
2016 Annual Report

SOUTH DAKOTA

Board of Vocational

Rehabilitation



Photo courtesy of SD Tourism

December 29, 2016

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



Dear Governor Daugaard:

On behalf of the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation (South Dakota's State Rehabilitation Council), I am pleased to provide you with a copy of our 2016 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. We believe these undertakings support your efforts of making employment the first priority and preferred outcome for South Dakotans with disabilities.

The passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act, reflects legislation to help workers, including workers with disabilities, to access employment, education, job-driven training and support services that provide them the chance to advance their careers and secure good jobs of the future. 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 will 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 continued belief and support to develop and expand our workforce, which includes people with disabilities.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patty Kuglitsch". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Patty Kuglitsch, Chairperson

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

December 29, 2016

RSA Commissioner
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), I am pleased to provide you with a copy of our 2016 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 (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. These undertakings support Governor Dugaard's efforts of making employment the first priority and preferred outcome for South Dakotans with disabilities.

The Board continually evaluates the effectiveness of the DRS vocational rehabilitation program, and we are pleased to report that in 2016 DRS provided services that assisted 776 individuals with disabilities accomplish their employment goals in careers of their choice. In addition, 409 students with disabilities had paid work experience prior to finishing high school.

The Board and Division will 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 continued belief and support to develop and expand our workforce, which includes people with disabilities.

Respectfully,



Patty Kuglitsch, Chairperson

CC: Board Members
Rimal Desai, RSA Liaison

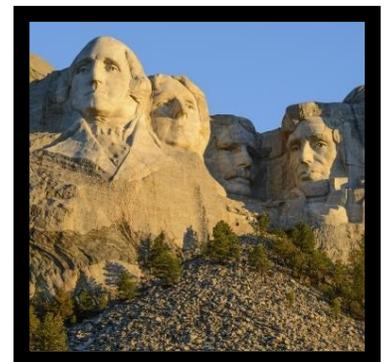


Photo courtesy of SD Tourism

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL OVERVIEW FFY 2016

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

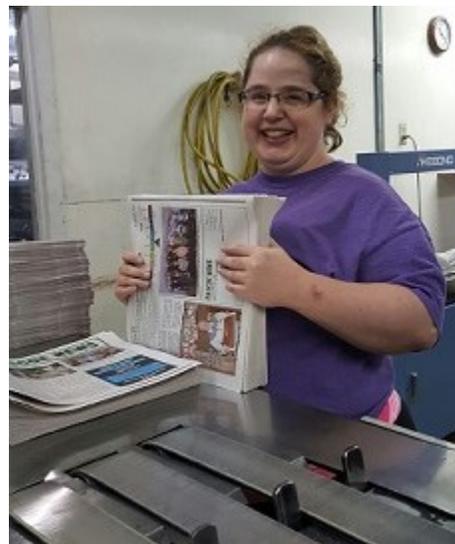
The State Rehabilitation Council is known in South Dakota as the **Board of Vocational (BVR or Board)**:

- ⇒ provides guidance to and works in partnership with South Dakota's general vocational rehabilitation agency - the Division of Rehabilitation Services.
- ⇒ plays a significant role in ensuring that the vocational rehabilitation program remains responsive to the needs of those served by it and operates effectively.
- ⇒ works 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.

Federally mandated membership requirements include a broad range of stakeholders to ensure various constituencies have a voice in the conduct of the VR agency.

The Council must be composed of at least 15 members—regulations specify requirements.

The 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.



BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MEMBERSHIP



*Members who have
resigned or whose terms
have expired.*



Patty Kuglitsch
Chairperson
Sioux Falls

Darla McGuire
Vice Chairperson
Ethan

Lisa Sanderson
Member-At-Large
Sioux Falls

Colleen Moran
Hartford

Jolleen Laverdure
Lower Brule

Chad Maxon
Box Elder

Joe Vetch
Summerset

Cole Uecker
Pierre

Eric Weiss
Pierre

Peter Bullene
Watertown

Kim Hoberg
Aberdeen

Kendra Gottsleben
Sioux Falls

Chuck Quinn
Pierre

Thore Jenshus
Rapid City

Beth Schiltz
Pierre

SRCs are the
consumer
voice for the
VR program!

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Committees

The Board utilizes three standing committees in completing its work. Conference calls, video conferencing, email and face-to-face meetings are utilized to conduct business. Their work is reported at each quarterly Board meeting. Below is a brief description of the three standing committees.



Photo courtesy of SD Tourism (Kadoka)



Photo courtesy of SD Tourism (Mitchell)

Quarterly Meetings

December 14/15, 2015
(canceled due to weather)
Rescheduled - January 29,
2016 via Digital Dakota
Network

April 7-8, 2016 in Pierre

June 27-28, 2016 in Pierre

September 22-23, 2016 in
Pierre

Executive Committee

Acts on behalf of the Board to perform necessary business matters between regular meetings. Their actions must receive concurrence of the full board (e.g., annual reports, state plan, staff support agreement, meeting agendas) at the next meeting.

Consumer Services Committee

Works on activities such as consumer satisfaction survey, Division's goals and strategies, systems change priorities, policy recommendations and public meeting topics.

Public Awareness Committee

Coordinates National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities, annual Governor's awards ceremony and other public outreach activities.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Title IV of WIOA) Enacted July 22, 2014

WIOA is designed to strengthen and improve the nation's public workforce system and help Americans with significant barriers to employment, including people with disabilities, obtain high quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers.

