DHS/DEED Stakeholder Engagement for Interagency HCBS Shared Visioning

Engagement 7 Summary Report: Explore, Plan, Find, Keep: A Framework for Waiver Employment Supports

February 2, 2021

The **Improve** Group

Report purpose

The DHS/DEED Stakeholder Engagement for Interagency HCBS Shared Visioning is being conducted as iterative, ongoing, agile engagement. As a part of this approach, PIPEin and VIP members are being invited for several data collection opportunities to help improve products and services. This report summarizes findings from DHS/DEED's seventh stakeholder activity: a survey to gather additional feedback on the Explore, Plan, Find, Keep framework for waiver employment supports. The survey was administered in January 2021.

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Introduction

The DHS/DEED Stakeholder Engagement for Interagency HCBS Shared Visioning's seventh engagement was a survey to gather feedback on the Explore, Plan, Find, Keep Framework for waiver employment supports. The survey was administered in January 2021 and led by The Improve Group (IG), a research and evaluation firm based in St. Paul, Minnesota. DHS and DEED sent an invitation to 262 PIPEin members, and a total of 99 individuals participated. IG analyzed the survey data; key findings and supporting evidence from this analysis is provided below.

Survey Executive Summary

Approximately two-thirds of respondents said they work with both adults and students who are enrolled in high school or transition programming, and one-third said they work with adults only. Overall, respondents described the information in most areas of the framework as "somewhat clear." A larger share of respondents said the "Keep" part of the framework was very clear compared to other sections of the framework. Respondents who found parts of the framework to be unclear wanted more clarity about the services associated with each part of the framework and who is paying for services. Some respondents also said the framework needed to use less jargon.
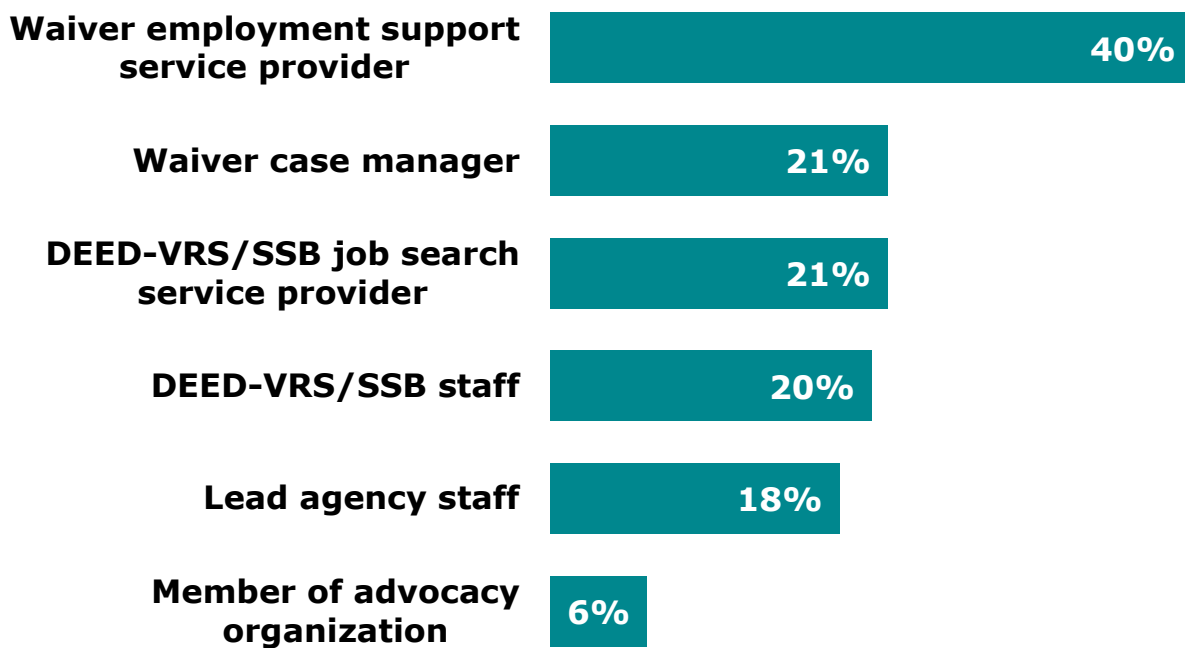
A Note About Charts

Some answer choices are abbreviated in charts to condense space; the full text of answer choices for each question can be found in Appendix A.

Survey Findings

What is your role? (select all that apply) (n=99)

The largest group of respondents were waiver employment support service providers; about one-fifth of respondents each identified as a waiver case manager and/or as a job search service provider.

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100% because participants were able to select more than one role.

