

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
EVALUATION AND TRAINING SERVICES (E&T)
FOR VR CONSUMERS STATEWIDE
RFP #HMS 802-20-001

Purpose of this request for information:

- To obtain community input in preparation for developing an RFP.
- To include a provider(s) in a federal grant application pursuant to section 3-143-614, HAR. If the State is awarded the grant, no RFP for this service will be issued and the provider(s) selected and named in the grant application as a result of this RFI will be awarded a contract for the service.
- Other: _____

The Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is requesting interested persons, agencies and organizations to provide information and feedback that will assist DVR as it develops a request for proposals to procure Statewide Services for Evaluation and Training Services for referred individuals for the contract period July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021.

Through this RFI, DVR is seeking expressions of interests and comments on the availability of potential service providers, input in the development of the scope of services and compensation.

We will conduct a general meeting via teleconference to provide background information, answer questions, and hear your comments.

Date: **December 13, 2018**

Time: **10:00am**

Conference Call Number: 712.770.5161
Access Code: 760859#

We appreciate your written comments by **December 20, 2018**.

Written comments may be mailed to John Zamarra, 515 Richards Street, #217, Honolulu, HI 96813 or via email at jzamarra@dhs.hawaii.gov

Participation in this RFI is optional and not required in order to respond to any subsequent procurement the purchasing agency may take. Neither the purchasing agency nor the interested party responding has any obligation under the request for information.

If you have any questions, please contact John Zamarra at (808) 586-9729 or at jzamarra@dhs.hawaii.gov.

Evaluation and Training Services
for VR Consumers Statewide
HMS 802-20-001

Service Specifications

OVERVIEW:

EVALUATION

Vocational Evaluation is a comprehensive, systematic, organized assessment process that uses a combination of work activities/samples, psychometrics, behavioral observations and other techniques to assess the presence and extent of vocational strengths, weaknesses, barriers to employment, and functional limitations in order to make recommendations that will utilize individual strengths and effectively alleviate or remove identified vocational barriers and/or functional limitations utilizing assistive technology/devices as appropriate.

Vocational Evaluation services shall utilize methods that assess skills and abilities, vocational barriers and/or functional limitations relative to gainful employment in an integrated setting. The content of any vocational evaluation must reflect the needs of the individual with a disability. The intent is to assess skills, abilities, and barriers that affect employment and make recommendations that will utilize individual strengths/abilities, alleviate identified barriers and identify reasonable accommodations. The following areas shall be addressed in the vocational evaluation report:

- Vocational Interest
- Vocational Goals
- Performance Skills and Aptitudes
- Work Related Behaviors
- Transferrable Skills
- Physical Capabilities
- Mental/Emotional Capabilities
- Learning Styles
- Independent Living Skills
- Job Seeking/Job Retention Skills
- Vocational Barriers to Employment
- Functional Limitations
- Reasonable Accommodation Needs and Modifications

Trial Work Experience – The Division must conduct Trial Work Experiences for individuals with significant disabilities to demonstrate with clear and convincing evidence that such individuals are incapable of benefiting from VR services in terms of an employment outcome. Individuals who are referred by the VR Counselors have not made the determination of VR eligibility at the point of referral.

- a) The demonstration of “clear and convincing evidence” must include, if appropriate, a functional assessment of skill development activities, with any necessary supports in a real work setting. “Clear and convincing evidence” is the strongest term allowable under civilian law with the highest possible burden of evidence required.
- b) Clear and convincing evidence might include a description of assessments, including situational assessments, from service providers who have concluded that they would be unable to meet the individual’s needs due to the severity of the individual’s disability.

- c) “Any necessary supports” herein includes everything that would be provided under a supported employment scenario. It also includes all accommodations, rehabilitation technology devices, job coaching, and other supports.
- d) A “real world setting” herein means that work experience inside a training facility is insufficient. The setting must meet the requirements of “integrated employment”.
- e) If failure to perform occurs, additional work sites must be secured such that “clear and convincing evidence” exists to determine that it wasn’t a job task mismatch, an employer mismatch, or a failure to provide adequate supports; but that the only possible explanation is that there exists no work environment, no employer, no set of work tasks that the participant can perform satisfactorily regardless of the level of support provided. Best practices suggests a minimum of three work sites.
- f) If success at the work experience occurs, TWE will immediately end, and it is expected that the participant will transition into Supported Employment remaining with the successful employer.

