

# ANNUAL REPORT

**PROGRAM YEAR 2018**  
JULY 1, 2018 - JUNE 30, 2019

*Supporting people with  
disabilities to achieve  
their employment goals.*

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## ABOUT THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

The State Rehabilitation Council is a citizen council whose members provide counsel and advice to Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation program. Council members play an active role in making program performance and policy decisions. They collaborate with VR leadership and staff to shape priorities, assess needs, convene public forums, measure customer satisfaction, and produce an annual report on the status of the VR program.

Members come from many walks of life and represent diverse parts of the state. If you care about the issue of employment for people with disabilities and want to make a difference, please consider applying for this council. **For more information, please contact Karla Eckhoff at [Karla.F.Eckhoff@state.mn.us](mailto:Karla.F.Eckhoff@state.mn.us) or 651-259-7364.**

You may apply online by  
using the Online Application:

**[commissionsandappointments.  
sos.state.mn.us/Position](https://commissionsandappointments.sos.state.mn.us/Position)**

Search for  
**State Rehabilitation Council – General**

### STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

**DEL BAHTUOH**  
*BROOKLYN PARK*  
Current or Former Recipient  
of VR Services

**SUE BENOLKEN**  
*ROSEVILLE*  
Department of Education  
Representative

**THOMAS DEVITA**  
*ST. PAUL*  
Business, Industry or  
Labor Representative

**STEVEN DITSCHLER**  
*EAGAN*  
Governor's Workforce  
Development  
Board Representative  
*Term end 1/6/2020*

**CHASE FOREMAN**  
*MINNEAPOLIS*  
Business, Industry or  
Labor Representative

**LEANN KLEAVER**  
*BURNSVILLE*  
VR Counselor Representative

**KAREN LEDDY**  
*MOUND*  
Business, Industry or  
Labor Representative

**JILLIAN NELSON**  
*ST. PAUL*  
Disability Advocacy  
Group Representative

**DR. KELLY  
NYE-LENGERMAN**  
*MINNEAPOLIS*  
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Group Representative

**ANITA OLSON**  
*FERTILE*  
Statewide Independent  
Living Council Representative  
*Term end 1/6/2020*

**LISA PARTEH**  
*CAMBRIDGE*  
Community Rehabilitation  
Provider Representative

**DANIEL PLANTENBERG**  
*BURNSVILLE*  
Current or Former Recipient  
of VR Services  
*Term end 1/6/2020*

**REBECCA PUCHTEL**  
*ELK RIVER*  
Disability Advocacy Group  
Representative

**JAMES RECHS**  
*ROCHESTER*  
Disability Advocacy Group  
Representative  
*Resignation 10/15/2018*

**ANNE ROBERTSON**  
*MINNEAPOLIS*  
Client Assistance Project  
Representative

**TYLER SADEK**  
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Business, Industry or  
Labor Representative

**SERGIO SANTOS**  
*ANDOVER*  
Business, Industry or  
Labor Representative  
*Resignation 7/1/2019*

**DEE TORGERSON**  
*SAINT PAUL*  
VRS Director

**BARB ZIEMKE**  
*MINNEAPOLIS*  
PACER Representative



COLLABORATION:  
A MESSAGE FROM THE SRC CHAIR

# CHASE FOREMAN

One of our responsibilities as a State Rehabilitation Council is to identify areas of collaboration and overlap in Vocational Rehabilitation Services activities. An area of ongoing interest for us has been the impact that shared responsibilities can have on recipients of service. When communication between stakeholders is poor, the individual we are trying to serve suffers. When there is good communication the result is a network of interested agencies, individuals, and organizations working together to ensure an individual's success. We call that partnership, and you're going to see evidence of VRS addressing partnership throughout the annual report.

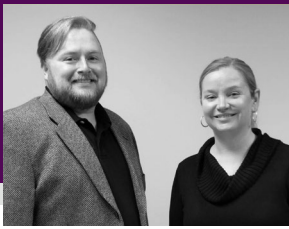
“... IT REQUIRES EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP  
WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO MAKE  
ALL THE PIECES FALL INTO PLACE.”

From where I sit in the business world, partnership is absolutely critical. We are experts in bringing our products and services to market. When we partner with VRS, with schools, and with service providers we are relying on the expertise of those organizations and the people in them. In business, we are not the experts on creating the conditions for individuals with disabilities to be successful. VRS is, and it requires effective partnership with other organizations to make all the pieces fall into place. I am proud of and impressed by VRS and its commitment to developing and improving partnerships this year.

The SRC will continue to emphasize partnership and collaboration for the sake of individuals with disabilities. And as a business leader with plenty of employment opportunities I am confident that VRS will be an effective driver of those partnerships. Please read on to see what I mean.

