

2020

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.

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.

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.

Board of Vocational Rehabilitation Membership

Cole Uecker, Chairperson
Pierre

Brad Konechne, Vice Chair
Brookings

Kevin Barber, Member at Large
Sioux Falls

Joe Vetch
Summerset

Pete Bullene
Watertown

Jolleen Laverdure
Lower Brule

Vicki Stewart
Sioux Falls

Lisa Merchen
Spearfish

Kristina Allen
Sioux Falls

Jennifer Trenhaile
Yankton

Bill McEntaffer
Pierre

Jonathan Englund
Black Hawk

Beth Schiltz
Pierre

Brooke Lusk
Pierre

Eric Weiss
Pierre

Thank You to Previous & Outgoing Members



Kim Ludwig



Lisa Sanderson



Kendra Gottsleben



Matt Cain & Colleen Moran

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

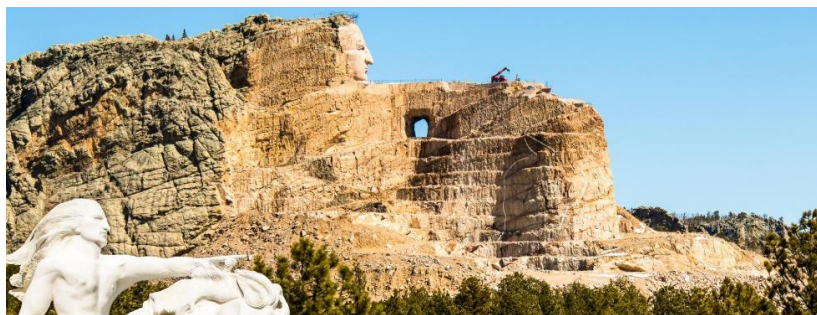
Goal 1: Students and youth will enter their adult lives capable of self-advocacy with sufficient experience to make choices about work and career, being appropriately supported and living as independently as possible.

Goal 2: DRS will facilitate the development of a strong statewide community with partnerships with workforce systems, businesses, State Government, tribal systems, schools, service providers and service organizations.

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

Goal 4: The VR Service delivery system will result in enhanced earnings, employee benefits, retention, and career advancement for DRS clients.

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



CRAZY HORSE MEMORIAL®
Photo courtesy of SD Tourism

Board of Vocational Rehabilitation

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 either accessible locations or utilizing a virtual platform and made accessible to people needing effective communication to fully participate.

The public is 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.

The Board elected to host the June and September meetings via Zoom following the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. All members were polled regarding what platforms were being utilized and what they were most comfortable using. All meetings were held in compliance with federal and state open meeting laws.

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.

Quarterly Meetings

December 10, 2019
Via video conference

March 5, 2020
Rapid City

June 25, 2020
Via Zoom/virtual platform

September 29, 2020
Via Zoom/virtual platform

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.

Board of Vocational Rehabilitation - Quarterly Meeting Highlights

December 10, 2019 - Meeting held via videoconference

ANNUAL REPORT: The Board works on the annual report and presents it during the December meeting for final approval. The annual report is due to the Governor and the RSA Commissioner by the end of each year.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES/STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT: A consultant assisted with the completion of a statewide needs assessment. The assessment results, Division's service history and the past three program years (2017, 2018 and 2019) were reviewed. The consultant spoke to what is needed for the next three program years (2020, 2021 and 2022), and the information was utilized as the basis for refreshing the statewide goals and strategies. The consultant outlined 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. The Division worked with the Consumer Services Committee to review and revise the Division's Goals and Strategies for the State Plan which were reviewed and approved by the Board.

CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT TRAINING: Training has been provided for VR counselors and Community Support Providers. Training focuses on an individualized employment relationship with employee and employer, to meet the needs of both, and targets individuals with the most significant barriers to employment. The Division is developing sustainability planning for customized employment to include continued training, gathering community practice efforts and identifying providers who can mentor newer providers. The Board endorses the Division's efforts to continue working to provide training and explore credential options for providers.

