



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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**C** OUNCIL

# Annual Report for FY 2016

The SRC/DVRS Partnership Celebrates Accomplishments

October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016

## New Jersey Dept. of Labor

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New Jersey State  
Rehabilitation Council

Executive Committee

Peggy Englebert  
Chairperson

Rebecca Shulman,  
Vice-Chairperson

Carolyn Hayer  
Treasurer

Alice Hunnicutt  
DVRS Director

## Rehabilitation Council Members

Council Membership is in accordance with Section 105 of the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act and New Jersey Executive Order 110 and reflects a diverse range of disability groups, geographical areas, racial, ethnic and gender groups. Each member is appointed by the Governor of New Jersey. The Council represents a broad spectrum of individuals who are concerned with the vocational needs of people with disabilities and who support the objectives of the public rehabilitation program in New Jersey. As of 2016 representation on the Council is as follows:

Member	Representation
Joanne Norflet	Recipient of VR Services
James R. Thebery	Advocate 1
Wayne Roorda	Advocate 2
Rebecca Shulman	Advocate 3
Patricia A. Tomlinson	Advocate 4
Thomas G. Jennings	Business Rep 1
James E. Seath	Business Rep 2
Margaret M. Englebert	Business Rep 3
Brian D. Sant'Angelo	Business Rep 4
Nils R. Richardson	Community Rehab Program Rep
Lillie Lowe-Reid	Client Assistance Program
Bill Freeman	NJDOE – Office of Special Education Rep
Lorna Runkle	Business, Industry & Labor Representative
Carolyn D. Hayer	Parent Training & Info Center Rep
Nantanee Koppstein	SILC
Margaret Gilbride	Advocate 5
Janice Oursler	VR Counselor 1
Kathleen Wilson	VR Counselor 2
In process	State Workforce Development Board
Alice Hunnicutt	Director, DVRS, Ex-Officio

CAMDEN DVR  
STAFF:

Congratulations to the Camden DVR Office on their Schedule A Hiring event and thank you to the staff who worked so hard to bring these employment opportunities to People with Disabilities in the South Jersey Region. We are proud of the extraordinary effort given by the dedicated staff in the Camden office for making this experience available to your clients.

Peggy Englebort, Chair  
NJ State Rehabilitation Council

TIFFANY HOOD  
(PLEASANTVILLE):

Thanks again so much. A little kindness makes such a difference in a day. Your thoughtfulness certainly made a difference in mine. Thanks again. Thanks for all your help.  
Consumer

COLLEEN  
HENDRICKSON  
(WILDWOOD):

My daughter and I wanted to thank you for all the help and encouragement you've given since we first met. It is very much appreciated.  
Parent

PATIENCE OKOTIE-  
ISEKENEGBE  
(BRIDGETON):

Thank you for all of your help. –Client

## Message from the Chair

As the Chair of the NJ State Rehabilitation Counsel I am delighted to have this opportunity to celebrate with you the achievements of our SRC. We have had a very busy, productive year with strong support from our DVR liaisons, our exceptional membership, and our outstanding relationship with NJDVRs under the leadership of Director, Alice Hunnicutt. The SRC was very proud to partner this past year with APSE and NJRA to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act in October, National Disabilities Awareness Month. Keynote speaker, NJ LWD Commissioner Harold Wirths, who gave an inspiring talk, joining a panel of speakers featuring people with disabilities, employers, and advocacy groups discussing progress since the ADA was signed into law. Reviews of the day were overwhelmingly positive!

The SRC continued to focus on WIOA and the implementation of the new regulations in our system. SRC members attended a training with our DVRs counterparts at RSA in Washington DC, as well as SRC and CSAVR meetings across the country during which specifics were laid out for participants. Title IV, which governs Vocational Rehabilitation Services, has, at the central core, a focus on Youth, and on Competitive Integrated Employment for all of our citizens with disabilities. To further this aim, and as an Employment First State, the SRC joined forces with several other groups, including the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division of Developmental Disabilities, to devise a graphic chart that would help people with disabilities, and their families, to find their way through the complications inherent in each system. Our Evaluation Committee worked hard to construct a survey to measure the satisfaction of clients with the services they receive from DVRs Counselors. Working with the Monmouth University Polling Institute, results were produced that indicated a strong majority of DVRs clients were satisfied with their services, with the interactions they had, and the level of communication and information they received. With these survey results, DVRs will be able to better assess needs, and suggest changes that will allow them to enhance and improve their services. The Legislative and Policy Committee prioritized goals for the upcoming year; and the Emerging Trends Committee became the Transition Committee in recognition of the need to focus on Youth and Students. By design, WIOA will promote stronger ties between the SEA and LEA's in order to help youth and Students to transition to Competitive Integrated Employment as it links all state employment programs in the hopes of creating a more fluid access to services and better outcomes for individual seeking jobs.

We congratulate DVRs on responding to the WIOA mandate to work more closely with industry by expanding their internal structure to include a Business Unit with a Chief, and staff, whose responsibilities will include building relationships with the business community. DVRs is the best kept secret in the state, and we expect that this unit will have a great impact on filling the needs of employers, as well as the needs of people with disabilities for employment. Finally, members of the SRC participated in 4 topic driven public forums throughout the state from which much information was gleaned for future planning. And members continued to visit the DVRs offices to talk with, and listen to our staff. These visits have been a highlight of my tenure as Chair of the SRC, for I am filled with pride at the dedication and commitment of those who work in these offices.

I would be remiss in not thanking all of the Council members for their extraordinary work this year, most especially our Vice Chair, Rebecca Shulman, for doing a wonderful job of pulling this report together.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Peggy Englebort*

Peggy Englebort, M.Ed., LRC, CRC, CVE

Chair, New Jersey State Rehabilitation Council

ESTHER "HELEN" VERVELAKIS (CAMDEN): I'd like to take a moment to commend one of your staff employees, specifically Helen, your front desk receptionist. I sense the feeling that she is very concerned with quality client care and client quality service. A few weeks ago your office had a construction project going on and she and I weren't able to communicate with each other because of the noise. Helen took it upon herself to cancel the morning appointment I had and rescheduled me for the afternoon after lunch. She took the initiative to make sure I was the first one to have signed the list so that could get in as soon as possible so that I could keep my other appointments that afternoon. I just wanted to express my gratitude to her and you for her thoughtfulness on my behalf that day and wanted you to know about that.  
Consumer

MARTHA SNODDY 55+ CLERK (SOMERVILLE): Just writing to say Martha deserves a raise, promotion, bonus or sash with flowers and a tiara. I lost my client's SS card and after a quick search, she joined me and she found it inside the copy machine. Not on the glass top, but inside the wheel where the paper is filtered. She is the best!!!  
Jennifer Grant,  
VRC/Somerville

## Beliefs, Mission, Function

### SRC BELIEFS

As members of the New Jersey State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), we believe:

- That people with disabilities, like all people, have diverse strengths that must be defined and identified along many dimensions.
- That each person with a disability has value.
- In a public system of vocational rehabilitation that is responsible and accountable to those it serves and to those who fund it.
- In partnerships, affiliations and linkages.
- That optimal results in rehabilitation depend on an equal partnership between consumers and the professional (service provider).
- That all consumers should be given enough information to make informed choices.
- That all people with disabilities are ultimately responsible and accountable for the choices they make.
- That all people with disabilities should have the opportunity to maximize their potential.
- That respect for all is critical to this process.
- That it is necessary to support, further and exemplify diversity and multiculturalism within the disability community and the community at large.
- That the rights of people with disabilities should be advanced and protected.

ELAINE SOTO-ORTIZ (TRENTON):

As I stated previously, Mrs. Ortiz is doing an exception job. She is taking into consideration my strengths and weaknesses and applying them to the opportunities that gives me work. I am very pleased and I hope to retain a long term relationship with this organization, and her as my counselor.

Katherine Shelton

BLACK HISTORY MONTH COMMITTEE MEMBERS (NEW BRUNSWICK):

Diane Bertrand (DVR), Monica Van Pelt (Middlesex County), Pete Ruffini (DVR), Michaela Macauley (DVR) Committee Chairperson, Richard Rodd (DVR), Solo Okonkwo (DVR), Mary Smith (Employment Services), Alexis Swaby (DVR Intern).

This team produced a wonderfully entertaining 2 hour production focusing on African and African American culture, people, arts, customs, dance and foods. The room was overflowing with visitors who took part actively. It was most inspiring to see County and State representatives as well as a variety of visitors all sharing together. I, for one, am looking forward to next year's expanded production. The team only had one week to present this year's event so next year is guaranteed to be even better. New Brunswick is the place to be!

Janice Fishbein, Manager

### SRC MISSION

The SRC is a partnership of persons with disabilities, advocates and other interested persons. It is committed to ensuring through policy development, implementation and advocacy that New Jersey has a rehabilitation program that is not only comprehensive and consumer-responsive but also effective, efficient and significantly funded. The SRC is dedicated to ensuring that persons with disabilities receive rehabilitation services that result in employment.