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*Chase Foreman is the current SRC chair and a manager with Marsden Building Maintenance.*



## COLLABORATION: THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

**The Vocational Rehabilitation program is fundamentally an employment program. And while it might seem too obvious to point this out, we don't always remember that employment presupposes employers. That's why one of the four strategic goals for Vocational Rehabilitation Services is Employer Engagement – a collaboration without which the work of the agency could not be done.**

Chase Foreman is the current SRC chair and a manager with Marsden Building Maintenance. Karen Leddy is SRC parliamentarian and works in human resources for Enterprise Holdings. As part of the focus on collaboration for this report, Chase and Karen responded to some questions about the perspective that employers bring to the work of the VR program.

### ***What do you think is important for employers to know when hiring individuals with disabilities?***

**Chase:** The perceived increased investment of time and energy in making accommodations, etc., has the possibility to yield a greater rate of return on retention and job satisfaction, which is of great importance to employers right now.

**Karen:** It's not as hard as it sounds. If you take a common sense approach and treat each individual with respect, an accommodation generally presents itself and usually without needing to recreate the wheel.

### ***Sometimes hiring managers get nervous about hiring people with disabilities and working with job coaches, what would you say about that?***

**Karen:** The job coach is your teammate. They are someone who is there to support the individual, make sure they understand the job, and mitigate issues.

### ***Where do individuals with disabilities fit in the employment landscape?***

**Karen:** With the unemployment rate being as low as it is, the competition for labor is fierce. Individuals with disabilities are an untapped labor pool. They can help us fill needs that would otherwise go unfilled.

**Chase:** With the labor force growth rate being so slow, there are still many people facing significant barriers to employment that don't have a system in place to help them move forward. However, we have these individuals with disabilities who already have an existing system of support to overcome barriers, and that's VRS. There may be costs associated with that system, but those costs are reasonable as the average cost of any hire has been increasing.

### ***What is one piece of advice that you would have for other employers?***

**Karen:** Have patience and take the time to develop relationships with partners you trust. Over time, you will find the right people. It may not always be a flood of candidates, but if they are referring someone to you it is someone they truly believe can be successful.

### ***Why are you involved with the SRC?***

**Karen:** From a business perspective this gives us a chance to live out our mission and values. We strengthen our communities, one neighborhood at a time. This is one way we build up our neighbors and make it a stronger community.

**Chase:** When you invest in individuals and their families and you build relationships with partners that are mutually sustaining that's the kind of collaboration that makes our community healthier, happier, and more successful. From a business perspective it's the smart thing to do and the right thing to do.





## AUSTIN WRIGHT IS SHREDDING IT: A STORY OF COLLABORATION

The temporary name-plate outside Austin Wright's office was hand-written, black marker on white paper. Someone attached it to the wall in May, when Austin started his new job at Performance Office Papers, a paper converter and distribution company in Lakeville.

"We need to get you a *permanent* name-plate," Pam Traylor, human resources manager, remarked in November after she and Austin had led a small group on a tour around the company's offices and warehouse. "It's time to make that permanent."

It wasn't always obvious that the 23-year-old would ever work in a place like Performance Office Papers. But in 2017, Kourtney Armbruster, a VRS counselor, met Austin and his IEP team in a school transition program and initiated a discussion about competitive, integrated employment as an option to explore.

As a result, Austin tried several community work experiences, one of which involved shredding documents. And that turned out to be just exactly the thing. His mother, Karen Wright, said Austin declared his intention to work always as a paper shredder. Just one problem: there aren't many employers clamoring to hire document shredders.

Here's where the collaboration kicked in: a creative approach to customized employment and an employer who saw the benefit of hiring a person with a disability to fill a unique business need. Mary Peratt, a VRS placement coordinator with expertise in customized employment, met with Performance Office Papers managers to learn whether they could identify any unmet business needs. As they talked and walked around the facility, they discovered that the



People in the group photo: Pam Traylor, Performance Office Papers HR Manager; Kourtney Armbruster, VRS Counselor, Apple Valley; Austin Wright; Abigail Small, Employment Specialist, Companion LINC; Mary Peratt, VRS Placement Coordinator, Apple Valley; Karen Wright, Austin's mother.



company had a storage room stacked high with files that needed shredding. Pam Traylor, the HR manager, asked her leadership team to identify any additional document-shredding needs that might result in a customized job opportunity for Austin.

It was a perfect match. Austin had unique skills and interests that could meet the needs of a business that had a very specialized need. Austin started his new job in May and has demonstrated that he can work efficiently in his office, shredding documents for extended periods of time without getting distracted or bored, clearing paper jams quickly without damaging the machine. He routinely checks the shredded paper levels in the bin to know when the bin needs to be emptied into a large recycling container in the warehouse.

