



# State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

# 2022

ANNUAL REPORT

## SRC-B Mission

The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, working on behalf of Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind is charged with ensuring that State Services for the Blind is in compliance with mandates under Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act. The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind strives to ensure that Minnesotans, who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind receive the best possible services under the law.

## SRC-B Vision

The SRC-B will be a catalyst for the emergence of State Services for the Blind (SSB) as a national leader in the development, implementation and continuous improvement of quality service programs and education for persons of all ages who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind throughout our state.

The SRC-B, in conjunction with SSB, will strive to ensure people who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind are made aware of the full array of services available to them, whether aimed at adjustment to blindness training, independent living, employment or education.

The SRC-B will work to make employers aware that people who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind have tremendous abilities for employment today and must be included in planning for the workforce of the future.

It is our vision that persons who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind will enjoy full equality of opportunity, education, complete integration in the life of our communities and appropriate employment that fulfills each individual's needs and aspirations.

# Table of Contents

- Letter from the Chair . . . . . 2**
- SRC-B Council Members . . . . . 3**
- Letter from Director Jerde . . . . . 4**
- SRC-B Committee Reports. . . . . 7**
  - Customer Satisfaction and  
Goals and Priorities Committee. . . . . 9
  - DeafBlind Committee Report. . . . . 14
  - Employment Committee Report . . . . . 15
  - Minority Outreach Committee Report . . . . . 16
  - Seniors Services Committee Report . . . . . 16
  - Transition Committee Report . . . . . 17
  - Vendor Outcomes Committee Report. . . . . 17

## Letter from the Chair

Corbb O'Connor, Council Chair  
State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind of Minnesota  
2200 University Avenue West, Suite 240, St. Paul, MN 55114

November 2021

The Honorable Timothy Walz  
Office of the Governor  
130 State Capitol,  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Letter from the Chair

### **Dear Governor Walz,**

On behalf of the appointed members of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B), I write to thank you for the steps you've taken to fund, support, celebrate, and enrich Minnesotans who are blind and have low vision. Contrary to the stereotypes and misconceptions held by some, we are grateful to work with an agency, State Services for the Blind, who believes that proper training and access to high-quality resources equip the blind for success in achieving maximum employment and self-sufficiency.

SSB Director Natasha Jerde continues to demonstrate visionary leadership, attentiveness to regulations, openness to constructive feedback, and a steadfast belief in blind people. Having just returned from the annual meeting of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB), I am further excited by her contributions to the betterment of rehabilitation services around the country. Our state agency uniquely serves seniors who are losing and are blind; we've seen demonstrable proof in this year, as we have in past years, that these programs make a profound impact on individuals who wish to continue lives of activity and significance.

Over the past year, the SRC-B has had the chance to hear from recipients of SSB's services, advised staff about reaching an even more diverse set of Minnesotans, and dive deeply into the operations of the agency. We appreciate the transparency with which agency leaders and vendors have shown so that we can collectively work together to improve outcomes for customers.

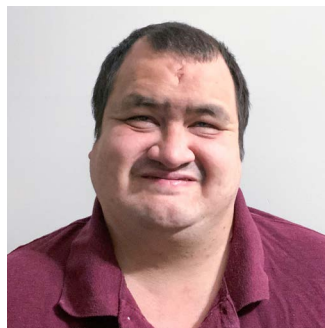
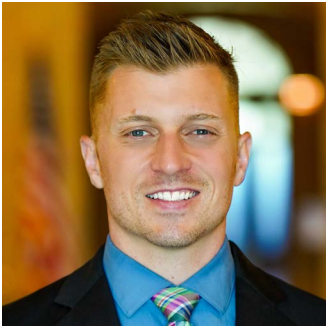
As State Services for the Blind moves toward the next evolution of its service delivery in the program "Evolve:VR," the SRC-B will continue its work of advising the agency in both its need to comply with federal regulations and opportunity to set a higher bar for services around the country. More than just providing recipients with the services they request, we are in agreement with the agency's leadership that all staff have a responsibility to counsel blind and low-vision Minnesotans about other tools and services (of which they may not yet be aware) that will set recipients up for a lifetime of independence, including comprehensive adjustment-to-blindness training.

It's my pleasure to serve as chairperson of the SRC-B, comprised of a dedicated group of Minnesota residents who give of their time, talents, and experiences that benefit countless recipients of vocational rehabilitation services. Thank you for appointing us to serve in these important roles.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Corbb O'Connor, Chair, State Rehabilitation Council-Blind*

## SRC-B Council Members



**Pictured from top left to bottom right**

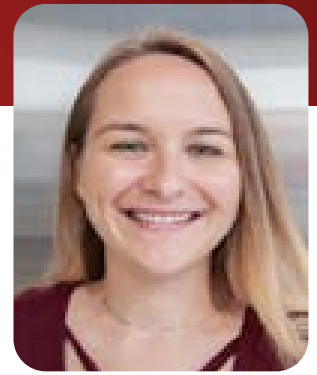
**Row 1:** Daniel Ashman, Deb Leuchovius, Ryan Strunk

**Row 2:** Trevor Turner, Kyle Van Acker, Corbb O' Connor

**Row 3:** Michael O'Day, Frank Eller, Judy Sanders

**Not pictured:** Tom Heinl, Catalina Martinez, Jeff Thompson, Gloria Lafriniere

# Letter from SSB Director Natasha Jerde



## Dear Governor Walz,

Simply put, the State Rehabilitation Council-Blind (SRC-B) helps us do our work better. The guidance of the council has been especially important to me this year as we have set out to accomplish some ambitious goals for strengthening our work and the delivery of our services. Council members have actively participated in shaping these goals and in charting our course toward achieving them. I am grateful to have had the privilege of working with the council in this last year, and look forward to another productive, transformative year ahead.

