

Delaware State Rehabilitation Council Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2021



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Our Missions

The State Rehabilitation Council

We are a consumer-driven organization of members representing DVR Stakeholders. Members are appointed by the Governor and provide advice and support to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.



The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

We provide individualized services to employers and people with disabilities, developing career pathways that link qualified employees to jobs, resulting in greater independence and a more inclusive workplace.



2021 SRC Council Members

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Christina Andrews | Parent Information Center |
| Nicole Barr | DVR Counselor - Ex Officio member |
| Alice Coleman | Workforce Development Board/Former Consumer |
| Ellen Coulston | Advocate |
| Karen DiNardo | Chair/DE Mental Health Association/Consumer |
| Alvin Emory | Business Owner/Consumer |
| Elisabeth Furber | Delaware Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. |
| Andrea Guest | DVR Director - Ex Officio |
| Emmanuel Jenkins | Vice Chair/Consumer/Advocate |
| Natalie Klaus-Rogers | DE Mental Health Association |
| Dale Matusevich | Department of Education |
| Robin McKinney-Newman | DE Workforce Development Board |
| Jackie Poquette | Business Representative |
| Loretta Sarro | Consumer/Advocate |
| Mary Jo Verdery | Advocate/Service Provider |
| Despina Wilson | State Independent Living Council |
| Alexia Wolf | DE Health & Social Services/Consumer |

SRC and DVR: Working Together for Employment

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) created a shared vision:

Assisting individuals with disabilities in Delaware to develop their talents and abilities and find meaningful employment

The SRC plays an integral role with the DVR in administering the public vocational rehabilitation program and evaluating the division's effectiveness in providing vocational rehabilitation services to Delawareans with disabilities. As partners, the SRC and DVR:

- Hold retreats to evaluate DVR's effectiveness in achieving the agency's mission, review and develop goals and priorities, and identify new directions.
- Evaluate consumer satisfaction with DVR services and provide feedback.
- Conduct periodic assessments to determine the needs of individuals with disabilities in Delaware.
- Provide direct input into the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan specifically addressing new services and required reporting elements.





**State Rehabilitation Council of Delaware
for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**
(Supporting Employment for Delawareans with Disabilities)

January 2022

The Honorable John Carney
Governor of Delaware
Dover Office, Tatnall Building
William Penn Street, 2nd Floor
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Governor Carney:

Enclosed for your review is the 2021 Annual Report of the Delaware State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). During FY21, Karen DiNardo was the SRC Chair, Emanuel Jenkins was the Vice Chair. Our goal was to develop goals and priorities in collaboration with the DVR Agency.

During FY21, the pandemic waxed and waned throughout our State and both the Council and the DVR agency operated in a virtual mode for the year. The SRC continued to hold regular meetings as well as our annual recognition event to highlight employees with disabilities along with the businesses that hire and accommodate them.

The DVR agency, while unable to host meetings in person, utilized a variety of platforms and communication tools to serve their participants. While their overall numbers served were reduced, DVR continued to provide career counseling, training opportunities, and job placement services that resulted in 702 successful employment outcomes, 28 up from their 674 successful outcomes in 2020.

The SRC members along with the DVR staff extend our sincerest thanks to you, Governor Carney, for continuing the work of the disability community's most fierce advocate, Jamie Wolfe. Bringing her years of hard work and dedication to fruition by signing into law the Jamie Wolfe Employment Act will change the lives of Delawareans with disabilities for years to come.

In conclusion, as we continue to navigate our daily lives and the additional barriers we face, we remain committed to the mission and goal of employment for all individuals with disabilities who want to go to work. We intend to stay up to date by broadening our membership, partnering with other Boards and Councils, and working hard to advocate for people with disabilities. I would like to thank our partner, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, for helping the SRC through this transitional time and thank the members of the Council for their time, dedication, efforts, and passion.

Thank you for the opportunity to give back to our community through service on the State Rehabilitation Council.

With Warm Regards,

Karen DiNardo
Karen DiNardo, Chair
State Rehabilitation Council

Emmanuel Jenkins
Emmanuel Jenkins, Vice Chair
State Rehabilitation Council

State Rehabilitation Council Committees

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is responsible for developing the agenda for full Council meetings. The committee addresses management issues relating to the function of the Council and provides oversight for the duties and responsibilities of the Council and its committee and project teams as governed by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee is responsible for recruitment of new SRC members to meet its representative requirements. SRC members represent people with disabilities, advocates and family members, employers, rehabilitation, and education professionals. The Chair of the Council serves as the Chair of the Membership Committee.

