



# Research and Technical Assistance Center on VR Program Management: Request for Participation Information Session

**November 26, 2012**

Presenters:

Bob Burns, John Halliday & Joe Marrone (Institute for Community Inclusion)

Betsy Hopkins (Maine Division of Vocational Rehabilitation)

John Walsh (New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired)



# The Research and Technical Assistance Center (RTAC) on VR Program Management

- Charged with developing, piloting, testing, and disseminating a “VR program management model including elements of strategic planning, QA, and HR development”
- Partnering with InfoUse
- Funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s NIDRR
- [www.VR-RTAC.org](http://www.VR-RTAC.org)

# Why the Project Came to Be

- Very little knowledge about what constitutes effective practices in HR, QA, and strategic planning.
- How are these related to outcomes important to VR agencies, RSA, and stakeholders like clients, employers, taxpayers, legislators.
- There may be models out there from other sectors, industries that could be applied to VR

# Phases of RTAC Project

- Development of Framework/Model of VR Program Management
- Management Model Laboratory
- Encourage Adoption and Adaptation of Model

# Development of the Model

- Examine HR, QA, and Strategic Planning Factors that promote outcomes.
- Literature Reviews
- Expert Input
- Case Studies of VR Agencies:
  - UT, TX General, TX Blind, FL, MD, CO, VT and WV
- Moved from a model focus to a framework

# What do we mean by Framework?

- A framework is more about the whole and less about the parts.
- How do these components provide information to leaders and managers?
- The question is how do leaders integrate the eight components to achieve outcomes rather than how to implement any given tactic (such as case file review).

# The Original Components Broadened

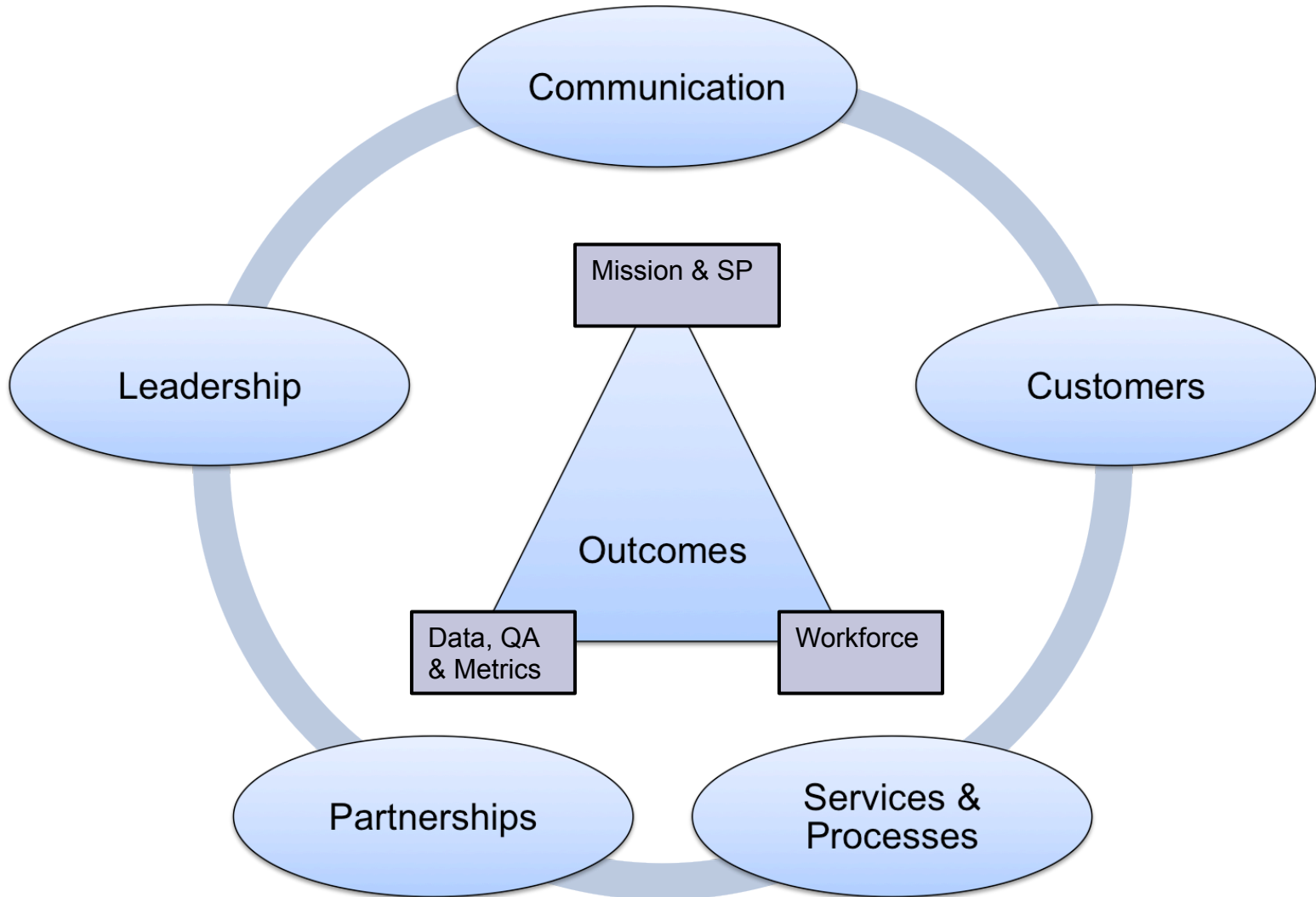
- From QA to: Data, Metrics, and Quality Assurance
- From Strategic Planning to: Mission and Strategic Planning
- From HR to: Workforce Focus

# Additional Components Added

- Customer Focus
- Services and Processes
- Leadership
- Communication
- Partnership



# VR Performance Management Framework



# Moving to a business case study approach

- What are the best ways to achieve management outcomes or improvements by mastering the use of these components?
- Adopting an approach (learning collaborative) that is used in other public sectors.