## “Evolve” is the watchword here at SSB

For us, “evolve” means that we’re taking what’s good in our work and building on it, while seeking out new opportunities to improve. Our “Evolve:VR” initiative sets out our focused plan for delivering services that meet the changing needs of our customers while strengthening our economy for “One Minnesota.” As you’ll see, evolving services is also at the core of our Business Enterprise Program, Communication Center, and services for seniors. In addition, we have five teams working on specific equity goals. The council continues to be a valuable partner in all of these efforts: several council members serve on an equity team, the council has given input into our “Evolve: VR” plan, and council committees and the council itself continue to guide and support all facets of our work.

## Evolution in Equity

In concert with DEED’s centering of equity, using the OKR (Objective and Key Results) framework we have formed five working groups to direct our efforts in reaching our strategic equity goals. We determined that progress in these key areas will help SSB evolve toward better service for all Minnesotans as we work across state government to close equity gaps.

1. SSB’s Communication Center will increase access for people with a print impairment and speak other languages by transcribing five print materials into alternative languages. Languages targeted will include Hmong, Karen, Somali, Anishinaabe, and Dakota
2. SSB’s Workforce Development Unit will analyze successful and unsuccessful closures by demographics (race, ethnicity, gender, and region)

to identify service gaps and needs and then develop and implement an action plan for resolving those areas.

3. SSB will foster an ongoing relationship with the Veteran’s Administration and VA Hospital to increase SSB’s exposure.
4. SSB’s Customer Satisfaction Survey will incorporate demographic information (e.g., age, race, ethnicity) so that we can analyze quality of services provided based on that information.
5. SSB will develop a comprehensive talent recruitment plan that actively promotes job openings to under-represented communities. Hiring managers will work with Human Resources to remove barriers to the application and interviewing process, which will include training on inclusive interviewing, modifications to job posting language, and a review of minimum and preferred qualifications for vacant positions.

## Evolution in Access

Our Communication Center is humming again. Volunteers are back, and together we’ve made substantial investments in evolving our services to better meet the needs of a changing demographic.

We have produced audio books in Ojibwe, Hmong, Karen, Somali, Finnish, and Dakota (See equity goal 1 above). In many instances these represent the first books in their respective languages to be available in an accessible format. We’ve been honored to work with Minnesota authors and scholars in order to make this content available.

We’ve completed the transition to web and app-based platforms for Radio Talking Book, our 24-7 news and book reading service. This has expanded our listenership and made it easier for listeners from across the country and around the world to discover RTB.

We’re now distributing braille e-readers, enabling Minnesota’s braille readers to download books directly from the National Library Service – an evolution indeed, and a new state-of-the-art tactile graphics braille embosser increases our capacity to produce high quality braille textbooks.

## Evolution in Small Business

It is no exaggeration to say that the small business owners in our Business Enterprise Program are in need of revolution more than evolution. With so many workers working remotely, and other changes in the way that public buildings are used, vending businesses have been dramatically impacted. Our BEP program has been working aggressively to re-tool, rebuild, and expand in new areas. We are investing 1.8 million to update vending machines to meet consumer demand, and we are working to move into new, more trafficked locations and to add micro markets. We're here to ensure that the small business owners in this program can make a good living as an owner-operator. We're pleased that some of our business owners have seen record profits this year, and we want to ensure that all of these businesses offer a viable career path.

## Evolution in Independence for Seniors

In 2021, our Senior Services team was one of the first to be back out in the field serving seniors in their homes. Now, we're back to pre-pandemic numbers of seniors served, with close to 4,000 Minnesota low vision seniors receiving tools, training, and resources to stay active and independent. Only California – a state with 7 times our population - serves more blind, DeafBlind, and low vision seniors.

Even so, we continue to evolve, knowing that there are still Minnesota seniors who could benefit from our services. In order to reach seniors closer to the time of diagnosis, we've collaborated with the Low Vision Specialty Center of the Mayo Clinic. Our Senior Services counselor in the area will spend one day a week at the clinic and meet with patients who are interested in learning more about how we can help them live well with vision loss.

## Evolution in Employment

As the Department of Employment and Economic Development's (DEED's) Commissioner Steve Grove has said, "At a time when our state's workforce shortage is presenting new challenges, it is also providing new opportunities. More employers are hiring Minnesotans who have a disability – and also possess the skills their business needs to thrive." At SSB we know that more Minnesotans who are blind, DeafBlind, or visually

impaired need a better shot at good, competitive, family-sustaining jobs with opportunities for growth. That's why our Evolve:VR plan is a multi-year systemic change initiative based on principles of customer-centric service delivery. This means getting away from policy-centric practices and moving into human-centered approaches.

Across the country, vocational rehabilitation programs are sharing in some collective soul-searching – taking a hard look at what is and isn't going well and assessing the long-term viability of the VR model. Here at SSB we've drafted an ambitious long-term plan that amplifies customer service and lays out a road map for empowering blind, DeafBlind, and visually impaired Minnesotans to connect with good jobs and solid opportunities for career advancement. Perhaps one bullet point in our draft plan sums it all up: We aim to be "The best VR program in the country that people want to work for and with."

