Developing a Business Relations Structure: Lessons Learned from VR Trailblazers

Six State VR Panel Presentations by Delaware, California, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Texas, and Nebraska

March 3, 2016



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DELAWARE March 3, 2016



What are the goals of Delaware's business relations model?

DVR's Business Relations Unit exists to serve a dual customer approach to Delaware's

- Job seekers with disabilities
- Business and Industry

DVR Business Relations Mission is:

To specialize in linking the ability of talented and qualified applicants with disabilities to public and private business, in addition to providing business with workforce resources and support services.



What is Delaware's business relations structure?

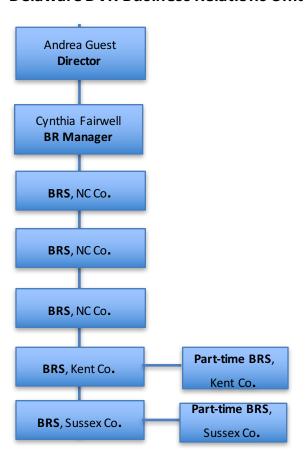
The unit consists of:

- One Statewide Business Relations Manager
- Five full-time Business Relations Specialist
- Capacity for 2 part-time Business Relations Specialists (29.5 hours per week)

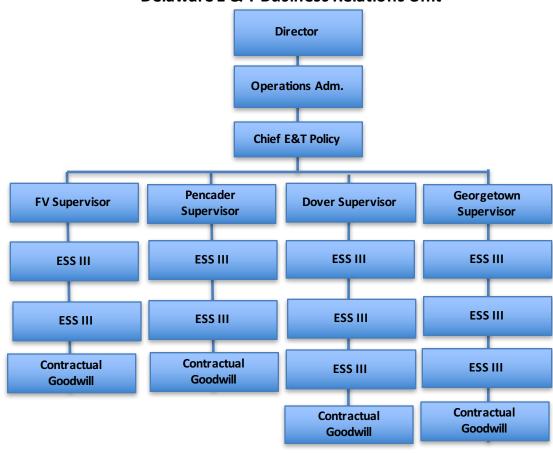


Delaware's Organizational Chart

Delaware DVR Business Relations Unit



Delaware E & T Business Relations Unit





What are the primary functions of Delaware's business relations model?

- Assist counselors in obtaining meaningful employment opportunities for all assigned job seekers.
- Identify and prepare the DVR job seekers in response to employer recruiting needs.
- Establish strong linkages and relationships with business and industry
- Build solid relationships and engage business and industry in collaborative activities as a resource to meet their workforce demands and needs.
- Increase state agency knowledge and participation and to help advance hiring opportunities for people with disabilities seeking employment in state government.
- Work closely with local workforce development agencies, schools and community-based organizations who seek to build relationships with employers by engaging in career fairs, parent nights and other activities.
- Facilitate statewide communication, training, marketing, resource sharing etc. as it refers to consumer placement and business development.
- Work closely with state and local Chambers, SHRM, rotaries, and other professional.



How do business relations and job placement differ/interrelate in Delaware?

- Business Relations Manager is responsible for overseeing business relations activities (*relations* between employers and employees, employers and *business* partners, and all the companies with which a company is associated).
- Business Relations Specialist have business relations activities in addition to job placement responsibilities.

How and how often do counselors and business relations specialists communicate in Delaware?

- There is one BRS assigned to each office (face to face, phone, email).
- BRS's often meet with counselors to discuss LMI prior to goal planning.
- Counselor, client and BRS meet at the beginning of placement to discuss and sign placement agreement.

What are the determining factors in Delaware's model?

- To connect with business.
- To serve each county's businesses and job seekers based on their geographical needs (one size does not fit all).
- To train and develop staff experts in the area of business relations.



How does Delaware's business relations model incorporate labor market information?

- Discussing information with job seekers during Employment readiness groups.
- Distributing printed materials from the Delaware Office of Labor Market Information.
- Using information from resources such as ONET, Delaware JobLinks, etc.
- Looking at Real-Time data and providing information to staff during unit meetings.

What business relations data does Delaware collect?

- Use the employer section of AWARE.
- Business Demographics SOC
 - Name
 - Address, City, State, Zip, County, Phone, Fax
 - Number of Employees, Contact
 - Ability to collect
 - Types of Jobs, how many jobs open/closed, who applied for positions.



How does Delaware measure success?

