Historically, American Indians with disabilities have been underserved by state vocational rehabilitation agencies. This situation was confirmed in 1978 by testimony in congressional hearings on amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. State VR agencies face challenges in providing effective vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians with disabilities due to cultural diversity, language differences, geographic remoteness and lack of cultural sensitivity. Because of these and other factors, including tribal sovereignty, it is essential for American Indian tribes to operate and administer their own VR programs. In 1978 the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was amended and authorized the funding of vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians with disabilities, in order to prepare them for suitable employment.

The Oklahoma Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs operate together with the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services and these programs are complementary to each other in providing services to American Indians with disabilities residing within Indian country. Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs are administered with a very limited budget, therefore it is imperative that State VR and Tribal VR co-serve cases whenever possible. Attachment A is a map of the Oklahoma Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs and their respective tribal jurisdiction service area. Some counties within Oklahoma fall within the jurisdiction of more than one TVR program and cases may be co-served by more than one TVR program. Each TVR program has the ability to define their own "on or near" service area designation. Any questions about TVR service areas shall be addressed with the TVR program.

This cooperative agreement is written with the intent of maximizing co-served cases and outlining the manner in which the State of Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and the Oklahoma Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) Programs will cooperate, and coordinate their efforts in order to provide the most beneficial, culturally relevant vocational rehabilitation services possible to American Indians with disabilities who reside within the state of Oklahoma, specifically the Tribal Jurisdiction Service Area (TJSA) of each respective Tribal VR Program.

Each Program individually maintains its sole responsibility of abiding by all mandates set forth by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and any other applicable federal, state, and/or tribal laws.

Each Program individually maintains its sole authority for determination of eligibility, service provision, and policy and procedural mandates set forth by the Program.

Service Collaboration Outline:

A. Upon initial contact with a new consumer, the DRS counselor or the TVR counselor shall offer the option to the consumer of a referral to the other program(s), if he/she suspects that the individual may be eligible for services, in order to establish a joint case.

B. The DRS counselor or the TVR counselor may refer the consumer to the DRS Career Planning Centers, DRS Psychological Assistants, or other evaluation specialists employed by DRS at no cost to the consumer or the TVR Program.

C. All consumer evaluation results, medical and/or psychological records, school records, and other pertinent information shall be shared with each DRS and TVR counselor that has an open case after
a release of information has been signed by the consumer granting permission for the agencies to share such information.

D. Since the State DRS and Tribal VR programs share the same eligibility criterion related to disability, after a consumer who has been determined eligible by the DRS Program or a Tribal VR program is referred for joint case development, the VR Counselor receiving the referral may use the referring agency’s certificate of eligibility as well as other documents the referring VR Counselor used in determining eligibility as existing documentation in order to expedite the eligibility determination process. The time lapse between referral of an eligible consumer and eligibility determination being made by the program receiving the referral is expected to be less than 15 calendar days.

E. After the consumer has been determined eligible by the state DRS and Tribal VR Program(s), a meeting shall be scheduled with the consumer, the DRS counselor, and TVR counselor(s) present. All parties shall work together to develop the consumer’s Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE). The consumer will have separate IPEs with each program; however each IPE shall reflect the services provided by the State DRS, the Tribal VR program(s) and any comparable benefits. Each VR Counselor may only obligate services to be provided by the VR agency they represent. The time lapse between referral of an eligible consumer and completion of IPE development by the state DRS and Tribal VR Programs is expected to be less than 30 calendar days.

F. During the determination of service provision, it shall be taken into consideration that DRS operates with a substantially larger budget than the TVR Programs and therefore a rule of thumb split for service provision on shared cases after all other comparable benefits are utilized, should be 80% DRS and 20% Tribal VR program(s). **TVR services are intended to be complimentary to the state DRS.**

G. A copy of the consumer’s IPE with each program shall be provided to the consumer, the DRS counselor, and the appropriate TVR counselor(s).

H. The consumer, the DRS counselor, and the TVR counselor(s) shall meet regularly to stay informed of any changes in the consumer’s case. The DRS counselor and the TVR counselor(s) shall collaborate on any projected status changes in the consumer’s case prior to making such changes, i.e., case closures.

I. If the consumer contacts one of the counselors and advises him/her of pertinent information such as change of address/phone number or employment, that information shall be provided to the other counselor(s) as soon as possible so that all information remains current in all case files.

J. When a change occurs in the consumer’s case and requires an amendment to his/her IPE, the consumer, the DRS counselor, and the TVR counselor(s) shall make contact in order to develop the amendment(s). Copies of the amendment(s) shall be provided to all parties.

K. Once the consumer has maintained gainful employment for a minimum of 90 days, all programs will close the consumer’s case as successfully rehabilitated and all programs will receive credit for the closure. A copy of each programs closing summary shall be sent to the consumer, the DRS counselor, and the TVR counselor(s).