## Evolving Together

In 2023 we will be celebrating 100 years of serving Minnesotans who are blind, DeafBlind, visually impaired or who have a print disability. Certainly, in those 100 years we've made tremendous strides forward in the breadth and quality of our services. But, this is not a time to look back. In 2022 we've been laying the groundwork for a stronger, more resilient and responsive SSB that will be a catalyst for success for blind, DeafBlind, low vision, and print-disabled Minnesotans for years to come. The SRC-B has been an invaluable partner in laying this foundation and will continue to be critical in the successful achievement of our ambitious goals. I look forward to more conversation, more feedback and guidance, and more thoughtful deliberation from the council and its committees in this coming year and the years ahead.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Natasha Jerde, Director, State Services for the Blind*

## WHAT RESILIENCE LOOKS LIKE

### An SSB Customer Shares Her Experience

When Becca<sup>1</sup> heard that there might be services available through an agency called State Services for the Blind, she called the number and left a long tearful message. The very next day, SSB Vocational Counselor Steve Pesola was visiting her at her sister's home in Bemidji and talking with her about how to develop a plan to meet and beat the challenges of vision loss. "I think I cried through that whole visit, too," Becca remembers.

Earlier, in the hospital, as she was recovering from a stroke and coming to terms with her vision loss, Becca had been overwhelmed with a feeling of hopelessness. "I didn't know that there was anything out there for me," she remembers, "I was thinking, 'I don't know how to do anything, anymore.'" Becca shared part of this story with the SRC-B at its April 2022 meeting.

Becca's journey started on February 8, 2019. It was a cold day, and Becca spent hours on a photo shoot in Grand Rapids out on the ice, taking pictures for a friend who had earned the world record for longest and fastest motor cycle wheely on ice. After that long day in the cold, Becca's migraine's started.

For the next several days, the headaches continued, and occasionally, Becca would experience blurred vision. She was feeling much better though, the day before her planned trip to Jamaica, a spot she had visited often.

Her health deteriorated while on vacation, and, in addition to a short hospitalization there, Becca credits the kind community where she was staying for caring for her and making sure she was strong enough to return home. Back in Minnesota, it didn't take long for Becca to realize that she had had a serious stroke, and before her lay months of hospitalizations, along with physical, speech, vision, and occupational therapies.

At age 50, coming to terms with vision loss was hard. A neuro ophthalmologist explained to her the confusing world of vision loss related to a brain injury. "I suddenly understood why I could sometimes see things like the counter, but not my phone which was sitting on the

<sup>1</sup> For reasons of safety and privacy, the customer's last name has been omitted.

counter," Becca said, "before that I would think, 'I just set my phone down here, now where did it go?'"

Even as Becca was coming to terms with her vision loss and making the slow recovery from her stroke, she experienced another traumatizing setback. She turned to a friend to help her with the difficult process of signing up for Medicare and SDI. Sadly, this friend opened 19 credit cards in Becca's name, took out loans and embezzled thousands and thousands of dollars. This tragedy, along with a difficult recovery from COVID, has made Becca's journey more complicated, and amplified her capacity for resilience.

That meeting with Steve Pesola was a milestone on Becca's incredible journey to confidence and independence. SSB provided training as well as resources to help Becca rebuild her life. "Before I knew about SSB, I was burning myself on the stove, or accidentally cutting myself because I would pick up the knife upside down," Becca recalls. "Now," she says, "The things I look back on with pride are things like the first full meal I cooked for myself, or the first time I recognized all the letters in the braille alphabet. I called Steve and told him about each of those accomplishments."

***"...I didn't feel like I was a part of the blind world or the sighted world. Now, I feel like I belong, and I have confidence I could never have imagined."***

Now, as she continues to learn through classes at the Hadley School, Becca is organizing an online group to practice braille together. She's also gaining work experience as an ambassador for OrCam; Becca uses OrCam's wearable recognition technology to do things like read menus, read her mail, or identify faces in a room. As an ambassador she helps others learn how to use the products.

Becca still remembers how difficult it was in those early days of confronting her vision loss. "I didn't feel I could be out in the world. More than that, I didn't feel like I was a part of the blind world or the sighted world. Now, I feel like I belong, and I have confidence I could never have imagined."

Becca's plans are to continue building her skills in order



to return to work. She has seen the value of good nutrition in her own life and is exploring the potential of becoming a nutrition coach.

Becca welcomed the opportunity to share some of her story with the council and to express her gratitude for Steve Pesola's unflagging support and for the resources provided by SSB. With those resources Becca has done the hard work of rebuilding her life from the ground up, setting her course for a bright future.

## SRC-B Mission

The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, working on behalf of Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind is charged with ensuring that State Services for the Blind is in compliance with mandates under Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act. The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind strives to ensure that Minnesotans, who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind receive the best possible services under the law.

## SRC-B Vision

**The SRC-B will be a catalyst for the emergence of State Services for the Blind (SSB) as a national leader in the development, implementation and continuous improvement of quality service programs and education for persons of all ages who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind throughout our state.**

The SRC-B, in conjunction with SSB, will strive to ensure people who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind are made aware of the full array of services available to them, whether aimed at adjustment to blindness training, independent living, employment or education.

The SRC-B will work to make employers aware that people who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind have tremendous abilities for employment today and must be included in planning for the workforce of the future.

It is our vision that persons who are blind, visually impaired or DeafBlind will enjoy full equality of opportunity, education, complete integration in the life of our communities and appropriate employment that fulfills each individual's needs and aspirations.

