

DHS/DEED Stakeholder Engagement for Interagency HCBS Shared Visioning

Engagement 8 Summary Report: Planning and Coordinating Employment Services: Referral from Waiver to VRS/SSB for Job Search Services

February 25, 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 eighth stakeholder activity: a survey to gather feedback on the referral process for a person transitioning from waivers to VRS/SSB for job search services. The survey was administered in February 2021.

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Introduction

The DHS/DEED Stakeholder Engagement for Interagency HCBS Shared Visioning's eighth engagement was a survey to gather feedback on the referral process for a person transitioning from waivers to VRS/SSB for job search services. The survey was administered in February 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 227 PIPEin members, and a total of 69 individuals participated. IG analyzed the survey data; key findings and supporting evidence from this analysis are provided below.

Survey Executive Summary

Overall, respondents most frequently rated sections of the Planning and Coordinating Employment Services document as somewhat clear. Nearly half of respondents said the referral checklist was very clear; this was larger than any other section of the document. Respondents who found parts of the document somewhat unclear or very unclear cited many reasons throughout the document, including not knowing when to refer someone to VRS/SSB and not having a clear understanding of certain roles' involvement throughout the process. Some respondents also said the document could be written in more plain language.

A Note About Charts

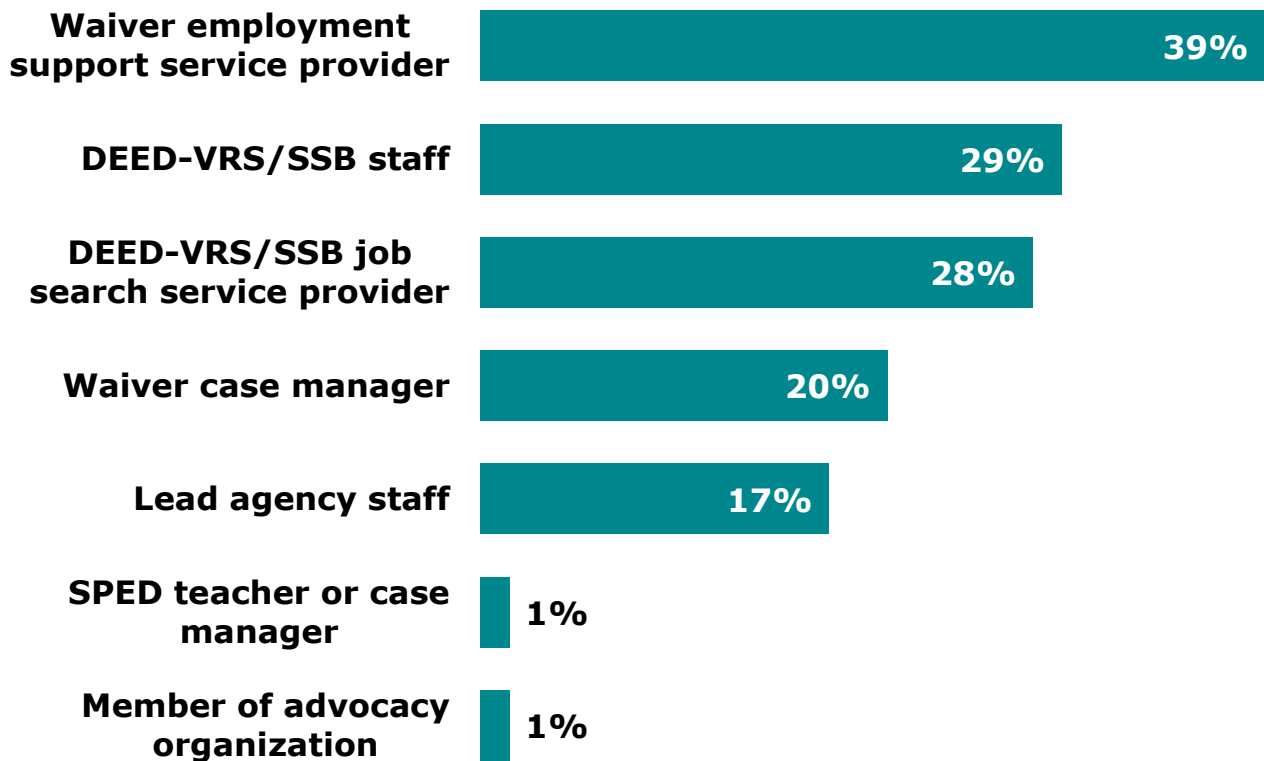
Some answer choices are abbreviated in charts to condense space; the full text of answer choices for each question can be found in Appendix A.

