



GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY

FY 2017 – FY 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN (FY 2018 UPDATE)

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AGENCY MISSION: EMPLOYMENT AND INDEPENDENCE FOR GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES

AGENCY VISION: EVERY GEORGIAN WITH A DISABILITY CAN WORK AND LIVE INDEPENDENTLY.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN/CHALLENGES:

In October 2016, Mr. Sean Casey was sworn in as the new Executive Director of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) following the retirement of his predecessor.

Mr. Casey's expertise in communication and public outreach has allowed GVRA to bolster and heighten agency visibility to a great extent in how the agency message meets people where they are in their journey to employment, as it cannot be a one size fits all message. GVRA has launched a more aggressive outreach campaign and received weekly feedback, which has had a multiplier effect.

One of the first priorities for Mr. Casey was to "hear what people had to say", so he made it a point to travel around the state to speak with as well as hear the concerns of both clients and staff to gauge what needed to be done to ensure the services provided by GVRA positively impact the community.

Under the governance of Mr. Casey, there have been substantive changes made to the agency organizational structure, thus removing the previous year's goals relating to Project Horizon. Agency administration has been realigned into nine (9) offices: Business Applications, Communications and Marketing, External Affairs, Facilities, Fiscal Services, General Counsel, Human Resources, Information Technology, and Strategy and Innovation. Many of the administrative and daily decisions have been returned to the Directors of the five statutory programs: Business Enterprise

Program (BEP), Disability Adjudication Services (DAS), Georgia Industries for the Blind (GIB), Roosevelt Warm Springs (RWS) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services.

Culture is an important component of an organization, and changes are being made that ensure that GVRA's clients are the primary concern when decisions are made. In total, over 184 positions have been returned to their respective local programs rather than being guided from the central office in Atlanta. Emphasis has also been placed on hiring internally in an effort to promote committed staff that understand disabilities and the people we serve. The hiring process is being reexamined to ensure that people with disabilities (PWD) are a vibrant part of the fabric of our dynamic and growing agency.

As a result of Mr. Casey's statewide travels, a Director of Blind and Deaf Services position was created, and this Unit has been busy holding listening sessions around the state to improve and increase services to clients who are blind or visually impaired, as well as deaf or hard of hearing.

While the Agency's mission of employment and independence for Georgians with Disabilities remains the same, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which was signed into law in July 2014, brought changes to the way GVRA serves clients with disabilities. WIOA's implementing regulations went into effect on October 18, 2016. GVRA has been updating policies and procedures to adhere to the changes and improvements in services to individuals with disabilities. One major tenant in the Act relates to services to students with disabilities (age 14 to 22) where GVRA will provide pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) to groups of students in secondary education and identified as being served on an IEP or 504 and who are therefore potentially eligible to receive pre-ETS. Another major focus of the Act is to serve eligible youth with disabilities age 14 to 24 who are not in school or training and provide them with services that will lead to competitive employment.

Another major provision of WIOA requires Vocational Rehabilitation programs to reserve not less than 15 percent of the federal VR allotment for providing or arranging for the provision of pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities transitioning from school. These services will be coordinated with Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and GVRA is required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State Education Agency with criteria for determining financial and programmatic responsibilities, pre-employment transition services, consultation and technical assistance to educational agencies.

WIOA also extends Supported Employment up to 24 months to provide post-placement services needed to support and maintain employment. In addition, WIOA specifies that 50% of GVRA's supported employment grant be focused on youth (age 14 to 24) with the most significant disabilities.

As of June 28, 2017 the Support Services unit of GVRA began an Outreach and Intake (O&I) pilot program in Fulton County that will streamline and standardize the intake process for clients who are seeking vocational rehabilitation services. Dedicated staff have been assigned to ensure full implementation of the pilot.