# Management Model Laboratory

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# RTAC Learning Collaborative

- Peer-to-peer knowledge exchange model with an evaluation component
  - 2 to 4 in-person meetings per year
  - On-site, phone and email TA.
  - Wrap around research and evaluation embedded in activities.

# Examples of Management Outcomes and Improvements

- Performance Management
  - Vendor Performance
  - Capacity Building
- Workforce Development
  - Staff leadership development
  - Recruitment
- Quality Management

# RTAC LC Cohort 1: 2012-2013

- Alabama
- Florida
- Indiana
- Maine
- Michigan
- New Jersey Blind
- Texas
- Virginia



# Maine

Betsy Hopkins

# Management Initiative

- ✓ To Implement VR CRP practice changes that increase employment outcomes
- ✓ To examine and make improvement recommendations in six areas of VR and CRP relations including:
  - ✓ Referral process and documentation of services
  - ✓ Accreditation of CRPs
  - ✓ Funding Models: rates and fees
  - ✓ VR CRP communication and relationships
  - ✓ Access and availability of CRP services
  - ✓ Business Relations



# Relevance of Management Framework

- Communication – vital to entire CRP project and a specific work group attends to this component
- Leadership – direct involvement and commitment at all levels of leadership within Maine DVR
- Data, QA and Metrics - DVR utilizes a wide range of data for quality assurance and program management throughout the project
- Customers – our DVR consumers will be the ultimate beneficiaries of the process improvements that are implemented.



# Relevance continued

- Services and Processes – Entire project examines our current CRP services and processes with the goal of making recommendations to improve them
- Core Mission and Outcomes – Project fits with DVR's core mission of improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities
- Workforce – In making process improvements – result will make better use of our workforce by utilizing resources better.

# Benefits of Learning Collaborative

- Peer-to-Peer -
  - Listening to processes other states used for their projects very helpful – gave us some ideas about how to tweak our project
  - One other state (FL) had similar project and we were able to share information we both gathered to help with our respective projects
  - Some of the other projects are of interest to us to possibly take on in the future, or areas that we have already tackled and could offer info to assist.



# Benefits of Learning Collaborative Cont.

- Technical Assistance
  - Staff of ICI were very helpful resources for us and provided links to other states inside and outside of the collaborative.
  - Writing up quarterly reports and reporting out to our peers on the project made us stop and take a close look at how our project was progressing and feedback both from state w/in the collaborative and ICI staff was constructive and helpful.



## Further info Regarding Maine RTAC Project

- Link to additional information about our CRP project  
[http://www.maine.gov/rehab/crp/crp\\_project/index.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/rehab/crp/crp_project/index.shtml)
- Contacts – Betsy Hopkins, DVR Director at 207-623-6745
- Karen Fraser – Director, Division of Quality Assurance at 207-623-7961



# New Jersey Blind

John Walsh

# Management Initiative

- Develop new Quality Assurance system for VR Services
  - Case review protocols for supervisors
  - QA case review protocols for administrative staff
  - Data driven (using Libera System 7)
- Performance Metrics
  - Linked with VR Competencies (TACE II)
  - Articulate expectations
  - Development of Dashboard

# Relevance of Management Framework

- Helped to expand focus to the “bigger picture”. Started project in “Data – QA” section
- Assisted in broadening the scope of agency project
- Moved project from one year to multi-year improvement plan and to look at the other components of the framework
- Quarterly progress evaluations were easy to complete and helped to keep focus on all components of the framework.



# Benefits of Learning Collaborative

- Peer-to-Peer support (A true learning collaborative!)
- Responsiveness of ICI Consultants
  - Information and Referral
  - Connecting with other VR Agency staff outside of Learning Collaborative based on my agency needs
  - Informative Project website
- Technical Assistance
  - Availability for support (phone, email, face-to-face)
  - Reviewed with constructive feedback of all project documents to improve overall outcome
  - Find linkages with evidence based practices
  - Assist in identifying outside consultants to assist in project.
  - Help to keep agency on target!



# RTAC Learning Collaborative Cohort 2: 2013-14

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# Next Phase

- Request for Participation (RFP) in a Research Project information release in December for a 12 month learning collaborative laboratory.
- 50K per VR Agency: up to eight State VR Agencies.
- SVRA Directors must submit letter of intent to participate by 12/14/12.

# Required Pieces of Request for Participation in a Research Project

- Letter from VR director approving project
- Budget
- List of personnel, contact information, and role on project
- Narrative
- Self-assessment tool

# Mechanics of Request for Participation in a Research Project

- Electronic submittal through SurveyGizmo (link will be provided by email)
- Interested parties are encouraged to contact ICI for guidance ([julisa.cully@umb.edu](mailto:julisa.cully@umb.edu)).
- Participating SVRAs will be asked to complete a contract and submit information to process budget.

# Project Dates

- Request for Participation in a Research Project  
Information Released: 11/30/12
- Letter of intent (email): 12/14/12
- Electronic Request to Participate Form Due Date:  
1/18/13
- Notification of selection to participate in research  
project made: 3/1/13
- Project Year: 3/1/13 through 3/1/14

# Thank You!!!

Contact information:

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