

DELAWARE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT



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2025 FISCAL YEAR



TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUR MISSIONS.....	3
The State Rehabilitation Council.....	3
The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation	3
2025 SRC COUNCIL MEMBERS	4
SRC AND DVR: WORKING TOGETHER FOR EMPLOYMENT	5
A MESSAGE FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL	6
A MESSAGE FROM THE DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION	7
Participant Satisfaction Survey Results	8
State Rehabilitation Council 2025 Recognition Awards	12
Business Relations in Delaware	16
Participant Success Stories	18
Transition Services in Delaware	21
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Highlights.....	24
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Federal Fiscal Year 2025 Performance Report.....	26
Vocational Rehabilitation Office Locations	27

OUR MISSIONS

The State Rehabilitation Council

The State Rehabilitation Council is a participant driven organization of members representing DVR stakeholders. Members are appointed by the Governor and provide recommendations and support to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.



The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides 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.



2025 SRC COUNCIL MEMBERS



Elisabeth ‘Lisa’ A. Furber- SRC Chair, Representative of the Client Assistance Program (CAP)

Lillian Harrison- SRC Member, Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group

Heath Chasanov- SRC Member, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor

Golda Duncan- SRC Member, Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Nicole Barr- Ex-Officio Member, Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

Lauren Foraker- SRC Member, Person with a Disability

Chip Riddleberger- SRC Member, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor

Kenyetta McCurdy-Byrd- SRC Member, Person with a Disability

Ashley Hicks- SRC Member, Representative of a Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider

Anna Conner- SRC Member, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor

Monterry Luckey- SRC Member, Representative of the State Workforce Development Board

Tomara Williams- SRC Member, Representative of Business, Industry and Labor

John Benson- SRC Member, Person with a Disability

***Sandra Fariña-** SRC Member, Representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

***Mary Andrews-** SRC Member, Representative of the Parent Information Center (PIC)

***Dale Matusevich-** SRC Member, Representative of the Department of Education

***Natalie Klaus-Rogers-** SRC Member, Representative of a Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider

***Laura Greene-** SRC Member, Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

***Elisha Jenkins-** DVR Director, Ex-Officio Member ***Individuals with an asterisk are not pictured.**

SRC AND DVR: WORKING TOGETHER FOR EMPLOYMENT

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) are aligned in their vision:

Empowering Delawareans with disabilities to develop their skills and abilities to access meaningful career opportunities and achieve successful employment.

The SRC has a valuable role in overseeing the public vocational rehabilitation program by assessing the division's effectiveness in delivering services to Delawareans with disabilities. As partners, the SRC and DVR work collaboratively to:

- Identify, develop, review, and implement program goals and priorities
- Review DVR participant satisfaction survey results and provide structured feedback
- Develop and participate in periodic assessments to determine the needs of individuals with disabilities in Delaware
- Provide input for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan.



A MESSAGE FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Greetings Governor Meyer, Lieutenant Governor Evans Gay and Friends,

It is my privilege and honor to share with you the State Rehabilitation Council's (SRC) Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2025. Inside, you will find details about the many ways that the SRC and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) work together to accomplish joint goals and priorities for Delaware's general vocational rehabilitation program. During this year and despite challenges, the SRC and DVR accomplished several required and important statutory tasks. I believe our Annual Report will highlight the priority areas that the SRC worked on during 2025.

In 2025, the SRC on-boarded three new council members, held an Annual Retreat to review the accomplishments of DVR and provided feedback to the agency, as well as participated in the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment process. Further, the SRC continued to strengthen the role of the subcommittees (Membership and Government Affairs; Policy, Procedure and Performance; Participant Satisfaction and our Recognition Event Planning) and we completed the updates to our Bylaws.

As I look forward to 2026, I am uncertain of the challenges that may be ahead, but I am also confident that DVR and the SRC can collaboratively navigate those challenges together. The partnership between DVR and the SRC will continue to support competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities in Delaware.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my fellow SRC members, who are all volunteers, for their time, hard work, and dedication to the SRC. I also thank you for the opportunity to serve on this important and meaningful Council.

Respectfully,

Elisabeth Furber

Elisabeth Furber
SRC Chair

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Greetings,

Thank you for the opportunity to highlight our division's accomplishments during Fiscal Year 2025 to empower Delawareans with disabilities to develop their skills and abilities to access meaningful career opportunities and achieve successful employment.

In alignment with Governor Meyer's Executive Order #1, the division prioritized the expansion of work-based learning opportunities and youth apprenticeship programs focusing on the development of policies and processes to strengthen Delaware's workforce pipeline. DVR has continued its statewide outreach efforts to high schools to engage students and families and to provide guidance on the vocational and training opportunities available post-graduation or school exit.

The Division's demographics this program year consistently reflect most participants served are under 25 years of age. The agency is increasing its capacity to serve the career development and employment needs of the students of Delaware through several initiatives. These efforts directly support Governor Meyer's priority of strengthening Pathway programs for work-ready youth. Pre-employment transition services for students ages 14 to 22 aim to improve the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-secondary education or to an employment outcome. The Department of Education has advised that there are currently more than 11,000 potentially eligible Delaware students with disabilities in middle schools and high schools. The Division served a total of 1,999 students statewide in Fiscal Year 2025, with the numbers steadily increasing each year of new students in need of employment and career supports.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to strengthen partnerships with workforce development partners, state agencies, businesses, and community providers to expand opportunities for participants to achieve competitive integrated employment. The Division remains dedicated to advancing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to pursue their career goals and attain economic self-sufficiency, and independence.

