**D. Coordination with Education Officials**

**Describe:**

**1. DSU's plans**

**The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.**

1.Plans, Policies, and Procedures

OVR works with many agencies to provide transition services and pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. This is inclusive of the blind and visually impaired and the deaf and hard of hearing populations. All of the collaborations described below allow for pre-employment transition services to be provided by either OVR or our partners.

OVR partners with the public school districts, Department of Education and the University of Kentucky Human Development Institute to provide transition services and pre-employment transition services through the Community Work Transition Program (CWTP). The CWTP contracts with the individual school districts to hire employment specialists to provide students with employment exploration and experiences, community-based evaluation, work experience and job placement while in high school.

OVR has assigned counselors to each of Kentucky’s 173 Local Education Agencies for the purpose of ensuring that all students with disabilities are served. The counselors work with referrals from special education and general education staff as well as the individual with the disability, their family, and other agencies who assist students with disabilities who are in need of transition. These counselors coordinate pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities, age 14-21, who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services. The counselors also provide general coordination, information, and outreach activities about vocational rehabilitation services to the local education agency and student for use in transition planning. Service coordination activities may also include resource information about vocational rehabilitation, presentations, handouts, and staff development. The counselor works in a collaborative team process along with the local education agency to develop the transition services section of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for transitioning students. Both the IEP and IPE will include, if appropriate, a statement of interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages by which the responsibilities of other entities are satisfied. The student should be prepared to enter the competitive integrated workforce following the provision of necessary and needed services, as reflected in the IPE. The student should have ample opportunity to participate in Pre-employment transition services before they graduate. The OVR counselor will engage in providing services that would be most beneficial to an individual in the early stages of employment exploration, such as counseling and self—advocacy training. These Pre-ETS services are provided to students who are eligible or who are potentially eligible for VR services.

OVR has contracted with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System in the provision of pre-employment transition services that will provide opportunities for potentially eligible Kentucky students with disabilities to enhance their skills and readiness for post — secondary employment and training.

OVR has a contract with the Jobs for American’s Graduates (JAG) to students with disabilities in the school system. JAG is a state-based national non-profit organization dedicated to preventing dropouts among young people who have serious barriers to graduation and/or employment.

The office’s executive director and state transition coordinators work directly when needed, with the Kentucky Interagency Transition Council. These involvements help facilitate the all of the partner’s understanding of the unique transition needs of students with disabilities and assists in understanding the educational process of Public Schools in the State.

The Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) serves students with visual disabilities from across the state. Students can live and attend classes at the school’s Louisville location, or receive outreach services while attending their local elementary, middle and high schools. Staff in specialized positions, namely Rehabilitation Counselors for the Blind (RCB) actively participate in the vocational planning and academic progress of all of these students through services such as vocational assessments, annual Individual Education Plans, and Individual Learning Plans. Staff collaborates on a variety of work-readiness and work-experience programs with KSB such as the Summer Work Program and The World of Work Program that provides work-based learning experiences in a competitive, integrated setting.

The Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD)

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation has staff trained to understand about the different problems people with hearing loss may have. Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf are proficient in American Sign Language and serve persons who are deaf and hard of hearing and use this type of communication. Communication Specialists are trained about devices and ways to serve individuals who are hard of hearing or late deafened with auditory/oral communication . Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf and Communication Specialists are also skilled in serving people who have vision limitations in addition to a hearing loss or deafness.  Individuals who are deaf use American Sign Language are served by a Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf.  There are Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf statewide to provide OVR services.

Examples of specialized services are and not limited to:

* Information and counseling about jobs
* Information and referral for other services
* Assessment about job skills
* Training programs with support services to learn job skills
* Technology (including training) - for work related technology
* Job Placement assistance
* Interpreting Services

The State Coordinator of Deaf-Blind Services (SCDB) works with, consults, and provides technical assistance to KY Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) staff including the Rehabilitation Counselors for the Blind (RCB), Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCD), and Communication Specialists.  Other staff include Managers, Blind Services Division Staff, and various other administrators within OVR.  The SCDB also maintains relationships for service delivery with staff from the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC), Kentucky Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH), The Kentucky Deaf-Blind Project, KY Mental Health Services for the Deaf and Deaf-Blind,  Kentucky Association of Deaf-Blind (KADB), and several other Community Resource Providers (CRP).  Kentucky has one of the largest Deaf-Blind census numbers with approximately 49,000 known individuals listed as being Deaf-Blind in the state.  The SCDB also coordinates, plans, and oversees training and support for staff that work with this population. The next statewide training will occur in November 2019.