### SRC MANDATED FUNCTION

The SRC, on behalf of the community it represents, reviews, analyzes and advises the New Jersey State Vocational Rehabilitation Program (DVRS) regarding the performance of its responsibilities. Council goals and activities are set annually and are in response to both National and State issues, as mandated by Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The focus of Council goals and activities includes but is not limited to Consumer Satisfaction, Statewide Needs Assessment, State Plan and Amendments, Policy, Extent/Scope/Effectiveness of Services, Interagency Agreements and New Jersey's Employment programs.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed into law July 22, 2014, reauthorized the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 under title IV. It is important to note that most provisions under title IV went into effect upon enactment of WIOA. The SRC is committed to ensuring appropriate support to the DVRS in its implementation of WIOA.

AMY HOEHMAN  
(NEPTUNE):

Good afternoon. I write you today to share my appreciation for the attentive and productive service provided by Amy Hoehman on behalf of our son. He has been Amy's client since spring 2015. His case has been and remains complicated as he has both cognitive and medical issues with which to contend. We particularly appreciate Amy's willingness to journey with us as we "dig deeper" in unpacking the obstacles that have been preventing him from successfully maintaining a job. Amy's recommendation of re-assessing his vocational interests/aptitudes via a 3 day assessment with Nancy Del-Papa provided valuable insight. Since that time, he has been able to examine and consider alternate work environments. Again, we commend Amy for her thoughtful, efficient and effective casework on behalf of his quest for vocational rehabilitation and a steady satisfying career. Parents

RAJ VENKATRAMAN  
(TRENTON):

I just wanted to take moment to thank you for meeting with me, your assistance and guidance, and your total professionalism. It was a pleasure working with you, and I enjoyed the conversation we had. I deeply appreciate the interest you showed in helping me. Again, thank you!  
Client

## Membership, Committees, Resources

### Membership Development

The full Council participates in identification of potential members appropriate to the beliefs and mission of the SRC. Member attendance, vacancies, and upcoming term expirations are reviewed during the February and June meetings with recommendations made to fill vacancies according to the category the vacancy(s) represents. The SRC is fully compliant with the requirements under Section 105 in the law; members have been appointed by the Governor and at least half of the SRC membership is comprised of persons with disabilities who are not employed by the DVRS. A wide range of disability representation has been achieved.

### Officer Elections

Officers are elected bi-annually at the SRC May meeting for a two-year term. The following new officers were elected in June 2016: Peggy Englebert, Chair; Rebecca Shulman, Vice-Chair, and Carolyn Hayer, Treasurer. The officers were elected for a two-year term.

### Committees

The SRC Chair, in conjunction with the Executive Committee, appoints committees annually to meet federally mandated activities and SRC priority areas. Each SRC member is expected to participate on a committee. The DVRS supports each committee by assigning a DVRS staff member to provide information as requested.

Standing committees include:

- **Executive Committee** – Comprised of the SRC Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and the DVRS Director as ex-officio.
- **Evaluation & Consumer Satisfaction Committee** – Activities include, but are not limited to, program evaluation activities and consumer satisfaction studies.
- **Policy Committee/Legislative Committee** – Activities include, but are not limited to, advocacy and education, policy and State Plan review, Administrative Code review, State Plan Public Hearings, Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment, pending and current legislation, particularly with respect to impact on funding.
- **Transition Committee** – Responsible for the identification of new initiatives relating to providing pre-employment transition services as outlined in WIOA.

LINDSEY AQUINO (THOROFARE):  
 Hi Lindsey it's been about a year since I spoke/corresponded with you last. I just wanted to give you an update. I'm working a job that I enjoy doing and it makes me happy. I'm a cook at Pizza Hut in Woodbury. Still haven't had a seizure since I broke my jaw. I also wanted to send you this email to say thank you for your help and always finding the time to help me. I hope this is one of many emails from people who have the same results. Keep up the good work. Thanks again Lindsey. You were pivotal in this whole process. Keep it up.  
 Client

JAZZ TILLMAN (PLEASANTVILLE):  
 For all you have done for my success in my path of higher education.  
 Consumer

ROSEMARIE PERRONE (WILDWOOD):  
 Thank you so much for all of your help with the hearing aids. I think I was ready to lose my job because not being able to understand the public and phone calls. I am a one girl office and it was really getting very hard. This is like a new world opened up for me. Major improvement thanks to you. I hope to be able to use my experience with you for other people with hearing problems.  
 Client

- **Ad Hoc Committees, Task Forces, and Study Groups** – Are created on an as needed basis by the SRC Chair. Non-Council members may serve on these groups, but the Chair of the group must be a SRC member. Ad Hoc Committees include:
- **By-Laws Review Committee** – Is appointed by the SRC Chair on even-numbered years to review and make recommendations to the full Council for needed revision.
- **Membership Committee** – Is charged with developing plans to bring membership into compliance with RSA mandates

**Resource Plan**

The following DVRS staff provides support, attend, and participate in the activities of the Rehabilitation Council:

- DVRS Director attends all meetings and provides staff support to the executive committee.
- Two Assistant Directors provide staff support to the legislative/policy and emerging issues committees; the executive assistant to the DVRS director provides staff support to the evaluation committee and day-to-day requests that come from SRC members.
- Executive secretary to the director provides minutes for every meeting and prepares handouts for all SRC meetings.
- Other DVRS staff members are assigned as needed to support the Council and as appropriate to their area of expertise.

For the period of 10/1/15 – 9/30/16, a \$46,500 budget was established for Council operating expenses. The budget covered: quarterly and special meeting costs, annual planning summit, member expenses to attend and participate in meetings and training, accommodations, training, printing costs, fiscal agent budget administration and miscellaneous funds needed to support Council activities as appropriate. Council activities stayed within the allocated amounts.



ASHLEE ROGERS  
(HACKETTSTOWN):  
Thank you so much for all of your help, kindness, and time. Thank you for guiding me and for going out of your way to help with school next semester. Hope you're having a great summer. Stay Well!!  
Client

AMY THOMPSON  
(TOMS RIVER)/BUTCH DAVIES (CENTRAL OFFICE):  
I would like to commend the efforts of Ms. Amy Thompson (in Toms River) and Butch Davies (in Trenton) for their outstanding support in getting me handheld controls on my van. I have had MS for more than 40 years and the beginning of the year I was unable to drive any longer. It was suggested to contact the DVRS for assistance and I felt a true concern on both of their behalves and greatly appreciated their roles in this process. This has enabled me to continue to work, which without the hand controls I would be unable to continue doing. Please share my appreciation with both of them for a job well done.  
Client

MARGARET FERRAO  
(ELIZABETH):  
Ms. Williams this is just a note to let you know that I appreciate the excellent thorough job Margaret Ferrao did to assist me with DVR services and was also courteous and personable.

## Meetings, Trainings and Forums

### Accessibility

The Council promotes inclusion at all sponsored meetings for members and other participants by providing, as needed, personal care attendant services, transportation services, interpreter services, computer assisted real-time transcription (CART) and assistive listening devices. Teleconferencing is made available to accommodate persons who have difficulty traveling, or who reside in rural or remote areas. In addition, all documents are sent out prior to each SRC meeting via email.

### Regular New Jersey SRC Meetings

The SRC conducts quarterly meetings. Meetings were held on November 18, 2015, February 10, 2016, June 15, 2016 and September 7, 2016. Full Council activities are scheduled in the morning with committees meeting in the afternoon. Committee meetings are also held in the interim months, on an as needed basis. Conference calling is used when appropriate. Regular meetings are open to the public and interested stakeholders are encouraged to attend. An annual planning meeting was held on August 11, 2016.

### SRC Members Participate in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)

Council representatives regularly attend the CSAVR spring and fall meetings. There is a special track for SRC leadership nationally that meets the day before the general CSAVR meeting begins. New Jersey SRC representatives attend this meeting in addition to the general CSAVR meetings. The New Jersey SRC is a member of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). The NCSRC coordinates the track for SRCs at the CSAVR conferences in the spring and fall meetings.

NJSRC representatives participate in CSAVR Standing Committee meetings; including the Deaf, Deaf Blind, Hard-of-Hearing and Late-Deafened Standing Committee; the Transition Standing Committee and the Employment Standing Committee.

Several members of the SRC continue to work on the "Model State Plan for Rehabilitation Services for Individuals Who Are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard-of-Hearing and Late-Deafened" and have offered technical consultation throughout the country.