Changes to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 under Title IV of WIOA had a profound impact on individuals with disabilities, especially students and youth with disabilities, transitioning from education to employment. These provisions strengthen opportunities for individuals with disabilities to acquire the skills and supports necessary to maximize their potential and enter competitive integrated employment. The final implementing regulations for the VR program adhere to three goals:

- 1) Align the VR program with the workforce development system;
- 2) Strengthen VR's focus on competitive employment; and
- 3) Expand VR services to students and youth with disabilities.

New opportunities and innovations under WIOA will have a strengthened emphasis on competitive integrated employment; emphasis on transition services, including pre-employment transition services; emphasis on employer engagement; and collaborative opportunities to work with partners across the workforce development system.

Each state must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the US Secretary of Labor that outlines a four-year workforce development strategy for the State's workforce development system. South Dakota's workforce development system submitted a Unified State Plan in March. It outlined a four year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs included: Adult Program (Title I); Dislocated Worker Program (Title I); Youth Program (Title I); Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (Title II); Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Title III); and Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV). States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs.

WIOA - was designed to improve the quality of the workforce, increase economic self-sufficiency, reduce welfare dependency, meet employer skill requirements, and enhance the nation's productivity and competitiveness.

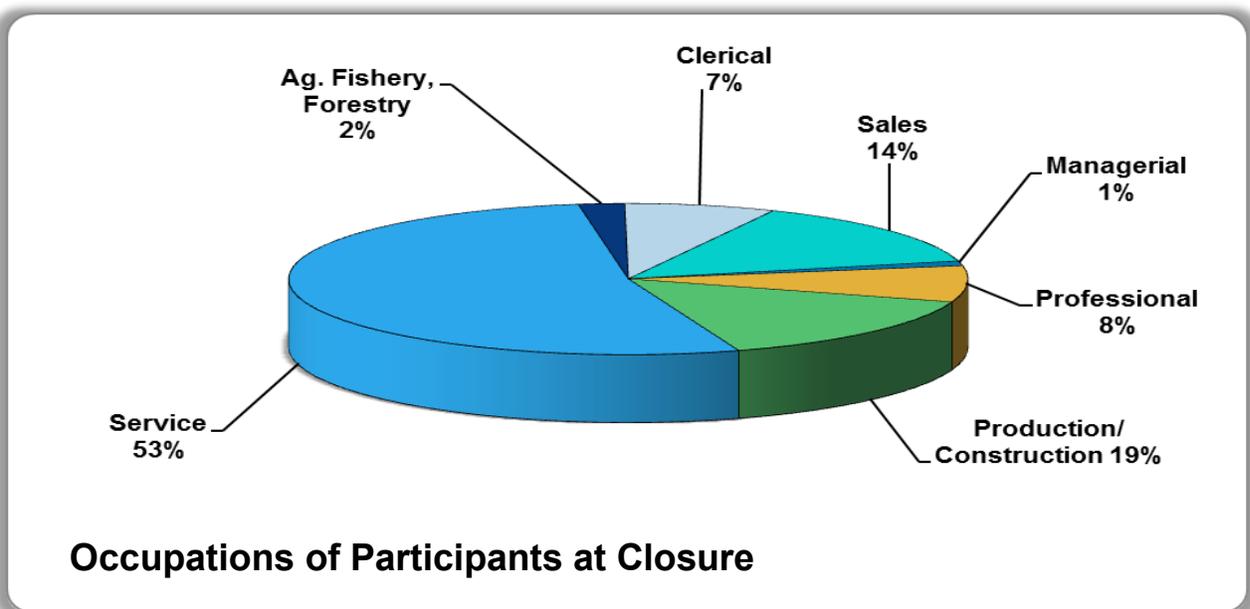
Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Division of Rehabilitation Services Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Program-specific requirements in the Unified State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation program authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA– Title IV.

Section 676.125 requires States to submit a VR services portion as part of the Unified State Plan that complies with all State Plan requirements set forth in sec. 101 (a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of WIOA. All submission requirements of the VR Services portion of the Unified State Plan are in addition to the jointly developed strategic and operational content requirements prescribed by sec. 102(b) of WIOA.

During the Board’s September 2015 meeting, the Division spoke to the State Plan re-write and its Sections (formerly called Attachments) and the proposed processes for obtaining public comment on this document, as well as other portions of the Unified State Plan. The Board’s Consumer Services Committee met early in December to review the Division’s State Plan. Committee members provided input, which was incorporated into the draft document.

The South Dakota Departments of Human Services (DHS) and Labor and Regulation (DLR) held public meetings to solicit input on the strategic planning and priorities for the core partners. A face-to-face meeting was held in Pierre on January 21st, and a video conference meeting was held on January 27th utilizing sites in Aberdeen, Sioux Falls, Pierre, Rapid City, Huron and Yankton.



Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Division of Rehabilitation Services

Goals of the VR Section of the State Unified State Plan

Five goals jointly developed by the Board and the Division for the VR portion of the State Unified Plan included:

Goal 1: Students will enter their adult lives capable of self-advocacy with sufficient experience to make choices about work and career, and being appropriately supported and living as independently as possible.

