

**SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**

**BOARD OF
VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION**

**ANNUAL REPORT
OF ACTIVITIES FOR
FISCAL YEAR
2015**

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

December 29, 2015

Governor Dennis Daugaard
State Capitol Building
500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Governor Daugaard:

On behalf of the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation (South Dakota's State Rehabilitation Council), we are pleased to provide you with a copy of our 2015 Annual Report.

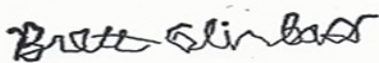
The Board partners with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) in the administration of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program in South Dakota. Activities in this report reflect the wide range of services designed to assist individuals with disabilities prepare for and engage in gainful employment. Doing so not only has had a tremendous impact on the lives of South Dakotans with disabilities, it also has a dramatic impact on our statewide community.

This past fiscal year, the Division provided services in support of 769 individuals with disabilities in accomplishing their employment goals in careers of their choice. In addition, 382 students with disabilities had paid work experience prior to finishing high school.

We believe the activities support your efforts of making employment the first priority and preferred outcome for South Dakotans with disabilities. The combined efforts of VR, employers, and the public is needed to promote the reality that all citizens are capable of full participation in competitive, integrated employment.

The Board and Division continue to work to provide services to citizens with disabilities to assist them in living a life of independence and economic self-sufficiency. We thank you for your commitment to these goals.

Respectfully,



Brett Glirbas, Chairperson

Cc: Board Members
Janet LaBreck, RSA Commissioner
Rimal Desai, RSA Liaison

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

December 29, 2015

RSA Commissioner Janet LaBreck
Potomac Center Plaza
550 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Commissioner LaBreck:

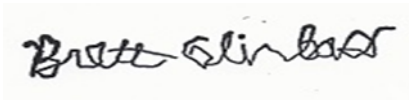
On behalf of the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation (South Dakota's State Rehabilitation Council), we are pleased to provide you with a copy of our 2015 Annual Report. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, specifies that a report be submitted to you and the Governor of South Dakota on an annual basis.

The Board partners with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) in the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program in South Dakota. The activities in this report reflect a wide range of services designed to assist individuals with disabilities prepare for and engage in gainful employment, which has had a tremendous impact on the lives of South Dakotans with disabilities and our state.

The Board continually evaluates the effectiveness of the DRS vocational rehabilitation program, and we are pleased to report that in 2015 DRS provided services that assisted 769 individuals with disabilities accomplish their employment goals in careers of their choice. In addition, 382 students with disabilities had paid work experience prior to finishing high school.

The Board and Division continue to work to provide services to citizens with disabilities seeking employment, and they are committed to increasing the employment rate of South Dakotans with disabilities.

Respectfully,



Brett Glirbas, Chairperson

Cc: Board Members
Rimal Desai, RSA Liaison

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The State Rehabilitation Council is established and meets the criteria set forth in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The State Rehabilitation Council, known in South Dakota as the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR or Board), provides guidance to and works in partnership with the general vocational rehabilitation agency in South Dakota - Division of Rehabilitation Services.

The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation plays a significant role in ensuring that the vocational rehabilitation program operates effectively and remains responsive to the needs of those served by it.

The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation works in partnership with the Division of Rehabilitation Services to develop policies, plan activities, evaluate program effectiveness and carry out other functions related to the vocational rehabilitation program.

The working relationship between the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division of Rehabilitation Services is a partnership focused on ensuring that eligible individuals with disabilities receive appropriate, timely, and effective vocational rehabilitation services leading to successful integrated employment within communities across South Dakota.

State of South Dakota — Dennis Daugaard, Governor
Department of Human Services — Gloria Pearson, Secretary
Division of Rehabilitation Services — Eric Weiss, Director
Board of Vocational Rehabilitation — Brett Glirbas, Chairperson

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MEMBERSHIP

The State Rehabilitation Council - Board of Vocational Rehabilitation (Board) - is appointed by the Governor to assist the Division of Rehabilitation Services (Division) to develop and evaluate vocational rehabilitation services for South Dakotans with disabilities.

The Board's fifteen members are a cross-section of South Dakotans who have a stake in vocational rehabilitation services. They are selected based on personal qualifications and the composition needs of the Board. Members serve three year terms.

The Board works jointly with the Division to annually develop and review vocational rehabilitation goals and priorities. In addition, the Board contributes to the study of consumer satisfaction and customer service needs.

Brett Glirbas
Sioux Falls
Chairperson

Patty Kuglitsch
Sioux Falls
Vice Chairperson

Darla McGuire
Ethan
Member-At-Large

Melissa Flor
Pierre

Colleen Moran
Hartford

Jolleen Laverdure
Lower Brule

Chad Maxon
Rapid City

Carol Kirchgesler
Aberdeen

Tim Neyhart
Pierre

Eric Weiss
Pierre

Lisa Sanderson
Sioux Falls

Kim Hoberg
Aberdeen

Kendra Gottsleben
Sioux Falls

Chuck Quinn
Pierre

Thore Jenshus
Rapid City

Staff:
Faith Korkow
Colette Wagoner

ABOUT THE BOARD

Meetings

All regular and special meetings are announced in advance, open and accessible to the public. The Board also holds public hearings and forums as they deem necessary. All meetings are called by the Chairperson, in cooperation with Division and Board staff, as stipulated in the bylaws.

Committees

Three standing committees assist the Board in completing its work. Conference calls, video conferencing, email and face-to-face meetings are utilized to conduct business. Their work is reported out at each quarterly Board meeting for consideration and action. Following is a brief description of the three standing committees.

Executive Committee: This committee may act on behalf of the Board to perform necessary business matters between regular meetings, provided their actions receive concurrence of the full Board. They bring recommendations to the full Board on a variety of activities, e.g., annual report, state plan, staff support agreement, meeting agendas.

Consumer Services Committee: This committee works on activities related to the consumer satisfaction survey, Division goals and strategies, systems change priorities, policy recommendations, and public meeting topics.

Public Awareness Committee: This committee coordinates the National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities, the annual Governor's Awards ceremony and other public outreach activities.

