



## **STOUT VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION INSTITUTE**

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### **VRTAC-PEQA Brief Abstract (CFDA 84.263B)**

The Technical Assistance Center for Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (SVRI-PEQA) is housed in University of Wisconsin-Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI), in Menomonie, WI. The SVRI-PEQA will be directed by Dr. John Lui (Principal Investigator), Dr. Cayte Anderson (Co-PI); and involves key partners including Drs. Fong Chan and Tim Tansey (UW-Madison); Dr. Mike Leahy (Michigan State University), CSAVR, and the Summit Group. The intent of this TA Center is to help transform VR agencies' business models by adopting organizational innovations and harnessing advances in IT and communication technologies, and to determine the most effective VR services by integrating evidence-based practice (EBP) and program evaluation methods. The ultimate goal is to assist state VR agencies adopt initiatives that will improve the quality of employment outcomes for people with disabilities to facilitate entry to the middle class.

The Applied Research Center (ARC) at UW-Stout currently has an Evaluation Studies Certificate for professionals, largely based on Master of Science Program in Applied Psychology (MSAP). One example is the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Leaders in Equitable Evaluation and Diversity (LEEAD) project, a 9-month evaluation pipeline-training program for underrepresented minority scholars interested in social justice and equity. SVRI will work collaboratively with ARC to adapt the LEEAD program to offer a one-year certificate program in VR program evaluation to increase the numbers and qualifications of evaluators in state VR agencies. In addition, MSU and UW-Madison will develop a series of special training opportunities for intermediate-level evaluators to increase their capacity to conduct rigorous examination of state VR practices and initiatives. An online community of practice (CoP) will also be established, using advanced Internet strategies and innovative content programming to maximize

recruitment, engagement, and retention of VR evaluators in the CoP. CSAVR will assist in recruiting state VR evaluators for these entry level and intermediate level program evaluation training opportunities available through the SVRI-PEQA.

The following outcomes and impacts will be achieved:

- Implementation of effective and efficient basic program evaluation certificate training and intermediate level special topics training for state VR evaluators;
- Successful development and implementation of a state VR evaluator driven CoP-PEQA to improve communication, information exchange, and training for program evaluators;
- Provide ample specialized training opportunities based on expressed needs of state VR;
- Successfully develop interagency collaboration networks and work teams committed to the improvement of quality assurance systems and tools.

Achieving the goals and objectives of the SVRI-PEQA will increase the capacity and sophistication of state VR program evaluators to provide timely and relevant program evaluation data to help state VR agencies develop new competencies capable of responding in new and different ways to create and deliver outcomes in a challenging economy.

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