# Item 4 Detail Sheet: SRC Quarterly Meeting Planning

# Background

To inform the October 5, 2022, SRC Executive Planning Committee (EPC) discussion to plan the November 30 – December 1, 2022 SRC quarterly meeting agenda, below is a proposed meeting structure followed by a list of requested updates, discussions, and presentations along with the associated policy questions/considerations.

**Proposed November 30 – December 1, 2022 Meeting Format**

Hybrid meeting format with in-person (DOR Central Office Sacramento, Room 301), conference call, and Zoom participation options.

## Proposed Meeting Structure: Day 1 – Wednesday, November 30, 2022

* Welcome and Introductions (9:00 – 9:10 a.m.)
* Public Comment (9:10 – 9:20 a.m.)
* Approval of the August 31 – September 1, 2022 SRC Quarterly Meeting Minutes (9:20 – 9:25 a.m.)
* Agenda item TBD (9:25 – 10:00 a.m.)
* *Break* (10:00 – 10:15 a.m.)
* Agenda item TBD (10:15 – 11:00 a.m.)
* Agenda item TBD (11:00 – 11:45 a.m.)
* *Lunch* (11:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.)
* Directorate Report (1:15 – 2:15 p.m.)
* Agenda item TBD (2:15 – 3:00 p.m.)
* *Break* (3:00 – 3:15 p.m.)
* Adopt-a-Region Reports (3:15 – 4:00 p.m.)
* Recess (4:00 p.m.)

## Proposed Meeting Structure: Day 2 – Thursday, December 1, 2022

* Reconvene, Welcome, and Introductions (9:00 a.m.)
* Public Comment (9:05 – 9:10 a.m.)
* Agenda item TBD (9:10 – 10:00 a.m.)
* Agenda item TBD (10:00 – 10:30 a.m.)
* *Break* (10:30 – 10:45 a.m.)
* Agenda item TBD (10:45 – 11:45 a.m.)
* *Lunch* (11:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.)
* Agenda item TBD (1:15 – 1:45 p.m.)
* Agenda item TBD (1:45 – 2:15 p.m.)
* Break (2:15 – 2:30 p.m.)

2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

* Debrief and Recommendations Working Session: SRC members will debrief from this meeting’s discussions and potentially adopt recommendations. A status update on (or review of) the DOR’s response to prior SRC recommendations will be provided.
* Review and Approval of the Federal Fiscal Year 2021/22 SRC Annual Report
* SRC Officers, Member and Executive Officer Reports
* Identification of Future Agenda Items
* Adjourn (4:00 p.m.)

# Running List of Potential Agenda Items

Note: this list includes the suggestions and feedback received from the SRC members during the August 31 – September 1, 2022 quarterly meeting. *All information listed below is for discussion and planning purposes only and should not be considered an invitation, commitment, or notice*

# DOR Student Services

* Background: There are 150,000 students in California eligible for an Individualized Education Program (IEP). DOR is currently serving ~30,000 students. As reported during the August 31, 2022 SRC meeting, DOR’s goal is to increase the number of students served to 60,000.
* Policy Questions: What strategies could help DOR achieve this increase? How is DOR going to ensure that youth with disabilities leave high school with either 1) a family sustaining wage, or 2) enrolled in VR services? Topics and issues for the SRC to explore that may inform these policy questions include:
  + Transportation and Clothing: A barrier of concern is that DOR cannot provide transportation or clothing for a student’s paid work experience. Why can’t DOR provide transportation or clothing for a student’s paid work experience? Is it because the funds are not available, or that it’s not allowed?
    - Next steps: 1) Kate Bjerke to reach out to DOR program staff to obtain background information on these questions. 2) Nick Wavrin, Ivan Guillen and Sara Abdrabou to provide input on this topic and develop a list of questions to inform the next presentation on DOR Student Services.
  + Individualized Education Program (IEP) and 504 Plans: IEPs are provided to a student when they qualify for special education. A 504 plan is provided to a student when accommodations and removing barriers to learning are needed. How do IEP and 504 Plans intersect with DOR Student Services, the We Can Work Programs, Transition Partnership Programs, and the Workability I Programs? What strategies can be utilized to increase understanding at schools about these various DOR programs?
  + Case Management: What are strategies for seamlessly transitioning potentially eligible case type students to a vocational rehabilitation case type? Why are demographics not collected for DOR’s potentially eligible case type?

# Benefit Planning and Employment

Background: An existing barrier that needs to be addressed is regarding the true cost of living with a disability. Concerns regarding losing benefits might deter individuals from pursuing VR services. Individuals with disabilities need more education on benefits. The current design of the benefit system is that it’s built on the concept of “fail to benefit.”

Policy Question: How can DOR increase awareness for consumers about available benefits? Topics and issues for the SRC to explore that may inform this policy question include:

* Recommendation 2021.4: Review and revisit the SRC Recommendation 2021.4 “Work Incentive Planning Information.” (Reference: pages 9 – 10).
* CCEPD: invite a representative from the California Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (CCEPD) to present on their Integrated Benefits Planning Policy Recommendations. (Reference: pages 10 – 18).

# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

* Background: The California Health and Human Services Agency is leading many initiatives to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and as a result, DOR will likely be asked to develop an equity action plan.
* Policy Questions: In support of a DOR equity action plan, the SRC is asked to provide considerations on the following questions: 1) how can inequities in DOR’s programs and services be identified, and what methodologies can be used to address these equity gaps, 2) what communities are unserved and underserved, and how can DOR effectively reach them, and 3) what methods and models should DOR look to and consider to address these inequities? Topics and issues for the SRC to explore that may inform these policy questions include:
  + Affinity groups: Ensure that DOR’s affinity groups are involved in informing the development of the Department’s equity action plan. Invite DOR affinity groups to present at an SRC quarterly meeting.
* Research:
  + Consult with other State entities that have engaged in this type of work and data analysis – example, data from the [Department of Developmental Services](https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/disparities/data/dds-disparity-measures/) (DDS) shows notable differences in service access among racial/ethnic and language communities. Review the DDS disparity measures.
  + Kate Bjerke to meet with subject matter experts from the California Strategic Growth Council to gather information on best practices.
* Legislation: A helpful strategy could be for DOR to inform legislation regarding equity hiring goals to ensure disability is included (example SB 485). Next steps: Jonathan Hasak and Kate Bjerke to reach out to DOR’s Office of Legislation and Communication to learn more about how DOR tracks legislation and how DOR takes an advocacy role with legislation, policies, and plans.
* Revisit Recommendation 2020.4 – Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Disparities: Ivan Guillen will review SRC recommendation 2020.4 and will provide suggestions to the SRC on possible updates. (Reference: page 19)

# Gun Violence

* Background: The California Health and Human Services Agency is calling upon Departments, including DOR, to recognize gun violence as a public health and public safety crisis, and for Departments to do more to act on this issue.
* Policy Considerations: The SRC has been asked to provide suggestions and recommendations on the strategies and actions that DOR can take to help address and respond to the gun violence crisis. Topics and issues for the SRC to explore that may inform this policy consideration include:
  + Research: Kate Bjerke to meet with subject matter experts from the California Firearm Violence Research Center and report back.
  + RAM Chapter 3078.1: Suggested that the SRC review RAM Chapter 3078.1 “Guidelines for Addressing Threatening or Harassing Behavior by Applicants or Consumers”. When this policy is misinterpreted, it can cause challenges for the consumer and increase stigma and involvement with the criminal justice system. Additionally, CAP has identified that this policy is utilized more frequently for consumers from underrepresented groups and individuals with behavioral health disabilities. (Reference: pages 20 – 23)

# Intersection of Retention Plans and Order of Selection

* Background: Per federal regulations, State VR agencies may elect to serve individuals at risk of losing employment outside the order of selection and provide VR services needed for the individual to maintain employment.
* Policy Question: If DOR implements an Order of Selection with closed categories, would DOR support the provision of VR services to individuals who reapply and require services to maintain/retain employment even though the individual would otherwise be assigned to a waiting list? Topics and issues for the SRC to explore that may inform this policy question include:
  + Data Review: Kate Bjerke will reach out to program staff to gather data that will inform the SRC’s next discussion on this policy question. Requested data and information may include the following elements:
    - How many consumers are currently on the DOR waitlist?
    - Historical data on the number of consumers on the DOR waitlist.
    - Trends/categories on why consumers who are employed come back to DOR post-employment services.
    - What kind of post-employment services are needed, and how long does it typically take a consumer to receive those services?
    - Historical data on the number of consumers in the post-employment category.
    - Average cost of post-employment services.

# Independent Living and Traumatic Brain Injury Programs

* Background: DOR’s Independent Living and Community Access Division has a standing item on the SRC quarterly meeting agenda for program overviews, updates, and opportunities for collaboration. This aligns with the SRC’s requirement to coordinate efforts with the State Independent Living Council (SILC).
* Policy Questions: 1) How can DOR provide coordinated “no wrong door” services to address the whole person whether they enter the systems through the VR or independent living programs? 2) How can DOR improve employment services and outcomes for individuals with traumatic brain injuries? 3) There is a need to include vocational rehabilitation and the benefits of employment when community supports are being discussed. Where and when does employment fit into the conversation? Topics and issues for the SRC to explore that may inform these policy questions:
  + TBI Survey and Needs Assessment: Review the recently released TBI survey and needs assessment. Then, the SRC can review the assessment and consider recommendations. Benjamin Aviles and Kate Bjerke will reach out to Megan Sampson for more information.