Meetings

January 6,
2015
Dakota Digital
Network
(Videoconference)

March 26-27,
2015
Sioux Falls

June 29-30,
2015
Ft. Pierre

September 21-22,
2015
Pierre

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; Workforce Investment Act

Vocational Rehabilitation Services & Board of Vocational Rehabilitation

With the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Congress has reauthorized the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, which includes the Rehabilitation Act, through 2020. WIOA has the potential for significant advancement in employment for people with disabilities; e.g., increased role in transition, limitations on sub-minimum wage, required cooperative agreements between Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and state Medicaid and IDD agencies, enhanced roles and requirements for the general workforce system and One-Stop Career Centers in meeting the needs of people with disabilities and changes in performance measures.

Reauthorization calls for the VR program to have a much larger role in the lives of youth transitioning from school to adult life (fifteen percent of VR funds must now be used for transition services, specifically pre-employment transition services). Core programs are subject to common indicators of performance, e.g., entering and retaining employment, median earnings, obtaining educational credentials, skill gains via post secondary credential, skill gains via post secondary education and training, and effectiveness in serving employers. These performance measures are new for VR and the changes in current performance indicators will be a critical implementation issue in the coming years.

The State Plan is a document which describes how the Division of Rehabilitation Services will provide vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals with disabilities. Each year, the State Plan is updated and submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) for review and approval. The receipt of federal funding is dependent upon its approval.

The Division and Board jointly review and develop vocational rehabilitation goals and priorities for serving South Dakotans with disabilities, which are laid out in the State Plan document and its related attachments. The State Plan sets the course of how to best serve citizens in achieving their employment goals. This document is a “plan in progress” which is evaluated continuously. The evaluation process includes gathering, reviewing and analyzing information from various sources e.g., meetings with consumers and family members; data and performance indicators based upon consumers served throughout the year, dialogue with other boards, councils and associations; activities with employers and human resource managers.

BOARD ACTIVITIES...

As a part of the Board's commitment to hear from consumers and stakeholders statewide, Board meetings are held around the state. Participants are invited to provide input through the 'public comment' period of each meeting, or during additional time set aside to meet with specific groups. These times provide the Board with the opportunity to hear about what is working well, what could be improved, and to brainstorm ideas of how individuals with disabilities across the state can be better served through vocational rehabilitation services. When possible, Board meetings are scheduled to coincide with other groups in an effort to provide an opportunity to learn from one another and identify ways to enhance collaboration.

January 2015 Meeting (December 2014 meeting cancelled due to winter storm)

Joint Meeting with Tribal and State Vocational Rehabilitation

The Board hosted their December meeting to coincide with the Tribal and State Vocational Rehabilitation meeting. There was time built into both group's agendas to come together and talk about transition services for Native American Youth with Disabilities living on and off the reservations. The winter storm forced cancellation of the Board meeting, however several members were available to participate in a time of informal dialogue.

Organizational Membership

During this meeting, the Board approved the Executive Committee's funding recommendation of renewing its organizational membership to the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities (Coalition). The Board supports the Coalition, as the only statewide, cross disability, consumer driven advocacy group made up of individuals and organizations and its mission of advocating for the full inclusion of individuals of all ages with disabilities in all aspects of society.

Year End Data

A report was requested on the Federal Fiscal Year 2014 Year End Data, as submitted to Rehabilitation Services Administration. In reviewing the data, trends noted were: changes in application for services (age group served, applications by district office), numbers served by age group (transition age applications growing) and resulting adjustments to staffing levels. A new element being tracked (students with disabilities; identifying those not on an IEP or 504 plan, those on an IEP, and those on a 504 plan) is helping in identifying students with disabilities and determining what other supports might be utilized/needed by them.

BOARD ACTIVITIES...

Joint Activities

The Board has had a working relationship with the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) for many years. The chairpersons of the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and Statewide Independent Living Council have met periodically to identify ways they might collaborate to best meet the vocational rehabilitation and independent living needs of South Dakotans with disabilities. Each includes reports from the other groups as standing agenda items at their regular meetings. They also do a joint solicitation for nominations for board/council vacancies, a joint review committee for the annual Governor's Awards and National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities.

ASPIRE (Promise Grant) Update

The Board requested updates on this federal initiative - "Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income" grant. It is targeted for youth, ages 14-16, who receive SSI and their families (South Dakota is one of six states in the consortium), and its goal is to identify interventions to impact youth's education and employment, and reduce a household's dependence on public benefits.

Major activities included enrolling youth and families in the project (120 by March 2016); developing and implementing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Departments of Human Services and Social Services in support of project activities; developing a variety of training materials (advocacy, self-determination, financial), developing paid employment opportunities for youth while in high school, benefits counseling, and other case management services.

Workforce Diversity Network of the Black Hills

The Workforce Diversity Network (WDN) started as a grassroots effort in Rapid City, and the group successfully applied for the Division's Request for Proposal to lend support to business led organizations to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. WDN is a team of business and human resource managers serving as a link between employers and individuals with disabilities who have the desire and qualifications to work. WDN provides educational opportunities to businesses regarding the employment of individuals with disabilities; creates a greater awareness of the benefits of diversity and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the local workforce; acts as resource for employers wishing to hire individuals with disabilities; and a link between employers and prospective employees with disabilities.

BOARD ACTIVITIES...

Office of Special Education Report

An update was provided on the “Indicator 14 Post-School Outcome” survey which is defined as: percent of youth who are no longer in secondary education, had Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in effect at the time they left school, and were enrolled in: (1) higher education; (2) higher education or competitively employed; (3) higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed in some other employment within one year of leaving high school.

There is the capability of doing a five year comparison with collected data looking at student engagement, type of exit, disability, ethnicity, and gender. One noted trend was the number of students engaged in competitive employment has improved every year since 2008-09. Other noted trends were:

- Exiters that drop out of school are 3 times more likely to be disengaged than those with a high school diploma;
- Exiters that aged out are 3½ times more likely to be disengaged than those with a high school diploma;
- Exiters labeled Emotionally Disturbed (ED) are approximately twice as likely to be disengaged than all other youth falling under other disability categories; and
- American Indians are 2½ times more likely to be disengaged than all other exiters statewide.