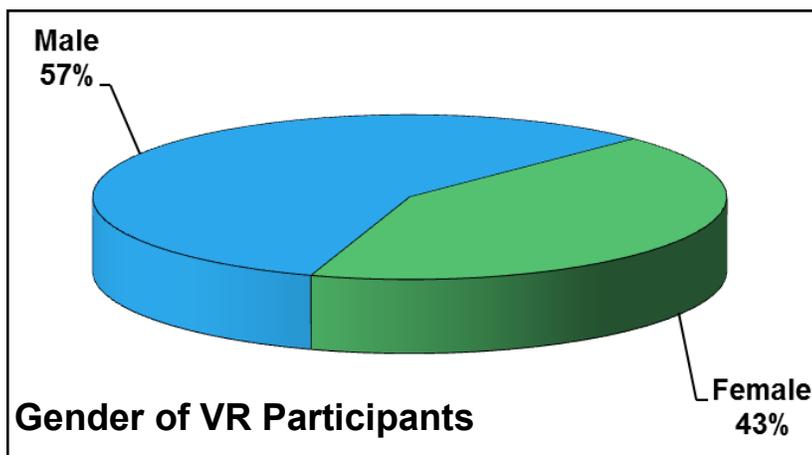
Goal 2: A strong statewide community with DRS presence and partnerships with business, community service providers, schools, State Government, workforce system and service organizations.

Goal 3: DRS participants will have greater access to transportation services needed to obtain and maintain employment.

Goal 4: A VR Services delivery system that results in enhanced earnings, employee benefits, retention and career advancement for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Goal 5: DRS participants will have the skills, motivation and supports necessary to make an informed choice for successful daily living, employment, money management, personal and work relationships.

The working relationship between the Board and the Division is a partnership focused on ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive appropriate, timely, and effective vocational rehabilitation services resulting in successful employment outcomes for those served.



VR Return on Investments

- ◆ The average annual income of participants rehabilitated was \$15,304.48.
- ◆ Prior to rehabilitation, the average income was \$3,833.96.

Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Division of Rehabilitation Services

Part of the Board's commitment to hear and learn from consumers and stakeholders statewide is supported by hosting Board meetings around the state. Participants are invited to provide input through the 'public comment' period at each meeting, or during 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 2016 Meeting (December 2015 meeting canceled due to winter storm)

Joint Meeting with Tribal and State Vocational Rehabilitation

The Board planned to host the December 2015 meeting in conjunction with the Tribal and State Vocational Rehabilitation Programs meeting. Time was going to be 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. Winter storms forced cancelation of both meetings. However several members were able to participate in a time of information dialogue.

Organizational Membership

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

Year End Data

A report was requested on the 2015 Federal Fiscal Year End Data. An overview was provided on the required federal reports which included all closed cases, fiscal and client data on open and closed cases, client appeals, caseload quarterly reports and semi-annual fiscal reports. Information on successful closures showed a total of 776 individuals were successfully employed with an average weekly 27.9 hours worked and earning \$10.61 average hourly wage.

Board Meetings & Activities

Workforce Diversity Network (WDN) of the Black Hills

Members met new executive director of the WDN, and she provided an overview of the organization. WDN has an approved contract in place with the Division to provide education, consulting, and technical assistance to businesses on the hiring, accommodations, supports and retention when employing people with disabilities. Examples of work being done include outreach to smaller employers, assistance with writing job descriptions, conducting interviews and providing information related to employees with disabilities. Partnerships have been developed with Black Hills Tourism and the Black Hills & Badlands Tourism Association.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Update

A member of the Board also serves on the SILC and information is exchanged between the two groups at their respective meetings. The SILC was working on its three year State Plan for Independent Living. New work groups were identified and activities assigned (consumer services, assistive technology, housing, outreach and public awareness). An independent living needs assessment was conducted to identify unmet needs. It addressed housing, transportation, health care, attendant services, disability rights, independent living needs, assistive technology and access to services. Outreach efforts and summer transition classes are offered to students with disabilities and information regarding these trainings is gaining momentum.

Employment Works Initiative

Several years ago Governor Daugaard called for the State of South Dakota to become a model employer of people with disabilities. The Governor challenged business, education and government sectors to work together to address workforce challenges. The Division has accomplished a number of activities under this initiative, which was fully endorsed by the Board.

**South Dakota
Employment Rate
for People with
Disabilities Highest
in the Nation**

***According to the 2015
Disability Statistics
Annual Report, South
Dakota has the
highest employment
rate for people with
disabilities at
50.1 percent.***

Board Meetings & Activities

Employment Works Initiative (Continued)

The Division has a designated business specialist serving as a single point-of-contact for businesses statewide. The business specialist provides technical assistance to businesses on disability related resources, awareness, training, and education when employing people with disabilities. Furthermore, the business specialist provides education and resources to vocational rehabilitation counselors and providers to increase their knowledge levels when contacting or working with businesses. DRS serves as a liaison with business associations by memberships and/or sharing information on diversity/disability employment related topics. For example, DRS has established a partnership with South Dakota Retailers Association (SDRA). Collaborative efforts have consisted of training webinars for their members and DRS has served as an advisor for their Office of Disability Employment Policy's "Getting Down to Business" pilot project.

"Ability for Hire" - an employer outreach campaign was launched in August 2015 to promote hiring, advancement, and retention of employment for people with disabilities in South Dakota's workforce. Strategies in the State Plan outline outreach/media activities targeting employers and the general public. Outreach includes a website and Facebook page, along with printed resources, radio advertising, television commercials, and videos that highlight businesses which have realized the value of hiring people with disabilities.

State's "Ability
for Hire"
campaign nets
two
communication
awards.



The Division worked towards increasing membership and involvement of staff within non-disability organizations to connect with employers. Some of the organizations include local Chamber of Commerce, Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM) and South Dakota Retailers Association. These opportunities allow for connecting with businesses to learn more about their workforce and training needs.

