

Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center on Program Evaluation & Quality Assurance (PEQA)



The Stout Technical Assistance Center-Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (SVRI-PEQA) is established under a grant from the Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) award number PR#H263B150004.



U.S. Department of Education

PEQA Partners

UW-Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI)

University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison)

Michigan State University (MSU)

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
(CSAVR)

The Summit Group



PEQA Overview

- ✓ Online certificate program
- ✓ Capstone project
- ✓ Advanced workshops
- ✓ Communities of Practice (CoP)
 - Summit
 - PEQA Quality Assurance (QA)
- ✓ Active Collaboration-RSA, CSAVR, Summit Group, state VR programs, other stakeholders



PEQA Online Course Domains

Domain 1: Overview of Evaluation

Domain 2: Research Methods

Domain 3: Data Collection

Domain 4: Data Analysis

Domain 5: Application and Reporting

Domain 6: Research and Resources



Participating State VR Programs



- Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (Combined)
- Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind (Blind)
- Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined)
- Florida Dept of Education, Division of Blind Services (Blind)
- Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (General)
- Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined)
- Hawaii Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined)
- Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (General)
- Illinois Department of Health Services (Combined)
- Indiana Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (Combined)
- Kentucky Office for the Blind (Blind)
- Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (General)
- Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (Combined)
- Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (Combined)
- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (Blind)
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (General)
- Michigan Rehabilitation Services (General)
- Minnesota DEED, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (General)
- Minnesota State Services for the Blind (Blind)
- Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation (General)
- New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (Blind)
- New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (General)
- New York Vocational Rehabilitation (General)
- Oregon Commission for the Blind (Blind)
- Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation (General)
- Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined)
- South Carolina Commission for the Blind (Blind)
- South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation (General)
- South Dakota Department of Human Services (General)
- Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined)
- Virginia Department for the Blind (Blind)
- Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitation Services (General)
- Washington, D.C. Rehabilitation Services Administration (Combined)
- Washington State Department of Services for the Blind (Blind)
- Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined)

PEQA Learning Goals

Course content is designed to enhance the knowledge & skills necessary for evaluation programs, policies, processes, and/or people.

Participants will gain the following skills:

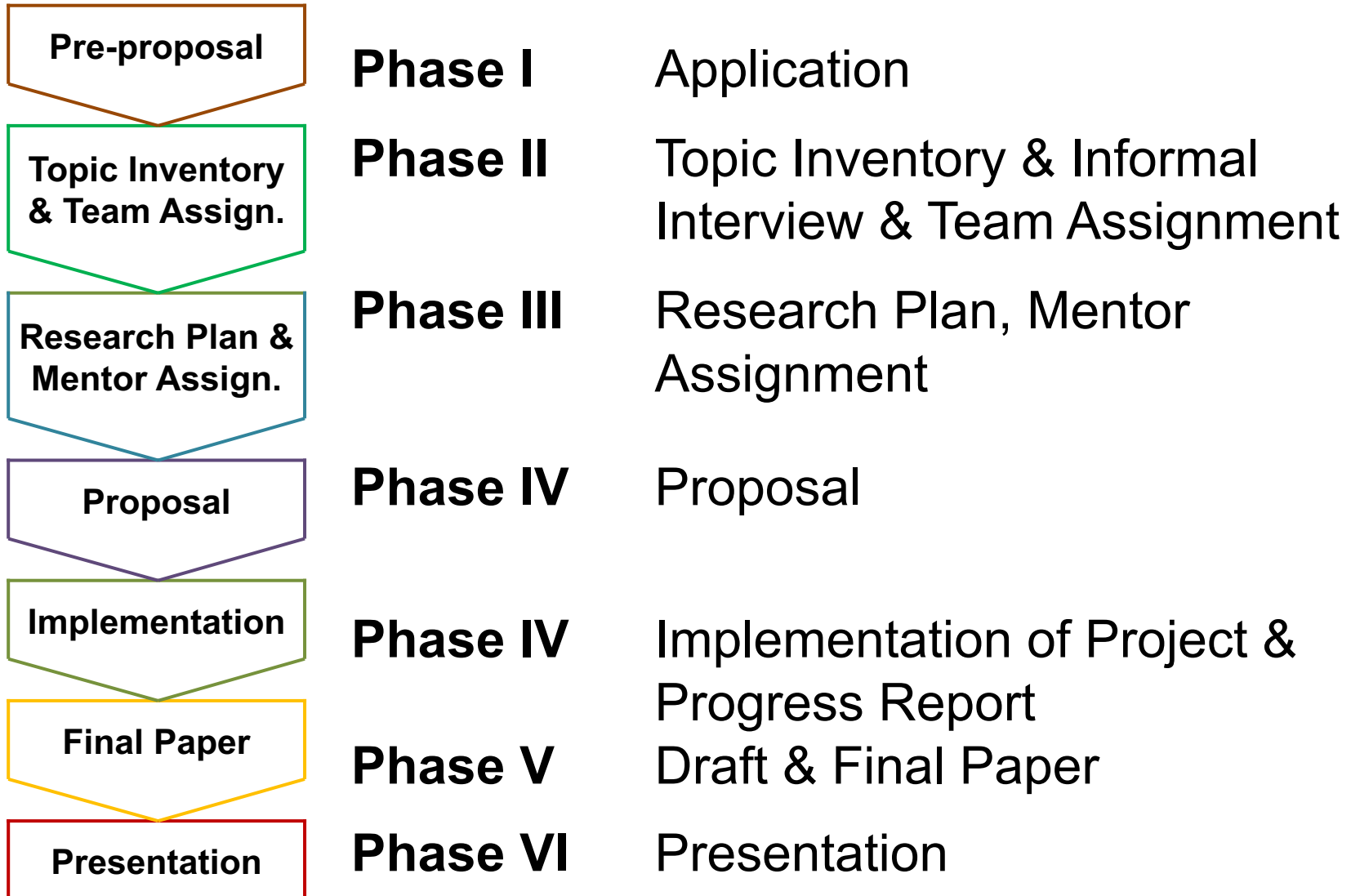
- ✧ Understand the principles of evaluation
- ✧ Select appropriate methods
- ✧ Design a rigorous evaluation plan
- ✧ Utilize valid and reliable measures
- ✧ Collect and analyze data
- ✧ Write scholarly articles and reports
- ✧ Develop assessment methods
- ✧ Execute proper data management
- ✧ Maintain a highly ethical approach to research
- ✧ Implement quality assurance in context



Capstone Goal & Objectives

- The **primary goal** is to design and implement program evaluation projects that support the participant's state agency's needs.
- Objectives:
 - Provide an opportunity to **apply** the knowledge and skills acquired in the PEQA online course to a specific problem or issue identified.
 - Assess feasibility of the proposed capstone project.
 - Obtain knowledge and skills to conduct literature review.
 - Refine evaluation skills, including designing a study, evaluating progress and collecting and analyzing data.
 - Demonstrate proficiency in written and/or oral communication skills.

Capstone Procedures



Capstone Resources

- Mentors
- PEQA-Capstone Project Handbook
- Resources
 - Category 1: Resources for Program Evaluation
 - Category 2: Resources for Research
 - Category 3: Previous Studies
 - Category 4: WIOA of 2014



Current Status

- ✓ Six Cohorts: Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Fall 2018, Spring 2019
- ✓ 49 Participants across 35 state VR agencies
32 participants working individually
17 participants working as 6 teams
- ✓ 10 Blind, 12 Combined, 13 General programs
- ✓ 6 Capstones completed
- ✓ 15 Capstones underway
23 initiated, 2 withdrew, 6 completed



Congratulations to the September 2019 PEQA Graduates!

Jacob Chorey

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation

Chris Clause

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation

Elaine Robertson

South Carolina Commission for the Blind



Evaluation of the SCVRD Information Technology Training Center (ITTC)

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Overview of the Project

Subject Program Design:

- Information Technology (IT) training delivered by agency staff
 - Computer Programming
 - Business Applications Plus
 - Computer Aided Drafting (CAD)
 - Network & Server Support
- Comprehensive program includes:
 - Lodging
 - Meals
 - Nursing

Project Purpose:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the program in delivering training that leads to competitive, integrated employment outcomes in occupations related to the training received

Evaluation Questions:

1. What ITTC courses are leading to Successful Employment Outcomes (SEOs) related to the training?
2. How do participant outcomes compare to outcomes of non-participant consumers with the same or similar vocational objectives?
3. What are the ITTC program's costs per consumer served? How does this cost compare to the cost for non-participant consumers?

