



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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C OUNCIL

Annual Report for FY 2014

The SRC/DVRS Partnership Celebrates Accomplishments
October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014

New Jersey Dept. of Labor

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Rehabilitation Council Members

Council Membership is in accordance with Section 105 of the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act and New Jersey Executive Order 110 and reflects a diverse range of disability groups, geographical areas, racial, ethnic and gender groups. Each member is appointed by the Governor of New Jersey. The Council represents a broad spectrum of individuals who are concerned with the vocational needs of people with disabilities and who support the objectives of the public rehabilitation program in New Jersey. As of 2014 representation on the Council is as follows:

Member	Representation
Clifford Sanders	Advocate 1
James R. Thebery	Advocate 2
Jamie C. Hilton	Advocate 3
Rebecca Shulman	Advocate 4
Patricia A. Tomlinson	Advocate 5
Thomas G. Jennings	Business Rep 1
James E. Seath	Business Rep 2
Margaret M. Englebert	Business Rep 3
Catherine Gacos	Business Rep 4
Nils R. Richardson	Community Rehab Program Rep
Lillie Lowe-Reid	Client Assistance Program
Robert Haugh	NJDOE – Office of Special Education Rep
Barbara Lee	DVRS Consumer
Carolyn D. Hayer	Parent Training & Info Center Rep
Kathleen W. Wilson	SILC
Nicholas P. Gacos	State Workforce Investment Board Rep
Janice Oursler	VR Counselor 1
Brian D. Sant'Angelo	VR Counselor 2
Ex-Officio	
Alice Hunnicutt	Director, DVRS

New Jersey State
Rehabilitation Council

Executive Committee

Peggy Englebert
Chairperson

Rebecca Shulman,
Vice-Chairperson

Carolyn Hayer
Treasurer

Alice Hunnicutt
DVRS Director

Message from the Chair

December 2, 2014

As the newly seated chair of the State Rehabilitation Council of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, it is an honor to present our annual report for Fiscal Year (FFY) 2014, authored by SRC Vice-Chair, Rebecca Shulman.

2014 has proven to be an exciting year for DVRS with a record number of job placements for People With Disabilities into employment in their communities. This year's report, again, highlights the positive feedback DVRS has received, and we celebrate the accomplishments of all of the staff for their fine efforts. The Director and her staff have their sights set on continuing to expand the number of placements, and for that they are to be congratulated as they seek to improve on the outcomes of the services they deliver.

The year 2014 brings to DVRS the additional challenge of meeting the new requirements of the recently reauthorized Workforce Investment Act of 1998, which includes the Rehabilitation Act. Known as WIOA, the Work Innovation and Opportunity Act, this reauthorization through 2020 was signed by President Obama on July 22nd, 2014. Although not all of the rules have been set in place yet, it is clear that WIOA will give DVRS a much larger role in transition from school to work for students, and will require many more cooperative agreements among the State and Federal agencies that interact around employment issues for People With Disabilities. While the implications and the impact of WIOA are currently being examined at the Federal level, the SRC has responded by reshaping its Policy Committee into the Emerging Trends Committee in order to ensure that the potential for significant advancement in employment for People With Disabilities in New Jersey is met, and that we provide our citizens with the fullest opportunity to take advantage of the provisions envisioned in this Act.

The State Rehabilitation Council of New Jersey is pleased to provide this report, which details the accomplishments of the NJDVRS on behalf of the people it serves. The SRC looks forward to working with the NJDVRS as it continues to reinvent itself, and challenge the future, through the dedication of its members, the staff and stakeholders.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Englebert

Peggy Englebert, M.Ed, CRC, LRC, CVE, Chairperson
NJ State Rehabilitation Council

Steven Shevlin (Trenton)

*Steven....I received my new Starkey BTE units today from Cathy and John Evans. They will make a dramatic difference in the quality of my life. I want to thank you for all your assistance in this matter. Your professionalism and thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated.. ...Also I want to thank the state of New Jersey for providing me with these units.
(Consumer)*

Al Cain (Pleasantville)

*I am so happy to have met a person like you who understands peoples' feelings. Now I can smile again. Thank you.
(Consumer)*

*I cannot thank you enough for all the support, guidance and friendship you've given me over the years. I sincerely appreciate everything and wish you all the best in the future. You have made such a difference in my life!
(Consumer)*

NJRA Winter Conference

On December 6, DVR Director Alice Hunnicutt provided opening remarks at the New Jersey Rehabilitation Association's Annual Winter Conference. The Rehabilitation Services Administration's newly appointed Commissioner, Janet LeBreck, was the keynote speaker.

Beliefs, Mission, Function

SRC BELIEFS

As members of the New Jersey State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), we believe:

- That people with disabilities, like all people, have diverse strengths that must be defined and identified along many dimensions.
- That each person with a disability has value.
- In a public system of vocational rehabilitation that is responsible and accountable to those it serves and to those who fund it.
- In partnerships, affiliations and linkages.
- That optimal results in rehabilitation depend on an equal partnership between consumers and the professional (service provider).
- That all consumers should be given enough information to make informed choices.
- That all people with disabilities are ultimately responsible and accountable for the choices they make.
- That all people with disabilities should have the opportunity to maximize their potential.
- That respect for all is critical to this process.
- That it is necessary to support, further and exemplify diversity and multiculturalism within the disability community and the community at large.
- That the rights of people with disabilities should be advanced and protected.

Michelle Shabazz-Schultz
(Somerville)

Thank you. Just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate everything you've done. It really meant a lot. May you keep up all your hard work because it makes and incredible difference! DVR has helped me so much with providing the financial means for me to successfully land a job and start paying off my student loans! Thank you so much for all of your hard work with advocating for me and for continually following up with me this past year as I explore different hearing aids and trial different jobs. I am currently doing well at an assisted living facility as an Occupational Therapist doing what I love – helping others reach their full potential, just as you have for me! My hearing aids and accessories have made an incredible difference with allowing me to succeed in my current job as I communicate with the patients, family and staff. Thank you so much!!! (Consumer)

Westampton DVR Office

Kudos go to the staff in the Westampton office. (Claire Spill, Pemberton HS Child Study Team Member)

SRC MISSION

The SRC is a partnership of persons with disabilities, advocates and other interested persons. It is committed to ensuring through policy development, implementation and advocacy that New Jersey has a rehabilitation program that is not only comprehensive and consumer-responsive but also effective, efficient and significantly funded. The SRC is dedicated to ensuring that persons with disabilities receive rehabilitation services that result in employment.

SRC MANDATED FUNCTION

The SRC, on behalf of the community it represents, reviews, analyzes and advises the New Jersey State Vocational Rehabilitation Program (DVRS) regarding the performance of its responsibilities. Council goals and activities are set annually and are in response to both National and State issues, as mandated by Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The focus of Council goals and activities includes but is not limited to Consumer Satisfaction, Statewide Needs Assessment, State Plan and Amendments, Policy, Extent/Scope/Effectiveness of Services, Interagency Agreements and New Jersey's Employment programs.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed into law July 22, 2014, reauthorized the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 under title IV. It is important to note that most provisions under title IV went into effect upon enactment of WIOA. The SRC is committed to ensuring appropriate support to the DVRS in its implementation of WIOA.

Louis Rojas (Jersey City)

It is truly a pleasure working with Luis Rojas. The entire Child Study Team at County Prep High School is so appreciative of his warm approach to the students and willingness to share his expertise with them. His receptiveness to scheduling the meetings at our school was not only a commendable gesture but also a heartfelt expression of his sensitivity to the needs of our students.

The opportunity to meet with Mr. Rojas prior to high school graduation not only increased the student's awareness of the postsecondary benefits of working with DVRS but also highlighted the need to focus on a practical career pathway. He is a stellar employee and I am sure he is an invaluable asset to your team. Please extend my sincere thanks to Mr. Rojas for his professional and approachable demeanor. (Denise Galluccio, Transition Specialist)

Brian Fitzgibbons, Central Office

Congratulations to Assistant Director Brian Fitzgibbons as he was selected as the recipient of the Family Resource Network's Outstanding Leadership Award.

Membership, Committees, Resources

Membership Development

The full Council participates in identification of potential members appropriate to the beliefs and mission of the SRC. Member attendance, vacancies, and upcoming term expirations are reviewed during the February and June meetings with recommendations made to fill vacancies according to the category the vacancy(s) represents. The SRC is fully compliant with the requirements under Section 105 in the law; members have been appointed by the Governor and at least half of the SRC membership is comprised of persons with disabilities who are not employed by the DVRS. A wide range of disability representation has been achieved.

Officer Elections

Officers are nominated at the February SRC meeting and then an election is held at the June SRC meeting. The following new officers were nominated in February 2014 and elected to begin serving their terms of office in June 2014: Peggy Englebert, Chair; Rebecca Shulman, Vice-Chair, and Carolyn Hayer, Treasurer. The officers were elected for a two-year term.

Committees

The SRC Chair, in conjunction with the Executive Committee, appoints committees annually to meet federally mandated activities and SRC priority areas. Each SRC member is expected to participate on a committee. The DVRS supports each committee by assigning a DVRS staff member to provide information as requested.