"Austin's the first person with a disability that we've hired here," Pam Traylor noted. "And I don't know why we never thought of this before. It has worked out beautifully for us and for Austin – and we're now looking for other tasks that he could do to maybe expand his responsibilities."

For his part, Austin said he enjoys being part of the work team and loves the job that can be attributed to the spirit of collaboration among Austin and his family, along with the school transition program, county staff, and VRS.



# COLLABORATION: MINNESOTA'S CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

BY ANITA OLSON



*Anita Olson is the Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council (MNSILC) representative to the SRC. She lives in rural northwestern Minnesota and is a former recipient of VR services.*

**Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and Minnesota's eight Centers for Independent Living (CILs) each exist for a similar reason: to address the needs of people with disabilities to have a choice in how they live and achieve independence in employment, community involvement, and living arrangements.** The VRS focus is on employment while the CILs concentrate on living independently, self-advocacy, community involvement, and information and referral for services.

Because of their shared purpose, there is a natural opportunity for collaboration and partnership between them – and for more than a decade the two agencies have engaged in an evolving partnership that has been a clear benefit to the individuals they both serve.

In 2007 the two agencies developed a plan to build local service capacity to advance employment success, independence, and community inclusion for people with disabilities. Each of the eight CILs developed a model that seemed appropriate for its particular catchment area, and for three years the agencies worked on a collective data collection system to monitor best practices and outcomes. It was determined that having Independent Living staff embedded in VRS offices most clearly met the needs of the agencies' shared consumers.

The funding and structure of this VR-IL Collaboration evolved over the years as new challenges presented themselves. Perhaps the biggest shift occurred in July 2014, when the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) brought significant change to the world of employment services for people with disabilities. To address these changes, VRS contracted with the CILs to interview disabled persons currently in or on track to enter sheltered workshops. The primary purpose was to ensure that individuals who were tracking into subminimum wage employment were fully informed of their choices regarding competitive work opportunities by providing career counseling and information and referral services.

During the 12 years that the evolving partnership between VRS and the CILs has existed, there have been challenges for both parties. There have been changes to the rules and laws; there have been changes in funding and how it must be used; there have been changes in administration in federal, state, and agency arenas. All these changes have affected the partnership: some positively and some negatively.

It remains true, however, that the collaboration between VRS and the CILs has proven to positively affect the lives of people with disabilities. It is important to the people of Minnesota that we work to overcome the challenges and continue the partnership.



# COLLABORATION: CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT

BY LISA PARTEH

**Customized employment offers flexibility and personalized services for a job candidate or employee and an employer in a way that meets the needs of both.**

This innovative approach to providing employment services to people with the most significant disabilities is based on identifying the strengths, conditions, and interests of a job candidate or employee through a process of discovery.

Customized employment has allowed VRS and their vendors to serve an influx of individuals who do not have previous working experience and have a more difficult time identifying skills which could translate into a job. Customized employment is not a new job development method, but it is a proven method that leads to increased partnerships with employers. Low unemployment rates, coupled with employers' needs to recruit and hire employees, has led to a new kind of conversation between VRS and employers about the customization of employment. The resulting partnerships often lead employers to create customized positions – and to give VRS and their vendors a call seeking employees to fill these positions.

Customized employment training was developed in Minnesota after a confluence of federal and state mandates and initiatives (such as the Workforce Opportunity and Innovation Act and Minnesota's Olmstead Plan and Employment First policy) resulted in a

growing number of individuals with the most significant disabilities coming to VRS for employment services. VRS brought in a training consultant, Marc Gold & Associates, to provide the initial round of customized employment training to its staff and vendors. After the first year, VRS partnered with Minnesota State Operated Community Services (MSOCS) and another consulting firm, Griffin Hammis Associates, to provide customized employment training.

In 2018 VRS and MSOCS took what they learned from both consultants and developed their own customized employment training curriculum and initiated classes in January 2019. A number of cohorts, which have included DEED staff and contracted vendors of DEED, have completed customized employment training and individuals have been certified to provide the service. The training and provision of customized employment has strengthened the partnerships between VRS and their contracted vendors as well as with individuals receiving VRS services.

Not enough can be said about customized employment and the number of partnerships developed and strengthened through it. We look forward to continuing to develop these partnerships, most of all with employers as the word is spread that customized employment works.



