

Vermont Progressive Employment Model Replication and Learning Collaborative: Supplemental Information on Research and Evaluation

Research and Evaluation Activities

The research strategy will be based on within state comparisons, or in other words, the VTPE outcomes will be compared with other program outcomes within your own state agency. The research design will better allow each participating VR agency to independently evaluate the effectiveness of VTPE within their program. This research design will also promote flexibility in the types and formats of data to be collected by VTPE replication states so your agency can tailor data collection to what you have in place already. The specific data to be collected in each participating state VR agency will be determined during an initial Request for Participation process and during the on-site visit to the agency from ICI and Vermont DVR staff. Involvement of your case management system staff will more than likely be important during this process. Data shared with ICI will be de-identified (stripped of any personally identifiable information, such as name and social security number) prior to transmittal. Data collection protocols and agreements will be formalized prior to data transmittal.

The specific types of data that likely will be collected include the following:

1. Employer database completed by Business Account Manager or personnel serving in that VTPE model role.
2. A variable to distinguish consumers who have a VTPE experience versus those who do not.
3. Dates of VTPE involvement and dosage (e.g., start date, hrs per week, number of weeks, did consumer complete the VTPE experience?). Space in database for more than one VTPE experience for a consumer.
4. Nature of job and job site where VTPE occurred.
5. Estimation of job performance at site (completed by VR or CRP staff).
6. Self evaluation of the job experience by consumer.
7. Consumer-level specific costs of VTPE training offset or work experience, beyond the normal case management funds expended on that case.
8. Selected consumer level RSA 911 variables linked with VTPE data (e.g., case status, disability categories, case costs, benefits received, income at acceptance into VR program, education level, special programs (e.g., transition, blind, TANF, etc).
9. Fidelity measures. These are model characteristics that are considered important to the success of the VTPE model in Vermont. The fidelity list was created via several steps that included review of outcome data, as well as expert opinion involving VT personnel, VR researchers, and several VR State Directors.
10. Short qualitative interviews of counselors, employment and business specialists, administrators, consumers, and employers. Because of structural differences in how VR programs deliver services, the qualitative component is important for identifying these variations.

Sample Data Collection Forms

Data forms in use in Vermont DVR that may be adopted or modified for your state agency can be found at ExploreVR.org. These forms include:

1. Employer data collected by person fulfilling Business Account Manager or similar function – form has been created in Salesforce software

Replication sites can opt to purchase the proprietary Salesforce software and replicate the VT database in the software, or they can adapt existing databases for employer information relevant to your program. The specific employer variables to be collected would be chosen by the replication agency following the site visit discussion on this topic with ICI.

2. Information for Businesses

This form in VT is completed by a different person than the Employer Data spreadsheet. The Information for Businesses form is specific to each VR consumer's agreed upon work experience in VTPE. Normally, the employment specialist completes this form with an employer.

3. Training Offset Request

Normally, the primary CRP in Vermont, VABIR, fills out this request for set aside funds to cover the costs of the VTPE work experience. These costs include a training stipend to the VR consumer (in lieu of actual pay for work), as well as costs associated with transportation, meals, childcare, etc. In some cases a VR counselor makes the request for the setaside funds. In VT, a consumer is considered to be in VTPE when a training offset request has been authorized and spent. ICI and VT DVR recognize that this funding approach to employment experience may differ in some states, and methods for addressing this model component will be arranged with states on an individual basis.

4. Progressive Employment Agreement

This is the formal signed agreement by the consumer indicating the specifics of the agreed upon work experience. In some cases the unique interests of the consumer have driven the efforts of the entire team to locate an employer that may have a job similar to the consumer's interests but otherwise unique (e.g., "I'd like to work for a radio station").

5. Participant Progress Report

Completed by the employment staff or VR counselor, depending on what was agreed upon during weekly "Jobsville" meetings of the employment team.

6. Self Evaluation of Work Experience

Completed by the consumer following completion of the VTPE activity.