Activities were conducted to increase the number of work experience opportunities for students with disabilities, increase training opportunities for Community Support Provider staff and private providers; and a higher reimbursement rate was established for service providers who attended training and obtained certification.

The Division is creating an "Employer Resource Guide" which will provide information and resources to employers regarding various aspects of disability related topics. Board members asked about reviewing this and the ability to provide feedback to the Division.

Board Meetings & Activities

April 2016 Meeting

Project SEARCH

The Board approved financial support of Project SEARCH staff from three communities (Aberdeen, Brookings, Sioux Falls) to attend the 10th Annual Project SEARCH Conference held in Florida. Project SEARCH is a unique high school transition program that provides real-life experience combined with training, employment, and independent living skills to youth with significant disabilities. It offers an extensive period of training and career exploration, adaptations, long term job coaching, and continuous feedback from teachers, job coaches, and the employer.

Office of Special Education

An update was provided on the “Indicator 14 Post Secondary Education Outcomes” survey (from the 2013-14 exiters) which looks at percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, who had Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in effect at the time they left school, and who were enrolled in:

- a) higher education;
- b) higher education or competitively employed;
- c) higher education or in some other post secondary education or training program; or competitively employed in some other employment within one year of leaving high school.

Data showed: 20.7% enrolled in higher education; 74.21% enrolled in higher education or in some other post secondary education or training program; or competitively employed in some other employment. Data reflected a 18% not engaged rate.

Data reflected that if the person is employed more than 3 months and works more than 20 hours a week, this increases the likelihood of them being engaged. A noted trend was the number of students engaged in competitive employment has improved every year since 2008-09.

Purpose of the Board

- * Voice for consumers and other stakeholders in the VR system
- * Advocate for VR with the public
- * Advise the state agency on a variety of issues
- * Work in partnership with the agency to maximize employment and independent living
- * Provides local, external perspectives
- * Reaches out to other service providers, community groups and state agencies

Board Meetings & Activities

ASPIRE Project

“Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income” grant is a research project designed to advance self sufficiency of youth receiving Social Security Income (SSI) (ages 14-16) and their families. The goal is identifying interventions to impact youth’s education and employment, and reducing a household’s dependence on public benefits. South Dakota is one of six states in this consortium along with Utah, Arizona, Colorado, North Dakota, and Montana. Major activities included enrolling youth and families in the project; developing and providing training materials (advocacy, self-determination, financial literacy, parent training) developing paid employment opportunities and providing benefits counseling and case management services. South Dakota youth continue to work on goals related to employment, education and independent living.

Section 511 Subminimum Wage

Section 511 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act added new requirements for employers who hold special wage certificates, known as 14(c) certificates, under the FLSA (29 U.S.C.214(c)). New requirements must be satisfied before an employer hires a youth with disabilities at subminimum wage or continues to employ individuals with disabilities of any age at the subminimum wage level. Through this reporting period, the Division has been distributing information on the new Section 511 requirements to school districts, VR personnel, service providers, consumer organizations, individuals with disabilities, family members and employers. It was discovered that approximately 1,300 workers in South Dakota were earning less than minimum wage, most working in sheltered workshops. If an adult continues to work in a segregated workshop then VR must meet with each person. Youth cannot start work in subminimum wage until certain conditions are met (receive pre-employment transition services, has been served or been determined ineligible by VR; has been provided career counseling and information/referrals to other public programs that allow the experience of competitive, integrated employment).

DRS Effort to Build the Capacity of Supported Employment Providers

The Division reported on awarding capacity building grants to Community Support Providers and Mental Health Centers. These grants seek to expand supported employment opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities and supporting competitive employment for youth with developmental/intellectual disabilities under the age of 24, individuals with disabilities working in sheltered employment and individuals with limited work histories.

Board Meetings & Activities

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

Following the 2015 NDEAM events, a debriefing was held in December involving the local community planners and Board of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and Statewide Independent Living Council members. This was an opportunity for all involved to hear about one another's events: what is needed, who was involved, what worked well, and what could be improved. Items noted were communities are growing the diversity of planning partners, the need to grow representation of non-disability specific entities on planning teams, and there is a need to seek feedback from event attendees. The Board approved twelve Request for Proposals at their April meeting for the 2016 year.



Kathleen Barrow, is a Principal in the Rapid City , office of Jackson Lewis P.C. Speaker at the Rapid City event.

Self Determined Youth

A presentation was provided on the “Self Determined Youth” project that was created in November 2015. Selected representatives are students with disabilities who have participated in previous Youth Leadership Forums. These students, also in grades 9th –12th, have various disabilities and are on an Individualized Education Plan. The focus is on self-determination and self advocacy skill building. The team helps identify opportunities for students to attend and participate in activities, e.g., trainings, board meetings. A regional conference is being planned to provide additional leadership opportunities for other teens.

Governor's Awards

Members from the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Statewide Independent Living Council comprise the review committee for the Governor's Awards. This committee reviews the solicitation packet prior to dissemination and then reviews all submitted nominations. The committee's recommendations are forwarded to the Governor for his final consideration and action. Once final word is received from the Governor's Office, the award recipients are notified and the awards ceremony is coordinated with the Governor's Office and the Department of Human Services. The annual ceremony was held in September, with Governor Daugaard presenting the awards.

GOVERNOR'S AWARDS CEREMONY

Recognizes the achievements of employers, individuals with disabilities and other South Dakotan's for their contributions toward the rehabilitation and employment of people with disabilities.



