

Conducting A VR Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment: Using the VR Needs Assessment Guide

*Susan Stoddard, PhD
Lewis Kraus, MCP, MPH
Contract # ED-04-CO-0106 with
Rehabilitation Services Administration
U.S. Department of Education*

Training objectives

- ***Become familiar with the model CSNA***
- ***Learn to use the guide to implement the steps of the model CSNA***

Why conduct a CSNA?

- *Required in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended*
- *Informs the State Plan*
 - ✓ **Basis for state plan goals, objectives, and strategies**
- *Informing the public and enhancing community awareness*

Required information goals

- *The VR services needs of:*
 - ✓ most significant disabilities, including supported employment
 - ✓ minorities and unserved or underserved
 - ✓ served through statewide workforce investment system
- *Establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs*

Why a model CSNA?

- ***Many CSNA studies do not address all requirements, especially:***
 - ✓ **Other parts of the workforce system**
 - ✓ **CRPs**
- ***Limited information: sometimes only focus is on current or former consumers***
- ***Need for clarification of expectations***
- ***Requests for technical assistance***

RSA identified need for:

- ***A model CSNA***
- ***A Guide to implementing CSNA***
- ***Training in using the Guide***

The Guide provides

- *Part I - Description of the model CSNA*
- *Part II - Implementation of the model CSNA*
 - ✓ Suggestions for conducting each of the six steps
 - ✓ Examples, worksheets, and links
- *Detailed Appendix*
- *Not a textbook or template*

Part I: 6 steps of model CSNA

1. Establish CSNA Goals
2. Plan for Information
3. Gather Information
4. Analyze Results
5. Develop Conclusions
6. Inform State Plan Goals, Priorities and Strategies

Seven Information Strategies

- *Disability population statistics and*
- *Disability population estimates*
- *Population projections and economic forecasts*
- *VR agency data, studies and experience*
- *State statistics from federal reports*
- *State and local data and reports*

Seven Information Strategies

- ***Stakeholders***
 - ✓ **Surveys**
 - ✓ **Focus groups**
 - ✓ **Key informant interviews**
 - ✓ **Hearings**

CSNA Principles

VR/SRC/Community partnership

Build on the experience of the State Plan

Involve the community

Use data to focus the study goals

Design a feasible and reasonable project

Multi-disciplinary needs assessment team

CSNA cannot rely on data alone

Start thinking dissemination early

CSNA Principles, cont.

- ✓ **Take advantage of existing knowledge**
- ✓ **Use wide range of methods, participants**
- ✓ **As much an art as a science**
- ✓ **Combine quantitative & qualitative results**
- ✓ **In developing state plan options, learn from past successes and mistakes**
- ✓ **Develop a menu of alternatives**

CSNA Principles, cont.

- ✓ **Results of CSNA steps lead to state plan documentation**
- ✓ **Some actions happen now, some need more study**

Part II: Guide to Implementation

- *Approaches, examples, products of steps*
- *Tables and reports to download*
- *List of potential community partners*
- *Ideas for stakeholder methods*
- *Roles for SRC and VR*
- *Example survey forms and other data collection forms*
- *Examples of multi-method analysis*
- *Worksheets for recommendations*

Step 1: Establish CSNA Goals

- ***Establish coordinating team***
 - ✓ Product: VR agency, SRC member, and community roles
- ***Use existing information, reports***
 - ✓ Product: Draft state population profile
- ***Define goals***
 - ✓ Product: List of information goals

Questions to consider

- *What organizations and individuals should be involved?*
- *What reports and findings are already available?*
- *Are there obvious needs and gaps that should be included?*

Guide resource: SRC role

- ***SRC involvement in the process***
 - ✓ **Planning**
 - ✓ **Data collection**
 - ✓ **Review findings**
 - ✓ **Develop recommendations**
 - ✓ **Information for State Plan**

Guide resource: community partners

- *Aging, developmental services, DD, PAS*
- *Education or special education*
- *Housing, transportation, welfare*
- *Mental health, Public health*
- *Mental retardation/intellectual disabilities*
- *Social security, Veterans, CILs*
- *Consumer organizations (TASH, UCPA, NAMI)*

“Unserved and Underserved”

- ***Unserved: eligible for VR, not receiving services***
- ***Underserved: not receiving equal or full benefits of VR***

“Unserved and Underserved”

- ***Examples***
 - ✓ **People with mental illness**
 - ✓ **TBI**
 - ✓ **Deaf-blindness**
 - ✓ **Low incidence disabilities**
 - ✓ **Low-income**
 - ✓ **Veterans**
 - ✓ **Students in transition**
 - ✓ **Older workers**
 - ✓ **Rural residents**

