Hello Partners! This has been such an exciting and creative year! As our state gradually emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services has continued to provide expansive services to persons with disabilities in our state, including remote services for those that need them, while increasing the availability of in-person services.

We are proud to share that more than 25,000 clients received services over the past year, with 3,474 achieving their competitive integrated employment goal. These clients earned an average hourly wage of over $13/hour, almost $2/hour more than the previous year’s average. Additionally, over 4,100 students with disabilities received pre-employment transition services to help them explore career options and prepare for the transition from high school to adult life. Our Independent Living Program served more than 2,000 clients, with 676 achieving their goals, and our Assistive Technology Program helped more than 16,500 clients explore, borrow, and purchase AT devices.

As you know, these data points are not just numbers; they represent lives that have been changed and progress towards our mission to assure that people with disabilities have the supports they need to achieve their employment and independent living goals. We have achieved great things this year and I’m grateful for the privilege of leading a team of rehabilitation professionals who believe - like I do - that our workforce is stronger when it is more inclusive of people with disabilities.
25,517 Individuals receiving VR services in North Carolina

VR Cases by Region

- 6,772
- 10,780
- 7,965

VR Cases by Age and Reported Gender

- Under Age 25: 10,627
- Age 25-54: 11,108
- Age 55 or older: 3,782

11,487 Female
14,020 Male

VR Cases by Race and Ethnicity (not mutually exclusive)

- Black: 11,508
- White: 13,411
- Hispanic: 1,895
- Asian: 283
- Native American: 363
- Pacific Islander: 37
Barriers to Employment for VR Clients

Primary Disability

Physical
7,564

Psychosocial
7,564

Sensory/Communicative
1,127

Cognitive
11,220

Impact of Primary Disability

Not Severe 6%

Severe 51%

Most Severe 43%

Additional Barriers to Employment

Secondary Disability 14,989
Long-term unemployed 14,818
Low Income 13,521
Basic Skills Deficient/Low Literacy 8,037
Ex-Offender 3,279
English Language Learner 2,937
Single Parent 1,414
Homeless 984
Perceived Cultural Barriers 838
Foster Care Youth 677
Snapshot of Community-Based Services

- **520** clients participated in a paid **VR Internship** to prepare for their employment goal
- **83** clients received specialized services through the **Brain Injury Support Services** program
- **917** clients met with a Work Incentives Planning Assistance counselor about the impact of earned income on benefits
- **2,013** individuals received **Supported Employment** services to help them succeed on the job
- **123** individuals participated in a **Project Search Transition to Work Program**
- **2,170** clients participated in **Work Adjustment Training** to acquire work skills and learn appropriate behaviors
- **17,779** clients received **Career Services**, like career assessments, counseling and workforce preparation activities; job search and placement assistance; and ongoing follow-up services
- **5,090** clients received VR-sponsored **Training Services** to attain a secondary degree or postsecondary credential

Youth and Student Services

- **4,418** students participated in **Pre-ETS** to help them explore career options and prepare for the transition from high school to adult life

Transition Services

- **10,627** transition-aged youth received services to help explore and pursue career goals as they enter into post-secondary education, training, and other workforce preparation activities
- **1,295** transition-aged youth successfully exited the VR program after achieving their unique goals for competitive integrated employment and more independent living
**DISABILITY AWARENESS TRAINING THAT WORKS**

How does a human resources manager change their perception of a particular employee? How should a supervisor discuss a disability that may be impacting the job performance of a valued staff member? The *Windmills Disability Awareness and Inclusion* curriculum answers questions like these and more.

The theory behind *Windmills* is that the barriers that prevent employers from hiring and retaining qualified candidates with disabilities are primarily attitudinal, and based on our preconceived notions, stereotypes, and misperceptions about disability. *Windmills* uses real-world situations faced by businesses both large and small to help leaders understand the benefits of diverse experiences and abilities, improve communications with and about people with disabilities, learn how to implement low-cost accommodations, and understand the basics of disability employment law.

*Windmills* training is provided at no cost to employers who want to support a diverse, disability-inclusive workforce but don’t know where to start. With 12 *Windmills* modules to choose from, businesses can partner with DVRS to develop a training curriculum targeted to their specific needs. Additionally, DVRS hosts a virtual *Windmills* training on a quarterly basis that is open to the public. Visit our *Windmills* page on the web for more information.

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### Independent Living Services

- **2,009** clients received services as part of their Independent Living Plan
- **359** clients received Personal Assistance Services
- **676** clients achieved their independent living goals

### Engineering Services

- **31** barrier removals completed
- **$7,715** average cost of removal
- **19** vehicle modifications completed
- **$10,390** average cost of modification

### Assistive Technology Services

- **16,588** clients received services from the NC Assistive Technology Program
- **562** individuals received training to help them use AT software and devices
- **638** clients received no-cost short-term device loans through an NCACTP partnership with the Division of Aging and Adult Services, with funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)
- **108** individuals received new or refurbished AT devices and equipment at no cost
- **276,414** dollars saved by North Carolinians with disabilities on the purchase of AT
Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Overall Satisfaction with DVRS Services

- Satisfaction with DVRS Staff
  - Respectfulness 97%
  - Responsiveness 89%
  - Providing Info & Referrals 93%
  - Availability 93%
  - Providing Career Guidance 84%
  - Identifying Service Needs 92%
  - Addressing Service Needs 94%

- Overall Satisfaction with DVRS Services
  - FFY 21-22: 90%
  - FFY 20-21: 86%

NCDHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider. 7/23