Eric Bowers (Spearfish)
Outstanding Citizen with
a Disability Award.



NAPA Auto Parts
(Watertown) Outstanding
Private Employer
(Small Employer Category)
Stuart Geerdes, General
Manager.

*Whether we are
living with a dis-
ability or not,
we all want the
same things.*

*We want to be
accepted, to
live as
independently
as possible,
and to work.*

*Work gives us
all a sense of
purpose.*

*- Governor
Dennis
Daugaard*



Aaron Ready (Rapid City)
Outstanding Employee
with a Disability Award.



Nyberg's Ace Hardware
(Sioux Falls) Outstanding
Private Employer (Large
Employer Category).
Front row: Marin Huber,
Governor, Kevin Nyberg,
Cheri Haight, Jordan Olson;
Back row: Glenn Stanley,
Kevin Olinger, Connor
Dewey, and Ronny Gillespie.

GOVERNOR'S AWARDS CEREMONY CONTINUED

Below: Strider Sports International Inc., (Rapid City) received the **Distinguished Service Award**. Front row: Governor Dennis Daugaard and CEO and Founder Ryan McFarland, Back row are team members Susie Marcks, Ann Hovdenes, Dona Ochsner, and Lori Hodgjin.



Above: Cindy Kirschman (Aberdeen) was selected as the recipient of the Outstanding Transition Services Award. Cindy is pictured with the Governor.

We have strived to be an “employment first” state. That means making employment the first priority and preferred outcome for our citizens with disabilities. Simply put, many individuals with disabilities can work, want to work, and, when given a chance, are valuable employees.

Even being #1 in the nation, our employment rate for people with disabilities is 50%. Though our unemployment rate for those with disabilities is much lower than other states’, it’s still too high. There are too many South Dakotans with disabilities who want a job but can’t find one.”

-Governor Dennis Daugaard

Governor Dennis Daugaard presented the 2016 Governor’s Awards to South Dakota businesses and workers who have made significant contributions to the employment of people with disabilities.

Board Meetings & Activities

June 2016 Meeting

Financial Awards

The Board approved financial support of the “2016 Lighting the Way - Autism Spectrum Disorder in our Community” and the Watertown Dare to Dream conferences. Both events highlight disability related topics and speakers, incorporate employment tracks and target individuals with disabilities, family members and service providers. The VR district office in Yankton also submitted a request for support of the ADA Education and Celebration event. The monies were utilized to support the participation of individuals with disabilities by providing transit tickets.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

- ◆ Assists eligible individuals to obtain/maintain employment
 - ◆ Provides time-limited services
 - ◆ Is not an entitlement program

Case File Review

Division staff reported on the case file review conducted to assure compliance with federal and state policies. The review sought to improve consistency among offices as well as identify areas in need of improvement, training needs and strengths/weaknesses. Results can pinpoint needed corrections and can generate information by counselor, office or agency. Areas of focus included: eligibility, Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) development, services provided and case closures.

Recommendations noted a need for improvement in the areas of benefit analysis, plans for sustaining employment, movement from eligibility to plan development within 90 days and revision of the case file review instrument. Training needs were also identified: appropriate use of trial work/extended evaluation, clarification for coding impairment and need for additional information on supported employment.

Vocational Rehabilitation Outcomes

- 776 VR participants obtained employment.
- Of those obtaining employment, 235 (30%) utilized formal supports with an average wage of \$9.63/hour.
- Average hourly wage of individuals employed \$10.97 after receiving vocational rehabilitation services.
- Upon completion of the VR program, participants will be working an average of 29.7 hours per week.
- Participants successful with their employment will generate \$11,876,276 combined annual earnings.

Board Meetings & Activities

South Dakota Retailers Association (SDRA)

SDRA staff spoke to the partnership between the Division and SDRA and explained that their mission is to help businesses succeed. SDRA has a membership of over 3,900 large and small businesses. At the encouragement of the Division, SDRA applied for and received a federal pilot project aimed at increasing workplace inclusion of people with disabilities. One activity includes the Hy-Vee in Brookings agreeing to serve as a pilot internship program for adults with disabilities and partnering with the Division and Department of Labor and Regulation. Employer workshops and webinars have been held on topics such as employment laws and services. The SDRA's Retail Prophet Newsletter features monthly articles about employers who employ people with disabilities and related information. Disability related information is posted regularly on their website and social media sites. SDRA is also partnering with the Division on NDEAM events.

Youth Leadership Forum (YLF)

Transition Services Liaison Project staff provided an update. YLF provides career and leadership training for high school juniors and seniors and an opportunity to learn about self advocacy skills and disability awareness. Other sections of the 2016 event included social media and safety, meet the agencies poker run, career and technical education, writing goals and assistive technology. Three student delegates attended and spoke about their experience, activities they enjoyed and their future goals.