Questions were also added to inquire with students about why they are not working or attending post-secondary education. This information is available.

Employment Works Initiative

These activities were prompted by Governor Dugaard’s initiative to have the state of South Dakota become a model employer of people with disabilities. A Task Force created in 2013 and led by the Department of Human Services included representation from private business, public sector employers, people with disabilities, family members, state government, legislators, service providers and nonprofit stakeholders. The Division accomplished a number of activities under this initiative, which were fully endorsed by the Board. A position was created and filled under the Division for a business specialist. Work experience opportunities for students with disabilities in state government have been identified. Contracts have been developed with several community support providers to expand supported employment services for individuals with intellectual disabilities under the age of twenty-four. The “Ability for Hire” campaign was launched in October with a focus on educating employers about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. Division staff partnered with the South Dakota Retailers Association (SDRA) and conducted a webinar for their membership on disability, accommodations and the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as articles written, submitted and featured in SDRA’s newsletter.

BOARD ACTIVITIES...

March 2015 Meeting

Social Security Administration Grant

The Board approved writing a letter of support for the Black Hills Special Services Cooperative grant application for the South Dakota Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program. Grant approval would continue to support staff who work with individuals to maximize earning potential and self-sufficiency, e.g., knowledge of SSA work incentives, Medicaid, Medicare, and other public programs (TANF, food stamps), information and referral to other services, work incentive analysis and planning and long term monitoring and follow-up services. This program enables people with disabilities to begin, maintain and increase work activity through informed choice. The Board and Division fully support these efforts.

Lighting the Way/Solutions for Success - Diagnosis Through Adulthood Conference

The “Lighting the Way Conference” provides training to parents, caregivers, professionals and advocates to help improve the lives of individuals on the autism spectrum. The conference offers keynotes by nationally recognized experts on the autism spectrum; focusing on strategies and techniques that work in the classroom, prepare students for transition, address family dynamics, and explore employment supports. The Board approved funds to assist with speaker costs for this conference.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

The Board continued conversation regarding its expectations of these events, prior to disseminating the Request for Proposals to conduct this year’s events. Conversation points included: emphasize employment issues; greater need for employer involvement; increase efforts to obtain the involvement of smaller employers; and better marketing to employers, businesses and HR managers. A meeting was convened in November following the conclusion of the 2014 events involving board/council members, Division staff and community planners. This provided an opportunity for all involved to hear about one another’s events: what is needed, who was involved; and what worked well in each community. A number of strengths were noted: use of different speakers, expanding to other communities, use of different venues in reaching community members, offering great presentations/topics bring employers in. Feedback was also solicited on how the Board and Division could better support these types of events. The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and Statewide Independent Living Council contributed financial support for the 2015 events.

BOARD ACTIVITIES...

New Member Orientation

A new member orientation was held in conjunction with the March meeting with seven members attending. Topics covered were: history and overview of the Rehabilitation Act, role of the State Rehabilitation Council, Rehabilitation Services Administration, Department of Human Services overview and working relationships between the Division, other state agencies, and organizations. South Dakota Advocacy Services talked about their organization, programs, mission and services, including the Client Assistance Program.

Employer Paid Work Experience Program Guide

The Division shared a draft program guide to support VR services provided to a person to obtain/maintain an employer paid work experience. Employment related services would be allowable for a job that is not the employment goal on the individuals employment plan. This would allow a person to develop work skills and the opportunity to earn wages. The Board supported the development of this service noting summer employment opportunities, increased seasonal employment opportunities and other short term employment options can provide needed skill development opportunities and wage earning experience while an individual is determining their employment goal. The Board passed a motion to move forward with implementation of this service.

Sioux Falls Business Resource Network (SFBRN)

A SFBRN board member provided an update on this private, non-profit organization with a mission of promoting the hiring of individuals with disabilities. SFBRN provides businesses with education, awareness and resources which promotes the successful employment of persons with disabilities. SFBRN works closely with the Division's business specialist on activities. SFBRN has hosted an annual disability mentoring day. They have implemented the disability friendly business program in and around Sioux Falls, which is a program which recognizes local employers who hire people with disabilities. SFBRN is a planning partner for National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities in the Sioux Falls area and has partnered with the Special Olympics on other activities. These activities have resulted in connections to schools and the business world. SFBRN circulates its message throughout the area through a Facebook page, as well as through publication and circulation of a monthly newsletter.

BOARD ACTIVITIES...

Employment Works Initiatives - Person Centered Thinking

The Division scheduled Person Centered Thinking Training sessions statewide for staff. The trainings also targeted Community Support Provider staff to further develop their capacity to expand supported employment services for individuals working primarily in segregated employment. Trainings were scheduled for employment specialists, job coaches, job developers and VR staff. Training focused on job development, employer relationships, job carving, job matching, assessment and discovery, and other instructional strategies and supports essential for job success.

This initiative went hand in hand with the Division's initiative to encourage providers to become certified. Providers must pass national certification testing offered through the Association of People for Supported Employment First and receive Person Centered Thinking training to be eligible for a higher reimbursement rate from the Division. The Division also provided assistance to cover the first time testing fee. The Board fully supported these initiatives.

Board members were introduced to Person Centered Thinking tools and concepts, which support an individual in different environments (school, employment, independent living) and the tools utilized with individuals of any age and/or disability. Developing an understanding of the person first, what they need in regard to health, safety and then balancing this with what makes them happy, content, and fulfilled leads to a more balanced life for the individual. Board members learned that the tools can be utilized with an employer to improve communication, and in identifying and matching people's characteristics, interests and skills with employment tasks.

State Workforce Development Council

The Division regularly provides updates on the Workforce Development Council meetings and activities. The Council oversees implementation of workforce training programs in South Dakota. Council membership represents various business, labor and education interests, including other state agencies. Meetings of the Council have taken place at several of the state's vocational technical institutes to allow members to tour these institutions. Meeting agendas included employer panels to address workforce needs and ways to address workforce shortages. The Council also directs the Build Dakota Scholarship Program which supports students entering high-need workforce programs.

