



# DRS Success: Making It Work Together

## 2015 Annual Report

**"My Success Can Be Your Success"**  
- Tony Abou Ezzi, Attorney

### Message from the Chair..

As I leave the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), it is my privilege to report on behalf of its membership who are appointed by the Governor to represent all individuals with disabilities in Illinois as a liaison, advisor, monitor and support to the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services (IDHS/DRS) our achievements from the past year. The SRC's relationship with DRS Administration continues to be stronger with significant input sought and used from both sides of the partnership.

Council members are particularly pleased to report the following points of focus in its efforts in 2015:

- Coordinating with the Bureau on Hearings to assure that Hearing Officers appointed to hear VR cases have appropriate background and training to best serve our clients. We are also routinely reviewing appeals filed regarding demographics, purpose and outcome.
- Working closely with DRS Administration regarding the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) including our participation in and approval of the Unified State Plan.
- Assessing and working with ADA Coordinators in State agencies to assure that opportunities for persons with disabilities employed by the State or candidates for employment by the State are able to work up to their abilities.
- Supporting the Strategic Planning process as a partnership between the SRC and DRS Administration.

We invite you to visit the DRS SUCCESS website at [drs.illinois.gov/success](http://drs.illinois.gov/success) and enjoy the wonderful stories from our customers and community and business partners that will encourage and educate on how to make successes happen at your home and in your community. Numerous helpful resources are also provided for your use.

It has been my honor to serve on the SRC and to Chair it. Please be assured that your Council members are hard-working and devoted to the ongoing partnerships with IDHS, DRS, consumers and community stakeholders to better ensure that the services that DRS provides are those that people with disabilities need and that they are delivered in a fashion that is most useful for them.

Sincerely,

Diane M. Crutcher, *Chair*  
Illinois State Rehabilitation Council



To learn more about Tony and other success stories please visit  
**[drs.illinois.gov/success](http://drs.illinois.gov/success)**



## The Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act

Effective July 1, 2015 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) became law, superseding the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and amending the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (which authorizes the vocational rehabilitation program), with the primary goal of streamlining the statewide workforce development system and increasing participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce.

WIOA requires a Unified State Plan for workforce development from all workforce partners in the state. The Plan will take effect July 1, 2016. Final federal regulations for WIOA programs are expected in June 2016 from the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education.

DRS will be actively engaged working with other workforce partner agencies, the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and stakeholders across the state in developing and implementing the Unified Plan over the next four years.

## The Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) and the National Employment Team (NET)

TAP is an online job development and placement tool that includes a national talent pool of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) candidates looking for employment; and a job posting system for businesses looking to hire individuals with disabilities at the local, state, and national level.

This Dual Customer system is supported by the National Employment Team (NET) which includes VR Business Consultants from each of the 80 publically funded VR agencies across the country.

Through these partnerships, VR customers in Illinois will gain greater access to businesses and employment opportunities while businesses will have greater access to the VR talent pool, NET VR Business Consultants, and the ability to post job opportunities in TAP reaching all VR customers, staff and partners!

## Message from the Secretary and Director...

The State of Illinois is in an unparalleled period of transition and while we both can be considered "new" to our respective positions, we are no strangers to the Mission and Vision of the Illinois Department of Human Services or the Division of Rehabilitation Services (IDHS/DRS). Having served in many different capacities within the Department and the Division over the years, we are working hard to assemble a leadership team that is invested and passionate about our work and committed to the individual SUCCESS of our staff and ultimately the customers we serve.

We are proud to share that the fiscal year that ended this past June (FY 2015) marked the fourth year in a row the IDHS/DRS has increased the number of individuals with disabilities they have worked with to achieve competitive employment outcomes. It is also the third consecutive year that DRS staff assisted more than 5,000 customers in achieving their employment dreams.

It is important to know that we don't highlight the past in order to simply recognize and reward prior achievements; we highlight past SUCCESS in order to challenge ourselves to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities seeking assistance through our programs and services. And as we redesign, develop, and implement more effective and efficient methods of providing programs and services, we understand the only way for us to do this is to work both HARDER and SMARTER!