- Business Relations success are based on # of placements.
- Maintaining relationships with assigned/developed business contacts.
- Developing new business contacts.
- Number in increased successful outcomes.
- Number of business partners that seek us out as a resource (they call us).

What are some challenges Delaware has faced? How did Delaware resolve these challenges?

- Initial acceptance of Unit.
- Task delineation counselor vs business relation responsibilities for BRS.
- Locating and hiring part-time staff to assist with job placement duties.

If Delaware could go back in time to design your program, what would you change?

- Would not have changed the educational requirements for hires (currently does not require a degree).
- Add administrative support for staff.
- Ideally have part-time job placement assistant for each office.

Delaware Contact Information

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Developing a Business Relations Structure: Lessons Learned from VR Trailblazers

CALIFORNIA March 3, 2016



What are the goals of California's business relations model?

 Increase the quality and quantity of employment outcomes for persons with disabilities (PWD)

 Support businesses hiring, retaining, accommodating and promoting PWD in their workforce

What is California's business relations structure?

The California Department of Rehabilitation (CaDOR) business relations structure includes two main components:

- A Workforce Development Services unit and service delivery team Employment Coordinators.
- Workforce Development Services unit (WDS):
 - WDS is the CaDOR centralized unit of staff that coordinates statewide business engagement(BE) activities
 - Collaborates with businesses to create staffing solutions
 - Develops and nurtures national business connections through the National Employment Team (NET)
 - Directly markets the services and supports provided by the CaDOR to businesses
 - Supports Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program activities related to the 503 regulations



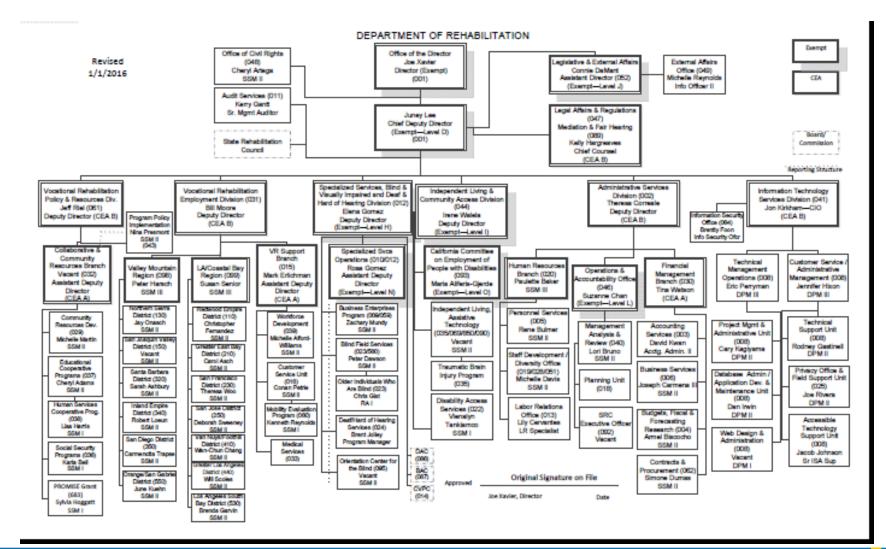
What is California's business relations structure? (continued)

Service Delivery Teams

At the local, field level, a Team Manager leads a unit comprised of:

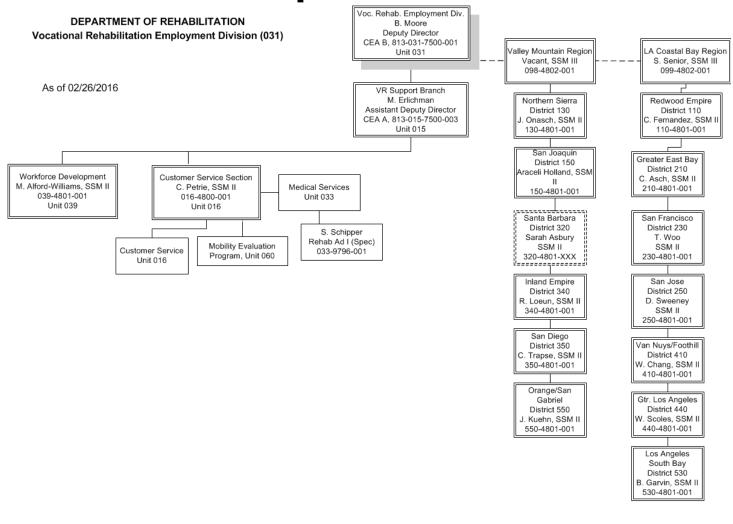
- Rehabilitation Counselors
- Service Coordinators
- Office Technicians providing clerical support, and
- One Employment Coordinator (EC) who engages local businesses; identifies labor needs; matches businesses with job seeking consumers; participates in Chambers of Commerce, job fairs, college fairs, and hiring events.

