

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND
REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-2531

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

RSA-IM-94-08

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DATE: December 21, 1993

TO: STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (GENERAL)
STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES (BLIND)
CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
REGIONAL REHABILITATION CONTINUING EDUCATION
PROGRAMS (RRCEPS)
RSA SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

SUBJECT: National Report On The State-Of-The Art Of
Placement/Marketing Activities In State VR Agencies

CONTENT: Attached, for your information, is a copy of the subject report which is a product of activities under Goal I, Objective I, Subobjective A of RSA's Operation Plan for FY 1993. It contains the results of teleconferences between representatives of State VR agencies and members of the RSA Placement/Marketing Committee. The report is organized by Region to assist you in identifying the resource person if you wish more information about the activities and recommendations in other areas.

We have listed the names and telephone numbers of the RSA Regional members of the Placement/Marketing Committee. If you would like further information regarding anything reported by a specific Region, please contact the appropriate RSA Regional Office staff person.

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We hope this information will be helpful as we work together to improve our placement and marketing strategies for the benefit of individuals with disabilities.

Acting Commissioner

Attachment

A NATIONAL REPORT ON
STATE-OF-THE-ART OF
PLACEMENT/MARKETING ACTIVITIES IN STATE
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) AGENCIES

SEPTEMBER 1993

This is a follow-up summary to the 1992 Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) report titled, "National Report On the State VR Agencies' Placement/Marketing Activities." It contains synopses of reports prepared earlier this year which describe the state-of-the-art for each RSA region, as submitted by members of the RSA Placement/Marketing Committee.

**A National Report On State-Of-The-Art of
Placement/Marketing Activities In State VR Agencies**

Rationale

As part of its Operational Plan for Federal fiscal year 1993, RSA established a goal of promoting employment and independence for individuals with disabilities through supporting a vocational rehabilitation program that will lead to maximized employability, independence and integration into the work place and community, and increased competitiveness in a global economy.

This goal led to an objective of increasing the number of competitive employment placements of individuals with disabilities through placement/marketing (p/m) activities specifically targeted at ways of developing a p/m infrastructure which could enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the rehabilitation community.

Methodology

The activities described in the RSA Operational Plan required each member of RSA's Placement/Marketing Committee to continue the regional teleconferences that had begun a year earlier to update what had been identified as "state-of-the-art" in a 1992 report RSA prepared on (p/m) activities in State VR agencies.

Members of RSA's Placement/Marketing Committee are:

Region I	David Ditullio
Region II	Anthony Lagattuta

Region III	Anthony Renzi
Region IV	Douglas Lawton
Region V	Allan Ellis
Region VI	Mike McGill
Region VII	Harry McGuire
Region VIII	Marian Fuller
Region IX	Jon Kissinger
Region X	Elsie Forrest.

The committee members prepared reports based on questions asked during the regional teleconferences that summarized the States' p/m activities to demonstrate what is now state-of-the-art in this area. A region-by-region synopsis follows.

The State-Of-The-Art of P/M Activities In Region I

1. Defining p/m can be difficult. For the purposes of RSA's report, we defined p/m as activities of a State VR agency to promote its services and to produce employment and independence outcomes for its clients. Any comments or suggestions regarding this definition?

Participants thought the RSA definition of placement/marketing was adequate.

2. Have any changes occurred during the past 12 months in p/m activities?

Agencies have focused on delivering quality services at all levels of the VR process, with particular emphasis on appropriate employment outcomes. Job service centers have been established locally in some States within Department of Labor offices. Improved computerization will mean better access to job openings. A five year training plan on p/m has been developed by one agency. Another agency is planning an employer breakfast for 60 employers and VR agency staff to discuss mutual needs and issues related to placement. VR staffs are also meeting with staff from the Employment and Training Administration. One agency has planned to establish an Employer Cabinet Advisory Group composed of 22 major industries and businesses.

3. Has implementation of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) had any affect on p/m activities?

ADA presentations are conducted throughout the States with members of Chambers of Commerce and personnel directors. Employer requests to VR relate to information on reasonable accommodation and job modification. Counselors are trained on ADA to make them better able to assist employers. Technical assistance is provided to employers. Some agencies conduct training for businesses on how to work with individuals with disabilities. Employers contact agencies for technical assistance and some agencies have assigned specific staff to address ADA issues.