Other Step 1 resources

- *Exhibit 1.2 - Data sources with live links (e.g. disabilityplanningdata.com)*
- *Exhibit 1.3 - Example data from American Factfinder tables*
- *Exhibit 1.4 - Example comparison data table*
- *Exhibit 1.5 - Example list of agencies/organizations with information*

Step 1: Example

ACS 2007: Ethnicity (16-64 years)

Hispanic

Number and percent of people with a disability and not employed

29,975 28.9%

Current VR consumers FY2007

2,915 12.3%

- State may want to consider Hispanics as unserved or underserved

Source: Developed from ACS Tables C18020 A-I and state agency VR caseload data

NOTE: Actual data in table are for example purposes only.

Step 2: Plan for information

- ***Create the CSNA workplan, staffing, timeline, and cost estimate***
 - ✓ **Product: Information strategies approach**
 - ✓ **Product: A planning checklist with skills and costs for each step**
 - ✓ **Product: A personloading chart**
 - ✓ **Product: Timeline**

Building the team

- ***Plan for the most accurate job possible***
- ***Internal staff, consultants, or both?***
- ***Are needed skills available?***
 - ✓ **Policy and goal-setting?**
 - ✓ **Survey design and analysis?**
 - ✓ **Conducting focus groups?**
 - ✓ **Qualitative methods?**
 - ✓ **Quantitative analysis?**
 - ✓ **Synthesis of information?**

Guide resources for Step 2

- *Exhibit 2.1 - Information strategies in the model CSNA*
- *Exhibit 2.2 - Skills and costs*
- *Exhibit 2.3 - Example personloading*
- *Exhibit 2.4a - Example timeline (1 yr cycle)*
- *Exhibit 2.4b - Example timeline (3 yr cycle)*

Dissemination plan

- ***Create the dissemination plan***
 - ✓ **Audiences**
 - ✓ **Goals**
 - ✓ **Methods and media**
 - ✓ **Schedule**
 - ✓ **Costs**

Step 2: Example

- ***Assure plan includes VR needs of Hispanics***
 - ✓ Obtain reports from other agencies
 - ✓ Plan for focus group for Spanish speakers
 - ✓ Plan for Hispanic expert interviews
 - ✓ Plan for more review of existing data
- ***Plan for dissemination to Hispanic organizations***
 - ✓ Make CSNA materials available in Spanish?
 - ✓ Find community organizations for distribution

Step 3: Gather information

- ***Product: Secondary data findings***
- ***Products: Survey findings (VR counselors, VR consumers)***
- ***Product: Focus group transcripts***
- ***Product: Key informant interview records***
- ***Product: Community hearing records***

Secondary data collection

- ***Population statistics: ACS, CPS, BRFSS***
- ***Disability population estimates***
- ***Population projections and forecasts: Census, BLS***
- ***VR agency data and information***
- ***State level data from federal sources***
- ***State and local data and reports***

Secondary data resources

- *Exhibit 3.1 - Data resources to retrieve*
- *Appendices A-F*
- *Exhibit 3.2 - Form for capturing and organizing data from reports*

Survey data collection

- ***VR counselors, VR consumers***
 - ✓ Identify a sample
 - ✓ Choose a method
 - ✓ Develop questions
 - ✓ Implement survey
 - ✓ Collect results
- ***Survey resources in Guide***
 - ✓ Exhibit 3.3 - VR counselor questionnaire
 - ✓ Exhibit 3.4 - VR consumer questions
 - ✓ Appendix G

Focus group data collection

- ***Focus groups***
 - ✓ **Community resources**
 - ✓ **Focus groups: individuals with disabilities, employers, workforce partners, service providers (at least 4 groups)**
 - ✓ **Facilitator**
 - ✓ **Capture transcripts**
- ***Focus group resource in Guide***
 - ✓ **Appendix G**

Interview data collection

- ***Key informant interviews***
 - ✓ Identify potential key informants
 - ✓ Topics
 - ✓ Training interviewers
 - ✓ Creating transcripts
- ***Interview resources in Guide***
 - ✓ Exhibit 3.5 key informant tracking
 - ✓ Exhibit 3.6 discussion guide
 - ✓ Appendix G

Hearings data collection

- ***Community hearings***
 - ✓ **Coordinate with community resources**
 - ✓ **Outreach with new media**
 - ✓ **Cover same information goals**
 - ✓ **Capture transcripts**
- ***Community hearings resource in Guide***
 - ✓ **Appendix G**