Julie Ann Boyle (Toms River)

*I wanted to take a moment to extend a sincere note of appreciation to each of you for your time & attention focused on my son Anthony's DVR open case. Thanks to each of your professional contributions...Julie Ann and I just spoke via a call. Her competent and efficient professional manner left me feeling assured we will continue forward seamlessly towards gainful employment via vocational rehabilitation services available through DVR; Project Hire (statewide employment placement and training program). I look forward to working collaboratively with you on behalf of my son Anthony's vocational journey.
(Deb Charette)*

Standing committees include:

- **Executive Committee** – Comprised of the SRC Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and the DVRS Director as ex-officio.
- **Evaluation & Consumer Satisfaction Committee** – Activities include, but are not limited to, program evaluation activities and consumer satisfaction studies.
- **Policy Committee/Legislative Committee** – The SRC combined the policy and legislative committee during its annual retreat in August 2014. Activities include, but are not limited to, advocacy and education, policy and State Plan review, Administrative Code review, State Plan Public Hearings, Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment, pending and current legislation, particularly with respect to impact on funding.
- **Emerging Issues Committee** – Responsible for the identification of new initiatives stemming from the WIOA.
- **Ad Hoc Committees, Task Forces, and Study Groups** – Are created on an as needed basis by the SRC Chair. Non-Council members may serve on these groups, but the Chair of the group must be a SRC member. Ad Hoc Committees include:
 - **By-Laws Review Committee** – Is appointed by the SRC Chair on even-numbered years to review and make recommendations to the full Council for needed revision.
 - **Membership Committee** – Is charged with developing plans to bring membership into compliance with RSA mandates

Jennifer Shaw
(Thorofare)

Thank you so much for all your help and encouragement! I could not have done it without you and Ms. Rogers from HireAbility. Ms. Rogers was extremely helpful, and I was very lucky to have her assist me finding work. She was so helpful and encouraging. Thank you for referring me to her. Thank you so much for extending counseling sessions as well.

I am hoping my position with Xerox turns into a permanent position. I am very excited to get back to the work force.

Thank you again for all your help. I could not have done it without your encouragement and assistance. (Consumer)

Resource Plan

The following DVRS staff provides support, attend, and participate in the activities of the Rehabilitation Council:

- DVRS Director attends all meetings and provides staff support to the executive committee.

Two Assistant Directors provide staff support to the legislative/policy and emerging issues committees; the executive assistant to the DVRS director provides staff support to the evaluation committee and day-to-day requests that come from SRC members.

- Executive secretary to the director provides minutes for every meeting and prepares handouts for all SRC meetings.
- Other DVRS staff members are assigned as needed to support the Council and as appropriate to their area of expertise.

For the period of 10/1/13 – 9/30/14, a \$46,500 budget was established for Council operating expenses. The budget covered: quarterly and special meeting costs, annual planning summit, member expenses to attend and participate in meetings and training, accommodations, training, printing costs, fiscal agent budget administration and miscellaneous funds needed to support Council activities as appropriate. Council activities stayed within the allocated amounts.

Julie An Boyle & Susan Ballantyne (Neptune)

It was brought to my attention by the TR counselors that in September, Julie Ann Boyle and Susan Ballantyne demonstrated an extreme act of kindness and compassion.

One Tuesday afternoon someone looked out of the third floor office window and noticed an older woman standing in the middle of Hooper Avenue. She was with a second adult who was in a wheelchair. Hooper Avenue is a very busy four lane road. People drive very fast and aggressively. There is also a concrete barrier making it impossible to safely cross.

Susan and Julie immediately exited our building and went to their aid. Julie assisted the person in the wheelchair and got her out of the highway and onto the sidewalk. The older woman was very distraught. Susan was able to talk to her and learned that she and her disabled daughter were homeless. Susan convinced the woman into leaving the highway and Susan and Julie brought them back into the LWD building. They then spent the necessary time contacting social services and connecting them with the appropriate services for housing.

I believe this deserves some recognition. "Way to go Julie and Susan.....great looking out!!!!" (Kathy Space, supervisor)

Meetings, Trainings and Forums

Accessibility

The Council promotes inclusion at all sponsored meetings for members and other participants by providing, as needed, personal care attendant services, transportation services, interpreter services, computer assisted real-time transcription (CART) and assistive listening devices. Teleconferencing is made available to accommodate persons who have difficulty traveling, or who reside in rural or remote areas. In addition, all documents are sent out prior to each SRC meeting via email.

Regular New Jersey SRC Meetings

The SRC conducts quarterly meetings. Meetings were held on November 20, 2013, February 19, 2014, June 4, 2014 and September 10, 2014. Full Council activities are scheduled in the morning with committees meeting in the afternoon. Committee meetings are also held in the interim months, on an as needed basis. Conference calling is used when appropriate. Regular meetings are open to the public and interested stakeholders are encouraged to attend. An annual planning meeting was held on August 4, 2014.

SRC Members Participate in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)

Council representatives regularly attend the CSAVR spring and fall meetings. There is a special track for SRC leadership nationally that meets the day before the general CSAVR meeting begins. New Jersey SRC representatives attend this meeting in addition to the general CSAVR meetings. The New Jersey SRC is a member of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). The

Pete Ruffini (New Brunswick)

Hi Pete. I'm still working for both Visiting Angels and Senior Helpers. I've been working since April and I am quite happy. In fact, I'm thinking about taking some classes on Alzheimer's and Dementia which most of my clients suffer from. I have to thank you again for helping me get on my feet. Take care. (Consumer)

Cynthia Fuller (Newark)

On 8/27/14, Wednesday afternoon, while I was at a Dental appointment, Cynthia Fuller met with a consumer assigned to me, who came in for an unannounced visit, and assisted him with filling out a ShopRite job application. The consumer has difficulty reading and writing and was anxious about being able to complete the form properly. I commend Cynthia for going above and beyond to meet this consumer's need and helping him with his goal of employment. (Mario Fontana)

NCSRC coordinates the track for SRCs at the CSAVR conferences in the spring and fall meetings.

NJSRC representatives participate in CSAVR Standing Committee meetings; including the Deaf, Deaf Blind, Hard-of-Hearing and Late-Deafened Standing Committee; the Transition Standing Committee and the Employment Standing Committee.

Several members of the SRC continue to work on the "Model State Plan for Rehabilitation Services for Individuals Who Are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard-of-Hearing and Late-Deafened" and have offered technical consultation throughout the country.

2014 Public Forums:

Date	Location	Attendees	SRC Reps	Topics discussed
3/5	Monmouth	13	Nils, Jim S	Referrals, SE, LTFA, DDD, Transportation, Disability Navigators
3/12	Essex	9	Jim S, Becky	CRPs, Emp. 1 st , transition program, work study, soft skills, workshops
3/19	Teleconference	5	Pat	Rates, TWE, I&E grants
3/26	Teleconference	5	Peggy and Carolyn	Rates, TWE, WAT, training, transportation

2015 forum recommendations:

- Onsite @ NJ APSE conference
- Onsite @ Expo with combination of CBVI
- Utilize Special Olympics site in Mercer County

Congratulations go out to the local offices for the incredible effort put out last year. Employment outcomes increased by 411 for a total of 4,439 individuals placed into competitive employment.

I want to thank Assistant Director Brian Fitzgibbons, Field Chiefs Keith McDermott, Melvin Crawford and Teresa Owens for all the miles put on their cars providing direct support to all the offices on a regular basis. Thanks also go to Maryann Tiesler and Janette Nazon for the support provided to the field from Central Office.

Thanks also to Assistant Director David Free, our central office administrative support staff and the program development specialists who provide expertise in subjects ranging from Deafness, Autism, vehicle modification, supported employment, mental health, transition, and substance abuse to our new counselors and local businesses who need information and technical assistance about how to better support the consumers they hire through the DVRS.

Every staff member contributed to this effort. The LWD is fortunate to have such a dedicated team providing services to ensure individuals with disabilities in New Jersey have equal opportunity for high quality employment.

Thank you!

Alice Hunnicutt
Director, Division of
Vocational Rehabilitation
Services

Activities and Accomplishments

All Eligible Consumers continue to be served

In FFY 2014, the DVRS served all categories of eligible consumers. The agency currently has the financial resources to serve all categories; however, it is projected that consumers needing services will increase. The Department of Human Services has implemented policy changes that now require all individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (ID/DD) who seek support through the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) to seek employment services with the DVRS. The agency is currently negotiating a new Memorandum of Understanding with the DDD to ensure that individuals with ID/DD meet the criteria as set forth in WIOA title IV. The DVRS is predicting that an order of selection will be necessary in FFY 2015 due to the substantial increase of individuals with significant disabilities accessing DVRS.

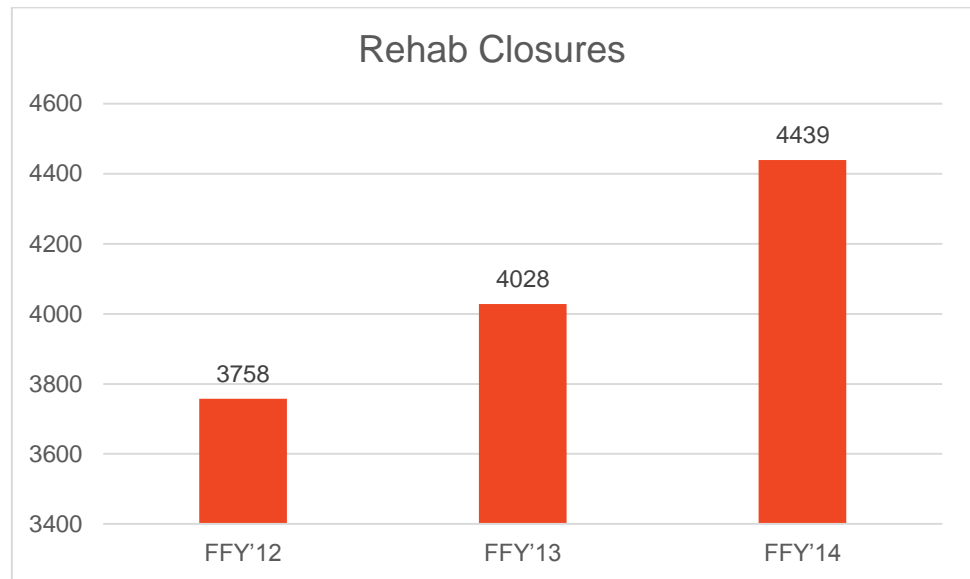
Successful Employment Outcomes

In FFY'14, Status 26 closures increased from FFY'13 numbers, to 4439. This increase is a reflection of a stronger economy as well as a reflection of the learning curve of all the new counselors that have been hired since FFY'12. This is the highest number of successful closures since WIA enactment in 1998 and reflects a 10% increase. The counselors statistically achieved at over 100% productivity; the DVRS will need to increase its counselors in order to continue to achieve these outcomes. In FFY'14 1919 females and 2520 males with disabilities were successfully rehabilitated.

