

Bi-Annual Newsletter

Vocational Rehabilitation Return on Investment Project

Estimating Return on Investment in State Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

Greetings from the VR-ROI Project Team!

We can't believe it has already been 6 months since our last edition of the VR-ROI Newsletter! Time flies when you are having ROI fun! We welcome you once again to this latest update on all news related to the VR-ROI Project. We think that you will love the articles that were submitted, including a fascinating piece by Cayte Anderson of the Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (PEQA) Technical Assistance Center on "Performance Excellence and ROI." She makes a compelling argument for how excellence in performance management strategies leads to improvements program-wide. You will also find a "Staff Spotlight" focusing on our Co-Principal Investigator, Dr. Joseph Ashley. We give you the latest updates on how the VR-ROI team has been involved with state partners, spreading the news about ROI. Be sure to check out the last page for information on how to register for the 2017 Summit Conference which will be held in Omaha Nebraska in September. We hope you enjoy the newsletter!



Maureen McGuire-Kuletz and Rob Froehlich presenting at GWU's Mid-Atlantic Counseling Symposium in April.

VR-ROI 101

In support of our project's goal of increasing awareness of the importance of establishing the Return on Investment of Vocational Rehabilitation, we have created the "VR-ROI 101 Learning Modules." We have created these modules to be available on our website. Prior to posting, we will be conducting focus groups with VR counselors and other interested partners in order to get feedback on the modules. Since the subject matter is often considered dense, particularly for those not immediately familiar with ROI terminology, we will be providing much background information related to general definitions as well as the rationale for our choice of ROI model. Our hope is that by thoroughly explaining the foundational concepts of the VR-ROI model, we will both increase interest in the project, as well as encourage all those involved in Vocational Rehabilitation, to be mindful of the importance of ROI.

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Be sure to follow us on social media for all your latest news in VR-ROI!

Twitter: [@VRRROI](https://twitter.com/VRRROI)

Facebook: [VR-ROI Project](https://www.facebook.com/VRRROIProject)

LinkedIn: [Vocational Rehabilitation Return on Investment \(VR ROI\) Project](https://www.linkedin.com/company/vr-roi-project)

Inside this issue:

Performance Excellence and ROI	2
Staff Spotlight	3
News/State Updates	3
Publications	4
Summit 2017	4

Performance Excellence and Return on Investment

By: Cayte Anderson, Ph.D., CRC, Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (PEQA) Technical Assist. Center

Did you know that performance management plays a key role in influencing your program's return on investment? Performance management strategies, particularly those with a focus on performance excellence, provide frameworks for organizations to enhance programmatic effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

What is performance excellence and why should it be of interest to vocational rehabilitation?

While various models exist, we will use the publicly funded Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (<https://www.nist.gov/baldrige>) as an example. In this context, performance excellence is defined as,

An integrated approach to organizational performance management that results in:

- ⇒ *Delivery of ever-improving and increasing value to customers and stakeholders, contributing to organizational success and sustainability,*
- ⇒ *Improvement of overall organizational effectiveness and capabilities,*
- ⇒ *Organizational and personal learning (Baldrige, 2017)*

The Baldrige framework provides a comprehensive and systematic approach to helping organizations identify and address critical aspects of performance management.

Core Values and Concepts

Core organizational values and concepts are complementary to Performance Management. They involve use of a systems perspective, visionary leadership, customer-focused excellence, valuing people, a focus on success, managing with data, continuous innovation, and delivering value and results.

Performance Management

Leadership
Strategy
Customers
Program Evaluation
Workforce
Operations
Results

Organizational Values and Concepts

Systems Perspective
Visionary Leadership
Customer-Focused
Value People
Focus on Success
Manage with Data
Innovation
Deliver Value and Results

Three broad questions used to assess and strategize are:

1. Is your organization doing as well as it could?
2. How do you know?
3. What and how should your organization improve or change?

Impact and Return on Investment

Organizations and public programs that proactively engage in performance management and excellence frameworks may find it easier to implement effective return on investment strategies. A basic conceptualization of return on investment generally involves data noting resources invested and programmatic outcomes and impact.

Implementing a performance excellence framework within the organization helps identify where and how efficiencies and improvements can be made. These then aid in expediting timelines and enhancing use of resources more efficiently and effectively, thereby further enhancing return on investment. Considerations include cost savings to the participant (organization) and consumers benefitting from greater satisfaction with higher-quality products and services.