## COMMUNICATION CENTER COMMITTEE REPORT

### Committee Charge

The product of this committee consists of reports to the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, containing specific strategies for increasing and improving Communication Center services as well as making visible the accomplishments of the past year.

### Committee Activities for 2022

Committee members were Steve Jacobson, Chair; Catherine Durivage, Kristin Oien, Ryan Strunk, Jennifer Dunnam, Catalina Martinez, and Tom Heinl.

The efforts of this committee are greatly enhanced by the extremely active participation of Communication Center section supervisors and managers. The committee wishes to express our thanks for their efforts and time. Rather than receiving extended general presentations at each meeting, the staff prepares what we have come to refer to as "preview reports" before each meeting. This permits us to concentrate more on asking questions and engaging in meaningful discussion during each meeting. We appreciate the staff effort to produce these reports for us.

The services of the Communication Center and the activities of this committee continue to be affected significantly by the COVID 19 pandemic, even while the "new normal" is being defined. During this reporting period, staff and some volunteers have resumed working in the office, however, some volunteers continue to record books at home and it is likely this number will remain higher.

This committee held four virtual meetings during the 2021-2022 term. They occurred on September 23, 2021, January 13, April 7, and June 23, 2022. In an effort to understand the services provided by the Communication Center and make recommendations, the following topics were covered in depth at these meetings:

- What is the process for requesting and producing textbooks
- How should the Communication Center expand its customer base to better serve new customers who now qualify for service under broader qualifications

# SRC-B Committee Reports

- How are volunteers recruited, trained, and monitored
- How do significant changes to the Radio Talking Book service impact customers as it moved away from closed circuit radios to internet distribution of programs

Here are some statistics showing the level of activity offered by the communication center.

Type	Number
Print pages transcribed / recorded	29,750
Print pages prepared for Radio Talking Book	86,706
Number of braille pages newly transcribed by CC in 2022	15,217
Total braille pages provided to Minnesota students in 2022	176,741
Total accesses (telephone and internet) of NFB Newslite for Newspapers and magazines	437,201
Equipment and accessories circulated	4,100

The Communication Center provides an important service to blind and other print-disabled people. This committee attempts to play a meaningful role in making these services as effective as possible.



## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND GOALS AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE

### Charge

1. This committee exists to carry out specific duties contained in federal regulations for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. These include:
  - Conduct a review and an analysis of the effectiveness of and consumer satisfaction with the functions of the Department of Employment and Economic Development;
  - Vocational Rehabilitation services provided within the state (except adjustment to blindness and technology services), and
  - the employment outcomes of persons served.
2. In collaboration with SSB, evaluate the extent to which SSB achieved its goals and priorities, strategies used, and factors that impeded success and performance on the federal Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) Primary Indicators of Performance.
3. Jointly with other committees of the Council, and in partnership with SSB, develop and, as necessary, revise a statement of goals and priorities.

### Part I State's Performance Under the Performance Accountability Measures of Section 116 of WIOA

Performance Indicators	PY 2019	PY 2020	PY 2021
Quarter 2 Employment Rate After Exit	50%	37%	36%
Quarter 2 Median Wage After Exit	\$4,588	\$4,872	\$7,348
Quarter 4 Employment Rate After Exit	53%	37%	35%
Quarter 4 Median Wage After Exit	\$ 5,090	\$ 6,000	\$6,428
Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) Rate	16%	25%	34%

The Performance Accountability Measures represent SSB individually.

### Part II Customer Satisfaction Survey Review

In 2017, the frequency of the conducting of the customer satisfaction survey (CSS) was changed from quarterly to once a year. The survey for PY2021, conducted near the end of the program year, covers customers served during the period from January through June 2022. Full results are at [mn.gov/deed/assets/ssb-wfd-css-2022-results\\_tcm1045-552143.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/ssb-wfd-css-2022-results_tcm1045-552143.docx)

The Committee reviewed the CSS results for PY2021.

### SSB Customer Satisfaction Survey

#### PY2021 Summary Results

Summary	PY2021
Q1: Satisfied with time it took to receive an answer	84%
Q2: Satisfied that counselor (staff) understood customer's needs	83%
Q3: Satisfied that customer given enough info to make good choices on employment plan	75%
Q4: Satisfied that customer had an active role in decisions about services	87%
Q5: Satisfied that services helped plan for/maintain employment	73%
Q11: Overall satisfaction with services provided	80%
Q12: Extent to which services have met expectations	69%
Q13: Comparison with "ideal" set of services	68%

# SRC-B Committee Reports

SSB's results on the Customer Satisfaction Survey are also computed by the Minnesota Department of Economic Development utilizing the Minnesota Customer Satisfaction Index (MnCSI). Simply put, this index summarizes overall satisfaction with services by applying a formula to the responses for Questions 11, 12, and 13 on the survey. Using the MnCSI makes it possible to compare the customer satisfaction ratings of SSB with those of other agencies in Minnesota and with industry in general.

Average MnCSI score over time (rolling quarterly 12 month periods).

Customers Served	Mar 18–Aug 18**	Feb 19–July 19**	Jan 20–July 20**	Jan 21–Jun 21**	Jan 22–June 22**
Average MnCSI Scores	73.5	63.9	69.2	68.9	72.0
N size	260	134	114	144	150

\*\*Prior to March 2018 survey was done quarterly via telephone. As of March 2018, the survey was done annually online.