4. Have any of the teleconference participants received any training or attended any meetings or conferences on p/m during the past year?

A regional Private Industry Initiative Conference was attended by p/m specialists from throughout Region I.

5. Do the participants have any suggestions for future activities that RSA could pursue to achieve its objective of developing "... an infrastructure on p/m which would impact competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the rehabilitation community"?

RSA should provide the opportunity for State VR agencies for the blind to share information and exemplary practices with other agencies. RSA should encourage the sharing of information with other State agencies. RSA should facilitate the focus on employment outcomes and encourage State agencies to share their marketing activities. RSA should continue efforts to provide the State VR agencies with information on any innovative initiatives.

6. Do the participants have any opinions on what they consider to be the most critical factors(s) in a State VR agency's efforts to successfully placing individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market?

Make the case with the employer and adequately prepare the client toward an employment outcome. Identify training programs to prepare clients for a changing economy. Continue efforts to interact with employers. The economy is the major problem.

The State-Of-The-Art of P/M Activities In Region II

1. Defining p/m can be difficult. For the purposes of RSA's report on national p/m activities we defined p/m as activities of a State VR agency to promote its services and to produce employment and independence outcomes for its clients. Any comments or suggestions regarding this definition?

Some states believe "p/m" should be referred to as "Marketing and Placement."

2. Have any changes occurred during the past 12 months in p/m activities?

One State's Department of Labor is leading a full employment initiative which involves the VR agency; this has opened Employment Services' evaluation, testing and job banks to VR consumers. Money from SSA reimbursements is being used to develop a marketing package with video tapes and trainers manuals to be used by VR counselors. VR agencies are participating on the State Employment and Training Commission's disability committee. VR agencies that are located within a State education department have developed strong linkages with the State Economic Development agencies. New staff positions are used to develop business, union and trade agreements. The relationship of the State agency to the Business Advisory Committee has been reviewed.

3. Has implementation of The Americans with Disabilities Act had any affect on p/m activities?

In 1993 two conferences, sponsored by the Rehabilitation-Industry Alliance, were held. ADA has raised everyone's consciousness level, particularly medium-sized companies. This has resulted in increased technical assistance inquiries from employers. ADA training programs have addressed reasonable accommodation issues. State agencies are considering hiring job development representatives to handle ADA-related inquiries.

4. Have any of the teleconference participants received any training or attended any meetings or conferences on p/m during the past year?

VR agencies conduct and participate in meetings and conferences on p/m. One agency's Career Development Specialist has attended a marketing/adaptive technology training program.

5. Do the participants have any suggestions for future activities that RSA could pursue to achieve its objective of developing "... an infrastructure on p/m which would impact competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the rehabilitation community"?

RSA should conduct more regional employment seminars, similar to the one held when former Commissioner Carney came to the Region. Increased frequency of teleconferences on p/m held by the RSA Regional Offices would be helpful. Increase the number of short-term training programs for rehabilitation professionals on p/m techniques. RSA should continue to explore work disincentives. RSA should encourage State VR agencies to participate in the President's Committee on Employment for Persons with Disabilities meetings and RSA should co-sponsor this activity. On the local level, there could be a gradual introduction of persons with disabilities into boards of directors for local businesses. RSA should continue the private employer initiative as directed by this Regional Office. Training or a conference should be held once every year or every two years to review the problem areas or labor market trends to keep us focused on the issue of p/m.

6. Do the participants have any opinions on what they consider to be the most critical factors(s) in a State VR agency's efforts to successfully placing individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market?

It's essential to identify a specific individual in each district office to do full-time employer/job development in the specific catchment area of the office. Difficult job markets and lack-luster local economies make it hard to do placement. Treat the consumer as an asset to the employer's business. Adaptive equipment designed to help people with disabilities retain their jobs must be readily available. Provide consumers with quality jobs in competitive employment. VR agencies must form alliances with other State agencies and the business community.