BUSINESS SPECIALIST ACTIVITIES: Members learned about presentations created for businesses, VR staff and providers to include "Recruiting, Hiring, & Retaining Employees with Disabilities: VR Services Available to Businesses", "Incorporating Disability Etiquette in the Workplace & in Customer Service", and the "Essentials of Business Engagement and Partnerships". Staff can provide presentations and sessions that were recorded are posted and available on the Division's websites.

BOARD SUPPORT AGREEMENT: The Division issued a Request for Proposal(s) to provide staff support for the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) as the current organizational provider of this service was dissolving. An agreement was entered into with Black Hills Special Services Cooperative for services. The Board thanked Division staff for assisting with Board related duties during the interim. Staff support is supervised and evaluated by the Board and SILC leadership or the Board/SILC as a whole.

March 5, 2020 - Meeting held in Rapid City

CAREER LEARNING CENTER (CLC) OF THE BLACK HILLS/ADULT EDUCATION/ADULT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: An overview was provided of available services for students and adults and the territory covered. Approximately 350 students attend classes in a year. Over 80 community-based organizations are part of the wrap around services. Students who gain assistance are 60% more likely to go onto post-secondary or training. Twenty-nine percent of current students have a self-disclosed disability. Involvement of the community partners has demonstrated more students accessing services through the Department of Labor and Regulation and VR.

PROJECT SEARCH OF THE BLACK HILLS: This project involves Monumental Health (locations in Rapid City and Sturgis) and partners with the Department of Human Services, DakotaLink and area school districts. Attendees are students with varying levels of disability, ages 18-21, who have met high school graduation requirements and are on an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with vocational rehabilitation. School year 2018/19 resulted in 100% employment, average starting wage for students was \$12.75; working on average of 32 hours a week and all qualified for benefits. The 2019/20 information included nine participants from five school districts.

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY NETWORK (WDN) OF THE BLACK HILLS: WDN networks with employers and businesses to help increase the understanding and benefits of hiring persons with disabilities. WDN sponsors educational events for employers and human resource managers, e.g., worksite modifications, accommodations, review of job descriptions/essential functions of positions, accessible websites, and interview practices. WDN links employers to prospective employees with disabilities; partners with local/state entities. The Board fully supports employer related initiatives.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS) INITIATIVE: The Board learned of ten agency proposals to conduct training opportunities for students with disabilities relevant to Pre-ETS, e.g., workplace readiness training, advocacy, and access to information on vocational rehabilitation and other community resources. The Board supports the Division's efforts to fund these types of activities which support students with disabilities to prepare for Project SEARCH or competitive employment.

VR AND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND REGULATION (DLR) BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT: WIOA places emphasis on helping job seekers access employment and training opportunities; and providing effective supports and services to businesses to match them with skilled employees. DLR offered training that focused on business engagement and techniques to improve working with and providing services to businesses, the Division had 85 staff participate in this training.

EMPLOYER SUPPORTS AND EMPLOYER MODULE STAFF TRAINING: Training was provided for VR staff on 'Employer Supports'. The training was intended for new and experienced staff to provide information and support regarding the purpose, importance of, and documentation of employer support and services in VR FACES (case management system). VR is required to track services and support provided to businesses, which is one of WIOA's performance measures.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS: WIOA establishes indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of the state in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development systems core programs, which includes vocational rehabilitation services. Members learned how the Division tracks 'Effectiveness in Serving Employers' and the supports provided to employers.

MEASURABLE SKILL GAINS: Measures the percentage of participants who are in education or training programs related to their employment goal. RSA issued a report in January reflecting measurable skill gains by general agencies and the Division was ranked highest in the nation. The Division met the indicator of "baseline" for program years 2020 and 2021 in areas of employment, median earnings, and credential attainment rate.

VR'S BEST PRACTICES FOR PROVIDING EFFECTIVE BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYER SUPPORTS DOCUMENT: The Division created a document for VR staff on what business engagement is and its importance. The information includes the role of the Division's business specialist, priority of business engagement with the agency, best practices of how to provide effective employer/business supports, and how to communicate "rehabilitation language" into language that employers will understand.

ABILITY FOR HIRE (AFH) INITIATIVE: This initiative provides information and resources to businesses to help recruit and hire employees with disabilities. The Board reviewed the AFH informational items and identified needed updates. Areas included how the resources relayed information e.g., ADA, working with individuals with mental health issues, reasonable accommodations, self-disclosure, and modifications to policies. Work continues exploring efforts regarding how best to communicate to employers that people with disabilities should be considered for all workforce needs.