The committee continued to track the questions about assistive technology that began to be asked on the survey in the year ending 2015:

**Q6** *Have you received any Assistive Technology from State Services for the Blind? This could be hardware or software.*

Responses	Jan-June 22
Yes	58%
No	35%
Don't know / Unsure	7%
N Size	179

**Q7** *Think about when you most needed to use your Assistive Technology. How prepared did you feel to use the Assistive Technology when you needed it? Were you very well prepared, somewhat prepared, not very well prepared, or not prepared at all?*

Responses	Jan-June 22
Very prepared	55%
Somewhat prepared	31%
Not very well prepared	8%
Not at all prepared	4%
Don't know/Refused	2%
N Size	102

**Q8** *How useful do you think the Assistive Technology equipment that you received will be/was in helping you meet your vocational plan goals? Do you think it will be very useful, somewhat useful, not very useful, or not at all useful?*

Responses	Jan-June 22
Very useful	76%
Somewhat useful	16%
Not very useful	0%
Not at all useful	2%
Don't know/Refused	6%
N Size	102

Additionally, the committee reviewed results from the three new questions added to the survey to address changes in service delivery caused by the pandemic.

**Q8a** *Please describe the primary method in how you interacted with SSB to receive your services. (NEW for 2020)*

Responses	Jan-June 22
In person meeting	7%
Phone call	45%
Email	30%
Online meeting (e.g. Zoom, WebEx, Skype platforms)	18%
N Size	174

**Q8b** *How satisfied are you with the non-traditional method you used with SSB to receive your services? (NEW for 2020)*

Responses	Jan-July 21
Very satisfied	38%
Satisfied	50%
Dissatisfied	5%
Very dissatisfied	3%
DK/Refused	4%
N Size	157

**Q8c** *Please explain how the process of meeting in a non-traditional way (e.g. Phone, Email, Online meeting, Other) went for you in receiving your services from SSB. (NEW as of 2020)*

Finally, the members of the committee read the verbatim comments elicited by the following two survey questions to determine if trends or issues specific to SSB were apparent. No new trends were identified from this data.

**Q9** *In your opinion, what is/was the most important part of the services you received from SSB?*

The most common responses were financial assistance, technology and training, and job search assistance.

**Q10** *If you could change one thing about the services you received, what would you change?*

The most common responses centered around communication and faster services.

## Part III Review of Goals and Priorities Program Year 2021 July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022

### Priority: Competitive Integrated Employment

#### Strategies:

1. Implement a model for coordinating employer services with DEED Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners, including:
  - Title I- Adult/Dislocated Worker; Youth
  - Title III- Job Seeker Services
  - Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
  - SSB is working with DEED partners and stakeholders to develop a Client Relationship Management tool. Currently partners are determining the cost to use Minnesota IT for consulting and services and what funding they can commit. Once this is finalized the planning process will begin by identifying partner business and customer needs and how to assemble these into a cohesive product.
  - Monitor the Employer One Stop online virtual hub representing all partners and available services and determine any modifications and adjustments needed to ensure its effectiveness.
  - Monitor the E1MN section of the Disability HUB website for DEED outreach and marketing and determine any modifications and adjustments needed to ensure its effectiveness.

**Response:** A group to discuss Department-wide implementation of a customer management system, like Salesforce, has been initiated by the Deputy Commissioner so we can track and coordinate our work with businesses. In Program Year 2020 (July 1st, 2020-June 30th, 2021), DEED connected with 8.1% of Minnesota businesses, which amounts to 15,377. Approximately 160 of those businesses were direct contacts from SSB.

# SRC-B Committee Reports

2. Implement ongoing training, tracking, and oversight of Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) and credential attainment of students to reach negotiated targets.
  - Monitor staff tracking of their customers and input of appropriate documentation by in depth review of staff input of customers MSG's and credentials between enrollment and disenrollment.
  - Ensure accuracy in reporting and validity of the MSGs and credentials claimed.
  - Train staff as needed regarding data fixes necessary for these measures.

**Response: SSB continues to focus efforts on Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) and credential attainment. We report on and negotiate rates for MSGs and credential attainment jointly with our sister agency, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS). For MSGs, Minnesota had a negotiated rate in Program Year 2021 (PY21) of 30% which as a state we surpassed by reaching 45.5%. SSB's individual rate was 35.6%. SSB did not have a negotiated rate for credential attainment in PY21 though our combined rate was 33.1%. SSB's individual rate was 16.4% even though we have the highest enrollment rate of people in post-secondary education. We know this continues to be a documentation issue, and have strategies we started putting in place that already appear to be working. SSB expects to reach the negotiated rate of 31% next year and 33% in PY23.**

3. Implement a model for coordinating employer services with DEED Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners, including :
  - Title I- Adult/Dislocated Worker; Youth
  - Title III- Job Seeker Services
  - Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation Services

**Response: Work on this strategy continues with some successes so far: 1. SSB has been working with DEED partners and stakeholders to develop a Client Relationship Management tool. Currently partners are determining the cost to use Minnesota IT for consulting and services and what funding they can commit. 2. An Employer One Stop is an online virtual hub representing all partners and available services. 3. Employment 1st Minnesota (E1MN) is a site for DEED outreach and marketing, recently online also at [disabilityhubmn.org/for-professionals/work/e1mn-partnership/](https://disabilityhubmn.org/for-professionals/work/e1mn-partnership/).**

4. In coordination with the Advisory Task Force on State Employment and Retention of Employees with Disabilities, develop and implement methods for the hiring and retention of blind, visually impaired, and deafblind customers into state government including using Connect 700 and Supported Worker programs.
  - a. Monitor the recommendation document submitted by the Advisory Taskforce to the Legislative subcommittee. Recommendations included items and proposed statutory changes that will specifically support the hiring and retention of blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind customers, including:
    - i. requirement for all technology and digital content to be accessible and provided in a timely manner;
    - ii. Job posting language to be nondiscriminatory (including not requiring a driver's license when one is not actually needed);
    - iii. Hiring managers are made aware of the state Accommodation Fund;
    - iv. Reasonable accommodations are provided to allow full participation;
    - v. State Services for the Blind and Vocational Rehabilitation Services must be consulted when it comes to any updates or changes to the Connect 700 policy;
    - vi. Training of staff on inclusive environments, digital accessibility standards, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
5. State Services for the Blind will continue to work with Minnesota Management and Budget to ensure these recommendations are carried out.