Methods

Non-Experimental Design

- Quantitative analysis of existing program data
- Calculation of average cost per consumer served for ITTC vs. general program

Program Participants: 114 consumers trained by ITTC (state fiscal years 2016-18)

- Target group of 55 participants whose courses had ended and cases were closed
- 33 (60%) had post-secondary education at application

Comparative Sample: 2,150 agency consumers not served by the ITTC but who had vocational objectives in common with program participants and whose cases closed during the study period

Procedures:

- Service delivery and case outcomes data queried from Case Management System
- Program participant enrollment, discharge and certifications data extracted from program records logged in Excel spreadsheets
- Consumers served expenditures data provided by fiscal staff from agency accounting system

Results

- **Business Applications Plus (shortest duration) lead to the most Successful Employment Outcomes (SEOs: 13) and the highest proportion of SEOs related to the training (84.6%). Programming (longest duration) produced the highest rehabilitation rate (66.7%).**
- **Average hourly wage at closure for ITTC participants was higher than wages for members of comparative sample with same occupation, but lower than prevailing wage for those occupations in general workforce (experienced workers).**
- **Expenditures for ITTC consumers was, on average, 4.84 times those for consumers served in the general program.**

Measure (July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2018)	Total	Programm -ing	CAD	NSS	BAP
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CONSUMERS SERVED

Total Capacity to Serve (Aggregate # of Seats)	122	18	40	24	40
Number Enrolled (Aggregate)	114	16	36	25	37
Percentage of Capacity Served	93.4%	88.9%	90.0%	104.2%	92.5%

COMPLETION

# Completed Training Course	66	8	18	11	29
# Did Not Complete	39	8	9	14	8
Course not yet ended	9	0	9	0	0
Completion %	62.9%	50.0%	66.7%	44.0%	78.4%
Completers as a Percentage of Capacity	57.9%	44.4%	56.3%	45.8%	72.5%

CREDENTIALS

# Certifications Earned	67	0	34	33	0
# Consumers Who Earned Certification(s)	38	0	22	16	0

OUTCOMES

Measure (July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2018)	ITTC					Compara -tive Sample*	ALL SCVRD
	Total	Programm -ing	CAD	NSS	BAP		
Cases Closed	55	9	18	6	22	2,149	35,584
SEO's (26 closures)	32	6	10	3	13	1,085	20,158
Rehab Rate	58.2%	66.7%	55.6%	50.0%	59.1%	50.5%	56.6%
% SOC Related to Training	68.8%	33.3%	70.0%	66.7%	84.6%	n/a	
Avg Weekly Hours at Closure	36.6	35.3	38.5	36.7	35.7	34.6	35.0
Avg Hourly Wage at Closure	\$13.58	\$10.87	\$14.69	\$15.60	\$13.97	\$13.02	\$13.31

Implications & Lessons Learned

- Data collection on previous IT experience and training needed to strengthen analysis of outcomes data
- Consideration of alternatives to direct provision of IT training warranted (e.g., sponsoring training via technical colleges or other training providers)
- Rehearsing data analysis and interpretation using mock data recommended to solidify details of the analysis plan

The Impact of Early Work Experience on VR Outcomes

Chris Clause

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Vocational Rehabilitation



Overview

Literature Review:

- Early work experience is positively associated with post-secondary employment for youth with disabilities (Carter, Austin, & Trainor, 2011; Wehman, et. al., 2015; Test, et. al., 2009).

Summer Work Experience (SWE):

- VR-eligible SWD entering their final year of HS
- No prior work experience
- CIE settings
- 16 hours per week of work with 4 hours per week soft skill training
- Six-weeks in duration
- Paid minimum wage
- On-site supports

Purpose:

- To better understand the mechanisms that underlie one specific program (SWE) on post-secondary employment outcomes.
- Research Question: Are SWE participants more likely to exit VR with employment than those who do not participate?

