

Case File Review Report - 2020

Division of Rehabilitation Services

Introduction:

A case file review was conducted on the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program on June 1-5, 2020. The purpose of the review was to identify areas we need to improve upon, detect training needs, recognize strengths, improve consistency between offices, and assure compliance with federal and state policies.

The case file review experienced several changes this year including the introduction of electronic files via FileDirector, a targeted review looking at unsuccessful and currently open cases to assess for client engagement, and a remote review due to social distancing requirements of COVID-19. Overall, the changes were received well by reviewers and good feedback was given as to how to improve the review for next year based on the changes made this year. The review instrument used was the case file review questionnaire incorporated into DH96VRFACES.

Due to all the changes, fewer cases were reviewed and more reviewers were reviewing cases to allow adequate time to review the cases while navigating a new case file system and remote reviewing. To increase simplicity of the review, cases were selected from the past year only to ensure that most cases had been scanned into the electronic case file system. Due to this, some counselors had few cases reviewed due to their longevity with the division, which will be noted in the results. A total of 224 open, closed due to client not wanting to continue services, and closed due to losing contact with the client cases were selected. The cases were open and closed cases approximately during State Fiscal Year 2020.

Of the 223 cases selected for review, 239 were reviewed (98.2%). Due to the targeted nature of the review, two cases were removed due to being closed successfully from the time of case selection to the time of case review

Reviewers:

Nineteen staff from DRS assisted with this review and each reviewed an average of 10 case files. The reviewers are identified below:

State Office – Eric Weiss, Bernie Grimme, Jordan Trumbo, Jessica Hovland
Aberdeen – Laura Stoltenburg, Mike Hauge, Corinna Alander
Brookings – Sylvia Buboltz, Sarah, Lesnar, Shaun Erchens
Rapid City – Ronda Lynch, Christine Gingras, Merrilee Miller
Sioux Falls – Vicki Nelson, Deb Brinkman, Emily Rudnik
Yankton – Jennifer Trenhaile, Jessica Sehnert, Steve Resick
19 Reviewers Total

Review Instrument:

The case file review instrument had multiple revisions in the last review. The case file review instrument focuses on the main areas of the VR case process: application, eligibility, IPE, services provided, and case closure. In addition, during the review process, reviewers identified areas of inconsistency and areas of attention that the VR program needs to consider.

Case File Review Findings:

Percentages less than 90% are identified as needing improvement. **Readers should also take into consideration the validity of the results when the percent is based on a total less than 50.**

Application

All 219 cases were reviewed for application criteria. The questions in this section check to make sure that the signed application is retained in the case file and that the date of application is correctly recorded on the VR case management system. The ratings for this section were positive and did not raise concerns/needs for improvement.

	Question	Yes	No	N/A	Percent
1.01	FileDirector contains a completed and signed copy of the application.	218	1		99.5%
1.02	The application date on VRFACES matches the application date on the form or the date stamped by the VR office upon receipt.	212	7		96.8%

Eligibility

All 219 cases were reviewed for eligibility and checked for the eligibility or ineligibility criteria. It should be noted that questions 2.01 to 2.04 deal with eligibility criteria. Not scoring a 100% on questions 2.01 to 2.04 does not reflect that DRS is serving individuals who were ineligible but instead that the case file did not maintain current or adequate documentation.

Out of the 219 cases, 219 were determined eligible for VR services due to the targeted nature of our review. Of those, 211 (96.3%) were determined in 60 days or less. This does not mean that the remaining cases were out of compliance as extensions may have been done.

The average number of days from application to eligibility was 26.32 days. In the previous review, the average time from application to eligibility for all new eligibilities was 30 days.

	Question	Yes	No	N/A	Percent
2.01	FileDirector contains documentation for a correct determination of a physical or mental impairment.	216	3		98.6%
2.02	FileDirector contains documentation for a correct determination that the impairment results in a substantial impediment to employment.	219	0		100%
2.03	FileDirector contains documentation for a correct determination that the individual requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.	219	0		100%
2.04	FileDirector contains documentation for a correct determination that the individual can benefit from VR services.	218	1		99.5%
2.05	All eligibility certificates (initial and revised) are signed and in FileDirector.	210	9		95.9%

	Question	Yes	No	N/A	Percent
2.06	Upon receipt of evidence that the applicant received SSI or SSDI, presumptive eligibility was completed within 5 working days (or 14 days if the case does not reflect the actual date SSA verification was received).	87	4	128	95.6%
2.07	If the eligibility was not completed within 60 days of application, an eligibility extension was completed and signed by both the individual and counselor (for eligibility extensions after July 2017).	19	2	198	90.5%
2.08	The eligibility date on VRFACES matches the date on the initial eligibility certificate in the FileDirector.	213	6		97.3%
2.09	The individual's primary and secondary impairment, if applicable, and cause code(s) are correctly recorded.	211	8		96.3%
2.10	For cases determined eligible, the eligibility letter was sent to the individual.	218	1		99.5%
2.11	The case record documents that the case was assigned the appropriate priority category based on the severity of the individual's disability.	211	8		96.3%

Individualized Plan for Employment

A total of 182 cases were reviewed for the development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The average length of time between eligibility and IPE for the reviewed cases was 47.41 days. In the previous review, the average length of time between eligibility and initial plans completed that year was 54 days.