Sincerely,

Elisha Jenkins

Director

Participant Satisfaction Survey Results

In 2025, the participant satisfaction survey was sent to individuals who exited the vocational rehabilitation program after receiving services. Surveys were returned by individuals who were employed at program exit as well as those who exited the DVR program without completing their plan for employment.

The agency was pleased to increase participant response through the addition of client communication software. The overall response rate compared to last year's response rate increased by over **6%** for the individuals who were employed at exit and increased by over **3 %** for the participants who exited without completing their plan for employment.

The geographic distribution among respondents is as follows: Wilmington **14.22%**, Newark **19.72%**, Dover **36.24%**, and Georgetown **29.82%**.

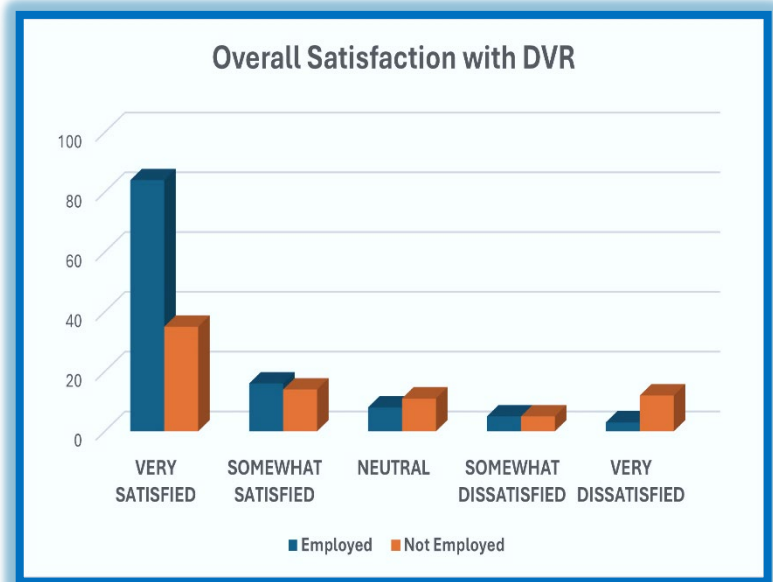
How would you rate your overall satisfaction with DVR?

The overall satisfaction rating is greater among individuals who were employed at closure with **86%** indicating that they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied.

The employed respondents reported that **7%** were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Among the respondents who did not reach employment at closure, **64%** indicated that they were very satisfied, or somewhat satisfied.

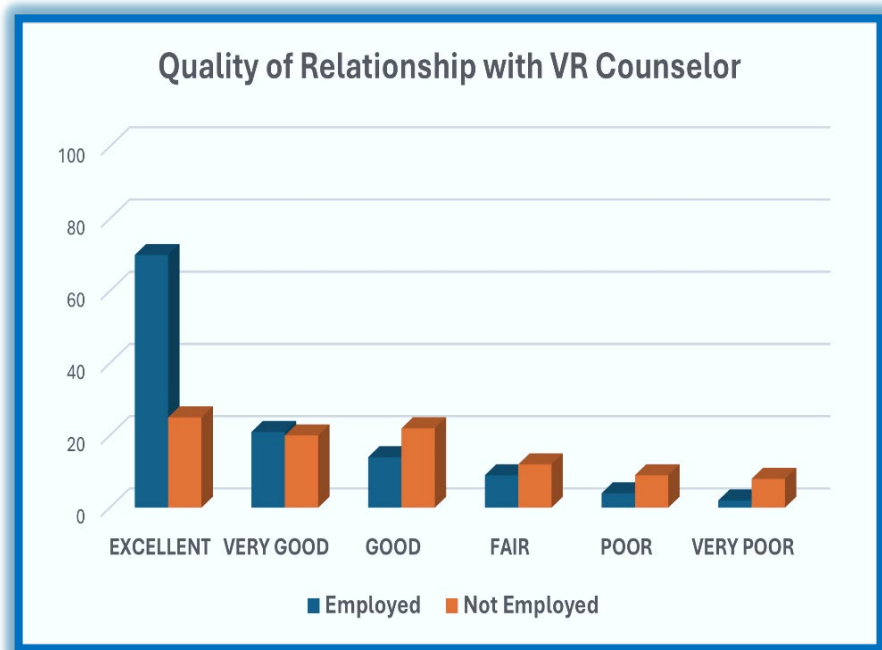
The unemployed respondents reported that **22%** were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.



Employed participants reported a **7%** neutral satisfaction rate with the DVR program, whereas **14%** of unemployed respondents indicated they were neutral in their overall satisfaction.

How would you describe the quality of your relationship with your Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor?

Among individuals who exited the program with employment, **76%** indicated that their relationship with their VR Counselor was either excellent or very good, **19%** indicated good or fair relationships, and **5%** indicated either poor or very poor relationships. Of those who exited without employment, **47%** indicated either excellent or very good relationships with their VR Counselor, **35%** indicated good or fair relationships, and **18%** indicated poor or very poor relationships.



How satisfied were you with the opportunity to choose your vocational rehabilitation goal and services?

The Vocational Rehabilitation program is guided by the principle that participants should have the information and support needed to make informed choices about their employment goals and services. The survey asked participants to evaluate their satisfaction with their ability to choose these goals and services.

