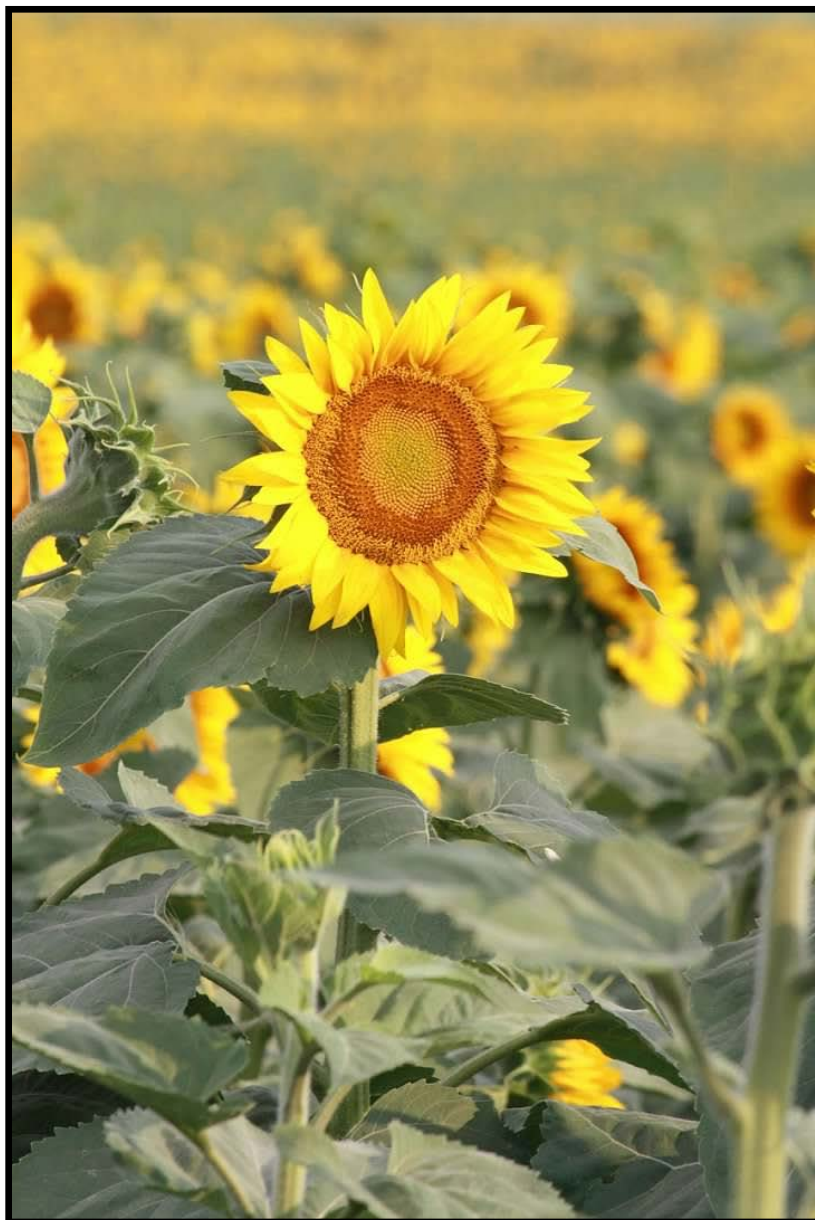


2019
South Dakota Board of
Vocational Rehabilitation
Annual Report



Vocational Rehabilitation- State Rehabilitation Council

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

South Dakota's SRC is known as the **Board of Vocational Rehabilitation** (Board). The Board:

- Provides guidance to and works in partnership with South Dakota's general Vocational Rehabilitation agency – the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).
- Plays a significant role in ensuring that the VR program remains responsive to the needs of those served and operates effectively.
- Works with DRS 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 vocational rehabilitation agency.

The SRC must be composed of at least 15 members –federal regulations (§361.17) specify requirements.

The relationship between the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division of Rehabilitation Services is a partnership. The partnership is focused on ensuring that eligible individuals receive appropriate, timely and effective vocational rehabilitation services. The provided services are designed to support the individuals served reaching their career goals in successful integrated employment within communities of all sizes throughout South Dakota.

Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Membership

Lisa Sanderson, Chairperson
Sioux Falls

Patty Kuglitsch (outgoing)
Sioux Falls

Jolleen Laverdure, Vice Chair
Lower Brule

Joe Vetch
Summerset

Brad Konechne, Member at Large
Brookings

Cole Uecker
Pierre

Kim Ludwig
Aberdeen

Kendra Gottsleben
Sioux Falls

Kristina Allen
Sioux Falls

Colleen Moran
Hartford

Bill McEntaffer
Pierre

Kristi Eisenbraun
Sioux Falls

Kevin Barber
Sioux Falls

Beth Schiltz
Pierre

Eric Weiss
Pierre

Peter Bullene
Watertown

Brooke Lusk
Pierre

Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Meeting Dates and Locations - Committees

Quarterly Meetings

December 4, 2018
Via video conference

March 27, 2019
Brookings

June 19, 2019
Ft. Pierre

September 26, 2019
Ft. Pierre



Dignity - Chamberlain
Photo courtesy of SD Tourism

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, meeting agendas) at the next meeting.

Consumer Services Committee

Works on activities such as consumer satisfaction survey, DRS goals and strategies, policy recommendations and public meeting topics.

Public Awareness Committee

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

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Enacted July 22, 2014

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which includes Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, is designed to strengthen the nation's 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 have had a profound impact on individuals with disabilities, especially students and youth with disabilities, transitioning from education to employment. These provisions have strengthened and increased opportunities for individuals with disabilities to acquire skills and supports necessary to maximize their potential and enter competitive integrated employment in communities throughout this state and country.

The final implementing regulations for the VR program under WIOA strongly 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 have emphasized competitive integrated employment. They have also strengthened an emphasis on transition services, including pre-employment transition services. Innovations have focused on greater employer engagement and partnering across the workforce development system.

Each state must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the U.S. Secretary of Labor outlining a four-year workforce development strategy for their workforce development system, which includes these core programs: Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program and Vocational Rehabilitation Program. An approved Unified or Combined State Plan must be in place to receive federal funding for these programs.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Division of Rehabilitation Services

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.

Goals of the VR Section of the Unified State Plan

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 systems and service organizations.

Goal 3: DRS participants will have greater access to transportation services required 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 informed choices about successful daily living, employment, money management, personal and work relationships.

Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Quarterly Meeting Highlights

The Board's commitment to represent consumers and stakeholders statewide is partially supported by hosting their meetings in communities throughout the state. It is also supported by ensuring that all meetings are held in accessible locations and made accessible to people needing effective communication to fully participate.

Public participants are invited to provide input during the "public comment" period of each meeting. Time is also set aside at some meetings to meet with identified groups. These are opportunities to hear about what is working well and what can be improved upon. When possible, meetings are also scheduled to coincide with meetings of other groups so they may learn from and enhance collaboration with one another.

Each meeting contains standing agenda items such as the Director's Report, Vocational Rehabilitation Initiatives, Business Specialist Report, SILC Report, and Board Staff Report. Below are highlights of discussion topics during the past year's BVR meetings.

December 4, 2018 The meeting was held via videoconference

ANNUAL REPORT: The Board's 2018 annual report is due to the Governor and the RSA Commissioner by the end of December each year. Suggestions for minor edits and highlighting the NDEAM events were made. Consensus was these changes were good and appropriate and the report was ready to submit.

CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS: There were discussions on how to increase the response rate. Some examples of recent steps that have been taken in the process e.g., prior emails alerting individuals of the arrival of the surveys and encouraging them to complete them; re-mailing of surveys; phone calls and offers to complete over the phone. There were questions about what other states may have already done to address some of the questions being asked, and if there might be a way to inquire and see what could be learned. It was also suggested that it might be beneficial to pilot some electronic approach

to completing the surveys. DRS has difficulty acquiring employment verification documentation once cases have been closed. Another problem is the inability to locate them due to no forwarding addresses.

DRAFT DOCUMENT ON POLICY IMPACT ON STUDENTS WITH ID SEEKING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: Draft questions for possible submission to RSA and questions for DRS were reviewed. A proposed change to one of the questions drafted for submission to RSA was requested. Extensive dialogue followed on comprehensive transition and postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disabilities.

March 27, 2019
Brookings, SD

STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT: Bob Jahner, a consultant from Wyoming with vast experience in the vocational rehabilitation program and has previously assisted both VR agencies in South Dakota with the completion of the statewide needs assessment, joined the meeting via teleconference. Mr. Jahner presented on the comprehensive statewide needs assessment, the agency's service history with an emphasis on the past three program years (2017, 2018 and 2019), an assessment of what is expected to be needed in the next three program years (2020, 2021 and 2022), and the use of this information as the basis for refreshing the statewide goals and strategies for the next three program years. He reviewed how the assessment is planned and designed – considering the federal format and the state's unique needs; gathering information; and how the outcome of the assessment will fit into the State's Unified or Combined State Plan. He further described the composition of the executive committee that will be involved with this process, as well as a proposed timeline for the completion of various stages of the process.

