



DRS Success: Making It Work Together

FY 2020 Annual Report

Message from the Chair...

On behalf of the Illinois State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and with our Illinois Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) partner, we are pleased to present the 2020 Annual Report for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program.

I don't think that any of us could have predicted the many novel challenges we have faced this year due to COVID-19 and commend the Illinois DRS leadership with working quickly to maintain service provision in the safest manner possible for consumers and DRS staff. We started out the year with priorities that indeed shifted during the months but DRS staff were able to continue to concentrate on the bigger picture of maintaining outcomes while also acting quickly to transform service provision. They have done a tremendous job!

Some of the notable accomplishments during the year include:

- DRS continues to adopt and integrate the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) standards and processes into their system.
- DRS completed a MOU with the Illinois Department of Developmental Disabilities to strengthen the partnership between these two agencies for supported employment.
- A pilot project for Customized Employment has been created.
- SRC and DRS worked with the Governor's office to get all outstanding SRC council members approved to the Council.
- The State Plan was completed and includes many aspirations for the SRC and DRS.
- Devised innovative methods to try to keep the Illinois Community Rehabilitation Provider network strong for Illinoisans with disabilities.
- Worked with RSA and federal and state legislators to receive guidance and request waivers and remedies of federal rules and regulations to ensure continued provision of most effective services during the pandemic.
- Continuing to move individuals from 14(c) employment to competitive integrated employment.

Many other initiatives have been started this year and will roll into next year. The SRC is working with DRS to create a reporting system to address the items in the state plan, to create a more effective strategic planning session structure, create an effective Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and customer satisfaction survey system and to strengthen the partnership between DRS and the SRC and to ensure that Illinois DRS provides the best possible services.

I wish to thank the DRS staff for their dedication, expertise, and professionalism in helping people with disabilities achieve their desired employment outcomes. I also wish to thank the SRC members who give freely of their time to help the SRC and DRS to make continuous improvements to efficiency and service quality.

Sincerely,

LaDonna R. Henson, *Chair*
Illinois State Rehabilitation Council

Success Story: Ashley Kim

Storytelling is an art and can be found in every culture and society. Stories can bring people together, simplify complex issues, inspire and motivate us as well. Ashley Kim believes that *“stories really have power”* and shared that she would like to help tell people’s interesting stories in the future. She has a powerful and interesting story of her own and it’s just beginning.

It was September of 2009 and Ashley was just 12 years old. She was at a birthday pool party with friends and they were all having fun. That is, until Ashley dove into the pool in an area that was not as deep as she thought and fractured her C-6 & C-7 vertebrae, resulting in quadriplegia.

Ashley required surgery and several months of therapy before returning home and fitting back into her active, pre-teen life with friends and family. The challenge of learning to live with a disability can be overwhelming in and of itself, especially when combined with teenage peer pressure, pressures to succeed academically and the stress of an uncertain future.

When Ashley was asked to share associated struggles or obstacles that she encountered with managing her disability or dealing with peer pressure, her response was not what you might expect. She calmly explained that *“every day is a struggle; the struggles range from the small things to bigger problems but if you worry about them before they even occur, you’ll be unable to do anything about them”*.

This philosophy was developed early in her life and she developed an interest in psychology courses and thoughts of becoming a Psychologist. It wasn’t until her senior year in high school that she discovered a book in the library titled *“Fifty Years of Silence”* and it was this story that would inspire and motivate Ashley to tell people’s stories that need to be told.

Fifty Years of Silence is a personal memoir written by Jan Ruff O’Herne, one of thousands of young women forcibly removed from their families in World War II to provide sexual services as ‘comfort women’ in a military brothel run by the Imperial Japanese Army between 1929 and 1945.

It took 50 years to break her silence and she was encouraged by the testimony of Asian women who first came forward to demand recognition and apology from the Japanese Military who still claim that all the accounts are false. So, in 1994 Jan became the first European ‘comfort woman’ to speak out regarding the brutality they faced in her book which would be published in six languages and a documentary film about her life won numerous accolades as well.

Ashley was first connected with the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program while she was in high school and was already receiving personal assistance services since 2011 through the DRS Home Services Program (HSP). She has always been an excellent student and with the assistance of Jennifer Schmidt, a VR counselor in the Rolling Meadows field office, a VR case was opened with Ashley in preparation for DRS to assist her with her college and employment goal.

To read more about Ashley, other success stories or to learn more about vocational rehabilitation programs and services please go to the success website at: drs.illinois.gov/success

Message from the Secretary and Director...

The Illinois Department of Human Services’ Division of Rehabilitation Services (IDHS/DRS) celebrated 100 years of the Federal Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program, a fitting anniversary for such an extraordinary year. This year tested our century old program in ways few could predict, but in this adversity, it gave IDHS/DRS an opportunity to look at ways to reinvent ourselves.

IDHS/DRS immediately implemented measures to protect the health and safety of our staff, customers, and communities. We made necessary technical investments to move our staff to a remote working environment with connectivity to ensure complete continuity in service.