Of the 182 cases reviewed, 170 (93.4%) were completed within 90 days or less. IPEs are to be done within 90 days or an extension is to be approved by the client.

	Question	Yes	No	N/A	Percent
3.01	A comprehensive assessment was adequately completed to determine the client's rehabilitation needs.	181	1		99.5%
3.02	The IPE was completed within 90 days or an extension was agreed upon by the client and VR counselor.	179	3	0	98.3%
3.03	The client's employment goals are specific and justified by supporting documentation.	178	4		97.8%
3.04	All services planned on the IPE are consistent with achieving the employment goal listed on the plan.	181	1		99.5%
3.05	The IPE includes all services necessary to achieve the employment outcome.	181	1		99.5%
3.06	Comparable services and benefits were considered, used, and properly documented on the plan(s).	181	1		99.5%
3.07	The individual and a qualified VR counselor signed the completed, final plan(s).	172	10		94.5%

	Question	Yes	No	N/A	Percent
3.08	All IPE signature dates on VRFACES match the signature dates on the IPEs in the FileDirector.	168	14		92.3%
3.09	Annual Reviews were completed in accordance with policy.	181	1		99.5%
3.10	For supported employment cases, the Identification of Extended Services section of the IPE was completed and the supported employment checkbox marked.	36	3	143	92.3%
3.11	Any measurable skill gain recorded on VRFACES has the necessary supporting documentation in the FileDirector.	174	8		95.6%

Services Provided

A total of 152 cases were reviewed for the category of Services Provided. Only cases with dollars spent for services were reviewed in this section. Findings in this section are mostly related to documentation practices for maintenance, post-secondary, benefit services, and repossession agreements.

	Question	Yes	No	N/A	Percent
4.01	The services provided are listed on the IPE, or the cost of the service was than \$200.00 and needed to complement an existing service.	149	3		98%
4.02	There are no significant differences between the units of services and timelines on the IPE and the actual services delivered.	152	0		100%
4.03	Services such as maintenance and transportation were well-documented, justified, and necessary to the employment goal if provided.	50	2	100	96.2%
4.04	All services are pre-authorized.	150	2		98.7%
4.05	Financial Needs was completed correctly if needed.	147	5		96.7%
4.06	If the individual was required to participate in the cost of services as identified from Financial Needs, their contribution was documented in the Planned Services section of the IPE.	14	0	138	100%
4.07	If the individual was attending postsecondary, VR form 336 was completed correctly and in the file.	10	1	0	90.9%
4.08	If the individual participated in Project Skills, the monthly reports were completed by the school as required.	27	0	0	100%
4.09	If the individual utilized an employment services provider, appropriate progress reports or feedback was provided.	85	2	65	97.7%
4.10	VR services were provided in a timely manner or delays were justified and well-documented.	149	3		98%
4.11	A Plan for Sustaining Employment was offered or completed with a provider for Ticket to Work cases.	5	0	147	100%

	Question	Yes	No	N/A	Percent
4.12	The VR Counselor or a benefit specialist offered or provided benefits counseling services for SSA beneficiaries.	54	7	91	88.5%
4.13	If equipment over \$500 was purchased, the Repossession Agreement (DHS-VR-338) was completed, signed, and retained in the case file.	1	1	150	50%
4.14	If the client failed to complete a training program or left employment for which the equipment was obtained before successful case closure, the counselor retrieved the items or completed an AT referral to DakotaLink to pick up an electronic devices.	8	1	143	88.8%

Closure

A total of 151 cases were reviewed for the category of all case closures. Of these, 2 cases were successful closures (closed successfully between time of case selection and review), 149 were cases closed in other statuses.

	Question	Yes	No	N/A	Percent
5.01	The reason for closure is correct and appropriate.	149	2		98.7%
5.02	The individual was informed that their case was closed.	149	2		98.7%
5.03	The SSI and SSDI statues were recorded correctly on the Special Programs, Intake, and Closure pages for SSA beneficiaries.	78	8	65	90.6%
5.04	The information on the closure page is recorded correctly and the case file has the correct closure information.	143	8		94.7%
5.05	If determined ineligible, the case file documents the appropriate ineligibility reason and contains an ineligibility certificate.	0	0	0	100%
5.08	The individual achieved the planned or a closely related employment outcome resulting in competitive, integrated employment.	2	0		100%
5.09	VR services provided substantially contributed to the individual's achievement of the employment outcome.	2	2		50%
5.10	The client and counselor knew of and jointly agreed to the case closure.	2	0		100%
5.11	The start date of employment is verifiable through supporting documentation, such as a pay stub, provider verification from a monthly report, or employment questionnaire.	2	0		100%
5.12	The wages and hours for the employment record are recorded correctly and verifiable through supporting documentation.	2	0		100%
5.13	A Plan for Sustaining Employment was offered or completed with a provider for Ticket to Work cases.	0	0	2	100%

Overall Ratings

Acceptable ratings were received in the areas of quality of the counselor's service record documentation; level of contact between counselor and clients; and the counselor's counseling and guidance services provided throughout the case. The individual's level of participation had the lowest ratings in this section.

