



DRS Success: Making It Work Together

FY2022 Annual Report



Message from the Chair...

On behalf of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and with our Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) partner, we are pleased to provide the Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Report for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. The update reviews this year's progress in program services and identifies outcomes and trends.

The SRC continues to hold quarterly meetings with DRS staff, during which we review and assess progress toward goals set forth in our Unified State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation. Among our ongoing goals are:

- **Conduct regular Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessments and Satisfaction Surveys:** Consumer input is essential for the work that we do. The SRC is in the process of implementing our triannual Needs Assessment and Satisfaction Surveys in accordance with the guidelines established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These tools allow the Council and DRS to receive candid feedback from a broad group of stakeholders about areas for improvement in our state's Vocational Rehabilitation program. We intend to use information obtained in our latest Needs Assessment and Satisfaction Surveys to inform our priorities and advocacy work.
- **Advocate for increased scope of work-based learning experiences for DRS customers and youth with disabilities:** The SRC continues to work with DRS to expand access to internships, apprenticeships, transitional jobs and other non-traditional experiences that have the potential to increase skills and enhance future opportunities for competitive integrated employment.
- **Increase competitive employment outcomes to 6,500 in FY2023:** The SRC supports an integrated strategy to achieve competitive integrated employment for VR consumers in Illinois that incorporates the use of the Career Pathways approach, creative job development strategies, adequate counselor staffing, referral growth, and community partnership development. Despite challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic in reaching these goals, we remain hopeful and continue to support work toward this important goal. We also feel encouraged by the great statewide progress made in transitioning individuals from 14(c) subminimum wage employment into competitive integrated employment in their community.

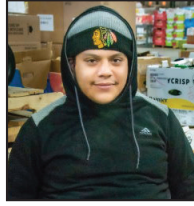
As I begin my first term as SRC Chair, I enthusiastically reaffirm the Council's commitment to maintaining our strong partnership with IDHS/DRS, customers and community stakeholders. We are steadfast in our mission to ensure that the services provided by DRS meet the ever evolving needs of consumers with disabilities across Illinois. We invite you to visit the SRC website at drs.illinois.gov/src to learn more about the Council and to engage in our process by attending future SRC meetings virtually or in-person.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Thompson, Chair
Illinois State Rehabilitation Council

Success Stories

Kevin Diaz



For Kevin Diaz, who not only has past criminal convictions, but a spinal cord injury sustained from a gunshot wound in December 2019, getting a chance, much less a second chance at employment, was a frustration he experienced regularly. But with the help of The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (IDHS-DRS), and the Chicago-based employer, The Bazaar, a second chance is exactly what he received. As Kevin began to work towards a better-quality life, he still experienced challenges and disappointments related to his physical disability and compounded by past criminal convictions and facial tattoos. "I felt dejected and dispirited regarding my employment prospects and began to question my abilities seeing no one was willing to even interview me."

That all changed when Kevin's DRS counselor and a DRS business consultant referred him to The Bazaar, an employer that has made diversity, inclusion, and second chances for marginalized individuals, a company goal.

It was there that he met Walt, a Human Resources Coordinator who also used a wheelchair and after the interview, Kevin's takeaway was one of excitement and connection. Kevin stated, "I felt great about the place as soon as I entered the building. My DRS team told me they were an inclusive employer and it showed right from the beginning.

A few weeks after the interview, Kevin was offered a part-time position as a Material Handler and The Bazaar staff was so impressed with his work that a short time later his position was moved to full-time!

For Kevin, this was a second chance worth taking.

To read the rest of Kevin's story go to [DRS.Illinois.gov/success](https://www.drs.illinois.gov/success)



Jacques LaCour

In 2017, Jacques LaCour came to DRS's Bureau of Customer & Community Blind Services (BCCBS) for assistance with adjustment to his vision loss and for seeking a career in Information Technology. His vision loss from Leber's Hereditary Optic Neuropathy makes him

legally blind and accessing a computer and print challenging. This diagnosis can be a devastating experience, however, he started out with a great attitude and sense of humor as well as a strong aptitude for computers. He just needed the tools to adjust to his vision loss and to access computers and print. After we assisted him with adaptive equipment, adjustment skills training and college, he successfully earned degrees from the College of DuPage and Dakota State University.

