

Helping Customers Reach Their Vocational Summit: The Washington Blind Journey to Milestone Planning

NCSAB - October 23, 2024

Damiana Harper, AD VR-Participant Services

Michael Skog, Regional Lead

Francis Gathenya, VR Counselor

Sarah Jalali, VR Counselor



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

Who is our panel?

- Michael Skog, Regional Lead
- Francis Gathenya, VR Counselor
- Sarah Jalali, VR Counselor



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

What is our opportunity?

1. Faster and more customer-centered engagement.
2. More effective teaming across the customer, employers, and DSB staff.
3. Everyone – customer, supporters, counselors, and specialists - is focused on the same “next” goal.
4. Improved quality, consistency and accountability with our customers.



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

Our journey so far...

1. First Contact to Case Creation

- Reducing time by Leveraging dedicated Intake Specialists

2. Eligibility Determination

- Prioritizing Counselor Judgement

3. Customer Plans

- Faster time to plan
- Re-ordering timing of comprehensive assessment
- Milestone Planning for improved outcomes



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

Our customer's journey to new employment outcomes



BASECAMP

The starting point of
my journey

MILESTONES

Important achievements along the way

SUMMIT

My final goal – for now!



WASHINGTON STATE

Department of Services
for the Blind

For each milestone, the cycle includes four steps.



Step 1 - Plan

Holistic planning discussion(s) with the VR Customer.

If needed, eligibility is also confirmed at this step.

Step 2 - Confirm

Set the next Milestone & confirm the plan.

The Milestone plan is signed and active at this point.

Step 3 - Deliver

Deliver this Milestone's assessments & services.

Most of the time is spent at this step.

Step 4 - Complete

Complete the current milestone.

If the customer hasn't reached their "summit" loop back to step 1.



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

Each individual's journey will include the number of milestones right for them.



Example 1 - New to Blindness & Employment

1. Develop core O&M and AT skills
2. Explore career options
3. Train for a new career including any additional accessibility needs
4. Search for work
5. Stabilize in a job and exit DSB services

Example 2 - Job Retention

1. Assess, then implement accommodations and acquire skills of blindness needed to maintain employment
2. Achieve stability and exit DSB services

Example 3 - Career Advancement

1. Explore career advancement opportunities
2. Participate in additional training/education for career next-step
3. Achieve stability and exit DSB services



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

Four Principles of Milestone Planning

1. Comprehensive = Holistic not all-encompassing

- Consider the holistic needs of the individual

2. “I’m Ready...”

- Gets the customer “ready” to move on to the next leg of their journey.

3. Outcomes & Timing

- What does it mean to be ready, and when do I need to be ready?

4. Focused assessments & services

- Assessing and delivering services for “Now” and “Later”



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

Who is our panel?

- Michael Skog, Regional Lead
- Francis Gathenya, VR Counselor
- Sarah Jalali, VR Counselor



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

Questions?



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

What's next on our journey?

Timeline so far...

- Intake Specialist started **August 2023**
- Assessment pilot started **February 2024**
- Milestone Planning Pilot started **May 2024**
- Milestone Planning statewide launch **October 1, 2024**

Coming up...

- Milestone Planning Champs
- Specialists Training “Focusing Assessment & Service Delivery”
- Regional Refresher Training during Oct. Quarterly Regional Meetings
- “Using AWARE for Milestone Planning” Video



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

Contact Information

- Damiana Harper
 - Damiana.Harper@dsb.wa.gov
 - (509) 381-6061
- Francis Gathenya
 - Francis.Gathenya@dsb.wa.gov
 - (206) 613-7505
- Sarah Jalali
 - Sarah.Jalali@dsb.wa.gov
 - (360) 515-2037
- Michael Skog
 - Michael.Skog@dsb.wa.gov
 - (509) 456-4458



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

Thank you!



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

Appendix



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

What's in it for me (WIIFM)?