June 2015 Meeting

South Dakota Advocates for Change—Advocacy Jam

South Dakota Advocates for Change is a statewide advocacy group for people with intellectual disabilities/developmental disabilities (ID/DD). The Leadership Team submitted a funding application for financial support of the “Advocacy Jam”, a biannual conference. The Advocacy Jam offers training for people with ID/DD, family members and professionals. Training topics included: self-employment/owning your own business, how to work with an employer to meet their needs, how to work together to stop bullying, changes in the Division of Developmental Disabilities system, and What to do When... (I’m in an accident or emergency). The Board approved funding to support a speaker for the September 2015 conference.

Dialogue with the South Dakota Council on Developmental Disabilities

The Council’s Executive Director and Vice Chairperson attended the Board’s June meeting to talk about the Council, it’s mission, funding, ideas for collaboration and development of its five-year state plan. Board members were invited to attend a Council meeting in July; which was also extended to other boards/councils, agencies, organizations, family members and individuals with disabilities.

The purpose of the meeting was to have dialogue on:

- ◆ What are the purpose, priorities and/or goals for your board or council?
- ◆ What are the trends or areas of concern for children, youth and adults with disabilities and their families?
- ◆ What new initiatives would help people with disabilities have greater inclusion and integration in their communities?
- ◆ What grant opportunities are needed?
- ◆ How and around what goal or activity can collaboration happen between your organization and the Council?

The September meeting agenda had this as a follow up item to hear from members who attended. Members reported that a common theme discussed was the use of Person Centered Thinking by different groups/agencies. Other issues that crossed the spectrum of disability were: transportation, communication needs, and educational training needs for employers. The members who attended felt this was a great opportunity to hear and learn from others. They also felt there was merit in collaborating on such efforts to obtain public feedback and to share or disseminate gathered input with one another.

BOARD ACTIVITIES...

Division Program Initiatives

An update was provided on the Division's Request for Proposal (RFP) issued in 2014 to advance supported employment efforts. The RFP outlined the need to serve individuals who have been working in sheltered workshops and move them towards supported employment or community employment. This effort will also assist providers in providing transition services to students with disabilities as they work towards community employment (individuals with intellectual disabilities under the age of 24 who have limited work history or experience).

Another initiative, noted earlier, began in June, seeks to increase the capacity of providers to serve people with disabilities. This initiative has increased the number of certified providers by twenty-seven. Eighteen providers have attended specific training sessions making them eligible for the higher reimbursement rate. The Division has also provided Person Centered Thinking training sessions across the state, employment specialist trainings, and advanced level provider trainings.

The Board fully supports the Division's efforts to increase provider expertise and capacity, as well as increase provider earnings, and employment retention. Increasing the number of certified providers also increases consumer choice for individuals with disabilities seeking support from these providers.

State and Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Collaborations

The Division has cooperative agreements with each of the four Tribal VR programs in the state (Pine Ridge, Lower Brule, Cheyenne River and Standing Rock). The Division hosted gatherings of their staff and staff of the four tribal VR programs. Dialogue at the meetings focused on independent living services, case services, assistive technology, promotion of disability awareness, and youth and transition services. Plans have been made for both groups to meet in December of 2015 and adjust meeting agendas to allow time for them to come together and continue dialogue.

On a separate front, the Pine Ridge VR Program was not successful with their grant application, and the Division is assisting by working on joint cases, renting office space in Kyle to house a VR counselor, and identifying other areas where assistance can be provided. The Board applauds the Division's efforts to continue to serve those eligible for services and accept applications from interested persons from this area of the state.

Disability Services Summit/Public Gathering in Mission

The Division and Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired invited the Board, SILC and Division to join efforts to host a gathering in Mission, South Dakota (this was attempted last year, and canceled due to weather). The gathering was scheduled on April 28th at Sinte Gleska University at the Wakinyan Wanbli Multi-Purpose Building. This provided an opportunity for Board and Council representatives to share information about services with local residents. There were twenty-two state and tribal entities represented at this event.

BOARD ACTIVITIES...

Transition Services Liaison Project (TSLP)

TSLP staff addressed the project's purpose - to provide technical assistance and training to transition age students with disabilities and their families, local education agencies, and adult service agencies statewide. Training is provided on transition and the development of transition plans, identifying and obtaining instructional materials, assistance with implementation of self-determination curriculum and assistance with identification of local resources, to address regional transition service needs and individual supports. Specific activities include: Youth Leadership Forum, Catch the Wave, resource website, regional transition forums, interagency councils, Project Skills, and Project SEARCH. TSLP offered the Transition Summer Institute for teachers, which focused on paid work experience, interagency collaboration and self-determination.

The Board fully endorses activities, which interface with the educational and workforce systems, as well as post-secondary education, independent living, and other necessary supports to assist students with disabilities and their families with making meaningful choices regarding their journey into adulthood.

Consumer Satisfaction Survey

The Consumer Satisfaction Survey instrument was developed years ago with the assistance of the Consumer Services Committee. The survey is conducted by sending out postcards to consumers at different stages of the VR process asking different questions, depending upon where the individual is within the process (e.g., six months after starting their first Individualized Plan for Employment, case closed as successfully rehabilitated). The Board felt there was no need to change or revisit the instrument at this time. It will revisit this as implementation of WIOA moves forward.

Election of Officers

The election of officers was held during the June meeting. Election results filled the offices of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Member-At-Large. In addition, two vacancies were filled on the Board, due to term limits and the death of one member. The Board Chairperson attended the Statewide Independent Living Council meeting held earlier, where a plaque was presented to one member for his service on both the Board and SILC. The member was thanked for his time, commitment and knowledge in working to improve services for people with disabilities in the areas of independent living and employment.