Emma Gordon
(Bridgeton)

The day I walked into your office on 7/22/14, it was a new beginning for me. I needed new hearing aids and you were the answer to my prayers.

I was impressed with the whole program from beginning to the end. You and the staff were fantastic. While going through the total process everything was explained to me very thoroughly in a professional, pleasant and confident manner. You could see that I was nervous but you were able to calm my fears and guide me through all of the criteria of the program. Thanks to you I can perform my job as a cashier in a school cafeteria much more efficiently now. I will be calling you once a month for the next three months to provide you with an update. I just wish than more people knew about this opportunity. (Joanne)



Leila Hosseina (Elizabeth)

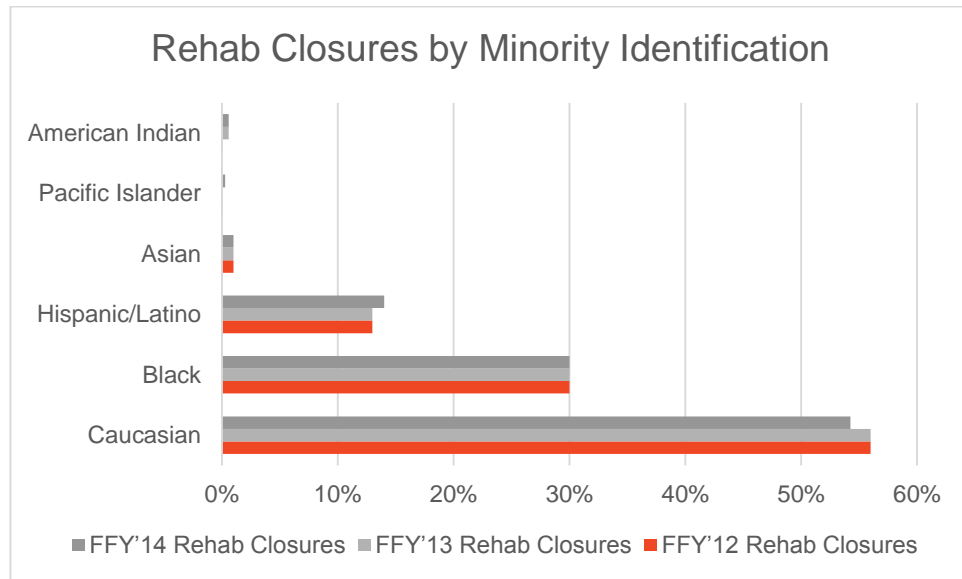
The National Association for Rehabilitation Leadership (NARL) is pleased to announce Leila Hosseini as the recipient of its 2014 Guy A. Renzaglia Scholarship. Leila is a student at Southern Illinois University's Rehabilitation Institute. She is studying through the Institute's off campus, online Executive Masters of Rehabilitation Administration program. More than midway through her program, Leila maintains a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Leila earned a bachelor's degree in Teaching English as a foreign language from Teacher's Training University of Tehran in 1993. For 13 years she worked as a high school teacher, pursuing her passion—teaching and interacting with her students. Later, Leila wished to expand her professional interests beyond teaching. Counseling had always fascinated her, so she decided to pursue a new path.

In 2009 Leila graduated with a Master of Science degree in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. She said it was a revolutionary step that turned her attention to her true lifetime calling. Upon graduation, she began her new career as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and lead transition counselor in Union County at the New Jersey DVRS. This gave Leila the opportunity to combine her teaching experience with VR counseling.

Minority Identification

Approximately 47% of all individuals served by the DVRS during FFY'14 are from minority groups, with 45.15% of rehab closures representing minority groups.



Referrals by Region

Northern Region

Office	Caseloads	Referrals
Paterson	9	955
Randolph	6	635
Hackettstown	5	843
Hackensack	10	1219
Jersey City	10	1607
Total	40	5259

Marcella Dinoso
(Hackensack)

I wanted to sincerely thank you for all the time and effort that you gave Chris yesterday at our meeting. The way that you worked with Chris and got him to open up and speak with you honestly was nothing short of a miracle! You truly have a gift for doing your job. Chris is very lucky to have you as a counselor.

When we left, Chris turned to me and said that he felt like he was treated as a human being struggling to get his life together as opposed to a number in a system. Thanks to you, Chris is committed to working this program to ultimately accomplish getting a job that he can be proud of and keep. It was an absolute pleasure meeting you and I look forward to working with you in the future.
(Parent)

Central Region

Office	Caseloads	Referrals
Newark	16	2933
New Brunswick	7	1251
Elizabeth	8	1428
Somerville	5	1089
Trenton	8	1321
Neptune	10	836
Total	54	8858

Southern Region

Office	Caseloads	Referrals
Toms River	9	1551
Camden	12	1149
Thorofare	6	657
Westampton	6	1061
Pleasantville	8	1063
Bridgeton	7	260
Wildwood	3	311
Total	51	6052

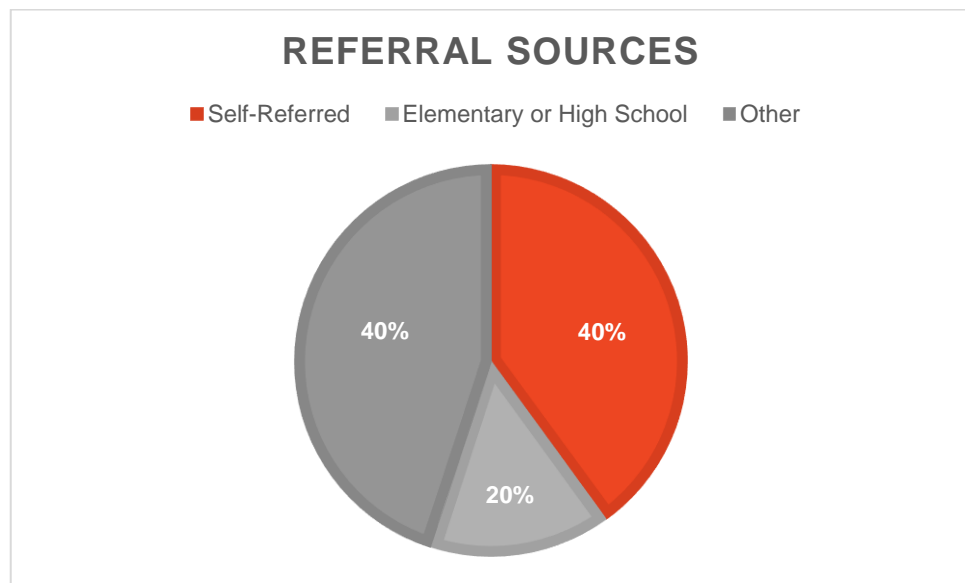
Louis Rojas (Jersey City)

*I am writing to you to say thank you for everything. I appreciate all the hard work and support you did for me. Thank you so much for the generosity you have shown through the years I was in college. It meant so much to me. It only takes a moment to say thank you, but your thoughtfulness will be remembered a long time.
(Consumer)*

Ann Disare (Westampton)

*Thank you very much for referring me to this job; and your ongoing support and guidance concerning job searching, job fairs, interviews, and applying for a variety of jobs. There are not enough words to describe how grateful I am.
(Consumer)*

The DVRS received a total of 20,169 referrals during FFY'14. Referral sources included self-referral, secondary schools, CRPs, medical professionals, One-Stop Career Centers, Post-secondary Schools, Social Security Administration and Welfare. Of the 4,439 total rehabilitations, the following referral sources were the highest.



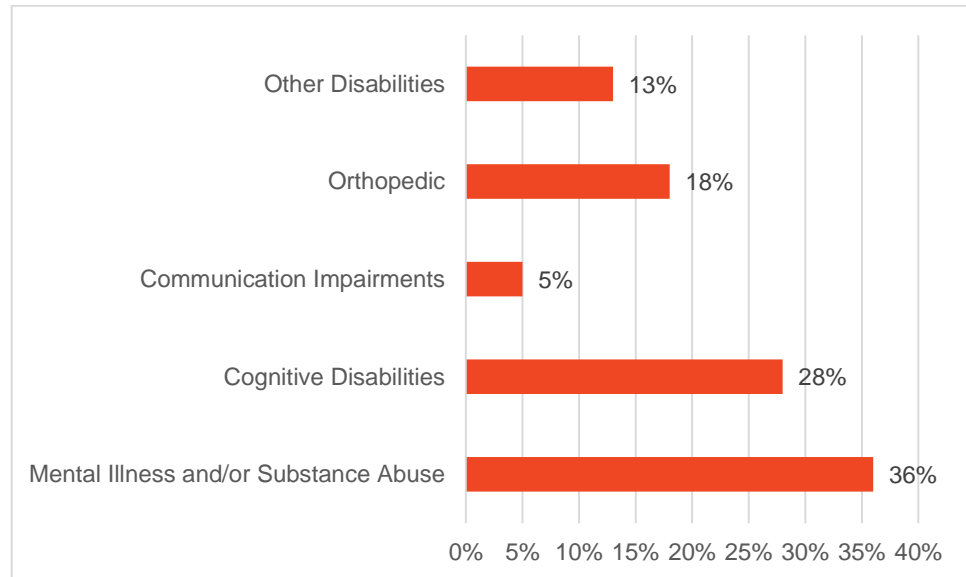
Teresa Owens (Central Office)

*I just wanted to thank you for all the attention and priority you have placed toward my current situation concerning my VR benefits and status. I have been assigned a counselor that I intend to meet with personally next week. I must add that the attention and expedience concerning my seeking help has been exemplary and is very much appreciated. You have certainly set the bar for treating veterans the way the program is designed to do!! Thank you again for all of your help.
(Consumer)*

Kathleen Edwards (Camden)

*I got my new hearing aids and they are great. Thanks so much for your help. I will keep you posted on my progress.
(Consumer)*

Disabilities Served



Supported Employment Assists Consumers with Significant Disabilities

The DVRS successfully rehabilitated 870 individuals who received Supported Employment services in FFY'14; the following represent the most significant disabilities:

- Mental Illness
- Developmental Disabilities
- Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing
- Traumatic Brain Injury

In each of these disability groups the division worked with CRPs with specific expertise in the provision of services.