Among individuals who were employed at closure, **86%** were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their ability to choose their goals compared to **57%** of those who were unemployed at closure. Among employed participants, **5%** were either somewhat or very dissatisfied while that number was **20%** among unemployed participants.

Among employed participants, **9%** were neutral while **23%** of the unemployed participants were neutral.

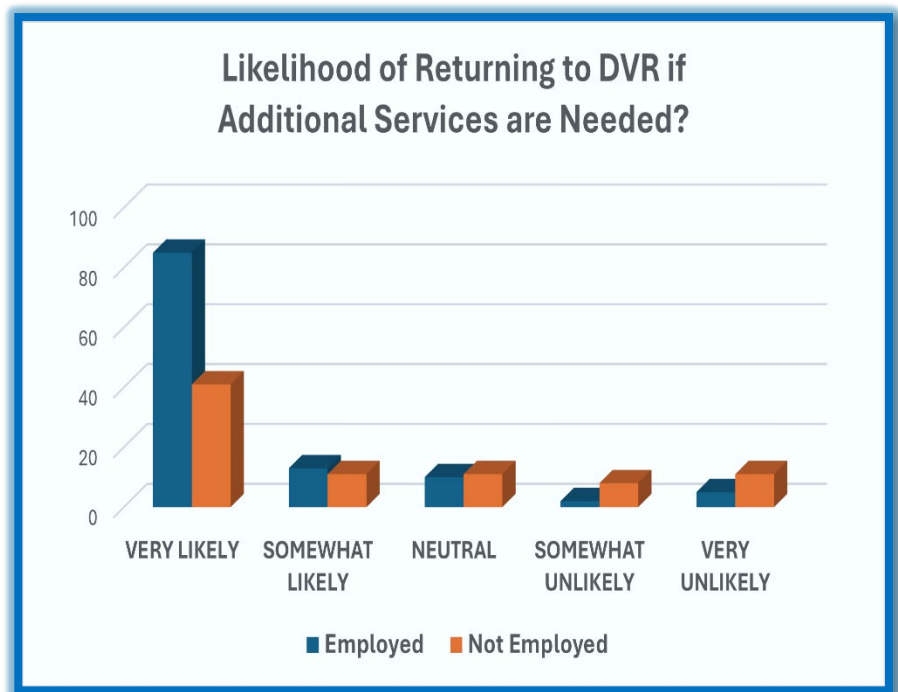


How likely would you be to come back to DVR if you need additional employment services?

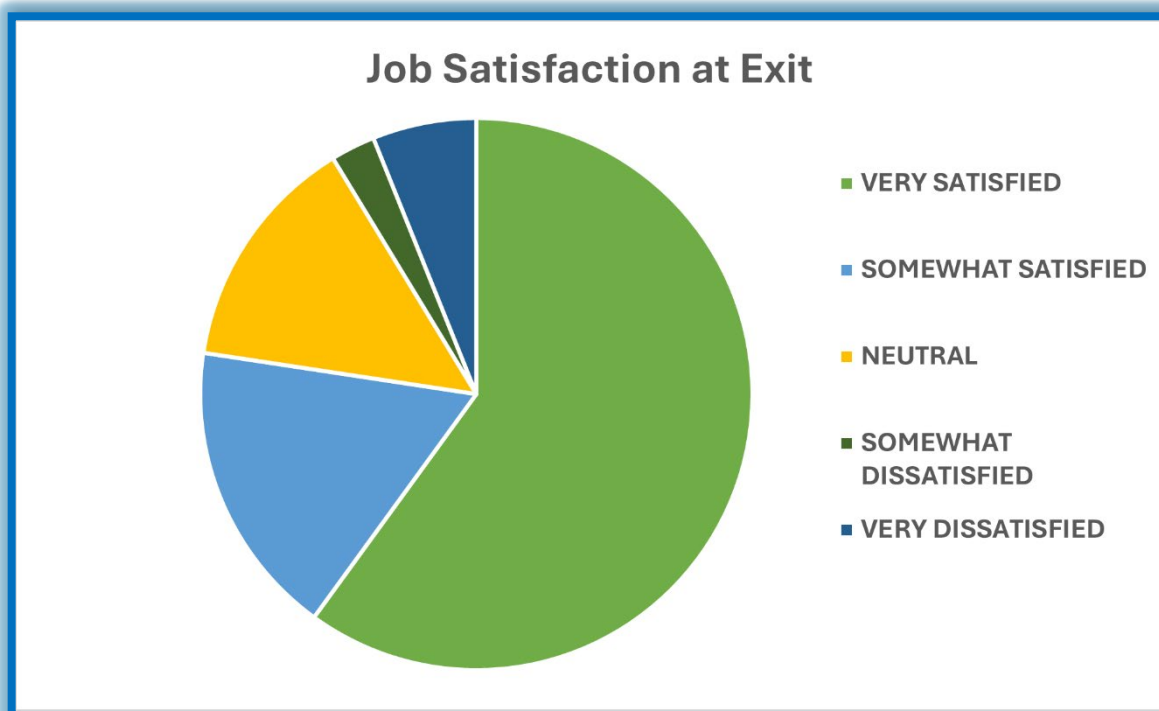
Survey participants were asked about the likelihood of returning to DVR if they needed additional employment services in the future.

