
VIRGINIA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND AND VISION IMPAIRED
(SRC)
Quarterly Meeting

FINAL Minutes
May 17, 2024

Held at
The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)
397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA, 23227
And Via Zoom

SRC Members in Attendance

David Andrews, Hampton, Representative of a Current/Former Recipient of Rehabilitation Services
Christine Appert, Charlottesville, Current/Former Recipient of Rehabilitation Services (virtual due to personal matters)
Susan Bowmaster, Annadale, Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (virtual due to personal matters)
Rebecca Ceja, Richmond, Representative of the Virginia Department of Education (virtual due personal matters)
LaSonya Jackson, Crozet, Representative of a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
Beth Klein, Stafford, Representative of the Virginia Disability Law Center of Virginia (dLCV)
Heidi Lawyer, Henrico, Representative of Parent Training & Information Center (PEATC) (virtual due to illness)
Gerald Meredith, South Chesterfield, Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group
Chanthen Nene, Manassas, Representative of an Applicant or Recipient of Rehabilitation Services
Mark Roane, Richmond, Applicant or Recipient of Rehabilitation Services (virtual due to personal matters)
Rachael Rounds, Midlothian, Representative of Community Rehabilitation Services Program
Beth Sellers, Harrisonburg, Parent/Guardian of a Person with a Disability
Francisco Semiao, Fairfax, Workforce Council Representative (virtual due to childcare)
Milford Stern, Roanoke, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

SRC Members Not Able to Attend

Rick Mitchell, Richmond, Commissioner, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member

DBVI Staff Present

Megan Hall, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services
Maggie Mills, Executive Assistant to Commissioner Mitchell – Recorder of Minutes
Justin Sheets, Assistant Director of Vocational Rehabilitation
Ashley West, Executive Assistant to Deputy Commissioners

Guest

Elizabeth Patacca, Policy & Legislative Affairs, Dept for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

ASL Interpreters

Elizabeth Leitch

John Folker

**Public
None**

Call to Order / Welcome and Introductions

Chair Stern called the meeting to order. A roundtable of introductions took place. Quorum was not met.

Adoption of February 9, 2024, Meeting Minutes

***The adoption of the February 9, 2024, Quarterly SRC Meeting Minutes will be an agenda item at the August 9, 2024, SRC Quarterly Meeting since quorum was not met.*

**Public Comment
None**

Commissioner & Deputy Commissioner's Report

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows.

Ms. Hall reported in Commissioner Mitchell's absence. Ms. Hall reported on the DBVI All-Staff Meeting held May 9 and 10 on the DBVI campus. Two hundred seventy employees from DBVI, Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB) and Virginia Enterprises for the Blind (VEB) attended. The event included Keynote speakers, teamwork activities and service awards. The two longest serving employees served 50 and 55 years.

Ms. Hall reported that the new state fiscal year starts July 1, so the Agency has been busy developing its budget for 2024-2025.

The second round of interviews for the vacant Deputy Commissioner for Services position is underway. The second interviews for the Policy, Planning & Evaluation Director are also underway. Susan Davis, Senior Policy Analyst, is retiring July 1 with 31 years of service. Her position has already been posted.

In regard to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – all capital projects have been accepted and the Agency will get working drawings done by December 1, 2024. Projects include the Library Resource Center (LRC) renovation, the VIB Charlottesville plant renovation, and the HVAC project at the VRCBVI dormitory.

VR Program Update

Ms. Hall reported on the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) event Financial Realities held May 10 which was all virtual. The event had 22 participants. SRC Member Beth Klein assisted with the presentation. Topics such as creating financial goals, creating a spending plan, social security benefits and reporting income were discussed.

The EDGE (Entrepreneurship Development for Gainful Employment) Program is a hybrid program with 24 virtual learning hours and an in-person final presentation in July at James Madison University. Fourteen students have been meeting once a week. Founders Mark has partnered with DBVI to do this training in entrepreneurship.

Cyber Space (formerly Leap into Linux) will be held at DBVI Headquarters June 23-28, 2024, where

students will learn how networks and web servers operate, how to protect from hackers, network, and cyber security. Their final project will be to develop a website of their own. Ms. Hall invited the SRC members to visit that event.

The Launching Point Program will be held at James Madison University (JMU) in Harrisonburg, VA, July 14 – 24, 2024. Students will navigate and explore JMU, meet students and professors from different degree programs, learn from admissions and disability support services, and participate in various self-advocacy programs.

Cyber Warriors Stem Camp is an all-virtual program that is held over six sessions, one week each from July 8 through August 16, 2024. Sessions cover 3D Printing, Splunk, AI, Building Custom Gaming PC, Drone Hacking and Programming, and Robotics.

The L.I.F.E. Program will be held July 7 – August 4, 2024, which is a four-week residential training program for students between the ages of 14-18 years old who are returning to a high school academic program in the fall of 2024. This program provides basic training in the skills of blindness and advocacy skills. The Agency uses work-based learning to pay Mentors for being involved in the L.I.F.E. Program. Confidence building activities include improvisation training, drivers' education experience, grilling, whitewater rafting, ropes course, rock climbing, sailing, bowling, swimming and more.

The Super Summer Camp Program is held at Camp Easterseals July 28-August 3, 2024. Positions are open for Junior Counselors, 16 and 17 years of age are preferred, who are interested in hospitality or outdoor recreation. This is also a work-based learning opportunity.

Careers in Action is scheduled for October 4 – 6, 2024, at the Delta Hotel in Richmond. Students are exposed to hotel careers including Kitchen, IT, Housekeeping, Reservations and more. Parents will be on hand to participate in a special educational track of programs relating to supporting their student as they move through High School and beyond.

The Business Team is scheduled to conduct the Elevate Your Career Reverse Career Fair next week in which participants who have gone through the previous training session surrounding interviews, resume development, disclosure discussions, etc. will have a table of their own and the employers will visit each table. Interviews are expected on the spot.

DBVI has been approached to partner with CVS and Aetna to create a customer service training lab. CVS/AETNA Grant funds will pay for computers and peripherals. DBVI will help with assistive technology, cubicles, and chairs. Conversations are still in progress regarding this lab. This is believed to be a four-week training for up to 6 individuals at a time. The lab is open to anyone in the state. DBVI will provide housing, transportation and meals for the individuals. DBVI hopes to have everything in place to start the first cohort in August 2024.

Mr. Andrews recommended additional DBVI locations throughout the state so that individuals do not have to travel so far for these programs.

*****Ms. Hall will share information about these programs with the SRC members.***

Old and New Business
Elizabeth Patacca – SRC Hearing Officers

Ms. Patacca presented a PowerPoint explaining the Hearing Officer process. She is currently recruiting for Hearing Officers. Members should let her know if they know of anyone interested in these positions.

***The August SRC Meeting Agenda will include a vote to renew Hearing Officers.*

Beth Klein – NCSRC Recap

Ms. Klein shared her experience at the NCSRC Conference. Ms. Hall announced that DBVI will sponsor a SRC Member who is interested in attending the Fall Conference in Seattle Washington.

Annual Report

Chair Stern explained what is required of volunteers in producing the Annual Report. ***He will ask for volunteers at the August SRC Meeting.*

New Member Orientation

Ms. Hall presented an Orientation to the SRC.

Adjourn

Next SRC Quarterly Meeting is August 9, 2024.



State Rehabilitation Council New Member Orientation

VR/SRC Partnership– Working together
Works!

Let's get to know each other

- ▶ Tell us a little about yourself.
- ▶ Who do you represent on the Council?
- ▶ What are you hoping to learn today?

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Mandates

- ▶ The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandates a VR/SRC partnership between state Vocational rehabilitation Agencies (VR) and State Rehabilitation Councils (SRC).
- ▶ WIOA provides the framework for the SRCs work and voice within the Vocational Rehabilitation process.

SRC informed voice

- ▶ In order for the SRC to have an informed voice, SRC members need a working understanding of their role
- ▶ The role of the SRC was first defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- ▶ Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was amended under WIOA in 2014

SRC Members Should...

- ▶ Feel comfortable and informed when entering into discussions concerning VR policy procedures, long and short-range agency planning

AND

- ▶ Have a basis and legislative reference for WIOA related discussions.

SRC Members Also Need...

- ▶ An understanding of Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act

AND

- ▶ Sections 361.16 & 361.17 of the implementing regulations (Code of Federal Regulations)
- ▶ These sections provide detailed mandates for the SRC structure and functions

Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act

- ▶ A state that designates a state agency to administer the part of the State plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind...may establish a separate Council (DARS and DBVI have SRCs)
- ▶ Specific Council Composition and Appointment criteria are outlined

Functions of the SRC

- ▶ Review, analyze and advise the designated state unit (DBVI) regarding the performance of the responsibilities of the unit relating to
 - Eligibility (including Order of Selection)
 - The extent, scope and effectiveness of services provided
 - Functions performed by DBVI that affect or that potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes

Perform Other Functions as:

- ▶ The SRC determines to be appropriate and consistent with the purpose of Title 1

AND

- ▶ Are comparable to other SRC mandated functions

In Partnership with DBVI...