NANCI HILLER  
(CENTRAL OFFICE):  
DVR wants to extend kudos to Nanci Hiller who represented DVR at GSETA last week. She conducted a TWE workshop Nanci along with other presenters were thanked by GSETA planners for providing a rich tapestry of workshops that met the needs of diverse attendees at the conference. Congrats Nanci!  
Shari Walker-Hunt

DUPREE MCCALLA  
(NEW BRUNSWICK):  
Thank you again for your endless care and love that we get from you.  
Client

MARIA PEREZ  
(HACKENSACK):  
I called the Hackensack D.V.R. office to find the status of my daughter's situation. She recently re-started working with D.V.R. again after a few years' hiatus. I have had a lot of experience dealing with state agencies as I have two special needs children. I had the wonderful experience of speaking with a warm, professional, caring and knowledgeable person in Maria Perez. I know there are many caring people in this line of work, but Maria Perez's nineteen years of dedicated experience certainly came through. She took care of my needs and treated me with dignity!  
Parent

EMMA GORDON  
(BRIDGETON):  
Thank you for all of your help!  
Client

**2016 Public Forums:**

Topic Driven Public Forum Discussion:

- Pre-employment transition
- Deaf H/H
- Family support
- Employment First

Dates	Venue	Attendance	Interpreter	SRC/DVRS Attendees	Written Testimony
April 5, 2016	Gloucester County	25	Rita Jo Scarcella, Rachel Owens	SRC: Peggy, Jim S, Wayne DVRS: Alice, Shari	NJ APSE
April 7, 2016	Morris County	17	Kathy Ferejohn, Benay Fiore	SRC: Jim S. DVRS: Alice, Brian	None
April 8, 2016	Monmouth County	10	Sharon Ferraro, Cheryl Lepple-Huber	SRC: Jim S. DVRS: Alice, Brian	None
April 12, 2016	Middlesex County	13	Sharon Ferraro, Audry Rosenberg	SRC: Peggy, Jim S, Tom Jennings, P. Tomlinson	Parent

ELIZABETH GUZMAN (CAMDEN):  
 Welcome back congratulations yes Andrew completed his courses with a final grade of a "B". He is working in the Westmont plaza. He started there on June 27th. He has full benefits with 401k. They really like him, he likes the job. 40 hours a week, 2 days off a week (they are open on weekends). This grids they are sending him to E. Brunswick for additional classes. We are both very happy. Thanks for all your help. And a PS make sure all your clients send out thank you letters after interviews. I really think that made the difference fit Andrew not to mention he hand delivered it because I forgot to have him do it right after. He went back a week later to ask if they made a decision and handed them the letter and 2 days later they offered him the job. I am so happy and proud. And thanks again for all your help. Pass this success story on to your boss. You deserve the recognition. Thank you and congratulations again. Parent

TINA BRAND (CAMDEN):  
 I wanted to thank you for coming to speak at our Wellness Week celebration. I heard that once again you gave a great presentation! We look forward to collaborating with you more in the future. Take care. Partial Hospital Program

## Activities and Accomplishments

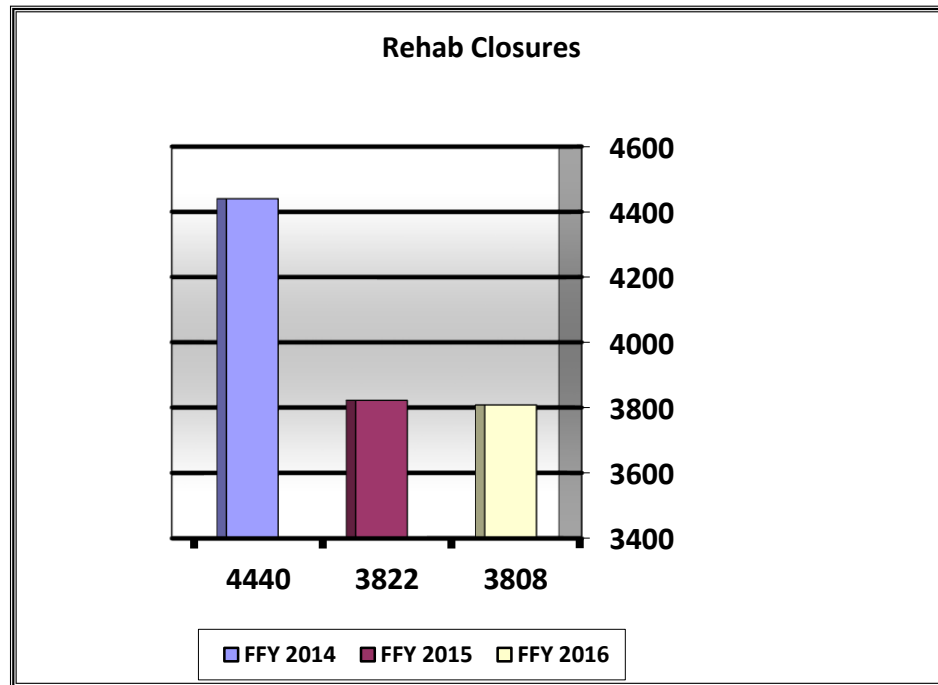
### Eligible Consumers Served in 2016

In FFY' 2016, the DVRS served all categories of eligible consumers. The agency currently has the financial resources to serve all categories; however, it is projected that with the implementation of the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) the agency could go into an order of selection in FFY' 2017 due to realignment of federal funds emphasizing students and youth. In addition, the Department of Human Services has implemented policy changes that now require all individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (ID/DD) who seek support through the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) to seek employment services with the DVRS.

### Successful Employment Outcomes

In FFY'16, closures decreased from 3,822 in FFY' 2015, to 3,808 in FFY' 2016. This decrease is less than 1% from FFY'15.

In FFY'16; 1,619 females and 2,189 males with disabilities were successfully rehabilitated.



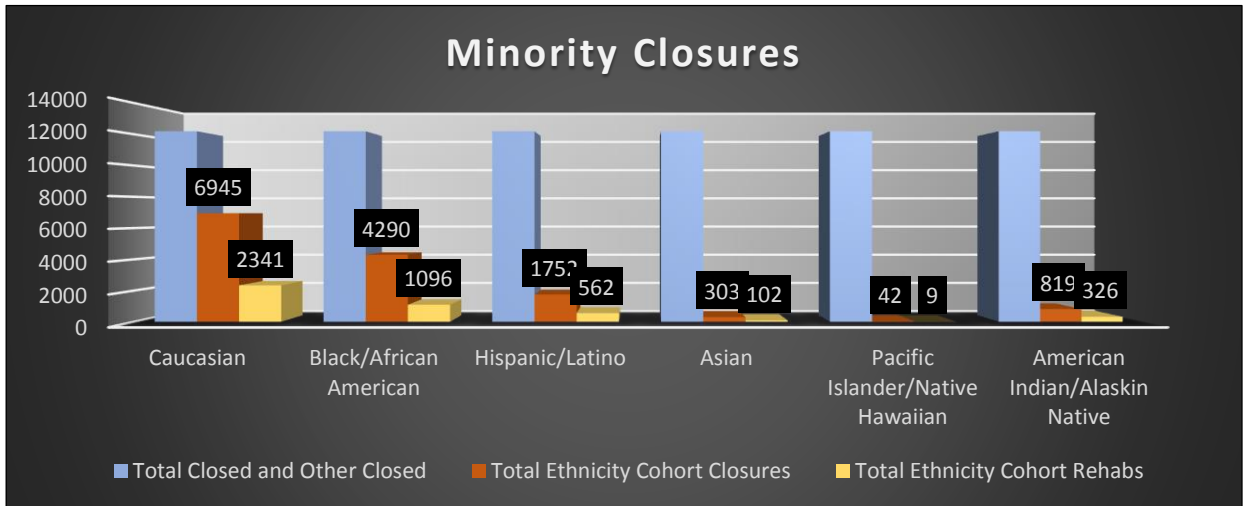
IRENE PEREZ (CAMDEN):  
Dear Ms. Perez, as my case closes with DVR, I wanted to attach a well-deserved thank you note to tell you how much I appreciate all the help you gave me during our time together. I appreciate you being there for me to offer advice on how to deal with issues that come up in the workplace. I know you cared greatly about my well-being and appreciate your patience and caring. I wish you well in life, and thank you for making my day a little bit brighter in every way.  
Client

AMANDA PARSONS (TRENTON):  
I am writing to let you know how much I appreciate the outstanding services your staff, Ms. Amanda Parsons provided my son and I. When we walked into the DVR building, not knowing what to expect, Ms. Parsons met with us and she was very attentive and helpful. She was very knowledgeable about the different DVR programs and I felt she was genuinely interested in helping us. Because of her efforts, my son will have an opportunity to work and interact with others apart from family. Mrs. Liu, you have put together a great team and their efforts should never go unnoticed.  
Parent

**Minority Identification**

There were 12,188 \*closed cases in FFY'16. DVRS served all these individuals and closed their cases for other reasons or were successful rehabilitations. 36% of all the closures are rehabilitations and 55% of the total rehab closures are from minority groups. Please note: Consumers can choose 2 or more minority identifiers on their applications.

**Minority Identification**



Total Closed and Other Closures by Minority Identification for FFY' 2016  
\*12,188 is represented by the blue column in the graph.