*Lisa Parteh is vice chair of the SRC. She is vice president of client services for Functional Industries, a community rehabilitation program.*

## SPECIAL ED TEACHER AND SRC MEMBER

BY BECKY PUCHTEL



*Becky Puchtel is a special education teacher at Rogers High School and is currently serving her first term on the State Rehabilitation Council.*

### **My story with Vocational Rehabilitation Services started about 20 years ago.**

I was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes at age 7 and because of this disease, dealt with many years of large medical expenses along with numerous seizures and illnesses. Diabetes affected my anxiety along with our financial abilities to pay for college.

I was welcomed into a VR facility where I met a wonderful counselor named John Stang who helped create a plan so I could afford college at the University of Minnesota-Duluth and continue paying for my medical expenses. I was able to meet with John (either by phone or in person) and check in about any needs I had regarding my health and/or my classes. I felt his support through everything and knew I could turn to him for questions (and I had a million of them).

I graduated in 2004 with a degree in Early Childhood Studies and moved to Arizona where I worked for three years in an inner-city, low-income school serving children and families in need. Upon moving back to Minnesota in 2007, I worked in various schools all around the metro and could not shake the feeling that I could do more than just teaching elementary education.

In 2011 I decided to pursue my Master's Degree in Special Education and graduated with a major in Emotional Behavioral Disorders and Learning Disabilities. I got my dream job at Rogers High School in 2014 as both an Autism Spectrum Disorder teacher and Learning Disabilities teacher.

In 2016, my husband and I became foster parents. With so many experiences



working with kids in various backgrounds, I helped convince my husband that we could be a mighty force in helping kids in traumatic experiences within our community. We got our first placement in 2017 and officially adopted those three kids in 2019.

Working as a special education teacher, and then having children of my own with disabilities, I found myself advocating for every child, and even some adults, with whom I came into contact.

Through one of these important conversations with our career counselor at Rogers High School, Lauren Handrick, I was pointed in the direction of applying to be an advocate on the State Rehabilitation Council. I was given the opportunity for

this advocate role on the State Rehabilitation Council in 2018 and have learned even more about the importance of providing Vocational Rehabilitation Services and how it can change the trajectory of people's lives.

Because of the support I had in VR services, I was able to fulfill my goals and in doing that, I was able to give back to the community and help those in need. With the support of VR services, I became more confident in myself and found, for the first time, that having a disability wasn't going to hold me back, it was going to help me succeed. Having a disability doesn't mean we are unable, but it does mean we may need a different plan in order to fulfill our dreams and goals. My success story can be attributed to the programming I received through Vocational Rehabilitation Services.



## COLLABORATION: SERVICES TO STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

**Students with disabilities became a primary focus for Vocational Rehabilitation Services after the enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014.** Beginning in that year, VRS began to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to potentially eligible students through contracts awarded to community organizations. Contracts were also extended to two centers for independent living to provide services to potentially eligible students.

In the years since, VRS has developed several other ways to meet the need for Pre-ETS for students, grade nine through age 21. In collaboration with local educational agencies, VRS now provides or arranges for the provision of these services to all students with disabilities, regardless of whether a student has applied for VR services.

The most recent data from the Minnesota Department of Education (2019) shows that more than 44,000 students age 14-21 (the age for transition services in Minnesota) are enrolled in special education programs – students who are potentially eligible for VR services and who should receive Pre-ETS services.

For many years, VRS has assigned a counselor to each high school in the state to provide outreach and services to students who are eligible for the program. Starting in the 2019-20 school year VRS changed its model for providing outreach and services to students who are potentially eligible from having contracted community agencies to now having internal Pre-ETS Rehabilitation Representatives who are assigned to each high school to ensure that Pre-ETS are available statewide. VRS will be monitoring the successes and challenges of the new Pre-ETS Representatives in order to provide enhancements as needed. Monthly meetings with the Pre-ETS Representatives and their managers will assist in sharing best practices and keeping a pulse on how things are progressing.



*In the summer of 2019, VRS hired 23 new Pre-ETS Rehabilitation Representatives to ensure that the services are available statewide.*

Counselors and Pre-ETS Representatives go into schools together to explain the two types of services that are available to students. Pre-ETS then become part of a student's employment plan, delivered either through one-on-one counseling sessions with a VRS counselor, the student's school, or an internal VRS placement coordinator. Funds can also be authorized to have the services delivered by community rehabilitation programs or centers for independent living, among other partners. VRS staff discuss with local school districts how Pre-ETS are already available to students and where gaps are that VRS might be able to fill.

VRS collaborates with the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Human Services on a Minnesota Olmstead Plan strategy called the Employment Capacity Building Cohort (ECBC). During the 2019-20 school year there are 25 school districts (along with their local VRS and county partners) participating. One goal is to improve competitive integrated employment outcomes for students with Developmental Cognitive Disabilities who are age 19-21.