Role	Percentage
Waiver employment support service provider	40%
Waiver case manager	21%
DEED-VRS/SSB job search service provider	21%
DEED-VRS/SSB staff	20%
Lead agency staff	18%
Member of advocacy organization	6%

Which populations do you work with? (select all that apply) (n=99)
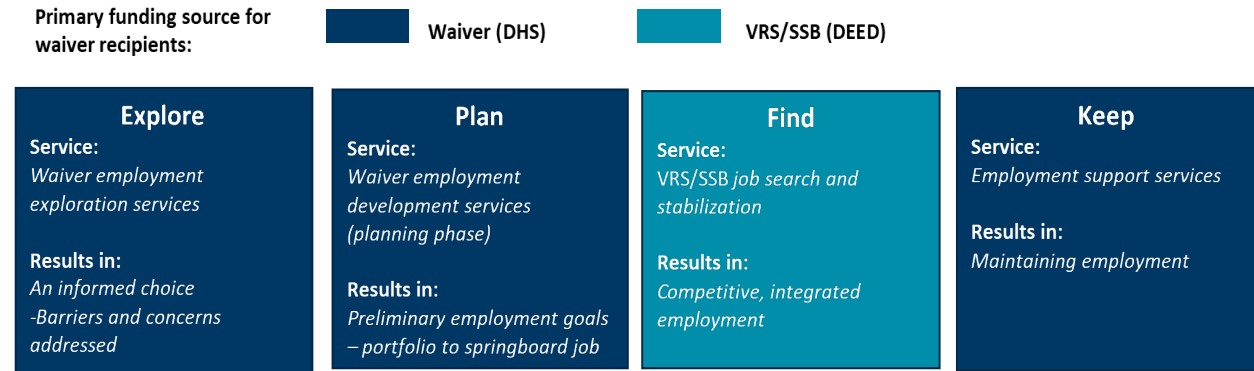
Nearly two-thirds of respondents said they work with both adults and students enrolled in high school or transition programming.

Population	Percentage
Adults and students	64%
Adults only	32%
Students only	2%
Neither adults nor students	2%
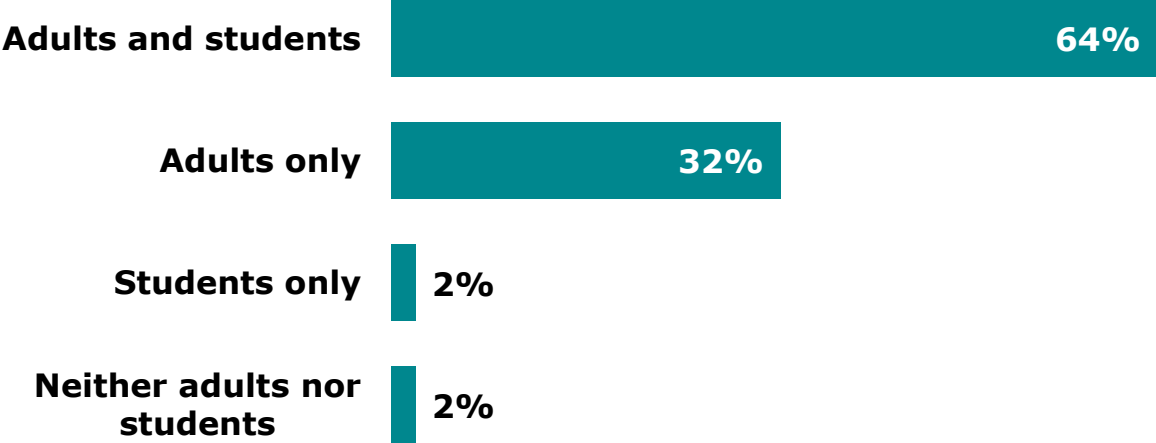
To what extent does the visual below[1] help you understand the types of supports provided in each phase of the Explore, Plan, Find, Keep: Adults framework? (n=99)

Explore, Plan, Find, Keep: **Adults**

Primary funding source for waiver recipients: ▮ Waiver (DHS)   ▮ VRS/SSB (DEED)

Explore	Plan	Find	Keep
Service: *Waiver employment exploration services*	**Service:** *Waiver employment development services (planning phase)*	**Service:** *VRS/SSB job search and stabilization*	**Service:** *Employment support services*
Results in: *An informed choice -Barriers and concerns addressed*	**Results in:** *Preliminary employment goals – portfolio to springboard job*	**Results in:** *Competitive, integrated employment*	**Results in:** *Maintaining employment*