# California Community Transitions (CCT) Project

Follow up discussion with program staff at the Department of Health Care Services Regarding the CCT project on questions such as:

* How could DOR become an information and referral partner?
* How can VR services and employment be incorporated into the CCT transition plans?
* Contractor Requirements – It would be helpful to understand how VR services could offered, perhaps within "habilitation" services?
* Reporting Requirements – Could it be possible to update reporting requirements to include the provision of VR services and/or a warm hand-off for VR services (when desired)?

# Budget Change Proposals

Policy Question: If DOR was going to make a budget ask, what should that ask be, and why? Notes:

* Recommendations for Budget Change Proposals (BCPs) need to be submitted to DOR between January – March 2023 for consideration for the next budget cycle.
* BCP recommendations need to be new initiatives – cannot be a request to do more of the same.
* Reference new [Executive Order N-16-22](chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https:/www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/9.13.22-EO-N-16-22-Equity.pdf?emrc=c11513) which requires an analysis related to DEI for any new budget requests.

# Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report

Report out on issues and trends CAP has provided support to DOR consumers with over the past three years.

# Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs)

Discussion with DOR’s Community Resource Division regarding opportunities, challenges, and the quality of services related to DOR’s CRPs throughout California.

# CalDOR Consumer Payment Card

Follow up presentation with updates and details on implementation.

# Behavioral Health DOR Impact Goal

* Background: DOR recently submitted an impact goal to CHHS to significantly increase the number of individuals with behavioral health disabilities with obtaining sustainable employment.
* Policy Question: What equity measures could provide insight as to whether this impact goal is being reached?

# Unified State Plan Committee

The DOR Planning Unit will provide the SRC Unified State Plan Committee with quarterly updates on the progress of the State Plan goals and objectives (November 2022 specific).

# Monitoring and Evaluation Committee

The DOR Planning Unit will provide the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee with the preliminary results of the most recent Consumer Satisfaction Survey (November 2022 specific).

# Annual Report

Review and approval of the 2021/22 federal fiscal year SRC Annual Report (November 2022 specific).

# Updates on DOR Initiatives

* Integrating Employment in Recovery (IER) initiative supported by opioid funding. Policy Question: How can success be defined and measured for individuals participating in the Integrating Employment in Recovery initiative at opioid treatment centers?
* Demand Side Employment Initiative
* VR Connections
* Labor Market Sector Specialty Teams

# Recommendations Review

The SRC will review the Council’s recommendations adopted from the past five years. Then, the SRC will prioritize which recommendations to revisit and request updates on (November 2022 specific).

# Fair Hearing and Mediation Statistics and Overview of Hearing Summaries

SRC members will learn about the fair hearing and mediation statistics and receive an overview of hearing summaries (Last update received in January 2022).

# State Hearing Division

Members will receive an update on DOR’s transition to utilizing the California Department of Social Services, State Hearings Division to conduct fair hearings for DOR consumers. SRC members are interested in learning if this transition has resulted in positive changes, increased engagement and neutrality, and if it is more user friendly for DOR consumers.

# Regulations

Update on efforts to update DOR regulations so they better align with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

# Individual Service Providers (ISP)

Members will receive an update on DOR’s use of ISPs. ISPs are independent contractors who assist individuals with disabilities to participate in vocational rehabilitation services and to achieve and maintain an employment outcome. DOR did not discontinue authorizations for ISPs and their services by September 1, 2021, as previously communicated.

# Adult Work Experience

Members will receive an update on the availability of Adult Work Experiences for DOR consumers. Work experiences are intended to be temporary placements to gain experience in the workplace.

# Reference Information: SRC Recommendation 2021.4

**Work Incentive Planning Information**

The SRC recommends DOR expand consumers’ access to Work Incentive Planning (WIP) information and services by providing WIP information and services so the consumer can make an informed choice. WIP services should be consistent throughout California in the following ways:

1. Before, during and after the consumer’s individualized plan for employment is written
2. Virtually through on-line materials and a recorded video that provides an overview of work incentive information and explanation of DOR WIP services. (Materials and video must meet website accessibility requirements)
3. Provide WIP information to family members of consumers (who may be impacted)

**DOR Response to SRC Recommendation 2021.4**

The DOR appreciates the SRC’s recommendations to expand consumers’ access to DOR’s WIP information and services. Currently, DOR Districts provide this service to Potentially Eligible (PE) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) consumers receiving Supplemental Security Income and/or Social Security Disability Insurance. PE consumers receive DOR WIP services either in a group setting to learn financial literacy skills or on an individual basis if they are planning for or participating in paid work experience as part of their DOR Student Services. VR consumers receive DOR WIP services either in Service-J status, Employed status or Service status or in their final quarter or semester of training. Some benefits planning services may also be provided during other stages of the VR process through the Work Incentive Planning and Assistance Programs sponsored by Social Security.

DOR staff will examine currently provided WIP services and assess whether resources, including staff resources, are available, can be identified, obtained or redirected to expand WIP services, including providing these services earlier in the consumer’s case. Following this examination, the DOR commits to working with the SRC regarding the development or implementation of possible changes to the provision of this important VR service.

