

Minnesota State Rehabilitation
Council for the Blind



Annual Report

October 1, 2009 - September 30, 2010

Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	2
MISSION AND VISION	3
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR.....	4
DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS	5
COMMITTEE REPORTS	7
Customer Satisfaction Survey Review.....	7
Progress on FFY10 Goals and Priorities:	9
Standards and Indicators	15
Minority Outreach Committee	16
Vendor Outcomes and Measures Committee.....	17
DeafBlind Committee.....	17
Senior Services Committee	18
Communication Center Committee	19
Transition Committee.....	19
APPENDICES	22
Appendix I Council Members.....	22
Appendix II Council Work Plan FFY2010	24

Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

Annual Report

Introduction

Long before it was required by federal law, blind consumers and Minnesota State Services for the Blind (SSB) recognized the wisdom of developing a partnership. In 1985, the Advisory Council for the Blind was formed. Prior to its existence in federal law, the majority of the membership of the Advisory Council for the Blind was composed of blind consumers with some representation from the business community. The Federal Government mandated the existence of a State Rehabilitation Advisory Council for the Blind in 1992 and the existing Minnesota Advisory Council for the Blind was expanded to comply with federal requirements.

In August, 1998, the Rehabilitation Act was again changed to rename this federally mandated council by deleting the word “advisory” and expanding its duties. The renamed State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) is now asked to carry out its responsibilities after consultation with the Governor’s Workforce Development Council and in partnership with SSB. The SRC-B’s role is still advisory in relation to SSB; however, SSB’s relationship with the SRC-B is no longer discretionary. The implications of these changes indicate a stronger directive for the SRC-B and SSB to work in a more equal relationship.

The SRC-B has increased responsibilities to work in partnership with SSB to develop, agree to and review state goals and priorities. This is accomplished by evaluating programs for rehabilitation and submitting progress reports to the commissioner and in an annual report to the Governor. The SRC-B still has responsibility for overseeing services provided by public and private agencies, and now must review employment outcomes as well as service outcomes for blind people.

The SRC-B now has a stronger role in coordinating efforts with other state and federally mandated councils. Minnesota has made an effort to avoid duplication of these councils since the early days of our Advisory Council for the Blind. The Minnesota SRC-B has always had members that represented the Statewide Independent Living Council, advocacy organizations for the blind, advocacy organizations for children with disabilities, and representatives of business, industry, and labor. Another responsibility of the SRC-B is to enhance its current organizational contacts to incorporate a system of working with the Governor’s Workforce Development Council.

This report is produced pursuant to federal law, Section 105(c) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which calls for each state rehabilitation council to prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor or appropriate state entity and the Commissioner of the Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Mission and Vision

Mission Statement for the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, working on behalf of Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or Deafblind is charged with insuring that State Services for the Blind is in compliance with mandates under Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act. The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind strives to insure that Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or Deafblind receive the best possible services under the law.

Vision Statement for the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

The State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) will be a catalyst for the emergence of State Services for the Blind (SSB) as a national leader in the development, implementation and continuous improvement of the quality of service programs and education for persons of all ages who are blind, visually impaired or Deafblind throughout our state.

The SRC-B, in conjunction with SSB, will strive to insure people who are blind, visually impaired or Deafblind are made aware of the full array of services available to them whether aimed at adjustment to blindness training, independent living, employment or education.

The SRC-B will work to make employers aware that people who are blind, visually impaired or Deafblind have tremendous abilities for employment today and must be included in planning for the workforce of the future.

It is our vision that persons who are blind, visually impaired or Deafblind will enjoy full equality of opportunity, education, complete integration in the life of our communities and appropriate employment which fulfills each individual's needs and aspirations.

Message from the Chair

The following document is a presentation to you about a valuable partnership between the state government's multi-service agency for the blind and blind people themselves. We are the Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) and, while we are federally mandated to work with the vocational rehabilitation services, we undertake to give advice regarding all facets of the agency. They include the Senior Services Unit and the Communication Center. In this report, you can find summaries from our very active committees which are the heart of what we do. This could not be accomplished without the involvement of members of the community who volunteer without being appointed to the Council. Their work is appreciated.

In addition to our committee work, we want to make note of the following:

Tom Scanlan represented the Council on a selection committee to choose a new director for State Services for the Blind (SSB.) This is another example of the Department of Employment and Economic Development's (DEED) commitment to involve consumers in major decisions regarding SSB. We were pleased to welcome Richard Strong as the new director. Mr. Strong not only listens to us and all consumers he actively seeks our involvement in formulating major policies for SSB.

A critical project for this agency involves updating its administrative rule. This rule governs all facets of service delivery and is the basis on which decisions are made regarding services to vocational rehabilitation and senior services customers. SSB formed a task force that met throughout the summer to recommend wording for much of the proposed rule. Steve Jacobson and I, as chair, represented the Council on this task force. The task force has ended its work and we now await the proposed rule with a Statement of Needs and Reasonableness.

For a long time we have had numerous vacancies on our Council. I am pleased to announce that the governor has appointed several new members and has reappointed others to fill most of the vacancies. We express our thanks for the help we have received from former Council members and from those active in the blindness community. We are proud to welcome our new members and look forward to the active participation of a very vocal and appreciated audience at all our meetings.

Read on to see how this committee structure works to ensure development of and compliance with our goals and priorities.

Judy Sanders, Chair

Director's Comments

The State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) is a splendid example of the close collaborative relationship State Services for the Blind (SSB), a governmental organization, needs in order to access and benefit from the voice of the consumer in continuing to build and improve its services. Long before called for in federal legislation, Minnesota established in statute (and in reality) a mechanism for customers and partners to advise and help shape the policy and direction of SSB. Since those early days of the 1980's, with the Minnesota Council for the Blind, SSB has sought out and listened closely to the advise and recommendations of the Council. It continues to do so today.