To further expand our ability to reach customers and maintain channels of communications with our communities, IDHS/DRS activated a mass texting program that has been used to provide critical information instantly to our customers and their families. To ensure customers are heard during these challenging and unprecedented times, we have shared targeted surveys to gain feedback and address their concerns quickly.

Additionally, in coordination with our partners, the Illinois Care Connections program provided much needed devices to our isolated seniors allowing them to maintain contact with loved ones without comprising their health.

These innovations are not just in response to the present pandemic but will allow the VR program to weather future storms without limiting our ability to serve our customers and communities. The pandemic has given us the opportunity to revolutionizing our service delivery model to include remote and digital tools and at the same time provide excellent quality of service to all Illinoisans with disabilities regardless of their location or mobility.

As we continue to navigate through COVID-19, IDHS/DRS will emerge from this pandemic stronger than before and have every confidence the best is yet to come for us all and the communities we serve.

Sincerely:



Grace B. Hou, Secretary
Illinois Department of Human Services



Rahnee K. Patrick, Director
Division of Rehabilitation Services

We invite you to visit the Division of Rehabilitation Services SUCCESS website at drs.illinois.gov/success and enjoy the wonderful stories from our customers and community business partners that will encourage and educate on how to make successes happen at your home and in your community. In addition, there are numerous helpful resources provided for your use as well.

If you require this in an alternative format, please inform us of your preference

IDHS/DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Program

FY 2020 Final Data Summary

Service Data

Category	Referrals	Applications	New Plans	Total Served	Outcomes
BFS Region 1	5,774	4,311	3,897	13,711	1,471
BFS Region 2	4,393	3,167	2,775	9,463	1,136
BFS Region 3	2,639	2,128	1,871	6,536	916
BFS Region 4	1,537	1,086	767	3,177	332
BFS Region 5	1,845	1,453	1,180	4,142	622
BBS	650	558	407	1,641	155
Statewide Total	16,838	12,703	10,897	38,670	4,632

Customers By Age Group

Category	Cases Served	Competitive Outcomes	Percent Competitive	Percent Served	Average Hourly Wage	Average Weekly Earnings
0 - 20	24,157	2,296	50%	65%	11.48	317
21 - 30	4,294	799	17%	12%	12.07	339
31 - 40	2,750	509	11%	7%	13.36	399
41 - 50	2,500	456	10%	7%	13.71	422
51 - 60	2,502	437	9%	7%	13.5	391
61 - PLUS	849	135	3%	2%	13.74	367
VR Total	38,670	4,632	100%	100%	12.26	349

Customers By Race/Ethnic Group

Category	Cases Served	Competitive Outcomes	Percent Competitive	Percent Served	Average Hourly Wage	Average Weekly Earnings
White	21,080	2,824	61.0%	56.9%	12.11	355
Black or African American	9,045	1,059	22.9%	24.4%	12.6	343
Hispanic Combination	5,448	596	12.9%	14.7%	12.28	330
Asian	827	82	1.8%	2.2%	13.45	367
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	59	5	0.1%	0.2%	11.12	311
American Indian/Alaskan Native	61	6	0.1%	0.2%	12.08	337
Two or More Races	532	60	1.3%	1.4%	11.52	309
VR Total	37,052	4,632	100%	100%	12.26	349
All Minority Categories	15,972	1,808	39%	43%	12.49	339

Customers By Race and Education Program

Category	White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Other Race	Two or More Races	Total	All Minority Categories
STEP	4,836	1,764	1,808	274	140	8,822	3,986
NON STEP Transition	212	47	34	4	15	312	100
College/University	2,804	751	491	122	79	4,247	1,443
Other	77	37	10	2	1	127	50
None	5,921	3,039	1,392	286	156	10,794	4,873
VR Total	13,850	5,638	3,735	688	391	24,302	10,452

Customers by Service Category

Category	STEP	Non-STEP Transition	STEP+ Transition	SEP	College
BFS Region 1	6,837	245	7,082	559	1,377
BFS Region 2	4,681	357	5,038	283	1,064
BFS Region 3	2,457	255	2,712	113	1,183
BFS Region 4	1,358	87	1,445	61	810
BFS Region 5	1,682	211	1,893	106	763
BBS	138	63	201	29	289
Statewide Total	17,153	1,218	18,371	1,151	5,486

Customers By Disability Category

Category	Cases Served	Competitive Outcomes	Percent Competitive	Percent Served	Average Hourly Wage	Average Weekly Earnings
Visual Impairment	1,418	118	2.6%	3.8%	15.42	498
Hearing Impairment	1,858	351	7.6%	5.0%	12.82	480
Orthopedic/Neurological Impairment	2,126	225	4.9%	5.7%	14.38	445
Mental Illness Disability	7,384	1,153	24.9%	19.9%	12.14	339
Intellectual Disability	10,124	1,080	23.3%	27.3%	10.71	249
Learning Disability	9,724	1,180	25.5%	26.2%	11.62	337
Alcohol - Substance Abuse	69	13	0.3%	0.2%	11.91	448
TBI Disability	405	45	1.0%	1.1%	14.15	437
Other	3,944	467	10.1%	10.6%	12.46	349
VR Total	37,052	4,632	100.0%	100.0%	12.26	349