INSIGHT - Post-secondary Preparation Program for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired is a collaborative project between the Kentucky Educational Development Corporation Special Education Cooperative, Kentucky School for the Blind, Kentucky School for the Blind Charitable Foundation, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, MCP Orientation and Mobility Services, and Morehead State University. INSIGHT is a unique program designed to provide college bound students an opportunity to experience some of the challenges encountered when entering a university or community college. Participants gain an increased awareness of the educational, recreational, and social opportunities and challenges of the post-secondary environment.

Staff also participates with the Kentucky Deaf-Blind Project, which helps promote cooperative transition services for youth who are deaf-blind. OVR has a DeafBlind Coordinator who is responsible for helping to facilitate pre-employment transition services, including all the previously described work readiness and summer work experience programs, for this population of students. OVR collaborates with the Kentucky Deaf-Blind Project to provide a weeklong summer camp for eight to nine students who are Deaf-Blind that addresses the five required Pre-Employment Transition Services. This program is unique to Kentucky, and other Deaf-Blind Projects across the nation are interested in replicating it in their states.

The PATH Program is a three-week Pre-employment Transition Services program held at the McDowell Center in Louisville, KY. This program is conducted in collaboration with the University of Kentucky’s Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairments. Through the University of Kentucky, practicum students from the teacher preparation program are able to assist with the providing the Pre-employment Transition Services to up to fifteen blind or visually impaired students from across the state. The University of Kentucky also provides staff such as Orientation and Mobility Specialists that assist the McDowell Center staff provide the five required Pre-employment Transition Services.

Workforce Development Boards: OVR counselors actively participate on their local Workforce Development Board’s Youth and One Stop committees to enhance and make accessible the programs and services for transition age consumers. Through Project CASE, a program developed from the use of Federal grant funding through the Rehabilitation Services Administration, OVR has stronger coordination and collaboration with the Youth Career Centers and other Kentucky Career Centers. Partnering with Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP) and KentuckianaWorks in the hiring of Career Pathway Coordinators, and in cross-agency training of staff on career pathways for students with disabilities, Project CASE will ensure sustained partnerships.

KY AHEAD is a professional organization whose purpose is to promote communication among professionals in post-secondary education in order to improve the development and implementation of services for persons with disabilities. Campus Disability Services Centers are an essential resource for students with disabilities attending post-secondary educational institutions. VR counselors maintain relationships with disability service center staff and strongly encourage college students to utilize the services available at the centers so that they can receive individualized accommodations for their coursework. Every effort is made to arrange for a student to meet with staff at the disability center prior to entry into a post-secondary program in assuring a smooth transition for the individuals.

The Kentucky Special Education Cooperative Network consists of nine special education cooperatives located across the state. These cooperatives were formed to better meet the needs of the multiple school systems across Kentucky’s 120 counties. All 173 local school districts, and the Kentucky Schools for the Blind and Deaf are members of a special education cooperative. Each cooperative has VI teachers and an AT specialist to assist students with visual needs. The school districts employ other specialty service providers such as Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Physical Therapists, and Speech Therapists. OVR works collaboratively with each cooperative network across the state in the provision of information and referral for students of all ages. Additionally, OVR has contractual agreements with each of the nine special education cooperatives in the provision of pre-employment Transition Services.

**2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:**

**A. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;**

**2. Formal Interagency Agreement**

The Office partners with the Kentucky Department of Education through an interagency cooperative agreement to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services.

The Agency has agreements with all public institutions of higher learning in the state to meet the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, to develop agreements between the state vocational rehabilitation agencies and public institutions of higher education who serve mutual individuals with disabilities.

The Office participates with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and 21 other state agencies on the Kentucky Interagency Transition Council. This Council’s agreement, entitled The Kentucky Interagency Agreement on Transition Services” provides for a statewide system of coordination among agencies in the delivery of transition services.