Regarding the SRC’s recommendation on providing WIP information to family members, currently, at any meeting with DOR staff, including meetings with Work Incentive Planners, all PE and VR consumers have the right to include family members, other representatives, or advocates. The DOR will ensure that WIPs and other DOR staff know and inform participants and their families and representatives that family members can be and are encouraged to participate.

With respect to online resources, DOR will review currently available online information regarding WIP services and access to and availability of that information to participants. DOR will ensure that online information is in plain-language and consumer-focused, that WIP website materials are accessible to consumers, family members, representatives, stakeholders, and partners, and provides an accurate explanation of DOR WIP services. DOR would appreciate the SRC’s sharing of resources or examples that are representative of what the SRC recommends as potential on-line materials and recorded videos that they feel provide a good overview of and delivers effective work incentive information.

DOR looks forward to future conversations with the SRC on this recommendation and sharing the results of the analysis, steps that have been or will be taken, and potential next steps the DOR will take in support of the delivery of effective and timely WIP services.

# Reference Information: CCEPD – May 2022 Integrated Benefits Planning Policy Recommendations

**Background**

State Coordination Subcommittee Members agreed that a set of policy recommendations on benefits planning should be developed and submitted to the Agency Secretaries. Taken together, the recommendations are providing a more systemic approach to benefits planning within programs and services serving people with disabilities. Members will approve the policy recommendations to begin the informal feedback process with the lead departments, the Department of Rehabilitation and Employment Development Department. Then, the recommendations will be submitted to the Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Labor and Workforce Development Agencies.

**Introduction to Policy Recommendation**

The California Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (CCEPD) is proposing a set of policy recommendations to create strategies for effective integrated benefits planning approaches among the various programs serving people with disabilities. The CCEPD submitted a similar policy recommendation in late 2019, which a few months later the global pandemic struck, and further discussions were deferred. Although previously submitted, the CCEPD believes that additional strategies are needed to fully integrate DB101 and develop sustaining cross-system approaches to benefits planning.

Considering the continued high unemployment rates and low labor market participation rates for people with disabilities, an effective, state-level strategies to coordinate benefits planning strategy is needed to assist with dispelling myths and incorporate the message that people with disabilities can manage benefits and work. If people with disabilities do not manage their benefits, they can lose health care or long-term services and supports or lead to paying back of benefits to the Social Security Administration. Although California is the first in the nation to develop this toolkit, an integrated benefits planning approach must be implemented to increase the rate of employment and make use the tool in multiple systems that serve people with disabilities.

The CCEPD recommends the following:

* Collaboration to fund the web-based tool Disability Benefits (DB)101 among the two agencies. Multiple providers and frontline staff in the following systems: workforce areas, vocational rehabilitation, independent living centers, behavioral health, social services, and regional centers may use the web-based tool. At the state level, six state departments are impacted using DB101, either by having information of their programs for clients or frontline staff or providers using the DB101 to help people with disabilities become employed. Each Department can use DB101 as part of other services and integrated service delivery.
* Recommend having a lead Department that coordinates an integrated approach to benefits planning among multiple systems. The Department can have existing staff provide technical assistance or specific staff that coordinate strategies at state level.
* Provide DB101 information to all clients, regardless of whether they are brand-new into the labor market, reentering or switching careers. This information will benefit all people with disabilities in various points of their employment efforts.
* Recommend Departments coordinate ongoing training efforts for frontline staff and providers on use of DB101 and general benefits planning understanding. Several training models can be used such as a “train the trainer” model, use of a learning management system or ongoing virtual training.
* Recommend that benefits counseling questions are included in documents to inform people with disabilities of how to manage benefits and employment when requesting employment services or create an informational session as part of the intake process.
* Recommend Departments that have transition-age youth or youth programs incorporate usage of DB101 to educate families and youth about community resources and managing benefits. Departments should work with Parent Training Information Centers to provide benefits counseling information to parents and DB101 information.
* Request Employment Development Department and California Workforce Development Board work with the America’s Job Centers of California to relay DB101 information to clients receiving services as they are enrolling into employment services and training programs.
* Require DB101 usage for employment efforts within the Department of Developmental Services, as part of the elimination of sub-minimum wage discussions and other employment discussions. Regional Centers should incorporate DB101 knowledge among staff and incorporate benefits planning strategies as part of the elimination of subminimum wage.
* Request Department of Rehabilitation relay DB101 information to clients receiving services as they are enrolling into the vocational rehabilitation program and developing an Individualized Plan for Employment.
* Request Department of Health Care Services incorporate DB101 into behavioral health efforts.
* Request Department of Social Services (DSS) coordinate with DSS employment program administrators, service providers, and additional stakeholder communities to share DB101 resource information. Utilization of DB101 can be pivotal in achieving employment goals for people with disabilities. This resource provides access to information that can encourage engagement by demonstrating the impact potential on an individual’s disability benefit levels, which has historically been a source of apprehension for potential participants.
* Information on benefits planning and access to DB101 should be placed on state websites. Access to services on benefits planning and dispelling myths for people with disabilities should not be a secret, and yet, many Californians still are the under the assumption that they can lose benefits if they work.