The State-Of-The-Art of P/M Activities In Region III

This region's p/m activities have progressed beyond the activities listed in RSA's Operational Plan for 1993. State p/m specialists have worked with the RSA P/M Committee member in this region to operationalize some of the ideas that have been expressed in other regions (i.e., convening a conference on placement and marketing that allows for the exchange of ideas between states, etc.). Although limited funding for such a conference required that it be held initially via teleconference, the agenda went beyond the six questions asked in other regions and allowed state p/m specialists to share their expertise in areas such as: 1) developing a marketing budget 2) the counselor's role in the placement process 3) ADA's effect on written job descriptions and the new law's influence on the counselor's role 4) marketing vs. traditional job placement. Following this first conference in August 1992 a face-to-face meeting opportunity for p/m specialists was offered as part of a Job Placement Forum Annual Training Program held seven months later. Since this region's p/m activities are already "down the road" from the basic questions used as the basis for this report, the responses for this region may be brief but there are substantial p/m activities being conducted in the region. This region's experiences may serve as a model for RSA to consider as it develops p/m activities for future operational plans.

1. Defining p/m can be difficult. For the purposes of RSA's report on national p/m activities we defined p/m as activities of a State VR agency to promote its services and to produce employment and independence outcomes for its clients. Any comments or suggestions regarding this definition?

The agenda for the Job Placement Forum Annual Training Program (presented by the Regional Office with the assistance of the regional RCEP) included items that are distinctly geared toward either marketing or placement, implying that these items are separate disciplines and should be treated as such.

2. Have any changes occurred during the past 12 months in p/m activities?

The biggest change that has occurred for all agencies within Region III is the regional awareness of, and the need to learn more about, placement and marketing. The Job Placement Forum Annual Training Program is evidence of one region's attempt to be responsive to the expressed needs of states in its region.

3. Has implementation of the ADA had any affect on p/m activities?

During the August 1992 teleconference when the following ADA-related topics were discussed: 1) strategies for selling practical solutions to ADA to employers 2) impact of ADA on placement (including assistive technology for reasonable accommodations), and implications of Title I of the ADA for restricting information to employers on an individual's disabling condition, and the impact of the ADA on competitive job placements. RSA may want to consider some of these topics for future potential p/m activities.

4. Have any of the teleconference participants received any training or attended any meetings or conferences on p/m during the past year?

The RO brought an expert in marketing to the regional teleconference to act as a resource to the State p/m specialists. Training in p/m was spearheaded by the Regional Office during a teleconference and a program co-sponsored by the Regional Office and the RCEP.

5. Do the participants have any suggestions for future activities that RSA could pursue to achieve its objective of developing "... an infrastructure on p/m which would impact competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the rehabilitation community"?

All p/m specialists expressed their interest in continuing the p/m initiative. There was a strong preference to change the medium of dialogue from teleconferencing to a traditional meeting format. The Regional Office responded with the Job Placement Forum Annual Training Program. RSA could replicate some of the activities conducted by Region III as part of its p/m initiative.

The State-Of-The-Art of P/M Activities In Region IV

1. Defining p/m can be difficult. For the purposes of RSA's report on national p/m activities we defined p/m as activities of a State VR agency to promote its services and to produce employment and independence outcomes for its clients. Any comments or suggestions regarding this definition?

It seems that the RSA definition is trying to combine apples and oranges. Try to think of placement as a product of marketing; marketing is mainly dealing with a process not results. Placement is the final end result of the marketing process.

2. Have any changes occurred during the past 12 months in p/m activities?

In one state, VR gets the same job listings as the Department of Labor (DOL), but this procedure is not consistent among all the states in this region. Another agency reports how it works with DOL: it is computerizing its offices and has an agreement to share all their job listings with VR. If an individual is placed, VR will complete the DOL application and the DOL gives VR the employer's name. Both DOL and VR get credit for placement. Another agency is working with DOL by providing them with information about VR. When DOL representatives talk to employers about ADA compliance issues they mention VR as a resource.

3. Has implementation of the ADA had any affect on p/m activities?

An agency is providing internal training on ADA and p/m issues to all staff, including clerical. One agency has its 14 employment specialists provide technical assistance to employers on ADA matters. This has resulted in a 20% in placements. Most agencies have provided training on ADA to their staffs. One agency has provided 500 ADA-related programs a year for the last two years. Employers are making an increasing number of requests for assistance in implementing ADA (i.e., rewriting job descriptions, analyzing jobs, etc.).

4. Have any of the teleconference participants received any training or attended any meetings or conferences on p/m during the past year?