PROJECT SEARCH: Larry Ayres, Project Coordinator, SDSU/ Brookings Project SEARCH. Larry explained that this is a High School Transition Program, which involved three 10 – 12-week job rotations. The program is in its sixth year. Larry explained that those accepted into the project have a 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM day, five days a week. It begins with a short period of time in the project office working on employability skills, and the remainder of the day is spent "on the job." In years 1 through 5, 34 interns have entered the program with 30

successfully finishing it. To successfully complete the program, an individual must be working 16 or more hours at minimum wage or more. At this time, 85% of those employed at the time of completion of their program are still employed. They have six interns this year, and four are already employed. For the coming year, they have accepted five of the applicants and are interviewing one later today; two have been declined. BVR members and others were able to tour of some of the employment sites on SDSU campus.

MASTERS DEGREE IN REHABILITATION AND MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING:

Dr. Alan Davis is the director of this degree program at SDSU. He provided a presentation focusing on: (a) the MSRC program being established at SDSU in 2006; (b) its accreditation by CORE in 2008; (c) the mission being to prepare professionals to facilitate social and economic independence of persons with physical and psychiatric disabilities; and (d) the reality that graduates have found employment in state rehabilitation offices, mental health centers, supported employment programs, community-based vocational programs, schools and other commercial and non-profit organizations.

CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT: DRS reported on the new Customized Employment service and how it is being developed in South Dakota. The essential elements of customized employment are: (a) meets the needs of employment seekers with disabilities who have not been or are unlikely to be successful with traditional or supported employment; (b) its individualized approach – one job for one person; (c) the “no fail” approach – presuming that all individuals can work; (d) provision of this service in the community or in businesses owned by the individual; (e) negotiation of job duties; (f) negotiated pay of at least minimum wage; (g) use of job development “agents” to represent the job seeker; and (h) an outcome of self-employment or wage employment as chosen by the individual. Information on the Discovery Process was provided, as well as steps taken to plan for and develop customized employment.

**June 19, 2019
Ft. Pierre, SD**

STATE PLAN: The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan went into effect in 2016. Revisions were made in 2018, and the State Plan involved other key partners under the Department of Labor and Regulation

(DOL). It is now time to update it with a pending effective date of July 2020. The Workforce Development Council met recently and reviewed the plan's vision and goals. DRS and Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired's (DSBVI) comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) are a next step for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs to take in preparing to make changes to their portions of the State Plan. A meeting with core partners to talk about the vision and goals was held. It is expected there will be a final draft of the WIOA Unified State Plan later this calendar year with Title IV (the DRS and DSBVI portions) – updated as well.

SPECIAL EDUCATION INDICATOR 14: Dr. Faye LaDuke-Pelster, from Black Hills State University, provided a presentation based upon a survey of all students on IEPs who had graduated, received a certificate, dropped out or aged out as of 2018.

September 26, 2019

**Joint meeting with Board of Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired
Ft. Pierre, SD**

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Due to a lack of a quorum at June meeting, the election of officers was postponed until the September meeting. The elected executive committee includes: Chairperson- Lisa Sanderson; Vice Chairperson- Jolleen Laverdure; and Member at Large- Brad Konechne.

BUSINESS SPECIALIST REPORT: Kim Ludwig presented on a variety of related topics including, including:

- 2019 NDEAM UPDATES/EVENTS – Kim provided an overview of this event from the national perspective, as well as sharing that Governor Noem has proclaimed October as Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) in South Dakota. The theme for 2019 is “The Right Talent, Right Now.” It emphasizes the essential role that people with disabilities play in America’s economic success, especially in an era when historically low unemployment and global competition are creating a high demand for skilled talent.
- 2019 GOVERNOR’S AWARDS –Kim addressed the annual Governor’s Awards process and status of that process. This year’s ceremony is scheduled for Monday – November 4th – at the Capitol Rotunda at 10:00

AM (CT). A reception will be held following the ceremony at the Casey Tibbs South Dakota Rodeo Center in Ft. Pierre.