Survey Findings

What is your role? (select all that apply) (n=69)

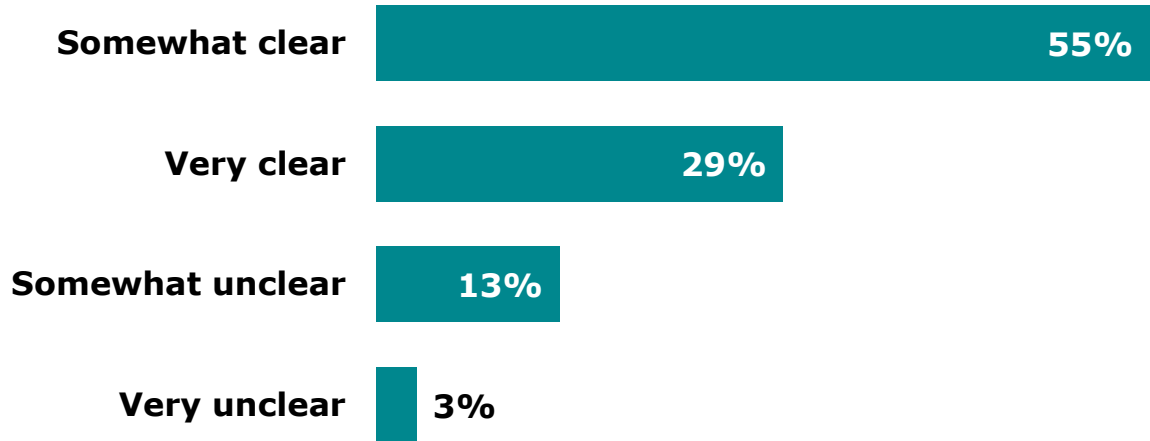
The largest group of respondents are waiver employment support service providers; more than a quarter of respondents each identified as DEED-VRS/SSB staff or a DEED-VRS SSB job search service provider.

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



Overall, how clear is the **Planning and Coordinating Employment Services** document? (n=69)

More than half of respondents said the Planning and Coordinating Employment Services document is somewhat clear.

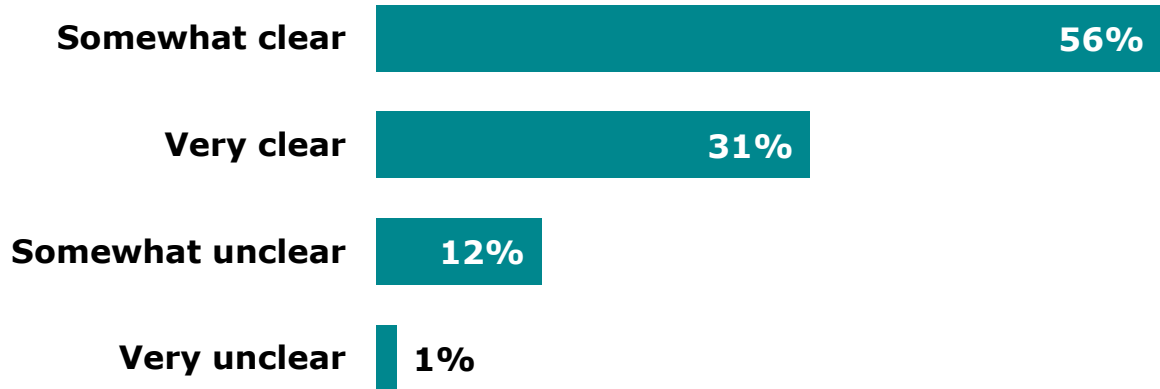


Respondents answering somewhat or very unclear said that, from the **Planning and Coordinating Employment Services document**, it is unclear:

- When a person should be referred to VRS/SSB (5 respondents).
- When a person would be connected to an employment service provider (4 respondents).
- How person will be involved in finding employment services. (4 respondents).
- When services would be offered (3 respondents).
- How the Waiver Case Manager will support parts of the process (2 respondents).
- Other concerns that respondents mentioned include the process being too complex and large, and additional clarification being needed for some roles, such as the VRS/SSB counselor and VRS/SSB staff.

