

# **Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

## **Performance Report**

**Performance Results for State Fiscal Year 2008**

## **Table of Contents**

- **Introduction**
- **Agency Overview**
- **Results**
  - Strategic Plan goals
  - Key Results of Core Functions – Vocational Rehabilitation and Disability Determination
  - Agency Performance Plan Results
- **Resource Reallocations**
- **Agency Contacts**
- **Agency Performance Plan Results**

## **Introduction**

This report will present the accomplishments of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, a division of the Iowa Department of Education, for the state fiscal year ending June 30, 2008. Accomplishments include those related to core functions identified in the IVRS SFY 2008 performance plan as well as progress toward new goals in the revised IVRS Strategic Plan (developed early in FY 08). Information in this report is provided in accordance with the Accountable Government Act to improve decision-making and increase accountability to Iowa stakeholders and citizens.

Key services of the agency are essentially separated into **two major program areas**: **1.** Services that assist Iowans with disabilities to become employed in the competitive labor market or to live independently in their homes through provision of various supports. **2.** Services involving the evaluation of Iowa citizens' disabilities to determine eligibility for economic support via Social Security disability benefits.

IVRS has managed a waiting list of potentially eligible clients seeking vocational rehabilitation services since May, 2002 and for several years thereafter had to balance the need for VR services against inadequacy of funding to meet all needs identified. Agency funding was stable during FY 08 which permitted significant progress on the waiting list. IVRS again matched all available federal funding for VR services and was able to meet or exceed all but one of the federal standards and indicators that are crucial to continued federal funding. The Disability Determination Services bureau has met the requirements set out by the Social Security Administration for accuracy and timeliness associated with determinations on disability claims.

This report will provide a brief update on progress toward the IVRS strategic plan goals as well as information on performance of the three identified core functions of the agency:

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Independent Living
- Economic Supports
- Agency Resource Management.

Information for the two major program areas named above will be presented using the “**Key Results Template**”. These continue to be the most crucial indicators of this agency's success in providing services to its customers.

## **Agency Overview**

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) exists to serve individuals with disabilities under Title II and Title XVI of the federal Social Security Act and Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act. IVRS serves people with disabilities by: 1) providing vocationally related assistance to achieve economic independence; or 2) providing disability determinations that result in appropriate financial benefits per Social Security Administration guidelines. Other services and financial assistance are provided to enable persons with disabilities to maintain independent functioning as long as possible within their communities and to prevent institutionalization. IVRS is an integral part of the statewide disability community.

The mission, vision and guiding principles of IVRS were reviewed and modified by a cross-division team in the fall of 2007. This was part of a successful effort to develop a new IVRS strategic plan with five key strategic objectives. The new statements of mission and vision are

included below. The new Strategic Objectives are identified in the “Results” section of this report.

## **MISSION**

We provide expert, individualized services to lowans with disabilities to achieve their independence through successful employment and economic support.

## **CORE FUNCTIONS**

Assist eligible lowans with disabilities in obtaining, maintaining and advancing in employment through rehabilitation services individually designed to disability and employment needs. Provide specialized services to the business community to meet their workforce and workplace needs.

Determine eligibility of lowans who apply for disability benefits administered by the federal Social Security Administration

## **VISION**

To be a respected leader that delivers innovative services to better the lives of lowans with disabilities.

### **Background:**

IVRS is the largest division of the Department of Education and functions with considerable autonomy. The division employs over 400 people in Des Moines and 43 locations throughout the state. Employees work within three Bureaus and a Planning and Development Team. For vocational rehabilitation services, IVRS received \$25.6 million in federal funds and another \$5.6 million in non-federal funds; for disability determination services, IVRS received federal funds totaling \$19 million from the Social Security Administration (no state funds).

The majority of staff is professionally trained rehabilitation counselors and disability examiners. Almost 91% of the counselors have master’s degrees in counseling or a closely related field. IVRS is mandated by its federal funding agency, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, to have qualified rehabilitation counselors – i.e., possession of an appropriate graduate degree. All disability examiners have at least a bachelor’s degree or its equivalent. In addition, DDSB has 35 professional consultants who are licensed as physicians, clinical psychologists, or speech pathologist. Most IVRS employees are covered under collective bargaining agreements negotiated with Iowa United Professionals and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

All employees of the Planning and Development Team, Administrative Services and Disability Determination Services bureaus work in the Des Moines facility. With the exception of a few administrative personnel and the Polk County area office, most of the Rehabilitation Services Bureau employees are geographically disbursed outside of Des Moines to cover all 99 counties and every high school in the state. They are housed in every community college, regent’s

institution, and in most mental health institutes in the state. In addition, staff co-locates or has itinerant offices in some Iowa Workforce Development Centers.