Targeted Evaluation - For the purposes of the contracts, a Targeted Evaluation responds to a specific ability, capability, and/or interest of a consumer. Examples of evaluation topics include (a) an individual’s preferences for different types of jobs and work activities (b) the individual’s capacity to perform in a variety of vocational roles, and (c) the need for training in specific and general skills required for success in employment.

TRAINING

Vocational/Occupational Training emphasizes skills and knowledge required for a particular job function (such as typing or data entry) or a trade (such as grounds keeping or food service). The training prepares VR consumers in a recognized occupation.

FEEDBACK IS REQUESTED ON THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

1. Previous contracts for these services have been worded as if the services would be provided to the entire scope of DVR participants, but in practice this has not actually been how the services were used. Do potential service providers have any recommendations for ways DVR can adjust the terms of the Evaluation and Training to better reflect the historical pattern of usage and primary population of clients that have been referred. For example, is the timeline of training adequate, or is it too long or too short for the majority of referred clients? Is the level of support and accommodations requested and provided adequate to the historical pattern of usage or are there supports that go unused and/or needed supports that are not provided? In particular, there has historically been a higher usage among transition youth than adults, and are the appropriate supports and processes included for this population or do potential service providers have recommendations for changes that would allow them to better serve this population?
2. For the training portion of these services DVR has previously allowed each provider to determine their own method of reporting progress. DVR requests feedback from providers on the practicability and value of making a standardized state form for tracking progress such that reports from all providers are #1 objective and #2 standardized. DVR proposes using our internal employment specialists to gather actual minimum qualifications from employers who work with DVR in each of the training areas—for example customer service, custodial, food service, etc.—and making the form reflect the actual job requirements for entry level work at these employers’ sites. Progress would be scored on a spectrum:
 - Has had the task described and has observed the task being performed
 - Has performed the task with support
 - Has performed the task with observation
 - Has performed the task independently
 - Reliably performs the task without the need for checking quality

2. Previously DVR has given each vendor for these services an individual contract with an individual budget in order to allow for DVR participants to exercise Informed Choice in services. DVR requests feedback from providers on the practicability and value of using the Vendor List/Price List model of contract vehicle, resulting in a single contract with multiple providers that DVR participants can select from. DVR is specifically proposing to use the SPO Vendor List # 02-45 as a model, because many of the entities who have historically provided these services to DVR participants are already on this Statewide Pricelist, so the process and guidelines would be familiar to said entities. This contract may be found in its entirety at https://spo.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/PL-02-45-Change-No.-19_signed.pdf
3. Per Hawaii Revised Statutes §92F-13.3 **the following question is only to be answered in writing to DVR**, and the answers are exempted from any possibility of public disclosure because by their nature the information “must be confidential in order for the government to avoid the frustration of a legitimate government function”. Please mail your response to John Zamarra at the physical address indicated above. **Question: Given the mandatory requirement to provide Trial Work Experience services as described in this RFI, do you intend to bid on the subsequent RFP? Why or why not?**

Planning activities conducted in preparation for this RFP

A Request for Information (RFI) was issued on December 6, 2018. An RFI teleconference will be held on December 13, 2018 at 10:00am with a deadline for written responses by 2pm December 20, 2018.

Description of the target population to be served

The target population is individuals with significant and most significant disabilities, both physical and mental, referred by their Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. The applicant must be prepared to serve individuals who are deaf, blind and deaf-blind.

Geographic coverage of service

The service will be provided island wide on Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii. On the island of Hawaii provider(s) are sought to serve the Hilo area and provider(s) are being sought for the Kona area.

Probable funding amounts, source, and period of availability

Probable State and Federal funds for the two years is approximately \$662,000.00 (\$331,000 per year).

The State reserves the right to amend the funding amount of individual contracts according to utilization, without rebidding.