Slightly more than half of respondents said the above visual helps them understand the supports offered in each phase of the framework somewhat, while nearly all other respondents said the visual helps them understand the framework a lot.
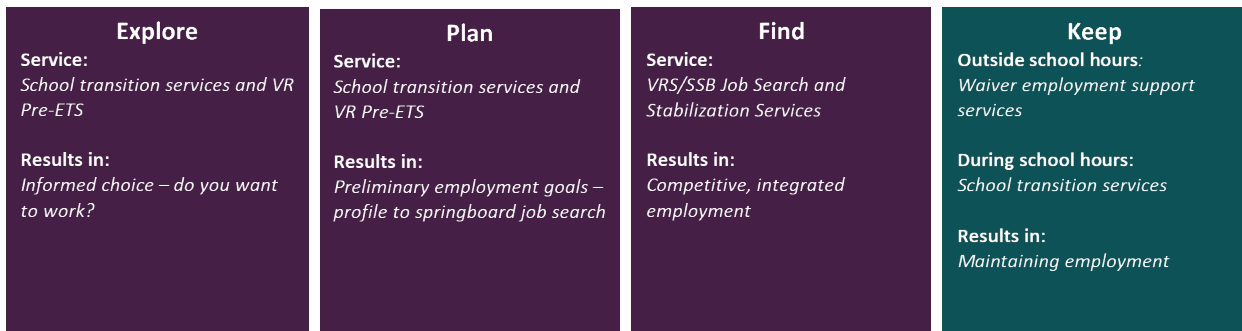
Somewhat **53%**

A lot **41%**

A little **5%**

Not at all **1%**

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[1] In the survey, the visual was above the survey question. The question was reworked for this report for improved flow of information.

To what extent does the visual below[2] help you understand the types of supports provided in each phase of the Explore, Plan, Find, Keep: Students framework? (n=98)

Explore, Plan, Find, Keep: **Students***

***Students** defined as enrolled in high school or transition programming

Primary funding source for waiver recipients:

VRS/SSB (DEED) + School Districts (MDE)

Waiver (DHS) + School Districts (MDE)

| Explore	Plan	Find	Keep
Service: *School transition services and VR Pre-ETS*	**Service:** *School transition services and VR Pre-ETS*	**Service:** *VRS/SSB Job Search and Stabilization Services*	**Outside school hours***:* *Waiver employment support services*
Results in: *Informed choice – do you want to work?*	**Results in:** *Preliminary employment goals – profile to springboard job search*	**Results in:** *Competitive, integrated employment*	**During school hours:** *School transition services*
			Results in: *Maintaining employment*

Slightly less than half of respondents said the above diagram was a little and a lot helpful in understanding the types of frameworks provided in each stage of the framework.

Somewhat **46%**

A lot **44%**

A little **9%**

Not at all **1%**

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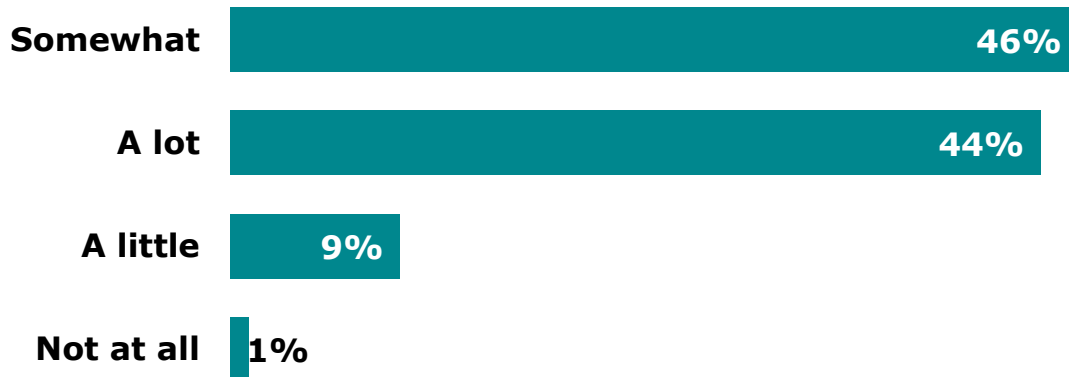
[2] In the survey, the visual was above the survey question. The question was reworked for this report for improved flow of information.

How clear are the descriptions of the **Explore** part of the framework? (n=99)