Measurable Skills Gains

Category	Skills Gained	Post Secondary Students	MSG Rate
BFS Region 1	135	233	57.9%
BFS Region 2	444	1,016	43.7%
BFS Region 3	516	769	67.1%
BFS Region 4	424	680	62.4%
BFS Region 5	305	632	48.3%
BBS	275	518	53.1%
Statewide Total	2,099	3,848	54.5%

Customers by Order of Selection

Category	Rehab Closures	Non-Rehab Closures	Rehab Rate	Average Weekly Earnings	Average Spending on Rehab Education	Average Spending on Rehab Non-Education
Disability which is Most Significant	2,418	3,006	44.59	325	6,738	2,289
Disability which is Very Significant	1,776	1,998	47.06	393	7,194	2,331
Disability which is Significant	438	407	51.83	410	6,588	1,967
Total	4,632	5,411	46.13	359	6840	2195

IDHS/DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Program FY 2020 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 Rehab Non-Education
Community College	520	356	59.4%	455	9,501	5,603
Secondary Transitional Experience Program	1,765	3,260	35.1%	294	5,486	1,860
Technical Institute	38	33	53.5%	535	7,171	3,845
Transition - NON STEP	235	316	42.6%	390	11,628	4,379
University	247	201	55.1%	617	35,393	22,954
Programs Total	2,805	4,166	40.2%	364	13,836	7,728

Customers by Special Program

Category	Rehab Closures	Non-Rehab Closures	Rehab Rate	Average Weekly Earnings	Average Spending on Rehab Education	Average Spending on Rehab Non-Education
Supported Employment	206	244	45.8%	199	9,996	3,314
IPS Program	383	199	65.8%	300	7,449	1,351
Community Rehab Program	1,610	1,064	60.2%	326	7,621	2,100
SSI or SSDI Recipient	1,487	2,158	40.8%	288	8,585	3,004
Programs Total	3,686	3,665	50.1%	300	8,413	2,442

Customers by Dual VR HSP Case

Category	Count of Dual Cases	Referrals	Applications	Eligibilities	Rehab Plans	Competitive Outcomes	Average Hourly Wage
BBS REGIONS	130	1	7	4	70	4	13.78
BFS REGION 1	470	17	5	11	223	21	15.25
BFS REGION 2	229	13	7	6	96	11	13.06
BFS REGION 3	105	1	1	1	75	5	13.02
BFS REGION 4	60	1	2	5	22	3	9.58
BFS REGION 5	65	9	2	5	19	5	14.97
Total	1,059	42	24	32	505	49	\$14.03

Customers by Dual VR HSP Case Closures

Category	Count of Dual Cases	Closed at Referral	Closed at Application	Closed at Eligibility	Closed at Plan	Total VR Spending
BBS REGIONS	130	19	8	3	13	479,065
BFS REGION 1	470	131	13	6	40	2,824,419
BFS REGION 2	229	50	9	4	33	1,682,447
BFS REGION 3	105	9	2	6	5	3,642,842
BFS REGION 4	60	10	2	8	7	641,343
BFS REGION 5	65	8	2	7	8	346,095
Total	1,059	227	36	34	106	9,616,210

Data Summary Narrative FY 2020 Annual Report to the State Rehab Council

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

In FY2020 the DRS vocational rehabilitation program assisted 4,632 people with disabilities in achieving a competitive employment outcome. This marked a decrease of 9.4% from the previous fiscal year. These individuals earned on average \$18,148 at case closure, an increase of \$1,295 annually from the previous year. This added a total of \$6 million in additional income for Illinois households over the previous year.

The State Rehabilitation Council Ad Hoc Data Committee and DRS-VR have continued to make progress on establishing data metrics and sharing to fulfill those objectives laid out in the State Plan. This FY2020 Data Summary exhibits those new metrics with which DRS is seeking to both track and establish benchmarks. The inclusion of Order of Selection, Special Programs, and Education Programs will allow for the establishment of tracking and benchmarks for those programs of current focus. With this data, and that of historically underserved communities, DRS can examine each aspect of our service and seek to continuously improve upon that.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

This will also lead to the inclusion of all WIOA data measures DRS has established targets for, with Measurable Skills Gains being the first DRS has established a target for at 62%. DRS served 3,848 Post-Secondary Students with 2,099 skills gained throughout FY2020, for an MSG rate of 54.5%. Per WIOA guidelines, DRS must reach 90% of their goal to have met. For this year, DRS missed this threshold by 1.3%. It is likely that the significant decrease in primary and secondary education functions in Illinois limited staff ability to record skills gains.

Home and Community Based Services

DRS has placed a focus on those cases receiving Home and Community Based Services and seeking services through the Vocational Rehabilitation program. These Dual Cases highlight the complete service DRS provides customers seeking independence in their homes and fulfilling employment in the community. DRS served 610 Dual Case customers in FY2020 and produced competitive outcomes for 49 of these individuals.

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.