- ▶ Develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities
- ▶ Evaluate the effectiveness of the VR program and submit reports of progress to the Commissioner (The extent to which a program achieves its planned outcomes)
- ▶ Advise DBVI regarding activities authorized to be carried out and assist in preparation of the State plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessment, and required evaluations

Required Evaluations (to the extent feasible)

- ▶ Consumer Satisfaction (The extent to which a program's customers feel positive about their experience with the program)
- ▶ Provision of VR services
- ▶ Employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services (including fringe benefits)
- ▶ Annual report submitted to Governor by December 31st each year
- ▶ Coordination of efforts with the Statewide Independent Living Council

Additional evaluations as feasible

- ▶ Plan for the provision of resources including staff and other personnel to sufficiently carry out the functions of the Council (this should rely on the use of resources in existence during the period of plan implementation)
- ▶ Resolution of disagreements between the SRC and DBVI shall be carried out and resolved by the Governor

Conflict of Interest

- ▶ No member of the Council shall cast a vote on any matter that would provide direct financial benefit to the member or otherwise give the appearance of a conflict of interest under State law

Meeting Requirements

- ▶ The SRC will meet four (4) times annually
- ▶ SRC members may attend one meeting virtually with the permission of the Chair
- ▶ One quarterly meeting may be designated as an “all virtual” meeting
- ▶ The meetings shall be publicly announced, and shall be open and accessible to the general public unless there is a valid reason for an executive session

Compensation and Expenses

- ▶ Reimbursement of reasonable and necessary expenses of attending Council meetings and performing Council duties
 - Attending meetings
 - Performing SRC duties
 - Childcare
 - Personal Assistance Services
 - Meeting accommodations

- ▶ Completed W9 form, Travel reimbursement form, direct billed hotel, direct billed transportation

- ▶ Out of State Travel requires RSA “prior approval”

Other SRC mandates

- ▶ SRC members cannot serve as an impartial hearing officers
- ▶ Every three (3) years, the VR program and the SRC must jointly conduct a comprehensive needs assessment describing the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state
 - Particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, minorities, unserved or underserved populations, individuals served under other Workforce Title partners, youth and students with disabilities

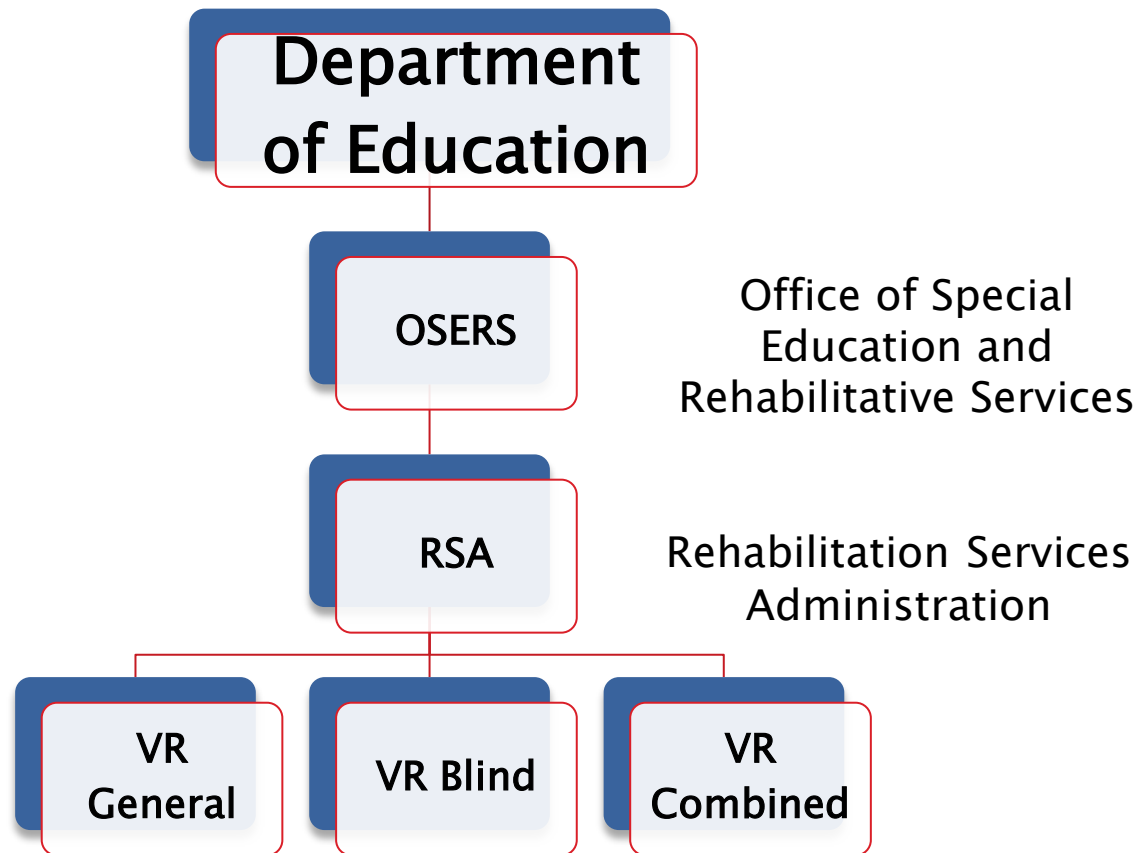
Report Requirements

- ▶ VR and SRC must submit an annual joint report to the commissioner on the effectiveness of the VR program, the progress made with improvements year over year and the extent to which goals were achieved.
- ▶ Assessment of performance related to the Common Performance Measures

SRC and VR Partnership

- ▶ Work together to develop and implement written policies and procedures to enable each applicant to exercise informed choice throughout the VR process
- ▶ Key Obligation: Review, analyze and advise DBVI based upon access to comprehensive data and information provided in a timely fashion

Where is VR in the Federal and State Structure?



Workforce System: Where is Rehab?

- ▶ Title 1: Adult, Dislocated and Youth Services
- ▶ Title 2: Adult Education and Family Literacy
- ▶ Title 3: Wagner–Peyser*
- ▶ Title 4: Vocational Rehabilitation
- ▶ Title 5: General Provisions

*Wagner–Peyser: Established a Nationwide System of public employment offices

WIOA Agency Partners

- ▶ US Department of Labor
- ▶ US Department of Education
- ▶ US Department of Health and Human Services



Philosophy of the Rehab Act: Policy Mandates

- ▶ Respect for the individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, and pursuit of meaningful careers based on informed choice
- ▶ Respect for individual privacy, rights and equal access
- ▶ Inclusion, integration and full participation
- ▶ Authorized representative as needed
- ▶ Advocacy and Community Involvement

Policy must also...

- ▶ Empower individuals to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, inclusion and integration into society
- ▶ Maximize opportunities for competitive, integrated employment
- ▶ Fulfill aspirations for meaningful and gainful employment
- ▶ Increase employment opportunities and employment outcomes
- ▶ Ensure transition opportunities

What does the Rehab Act Include?

- ▶ Title I: VR Services (SRC partnership)
- ▶ Title II: Research and Training
- ▶ Title III: Professional Development: Special Projects and Demonstration
- ▶ Title IV: National Council on Disability
- ▶ Title V: Rights and Advocacy (503/504)
- ▶ Title VI: Employment Opportunities
- ▶ Title VII: Independent Living Services

What is included in Sec. 105 Title 1?

- ▶ VR must have an SRC to be eligible for Federal funds
- ▶ Members are appointed by the Governor after recommendations from organizations
- ▶ Minority representative must be considered
- ▶ SRC must have a minimum of 15 members
- ▶ Majority made up of persons who are blind

SRC Member Terms

- ▶ Three-year terms
- ▶ Maximum of 2 Consecutive Full terms
- ▶ Client Assistance Programs and 121 (Native American) projects have no term limits

How can the SRC be of the most assistance to the VR Director?

- ▶ Broad advocacy for the VR program
- ▶ Education of partners, consumers and legislators (as permitted)
- ▶ Provide open and respectful input
- ▶ Participate in public meetings and forums

What does the SRC need?

- ▶ An annual plan with targeted goals, action steps, timelines and persons responsible to accomplish their mandated functions
- ▶ Member commitment to the time and work necessary to achieve the desired outcomes

Resources to learn more:

- ▶ Visit the RSA website for additional SRC resources and information

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/index.html>

OR

- ▶ Contact Megan Hall
DBVI Director of Vocational Rehabilitation
and Workforce Services

megan.hall@dbvi.virginia.gov

804-371-3344

We are glad you are here!

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring
that DBVI's Vocational Rehabilitation Program
continues to thrive!

FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS

ACB	American Council of the Blind
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AER	Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired
AFB	American Foundation for the Blind
AT	Assistive Technology
BEP	Business Enterprise Program
BOB	Business Opportunities for the Blind
BVA	Blinded Veterans Association
CAP	Client Assistance Program
CIL	Center for Independent Living
CRC	Certified Rehabilitation Counselor
CRP	Community Rehabilitation Program
CSAVR	Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation
CSPD	Comprehensive System for Personnel Development
DBVI	Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
DDS	Disability Determination Services
DOE	Department of Education
DOL	Department of Labor
DRS	Department of Rehabilitative Services
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
EN	Employer Network
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
IL	Independent Living
SILC	State Independent Living Council
IPE	Individualized Plan for Employment
JWOD	Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act
LEA	Local Education Agency
LRC	Library and Resource Center
LWIB	Local Workforce Investment Board
NCSAB	National Council of State Agencies for the Blind
NFB	National Federation of the Blind

NIB	National Industries for the Blind
ODEP	Office for Disability Employment Policy
OJT	On-the-Job-Training
OSERS	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services
O&M	Orientation & Mobility
RSA	Rehabilitation Services Administration
RT	Rehabilitation Teaching
RT/IL	Rehabilitation Teaching/Independent Living
SGA	Substantial Gainful Activity
SRC	State Rehabilitation Council
SGA	Substantial Gainful Activity
SPIL	State Plan for Independent Living
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSDI	Social Security Disability Income Insurance
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
SWIB	State Workforce Investment Board
VATS	Virginia Assistive Technology System
VEC	Virginia Employment Commission
VIB	Virginia Industries for the Blind
VOPA	Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation
VRCBVI	Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired
VSDB	Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind
WWRC	Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center
WIA	Workforce Investment Act

Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired State Rehabilitation Council Bylaws

Article I: Name

The name of this Council shall be the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired State Rehabilitation Council; hereafter, referred to as the "SRC".

Article II: Function and Responsibilities

The SRC is established to fulfill the requirements of §51.5-71 of the Code of Virginia and Title I, Part A, Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and its implementing regulations 34 CFR 361.16 and 34 CFR361.17. In fulfilling its mission, the SRC shall:

1. Review, analyze, and advise the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) regarding the performance of the responsibilities of DBVI under Title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act, particularly responsibilities relating to:
 - a. Eligibility, including order of selection;
 - b. The extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and
 - c. Functions performed by DBVI that affect or that potentially affect the ability of individuals who are blind, have visual impairments or deaf/blind to achieve rehabilitation goals and objectives under Title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended.
2. In partnership with DBVI:
 - a. Develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities for carrying out the vocational rehabilitation program; and
 - b. Evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and submit reports of progress to the Commissioner.
3. Advise DBVI regarding activities authorized to be carried out under Title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, and assist in the preparation of the State Plan and amendments to the plan; and, preparation with applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required by Title 1.
4. To the extent feasible, conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with:

- a. The functions performed by DBVI;
 - b. Vocational rehabilitation services provided by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under the Act; and
 - c. Employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving vocational rehabilitation services, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes.
5. Prepare and submit an Annual Report to the Governor and the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State, and make the report available to the public.
 6. Coordinate with other councils and Boards within the State, including the State Rehabilitation Council for the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the State Special Education Advisory Council, the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, the State Mental Health Planning Council, the Disability Law Center of Virginia and the Governor's Work Force Investment Board.
 7. Provide for coordination and the establishment of working relationships between DBVI and the Department for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, the Statewide Independent Living Council and centers for independent living within the Commonwealth of Virginia.
 8. Perform duties as may be prescribed to the SRC by Title I and Title VI of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Article III: Composition

- A. The SRC shall be composed of at least 15 members to include:
 1. at least one representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council;
 2. at least one representative of a parent training and information center;
 3. at least one representative of the Client Assistance Program of the Disability Law Center of Virginia (there is no limit on the number of consecutive terms this individual can be reappointed);
 4. at least one vocational rehabilitation counselor with knowledge of, and experience with, vocational rehabilitation programs, who shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the SRC if the counselor is an employee of DBVI;

5. at least one representative of a Community Rehabilitation Program;
 6. four representatives of business, industry and labor;
 7. A minimum of two individuals who represent advocacy groups for the blind (this category must include at least one representative from each of these consumer organizations: the Old Dominion Council of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia);
 8. include at least one representative of an individual who is blind, has multiple disabilities, and has difficulty representing him or herself due to his or her disabilities;
 9. current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services;
 10. at least one representative of the Virginia Department of Education, and
 11. at least one representative of the Virginia Workforce Council.
- B. The Commissioner of DBVI shall be an ex-officio nonvoting member.
- C. A majority of the SRC members shall be persons who are blind or vision impaired and not employed by DBVI.

Article IV: Appointment, Termination and Leadership

Section 1: Appointment

- A. Members of the SRC shall be appointed by the Governor. The Governor shall select members after soliciting recommendations from individuals, organizations representing individuals who are blind, have visual impairments or deaf/blind and other organizations interested in individuals with disabilities. In selecting members, the Governor shall consider, to the greatest extent practicable, the extent to which minority populations are represented on the SRC.
- B. Applications for appointment shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Commonwealth.
- C. The SRC shall recommend candidates to the Commissioner of DBVI for transmittal to the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Section 2: Terms

- A. A SRC member term is three (3) years in length.
- B. Except as provided by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended and/or federal regulations, no member of the SRC may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- C. SRC members appointed to fill a vacancy of a partial completed term may fill the remainder of that term and two (2) additional full terms.

Section 3: Resignations and Terminations

- A. SRC members who resign from the SRC prior to the end of their term shall submit a letter of resignation to the SRC Chair and the Secretary of the Commonwealth.
- B. Termination at the completion of a member's term shall be automatic and not require a formal written resignation.
- C. Any vacancy occurring in the membership of the SRC shall be filled according to Article IV, Section 1. The vacancy shall not affect the power of the remaining members to execute the duties of the SRC.

Section 4: Election, Terms and Duties of the Chair and Vice-Chair

A. Election and Terms

- 1. The SRC has two elected officers: Chair and Vice Chair. A member must be on the SRC for at least 1 year prior to being elected to serve as Chair or Vice Chair.
- 2. The Chair and Vice Chair must be elected by the SRC's membership at large and cannot be an employee of DBVI.
- 3. The SRC Chair shall at the June meeting appoint a nominating committee composed of members of the SRC to identify and recommend the candidates at the September meeting for Chair and Vice Chair.
- 4. A voting member may nominate additional candidates from the floor during the September meeting;
- 5. The Chair and Vice Chair shall be selected by a vote of the full SRC at the September meeting. Terms will begin effective October 1.

6. The term of the Chair and Vice Chair is one year. The Chair and/or Vice Chair would be eligible to serve a second one-year term if nominated and elected.

7. The vice Chair does not automatically progress to the position of Chair at the end of the Chair's completed term.

8. If the Chair cannot complete his/her term, the Vice Chair will handle the duties of the Chair until the SRC elects a new Chair at the next SRC meeting to complete the remainder of the term.

9. If the Vice Chair cannot complete his/her term, the SRC will elect a new Vice Chair at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

B. The duties of the Chair are:

- a. Participate in the development of SRC meeting agendas;
- b. To preside at all scheduled meetings;
- c. Be responsible for the general and active management of the business of the SRC;
- d. Convene regular and special meetings of the SRC;
- e. Establish and appoint the chairpersons for all standing and ad hoc committees;
- f. Sign and/or authorize all letters, reports and official communications of the SRC;
- g. Serve as an ex-officio member of the committees; and,
- h. Be the official spokesperson for the SRC.

C. The duties of the Vice Chair are:

- a. Preside at all meetings of the SRC not attended by the Chairperson;
- b. Carry out the duties as may be assigned by the Chairperson or Council within these Bylaws to include acting as the official spokesperson for the SRC when requested;
- c. Serve as a voting member of a committee; and,
- d. Act as coordinator for SRC membership recruitment.

Section 5: Appointment, Terms and Duties of the Committee Chairs

A. Appointment and Terms

- a. The standing committees of the SRC shall be: Executive, State Plan, and Annual Report.
- b. The executive committee will be comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair and past Chairs who still serve on the SRC. The Executive Committee shall meet at the request of the Chair and meetings of the Executive Committee shall be open to all SRC members and the public.
- c. The SRC Chair may establish other committees or work groups as appropriate to conduct SRC business;
- d. Committee Chairs shall serve a one year term, but may be reappointed.
- e. The duties of the Committee Chairs are:
- f. To coordinate and manage committee activities to achieve SRC goals and objectives. and
- g. To report the Committee actions to the full SRC.