How clear is the description of the **DEED-VRS/SSB Liaison**?
(n=68)

More than half of respondents said the description of the DEED-VRS/SSB Liaison is somewhat clear.

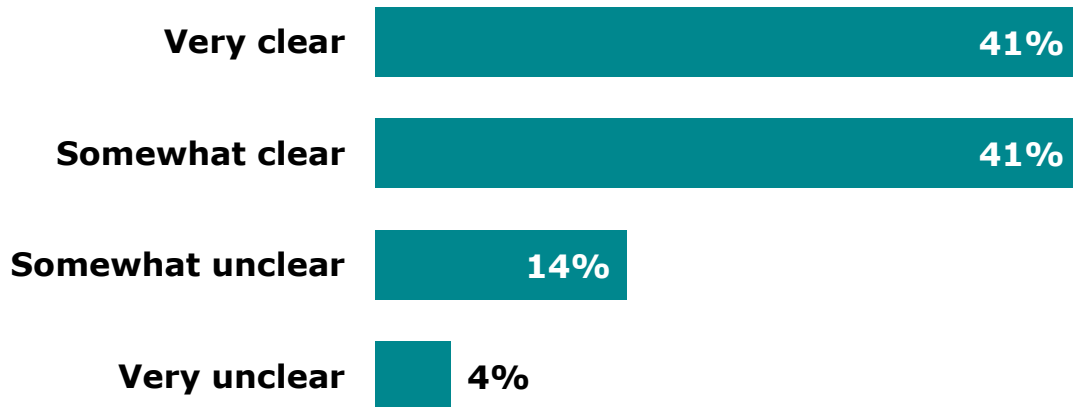


Respondents answering somewhat or very unclear said that, from the **DEED-VRS/SSB Liaison** section, it is unclear:

- What the DEED-VRS liaison's role in the process is (7 respondents).
- What supports a person accessing services would receive during this process (5 respondents).
- How the Waiver Case Manager will interact with the liaison (4 respondents.)
- How a person accessing services will be involved in finding employment services (4 respondents).
- How the waiver employment service would interact with the liaison (3 respondents).
- What the Waiver Case Manager's role in supporting parts of the process (2 respondents).
- Other areas that participants said are unclear include specific duties of the liaison and how the liaison would work on teams.

How clear is the description of the **waiver eligibility, service authorization and coordination** process? (n=69)

More than forty percent of respondents said the description of the waiver eligibility, service authorization and coordination process is very clear.

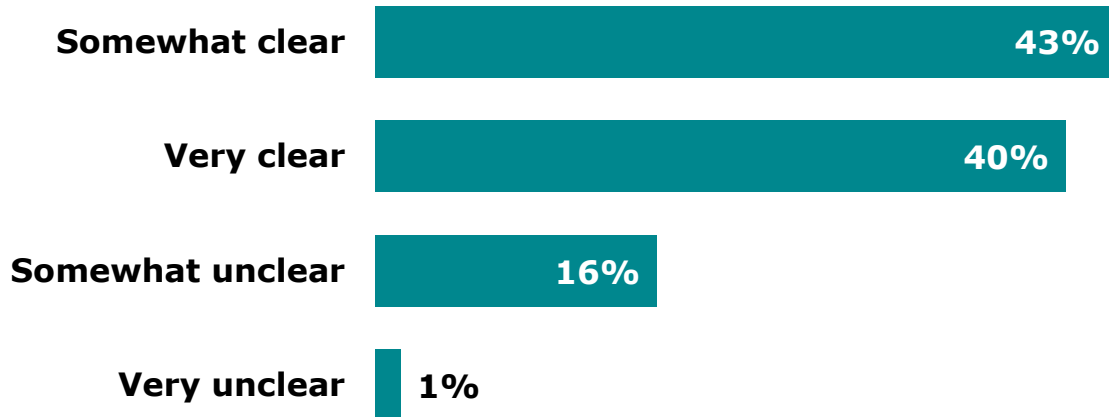


Respondents answering somewhat or very unclear said that, from the **waiver eligibility, service authorization and coordination** section, it is unclear:

- What supports a person accessing services would receive during this process (8 respondents).
- What DEED-VRS/SSB's role is in supporting this part of the process (7 respondents).
- What the Waiver Case Manager's role is in supporting this part of the process (7 respondents).
- When a person would be referred to VRS/SSB (6 respondents).
- What the person accessing services' role in this part of the process is (6 respondents).
- How a person accessing services will be involved in finding employment services (6 respondents).
- Other areas that participants said are unclear include the overall process, and what would happen in certain circumstances, such as if people wanted employment services after their MN-Choices assessment and whether a person would need to be referred to DEED if they already have an employment services provider.