September 2015 Meeting

Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR)

A request had been made for an update from DLR. DLR staff attended and spoke to available programs and services. Services available to businesses/employers include: online job order listings, assistance with layoffs, human resource services and facilities, training programs for unemployed workers, student internships, assistance with unemployment insurance and worker's compensation, income tax credits and labor market information. Services for job seekers were outlined, including services available for adults with disabilities as well as transition age youth. DLR and VR work together with some individuals as "shared consumers". The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) was discussed, as well as the need to educate more businesses about what it is, and what it is used for - a national assessment that measures a person's essential work skills needed in jobs across the industries and occupations.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) - Continued Discussion Item

The Division updated the Board on activities related to the implementation of WIOA. Regulations call for a larger focus on transition age youth, pre-employment transition services, as well as transition from school to adult life. The Division has done a tremendous amount of work in this area with their involvement in activities such as Project Skills, Youth Leadership Forum, Catch the Wave and Project SEARCH. The Division has been meeting with providers, schools, and other agency staff (e.g., Department of Labor and Regulation and Office of Special Education) on issues impacting Section 511 (limitations on sub-minimum wage), as well as to work on areas needing attention e.g., formal cooperative agreements, changes in performance measures, enhanced roles working within the workforce system and employers.

Bob Jahner (consultant) was available to brief members on the planning approach for the Vocational Rehabilitation Services portion of the Unified State Plan. Bob was hired several years ago to assist the two vocational rehabilitation agencies (Division of Rehabilitation Services and Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired) with developing the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and writing sections of the State Plan and related attachments (goals, priorities, and strategies). Decisions need to be made regarding the makeup of the "executive group". Once the information is compiled, Bob will work with both Divisions, staff and board committees to revise and finalize the State Plan related documents prior to submission.

BOARD ACTIVITIES...

DakotaLink (South Dakota's Assistive Technology Project)

Members were apprised of the DakotaLink Project, including mission, goals, and program activities. The presentation included funding initiatives, current projects, as well as office locations and available individual services. The overview provided members with an idea of projects that DakotaLink is involved with (e.g., closed circuit television program, National Deaf Blind equipment distribution program, Department of Education Smarter Balance Testing, educational efforts with the VA and employers).

Members were introduced to newer technology (devices or software) now available to individuals with various types of disabilities: reading by converting text to speech, writing technologies, math technologies, memory and organization, speech, hearing and orientation, mobility or ambulation devices. Members also learned of the recycle program, which takes equipment, refurbishes it and redistributes it to those who can utilize it. The Board thanked the Division for suggesting this agenda item, noting that technology changes so fast, it's hard to keep up to date.

Governor's Awards Ceremony

The Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, Statewide Independent Living Council and Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, as well as the Department of Human Services, hosted the Governor's Awards ceremony. This annual event recognizes the efforts of individuals, employers, and organizations for their contributions to the employment of persons with disabilities in South Dakota. The event was held at the Capitol Rotunda in early September, and Governor Daugaard presented awards to recipients from across the state.

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) Development Policy

This draft policy was shared with members at the June meeting. Changes were called for as a result of WIOA, e.g., completing the IPE within 90 days, documenting reasons for requesting an extension, counselor and consumer agreeing upon an identifiable date. The Consumer Services Committee met prior to the September meeting to review the draft policy and provided recommendations. The draft policy was also presented to the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired for review as well as posting the draft policy on the Division's website seeking feedback. The committee's recommendations were incorporated into the draft policy and presented to the full Board for final review and approval. The Board made a motion to approve the policy as presented.

BOARD ACTIVITIES...

Introduction of Division Staff

Board members had the opportunity to meet state office staff and learn more about the activities that fall under the Division. Examples included: staff working with the Independent Living Program and the Activities of Daily Living Program (a waiver that provides services to those with quadriplegia); staff working with DakotaLink regarding assistive technology and provision of technical assistance to employers; staff working to provide technical assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act to public and private entities as well as being the point of contact as the ADA coordinator for the Department of Human Services; and staff working with the Ticket to Work and Social Security Reimbursement Program, Equipment Distribution Program, Telecommunication Assistive Devices, Deaf Services as well as managing the Interpreter Certification Program.

Division of Developmental Disabilities—Employment Initiatives

A request was made for Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) staff to attend and update members on initiatives they are working on for people with intellectual disabilities/developmental disabilities. DDD is working closely with the Divisions, providers and national partners on employment outcomes (e.g., Person Centered Planning and Thinking trainings). DDD worked with self advocates and family members on the development of the “Supporting Real Lives Across the Lifespan” folders and is now disseminating these across the state. The folders also contain the “Charting the Life Course” booklets which assist persons with disabilities and family members to think about questions as well as choices when plotting a course towards a full and meaningful life, as well as engage in discussions about employment earlier in a person’s life (expectations, likes/dislikes, self discovery and employment actions).

The implementation of new regulations created significant changes to their waiver. The focus shifted to community integration with increased access to supports. There were also significant changes to the Medicaid Waiver, e.g., increased use of person centered planning, conflict free case management, residential living vs. non-residential living; sheltered employment vs. community employment. New definitions call for employment discovery, career planning/development, community life engagement, which are leading to more choices for individuals. DDD will continue to work on implementing items related to the changes in regulations and is grateful for the close working relationship with the vocational rehabilitation agencies in the state.

BOARD ACTIVITIES...

Miscellaneous Items

Appointments

Annually, the Board consults with the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and Statewide Independent Living Council about the need to solicit nominations statewide for their respective board/council. Nominations were sought for vacancies during March/April, forwarded to the Governor for his consideration and action, and the Governor made appointments and/or reappointments to the Boards of Vocational Rehabilitation and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Statewide Independent Living Council in July.

Training Initiatives and Fall Conference

The Division hosted a variety of training sessions this reporting period. Training topics included: SSA work incentives, employment specialist training, motivational interviewing, and Person Centered Thinking. The Fall Conference is also a collaborative effort involving a variety of agencies providing presentations in areas of vocational rehabilitation, community employment and independent living. Other breakout topics included: diversity, NAMI "In My Own Voice", self employment, marketing to employers, disabilities and aging, youth services, recreational opportunities, Housing and Labor programs. The Board and Division encourage members to attend, to learn about what is happening statewide and to hear about the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Board Staff Support

The Division of Rehabilitation Services, through an agreement with the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, provides staff support to the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Statewide Independent Living Council. This is a vendor agreement for the procurement of goods and services, effective June 2015 through May 2016. Staff activities are directed by the Chairs of the Board and SILC, and staff provided reports of their activities at their respective meetings as requested.

Vocational Rehabilitation at a Glance

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program is a comprehensive program designed to assist individuals with significant disabilities in making career decisions and reaching their employment goals.