VR serves a diverse population

Caucasian	82%
American Indian	10%
African American	6%
Hispanic or Latino	<1%
Asian	1%
Pacific Hawaiian	<1%

Not equal to 100% as participants can identify with multiple races/ethnicities

Vocational Rehabilitation Participants Receiving SSI/SSDI at the time of Application

SSI	SSDI	SSI & SSDI	Total	Percent of Total VR Applicants
369	502	64	935	55%

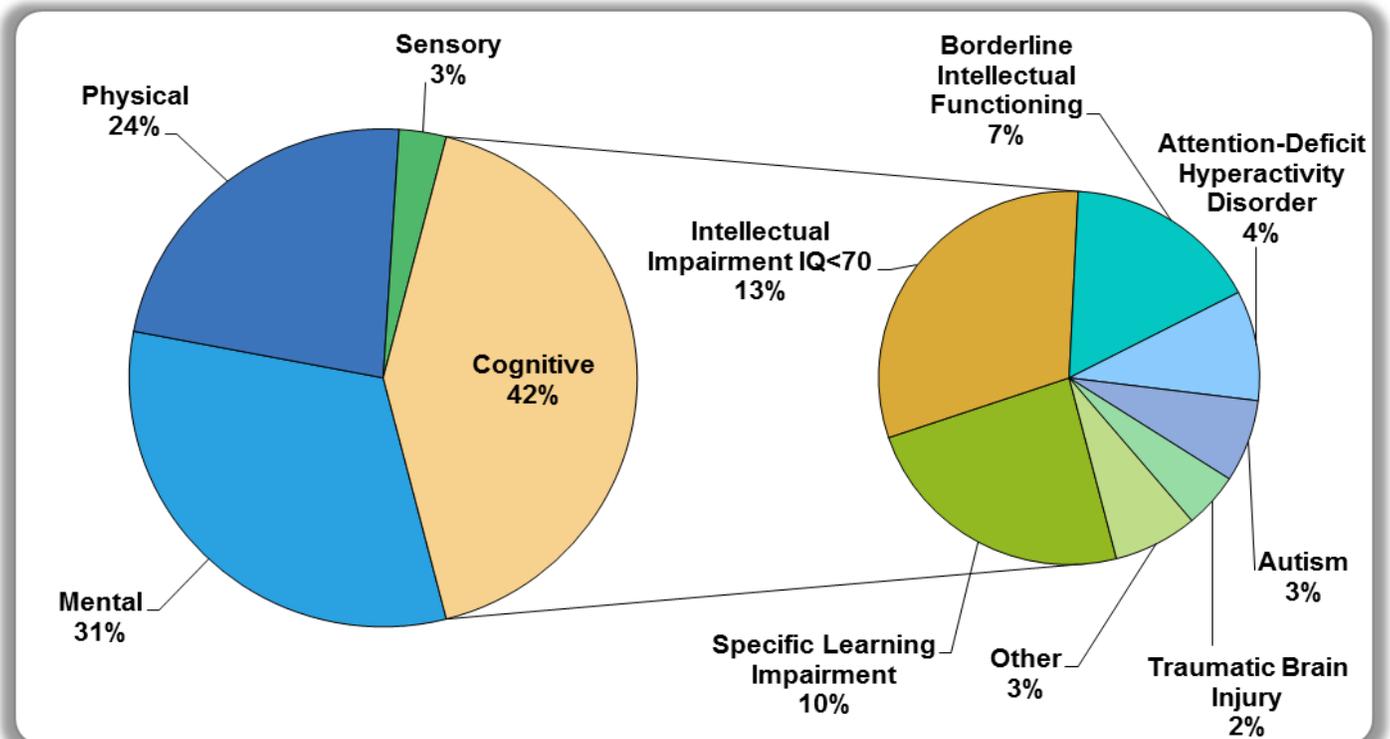
Board Meetings & Activities

September 2016 Meeting

A joint meeting was held for the Boards of Vocational Rehabilitation and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired. It began with new member orientation, which included the use of on-line training modules “History of Rehabilitation” and the “Role of the State Rehabilitation Council”. Information was provided on reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act, and the passage/implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. “What is Vocational Rehabilitation” addressed the two VR agencies in South Dakota and what VR can do (eligibility, services, IPE). An organizational overview was provided of the Department of Human Services including the two divisions, DRS and SBVI, and the Division of Developmental Disabilities and Developmental Center. Information also outlined the role, responsibilities and functions of the boards.

Time was held in the evening for members of both boards and staff of both divisions. The following morning’s agenda was developed by the directors of both agencies with input from the respective boards’ executive committees. The agenda focused on: WIOA and the Rehabilitation Act (Overview and Impact), competitive integrated employment, supported employment, pre-employment transition services, integration of VR into the Workforce System, and performance measures. There was also discussion on draft policy, other coming changes and the role of the boards in providing input on these matters.