Another goal this year is to choose among one of the four strategies aimed at improving outcomes for all students with disabilities: 1) Quality transition planning within the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process; 2) Family engagement through person-centered planning processes; 3) Embedding customized employment strategies into schools; and 4) Improving interagency business engagement strategies.



# COLLABORATION: THE GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

## BY STEVE DITSCHLER

**Individuals with disabilities in Minnesota sometimes need help to accomplish their employment goals.** Vocational Rehabilitation Services is a very valuable resource for many, but not necessarily for everyone seeking meaningful employment. Achieving successful outcomes for customers of VRS, as well as for those who are not eligible for VRS services, requires relationships with many other entities.

One of the many relationships VRS has is with the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB). The GWDB represents key leaders from business, education, labor, community-based organizations, and government. Like the State Rehabilitation Council, its members are appointed by the governor.

The GWDB has a responsibility to advise the governor on Minnesota's workforce system, which has recently been rebranded as "CareerForce". The governor appoints a member of the GWDB to serve as its representative on the State Rehabilitation Council. This relationship provides one direct connection between the SRC and GWDB, and was instrumental in ensuring that education, skills training, and employment of people with disabilities would be the focus of Minnesota's Combined State Plan.

In 2017, a GWDB committee was established to identify strategies to make informed, actionable, and measurable solutions to address disparities in training and employment for Minnesotans with disabilities. VRS staff have been important members of the committee which can facilitate information sharing and alignment of efforts to increase the effectiveness of the system. The important work of that committee continues and will again help to inform the development of Minnesota's state plan in 2020.

The vision of the GWDB is to have a healthy economy where all Minnesotans have – or are on a path to – meaningful employment and a family sustaining wage, and where all employers are able to fill jobs in demand. Certainly, individuals with disabilities are an important part of our workforce now and in the future.



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*Steve Ditschler is a former chair and the current GWDB representative on the SRC. He is president and chief executive officer of ProAct, Inc., a community-based organization.*

## GOOD VR COUNSELING FOR KATHRYN HARRIS LEADS TO HER OWN COUNSELING JOB

**Kathryn Harris, a single parent of a daughter with autism spectrum disorder, wanted to be a positive role model and strong provider – to demonstrate that dreams and goals can be achieved.** But Kathryn was barely getting by. She had been laid off a low-wage job. She was unemployed and having no success in finding a new job. And she was coping with a combination of significant physical and mental health issues of her own.



She applied for Vocational Rehabilitation services in 2016 and began meeting with LeAnn Finger, a counselor in the Apple Valley office. Her goal was to complete a college degree, but she was unsure what school to attend and what degree to pursue.

“At first, after meeting with LeAnn, I thought maybe I’d like to go into vocational rehabilitation work myself,” Kathryn said. “It really intrigued me. But it just wasn’t feasible to pack up and go [to the University of Wisconsin-Stout] to enroll in the undergraduate program.”

Ultimately, LeAnn helped her decide on a degree focusing on human services. After a couple of semesters at Inver Hills Community College she transferred to Metropolitan State University, where she earned a degree in the Alcohol and Drug Counseling program. She graduated in 2019, then went through the process of obtaining Minnesota state licensing

“**... FELT LIKE I HAD MY OWN MENTOR AND CHEERLEADER, AND THAT I WAS NEVER ALONE ON THIS JOURNEY.**”

approval, going through multiple background checks, and taking a little time to pay attention to her own self-care.