The strength of the Council comes primarily from its committee structure and the active participation of a broad range of community members on those committees. Membership on those committees, subject to appointment by the Chair of the SRC-B, is available to any interested person and is not limited to members of the full State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind. In this way a veritable chorus - composed of the voices of customers, partners and interested persons – are heard and help shape the programs and services of SSB.

SSB, due in no small part to the work of the Council and its committees, along with our outstanding staff and scores of dedicated volunteers, realized a number of magnificent accomplishments during the year. Here are just few of the truly shining examples of those results:

1. 80 blind or visually impaired Minnesotans attained competitive employment in an integrated setting as the Workforce Development Unit exceeded its placement goal by more than 10%.
2. Over 3,600 Minnesotans were served by our Senior Services Unit, an all-time record. This was done despite a number of staff vacancies for parts of the year.
3. Hundreds of thousands of braille pages were provided to blind Minnesota children by the highly skilled staff and exquisite volunteers of the Braille section.
4. By collaborating with the Minnesota Braille and Talking Book library, Minnesota executed a successful transition from cassette machines to the new digital playback machines from the National Library Service (NLS).
5. Successfully implemented our own customized digital DAISY recording system. The CDs we create can be easily copied onto a portable memory device and played on the new NLS digital machines.
6. The RTB digital radio receivers are nearing full distribution with needed pilot testing continuing in markets statewide.

7. Staff Chuk Hamilton and David Andrews played critical roles in the process that resulted, on September 1, 2010, in the State of Minnesota adopting the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act as standards for its information systems, tools, and information content. Implementation of these standards opens the door to state employment for untold numbers of qualified persons with disabilities.

As you can see, together we accomplished much in 2010. Thanks to all who work so hard to turn hopes and aspirations into accomplishments. The coming year will be one full of challenges, frustrations, and trials. I believe that SSB, together with its State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind and its community partners, is ready for the tough days ahead and will succeed: our customers deserve and expect no less.

Richard Strong
Director

Committee Reports

Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee

Jennifer Dunnam--Chair, Kathy Hagen, Steve Jacobson, Bob Raisbeck, Tom Scanlan. SSB staff—Pam Brown, Jennifer Beilke.

CHARGE: This committee exists to carry out specific duties contained in federal regulation for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. These include:

1. Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of and consumer satisfaction with the functions of the Department of Employment and Economic Development; Vocational Rehabilitation services provided within the state (except adjustment to blindness and technology services), and the employment outcomes of persons served.
2. In collaboration with SSB, evaluate the extent to which SSB achieved its goals and priorities, strategies used, and factors that impeded success and performance on the federal standards and indicators.
3. Jointly with other committees of the Council, and in partnership with SSB, develop and, as necessary, revise an annual statement of goals and priorities.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Review

The Committee reviewed the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) results through March 31, 2010.

Five survey items were analyzed to compare the results for years ending 3/31/07, 3/31/08, 3/31/09, and 3/31/10. While there has been some fluctuation in results, no significant changes have taken place from year to year.

Summary	YE 3/31/07	YE 3/31/08	YE 3/31/09	YE 3/31/10
Q1: Overall satisfaction with services provided	82%	84%	83%	84%
Q2: Extent to which services have met expectations	77%	77%	78%	80%
Q3: Comparison with “ideal” set of services	72%	80%	77%	80%
Q5 (now Q4): Satisfied that counselor (staff) understood customer’s needs	79%	88%	91%	89%
Q10 (now Q5): How satisfied are you with the time it usually took to get your answer	80%	85%	87%	78%

SSB's results on the Customer Satisfaction Survey are also computed by the Minnesota Department of Economic Development utilizing the Minnesota Customer Satisfaction Index (MnCSI). Simply put, this index summarizes overall satisfaction with services by applying a formula to the responses for

Questions 1, 2, and 3 on the survey. Using the MnCSI makes it possible to compare the customer satisfaction ratings of SSB with those of other agencies in Minnesota and with industry in general.

CUSTOMERS SERVED	APR08-MAR09	JUL08-JUN09	OCT08-SEP09	JAN09-DEC09	APR09-MAR10
MNCSI	72.9	74.4	73.0	71.6	72.3
N	282			275	276

Two new questions specific to the Vocational Rehabilitation program were added to the customer satisfaction survey during this fiscal year. The data for FFY10 were as follows:

Responses	APR-JUN 09	JUL-SEP 09	OCT-DEC 09	JAN-MAR 10	Last 4 Quarters
QVR1: Satisfied that customer given enough info to make good choices on employment plan	88%	88%***		85%	86%
QVR2 Satisfied that customer had an active role in decisions about services	93%	92%***		94%	91%

Three other open-ended questions were also added to the survey this year, replacing the previous Questions 8 and 9. The committee reviewed the verbatim comments in response to questions regarding what SSB should start doing, continue doing, or stop doing. The committee tracked the categories of comments receiving the four highest percentages from quarter to quarter.

OEQ4: What would you like [SSB] to START doing?

COMMENTS	APR-SEP 2009 (103)	OCT-DEC 2009 (40)	JAN-MAR 2010 (50)
Highest	Misc. 35% (39)	Help finding job 48% (19)	Help finding job 30% (15)
2nd	staff improvement 22% (35)	Staff improvements 33%(13)	Staff improvements 30% (15)
3 rd	Help finding job 21% (24)	Misc. 30%(12)	WFC(SSB) related improvements20% (10)
4 th	WFC(SSB) improvements 12% (14)	Education/classes 20%(12)	Provide education/classes 10% (5)

OEQ5: what would you like [SSB] to STOP doing?