Policy, Procedure, and Performance Committee

The State Rehabilitation Council has several members who participate on the DVR Policy Committee which develops policy and procedures for DVR participant services. These SRC members are part of the Policy, Procedure, and Performance Committee. In addition to sharing information with the entire SRC such as the development of DVR policies and procedures, this committee brings the SRC perspective to the Policy Committee.

Government Relations Committee

The Government Relations Committee is responsible for maintaining awareness of issues and activities of the councils and committees around the state that address disability-related issues and monitoring legislative initiatives. The committee reports on noteworthy activities of other councils and the State legislature and facilitates the SRC's advocacy on issues of concern. The committee also coordinates the SRC participation in the DVR budgeting and funding process.

Participant Satisfaction Committee

The Participant Satisfaction Committee is responsible for reviewing the participant satisfaction process including the survey instrument used to obtain feedback from all participants. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the sub-committee was unable to implement the survey for 2020. The process will be reinstated for FY2021 to collect participant satisfaction data.

CSNA Committee

On a triennial basis, the DVR and the SRC are required to complete a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). The CSNA Committee takes an active role in determining the way the assessment will be conducted, designing the assessment questions, assisting in the implementation, and reviewing the results.

The Jamie Wolfe Employment Act

Governor Carney signed House Bill 122 into law on Wednesday, October 20, 2021. Known as the Jamie Wolfe Employment Act, the new law phases out sub-minimum wage for individuals with disabilities effective July 01, 2023.



The legislation was at least a decade in the making, and Governor Carney noted that more changes are needed to ensure equity. "This is not the end; there will be systemic changes that need to take place, which will be challenging for all of us, but in the long-run it will be a tremendous opportunity for so many Delawareans," said Carney.

"I know that our dear friend Jamie Wolfe is smiling down on us today. Jamie fought the fight every single day of her life; she had a Master's degree from the University of Delaware, back when it was a challenge to get in the door of the classroom. She lived in her own home in the community, and wasn't always supported when she did that. She fought very hard for the support she needed; she had a career in the community with competitive wages. Jamie never gave up, and neither did Deb Heffernan when she promised Jamie that she would see this bill through," said Terri Hancharick, Chair of the State Council for People with Disabilities.

HB 122 is named the Jamie Wolfe Employment Act, after the fierce, well-known disabilities advocate, Jamie Wolfe. Wolfe passed away in 2018 after fighting for years for this legislation. She fought for other issues of equality for people with disabilities as well.



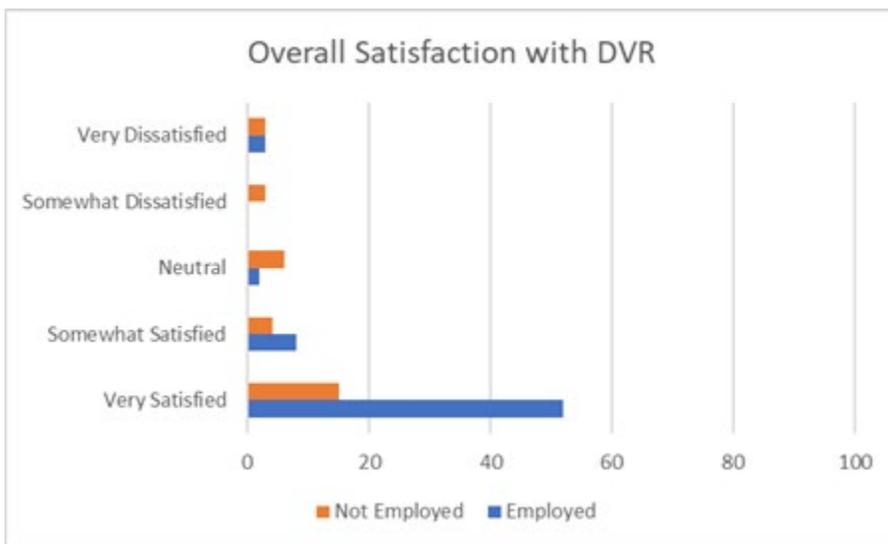
The State Council for People with Disabilities Director, John McNeal, was a longtime friend of Wolfe. "Equality is a word that gets thrown around a lot, but there's nothing that I think that really measures equality as much as a paycheck equal to your peers, and that's what this does today," he said. "This is opportunity for people who maybe never had the opportunity before, or thought to have the opportunity to find the dream that they may have never saw for themselves," McNeal.

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) see the Jamie Wolfe Employment Act as quite advantageous for VR Participants as they seek employment and self-dependence. DVR is working with Delaware's last two subminimum wage employers to offer supported employment opportunities and other employment models that pay individuals minimum wage or higher.