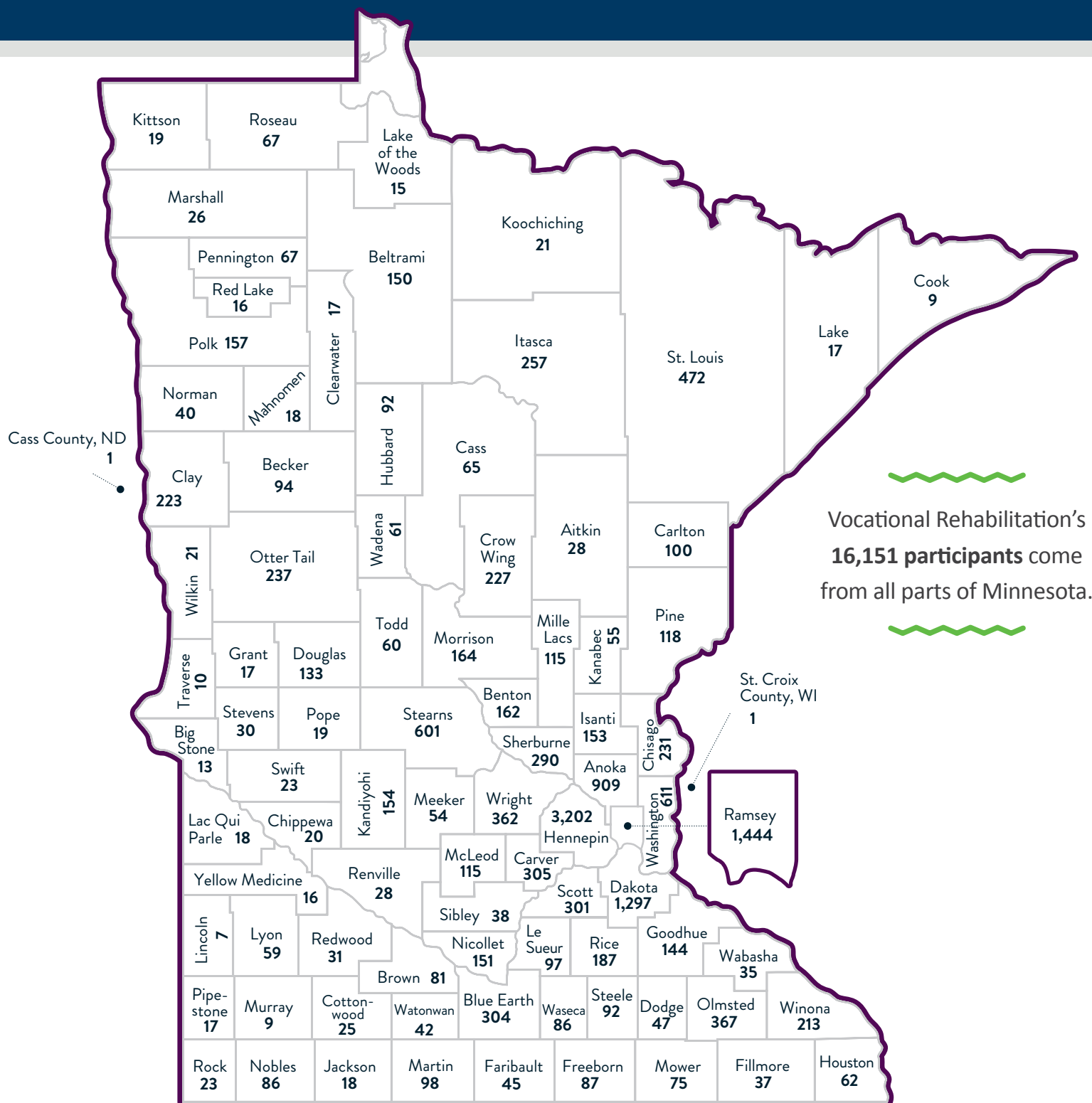
In October she landed a job as a licensed alcohol and drug counselor specializing in harm reduction care, primarily for people with opioid addiction, at a facility in Dakota County. She works in a Medication Assisted Treatment facility, perhaps more commonly known as a methadone clinic, which helps patients to safely avoid withdrawal symptoms and prevents possible overdose or death. Kathryn had personal reasons why this career interested her, and she wanted to make a difference in people’s lives.

“It’s sad, but addiction counseling is in great demand,” Kathryn said. “Opioid addiction is just as prevalent here, just as big a problem, as it is anywhere in the country. The market for people in the addiction counseling field is huge. We really need people in that field.”

Kathryn said her success in completing a degree program and getting a good job in addiction counseling is directly attributable to the assistance she received from the VR program – especially from the good, solid counseling she received from her counselor. She wanted to say thank you. That’s why Kathryn Harris was willing to share her story.

“Having LeAnn support me in every step was of tremendous value,” she said. “I felt like I had my own mentor and cheerleader, and that I was never alone on this journey. I couldn’t have gotten a degree and this job if it hadn’t been for LeAnn believing in me and supporting me. I also wouldn’t have been able to attend school without Vocational Rehab’s financial contribution and investment. I can’t express how much this program has meant to me.”