	Question	Above Standard	Standard	Below Standard	N/A
6.01	Overall, how would you describe the service record documentation?	23.5%	61.5%	7.3%	.1%
6.02	Overall, how would you describe the level of contact initiated by the counselor?	22%	68.8%	9.2%	0%
6.03	Overall, how would you describe the individual's level of participation in the VR process?	22.2%	65.6%	32.1%	0%
6.04	Overall, how would you describe the counselor's counseling and guidance services throughout the VR process?	20.2%	64.2%	6.4%	9.2%

Recommendations:

Below is a summary of various recommendations and changes. It is important to understand that many cases selected for the review are older cases with documentation and services prior to trainings and policy changes.

1. Changes to Review Process for next year to accommodate changes for FileDirector and Remote Review
 - To Provide to Staff
 - List of what staff are in what offices to look people up on FileDirector.
 - Make sure that we have the what goes where in FileDirector list for searching FD
 - Sending out list of cases to check for scanning earlier-shouldn't be much of a problem next year anyway.
 - BIT Tickets to be Completed
 - Extend guest access for CFR assignments
 - Fix Save Incomplete option
 - Fix CFR Case Upload
2. Edits to the case file review instrument are necessary, including:
 - Section 1
 - No changes recommended
 - 1.02 changed to inquire about correct documentation of SSI/SSDI Status at Intake
 - Section 2
 - Order of Section 2 questions for ease of review
 - Combination of Questions 2.1-2.4
 - Section 3
 - 3.11 needs to have "NA" option added.
 - Other questions to clarify MSG Documentation were added from test questions
 - Section 4
 - 4.12-Benefit Specialist question, moving and changing rewording for open cases.
 - Moved to Closed Cases Section for clarity

- 4.14-Do we even have this happening? And is it worth asking? Should they be removed so we can focus on other things
 - Determined this is needed for SBVI Review
- Section 5
 - Add question to “closure” about if closed case on FACES was also closed in FD
 - Clarify what exactly needs to be documented correctly for SSI/SSDI status at closure
 - Reworded question and help
 - 5.04 Help “Was the correct documentation as shown on the VR FACES Manual - Closure Note: the closure letter needs to be printed signed, and placed in the case file for 26 and 28 closures as these are amendments to the IPE. **Were SSI and SSDI amounts recorded correctly?”**
- Section 6
 - Struggles with subjective questions
 - People not understanding rating
 - Changed to narrative responses only
 - Added questions from “test” document about client engagement
- Make sure “help” buttons are more helpful!
 - 2.06-Question about presumptive within five days
 - Clarified Help
 - 4.05-Question about financial need being completed mark yes if done but not needed
 - 4.11-Clarify how to answer about PSE if case is still open
- **These changes have been made to the CFR instrument for next year and will be made to FACES in preparation for next years review.**

3. Clarification in policy/training will be provided on

- Items with Below 90% due to lack of cases reviewed on this topic
- Will check on next year’s review
 - Repossession Process
 - Services contributing to outcome
 - Documentation of wage information
- Providing services to individuals with mental illness, how can we improve this?
- Client engagement, communicating with parents/client when parents/guardians involved
- **Benefit Specialist Services and when it should be offered and how it should be documented**
 - **Covered in Documentation Training**
- **Recording of SSI/SSDI Wages**
 - **Covered in Documentation Training**
- **Recording Comparable Benefits for Project Skills Plans with School Match**
 - **Covered in Documentation Training**
- **Documentation for Eligibilities (what do all the sections really need to look like) and when a revised eligibility is or isn’t needed**

- **Covered in Documentation Training**
 - **Clarifying when to use Closure Reasons “No Longer Interested” versus “Lost Contact”**
 - **Covered in Documentation Training**
 - **SA as assessments-doesn't require financial need, doesn't need to be on plan, but can be**
 - **Covered in Documentation Training**
 - **Appropriate case note documentation**
 - **Covered in Documentation Training**
4. Other topics that arose during CFR that require additional conversation include
- How we document MSG's in FACES and improving it for easier review
 - History of MSG's and type of supporting documentation being used
 - Addressing Supported Employment Specifically for youth
 - Making sure all services that could benefit client are offered/provided
 - Expediting process for people who just need assistance with job, not career