Participant Satisfaction Results

In 2021, the participant satisfaction survey was sent to every individual who exited the vocational rehabilitation program after receiving a service, whether the individual was employed or not at exit. The survey, along with a postage paid envelope, was included with the closure letter to the individual. 97 surveys were returned, 65 from among the individuals who were employed at exit and 32 from among those not employed at exit.

The geographic distribution among respondents is Wilmington Office (29.47%), Newark Office (36.84%), Dover Office (18.94%), and Georgetown Office (14.73%). With each satisfaction measure, the ratings were positive overall and more positive among those who had exited with employment than among those who exited without employment.



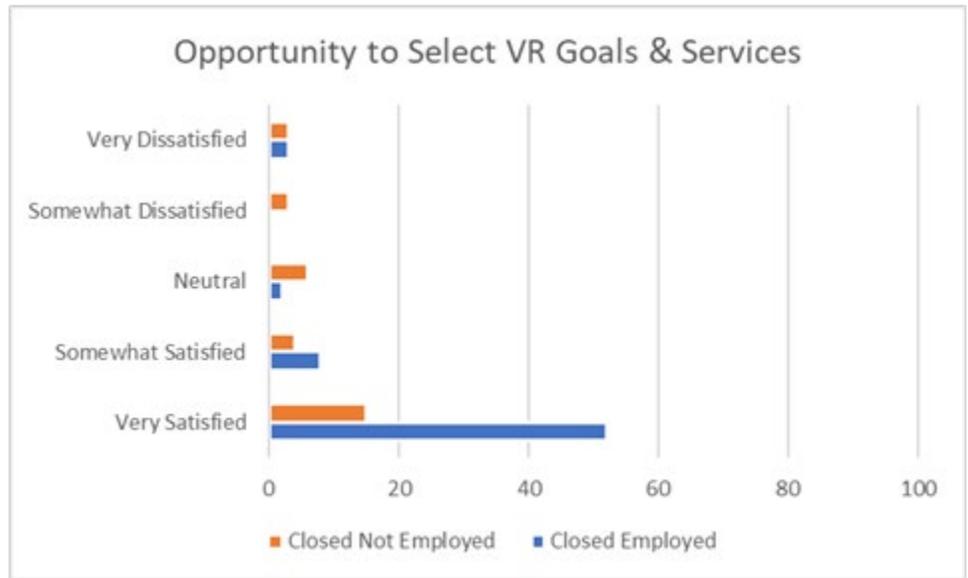
The Overall Satisfaction rating was greater among individuals who were employed at closure with 92.30% indicating that they were very or somewhat satisfied and 4.61% indicating that they were somewhat or very dissatisfied. Among those not employed at closure, 61.29% indicated that they were very or somewhat satisfied while 19.35% indicated that they were somewhat or very dissatisfied. 8.33% of employed and unemployed were neutral.



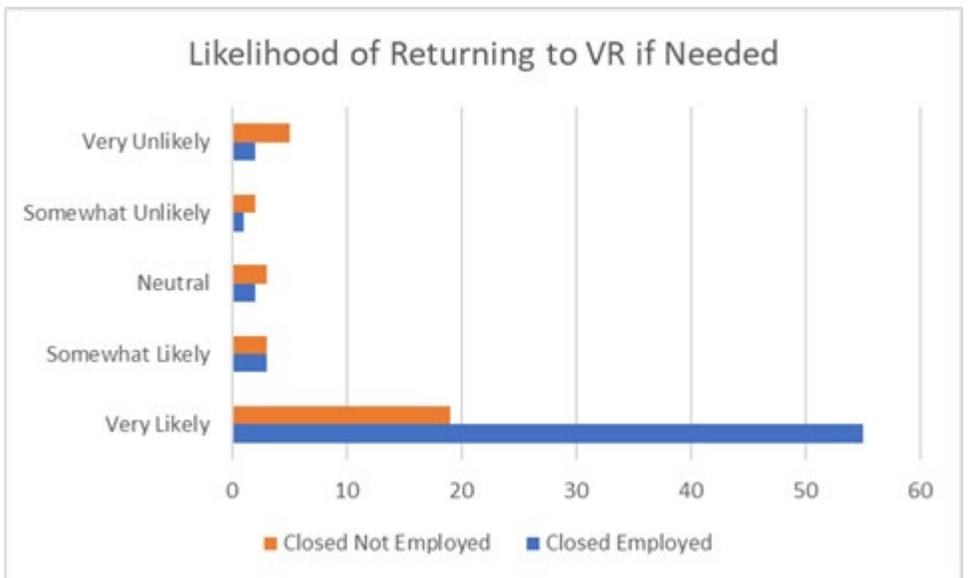
Among individuals who exited with employment, 86.15% indicated that their relationship with their VR counselor was either excellent or very good, 9.23% indicated good or fair relationships, and 4.61% indicated either poor or very poor relationships. Those who exited without employment, 56.25% indicated either excellent or very good relationships with counselor, 31.25% indicated good or fair relationships, and 12.5% indicated poor or very poor relationships.

