



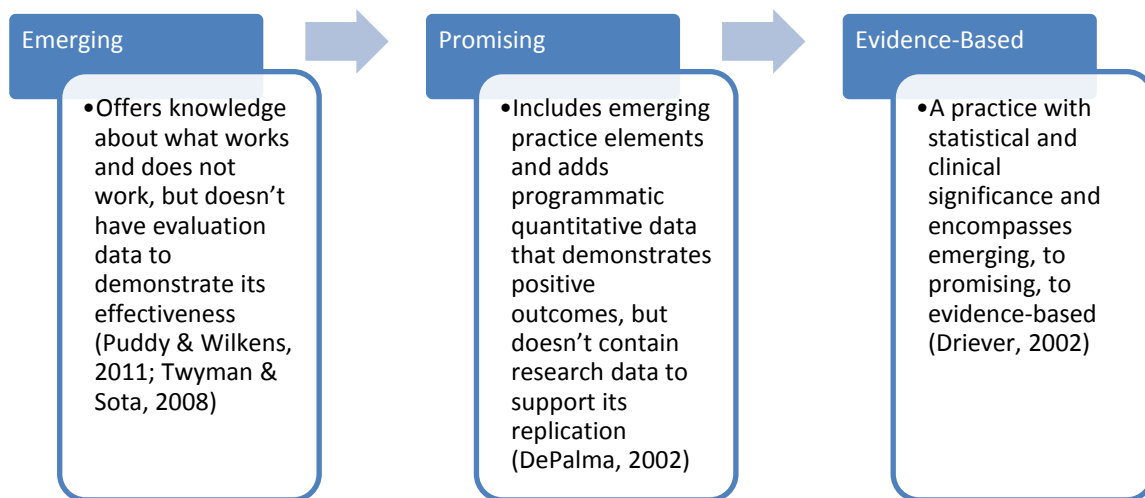
RRTC-EBP VR

Rehabilitation Research & Training Center
for Evidence Based Practice in Vocational Rehabilitation

Phase II Findings: Promising Organizational Practices

A purpose of this study was to discover emerging and promising vocational rehabilitation (VR) service delivery practices that help improve employment outcomes of people with disabilities who receive services from the state-federal vocational rehabilitation (VR) system. Four high performing state VR agencies (Maryland, Mississippi, Texas, and Utah) were selected for study based on annual adjusted rehabilitation rates and other indicators that demonstrated they had developed effective models of delivering services that set them apart in performance from other state agencies. In looking at these states the question was asked, **“What are specific best practices that appear to be evidence-based and transportable to other state VR agencies?”**

The RRTC recognizes that there is a continuum of innovative practices being implemented by rehabilitation counselors within the state-federal VR system. Vocational rehabilitation practices fall within the following continuum:



This summary of findings contains brief descriptions of promising organizational practices identified across the four state agencies included in this study.

Incubator Unit (Texas) - Incubator unit startups can occur at any level or location within the agency requiring no formal permission to engage in developing innovative services.

SharePoint (Texas) - The agency uses a Microsoft web-based cloud “SharePoint” site that the agency calls “Replicating Success.”

E-3 (Texas) - Inclusive of the dual customer approach is the belief that each customer and employer of the agency be provided with Excellent Service, Every Customer, Every Time, or E3 for short.

Business Relations (Utah) - Initially funded by the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG), Utah VR provides funding for this project which now funds two full-time staff. The Business Relations team provides support and education to businesses that express an interest in hiring and retaining people with disabilities.

Rapid Response and Internal Service Delivery (Mississippi) - Eligibility for VR services is determined quickly and consumers are immediately connected with services, including those with the most significant disabilities. AbilityWorks, Inc., is a network of 17 community rehabilitation program locations across 10 districts throughout the state. Although AbilityWorks is managed by the state agency, it is technically a 501(c) 3 non-profit entity designed to complement the vocational rehabilitation program by providing vocational assessment and evaluation, job training, and work experiences exclusively to VR agency consumers. The model allows VR counselors to serve consumers quickly and effectively regardless of severity of disability and service capacity gaps across the state.

Linking Innovative Networks of Community Services (LINCS) (Mississippi) - A community-based alternative available within the broader AbilityWorks program that provides evaluation, training, and work experience opportunities directly with employers rather than in facility-based environments.

Business Development Program and Employment Coordinators (Mississippi) - Employment Coordinators perform an integral role in developing and managing business relationships in concert with the agency’s Business Development Program.

Specialized Coordinators, Counselors, and Caseloads (Mississippi) - Specialized caseloads for transition, supported employment, consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing, and consumers with alcohol and drug addiction disorders.

Data Driven (Mississippi) - The agency fosters a culture of high expectations and pride in their high employment outcome rate and actively uses data to establish goals and monitor performance. Staff members across all levels of the organization including counselors, managers, and leaders are held accountable for achieving the objectives of the organization.

Clinical and Organizational Skills Enhancement (Maryland) - The agency has developed a three level leadership program. Participants get a “broader perspective of the VR program nationally, statewide and within their part of the agency.”