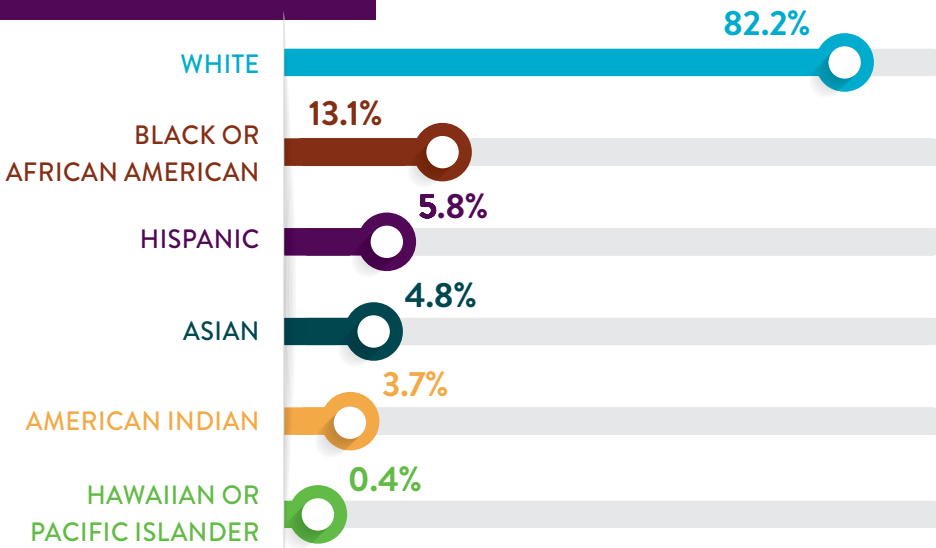
## WHO VR SERVES IN MINNESOTA



# WHO VR SERVES IN MINNESOTA

Reporting period is Federal Program Year (PY), July 1 of Program Year-June 30 of following year

## RACE & ETHNICITY



## GENDER

57.2%

Male

42.7%

Female

0.1%

Did Not Self-Identify

## AGE AT APPLICATION

Age group	# served in PY2013	# served in PY2015	% change PY13 to PY15	# served in PY2018	% change PY15 to PY18
<b>Youth</b>	7,466	7,906	5.9%	9,061	14.6%
14-18	5,095	5,371	5.4%	5,833	8.6%
19-21	1,658	1,812	9.3%	2,435	34.4%
22-24	713	723	1.4%	793	9.7%
<b>Adult</b>	7,986	7,827	-2.0%	7,090	-9.4%
25-64	7,928	7,734	-2.4%	6,931	-10.4%
65+	58	93	60.3%	159	71.0%
<b>Total</b>	15,452	15,733	1.8%	16,151	2.7%

There have been considerable changes in the population VRS serves since the implementation of the unfunded mandates put forth by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), enacted in Program Year 2015. Most notably there has been a significant increase in the number of youth being served and the complexity of cases.



## PRIMARY DISABILITY GROUPS

Primary Disability Group	# served in PY2013	# served in PY2015	% change PY13 to PY15	# served in PY2018	% change PY15 to PY18
Intellectual Disability	1,107	1,363	23.1%	2,207	61.9%
Autism	1,568	2,008	28.1%	3,013	50.0%
Traumatic Brain Injury/Stroke	543	541	-0.4%	535	-1.1%
Other Mental Impairments	386	361	-6.5%	354	-1.9%
Serious Mental Illness	4,913	5,241	6.7%	4,956	-5.4%
Other Physical Impairments	1,219	1,034	-15.2%	899	-13.1%
Learning Disabilities	3,264	3,011	-7.8%	2,509	-16.7%
Orthopedic/Neurological Disorders	1,415	1,241	-12.3%	984	-20.7%
Deaf/Hearing Loss	686	674	-1.7%	520	-22.8%
All Other Impairments	143	112	-21.7%	78	-30.4%
Chemical Dependency	208	147	-28.3%	96	-34.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,452</b>	<b>15,733</b>		<b>16,151</b>	

The population VRS serves has become more complex since the passage of WIOA, specifically the implementation of Section 511 requirements. Section 511 places limitations on the payment of subminimum wages to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to information and services that will enable them to achieve competitive integrated employment. Individuals who may previously have been "tracked" into subminimum wage situations are now seeking competitive integrated employment through VR services.

## FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS

Number of functional limitations reported	Program year 2013		Program year 2015		Program year 2018	
	Number of Individuals	%	Number of Individuals	%	Number of Individuals	%
1	1,122	7.3%	546	3.5%	90	0.6%
2	3,023	19.6%	1,455	9.2%	259	1.6%
3	6,056	39.2%	7,070	44.9%	7,190	44.5%
4	3,385	21.9%	4,083	26.0%	4,576	28.3%
5	1,391	9.0%	1,881	12.0%	2,485	15.4%
6	388	2.5%	602	3.8%	1,139	7.1%
7	86	0.6%	95	0.6%	412	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,452</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15,733</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>16,151</b>	<b>100%</b>