Marketing reached new levels this fiscal year with radio spots currently running statewide advertising GVRA services. Beginning July 1st, GVRA will begin launching 30 second TV ads statewide on all major channels (NBC, CBS, ABC, FOX) via the Georgia Association of Broadcasting (GAB). The relationship with GAB has also provided multiple opportunities for live-to-tape news-talk format radio interviews to bolster GVRA's awareness campaign. In addition, targeted, employer-focused spots air in the Atlanta radio market on Georgia Public Broadcasting's "Marketplace", messaging the benefits of hiring clients to the business community.

GVRA ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS

In an effort to provide better customer service and ensure that inquiries are directed to the appropriate point of contact, the list below highlights each office's responsibilities:

OFFICE OF BUSINESS APPLICATIONS

Case Management Application (Libera/System7) – managing, maintaining and enhancing programs; supporting business needs related to case management and training; directing support team; managing reporting function; control interface with PeopleSoft

Information Technology Steering Committee – focus on IT strategic planning, project prioritization and project approval from a cross-functional perspective. The objective is to find a balance between IT constraints and business priorities; and use shared decision making and group business consensus on strategic investments

Third-Party Software Purchases and Project Implementations – guiding implementation of new AWARE system to replace System7; negotiating contracts with future case management vendor (Alliance); vetting, managing, implementing and supporting third party software purchases for GVRA that support administrative and statutory program operations

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Advertising – purchasing, designing and approving all ads and public service announcements in print and broadcast, to include newspaper, magazine, digital publications, television and radio

Brand compliance – approving all outward-facing documents and ordering all products bearing the organization's brand and/or logo

Branded products – stocking branded products (cups, flash drives, keychains, lanyards, stress balls, etc.) for clients, employers and stakeholders

Internal and external communications – mass emails, collateral, brochures, one-pagers, website (gvs.ga.gov) and social media management

Media relations- approving all interviews and published articles, drafting of news releases, and response to media inquiries

Signage – overseeing, in collaboration with Facilities, the design of signage on all office and program locations and on fleet vehicles for aesthetics and brand consistency

OFFICE OF EXTERNAL/LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Board Relations – Liaising with Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services (GVRS) Board; coordinating board meetings and activities; facilitating board leadership development

Council Relations – serving as primary point of agency contact with State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), facilitating the development of the SRC’s Customer Satisfaction Survey, Public Hearings, and quarterly meetings. Also serving as primary point of contact for the statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and facilitating submission of their federal reports.

Disability Community Outreach– traveling statewide serving as the face of GVRA at local and community events, informing clients and prospective clients of GVRA’s mission and services, connecting them to agency resources; hosting presentations, information tables, and exhibits at events and conferences; gathering client feedback for continuous improvement; building partnerships with disability community partners statewide to achieve common goals, identifying areas of need, and identifying issues pertinent to the disability advocacy community

Legislative Relations – liaising between GVRA and Georgia’s elected officials; increase legislative awareness of GVRA’s functions; draft and promote agency legislation; analyzing proposed legislation; coordinating and supporting legislative events; serving as primary contact on all legislative inquiries

OFFICE OF FACILITIES AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Asset Coordination – maintaining asset inventory, overseeing the surplus process, liaising with the Department of Administrative Services, maintaining fleet vehicles

Building access – distribution of GVRA Identification Cards for employees, parking management

Capital Outlay Budgets – planning for projects involving facilities and properties

Emergency coordination – working with the Georgia Building Authority to ensure appropriate emergency procedures, maintaining list of employees requiring accommodations during an evacuation

Lease coordination – correspondence with landlords, monitoring of sites

Mail – receipt and distribution of all packages

Project Management – managing all RWS and Central Office renovations, modifications and design; coordinating with landlords for local offices

Telecommunications – assigning mobile devices, managing voice and data, setting up conference rooms

OFFICE OF FISCAL SERVICES

Accounts Payable/Disbursement – processing payments to agency vendors; controlling expenses by receiving, processing, verifying and reconciling invoices to agency vendors. Tracking record transactions involving the outflow of cash to include date of transaction, check voucher number, amount and nature of transactions.