Sample:

- SWE participants in 2015(92%), 2016(82%), and 2017(52%)
- Treatment group: SWE participants
- Control group parameters:
 - Application date
 - Age at application
 - IPE

Design:

- **Propensity Score Model:**
 - *Summer work experience participation* = $\theta_0 + \beta_1(\text{gender}) + \beta_2(\text{race/ethnicity}) + \beta_3(\text{age}) + \beta_4(\text{primary disability}) + \beta_5(\text{MSD}) + \mu$.
- **Linear Probability Models:**
 - *Successful Employment Outcome* = $\theta_0 + \beta_1(\text{summer work experience participation}) + \mu$.
 - *Successful Employment Outcome* = $\theta_0 + \beta_1(\text{summer work experience participation}) + \beta_2(\text{gender}) + \beta_3(\text{race/ethnicity}) + \beta_4(\text{age}) + \beta_5(\text{primary disability}) + \beta_6(\text{MSD}) + \mu$.

Results

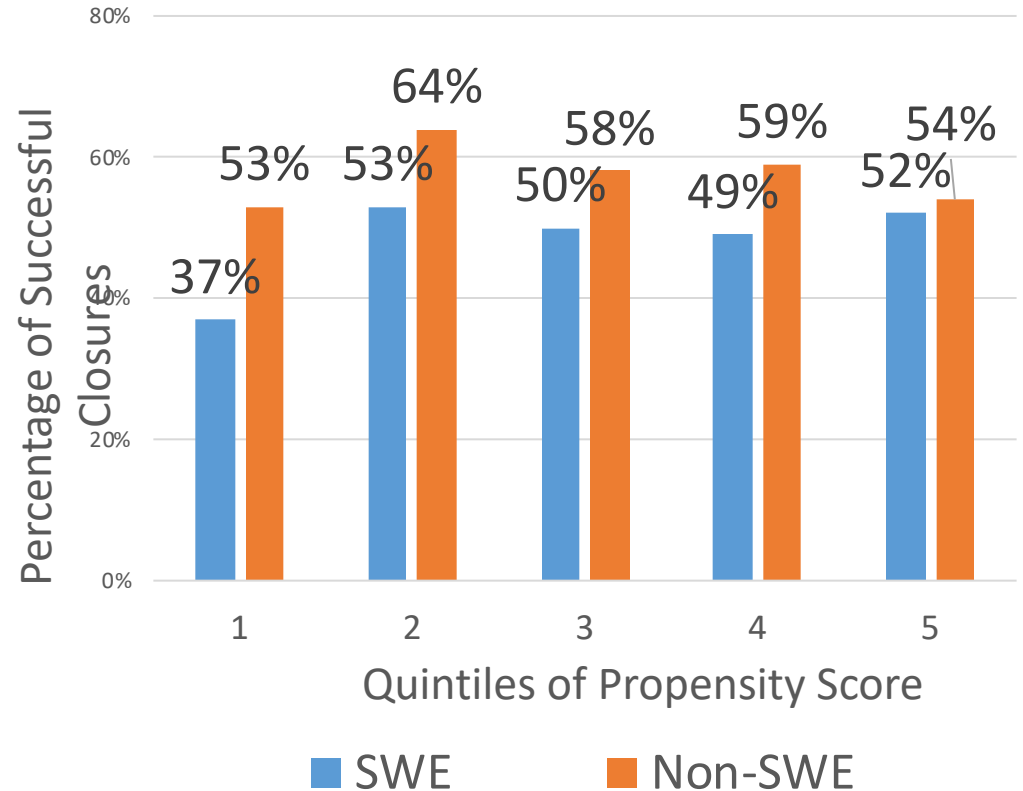
Descriptive Statistics (Participants)

Variable	SWE (N=816)	Non-SWE (N=2,005)	Full Sample (N=2,281)
Successful Outcome	50%	58%	55%
Age 16	17%	3%	7%
Age 17	62%	35%	43%
Age 18	21%	62%	65%
Male	62%	66%	65%
White	74%	74%	74%
Black	19%	22%	21%
Other race	7%	4%	5%
MSD	63%	60%	61%
Sensory	3%	3%	3%
Physical	3%	6%	6%
Cognitive	67%	61%	63%
Psychosocial	20%	25%	24%
Other Mental	6%	4%	4%

Linear Probability Models

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
SWE participant	-0.08 (0.00)	-0.09 (0.00)
Age 16		0.06 (0.11)
Age 17		-0.009 (0.65)
Age 18		Reference Group
Male		0.09 (0.00)
White		Reference Group
Black		-0.08 (0.001)
Other race		-0.04 (0.35)
Most Sig. D		0.02 (0.26)
Sensory		0.04 (0.39)
Physical		-0.10 (0.01)
Cognitive		Reference Group
Psychosocial		-0.05 (0.03)
Other Mental		-0.07 (0.11)
Adj. R ²	0.005	0.02