Participant Satisfaction Results Continued

A core tenant of the vocational rehabilitation program is allowing participants to make informed choices about the employment goals they set and services that they receive. The survey asked participants to rate their satisfaction with their perceived ability to choose goals and services. Among individuals who were employed at closure, 92.3% were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied compared to 61.29% among those who were not employed at closure. Among employed participants, 4.61% were either somewhat or very dissatisfied while that number was 19.35% among not employed participants. Among employed participants, 3.07% were neutral while 19.35% of the individuals who were not employed were neutral.

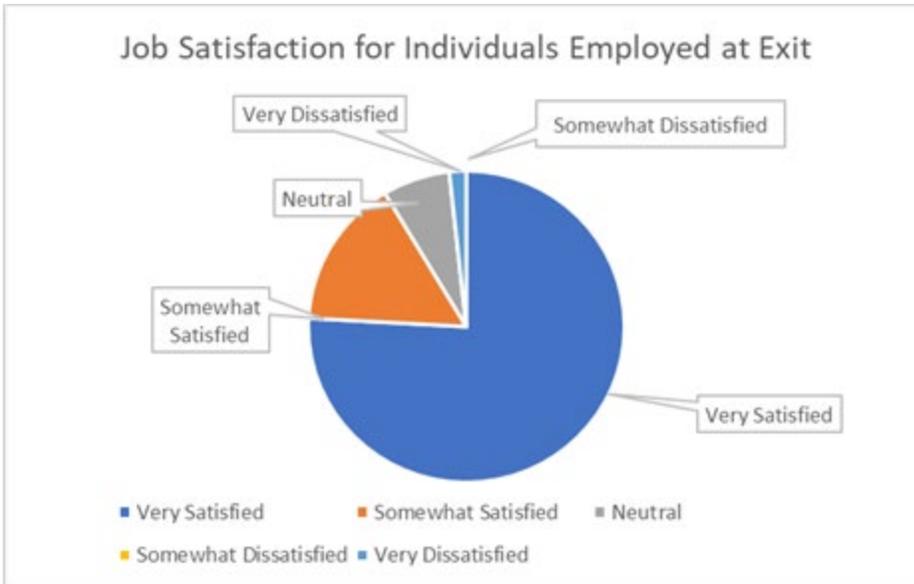


Survey participants were asked about their likelihood of returning to DVR if they needed additional employment services in the future. Among those who exited with employment, 92.6% said that they were very or somewhat likely to return, 3.17% were neutral, and 4.76% were somewhat or very unlikely. Among those who exited without employment, 68.75% said that they were very or somewhat likely to return, 9.37% were neutral, and 21.87% said that they were somewhat or very unlikely to return.

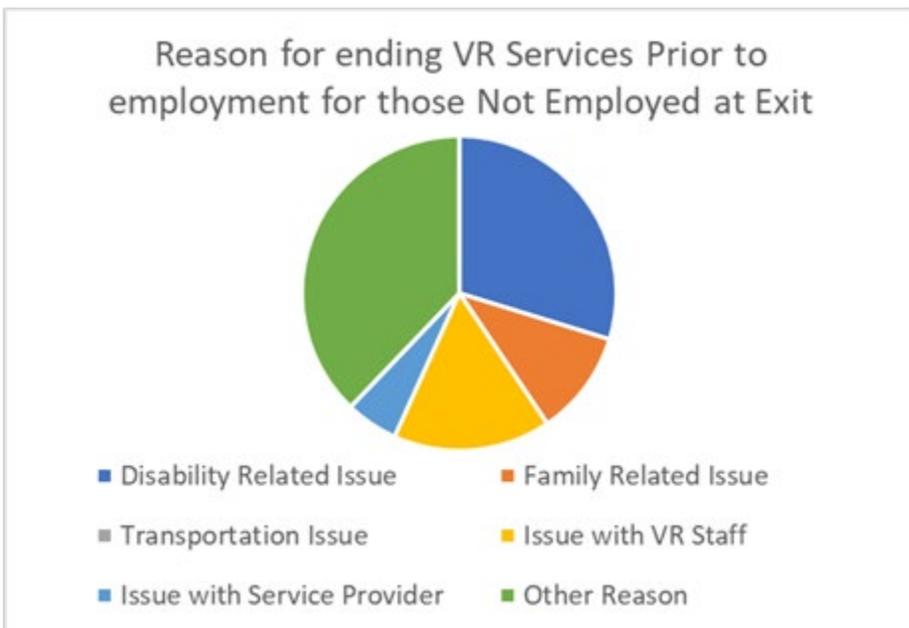


Participant Satisfaction Results Continued

The surveys sent to those who exited with employment and to those who exited without employment differed by one question.