Staff from several agencies attended the University of Tennessee RCEP's training based on the University of Arkansas R & T Center's marketing program. Another program mentioned was the Region V RCEP's training on marketing held in Dallas in 1992. Another agency mentioned a program called "Developing Partnerships," presented by Auburn University.

5. Do the participants have any suggestions for future activities that RSA could pursue to achieve its objective of developing "... an infrastructure on p/m which would impact competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the rehabilitation community"?

One agency is planning to buy a store-bought job placement system. This agency will put this purchase out for bids but believes that RSA has federal responsibility to provide guidance on this matter. Virtually all the p/m specialists expressed the urgent need for the group to get together with time to share needs, issues, concerns, etc. They felt that the RSA Regional Office should take the lead with such a conference (Note: this was subsequently done). The p/m specialists felt that the issues discussed during the teleconference should be readdressed at a conference with time for more in-depth presentation and discussion. One agency mentioned that the "Placement and Employment 2000" (an IRI document) would be a good discussion item for a conference. P/M specialists asked if a regional communication network could be established. The RSA Regional Office responded that the RSA BBS should be available to State agencies in the very near future.

6. Do the participants have any opinions on what they consider to be the most critical factors(s) in a state VR agency's efforts to successfully placing individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market?

One agency mentioned that public transportation was a major obstacle in their mostly rural state. Another agency said that computers and assistive technology must be readily available for on-the-job accommodations and there should be a method for making speedy responses to requests for this kind of equipment. Another agency said that it has been working during the past two years in developing a system for listing all applicants in a comprehensive "pool" of applicants. One agency stated its need for excellent individual assessment but added that clients also need to be well versed on everything they need to know about questions an employer may

legally ask in a job interview and have an understanding of their rights and responsibilities under ADA. Another agency responded that it does a job readiness workshop for counselors and clients.

The State-Of-The-Art of P/M Activities In Region V

1. Defining p/m can be difficult. For the purposes of RSA's report on national p/m activities we defined p/m as activities of a State VR agency to promote its services and to produce employment and independence outcomes for its clients. Any comments or suggestions regarding this definition?

Placement and marketing are different items. It's confusing to put them together.

2. Have any changes occurred during the past 12 months in p/m activities?

One agency is working with a consultant, one agency is trying to be more customer-responsive. Another agency works with the RCEP to develop goals and objectives for developing p/m strategies. Most agencies are trying to do more advance planning for p/m activities. One agency is developing a new agency brochure. VR staff now conduct marketing with employers.

3. Has implementation of the ADA had any affect on p/m activities?

Employers are quite sophisticated about ADA. One agency has had a full-time ADA coordinator for the past 18 months. Employers look to agencies for technical assistance on ADA, so many agencies in this region have designated staff to handle ADA questions.

4. Have any of the teleconference participants received any training or attended any meetings or conferences on p/m during the past year?

Some agencies have not offered p/m training to their staffs, while some had. Some agencies have staff that attended the Region V RCEP's marketing training (participants were very positive about this training).

5. Do the participants have any suggestions for future activities that RSA could pursue to achieve its objective of developing "... an infrastructure

on p/m which would impact competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the rehabilitation community"?

RSA should provide technical assistance on methods of p/m best practices, materials, and strategies for market analysis. P/M activities should be re-examined in light of the current focus on providing services to people with severe disabilities. RSA's p/m initiative should be more action-oriented rather than just on paper. There should be a marketing approach developed for both the State and regional levels. Some States want more opportunities (preferably face-to-face) for networking and sharing of p/m ideas between states. There's a strong need for strategizing p/m techniques.

6. Do the participants have any opinions on what they consider to be the most critical factors(s) in a State VR agency's efforts to successfully placing individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market?

Due to focus on order of selection and serving the most severe, States need more training on how to do on-site assessments for accommodations and how to work with employers. The economy, employer attitudes and the availability of health care are some of the States' biggest concerns.

The State-Of-The-Art of P/M Activities In Region VI

1. Defining p/m can be difficult. For the purposes of RSA's report on national p/m activities, we defined p/m as activities of a State VR agency to promote its services and to produce employment and independence outcomes for its clients. Any comments or suggestions regarding this definition?

We need to standardize a definition of "marketing.