About 90 percent of respondents said the descriptions in the *Explore* part of the framework are somewhat or very clear.
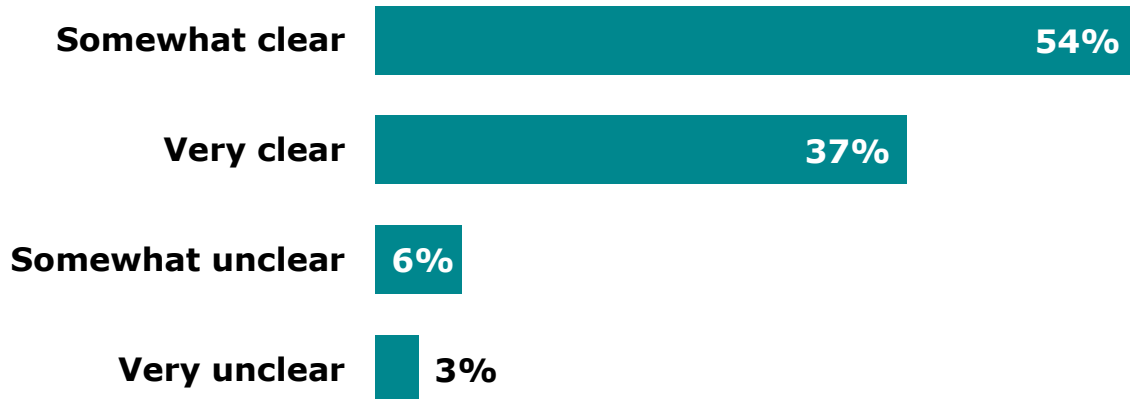
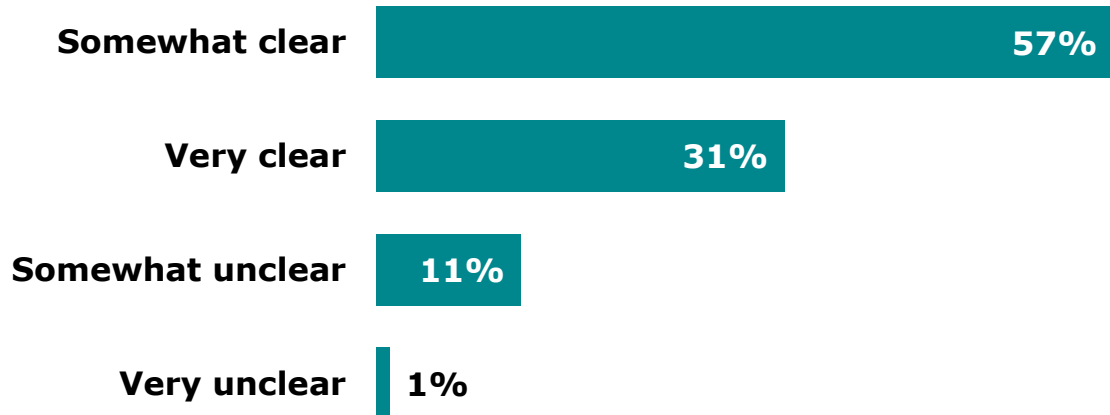|	
Somewhat clear	54%
Very clear	37%
Somewhat unclear	6%
Very unclear	3%

Among respondents who said the explore part of the framework was somewhat or very unclear:

- Five respondents said the service itself was unclear.
- Three respondents said it was unclear what is changing about the service.
- Three respondents said that there was too much jargon in the framework.
- Two respondents said it was unclear who is paying for the service.
- One respondent said it was unclear which waiver services the Explore part of the framework falls under.

How clear are the descriptions of the **Plan** part of the framework? (n=99)

Nearly 90 percent of respondents said the descriptions in the *Plan* part of the framework are very or somewhat clear, while more than 10 percent of respondents said the descriptions are somewhat or very unclear.

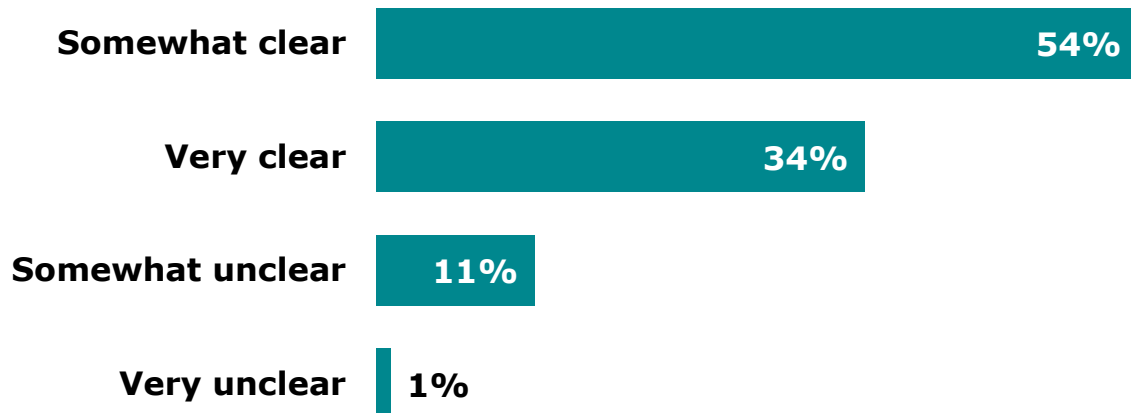|	
Somewhat clear	57%
Very clear	31%
Somewhat unclear	11%
Very unclear	1%

Among respondents who said the explore part of the framework was somewhat or very unclear:

- Five respondents said the service itself was unclear.
- Four respondents said who can benefit from this service is unclear.
- Three respondents said it was unclear who is paying for the service.
- Three respondents said that there was too much jargon in the framework.
- Two respondents said it was unclear what is changing about the service.
- Two respondents said that more examples and specification would help increase clarity.