Section 6: New Member Orientation

- A. Newly appointed members to the SRC are expected to attend a SRC new member orientation provided by DBVI.
- B. Newly appointed members will receive a copy of these Bylaws and other information pertinent to their duties, including information on the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and the Virginia Conflict of Interests Act.

Article V: Procedures

Section 1: Meetings

- A. The SRC shall convene at least four meetings per year in such places as it determines necessary for the efficient and effective conduct of the SRC. It may also conduct forums or hearings as it determines necessary for the conduct of its duties.

B. All meetings shall comply with the requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and shall be publicly announced, accessible and open to the public with a period of time allotted in the agenda for public comment.

Section 2: Quorum

A. The presence of at least 50% plus one of the current appointed members shall constitute a quorum.

B. A quorum shall be required for any official action or vote of the SRC.

C. When a voting member is unable to attend a meeting, the member may give their proxy to another voting member; the proxy must be documented in writing (which includes e-mail) and given to voting member and the Chair no later than one calendar day in advance of the meeting and will be identified at the beginning of the meeting.

D. In the absence of a quorum, the present members may continue to meet to hear informational items, but shall not take any official action.

Section 3: Voting

A. All appointed members, except ex officio members, having voting privileges.

B. Only members present at a schedule meeting may vote, unless they have a proxy.

Section 4: Attendance

A. A SRC member is expected to attend all regularly scheduled meetings. If, however, two consecutive meetings are missed without notice, the SRC may request the Governor to remove the member.

Section 5: Electronic Member Participation

A. Electronic Member Participation

It is the policy of the DBVI State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) that individual SRC members may participate in meetings of the SRC by electronic means as permitted by § 2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia.

This policy shall apply to the entire membership and without regard to the identity of the member requesting remote participation or the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting.

Electronic Member Participation Permission #1: Disability, Medical Condition or Caregiving Obligations – If notified on or before the day of the meeting, it shall be the policy of the SRC to allow a member to participate electronically. At the beginning of the meeting, the Chair shall state the member's electronic participation and the general reason (specifics are not required). A quorum of SRC members must be physically assembled at the primary or central meeting location, and there must be arrangements for the voice of the remote participant (or other forms of communication for members who rely on communication other than speech) to be heard by all persons at the primary or central meeting location. The SRC shall record in its minutes the remote location from which the member participated and the fact that the member participated through electronic means due to a disability, medical condition or caregiving obligation.

Electronic Member Participation Permission #2: Personal Matters – If notified on or before the day of the meeting, it shall be the policy of the SRC to allow a member to participate electronically. At the beginning of the meeting, the Chair shall state the member's electronic participation and the general reason (specifics are not required). Each SRC member may only use this permission one time per year, or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater. A quorum of the SRC members must be physically assembled at the primary or central meeting location, and there must be arrangements for the voice of the remote participant (or other forms of communication for members who rely on communication other than speech) to be heard by all persons at the primary or central meeting location. The SRC shall record in its minutes the remote location from which the member participated and the nature of the personal matter cited by the member.

Individual participation from a remote location shall be approved unless such participation would violate this policy or the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ 2.2-3700 et seq. of the Code of Virginia).

If a member's participation from a remote location is challenged, then the SRC shall vote on whether to allow such participation. If the SRC votes to disapprove of the member's participation because such participation would violate this policy, such disapproval shall be recorded in the minutes with specificity.

The SRC may meet without a quorum physically assembled at one location if the meeting is being held solely to receive presentations, updates, public comment, or conduct other forms of information gathering. If a quorum is not physically assembled, the SRC shall not take any votes or make any formal recommendations at the meeting.

The meeting notice shall include the electronic communication means by which members of the public may witness the meeting.

The Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired may hold all-virtual public meetings. The decision to hold an all-virtual public meeting shall be made by the State Rehabilitation Chair in consultation with the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services. The basis for the decision to hold an all-virtual public meeting shall be documented in the State Rehabilitation Council minutes.

An all-virtual public meeting must adhere to guidance in §2.2-3708.3 C.

- i. The required meeting notice must identify that the meeting will be all-virtual and includes a statement that the meeting method will not change unless the public body provides a new meeting notice in accordance with the provision of §2.2-3707;
- ii. Public access to the all-virtual public meeting is provided via electronic communication means;
- iii. The electronic communication means used allows the public to hear all members of the public body participating in the all-virtual public meeting and when audio-visual technology is available, to see the members of the public body as well;
- iv. A phone number or other live contact information is provided to alert the public body if the audio or video transmission of the meeting provided by the public body fails, the public body monitors such designated means of communication during the meeting, and the public body take a recess until public access is restored if the transmission fails for the public;
- v. A copy of the proposed agenda and all agenda packets and, unless exempt, all materials furnished to members of a public body for a meeting is made available to the public in electronic format at the same time that such materials are provided to members of the public body;
- vi. The public is afforded the opportunity to comment through electronic means, including by way of written comments, at those public meetings which public comment is customarily received;
- vii. No more than two members of the public body are together in any one remote location unless that remote location is open to the public to physically access it;
- viii. If a closed session is held during an all-virtual public meeting, transmission of the meeting to the public resumes before the public body votes to certify the closed meeting as required by subsection D of §2.2-3712;
- ix. The public body does not convene an all-virtual public meeting
 - (a) more than two times per calendar year or 25 percent of the meetings

- held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater, or
- (b) consecutively with another all-virtual public meeting; and
- x. Minutes of all-virtual public meetings held by electronic communication means are taken as required by §2.2-3707 and include the fact that the meeting was held by electronic communication means and the type of electronic communication means by which the meeting was held. If a member's participation from a remote location is disapproved the disapproval shall be recorded in the minutes with specificity.
- a. All DBVI SRC meetings including all-virtual meetings will comply with §2.2-3707 to include:
- i. For in-person meetings a quorum is physically assembled at one primary or central meeting location (2.2-3701); for all-virtual meetings members do not need to be assembled at one primary or central location to establish a quorum.
 - ii. Appropriate notice of the meeting has been provided at least three working days in advance of the date scheduled for the meeting and the notice identifies the meeting as in-person or all-virtual.
 - iii. A copy of the proposed agenda and agenda packets and, unless exempt, all materials that will be distributed to members of the public body and that have been made available to the staff of the public body in sufficient time for duplication and forwarding to all locations where public access will be provided shall be made available to the public at the time of the meeting.
 - iv. Minutes of all meetings shall be recorded as required by §2.2-3707. Votes taken during any meeting conducted through electronic communication means shall be recorded by name in roll-call fashion and included in the minutes.

Section 6: Conflict of Interests

- A. All appointed members shall annually complete a Conflict of Interests Statement which is submitted to the Secretary of the Commonwealth and shall participate in training on the Conflict of Interests Act as required by §2.1-3130 of the Code of Virginia.
- B. No member of the SRC shall cast a vote on any matter that would provide direct benefit to, or otherwise create an actual conflict of interest for the member.