**Referrals by Region**

Northern Region

Office	Caseloads	Referrals
Paterson	9	930
Randolph	5	635
Hackettstown	6	684
Hackensack	9	1325
Jersey City	10	1302
Total	39	4876

**Central Region**

Office	Caseloads	Referrals
Newark	16	2617
New Brunswick	12	1859
Elizabeth	8	721
Somerville	7	990
Trenton	9	1215
Neptune	9	830
Total	61	8232

**Southern Region**

Office	Caseloads	Referrals
Toms River	9	1778
Camden	12	1755
Thorofare	6	742
Westampton	7	861
Pleasantville	12	762
Bridgeton	7	1103
Wildwood	2	440
Total	55	7441

KRISTA LOPE  
(CAMDEN):  
You really made a difference. Thank you so much for helping me. I have been approved for SS Disability starting in September again. Thank you so much!  
Client  
CLIFFORD JACOB  
(RANDOLPH):  
On behalf of the Alumni Association of the Morris County Drug Court and The Willow Tree Center a Program of Integrity we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation in Substance Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment Day. Thank you, again for taking the time to educate the community about your programs and network with your colleagues. Your participation helped to make the program a success.  
Charles C. Johnson, Jr.

ANA CORTES  
(JERSEY CITY):  
Just wanted to email you and say thank you for assisting me with my son M.C. I appreciate the work and the assistance that you have provided my son. I would like to keep in touch with you regarding his progress.  
Parent  
BARBARA KERN  
(RANDOLPH):  
Thanks for everything!  
Client

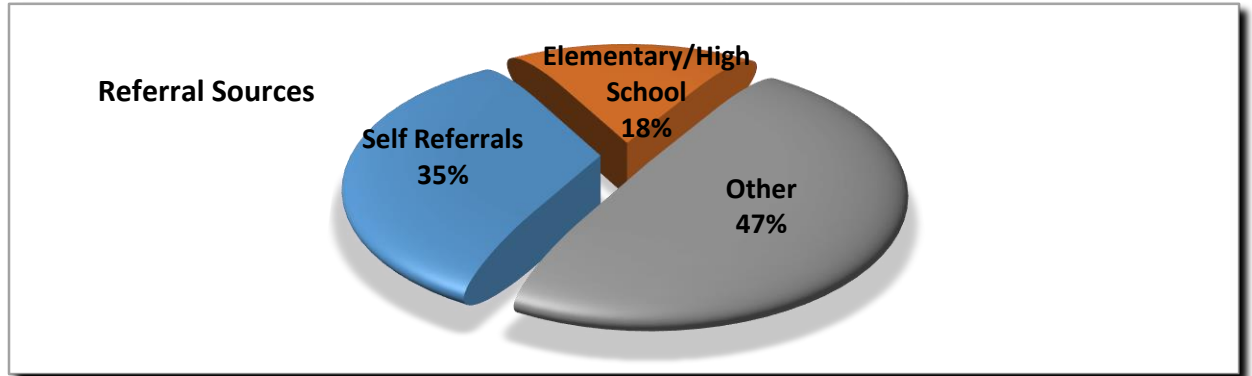
JOAN WLAZLOWSKI (RANDOLPH): Congratulations again on your well-deserved new position! Looking forward to continuing to work cooperatively with DVR in providing excellence in hearing care under your direction and that of your team! Vendor

JENNIFER SOSDORF (WESTAMPTON): I wanted to thank you for all the help you are giving my nephew. I appreciate your insight on him. This is the best thing that has ever happened to him. I know he is capable of doing a lot more than he ever has been allowed to do. Family Member

JUDY DORRBECKER (JERSEY CITY): I want to take this opportunity to thank Judy and DVR staff for assisting me in getting my Hearing Aid. It is such helpful for me to teach children and hear better. Consumer

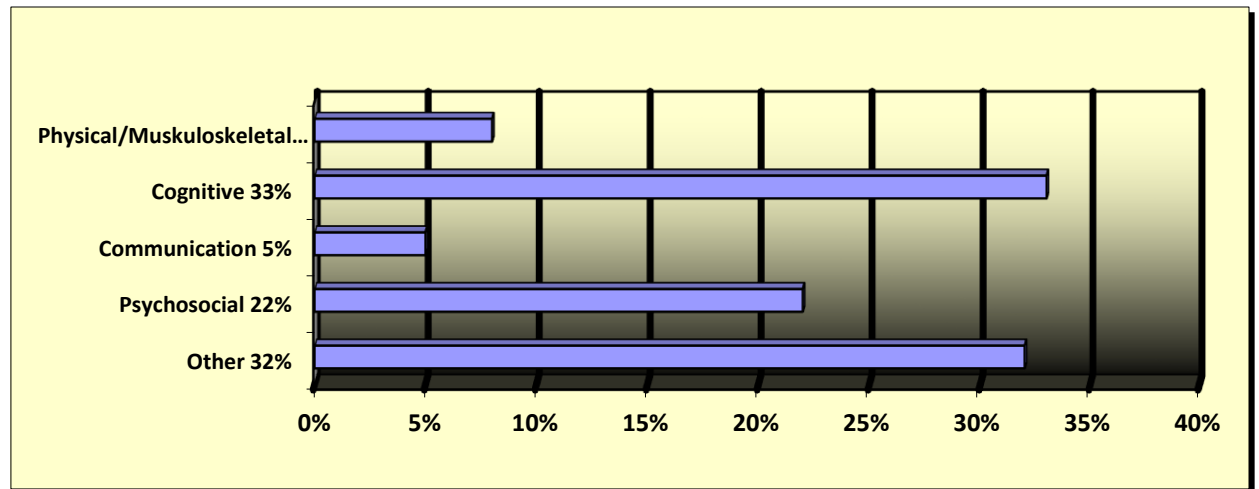
JAMIE CHRZAN (NEW BRUNSWICK): Thank you so much for all the necessary help as much as getting back on my feet again is concern. Once again thank you, I will never forget to be praying for you. Have a great day. Be blessed by the Lord. Client

The DVRS received a total of 20,549 referrals during FFY'16. Of the 3808 total rehabilitations, the following referral sources were the highest; Self Referrals, Elementary/High School, Other Educational Institutions. Some of the other referral sources include: CRPs, medical professionals, One-Stop Career Centers, Social Security Administration, employers, family and friends, welfare, etc.



**Disabilities Served**

DVRS serves a wide range of disabilities; in 2016 Cognitive and Psychosocial were the largest group serves. These two groups made up 55% of all disabilities served.



**Supported Employment Assists Consumers with Significant Disabilities**

The DVRS successfully rehabilitated 1,481 individuals who received Supported Employment services in FFY'16; the following represent the most significant disabilities:

- Cognitive Impairment 44%

PETER RUFFINI  
(NEW BRUNSWICK):  
For a long time, I was without a job. You gave me the chance to work. For that, I am very grateful. You helped me a lot.  
Client

MAUREEN RITCHIE  
(PATERSON):  
I want to thank you again for all of your time, knowledge, and expertise with getting DVR services for Colin. You are someone we consider quite special in our family and we appreciate you so much! Please accept our most sincere thanks for all you do to assist with educating and finding career paths for all who need you. We are most grateful and we will never forget the kindness and professionalism you have shown to our family.  
Parent

BARBARA STOCKTON (NEW BRUNSWICK):  
Thank you so much for helping Ian receive his DVR benefits and all other expenses. We are grateful for your help. His hearing aids are working perfectly and he was able to save money financially. We hope you continue to help others with disabilities.  
Consumer

- Psychosocial Impairments: 28%
- General Physical: 7%
- Communication: 3%

In each of these disability groups the division worked with CRPs with specific expertise in the provision of services.

Individuals receiving Supported Employment Services in FFY'16 accounted for 39% of successful rehab closures.

Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. WIOA was created to provide state and local areas the flexibility to collaborate across systems in an effort to better address the employment and skills needs of current employees, jobseekers, and employers. WIOA requires a single, unified state plan that includes all of the core programs under it. It established core measures for all four titles that are designed to measure the effectiveness and continuous improvement of the One-Stop and Youth service delivery systems.

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) has identified four major priorities in connection with WIOA. The first is Re-employment. We will strengthen services to jobseekers and businesses through a renewed one stop career system, the development of a 21<sup>st</sup> century career planning model, which includes expanding partnerships with organizations engaged in workforce development, and using technology, including assistive technology applications for individuals with disabilities.

The second major priority focuses on opportunity. We will implement innovative strategies to help people, including individuals with disabilities achieve economic self-sufficiency by investing in programs that integrate strong foundational skills, workforce readiness skills, and occupational skills that lead to a career pathway.

The third major priority focuses on alignment. We will invest in high quality business education partnerships that fill skills gaps in New Jersey's key industries, and help individuals obtain employer-valued credentials.

The fourth major priority focuses on accountability. We will ensure that all of our workforce investments are efficient and effective by using performance metrics and outcomes to make program and policy decisions, and by providing customers, including individuals with disabilities, with information on the quality of training programs and workforce services.