How clear are the descriptions of the **Find** part of the framework? (n=99)

Nearly 90 percent of respondents said the descriptions in the *Find* part of the framework are very clear, while more than 10 percent of respondents said the descriptions are somewhat or very unclear.

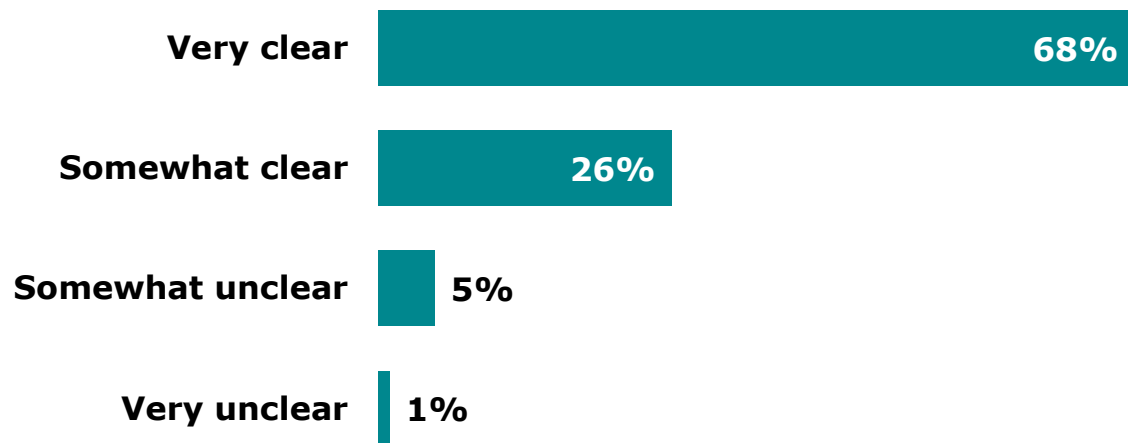|	
Somewhat clear	54%
Very clear	34%
Somewhat unclear	11%
Very unclear	1%

Among respondents who said the explore part of the framework was somewhat or very unclear:

- Six respondents said it was unclear who is paying for the service.
- Five respondents said it was unclear which waiver services the Find part of the framework falls under.
- Four respondents said who can benefit from this service is unclear.
- Three respondents said the service itself was unclear.
- Two respondents said it was unclear what is changing about the service.
- Two respondents said that there was too much jargon in the framework; it was mentioned that case managers would not be able to understand the information present in the framework.

How clear are the descriptions of the **Keep** part of the framework? (n=99)

More than two-thirds of respondents said the *Keep* part of the framework was very clear, indicating that respondents found this part of the framework to be more clear than the other three parts.

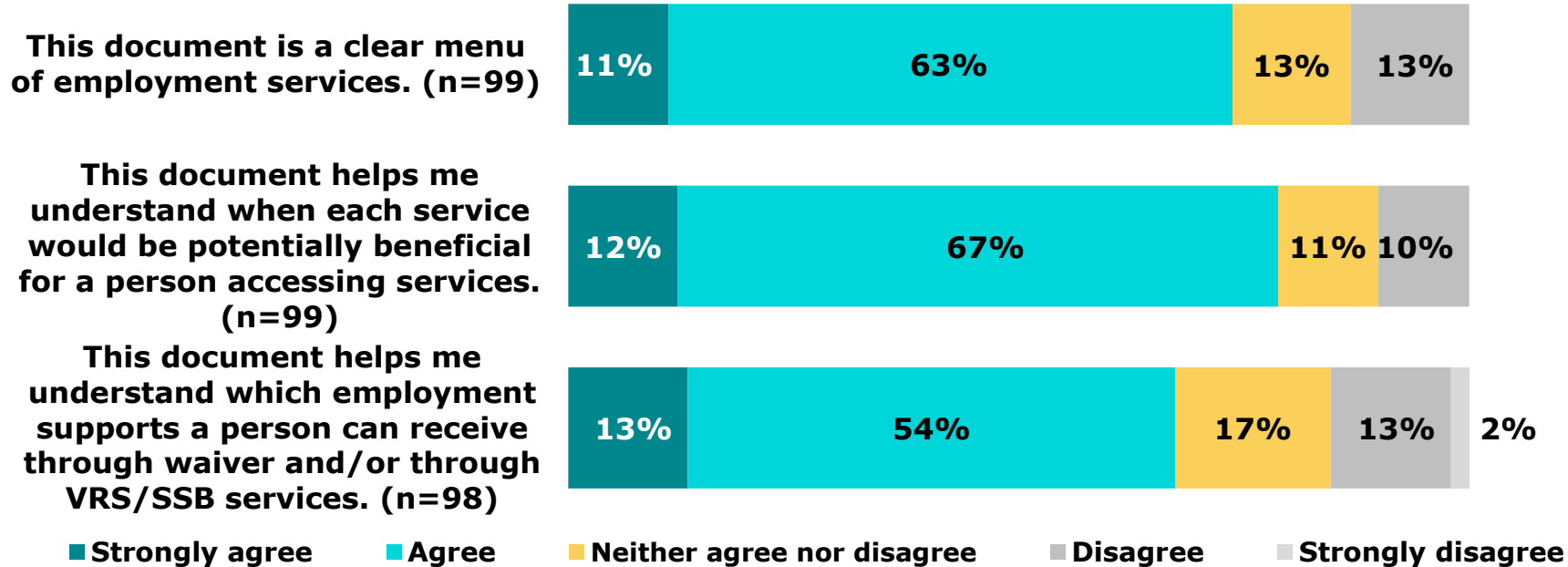| Response	Percentage
Very clear	68%
Somewhat clear	26%
Somewhat unclear	5%
Very unclear	1%