California's Organizational Chart





Field Operations –VRED





Date:

Bill Moore, Deputy Director

What are the functions of California's business relations model?

- Increase the quality and overall number of relationships with businesses
- Support businesses hiring, retaining, accommodating, and promoting persons with disabilities
- Market and ensure the effective delivery of services to businesses, such as disability awareness and etiquette training, information and resources for the provision of reasonable accommodations, and information on available tax incentives

How do business relations and job placement differ/interrelate in California?

- Business relations and job placement are closely related and are often being performed by the same staff, however:
 - WDS typically focuses more on the building of strong business relationships
 - Employment Coordinators most often engage businesses for purposes of job placement



How and how often do counselors and business relations specialists communicate in California?

Employment Coordinators (ECs):

- ECs are an integral part of the service delivery team, so as team members they communicate on an ongoing, daily basis with counselors
- As team members, ECs also participate in case management, including completing required case documentation

Workforce Development Services Unit (WDS):

- WDS staff maintain regular contact with ECs and field counselors by phone or email and sometimes attend individual team meetings
- WDS staff hold monthly EC calls which many team managers and counselors also attend
- WDS provides frequent updates on labor market information (LMI) and position openings from partner businesses through email and on the WDS webpage



What are the determining factors in California's model?

- WDS was created due to the identified need for statewide coordination of business contacts
- Most businesses appreciate a single point of contact that WDS and ECs can provide
- Feedback from businesses that consumers needed more job preparation, particularly soft skills training
- Complexity and size of the State requires a multiple level approach
- Limited job preparation and placement services in many rural or isolated areas
- Employment coordinators are best able to attend to individual local needs



How does California's business relations model incorporate labor market information?

- Labor market information (LMI) is regularly utilized in plan development
- LMI is available to staff regularly and ondemand from online, local job centers and from the California Employment Development Department at no cost
- Local staff also use LMI to identify volunteer experiences, internships, on-thejob training opportunities at businesses with identified hiring needs

What business relations data does California collect?

- CaDOR collects information on:
 - Number of central business contacts
 - Purpose of business contacts and outcome of the contact (consumer hire, training provided, information and referral)
 - Number of On-the-Job training (OJT) agreements entered into
 - New, expanded, or renewed business or industry-specific partnerships, including pilots and other initiatives
 - Number of hires resulting from business contacts and job leads provided to CaDOR
 - Future tracking will include internships and apprenticeships
 - Additional information will be collected, if necessary, based on the new performance measure in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act on business engagement



How does California measure success?

CA measures success based on:

- The number of successfully employed consumers (statewide and by district)
- Number of consumers hired by CaDOR business partners
- Number and type of unduplicated business contacts
- Number of disability etiquette or awareness trainings provided to businesses
- The number and type of outcomes of individual initiatives, including:
 - SAP's autism at work partnership with CaDOR
 - Fruits of Employment program for consumers seeking agricultural careers



What are some challenges California has faced? How did California resolve these challenges?

- Difficulty in hiring, training and retaining qualified Employment Coordinators (EC)
- Providing on-time referrals of potential applicants to business partners when requested
- To resolve hiring and retention challenges we are:
 - Developing a comprehensive online training for ECs
 - Investigating ways to make the EC position more attractive/competitive for potential and current ECs
- To improve hiring referrals to businesses we are:
 - Developing better identification systems of job-ready consumers, and
 - Looking to increase internship, on-the-job training, and work experience opportunities for job seeking consumers



If California could go back in time to design your program, what would you change?

- Develop or purchase an electronic business engagement management system that can be linked to, or is integrated into our electronic case management system
- Develop or identify a required comprehensive training for ECs, such as a job development and placement certificate program

What has worked for other states to consider:

- Have well-developed duty statements and position expectations
- Hold comprehensive roles and responsibilities trainings
- Ensure that the EC position description indicates that business experience is a desirable job qualification
- Work with professional training provider(s) that can address change management strategies and team formation
- Coordinate business engagement activities with America's job centers and education partners



California Contact Information

- WDS Email: wdsinfo@dor.ca.gov
- WDS Website:

http://www.dor.ca.gov/Workforce-Development/index.html

Developing a Business Relations Structure: Lessons Learned from VR Trailblazers

PENNSYLVANIA March 3, 2016



What are the goals of Pennsylvania's business relations model?

