Director’s Message

Despite the challenges we faced serving North Carolinians with disabilities through the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services also marked important gains. DVRS investments in online tools and technology training have resulted in: significantly increased participation in virtual stakeholder engagement efforts, training and professional development events, and several programs for jobseekers with disabilities, like Individual Placement and Support and Internships. We also celebrated an increase in our clients’ average hourly wage to $11.26 for those placed in competitive integrated employment this year.

We are hopeful as we begin another year, which promises a candidate-driven job market, businesses expanding their recruitment efforts to previously underutilized talent pools, and more remote and flexible work opportunities. As we leverage these opportunities and our resources to help current clients, we are also determined to raise awareness among North Carolinians with disabilities who have not yet discovered the valuable DVRS services that can help them achieve unrealized goals for employment and independent living.

Successful Outcomes and Return on Investment

- 3,258 Individuals successfully exited the program in competitive integrated employment
- $11.26 average hourly wage
- 29 average weekly hours
- 26 average number of months from application to case closure

FFY 2020-2021 Program Cost

- 23.7% State/Other Funds
- 76.3% Federal Funds
- $80 M Federal funding
- $25 M State/other funding

Return on Investment in Services

- $346 M 5-year earnings of individuals exiting the VR Program in FY 2016
- $105 M Federal and State investment in VR services
Demographic Snapshot of Individuals Receiving Services

26,733 Individuals receiving VR services

VR Cases by Region

**7,265**  
**11,331**  
**8,137**

VR cases by Age and Reported Gender

- **Under Age 25**: 11,053
- **Age 25-54**: 11,597
- **Age 55 or older**: 4,083

14,737  
11,996

VR Cases by Race and Ethnicity (not mutually exclusive)

- **Black**: 11,949
- **White**: 14,174
- **Hispanic**: 1,780
- **Asian**: 275
- **Native American**: 385
- **Pacific Islander**: 36
Barriers to Employment for Individuals Receiving Services

### Primary Impairment

- **Psychosocial**: 7,959
- **Physical**: 6,091
- **Sensory/Communicative**: 1,160
- **Cognitive**: 11,523

### Impact of Disability

- **Not Severe**: 7.39%
- **Severe**: 52.23%
- **Most Severe**: 40.38%

### Other Reported 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
# Community-Based Employment and Training Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Services</td>
<td>18,837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported Employment Services</td>
<td>1,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Adjustment Training</td>
<td>2,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Search</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment Program</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid, community-based VR Internships</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling about the impact of earned income on their benefit</td>
<td>1,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Services</td>
<td>5,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brain Injury Support Services</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Youth and Student Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition Services</td>
<td>11,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Employment Transition Services</td>
<td>2,748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases closed successfully</td>
<td>1,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participated in services to help them explore career options and prepare for the transition from high school to adult life</td>
<td>2,748</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11,601 individuals received services

1,215 cases were closed successfully

2,748 students participated in services to help them explore career options and prepare for the transition from high school to adult life
Preparing for Employment During a Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented challenges for VR agencies and the clients we serve. DVRS met the challenges by finding innovative ways to meet the needs of clients, maintain relationships with partners, create safe work environments for staff, and continue to pursue our mission. VR services are essential, and were treated that way as North Carolina responded to the pandemic.

To minimize disruptions to client service delivery, we equipped staff with laptops, mobile WiFi devices, Internet-based phone numbers, and platforms and tools that support virtual communication and collaboration. We developed new and modified policies to support ongoing engagement with clients and community partners by expanding the use of electronic signatures, remote counseling, and virtual training opportunities. The promising new policies, tools, and approaches to service delivery developed during the pandemic will not be forgotten as we transition to the “new normal.” The critical lessons learned during the pandemic will be integrated into policy and practice to better serve North Carolinians with disabilities as they pursue their goals for employment and independence.

Independent Living Services

Total individuals served under Plan for Independent Living (IL) +1,822

- 1,340 individuals determined eligible for IL services
- 584 individuals achieved their IL goals
- 302 individuals received Personal Assistance services

Rehabilitation Engineering Services

- $15,153 Average vehicle modification cost
- $6,109 Average barrier removal cost

- 27 vehicle modifications completed
- 16 barrier removal completed

Assistive Technology Services

Total individuals served through the NC Assistive Technology (AT) Program +9,447

- 652 individuals received short-term device loans
- 562 individuals received training on AT

- $28,000 savings on purchase of AT for North Carolinians with disabilities
Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Overall Satisfaction with VR Services

Overall Satisfaction with VR Staff

- Respectfulness 94.8%
- Responsiveness 85.6%
- Providing Info & Referrals 83.8%
- Availability 86.5%
- Providing Career Guidance 80%
- Identifying Service Needs 87%
- Addressing Service Needs 86.1%

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