Accounts Receivable/Revenue – tracking and recording to ledger federal and local revenue earned but not collected

Budgets – monitoring, analyzing and preparing the agency’s budget representing proposed revenues and spending for the state fiscal year that is passed by legislation and approved by the governor.

General Ledger – tracking and reconciling all of the accounting transactions related to the agency’s assets, liabilities, revenue, expenses and fund balance recorded on financial statements.

Grants and Compliance – monitoring, analyzing and preparing federal, state and local financial reports in compliance with regulation and guidance outlined in terms and conditions of the grant award.

Payroll – ensuring that all agency employees are paid accurately and timely with the correct withholdings and deductions. This includes salary payments, payroll tax withholdings and deductions from paychecks.

Procurement – developing terms and conditions for goods and service related contracts, authorizing and issuing invitations for bid, request for proposal, and purchase orders.

OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

Arbitration and litigation – including research, case management and negotiations

Ethics/Code of Conduct – response, compliance and staff-training

Program and Office Legal Support – privacy issues, contract review, human resources matters, bonds, facilities, safety and procurement

Policies – support, redevelopment and repository

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Benefits Administration – managing Time and Labor and Absences Databases; collaborating with external partners to administer State Health Plan, Flexible Benefits and Retirement Benefits; administering leaves of absence

Employee Engagement - Coordinating and implementing employee engagement and recognition activities and events such as SCCP, State Employee Appreciation Day, Jeans Day, Annual Award Ceremony, Holiday functions and other employee networking events (i.e. Hawks game, etc.)

Employee Relations – complaint resolution and investigations (internal and client/based complaints regarding employees); responding to outside discrimination complains (GCEO/EOC) and appeals; response, compliance and staff training regarding ethics/code of conduct, sexual harassment and progressive discipline; ADA request processing; progressive discipline training for managers

Talent Acquisition – facilitating recruiting and hiring; evaluating and identifying employee classifications; ensuring equitable and compliant compensation; maintains organizational charts under direction of Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director

Training and Development – coordinating learning and development opportunities; implementing organization-wide Learning Management System

OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Hardware – installation of standard and special-request hardware, servicing of warranty and non-warranty hardware

Group Management – creating and modifying email groups

Software – installation, special requests and orders

User Account Management – creating new accounts, resetting passwords, modifying user accounts

OFFICE OF STRATEGY AND INNOVATION

Business Enterprise Program – managing the Business Enterprise Program, which provides entrepreneurship and vending opportunities to individuals who are blind or have low vision.

Staff and Client Support – supporting functions through the Grants Manager, Strategy Manager and the Program Evaluator

Strategy Development – developing overall GVRA strategy in conjunction with program and administrative leaders

Strategy Implementation – overseeing the implementation of strategy to ensure alignment with GVRA mission

AGENCY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since October 2016, the GVRA has made great strides in making a positive difference in the lives of people with disabilities. Some of the many accomplishments of the agency include but are certainly not limited to the following:

- Representatives from the Governor’s office, retirees as well as customers statewide have been very complimentary of the services being provided to people with disabilities. As a result of the support, GVRA was awarded an additional 1.4 million to its 2017 budget.
- The **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)** program has completed business process mapping and is preparing to go live October 1, 2017. Procedures, Protocols and Forms are currently under development, including training curriculum development.
- The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Client Handbook has been properly updated to ensure compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This handbook is given to clients once they are found eligible for VR services.
- The VR **Blind and Deaf Services** Unit has several accomplishments this fiscal year, including:
 - Monthly interdisciplinary collaboration meetings for leadership and staff
 - Executed MOU with GIB to provide online intakes for Blind/Visually Impaired clients
 - Submitted Proposal to upgrade Statewide Sensory Services (includes Staffing)
 - -Coordinating Statewide Training for general counselors on Blind and Deaf Services
- The VR **Employment Services** Unit staff has been involved in numerous activities as follows:
 - Training all staff on Business Engagement
 - Developing a one to three-year strategic plan
 - Developing business agreements
 - Collaborating with Walgreens, Sodexo, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in holding job fairs for VR clients