Propensity Score Quintiles



Conclusions

- Conclusions:
 - Do not see that SWE positively impacts outcomes.
 - It's counter-intuitive to believe that it's actually causing a lower rate of successful outcomes.
 - Design limitations seem to be the main culprit.
- Design Limitations:
 - Major selection bias concerns
 - Omitted variable bias concerns
 - Administrative data set limitations
 - Low data integrity
 - Gap in time (makes causality a tough sell)
- Future Directions:
 - Explore ways to reduce the time between SWE and post-SWE VR services
 - Consider other dependent variables of interest in order to better understand other ways that SWE is impacting participants beyond only successful employment outcome measures

A PILOT STUDY TO DEVELOP VR CASE REVIEW INSTRUMENT FOR WIOA PERFORMANCE MEASURE DATA COLLECTION

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Overview of the Project

Subject Program Design:

Case Review Instrument to:

- Effectively measure performance data
- Pave a pathway to change in data collection
- Drive creation of consistent training

Project Purpose:

To develop and validate the case review instrument to increase federal compliance with WIOA based performance indicators

Project Questions:

1. What are the WIOA performance indicators pertaining to case documentation?
2. Is the case review instrument developed reliable and valid?



Methods & Procedures

Review Materials



Needs Assessment



Individual Case Review



Development of the SCCB Case Review Instrument



Validation & Application Study

Review Materials

- Reviewed of the RSA Monitoring and Technical Assistance Guide
- Reviewed the recent monitoring visit reports (Florida & Michigan) and had conversations with the directors
- Reviewed the existing Case Review instruments used by other agencies

Needs Assessment

- Conducted a survey to assess level of understanding about the WIOA Performance Accountability Measures and current needs of VR counselors (N=16)
- Conducted a focus group meeting with VR supervisors & program directors to elicit their perceptions on quality documentation

Individual Case Review

- Reviewed 10 cases to determine the availability of data necessary for the RSA reporting and monitoring

Development of the SCCB Case Review Instrument (4 Categories)

- **Quality of Counseling Services & Documentation**

- 1. Intake information including documentation of benefits, referral to benefits counseling*
- 2. Evidence of informed choice and comprehensive assessment of VR needs (CARN)*

- **Quality of Vocational Preparation, Goal, Training, & Placement**

- 1. Vocational exploration, labor market information, measurable skill gains*
- 2. Referred to Employment Consultant, job placement information including wages*

- **Quality of Closures**

- 1. Federal Compliance when closed successfully*
- 2. Sufficient documentation and review when closed without employment*

- **Compliance with Regulations, Laws & Policies**

- 1. All timelines met for eligibility and IPE; all signatures in place and dated correctly.*
- 2. Comparable benefits documented; expenditures follow all policies*
- 3. All goods and services included on IPE*
- 4. If transition or supported employment case, all documentation follows policy.*

Rating Scale for Compliance

1 = *Minimally or Not in Compliance (multiple important aspects were omitted **and/or** the omission(s) have a major impact)*

2 = *Mostly Compliant (The majority of important aspects were completed **and** omissions have no more than a mild to moderate impact)*

3 = *Compliant with No Major Omissions (if any omission they were minor and have no or only a mild impact)*