**Response: The legislatively formed Advisory Taskforce that provided recommendations on recruitment and retention of people with disabilities concluded its work. SSB, along with many other disability agencies that were part of the Taskforce, still meet regularly with Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB). MMB oversees the Connect 700 program and provides oversight to all State of Minnesota American with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinators and affirmative action offices. Eric Falk, the newest Statewide ADA Coordinator at MMB, presented to SSB's Workforce Development Unit team in November, and staff provided suggestions for further improving the Connect 700 program.**

## Priority: Internal Controls and Quality Assurance

### Strategies:

- A. Enhance the case review process to allow for real time results that can be put in SharePoint and allow for trends and patterns that can shape training and accountability and policy process.

**Response:** Work has begun with the IT team who built the case management system we use to embed our case review toll directly into the system. That will allow for more real time tracking and reporting of how we are doing individually and collectively. This building process has started but will take some time to complete.

- B. Create a data dashboard to allow for real-time reporting of performance and demographics.

**Response:** We have partnered with Michael Prideaux, one of the data analysts from the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and he has started building a dashboard for us in a tool called PowerBI. So far he has created the following three reports with more expected:

- Applications and Closures Trend Report
- Percentage of applicants who complete eligibility within 60 days and an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) within 90 days
- Average number of days from application to eligibility, and average number of days from eligibility to receiving first service.

**The next dashboard developed will report authorizations and expenditure data. Some future dashboards will be posted on the SSB website and available for public view.**

## Priority: Under-Represented Populations

### Strategies:

- A. Increase minority applicants for vocational rehabilitation services who otherwise would not have applied as a result of statewide outreach with the minority communities.
- B. Use applicant data on race, ethnicity, gender, and religion to measure against closure rates to determine if there are trends in unsuccessful closures among a particular protected class.
- C. Once measurements are established, an action plan will be developed to identify what gaps exist and how to reduce them.

**Response:** We do not have any data or trends at this time to determine if we have seen an increase in minority applicants compared to previous years. We have been focusing heavily on our outreach methods with job vacancies. SSB maintains a database of over 100 community organizations that represents a wide range of diverse cultures that vacancies are shared with. SSB has developed Equity Objective and Key Results (OKR) groups to address specific issues that are tied to SSB's Goals and Priorities. The OKR#5 workgroup has been focused on recruitment and hiring and will be restructured to focus on minority applicants. Another OKR goal was created with the objective: SSB's Customer Satisfaction Survey will incorporate demographic information (e.g., age, race, ethnicity) so that we can analyze quality of services provided based on that information. The OKR#4 group has met regularly over the past year to determine the best way to gather the demographic information and how to analyze the data in a meaningful way. The OKR#2 group, with the purpose focused on Workforce Development Unit (WDU) closure analysis, has been looking into unsuccessful closure data and will continue to do so.

## Priority: Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

### Strategies:

- A. Develop a longitudinal study on all youth (ages 25 and younger) case closures. Identify factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful outcomes.
  - The Transition Subcommittee of the SRC-B has requested the data on case closures specifically for student and youth 25 and under with successful and unsuccessful closures.
  - When the data is received, the Transition Subcommittee will evaluate to identify factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful outcomes.
  - Based on the factors we will begin to develop strategies to address how better to ensure successful outcomes.

**Response:** The longitudinal study has not begun in depth. Now that we have additional data analytic capacity, this project will have more attention in the near future. There has been some data shared on a national level regarding higher rehabilitation rate with Pre-ETS services that SSB has reviewed.

# SRC-B Committee Reports

## Priority: Staff Training and Development

### Strategy:

- A. Provide a comprehensive and structured training curriculum for new employee onboarding and ongoing staff training by the designated trainer.
- The designated trainer is developing the comprehensive and structured training curriculum for new employee onboarding and ongoing staff training. Expected outcomes are:
    - On boarding and training packages specific to each role that make up the Workforce Development Unit (WDU)
    - An annual training and development schedule for the WDU as a whole and for specific unit roles and functions
    - Acquiring data about training effectiveness and adjusting as needed
- B. Increase the level of awareness of the importance of timely communication with customers in response to customer comments on the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS)
- The Customer Outcomes and Goals & Priorities Committee, together with SSB staff, will monitor the frequency of comments on subsequent surveys.
  - SSB staff will investigate other internal controls that could be useful in identifying any communication timeliness problems.

**Response: SSB has provided a comprehensive and structured training curriculum for new employee onboarding and ongoing staff training by the designated trainer. We now have a comprehensive and robust onboarding training program and all employees are introduced to Phase 1 Adjustment to Blindness. In addition, we've incorporated 4-6 guidance meetings with a group of new employees. One of those meetings includes a discussion on psychosocial aspects and removing the stigmas around vision loss. The expanded training has been embedded in our new learning management system YesLMS. The OKR#4 group has focused worked on the CSS and the next phase will be to have a more comprehensive way to share results and develop action items around them.**

## DEAFBLIND COMMITTEE REPORT

### Committee Charge

This committee exists to support and advise SSB regarding its services to individuals who are deaf/ hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired. This committee will provide input to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and the full Council for consideration in the development of annual goals and priorities in conjunction with SSB, and will monitor those goals and priorities throughout the year.