The Rehabilitation Services Bureau (RSB) has the primary responsibility for the statewide program of quality vocational rehabilitation services to all eligible disabled Iowans through direct and purchased services from a network of providers. The Disability Determination Services Bureau (DDSB) is responsible for determining the eligibility of Iowa residents who apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (Title II), and Supplemental Security Income (Title XVI) or the Department of Human Services Medicaid waiver programs. DDSB makes the initial determination of eligibility and any subsequent determination of continuing eligibility and handles first-level appeals of unfavorable decisions. The Administrative Services Bureau (ASB) provides fiscal, personnel, information services and building maintenance support to the other Bureaus. The Planning and Development Team (PDT) is responsible for planning, budgeting, staff development, program evaluation and outreach.

IVRS customers are individuals with disabilities who need vocational or other assistance to help meet their goals for vocational or personal independence or who need financial benefits due to their disabilities. Vocational rehabilitation and disability determination programs are eligibility rather than entitlement programs. Applicants must meet federally determined criteria. Customers of both RSB and DDSB may apply on multiple occasions during their lifetime. Customers of the vocational rehabilitation program, be they Iowans with disabilities or the business community, expect and receive professional and accurate career planning information and involvement to achieve workforce planning, placement or personal independence. DDSB claimants require accurate and timely decisions on their claims.

Competitive success is determined at the federal level by performance standards and indicators. In DDS that translates to timeliness and accuracy of case processing; on the vocational rehabilitation side, success relates to employment outcomes and equal access to services.

## **Strategic Challenges**

The Rehabilitation Services Bureau experienced an unprecedented increase in new client referrals and average case costs starting in FY02 which escalated into FY 06. In October of 2006 the management team redesigned the service delivery system to focus on the core function of the bureau and deliver services directly. As such the waiting list between October of 2006 (5800) and October of 2007 (745) demonstrated that the new direct service delivery model and cost containment measures made a significant impact. In addition -- through cost control measures, workforce planning, the direct service delivery approach, and increases in state funding resources -- IVRS is more poised to better serve Iowans with disabilities.

The change in service delivery transformed from a case management model to a direct service delivery model, thereby utilizing state resources much more effectively and efficiently to produce more timely services and move more cases into an active status. During the prime time of the waiting list when the numbers waiting for services was around 5800, IVRS had 40% of the caseload in college. However that number is misleading since the numbers on the waiting list are not included in the calculations. As of September 30, 2007, IVRS had 29.9% of the caseload in college services and the decrease in numbers is due to more individuals in a planning status and not remaining on the waiting list. IVRS anticipates that the percentage in college will increase as plans are developed with individuals to prepare for an occupation. The ability to serve more individuals has been significantly impacted by the amount of additional

state dollars received during fiscal year 08 and the change in the service delivery model. These proactive steps of re-organization and process design will positively move IVRS into the future so that state government is working at its finest and tax dollars are used efficiently.

Federal legislation that sought to reduce duplication in the provision of employment and training services through the development of one stop service centers resulted in IVRS being co-located with many Iowa Workforce Development Centers. In SFY07 IVRS and IWD entered into an agreement that identifies the state IWD system as an employment network and allows IVRS and IWD to share in the Ticket To Work program that works to achieve employment for individuals on social security benefits. This joint agreement allows IVRS to be reimbursed for all expenditures on a client who is dependent upon benefits but becomes employed, and allows IWD to receive milestone payments from Social Security after IVRS is reimbursed for identified cases.

There have been some private community rehabilitation programs (CRP) that advocated for their organizations to receive the federal appropriation directly rather than through IVRS under a purchase of service model. However only 2% of the population that IVRS serves actually participates in services through a CRP, and the majority of the population served by IVRS is college educated or injured workers returning to employment after recovery. This population of clients served would not receive the level of service or expertise from the CRPs. One CRP in particular was successful in advocating for direct state appropriation from the Iowa Legislature. The Easter Seals Community Rehabilitation Program advocated and received a direct appropriation of \$135,000 for their farm program, and this continued into FY 08. However the state legislature did not place any restrictions on the funding and as such the program was actually eligible to receive both the appropriation and service funding from Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services. IVRS was informed that no restrictions should be put in place and as such did financially support the program through case service authorizations. For this past fiscal year IVRS did not provide any additional funding.