Title IV of WIOA includes many key changes for the vocational rehabilitation program. Employer engagement is a focus and the DVRS plan now includes a section that describes how we will coordinate with employers. DVRS is establishing a business outreach team that will start providing services to the New Jersey business community and provide critical linkages to jobseekers with disabilities.

Jennifer Veneziani  
(Camden)  
I don't know the last time I met someone in the human services field who demonstrated the concern and motivation that you have to help someone in need. I told my husband the day I met you in your Camden office that you seemed so genuinely concerned and I really believed you were going to do all that you said you would to help my son. I wish someone would reward your perseverance to work the system and right a wrong. You'll always have my vote for Human Service Professional of the decade.

From our family to you,  
THANK YOU!  
Parent

KATIE  
CZAJKOWSKI/JODY  
CLASSEN  
(BRIDGETON):  
On behalf of Salem Family Success Center, we would like to thank you for attending our "Back to Business" Job Expo. We appreciate your participation and ongoing support.

YIGAL FALK  
(TRENTON):  
We just wanted to write you a short note of appreciation for taking the time to meet with our son. He was truly impressed and inspired by you. You gave him hope where he was clearly losing confidence in himself. Again, thank you so much and we look forward to working with you.  
Parent

The Act also includes an emphasis for services to students with disabilities. Pre-employment transition services is another new requirement in the Act, and DVRS has identified 25 dedicated counselors to take the role of providing pre-employment transition services throughout the New Jersey.

The WIOA amendments added section 511 to the Act that pertains to individuals working under a special wage certificate issued to an employer under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA) that authorizes payment of subminimum wages under certain conditions. The new section 511 applies to all entities holding a certificate under section 14(c) that employ or are interested in employing individuals with disabilities at subminimum wages.

To meet the requirements under section 511, DVRS developed a strategy to work with the providers who employ individuals with disabilities in subminimum wages who are known to the division. Counselors from local offices are going to these facilities to meet and provide individual counseling to individuals currently making subminimum wages. Another letter was sent to the entities holding subminimum wage certificates who are not known to DVRS describing the process to engage with the division.

It is important to note that there is a new obligation in WIOA that requires an annual accessibility review of all one-stops. This includes an examination of the physical layout as well as programmatic accessibility to ensure individuals with disabilities have equal access to all services provided to jobseekers without disabilities. DVRS has been a leader in helping to develop an appropriate template to ensure that all local one-stop offices follow this requirement.

### **Transitioning to Post School Activities**

The reauthorization of WIOA made significant changes to the DVRS responsibility for transition services. Specifically, the law requires that the public VR program provide pre-employment transition services (PETS) to all students with disabilities. DVRS identified strategies to ensure that all transition students with disabilities have the opportunity to receive these services.

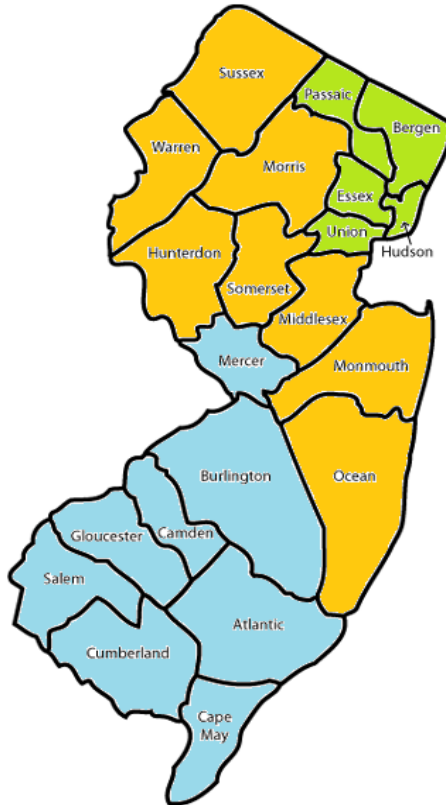
DVRS has assigned a VR Counselor to every public high school in New Jersey for many years, and each local office assigns one counselor to provide coordination for county-wide transition activities. DVRS also designates a PPDS in central office to coordinate transition services information within the state. Counselors provide technical consultation, attend IEP meetings (when invited), provide information about DVRS to families, and will open a case for a student with a disability up to two years prior to graduation or aging out of school. DVRS has not funded services until a student receives his/her diploma. DVRS enjoys high quality partnerships with many local districts; yet there remains a significant number of districts who do not partner with the local DVRS office.



**CENTRAL OFFICE (TRENTON):**  
 Recognition due to DVRS Central Office IT Team: December 2015 brought Central Office's usual RSA 911 reporting requirements. It also brought over anomalies due to the conversion from WORCS to AWARE. Before we could send RSA our report these anomalies had to be corrected or explained. Staff worked throughout the Christmas season to assist the field offices with locating these errors and explaining what was necessary in order to correct the data. Staff came in early and worked late on several days to get this work done and individually corrected errors themselves. DVRS is lucky to have such a dedicated IT staff and I know I speak for DVRS management when I offer my congratulation to Deanna, Gina and Frank on a job well done.  
 Rob Paige, Chief

**PETER RUFFINI (NEW BRUNSWICK):**  
 Thank you for restarting my career objective and helping me to find my way.  
 Consumer

Pre-employment transition services (PETS) is a new requirement under W.I.O.A. The public VR programs must offer pre-employment transition services to every student with a disability. DVRS plans to establish three regions to help coordinate PETS activities. DVRS has assigned 25 counselors to provide PETS services throughout the state.



Each PETS counselor will be assigned to coordinate services to approximately 3,000 students.

PETS counselors will maintain PETS cases and will adhere to LEA requirements (fingerprinting) in order to provide PETS in schools. They will report to a designated local office in their catchment area.

The PETS counselors will continue as part of the local office.

The PPDS in central office will manage all PETS contracts and coordinate data for the state.

The local office team will work with vendors designated by DVRS to provide PETS.

Managers report to the Field Chief assigned to their region.

Field chiefs report directly to the Assistant Director of DVRS Field Services.

**Master's Degree Programs Collaborate with the DVRS**

The School of Health Related Professions at Rutgers University has a Master's degree program in Rehabilitation Counseling. The staff reports the following collaborative activities:

- The DVRS regularly provides practicum and internship placements in all local offices.
- The DVRS and the SRC members have provided letters of support for grant applications for rehabilitation education program students at both the graduate and undergraduate level. The school has an excellent record for receiving these grants.
- The DVRS staff and the SRC members provide classroom lectures, mentor students, assist with case conferences and provide knowledge of current practices in the field.

ISABEL  
CARRION/CARREL  
COREUS/NEWARK  
OFFICE:

Isabel Carrion, Carrel Coreus from the Newark office participated in the Disability Awareness Celebration held by Prudential at Military Park on October 18, 2016. DVRS had a table at the event and gave out information and received a number of referrals. Thank you so much for partnering with Prudential for our Disability Awareness Celebration on October 18th! We truly appreciate the time you took to connect with the community and share the services that your organization provides. My only regret was that I wasn't able to spend more time with you, given our simultaneous Disability Summit. We hope that you had an amazing and productive experience. I would love to hear all about it when you have a chance. Again, a huge thank you for your engagement and for all that you do!

Office of Diversity & Inclusion Prudential Financial, Inc.

SUSAN POLANSKY  
(RANDOLPH):

Thank you very much for referring me to JVS and for supporting and believing in me.  
Client

- Several members of the DSU and the SRC are active members of the Rutgers University, School of Health Related Professions Rehabilitation Counseling Program Advisory Council.

In addition to supporting staff to attend Rutgers University the agency has also offered programs in the George Washington University, The University of Wisconsin at Stout and several other universities offering on-line support. In FFY' 16 counselors who do not have their Master's Degree developed their training plan to work towards the advanced degree. While WIOA no longer requires a Master's level of competency, the New Jersey Civil Service Commission requires it as a prerequisite to become a Counselor for the DVRS. The SRC supports the continuation of this requirement.

**Staff Development and Training**

During the past FFY DVRS was able to promote 19 employees at various levels and offered support to assist them in their new roles. The agency also hired 39 new staff and maintained 140 counseling positions statewide. The Training Unit was able to identify several external training programs and conferences for staff to enhance their skill levels and benefit from Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) especially the CRC.

Specific leadership development was provided to 6 newly promoted managers who now hold the designation of Certified Program Manager (CPM). Prior to the closing of the Region II Technical Assistance and Continuing Education program (TACE) the agency was able to offer a 2 day training on the best practices for offering Supported Employment to all counselors.

In FFY' 16 the DVRS was able to send several staff members to conferences, including the Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE), the New Jersey Rehabilitation Association (NJRA) winter conference, the New Jersey Business Leadership Network and Project Search Annual International Conference. Additional staff members were also able to attend conferences specific to their area of expertise, interest and assignment.

**Job-Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Grant**

The DVRS was a successful applicant with the JDVR-TAC and received intense technical assistance from the Institute for Community Inclusion in Boston to develop a business outreach team. DVRS executive management met with the ICI team throughout the year to develop the unit.