**Need for Benefits Planning**

Benefits planning helps individuals determine how their cash benefits (including SSI and SSDI) and healthcare benefits (such as Medi-Cal, Medicare, and In-Home Supportive Services) or housing benefits may be impacted by earnings from employment. Clear, timely, and accurate benefits planning supports people with disabilities to choose employment over benefits, and plan for their future. The CCEPD believes that benefits planning is just as critical as inclusive employment strategies and educational opportunities. In step with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), CCEPD believes that an integrated approach to benefits planning is needed to increase the employment rate of people, leverage resources to expand expertise in multiple systems and assist with dispelling myths about employment and disability.

According to the Social Security Administration (SSA), as of 2020 there are 1.9 million Californians receiving SSI and SSDI benefits. Of those, 1,192,888 Californians receive SSI based on disability, blindness, and age, and 709,336 Californians receive SSDI, based on disability. Although SSI and SSDI provide a safety net, income derived solely from benefits assures a life of poverty.

As noted in the WIOA Modified State Plan, the labor force participation rate, an indicator of people not institutionalized who are employed or looking for work, is 18.1% for people with disabilities and continues to remain low when comparing other populations. This rate has remained relatively flat for people with disabilities despite a recovered economy. Labor force participation is one metric that demonstrates the continued, low employment of people with disabilities. Although benefits planning is mentioned as support services in WIOA Modified State Plan, there is not coordinated state-level strategies to assist with ongoing efforts to integrate the knowledge of benefits planning among frontline staff in multiple systems.

**Use of Benefits Counseling**

Currently, only three systems (independent living, vocational rehabilitation, and workforce) have expertise in providing people with disabilities benefits planning to assist both in employment efforts and with a social safety net. Other systems, such as mental health or developmental services, do not offer benefits counseling in a consistent manner. Each system uses the expertise differently for the populations it serves. At the local level, there may be systems overlap. However, at the state-level, there is no interaction of state policy across all three systems that can be determined by the CCEPD. The CCEPD believes that more cross-system collaboration can occur to further the training for all professionals working with people with disabilities to educate them on benefits planning and employment. Educating professionals about managing benefits is a needed strategy to help dispel the myths about employment for people with disabilities.

Independent Living Centers (ILCs) are community-driven and offer a variety of services to people with disabilities of any age based on the community needs of the local area. Although the supportive services that ILCs offer can be different, most offer benefits planning. ILCs provide expertise to wrap services around people with disabilities, stabilizing a social safety net with benefits. This creates access to employment when people with disabilities understand their benefits and their interaction with paid work.

The Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), California’s vocational rehabilitation program, provides Work Incentives Planning Services, including information and counseling on benefits planning for SSI/SSDI participants who are in the job-ready and employed statuses of their Individualized Plan for Employment and for students with disabilities, ages 16 years old until 21 years old. The DOR also receives funds from the Social Security Administration’s Cost Reimbursement program for SSI/SSDI consumers who have gained employment. As a result of the WIOA, DOR has Work Incentives Planning for students in potentially eligible cases, offering benefits planning for students participating in paid work experience who receive SSI or Title II disability benefits (SSDI or Childhood Disability Benefits). Potentially eligible cases are students who are in school between 16 years old until 21 years old. This includes educating families about benefits planning and financial literacy, explanation of the individual’s benefits, review of a benefits summary, calculation, and information through the DB101 website, and an overview of how to report earnings.

In California, 8 Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) are Employment Networks, offering Ticket to Work Programs that include connections to benefits planners. Employment Networks are recognized by the Social Security Administration as providers who can assist people with disabilities pursue, enter, and maintain employment. LWDA Ticket to Work Programs are funded on a milestone/outcome basis, only receiving funds for clients who gain and keep employment. These LWDAs have access to benefits planning either through staffing benefits planners or by navigating services within their partnership and referral networks.  They have built capacity to assist people with disabilities with employment services, including benefits planning and supportive services through grant programs such as the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) and Disability Employment Accelerator (DEA). Unlike ILCs and DOR, LWDAs serve the public who are seeking job services, and do not have additional eligibility criteria based on the severity of a disability.

There are 21 Regional Centers state-wide offering employment services. Although some of the Regional Centers may offer benefits counseling, it is unknown how consistent the counseling is throughout the system. If Regional Center clients are involved in employment efforts and works with DOR, then that individual will receive benefits planning counseling in the job-ready status.