Step 3: Example

- ***Data collection includes focus on Hispanics***
 - ✓ **Review state and substate ACS data tables on ethnicity and language**
 - ✓ **Run focus group(s) hosted by Hispanic community organization**
 - ✓ **Identify and interview Hispanic experts**
 - ✓ **Etc.**

Step 4: Analyze results

- *Quantitative analysis*
- *Qualitative analysis*
- *Combine sources*

Quantitative analysis

- *Organize tables by information goal*
- *Analyze report data*
- *Organize survey data findings*

Qualitative analysis

- *Organize findings from written information*
- *Tag focus group, informant, and community hearing information by topic*
- *Organize information by information goal*

Combine sources

- *Organize findings from different methods by information goals: supported employment, CRPs, etc.*

Step 4: Guide resources

- ***Guide resources for quantitative analysis***
 - ✓ **Exhibit 4.1 - Template for statistical and data resources**
 - ✓ **Exhibit 4.2 - Template for content analysis of reports**
 - ✓ **Tables 4.1 to 4.5 for ideas of combining information**
 - ✓ **Exhibit 4.3 - Template for summarizing findings**

Example questions to ask

- *What does the ACS tell us about disability among Hispanics in the state and areas within the state, particularly those in need of VR services? What are the shortcomings of that information? How can I use the information effectively?*
- *What does VR agency data tell us about services, waiting lists, and outcomes of Hispanics?*

Example questions to ask, cont.

- *For any reports or studies from other agencies, what do we know about the reliability of the information? Which studies describe their methods for collecting information? Do those methods appear sound and appropriate?*
- *How representative is stakeholder information?*

Example questions to ask, cont.

- ***What is the current supply of Spanish language services in the state available for VR? What is the current supply of in-house capability for Spanish language?***
- ***What are the service needs of Hispanics? What are their barriers to services?***

Step 4: Example

- ***Information on Hispanics from different sources***
 - ✓ ACS data shows high percent of state population speaks English “less than very well”
 - ✓ VR data indicate low percent served
 - ✓ VR counselors describe language barrier
 - ✓ Hispanics focus group shows lack of familiarity with VR services

Step 5: Develop Conclusions

- ***Review sources for potential strategies***
- ***Review agency processes***
- ***Review other agencies efforts***
- ***Conversations with experts***
 - ✓ **Product: Alternative action strategies**

Step 5: Guide resources

- *Exhibit 5.1 - Applying potential strategies to needs*

Step 5: Example

- ***Staff are not fluent in Spanish***
- ***Materials are not available in Spanish***
- ***Potential action steps developed include***
 - ✓ **Develop service materials in Spanish**
 - ✓ **Identify source(s) for language interpreters**
 - ✓ **Recruit Spanish-speaking counselors**
 - ✓ **Develop relationships with community organizations.**

Step 6: Inform State Plan

- ***Identify priorities using criteria: such as feasibility, cost, and importance***
 - ✓ **Product: Recommendations for State Plan goals, priorities, strategies**
 - ✓ **Product: CSNA report (useful, not required)**
 - ✓ **Product: State Plan Attachment 4.11(a)**
 - ✓ **Product: Disseminated State Plan**

Step 6: Guide Resources

- ***Exhibit 6.1 - Applying criteria to strategies***
- ***Exhibit 6.2 - Checklist of meeting CSNA requirements***
- ***Exhibit .6 - Outline of Attachment 4.11(a)***
- ***Exhibit .7 - Example summary of CSNA methods, results, gaps, and implications for state plan***

Step 6: Example

- ***Identify priorities***
 - ✓ **Consider needs of Hispanic population relative to other groups in need of service**
 - ✓ **Consider alternative ways to address needs**
 - ✓ **Recommend goals, policies, priorities**

CSNA Principles

- ✓ **VR/SRC/Community partnership**
- ✓ **Build on the experience of the State Plan**
- ✓ **Involve the community**
- ✓ **Use data to focus the study goals**
- ✓ **Design a feasible and reasonable project**
- ✓ **Multi-disciplinary needs assessment team**
- ✓ **CSNA cannot rely on data alone**
- ✓ **Start thinking dissemination early**

CSNA Principles, cont.

- ✓ **Take advantage of existing knowledge**
- ✓ **Use wide range of methods, participants**
- ✓ **As much an art as a science**
- ✓ **Combine quantitative & qualitative results**
- ✓ **In developing state plan options, learn from past successes and mistakes**
- ✓ **Develop a menu of alternatives**

CSNA Principles, cont.

- ✓ **Results of CSNA steps lead to state plan documentation**
- ✓ **Some actions happen now, some need more study**

For More Information

InfoUse
Berkeley, CA 94710
(510) 549-6520
CSNA@infouse.com

Regional TACE center