With the recent passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and participating in the online services of the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP); we will be strengthening partnerships with workforce investment, education, economic development systems and businesses throughout the local, state and national levels to streamline workforce service delivery and approaches.

Making It Work Together, we will build on our history of SUCCESS for our customers!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James T. Dimas".

James T. Dimas  
Secretary-Designate  
Illinois Department of Human Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristine A. Smith".

Kristine A. Smith  
Director  
Division of Rehabilitation Services

*If you require this information in Braille or large print, please inform us of this preference.*

# IDHS/DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Program

FY 2015 Final Data Summary

Service Data					
Category	Referrals	Applications	New Plans	Total Served	Outcomes
BFS Region 1	7,440	4,768	3,661	13,059	1,399
BFS Region 2	5,052	3,570	2,820	9,759	1,391
BFS Region 3	3,378	2,447	1,792	7,109	974
BFS Region 4	2,241	1,689	1,101	4,503	740
BFS Region 5	2,270	1,734	1,260	4,737	721
BBS	1,294	846	659	2,865	217
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>21,675</b>	<b>15,054</b>	<b>11,293</b>	<b>42,032</b>	<b>5,442</b>

Customers By Service Category					
Category	STEP	Non-STEP	Transition	SEP	College
BFS Region 1	3,504	317	3,821	542	523
BFS Region 2	2,777	422	3,199	260	296
BFS Region 3	1,035	233	1,268	185	330
BFS Region 4	628	228	856	55	151
BFS Region 5	605	190	795	109	183
BBS	37	69	106	17	146
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>8,586</b>	<b>1,459</b>	<b>10,045</b>	<b>1,168</b>	<b>1,629</b>

Customers By Age Group				
Category	Served	Outcomes	% Outcomes	% Served
< 20 years	22,121	2,295	42.2	52.7
21-30 years	5,893	1,045	19.2	14.0
31-40 years	3,846	646	11.9	9.2
41-50 years	4,573	695	12.7	10.8
51-60 years	4,265	624	11.5	10.2
61 or more	1,313	137	2.5	3.1
<b>VR Total</b>	<b>42,011</b>	<b>5,442</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Earnings Data			
Average Earnings	Weekly	Monthly	Annual
Case Opening	\$55.64	\$241.10	\$2,893.26
Case Closure	\$291.39	\$1,262.68	\$15,152.16
<b>Average Increase</b>	<b>\$235.75</b>	<b>\$1,021.58</b>	<b>\$12,258.90</b>
<b>Total Increase</b>	<b>\$1,282,951</b>	<b>\$5,559,412</b>	<b>\$66,712,939</b>
		<b>Estimated Taxes</b>	<b>\$5,737,313</b>
		<b>Estimated Tax Percent</b>	<b>8.809</b>

Customers By Disability Category				
Category	Served	Outcomes	% Outcomes	% Served
Blind-Visual Impairment	2,930	231	4.2	7.0
Deaf-Hard of Hearing	2,678	468	8.6	6.4
Physical Disability	3,327	361	6.6	7.9
Mental Illness	5,248	876	16.3	12.5
Intellectual Disability	5,672	655	12.0	13.5
Learning Disability	12,203	1,606	29.5	29.0
Alcohol-Drug Abuse	37	8	0.1	0.1
Brain Injury	516	84	1.5	1.2
Other Condition	9,400	1,153	21.2	22.4
<b>VR Total</b>	<b>42,011</b>	<b>5,442</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Customers By Race/Ethnic Group				
Category	Served	Outcomes	% Outcomes	% Served
White	24,492	3,614	66.4	58.3
African American	11,319	1,188	21.8	26.9
Hispanic/Latino	4,829	491	9.0	11.5
Asian	696	82	1.6	1.7
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	42	6	0.1	0.1
American Indian	85	8	0.1	0.2
Multi Racial	548	53	1.0	1.3
<b>VR Total</b>	<b>42,011</b>	<b>5,442</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>All Minority Categories</b>	<b>17,519</b>	<b>1,828</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>41.7</b>

## Data Summary

### Vocational Rehabilitation Program

In FY2015 the DRS vocational rehabilitation program assisted 5,442 people with disabilities in achieving a competitive employment outcome, an increase of 5.6 percent over the previous year and the fourth consecutive year with positive growth in outcomes. These individuals earned an average of \$15,152 at case closure, an increase of \$12,259 over earnings at case opening. Taken together, this equals annual increased earnings of \$66.71 million, which resulted in an estimated additional \$5.7 million in taxes paid as a result of employment.