OVR has an agreement with the KDE for transition planning and services for secondary students with disabilities. This agreement is in the process of being rewritten to meet the requirements of WIOA and in keeping with the upcoming merger of the blind and general agency.

These agreements are designed to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school, to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services.

**B. transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;**

Under IDEA, schools are responsible for initiating transition planning at the age of 16 for each student identified with a disability or younger if the IEP determines that it is appropriate. In Kentucky, as stated in Kentucky Special Education Regulation 707, KAR 1:320, Section 7:1, transition planning can start in the child’s 8th grade year or when the child turns age 14, or earlier if the ARC deems it appropriate, in alignment with the child’s Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Since school faculty and staff are academic specialists, it is very important for the VR counselor to have early influence on the student’s vocational future helping to avoid weak or unrealistic vocational training. The VR counselor acts as a vocational specialist forging the educational and future vocational needs of the child realistically together. The VR counselor is educated on the federal and state laws associated with transition and acts as an advocate for the student and parents. VR counselors attend transition related meetings as early at age 14 and act as a consultant in the student’s IEP. Early contact and intervention not only saves the VR counselor considerable time and effort, it allows the student and parents the opportunity to plan a realistic vocational path that will lead them to the vocational goal of their choice.

VR counselors shall attend student IEP meetings starting at age 14. The school system will continue to have the primary responsibility for accommodations and student’s educational needs. Once the student graduates OVR will become the primary agent. It is mandatory that the IPE be developed with the student 90 days after eligibility or prior to graduation, whichever comes first.

An IPE is developed for each student determined eligible and that meets the current order of selection for vocational rehabilitation services. The IPE should address the student’s pre-employment transition services needs in the areas of job exploration counseling, work based learning experiences, counseling regarding post-secondary training opportunities, workplace readiness training to assist in the development of social and independent living skills, and instruction in self-advocacy.

OVR recognizes that it is the responsibility of Kentucky schools and OVR to coordinate and provide transition planning and services for students with disabilities. The VR counselor will provide consultation and technical assistance to assist the school as well as pre-employment transition services based on the student’s needs. OVR recognizes that transition planning is an ongoing process and that a student may choose to go in a different direction requiring a change in their vocational goal. Ongoing evaluations, work exposure, and vocational counseling will be provided to assist students in the decision making process.

Provisions under the cooperative agreement include:

1. Process for making student referrals to the OVR;

2. Determination of eligibility for OVR services;

3. Joint sharing and use of evaluations and assessments;

4. Planning and development of individualized programs (IEP and IPE) as a collaborative team process;

5. Role of educational personnel in transition planning;

6. Role of the OVR counselor in outreach to, identification of, and transition planning for eligible students with disabilities;

7. Use of memoranda of agreement (MOA) at the local level to facilitate and coordinate transition services for secondary students with disabilities;

8. State coordination with agencies in the provision of transition services inclusive of pre – employment transition services;

9. A comprehensive system of personnel development for qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

10. Determination of lead agencies;

11. Financial responsibilities;

12. Status of services for an individual student/consumer during a dispute;

13. Agency dispute resolution;

14. Due process for the individual student/consumer.

15. Memoranda of Agreements at the Local Level

**C. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;**

C. Memoranda of agreements at the local level will be used in order to further the collaborative efforts detailed in the interagency cooperative agreement between the Kentucky Department of Education and the agency. These memoranda of agreements will define the basic tenets of the Community Work Transition Program (CWTP). The rights and responsibilities of OVR and the local education agency for implementing and carrying out the CWTP are also detailed in these memoranda of agreements. OVR authorizes payment of services needed to determine eligibility and for any services provided that do not fall under the responsibility of the school district. OVR provides payment for pre-employment services such as career exploration, work experiences, advocacy, and peer mentoring.

D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

OVR obtains a list of consumers per county that are accessing Educational Materials as an accommodation due to their disability in high school. The list is distributed to VR Counseling staff so they can identify where students with visual disabilities are located in the counties they serve for outreach purposes. Staff is required to conduct outreach to school staff in order to strengthen partnerships and increasing awareness regarding services available defined as Pre-Employment Transition Services. Outreach and Involvement of the VR Counselor begins at age 14.