How clear is the description of the process of **referring to DEED-VRS/SSB when no waiver employment services are needed?** (n=68)

More than forty percent of respondents said the process of referring to DEED-VRS/SSB when no employment services are needed is somewhat clear.

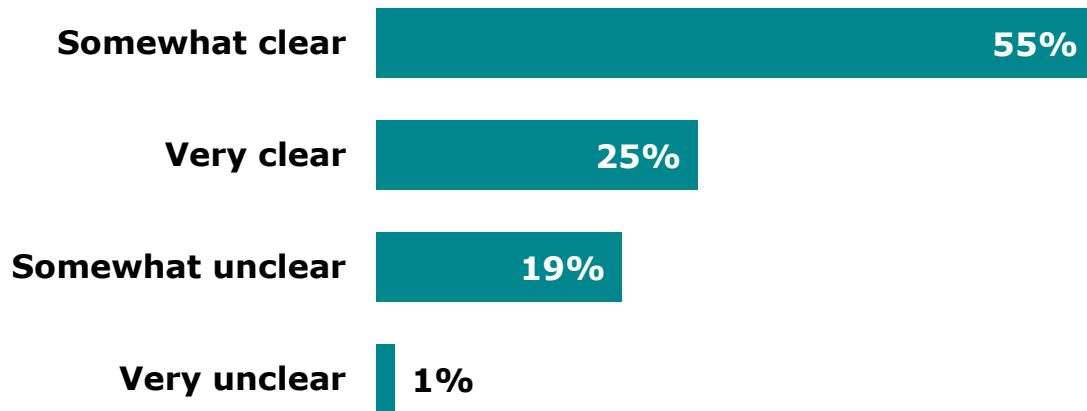


Respondents answering somewhat or very unclear said that, from the **referring to DEED-VRS/SSB when no employment services are needed** section, it is unclear:

- What supports a person accessing services would receive during this process (7 respondents).
- When a person would be referred to VRS/SSB (6 respondents).
- What the Waiver Case Manager's role is in supporting this part of the process (6 respondents).
- What DEED-VRS/SSB's role is in supporting this part of the process (4 respondents).
- What the person accessing services' role is in this part of the process (4 respondents).
- Other areas that participants said are unclear include the reasoning for using the waiver checklist and the word choice in this section.

How clear is the description of the process of **referring to DEED-VRS/SSB when someone is participating in Waiver Employment Exploration or Development-Planning Services?** (n=69)

More than half of respondents said the description of the process of referring to DEED-VRS/SSB when someone is participating in Waiver Employment Exploration or Development-Planning Services is somewhat clear.

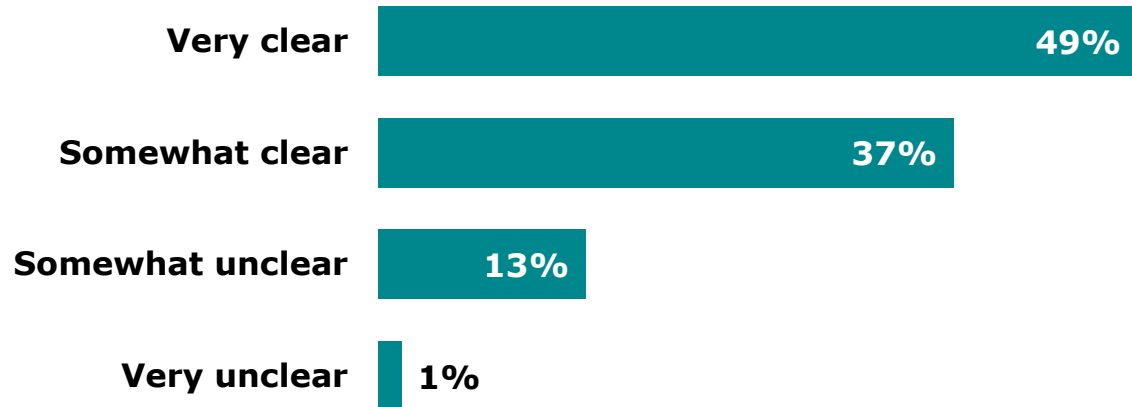


Respondents answering somewhat or very unclear said that, from the **process of referring to DEED-VRS/SSB when someone is participating in Waiver Employment Exploration or Development-Planning Services** section, it is unclear:

- What the Waiver Case Manager’s role is in supporting this part of the process (8 respondents).
- What the employment service provider’s role is in supporting this process (6 respondents).
- What the DEED-VRS/SSB liaison’s role is in supporting this process (4 respondents).
- When this service is offered (4 respondents).
- What supports a person accessing services will receive throughout this process (4 respondents).
- How a person accessing services will be involved in finding employment services (2 respondents).
- Other areas that participants said are unclear include how a liaison would be assigned and the usefulness of DEED-VRS if one has an existing provider.

How clear is the description of the **Referral checklist**? (n=68)

About half of respondents said the description of the referral checklist is very clear.

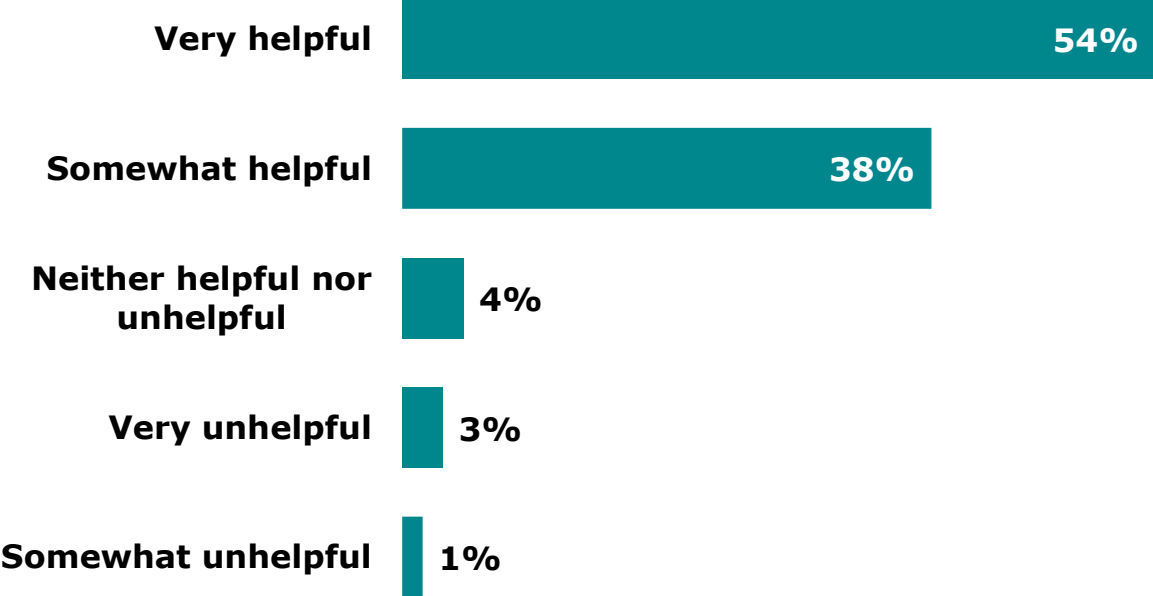


Respondents answering somewhat or very unclear said that, from the referral checklist section, it is unclear:

- What documentation is required to determine eligibility for VRS/SSB (4 respondents).
- How to know if someone is eligible for VRS/SSB (3 respondents).
- Other elements that participants said are unclear include whose responsibility it is to gather information and documents listed in the checklist.