Individuals who were employed at closure were asked about their level of job satisfaction. 91.37% indicated that they were very or somewhat satisfied with their employment while 6.89% were neutral and 1.72% were either somewhat or very dissatisfied.



Individuals who exited DVR services prior to obtaining employment were asked to identify reasons for leaving. They were able to identify multiple reasons. The following are the responses: Disability-related (29.72%), Transportation-related (0%), Vendor/service provider-related (5.4%), Family-related (10.81%), DVR staff-related (16.21%), and other (37.83%).

State Rehabilitation Council Goals & Priorities

During the March 21, 2021 State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Annual Retreat, the goals and priorities that the SRC sets for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) were discussed. Members of the DVR staff presented information regarding the agency's work related to each goal.

GOAL 1: Provide quality employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

- Builds Relationships with Business
- Employment Outcomes for Consumers with Significant Barriers to Employment
- Services support Financial Independence
- Access to Services is Non-Discriminatory

DVR Deputy Director, Cynthia Fairwell presented constructs within the goal: in-house business relations assisting counselors to help persons with disabilities gain competitive integrated employment (CIE), contractual placement vendors, coordination with Job Center/Career One-Stop, and building relationships with business.

GOAL 2: Support training programs that reflect opportunities in the labor market.

- Helps consumers to focus on their Career Pathways
- Appropriate Training Opportunities leading to Business-Recognized Credentials
- Coordination with WIOA Partners

DVR Director, Andrea Guest and Contracts Administrator, Stephen Malone collaborated in presenting this goal. An overview was presented on post-secondary training alignment that reflects job opportunities in the labor market. DVR's emphasis is helping persons with disabilities focus on career pathways. This nuanced work is executed through intra-department and interagency collaborative efforts.

GOAL 3: Expand opportunities for students to transition from school to work.

- Quality of Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Quality of Transition Services
- Coordination with Partners (e.g. DOE & DDDS)

DVR Statewide Transition Coordinator, David Frye presented the many facets of bringing transition services to students with disabilities. It was noted that WIOA provides the opportunity to increase knowledge of transition through Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Numerous initiatives such as partnering with Career Technical Education (CTE) educators to enable students with disabilities to receive career exposure were also discussed.

Keeping in mind the effect COVID has had on service delivery due to social distancing and closures of many employers for an extended time period, the SRC rated DVR's success in regard to each of the goal's objectives. On a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), the SRC rated DVR with an overall average of 4. It is clear to the SRC that the staff of the DVR are committed to their participant's employment goals and continue to strive to provide consistent and meaningful service to Delawareans with disabilities.

Transition Services in Delaware

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) amends the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and now requires Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies to set aside a minimum of 15% of their federal funds to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services to Students with Disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services.

An early start at job exploration for students with disabilities ensures meaningful opportunities to achieve successful employment outcomes, including:

- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences during or after school, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships) provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive training or postsecondary education programs at Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)
- Workplace Readiness Training to develop social skills and independent living
- Instruction in self-advocacy, including peer mentoring

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's (DVR) Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program was initially solicited to the public in 2016, however with recent program requirements by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), DVR issued a new RFP in the summer of 2021 that included a pre-bid meeting and a negotiation process for a Best and Final Offer.

On October 01, 2021, Professional Services contracts were awarded to 14 vendors that provide Pre-ETS. These services are for eligible youth enrolled in school, aged between 14 and 21 years old who have a disability, and are potentially eligible for DVR services, as well as consumers referred by DVR and/or community partners. The updated services have been enhanced to require at least 3 of the 5 Pre-ETS core services – Job Exploration, Workplace Readiness, and Work-Based learning which includes a paid stipend.

DVR continues to employ internal Pre-Employment Career Counselors to work directly with the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and students throughout the state. Pre-ETS Career Counselors meet with the LEAs to identify the needs of their students in regard to gaps in their career preparation services. Together they develop a plan to distribute the core Pre-ETS services that are most needed.

DVR's Pre-Employment Career Counselors work with students beginning at age 14 in order to assist these individuals to develop a foundation of skills related to career interests and exploration, self-advocacy, and disability awareness. However, each school has different resources so DVR remains flexible to meet the needs of the students. The collaboration among DVR, DOE, LEAs, Pre-ETS Career Counselors, and providers has been exceptional, with all involved seeing the value of connecting students to these opportunities.