N/A

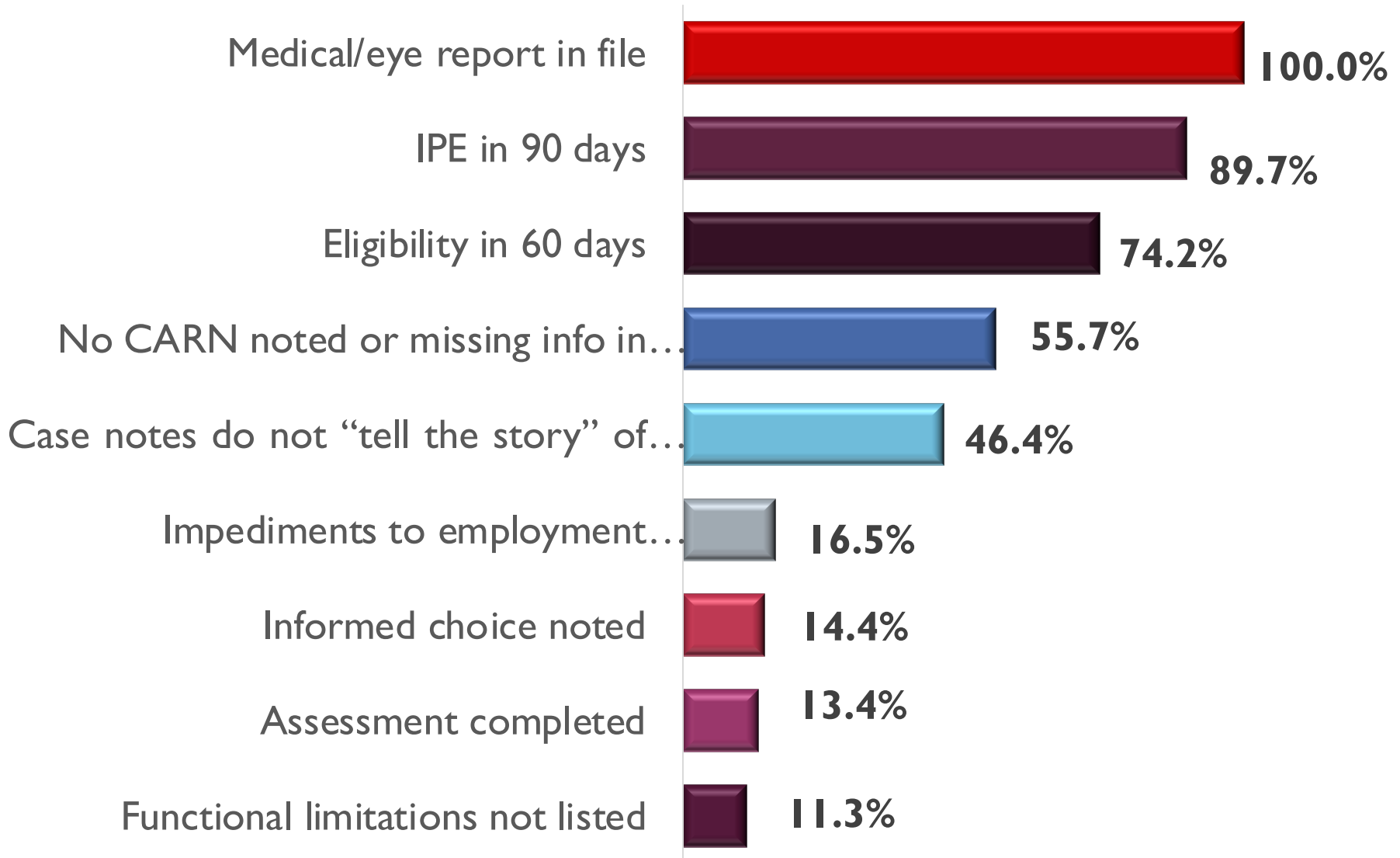
Validation & Application Study

- Using the Case Review Instrument, 20 cases were reviewed by 3 regional VR supervisors, the VR Consumer Services Director, and the current evaluator
- 77 cases were reviewed by the counselor trainer and the current evaluator
- Compliance rate: *mostly compliant or compliant*

Results

- Team Review with 20 cases: 100% agreement in rating scales (checked for inter-reliability)
- Case review results with all 97 cases were analyzed and computed the compliance rate (*mostly compliant or compliant*) for each item

Results



Discussion

- The implementation of the case review instrument has created a path for development of training to better inform VR staff of compliance needs.
- The instrument is another tool for counselors, supervisors, and QA staff to target specific data collection areas and utilize the information for supervision and guidance.
- Case documentation procedures within the AWARE system are being revised to reflect needs expressed by the counselors to encourage stronger case documentation.
- Increased use of the instrument for the above will ultimately increase agency compliance with Federal performance indicators.



Future Implications

- Training and provision of desk reference guides would increase accurate data entry.
- Targeted case reviews should be completed monthly for specific measures.
- Modification of AWARE will assist in streamlining data entry.
- Implementation of a consistent case review instrument will provide higher compliance rates and a better overall picture of agency performance.