### National VR Network

ROSEMARIE  
RUDDEROW  
(NEPTUNE):  
I can't thank you  
enough for all of your  
help. It is very nice to  
have you by my side as  
I walk this new path  
with my son. I moved  
him in last Monday, and  
he seems to be settling  
in well. Hope you are  
warm, safe, and dry in  
this blizzard.  
Parent

MARYBETH  
MCLOUGHLIN  
(NEPTUNE):  
I want to thank you for  
your support these past  
four years. I know for  
sure that I would not  
have made it thus far  
without it, and I thank  
God for putting you in  
my life. May you always  
be blessed in all that  
you do. Know that you  
have a very special  
place in my heart.  
Client

MARC SCHWEITZER  
(JERSEY CITY):  
I have less than a  
month left to complete  
DPT program at  
Rutgers: SHRP. I owe  
my success partly to  
DVR and the help of my  
counselor Marc  
Schweitzer. Thanks!  
Client

MICHAELA  
MACAULEY (NEW  
BRUNSWICK):  
A bundle of thanks to  
you for all of the  
thoughtfulness you've  
shown. I appreciate the  
kindred spirit and your  
professional expertise.  
Client

Both individual DVRS consumers and businesses have greatly benefited from this national collaboration that has been activated by the CSAVR National Employment Network (The NET). The CSAVR has developed a national talent acquisition portal (TAP) that houses resumes and job information specific for DVRS consumers. The National Business Leadership Network has supported this initiative that ensures every resume posted is from an individual with a disability. This has particular interest with Federal Departments and contractors who are required to meet the Section 503 requirements. Prudential, in particular, reached out to DVRS to establish an on-going relationship for help with onboarding qualified candidates with disabilities DVRS participated in several activities with them in FFY'16, including celebrating Disability Employment Awareness Month with the national Disability history travelling museum in Newark.

### Regional Deafness Centers

Three regional centers serving individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened or with cochlear implants opened in 2009. They are as follows:

- JVS Goodwill Career Center (operated by Jewish Vocational Service and Goodwill of Northern NJ)
- Career Development Center (operated by Bridges to Employment in Raritan)
- Career Success Solution (operated by Burlington County College)

The purpose of the Regional Career Center (RCC) for People with Hearing Loss grant is to provide comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services to consumers of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) who are 1) Deaf, 2) hard of hearing, 3) late-deafened or 4) have cochlear implants.

Each center offers the following Services:

- Vocational Assessment to identify career options and goals
- Job Readiness Training to learn about the job market and employer needs
- Job Placement Assistance that will offer help in finding job openings and placement
- Assistive Technology Services

AL CAIN  
(PLEASANTVILLE):  
Sorry this has taken so long to get to you but I just wanted to thank you for all your help. You really make a difference in peoples' lives. Take care.  
Consumer

KATHLEEN KINDYA  
(THOROFARE):  
Hello, how are you? I hope all is well. As for myself school is coming along well. I just want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to make something of myself. It's greatly appreciated.  
Client

MICHAEL HESSLER  
(RANDOLPH):  
Thank you for all your help and the generosity of the DVR. Phillip is settled into University of Arizona and we are all hopeful for the best. Thank you again.  
Parent

LESLEY JACK  
(WESTAMPTON):  
Northern Burlington HS Career Orientation Program May Newsletter - Thank you so much for attending our End of Year Event at Northern Burlington HS on May 12th. We are always advocating to parents the importance of agencies like yours and I hope some came up to speak to you and your coworker. If you could please extend my thanks to her as well!  
Job Coach

In FY 2016, the centers provided over 70 vocational assessments, provided job readiness training to 125 individuals, and secured employment for 91 Division of Vocational Rehabilitation clients.

**Schedule A Hiring:**

In FFY '16 the DVRS hosted two Schedule A Hiring Events;

- December 2016 in Camden County. This marked the sixth time the Schedule A Hiring event was held in Camden for the southern offices. There were over 32 job openings ranging from entry level clerical to professional. Nineteen employers participated (11 federal agencies and 8 contractors). Eighty individuals were interviewed and there were fourteen veterans with service connected disabilities who participated. Eleven of these individuals secured employment.
- June 28 in Hudson County. This was the second event scheduled for the northern part of the state. The northern offices worked diligently to provide opportunity for qualified DVRS candidates and also partnered with the CBVI and Veteran's Administration to solicit qualified candidates with disabilities from them. A combination of 27 federal agencies/contractors participated at this event. One hundred thirty-two candidates were interviewed and as of 9/13/16, twenty-nine of these individuals secured employment.

Schedule A is different than that of the traditional Job Fair model. DVRS consumers are pre-screened by the VR counselor, matched to the Federal Job lead, and scheduled for a specific interview with a specific Federal HR Coordinator. The interviews are conducted in private in the local DVRS host office. Federal agencies such as the Department of Defense Logistics, the Department of the State, U.S. General Services Administration, IRS, Naval Air Command, SSA in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, U.S. Border Protection, Veteran's Administration, the U.S. Department of Agricultural, U.S. Mint, and Federal Bureau of Prisons, along with contractor Johnson & Johnson and U.S. Department of Labor have participated. Since the DVRS started the Schedule A Hiring Event, 119 individuals with disabilities have been hired via this activity. The DVRS will host another Schedule A event in December 2016 and June 2017.

Hackensack DVRS Employer Contact: Home Depot on Route 17 North in Paramus has treated my consumer with lots of respect. Consumer brought a job coach on site, who has assisted him with management of his stressors and social situations related to learning his job. There was one incident where client was accused by a customer of blurting out something inappropriate. Consumer vehemently denied the incident. This was investigated and consumer was found to have not part in such situation. Throughout his investigation consumer used job coach who reported that employer, locally and at headquarters were all respectful with consumer and with consumer supports. He is still employed there.  
Job Coach

RAJ  
VENKENTRAMAN  
(TRENTON):  
Thank you and your team so much for your awesome work, I look forward to working with you all.  
Good Temps

## Significant Issues

### **Appointments**

Appointments to the SRC were a significant issue to resolve in FFY 2013, but there have been significant improvements since then. The DVRS and the SRC continue to work with the Governor's Appointment office to provide all the paperwork necessary so appointments can be made on a timely basis. The Governor's office maintains communication with the SRC chair on a regular basis to ensure compliance with the WIOA requirements for appointments.

### **State Match**

The SRC continued to express concern regarding the state match needs of the DVRS in FFY '16. The full membership discussed this issue at every meeting and has charged the DVRS director to identify strategies to increase match opportunities. DVRS was successful in identifying WDP allocations for DVRS consumers as a source of state matching funds in FFY '16.

### **RSA Monitoring**

The RSA came to DVRS for a fiscal technical assistance meeting in June 2016. RSA staff worked with the DVRS director and the chief financial officer (CFO) of LWD to provide information and technical assistance on matters pertaining to DVRS fiscal integrity. Key discussions included how to utilize state-funded long-term follow-along monies as appropriate match for the VR program. RSA also looked at the organizational structure of LWD and where DVRS falls within that structure. RSA staff discussed WIOA provisions relating to the sole authority given to the DVRS director in implementing the public VR program.

### **Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)**

The DVRS and the SRC are prepared a CSNA during FFY 2014. Preliminary goals were identified, as follows:

- An Employment First goal to improve outcomes for consumers with significant intellectual and complex disabilities;
- A goal to improve communication and outcomes for consumers who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing;
- A goal to improve outcomes for consumers with disabilities who are also served through the criminal justice systems; and
- A goal to improve community rehabilitation programs in New Jersey, with particular emphasis on restructuring the current sheltered workshop programs to become competitive and integrated employment vendors.

WESTAMPTON DVRS:  
 I just wanted to take a moment and thank all of you for your role in our National Disability Employment Awareness Month Event- #InclusionWorks. I have received nothing but extremely positive feedback on the event. There was definitely an emotional connection made at yesterday's event. You could feel and empathize with the struggle each of the individuals with disabilities had gone thru to get where they are today. The gratefulness and thankfulness each individual had expressed for the caring professional people who came into their lives to provide the services they needed to reach the goal of meaningful employment. This is what it is all about, and why we do what we do. The representatives of the companies that hired these individuals spoke very well of their employees. How these individuals with disabilities have skills, talents and abilities that make them great employees, and how lucky they (the company) are to have these employees working for them. It was truly a great day! Thank you all!  
 Burlington County Disability Navigator

The DVRS saw a significant increase in the number of consumers with cognitive impairments determined eligible for VR services; from 23 in FFY'2013 to 1004 in FFY'2016. There was also an increase in the number of consumers receiving services; from 410 in FFY'2013 to 1508 in FFY'2016. Likewise, there was significant increases in the number of consumers with hearing loss between FFY'13 and FFY'16. DVRS was also successful in establishing four Project SEARCH sites for students with intellectual disabilities in FFY'16.