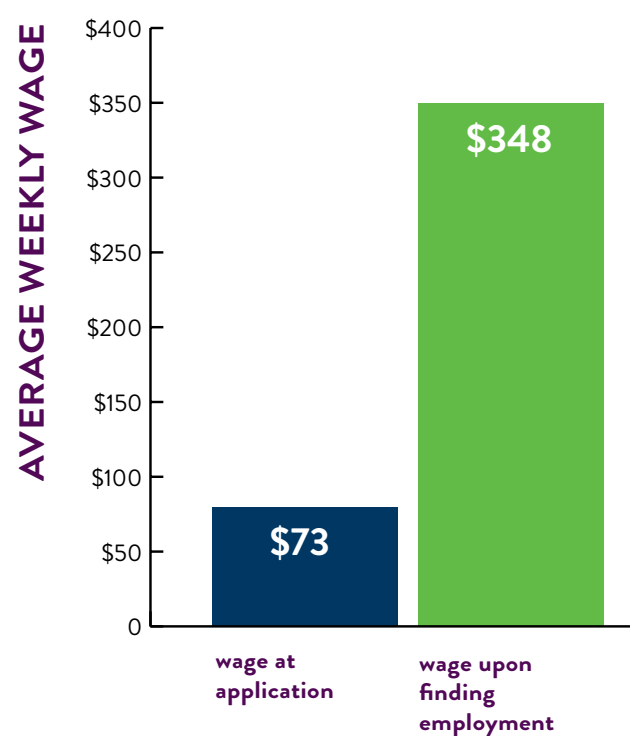
Federal law requires the VR program to offer the full range of services to all eligible individuals unless it is insufficient resource to offer those services to all. In such instances, the state must establish an "order of selection" – or a priority for service – based on the number of life skill areas in which a person has significant limitations to employment. Minnesota has established four such priority categories. Within this order of selection, persons with limitations in three or more functional areas must be served first, followed by those with fewer limitations to employment. Because of resource shortages, three of the four priority categories have been closed since 2011.

## OUTCOME MEASURES

	PY13	PY15	PY18
New consumers accepted for service	5,898	6,638	6,322
New employment plans	4,508	5,522	5,406
Consumers completing an employment plan and attaining employment	2,873	2,947	2,605
Participating employers	1,991	2,012	1,908
Year-end active caseload	10,242	10,231	10,254

## EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES BY AGE

Age	# of placements	Average of hours per week	Average of hourly wage	Average of weekly earnings
14-18	80	27.9	\$11.63	\$336.92
19-21	615	26.4	\$11.71	\$323.96
22-24	345	25.7	\$12.14	\$327.16
25-64	1,521	25.4	\$13.44	\$362.24
65+	44	23.3	\$13.72	\$327.84
Total	2,605	25.7	\$12.80	\$347.78



### VR PARTICIPANTS SEE RESULTS

This year, 2,605 people found work through VR. Upon finding employment, wages increased an average of **377%**.

## PY2018 EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES BY PLACEMENT TYPE

Placement by type of employment	# of placements	Average of hours per week	Average of hourly wage	Average of weekly earnings
Competitive Integrated Employment	2,146	26.7	\$13.00	\$366.55
Self-Employment	20	22.3	\$22.77	\$473.93
Supported Employment - Short-Term	26	22.9	\$12.17	\$290.44
Supported Employment in Competitive Integrated Setting	413	21.0	\$11.37	\$247.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>\$12.80</b>	<b>\$347.78</b>

## JOB PLACEMENTS BY BROAD CATEGORY<sup>1</sup>

Job category	# of placements	Average of hours per week	Average of hourly wage
Office and Administrative Support	453	26.1	\$12.46
Food Preparation and Serving-Related	431	20.8	\$10.69
Production, Construction and Mechanics	334	33.3	\$14.19
Sales and Related	293	23.9	\$11.18
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	268	20.4	\$11.54
Transportation and Material Moving	240	31.9	\$12.93
Human Services and Health Care	234	28.9	\$16.73
Personal Care and Service	192	23.3	\$11.67
Other Professional	89	36.2	\$20.60
Other	68	24.4	\$15.89
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,602</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>\$12.80</b>

<sup>1</sup> All VR placements are competitive (pay minimum wage or higher and at a rate comparable to non-disabled workers performing the same tasks) and integrated (at a location where the employee interacts with individuals without disabilities to the same extent that non-disabled workers do in a comparable position).

## COMPARISON OF EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES BY PROGRAM YEAR

Program year	Employment outcomes	Average of hourly wage	Average of hours per week
2013	2,873	\$10.95	28.3
2014	2,944	\$11.33	27.9
2015	2,947	\$12.00	27.8
2016	2,807	\$12.41	27.2
2017	2,701	\$12.50	26.5
2018	2,605	\$12.80	25.7



The Department of Employment and Economic Development is an equal opportunity employer and service provider.

Upon request, this information can be made available in alternate formats for individuals with disabilities by calling **651-259-7364** or emailing **Karla.F.Eckhoff@state.mn.us**.