We received this email from him recently: "On May 6, 2022, myself, my wife, my now four year old son, my brother, parents, and mother-in-law flew up to Sioux Falls, South Dakato and on May 7, I graduated from Dakota State University with my Master's Degree in Cyber Defense with a GPA of 4.0. This final semester was possibly the hardest as it was completed while employed full-time as a Cybersecurity Incident Responder at United Airlines at which I am loving my career and the team I work with."

"To top it all off, I was able to come home to our very own home which we purchased at the end of March. All of this would not be possible without the team effort, assistance, and encouragement of the team there at DRS / BCCBS. A thousand thank you's for helping me find a future I love."

To read the rest of Jacques's story go to [DRS.Illinois.gov/success](https://www.drs.illinois.gov/success)

A message from the Secretary and the Director...

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) has a vision for all people in Illinois to achieve their full potential. The Department is committed to providing equitable access to social/human services, supports, programs, and resources to enhance the lives of those we serve. In 2022, the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), a division of IDHS, reinvented and realigned itself to better meet the needs of our customers with disabilities. We are proud to support best practices for equity-related initiatives with a strong commitment to equal employment and educational opportunity in all activities, programs, and services.

2022 Division Highlights:

- DRS field office staff welcomed the opportunity to re-engage and provide face-to-face VR services by meeting their customers in the community, visiting employers, working with Community Resource Providers, and attending Individual Education Program meetings for youth in area high schools.
- Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the IDHS Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and DRS. The MOU focuses on the continuity of services between shorter-term DRS vocational rehabilitation services and longer-term DDD employment services.
- DRS field staff provided thousands of individuals working in sheltered workshops earning a subminimum wage, with career counseling and guidance related to obtaining competitive integrated employment through DRS Vocational Rehabilitation services.
- Guided and supported individuals with disabilities as the State eliminated the practice of contracting with vendors in the State Use Program who pay individuals with disabilities a subminimum wage.
- Realigned the organizational structure of DRS by redesignating the Illinois Client Assistance Program to Equip for Equality, to serve as an independent ombudsperson, and by creating new Bureaus focused on quality outreach and excellent customer service.

DRS looks forward to closing more gaps in service in 2023 by refining and implementing our Bureau restructure to better serve our customers in diverse, equitable, and inclusive ways.

Our services powerfully support and influence individuals with disabilities to live full, abundant lives by helping them achieve their goals of employment, education, and independent living. We want the world to recognize the talent people with disabilities bring to the table, as this talent has the ability to change our future.

We value human dignity, equity, informed community, urgency, transparency, and kindness. Our accomplishments in 2022 highlight our Department's and the Division's pledge to these values. We are ready to serve you. Help is Here.

Sincerely,

Grace B. Hou, Secretary
Illinois Department of Human Services

Rahnee K. Patrick, Director
Division of Rehabilitation Services

IDHS/DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Program

FY 2022 Final Data Summary

Service Data

Category	Referrals	Applications	New Plans	Total Served	Outcomes
BFS Region 1 North	3,240	2,519	2,224	8,171	910
BFS Region 1 South	2,143	1,551	1,271	5,174	579
BFS Region 2	3,962	3,038	2,475	8,862	1,135
BFS Region 3	1,979	1,679	1,401	4,863	796
BFS Region 4	1,503	1,270	1,111	4,022	535
BFS Region 5	1,900	1,675	1,172	4,268	555
BBS	594	479	401	1,795	203
Statewide Total	15,321	12,211	10,055	37,155	4,713

Customers by Service Category

Category	STEP	Transition	STEP + Transition	SEP	College
BFS Region 1 North	4,288	92	4,380	389	1,096
BFS Region 1 South	3,065	92	3,157	192	534
BFS Region 2	4,845	277	5,122	294	1,279
BFS Region 3	2,100	167	2,267	136	940
BFS Region 4	1,825	150	1,975	75	935
BFS Region 5	1,957	167	2,124	94	760
BBS	83	55	138	19	348
Statewide Total	18,163	1,000	19,163	1,199	5,892