Among those who exited the program with employment, **85%** said that they were very or somewhat likely to return, **9%** were neutral, and **6%** were somewhat or very unlikely.

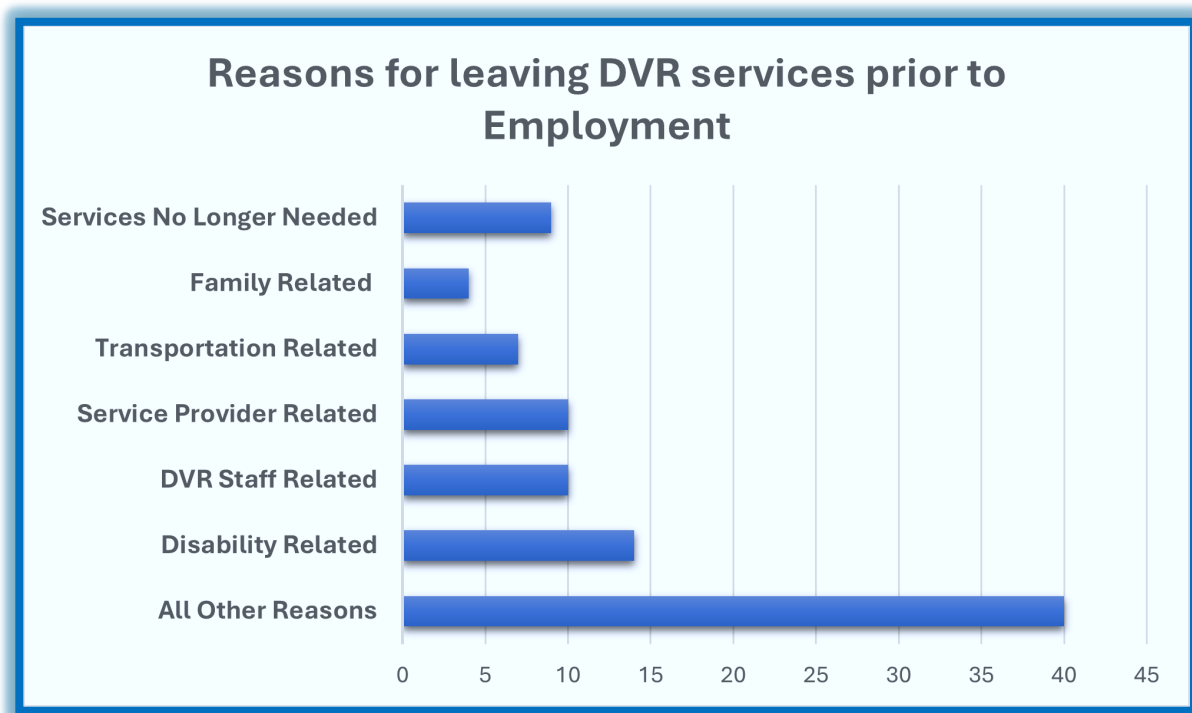
Among those who exited without employment, **63.4%** said that they were very or somewhat likely to return, **13.4%** were neutral, and **23.2%** said that they were somewhat or very unlikely to return.



The participants who were closed in employment status were asked to provide job satisfaction feedback in their surveys. Job satisfaction was rated at **77%** for participants who were very or somewhat satisfied with their employment while **14%** were neutral. Participants expressing that they were somewhat or very dissatisfied with their employment was at **9%**.



Participants who exited DVR services before obtaining employment were asked to select from a variety of factors the reasons that impacted their departure. Participants overwhelmingly responded ‘Other Reasons’ at **45%** as the factor in them leaving the program before achieving employment. Additional factors that played a role in their exiting the program were rated as follows: Disability-related issues at **16%**, DVR staff-related issues at **11%**, Service provider related issues at **11%**, Transportation-related issues at **8%**, Family-related issues at **5%**, and Services no longer needed at **10%**.



State Rehabilitation Council 2025 Recognition Awards

In recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, (NDEAM) the Delaware State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) honored businesses, employees and DVR team members who demonstrated exceptional leadership in advancing disability inclusion. Almost forty nominations were received across the three categories.

The Award Ceremony coincided with the 80th Anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), “Celebrating Value and Talent.” The SRC and DVR were honored to have as their guest speaker, the honorable Secretary of Labor, LaKresha Moultrie to share her insights into the importance of celebrating NDEAM and to highlight the important work the Department of Labor and DVR does to advance disability employment. Secretary Moultrie acknowledged the commitment and dedication the Department of Labor demonstrates towards increasing access and opportunities for Delaware job seekers to quality jobs and career pathways.

The awards also included a special message from Governor Matt Meyer congratulating this year’s winners and reminding everyone to reflect on the progress we have made in this area and encouraging recommitment to building more inclusive workplaces.

The Employee Champions of the Year were chosen in recognition of their remarkable growth, determination, and commitment to achieving their vocational goals.

The selected winners were as follows by county, pictured left to right, Kent County- Dielle DeNoon, New Castle County- Zachary Gonzalez, Sussex County- Stacy Green.



The Delaware Employer Champions of the Year were selected for their commitment to promoting accessibility, creating supportive workplaces, and providing employment opportunities.

The Employer Champion for New Castle County was BlindSight Delaware, located in Wilmington. BlindSight has been an incredible partner over the past year, providing remote opportunities for participants.