- Statewide consistency of a business outreach model and services
- Branded business services and OVR agency materials, web sites, outreach language, and name recognition
- Increased district office business services representative staff capacity (single points of contact-SPOCs) for our combined general VR program organized as the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (BVRS) and our blind VR program organized as Bureau of Blindness and Visual Serves (BBVS)
- Quality control and feedback mechanism from business customers
- Local talent pool coordination with other agencies to meet business workforce talent needs
- PA Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) workforce development collaboration, with OVR providing leadership for disability talent recruitment and on-boarding expertise;
- National VR NET utilization and collaboration to expand employment opportunities for our consumer customers



What is Pennsylvania's business relations structure? (Central Office)

- <u>Division Chief</u>: Provides leadership and strategic planning with Executive Team, BCO Director, Bureau Directors, District Administrators (DA's) Division Staff and Labor/Management Workgroup. Considered OVR VR-NET and Statewide Business/Employer Single Point of Contact (SPOC)
- <u>East/West Business Services Specialists:</u> Support district offices in business outreach training, resources and technical assistance. Considered OVR VR-NET Western & Eastern Regional Business/Employer Single Points of Contact (SPOC)
- Business Services Analyst II: Coordinates the U.S. Rehabilitation Services
 Administration (RSA) mandated tri-annual needs assessment, agency customer
 satisfaction surveys, staff complement reports, The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
 Annual Report, and research on economic and policy issues affecting employment or
 agency services
- Social Media and Communications Outreach Specialist: Coordinates branding of OVR communications for OVR Web pages (public/LION) social media, and print resources for OVR in collaboration with L&I Press Office, and the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC) referred to by the U.S. Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) as our State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

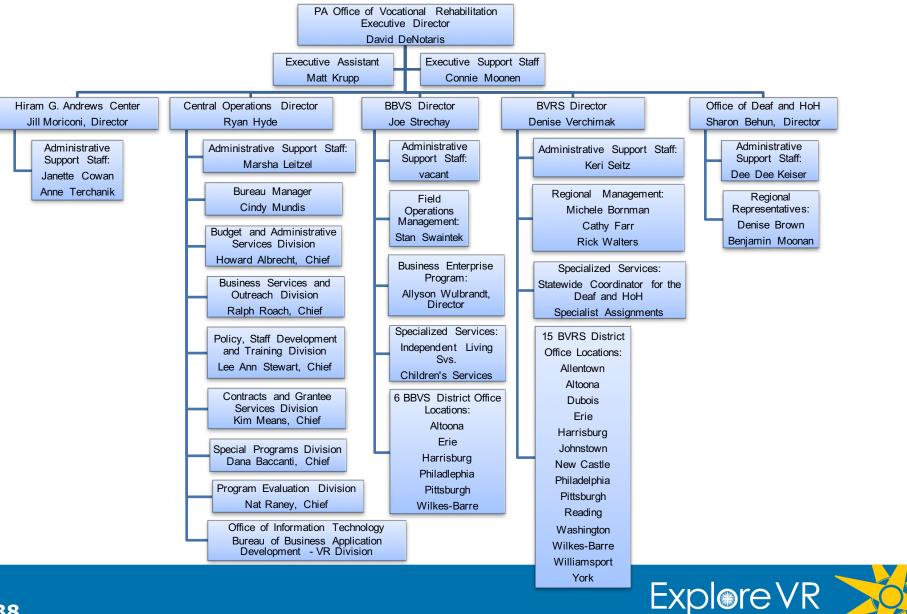


What is Pennsylvania's business relations structure? (District Office)

- Almost all Offices already had a placement counselor. These individuals were re-named
 Business Services Counselors. Their focus is more individualized with OVR customers.
- Business Services Representatives (Employment Facilitators) were added to all 15
 District Offices. Their focus is on outreach and working with employers.
- Both of these above positions, along with the Business Services Supervisor, make up the local office Business Services Team
- The Business Services Team represents OVR and our customer talent during outreach to Employers and Businesses throughout the geographic area of their assignments and function as a local Single Point of Contact (SPOC).
- The Business Services Counselors work individually with OVR customers to increase their job knowledge, job seeking skills, and interview skills.
- The TEAM concept works in PA, taking us from an old model of "placement" to a new multifaceted model of considering the dual customer and working to meet the needs of both the employer and the job seeker.