Work in the state-federal vocational rehabilitation program is dynamic and complex, particularly when implementing legislation such as the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) with new performance measures, data requirements, partnerships, state plan development, and reporting structure. The pressure to improve and enhance outcomes and impact without an increase in funding is real. The need to demonstrate that investment of funds in the state-federal vocational rehabilitation program is cost-effective and makes a difference is real. Leaders of state vocational rehabilitation programs are encouraged to consider the use of performance management and excellence strategies within their organizations to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and impact.

Further Resources: Resources and information on performance management are available through the Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (PEQA) national technical assistance center www.pegatac.com. Additionally, the Summit Group and PEQA will be co-hosting the 10th Annual Conference on Performance Management in Vocational Rehabilitation September 6-7 in Omaha, Nebraska. For more information, please visit <https://pegatac.org/summit-conference>.

Staff Spotlight: Dr. Joseph Ashley



Dr. Joseph Ashley, who is the Co-Principal Investigator for the VR-ROI Project, also serves as the Assistant Commissioner of the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. Dr. Ashley has over 30 years of experience developing and improving programming that supports individuals with disabilities as they obtain and maintain employment. He currently oversees DARS' Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act requirements as well as the Social Security Trust Fund Reimbursement Program. He also represents DARS on the state Career Pathways Workgroup and the state Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Implementation Team. In addition to his work on the VR-ROI project, he also serves as co-Director on Virginia's U.S. Department of Labor-funded Disability Employment Initiative. When he is not working, Dr. Ashley can be found sailing, ballroom-dancing, and travelling.

VR-ROI News/State Updates

- ◇ Maureen McGuire-Kuletz and Rob Froehlich presented on the new VR-ROI 101 modules at the Annual GWU Mid-Atlantic Counseling Symposium in March in Washington, D.C., reaching administrators and counselors from D.C., Virginia, and Maryland.
- ◇ The VR-ROI Advisory Council met during the CSAVR Spring Conference in Bethesda, MD in April. It was a great opportunity to re-connect and get feedback on the VR-ROI 101 modules.
- ◇ We are happy to announce North Carolina as our newest partner in VR-ROI! Project team members recently visited with state administrators in June 2017. We are looking forward to our work together!
- ◇ The VR-ROI Team will be visiting Texas in the fall. We can't wait to see our Texan partners face-to-face!
- ◇ Rob Froehlich was recently interviewed on Rick Sizemore's VR Workforce Studio podcast. The title of the episode is "Faith, Grit and Vocational Rehabilitation: The Pam Cobbler Story." In this edition, they discuss VR-ROI, the great work of VR counselors, and the inspiring success story of a VR consumer. Listen [here](#).
- ◇ Also follow Rick Sizemore on twitter (@rickwwrc) or subscribe to the Workforce podcast, available on iTunes and by visiting their website: <http://vrworkforcestudio.com/>





The Bureau of Disability Economics Research
Robins School of Business,
University of Richmond
28 Westhampton Way
Richmond, VA
23173

For information, contact Project Manager Dr.
Robert Froehlich at 804-794-6667.

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information on VR-ROI
News, follow us:**

Twitter: @VRR0I

Facebook: VR-ROI Project

Website: www.vrroi.org

Publications

- ◇ “The Effects Vocational Rehabilitation Services for People with Mental Illness” by David Dean, John Pepper, Robert Schmidt, and Steven Stern will be published this summer in the *Journal of Human Resources*.
- ◇ “The Effects of Vocational Rehabilitation for People with Physical Disabilities” by David Dean, John Pepper, Robert Schmidt, and Steven Stern is under review with the *Journal of Human Capital*.
- ◇ The researchers are working diligently on new ideas for manuscripts, looking at a wide range of topics impacting VR-ROI such as race and youth transition programs.
- ◇ Stay up-to-date with the latest publications by following us on one of our social media accounts!



- ◇ The 2017 Summit on Performance Management in Vocational Rehabilitation will be September 5-7 in Omaha, Nebraska.
 - ◇ It is sponsored by the Summit Group, the Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance Technical Assistance Center (PEQA), Rehabilitation Program Evaluation Network (RPEN), and the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC).
 - ◇ Visit the conference website for more information on how to register: <https://peqatac.org/summit-conference/>