Pictured from left to right, Director Elisha Jenkins, Business Relations Specialist, John Ludwig, BlindSight Director, John Baker, SRC Chair Elisabeth Furber, Secretary of Labor, LaKresha Moultrie.



The Employer Champion of the Year for Kent County was Chesapeake Utilities, located in Dover. Vice President Stacie Roberts initiated a partnership with a Community Rehabilitation Provider with the specific goal of creating an employment program that not only offers individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities the chance to be employed but also ensures they are fully supported to thrive in their careers. Additionally, Chesapeake Utilities worked closely with this Community Rehabilitation Provider to produce a video shared across the company, encouraging all departments to consider hiring individuals with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and exploring ways to provide inclusive opportunities. Chesapeake Utilities serves as an exemplary model for employers aspiring to be accessibility champions and advocates for employees with disabilities.

Pictured from left to right, Director Elisha Jenkins, Stacie Roberts, SRC Chair Elisabeth Furber, Secretary of Labor, LaKresha Moultrie, Deputy Director Stacey Bragg and SRC Member, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Nicole Barr.



The Employer Champion of the Year for Sussex County was Best Ace Hardware, which has several Sussex County locations in Longneck, Milford, and Milton. Best Ace Hardware has been accommodating in supporting contracted agencies to complete community-based assessments at their various locations. Best Ace Hardware has tailored positions at all three of their locations for participants building grills and wheelbarrows.

Pictured from left to right, Director Elisha Jenkins, Sussex County District Administrator, Beth Holston, Community Provider Savanah Zaorski, SRC Chair Elisabeth Furber, Deputy Director Stacey Bragg and Secretary of Labor, LaKresha Moultrie.



The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Team Members of the Year were selected for the excellence and dedication they display every day to advance disability inclusion and improve employment opportunities. The selected winners are as follows and are pictured left to right; Wilmington VR office- Michael Papili, Dover VR office- Mary Wyllie, Georgetown VR office- Diana Willis, Newark VR office- Michelle Livingston.



Business Relations in Delaware

The DVR Business Relations team connects businesses with a pool of qualified candidates and offers the necessary support services to help participants thrive in their roles. Career exploration, employer engagement, and assisting Delaware job seekers with employment are at the forefront of DVR's strategic goals. The Business Relations Team is dual customer-centered, working with job seekers with disabilities and businesses to:

- Assist job seekers to obtain meaningful and quality employment opportunities.
- Identify and prepare DVR job seekers to promptly meet employer recruiting needs.
- Build relationships and engage business and industry in collaborative activities as a resource to meet their workforce needs.
- Engage employers in activities as strategic partners.
- Collaborate with employers to help identify high-demand industries and occupations in Delaware.
- Promote and encourage apprenticeships, On-the-Job-Training (OJT), internships, and other work-based learning opportunities.
- Provide labor market information and other tools and resources that address workforce needs.
- Explore tax credits and workforce incentives.

During Fiscal Year '25 DVR assisted 481 job seekers with disabilities. The Business Relations Specialists provided support to 197 Delaware businesses to address their specific workforce needs such as accessing an untapped labor pool, training, workforce recruitment and retention assistance, and accommodations.

The Business Relations Team is a partner with the State of Delaware's Department of Human Resources (DHR) Talent Acquisition Team and the Division for the Visually Impaired to support the State of Delaware Employment Network. The State of Delaware's Employment Network (EN), a Work Experience Development Program, was created to provide work experience opportunities for people with disabilities to gain useful, employment-based knowledge and experience within varied state government career paths. Over the past Fiscal Year, one participant was added to the Employment Network. The Business Relations Team partnered with the DHR Talent Acquisition Team to increase state agency knowledge and participation in the State of Delaware's Selective Placement and Employment Network Programs. These initiatives are to advance hiring opportunities for people with disabilities seeking employment in State government. During this period, in collaboration with the State of Delaware's DHR Talent Acquisition, the Selective Placement Program processed seventy-eight applications with two resulting in Merit employment positions. During this period, one individual was placed in work-based experience opportunities.

The Business Relations Unit uses information from the Delaware Office of Occupational and Labor Market Information such as the Delaware Career Compass, the Delaware Monthly Labor Review, and other labor market information as a guide for creating career opportunities for people with disabilities and for establishing links with business. Utilization of Delaware JobLink, the State's free job matching and workforce information service for job seekers and businesses from the Division of Employment and Training is also a resource used by the unit for serving its dual-customer population. The National

Employment Team Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP), which connects participants to various resources, including Job Postings, Geographic-Specific Resumes, Recruiter Access, Compliance and Application Reports, Hiring Data, and Interview Capability is also a resource shared with businesses and job seekers.

The DVR Business Relations Team facilitated forty-four Employment Workshops this past Fiscal Year. At the workshops, the Business Relations Specialists presented information on interview preparation, including how to answer difficult interview questions, and conducted mock interviews with attending participants.

DVR is an active member of the Delaware Workforce Development Board's Business Cohort. This collaborative initiative provides Business Relations professionals with the opportunity to share resources, strategically address workforce needs, and provide an extensive marketing and outreach network.

The DVR Business Relations Team also partners with state and local Chambers of Commerce, SHRM (Society of Human Resource Management), and other professional organizations to promote a structure for networking, collaboration, and sharing information.