Pennsylvania's Organizational Chart



What are the primary functions of Pennsylvania's business relations model?

SPOC/business services teams will perform various duties including:

- Developing local business customer networks, business consultation services relationships, coordination of local combined bureau job fair/hiring events, local Society of Human Resources Managers (SHRM) and chambers of commerce membership and outreach, How-to-Guide model employer initiatives
- Conducting job readiness and job club groups for both Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services BVRS- general VR) and Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS).
- Coordinating targeted job development within combined bureau District Offices
 (DO's) business services teams and primary VRCs, based upon the current
 Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and qualifications of job-ready, qualified,
 consumer customers.



How do business relations and job placement differ/interrelate in Pennsylvania?

We have transformed over the years:

- For 38 years, we have had traditional placement counselors
- In 2007, we introduced an employer services and placement plan which introduced the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) model
- In 2013, we expanded this into a Business Services Plan
- In 2014, we further expanded this plan by adding Business Services
 Representatives in every office, creating an entire Central Office Unit to
 support these staff and further developing the SPOC
- Through all these changes, we have maintained our original placement counselor positions – now called Business Services Counselors
- Multiple levels of staff comprise a Business Services Team



How and how often do counselors and business relations specialists communicate in Pennsylvania?

- The Business Services Counselor is added as a "secondary counselor"
- The Business Services Representatives and Business Services
 Counselors regularly co- present job placement trainings
- The Business Services Team presents at every local office staff meeting to update staff on their work
- Offices have developed newsletters, email blasts or business services bulletin boards
- Job leads/Business Services Information is regularly communicated through our Central Office Staff



What are the determining factors in Pennsylvania's model?

- We wanted to keep individualized counselors for business services and add business representatives for outreach
- The team approach was vital to make this model work
- Communication is key



How does Pennsylvania's business relations model incorporates labor market information?

- We hold a Statewide Business Services Training one time per year for Business Services Staff and one time per year for regular staff with different agendas but always including LMI
- We have developed standard reports that incorporate LMI for staff use
- This is our JD VRTAC project so we hope to further improve!

What business relations data does Pennsylvania collect?

- We already collect a large amount of Data
 - Examples include:
 - Placements per business
 - Funds allocated for On the Job Training (OJT) overall and per business
 - Basic information on a business to best meet their needs
- We are planning to collect even more
 - Examples include:
 - Specific services provided to a business



How does Pennsylvania measure success?

- We recognize our Business partners regularly
 - Statewide award for Employer of the year
 - Runner up Businesses given an award locally
 - Facebook and Linked In Recognition
- We recognize our Business Services Staff
 - Highest number of OJT's
 - Exceeding Expectations

What are some challenges Pennsylvania has faced? How did Pennsylvania resolve these challenges?

- Classification Challenges
- Who does what
- Communication
- State Agencies working together
- Availability of Training
- Positions



If Pennsylvania could go back in time to design your program, what would you change?

- Larger focus on Career Pathways
- Larger focus on Incorporating Assistive Technology
- Have implemented this years ago!

It is making a positive difference in our agency and the way in which we provide quality services!



Pennsylvania Contact Information

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VERMONT March 3, 2016

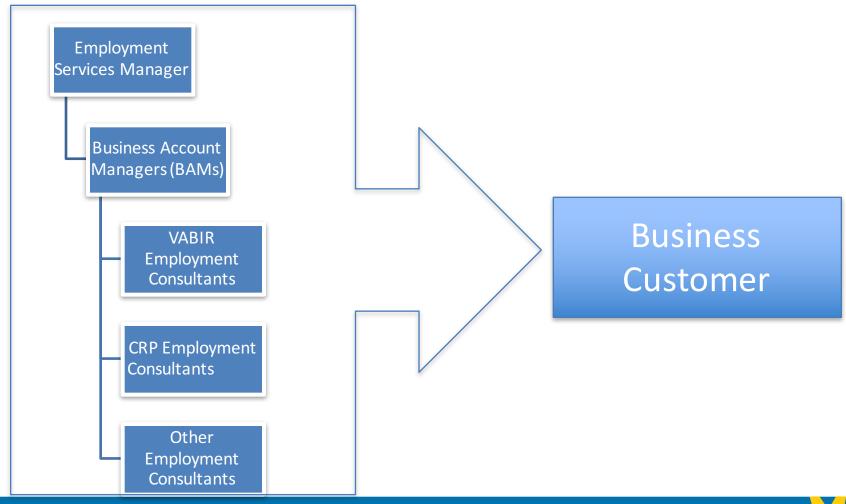


What are the goals of Vermont's business relations model?