Section 7: Staff Support, Compensation and Expenses

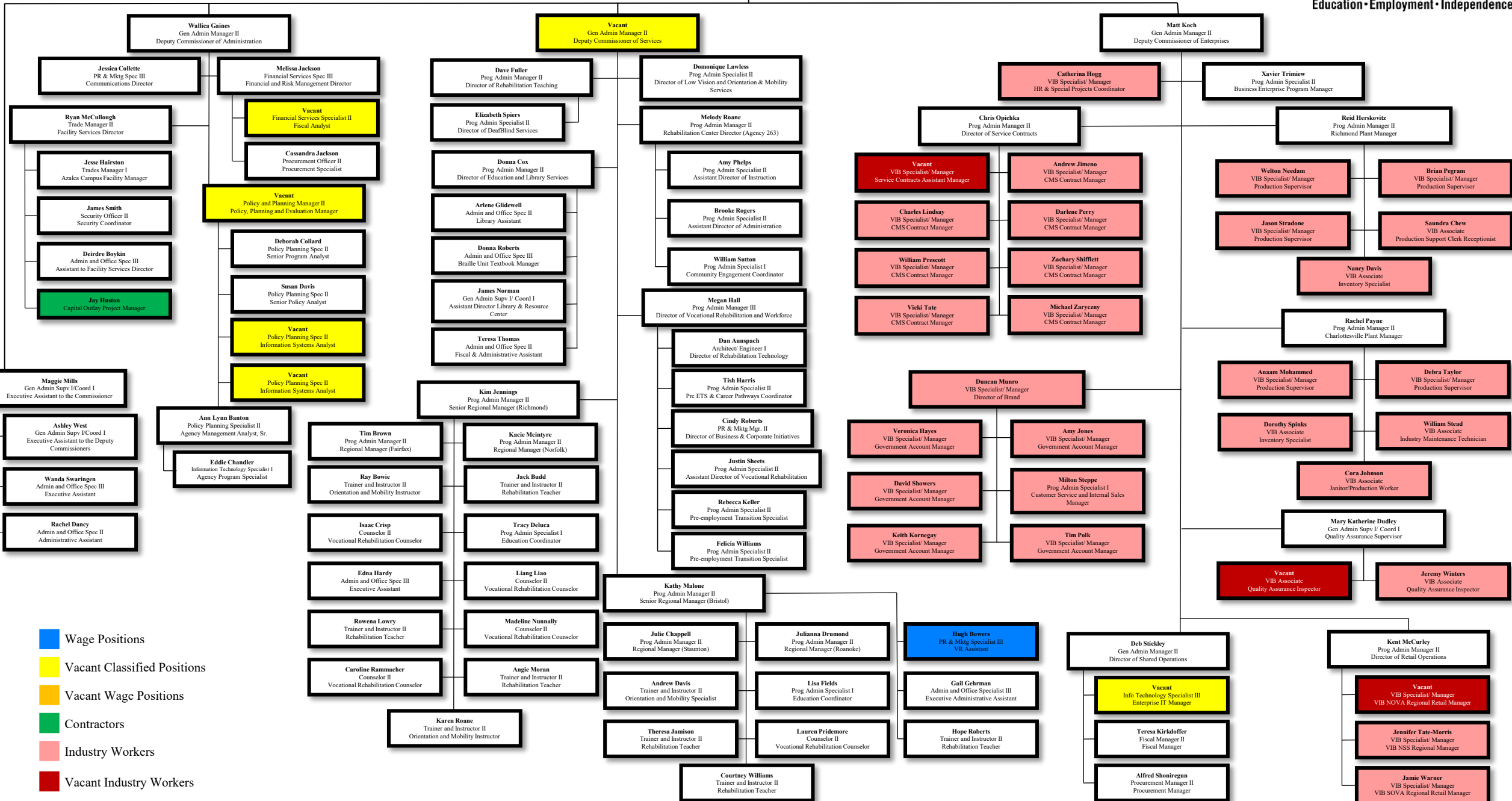
- A. DBVI shall provide such staff support as required to conduct the business of the SRC. On an annual basis, DBVI will prepare a resources plan to be reviewed and approved by the SRC.
- B. SRC members shall be reimbursed for expenses to attend scheduled meetings and other events in compliance with State travel regulations.

Article VI: Bylaws

- A. These bylaws may be amended if the proposed amendment is introduced at a regularly scheduled meeting. The amendment must be sent out with the agenda for the SRC meeting.
- B. The proposed amendment shall be presented at one meeting and voted on at the subsequent meeting.
- C. The bylaws may be amended upon a two-thirds vote of the SRC members in attendance, provided a quorum is present.
- D. The bylaws and any subsequent amendments shall become effective upon review and approval of the SRC.

Article VII: Reporting and Dissemination

- A. A SRC member shall not in writing or orally represent the SRC or SRC committee, task force, or workgroup with a position or opinion on an issue or subject as an official SRC position unless the SRC has previously recorded an official position on that issue or subject.
- B. The draft and final minutes of the SRC meetings shall be distributed to the SRC and posted for public view consistent with the requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.



- Wage Positions
- Vacant Classified Positions
- Vacant Wage Positions
- Contractors
- Industry Workers
- Vacant Industry Workers

§361.16 Establishment of an independent commission or a State Rehabilitation Council.

(a) General requirement. Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, the State plan must contain one of the following two assurances:

(1) An assurance that the designated State agency is an independent State commission that--

(i) Is responsible under State law for operating, or overseeing the operation of, the vocational rehabilitation program in the State and is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation services, in accordance with §361.13(a)(1)(i);

(ii) Is consumer-controlled by persons who--

(A) Are individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit major life activities; and

(B) Represent individuals with a broad range of disabilities, unless the designated State unit under the direction of the commission is the State agency for individuals who are blind;

(iii) Includes family members, advocates, or other representatives of individuals with mental impairments; and

(iv) Conducts the functions identified in §361.17(h) (4) .

(2) An assurance that--

(i) The State has established a State Rehabilitation Council (Council) that meets the requirements of §361.17;

(ii) The designated State unit, in accordance with §361.29, jointly develops, agrees to, and reviews annually State goals and priorities and jointly submits to the Secretary annual reports of progress with the Council;

(iii) The designated State unit regularly consults with the Council regarding the development, implementation, and revision of State policies and procedures of general applicability pertaining to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services;

(iv) The designated State unit transmits to the Council--

(A) All plans, reports, and other information required under this part to be submitted to the Secretary;

(B) All policies and information on all practices and procedures of general applicability provided to or used by rehabilitation personnel providing vocational rehabilitation services under this part; and

(C) Copies of due process hearing decisions issued under this part and transmitted in a manner to ensure that

the identity of the participants in the hearings is kept confidential; and

(v) The State plan, and any revision to the State plan, includes a summary of input provided by the Council, including recommendations from the annual report of the Council, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction described in §361.17(h)(4), and other reports prepared by the Council, and the designated State unit's response to the input and recommendations, including explanations of reasons for rejecting any input or recommendation of the Council.

(b) Exception for separate State agency for individuals who are blind. In the case of a State that designates a separate State agency under §361.13(a)(3) to administer the part of the State plan under which vocational rehabilitation services are provided to individuals who are blind, the State must either establish a separate State Rehabilitation Council for each agency that does not meet the requirements in paragraph (a)(1) of this section or establish one State Rehabilitation Council for both agencies if neither agency meets the requirements of paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(Authority: Sections 101(a)(21) of the Act; 29 U.S.C.

721(a)(21))

§361.17 Requirements for a State Rehabilitation Council.

If the State has established a Council under §361.16(a) (2) or (b), the Council must meet the following requirements:

(a) Appointment.

(1) The members of the Council must be appointed by the Governor or, in the case of a State that, under State law, vests authority for the administration of the activities carried out under this part in an entity other than the Governor (such as one or more houses of the State legislature or an independent board), the chief officer of that entity.

(2) The appointing authority must select members of the Council after soliciting recommendations from representatives of organizations representing a broad range of individuals with disabilities and organizations interested in individuals with disabilities. In selecting members, the appointing authority must consider, to the greatest extent practicable, the extent to which minority populations are represented on the Council.

(b) Composition.

(1) General. Except as provided in paragraph (b) (3) of this section, the Council must be composed of at least 15 members, including--

(i) At least one representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council, who must be the chairperson or other designee of the Statewide Independent Living Council;

(ii) At least one representative of a parent training and information center established pursuant to section 682(a) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

(iii) At least one representative of the Client Assistance Program established under 34 CFR part 370, who must be the director of or other individual recommended by the Client Assistance Program;

(iv) At least one qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor with knowledge of and experience with vocational rehabilitation programs who serves as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Council if employed by the designated State agency;

(v) At least one representative of community rehabilitation program service providers;

(vi) Four representatives of business, industry, and labor;

(vii) Representatives of disability groups that include a cross section of--

(A) Individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities; and

(B) Representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves;

(viii) Current or former applicants for, or recipients of, vocational rehabilitation services;

(ix) In a State in which one or more projects are carried out under section 121 of the Act (American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services), at least one representative of the directors of the projects;

(x) At least one representative of the State educational agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities who are eligible to receive services under this part and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

(xi) At least one representative of the State workforce investment board; and

(xii) The director of the designated State unit as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the Council.

(2) Employees of the designated State agency.

Employees of the designated State agency may serve only as nonvoting members of the Council. This provision does not apply to the representative appointed pursuant to paragraph (b) (1) (iii) of this section.

(3) Composition of a separate Council for a separate State agency for individuals who are blind. Except as provided in paragraph (b) (4) of this section, if the State establishes a separate Council for a separate State agency for individuals who are blind, that Council must--

(i) Conform with all of the composition requirements for a Council under paragraph (b) (1) of this section, except the requirements in paragraph (b) (1) (vii), unless the exception in paragraph (b) (4) of this section applies; and

(ii) Include--

(A) At least one representative of a disability advocacy group representing individuals who are blind; and

(B) At least one representative of an individual who is blind, has multiple disabilities, and has difficulty representing himself or herself or is unable due to disabilities to represent himself or herself.

(4) Exception. If State law in effect on October 29, 1992 requires a separate Council under paragraph (b) (3) of this section to have fewer than 15 members, the separate Council is in compliance with the composition requirements in paragraphs (b) (1) (vi) and (b) (1) (viii) of this section if it includes at least one representative who meets the requirements for each of those paragraphs.

(c) Majority.

(1) A majority of the Council members must be individuals with disabilities who meet the requirements of §361.5(b)(29) and are not employed by the designated State unit.

(2) In the case of a separate Council established under §361.16(b), a majority of the Council members must be individuals who are blind and are not employed by the designated State unit.