- **VR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES INITIATIVE** – Kim explained the focus and development of this initiative. A written report had been sent out to members prior to the meeting, which provided an overview of the entities involved, training locations, the dates trainings were held and the number of participants. A total of 107 students were involved in the trainings. Sixty-four are currently receiving services from VR, and 43 are potentially eligible for services.
- **BUSINESS ASSOCIATION TRAINING** – In July, Kim facilitated a webinar for SD Retailers Association on Recruiting, Hiring & Retaining Employees with Disabilities: VR Services Available to Businesses. It focused on promoting to businesses the availability of VR supports to them for workplace assistance and solutions.
- **BUSINESS MEETINGS/ON-SITE TOURS** – During the past quarter, Kim has had the opportunity to meet with several businesses to learn more about their workplaces, workforce needs through the completion of on-site tours. She has done this with Twin City Die Castings/Watertown; United Hardware Distributing Center/Milbank; Tech Ord/Clear Lake; and Terex Utilities/Watertown and Huron.
- **ABILITY FOR HIRE EMPLOYERS BROCHURE** – Kim handed out a copy of the current materials. She shared that it is time to review this material and determine if an update it needed. Consensus was that the Public Awareness Committee will take the lead on this activity.

Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Governor's Awards Ceremony

GOVERNOR KRISTI NOEM PRESENTING
THE 2019
GOVERNOR'S AWARDS



Outstanding Citizen with a
Disability:
Brad Konechne



Outstanding Employee with a
Disability:
Carolee Bucholz
Accepting for Carolee is
Vicki Nelson



Outstanding Transition
Services:
Carolyn Schuldies



Outstanding Employer
(Small Employer Category):
Cammack Ranch Supply -
Union Center



Outstanding Employer
(Large Employer Category):
Five Star Call Center - Madison



Outstanding Employer:
USD/Center for Disabilities
Sioux Falls



Distinguished Service:
Nancy Schlichenmayer
Pierre

Board of Vocational Rehabilitation National Disability Employment Awareness Month Activities



Annually, October is declared National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). The Board collaborates with the Board of Service to the Blind and the Statewide Independent Living Council to support activities throughout the state recognizing the contributions of people with disabilities within our communities' workforces. This year was no different. Governor Noem joined by declaring October as Disability Employment Awareness Month in South Dakota.

Events were held in thirteen communities across the state – Volga, Madison, Brookings, Sisseton, Aberdeen, Mobridge, Pierre, Sioux Falls, Yankton, Rapid City, Vermillion, Watertown, and Mitchell.

The national theme was "The Right Talent, Right Now." Public turnout at these events was promising, although most sites continue to explore ways to attract more representation from businesses at the NDEAM events.

Board of Vocational Rehabilitation

2019 Success Story

Persevering Through Limitations Towards Employment

Carolyn Raville keeps things simple. Her advice to anyone wanting to be successfully employed is: "Get yourself to work. Learn the job. Always do the best you can. Stay positive. And most of all SMILE!"

These are words that she lives by each day when going to a job that she truly enjoys. Carolyn lights up when talking about her journey to becoming a full-time employee at the Southside Walmart in Sioux Falls. But to fully understand her story, you would need to go back to around the year 2000. This is when Carolyn started to feel like she had "butterflies fluttering in her legs." What was happening was the onset of multiple sclerosis (MS).

Because of this progressive condition, Carolyn eventually needed a walker for mobility reasons. She also struggled with driving as her foot was too weak to move from the gas pedal to the brakes. She came to Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) in 2015, requesting assistance with seeking employment that would be compatible with her functional limitations. With the assistance of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor, Emily Rudnik, and longtime job placement provider, Loni Broton, Carolyn was on the path to obtaining employment.

Since beginning her job in the deli at Walmart back on September 8, 2016, Carolyn has continued to feel positive results of working. When asked about what makes her job better, she's quick to answer: "the 3-tiered cart!" Even though it is an accommodation that was provided to specifically help her, her co-workers are also benefiting by using it. With the assistance of DakotaLink, DRS researched the cart and purchased it. It was approved ahead of time by Walmart management and has allowed her to complete her job tasks more efficiently. Carolyn states that she puts everything and anything on the cart including up to 12 rotisserie chickens and more!

Another thing that Carolyn says added to her success is the hand-controls that DRS helped her with getting installed on her vehicle. Because of her MS, she was also encountering more difficulty with driving. With the assistance of her VR counselor and DRS rehabilitation engineer, she completed an evaluation through Sanford Occupational Therapy. DRS ordered the hand-controls and then contracted with R&R Mobility Conversions, Inc. to install them on her vehicle. Carolyn then received training, so she could use the controls effectively. With the

strength in her hands and the control knobs on her steering wheel, she feels safe and secure when driving.