COMMENTS	APR-SEP 2009 (89)	OCT-DEC 2009 (31)	JAN-MAR 2010 (51)
Highest	Misc. 54% (51)	Misc 63%(19)	Misc 41% (21)
2 nd	staff issues 18% (17)	Gen. finding job 27%(8)	Gen. Job search issues 29% (15)
3 rd	process issues 6% (6)	Staff issues 27%(8)	Staff issues 18% (9)
4 th	job leads 1% (1)	Process issues 7%(2)	Process issues 10% (5)

OEQ6: what would you like [SSB] to KEEP doing?

COMMENTS	APR-SEP 2009 (115)	OCT-DEC 2009(34)	JAN-MAR 2010(82)
Highest	help finding job 20% (29)	Staff strengths 46%(18)	Staff strengths 23% (19)
2nd	Staff strengths 20% (29)	Help find job 28%(18)	Help finding job 23% (19)
3 rd	misc. 18% (26)	Info and resources 26%(10)	Education/training 17% (14)
4 th	Ed. training/classes 10% (14)	Ed. training/classes 18%(7)	Info and resources 12% (10)

In addition, the members of the committee also read the verbatim comments to determine if trends or issues specific to SSB arise which may not be apparent from these categories. No significant trends were identified from this data, although the committee did note a recurring theme of dissatisfaction with the time it took to get a response back from SSB when a contact was made.

For the complete Customer Satisfaction Survey results see:

http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/About_Us/Customer_Satisfaction/Job_Seeker_Satisfaction/Results_by_Program_5.aspx

Progress on FFY10 Goals and Priorities:

GOAL AND PRIORITY #1: Employment Outcomes—SSB will meet RSA Indicator 1.1 and 1.2. **For FFY2010, SSB did not meet this goal.**

The strategies for meeting this goal are—

1. Each Counseling Supervisor will ensure staff of the WorkForce Development Unit (WDU):
 - a) agree to specific paid closure goals by September 30 of each year for the following year;
 - b) actively participate in all relevant workforce-related activities to ensure customers are provided current, accurate information about employment demands, trends and opportunities; and
 - c) utilize the results of the biannual case file reviews to assess individual training needs to improve staff counseling and placement skills.

A goal of 72 successful employment outcomes for FY2010 was set by the WDU counselors in conjunction with their supervisors. The Workforce Development Unit exceeded this goal by assisting 80 customers to achieve an employment outcome in FY 2010.

2. The SSB marketing and outreach coordinator dedicates 25% of his time to working with WDU staff on targeted VR outreach activities: i.e., presenting information on SSB services at various professional conferences; contacts with community based organizations; mailings to ophthalmologists; etc. Effectiveness will be measured by comparing referrals from FY2007 through FY2009.

In FY2010, examples of support from the SSB marketing and outreach coordinator included representing the WDU Unit in a variety of conferences statewide, supporting the WDU Unit in its targeted outreach to transition students and revising marketing information utilized at the SSB State Fair booth to more specifically reflect the employment aspect of SSB. However, SSB is unable to objectively document the number of referrals in support of this strategy.

3. Analyze data comparing successful and unsuccessful closures to identify any statistically significant differences that may lead to changes in service provision.

Data analysis from the TACE (Training And Continuing Education) program was unable to identify any statistically significant differences in services provided when comparing successful and unsuccessful closures. Additionally, data requested from SSB management by the Successful Closures Task Force of the SRC-B that compared the services provided by those

counselors with the highest number of successful closures to counselors with the lowest number of successful closures did not provide any statistically significant difference. These evaluations led the Task Force to conclude that the difference in closures does not lie in services provided, so the Task Force is waiting for additional information from SSB management relating to review of unsuccessful closures as they occur.

GOAL AND PRIORITY #2: Minority Service Rate—By the end of FFY2010, at least 100 persons from minority backgrounds will exit services annually and SSB will meet RSA Indicator 2.1.

For FFY 2010, 62 persons from minority backgrounds exited services. SSB did not meet RSA Indicator 2.1.

The strategies for meeting this goal are—

1. Carry out the in-service quality training grant plan for training on cultural diversity.

SSB successfully completed the criteria of the quality training grant plan on training in cultural diversity.

2. Provide information to staff on cultural diversity training opportunities and various community cultural events and encourage attendance.

SSB staff are regularly provided with information about training opportunities, cultural events and other activities which would provide additional insight into the unique cultures in Minnesota.

3. The SSB marketing and outreach coordinator will work with SSB WDU staff in outreach activities to Minnesota's community-based organizations representing minority groups, with emphasis on community-based organizations serving African-Americans.

SSB was unable to make progress on this strategy in FFY2010. The strategy was rewritten for FFY2011 to provide additional guidance and objective measures so that the activity could be implemented more accurately and its effectiveness measured.

4. Strengthen relationships between Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs and SSB to enhance mutual understanding of respective programs so that SSB customers are better prepared for employment. Work with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), vendors and other community organizations to develop innovative approaches to effectively serve non-English speaking SSB customers.

SSB developed and implemented two training events during FFY 2010 with the outcome goal of educating attendees on the current approaches to effectively serving non-English speaking SSB customers. These training events were attended by staff from SSB WDU, Minneapolis ABE programs and one Minneapolis CRP.

GOAL AND PRIORITY #3: Deafblind Outreach and Service—Enhance services for persons who have a dual sensory loss, including persons who are deafblind. During FFY2010 at least four individuals with a dual sensory loss will secure employment as a result of SSB services.

For FFY2010, 9 individuals with a dual sensory loss obtained employment. SSB met this goal.

The strategies for meeting this goal are—

1. Continue training opportunities for new staff on understanding deafblindness and competency in serving SSB customers who are deafblind.