Individuals receiving Supported Employment Services in FFY'14 accounted for 20% of successful rehab closures.

Margaret Custodio
(Bridgeton)

*I would like to thank you so much for helping me out with my vision. Thanks to you, I can see clear. You have been a blessing to me, not just for my vision but for my hearing aid as well. I'm beyond grateful for them. For many years I could hear nothing, not even a knock on the door. Thanks to you I can now. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. God bless you all.
(Consumer)*

Tiffany Hood
(Pleasantville)

*You've got a deep-down goodness that shows itself in your generosity and kindness. Words cannot express my feelings! Thank you.
(Consumer)*

Transitioning Continues as a Major Initiative

In FFY'14, the Transition Counselors statewide continue to make an impact on school systems and transitioning students as evidenced by the following:

TRANSITION REPORT Annual Totals FISCAL YEAR 2014

OFFICES	Number of Technical Consultations	Number of IEP Meetings attended	# of Presentations/ Meetings with school personnel or parents/students
Bridgeton	382	21	150
Camden	396	36	89
Elizabeth	1042	85	269
Hackensack	777	25	12
Hackettstown	244	95	56
Jersey City	2323	2	193
Morristown/Randolph	1100	15	248
Neptune	870	165	384
Newark	522	66	72
New Brunswick	554	21	51
Paterson	508	34	208
Pleasantville	623	92	136
Somerville	187	38	126
Thorofare	474	6	88
Toms River	1020	115	322
Trenton	571	17	178
Westampton	169	21	63
Wildwood	325	16	38
TOTALS	12087	870	2683

Cheri Thompson **(Camden)**

The reason for this letter is to let you know that you have in your organization one exceptional employee, Cheri Thompson. Years ago when I had the dream of completing my studies, I touched the doors of your institution with the idea that I would receive the financial assistance and the guide I was looking for. Mrs. Thompson was assigned as my counselor. Little by little I found support to complete my dreams and understanding of my situation. I feel very grateful because she always had time to answer all my questions and concerns. I wanted to say thanks to her and your institution in some way.

I value DVR help and monetary support. That small grain of sand contributed to my effort to finish my education and fulfill my dream. I consider myself very fortunate for having Cheri Thompson as my counselor. My success is due in large part due to her human qualities. I consider her a valuable counselor. (Consumer)

Transitioning to Post School Activities

The DVRS supported a pilot initiative with the Centers for Independent Living to establish a fee-for-service program throughout the state in FFY 2013. The pilot identifies secondary schools who partner with the CILs for self-advocacy education and career readiness. Through the school program students with disabilities become DVRS eligible. Once eligible, the DVRS provides funding for continued pre-employment training with the CILs. The WIOA identifies transition as a major emphasis and continued work with the CILs will be critical for the DVRS to ensure that pre-employment transition planning is available to all students with disabilities.

Masters Degree Programs Collaborate with the DVRS

Rutgers University Master's degree program reports the following collaborative activities:

- The DVRS regularly provides practicum and internship placements.
- The DVRS and the SRC members have provided letters of support for grant applications for rehabilitation education program students at both the graduate and undergraduate level.
- The DVRS staff and the SRC members provide classroom lectures, mentor students, assist with case conferences and provide knowledge of current practices in the field.
- Several members of the DSU and the SRC are active members of the Rutgers University, School of Health Related Professions Rehabilitation Counseling Program Advisory Council.

In addition to supporting staff to attend Rutgers University the agency has also offered programs in the George Washington University and several other universities offering on-line support. In FFY' 14 counselors who do not have their

Lori DeSantis
(Thorofare)

Yes, I most definitely benefitted from the program. All of the job meetings that I attended in your office were a big help in my motivation, direction and guidance. Thanks to your program, it gave me some worth, knowing that you were willing to help me. I would personally like to thank you for your professionalism, dedication and time with my case. You were extremely helpful with my situation. Knowing that you probably have a large work load, you still found the time to respond to my calls and emails. It was a pleasure to have you as my case worker. (Consumer)

Master's Degree developed their training plan to work towards the Master's. While WIOA no longer requires a Master's level of competency, the New Jersey Civil Service Commission requires it as a prerequisite to become a Counselor for the DVRS. The SRC supports the continuation of this requirement.

Mental Health Services

The DVRS provides consultation regarding the DVRS policies and services to various New Jersey-based mental health agencies and organizations. In FFY 2014 the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was developed between the Department of Human Services Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services ended. The DVRS worked with mental health vendors to become approved through the DVRS in order to provide services for DVRS mental health consumers.

National VR Network

Both individual DVRS consumers and businesses have greatly benefited from this national collaboration that has been activated by the CSAVR National Employment Network (The NET). The CSAVR has developed a national talent acquisition portal (TAP) that houses resumes and job information specific for DVRS consumers. The National Business Leadership Network has supported this initiative that ensures every resume posted is from an individual with a disability. This has particular interest with Federal Departments and contractors who are now required to meet the new Section 503 requirements.

Regional Deafness Centers

Three regional centers serving individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened or with cochlear implants opened in 2009. They are as follows:

Steven Shevlin (Trenton)

I have received and am using my hearing aids, of which I am very pleased with the results. You were extremely helpful during this entire process. You were professional and sensitive to my individual needs, and the entire staff in Trenton office always conducted themselves in a courteous manner.

The hearing aids have changed my emotional well-being and my outlook tremendously. I am now able to fully participate in conversations in my home with my wife and four children, which in the past was so very difficult for me and frustrating for them. I am much more confident in my workplace, being able to hear the discussion in the weekly meetings and interacting with my fellow coworkers/supervisors. Recently, I received a promotion with Hilton Management, which I can partly attribute to my having hearing aids have given me a better understanding of job related duties. Overall, the hearing aids have had a positive and dramatic change in my daily life. (Consumer)

- JVS Goodwill Career Center (operated by Jewish Vocational Service and Goodwill of Northern NJ)
- Career Development Center (operated by Bridges to Employment in Raritan)
- Career Success Solution (operated by Burlington County College)

The purpose of the centers is to provide the services necessary to enable eligible NJDVRS clients who are deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened, or who have cochlear implants to prepare for, obtain, and retain employment. These centers offer vocational evaluations, job search support and advice on Assistive Listening Devices and appropriate individuals are encouraged to make appointments through the Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. For FFY 2014, 94 DVRS clients have been successfully placed by the centers.

Grants

The DVRS supported several grant programs in FFY 14:

- **EmploymentFirst4Jersey** – The EmploymentFirst4Jersey Training Grant program is designed to promote competitive, integrated employment for people with any type of disability in the general workforce. By working with employers, the program will create opportunities for individuals with disabilities to obtain gainful employment in targeted industry sectors, local school districts and community rehabilitation organizations.
- **Innovation and Expansion** – The DVRS issued a new Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO) for FFY'13. The DVRS has approximately \$2.2 million dollars to use for this NGO. The focus of the grants was Employment 1st, Statewide Social Security Benefit Counseling, Autism and other innovations.

Process Improvement:

Rehabilitation & Research Technical Assistance Center (RTAC)

Jerry Calabrese, Manager
(Hackensack)

I am impressed by the work and knowledge of your vocational rehabilitation counselors, so I have decided to take some classes in vocational counseling in order to increase my own knowledge. This semester I started taking a "Vocational Counseling" course that requires one day of "shadowing a certified rehabilitation counselor" and I am hoping to be able to shadow one of your counselors for the day. (M. M, Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation, Saddle Brook)

Renee Caratozzolo
(Hackensack)

You've been such a great help in my life, I can't thank you enough for all your efforts, sacrifices and sincere advice. I am in debt to you forever. You're an amazing human and I feel truly blessed to have met you. Take care of yourself, and whichever way my case turns out I appreciate all you've done. Thanks so much, you were more than kind. People like you aren't easy to find. (Consumer)

The DVRS agency applied for and obtained a grant through the Institute of Community Inclusion / Rehabilitation & Research Technical Assistance Center for problem solving, identification and application of practice based solutions, and evaluation of related outcomes. It is a peer-to-peer knowledge exchange model that features strong evaluation components providing documentation of success. Features of the collaborative include face-to-face meetings, on-site and distance consultation, self-assessment, and tailored evaluation. The grant was awarded for \$50,000 and the project started in February 2013 ending in January 2014 with final reporting through February 2014.

This project worked closely with the Talent Networks in NJ to ensure DVRS clients become a natural component of job applicants. The project aimed to solidify a partnership with the Financial Services talent network, DVRS staff, VR clients and stakeholders.

The RTAC grant successfully prepared 23 DVRS consumers for employment in the Banking industry. The New Jersey RTAC implementation team provided a national webinar showcasing the efforts in September 2014.