2. Have any changes occurred during the past 12 months in p/m activities?

Projects with industry staff are used as placement specialists in two agencies. In one of those agencies, there is a specialist in each regional office of the State agency who has a monthly quota of employer contacts that must be made. Some agency administrators do not place specialized p/m activities as high on the priority list as the p/m specialists would like, and in those situations the specialists have to reach both the employers and the administrators in their marketing strategies. These administrators believe that VR counselors should be responsible for conducting placement activities and that personnel specialized in p/m are too expensive. One state agency has shifted the p/m specialist's job back to the counselor. P/M specialists' duties vary among the agencies in this Region. Some p/m specialists do placement, while others train employers, staff and/or clients in job readiness. One agency has a project where the placement specialists routinely get computer information about clients who are ready for employment. This information is matched up with employer needs. One agency works with the State Employment Service by using their computerized job bank for employment information. The information available from some of the States' Occupational Information Coordinating Committees is used by some agencies, but most don't know enough about these resources.

3. Has implementation of the ADA had any affect on p/m activities?

ADA training for employers has helped in the marketing efforts in some states. In others, the p/m staff are not directly involved in ADA training.

4. Have any of the teleconference participants received any training or attended any meetings or conferences on p/m during the past year?

In one agency, training for placement specialists has consisted of monthly meetings of the placement staff. The training put on by the Region V RCEP was considered to have been very good by the conference participants that attended, but there should be greater participation in these kinds of training opportunities by top agency administrators. Some States are actively training staff to get away from the "medical" model and the "train and place" model, and are moving instead toward a "place and train" model.

5. Do the participants have any suggestions for future activities that RSA could pursue to achieve its objective of developing "... an infrastructure on p/m which would impact competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the rehabilitation community"?

The 1992 Amendments have placed an emphasis on employment outcomes and competitive employment. Now the impact of this new focus is beginning to be felt by the p/m specialists. RSA needs to provide training that is aimed at the placement/marketing specialists, in-service training officers and administrators who could coordinate instruction on the diverse p/m strategies currently used by state agencies.

6. Do the participants have any opinions on what they consider to be the most critical factors(s) in a State VR agency's efforts to successfully placing individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market?

The economy is the most important factor in determining the success or failure of p/m activities.

The State-Of-The-Art of P/M Activities In Region VII

1. Defining p/m can be difficult. For the purposes of RSA's report on national p/m activities we defined p/m as activities of a State VR agency to promote its services and to produce employment and independence outcomes for its clients. Any comments or suggestions regarding this definition?

Most agencies in this region would suggest that this definition be changed to include "The Identification Of Its Customers." This may include clients, employees, staff, organizations, etc. Marketing not only promotes VR's services, but it identifies and provides services to all the customers an agency serves (i.e., the client, the employer, agency staff). The RSA definition of p/m should also address how "satisfaction" will be achieved for an agency's various customers.

2. Have any changes occurred during the past 12 months in p/m activities?

The strategic plans for some of the State agencies in this Region now include marketing as an objective. Some agencies have newly created marketing committees composed of agency staff members. These committees address client satisfaction, and other issues, such as the agency's public image, and the public's level of satisfaction in the way "customers" are served. One agency is developing a recognition award program for employers who promote the hiring of workers with disabilities. District offices at this agency are networking more closely on job openings and job-ready clients. "Sales" training has been held at another agency for staff focusing on specific skills needed to approach employers. A training video is also being developed on this topic. Some agencies have participated in job fairs, while others have been working toward improving their clients' job seeking skills. One agency arranged for clients to experience "practice" job interviews with local employers. (Although job offers were not a specific objective, three participants did so well that they were offered employment on the spot!)

3. Has implementation of the ADA had any affect on p/m activities?

Considerable discussion has been generated over ADA-created restrictions on releasing client information to employers even with written

authorization to do so. ADA training has been conducted in all States in this Region. ADA awareness is greater among large employers but the majority of employers in this Region are small or medium sized and there is a lack of awareness and implementation of ADA. In Missouri, ADA has had little affect on increasing employment. Employers are concerned more with accessibility than employment issues. Another State reports that the ADA has made some employers more receptive to VR and willing to listen to placement staff and their presentations.

4. Have any of the teleconference participants received any training or attended any meetings or conferences on p/m during the past year?