- The **VR Transition Unit** had several accomplishments this fiscal year as follows:
 - Completed and submitted a Memorandum of Understanding to the Department of Juvenile Justice to coordinate and provide pre-employment transition services to incarcerated youth
 - Created a webinar to train staff on WIOA, pre-employment transition services and forms for providing these services
 - Collaborated with the Poses Family Foundation to provide business engagement training entitled “Through the Eyes of the Employer” to their colleagues in the Employment Services Unit.
 - Received and implemented a \$5 million dollar Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Career Pathways Demonstration Grant called E3: Explore, Engage, Employ to transform delivery of transition services to students and youth with disabilities.

- 2017 is a special year for **Roosevelt Warm Springs (RWS)** as it celebrates 90 years of service. In 1927, Franklin Delano Roosevelt established the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation as a polio rehabilitation center, laying the foundation for the vibrant campus that still changes lives and reshapes futures today.

- There is currently an exhibit with Rotary International on display at RWS. GVRA participated in the Rotary International conference in Atlanta in June 2017 and as part of the partition there was an ad that was featured in the Atlanta Business Chronicle reaching distribution of over 38,000.

- **Cave Springs (CS)** hosted a tour for students from Troup County involved in the Career Pathways grant.

- GVRA’s **Office of Business Applications** has done exemplary work supporting the agency’s current case management application System7 while simultaneously implementing the agency’s future case management application Aware, scheduled for an April 2018 go-live. In addition to managing this highly visible project, Business Applications has been instrumental in the following:
 - July 2016 PeopleSoft Implementation that decommissioned the Department of Labor (DOL)’s check writing interface. The decommissioning of this interface has saved GVRA in support/maintenance costs totaling 26K per month.
 - Strong policies are the foundation of a strong robust compliance program; in July 2017 NAVEX Global was implemented. This tool allows GVRA to have a more effective policy program and empowers agency and statutory program leadership to establish, manage, assess and monitor policy.
 - Completed Regression and User Acceptance Testing on the new data elements that were developed under the Workforce Innovative and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Testing was

- completed each month over the year to ensure that System7 is ready and available to capture the new required data effective July 1, 2017.
- Currently supporting the Georgia Department of Economic Development – Workforce Division project with the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI). The objective of this project is to build an integrated service delivery system for state agencies due to WIOA. WIOA brings together core programs of Federal investment in skill development; this system developed will focus on the following (1) how current data systems will communicate and handle co-enrollment under WIOA, (2) how data reporting will be handled by the various state agencies under WIOA and (3) assist in addressing the data sharing needs to best facilitate an integrated data system. GVRA is one of four agencies participating in this project.
 - GVRA’s internal **Office of Information Technology (IT)** has done an outstanding job servicing GVRA staff since the contract with DOL for these same services ended. Effective October 2016, these services were removed from under the Department of Labor (DOL) umbrella. Since then, IT has led us to complete the following major accomplishments:
 - The agency domain name has been changed from “ablegeorgia” to “gvs” (Georgia Vocational Services) to embrace all divisions within the agency. This was accomplished within a very short timeframe.
 - GVRA migrated to Microsoft Office 365 so that staff can access their email, calendar and documents from anywhere.
 - GVRA’s IT Director took the proper measures to protect all agency computers from malicious spyware attacks and to stay abreast of possible future threats to the integrity of agency hardware and software.
 - IT staff has increased by 40% to provide better support to agency staff statewide
 - A complete refresh of all agency computer hardware has been completed
 - **GVRA’s Office of Communications and Marketing** has worked on major initiatives such as:
 - GVRA launched a new logo in March 2017 after buy-in from staff statewide who voted for the logo they liked best based on color and design. After votes were tallied the new logo was chosen and has been placed on the website, letterhead, staff email signatures, brochures, collateral materials, and swag.
 - Contracted with the broadcasting industry to get an agency advertisement on over 100 radio stations across Georgia.
 - Produced updated brochures for our Team 26 **Veterans Unit** and the Cave Spring Center campus.
 - Created new brochures entitled “Your Future Begins Now”, written for youth with disabilities who are transitioning from high school. Another new brochure directed at employers is entitled “You are Hiring & We Can Help.” Additional brochures include a tri-fold focused on individuals with autism spectrum disorder entitled “Career and Independent Living Success with Autism Spectrum Disorders” and a tri-fold highlighting veterans’ services through the TEAM 26 program.