BOARD NOMINATION PROCESS: The Board and the Statewide Independent Living Council disseminated a joint solicitation packet to individuals and organizations representing a broad range of individuals with disabilities seeking nominees to fill pending vacancies. All nominations were forwarded to the Governor for review and consideration of appointment.

DAKOTALINK (SOUTH DAKOTA'S ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROJECT): Members learned of the project's goals and activities. This included the definition of assistive technology devices, as well as services (evaluation, purchase, leasing, selecting, designing, customizing and coordination of services). Universal design is key when looking at products, communications, and the built environment. DakotaLink operates the Medical Equipment and Recycle Program, affiliated with Medicaid, which provides used equipment to those who are eligible. DakotaLink also has repossessed VR equipment that is cleaned and redistributed to other VR clients. Brochures and other resources were handed out in order for the information to be shared.

UNSUCCESSFUL CLOSURES: The Division is identifying barriers for both counselors and consumers to reduce the number of unsuccessful closures. Areas included: consumers applying for services at a time of crisis and the need for immediate assistance; tendency for consumers to accept the first position offered, losing clients after application due to time needed to verify eligibility. A number of individuals who were eligible for VR services are transient, which makes maintaining contact very difficult. Establishing relationships with youth are difficult due to student/counselor schedule conflicts and VR and school staff turnover.

CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEY: The Board assisted the Division with updating the consumer satisfaction survey. An updated survey will be disseminated in FFY20 to include a new survey sent to individuals who received services and closed 'unsuccessfully rehabilitated'. Surveys are disseminated to individuals randomly at different stages of the VR process to ensure the program is meeting the needs of those who receive services. Responses can be submitted online, through a toll-free number, or by returning the postcard.

STATE PLAN: The WIOA State Plan involves key partners under the Department of Labor and Regulation (DOL). The Unified State Plan needed to be updated, submitted and approved, and required an effective date of July 2020. The Workforce Development Council met and reviewed the plan's vision and goals. DRS and Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (DSBVI) comprehensive statewide needs assessments (CSNA) were completed and this information was utilized with the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs in making changes to their portions of the State Plan. A meeting was held with core partners to talk about the vision and goals. A final draft of the WIOA Unified State Plan to include Title IV (DRS and DSBVI portions) was shared with related boards/councils for input. Public meetings were held to obtain additional comment/input. The Unified State Plan was submitted in March and approved in May.

GOVERNOR'S AWARDS: The Governor's Awards ceremony was held in Pierre at the Capitol with seven recipients recognized for their contributions to improving independent living and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Sponsors include the Board, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (B/SBVI), Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), and Department of Human Services (DHS).

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES: The Board and Division have had conversations regarding VR's role in funding post-secondary education programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Questions were posed and answered by Rehabilitation Services Administration. There was Board consensus to continue dialogue about these post-secondary education programs and meeting VR requirements.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Communities across the state conducted NDEAM activities to celebrate the contributions of workers with disabilities and educate the public about disability employment issues. The Board, BSBVI, SILC and DHS sponsor activities throughout the state recognizing the contributions of people with disabilities and employers.



The national theme was "Increasing Access and Opportunity". Individuals from across the state were able to participate in virtual learning sessions. Topics included: "The Future is Neurodiverse: A more inclusive working world for people with disabilities; Remote Work, Accommodations and COVID; "Using Your Words for Good; Understanding Autism and Disability"; "The Power of Culture" (elements of an inclusive and intentional workplace culture); and "Increasing Access and Opportunity".

(Several flyers of NDEAM events pictured below)



June 25, 2020 - Meeting held via videoconference

COVID-19: The Governor issued an executive order to have the majority of state employees work from home in March. Challenges included the decrease in availability of jobs, business closures and other labor market changes. Technology options were explored and virtual platforms were utilized to support meetings, trainings, case file reviews, and board meetings during this time of social distancing. As the doors slowly re-open, “re-engaging” with all customers in a safe environment is a priority.