Primary Impairment of Eligible VR Participants



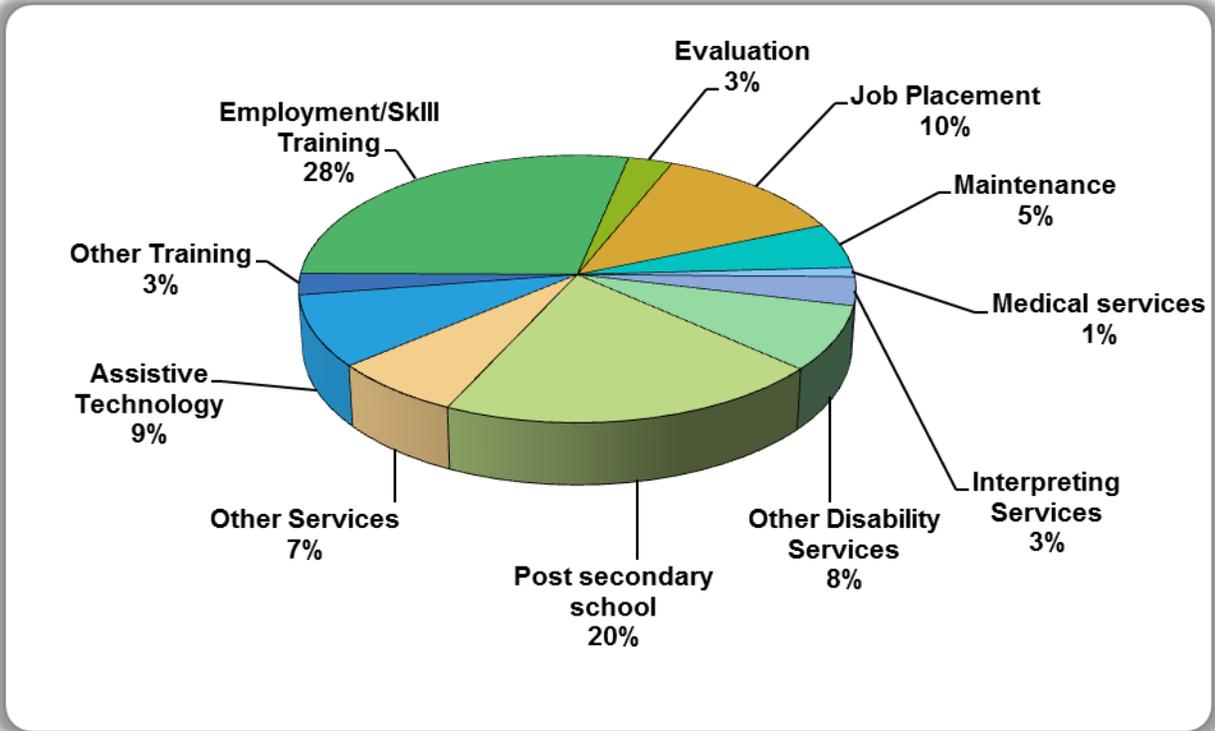
Board Meetings & Activities

Division’s Program Initiatives

The Board fully supports the Division’s efforts to increase provider expertise and capacity, as well as increase provider earnings, and employment retention (e.g., establishment grants to advance supported employment efforts, increase the number of certified providers, providing specialized training sessions). The Board encouraged the Division to continue activities to increase the number of certified providers, which also increases consumer choice for participants seeking employment supports. In addition to the above listed items, three seed grants were awarded to the communities of Aberdeen, Brookings and Yankton to expand business led opportunities, similar to what has been done in Sioux Falls with the Business Resource Network and in Rapid City with the Workforce Diversity Network of the Black Hills.

The Division also offered two summer initiatives: pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities and employer based work experience for vocational rehabilitation participants. The first initiative focused on providing students with disabilities workplace readiness training, instruction in self-advocacy, and information on VR and other organizations. The second initiative partnered with employers to provide VR recipients with information, job shadowing, and other opportunities to experience various positions within a given business.

Vocational Rehabilitation Expenditures - Payments by Service Type



What Can Be Accomplished

Graduate from High School
Attend Post Secondary Education
Earn a Degree in Marketing
Work At Your Dream Job



Kayley worked with the Division of Rehabilitation Services in high School. She wanted to continue with post-secondary education. She worked with a vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor to pursue a career. Through guidance and counseling, she decided her direction. VR provided tuition, books and note scribe for her time in school. Kayley worked with DakotaLink, SD Assistive Technology Project, to determine what assistive devices would work best for her. She now utilizes Keystrokes, Photoshop, In-Design and Illustrator. She also has a monthly subscription for 30+ Adobe programs.

Kayley likes marketing, media, and football. Working for a football team was her dream job. She worked for the Sioux Falls Storm, indoor football team, as a media intern. Following graduation from college, she was hired as their Director of Social Media Marketing. She tweets live during each game, runs the Storm's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, she also works on the team's website and writes all of the press releases for the Storm.

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

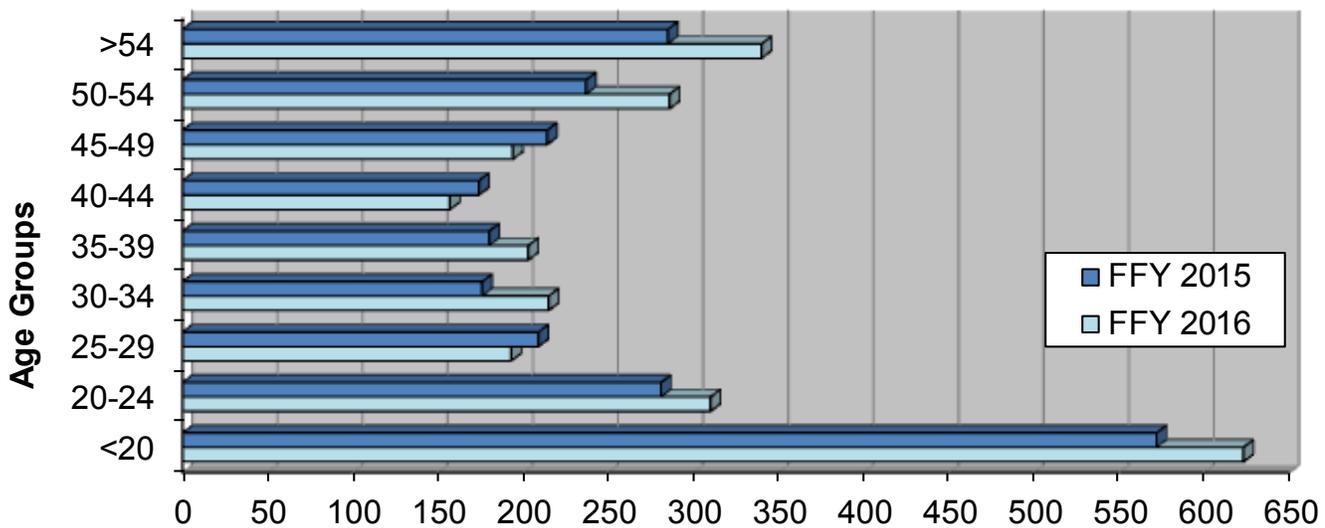
- ◆ Served 4,620 South Dakotans with Disabilities.
- ◆ Average age of the applicant was 35.3 years of age.
- ◆ 37% of VR's participants were transition age (16 to 24 years of age at application).
- ◆ 31% of VR participants reported a serious mental illness as primary disability.
- ◆ 37% of VR applicants received either Social Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).
- ◆ 98% of all participants had a significant disability.