The Centers for Independent Living (CIL) lobbied and received a separate appropriation from the state legislature of \$200,000. The appropriation was for existing centers and there was not a provision that the dollars were earmarked for expansion of IL to cover areas not currently served. As such the CILs receive limited federal funding, provided through IVRS, and the state funding along with other donations. IVRS does serve the entire state for independent living providing the necessary accommodations and assistive technology that enables Iowans with the most significantly and most debilitating disabilities to live independently in their home.

While there are no direct competitors for Disability Determination Services, there is competition for funding with other Social Security Administration entities and other states.

New technology is changing the nature of work in the division. A web based information system (Iowa Rehabilitation Services System -- IRSS) is nearing completion; it allows for enhanced electronic case management and financial management functions, which will benefit staff in their individual work as well as managers in the planning, administration and reporting of IVRS work, overall. When fully implemented and coupled with organization re-design, this technology should positively impact productivity in client services through increased efficiency in case management, administrative and financial processing. The implementation of the Social Security Administration's fully electronic case processing system is in its third year in DDSB and the bureau continues to be certified to process cases electronically.

## **New Developments**

**The IVRS Business Network:** To be successful in the mission of achieving quality employment and careers for people with disabilities, IVRS must serve a dual customer base—lowans with disabilities and Iowa business. During fiscal year '08 IVRS infused business outreach activities into local and state plans that have resulted in newly developed business relationships.

These relationships enhance the counselors' understanding of business expectations and are directly connected to the planning process with consumers. It has been found that employer involvement upfront supports informed choice in building career plans and results in consumer access to a broader range of employment opportunities.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation is committed to serving business and industry as a valued customer and in FY'08 demonstrated this commitment through the following activities:

- The new IVRS strategic plan highlights the importance of understanding the changing workforce needs of Iowa business and industry and dedicates resources for developing IVRS' capacity to respond to those needs.
- Local office placement plans have resulted in the development of business relationships with over 400 employers. Information on these businesses has been entered into a user-friendly database that allows counselors easy access for use in career counseling.
- IVRS is serving on the Governor's Diversity Committee to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities within state government.
- Development of internships, customized and on-the-job training opportunities has resulted in successful placements in various industries across the state.
- IVRS is coordinating the activities of the Employer Disability Resource Network (EDRN) which recently launched a new website, [www.EDRNetwork.org](http://www.EDRNetwork.org). With the support of the EDRN partners private and public rehabilitation professionals are collaboratively mobilizing resources, supports and services that add value to Iowa businesses hiring persons with disabilities.
- IVRS continues to be an active participant in the national and regional network (The NET) of 80 public VR agencies across the country. The NET membership allows for participation in online trainings, sharing of multi-state job leads and keeping up-to-date on federal employment opportunities.

## **Results**

### **Strategic Plan:**

The IVRS strategic plan was revised in September, 2007 and includes five major objectives listed below.

**Strategic Objective 1: Develop and foster an engaging work environment that promotes innovation and continual improvement to achieve organizational priorities.**

**Strategic Objective 2: Develop a work force that identifies and responds to changing work force and work place needs.**

**Strategic Objective 3: Develop and deliver customer service that addresses customer needs and requirements.**

**Strategic Objective 4: Increase efficiency and customer value through performance accountability and continuous improvement.**

**Strategic Objective 5: Build external relationships that contribute to improved services that better the lives of lowans with disabilities.**

**Progress toward Strategic Plan objectives:**

The IVRS administrator chairs a group of strategic objective leaders which continues to meet regularly to report progress on each objective. Each objective team leader has a designated group of IVRS employees who are involved in implementing actions intended to accomplish that objective. Bureau chiefs are regularly involved in meetings with Administrator regarding the strategic plan and are accountable for supporting staff and activities within each one's bureau that contribute to accomplishment of the objectives.