Among respondents who said the explore part of the framework was somewhat or very unclear:

- Three respondents said it was unclear who is paying for the service.
- Two respondents said the service was unclear.
- One respondent said who can benefit from this service is unclear.
- One respondent said it was unclear which waiver services the Keep part of the framework falls under.
- One respondent said it was unclear what is changing about the service.
- One respondent provided feedback saying waiver rates are too low to cover service costs in current economic conditions.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Fewer respondents agreed the document helped them understand which employment supports a person can receive through waiver and/or VRS/SSB services compared to the other statements.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
This document is a clear menu of employment services. (n=99)	11%	63%	13%	13%	
This document helps me understand when each service would be potentially beneficial for a person accessing services. (n=99)	12%	67%	11%	10%	
This document helps me understand which employment supports a person can receive through waiver and/or through VRS/SSB services. (n=98)	13%	54%	17%	13%	2%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

What additional feedback do you have about the framework, if any?

- Sixteen respondents said they wanted information presented more clearly. Items respondents clarified that could use additional details include explaining the definition of waiver services, defining information that elements of the framework are compared to, and explaining the systemic impact of changes presented by implementing this framework.
- Eleven respondents said they wanted more examples of services offered at each level of the framework.
- Seven respondents said they wanted additional clarification and differentiation between different sections of the framework.
- Five respondents said they wanted to see an increased focus on supporting people accessing services without paid work experiences and/or others looking to change areas of employment in the framework.
- Five respondents said they did not want to see services split into multiple phases of the framework.

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

DHS & DEED-VRS/SSB Explore, Plan, Find, Keep Framework Survey

Thank you for your input about revised Explore, Plan, Find, Keep framework! DHS and DEED-VRS/SSB will use your input to finalize the framework for waiver employment development services.

Before taking this survey, please read the "Explore, Plan, Find, Keep: A Framework for Waiver Employment Supports – PIPEin Summary" document attached to the email you received. It may be helpful to have the document open while you take the survey.

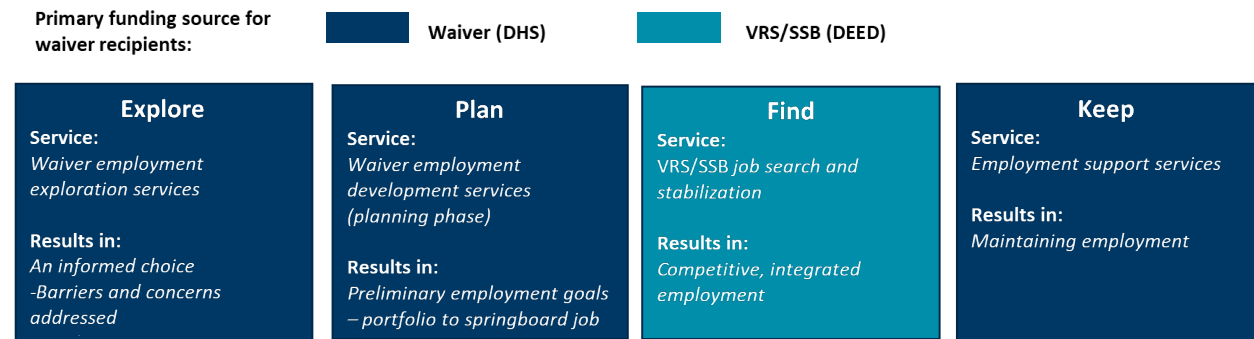This survey is confidential; your name will not be associated with your responses.