- **GVRA's Office of External Affairs** represents the agency to the Governor's office, legislature, and community partners. This office has many accomplishments this fiscal year as follows:
 - Distributed information to thousands of clients, prospective clients, school staff, providers, and others throughout Georgia at various events, including the Statewide Autism Conference and Expo, the Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education, Georgia Association of Educational Leaders, Department of Education Parent Mentor Conference, Department of Human Resources Fatherhood Event, Georgia People's First Conference, Service Provider Association for Developmental Disabilities (SPADD), Georgia National Association of Individuals with Mental Illness (NAMI) Conference and the Systems of Care Conference.
 - Made presentations to hundreds of youth with disabilities and adults, including school staff, teachers, providers and staff of external partners at high schools, public health sites, Department of Family and Children Services site, and churches.
 - Coordinated 13 public hearings on behalf of the SRC on proposed VR policy changes.
 - Managed the agency's legislative agenda.
 - Submitted the federal Annual Performance Report (704 Report) on behalf of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) to Health and Human Services Administration on Community Living.
 - Managed board relations for the GVRS board and improved board relations and communication with board members.
 - Developed and disseminated the SRC FY16 annual report.

- **The Business Enterprise Program (BEP)** has finally reached 100% accountability via usage of technology. All active licensed blind vendor managers have been trained and are using accountability mechanisms (square registers, iPads, USA technology, etc.) to better operate and manage their food service businesses.

- In May 2017, **Georgia Industries for the Blind (GIB)** received the Bronze and Silver Level Awards from the National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and the National Association for Employment for People who are Blind (NAEPB). The recognition comes as a result of GIB's implementation of the first two levels of the Quality Work Environment (QWE) initiative at the Bainbridge plant.

- **Disability Adjudication Services (DAS)** processed more than 136,000 disability claims for the state fiscal year. Additionally, the current Initial Performance Accuracy Rate is at 95.1%, which is above the region (of eight states in the southeast) and equal to the nation.

- **GVRA’s Office of Fiscal Services** operates with financial integrity and transparency and performs management and oversight of the agency’s annual budget. The agency's base budget is comprised of approximately 11% state funds and 86% federal funds. In addition to these sources, approximately \$2.1 million per year of local matching funds are expended. Federal funds are comprised of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Supported Employment (SE), Career Pathways, Disability Adjudication Services (DAS), WIPA and Independent Living Services.
 - Case management conversion was completed converting check writing for Disability Adjudication Services (DAS) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services to PeopleSoft.

- **GVRA Human Resources** had a rewarding year with being recognized by Governor Nathan Deal with the Department of Administrative Service’s Commissioner’s Recognition Award for Outstanding Performance in Compensation Management and the Commissioner's Recognition Award for Outstanding Performance in Classification Management.

WORKFORCE TRENDS

As of June 2017, GVRA has 1048 females (77%) and 313 males (23%).

Group	Number 2016	Percent 2016	Number 2017	Percent 2017
American Indian	1	0.1%	1	0.1%
Asian	16	1.1%	15	1.1%
Black	755	52.5%	733	53.9%
Hawaii/Pacific	3	0.2%	3	.2%
Hispanic	23	1.6%	24	1.8%
Multi-Racial	14	1.0%	16	1.2%
White	626	43.5%	569	41.8%
Total	1438	100.0%	1361	100.0%

GVRA’s turnover rate has increased from 10.1% in June 2016 to 18.8% in June 2017.