A total of 2,295 outcomes were achieved by individuals who began receiving services prior to age 21, or 42.2 percent of all outcomes. This demonstrates the continuing emphasis of the DRS VR program on serving transition age youth with disabilities. Transition youth represented 52.7 percent of all persons served in FY2015.

Demographic changes in Illinois are reflected in the competitive outcome data, with 33.6 percent of competitive outcomes achieved by minority customers, an increase from 28.8 percent five years ago. Notable increases in this time period were seen for African American (+30.4%), Latino (+44.4%) Asian (+54.7%) and Hawaiian-Pacific Islander (+50%) groups, as well as those individuals in the multi-racial category (+96.3%). In contrast, during this time period the number of outcomes achieved by white customers increased by only 8.3 percent.

### Home Services Program

The total number of persons served in HSP declined by 1.7 percent in FY2015 compared to the previous year. The number served in the General waiver program decreased by less than .05 percent to 28,628 individuals. The number of persons served in the AIDS waiver decreased by 4.2 percent to 1,600, while the number served in the Brain Injury waiver declined by 8.9 percent to 4,669. This is the result of the transfer of individuals to the General waiver based on reduced need for specialized services.

A total of 87 individuals were moved from nursing homes into the community through reintegration efforts of DRS contractors. This number was 35.6 percent less than the number for the previous year.

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.

## Comparison of Data by Race/Ethnic Group

### Competitive Employment Outcomes

Race/Ethnic Group	FY 2015	FY 2010	Percent Difference
White	3,614	3,338	8.3
African American	1,188	911	30.4
Hispanic/Latino	491	340	44.4
Asian	82	53	54.7
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	6	4	50.0
American Indian	8	14	-42.9
Multi Racial	53	27	96.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,442</b>	<b>4,687</b>	<b>16.1</b>
<b>All Minority Categories</b>	<b>1,828</b>	<b>1,349</b>	<b>35.5</b>
<b>Minority Percent of Total</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>28.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>

### Average Monthly Earnings

Race/Ethnic Group	FY 2015	FY 2010	Percent Difference
White	\$1,302	\$1,256	3.6
African American	\$1,174	\$1,271	-7.6
Hispanic/Latino	\$1,224	\$1,171	4.5
Asian	\$1,051	\$1,325	-20.7
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	\$1,334	\$1,823	-26.8
American Indian	\$1,256	\$1,384	-9.3
Multi Racial	\$1,274	\$1,073	18.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,263</b>	<b>\$1,235</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<b>All Minority Categories</b>	<b>\$1,186</b>	<b>\$1,183</b>	<b>0.3</b>

### Rehabilitation Rate

Race/Ethnic Group	FY 2015	FY 2010	Percent Difference
White	56.6	63.8	-11.3
African American	43.9	47.1	-6.8
Hispanic/Latino	46.5	54.2	-14.2
Asian	56.5	51.8	9.1
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	51.3	44.4	15.5
American Indian	50.0	63.6	-21.4
Multi Racial	49.2	58.0	-15.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>52.1</b>	<b>58.7</b>	<b>-100.0</b>

### Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Race/Ethnic Group	FY 2015	FY 2010	Percent Difference
White	24,492	26,073	-6.1
African American	11,319	11,806	-4.1
Hispanic/Latino	4,829	3,674	31.4
Asian	696	538	29.4
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	42	61	-31.1
American Indian	85	78	9.0
Multi Racial	548	304	80.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,011</b>	<b>42,534</b>	<b>-1.2</b>

### Home Services Program

Race/Ethnic Group	FY 2015	FY 2010	Percent Difference
White	14,625	18,770	-22.1
African American	15,666	17,215	-9.0
Hispanic/Latino	2,817	2,525	11.6
Asian	527	474	11.2
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	34	40	-15.0
American Indian	836	117	614.5
Multi Racial	392	165	137.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,897</b>	<b>39,306</b>	<b>-11.2</b>