Customers By Age Group

Category	Cases Served	Competitive Outcomes	Percent Competitive	Percent Served	Average Hourly Wage	Average Weekly Earnings
0 - 20	25,462	2,423	51%	69%	\$13.87	\$391
21 - 30	4,055	776	16%	11%	\$14.72	\$409
31 - 40	2,619	552	12%	7%	\$16.24	\$441
41 - 50	2,131	394	8%	6%	\$16.17	\$493
51 - 60	2,065	419	9%	6%	\$15.77	\$433
61 - PLUS	823	151	3%	2%	\$15.60	\$431
VR Total	37,155	4,715	100%	100%	\$14.70	\$413

Customers By Disability Category

Category	Served	Outcomes	Percent of Outcomes	Percent of Served	Average Hourly Wage	Average Weekly Earnings
Visual Impairment	1,616	159	3.4%	4.3%	\$17.21	\$545
Hearing Impairment	1,727	353	7.5%	4.6%	\$17.91	\$527
Orthopedic/Neurological Impairment	1,938	221	4.7%	5.2%	\$16.88	\$535
Mental Illness Disability	7,142	1,190	25.2%	19.2%	\$14.43	\$400
Intellectual Disability	11,062	1,130	24.0%	29.8%	\$13.08	\$300
Learning Disability	9,445	1,179	25.0%	25.4%	\$14.20	\$425
Alcohol - Substance Abuse	56	13	0.3%	0.2%	No Data	No Data
TBI Disability	345	42	0.9%	0.9%	\$15.34	\$418
Other	3,824	428	9.1%	10.3%	\$14.70	\$395
VR Total	37,155	4,715	100.0%	100.0%	\$14.70	\$413

Customers By Race/Ethnic Group

Category	Cases Served	Competitive Outcomes	Percent Competitive	Percent Served	Average Hourly Wage	Average Weekly Earnings
White	20,967	2,933	62.2%	56.4%	\$14.58	\$415
Black or African American	8,478	1,049	22.3%	22.8%	\$15.04	\$412
Hispanic Combination	5,953	587	12.5%	16.0%	\$14.60	\$402
Asian	955	77	1.6%	2.6%	\$15.94	\$457
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	49	7	0.2%	0.1%	\$15.23	\$515
American Indian/Alaskan Native	59	5	0.1%	0.2%	\$13.50	\$366
Two or More Races	693	57	1.2%	1.9%	\$14.04	\$393
VR Total	37,154	4,715	100.0%	100.0%	\$13.36	\$413
All Minority Categories	16,187	1,782	37.8%	43.6%	\$14.73	\$407

Customers By Race and Education Program

Category	White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Two or More Races	Total	All Minority Categories
STEP	9,559	3,684	3,993	525	20	22	360	18,163	8,604
NON STEP Transition	660	175	118	19	1	1	26	1,000	340
College/University	3,892	1,027	681	157	13	5	117	5,892	2,000
Other	336	156	53	14	1	2	7	569	233
None	6,520	3,436	1,108	240	14	29	183	11,531	5,010
VR Total	20,967	8,478	5,953	955	49	59	693	37,155	16,187

Measurable Skills Gains

Category	Post Secondary Students	Skills Gained	MSG Rate
BBS	211	166	78.7%
BFS Region 1 North	750	623	83.1%
BFS Region 1 South	296	245	82.8%
BFS Region 2	754	578	76.7%
BFS Region 3	532	431	81.0%
BFS Region 4	514	379	73.7%
BFS Region 5	394	271	68.8%
Statewide Total	3451	2693	78.0%

*Internal tabulation. Final rate confirmed by RSA is 67.8%, negotiated target 50%.