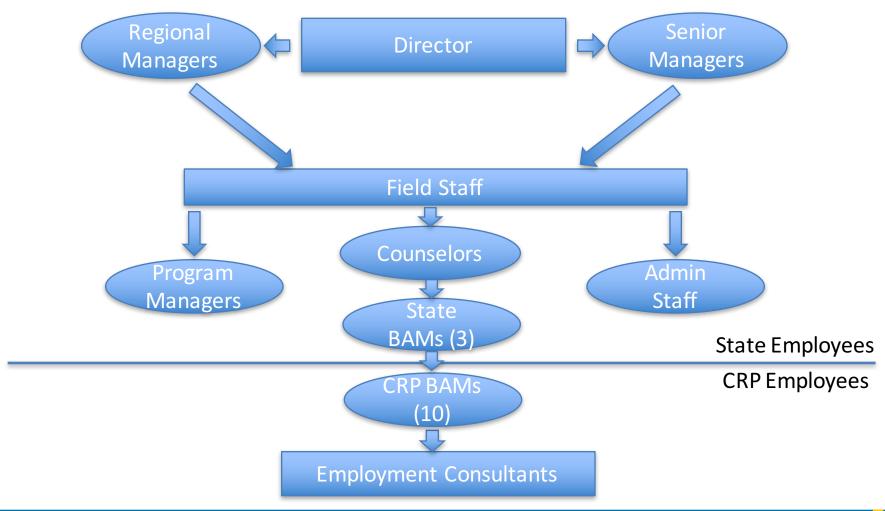
- Expand business outreach
- Develop relationships <u>over time</u>
- Position ourselves as a staffing resource
- Identify a wider range of choices for our candidates
- Identify businesses willing to offer Progressive Employment options



What is Vermont's business relations structure?



Vermont's Organizational Chart





What are the primary functions of Vermont's business relations model?

- Employment Services Manager
 - Macro-level business relations
 - Legislative work
 - Marketing
 - National Accounts
 - Liaison to the NET
- Business Account Manager
 - Build relationships with business
 - Coordinate local Employment Team
 - Salesforce management
 - <u>Do not carry caseloads</u>



Primary functions of Vermont's business relations model (continued)

- Employment Consultant
 - Carries a caseload
 - Direct intermediary between candidate and business
 - Timely follow up and customer service
 - Also developing and maintaining business relationships



How do business relations and job placement differ/interrelate in Vermont?

- BAM acts as primary contact for the majority of businesses
- Use of Salesforce to track activities with business accounts
- Introduce Employment Consultants and/or Candidates to business accounts
- BAM as staffing consultant does not "pitch" specific candidates
- BAM represents the entire Employment Team



How and how often do counselors and business relations specialists communicate in Vermont?

- Jobsville/Work Links
 - Most meet weekly, all meet at least every other week
 - Referral point between Counselors and Employment Consultants
 - Live brainstorming of placement ideas/strategies
 - Labor Market information is shared with everyone
 - "Everyone is a Job Developer"



What are the determining factors in Vermont's model?

- New business contacts identified
- Activities recorded in Salesforce
- "Opportunities" recorded in Salesforce
 - Competitive employment
 - Work Experiences, job shadows etc.
- Progressive Employment placements
- Successful employment outcomes



How does Vermont's business relations model incorporate labor market information?

- Labor Market information vs. Labor Market "intelligence"
 - Both are important
- Generic vs. targeted business outreach
 - "Brand" awareness vs. caseload-driven
- Jobsville/WorkLinks as mechanism for sharing
- Salesforce report building feature



What business relations data does Vermont collect?

- Salesforce CRM
 - New contacts developed
 - New opportunities identified
 - Activities (account notes) captured
- Business lists
- Attendee/exhibitor info
 - Career Fairs
 - Business expos



How does Vermont measure success?

- Successful employment outcomes
- Conversion of PE activities to employment
- Customer satisfaction surveys
 - Consumer
 - Business
 - Partner
- Retention
- Earnings



What are some challenges Vermont has faced? How did Vermont resolve these challenges?

- Salesforce CRM tool within a state IT model
 - CRP is "owner" of account
- Resistance from community employment programs
 - Regular surveys of team members
 - BAM focus on individual program needs
 - Time
- Consistent use of Salesforce by external partners
 - Work on this is ongoing!



If Vermont could go back in time to design your program, what would you change?