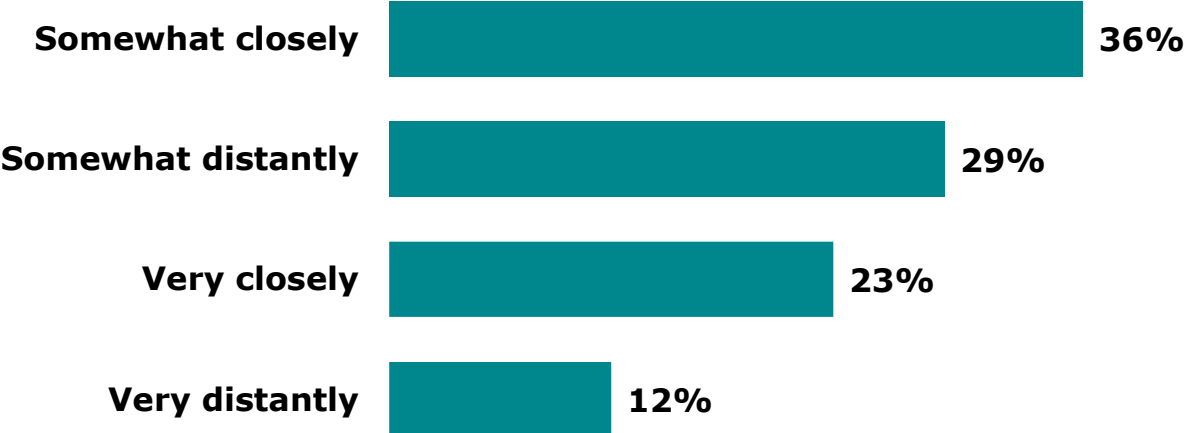
14. How helpful, if at all, do you think a tool like this will be for knowing when and how to refer people to VRS/SSB? (n=69)

More than ninety percent of respondents said having a tool like the Planning and Coordinating Employment Services document would be very helpful or somewhat helpful for knowing when and how to refer people to VRS/SSB.



15. How closely or distantly does this referral process align with what you are currently doing to support job search services? (n=69)

More than forty percent of respondents said the referral process in the Planning and Coordinating Employment Services document somewhat distantly or very distantly aligns with their work to support job search services.



16. In what ways is the referral process different from what you are currently doing? (n=24)

Respondents have a range of work experiences, and as a result, there is not a strong consensus on how the referral process outlined in the document differed from their work.

Some respondents said they do not use exploration services often, or that VRS does not get involved frequently. Other respondents said steps of the process happen in different order than what is outlined in the document. Ways that some participants mentioned the outlined process differs from their work include integrating the liaison earlier in the process and the outlined process being reversed from respondents' work. Respondents handled "referrals" in a range of ways, from not making referrals at all, to having non-extensive referrals, to engaging with a range of stakeholders to make referrals.

17. How could this process be improved to make it easier to connect people to appropriate employment supports? (n=44)

Respondents want to see content that is easier to digest and presented in a simpler format.

Many respondents mentioned that elements of the referral process could be simplified. Specific recommendations suggested by respondents include reducing the number of processes and steps in the process, having a visual representation of the process, and clarifying the expectations regarding when to refer to waiver employment services. A few respondents suggested having contact information for liaisons; one respondent mentioned having a directory of liaisons. A few other respondents suggested having a training for providers to help familiarize them to various tools mentioned throughout the process.

18. What additional feedback do you have about the referral process, if any? (n=29)

Additional feedback from respondents varied, ranging from clarification of information to being more inclusive with how it is written.

Some respondents wanted certain elements of the referral process clarified, including who initiates contacts with other stakeholders involved, the role of the liaison, and the role of the person accessing services. A few respondents also commented on the language of the process, which is described by respondents as overly extensive for a referral process and exclusionary towards people with disabilities. A few participants also mentioned that a similar process should be implemented for transition-aged youth.

- Sixteen respondents said they wanted information presented more clearly. Items respondents noted 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

Referral Process: Waiver to DEED-VRS/SSB Survey

Thank you for your input about the referral process from waivers to DEED-VRS/SSB for job search services. Please read the Planning and Coordinating Employment Services document sent by email with this survey before taking the survey; we encourage you to keep it open to refer to while taking the survey. DHS and DEED-VRS/SSB will use your input from this survey to finalize the framework for waiver employment development services.