18-21 Grants: The Board learned of four new grant awards to initiate 18-21-year-old programs. This is a transition to adulthood program for students with disabilities ages 18-21 in which the student participates in the Project Skills work experience program as well as works on curriculum in areas of pre-employment, job exploration, social skills, self-advocacy, workforce readiness (attitude, communication, problem solving, professionalism) and independent living/community readiness (shopping, budgeting, meal planning/cooking, paying bills, scheduling appointments). The Board fully endorses the Division’s efforts to increase available programs and services for all individuals with disabilities.

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION – POST SECONDARY INDICATOR 14 SURVEY: A report was provided on students (exitors), who have left high school by graduating with a diploma, aged out, or dropped out. Indicator 14 identifies the percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in effect at the time they left school, and were enrolled in:

- ❖ Higher education;
- ❖ Higher education or competitively employed;
- ❖ Higher education or in some other post- secondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school.

The 2017-18 data reflected a total of 313 respondents of which 53 were enrolled in higher education, 168 were engaged in competitive employment, 10 were enrolled in some other post-secondary education or training, and 26 respondents were engaged in some other employment (those not counted in the previous areas). The findings for 2017-18, South Dakota reported the fourth highest engagement percentage since data was first collected (2008-09).

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: The election of officers was held during the June meeting for the positions of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Member at Large. Outgoing members were also honored at this time and thanked for their service and leadership.

September 29, 2020 - Meeting held via videoconference

SECTION 511 REVIEWS: "Section 511" comes from the Rehabilitation Act and it places limitations on the payment of subminimal wages by entities holding special wage certificates. Reviews are conducted to ensure individuals with disabilities have access to information and services that enable them to achieve competitive integrated employment. VR is required to conduct periodic reviews of individuals with disabilities who earn less than minimum wage. In State Fiscal Year 2017 there were almost 1000 individuals working in subminimal wage and in SFY 2020 this number dropped to 443.

FALL CONFERENCE: The Fall Conference was held virtually via ZOOM due to COVID. Sessions offered real time captioning and interpreters and topics of: workforce revolution; work ethics, dilemmas, and principles of integrity; identifying and working with hidden addictions; file documentation; partnerships; fidelity thinking; understanding hoarding behavior/strategies to support clients who hoard; customized job development; adverse childhood experiences/next steps towards resiliency; and how to manage implicit bias in the workplace. There were 340 individuals registered.

ON THE JOB TRAINING: The Division expanded its On-The-Job training reimbursement to employers to assist individuals with disabilities in returning to work. VR was reimbursing employers for 50% of the wages during a training period when hiring a person with a disability, now it is 100%. Wage reimbursement is for new employees or previous employees returning to employment. This is an incentive for employers to bring individuals with disabilities back to previous employment or bring on new employees with disabilities.

PROVIDER TRAINING NEEDS: The Division issued an RFP seeking to establish a training program for service providers who work with people with disabilities. This was an identified training need resulting from conversations with counselors and employment specialists. The RFP was issued September 14th, letters of intent were due September 28th with four letters submitted. Proposals are due in early November and the Division will select by the end of the year.

TRANSITION SERVICES LIAISON PROJECT (TSLP): TSLP provides technical assistance, resources, and training to students with disabilities, families, education agencies and adult service agencies throughout the state. TSLP coordinates the Youth Leadership Forum, Catch the Wave and "Let's Talk about Work" events, transitional forums, Indicator 13 workshops, and the transition summer institute. The project's goal is to coordinate meetings with individuals with disabilities and family members and to broaden knowledge about available services and agencies.

2020 Governor's Awards Ceremony

Governor Kristi Noem Presents the Awards



The Governor's Awards Ceremony was sponsored by: Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, Statewide Independent Living Council, Division of Rehabilitation Services, Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, and the Department of Human Services.