Several steps have been taken to bring about each of the above objectives. One action of note is a "Performance Management" initiative that IVRS has undertaken to improve its efforts to align individual and agency performance goals and to enhance the use of the State's performance evaluation system. Impetus for this initiative arose from a survey of managers and employees which brought out concerns in this area. Other initiatives focused on enhancement of internal service delivery in the provision of IT Help Desk support and in increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the IVRS screening/hiring process for new employees.

**Performance Plan Results**

See enclosed templates for **Key Results** and **Agency Performance Plan Results**.



## **Resource Reallocations**

“Ownership” of the Jessie Parker Building continues to be with the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). IVRS entered into a second memorandum of agreement with DAS to provide specified building maintenance services using IVRS building operations staff that have been on the IVRS payroll for years. At the same time, IVRS pays the prescribed association fee to DAS (as do other inhabitants of the Parker Building) for the space occupied.

Other resource reallocations in IVRS relate primarily to human resource management as management continues to analyze the most effective staffing in relation to rehabilitation service delivery. The agency continues to operate at a level exceeding the standard for span of control – approximately 1:13 ratio of supervisor to employees (vs. 1:12 expectation). Instead of automatically filling vacant Rehabilitation Counselor jobs in the Rehabilitation Services Bureau, new staffing patterns have been applied which provide alternatives to the traditional type of staffing without diminishing the professional level of service required for IVRS clients.

The Disability Determination services Bureau continues to operate with medical/psychological staff on its payroll (mostly part time) rather than contract for individual services in this area – which was the case until recent years. This has proven to be a more cost effective approach to securing the necessary medical expertise for disability claims.

## KEY RESULTS 1 of 2

### CORE FUNCTION

**Name:** Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Independent Living

**Description:** Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) provides a wide variety of services for persons with disabilities that lead to the attainment of their employment, independence and economic goals. Business and industry is also a customer of IVRS to whom various services are provided to help them meet their workplace and workforce needs. The desired outcome is fulltime or part time competitive employment in the integrated labor market. Services include: assessment, diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments, training, personal assistance services, placement, rehabilitation technology services, maintenance, transportation, small business enterprise assistance, and post-employment services.

**Why we are doing this:** IVRS provides services to help persons with disabilities find and maintain employment, or to help them live independently (not in a group home or other care facility). This greatly enhances their quality of life and adds to the Iowa economy through reduced dependence on public support and through the payment of taxes.

**What we're doing to achieve results:** IVRS staff includes master's degreed rehabilitation counselors who are strategically located throughout the state. IVRS partners with nearly 100 organizations to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services. The Iowa Rehabilitation Services System (IRSS) has been developed and implemented to enhance internal operating efficiency. IVRS has met or exceeded both the quantity and quality performance measures, going back several years when there was insufficient non-federal funding. IVRS has a federal mandate to serve the most significantly disabled individuals first when resources are limited. The focus upon vocational placement and the action planning done in each area office contributed to the number of individuals placed into competitive employment. Through the expertise of the counseling staff, collaboration with clients and other services and resources, IVRS has been increasing the number of clients placed in competitive employment. Every employed client becomes a tax payer and a consumer thereby increasing Iowa's economy and tax base while also saving the State's support dollars.

**Data Sources:** Case Service Records.

**Resources Used:** Combination of 78.7% federal funds with 21.3% non-federal funds required to generate the federal funding. State appropriation for FY 08 was \$5.6 million. Total of 243 FTEs involved (out of budgeted 281).

*Results*

*Performance Measure:*

**Number of Employment Outcomes**

*Performance Target:*  
**2050**

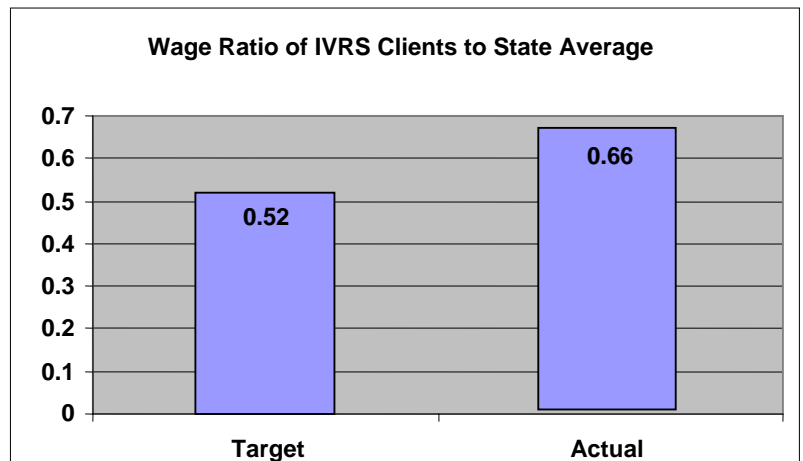
Since reducing the waiting list more individuals have entered into services. In general it takes about 2-4 years for a client to complete the rehabilitation plan and obtain employment. This is due to the focus upon an individual's optimal level of employment to which reduces dependency upon public benefits and assists individuals with disabilities to be employed to their maximum potential. As such the number removed from the waiting list are in active services, many in college, and so it is anticipated that the numbers placed in previous year may not be at the same level as current years until clients achieve their diploma.