During the first three months of their employment, all new WDU staff receive one-on-one training in working with customers who are deafblind from the internal subject matter expert on deafblindness. Additionally, new WDU staff are oriented to the Deafblind Procedures Manual.

2. Design, implement and analyze needs assessment and customer satisfaction surveys administered to each SSB customer with a dual sensory loss or who is deafblind.

In FFY2010, a needs assessment survey was developed and administered to current customers of SSB WDU with a dual sensory loss or deafblind as well as to customers in these categories closed since the last needs assessment survey was completed.

3. To increase and improve communication between deafblind customers and SSB, the DeafBlind Committee of the SRC-B, in cooperation with SSB, will review and revise standard written communications to determine their effectiveness with American Sign Language (ASL) users and develop additional materials as needed.

The DeafBlind Committee of the SRC-B began to review the document “What If My Counselor and I Disagree” for possible revision but determined that developing a viable satisfaction survey instrument was a priority for their work this year.

4. Promote collaborative efforts with other state agencies, which provide services to individuals who are deafblind, so that specific vocational needs, like the need for supported employment, can be met.

SSB continues to work with DeafBlind Services Minnesota (DBSM), Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS), the Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) program and other state agencies as well as a private, non-profit service provider, Employment Endeavors, to develop additional services for individuals who are deafblind. SSB also entered into an Operating Agreement with a second private, non-profit agency to provide employment-related services and supports specifically to individuals who are deafblind.

GOAL AND PRIORITY #4: Increase customer satisfaction with services provided—by the end of FFY2010 the annual overall satisfaction with services provided by SSB will be at or above 85%. (Q1 on the Customer Satisfaction Survey, “What is your overall satisfaction with the services provided?” The scale is from 1 to 10 where “1” means “very dissatisfied” and “10” means “very satisfied”.)

For FFY 2010, the overall annual satisfaction with services provided was 84%. SSB did not meet this goal.

The strategies for meeting this goal are—

1. Customer satisfaction surveys will be administered quarterly to approximately 60 SSB customers as part of the DEED customer satisfaction initiative. The surveys are conducted by an external organization as the result of a competitive process.

This strategy continues to be a regular, integral part of SSB’s analysis of customer satisfaction with the WDU program.

2. SSB and the SRC-B Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee will continue to review and analyze the data on a quarterly basis including specific customer comments.

This strategy continues to be a regular, integral part of SSB’s analysis of customer satisfaction with the WDU program.

3. Based on the analysis of the customer satisfaction survey results, recommendations for program improvements will be brought to SSB and the SRC-B to assure that services are available that meet customer needs.

This strategy continues to be a regular, integral part of SSB’s analysis of customer satisfaction with the WDU program.

GOAL AND PRIORITY #5: Increase the number of referrals of transition-age students to SSB. SSB had no way to objectively measure this goal during FFY 2010.

The strategies for meeting this goal are—

1. Continue working statewide with Special Education teachers, teachers of the blind and visually impaired, and other IEP team members in designated school districts to facilitate regular information meetings with SSB counselors.

SSB continues to invite staff who work with students with a vision impairment to meet annually to exchange information and answer questions about service delivery. Additionally, SSB has accepted the invitation to post relevant information on the listserv hosted by the teachers of the blind and visually impaired.

2. Conduct an annual SSB Information Fair and open house for families, students, and teachers to include presentations about the various programs, informed choice, time for questions and answers and perhaps one-on-one time with counselors and Communication Center staff.

During FFY2010, the WDU Unit attempted to host two Information Fairs. However, the September 2010 Information Fair was cancelled for lack of attendance.

3. Continue to encourage and provide enrichment activities to students in all areas of adjustment to blindness training as part of an employment plan.

WDU counselors continue to implement this strategy with their transition students whenever possible.

GOAL AND PRIORITY #6: Insure every SSB customer has the information needed to make an informed choice in selecting providers for adjustment to blindness training. This goal was met during FFY2010.

During FFY2010 100% of SSB customers attending ATB half time or more will indicate that they were given the opportunity to choose their provider.

The strategies for meeting this goal are—

1. During FFY2010 SSB counselors will complete the “Choosing ATB Training” form with each customer who is considering ATB training. Counselors will ensure that all customers are provided information, in an accessible format, about options for receiving adjustment to blindness services, and strongly encourage each customer to tour each community rehabilitation program. The “Choosing ATB Training” form is signed by the counselor and customer. The customer affirms that they received the information they needed to make an informed choice in the selection of the provider. A copy of the form will be sent to SSB’s State Director, and the information will be compiled and reported semi-annually to the SRC-B.

This strategy continues to be implemented as stated.

2. SSB and the Vendor Outcomes and Measures Committee of the SRC-B developed and implemented a customer satisfaction survey for customers who completed adjustment to blindness training. During FFY2010, each SSB customer will be surveyed six months after completion of adjustment to blindness training or at time of case file closure, whichever comes first. Each month an estimated ten to fifteen customers will be contacted to complete the telephone survey of eighteen questions.

The data gathered from the completed customer satisfaction surveys will be formatted, posted externally on the SSB website, and made available on tape for customer review when selecting a service provider to meet their rehabilitation needs. ATB providers will be able to use the results for

continuous improvement of their services. The results will be reported to the SRC-B and will be used to identify customer needs and areas for service improvements.

This strategy continues to be implemented as stated

3. SSB will continue to require individual vendors who provide training to SSB customers on access and assistive technology to pass a test, developed by SSB staff or an external vendor, on the software programs they wish to teach in order to be on the list of approved vendors. In addition, each individual vendor and CRP trainer must take and pass an adult learning course which was developed for SSB by Century College, a school within the Minnesota State College and University System. That course provides training on learning styles, teaching methods, multiple intelligences, and how to write individualized training plans and learning objectives.

