Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Professional Development Policy

REVISED February 2009

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) is to assist Kentuckians with disabilities to achieve suitable employment and independence. The provision of ongoing support and encouragement of professional development activities is essential for ensuring that qualified staff is available to provide services to consumers. The agency values all staff, their individual talents, unique abilities, and contributions to the agency mission. The professional development policy reflects OVR values and encourages professional growth.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation will set aside sufficient funds to pay for professional development contingent upon funding availability.

Selection for participation in training shall be on an equal opportunity basis. No employee shall be prohibited from participating in training courses because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age, or veteran status.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

All professional growth and development activities offered to staff enhance work related skills, increase knowledge, improve service delivery, meet the requirements of the comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD) and are in keeping with OVR mission and values.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

Employees in active work status who work 100 or more per month are **eligible** for professional development assistance recognizing that first and foremost responsibility is to providing services to consumers. It is imperative that participation in a professional development program does not interfere with the mission of this office.

Employee's seeking permission for professional development training must have the requested training identified on their Career Development Plan (CDP) with appropriate signatures. The employee must complete a training approval form with required signatures from their frontline supervisor. The requested training must have a clear and direct relationship to the work of the agency and to the improvement of the employee's job effectiveness in his or her present position.

An employee may initiate the request for professional development or the supervisors may suggest to the employee that specific courses might help him or her perform job duties.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Every employee is required to complete a Career Development Plan form within the first three months of employment. This form is reviewed at least two times per year (April and August) in conjunction with the employee evaluation. Employees may update the forms as needed to accurately reflect their career development objectives.

FUNDING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

As per the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation strategic plan, an annual comprehensive training plan will be developed by the HRD Program Administrator and will be presented to the Leadership Team for approval by July 31st each year. The training plan will include an

outline of the approved training opportunities for staff in the fiscal year and the amount of funding support that will be provided through the HRD budget. Training needs outside of those designated in the plan will be subject to funds available in the district. The training plan may be adjusted as needed based on the identification of critical training needs and funding limitations.

TRAVEL APPROVAL
Travel for training that requires compensatory time should be avoided, however there are times when compensatory time is in the best interest of the Commonwealth as well as the employee. Use of compensatory time requires pre-approval with the first line supervisor. Approval of compensatory time is also based on the flexibility available to state agencies in accordance with guidelines established by officials of the Commonwealth.

ATTENDANCE AT COLLEGES OR UNIVERSITIES FOR DEGREE OR COURSEWORK
Please see the agency tuition assistance policy for this information.

TRAINING TRANSCRIPTS
Upon completion of a professional development course, individuals will send a copy of the certificate of completion to the HRD Program Administrator for documentation in the employee-training transcript.

The office will maintain files and records to insure the proper administration of the professional development program. The files will be maintained within the database currently house at the Office of Government Training. Hard copies will be kept as needed for information that cannot be stored on the database.

CERTIFIED REHABILITATION COUNSELOR TRAINING CREDITS

- **In-Service Training** -The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation makes every effort to provide in-service training opportunities that meet the requirements for CRC credits. Sign-in sheets and certificates of completion will be provided at all approved CRC in-service training programs. A copy of your certificate from the in-service program does not need to be provided to the HRD Program Administrator since the sign-in sheet will provide the needed documentation for inclusion in the agency transcript. A report is filed at the end of each calendar year with the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) to document the training opportunities provided through OVR.

- **Outsourced Training** - On occasion Office of Vocational Rehabilitation personnel participate in training opportunities offered through other entities where CRC credits are not extended. In this situation, individuals with their may obtain CRC credit by submitting a certificate from the training to the HRD Program Administrator for review. If the training is approvable for CRC then the HRD Program Administrator will issue a CRC certificate to the individual which can be filed with the commission for credit.

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS
The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation will pay application and examination costs for employees seeking professional certification in their field of expertise either as a direct

requirement of the position or through recommendation by a supervisor. If the certifying body allows payment by credit card then the employee may use the pro-card to pay the fees in advance. If a credit card payment cannot be utilized the employee must pay the fee in advance and seek reimbursement for the expenses by submitting the expense on a travel voucher. In either payment method a copy of the receipt is required. This cost for the application and examination for any certification will be provided only once.

The office recognizes that the administration of certification examinations may take place during the week or on the weekend and expects that employees will use flex schedules and/or leave time to accommodate the testing requirements. Travel expense is not provided.

MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

As of November 1, 2003, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation will financially support certification maintenance for agency staff that possesses a certificate in their professional field. The following specific guidelines have been put in place for the reimbursement of these fees:

- The certification must be required for the employee's CURRENT JOB he or she is performing as determined and approved by the immediate supervisor.
- For those employees that have multiple certifications, priority will be given to the certification that directly pertains to the employee's current job unless there is justification to show that the approval of additional certification payment is beneficial to the office. This determination is to be made by the employee's supervisor.
- The certification must be used for office business and not for private practice purposes.
- Employee's may pay for the certification maintenance using the procard or may pay for it him or herself and submit a travel voucher with a paid receipt for reimbursement.
- The office will not pay for any dues for professional organizations or clubs that are optional (i.e. KRA).
- The office will pay for dues to organizations on behalf of the OVR (i.e. Chamber of Commerce).
- Obtaining contact hours or other criteria for maintaining a certification is the responsibility of the employee. The office will not pay for a re-examination or additional fees associated with reinstatement should the certification lapse due to the employee not following the required maintenance criteria.

The following are examples of certifications within the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, but it is not an exhaustive list as other incidental certification may also be applicable based on supervisor approval.

- Certified Rehabilitation Counselor
- Certified Vocational Evaluator
- Teaching Certificate
- Licensed Practical Nurse or Registered Nurse
- Commercial Driver's License
- Physical Therapist
- Speech/Language Pathologist

- Assistive Technology Practitioners as certified by Rehabilitation Engineer and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA)

ONLINE TRAINING POLICY

With the advent of new technology, online training will become more prevalent as a resource for professional development. In most cases the most prudent use of employee time is to allow for the completion of the courses at designated office locations. However, there may be times when it is appropriate to allow an individual to complete the online training at an alternate site. The situation is warranted if one or more of the following statements are applicable:

- Use of an alternate location is a cost savings to the agency
- Use of an alternate location is an approved accommodation for an employee with a disability
- The technology required to participate in the training is not available at the worksite

**Employees approved for online training away from the worksite will be credited with clock hours consistent with those given for the completion of the course. In other words, if the course is valued at 4 CRC credits then the course creators believe that (four) 4 clock hours are a reasonable timeframe for the average individual to complete the requirements.

The process for requesting online training:

- The requested course must be on the employee Career Development Plan
- The employee must furnish the supervisor with a copy of the outline or agenda for the course that reflects the time commitment involved in the training, course topic, etc along with a completed Training Pre-Approval Form (located on the Intranet)
- Supervisors must approve the course and provide written justification (based on the parameters above) indicating the reason training away from the worksite is the most appropriate action.
- Employees must submit a copy of the completed Training Pre-Approval form to the HRD Program Administrator
- Upon completion of the course, the employee will provide a certificate of completion to the HRD Program Administrator for entry on the employee transcript

**Employees that do not seek first line supervisor approval PRIOR to taking the course will not be credited with the hours spent completing the professional development program. Utilization of offsite locations is at the discretion of the first line supervisor and inappropriate use by an employee may result in revocation of this privilege.

EXCEPTIONS

Other exceptions to this policy, when in the best interest of the public may be granted when justified in writing and approved by the Executive Director.