In conjunction with the RCEP, a pilot project in one State agency's district office uses a trainer to work with each counselor in order to guide, train and develop a placement plan for each client. Counselor and client goals are aimed at achieving employment. A training manual on placement is being developed by one agency. Other agencies participate in the RCEP's Job Development/Job Placement Advisory Council. Training attended by the Kansas p/m staff leader included a session cosponsored by the Kansas-Missouri Chapters of the Job Placement Division of the NRA. A Kansas University Economic Conference related to the labor market and economic forecasting also involved the p/m staff. One agency noted that the amount of funding available has dictated the kind of training counselors have received in p/m. With a reduced amount of money for training and a cut-back in the number of counselors, some agencies are extremely reluctant to go out and drum up more business. An RCEP Job Development and Placement Grant project was the stimulus for another agency's p/m training. It involved all its placement specialists, supervisors and counselors. Although this training is on-going, the State agency believe it's very beneficial to teach counselors ways of approaching employers.

5. Do the participants have any suggestions for future activities that RSA could pursue to achieve its objective of developing "... an infrastructure on p/m which would impact competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the rehabilitation community"?

RSA could help by reinforcing job placement as an expectation of qualified VR counselors. One agency summed up comments made by other agencies by saying that, if p/m is a serious objective for RSA, activities should involve more than an annual teleconference. This agency said that there should be more resources allocated for p/m activities and

that these activities should be targeted on the real issues confronted by States as they conduct and develop p/m activities. RSA staff should brainstorm on how Innovation and Expansion Grants or other resources could be used creatively to achieve p/m objectives. Competitive employment -- with all the job benefits other nondisabled workers enjoy -- should be VR's goal. Counselors should consider employment "suitable" only if it's a job that they would take.

6. Do the participants have any opinions on what they consider to be the most critical factors(s) in a State VR agency's efforts to successfully placing individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market?

Funding cuts continue to influence p/m activities in this Region. Staff attrition and personnel hiring restrictions are squeezing more out of existing staff. In response to this, some agencies are examining ways to train staff in p/m matters in order to offset the loss of other staff. Some believe that skilled staff (preferably placement specialists) are critical to assisting people with disabilities to bridge the gap with employers. Others believe that true commitment to competitive employment is vital and that those who consider this an important part of their job descriptions should be rewarded. The most critical factor for one agency is keeping its personnel "a PART of the employer community and not APART from it." [Note: That's a catchy phrase, maybe it could be used as a national slogan for VR!] This idea was expressed in various ways by other agencies when they discussed how they are trying to meet the needs and expectations of employers. Most agencies believe that this is the key to making more quality placements with longer on-the-job retention.

The State-Of-The-Art of P/M Activities In Region VIII

1. Defining p/m can be difficult. For the purposes of RSA's report on national p/m activities we defined p/m as activities of a State VR agency to promote its services and to produce employment and independence outcomes for its clients. Any comments or suggestions regarding this definition?

The consensus of the group participating in the teleconference seemed to indicate that, although not perfect, the definition used in the 1992 RSA report on p/m activities is "workable," although it doesn't focus strongly enough on satisfying the needs of VR's "customers."

2. Have any changes occurred during the past 12 months in p/m activities?

One State has moved p/m into its central office under supported employment and assigned it to an individual who is also responsible for facilities and supported employment. Another State has been divided into five regions for p/m purposes. Most p/m activities in this Region are status quo with last year's activities.

3. Has implementation of the ADA had any affect on p/m activities?

Some States are using ADA as a marketing tool. One agency hired an ADA specialist and a job development specialist. The p/m specialist also served as the ADA coordinator in several state agencies.

4. Have any of the teleconference participants received any training or attended any meetings or conferences on p/m during the past year?

Three of the six States in this Region received training in p/m during 1992. Five states went to p/m training in Dallas provided by Region V's RCEP. There was an overwhelmingly positive response to Region V RCEP's marketing training. As a result of this training, several excellent presenters on p/m were discovered. The training module from this training was shared with the Regional Office, along with a video on p/m featuring former Commissioner Carney.

5. Do the participants have any suggestions for future activities that RSA could pursue to achieve its objective of developing "... an infrastructure

on p/m which would impact competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the rehabilitation community"?

All of the p/m specialists expressed a desire to meet face-to-face for training, swapping information and networking. They want a national conference convened on p/m to include business representatives. RSA's support for p/m should be channeled through CSAVR.