Outstanding Employee
with a Disability:
Chris Peterson

Outstanding Citizen
with a Disability:
Kendra Gottsleben



Governor's Awards Ceremony

Outstanding Private Employer
(Small Employer Category):
The Fox Stop
Tracey and James Grotenhuis



Outstanding Employer (Large Employer Category):
Boyd's Gunstock Industries
Rob Carstensen and Dustin Knutson



Governor's Awards Ceremony

Outstanding Employer:
Mitchell School District
Food Service Department
Leann Carmody



Outstanding Transition
Services:
Karen Schmeiser

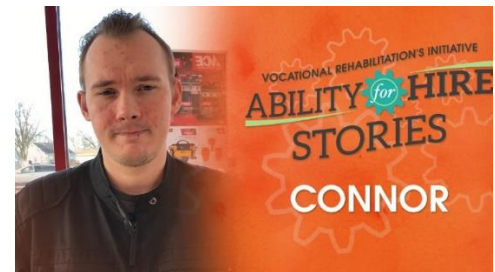


Distinguished Service:
Eugene (Gene) Murphy
Accompanied by his wife
Eldine Murphy

Vocational Rehabilitation Success Story

Connor is a Sioux Falls resident who is currently employed by Berry Global.

He provided the following responses in regard to his position.



What do you love most about your current job?

“The hours,” he said. “It’s a full-time job, so I’m a lot busier.” Beyond simply having the opportunity to earn a full-time paycheck, Connor also appreciates the nature of his position. “I’m working with heavy machinery that I never thought I’d be working with,” he said of his position with Berry Global, where he works with garbage rollers among other industrial equipment.

How does it make you feel to go to work each day?

“It’s good—knowing I have a better job now, better pay,” Connor said. “The machinery is also cool to work with. Time goes by really fast.” And operating this sort of machinery is the type of thing Connor hopes to be doing for years to come. “I want to be a mechanic for vehicles or aircraft,” he said, highlighting in particular his knowledge of pneumatic actuators.

What makes you a great employee?

“I show up on time, I work hard, I like routine and I like finding things to do to stay busy,” Connor said. “I’m not one that likes standing around. I have attention to detail, and I don’t get distracted.” These attributes have been gained, by Connor’s own estimation, through experiencing what it is like to work a part-time job through his past positions at Qdoba and Nyberg’s Ace, as well as full-time work like his current position.

Connor’s full story can be found on the Division’s website at:
<https://dhs.sd.gov/rehabservices/stories.aspx>.

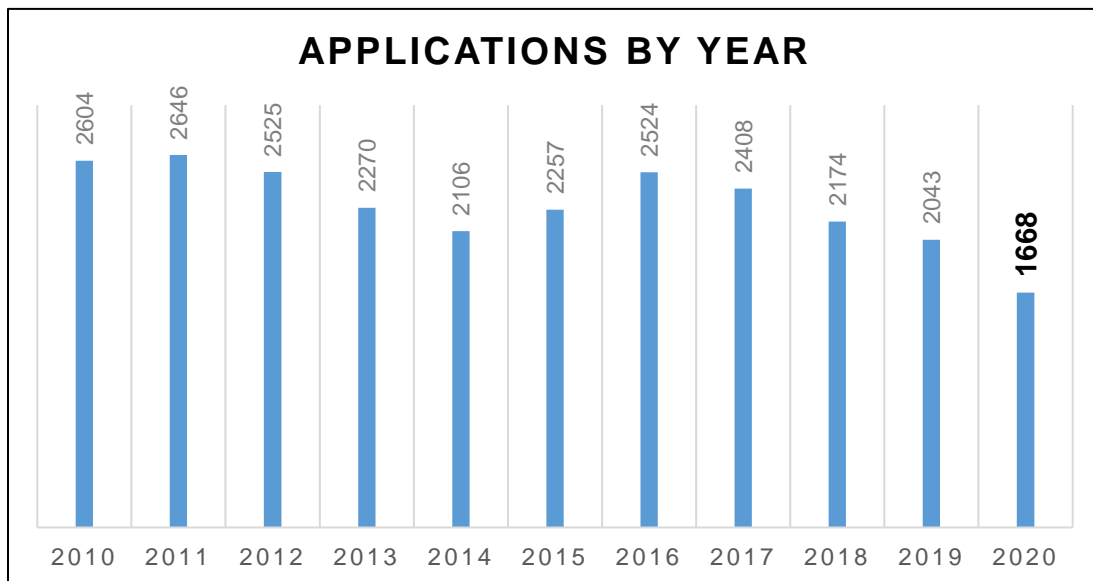
More success stories can be found on the Ability for Hire website: <https://abilityforhire.com/>

Division of Rehabilitation Services 2020 Outcomes

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) assists individuals with disabilities to obtain or maintain employment, economic self-sufficiency, personal independence, and full inclusion into society. The Division is made up of twelve offices across the state that offer a variety of services to people with disabilities. The Division is a part of the Department of Human Services, and as such, is committed to enhancing the quality of life of people with disabilities.