Who We Serve

- The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program served 4,657 South Dakotans with disabilities.
- There were 2,328 new applicants this last year.
- The average age of the applicant was 35.1 years of age.
- 41% of eligible VR participants had two or more serious functional limitations.
- 37% of Vocational Rehabilitation's participants were transition age (16 to 24 years of age at application).
- 31% of Vocational Rehabilitation's participants reported a serious mental illness as their primary disability.
- 40% of VR participants received either Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

Vocational Rehabilitation's Outcomes

- 769 Vocational Rehabilitation participants obtained employment.
- Of those obtaining employment, 220 (28.6%) utilized formal supports with an average wage of \$9.30/hr.
- The average hourly wage of individuals employed was \$10.61 after receiving vocational rehabilitation services.
- Upon completion of the VR program, participants will be working an average of 27.9 hours per week.
- Participants successful with their employment will generate \$11,842,269 combined annual earnings.

Vocational Rehabilitation at a Glance

Alan



Alan had experience working as a convenience store manager, meat clerk, and in positions working in advertising and contracting. Alan applied for VR services through the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).

At the time, he was utilizing a wheelchair for nearly all mobility needs. Alan has spinal stenosis/peripheral neuropathy/diabetic lumbosacral radiculoplexopathy. Spinal Stenosis is a narrowing of the spinal canal, located within the backbone. This is the space that holds the nerve roots and spinal cord. As this space becomes smaller, it can squeeze the nerves and spinal

cord which causes pain and other symptoms. Peripheral neuropathy is a condition that causes tingling, numbness and burning pain throughout the body, but primarily in the hands and feet.

Alan's work experience was very physical and when his conditions worsened, he could no longer perform the necessary functions of his current employment. He had surgery in July 2012, and he was unable to return to previous positions. Alan had to confront his health realities and their impact on his future employment opportunities.

Alan and his DRS counselor explored what new career options would match his current abilities through employment skills training. Alan had interests in the clerical support arena. Alan received guidance and counseling, assistive technology training, job placement, benefits counseling, follow along services and assistance with transportation. He learned how to utilize Paratransit services to attend training and to meet other mobility needs. He received training on "*Dragon Naturally Speaking Voice Recognition*" software, a program which allows the user to speak into a microphone and have the computer produce their words as text on the computer screen.

Alan started work part time as an Operation Specialist earning over \$11 an hour. Later, he was offered a full-time position with TCF Corporate, and he is now earning enough in wages to get off Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. He also receives other benefits of employment, e.g., health insurance, leave, retirement.

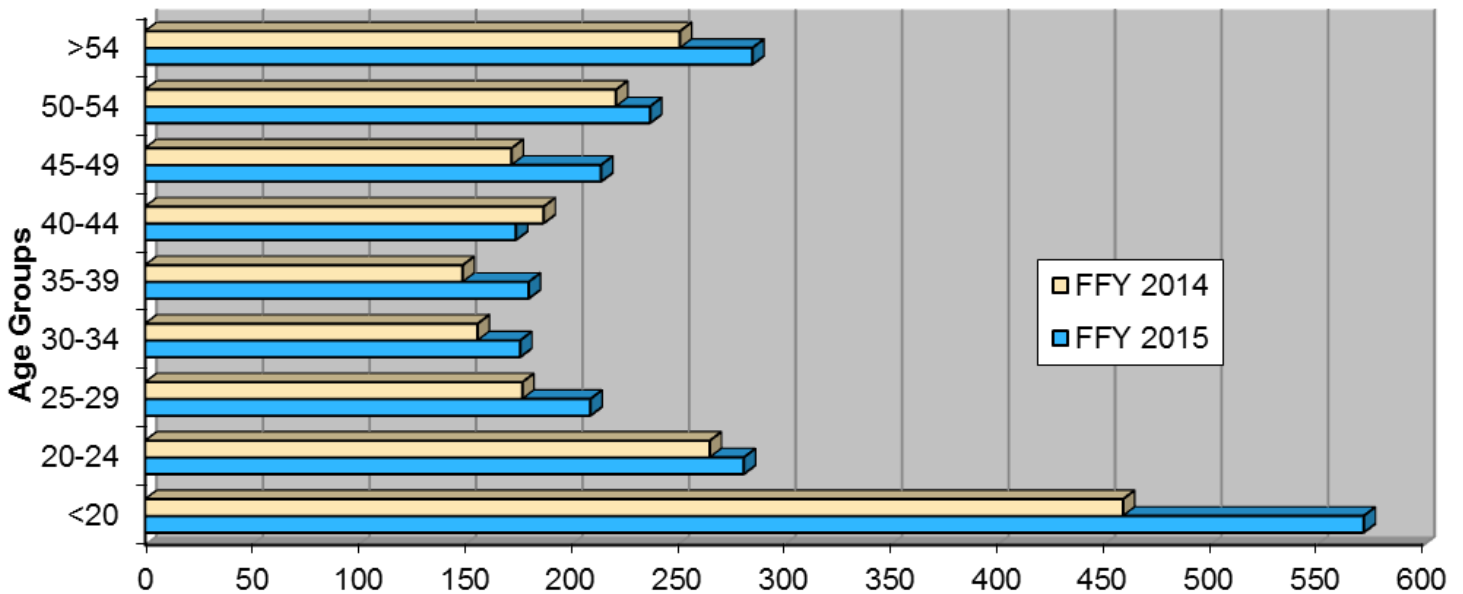
When Alan began employment he was utilizing a wheelchair for mobility. Today he is working full time, driving his own vehicle, and walking on his own. Beyond working, Alan enjoys spending time with his wife. Together they enjoy music, golf and other sports.

Vocational Rehabilitation at a Glance

The Division had a total of 2,328 individuals apply for vocational rehabilitation services in fiscal year 2015. The following chart depicts the number of applicants served per age group.