Your role(s)

1. What is your role? (select all that apply)
   - ☐ Waiver case manager
   - ☐ Lead agency staff
   - ☐ DEED-VRS/SSB staff
   - ☐ DEED-VRS/SSB job search service provider
   - ☐ Waiver employment support services provider
   - ☐ School special education teacher or case manager
   - ☐ Member of an advocacy organization

2. Which populations do you work with? (select all that apply)
   - ☐ Adults
   - ☐ Students (enrolled in high school or transition programming)
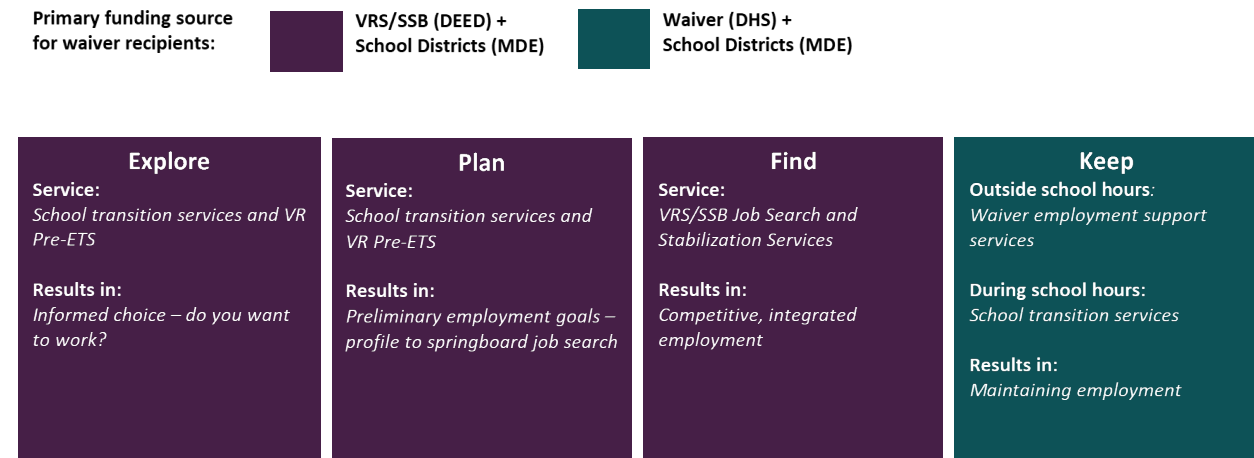   - ☐ None of the above

Framework Understanding

Explore, Plan, Find, Keep: **Adults**

Primary funding source for waiver recipients: ▉ **Waiver (DHS)**   ▉ **VRS/SSB (DEED)**

Explore	**Plan**	**Find**	**Keep**
Service: *Waiver employment exploration services* Results in: *An informed choice -Barriers and concerns addressed*	Service: *Waiver employment development services (planning phase)* Results in: *Preliminary employment goals – portfolio to springboard job*	Service: *VRS/SSB job search and stabilization* Results in: *Competitive, integrated employment*	Service: *Employment support services* Results in: *Maintaining employment*

3. To what extent does the visual above help you understand the types of supports provided in each phase of the *Explore, Plan, Find, Keep:* **Adults** framework?
   - o A lot
   - o Somewhat
   - o A little
   - o Not at all

Explore, Plan, Find, Keep: **Students***

***Students** defined as enrolled in high school or transition programming

Primary funding source for waiver recipients: ▉ **VRS/SSB (DEED) + School Districts (MDE)**   ▉ **Waiver (DHS) + School Districts (MDE)**

Explore	**Plan**	**Find**	**Keep**
Service: *School transition services and VR Pre-ETS* Results in: *Informed choice – do you want to work?*	Service: *School transition services and VR Pre-ETS* Results in: *Preliminary employment goals – profile to springboard job search*	Service: *VRS/SSB Job Search and Stabilization Services* Results in: *Competitive, integrated employment*	Outside school hours: *Waiver employment support services* During school hours: *School transition services* Results in: *Maintaining employment*

4. To what extent does the visual above help you understand the types of supports provided in each phase of the *Explore, Plan, Find, Keep:* **Students** framework?
   - o A lot
   - o Somewhat
   - o A little
   - o Not at all

Description of Services

For the following questions, review the detail for each part of the *Explore, Plan, Find, Keep* framework, before answering the questions about the description.

Explore

What services are: Waiver services to help a person gain a better understanding of employment so they can make an informed choice about competitive employment.