Through joint collaboration with DOE and DVR, Pre-ETS have been built into the student IEP to assess for participation, in order to generate more awareness of the programs and services available. DVR continues to monitor and evaluate the programs and services provided by the Pre-ETS Career Counselors and Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), both formally and informally. On-site monitoring, observations, soliciting feedback from schools, students, and families and using pre/post tests are all strategies used to evaluate the Pre-ETS services being provided. In addition, CRPs and Pre-ETS Career Counselors are asked to collect information on each participant and to submit monthly reports or formal program summaries upon completion of the program.

In addition to the more formal documentation, anecdotal information is shared by students, school staff, and family members who see the benefits students gain by participating in these programs.

There is a lot of valuable information available, and DVR continues to utilize the case management system to find the most effective way to track and share information about students who participate in Pre-ETS services, especially if/when they become DVR consumers. This is information that can be used by schools, the DVR Counselor, students themselves, and any provider they may work with in the future. Due to the difficulty in sharing individual information, DVR sees this as an opportunity to encourage providers and Pre-ETS Career Counselors to help the students have a better understanding of their own strengths, barriers, disability, and accommodation needs in order to develop and utilize their self-advocacy skills to the best of their ability.

Project SEARCH (PS) is another example of a strong collaboration with DVR, DOE, local schools, businesses, and a community rehabilitation provider. The program continues to serve students in 4 different businesses and all three counties in the 2020-2021 school year including Christiana Care Health Services (CCHS) in New Castle County, Bayhealth Hospital and the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) in Kent County, and Tidal Health Hospital in Sussex County. Each site has a host school district providing the instructor and classroom support, however, students from any district are encouraged to apply and have the ability to use the school choice process in order to participate through the host district.

Delaware has been nationally recognized for the high rate of successful employment among the graduates of the CCHS, DelDOT, and Bayhealth Project SEARCH sites. These three programs consistently achieve 80%-100% placement rates with each cohort of students. Two of these three sites have also received the "Superstars in Education" Award from the Delaware Chamber of Commerce.

Project Search Steering Committees exist for all Project SEARCH programs in Delaware and are comprised of representatives from each of the partners; the host business, DVR, DOE, Local Education Agencies, and provider agencies. Although each program operates slightly differently, the committee meetings are held regularly, generally monthly, but no less than quarterly. The purpose of the committee is to monitor and evaluate the program based on adherence to the Memorandum of Understanding.

The committee reviews roles and responsibilities, process and procedures, and the timeline of events to evaluate program effectiveness and efficiency. With all partners at the table on a regular basis, we

have the ability to provide continuous program evaluation. When situations arise in which a change is required, the partners discuss options, the impact the change may have on the program, and considerations for each individual partner. The Committee will consult with the PS on-site team to receive feedback and communicate changes for program implementation.

The PS on-site team consists of the instructor, paraprofessional(s), skills trainers, and the VR Counselor. This team meets weekly to review operational needs, plan coverage, identify and address concerns, and facilitate communication and collaboration. A member of the Steering Committee meets with the PS on-site team at least monthly in order to maintain communication, evaluate the daily operations, and assist with identifying and resolving programmatic barriers.

Student Reflections:

"I enjoy working every day. I look forward to coming to the hospital and talking to the staff and patients. My mentor and job coach treat me like I am already a staff member. My future goal is to work in the Operating Room. Having the opportunity to intern in the hospital will give me experience to meet my goals in life." Student intern

"I really enjoy getting up and going to work each day. I know how much my team needs me to do my job carefully and correctly in the Operating Room."
Student intern



Annual Workplace Inclusion Recognition Awards

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation along with the State Rehabilitation Council hosted the annual Workplace Inclusion Recognition Awards event on Monday, October 11th at 1:00 pm via the Zoom platform. Approximately 170 individuals attended, including DVR Staff, SRC members, Employee awardees and members of their families, representatives from the Employer awardees and their colleagues, along with multiple Delaware Legislators, and a host of additional attendees from the community.



During welcoming remarks, Karryl Hubbard, Secretary of Labor, read aloud the proclamation by Governor Carney and Lt. Governor Hall-Long, declaring October 2021 as Disability Employment Awareness Month in the State of Delaware.

The Keynote Speaker, Cindy Otis, Disability Advocate and former CIA Cybersecurity Expert, was an excellent addition to the program. She spoke about incredible career paths she's taken, never allowing her disability to stand in her way. Ms. Otis recently solidified herself as a writer, releasing her first book, "True or False: A CIA Analyst's Guide to Spotting Fake News".