This strategy continues to be implemented as stated. Additionally, during FFY2010, SSB contracted with an external agency to update current tests and develop additional tests which reflect the new software.

GOAL AND PRIORITY #7: All VR staff members new to SSB will receive Introduction to Blindness —Phase 1 and/or Phase 2 training on the essential aspects of blindness and visual impairment.

This goal was met during FFY 2010.

The strategies for meeting this goal are—

1. Supervisory staff will ensure all new VR staff will complete **Introduction to Blindness —Phase 1** training within three months of hire.

This strategy continues to be implemented as stated.

2. Supervisory staff will ensure all new Rehabilitation Counseling staff will complete **Introduction to Blindness—Phase 2** training within three months of hire.

This strategy continues to be implemented as stated.

3. **Introduction to Blindness—Phase 2** training will be discussed with and encouraged for career development for current staff that would otherwise not be required to attend.

This strategy continues to be implemented as stated.

Standards and Indicators

The performance of the WorkForce Development Unit of State Services for the Blind on the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Standards and Indicators for FY2010 follows.

The numbers reported for FFY2010 are unofficial because the information is still being validated. The RSA requires that at least four of the six indicators of Standard 1 must be met. The RSA requires that the State agency meet or exceed at least 2 of the 3 primary indicators.

State Services for the Blind Performance on Standards 1 and 2

Must pass at least 4 of 6 Indicators and 2 of 3 Primary Indicators for Standard 1

Federal Fiscal Year

	2010*	2009	2008	2007
Ind 1.1: Change in employment outcomes(>=0)	-13	-3	-11	-47
Ind 1.2: Percent of employment outcomes (>=68.9%)	50.64%	48.17%	44.38%	46.6%
Ind 1.3: Competitive employment (>=35.4%)	92.40%	98.11%	97.70%	94.05%
Ind 1.4: Significant Disability (>=89.0%)	98.74%	100%	100%	98.85%
Ind 1.5: Earnings ratio (>=.59)	.80	.668	.648	.69
Ind 1.6: Self support (>=30.4)	34.5%	36.54	42.94	43.68
Number of indicators in standard 1 that were passed	4	4	4	4
Number of primary indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 that were passed	3	3	3	3
Ind 2.1 Ratio of Minority to Non-Minority Service Rate (>=.80)**	**	**	**	**

*Not official until approved by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Approval pending at time of publication.

**The ratio of minority to non-minority service rate is not calculated if fewer than 100 persons from minority backgrounds exit the program during the fiscal year.

Minority Outreach Report

Kathleen Hagen – Chair, Connie Lee Berg, Vince LLanas, Sharon Monthei, Fanny Primm, and Ken Trebelhorn. SSB Staff – Pam Brown, Linda Lingen.

CHARGE: This committee exists to recommend specific strategies for increasing and improving services to individuals from minority backgrounds. This committee will provide input to the Customer Satisfaction and Goals and Priorities Committee and the full Council for consideration in the development of annual goals and priorities in conjunction with SSB.

2010 Report

SSB is currently completing a project with Century College and DEED which will put cultural information on the five largest minority populations in Minnesota: Somali, Hmong, Latino, American Indian, and Russian, on the IntraWeb as an on-line course for SSB staff.

During this year, SSB worked with the English Language Learning (ELL) programs in the Twin Cities to understand what these programs provide to immigrants/refugees and how SSB can partner with them in assisting our customers with visual impairments to effectively learn English. Two training opportunities were provided to WDU staff to learn more about the ELL programs.

During one of these training sessions, WDU staff were also provided with an introductory session on the use of spoken language interpreters in meetings and in ATB training.

SSB in its outreach efforts was present as an exhibitor and/or presenter at the following events:

- The Hmong Resource Fair, held in October.
- SSB staff presented at a Collaborative Disability Awareness Conference at the Shooting Star Conference Center in Mahanomen, MN, held in June, 2010. This conference was sponsored by the White Earth Vocational Rehabilitation Program.
- SSB participated in the Twin Cities World Refugee Day held in June, 2010, in Minneapolis. This is a Resource Fair which brings together community organizations serving refugee and non-refugee persons in areas such as education, employment, health and housing.

The committee members worked on revising the strategies for meeting Goal #2 on the SRC-B work plan. Goal #2 states: Increase the number of individuals served. Priority 2.1 relates to the Minority Service Rate. This priority states: “By the end of FFY2011, SSB will meet RSA Indicator 2.1 as follows: The ratio of customers from the minority population exiting after receiving services under an IPE to all customers from the minority population exiting will exceed 80% of the same ratio calculated for customers from the non-minority population. Current (FFY2009) performance level is 69.9%”. The revised strategies for this goal were unanimously accepted by the SRC-B at their August 2010 meeting.

Vendor Outcomes and Measures Committee

Tom Scanlan--Chair, Michael Malver, Ken Trebelhorn. SSB staff—Jennifer Beilke..

CHARGE: This committee exists to support and advise SSB regarding measuring the outcomes realized by the recipients of training in adjustment to blindness and technology. This committee will provide input to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and the full Council for consideration in the development of annual goals and priorities in conjunction with SSB.

2010 Report

Last year the committee continued the survey of 20 items given to each SSB customer after completing specific training with a vendor. Since the population base is relatively small in statistical terms, especially for a single vendor, the committee was concerned that the highest return possible is needed. The company surveying for the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee (Strategic Research Group) also surveys for this committee. That provides the maximum response rate by contacting people at night as well as during the day.

The survey results are published in a semiannual report covering 12 months of activity. This report contains extensive tables for each vendor meeting the minimum statistical requirements for meaningful results.