Carolyn was also quick to point out the no-skid shoes that she was able to purchase through DRS's assistance. They have lasted two years and have really help her to ambulate throughout the deli.

Carolyn says she was also fortunate to have benefits specialist, Rhonda Erickson, help her navigate and get accepted for the Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD) program. When she began working at Walmart she was employed on a part-time basis in which she needed medical insurance. Under MAWD, Carolyn receives Medicaid insurance to cover on-going medical expenses. Even though she has been promoted to full-time hours, Carolyn continues to receive MAWD and it saves her a great deal on monthly insurance premiums.

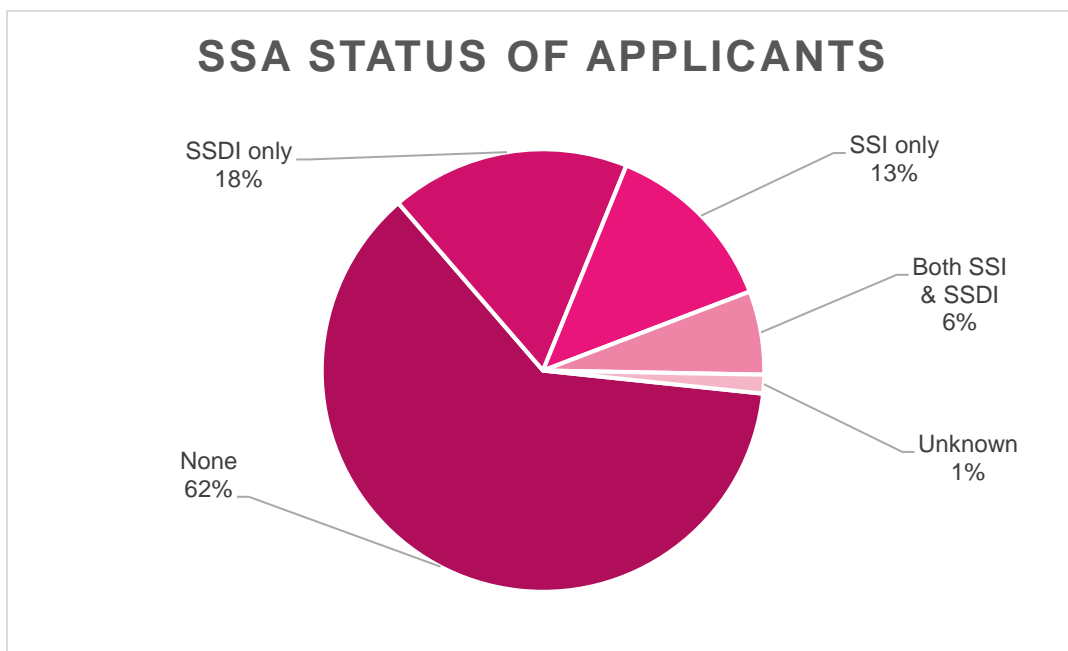
But most important, Carolyn just enjoys working. Visiting with the deli customers when getting their orders and problem solving with co-workers is what she likes best. In her spare time, Carolyn exercises in the therapeutic pool at Bethany Meadows and spends time with her five adult children and six beautiful grandchildren.

It is evident that she has formed many meaningful relationships with her co-workers and customers alike when walking around Walmart with her. Walmart is one fortunate company to have Carolyn on their team!