**Vocational, Psychological, and other Evaluation Services:**
When a joint case exits between the DRS and a TVR Program, a referral may be made by either counselor to the DRS for vocational, psychological, and/or other evaluations provided by DRS staff at no cost to the consumer or the TVR Program. When no joint case exists, a consumer of the TVR Program may be referred by a TVR
counselor to the DRS Career Planning Center(s) and/or other evaluations provided by DRS staff at no cost to the consumer or the TVR Program.

**Comprehensive System of Personnel Development**
The DRS will allow the TVR Programs opportunities of in-service training that will enhance the effectiveness of the TVR staff. The TVR will allow DRS opportunities of in-service training that will enhance the effectiveness of the DRS staff. Training opportunities will be disseminated to all parties and an invitation to attend will be extended, when appropriate.

**Dispute Resolution:**
The counselor of each party may take unsettled disagreements regarding the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to their respective supervisor. The supervisor will make arrangements to discuss the issue with the supervisor(s) of the other program(s). If the disagreement is not resolved, the DRS supervisor will take the matter to the DRS Field Coordinator, and the TVR supervisor will take the matter to his/her designated supervisor for resolution. If the problem is not resolved at that administrative level, it will be taken to the next administrative level of each party until a resolution is achieved. This should in no way delay services or affect the consumer’s right to request a fair hearing or utilize the Client Assistance Program.

**Funding Contingency Plan:**
In the event of a lapse of federal funding granted from the Rehabilitation Services Administration to any Tribal VR program in the state of Oklahoma, the tribe may submit a proposal to the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services for contingency funding. Each proposal shall not exceed a 12 month period and would require subsequent proposals for extended periods. Funds may be awarded to ensure the continuation of operations to provide ongoing services to American Indians with disabilities who reside within the tribe’s jurisdictional area. The tribe must agree to provide the required state match during periods of contingency funding.

**Duration:**
This cooperative agreement will take effect upon the date of signatures and will remain in effect until amended or terminated with a thirty (30) day written notification by any participant. This agreement should be reviewed at any time upon written request of any participant and may be modified at that time to meet the needs of any and all participants.
I have read the attached Cooperative Agreement between the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services and the Oklahoma Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs and agree to all the terms set forth by this document.

Michael O'Brien, Director
Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

DeLorna Strong, Director
Apache Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Brenda Fitzgerald, Director
Cherokee Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program

George Bryan Sykes, Director
Cheyenne & Arapaho Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Michelle Wilson, Director
Chickasaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Lisa John, Division of Education Administrator
Chickasaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Eric Seiber, Procurement Department Director
Chickasaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Debbie Davenport, Director
Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Rachel Allen, Project Coordinator
Delaware Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Rose Malone, Program Coordinator
Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Charlotte McCurtain, Director
Comanche Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Date

6/19/12

6-20-12

6/15/2012

10-13-12

10-13-12

6/13-12

6/14/12

6/20/12
### Tribal VR Programs and Service Areas in Oklahoma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribal VR Program</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Counties Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apache Tribal VR Program</td>
<td>P. O. Box 1220 Anadarko, OK 405-247-7494</td>
<td>Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Jackson, Kiowa, &amp; Tillman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee Nation Tribal VR Program</td>
<td>P. O. Box 948 Tahlequah, OK 918-453-5004</td>
<td>Adair, Cherokee, Craig, Nowata, Sequoyah, Washington, Delaware*, Mayes*, McIntosh*, Muskogee*, Ottawa*, Tulsa* **= partial counties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheyenne &amp; Arapahoe Tribal VR Program</td>
<td>405-422-1178</td>
<td>Beckham, Blaine, Canadian, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Kingfisher, Major, Roger Mills, Washita, &amp; Woodward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choctaw Nation Tribal VR Program</td>
<td>580-326-8304</td>
<td>Atoka, Bryan, Choctaw, Coal, Haskell, Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pittsburg, Pushmataha &amp; Hughes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comanche Nation Tribal VR Program</td>
<td>580-326-8304</td>
<td>Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Grady, Jackson, Jefferson, Kiowa, Stephens &amp; Tillman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware Nation Tribal VR Program</td>
<td>405-632-3749</td>
<td>Blaine, Caddo, Cleveland, Grady, Kiowa, Logan, McClain &amp; Oklahoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Tribal VR Program</td>
<td>405-547-5721</td>
<td>Kay, Lincoln, Logan, Noble, Pawnee, Payne &amp; Pottawatomie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscogee Creek Tribal VR Program</td>
<td>918-623-1197</td>
<td>Creek, Hughes, Mayes, McIntosh, Muskogee, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, Rogers, Seminole, Tulsa &amp; Wagner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Counties with more than one color are served by more than one Tribal VR Program. Please call the Tribal VR Program for further information.*