Number of Applicants Per Age Group

Federal Fiscal Year 2015 - October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015



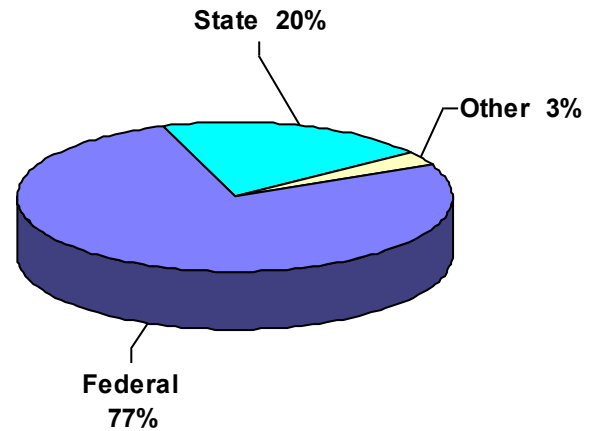
Vocational Rehabilitation at a Glance

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Serving a Diverse Population

Caucasian	82%
American Indian	16%
African American	4%
Hispanic or Latino	4%
Asian	1%
Pacific/Hawaiian	<1%

*Not equal to 100% as clients can identify with multiple races/ethnicities.

Vocational Rehabilitation Funding Sources in 2015



In fiscal year 2015, the average annual income of consumers rehabilitated was \$15,399.57.

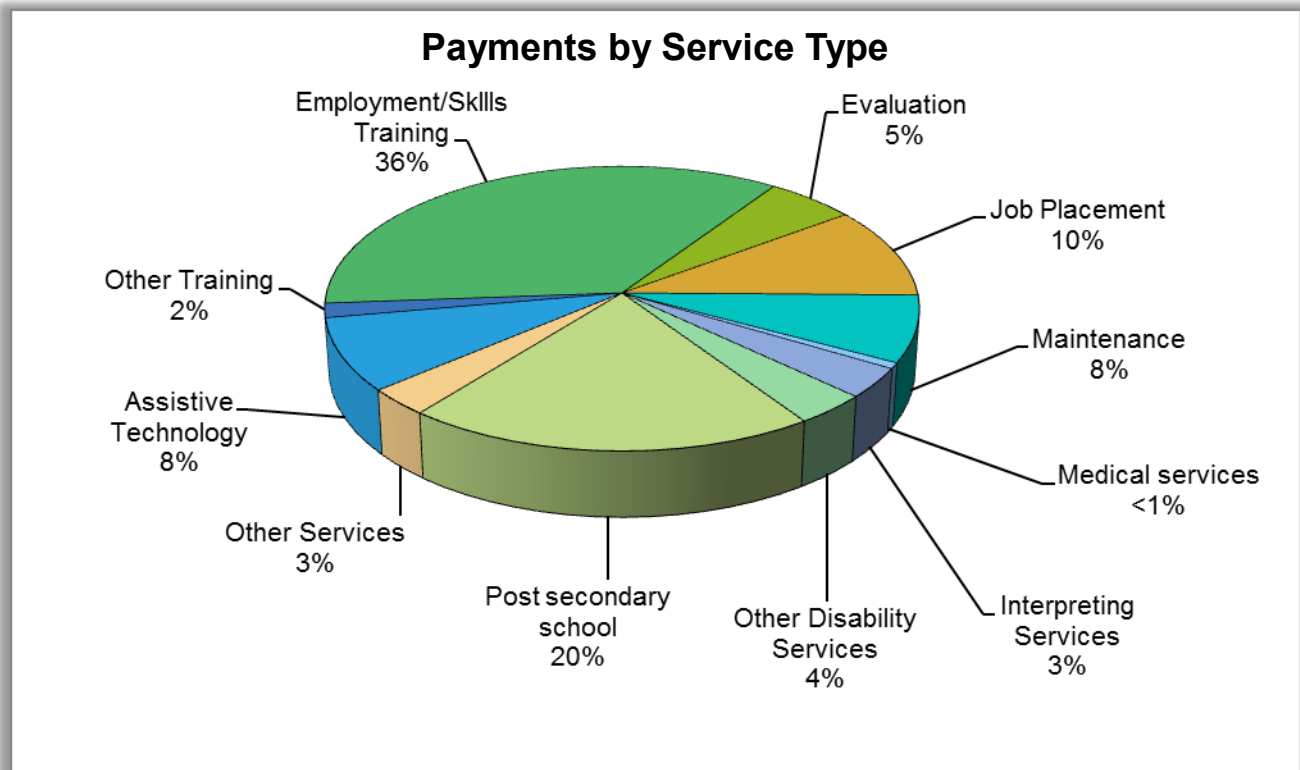
Prior to rehabilitation, the average income was \$2,725.44.