Schedule A Hiring:

In December 2013, the DVRS hosted a Schedule A Hiring Event which is different than that of the traditional Job Fair model. DVRS consumers are pre-screened by the VR counselor, matched to the Federal Job lead, and scheduled for a specific interview with a specific Federal HR Coordinator. The interviews are conducted in private in the local DVRS host office. Federal agencies such as the Department of Defense Logistics, the Department of the State, U.S. General Services Administration, IRS, Naval Air Command, SSA in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, U.S. Border Protection, Veteran's Administration, the U.S. Department of Agricultural, U.S. Mint, and Federal Bureau of Prisons, along with contractor Johnson & Johnson and U.S. Department of

Rosemary Perrone
(Wildwood)

From our first meeting, I felt that I was in very empathetic and capable hands. You understood my problem of not being able to fully engage in my nanny/tutoring capacity with my hearing frustrations. You asked the right questions that led me to believe that you were putting yourself in my place and feeling the same as I.

I've been a musician since I was very small and the recent difficulty in tuning my instrument and singing on key has been a huge issue. When I taught full time, I sang and played my guitar every day. The "new normal" of not being able to fully participate in these activities has caused me to withdraw from many situations.

Now that I've had these aids for two weeks, I feel like I've rejoined the world. The streamer is extremely helpful in so many ways. My employer is happy; my husband is happy and I am extremely happy.

*Thank you once again for your help. I know this is your job, but I guarantee that it is more than just a job to you. It is a mission; a very rewarding occupation that is helping people like me stay in the workforce.
(Consumer)*

Labor have participated. Since the DVRS started the Schedule A Hiring Event, 61 individuals with disabilities have been hired via this activity. The DVRS will host another Schedule A event on December 17, 2014. Additionally, plans are being made to host this event in the northern part of the state in June 2015.

Training for staff

The DVRS had an outstanding year in staffing and development, with 7 promotions, steps toward making staff permanent in their leadership positions, 5 new hires, numerous training opportunities including 4 staff members accepted into the Certified Public Manager program. The division continued to use the TACE center through September 30, 2014 to provide ongoing technical assistance and continuing education including an agency wide Supported Employment training.

In-Service Training Grant

The DVRS was a successful applicant under the State Vocational Unit In-Service Training (CFDA 84.265A) Program, which is a five year discretionary grant through RSA. The goal of this project is to assure opportunities for employment, independence and the integration of people with disabilities into the community by expanding the training, education and skills of rehabilitation personnel through a managed system of continuing education. In FFY' 14 the DVRS was able to send several staff members to conferences, including the Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE), the New Jersey Rehabilitation Association (NJRA) winter conference, the New Jersey Business Leadership Network and Project Search 8th Annual International Conference. Additional staff members were able to attend conferences specific to their area of expertise as well.

Hurricane Sandy

New Jersey was pummeled by this major storm at the beginning of FFY 2013 and the DVRS continued to work with DVRS consumers affected by this storm throughout FFY 2014.

Lori DeSantis

(Thorofare)

*I thank you for all the help and consideration in getting me jump started back into the workplace. I feel that once I complete this program I shall have many great opportunities for employment. I'm so very grateful for your belief in me. Thank you; many might not have given me this privilege.
(Consumer)*

Jennifer Veneziani

(Bridgeton)

I wanted to take the time to thank you for coming in and speaking with our students. We greatly appreciate you sharing your knowledge and introducing our students to some of the resources that are available to them. I have given your card and information to a few students who were not able to make it for the presentation, but who I believe would benefit from the services DVR offers.

Thanks again. (School personnel)

Significant Issues

Appointments

Appointments to the SRC were a significant issue to resolve for FFY 2013. The DVRS and the SRC worked together during FFY 2013 with the Governor's Appointment office to provide all the paperwork necessary so appointments would be made. The SRC members received their appointments in early December 2013. The membership is now fully constituted and strategies are in place to develop a pipeline of applicants to ensure that the SRC remains fully constituted moving forward. The Governor's office is now making sure that SRC appointments are done on a regular basis throughout the year.

State Match

The SRC was very aware and expressed concern regarding the state match needs of the DVRS in FFY 2014. The executive committee met with the LWD deputy commissioner to express their concern and discuss possible strategies to acquire state match. The SRC chair presented a request for state dollars to the Casino Revenue Commission this past year and was invited back to discuss this option in early 2014. The DVRS developed a notice of grant opportunity (NGO) utilizing state dollars to develop training for DVRS customers in the industry sectors identified in the LWD unified state plan; the SRC was supportive of this strategy and is hopeful that these state dollars continue to be available next year.

Standards and Indicators

In FFY'14 the DVRS met or exceeded all RSA Standards and Indicators except 1.5 (earnings ratio). Despite the overall economy and numerous staffing challenges

Shari Stengel
(Hackensack)

We are grateful and fortunate to have you as our son's counselor. My husband and I always appreciated the extra time and care you spent to inform, support, and present all opportunities for assistance available for our son. Thank you so much for your kind words. Your support and care gave us hope that there was someone who we could turn to help us help our son. He feels very comfortable with you and is very appreciative for all of your assistance and the opportunities you've provided him – and he strives to continue to succeed and be independent. I saw the confidence and belief that you've instilled for him to grow and do well continually. It might have been a whole different outcome for his growing success and independence if it were just any other person helping us. Thank you so much again for being you and all that you do... I'm sure a lot of people feel this way. (Parent)

the DVRS managed to successfully rehabilitate 4,439 persons with disabilities in NJ.

The earnings ratio indicator continues to be a challenge in New Jersey due to the high per capita income of the state. The DVRS has no control over these earnings. This particular indicator affects most of the northeastern states due to the higher income levels of these states. The SRC supports a change in this RSA Indicator to make it more equitable to all states.

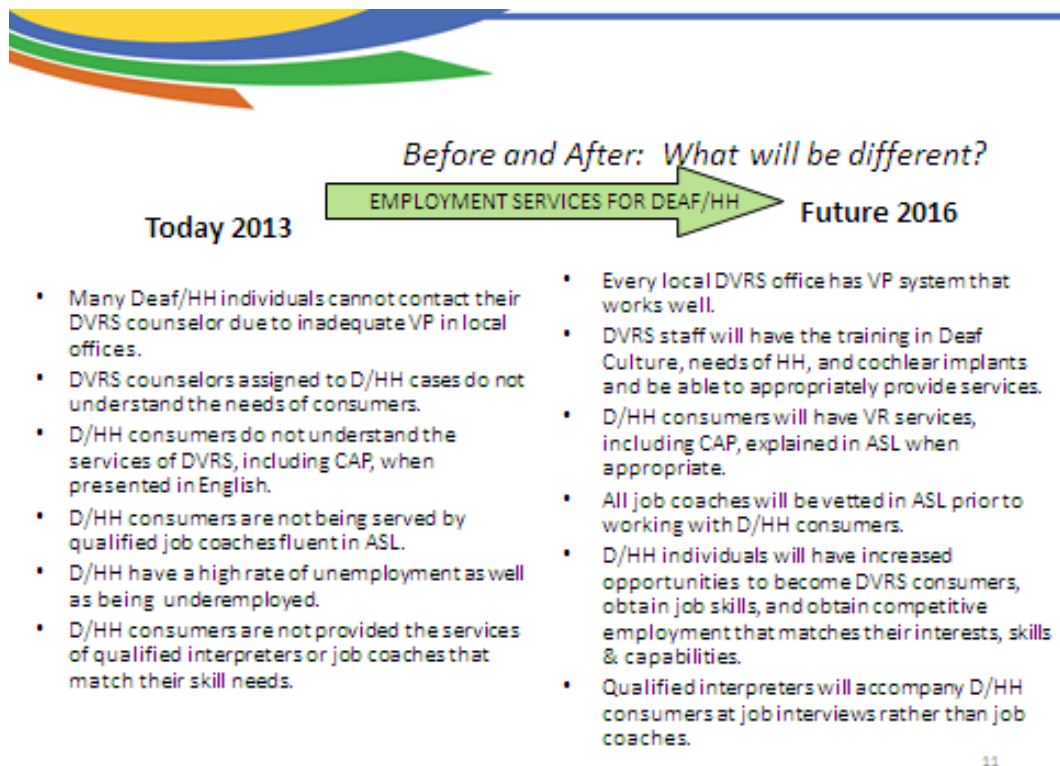
RSA Monitoring

The RSA monitoring report which resulted from the monitoring visit in April, 2010 was provided to the agency in March 2011. The SRC receives a compliance update from the DVRS at every meeting. The DVRS has resolved ten of the 11 findings by September 30, 2014. Significant progress was made to resolve the last finding and it is projected to be resolved in early FFY 2015.