Currently 13% of GVRA employees are eligible to retire which does not differ from last year. 38% of GVRA employees have between 10-30 years of service, whereas last year the number was 37%. GVRA is still developing succession planning strategies to facilitate transition of institutional knowledge, skills and abilities from retirees to current and new employees.

As part of the culture change to ensure that GVRA clients come first, GVRA will begin collecting data regarding the number of agency employees who have a disability. Information can be voluntarily self-disclosed and will be recorded annually. This will go into effect July 2017.

GVRA STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS:

- Internal information technology (IT) department for staff statewide
- Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's) with the Department of Education (GaDOE), the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), and the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)
- Career Pathways Grant focused on transition services for youth with disabilities that has resulted in MOU's with pilot school districts: Hall County Board of Education (BOE), Troup County BOE, Paulding County BOE, Decatur County BOE, Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, Georgia School for the Deaf and Georgia Academy for the Blind.
- Partnering with Georgia Department of Economic Development, Technical College System of Georgia Adult Education, Georgia Department of Labor and the Georgia Department of Family and Children Services.
- Collaborative relationship with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the GVRS board
- The Work Incentive Planning Assistance program for Social Security beneficiaries
- Staff with national credentials and decades of experience in serving individuals with disabilities
- GVRA has hired staff who received VR services
- Liaisons to the disability community and the independent living community

WEAKNESSES:

- Inadequate training and staff development
- Lack of succession planning
- Lack of inter-departmental communication
- Lack of quantitative and qualitative data and analysis across programs
- Maintaining sufficient staffing levels across programs
- Outcomes in self-employment as a career option outside of the BEP program
- Insufficient plan to reach out of school youth with disabilities as required by WIOA
- Lack of vetting process for providers of VR services
- No defined reporting capability
- IT organization is not fully staffed
- No overarching agency strategy for using technology to benefit job seekers & programs
- No plan for serving clients where English is a second language in terms of linguistic access especially via the phone or website

- Accessibility in terms of programs and services

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Upgrading pay-scale for client-facing staff with competitive wages to maintain a quality workforce
- Fully funding to draw down federal funds allocated for Georgia
- Matching opportunities four to one with our federal partners
- Researching and obtaining new public and private funds from grants and foundations
- Partnering with public and private agencies in writing for specific grants
- Collaborating with other workforce partners under the WIOA mandate
- Internships and apprenticeships for students with disabilities
- Building and leveraging relationships with the members of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) who represent diverse entities such as colleges, employers and private organizations
- Utilizing ongoing internal program evaluation for improvement of services to clients by continually examining processes and results
- Leveraging broadcast relationships for Agency exposure via radio and TV advertisement
- Highlighting the residential programs at Roosevelt Warm Springs and Cave Spring Center
- Developing and implementing a targeted marketing plan for the Georgia Industries for the Blind's (GIB) products and analyzing the results
- Enhancing the GIB website to ensure customer ease in ordering products
- Assessing staff training needs in all divisions and implementing a training plan for each program
- Researching training tools for staff, including webinars, online courses, and other mechanisms that minimize travel time and out-of-office time
- Implementing an inter-office communication system so staff can share best practices and challenging cases statewide on a continuous and timely basis
- Developing and maintaining a relationship with the film industry as a source of statewide jobs and careers
- Holding statewide job fairs in targeted industries such as truck driving and others that require credential programs
- Implementing in-house data reporting capability
- Developing economy of scale for systems
- Leveraging of social media

THREATS:

- GVRA's lack of proper succession planning due to turnover and retirement could lead to loss of program knowledge
- Increased demand for services across the state and ability to serve new clients timely
- Too many vacancies in critical positions that provide direct client services
- Individuals with disabilities seeking employment services from other agencies
- Risks associated with providers serving youth with disabilities starting at age 14
- Provider turnover and lack of providers in rural areas
- Providers not being thoroughly vetted before providing services
- On-going cybersecurity (statewide)
- Change in IT funding sources
- Developing silos with the Vocational Rehabilitation program

GOAL 1 SUMMARY: GVRA WILL IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITHIN AND ACROSS PROGRAMS AND ALSO TO EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS

State Strategic Policy Area: Responsible and Efficient Government: Fiscally sound, principled, conservative

Measurable Objective 1: GVRA will improve communication internally among employees and also externally with clients, providers, and community partners and prospective clients. IN PROGRESS

Strategy 1: GVRA will have an effective internal and external communication system.