DVRS provided increased opportunities for consumers served through the criminal justice system as well. Several offices partnered with the prison systems in their local areas and established streamlined application protocols so individuals could be determined eligible for services as soon as they left the prison. DVRS also increased partnerships with the local drug court system to provide ongoing counseling and services to eligible consumers as a strategy to prevent movement into the prison system for successful participants.

Finally, the DVRS director met with every community rehabilitation program in FFY '16 to discuss the WIOA and brainstorm how best to change current business practices of the facilities to meet Congressional intent. Three of the facilities have identified a desire to change their current business practices, and all of the facilities indicated that they would work to increase outcomes of competitive integrated employment for consumers in their facilities. Providers have been working with DVRS staff to develop community-based assessments and vocational evaluations, discovery, and customized employment services.

**Combined State Plan (CSP)**

The reauthorization of WIOA requires states to submit either a unified state plan or a combined state plan in order to qualify for federal funding. New Jersey has chosen to submit a combined state plan. The DVRS participated in this plan by writing sections pertaining to title IV, Rehabilitation Act, and participated in public meetings regarding the plan.

**Case management system**

In FFY 2014 the DVRS upgraded its case management data base to a full AWARE system. This upgrade took approximately 15 months. The new system went live on October 1, 2014. Counselors were trained on the new system, and a "best practices" group was formed in order to identify processes to help counselors learn the new system. More training occurred in FFY '16 and the best practices group continued to meet throughout the year.

**Centers for Independent Living**

Centers for Independent Living (CIL's) are community-based, cross-disability, non-profit organizations that are designed and operated by people with disabilities. CILs are unique in that they operate according to a strict philosophy of consumer control, wherein people with all types of disabilities directly govern and staff the organization. The centers help their clients

ANA VELIZ-LAYNE/JAMIE CHRZAN (NEW BRUNSWICK):  
 Ana Veliz-Layne and Jamie Chrzan attended a Family Community Fair at the Wilentz Middle School in Perth Amboy on the evening of October 26. Hundreds of parents, students, and special education staff came together to meet with agencies and vendors that serve special needs students in education and employment. Ana and Jamie report that their table was busy all night!

JENNIFER SHAW-KNAB (THOROFARE):  
 I'm excelling in my courses and my internship is slowly coming to an end. I can't believe that it came and went so fast. I'm excited for the next couple of weeks because I get fitted for my cap and gown. Graduation is approaching really fast! May 10th is the day I graduate. I just want to say thank you for all the support and encouragement you've given me over the years. Your generosity and kindness has been invaluable.  
 Client

JULIE ANN BOYLE (PLEASANTVILLE):  
 Julie Ann Boyle has been very kind and helpful with this process. I appreciate everything she has done.  
 Consumer

to lead fulfilling lives, make decisions that lead to self-determination and integrate into mainstream American society.

Each of New Jersey's 13 CIL's for Independent Living provides the following five core services:

- Peer Support
- Information and Referral
- Individual and Systems Advocacy
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Transition

In FY 2016, the CILS provided information and referral services to over 14,000 individuals, Independent Living Skills training to 1,700 individuals and peer counseling/support to 1,500 people.

The DVRS is the designated state entity (DSE) for the CILS, and assigns a planning program development specialist (PPDS) as the official liaison for the program. In FFY'16 the CILS developed an application to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities in New Jersey. DVRS will be examining data of students in transition to determine how best to assign the CILS to provide services to designated schools within each local office catchment area.

**Implementation of Section 511**

In New Jersey there are approximately 3,200 individuals in extended employment receiving subminimum wages who are known to the DVRS. Templates were developed in FFY'16 to document the required counseling and referral services for each individual. Each local office will be responsible to provide services to extended employees in facilities throughout the state in order to make sure each individual is seen within the timeframe set in WIOA.

There are other entities who have subminimum wage certificates in New Jersey who are not known to DVRS, and instructions will be placed on the LWD website in early FFY '17 to provide guidance to these entities in order for them to receive the services required under WIOA.

LEILA MOLAIE (ELIZABETH):  
 And celebrate every moment of this wonderful Thanksgiving Day! Thank you for everything you have done for me at DVRS. The work you've done has taken away a great deal of stress from not only myself, but my family as well. I wish you and your family a wonderful holiday season. Thank you again for all you've already done.  
 Client

ELAINE SOTO-ORTIZ (TRENTON):  
 Elaine set up timely appointments and always answered my calls. Elaine is very friendly and very good at explaining the DVRS process.  
 Client

DANIELLE KWAN (SOMERVILLE):  
 And alright... thank you again for everything! You made a huge difference in my life... I would not be where I am without you! All the best :)  
 Client

JAMIE CHRZAN (NEW BRUNSWICK):  
 Good Afternoon! I just wanted to say that it was very nice meeting you today. Our meeting went very well and I am happy that client decided to change her job goal. Thank you so much for all of your assistance and guidance today, and I look forward to continuing our working together!  
 Employment Specialist

## Planned Activities for FY 2017

### Meetings:

- Continue quarterly Council meetings;
- Conduct an annual planning summit as a one day event;
- Conduct public forums in geographically diverse areas to obtain input regarding specific topics identified by the SRC. Topics identified include:
  - Employment first;
  - Pre-employment transition services/family engagement;
  - Services to the individuals with Autism; and
  - Limitation of the use of subminimum wage.
- Support the agency's efforts to meet on a regularly scheduled basis with service providers and/or other agencies for planning, problem solving, grant development and other purposes as needed; and
- Keep abreast of the goals in the New Jersey combined state plan and support the outcomes identified in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment.

### Committees:

- Enhance and support the sub-committee structure itself;
- Enhance and support the recommendations of the sub-committees by full disclosure of sub-committee recommendations in advance of meetings where possible and follow up by the full SRC;
- Continue consumer satisfaction activities, analysis and follow up recommendations to ensure the DVRS is meeting the changing needs of its consumers. Utilize Survey Monkey for electronic delivery, response and analysis of satisfaction feedback; and
- Establish a transition committee that will identify pre-employment transition services and transition services needs throughout the state.

### SRC Membership:

- Develop screening guidelines for recruitment and membership and review membership activities/status at each Executive Committee meeting, including resignations/expiration of appointments;
- Provide guidance re: issues relating to recruitment and approval of members; and
- Conduct new SRC member orientation/training, including consideration of joint efforts with the CBVI.

### Communication:

- Continue to look at opportunities and encourage the use of technology including, but not limited to conference calling, long distance learning, and/or a dedicated web site for



TONI GRAMIGNA  
and TINA BRAND  
(WESTAMPTON):

Hello Toni and Tina. I am writing to both of you, and I am hoping that you will please pass my email along to your supervisors; or provide me with their email addresses. I am beyond grateful for the time you spent here at Kingsway Learning Center to conduct the DVRS interviews/meetings. I am confident that I speak on behalf of my graduating students and their families when I tell you how smooth this makes the difficult transition process. Your expertise, coupled with the comfort and security of the familiar Kingsway location, provides the ideal showcase of transition at its finest. You both deserve to be commended for your professionalism and the time and dedication you give to each student and family. It is truly a pleasure to work with both of you.  
Kingsway Learning Center

BARBARA  
STOCKTON (NEW  
BRUNSWICK):  
I have finished my lab training class! Thank you so much for helping me and reaching me there. Because of you I got this! Thank you! This is for you!  
Consumer

purposes of information sharing, receiving input, training of members (including staff), emergency and routine notifications;

- Implement use of Go to Meeting and Go to Webinar software; and
- Utilize Share Point to share information between SRC meetings.

#### Educational Efforts:

- Continue leadership in providing training, support and access to the One-Stop systems regarding persons with disabilities and the workforce; and
- Develop educational information regarding the services provided to, successes and outcomes of the DVRS constituents, including legislative district break down; and send the information to New Jersey representatives.

#### Advocacy:

- Continue to advocate for funding which will provide support to the DVRS for staffing, programs, staff development and vocational rehabilitation services as mandated by the RSA and the demands of NJ's population;
- Advocate for funding to support the DVRS' efforts to expand services through grants and other means as appropriate to support a full range of services to individuals, including those in transition;
- Advocate for funding to support the RSA's requirements for state match, including third-party cooperative agreements; and
- Provide support to the DVRS in applying for grants that enhance successful employment outcomes for persons with disabilities.

#### Collaboration:

- Support the DVRS' effort to increase opportunities for paid internships;
- Participate in development of goals and work plan to enhance services to consumers who are the most significantly disabled;
- Continue active involvement with the CSAVR National Employment Network (The NET); and
- Partner with the DVRS in the development of a new CSNA in FFY '17.