- Longer lead time to introduce concept to community partners
- BAMs as state employees vs. CRP
 - "Matrix" supervision can be challenging
- Even more Employment Consultant capacity!
- Sales incentives for BAMs

Vermont Contact Information

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Developing a Business Relations Structure: Lessons Learned from VR Trailblazers

TEXAS March 3, 2016



What are the goals of Texas's business relations model?

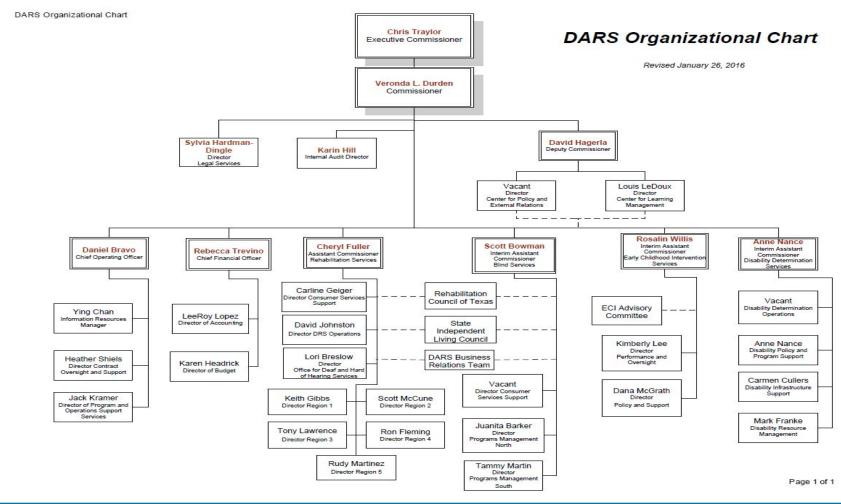
- To enhance employment opportunities for DARS consumers by building relationships with businesses
- To provide quality services to meet business needs for a skilled workforce.

What is Texas's business relations structure?

- 2 Statewide Program Specialists for Business Relations
- 10 Regional Business Relations Coordinators
- 9 Regional Employment Assistance Specialists
- 15 Outreach Service Coordination Teams across economic development areas



Texas's Organizational Chart





What are the primary functions of Texas's business relations model?

Texas Department of Assistive &
 Rehabilitative Services provides diverse
 solutions and resources to Texas
 businesses through outreach,
 consultation, and technical assistance to
 assist with the recruitment and retention of
 qualified candidates.

The Complimentary Role of Business Relations and Job Placement in Texas

- Business Relations staff work with businesses and other community partners to develop long lasting business partnerships that result in multiple employment opportunities.
- Job Placement finds a job for a consumer at a specific point in time.
- Both are important depending on the needs of our dual customers, business and consumers.

How and how often do counselors and business relations specialists communicate in Texas?

- Business Relations Coordinators develop and support
 Outreach Service Coordination Teams (OSCT) in each area of
 the state.
- The OSCT includes counselors, teachers, support staff and/or community partners.
- The OSCT meets regularly to share information related to connecting job ready consumers with employment opportunities.
- All counselors are trained on LMI which is key to the development of a consumer's employment goal.



What are the determining factors in Texas's model?

- Joint effort by Texas General and Texas Blind
- Regionally-based Business Services Coordinators and OSCTs who know their labor market composition and needs
- Active coordination with local workforce development boards
- Focus on federal contractors and subcontractors
- System to track business relations activity



How does Texas's business relations model incorporate labor market information?

- Use the tools and resources from the Texas
 Workforce Commission's (TWC) Labor Market
 and Career Information Division (LMCI).
- Partner with LMCI to train BRC's & local OSCTs on how to use the tools and information
- Staff use the information to support consumer informed choice regarding their vocational goal

What business relations data does Texas collect?

- Number of businesses & federal contractors contacted by DARS
- Number of business service deliverables provided to business partners
- Number of consumers employed by business partners, including federal contractors
- Activities to maintain quality business partnerships



How does Texas measure success?

- Cross-divisional coordinated efforts through a unified Business Services Tracking Tool that measures quality services provided to business partners
- Partnerships with OFCCP; Federal Contractors;
 Workforce Solutions Centers; Community Partnerships
- Staff recognition of the value Business partnerships have in establishing mutually-beneficial employment opportunities for job-ready Consumers

What are some challenges Texas has faced? How did Texas resolve these challenges?