DVR's Business Relations Team's dual-customer focus also provided support to assist youth and adult job seekers with developing resumes, preparing for interviews, completing applications, and connecting with employers. In addition, the Business Services team provides onsite supports during employer onboarding. DVR's Business Relations team developed employer informational tours to increase industry knowledge for youth with disabilities and adult job seekers. Examples of information tours include various industries such as information technology, retail, electrical, HVAC, production, education, and communications.

The Business Relations Specialists also collaborate with other divisions in the Department of Labor such as the Division of Employment and Training in community outreach, career job fairs, and local employer's hiring needs to bring the best career opportunities to youth and adult participants.

DVR received technical assistance resources through the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center -Quality Employment during this period. This provided DVR's Business team with tools and strategies focused on building capacity to connect with businesses, identifying business needs, and supporting their efforts to hire and retain people with disabilities in their workforce. The DVR Business team will continue to enhance their skills in areas such as analyzing business-driven strategies and tools, engaging diverse business partners, working collaboratively with companies to analyze staffing challenges and identifying opportunities to leverage hiring individuals. In addition, Business Relations team members receive professional development in job development and placement, labor market and career information, marketing to business customers, employment readiness, soft skills training, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other areas to ensure customer responsiveness.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will continue to develop and enhance established partnerships with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services.

Participant Success Stories

- 1) M.S. has been a participant with DVR since 2020. With the support from DVR, M.S. completed a post-secondary educational goal with Wilmington University earning his Bachelor of Science degree in Cybersecurity in 2024. M.S. worked with DVR's Business Relations Specialist (BRS) for support and assistance in finding employment. The BRS noticed that in the initial meeting, M.S. allowed his guardian to speak for him while he kept his head low and spoke minimally. The BRS recommended regular meetings, to work on his job readiness skills and build confidence. M.S. participated in the Business Relations Unit Employment Workshop in May 2025, where the Employer, FS.com, was the presenter. FS.com provided descriptions of their current job openings and their hiring process. The BRS discussed the position of Computer Component Distributor with M.S., explaining how this position could be a steppingstone in his long-term career path. M.S. was unsure of how this position would fit into his career path but was open to the interview process. The BRS prepped M.S. for the interview, assisted with transportation and provided support at the interview. M.S. was very excited when he received a job offer the next day! The Talent Acquisition Specialist at FS.com remarked on M.S.'s educational background in cybersecurity and advised that he could possibly evolve in a role supporting their IT division. M.S. excitedly accepted the offer. M.S. relayed that he was pleased to be offered the job but was nervous because this was his first job. M.S. has been successfully employed with FS.com for more than six months and is an integral member of their team.
- 2) J.F. exemplifies resilience, determination, and the power of perseverance. A single parent of teenagers, including a son with Autism, J.F. faced a life-altering situation earlier this year when he experienced new mobility challenges due to complications from Diabetes. Laid off from his role as a Property Manager and navigating life in a wheelchair while awaiting his prosthetic fitting, J.F. encountered many challenges. Despite these obstacles, J.F. began working with DVR in April 2025 demonstrating an unwavering commitment to rebuilding his career. Actively engaged with his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Business Relations Specialists, he pursued job leads, attended interviews, and explored remote work opportunities. Thanks in part to the ongoing support of the DVR Business Relations Specialists, J.F. was offered a Primary Sales Representative role at a local management company through the On-the Job-Training (OJT) program. Though initially hesitant about entering Business-to-Business sales, J.F. embraced the opportunity. Today, he is thriving—earning commissions, building client relationships, and contributing to the company's success. His employer has praised J.F.'s strong communication skills and ability to tailor solutions that deliver results to his customers.
- 3) A.M. has shown extraordinary resilience and determination in pursuit of his vocational goals. A certified Operating Engineer, A.M. faced life-changing challenges following a bilateral traumatic leg amputation due to an accident. He first connected with DVR in 2022 for assistance with adaptive prostheses and vehicle modifications, later seeking job placement support after experiencing a lack of accommodations in his workplace. Despite multiple setbacks, including a devastating motor vehicle accident in 2023 that required extensive surgery and recovery, A.M.

never gave up. With the support of his VR Counselor and Business Relations Specialist, A.M. explored State of Delaware employment through the Selective Placement Program. A.M. was offered and accepted a position as Facilities and Maintenance Supervisor. Though the commute was long, A.M. embraced the opportunity with gratitude and pride. “I just wanted to say thank you..... You helped me reach my dream life. I just moved into this house, and I am loving my job.” – A.M.