Who can benefit: People unsure or skeptical about working in competitive, integrated employment. The following groups may benefit:

- People who say "yes" during a WIOA 511 conversation
- People who have been working in noncompetitive employment (sheltered workshops, mobile work crews)
- Recent graduates from high school or transition programming who continue to need support in understanding the work world

Waiver service: Employment Exploration Services

Changes to Service: New tools and resources for support professionals to use in delivering the service. Clarified expectations on the outcomes of the service.

5. How clear are the descriptions of the **Explore** part of the framework?
   - Very clear
   - Somewhat clear
   - Somewhat unclear
   - Very unclear

6. What is unclear about the description for **Explore** services? (Select all that apply) **(ask if Q5=3 or 4)**
   - What this service is
   - Who can benefit from this service
   - What waiver service this is under
   - What is changing about this service
   - Who pays for this service
   - Other (please specify)

Plan

What services are: Waiver services to help a person plan their employment goals and learn about personal strengths, interests, and conditions for employment.

Who can benefit: People who are interested in working, but aren't sure what work might look like or what they want to do. The following groups may benefit:

- People who are interested in working, but have questions, barriers or specific conditions for employment
- People who are interested in working, but have little or no experience in competitive employment
- People who would benefit from "customized employment"

Waiver service: Employment Development Services – "Plan" phase

Changes to Service: Waiver Employment Development is being separated into two phases: Plan and Find.
- Plan: The planning phase lasts no more than 120 days from the date the service is authorized to begin. It results in portfolio of outcome products that helps set the person's job search up for success. When a referral to another employment service provider, like Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) or State Services for the Blind (SSB), this portfolio of outcome products can be shared via the person's My Vault account.

7. How clear are the descriptions of the **Plan** part of the framework?
    o Very clear
    o Somewhat clear
    o Somewhat unclear
    o Very unclear

8. What is unclear about the description for **Plan** services? (Select all that apply) **(ask if Q5=3 or 4)**
    ☐ What this service is.
    ☐ Who can benefit from this service
    ☐ What waiver service this is under.
    ☐ What is changing about this service
    ☐ Who pays for this service
    ☐ Other (please specify)

Find

What services are: Waiver services to help a person find competitive, integrated employment.

Who can benefit: People who would like to find competitive, integrated employment *and VRS/SSB services are not available*, this may occur when:

- **Application in process**: A person has submitted an application to VRS/SSB, but is waiting to find out if they are eligible or meet the priority of service determination. This can be up to 60 days.
- **Ineligible/not priority status**: A person is put on a wait list for VRS/SSB because they do not meet VRS/SSB's priority of service or VRS/SSB has closed all categories.
- **Services exhausted**: A person gets a determination from VRS/SSB stating they can no longer benefit from continued VRS/SSB services.

VRS/SSB service: VRS/SSB are the primary providers of "find" services to assist with a job search

Waiver service: Employment Development Services – "Find" a job phase

Changes to Service: Waiver Employment Development is being separated into two phases: Plan and Find. VRS/SSB will be primary providers of job search (Find) services. When VRS/SSB is unavailable for the bullet point reasons above, employment development services – find phase can be authorized.

9. How clear are the descriptions of the **Find** part of the framework?
    - Very clear
    - Somewhat clear
    - Somewhat unclear
    - Very unclear

10. What is unclear about the description for **Find** services? (Select all that apply) **(ask if Q5=3 or 4)**
    - What this service is.
    - Who can benefit from this service
    - What waiver service this is under.
    - What is changing about this service
    - Who pays for this service
    - Other (please specify)

Keep

What services are: Waiver services that help people keep paid employment in community businesses or settings.

Who can benefit: People who are working in community businesses and need supports to succeed in employment.

Changes to Service: There are no changes to this service.

11. How clear are the descriptions of the **Find** part of the framework?
    - Very clear
    - Somewhat clear
    - Somewhat unclear
    - Very unclear

12. What is unclear about the description for **Find** services? (Select all that apply) **(ask if Q5=3 or 4)**
    - What this service is.
    - Who can benefit from this service
    - What waiver service this is under.

- ☐ What is changing about this service
- ☐ Who pays for this service
- ☐ Other (please specify)

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "This document is a clear menu of employment services."
    - o Strongly agree
    - o Agree
    - o Neither agree nor disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Strongly disagree

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "This document helps me understand when each service would be potentially beneficial for a person accessing services."
    - o Strongly agree
    - o Agree
    - o Neither agree nor disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Strongly disagree

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "This document helps me understand which employment supports a person accessing services can receive through waiver services and/or through VRS/SSB services."
    - o Strongly agree
    - o Agree
    - o Neither agree nor disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Strongly disagree

16. What additional feedback do you have about the framework, if any? (open-ended)

Thank you for taking the survey! Click "Submit" to submit your answers.