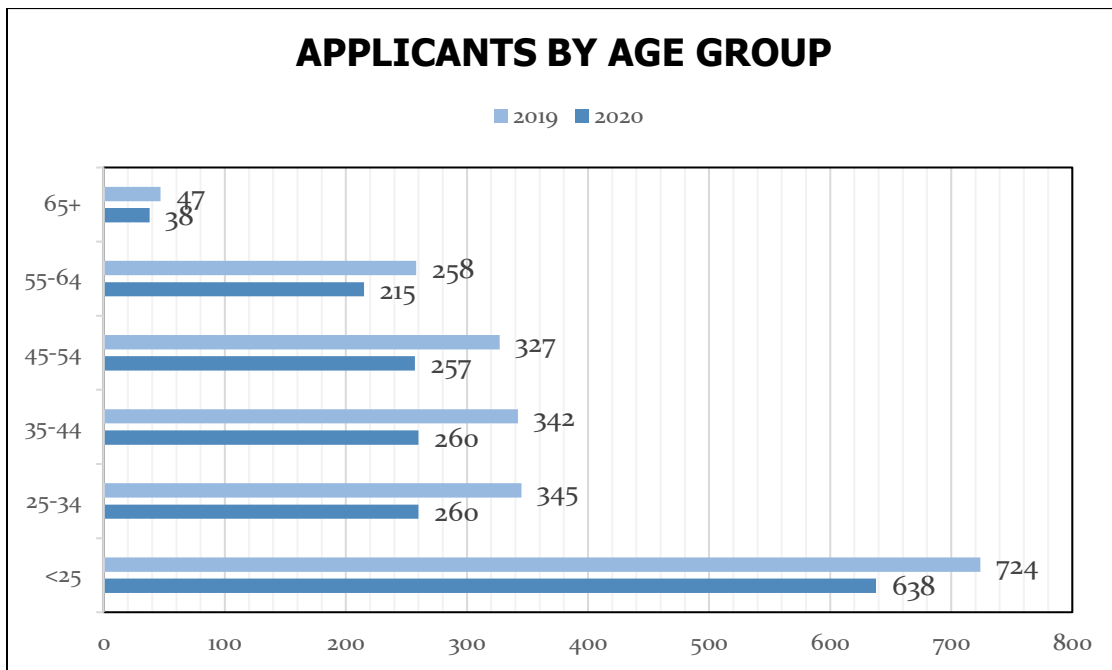
The following information provides a snapshot of applicants, individuals eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, and individuals who successfully obtain employment, and other data on the Division's VR program.

The Division received 1,688 applications for VR services between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020. The average age of applicants was 34 years.