IDHS/DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Program

FY 2022 Final Data Summary *(continued)*

Customers by Education Program

Category	Rehab Closures	Non-Rehab Closures	Rehab Rate	Average Weekly Earnings	Average Spending on Rehab Education	Average Spending on Non-Rehab Education
Community College	617	529	53.8%	\$540	\$10,173	\$5,933
Secondary Transitional Experience Program	1925	3362	36.4%	\$374	\$6,476	\$2,599
Technical Institute	35	28	55.6%	\$491	\$7,976	\$4,787
Transition - NON STEP	194	286	40.4%	\$478	\$13,930	\$3,613
University	275	173	61.4%	\$677	\$32,298	\$15,102
VR Total	4,713	5,627	45.6%	\$429	\$7,726	\$2,871

Customers by Special Program

Category	Rehab Closures	Non-Rehab Closures	Rehab Rate	Average Weekly Earnings	Average Spending on Rehab Education	Average Spending on Non-Rehab Education
Supported Employment	158	258	38.0%	\$241	\$13,059	\$3,665
IPS Program	451	255	63.9%	\$387	\$7,817	\$2,184
Community Rehab Program	1,989	1,204	62.3%	\$380	\$8,734	\$3,085
SSI or SSDI Recipient	1,463	2,019	42.0%	\$330	\$10,386	\$2,570
VR Total	4,713	5,627	45.6%	\$429	\$7,726	\$2,871

Customers by Order of Selection

Category	Rehab Closures	Non-Rehab Closures	Rehab Rate	Average Weekly Earnings	Average Spending on Rehab Education	Average Spending on Non-Rehab Education
Disability which is MOST SIGNIFICANT	2685	3434	43.9%	\$387	\$7,911	\$2,462
Disability which is SIGNIFICANT	390	416	48.4%	\$511	\$7,832	\$3,331
Disability which is VERY SIGNIFICANT	1649	1777	48.1%	\$478	\$7,401	\$2,820
Statewide Total	4,724	5,627	45.6%	\$429	\$7,726	\$2,871

WIOA Performance and Accountability Indicators

Performance Indicator	PY 21 Final Actual	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	57.2%	56.0%	56.0%	60.0%	60.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	42.2%	49.0%	49.0%	51.0%	51.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$3,997	\$3,627	\$3,627	\$3,942	\$3,942
Credential Attainment Rate	28.6%	29.5%	29.5%	31.0%	31.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	67.8%	72.5%	61.0%	75.0%	63.0%

Data Summary Narrative

FY2022 Annual Report to the State Rehab Council

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

In FY2022 the DRS Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program assisted 4,713 people with disabilities in achieving a competitive employment outcome. This marked an increase of 20.5% from the previous fiscal year total of 3,911. These individuals earned on average \$21,476 at case closure, an increase of \$1,352 annually from the previous year. This added a total of \$6.4 million in additional income for Illinois households over the previous year.

DRS VR and the State Rehab Council developed a structured list of quantified performance to be shared quarterly from DRS VR to the SRC, beginning Q1 SFY23. This data covers all of DRS VR programs and brings our cooperative accountability work in line with our State Plan. DRS VR and the SRC believe this will lead to improved services and increased accountability to our customers and the Illinois public.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

For the final year that Title-IV agencies only have a negotiated target for Measurable Skills Gains Rate as part of the performance and accountability measures, we exceeded this target for the second year in a row. This negotiated goal was 50.0% for PY21/SFY22 and our final confirmed rate found on our submitted ETA-9169 was 67.8%. This was the 6th highest in the nation and the highest rate of any state with at least 18,000 participants served and of these states, the second highest was achieved by Michigan at 56.8%. This high rate of success for our post-secondary participants is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our customers, field staff, community partners, and the Illinois Workforce System as a whole.

This success is encouraging as we adopt four new performance and accountability measures for which we have negotiated targets. We have held training sessions for our staff and prepared them to meet these new targets and build upon the success we achieved with our MSG Rate. The mission of DRS VR is aligned with these new targets as they all relate directly to high standards of service leading to high levels of success for our customers, which in turn leads to a higher quality of life. Credential Attainment and MSG Rate require our staff to ensure our customers' post-secondary endeavors lead to achieving their goals with regular supports. Employment Rate 2nd and 4th Quarter Post-Exit and Median Earnings 2nd Quarter Post-Exit require our staff to prioritize quality of placement and supports to ensure a well-paying, rewarding career our customers would want, and be likely, to stay with. This two pronged approach will allow us to continuously improve our performance statistically, while continuing to prioritize our service to our customers and community.

Programs, activities and employment opportunities in the Illinois Department of Human Services are open and accessible to any individual or group without regard to age, sex, race, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin or religion. The department is an equal opportunity employer and practices affirmative action and reasonable accommodation programs.