(d) Chairperson. The chairperson must be--

(1) Selected by the members of the Council from among the voting members of the Council, subject to the veto power of the Governor; or

(2) In States in which the Governor does not have veto power pursuant to State law, the appointing authority described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section must designate a member of the Council to serve as the chairperson of the Council or must require the Council to designate a member to serve as chairperson.

(e) Terms of appointment.

(1) Each member of the Council must be appointed for a term of no more than 3 years, and each member of the Council, other than a representative identified in

paragraph (b) (1) (iii) or (ix) of this section, may serve for no more than two consecutive full terms.

(2) A member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the end of the term for which the predecessor was appointed must be appointed for the remainder of the predecessor's term.

(3) The terms of service of the members initially appointed must be, as specified by the appointing authority as described in paragraph (a) (1) of this section, for varied numbers of years to ensure that terms expire on a staggered basis.

(f) Vacancies.

(1) A vacancy in the membership of the Council must be filled in the same manner as the original appointment, except the appointing authority as described in paragraph (a) (1) of this section may delegate the authority to fill that vacancy to the remaining members of the Council after making the original appointment.

(2) No vacancy affects the power of the remaining members to execute the duties of the Council.

(g) Conflict of interest. No member of the Council shall cast a vote on any matter that would provide direct financial benefit to the member or the member's

organization or otherwise give the appearance of a conflict of interest under State law.

(h) Functions. The Council must, after consulting with the State workforce investment board--

(1) Review, analyze, and advise the designated State unit regarding the performance of the State unit's responsibilities under this part, particularly responsibilities related to--

(i) Eligibility, including order of selection;

(ii) The extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and

(iii) Functions performed by State agencies that affect or potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under this part;

(2) In partnership with the designated State unit--

(i) Develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities in accordance with §361.29(c); and

(ii) Evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and submit reports of progress to the Secretary in accordance with §361.29(e);

(3) Advise the designated State agency and the designated State unit regarding activities carried out under this part and assist in the preparation of the State

plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required by this part;

(4) To the extent feasible, conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with--

(i) The functions performed by the designated State agency;

(ii) The vocational rehabilitation services provided by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under the Act; and

(iii) The employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this part, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with those employment outcomes;

(5) Prepare and submit to the Governor and to the Secretary no later than 90 days after the end of the Federal fiscal year an annual report on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State and make the report available to the public through appropriate modes of communication;

(6) To avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served, coordinate activities with

the activities of other councils within the State, including the Statewide Independent Living Council established under 34 CFR part 364, the advisory panel established under section 612(a)(21) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council described in section 124 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, the State mental health planning council established under section 1914(a) of the Public Health Service Act, and the State workforce investment board;

(7) Provide for coordination and the establishment of working relationships between the designated State agency and the Statewide Independent Living Council and centers for independent living within the State; and

(8) Perform other comparable functions, consistent with the purpose of this part, as the Council determines to be appropriate, that are comparable to the other functions performed by the Council.

(i) Resources.

(1) The Council, in conjunction with the designated State unit, must prepare a plan for the provision of resources, including staff and other personnel, that may be necessary and sufficient for the Council to carry out its functions under this part.

(2) The resource plan must, to the maximum extent possible, rely on the use of resources in existence during the period of implementation of the plan.

(3) Any disagreements between the designated State unit and the Council regarding the amount of resources necessary to carry out the functions of the Council must be resolved by the Governor, consistent with paragraphs (i) (1) and (2) of this section.

(4) The Council must, consistent with State law, supervise and evaluate the staff and personnel that are necessary to carry out its functions.

(5) Those staff and personnel that are assisting the Council in carrying out its functions may not be assigned duties by the designated State unit or any other agency or office of the State that would create a conflict of interest.

(j) Meetings. The Council must--

(1) Convene at least four meetings a year in locations determined by the Council to be necessary to conduct Council business. The meetings must be publicly announced, open, and accessible to the general public, including individuals with disabilities, unless there is a valid reason for an executive session; and

(2) Conduct forums or hearings, as appropriate, that are publicly announced, open, and accessible to the public, including individuals with disabilities.

(k) Compensation. Funds appropriated under Title I of the Act, except funds to carry out sections 112 and 121 of the Act, may be used to compensate and reimburse the expenses of Council members in accordance with section 105(g) of the Act.

(Authority: Section 105 of the Act; 29 U.S.C. 725)

Department for Blind and Vision Impaired
State Rehabilitation Council
Agency VR Report
May 19, 2024

Deputy Commissioner’s Report – Dr. Rick Mitchell

Regional Office Updates

Bristol	Fully Staffed
Fairfax	Fully Staffed
Norfolk	Recruiting for 1 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, 1 Rehabilitation Teacher, Education Services Coordinator (begins July 2024)
Richmond	Recruiting for a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
Roanoke	2 Rehabilitation Teachers (to begin in July 2024)
Staunton	Fully Staffed
Headquarters	Fully Staffed
Business Relations	Fully Staffed
VRCBVI	Recruiting for Orientation & Mobility Specialist

State Plan Goals

DBVI, with assistance from the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), developed six goals and priorities for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Supported Employment (SE) programs for this state plan cycle. The six goals are listed below and updates are included in this report.

1. Engage and collaborate with WIOA core partners to coordinate business service efforts to include the blind and visually impaired labor market.
2. Provide comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services to students with disabilities, youth in transition, and adults resulting in the attainment of industry recognized credentials to obtain competitive integrated employment.
3. Conduct outreach efforts to Local Education Agencies and other Community Partners to assist in increasing the number of students with disabilities participating in and benefiting from DBVI offered Pre-Employment Transition programs.

4. Continue to expand the utilization of Supported Employment and Customized Employment services for adults and youth to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
5. Achieving agency annual performance goals and establishing base lines for the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance in section 116(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.
6. Increase collaboration with the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services to provide comprehensive wrap around services to address the needs of individuals who have dual diagnoses.

State Goal Updates:

1. DBVI Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services met with Anthony Reidy (Executive Director of the Virginia Board for Workforce Development) to explain DBVI's participation as a workforce partner in Virginia, and to speak to DBVI's timeline of assisting career seekers to obtain or maintain employment in their chosen field.
2. During this quarter, DBVI teamed up with DARS to provide a Cyber Simulation Academy. The academy was funded through an RSA grant received by DARS and is a 140 hour simulation to mimic a real work-environment built upon real-world scenarios gleaned from challenges facing today's information technology professionals in Fortune 500 companies. The simulator provides a safe environment for participants to learn through experience and challenge and by nature is better than employer-based internships. All DBVI participants have completed DBVI Pre-ETS or Tiered IT Cohort training and have received advanced credentials that would lead to a career in cyber security.
3. During the month of April, several DBVI staff members attended the Shenandoah County Fun Fair for families with students with disabilities. Along with providing a table with resources, DBVI staff were able to connect with numerous community partners to discuss potential partnerships, work based learning opportunities, future presentations and opportunities for collaboration to provide students and families with comprehensive wrap around services.

4. During the third quarter of the program year, DBVI counselors and staff supported 30 individuals in pursuing careers of their choice by providing targeted supported employment services. Several individuals located work in competitive integrated environments and continue to receive follow along services to ensure continued employment success.
5. DBVI is awaiting the latest dashboard of information from the Rehabilitation Services Administration to provide an update on this state plan goal.
6. DBVI has been actively working with Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services to update policy and regulations in relation to serving individuals with dual enrollment. The Virginia DeafBlind Project, with members from both DBVI and DARS, meet on a quarterly basis to determine process improvements to streamline combined VR services.

Business Relations Unit Updates- Cindy Roberts and Team

Recruitment Update:

- The newest Business Relations Specialist, Ms. Tina Howley-Blount began at the Norfolk Regional Office on March 25th. Ms. Howley-Blount is no stranger to DBVI having most recently served as the Assistant Director of Contracting with the Virginia Industries for the Blind. Ms. Howley-Blount has hit the ground running and is already meeting with business partners, participating in career fairs, working with DBVI individuals from the Norfolk area, and assisting the Business Relations Team with outreach and special programs.
- Ms. LaPearl Smith, longtime friend and colleague of DBVI has moved from a part time business relations position to a part time Pre-ETS business relations opportunity. Ms. Smith will be working with students with disabilities to locate paid and unpaid summer work experiences, assisting the LIFE participants in completing a work experience in the final weeks of the summer program, and will be developing and implementing career readiness workshops aimed at the Pre-ETS student population ages 14-22. DBVI is excited to have a dedicated business team member to coordinate the work experience process. To date, the DBVI Business Relations Unit has set up almost 200 work experiences across all ages.