Since the1990s, federal law has instituted Work Incentives Planning that assists people with disabilities to gain employment while managing their benefits. The Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) program, created by the Social Security Administration, was developed to promote employment for people with disabilities. According to the federal government, the goal of the program is to allow people with disabilities to have financial stability and have gainful employment. There are currently seven WIPA projects in California. These federal law changes have allowed states to have benefits planning for people with disabilities and receive funding when people with disabilities receive employment. If people with disabilities gain employment, the entities (i.e., DOR, ILCs and LWDAs) receive funds from Social Security Administration. Accompanying funding enabled states to expand their work incentives planning programs and allowed nonprofit organizations to receive funds to develop benefits planning programs.

**DB101 Website Background**

The DB101 website is operated and maintained by the World Institute of Disability (WID). The website offers information on SSI and SSDI, Medi-Cal, In Home Supportive Services, Medicare, work preparation and education, asset building information, and benefits planning/work incentive planning calculators.

In California, the DB101 website offers users the information in English or Spanish. In the last five years, the following chart provides the number of users.

| Year | English Site | Spanish Site | Percentage Increase | Total Users |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2017 | 506,093 | 43,607 | 28.7% | 549,700 |
| 2018 | 609,841 | 48,724 | 20.5% | 658,565 |
| 2019 | 792,893 | 55,038 | 30.0% | 847,931 |
| 2020 | 745,865 | 67,416 | -6% | 813,281 |
| 2021 | 611,123 | 36,460 | -17.9% | 647,583 |
| 5-Year Total | 3,265,815 | 251,245 |  | 3,517,060 |

Sessions are the number of times an individual uses the website. WID assumes that those using the website are benefits planning specialists and service providers with knowledge of the online tool, people with disabilities or their families or support network who know of the online tool due to the service providers.

DB101 was first created in California to combat the misinformation and fear among people with disabilities to be employed and manage their benefits. At that time, conversations centered on the need for an online portal that could be accessed by both customers and their families or support network and practitioners working with people with disabilities. A needs assessment was developed to determine usability needs of the online portal.

Launched in 2004, the creation of the online portal has been a public-private creation between the WID, grants from the California Endowment, start-up and research and design grants from the DOR, and funds from the Disability Employment Initiative from the EDD. In 2005, the Social Security Administration awarded a grant to finish designs and launch online calculators for California disability beneficiaries.

In 2020, after securing foundational grants, the WID redesigned the website to streamline the navigation of the tool and make it fully mobile responsive. Although WID continues to maintain the tool, the State of California currently does not pay for the ongoing maintenance and operation costs. WID has estimated that the maintenance and operation costs about $113,463. The CCEPD has provided examples of how other states have funded DB101 as well as how other have integrated the usage of DB101 in multiple systems.

In 2020, as part of understanding how customers are experiencing the site and what the site is used for, WID embedded a survey feature into the site. People with disabilities, their families or caregivers and professionals are using DB101. Of the service professionals, the majority users are service providers, employment specialists and community resource specialists. Many are using DB101 to support their job and clients with information on employment and community resources. As a result of using DB101, many will use community resources to improve their life, take the job offer, look for work and go back to school.

**Other State’s DB 101 Usage**

DB101 is now available in 10 states, including Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, and Ohio. In 2022, DB101 is launching in Illinois. California, Arizona, Colorado, and New Jersey have a bilingual website and so will Illinois.

Each state can additional specific information to the tool. For instance, the State of Minnesota has included information on energy, childcare, housing, and food assistance that California does not include. Additionally, Arizona has included information on home ownership and how to start a business. The State of Michigan provides veterans information on its web-based online tool. The State of California can also include other information not currently included on the toolkit.

Not only are states including various types of information to assist people with disabilities, but States have also integrated DB101 into the service delivery of multiple systems. The following are three examples of how States integrated DB101 into their systems to assist people with disabilities navigate and manage benefits and employment.

Arizona (AZ) has integrated AZ DB101 into every service provider system within the state. Though the site is funded solely by Vocational Rehabilitation dollars, systems like Medicaid have mandated use of and competencies in AZ DB101 for all employment specialist receiving Medicaid reimbursement. The mental health system has also created policy that mandated AZ DB101 usage. AZ DB101 has been incorporated into Development Disability trainings as has the Department of Education. Each agency has looked at how AZ DB101 can improve the effectiveness of the services they provide to promote and support employment.

Michigan (MI) has united MI DB101 with their benefit planner tiered-approach system. Michigan has included a professional path to their vault that allows for benefit planner to coordinate services and communicate with their beneficiaries. They have also included videos as a diverse way to communicate benefit complexity. Michigan also has tutorial video to support users – both individuals with disabilities and service providers.

Minnesota (MN) has created an integrated system that partners with local Center of Independence to provide a HUB, where trained professionals are available to provide information and referral to people with disabilities. MN DB101 is at the center of the HUB information. Minnesota Department of Human Services has partnered with Vocational Rehabilitation to access MN Vault activities through the HUB.