Division of Rehabilitation Services 2019 Outcomes

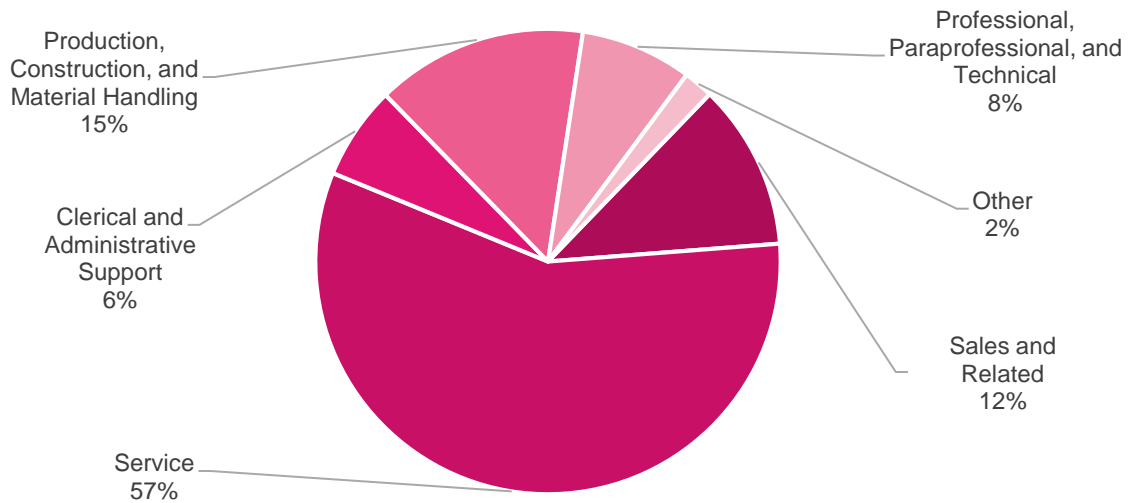
The Board's responsibilities include: reviewing, analyzing and advising the agency; developing, agreeing to, and reviewing State goals and priorities; advising and assisting in the preparation of the State Plan; reviewing and analyzing the satisfaction with services; preparing an annual report to the Governor; and coordinating activities with other councils in the State. See below for information on applicants, individuals who successfully obtain employment, and other data on the Division's VR program.



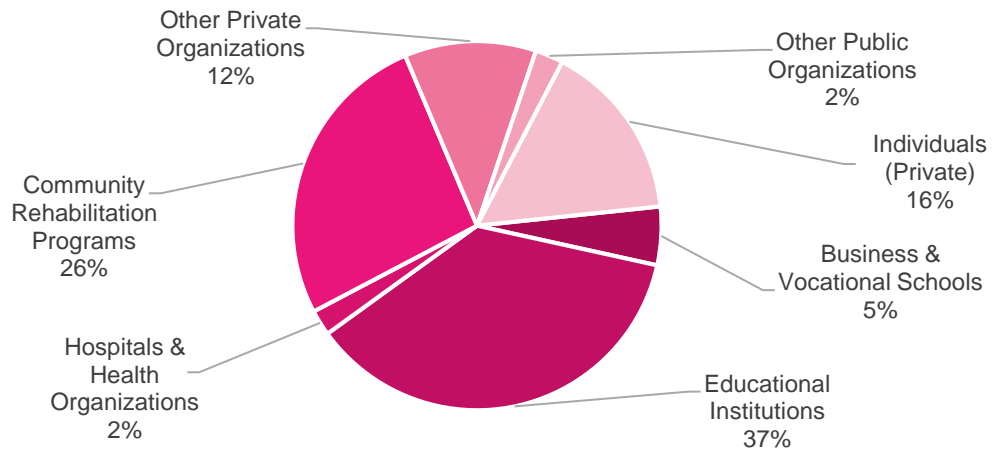
AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT DATA BY TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT

Employment Type	Total Cases	Weekly Hours at IPE	Weekly Wage at IPE	Weekly Hours at Closure	Weekly Wage at Closure
Competitive Integrated Employment*	576	5.3	\$58.30	27.1	\$316.97
Supported Employment	47	5.8	\$49.58	21.4	\$217.22
Self-Employment	6	17.5	\$252.52	25.0	\$400.91
All Employment Types	629	5.5	\$59.50	26.7	\$316.97

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES BY CATEGORY



PAYMENTS BY VENDOR TYPE



Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Seeks Public Input

The Board is committed to hearing from the public on matters relating to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in South Dakota under the Division of Rehabilitation Services. Consequently, all regular and special Board meetings are announced in advance, open and accessible to the public.

The Board also holds public hearings and forums as they deem them necessary. These, too, are announced in advance, open and accessible to the public.

All meetings are called by the Board Chairperson, in cooperation with DRS and Board staff, as stipulated in the bylaws.

If you wish to let the Board know your thoughts on the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, you may reach them in the following ways:

Phone: 605.773.4644 or toll-free 1.800.265.9684

Write: Board of Vocational Rehabilitation
E Hwy 34, Hillsvie Properties Plaza
c/o 500 E Capitol Ave
Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Attend: Meetings – copies of agendas can be obtained by contacting Board staff at the above phone numbers or by going to the State of South Dakota Boards and Commissions portal at

<http://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/>

At this site you may also access additional Board information such as member listing and past meeting minutes. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Board, a nomination form is also available, or you may request it from Board staff or DRS.