The Division had a total of 2,521 individuals apply for vocational rehabilitation services in fiscal year 2016.

Aspects of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Number of Applicants Per Age Group

Fiscal Year 2016 - October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016



Eligibility for VR

- ⇒ Individual must have a documented disability.
- ⇒ The disability must create a substantial impediment to the employment outcome.
- ⇒ The individual must require services to achieve an employment outcome.
- ⇒ The individual must be able to benefit from services to achieve an employment outcome.

Referral Sources of Applicants

Referral Source	Percentage
Self	24%
Post Secondary & Secondary Schools	19%
Other	15%
Mental Health Center	11%
Department of Labor	11%
Friends/Family	9%
Intellectual & Developmental Disability Providers	7%
Community Rehabilitation Programs	2%
Tribal VR	2%

Aspects of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Project Skills

Many students with significant disabilities do not have an opportunity to gain paid employment experiences while in high school. This is an important learning, maturing and socializing experience. Although willing, most employers cannot afford the supports some 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 VR agencies fund 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.

Other Services

In addition to vocational rehabilitation services, participants receive other types of assistance. The chart to the right reflects a variety of services and entities that the Division works with to fulfill the participant’s employment goals.

Programs Participants Are Involved With	Count
Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Agencies	175
One-stop Employment Training Centers	152
Educational Institutions (elementary/secondary)	152
Social Security Administration	132
Mental Health Provider	121
State Department of Correction Juvenile Justice	76
Welfare Agency (State or local government)	73
Medical Health Provider	70
Other Sources/Programs	43
Child Protective Services	31
Public Housing Authority	29
Veteran’s Administration	22
Consumer Organizations or Advocacy Groups	20
Other State Agencies	16
Employers	16
Other VR State Agencies	12
Worker’s Compensation	11
Employment Networks	7
Federal Student Aid	4



Photo courtesy of SD Tourism

VR Success Story



Mandy was born with congenital hearing loss in both ears. She has worn hearing aids since age three. She also has a twin sister who has hearing loss in one ear.

Following high school graduation, Mandy and her sister attended Missouri State University (MSU) on handball scholarships. Mandy sought out vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. She received counseling and guidance while continuing her education. Other services provided during this time included tuition & fees and hearing aids. In the midst of studying and attending classes she and her sister were playing pro-level handball, eventually placing third and eighth place. She earned a bachelor's degree in communication disorders upon completion of her study at MSU.

Upon graduation, Mandy didn't quite know what she wanted to do, so she worked a variety of jobs. Mandy decided to go back to school. She applied with the University of South Dakota and enrolled in the audiologist program. At first, she didn't know if she would make it into the program because of her hearing loss. She was accepted. This gave her hope and confidence that she would be able to assist others with hearing impairments.

She graduated with a Master's degree and then she did a fellowship at the School for the Deaf in Faribault, Minnesota. Following this, she worked at an Ear, Nose and Throat practice in Kansas City, Missouri.

During her time in Kansas City, she enrolled in a doctorate program of Audiology. She obtained her degree two years later through the University of Florida online program. Upon receipt of her doctorate, she accepted a position with the Sioux Falls Veterans Administration. Mandy has been working there for over seven years.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Available

- Evaluations—Medical, psychological, educational, work related
- Vocational Counseling—adjustment to disability, planning for the future, interest assessments, disability related knowledge
- Training—on the job training (OJT), job coaching and post secondary training programs
- Employment—resumes, applications, interviewing, job placement assistance
- Accommodations— personal support services, assistive technology, interpreters, readers, note takers, work site evaluations
- Transition services for students 16 years old and older. Services can include Project Skills, attending IEP meetings, and other school to work activities.

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Public Input

Ways to let the Board and Division know your thoughts:

Telephone:

605.945.2207

Toll Free: 800.210.0143

Fax: 605.945.2422

*Write: Board of Vocational
Rehabilitation*

*221 S Central Ave, Ste 34A
Pierre, SD 57501*

Attend a meeting. All board meetings are open to the public. Copies of the meeting agendas can be obtained by calling 605.945.2207 or 1.800.210.0143

*Information (membership, agendas, minutes) can also be found at the Boards/Commissions website portal:
<http://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/>*

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Board, a nomination form can be obtained by calling 605.945.2207

Board Responsibilities

- * Review, analyze and advise the agency;
- * Develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities;
- * Advise and assist in the preparation of the State Plan;
- * Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of consumer satisfaction;
- * Prepare an annual report to the Governor;
- * Coordinate activities with other councils in the State;
- * Coordinate relationship between the Designated State Agency (Department of Human Services) and SILC/ CILs; and
- * Perform other functions as appropriate

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 of the Division and Board staff, as stipulated in the bylaws.