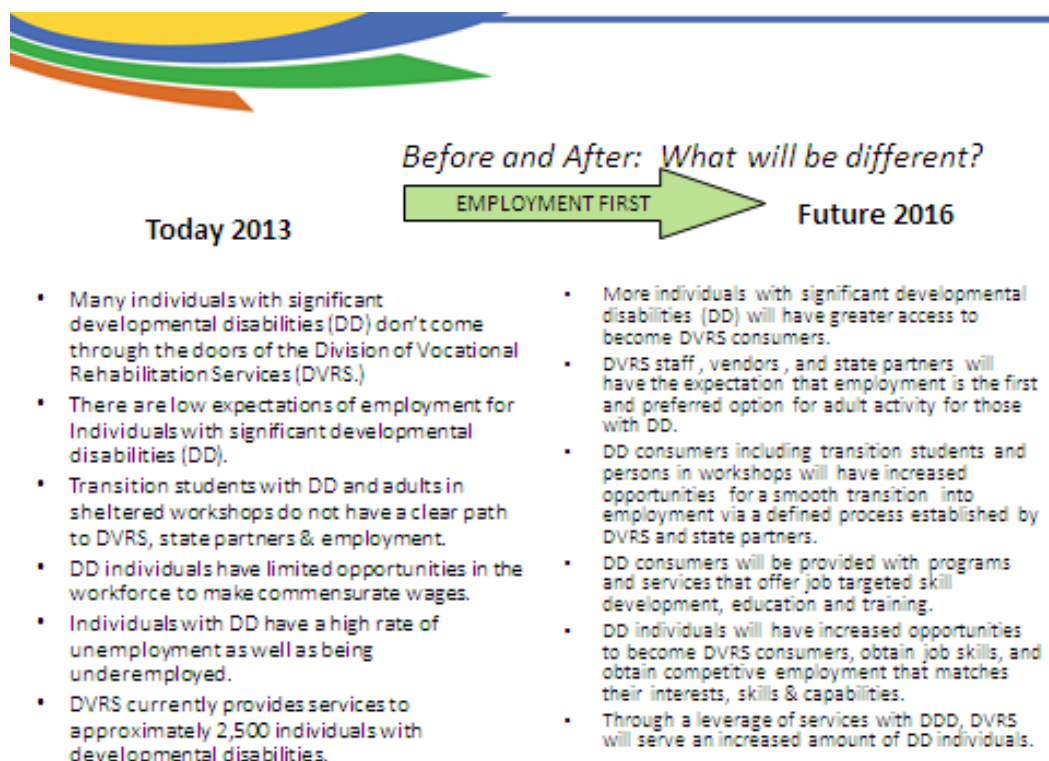
Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)

The DVRS and the SRC are prepared a CSNA during FFY 2014. Preliminary goals were been identified, as follows:

- An Employment First goal to improve outcomes for consumers with significant intellectual and complex disabilities;
- A goal to improve communication and outcomes for consumers who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing;
- A goal to improve outcomes for consumers with disabilities who are also served through the criminal justice systems; and
- A goal to improve community rehabilitation programs in New Jersey, with particular emphasis on restructuring the current sheltered workshop programs to become competitive and integrated employment vendors.



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Barbara Szabo (New Brunswick)

I am a social worker for more years that I care to admit. During my career I have dealt with many agencies and their employees, but none as memorable and praiseworthy as you. You exemplify competence, compassion and knowledge in a most professional manner. I consider myself and my nephew, for whom I advocate, extremely fortunate to have the privilege and pleasure of interacting with you. You have had a positive impact on his future. I am certain that you have made an impact on all consumers who have also been fortunate to be under her wing. (Parent)

Nedianne Koch (Randolph)

Thank you so much for the excellent help I received from you and your department. I am very grateful for everything you did for me, as being able to go for rehabilitation at Kessler was a true blessing. I am well on my way to recovery! Thank you again for being so kind and compassionate. (Consumer)

Unified State Plan (USP)

The DVRS was very involved in formulating the Unified State Plan (USP) developed in FFY 2012 that will be the blue print for the state for the next five years regarding providing appropriate services to all job seekers of New Jersey. In FFY 2014 the DVRS participated in a listening tour that visited every one-stop center in New Jersey. Key goals for LWD were discussed with input from all one-stop staff as it relates to the following:

Reemployment

- The LWD plans to reduce the amount of time that people are unemployed by initiating processes that equip jobseekers with the skills they need in an expedited way.

Opportunity

- The LWD plans to increase the number of individuals who are on a path to economic opportunity. This supports the goals identified in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment.

Alignment

- The LWD plans to increase the number of individuals with an industry-valued post-secondary degree or credential.

Accountability

- The LWD plans to increase all system accountability and align outcomes in order to have accurate measurements within all partners
- The USP will be rewritten and submitted to align with the WIOA timelines.

Maxine Becker
(Hackensack)

I can't thank you enough for all the sacrifices, love, and effort you put into DVR. I thank you especially for your dedication and help on my case in particular. But I know you put all of you into everything you do. You can distinguish the special ones and you, Maxine, are special, even though I only met with you personally once or twice, it's viable. Thank you again. (Consumer)

Ann Davis, Supervisor
(New Brunswick)

Your staff did a great job at the parent meeting on January 23rd. Dupree did most of the presentation, which was very comprehensive. He explained the application process, details and gave examples. Also, he answered questions that were asked by parents, faculty and students. All of your staff stayed after to answer questions and interact with parents. (School personnel)

Upgraded case management system

In FFY 2014 the DVRS upgraded its case management data base to a full AWARE system. This upgrade took approximately 15 months. The new system will streamline information, compile reports required by RSA in a timely manner and provide better information to inform the DVRS.

Raj Venkatraman
(Trenton)

Rajashree, I just want to say Thank you for your kindness and help. I was going to bring this card on our appointment date but it looks like we won't be able to see each other. Your thoughtfulness and kindness impressed me". (Cedric Bondo)

Jocelyn Gamble
(Neptune)

Dear Ms. Gamble, A Thank You Note for your kindness and understanding. I am grateful for your help. God bless you and your family. God bless everyone there who are trying to help people with their lives, and to improve their lives. All my best to the Professionals, Psychiatrists, and other professionals, counselors and teachers. Good luck to all. (Consumer)

Planned Activities for FY 2015

Meetings:

- Continue quarterly Council meetings;
- Conduct an annual planning summit as a one day event;
- Conduct public forums in geographically diverse areas to obtain input regarding services delivered and communicate with the community; and
 - Support the agency's efforts to meet on a regularly scheduled basis with service providers and/or other agencies for planning, problem solving, grant development and other purposes as needed.
 - Keep abreast of the goals in the DVRS state plan and support the outcomes identified in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment.

Committees:

- Enhance and support the sub-committee structure itself; and
- Enhance and support the recommendations of the sub-committees by full disclosure of sub-committee recommendations in advance of meetings where possible and follow up by the full SRC.
 - Continue consumer satisfaction activities, analysis and follow up recommendations to ensure the DVRS is meeting the changing needs of its consumers. Utilize Survey Monkey for electronic delivery, response and analysis of satisfaction feedback.
 - Identify other committee needs through the emerging issues committee and recommend establishing standing committees based on their analysis.

Mikki Fuller (Jersey City)

I appreciate all the assistance you were able to provide this person despite his less than co-operative nature.

I also want to take this time to let you know that I am very grateful for your help. Mr. G has been one of my most difficult clients. He had been terminated from many WFNJ work activities prior to seeing you. Since you have been his counselor, his attendance has improved as well as his overall demeanor. I can only thank you for working with him and helping him make this progress. He still has a long way to go, of course, but in the year or so that you have assisted him, he has definitely progressed immeasurably.

Thank you for taking the initiative to keep me informed of his progress. I believe that is a major reason why the client was able to make the most out of DVR.

Once again, thank you. Hopefully, we can work together again in the future! (WFNJ Case Manager, Dept. of Family Services)

SRC Membership:

- Develop screening guidelines for recruitment and membership and review membership activities/status at each Executive Committee meeting, including resignations/expiration of appointments;
- Provide guidance re: issues relating to recruitment and approval of members; and
- Conduct new SRC member orientation/training, including consideration of joint efforts with the CBVI.

Communication:

- Continue to look at opportunities and encourage the use of technology including, but not limited to conference calling, long distance learning, and/or a dedicated web site for purposes of information sharing, receiving input, training of members (including staff), emergency and routine notifications.
- Implement use of Go to Meeting and Go to Webinar software.

Educational Efforts:

- Continue leadership in providing training, support and access to the One-Stop systems regarding persons with disabilities and the workforce;
- Develop educational information regarding the services provided to, successes and outcomes of the DVRS constituents, including legislative district break down; and

Advocacy:

- Continue to advocate for funding which will provide support to the DVRS for staffing, programs, staff development and vocational rehabilitation services as mandated by the RSA and the demands of NJ's population;

Colleen Hendrickson

Wildwood

*I started school yesterday and everything is going good. I'll keep you updated with anything new, thank you very much.
(Consumer)*

Marianne Hanifin

(Neptune):

Dear Mrs. Hanifin, Once again thank you so much for your help and support throughout the years. It truly meant a lot and I'm truly grateful to have had your support with all of my success along the way. People like you make life enjoyable and easy going and I'm appreciative to have the time you gave me that I needed towards my goals. (Consumer)

- Advocate for funding to support the DVRS' efforts to expand services through grants and other means as appropriate to support a full range of services to individuals, including those in transition;

- Advocate for funding to support the RSA's requirements for state match;
- Provide support to the DVRS in applying for grants that enhance successful employment outcomes for persons with disabilities; and

Collaboration:

- Support the DVRS' effort to gain approval for paid internships.
- Participate in development of goals and work plan to enhance services to consumers who are the most significantly disabled.
- Continue active involvement with the CSAVR National Employment Network (The NET).
- Partner with the DVRS in the development of a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, in particular to develop goals and work plan to implement an Employment First strategy for consumers who are the most significantly disabled, to improve communication and services to consumers who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, to support the rehabilitation needs of consumers who are coming out of the criminal justice system and to improve services to consumers living in poverty.