Program Update:

- The Business Relations Team has remained busy and engaged with both DBVI Career Seekers and Commonwealth of Virginia businesses. In March, Director of Business and Corporate Initiatives, Cindy Roberts, served as a panelist during the CSAVR general session titled, “Agents of Change: Partnering with Business to Develop Talent and Build Career Opportunities in an Inclusive Workplace”. The panel presented to over 400 professionals from around the country. The panel highlighted the productive working relationships with business partners in varying industries, described a range of strategies currently being used to develop and grow careers, build a talent pipeline, retain employees, and grow workplaces that support diversity, equity, access, inclusion and belonging.
- The Business team met with Kevin Tortoriello, CEO with ADAPT staffing in Richmond to develop a new working relationship to support DBVI’s growing paid work-based learning program. DBVI has historically partnered with the Bradford Company Staffing agency but has seen a need to diversify supports for the program as numbers have increased exponentially year over year.
- The DBVI Business Relations Team and members of the Virginia Industries for the Blind executive team travelled to Ohio to meet with CVS/Aetna Workforce partners and staff members of El Barrio (a community partner). DBVI staff were able to tour the CVS Innovation Center, including a mock retail store. DBVI is looking at partnering with CVS and Aetna to provide a computer lab with customer service training curriculum and programs to provide targeted customer service training that is accessible to all individuals with vision loss. Business Relations staff have reached out to Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center to talk about the customer service training program used in their customer service credential program. DBVI will continue to explore the opportunity to set up a computer lab to be housed in underutilized space at the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired.
- The DBVI Business Relations Team and VRCBVI staff worked together to present a two day employment workshop titled “Elevate Your Career”. During this program, individuals received education surrounding developing a winning elevator pitch, preparing for a job interview, resume and cover letters, disability disclosure, and work-based learning. These same participants will reconvene in May to review items learned and engage in a reverse career fair in which the individuals will be marketing themselves to community partners who are looking for employment talent. DBVI is excited to re-engage in collaborative programs with VRCBVI once again.

VRCBVI- Brooke Rogers**Programming Update:**

- The 2024 Learning Independence Feeling Empowered (LIFE) program recruitment is complete. In July, 15 high school students will move into the VRCBVI dorm to start their summer learning adventure. The LIFE program is geared towards building foundational skills of blindness to allow students the opportunity to become more independent and self-aware. Along with a lot of learning, students and staff will participate in team and confidence building experiences such as Comedy Improv, rock climbing, sailing, tubing and grilling. DBVI is looking forward to the energy that our summer programs bring to campus each year!
- VRCBVI will once again be hosting two weeklong sessions for Seniors. This popular program invites members of DBVI's older blind community and their family members to live on campus for a week and participate in basic skills of blindness training, self-advocacy, and independence. Following last year's programs, VRCBVI welcomed back many of the week's participants for the fully immersive adult training program.
- **Adult Training Program:** Following the Holiday break, VRCBVI's adult training program resumed at full speed with 13 new student participants. Adult students will continue their learning through the month of June and will take a summer break while the younger students are on campus. The adult program will re-convene in September for another year of learning and support.

**Vocational Rehabilitation Program, Common Performance Measures Report –
Deborah Collard**

DBVI has transitioned to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) Common Performance Measures (CPM). These measures replace the Standards and Indicators report that was previously shared with the SRC. The six core WIOA programs are all required to now report on the CPMs. The six core partners in WIOA include:

- Adult Formula Program (WIOA title I)
- Youth Formula Program (WIOA title I)
- Dislocated Worker Formula Program (WIOA title I)
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIOA title II)

- Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (WIOA title III)
- Vocational Rehabilitation program (WIOA title IV)

Common Performance Measures:

Under section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA, there are six primary indicators of performance:

A. Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit: The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program (for title I Youth, the indicator is the percentage of participants in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit).

B. Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit: The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program (for title I Youth, the indicator is the percentage of participants in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit).

C. Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit: The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

D. Credential Attainment: The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training) who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program. A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent only if the participant also is employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program.

E. Measurable Skill Gains: The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment. Depending on the type of education or training program, documented progress is defined as one of the following:

- a) Documented achievement of at least one educational functioning level of a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary education level.
- b) Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
- c) Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the State unit's academic standards².
- d) Satisfactory or better progress report, towards established milestones, such as completion of OJT or completion of one year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training.
- e) Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks such as knowledge-based exams.

F. Effectiveness in Serving Employers: WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) requires the Departments (DOE and DOL) to establish a primary indicator of performance for effectiveness in serving employers. The Departments are piloting three approaches designed to gauge three critical workforce needs of the business community.

Approach 1 – Retention with the same employer – addresses the programs' efforts to provide employers with skilled workers.

Approach 2 – Repeat Business Customers – addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time.

Approach 3 – Employer Penetration Rate – addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to all employers and sectors within a State and local economy.

² Within each State there is an administrative unit that provides authorization to postsecondary institutions within the State. States differ in the requirements to which they

hold postsecondary institutions responsible for satisfactory progress. Progress for WIOA purposes must comply with any applicable State standards. Likewise, every State has a State educational agency that establishes education standards for secondary education within the State, which would apply for purposes of determining if a participant is meeting the State’s academic standards.

Virginia WIOA Employer Engagement Common Performance Measure (CPM)

DBVI reports with Virginia WIOA core partners on the joint CPM of Effectiveness in Serving Employers as described below:

1. Effectiveness in Serving Employers (States select two of three measures) – Virginia has selected employer retention and employer penetration as described below:
 - Retention with the same employer – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide employers with skilled workers.
 - Employer Penetration Rate - addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to all employers and sectors within a State and local economy.

Since this indicator is a new approach for measuring performance under WIOA’s six core programs, DOE and RSA have implemented a pilot program during which States must select two of the three approaches. DOE and RSA will evaluate State experiences with the various approaches and plan to identify a standardized indicator to be implemented in the future.

All state VR agencies nationwide continue working with RSA on reporting of WIOA Common Performance Measures (CPM) and utilizing RSA 911 data along with performance data dashboards developed by RSA to demonstrate VR program performance. Based on current information, DBVI is able to report on several measures as shown in the table below.

CPM	PY18	PY19	PY20	PY21	PY22	PY23Q2
Employment rate 2 nd Q after exit	42.2% DBVI 51.5% VA*	37.6% DBVI 54.4% VA*	39.9% DBVI 51.6% VA*		39% DBVI	51.4% DBVI 30% DBVI

Employment rate 4 th Q after exit	N/A	27.7% DBVI 52.2% VA*	30.2% DBVI 47.5% VA*	33% DBVI	39.1% DBVI	44% DBVI
Median Earnings 2 nd Q after exit	\$4362 DBVI \$3011 VA*	\$4445 DBVI \$3127 VA*	\$5540 DBVI \$3238 VA*	\$4878 DBVI	\$7465 DBVI	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	N/A	16.7% DBVI	61.8% DBVI 43.3% VA*	49% DBVI	49.3% DBVI	TBD
Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) Rate	53.0% DBVI 45.0% VA*	82.6% DBVI 85.65 VA*	85.5% DBVI 88.9% VA*	85% DBVI	93.3% DBVI	7% DBVI
Number of DBVI Participants Earning an MSG**	249	247	243	244	237	TBD
Effectiveness in Serving Employers						
Employer Retention Rate	N/A	62% VA*	70% DBVI TBD VA	69%	34% DBVI	TBD
Employer Penetration - DBVI	256 services 129 businesses	266 services 132 businesses	190 services 84 businesses	190 services 117 businesses	227 services 118 businesses	151 services 61 businesses

*Reported for the state of Virginia, this includes Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) VR data combined with DBVI VR data.

**Not a WIOA CPM, but considered a primary indicator of performance by RSA.

As part of the implementation of the WIOA CPMs and to assist state VR agencies with determining how the RSA 911 data elements are used and how the CPMs are calculated, RSA has developed a set of dashboards or graphics that illustrate key data elements. One of the

dashboards outlines Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) outcomes. In PY23 Q2 there were 26 CIE outcomes achieved. DBVI continues to have a wide variety of occupations and strong median wages represented in CIE outcomes. The top ten careers by Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) categories, median hourly wage, and median weekly hours are listed in the table below:

Standard Occupational Classification	Individuals	Median Hours	Median Wage
Social and Human Service Assistants	2	21	\$25.00
Office Clerks, General	2	14	\$16.50
Financial and Investment Analysts	1	40	\$84.13
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	1	40	\$42.15
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	1	40	\$38.46
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	1	40	\$33.97
Educational, Guidance, and Career Counselors and Advisors	1	40	\$28.65
Media and Communication Workers, All Other	1	25	\$28.46
Randolph-Sheppard vending facility operator	1	36	\$26.71
Procurement Clerks	1	40	\$26.00

Another WIOA performance area where DBVI continues to be consistent and robust is in the provision of the required pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS). For PY2023 Q2, DBVI reported 99 students receiving pre-ETS, including the following number of services provided: 61 job exploration counseling services (15%), 73 work based learning experiences (18%), 86 counseling and enrollment opportunities services (22%), 88 work readiness training experiences (22%), and 88 instructions in self-advocacy services (22%).