- 4) Participant, S.S.’s VR Counselor referred her to the DVR Business Relations Specialist (BRS) for assistance with finding employment. S.S. relayed that she had been out of work for three months and needed to find a new position as soon as possible. The DVR BRS met with S.S. to discuss the labor market and employment opportunities. She was provided with employment opportunities for several local employers. It was determined that a Customer Service Representative position with BlindSight Delaware would be a good match. The DVR BRS shared S.S.’s resume with BlindSight. After a phone interview, she received a job offer on the spot. DVR assisted S.S. with the necessary equipment needed for her employment. She successfully completed the four-week customer service training program. She has been employed with Blindsight Delaware for more than eight months. S.S. expressed that the job is going well, and she enjoys her new job.
- 5) Participant D.D. was referred to DVR in her Senior year of High School in 2018. During their initial meeting, D.D. expressed to her Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor that she was not sure if she wanted to pursue college but was considering a career in graphic design or computers. Her Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor encouraged her to explore her interests, consider post-secondary training and provided her with grant and scholarship resources. D.D. enrolled in Delaware Technical Community College studying Information Tech and Networking. She worked with her VR Counselor as she attended Delaware Technical Community College, receiving assistance with the accommodations for her to be successful. D.D. obtained her Associate’s Degree and obtained a position in the IT career field. D.D. has remarked about her job, “I love it here.”
- 6) Participant Z.G. was referred to DVR as a Transition student in 2019. His VR Counselor provided ongoing counseling and guidance. Z.G. decided to enroll at Delaware Technical Community College to pursue a degree in Multimedia. He successfully graduated with his Associate’s Degree in Applied Science. His goal was to pursue an entry-level, full-time position in this field. Z.G. began working with a DVR Business Relations Specialist who assisted him with job leads and preparing for interviews. Z.G. attended several job fairs with the BRS, diligently following up on open positions as he continued his job search. Z.G.’s hard work paid off when he was interviewed and was hired for a position with the State of Delaware. Z.G. attributed his success and ability to overcome the challenges he faces with the ongoing love and support of his mother and family.
- 7) Participant S.G. self-referred to DVR in 2020, as she was unsure of her capabilities to return to work after a stroke. She closely worked with her Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to identify her current abilities, strengths, and limitations to assist her to return to work. S.G. invested significant time and effort in her personal growth and rehabilitation. She began working with the

DVR Business Relations Specialist to find employment that she could manage. S.G. found employment providing caregiving support, while continuing to engage with DVR to prepare for reentry as an Occupational Therapist (COTA). She received support from DVR to pursue the relicensing process, continuing education, and navigating complex requirements from state licensing boards. S.G. worked diligently to complete all the requirements while pursuing employment opportunities. Her determination paid off: she is now employed full-time by a Healthcare company in Delaware, earning a competitive wage as a COTA.

Transition Services in Delaware

The Delaware VR Transition Services Team is composed of nineteen Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors dedicated to transition services, supporting students in their career pathways.

DVR is exploring opportunities to expand its resources as students with disabilities, ages 14 to 22, continue to increase. There is an estimated 11, 000 students with disabilities aged 14 to 22 according to the Department of Education.

During Fiscal Year 2025, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation served a total of 1,999 students; reflecting an increase of 13.71 % from the previous year; 735 of those were new students, an increase of 17.04% from the previous year. However, Delaware DVR experienced a decline in Pre-Employment Transition Services participation with 814 students accessing 2,116 Pre-Employment Transition Services that include the following core services:

- 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.

Project SEARCH is an international and highly recognized Transition to Work Program aimed at preparing youth with significant disabilities for success in competitive integrated employment. Delaware has four Project SEARCH sites: Christiana Care Hospital Services (New Castle County), Bayhealth Hospital and Delaware Department of Transportation (DEL DOT) (Kent County), and Tidal Health Hospital (Sussex County). The collaboration includes the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Department of Education, Local Education Agencies, businesses, and a Community Rehabilitation Provider. During the annual Project SEARCH Conference held in July 2025, Bayhealth Hospital was recognized with an Excellence Award. For the 2024-2025 school year, the total number of students enrolled in the Project Search program was thirty, with twenty-seven students completing the program and eighteen obtaining employment. Compared to last year's cohort, the program saw an 80% increase in graduates employed:

Project Search Site	Number of Employed Students
Christiana Care Hospital	7
Bayhealth Hospital	6
DEL DOT	4
Tidal Health	1

Delaware is a partner of Delaware's Program Improvement Process for Equity (PIPEline to Career Success) for students with disabilities. PIPEline, facilitated by the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) is focused on increasing the number of students with disabilities enrolled in career technical education career pathways, participate in related work-based learning experiences, and enter in-demand employment. The students participate in a curriculum-Student Voice which helps them identify barriers and highlight innovative ways to connect students to career technical education pathways. The Delaware PIPEline Project has engaged over seventy students from nine school districts over the past seven years. For Pipeline 2024-2025, eighteen students from four school districts participated in PIPEline: Appoquinimink School District, Brandywine School District, Capital School District, and the Red Clay Consolidated School District. A highlight of the 2024-2025 school year was the launch of a Pilot program in the Red Clay Consolidated School District that involved five justice-involved students who participated in the Pipeline Project. The outcome of the pilot demonstrated positive initiatives within the juvenile facilities to engage students in career technical education.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has collaborated with other departments within the State to strengthen DVR's ability to provide quality employment services to the people and families of Delaware. DVR and the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and their Families (DSCYF) initiated a collaborative effort to improve the delivery of career and employment services to transition-age justice-involved students. This collaboration is the foundation of ensuring access to services. DVR has dedicated VR Counselors in the facilities providing transition services and pre-employment transition services. This effort is a strong collaboration aimed at serving students within the Department of Services for Children, Youth & Their Families (DSCYF). DVR partners with the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) to improve the quality and access to supported employment services. Collaboratively DVR and the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) coordinate services, and resources for students requiring extended supports in a work environment.

Monthly Statewide Transition Cadre meetings provide transition stakeholders an opportunity for professional development and collaboration, share best practices, and enhance post-school planning and outcomes for transition-age youth. Stakeholders include Department of Education Exceptional Children team members, Local Education Agencies, DVR, community partners, and other state agencies.