MAXINE BECKER/GILDA ESCOBAR (HACKENSACK):  
 On behalf of the Bergen County Special Services CAPE Resource Center, I am writing to thank all of you for your participation in the workshop.”  
 Transitioning from School to Adult Services: Everything you Need to Know about Creating Linkages to Adult Services and Agencies for Students with Disabilities and their Families”. The feedback was positive and complimentary. As experts in your field, your willingness to share your expertise was evident to everyone and greatly appreciated.  
 Transition from School to the Adult World is a time of uncertainty for so many, but you were able to provide some guidance and current information to the professional who work with families on a daily basis. Again, Thanks for a worthwhile and useful workshop and for taking time from you busy schedules. The CAPE Special Services Resource Center

MARIANNE HANIFIN (NEPTUNE):  
 Best wishes for a happy new year. Thank you for everything you do for us.  
 Parent

## SRC State Plan Recommendations

The New Jersey State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides oversight and advises the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), the designated state unit (DSU) within the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD). The LWD is the designated state agency (DSA). The SRC is a partnership of people with disabilities, advocates, and other interested persons who are committed to ensuring through policy development, implementation, and advocacy that New Jersey has a rehabilitation program that is not only comprehensive and consumer-responsive but also effective, efficient, and significantly funded. The SRC is dedicated to ensuring that people with disabilities receive rehabilitation services that result in gainful employment. Representing the myriad of diversity that is New Jersey, council members believe that individuals with disabilities are the “untapped resource” to the business community and assert that disability is a natural part of the human experience that in no way diminishes a person’s right to fully participate in all aspects of American life. Members of the SRC in New Jersey believe in a public system of vocational rehabilitation that is responsible and accountable to those it serves and to those who fund it; they believe that competitive jobs generate tax revenue and enable all individuals, including individuals with disabilities, to spend discretionary income which contributes to the state's economy.

The SRC and the DVRS jointly developed and reviewed elements of the combined state plan. An assessment of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation delivery system has resulted in the following recommendations based on suggestions from the public forums held in FFY’16 in Gloucester, Monmouth, Middlesex, and Morris counties.

**The SRC recommendations for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2016 and their status updates are as follows:**

**SRC Recommendation:**

The SRC understands that the job of the counselor is unique and requires knowledge of vocational rehabilitation specific to individuals with disabilities. The SRC recommends continued requirement of the New Jersey DVRS counselor position to include a master’s degree in vocational rehabilitation or a closely related field as per current civil service description

**Agency Response:**

The DVRS accepts the recommendation to maintain the requirement of a VR counselor to include a master’s degree in vocational rehabilitation or a closely related field as per current civil service description.

**Status Update:**

The DVRS has been successful in advocating to continue the requirement of a VR counselor to include a master’s degree for all new hires in FFY ’16.

KAMLESH MEHROTRA (NEWARK):  
I want to thank DVRS that I am now trained and licensed as a home health aide and working for 6 months. I am awarded Employee of the Month by my employer. I am thankful to my counselor who assessed and analyzed my impairment, helped me in setting a vocational goal what I could successfully do. My counselor has insight about my strengths and weaknesses and empowered me. When I was in HHA training and had some issues; she listened to me. When I was waiting long enough for my HHA license, she encouraged me and gave me hope. This day, I am happy with my job.  
Client

LORI DESANTIS (THOROFARE):  
I agree with everything Lori DeSantis explained to me. She explained to me how the program with DVR works and also my responsibilities. I have nothing but good things to say about the whole program. My counselor knows exactly how to present the program!  
Thank you so much for taking care of my needs and made my life a lot easier than before You are doing outstanding job at DVR South New Jersey!  
Client

**SRC Recommendation:**

The SRC recommends that the DVRS continue to educate the community and policy makers as to the services, successes and outcomes of the state public vocational rehabilitation program, including the return on investment from using vocational rehabilitation services.

**Agency Response:**

DVRS accepts the recommendation to educate the community and policy makers as to the services, successes and outcomes of the public VR program and will implement marketing strategies to educate the public about its services.

**Status Update:**

The DVRS developed new marketing materials in FFY'16, including new brochures and new table top banners for each local office.

**SRC Recommendation:**

The SRC recognizes that the DVRS program is affected by state funding cuts. The SRC recommends that the DVRS identifies and advocates strategies to ensure that state matching funds will be consistently available for future fiscal years and that there is funding for maintenance of effort.

**Agency Response:**

DVRS accepts the recommendation to identify new sources of state match in order to be able to draw down the total federal allotment and ensure maintenance of effort is funded.

**Status Update:**

The DVRS has worked with LWD's centralized fiscal unit to identify sources of non-federal match, including LWD state funds for training and long-term follow-along state funds. Additional sources for possible match for FFY'17 include state funds to move individuals out of subminimum wage employment and third-party cooperative agreements.

**SRC Recommendation:**

The SRC recognizes that jobseekers with disabilities sometimes require innovative approaches to enhance their chance to garner gainful integrated employment. The SRC recommends that the DVRS pursue strategies such as using paid internships for DVRS consumers and increase the use of on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities for qualified DVRS jobseekers as appropriate.

**Agency Response:**

DVRS accepts the recommendation to develop processes that will encourage the use of paid internships for DVRS consumers and increase the use of on-the-job training opportunities for qualified DVRS jobseekers.

**Status Update:**

The DVRS initiated a pilot program that provided paid internships for students with disabilities in FFY'16. The pilot will be expanded throughout the state in FFY'17

VALERIE KERRIGAN  
(TRENTON):

I want to take this opportunity to express my esteem gratitude to one of your employees, Valerie Kerrigan, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Ms. Kerrigan was assigned my daughter's case when she was graduating high school in June 2015. Ms. Kerrigan is highly professional and aided my daughter in this transition process into young adulthood with her educational pursuits. Ms. Kerrigan clearly provided information to my daughter and was pivotal in helping me to have my extenuating circumstances resulting from family court reviewed in the grant and aid process. I am happy to report my daughter has successfully completed her first semester of college. The Department of Labor and Citizens of this State are fortunate to have an employee of Ms. Kerrigan's caliber and dedication  
Parent

EMMA  
GORDON/BRIDGETON  
STAFF:

I just wanted to write to tell you what a wonderful program you have. Your staff is lovely and has helped me to hear much better and keep my job. Without you, probably couldn't have my job and take care of my family. Keep up the wonderful work your do, it is greatly appreciated.  
Client

**SRC Recommendation:**

The SRC further recommends that the DVRS develop strategies that will enhance opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities currently participating in segregated employment programs who, through informed choice, identify the desire to move into integrated employment.

**Agency Response:**

DVRS accepts the recommendation to enhance opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities currently participating in segregated employment programs who, through informed choice, identify the desire to move into integrated employment.

**Status Update:**

The DVRS director and CRP team met with every center-based employment provider in FFY'16 to discuss strategies that encourage participants in these programs to begin the journey toward competitive integrated employment. Contract language was changed to require providers to identify individuals making 50% production in center-based employment so DVRS staff can provide technical assistance to help open cases when appropriate.

**SRC Recommendation:**

The SRC recognizes that public satisfaction for DVRS services is critical and recommends that DVRS establish yearly public forums throughout the state that focus on specific topics based on the goals established by the comprehensive statewide needs assessment.

**Agency Response:**

DVRS accepts the recommendation to establish yearly public forums throughout the state that will focus on specific topics based on the goals established by the comprehensive statewide needs assessment and looks forward to further suggestions from the SRC for any additional topic areas

**Status Update:**

The yearly forums for FFY'16 identified specific topics for discussion that were based on the CSNA. Time was also allocated for input that was not topic-specific. Attendance at the public forums was significantly increased this year due to this strategy.

ADEKOYA BROWN (NEWARK):  
 I want to thank you for joining our transition meeting at The Calais School today. You did a fantastic job explaining the transition process and how DVRS can assist our students. Mrs. Johnson, the parent, left the school more informed and happy regarding all of the supports that can be in place for her daughter. Explaining the transition process could be daunting, however you were knowledgeable and articulate which made it easier for all of us to understand. Thanks again and I look forward to working with you in the future!  
 Guidance Counselor - The Calais School

JENNIFER SHAW-KNAB (THOROFARE):  
 Words could never express how blessed I have been to have such a great DVR consoler in my times of need. Again thank you for being a great counselor and always willing to follow up with all matters on my case and in a very timely manner. Thank you for all that you have done and for really caring about me being able to maintain my employment. Please feel free to close out my case when you want or need to!!!  
 Client

## Summary

During FFY'16, the Rehabilitation Council continued to work cohesively and productively, partially as a result of renewed emphasis on the tools at hand, utilizing an updated committee structure, staff and member dedication and focus on staffing to achieve maximum employment outcomes. Members worked closely with each other, the DVRS, Department of Labor and Workforce Development personnel, other state agency directors, and most importantly with the constituency it is mandated to serve. It made recommendations on topics of importance to the Federal and State governments, and supported the participation of the DVRS in local initiatives.

The Rehabilitation Council has benefited from the support and cooperation of the New Jersey DVRS. The Council looks forward to another year of challenges and successful outcomes for persons with disabilities who seek employment and other services through the New Jersey DVRS.

### DVRS Offices & Contact Information

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