**Funding Streams Used in Other States**

In the State of Alaska, the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Senior and Disability pays for monthly maintenance services. The State of Arizona funds DB101 by the Department of Economic Security, Division of Employment and Rehabilitation, and pay for direct training services, change requests and monthly maintenance. The States of Kentucky and Ohio fund DB101 through developmental services departments in respective states (Kentucky Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities and Ohio Department of Developmental Services, Policy and Strategy Division). The State of Kentucky pays for monthly maintenance and the State of Ohio pays for both monthly maintenance and change requests. The State of Michigan pays for DB101 through the Department of Technology, Management and Budget and pays for monthly maintenance. No information on how State of New Jersey funds DB 101 was provided.

Only two states, Minnesota and Missouri, seem to have braided funding for the DB101 website. The Department of Human Services, Disability Services Division and Housing and Supportive Services Division paid for monthly maintenance, change requests and real-time search tools for DB 101. Braiding funds also occurred in the State of Missouri. The Department of Mental Health, Division of Behavioral Health and Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services and the Developmental Disabilities paid for DB 101 for both monthly maintenance and change requests.

# Reference Information: SRC Recommendation 2020.4

**Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Disparities**

The SRC recommends DOR integrate on-going mechanisms throughout its operations to eliminate racial, ethnic, and cultural disparities (to include identification, data analysis, stakeholder review, training, and performance of services).

**DOR Response to SRC Recommendation 2020.4**

The DOR appreciates this recommendation and is addressing racial, ethnic, and cultural disparities. Looking inward, the DOR established the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) team to develop DOR’s DEI vision, goals, and objectives for state year 2020-21. This team will work to build DOR’s internal capacity to support long term DEI efforts and develop an initial set of DEI strategies to be implemented by the DOR. DOR has supported managers’ participation in implicit bias and cultural competency trainings. Employees have united through the work of the African American and Asian Pacific Islander taskforces and established the Latinx taskforce.

The majority of DOR Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). CARF is committed to diversity and cultural competence in all CARF activities and associations and has an eight-module webinar available to its members to support ongoing development.

The DOR is collecting, analyzing, and sharing data on consumer demographics to learn more about the consumers served or who are potentially unserved or underserved. The DOR conducts a triennial comprehensive statewide needs assessment to identify unserved or underserved communities and strategies to serve them. DOR has entered into demographic data sharing agreements with the Employment Development Department and nationally with VR agencies. The DOR is contracting with San Diego State University to analyze consumer demographic data and employment outcomes. The DOR’s support of these data endeavors and diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts will further the department’s commitment to the pursuit of employment, independence, and social equity.

# Reference Information: Rehabilitation Administrative Manual (RAM) Chapter 3078.1

## Guidelines for Addressing Threatening or Harassing Behavior by Applicants or Consumers

The DOR employees, vendors, partners, applicants, consumers, and members of the public are entitled to interact in a secure and safe environment, free from threatening or harassing behavior, and to be treated with dignity and respect in the provision of VR services. These guidelines describe threatening or harassing behavior by applicants or consumers and provide the DOR staff with a consistent procedure for documenting and reporting threats and potential threats.

The DOR staff must take into consideration the disability of the applicant or consumer when assessing a behavior to determine whether it is threatening or harassing. A disabling condition or medication problem could result in a behavior appearing to be, but that is not, threatening or harassing.

## ****Examples of Threatening or Harassing Behavior****

Examples of threatening or harassing behavior directed at a DOR employee, vendor, partner, applicant, consumer, or other related individual, which may cause a reasonable person to be fearful or have the intention or effect of alarming or intimidating, include, but are not limited to, the following:

* Hitting, throwing, or shoving an individual or an object
* Raising one’s voice in a loud disruptive manner, this may include profanity, obscenities, or discriminatory language
* Telling an individual that she or he may be harmed
* Following or stalking an individual
* Suggesting that violence against an individual or damage to property is appropriate
* Touching an individual in a sexual manner or engaging in lewd, indecent, or obscene conduct
* Carrying firearms or weapons during the provision of VR services

Threats and/or harassment may be direct or indirect, in person, by telephone, by mail, email, via an electronic device, or an alternate form of communication.

## ****Responding to Reports of Threatening or Harassing Behavior****

Any emergency situation that involves a credible threat of imminent serious violence or physical harm that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety should be reported to local law enforcement by dialing the 9-911 emergency number or 911 from an outside phone. Any employee who feels that he or she is at risk of harm may dial 911 with or without a supervisor’s approval. If an employee does not consider himself or herself to be in immediate danger, he or she should notify his or her supervisor for the supervisor to determine the appropriate action.

The DOR should seek assistance from law enforcement (e.g., police, sheriff, or California Highway Patrol) when an applicant or consumer commits or threatens to commit a crime on the premises of the DOR or against DOR personnel. When an applicant or consumer threatens to commit a crime of violence against a person other than a DOR employee, the DOR should also contact law enforcement and report. If law enforcement conducts an investigation, or an applicant or consumer is prosecuted for a threat on DOR premises or against a DOR employee, the DOR is authorized to share information in an applicant or consumer’s record of services (CCR 7143(a)(7) and 7143.5(a)). If there is no investigation or prosecution, however, the DOR may not share information from an applicant or consumer’s record of services with law enforcement.