The committee and other council members became concerned about the complexity and volume of the full table-laden report. As a result, the committee also produced a condensed report with just explanatory text and a summary of vendor ratings according to skill area. This report can be used as an introduction to the full report to narrow focus on the desired training.

Both reports are available in print, braille, audio, and the SSB website so that all customers, SSB staff, vendors, and the public have access to the results.

The data collected showed good customer satisfaction, but some areas of training need improvement. The best results were achieved in travel and computer. The areas that were weakest in the results were for challenging the student, increasing self confidence, and reading/writing braille.

SSB management continued to provide full support for the survey.

DeafBlind Committee

Lynette Boyer--Chair, Jamie Taylor, Joni Anderson, Michael O'Reilly, Kim Williams. SSB staff—Natasha Lemler, Pam Brown, and Linda Lingen.

CHARGE: This committee exists to support and advise SSB regarding its services to individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired. This committee will provide input to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and the full Council for consideration in the development of annual goals and priorities in conjunction with SSB.

2010 Report

Note: (The following is a message from the Chair of the DeafBlind Committee, not only summarizing the efforts of her committee, but acknowledging the cooperation of staff and the DeafBlind Community.)

My report starts off with a big hello and a huge thank you to all the DeafBlind Committee for their hard work last year. At the conclusion of last year's DB Committee we had just decided to work on an ASL draft of the "What if my counselor and I disagree document" both in a simplified English for our ASL users and a more revised version for our hard of hearing users. We voted at our very first meeting to get it approved. However, realizing time constraints we needed to focus in on the DB survey that was shared with us by the Goals and Priorities committee. We solicited help from Natasha Lemler, Pam Brown and Linda Lingen to come up with some ideas from that last Customer Satisfaction & goals and priorities survey and requested if it would possibly follow that same format like the one 3 years ago. After some lengthy discussions we came to the conclusion it needed some work. We started to revise this document, after a few meetings we narrowed it down to how the survey would be conducted and finalized the questions that would be in the survey. We did not complete the revisions until the end of the year in May 2010.

I feel confident that we have a working document that will allow the DB population to understand clearly the survey and that SSB has hope that everyone will feel comfortable sharing their experiences about the services they received from SSB. Again a big thanks to all of you who helped create and implement that new revised survey and hopefully now we can start working on the document "What if my counselor and I disagree" document for 2010 -2011. I am excited about working with the DeafBlind committee for the 10-11 fiscal years. Thank you again for allowing me to serve State Services for the Blind and help play a small role in accomplishing meeting their goals to better serve the DeafBlind citizens of our wonderful state.

Senior Services Committee

Joyce Scanlan--Chair, Amy Baron, RoseAnn Faber, Harry Krueger, Larry Lura, Coralmae (Coke) Stenstrom, Frances Whetstone. SSB staff—Lyle Lundquist, Richard Strong, Sue Crancer.

CHARGE: The Senior Services Committee exists to assist State Services for the Blind improve and expand services to blind, visually impaired, or Deafblind Minnesotans who are not interested in employment. The majority of this group is seniors. These customers face significant barriers to independence, but they can benefit from services which help maintain or increase their independence. Activities include identifying unmet needs, recommending services necessary to meet these needs and identifying strategies to remove or reduce barriers to their independence.

2010 Report

The seven members of the Senior Services Unit committee held regular meetings at 3:00 on the afternoon of the same days the SRC-B met so that our members could attend both meetings. Committee meetings were well attended, and participation was enthusiastic and meaningful. With two new members, we took a few minutes to introduce ourselves to one another.

We greatly appreciated the information presented by SSB staff at our meetings. The video prepared for nursing home staff working with seniors who are dealing with loss of eyesight was well received and given high praise as a training tool. The committee received regular reports on the financial status of the SSU. We also reviewed the 28-page guide outlining SSU services available to customers designed for use by staff. The committee was kept updated on the progress of the work being done on the SSB administrative rule.

All members of the SSU committee are well aware of the fact that our specific issues are not at a high priority level for the SRC-B, despite the fact that the SSU serves the largest number of customers within SSB, and the SRC-B's primary concern is with federally-funded programs; and the services of the SSU are available largely through state funds. We also know that whenever funds are scarce, it is always the SSU services or staff which takes the cuts. Nevertheless, the members of the SSU committee have committed themselves to making certain that senior blind do not lose services due to reduced funding. We are ready to take whatever steps are necessary to inform relevant officials of the importance of senior services in ensuring the continued independence of those experiencing loss of eyesight.

Transition Committee

Liz Bruber- Chair, Jan Bailey, Pat Barrett, Joan Breslin-Larson, Diane Dohnalik, Rebecca Kragnes, SSB Staff-Pam Brown, Mary Kolles.

Charge: This committee provides specific advice and counsel regarding services to transition-age youth (ages 14 – 21). This committee will provide input to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and the full Council for consideration in the development of annual goals and priorities in conjunction with SSB, and will monitor those goals and priorities throughout the year.

2010 Report

The Transition Committee's focus is to collaborate with the Workforce Development Unit to identify opportunities in assisting blind, visually impaired and DeafBlind youth to gain job experience during their transition years. It is the aspiration of the Transition Committee, with the aid of Teachers of the blind, visually impaired and DeafBlind and the Resource Center of the Minnesota Department of Education, that we can give advice and guidance to SSB counselors on how to assist blind, visually impaired and DeafBlind teenagers find their first employment opportunity.

Communication Center Committee

Steve Jacobson-Chair, Liz Bruber, Joan Breslin-Larson, Catherine Durivage, Rebecca Kragnes, Jennifer Oliphant, Carla Steinbring, Andy Virden, and Jeffrey West.