The DVR and the SRC host this event each year in recognition of individuals with disabilities who've overcome barriers to go to work and have contributed to the diversity and inclusion of Delaware's workforce, as well as employers that hire individuals with disabilities and promote a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Ms. Guest facilitated the presentation of the recognition awards which were presented to the following Outstanding Employees and Outstanding Businesses:

Outstanding Employees

- Glenn Clayville
- Timothy Simpkins
- Ashley Tourison
- Dennis Gaske

Outstanding Businesses

- Martin Newark Dealerships
- Big Lots, New Castle, DE
- Dover Airforce Base
- Wilson Baker, Inc.

The award winners were presented to the audience by their nominators, who spoke about the reasons for their nominations. Even during the pandemic, the awardees continued to work towards the successful vocational rehabilitation and employment of people with disabilities.

Workplace Inclusion Employee Awardees

Each year employees and employers are nominated for awards in recognition of their commitment to workplace diversity and the employment of people with disabilities.

Glenn Clayville

Counselor: Gary Carter

Employer: Christina School District

Job Title: Teacher's Aide



Nomination:

DVR supported Glenn with multiple services, which culminated in him gaining employment. Glenn attended New Castle County Vo-Tech's Frameworks for Success Program. Through Frameworks, he received an internship as a library and classroom aide, and went on to earn his Paraeducator license from the State of Delaware in 2020. Glenn's goal was always to become a Paraeducator, working in the classroom to assist students. After putting in quite a bit of effort to reach his goal, Glenn is now working at a local school as a Paraeducator and making a difference in student's lives.

Timothy Simpkins

Counselor: Karin Elterich

Employer: Care at Home of Delaware

Job Title: Director of Operations



Nomination:

Timothy came to DVR for career pathways services. DVR provided him with multiple services, including, but not limited to vocational counseling and guidance, as well as funding for sobriety treatment and a vision assessment, along with reading glasses to assist with his sight. Over the past few years, Timothy has impressively overcome difficult barriers. He successfully completed the Limen House sobriety program and has continued to maintain his sobriety for over 4 years.

He graduated from Del-Tech in December 2020 with an Associates' Degree in Business Administration, while maintaining a 4.0 grade point average. After he earned his degree from Del-Tech, he obtained a full-time job as Director of Operations with Care at Home of Delaware. Timothy has quickly earned a leadership role at the company and is pleased with his job.

Timothy has become independent, purchased and paid off his own car, and moved into his own apartment. He is an example of a DVR consumer who worked very hard to rehabilitate his own life with the assistance of multiple partners including DVR, the Limen House, and Del-Tech. Timothy is to be congratulated for his hard work and personal success.

Workplace Inclusion Employee Awardees Continued

Ashley Tourison

Counselor: Miranda Smith

Employer: **Job Title:** Patient Services Coordinator



Nomination:

Ashley began working with DVR as a transition student, while attending high school, and initially hoped to pursue a degree in photography. After high school, she enrolled in Delaware Technical & Community College, where she began with the DVR Supported Education class during her first semester as a college student.

Ashley utilized all of the resources available to her through DVR and Delaware Technical & Community College, which enabled her to complete her Associate's degree in July of 2021. After graduating, she moved to Maryland to secure employment at The Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins Medicine as a Patient Services Coordinator. Ashley is thrilled with her new job and has expressed her gratitude for the assistance DVR provided with counseling and guidance, tuition, books and fees and tutoring throughout the DVR process.

Dennis Gaske

Counselor: Beth Holston

Employer: State of Delaware, Department of Correction

Job Title: CS Account Specialist



Nomination:

Since earning his Master's degree in Accounting and Paythroughs from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and moving to DE in 2017, Dennis Gaske had been working seasonally for a local accounting firm where he prepared taxes and at a local golf course near his home. However, Dennis wanted to find employment in accounting with the State of Delaware where he could move up the career ladder, so he referred himself for DVR services.

After working through the process of being found eligible for services and receiving counseling and guidance, Dennis was then referred to a Business Relations Specialist (BRS) for placement. Mock interviews were provided by his BRS and various VR Counselors to help him prepare for upcoming interviews as this was an area he identified as a struggle.

Dennis utilized both Selective Placement and general applications to apply for State accounting positions, and interviewed for a total of 13 jobs state-wide. His persistence and drive paid off, as he was hired by the State of Delaware, Department of Corrections as an Account Specialist in June of 2021. Dennis is grateful for the opportunity to receive services through DVR which assisted him in finding the State employment he desired.

Workplace Inclusion Employer Awardees

Martin Newark Dealerships

Nominator: Samuel Mathew, VR Counselor

Nomination:

Martin Newark Dealerships strive to maintain an inclusive environment for their customers as well as their staff.