If there is reasonable concern that an applicant or consumer is a danger to himself or herself, DOR professional staff (e.g., Rehabilitation Counselor, Team Manager, Rehabilitation Supervisor, District Administrator, Medical Consultant, and Consulting Psychologist) should immediately contact law enforcement and report the behavior. In accordance with federal regulations, the DOR may release confidential information from an applicant or consumer’s record of services in order to protect the individual or others, if the individual poses a threat to his or her safety or the safety of others (34 CFR 361.38(e)(5)).

If the incident does not involve an imminent threat of serious violence or physical harm, the supervisor will inform the next supervisory level of the occurrence. The California Highway Patrol, rather than local law enforcement, should be contacted to investigate.

Whether there is an imminent threat or a less serious but repeated threat or harassment, an applicant or a consumer’s conduct may be the basis for closing the record of services (CCR 7179(b)(1), 7179.1(c)(1), or 7179.3(a)(6)), or for obtaining a temporary or permanent restraining order. The next supervisory level may seek advice from the Health and Safety Officer (HSO) in the DOR Business Services or the DOR Office of Legal Affairs and Regulations. The HSO may have some additional information that is helpful to reduce the risk, and the Legal Affairs Office will assess the facts to determine if the state and federal regulations support closing the case and if the DOR should contact the Attorney General’s Office for assistance in obtaining a restraining order.

[Go to CCR.](http://www.dor.ca.gov/executive/regulations.html)

## ****Reporting Threatening or Harassing Behavior****

All DOR employees who observe or experience threatening or harassing behavior in the workplace are responsible to report it immediately to their direct supervisor or the person acting in that capacity. The immediate supervisor will document the incident on a [DR 160 Incident Report](file:///G:\Public%20Folder\InDOR%20Documents\Forms\Business%20Administration\DR160%20Incident%20Report.pdf), located on the DOR intranet.

Department of Rehabilitation employees who observe indicators that an applicant or consumer may be having difficulties that could result in threatening or harassing behavior will notify their supervisor and the Rehabilitation Counselor of record of these observations. The District Administrator, Team Manager, or Rehabilitation Counselor of record may consult with a DOR Medical Consultant or Consulting Psychologist, as appropriate. The applicant or consumer’s psychiatrist, psychologist, medical doctor, family member, or case manager may also be consulted if proper release forms have been obtained. Indicators of potential for threatening or harassing behavior include, but are not limited to, mood swings, changes in appearance (disheveled), aggressive speech or behavior, or indicators that the individual may be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

## ****Documenting Threatening or Harassing Behavior in the Record of Services****

All reports of threatening or harassing behavior by applicants or consumers must be documented in a case note in AWARE and reported to the immediate supervisor to determine the course of action, including record of services closure and possibly obtaining a restraining order. In addition, a DR 160 must be completed, reviewed, signed by the supervisor, and sent to the HSO in the DOR Business Services Section, with a copy to the District Administrator within three days.

The DOR must, as soon as practical, report all crimes on state property to the California Highway Patrol, State Police Division (Government Code section14613.7). If a crime is committed on state property and a law enforcement entity other than the California Highway Patrol responds, the supervisor must complete an [STD 99 Report of Crime on State Property](https://www.chp.ca.gov/notify-chp/crime-incident-reporting-system). This report is provided to the local California Highway Patrol office, with copies forwarded to the Health and Safety Specialist in Business Services and the District Administrator.

A Rehabilitation Counselor, with the Team Manager, in consultation with a District Administrator, will determine the need for subsequent action. For applicants and consumers, depending on the severity of the violation, this may include closure of the record of services. This determination will be made by a Rehabilitation Counselor in accordance with the facts of the incident(s), the consumer’s record of services, current case status and the applicable regulations, most likely either CCR 7179(b)(1), 7179.1(c)(1), or 7179.3(a)(6). The DOR district staff may wish to seek advice from the DOR Legal Affairs and Regulations Office, as the office can, as noted above, assess the facts to determine if the state and federal regulations support closing the record of services.

An applicant or consumer who disagrees with the action taken by the DOR has the right to contact CAP or request an administrative review, mediation, and/or a fair hearing. Refer to [DR 1000 Rights and Remedies](file:///G:\Public%20Folder\InDOR%20Documents\Forms\Vocational%20Rehabilitation%20Programs%20&%20Services\DR1000%20Rights%20&%20Remedies.pdf).

Refer to the DOR’s Workplace Violence and Bullying Prevention Program on the DOR intranet for more information on policies and procedures.

Refer to the RAM Chapter 30 Toolbox for sample warning letters.

Refer to Section 3070 for information on record of services closure.  
[Go to CCR.](http://www.dor.ca.gov/executive/regulations.html)