DVR is engaged in technical assistance with the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C). This ongoing support is to assess DVR's transition program model, best practices, and develop strategies to support youth with disabilities in achieving their educational and employment goals. DVR partnered with NTACT:C for professional development training. The training provided an overview of the history and evolution of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), federal laws, federal reporting requirements, and quality assurance guidelines for monitoring Pre-ETS. DVR's intention is to increase employment and career opportunities for youth with disabilities as well as program accountability through the education and support of the team.

DVR continues to evaluate opportunities to expand services and engage additional partners. DVR has implemented strategic communication opportunities through technology, social media, and participating in community events including college and career fairs, and resource events. DVR has been actively meeting with community partners to develop and discuss apprenticeship and internship opportunities for

students in the Pre-Employment Transition services and Transition services programs, with a goal of launching these initiatives in the coming year.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to identify ways to increase opportunities for students and creatively develop career exploration pathways. DVR engaged in the development of summer Pre-Employment Transition Services, which included four weeks of activities devoted to job readiness, job exploration, self-advocacy and a visionary board.

DVR enhanced its collaboration with community partners to address emotional and mental health challenges for youth. DVR partnered with the Delaware Mental Health Association to provide Suicide Prevention Certification training which focused on identifying individuals facing a mental health crisis. The team members in attendance received a five-year Suicide Prevention Certification for their participation.

Moving ahead the team will work to identify the needs of the community while increasing service capacity across the state.



DEL DOT Project Search Graduates 2024 - 2025

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Highlights

DVR Mission: 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.

Core Beliefs:

- There is always more than one future
- The key is to find the intersection of the possible, preferable, and plausible futures
- In order to compel action in a common direction two things must occur:
 - Everyone on the team must believe in the path forward
 - Everyone must be able to see themselves as a participant on the journey.

In FY'25, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) served 4,948 individuals, compared to 4,659 in FY'24. The Division is exploring additional outreach strategies to ensure more Delawareans with disabilities have access to employment and career services.

The State of Delaware is pleased to have completed the following items from the 2025 National Expansion on Employment Network Core State Plan:

1. Benefits Planning Education
2. Benefits Planning Communication Materials
3. Research on model employment awareness campaigns
4. Analyze 2024 Provider recommendations for quality and efficiency incentives.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is one of four titles of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and is one section of a four-year strategy for Delaware's Workforce Development System. The Combined State Plan includes goals, priorities, strategies, evaluation and reports of progress, comprehensive system of personnel development, and supported employment services. Annually, vocational rehabilitation programs are evaluated on the following performance measures and expected to meet the proposed targeted goals reflected below. The Division is pleased to have exceeded all targeted goals.

Performance Measures:	Program Year 2024 Target Goals:	Program Year 2024 Actual Performance:
1. Measurable Skill Gains Rate	50.3%	68.1%
2. Median Earnings-2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$4,540	\$5,280
3. Employment Rate-2 nd Quarter After Exit	45.0%	51%
4. Employment Rate-4 th Quarter After Exit	45.0%	47.6%
5. Credential Attainment Rate	53.0%	54%

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Division for the Visually Impaired and the State Rehabilitation Council conducted its triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) during this period. Participants and their family members, community partners, and DVR team members participated and provided valuable feedback in virtual, in-person focus groups, and electronic surveys.

DVR will utilize the results of this CSNA to determine priorities and develop programs and services to better meet the needs of Delawareans to obtain and maintain quality employment.



Christiana Care Project Search Graduates 2024 - 2025

Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Federal

Fiscal Year 2025 Performance Report

Successful Rehabilitations:	481	
Most Significant Disabilities	186 (39%)	} 90 %
Significant Disabilities	244 (51%)	
Transition Youth Rehabilitated	109	
Total Participants Served:	4,948	
Most Significant Disabilities	2,014 (41%)	} 90 %
Significant Disabilities	2,408 (49%)	
New Applicants in FY'25:	2,074	
Determined Eligible	1,922	
Acceptance Rate	94%	
New Transition Students	735	
Transition Students Served	1,999	
Average Hourly Wage for FY 2025 Closures:		
All closures	\$18.94	
Transition	\$17.36	
Supported Employment	\$15.63	
Adults (Not TR or SE)	\$20.17	



Vocational Rehabilitation Office Locations

New Castle County

Wilmington

4425 North Market Street
Wilmington, DE 19802
P: 302-761-8275
F: 302-761-6633

Newark

University Office Place
252 Chapman Road 2nd Floor
Newark, DE 19702
P: 302-368-6980
F: 302-368-6988

Kent County

Dover

Blue Hen Corp. Ctr.
655 S. Bay Rd., Ste. 2H
Dover, DE 19901
P: 302-739-5478
F: 302-739-6874

Sussex County

Georgetown

8 Georgetown Plaza, Ste. 2
Georgetown, DE 19947
P: 302-856-5730
F: 302-856-5486



For additional information,
Please visit our website at the link or scan the QR code:
<https://labor.delaware.gov/divisions/dvr/>



PHOTO CREDITS

PHOTO CREDITS FROM COVER:

- Aerial view of Wilmington, Delaware, by Christopher Boswell

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS:

- Page 3: Aerial view of the Indian River Inlet Bridge at Delaware Seashore State Park in Bethany Beach, by Conor Adams/Wirestock Creators
- Page 5: Aerial view of Delaware Memorial Bridge at dusk. The Delaware Memorial Bridge is a set of twin suspension bridges crossing the Delaware River between the states of Delaware and New Jersey, by mandritoiu.