**The Committee Chairs:** Jessica Eggert (9/2021 – 12/2022) Trevor Turner (1/2022 – 8 – 2022) **Committee Members:** Ann Mayes, John Filek, Kim Johnson, Patrick Veillia, Wendy DeVore, Mohamed Mohamed

**SSB Staff:** Hannah Edwards, Lindsay Escalera, Sara Kreiling, Susan Kusz

**FY 2022 Meeting Dates:** The Committee met remotely Oct 25th, 2021, March 22, 2022, June 28, 2022, August 9, 2022

**Committee Activities:** The meetings agendas include a report from staff on the number of clients that are employed, as well as the successful closures since the last meeting.

In Oct we specifically discussed a resource list for staff and the posting of the two Step by Step documents to the website. In March 22nd meeting we discussed John Filek presenting to WDU staff meeting on his resources with the Helen Keller National Center. The Committee also reviewed our Goals and Priorities. In June we reviewed previously discussed items since we had not met in a few months and began to formulate a plan of next steps for the committee. In August we reviewed the information on the website with the MDBA info and the Communication Guidelines for Meetings with Members who are DeafBlind. This document is still out for revisions at this time. We totally revised the Goals and Priorities for the Committee making Review successful and unsuccessful closures for DB clients and provide feedback and suggestions to address barriers and supports needed for employability now our number one priority. The Committee members are very dedicated and most have served this committee now for several years. We work well as a team and hope to continue to make progress into the new year.



## EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

---

### Committee Charge

This committee exists to provide advice and propose strategies to increase the quantity and quality of employment outcomes for individuals served through the state vocational rehabilitation services for the blind system.

**FY 2022 Meeting Dates:** The Committee met remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the convenience of committee members. The committee met on 11/4/2021, 12/9/2021, 3/3/2022 and 8/3/22.

**Committee Activities:** At the November 4th, 2021 meeting, Dave Smith provided an update on Employment statistics for SSB. There was a discussion about how COVID has impacted case closures. On the one hand, demand for labor has gone up. On the other hand, some clients are uncomfortable working while the pandemic is ongoing. Persons in this second group make up a significant part of the individuals in the “Services Interrupted” category. It was also reported that referrals are up as people are beginning to head back to work. Mark Groves provided a review of the “career from Here” job club initiative for new members to the committee. Plans were underway to have the first of the job clubs meet remotely. We discussed that perhaps having the job club virtually would increase its convenience and might improve attendance. Also, having specific agenda items that attendees are interested in might also help to increase attendance.

We also had a discussion about the importance of networking. Having a database of blind, deaf blind and visually impaired individuals employed in different professions and industries would allow those looking for work to speak with someone already doing the job. In that way, the individual seeking employment would gain information about job responsibilities and how to work around potential obstacles. We decided to look into this possibility further during future meetings.

At the December 9th, 2021 meeting, Mark Groves reported that only two customers participated in the first job club session. We agreed that it takes time to build up the job club so we need to be patient. We discussed the technology issues that might impact job club attendance.

Some people might not have computers or internet access. Some might not have the adaptive technology skills to navigate to the site. Others might have difficulty participating by Zoom by phone because of access codes and passwords that need to be entered. One suggestion is to have phone access without the password to make it easier for people to join. We agreed with Mark that sending out emails to staff encouraging them to include the job club attendance as part of their Plans for Employment is a good idea.

At the March 3rd, 2022 meeting, we discussed the low attendance at the “Career from Here” job club events. Only a couple people attended each event. The typical person who attends the job club is in mid-career and often needs to change careers due to vision loss. Many people believe that their options are limited because of vision loss. Mark Groves said that he works with participants on interviewing skills and improving the client’s resume during the meeting. After the meetings, Mark will work with the clients one-on-one to improve these skills. He recently sent a reminder to counsellors to refer clients ready for employment to the job club.

The committee discussed the purpose of the job club. Was it for finding a job or for job exploration? In practice it is both, as people need to both understand what jobs are available and what jobs they are qualified to do. Attendees would typically be the ones who have gone through ATB training and are deemed ready to find a job. Those attending the job club also need to build confidence in their ability to find a job by practicing interviewing and improving their resume.

We also discussed having a list of successfully employed blind people that those looking for work could contact to learn more about how blind individuals perform different types of jobs. There was a discussion that perhaps the blind consumer groups could be helpful in this process. SSB also has a database of former clients who are successfully employed. Perhaps a list of former clients that are successfully employed could be developed. The committee agreed that a list of this nature would consist of volunteers that would be willing to talk about their career journey.

At the August 3rd, 2022 meeting, Dave Smith provided an update on the DEED initiative called the “Summer of Jobs”, which highlight employers, such as Medtronic, that have hired people with disabilities. One of the

# SRC-B Committee Reports

companies that will be featured is United Health Group, which successfully employs several blind individuals. They will be highlighting how technology can help blind candidates successfully perform the job. Hopefully, the additional publicity will generate more hiring opportunities for blind clients. He also believes that employers are looking more for employees in nontraditional places due to the labor shortage, including employment of individuals with disabilities.