Joshua Philips (Camden)

Thank you for your help with everything, especially for getting me in touch with Rhonda Rogers from HireAbility. She sent me several links to job postings and I applied for all of them. Last week I applied for a position with Xerox, completed the online assessments, and did well enough to be granted an interview on Friday. I was offered the job on Saturday and have completed the paperwork and accepted the position. I've been grinning from ear for days. Thank you again for all your assistance. (Consumer)

Lauren Doyle (Westampton)

I just wanted to give you some updates on how I'm doing. You helped me get through my career at college and I want to thank you for all your help. Have a good day, and I hope to see you again sometime. Thank you once again. (Consumer)

SRC State Plan Recommendations

The New Jersey State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides oversight and advises the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), the designated state unit (DSU) within the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD). The LWD is the designated state agency (DSA). The SRC is a partnership of people with disabilities, advocates, and other interested persons who are committed to ensuring through policy development, implementation, and advocacy that New Jersey has a rehabilitation program that is not only comprehensive and consumer-responsive but also effective, efficient, and significantly funded. The SRC is dedicated to ensuring that people with disabilities receive rehabilitation services that result in gainful employment. Representing the myriad of diversity that is New Jersey, council members believe that individuals with disabilities are the “untapped resource” to the business community and assert that disability is a natural part of the human experience that in no way diminishes a person’s right to fully participate in all aspects of American life. Members of the SRC in New Jersey believe in a public system of vocational rehabilitation that is responsible and accountable to those it serves and to those who fund it; they believe that competitive jobs generate tax revenue and enable all individuals, including individuals with disabilities, to spend discretionary income which contributes to the state's economy.

The SRC recommendations for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2014 and their status updates are as follows:

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC appreciates the continued success the DVRS had in 2012 with filling staff counseling vacancies and backfilling supervisory personnel. Hiring of qualified staff and maintaining an appropriate number of personnel are integral to providing quality services to individuals with disabilities. The SRC recommends

Nedianne Koch
(Randolph)

Thank you for suggesting that I change agencies to find me a job locally.

*Thank you for your patience with working with me. I feel working with Enable was and is an excellent agency to work with. They are warm and friendly, but also stern when needed to keep me in check. I have found my **Dream Job!** I appreciate all your hard work on your end.
(Consumer)*

Stacey Smith, Jen Shaw
(Thorofare), Vito Palo
(Camden)

*I just wanted to thank you for doing the presentation for the group the other night. It was a huge success and I was happy with the turn out. I have had a lot of positive feedback from clients and I just wanted to share that with you and let you know how much we appreciate you doing these presentations.
(Transition Counselor)*

that the DVRS restore the rehabilitation counselor aide position within the local offices as a method of recruiting more consumers with disabilities to the front line staff. The aide position requires an associate's degree and offers flexibility in hiring and can act as a feeder to the counseling position.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts the recommendation and notes that the Civil Service Commission recently tested for the rehabilitation aide position. Upon the announcement of the test, the agency conducted a campaign to reach out to consumers and employees interested in this paraprofessional opportunity. The DVRS will work towards reestablishing this vital position within the local offices.

Status Update:

The Civil Service Commission has certified its rehabilitation aid position list. The DVRS has not been able to hire any aide positions at this time. The new upgrade of the current WORCS data base system to a full AWARE system may provide an opportunity for the DVRS to convert the current clerical support staff positions to align with the rehabilitation aide position.

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC acknowledges its duty to examine the success of the DVRS program through public hearings. The SRC recognizes the importance of keeping open lines of communication with the DVRS and consumers of vocational rehabilitation services. The SRC appreciates the efforts made by the DVRS in 2013 to utilize technology for its first public forum teleconference and recommends that the DVRS continue to explore technology and alternate public hearing venues to maximize opportunities for consumer input.

Agency Response:

Danielle Kwan
(Somerville)

Thank you, by the way, for everything you and DVRS have done for me. There is no way I would be here without you. You have changed the course of my life for the better.
(Consumer)

Alan Bernhardt
(Hackensack)

I was just told about how your leads from Cosmetic Essence Innovations made all the difference in finding a great clerical job for one of our consumers. Thank you.

Great teamwork; we really appreciate you.
(Kathleen Wilson, Small & Associates, Inc. /ENABLE)

Thorofare DVRS staff

Thank you so much for all that everyone did at DVR. Fred would not have made it in the job force without your help. Everyone at DVR is very kind. (Consumer)

The DVRS appreciates the continued need and accepts the recommendation and will explore alternate venues and the use of technology to enhance participation of consumers at our public hearings.

Status Update: The DVRS provided two public forums via teleconferencing in 2014. Additionally, the DVRS director met with two Deaf/HH consumer groups to maximize consumer input from this group of stakeholders.

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC recognizes that jobseekers with disabilities sometimes require innovative approaches to enhance their chance to garner gainful integrated employment. The SRC recommends that the DVRS pursue strategies such as using paid internships for DVRS consumers and increase the use of on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities for qualified DVRS jobseekers as appropriate.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will develop strategies that increase innovative approaches to ensure that jobseekers with disabilities garner gainful integrated employment.

Status Update:

The DVRS identified state resources to use for a DVRS specific opportunity that provided training for DVRS consumers in New Jersey's industry sector strategy. Milestone benchmarks were developed that increased the outcome of employment with this dedicated funding stream.

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC recognizes that people with disabilities need full access to the One-Stop Career Center system. The SRC recommends that the DVRS continue in its direction regarding universal access to the One-Stop Career Center system throughout New Jersey.

Adeyoka Brown (Newark)

I would like to commend Mr. Brown for his work ethics. He is very attentive, highly professional, caring, empathetic and reasonable. His professional behavior and demeanor ought to be replicated and imitated. I hope he is recognized for his work ethics and dedication to this profession. (Consumer)

Amy Hoehman (Neptune)

Just want to say thank you for all you do. Words cannot express how grateful I am to be able to have completed this goal of obtaining my baccalaureate degree. If it weren't for programs as these, I would not have been able to finish school. You are amazing and I wish you many, many blessings. You will always have a personal RN. (Consumer)

Allen Waters (Central Office)

At their recent annual dinner Allen Waters was recognized by Easters Seals for his lifetime commitment and advocacy to individuals with disabilities.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts the recommendation and will continue to provide technical assistance, training, information and coordination regarding universal access design to the One-Stop Career Center system throughout New Jersey.

Status Update:

The DVRS provided opportunity, through its DEI grant, to fund local One-Stop Career Centers with technology in their public access areas. No VR dollars were used in this effort.

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC is mindful that there are emerging groups of people, in particular individuals identified by the Governor's *Employment First Initiative* who demonstrate a need for intense vocational rehabilitation. The SRC recommends that the DVRS continue to develop and enhance services to these segments of the state's population.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will develop policies and procedures as appropriate to provide tailored vocational rehabilitation to emerging groups of people, in particular individuals identified by the Governor's *Employment First Initiative*.

Status Update:

The DVRS, along with the SRC, is currently working on its Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). As part of the CSNA the DVRS determined that an *Employment First* strategy is an appropriate outcome. Five objectives have been identified under the DVRS *Employment First* strategy and will be included in the DVRS state plan 2015 goals.

Linnett Howell
(Bridgeton)

Thank you for getting an employment specialist to work with Gary. She was really great with him and immediately put in an application at the new super Walmart in Vineland. On the day she did an intake with Gary, he informed her he had just picked up an application from Goodwill in Millville. She took the time to help him fill out the application, but also informed him that she was going to put in an application for him at the Walmart. Within a few days of talking to her Gary was called in for an interview at Walmart. He begins work tomorrow. To say he is happy is an understatement. Thank you for believing in him and giving him the help he needed. (Parent)

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC recognizes that the DVRS program is affected by state funding cuts. The Council also understands that an inability to match funds from the state will impact the ability to draw down full federal funds for Title I. The SRC understands that, at this point, the DVRS will be flat funded for state year 2014, and it recommends that the DVRS identifies and advocates strategies to ensure that state matching funds will be consistently available for future fiscal years.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will work with the SRC to implement strategies to identify match funding to preserve the ability to draw down full federal funds for Title I.

Status Update:

The SRC initiated and presented to the New Jersey Casino commission to discuss the ongoing need for state match. This is the first step toward being included for the consideration of these funds. The DVRS was successful in identifying approximately \$2.5 million in WDP state funds for a specific DVRS consumer training NGO. The DVRS is also exploring identification of post-employment services using state funds.

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC further recommends that the DVRS develop strategies that will enhance opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities currently participating in segregated employment programs who, through informed choice, identify the desire to move into integrated employment.

Agency Response:

Lindsey Aquino (Thorofare)

I am especially thankful that you and the DVR Program have afforded me the opportunities to get these health issues under control before I enter the workforce again, because I don't want to take time away from the job to get those things done. Please know, Lindsey, that I'm forever grateful for your unswerving patience and continued support during those trying times. I really appreciate everything that you've done, and still continue to do, for me. Take care and continued success and infinite possibilities. (Consumer)

Richard Rodd (New Brunswick)

We would like to honor you with our 2014 Annual Community Partnership Award. We recognize that you have worked to create a significant positive impact on the lives of the individuals whom we serve and we would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank you for this support. To find a community partner who embraces and supports our mission and helps to effect positive change for individuals facing mental illness is a godsend to us. (Vendor, Board of Trustees)

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will work with community providers to develop strategies to provide opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities to move into integrated competitive employment.

Status Update:

The CSNA identified a strategic objective that focuses on creating opportunities for individuals currently in a sheltered workshop to move into competitive employment when appropriate. Goals will be identified in the FFY 2015 state plan based on this objective.

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC recommends that the DVRS examine its policies regarding the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including employment.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will continue to examine policies regarding the transition of students with disabilities from school to employment. The DVRS is keeping careful eye on the current reauthorization drafts for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA); proposed language mandates increased services for students in transition.

Status Update:

The DVRS provided innovation funds geared towards students in transition. Additionally, the DVRS has worked with the New Jersey Centers for Independent Living using an integrated resource team approach that is increasing the number of student referrals in the local offices. The CILs are funded by the local school districts for this effort.

