

Goals and Priorities for SSB Services PY 2024-2025

Goal 1: Improve Partnerships

Increase interagency coordination with local and state workforce partners so individuals who are blind, low vision, and DeafBlind, and employers have a customer-centric, positive experience no matter which “door” they enter. The basis for this goal/priority is SSB’s Evolve: VR Initiative.

Strategies:

A. Implement an outreach and training campaign that increases the relationships and engagement between Community Partners and SSB staff, so customers quickly receive needed services by:

- Building a Community Partner Search Tool in WF1 so staff can quickly locate service providers.
- Hosting regularly scheduled Community Partner and WDU staff training sessions that focus on a certain service type and inviting partners who provide that service to introduce themselves and their services.
- Developing a schedule to regularly engage with Workforce partners to remind and educate them about how best to work with, and refer individuals to, SSB.

B. Develop and nurture old and new partnerships with entities that represent underserved groups, including:

- organizations that serve veterans,
- communities of color,
- English language learners
- Tribal communities,
- individuals with severe and persistent mental illness,

- justice involved individuals,
- individuals with complex and significant disabilities, and
- immigrants and refugees.

C. Develop a universal application and process by:

- Creating a digital, accessible referral process that quickly and easily connects customers to a WDU staff.
- Designing an electronic application that is easy to complete and deliver to WDU staff.

D. Further advance and support the E1MN framework by:

- Hiring a Multiple Systems and Pathways Navigator that works with students with significant disabilities, families, educators, and others in navigating the complex employment services program (including waiver services).
- Training identified staff in becoming benefits planning experts that can help individuals who are receiving benefits understand the implications of employment (both positive and negative) on their financial situation.
- Pre-ETS Coordinator delegates counselors to serve on regional E1MN teams who meet quarterly with representatives from the general agency, local school districts, and county case workers. This allows teams to build partnerships and implement the framework locally.

Goal 2: Increase the Workforce Participation Rate

Build relationships with businesses that lead to career opportunities with family sustaining wages for individuals who are blind, low vision, and DeafBlind. It is recognized that services prior to job placement in the individuals plan may include internships and work opportunities that build a work foundation which leads to meaningful and career path employment. The basis for this goal/priority is SSB's Evolve: VR Initiative.

Strategies:

A. Redesign how we prepare job seekers and connect them with vacancies by implementing the Rapid Placement Model that places customers into their chosen field as quickly as possible by:

- Reimagining WDU's employment services model so the framework meets the needs of customers, businesses, and staff.
- Establishing a system and process that connects customers to vacancies quickly and efficiently.
- Better utilizing the WF1 Talent Pool page so job leads are easily shared with customers.
- Engaging fully with E1MN to develop and use relationships with long-term support providers to accelerate customers transition to those supports.

Goal 3: Focus Activating Overlooked Workers

Create an agency that better meets the needs of the current and emerging workforce, including improving services to new Americans, underrepresented communities, and veterans. The basis for this goal/priority is SSB's Evolve: VR Initiative.

Strategies:

A. Develop new, and nurture existing partnerships with entities that represent underserved groups, including:

- Organizations that serve veterans
- Communities of color
- English Language Learners
- Tribal communities
- Individuals with severe and persistent mental illness
- Justice involved individuals

- Individuals with complex and significant disabilities
- Immigrants and refugees

Goal 4: Marketing Work Ready Individuals to Employers

Identify and implement innovative and evidence-based practices, and service-delivery approaches so that individuals with disabilities have the same opportunities in the labor market as everyone else. The basis for this goal/priority is SSB's Evolve: VR Initiative.

Strategies;

- A.** Utilize all available opportunities to encourage eligible employers to use the Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund for potential and existing employees with disabilities.
- B.** Develop and launch a public outreach and engagement campaign using multiple modes of communication to broadcast to employers that hiring blind, low vision, and DeafBlind people is essential to solving their workforce shortages.
- C.** Create a Rapid and Continuous Engagement framework so customers can begin receiving services quickly and sustain their momentum while they are engaged in services. This framework may include:
 - Rapid Eligibility Model
 - Rapid Assessment Model