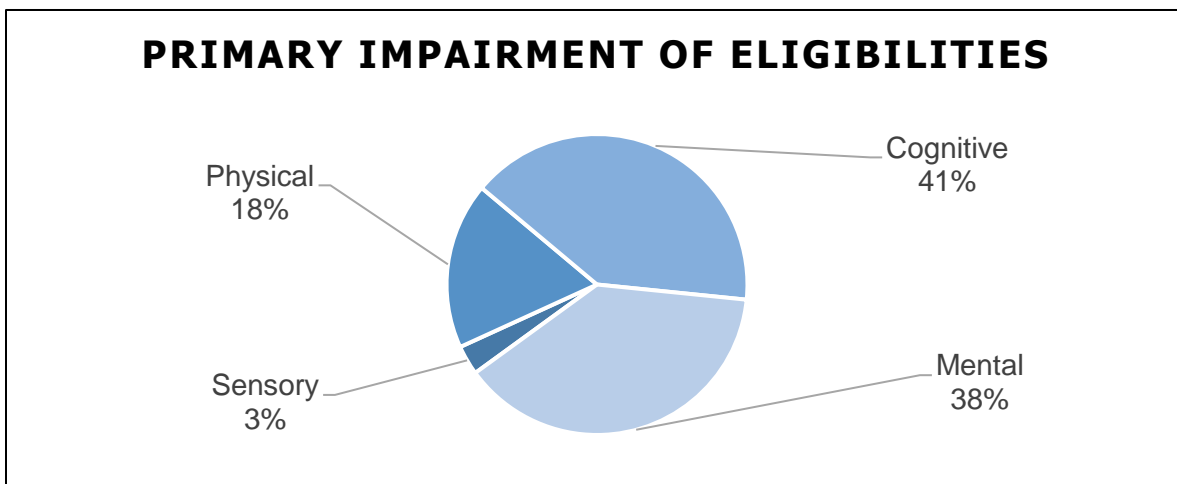


Race of Applicants	% of Applicants
White	72%
American Indian or Alaska Native	14%
Black or African American	4%
Two or more races	8%
Asian	1%
Did not self-identify race	1%

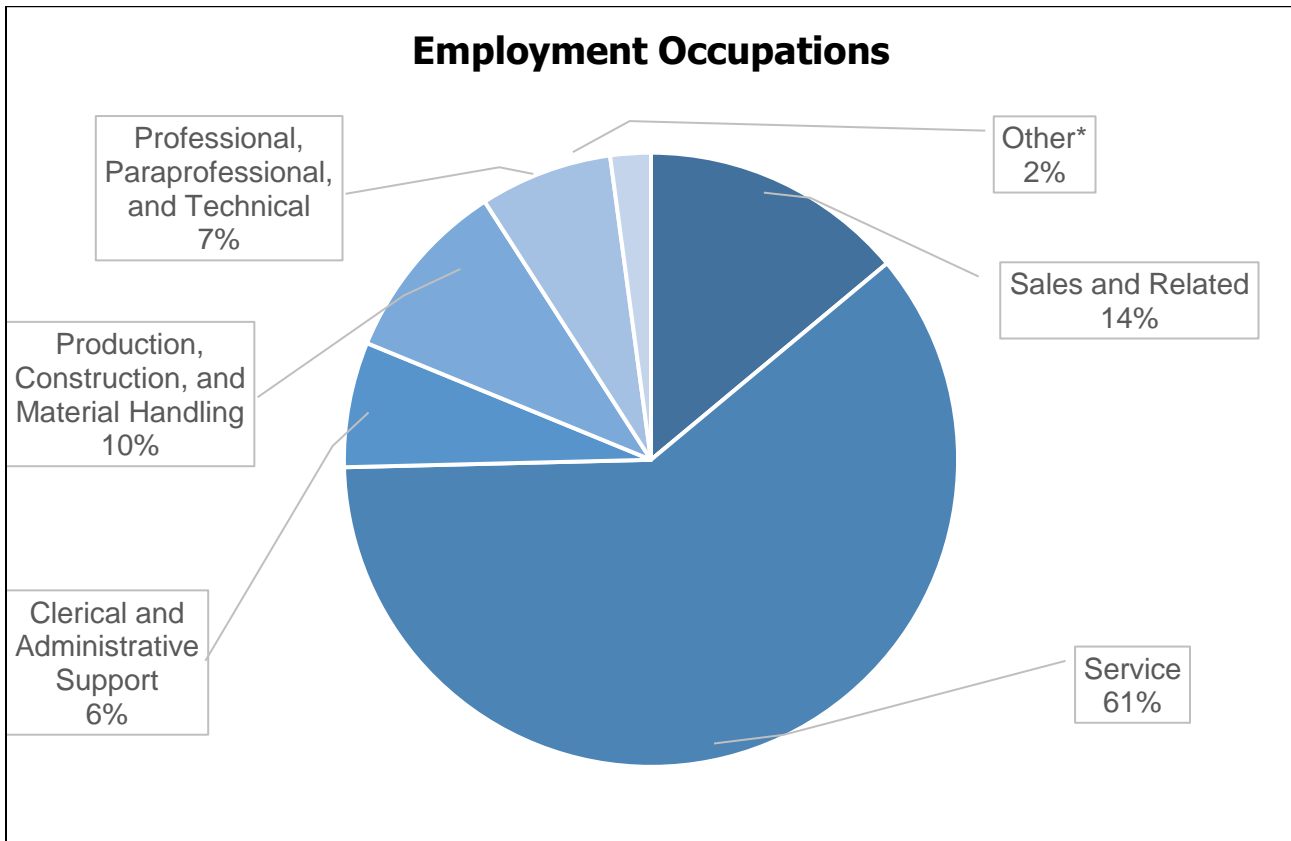
Data is from applicants between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020. The Division found 1,601 individuals eligible for VR services. The average amount of time from application to eligibility was 29 days.