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

Planning and Coordinating Employment Services (General)

2. Overall, how clear is the **Planning and Coordinating Employment Services** document?
 - Very clear
 - Somewhat clear
 - Somewhat unclear
 - Very unclear
3. Overall, what is unclear about the **Planning and Coordinating Employment Services** document? (Select all that apply) **(ask if Q2=3 or 4)**
 - When services are offered.
 - The Waiver Case Manager's role in supporting parts of the process.
 - How a person will be involved in finding employment services.
 - When a person should be referred to VRS/SSB.
 - When a person will be connected to an employment service provider.
 - Other (please specify)

DEED-VRS/SSB Liaison:

4. How clear is the description of the **DEED-VRS/SSB Liaison**?
 - Very clear
 - Somewhat clear
 - Somewhat unclear
 - Very unclear
5. What is unclear about the description of the **DEED-VRS/SSB Liaison**? (Select all that apply) **(ask if Q4=3 or 4)**
 - The Waiver Case Manager's role in interacting with the liaison.
 - The waiver employment service provider's role in interacting with the liaison. The DEED-VRS/SSB liaison's role in the process.
 - How a person accessing services will be involved in finding employment services.
 - The supports the person accessing services will receive during this process.
 - Other (please specify)

Waiver eligibility, service authorization and coordination

6. How clear is the description of the **waiver eligibility, service authorization and coordination** process?
 - Very clear
 - Somewhat clear
 - Somewhat unclear
 - Very unclear
7. What is unclear about the description of the **waiver eligibility, service authorization and coordination** process? (Select all that apply) **(ask if Q6=3 or 4)**
 - When a person will be referred to DEED-VRS/SSB.
 - The Waiver Case Manager's role in supporting this part of the process.
 - DEED-VRS/SSB's role in supporting this part of the process.
 - The person accessing services' role in this part of the process.
 - How a person accessing services will be involved in finding employment services.
 - The supports the person will receive during this process.
 - Other (please specify)

Referral to DEED-VRS/SSB when no waiver employment services are needed:

8. How clear is the description of the process of **referring to DEED-VRS/SSB when no waiver employment services are needed**?
 - Very clear
 - Somewhat clear
 - Somewhat unclear
 - Very unclear

9. What is unclear about the description of the process of **referring to DEED-VRS/SSB when no waiver employment services are needed?** (Select all that apply) (ask if Q8=3 or 4)
- When a person will be referred to DEED-VRS/SSB.
 - The Waiver Case Manager's role in supporting this part of the process.
 - DEED-VRS/SSB's role in supporting this part of the process.
 - The person's role in this part of the process.
 - The supports the person will receive during this process.
 - Other (please specify)

Referral to VRS/SSB when person is participating in waiver Employment Exploration or Development - Planning Services:

10. How clear is the description of the process of referring to **DEED-VRS/SSB when someone is participating in Waiver Employment Exploration or Development - Planning Services?**
- Very clear
 - Somewhat clear
 - Somewhat unclear
 - Very unclear
11. What is unclear about the description of the process of referring to **DEED-VRS/SSB when someone is participating in Waiver Employment Exploration or Development - Planning Services** process? (Select all that apply) (ask if Q10=3 or 4)
- When this service is offered.
 - The Waiver Case Manager's role in supporting this part of the process.
 - The DEED-VRS/SSB liaison's role in supporting this part of the process.
 - The employment service provider's role in supporting this part of the process.
 - How a person accessing services will be involved in finding employment services.
 - The supports the person accessing services will receive during this process.
 - Other (please specify)

Referral Checklist

12. How clear is the description of the **Referral Checklist?**
- Very clear
 - Somewhat clear
 - Somewhat unclear
 - Very unclear
13. What is unclear about the description of the **Referral Checklist?** (Select all that apply) (ask if 12=3 or 4)
- How to know if a person is eligible for VRS/SSB.
 - What documentation is required to determine eligibility for VRS/SSB.
 - Other (please specify)

Concluding Questions

14. How helpful, if at all, do you think a tool like this will be for knowing when and how to refer people to VRS/SSB?
 - Very helpful
 - Somewhat helpful
 - Neither helpful nor unhelpful
 - Somewhat unhelpful
 - Very unhelpful
15. How closely or distantly does this referral process align with what you are currently doing to support job search services?
 - Very closely
 - Somewhat closely
 - Somewhat distantly
 - Very distantly
16. In what ways is the referral process different from what you are currently doing? (open-ended)
17. How could this process be improved to make it easier to connect people to appropriate employment supports?
18. What additional feedback do you have about the referral process, if any? (open-ended)

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