The CWTP is designed to provide pre-employment transition services to all students with disabilities and provide transition services to assist VR eligible students with the most significant disabilities in transitioning from high school to competitive integrated employment. Student employment coordinators, funded by the local education agency, refer students to OVR in order to provide pre—employment transition services during their final three years of school. During this time, should the student need individualized transition services, counselors work with the employment coordinators to ensure that community vocational services provided lead to the completion of an individualized vocational evaluation and the development of individualized programs (IEP and IPE) to ensure successful transitioning from high school to post school activities, including employment. Upon completion of the IPE, further community—based vocational services are provided to the student in the form of training for the planned vocational goal. The desired outcome for participants in the CWTP Transition Services is a post—school outcome or paid employment.

Outreach to students also occurs through OVR’s contractual agreements with the Kentucky Career and Technical Educational System and the nine Special Education Cooperatives for pre-employment transition services. Our main contracts are through Jobs for the American Graduate (JAG) and the special education cooperatives.

Jobs for Kentucky’s Graduates (JAG KY) operates its curriculum program in conjunction with the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to service students in their program who have disabilities and who are potentially eligible and/or eligible for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. JAG provides a curriculum for in-school youths with disabilities who have significant barriers to success that includes academic, physical, psychological, work related, and/or environmental.  JAG KY provides a curriculum or the target population of in-school youths with disabilities between the ages of 14 and 21 and have significant barriers to success. The areas for the curriculum will includes career development, job attainment, job survival, basic skills, leadership and self-development, personal skill, life survival skills workplace and economic empowerment.JAG KY employs and certify “Specialist” who are assigned to the schools that have a JAG KY Program through Kentucky.

The Kentucky Special Education Cooperative Network consists of nine (9) Special Education Cooperatives located across the state.

1. Central Kentucky Educational Cooperative (CKEC)
2. Green River Regional Educational Cooperative (GRREC)
3. Greater Louisville Education Cooperative (GLEC)
4. Kentucky Educational Development Corporation (KEDC)
5. Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative (KVEC)
6. Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services (NKCES)
7. Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC)
8. Southeast/Southcentral Education Cooperative (SESC)
9. West Kentucky Educational Cooperative (WKEC)

Transition Specialists are hired by the cooperatives to provide the five core pre-employment transition services. They provide transition services focused trainings with participation for students from several school districts in their regions.  Staff coordinate with local education agencies to provide the opportunity for students to participate in a variety of summer workshops/camps/ internships and local College visit.  Staff hold comprehensive weekly group workshops to the schools in their district during the school year.

The Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) provides Pre-employment Transition Services on a Fee Schedule in groups or individual.  Proposals for CRP Pre-ETS programs are submitted to the OVR CRP Branch.  CRP programs provide the five required pre-employment services: Job exploration counseling, work based learning experiences, post-secondary counseling, workplace readiness training, and self-advocacy.  CRPs provide in-school and after-school Pre-ETS.

E.

Section 511 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) requires the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to perform certain actions before an employer can pay an individual, especially youth with a disability a wage that is below the standard minimum wage.  The Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation has provided the thirty-five subminimum wage facilities within Kentucky access to a Career Counseling video that is to be shown to individuals according to the requirements set forth in WIOA.  The Career Counseling Participation Form is completed on each individual and provided to the Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Branch of OVR as required.  The OVR offers multiple Pre-Employment Transition Services opportunities for youth with disabilities to ensure that this particular WIOA mandate is met.  The OVR ensures that all OVR staff are trained to understand that before a youth with a disability can enter in to subminimum wage employment, the youth must be determined eligible, have an approved Individualized Plan for Employment, have been working toward their vocational goal for a reasonable period of time with appropriate supports, but without success and be closed from the OVR.  The CRP Branch continues to monitor and provide technical assistance to subminimum wage facilities and OVR staff to ensure these requirements are met. We keep records on all the individuals that receive Career Counseling.  Their first year in the subminimum wage facility they receive the Career Counseling twice and then annually thereafter.  They are also given information regarding available resources in the community that will help them with services to obtain employment and support.

The Office assures that in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31 that we will not enter into an agreement.