Merging 2 divisional programs

 Solution – workgroup made up of staff from both divisions

Field staffs understanding of the new team

 Solution – communicate, communicate, communicate

If Texas could go back in time to design your program, what would you change?

- Appreciate the time it would take to develop the tool for tracking business partnerships deliverables and educating staff on use
- Create a common language and framework
- Achieve the right balance between statewide consistency and regional autonomy
- Establish a more structured communication pipeline to middle-management



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Texas Department of Assistive and
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NEBRASKA March 3, 2016



What are the goals of Nebraska's business relations model?

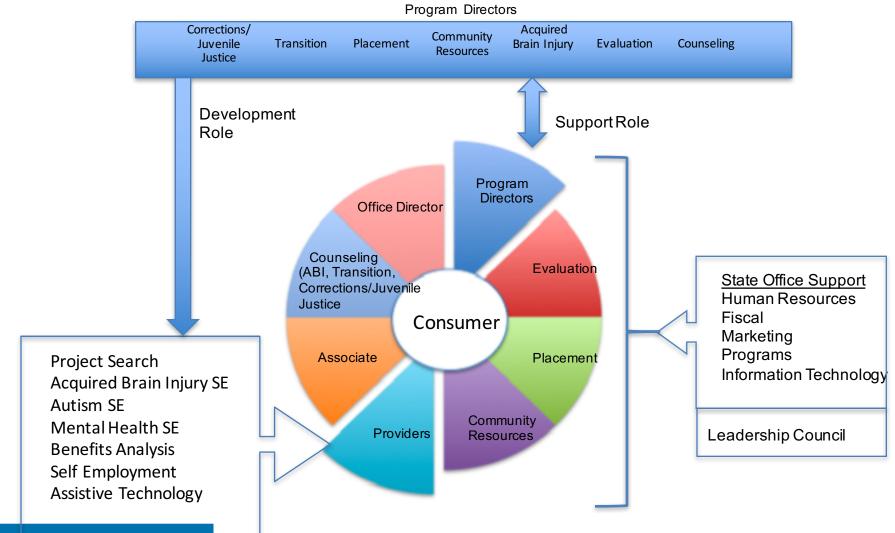
- Make businesses aware of how we can be of assistance
- Develop strong and meaningful partnerships
- Increase the number of businesses participating in rapid engagement activities
- Ultimately place more individuals with disabilities



What is Nebraska's business relations structure?

- Program Director for Employment Services
- Business Account Managers (BAMs)
- Employment Specialists (placement)

Nebraska's Organizational Chart



What are the primary functions of Nebraska's business relations model?

- Business Account Mangers function as a single point of contact for business and develop a continuum of partnerships
- Document contacts in employer database
- WIN meetings



How do business relations and job placement differ/interrelate in Nebraska?

- Selling programs versus candidates
- Placement staff may perform other roles on the team where BAMs have a dedicated role
- Each participate in team meetings and work to meet the needs and goals of the client and business (team model)

How and how often do counselors and business relations specialists communicate in Nebraska?

- Varies by office
- Placement staff and BAMs participate in weekly team meetings
- WIN meetings (Work in Nebraska)



What are the determining factors in Nebraska model?

- Assessment of Non-partnering Businesses
- Teams requested dedicated staff member for business outreach (FedEx Project)
- Participation in the Employer Demand-side grant and Learning Collaborative
- Thank you, Vermont!



How does Nebraska's business relations model incorporate labor market information?

- Impact of low unemployment rate
- LMI is part of career planning
- Reverse approach-the Talent Bank
- Career pathways and sector strategies



What business relations data does Nebraska collect?

- Contact information
- Background check required? Will consider hiring offenders? Has hired offenders?
- Will consider hiring employees under 18?
- Is interested in disability training?
- Drivers license required?
- Will consider flex schedule? Will offer short term job shadow?
- Will consider on-the-job training or on-the-job evaluation?
- Will offer job tours? Will complete practice interviews?
- Is this employer a referral source?
- Would you like to be contacted to discuss partnership opportunities?



How does Nebraska measure success?

- Number of businesses willing to work with VR
- Willingness of businesses to engage in RE activities
- Reduced number of days in employment services
- Increased consumer satisfaction and successful outcomes
- Future employer/business satisfaction survey

What are some challenges Nebraska has faced? How did Nebraska resolve these challenges?

- Still working out roles and responsibilities
 - Don't have statewide coverage
- Coordination with single point of contact
 - Not all staff are using Employer Database



If Nebraska could go back in time to design your program, what would you change?

Would hire BAMs earlier



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