

## **Maine DBVI Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment**

### **Proposal**

In order to accomplish the Maine Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MDBVI) Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, Drs. Karen Wolffe and Kathy Nelson will work closely with the agency director, Dr. John McMahon, and his staff to accomplish the following:

- Review and report on Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) data and related economic and population data collected nationally between fiscal years 2013 to 2015.
- Three focus groups of consumers and stakeholders from geographically different areas of the state (suggest sessions in Portland, Augusta, and Bangor).
- Interviews with DBVI direct service recipients, including Employability Skills Program intervention participants, and indirect service recipients such as employers of successfully closed MDBVI consumers.
- Interviews with potential referral sources such as with medical professionals (ophthalmologists and optometrists) and former high school students who have graduated within the last 3 years and received services from DBVI while in school programs.

This will enable us to capture an in-depth view of outcomes achieved by MDBVI consumers as well as identify possible areas of need for individuals who are blind or have low vision and reside in Maine. In addition, our efforts will enable us to query possible referral sources such as medical professionals to determine how to better coordinate efforts to reach visually impaired citizens in Maine moving forward.

Each segment of our plan is detailed in the following Outline of Services. The individuals expected to contribute to the effort, a brief description of the work to be accomplished, and the approximate amount of time involved to accomplish the tasks entailed, and anticipated costs are detailed in a brief tabular format at the conclusion of the outline.

#### **Outline of Services** (September 15, 2014 to April 15, 2015)

1. Review 911 & state data and report on differences over time - 2011 to present (Sept/Oct)
  - a. Revisit data from last comprehensive needs assessment (2011/2012) and compare to most recently collected RSA and Maine data, as follows:
    - i. MDBVI Individual Characteristics for Cases Closed
    - ii. MDBVI: Total Applications, Plans Developed and Closures

- iii. MDBVI Active Caseload Status: End of Fiscal Year Snapshot
  - iv. MDBVI: Number of Closures by Closure Type
  - v. MDBVI: Average Months in VR Process: for Rehabilitated Clients (Status 26)
  - vi. MDBVI: Average Months in VR Process by Closure Type (Application to Closure)
  - vii. MDBVI: Rehabilitation Rate
  - viii. MDBVI Competitive Employment Rate
  - ix. MDBVI Competitive Employment Rate by Age Group
  - x. MDBVI Rehabilitation Rate by Secondary Impairment (Combined)
  - xi. MDBVI: Average Weekly Earnings at Application and Closure for All Successful Competitive Employment Closures
  - xii. MDBVI: Change in Education Level from Application to Closure  
FFY 2011-2012 Closures
  - xiii. MDBVI: Degree Completion by Age Group
  - xiv. MDBVI: Purchased Services Costs by Service Group
  - xv. MDBVI Top 5 Service Groups by FFY (excluding contract services)
  - xvi. MDBVI: Purchased Services Costs by Service Group
  - xvii. MDBVI: Average Cost per Closure FFY
  - xviii. American Community Survey Visual Disability Population  
State of Maine
  - xix. Population Characteristics: People with Visual Impairments  
Age 16 and older
  - xx. Maine Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired Client Characteristics  
and Selected Comparisons to ACS Visual Disability Population
  - xxi. VR Blind Agency Rehabilitation Rate by State
  - xxii. Average Hours Per Week and Hourly Earnings for Successful Closures
  - xxiii. Average Time (in Months) between Application and Closure for Individuals with  
Successful Employment Outcomes
  - xxiv. Maine DBVI Closure Cost Summary
- b. Capture & review current data on cases closed since 2011-2012
- i. Referrals
  - ii. Successful (competitive)
  - iii. Successful (noncompetitive)

iv. Unsuccessful

2. Focus groups (3) with constituents & stakeholders (Nov/Dec)
  - a. Generate queries
  - b. Invite participants
  - c. Facilitate focus groups
  - d. Analyze data & report
3. Interview by telephone/email service recipients (closed and open cases, include ESP intervention participants (Nov/Jan)
  - a. Generate queries
  - b. Identify participants
  - c. Contact participants
  - d. Analyze data & report
4. Interview medical professionals via Survey Monkey (ophthalmologists & optometrists as potential referral sources) (Nov/Jan)
  - a. Generate queries
  - b. Identify participants
  - c. Contact participants
  - d. Analyze data & report
5. Consider telephone/email interviews with employers of successfully closed clients (25%) , ESP graduates, and students served who graduated 2012, 2013 & completed TCC evaluations (Nov/Jan)
  - a. Generate queries
  - b. Identify participants
  - c. Contact participants
  - d. Analyze data & report
6. Analyze all data (Jan/Feb)
7. Write report (March/Apr)
8. Edit report (April)
9. Submit report by April 15, 2015