Individuals with disabilities are treated with respect, as every person should be. The management at Martin Newark Dealerships welcomes individuals with disabilities to apply for open positions within their family of vehicle dealerships in Newark, Delaware. They've hired multiple employees who have disabilities, then as expected, they've truly become part of the team, and their work and work ethic are equivalent to their coworkers who don't have disabilities. Accommodations are available for employees who request them, as Martin Newark Dealerships are fully invested in assisting their employees to succeed.



Martin Dealerships
Newark, Delaware

Big Lots, New Castle, DE

Nominator: John Ludwig, Business Relations Specialist

Nomination:

Big Lots is committed to a diverse workforce and offers a barrier-free employment process. Management as well as fellow staff are quite supportive of all employees, especially individuals with disabilities. Big Lots' teams function in a way that creates a deep sense of belonging, where employee's ideas and inherent value create a culture of inclusion. Accommodations are provided when an employee requests them. The accommodations include, but are not limited to a modified work schedule and a plan of action in the workplace in the case of an emergency medical situation.



Big Lots offers yearly training for all staff. New employees are matched with mentors in their department for a smooth learning process. The store manager is easily accessible to the DVR Business Relations Specialist for follow along with employees with disabilities that have been hired to work at Big Lots in various capacities. They strongly believe in the benefits of employing people with disabilities. They have employed DVR clients in various retail positions such as furniture associates, stock associates, cashiers and management positions, within their company.



Workplace Inclusion Employer Awardees Continued

Dover Airforce Base

Nominator: Dana Seaberg, Business Relations Specialist

Nomination:

The Dover Air Force Base (DAFB) Non-appropriated Funds (NAF) office is very committed to hiring and maintaining a diverse workforce and offers a barrier-free employment process for those individuals that require an accommodation during this time. They are very supportive of their employees, especially those with disabilities and have provided modified work schedules, assistive technology aids and equipment, and resume classes. Candace, the Human Resources Specialist, is always reaching out to the DVR Dover field office to connect with the Business Relations Specialist (BRS) in order to actively recruit candidates. She sends all job postings to BRS and offers feedback regarding the employment of individuals with disabilities in various positions from Lodging Clerk to Childcare Assistant.



Wilson Baker, Inc.

Nominator: Joshua Miller, Business Relations Specialist

Nomination:

DVR's relationship with Wilson Baker Inc. (owners of Baker Petroleum, Exxon and Country Corners Market in Sussex County) spans over 5 years, as Business Relations Specialist Joshua Miller maintains contact with their hiring manager regularly. Wilson Baker has hired DVR participants with disabilities at multiple store locations around Sussex County. The staff at all locations have always been willing to work with DVR Participants. This has been a fortunate partnership between Wilson Baker and DVR, as Wilson Baker is great company that promotes diversity in their workforce. On numerous occasions, hiring managers from their various locations have contacted Joshua when looking to fill job openings and he has been able to accommodate the managers, further fulfilling DVR's mission of employment for individuals with disabilities. Wilson Baker continues to demonstrate their ability to accommodate employees with disabilities to see them prosper and thrive as valuable members of the team.



Appreciation

The State Rehabilitation Council and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation extend our thanks and appreciation to the following individuals who identified our 2021 awardees:

Employee Nominators

Gary Carter, Karin Elterich, Miranda Smith, Beth Holston

Employer Nominators

Samuel Mathew, John Ludwig, Dana Seaberg, Joshua Miller



Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

2021 Performance Report

| | | |
|--|-------------|-----|
| Successful Rehabilitations: | 702 | |
| Most Significant Disabilities | 281 (40%) | } |
| Significant Disabilities | 374 (53%) | |
| | | 93% |
| Transition Youth Rehabilitated | 260 | |
| Total Participants Served: | 4,295 | |
| Clients with Most Significant Disabilities | 1,964 (46%) | } |
| Clients with Significant Disabilities | 2,071 (48%) | |
| | | 94% |
| New Applicants in FY 2021 | 1,246 | |
| Determined Eligible | 1,154 | |
| Acceptance Rate | 96% | |
| New Transition Students | 468 | |
| Transition Students/Youth Served | 1748 | |
| Average Hourly Wage for FY 2021 closures | | |
| All closures | \$13.23 | |
| Transition | \$12.43 | |
| Supported Employment | \$10.41 | |
| Adults (not TR or SE) | \$14.11 | |
| Individuals in Delayed Status at the end of FY 2021 | 0 | |



Vocational Rehabilitation Office Locations



New Castle County

Wilmington

P: 302-761-8275

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Middletown

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For additional contact information,
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