After the application process, the VR counselor reviews medical records, educational background, work history, and other related information to determine how the applicant's disability affects his or her ability to be employed and how VR services might help. The average amount of time from application to eligibility was 29 days.



The below data comes from cases closed as successfully rehabilitated between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020. These common closure types are consistent with Tourism and Agriculture being two of our state’s top employment industries.



*Other includes the following categories: Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing, and Related; and Managerial and Administrative.

AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT DATA BY THE TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT AT CLOSURE

Employment Category	Total Cases	Average Weekly Hours	Average Hourly Wage	Average Weekly Wage
Competitive Integrated Employment*	513	23	\$10.95	\$251.85
Self-Employment	2	14	\$34.55	\$483.70

CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

To ensure that the VR program is meeting the needs of those who receive services as well as to provide the highest level of service as possible, the Division of Rehabilitation Services in collaboration with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation conducts an ongoing satisfaction survey.

The surveys contain six questions that target the following three areas: 1) Satisfaction of Informed Choice; 2) Satisfaction with Services; 3) Satisfaction of Employment Outcomes. Individuals are randomly selected to receive a survey each quarter depending upon where the client is in the VR process. Postcards are mailed to those selected, who can either provide their responses online, through a toll-free number, or by returning the postcard.

The following results were based on surveys the Division of Rehabilitation Services sent for the time period of October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019.

INDICATOR 3.1

Surveys were sent to clients six months after they started their initial plan in order to analyze how satisfied they are with their participation in the planning and implementation of their individualized plan for employment.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. My VR counselor explained my options in choosing my employment goal.	52%	40%	2%	5%
2. My VR counselor explained my choices to develop the IPE myself or receive assistance with developing my employment plan.	52%	42%	2%	5%
3. My VR counselor explained to me what services were available.	54%	38%	4%	4%
4. I was informed of my right to contact the Client Assistance Program for help in resolving differences and my right to appeal any disagreement.	47%	42%	6%	5%
5. Information was presented to me in an understandable manner.	54%	39%	4%	4%
6. I was a full partner in the decision-making process for my goal, employment plan, and choosing my services and provider.	51%	41%	2%	5%

INDICATOR 3.2

Surveys were sent to clients who have been in the VR program for a longer period of time and had an opportunity to experience a variety of services in order to analyze their satisfaction with the suitability and quality of the services they have received as well as their interactions with providers and VR program staff.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel that the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services in my plan will help me reach my employment goal.	58%	30%	8%	3%
2. Services from my VR counselor were provided in a timely manner.	63%	26%	7%	4%
3. The guidance and counseling received from my VR Counselor have been helpful.	64%	26%	6%	5%
4. I would recommend the services to other people.	66%	27%	3%	4%
5. I am satisfied with the services I received from my service provider.	65%	24%	6%	6%
6. The services from my provider were accessible to me.	66%	25%	5%	5%

INDICATOR 3.3

Surveys were sent to clients who have recently been closed as successfully rehabilitated in order to evaluate their satisfaction with their employment and overall involvement in the VR program.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I am working in the field that I chose as my employment goal.	54%	31%	10%	6%
2. I am satisfied with the wages I receive.	45%	45%	9%	2%
3. I am satisfied with the employment I have as a result of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services.	50%	41%	4%	6%
4. I am satisfied with the benefits I receive through my job.	45%	36%	13%	6%
5. I like the people and place where I am working.	50%	47%	2%	2%
6. I feel the services provided by VR helped me get my job.	57%	28%	9%	6%

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: 605.494.3613

Write: Board of Vocational Rehabilitation
221 South Central Ave, Ste 33
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.