Strategy detail: GVRA will have an interdepartmental communication system so employees across programs can share ideas, strategies, challenges and success stories in a timely and efficient manner. Share Point software will be implemented and staff will be trained on how to use it to gather information to be shared across programs.

Measurable Objective 2: GVRA will improve internal communication by having interdisciplinary meetings to share information and resources for clients. IN PROGRESS

Strategy 2: GVRA will use monthly interdisciplinary meetings to increase communication within and across programs.

Strategy detail: Expand the monthly interdisciplinary meeting model currently being used for clients who have sensory impairments to other clients such as those with developmental disabilities, autism and mental illness so that communication happens between divisions such as Assistive Work Technology, Employment Services, Transition, Work Incentive Planning Assistance, Provider Relations and others. Institute a system for monthly interdisciplinary meetings using online technology such as webinars, etc. to reduce travel and out-of-office time. Notes will be taken and shared with each Program Director and also for succession planning purposes. Surveys of staff will be done to elicit feedback on these meetings and their impact.

Measurable Objective 3: GVRA will improve communication by having each office and program develop a communication plan.

Strategy 3: GVRA will have a master plan to improve internal and external communications

Strategy detail: Each unit will be given a template to develop a communication plan after discussion with staff in their unit. The plan will be returned to the Office of Communications and Marketing to become part of a master communication plan. The Office of Strategy and Innovation will work with the Office of Communications and Marketing to do a crosswalk of the plans for

common themes and issues and then develop a master plan to be shared with all Program Directors and agency leadership.

Measurable Objective 4: GVRA will develop an effective communication and marketing plan to increase the sale and distribution of the Georgia Industries for the Blind (GIB) products and services by 10% by FY'19. ON-GOING

Strategy 4: **GVRA will enhance and expand advertising and marketing of GIB products and services to increase sales and distribution.**

Strategy detail: GVRA will advertise and market all GIB products and services statewide through various media outlets, weekly newsletter updates, local newspapers, conferences, etc. GVRA will encourage staff to order all supplies internally via GIB before they purchase product elsewhere.

GOAL 2 SUMMARY: GVRA WILL DEVELOP, ENHANCE AND EXPAND TRANSITION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

State Strategic Policy Area: Educated, Developing life-, college-, and work-ready students.

Measurable Objective 5: GVRA will increase the number of middle and high school students with disabilities served by 10% by the end of FY '19. ON-GOING

Strategy 5: **GVRA will collaborate with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and local school districts across the state.**

Strategy detail: GVRA will continue to collaborate with DOE on the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) to serve students with disabilities in the 50 school districts identified as intensive districts. In addition, GVRA will collaborate with other school districts that are not part of the SSIP.

GOAL 3 SUMMARY: GVRA WILL ENHANCE AND EXPAND SERVICES TO SPECIAL POPULATIONS OF YOUTH AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

State Strategic Policy Area: Educated, Developing life-, college-, and work-ready students.

Measurable Objective 6: GVRA will increase services to out-of-school youth with disabilities ages 14-24 by 10% by the end of FY'19. ON-GOING

Strategy 6: GVRA will collaborate with community agencies.

Strategy detail: GVRA will collaborate with community agencies such as Technical College System of Georgia, United Way, recreation centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, after-school programs, GED programs and others to provide information and obtain referrals on youth with disabilities who are not in school. The Vocational Rehabilitation Program will also collaborate internally with other offices such as External Affairs and Communications and Marketing to share information about community events where GVRA may have a table to share information and obtain referrals for this population.