Charge: The Communication Center Advisory Committee exists to help State Services for the Blind (SSB) improve and expand the services of the Communication Center for blind and visually impaired persons. Committee membership includes representatives of the following: Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library; Resource Center for the Blind /Visually Impaired (Department of Education);

teachers of the blind and visually impaired; representatives from colleges/universities; and consumers at large.

2010 Report

The product of this committee is a report to the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind containing specific strategies for increasing and improving Communication Center services. During FFY 2010 the Communication Center Committee met four times to receive updates and offer input on the projects, staffing changes, and other on-going work of the Communication Center.

Listed below are highlights and accomplishments of the Communication Center in FFY 2010:

- Evolution of Textbook Production – Work has been completed permitting the production of audio books in the DAISY format. This format allows students to navigate recorded material similarly to what can be done with a hard-copy book, providing direct access to specific pages, sections and chapters. Books can be distributed on CD's and still on cassette. Work is being done to make textbooks available on cartridges which are compatible with the new National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) Digital Talking Book cartridges. Almost all volunteers have now received training and can produce books using this new technology. The Communication Center is now also authorized to receive National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) files from the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC) taking advantage of the availability of textbooks in electronic format. This reduces the need for manually copying in braille or scanning texts allowing volunteers to concentrate on formatting.
- Support of National Library Service Functions – The Communication Center is the agency in Minnesota that distributes and repairs the equipment used to read books from the National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. During the past year, a new Digital Talking Book player has been introduced which has resulted in significant increase in this activity. The Communication Center has distributed over 3,600 new NLS digital talking book players.
- Radio Talking Book Receivers – The new digital radio talking book receivers were received from the manufacturer, and distribution has begun in targeted areas of the state.
- Modernization of the Radio Talking Book Service – This work has permitted greater automation of broadcasts. Overnight broadcasting now makes use of the new system reducing overall costs. Also being developed are approaches for more flexible listening options for users. Programs are now archived and can be retrieved through a secure web site.
- Braille Production - Huge numbers of print pages were converted to braille to support Minnesota students in K-12 and in post-secondary institutions. Over 700,000 braille pages were produced directly or distributed from other sources during this year. This effort has a strong effect on the quality of education of blind Minnesotans and ultimately their potential for employment.
- NFB Newsline® and Dial-in News Service Improvements - In response to requests of consumers, the Communication Center added procedures to more quickly identify interruption of Newsline or Dial-in News in 2009. During the current year, the Advisory Committee continued to monitor the

results of these changes and noted significant improvements.

- Dial-in News and NFB Newsline® Expansion – Additional user interface enhancements such as additional and clearer voices have been added to these services.
- Annual Volunteer Recognition Events - The Communication Center conducted the annual volunteer recognition events to applaud the work of nearly 700 volunteers that make possible much of the work of the Communication Center. This year the major event honoring current volunteers was a wonderful buffet and entertainment on Nicollet Island. Over 300 volunteers and their guests were present for this event. This event was sponsored by the Hamm Family Fund at the St. Paul Foundation.
- National and International Involvement - During the year staff and committee members were involved in a number of national and international activities including: the DAISY consortium, National Braille Association, Braille Authority of North America, and the International Association of Audio Information Services. In addition, the Communication Center is continuing to consult with representatives of the People's Republic of China as they work to establish a Radio Talking Book service in that country. These efforts reflect continued leadership by staff members and Communication Center Committee members.
- Staff Changes – During the past fiscal year, new staff members assumed critical roles. In particular, the transition to new leadership of the Braille and Audio Sections was successfully completed.

Appendices

Appendix I Council Members

Member

Jan Bailey

Connie Lee Berg

Lynette Boyer

Joan Breslin-Larson

Elizabeth Bruber

Steven Ditschler

*Term began October 2010

Kathleen Hagen

*Term began October 2010

Steve Jacobson

Rebecca Kragnes

Michael Malver

Jeff Mihelich

*Term began October 2010

Felix Raymond Montez

*Term began October 2010

Fannie Primm

Craig Roisum

*Term began October 2010

Judy Sanders, Chair

Tom Scanlan

Coralmae Stenstrom

Richard Strong

Jamie Taylor

*Term began October 2010

Kenneth Trebelhorn

Vacant

Jeffrey West

Lisa Vala

*Term began October 2010

Representing

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Project

Deafblind Community

MN Department of Education, Special Education

Parent of Blind Child

Governor's Workforce Development Council

Client Assistance Project

Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Disability Advocacy Group

Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Disability Advocacy Group

Business, Industry, and Labor

Business, Industry, and Labor

Business, Industry, and Labor

Statewide Independent Living Council

Disability Advocacy Group

Disability Advocacy Group

Director, State Services for the Blind

Deafblind Community

Community Rehabilitation Program

Parent Training and Information Center

Business, Industry, and Labor

Parent of Blind Child

**STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
FOR THE BLIND
MEMBERS
FFY 2009**



Picture

Back Row: Richard Strong, Tom Scanlan, Steven Ditschler, Jeffrey West, Kenneth Trebelhorn, Craig Roisum, Coralmae (Coke) Stenstrom.

Front Row: Jan Bailey, Fannie Primm, Judy Sanders, Jeff Mihelich, Kathleen Hagen, Steve Jacobson, Lisa Vala.

Not Pictured: Connie Lee Berg, Lynette Boyer, Joan Breslin-Larson, Elizabeth Bruber, Rebecca Kragnes, Michael Malver, Felix Raymond Montez, Jamie Taylor.

Appendix II Council Work Plan FFY2010

State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

2009 – 2010 Work Plan

June-2009

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee reports progress to the Council on achievement of goals and priorities.