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC recommends that the DVRS continue to educate the community and policy makers as to the services, successes and outcomes of the state public

Amy Hoehman
(Neptune)

Thank you for all your help and support with helping me get back on track during my disability and as I try to regain my marbles, and build new skills for returning to work. Your holistic concern, and expert DVR counseling assistance, referrals and knowledgeable application of resources for individuals like me was invaluable. I wish you great success and happiness in your career and in your life! The State of New Jersey and the people you help are very lucky to have you. With much gratitude (Consumer)

Rosemarie Rudderow
(Neptune)

Thank you very much for taking the time to meet with me and John today. You were very kind to us and I sincerely appreciate the advice and guidance you provided. (Consumer)

vocational rehabilitation program, including the return on investment from using vocational rehabilitation services.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts the recommendation and plans to assess the actual return on investment for state funds. The DVRS and the SRC are working closely to develop this assessment. The LWD is currently rebranding the programs within workforce development, including the DVRS, to update existing information for distribution.

Status Update:

The DVRS has not made progress on this recommendation.

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC is excited that New Jersey became the 14th *Employment First* state. The SRC recommends that the DVRS take the lead to develop, revise and monitor agreements with other state agencies and community partners to ensure success of this critical change in policy.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will work with other state agencies to develop, revise and monitor agreements supporting policies that promote *Employment First* in New Jersey.

Status Update:

The DVRS has developed an *Employment First* strategy as part of its CSNA. The division utilized state funds to promulgate an *Employment First* training grant during FFY 2013/2014 as well.

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC understands the importance of working with community-based organizations that provide supported employment services that are integral to the success of many customers of the DVRS. The SRC appreciates the assessments

Emma Gordon
(Bridgeton)

I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving new life not only to myself but my friends, family, and co-workers. Tears of frustration, depression and loneliness no longer sting my eyes. I no longer feel left out and apart from the world. I feared for my job. I feel so much safer at work being able to communicate and hear the oncoming forklifts. People no longer have to repeat themselves or say "Oh, never mind" and walk away. I no longer say "Can you repeat that please," and I even talk on the phone again.

When I walked outside and heard the birds chirping I cried all the way to work. I feel like a new person. I've been uplifted and I sleep so much better going to bed in a happy mood.

Again I thank you so much for all you have done for me and so many others. Your help and hard work is deeply appreciated. (Consumer)

being done concerning vendor rates and recommends that the DVRS continue to reevaluate its current hourly rate for supported employment.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will continue to evaluate its fee structures. The DVRS will elicit input from the SRC prior to finalizing any changes.

Status Update:

The DVRS has made updates to the following fees:

- Group Supported Employment fee was increased to \$10.20 per hour;
- Clinical psychological and report fee was changed from a flat fee of \$175 to \$125 per unit. This was necessary so counselors have more control on what specific assessments and tests are being purchased; and
- Trial Work Experience fee of \$51 per hour was implemented.

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC is aware that New Jersey is a very diverse state and recommends that the DVRS evaluate demographics of disability populations to keep abreast of possible underserved populations.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts this recommendation and will develop strategies to determine disability populations by region. This information will be gathered as part of the DVRS comprehensive needs assessment and will be used to establish goals for the DVRS state plan in FFY 2015.

Status Update:

The DVRS spent the last year evaluating demographics and disability populations for its CSNA. Goals for FFY 2015 will reflect the results of the CSNA.

Dupree McCalla (New Brunswick)

I would like to thank you again for your assistance with re-opening my daughter's case. She is very frustrated with her current inability to find employment. You are doing wonderful things for the people who you meet and work with. I would like to assure you that I admire what you do and do not consider it an entitlement. I look forward to working with you. (Parent)

Jennifer Sosdorf (Westampton)

I really appreciate all you have done for me. I am really thankful to be working in a career that I truly love and enjoy. Thanks again for all of your help and support. (Consumer)

Valerie Kerrigan (Trenton)

Both Dee and I enjoyed meeting with you. We are very appreciative of the time you spent with us and your sensitivity to Dee's strengths and challenges. She felt very good about the meeting and looks forward to finding a job at which she can succeed. (Parent)

State Plan Recommendations for FFY 2015

The SRC and the DVRS jointly developed and reviewed elements of the state plan. An assessment of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation delivery system has resulted in the following recommendations based on suggestions from the RSA monitoring report from April 2011 as well as the public forums held March 5 in Monmouth County; March 12 in Essex County; March 19 and March 26 via teleconference. Additional forums specifically for Deaf/hard of hearing were held September 28, 2013 and October 12, 2013.

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC understands that the RSA monitoring visit in FFY 2010 identified several recommendations for the DVRS and advocates that the DVRS implement strategies to address the suggestions, as follows:

- Develop strategies to increase wage levels for individuals served;
- Explore relevant training and education to increase wages, and expand relationships with employers throughout the state;
- Analyze the decline in the number of individuals who have SE goals on their IPEs and achieve SE to determine the reasons underlying the decline in these respective performance measures and develop strategies to address the reasons identified;
- Review and analyze the case management settings utilized to identify SE goals and SE services on an IPE and the case closure page and develop a systematic process to ensure accurate coding and reporting;
- Provide training to staff related to the definition of SE and SE services to include appropriate identification of SE goals on the IPE, coding of SE services on the IPE and the case closure page in the case management system;
- Develop fiscal controls and evaluation methods to ensure that providers are not billing DVRS through multiple contracts;

Tina Brand
(Westampton)

I finished my first day at my new job this past Monday. It was a good day. I am already learning a lot. I really like the folks I'm working with. It's a great job for me to get back into the groove with.

I want to say thank you again for your work and support and help...I couldn't have done it without you. Thanks for everything. (Consumer)

Ron Lazano (Trenton)

I wanted to thank you for meeting with us in August. Maddie was quite anxious to come to that initial meeting. Perhaps you could tell from her body language. But your kind voice, steady gaze and sensitivity to how Maddie processes information completely relaxed her. She and I both appreciate how you explained the process and helped her to understand the next steps. Perhaps our paths will cross in the future. You are a very kind, empathetic person and we both thank you for your time and guidance. (Family Member)

- Conduct surveys of transition-age youths who exit the VR program after eligibility is determined, but before their IPEs are developed, to determine the reasons why these individuals are withdrawing from the program;
- Develop a plan for training on existing and revised policies and procedures for all staff involved in their implementation;
- Resume the QA process for the review of service records by staff not functioning as VR counselor supervisors;
- Review and refine instrumentation for conducting service record reviews; and
- Develop mechanisms to collect and aggregate the results of the review process and provide the results to the training function to inform the design and evaluation of training.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts these recommendations and will establish measurements and performance targets for each that will enable the agency and its stakeholders to accurately assess progress.

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC is pleased that the DVRS has worked with them in performing a comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) in FFY 2014 and recommends goals and objectives based on information garnered from the CSNA be identified for FFY 2015, 2016, and 2017.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts these recommendations and will identify goals that incorporate the needs of its stakeholders and the individuals served by the DVRS identified in the FFY 2014 CSNA.

SRC Recommendation:

Emma Gordon
(Bridgeton)

I am writing to let you know how much I appreciate the outstanding customer service that the DVRS staff provided. Your staff was very attentive and helpful, and the employees I interacted with, especially Emma were very knowledgeable and seemed genuinely interested in helping me get everything that met my needs. Because of these efforts I am now able to maintain employment. Please let everyone know that their efforts did not go unnoticed. You have put together a great team that makes customers feel respected and valued. (Consumer)

Pete Ruffini (New Brunswick)

Pete, you were an outstanding Counselor. Thank you for helping to get me back on my feet. (Consumer)

The SRC recommends that the DVRS continue to educate the community and policy makers as to the services, successes and outcomes of the state public vocational rehabilitation program, including the return on investment from using vocational rehabilitation services.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts the recommendation and plans to assess the actual return on investment for state funds. The DVRS and the SRC are working closely to develop this assessment. The LWD is currently rebranding the programs within workforce development, including the DVRS, to update existing information for distribution.

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC appreciates the continued success the DVRS had in 2012 with filling staff counseling vacancies and backfilling supervisory personnel. Hiring of qualified staff and maintaining an appropriate number of personnel are integral to providing quality services to individuals with disabilities. The SRC recommends that the DVRS restore the rehabilitation counselor aide position within the local offices as a method of recruiting more consumers with disabilities to the front line staff. The aide position requires an associate's degree and offers flexibility in hiring and can act as a feeder to the counseling position.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts the recommendation and will work towards reestablishing this vital position within the local offices.

SRC Recommendation:

The SRC understands that the job of the counselor is unique and requires knowledge of vocational rehabilitation specific to individuals with disabilities. The SRC recommends continued requirement of the New Jersey DVRS counselor position to include a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation or a closely related field as per current civil service description.

Agency Response:

The DVRS accepts the recommendation and will advocate maintaining this requirement.

Michaela Macauley
(New Brunswick)

*Thank you for taking care of this semester's disbursement for me! I know it's just your job, but please realize the warmth you create in this world when you help people in crisis. It makes me realize that everyone deserves little favors, to keep our world from getting too cold. I pray to remember this lesson that I am taught by your actions and job. You play a special role in our society. Thank you.
(Sponsored student)*

Jazz Tillman
(Pleasantville)

*You have been so instrumental in my success. I am forever grateful. Thank you.
(Consumer)*

Summary

During FFY'14, the Rehabilitation Council worked cohesively and productively, partially as a result of renewed emphasis on the tools at hand, committee structure, staff and member dedication and focus on staffing to achieve maximum employment outcomes. Members worked closely with each other, the DVRS, Department of Labor and Workforce Development personnel, other state agency directors, and most importantly with the constituency it is mandated to serve. It made recommendations on topics of importance to the Federal and State governments, and supported the participation of the DVRS in local initiatives.

The Rehabilitation Council has benefited from the support and cooperation of the New Jersey DVRS. The Council looks forward to another year of challenges and successful outcomes for persons with disabilities who seek employment and other services through the New Jersey DVRS.

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