VR Customer

- Get into services much more quickly
- Focused plan that's less overwhelming
- Small, achievable “bites” with opportunities to celebrate success
- Clearer path to success

Counselor

- Additional tools and resources
- Natural touchpoints for C&Gs and plan reviews
- Opportunities to course-correct sooner if things aren't going to plan
- Clearer expectations for customer and staff

Specialists

- Focus on smaller, more achievable goals
- Clarity on what is needed at any point in a case
- Less pressure to complete full assessments before a plan can be written
- Start providing recommended services or devices for the current milestone immediately



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

Principle 1: Comprehensive = Holistic not all- encompassing


Consider the holistic needs of the individual:

- Understand and overcome limitations and barriers
- Acquire new skills, education, and employment
- Manage resources – especially income and support



WASHINGTON STATE

Department of Services
for the Blind

A hand is pointing at a complex transit map with various colored lines representing different routes. The map is partially visible on the left side of the slide, which has a dark blue background with a subtle grid pattern.

Principle 2: “I’m Ready...”

Gets the customer “ready” to move on to the next leg of their journey.

- “I’m ready to navigate my community on my own.”
- “I’m ready to begin post-secondary education.”
- “I’m ready for job retention.”

Principle 3: Outcomes & Timing

What does it mean to be ready, and when do I need to be ready?

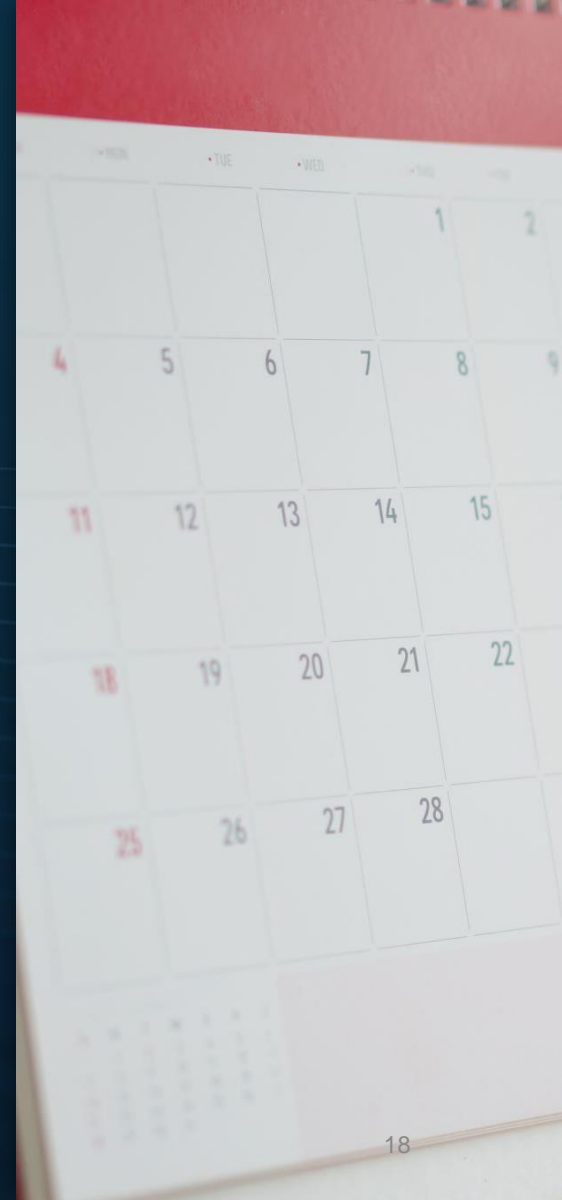
Example Milestone: "I'm ready to apply for post-secondary education"

1. Potential Outcomes

- "I have chosen a specific program or school."
- "I can fill out application forms independently, including any accommodations requests."
- "I am familiar with deadlines and submission requirements for college applications."

2. Timing

- How much time will it take to get them ready?
- Is there a deadline that needs to be met, such as an application due date?



WASHINGTON STATE

**Department of Services
for the Blind**

Principle 4: Focused assessments & services

Assessing and delivering services for “Now” and “Later”.

Example Milestone: “I’m ready to apply for post-secondary education”

- Consider what must happen “now” and what should happen “later”?



WASHINGTON STATE

Department of Services
for the Blind