Standing Committees report to the full Council.*

Review and act on report of the Task Force on Council Committee Structure. The Chair notifies members and the public at large in writing of the July 15 deadline to submit applications for committees.

The Budget Task Force meets and makes recommendations at the August meeting for the resource plan for next fiscal year. A written report is due to SSB by July 15

July-2009

Applications for committee appointments must be submitted to the Council chair or SSB designee by July 15.

August-2009

The Budget Task Force makes recommendations for the resource plan for next fiscal year. The Council acts on the recommended resource plan.

Standing Committees report to the full Council.*

The Chair, with Council approval, appoints Council committee members and chairs.

The Annual Report Task Force, consisting of committee chairs, will begin its work.

The Chair, with Council approval, appoints a Coordinating Councils Task Force to address the federal requirement of collaboration. The Task Force determines the councils appropriate for coordination and the methods to be used to carry out that coordination in keeping with the requirement in the Rehabilitation Act.

The Chair, with Council approval, appoints a Needs Assessment Task Force.

September-2009

Chair reminds the Annual Report Task Force members to submit their section of the annual report to SSB by 10/15.

October-2009

The Chair reports on member terms and current and upcoming vacancies.

Standing Committees report to the full Council.*

November-2009

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee reviews preliminary VR effectiveness data.

The Annual Report Task Force delivers draft Annual Report, including the Report on the Effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, to SSB by 11/6.

SSB sends draft of Annual Report, including the Report on the Effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, to Council members by 11/20 as part of the Council packet to ensure action at December meeting.

December-2009

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee reports progress to Council on achievement of goals and priorities.

The Council approves Annual Report and the Report on the Effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

The Annual Report, including the Report on the Effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, are produced for distribution by December 31.

Standing Committees report to the full Council.*

The Chair, with Council approval, appoints a task force to review the Council's annual work plan.

The Chair reminds committees to review goals and priorities during January. Committees provide any recommendations to the Customer Satisfaction & the Goals and Priorities Committee by February 10.

January-2010

All committees assess progress on goals and priorities relevant to their committee and submit recommendations to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee by February 10.

February-2010

The Coordinating Councils Task Force provides feedback on their activities to the Council.

Standing Committees report to the full Council.*

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and SSB begin drafting goals and priorities for next federal fiscal year.

The Council elects Chair and Vice Chair.

The Chair, with Council approval, appoints a Budget Task Force to get update on current status of expenditures and to propose any necessary refinements in the Resource Plan for the current fiscal year at the April SRC-B meeting.

The Chair, with Council approval, appoints a task force to review the SRC-B New Member Orientation Packet and make updates if needed.

The Work Plan Task Force reports on revisions to the annual work plan for Council approval.

Client Assistance Project annual report.

March-2010

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and SSB provide a joint draft of the goals and priorities to the Council by March 13.

The draft goals and priorities will be distributed to the Council as part of the Council packet to ensure action at the April meeting.

April-2010

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and SSB present goals and priorities for next federal fiscal year for joint approval. The federal fiscal year begins October 1.

The Budget Task Force makes recommendations for any necessary changes to the Resource Plan for the current fiscal year.

Standing Committees report to the full Council.*

The Chair, with Council approval, appoints a Task Force on Council Committee Structure to review committee structure and report recommendations on changes necessary at the June SRC-B meeting.

In even numbered years, the Council, in partnership with SSB, agrees on a pool of impartial hearing officers.

The Needs Assessment Task Force submits a written or oral report on their progress.

May-2010

The task force on Council Committee Structure meets to review the committee structure and propose changes to the Council.

* Standing Committees:

- Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee
- Vendor Outcomes and Measures Committee
- Minority Outreach Committee
- DeafBlind Committee
- Senior Services Committee
- The Child Committee
- Communication Center Committee

Appendix III Federal Standards and Indicators

Standard 1:

For any given year, calculations for indicators 1.1 through 1.6 for Designated State Units that exclusively serve individuals with visual impairments or blindness are based on aggregated data for the current year and the prior year, i.e., two years of data (34 CFR §361.81(4)). The Designated State Unit must pass four of the six indicators in Standard 1 and must pass two of the three primary indicators (1.3 to 1.5).

Indicator 1.1

The number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current performance period compared to the number of individuals who exit the VR program after achieving an employment outcome during the previous performance period.

Required Performance Level: DSUs performance in current period must equal or exceed performance in previous period.

Indicator 1.2

Of all individuals who exit the VR program after receiving services, the percentage who are determined to have achieved an employment outcome.

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is 55.8%; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 68.9%.

Indicator 1.3

Of all individuals determined to have achieved an employment outcome, the percentage who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or business enterprise program (BEP) employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage.

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is 72.6%; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 35.4%.

Indicator 1.4

Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the percentage who are individuals with significant disabilities.

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is 62.4%; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 89.0%.

Indicator 1.5

The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage as a ratio to the State's average hourly earnings for all individuals in the State who are employed (as derived from the

Bureau of Labor Statistics report “State Average Annual Pay” for the most recent available year).

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is a ratio of .52; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the ratio is .59.

Indicator 1.6

Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the difference between the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of economic support at the time they exit the VR program and the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of support at the time they apply for VR services.

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is an arithmetic difference of 53.0; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is a difference of 30.4.

Standard 2:

If a DSU had fewer than 100 individuals from a minority background exit the VR program during the reporting period, the DSU must describe the policies it has adopted or will adopt and the steps it has taken or will take to ensure that individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds have equal access to VR services, in lieu of calculating the ratio described below (34 CFR §361.86(b)(2)(iii)).

Indicator 2.1

The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from non-minority backgrounds.

Required Performance Level: All agencies must attain a ratio level of .80.