Vocational Rehabilitation Participants Receiving SSI/SSDI at Application

SSI	SSDI	SSI & SSDI	Total	Percent of Total VR Applicants
307	370	151	828	36%

Vocational Rehabilitation at a Glance

Vocational Rehabilitation Expenditures

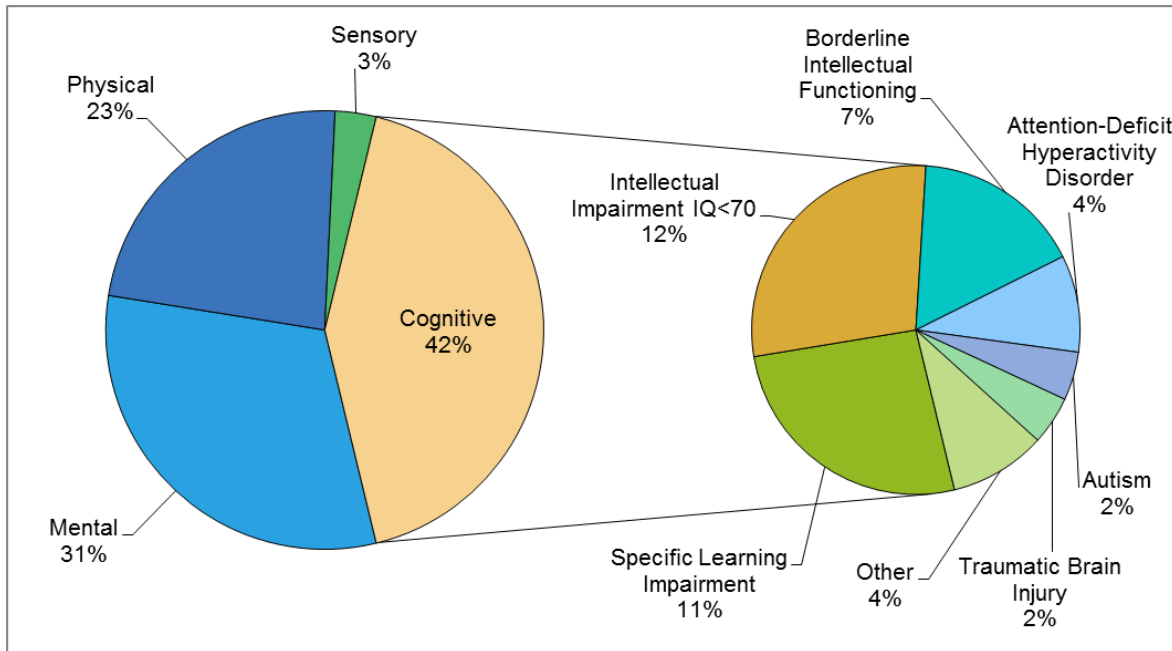


Fiscal Year 2015 Performance Outcomes

Performance Description	At Application	At Closure	Percent of Improvement
Increase in individuals obtaining medical insurance through employment	32	121	278%
Increase in individuals where wages are primary source of support	125	575	360%
Increase of weekly wages	\$64.22	\$296.02	361%

Vocational Rehabilitation at a Glance

Primary Impairment for Eligible Consumers



Referral Sources of Applicants

Referral Source	Percentage
Self	24%
Post & Secondary Education	20%
Other	13%
Mental Health Center	11%
Department of Labor	12%
Friends/Family	9%
Intellectual & Developmental Disability Providers	5%
Community Rehabilitation Programs	4%
Medical Agencies	2%

Project Skills

Many students with significant disabilities do not have an opportunity to gain paid employment experience while in high school. This is an important learning, maturing and socializing experience. Although willing, most employers cannot afford the supports these students frequently require on their first job.

The Divisions of Rehabilitation Services and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) fund a program entitled "Project Skills" to address this need.

Project Skills is a cooperative arrangement between VR Agencies and local school systems. The State VR Agencies fund the wages, worker's compensation and FICA while the schools provide job development, job coaching and follow-along services for the student at the job site. A total of 382 students participated in the program this past year.

Vocational Rehabilitation at a Glance

Laci

Laci's employment history is diverse. She has worked as a magazine vendor and in a restaurant as a dishwasher. She has also completed piece rate work through LifeQuest, and she has worked at the Daily Republic inserting ads into the newspaper.

When the Daily Republic had an opening for an individual to assist with pulling from the press machine, labeling and other various tasks, Laci expressed an interest in moving into this position. She was looking for new challenges and opportunities. Laci learned the new duties associated with the press machine with assistance from a job coach, and she was hired in this new position.

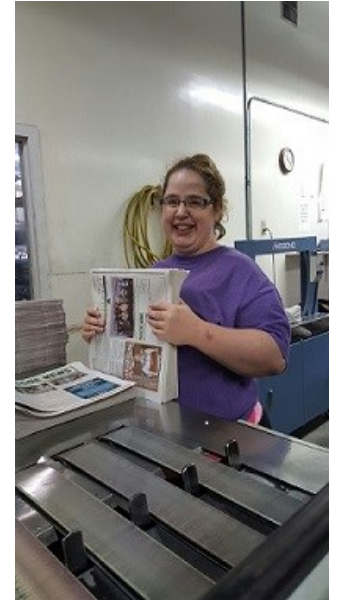
Laci is an individual with an intellectual disability and speech impediment, which makes it very difficult to understand her. Her speech impediment was causing the greatest impediment to reaching new employment goals.

After visiting with a vocational rehabilitation counselor, job placement assistance was authorized and provided by Career Connections, the local community support provider. The VR counselor also identified the need for assistance with transportation to and from work, and the need for orthopedic shoes due to the amount of standing required at work. The counselor also coordinated a meeting between Laci and a benefits specialist to work with her to determine how this career change would impact her benefits.

In the past, VR purchased a "Say it Sam", a communication device to help with communication, and Laci used pen and paper to correspond with others when they were unable to understand her. Later, Laci began using a cell phone to text when someone was having difficulty understanding her. Now, Laci has a job in which they are able to communicate effectively with her.

Laci continues to receive services and supports coordinated between the Division of Rehabilitation Services and LifeQuest. She also continues to receive HCBS funding and supported employment services. When Laci first applied for vocational rehabilitation services, she was receiving SSI and SSDI as well as Medicaid and Medicare. She is now only receiving SSDI and Medicare.

Laci enjoys spending time with her family, attending movies, going to concerts, bowling, playing the wii/computer, swimming and other community events. Laci also likes to participate in art related activities and is an active member of her church.



Vocational Rehabilitation at a Glance

Other Services

In addition to vocational rehabilitation services, consumers receive other types of assistance. The following reflects a broad array of entities that the Division works with to fulfill the consumer's employment goals.

Programs	Number of Clients
Mental Health Centers	261
Social Services	257
Department of Labor	165
Supported Employment	143
Drug/Alcohol Treatment	65
Probation/Parole	56
Honorably Discharged Veterans	35
Independent Living Center	24
Other VR Agencies	20
Community Support Provider	18
Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Section 304	16
Work Force Investment Act	15

Public Input...

Ways to let the Board and Division know your thoughts.

You can call:

- Voice/TTY: 605.945.2207
- Toll Free: 800.210.0143

You can fax:

- 605.945.2242

You can write:

- Chairperson, Board of Vocational Rehabilitation;
221 S Central Ave., Ste 34A,
Pierre, South Dakota, 57501

You can attend a meeting:

All Board meetings are open to the public. Copies of the meeting agendas can be obtained by calling:

- 605.945.2207 (Voice or TTY)
- 800.210.0143

You can become a member:

If you are interested in becoming a member of the State Rehabilitation Council, an application can be obtained by calling:

- 605.945.2207 (Voice or TTY)