6. Do the participants have any opinions on what they consider to be the most critical factors(s) in a State VR agency's efforts to successfully placing individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market?

The economy is still rather slow in most of the States in this Region. This has hampered some States' in their p/m efforts. States need more support from RSA in developing p/m plans. Employers need to be better educated about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities. P/M initiatives could incorporate some of the philosophies that work in supported employment, such as an individualized approach to job placement.

The State-Of-The-Art of P/M Activities In Region IX

1. Defining p/m can be difficult. For the purposes of RSA's report on national p/m activities we defined p/m as activities of a State VR agency to promote its services and to produce employment and independence outcomes for its clients. Any comments or suggestions regarding this definition?

Missing from RSA's definition is the basic foundation of a marketing strategy: that the "customers" (clients and employers) determine the scope of services to be offered and this determination is not made by professional "experts." Perhaps the term p/m should be separated, with "placement" directed toward employment and "marketing" directed toward activities that lead to independence outcomes.

2. Have any changes occurred during the past 12 months in p/m activities?

The most significant change reported by one agency in this Region is the shift that has occurred from the "expert" model to a "customer" model. This shift was the result of a conference on p/m that was held in Seattle. Several agencies that attended this conference had positive remarks on their experience. Another agency reports that there has been more contact with small and medium sized employers. Supervisors and counselors are now working together at some agencies to assess the effectiveness of various p/m methods and how individuals with disabilities are most advantageously placed into competitive employment.

3. Has implementation of the ADA had any affect on p/m activities?

When the first implementation dates for the ADA became effective there was an increased interest in compliance with the new law by private industry. ADA has generally made employers more receptive to VR's marketing approaches and more receptive to continuing to work with VR agencies in this Region. Employers are now making many of the initial contacts with VR agencies as they seek to find qualified referrals.

4. Have any of the teleconference participants received any training or attended any meetings or conferences on p/m during the past year?

The Region V RCEP hosted a p/m training session in Seattle. Several p/m specialists participated in this training and found it most helpful. One of the most beneficial aspects of this training was the discovery that marketing should be approached from a business perspective and not from that of a social services agency. Only one agency did not provide training on p/m during the past year. One agency participated in the University of San Francisco's training on "Disability Recruitment and Retention Through Community Partnerships." The objective of this training was to establish partnerships between employers, community service providers, and VR counselors so they can recruit qualified applicants with disabilities who are capable of long-term job retention.

5. Do the participants have any suggestions for future activities that RSA could pursue to achieve its objective of developing "... an infrastructure on p/m which would impact competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the rehabilitation community"?

Washington State VR has redefined its mission in terms of providing genuine services to employers as well as people with disabilities who are also customers of the agency. Could RSA help to provide more training along these lines? RSA could provide grants directly to employers who could be used to recruit and train people with disabilities. RSA could establish links with these employers and be available to provide technical assistance to them. RSA should continue to emphasize "choice." Marketing activities that are responsive to local job markets are most effective when they're conducted on a state-by-state basis.

6. Do the participants have any opinions on what they consider to be the most critical factors(s) in a State VR agency's efforts to successfully placing individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market?

Placement activities must be customer focused. VR agencies and RSA must break out of their old paradigm. Counselors need to understand the important role they play in the placement process and they must have ready access to employers in their area who have job openings. Consumers must be motivated and committed to entering the world of work. Up-to-date career and labor market information is essential.

The State-Of-The-Art of P/M Activities In Region X

1. Defining p/m can be difficult. For the purposes of RSA's report on national p/m activities we defined p/m as activities of a State VR agency to promote its services and to produce employment and independence outcomes for its clients. Any comments or suggestions regarding this definition?

Most States in this Region regard "placement" and "marketing" as two separate topics, with placement being a subset of marketing. A whole strategic plan could be developed for marketing with a core philosophy and values. This can be accomplished when marketing is viewed in a broad context (i.e., marketing the agency within the community, or marketing the agency's capacity to meet employers' needs, or marketing job-ready clients). In this regard, marketing is not to be aimed at a specific client or at a specific employer. On the other hand, placement can be the direct responsibility of job-ready clients with VR counselors guiding them into the job marketplace and selling their skills to employers with job openings.