**What was achieved:** IVRS exceeded target by placing 2146 clients into competitive employment.

*Performance Measure:*

**Wage ratio of IVRS clients to state average**

*Performance Target:*  
**0.52**



**What was achieved:** IVRS exceeded target by placing clients in positions paying an hourly rate of 66% of the average state hourly wage rate.

# KEY RESULTS 2

## CORE FUNCTION

**Name:** Economic Supports

**Description:** The IVRS provides disability determination services to claimants for Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income in Iowa through a relationship with the Social Security Administration (SSA) – per federal regulations.

**Why we are doing this:** To enhance economic independence for disabled Iowans through cash benefits and healthier Iowans through access to Medicare and Medicaid.

**What we're doing to achieve results:** The IVRS has successfully implemented a paperless process to determine claimant eligibility for social security benefits and the new system is operating effectively.

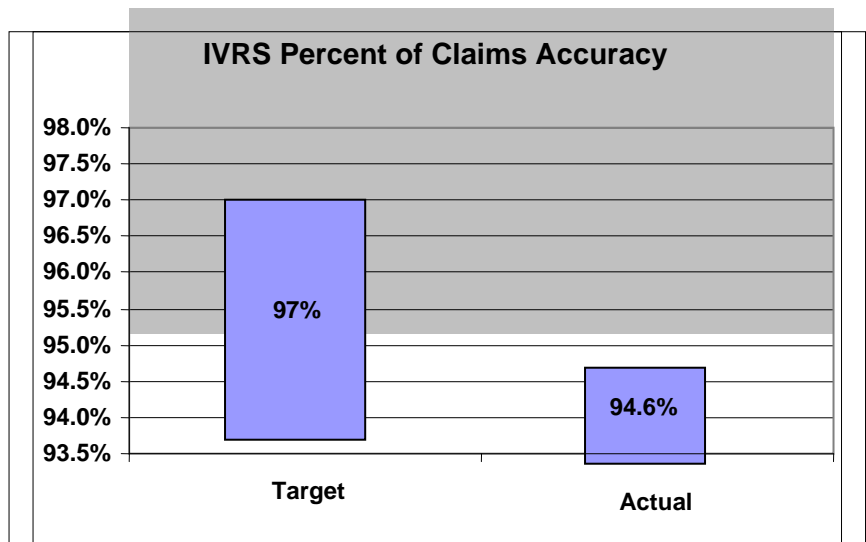
**Data Sources:** Social Security Administration Office of Quality Assurance and Performance Assessment

**Resources Used:** 100% federal funding of \$19 million from the Social Security Administration. Total of 128 FTEs involved (out of budgeted 142).

### Results

**94. Performance Measure:**  
**Percent of claims accurately determined per SSA standards**

*Performance Target:*  
**97%**



**What was achieved:** IVRS almost met the goal of 97% with 94.6% accuracy rate.

## **AGENCY CONTACTS**

- Stephen A. Wooderson, IVRS Administrator
- Keith Hyland, Chief, Administrative Services Bureau
- Matt Coulter, Chief Financial Officer
- Jeff Haight, Data Specialist

# AGENCY PERFORMANCE PLAN

FY 2008

(Numbers in red indicate actual result)