Additionally, through the national Rehab Data Workgroup, RSA has shared several “Other Measures that Matter” with the RSA quarterly Dashboards. These measures are provided to enhance the VR agencies’ understanding of the use of the new data elements collected and the implementation of WIOA. In FPY23 Q2, DBVI had 927 total VR participants of which 892 participants had a most significant disability representing 96.2% of participants receiving VR services.

VR Consumer Satisfaction Evaluation Program - Deborah Collard

The VR consumer satisfaction evaluation program for federal program year (FPY) 2023 continues with outreach to 184 eligible individuals with VR cases closed July 1, 2023 – April 2024. During the current cycle of the evaluation program several changes implemented in FPYs 2020 and 2021 to improve response rate and enhance the feedback received continue to be in place. In FPYs 2020 and 2021, DBVI partnered with the SRC to update and edit the survey platform and questions and add additional personnel resources to provide follow up. Also, adjustments to outreach of eligible individuals, including the re-introduction of providing the option to complete the survey by mail, and increased follow up activities with the addition of resources that were implemented in March 2021 remain in place. The current response rate is approximately 25%, up from 23% in FPY22. Additionally, the time to complete the evaluation is down approximately 20%.

Responses to the VR consumer satisfaction evaluation continue to be shared with the Director of VR and Workforce for consultation, training planning, resolution of potential issues, and continuous program improvement. Data review and analysis will continue to take place to provide quarterly updates to the SRC and as needed. Response summaries and graphics for FPY2023 can be viewed at https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-MwwOba1djYN8IUyABVQQ1A_3D_3D/

VR Customer Satisfaction PRELIMINARY results to date; through April 2024. The information in Tables 1 and 2 below, includes preliminary* data from FPY2023 evaluation responses. The FPY2023 evaluation program is open through the third calendar quarter of 2024. Data included in this update are preliminary* and are subject to change.

Table 1. Overall Satisfaction rating with the VR Program FFY2016 through current FFY2023, range = 20-100 points.

Year	Total	Rehabilitated	Not Rehabilitated
FFY2016	73.7	82.8	63.3
FFY2017	79.7	85.6	69.8
FFY2018	78.6	94.7	58.5
FFY2019/20	73.3	87.3	45.5
FPY2020	78.8	91.82	71.20
FPY2021	87.7	94.7	76.7
FPY2022	85.6	95.0	67.7
FPY2023*	94.4	TBD	TBD

Table 2. Satisfaction with VR Staff FFY2016 through FFY2023, range = 20 – 100 points.

How satisfied are you that your VR Counselor was:

Year	Respectful	Knowledgeable About your disability	Sensitive to your needs
FFY2016	83.7	78.6	78.0
FFY2017	86.6	86.0	83.9
FFY2018	92.9	81.4	85.7
FFY2019/20	84.4	83.8	85.7
FPY2020	85.8	87.2	84.3
FPY2021	90.9	88.7	90.9
FPY2022	88.6	90.5	88.3
FPY2023*	96.7	97.8	97.8

Pre-Employment Transition Services and Career Pathways – Tish Harris

Since the last SRC meeting, the DBVI student team has continued to provide innovative programming and opportunities for students with disabilities age 14-22. Students participated in programs Social Media and Marketing. The EDGE (Entrepreneurship Development for Gainful Employment) Program and Financial Reality. Up next is Cyber Space (June 2024), JMU (July 2024) LIFE (July 24) and Cyber Warriors (June-August 2024). More information to come!

VR Consumer Satisfaction Evaluation Program - Deborah Collard

The VR consumer satisfaction evaluation program for FPY2022 continues with outreach to eligible individuals with VR cases closed July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023. During the current cycle of the evaluation program several changes have been implemented to improve response rate and enhance the feedback received. DBVI partnered with the SRC to update and edit the survey platform and questions for FPYs 2020 and 2021. These updates, including additional personnel resources to provide follow up, have been implemented and show indications of improvement in response rate and reduction of response time. The current response rate is approximately 25%, down from 40% in FPY21. The time to complete the evaluation is down approximately 20%.

Adjustments to outreach of eligible individuals who may participate in the evaluation, including the re-introduction of providing the option to complete the survey by mail, and increased follow up activities with the addition of resources, were implemented in March 2021.

Responses to the VR consumer satisfaction evaluation continue to be shared with the Director of VR and Workforce for consultation, training planning, resolution of potential issues, and continuous program improvement. Data review and analysis will continue to take place to provide quarterly updates to the SRC and as needed. Response summaries and graphics for FPY2021 can be viewed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-RKJ723YW/>

VR Customer Satisfaction PRELIMINARY results to date; through May 2022. The information in Tables 1 and 2 below, includes data from FPY2022 evaluation responses. The FPY2022 evaluation program was open through the third calendar quarter of 2022.

Table 1. Overall Satisfaction scores FFY2016 through FPY2022

Year	All	Rehabilitated	Other than Rehabilitated
FFY2016	73.66	82.75	63.33
FFY2017	79.65	85.57	69.79
FFY2018	78.60	94.70	58.50
FFY2019 and 2020	73.33	87.32	45.54
FPY2020*	78.80	91.82	71.20
FPY2021	87.74	94.73	76.66
FPY2022	85.58	95.00	67.69

When compared to the last reporting period, FPY2021, scores for FPY2022 remained consistently high for individual perception of VR staff being respectful, knowledgeable about disability, and sensitive to needs. FPY 2022 survey highlights are provided below:

- ❖ 88 percent of individuals agreed their VR counselor was respectful, resulting in a weighted score of 88.57. Additionally, 81 percent agreed their VR counselor delivered services and service items in a timely manner, scoring 87.32.
- ❖ Individuals believed their VR counselor was sensitive to their needs, scoring an 88.29 (86 percent), and partnered with them in developing their vocational goal, scoring 88.11 (72 percent).

- ❖ 86 percent of individuals agreed their counselor was knowledgeable about their disability, scoring 90.5, the highest score in the last seven years. Additionally, 77 percent agreed their VR counselor partnered with them in choosing services and service providers, scoring 87.18.

Results for satisfaction scores with VR staff from FFY2016 through FPY2022 are included in the table below.

Table 2. Satisfaction scores with VR Staff FFY2016 through FPY2022

Year	Respectful	Knowledgeable about disability	Sensitive to needs
FFY2016	83.71	78.59	77.96
FFY2017	86.61	85.96	83.93
FFY2018	92.86	81.43	85.71
FFY2019/20	84.38	83.75	80.00
FPY2020*	85.83	87.23	84.26
FPY2021	90.87	88.70	90.97
FPY2022	88.57	90.50	88.29

In FPY2020 DBVI introduced a Net Promoter Score (NPS) question to the survey. The NPS is a metric used in customer experience evaluation programs. A NPS is used to measure how likely a customer is to refer your product or service to others, scores can range from -100 to +100, a higher score is desirable. A national benchmark NPS for government organizations in 2023 is 48. The FPY2020 NPS responses were calculated to establish a baseline for DBVI equaling 36. The DBVI NPS for FPY2022, the third year this metric was used is 47, an improvement from the baseline, however less than last year’s rating of 57. The NPS will continue to be monitored and analyzed in the coming years.

Given the number of evaluation responses submitted in FPY 2022, it is difficult to determine how well the summary statistics represent the entire group of eligible individuals served; as a result, please view the summary information as informative, and providing general guidance, rather than as definitive statements regarding the consumer satisfaction results of any specific subset of VR cases or individuals being served. A detailed summary of all evaluation questions and responses is located at the website listed below and is available for review and comment.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-XRxTVNBo_2B_2F23NFc08eW10A_3D_3D/

The open-ended responses from the VR consumer satisfaction evaluation included numerous comments from consumers regarding their experiences with the agency and their satisfaction with their VR counselors and trainers. Independence and accessibility to services and opportunities continue to be a focus for individuals DBVI serves. DBVI is also aware of the need to continue with early engagement and follow up with individuals to improve services and access to services. Additionally, DBVI is focused on the need to optimize staff coverage for service provision and minimize staff turnover. All responses are included in Attachment B at the end of this document.

The DBVI VR Program is part of the Workforce system within the Commonwealth of Virginia. As a member of this large, coordinated network, DBVI continues to position itself to maintain strong partnerships within the Virginia Workforce system as the Commonwealth continues to implement the Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act (WIOA) of 2014. The results of the consumer satisfaction survey will be used by DBVI decision makers and the SRC in the continued development and implementation of the Combined Virginia State Plan and WIOA implementation. The feedback and insights will also be used to make recommendations for improvement of services on behalf of individuals. The comments provided by the consumers are rich in content and will continue to aide in improving the high-quality service delivery program that exists at DBVI.

* FedProgramYear2020 is a partial federal program year, from September 2020 through June 2021. This timeframe is used for this reporting year to align the reporting year at DBVI with the federal program year in WIOA. The next reporting timeframe, Federal Program Year 2021, corresponds to July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022.