Measurable Objective 7: GVRA will increase the number of youth with sensory impairments, developmental disabilities, severe and persistent mental illness and autism spectrum disorder served by 10% by the end of FY'19. ON-GOING

Strategy 7: GVRA will enhance and expand services to youth with disabilities ages 14 – 24 who are in school and also those who are not in school whose disabilities fall into the special-populations category.

Strategy detail: GVRA will expand outreach and referral efforts to out-of-school youth ages 14 – 24 that are in the special-populations category. Staff will expand outreach to community-based agencies to obtain referrals for youth ages 14-24 in this category who are not in school. The Vocational Rehabilitation Program will work collaboratively internally with other offices such as External Affairs and Communications and Marketing to network with community-based agencies to increase the number of youth ages 14-24 who are served that have sensory impairments, developmental disabilities, severe and persistent mental illness and autism spectrum disorder. GVRA can provide supported employment support up to 24 months for youth in this category.

Measurable Objective 8: GVRA will increase the number of Veterans, adults with sensory impairments, developmental disabilities, severe and persistent mental illness and autism spectrum disorder served by 10% by the end of FY '19. ON-GOING

Strategy 8: **GVRA will expand and enhance services to Veterans and other special populations.**

Strategy detail: GVRA will expand outreach to adults who are in the special-populations category by having a presence at statewide conferences such as the Georgia National Association on Mental Illness (NAMI), People's First of Georgia Conference, Autism Conference and Expo, and Georgia Council of the Blind, Fatherhood Celebration event and Blinded Veteran conferences to increase referrals from this population. These events will enable staff to provide information and obtain referrals from individuals around the state. Once individuals are eligible and proceed through the VR process to gainful employment, GVRA can provide post-placement services to support and maintain employment up to 24 months.

GOAL 4 SUMMARY: GVRA WILL DEVELOP A PLAN FOR STAFF TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACROSS PROGRAMS TO ENHANCE SKILLS AND TOOLS FOR SERVING CLIENTS MORE EFFECTIVELY

State Strategic Policy Area: Responsible and Efficient Government: Fiscally sound, principled, conservative

Measurable Objective 9: GVRA will build and maintain a quality workforce that provides effective customer service. IN PROGRESS

Strategy 9: **Staff will gain skills from training and professional development to serve clients more effectively.**

Strategy detail: Staff will be provided opportunities for professional development as a result of training opportunities from conferences, webinars, online courses and other activities. Pre and post-tests will be given to staff and analyzed with ongoing follow-up to ensure implementation of skills gained. Quantitative and qualitative data will be recorded and analyzed to compare the results of the pre and post-tests to see if skill gain was met after staff training is completed. Employee surveys will be distributed annually to assess if professional development plan is impacting employee retention rates. This data will be shared with Program Directors and agency leadership.

Measurable Objective 10: GVRA will decrease staff attrition by 10%.

Strategy 10: **GVRA will maintain a quality workforce as a result of increased staff retention.**

Strategy detail: Distribute employee/staff satisfaction surveys at least annually (or more often) in a variety of methods and analyze the data to see if staff retention has improved. Information will be gathered from Human Resources to track retention rates quarterly. Share information with Program Directors and agency leadership.

Measureable Objective 11: GVRA will hire a Program Evaluator to assist managerial staff in the monitoring of their programs to ensure agency objectives within programs are being met. IN PROGRESS

Strategy 11: The PE will assist the agency in meeting annual contract and grant performance measures.

Strategy detail: The PE will assist in ensuring that departmental objectives are met by conducting overseeing goals-based, process-based, and outcome-based evaluations, conduct surveys and focus groups to determine both client and staff needs statewide.

Measureable Objective 12: GVRA will develop staff succession plans due to attrition and retirees to help maintain a quality workforce. IN PROGRESS

Strategy 12: Succession planning will enable the agency to maintain a quality workforce.

Strategy detail: Each departmental unit will develop an effective succession plan that will be incorporated into an overall agency succession plan. These plans will be reviewed annually.

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