<b>Name of Agency:</b> Department of Education, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services			
<b>Agency Mission:</b> To work for and with individuals with disabilities to achieve their employment, independence and economic goals.			
Core Function	Performance Measure (Outcome)	Performance Target(s)	Link to Strategic Plan Goal(s)
CF: Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Independent Living	Wage ratio of IVRS clients to state average	0.52 <b>.66</b>	Goal 1 To maximize every client's opportunity to reach their economic, independence and employment goals.
<b>Desired Outcome(s):</b>			
Full-time, or if appropriate, part-time competitive employment in the integrated labor market.			Goal 2 Increase advocacy and support for rights of individuals with disabilities.
Services, Products, Activities	Performance Measures	Performance Target(s)	Strategies/Recommended Actions
<b>1. Employment (Vocational Rehabilitation)</b> Org# 0001-283-1000 0001-283-2000 0034-283-0704 0366-283-0708 0395-283-0703 0398-283-0093	<b>A. Percent employed (federal reporting)</b> <b>B. Access to services ratio of minority to non-minority clients (federal reporting)</b> <b>C. Number of employment outcomes (federal reporting)</b> <b>D. Number of Entrepreneurs with Disabilities that achieve start-up or expansion of a business</b>	<b>A. 55.8%    <b>63.3%</b></b> <b>B. 0.80      <b>.77</b></b> <b>C. 2050     <b>2146</b></b> <b>D. 30        <b>29</b></b>	<b>1. High quality client services and outcomes</b> <b>2. Comprehensive system of job placement</b> <b>3. Effective collaboration</b> <b>4. Manage waiting lists for services</b>
<b>2. Independent Living (Vocational Rehabilitation)</b> Org# 0001-283-0714	<b>A. Percentage of persons meeting their goals</b> <b>B. Number of persons able to continue to live independently in their homes</b>	<b>A. 45%      <b>47%</b></b> <b>B. 95        <b>117</b></b>	<b>1. High quality client services and outcomes</b> <b>2. Effective collaboration</b> <b>3. Enhanced external communication</b>

<b>Name of Agency: Department of Education, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services</b>			
<b>Agency Mission: To work for and with individuals with disabilities to achieve their employment, independence and economic goals.</b>			
<b>Core Function</b>	<b>Performance Measure (Outcome)</b>	<b>Performance Target(s)</b>	<b>Link to Strategic Plan Goal(s)</b>
CF: Economic Supports	Percent of claims accurately determined per SSA standards (initial net accuracy)	97% <b>94.6%</b>	Goal 1 To maximize every client's opportunity to reach their economic, independence and employment goals.
<b>Desired Outcome(s):</b>			
Economic independence for disabled Iowans through cash benefits, and healthier Iowans through access to Medicare and Medicaid.			
<b>Services, Products, Activities</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>	<b>Performance Target(s)</b>	<b>Strategies/Recommended Actions</b>
3. Disability Determination: Initial review of claims and continuing disability reviews (CDR) (Economic Supports Org# 0231-283-0716 0394-283-0702 0394-283-0712 0394-283-0722 0394-283-0723	A. Initial claim processing time B. Percent of budgeted CDRs completed	A. 85 days <b>81.6</b> B. 100% <b>109%</b>	1. Develop quality management plan 2. Enhance training where needs are identified

Name of Agency: Department of Education, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Agency Mission: To work for and with individuals with disabilities to achieve their employment, independence and economic goals.

Core Function	Performance Measure (Outcome)	Performance Target(s)	Link to Strategic Plan Goal(s)
CF: Agency Resource Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of internal customer satisfaction with key support services</li> <li>Percent of time IT network services are available to staff</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>85% <b>78%</b></li> <li>95% <b>95%</b></li> </ol>	Goal 3 Increase capacity to serve all VR clients. Goal 4 Increase interest and satisfaction in VR careers.

Desired Outcome(s):

Resources are sufficient to provide services per IVRS mission and federal guidelines for Vocational Rehabilitation and Disability Determination.

Services, Products, Activities	Performance Measures	Performance Target(s)	Strategies/Recommended Actions
4.Infrastructure (Resource Management) Org# 0001-283-3000 0001-283-4000	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent of required non-federal match dollars generated</li> <li>Ratio of employees to supervisors</li> <li>Inspection results on safety and health of Parker Building facilities</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% <b>100%</b></li> <li>12:1 <b>13:1</b></li> <li>No major deficiencies  <b>(No major deficiencies)</b></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain and improve sustainability model</li> <li>Use IRSS to forecast resource needs</li> <li>Maintain IVRS responsibility for maintenance operations extending throughout Parker Building – including other agency - occupied space.</li> </ol>