

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND
REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202-2800**

**POLICY DIRECTIVE
RSA-PD-12-08
DATE: March 5, 2012**

ADDRESSEES: STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES
STATE REHABILITATION COUNCILS
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION
CENTERS
AMERICAN INDIAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
PROGRAMS
CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
CONSUMER ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

SUBJECT: Announcement of OMB Approval for the on-line submission of the
Vocational Rehabilitation Program Improvement Plan

BACKGROUND: The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved a new
information collection instrument for the on-line submission of the
Program Improvement Plan (PIP) for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
program. The approval of this information collection instrument will
expire on November 30, 2014. The OMB Control Number for this
collection is 1820-0693.

DISCUSSION: Pursuant to Section 106 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended,
(*Rehabilitation Act*) RSA is required to evaluate the performance of state
VR agencies on established standards and indicators. Federal VR program
regulations (34 CFR 361.82 thru 34 CFR 361.86) establish standards and
indicators by which RSA measures the performance of the state VR
agencies. Evaluation Standard 1 measures employment outcomes using
six indicators. To achieve successful performance on Standard 1, a VR
agency must meet or exceed the performance levels for at least four of the
six indicators. In addition, the agency must meet or exceed the
performance level for two of the three primary indicators. An agency that
does not achieve the required minimum performance levels for Standard 1
during the fiscal year must submit a PIP for RSA approval pursuant to 34
CFR 361.89 (a).

The PIP must contain goals established by the agency, including
measurable targets, by which it will assess its progress toward meeting the
required minimum performance levels, along with strategies for the

achievement of the goals. In accordance with regulations at 34 CFR 361.89(c), RSA reviews an agency's progress toward achieving the goals established in the PIP. For this purpose, it requires that an agency report its progress on a quarterly basis. Should the agency not sustain a satisfactory level of performance on Standard 1 for two consecutive fiscal years, RSA will request that the agency modify the PIP to achieve the required level of performance.

Beginning in fiscal year (FY) 2012, each of the VR agencies evaluated during the year that RSA has found to be out of compliance with federal performance standards will use this form located on the RSA MIS to submit a PIP for RSA approval and thereafter to report progress on the goals and strategies contained in the PIP on a quarterly basis, until such time as the agency meets the performance criteria for each indicator of the PIP and the PIP is resolved.

The PIP must contain goals established by the agency, including measurable targets, by which it will assess its progress toward meeting the required minimum performance levels, along with strategies for the achievement of the goals. Using this information for each VR agency required to submit a PIP, RSA will be able to track the agency's progress on goals and strategies to improve performance and identify the need for technical assistance to enable it to carry out the strategies.

Procedures for Submitting the PIP and Quarterly Progress Reports

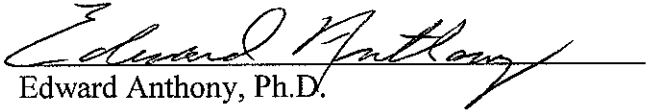
RSA developed the capacity for the FY 2012 and all future PIPs and Quarterly Progress Reports to be submitted online through the RSA MIS. This web-based approach to PIP submission affords state agencies a number of benefits, including:

- ease of submission by state agency personnel charged with developing the PIP;
- greater clarity of the content requirements for the PIP with the use of prompts throughout the template;
- a significant reduction in the amount of paperwork state agencies will need to prepare and transmit to RSA;
- full accessibility for individuals using screen access technologies; and
- a simplified process for updating the PIP on a quarterly basis.

To begin the submission process, the individual in the state agency responsible for entering PIP information is required to have a user ID to access the RSA website. If you have a user ID to <http://rsa.ed.gov>, log in and then click on the dropdown menu titled *Help* and then select the option *Technical Support*. Under *Technical Support*, open the option *I Need to Enter Data on a Form that Isn't Listed on my Data Entry Screen* and follow the prompts. If you need assistance, contact *Technical Support* via the link within the *Help* menu or at the email address below. If you do not have a user ID, go to <http://rsa.ed.gov> and click on the dropdown menu titled *Help*, and then select *Info for New Users*. If you have forgotten your user ID or password, go to <http://rsa.ed.gov> and click on *Log On*. Refer to the link under "New User?" entitled *Click Here If you Have Any Problems Logging In*. If you require further assistance, send an email to RSAMIS.Technical.Support@ed.gov.

INQUIRIES:

For questions regarding the content of PIP submissions, please contact your RSA state liaison. For technical questions about the RSA MIS, please contact Ken Schellenberg at ken.schellenberg@ed.gov.


Edward Anthony, Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner

ATTACHMENT:

cc: Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
National Council of State Agencies for the Blind
National Disability Rights Network

OMB Number: 1820-0693

Expiration Date: November 30, 2014

**Rehabilitation Services Administration
Vocational Rehabilitation Program
Program Improvement Plan
Instructions for Completion of On-Line Form**

Pursuant to Section 106 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended, RSA is required to evaluate the performance of state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies on established standards and indicators. Agencies found to be below federal performance requirements must develop program improvement plans (PIP) through which they will take action to meet performance measures using the on-line form located on the RSA management information system (MIS). In addition, the agencies must use the on-line form to report progress toward the achievement of targets for each indicator identified in the PIP on a quarterly basis. The MIS on-line form will be populated with performance data submitted by the VR agency. Only indicators for which the VR agency did not meet the required performance levels will be listed in the on-line form drop down menu. The instructions for completion of each field contained in the PIP on-line form are as follows:

Strategies

For each indicator for which the VR agency did not meet the required performance levels enter strategies that will result in achievement of performance goals and targets. For each strategy describe how it will result in achievement of the performance target. After the information has been entered select either the "save" or "save and open next section" option.

Approval of Plan

Once all strategies have been entered for all listed performance indicators, select the "save" option, and scroll to the top of the form. To submit the PIP to RSA for approval, select the option "Submit to RSA". RSA will review, request changes if necessary, and approve the PIP, notifying the agency of this approval through email.

RSA Approval

RSA will review the submitted PIP, request revisions if necessary and notify the VR agency of the approval of the PIP through an electronic message generated by the MIS.

Quarterly Reporting of Progress

Following approval of the PIP, report progress toward the achievement of the identified performance targets for each indicator by entering in data pertaining to the indicator at the close of the quarter and a narrative description of the strategies implemented through that date in the appropriate text field "Update for Current Quarter."

Termination of PIP

Once the required performance levels have been met or exceeded for all indicators covered by the PIP over a period of two consecutive years, as required by 34 CFR 361.89, RSA will notify the VR agency through electronic message generated by the MIS that the PIP is terminated and no further action is required.

Transmittal of the Report

The PIP must be developed within 30 days of the published Standards and Indicators Report and submitted into the RSA-MIS. The Quarterly Progress Reports must be developed and entered into the RSA-MIS within 30 days of the end of the subsequent full quarter of the federal fiscal year and then updated within 30 days of the end of each subsequent quarter until resolved.