2. Have any changes occurred during the past 12 months in p/m activities?

P/M activities have diminished in some agencies mostly due to budgetary constraints, staff's time limitations, or staff reductions. From a practical standpoint, the focus of p/m has shifted among the States in this Region from general marketing to direct placement. Counselors in some States are developing partnerships with employers so that some of the skill training and job follow-along is done by the employers themselves. Staffs are focusing on job development and outreach activities to employers. More placements are resulting from these kinds of activities because they have raised employers' awareness of VR and what it can do for them.

3. Has implementation of the ADA had any affect on p/m activities?

Some of the marketing outreach activities described above have been absorbed into ADA activities designed with employers in mind. States in this Region report that employers are hungry for training on the ADA and on disability awareness. Thanks to these training opportunities provided by the State VR agencies, employers now have a better understanding of resources available to them and of assistance they can get from VR.

Awards which emphasize ADA-related efforts have been given to employers (this information has been shared with the media for greater public awareness of ADA too). Business and industry advisory councils have sprung up, bringing businesses and VR together. Personnel responsible for developing affirmative actions plans for their employers have been targeted by some VR agencies as a means of informing private industry that people with disabilities are a "protected group" in the affirmative action arena.

4. Have any of the teleconference participants received any training or attended any meetings or conferences on p/m during the past year?

Training in p/m during the past year has involved ways of planning "customer driven" services (taking into consideration the client's self esteem and his/her responsibilities for the future) through courses offered by the RCEP and RAMP.

5. Do the participants have any suggestions for future activities that RSA could pursue to achieve its objective of developing "... an infrastructure on p/m which would impact competitive employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the rehabilitation community"?

Counselors should be able to meet to share placement techniques. There's a need for brainstorming on ways counselors can help clients build self-confidence and ways in which employers can gain more confidence about hiring workers with disabilities. RSA needs to have more communication and involvement with employers to learn what they need in the way of job-ready clients. There also needs to be a change in the paradigm of "protection and no risk" to one of "can do and abundance." And, could RSA help to find ways of facilitating the client's move away from public supports and into the job market?

6. Do the participants have any opinions on what they consider to be the most critical factors(s) in a State VR agency's efforts to successfully placing individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market?

Resources must be available to work as a team in developing a client-to-job readiness and in assisting the job-ready participants to further their own plans. Counselors must be able to convince clients that employers will value them. Families must get involved with, and support, the rehabilitation process. Focus on the client's participation in the closure process and on his/her self-esteem.

Future implications

Most agencies see the long-term need to continue p/m activities. They are looking to their Regional Continuing Education Program and RSA for support in this area. Specifically, State agencies want training for their staff in placement/marketing. They also want opportunities to share their p/m experiences and to learn from other State agencies. And they want assurance that their p/m activities are endorsed by RSA.

Total Quality Management is the latest buzzword in business and government operations. It seems everyone is talking about changing the traditional methods of doing business and looking at ways the needs of "customers" can be better served. By all indications, TQM's principles will be incorporated into the operation of federal agencies as Vice President Al Gore leads the way at reinventing government. States, too, are jumping on the TQM bandwagon. In fact, if the State p/m specialists' responses to questions asked during the regional teleconferences are an accurate indication, most State agencies are ahead of their federal counterpart at incorporating TQM principles into their p/m activities. Today's emphasis on delivering quality in every aspect of an agency's p/m operation (either it be a State or Federal agency) is apparently the result of institutionalizing TQM into all of an agency's activities.

The suggestions made for RSA during the teleconferences are mostly focused on elevating this p/m initiative to the next appropriate level. P/m specialists say they want the opportunity to share their p/m experiences and

challenges face-to-face with others confronting the same issues. At the time this report was being prepared, two of RSA's Regional Offices had already responded to this request by helping to organize Regional p/m meetings or training opportunities.

The Regional synopses in this report highlight the importance of providing training to VR staff in marketing and placement. But the synopses also indicate that there's no "right way" when it comes to conducting a successful p/m campaign. Local economic factors, employment trends and an agency's resources (funding and personnel) continue to drive p/m activities. And, as reported last year, there continues to be one factor common to every successful p/m effort: employer involvement. Without it, p/m activities remain limited in scope and marginally effective at increasing employment outcomes. With it, the opportunities created by p/m activities seem almost unlimited.