It was also reported at the August meeting that the “Career from Here” initiative has been discontinued due to lack of attendees. The job club concept has been tried before at SSB and clients have not shown interest enough to consistently attend.

We briefly discussed the idea of developing a list of mentors. Job seekers need to determine what jobs they are interested in and qualified for and then gain some experience in the labor market before mentoring truly becomes valuable. Blind job seekers need to see successfully employed blind employees as role models so that they can learn that blind people can perform a variety of jobs. We decided to discuss this more at our next meeting.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Michael O’Day, Minority Outreach Committee Report*

## MINORITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE REPORT

### Committee Charge

The role of the Minority Outreach committee is to advise State Services for the Blind (SSB) with specific strategies concerning its services to individuals with minority backgrounds. Additionally, the committee is responsible to provide input to the council, and both the customer satisfaction and the goals and priorities committee in order to develop the annual goals and priorities in conjunction with State Services for the Blind.

This year the Minority Outreach Committee met to review the outreach efforts conducted by SSB staff.

Members: Michael Colbrunn, Chair; Gloria LaFriniere, Frank Eller; Alana Strickler, Lisa Larges

## SENIORS SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

### Committee Charge

The Senior Services Committee exists to assist State Services for the Blind to improve and expand services to blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind Minnesotans who are not interested in employment. The majority of this group is seniors. These customers face significant barriers to independence, but they can benefit from services which help maintain or increase their independence. Activities include identifying unmet needs, recommending services necessary to meet these needs and identifying strategies to remove or reduce barriers to their independence.

**Committee Members:** Judy Sanders, chair; Lori Thompson, Jeff Thompson and Ed Lecher representing our staff.

During 2021/2022 the Senior Services Unit was still dealing with the Covid pandemic. This meant that many clients could not receive in-person services and our committee did not meet as often as we would wish.

In 2022 we did meet over zoom and started moving forward with a more positive outlook. We began exploring ideas that would allow us to reach out to the ever growing senior population who are experiencing changes in their vision. We want to spread a message that tells seniors that their lives can continue; they have choices about how to live their lives.

We gathered a list of organizations such as AARP where we can spread our message.

During the 2022-2023 term for this committee we want to see that the number of seniors served by the Senior Services Unit reaches over 4,000 people. As long as there are seniors who believe in themselves we can help make their dreams come true.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Judy Sanders, Chair*

## TRANSITION COMMITTEE REPORT

---

### Committee Charge

This committee provides specific advice and counsel regarding services to transition-age youth (ages 14-21). This committee will provide input to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and the full Council for consideration in the development of annual goals and priorities in conjunction with SSB, and will monitor those goals and priorities throughout the year.

This year, the Transition Committee tracked activities and programs for transition-age students from SSB and community organizations. We received reports from SSB's Transition Coordinator and other staff members as well as updates from providers who offer programming for transition students. In addition, the committee began looking at preliminary data on unsuccessful closures for youth in an effort to identify patterns and trends.

Members: Wendy DeVore, Chair; Carolyn Cherry, Michelle Gip, Deborah Lechovious, Mohamed Mohamed, Kristine Petronko, Ryan Strunc; John Hulet, Sheila Koenig

## VENDOR OUTCOMES COMMITTEE REPORT

---

### Committee Charge

This committee exists to support and advise SSB regarding measuring the outcomes realized by the recipients of training in adjustment to blindness and technology. This committee will provide input to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and the full Council for consideration in the development of annual goals and priorities in conjunction with SSB, and will monitor those goals and priorities throughout the year.

### Introduction

State Services for the Blind (SSB) and the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) designed a customer survey to measure the satisfaction of Adjustment to Blindness (ATB) training participants with training completed through SSB ATB vendors. Customers are chosen to be surveyed from 30 to 90 days after they have completed ATB training or when their case is closed with SSB, whichever is earlier. In the winter of 2014, SSB and the SRC-B worked to redesign the questionnaire to elicit more helpful survey responses. By fall 2017, SSB moved to just administer a WDU survey on a one-time basis. Now starting in 2021, the SSB ATB survey administration was adjusted collect responses in-house at the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) via Alchemer, DEED's online survey software system on a quarterly basis.

For the 12-month period **(July 2021 through June 2022)** 226 SSB WDU customers were selected as having participated in ATB training with valid contracted vendors. Of the 226 trainees pulled from WF1, 212 had a listed email address in their contact information. For the launch of the survey, 212 of those contacts had an email address that was allowed to be sent an email invite to complete the survey. Out of these 212 initial email contacts, 196 were found valid. At the end of the process, 72 contacts completed (37%) the survey. SSB did not have a correct/valid email on 16 trainees (e.g. no email present, email was unable to load in system, email bounced/undeliverable in system, email had a technical issue connecting to a valid survey opportunity) and those contained in the survey are reported as "Invalid" in the tables below. The response status per individual vendor and CRP is shown on the next page:

# SRC-B Committee Reports

CRP's	Completed Interview	No Response	Invalid <sup>1</sup>	Total	Response Rate <sup>2</sup>
Blindness Learning in New Dimensions, Inc. (BLIND, Inc.)	8	21	3	32	28%
Duluth Lighthouse Center for Vital Living (formerly known as Duluth Lighthouse Center for the Blind)	6	7	1	14	46%
Vision Loss Resources, Inc.	16	29	4	49	36%
<b>CRP sub-total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>34%</b>

Individual Vendors	Completed Interview	No Response	Invalid	Total	Response Rate
Abdi Mumin/A&A Solutions	0	0	1	1	--%
Career Ventures Inc	0	2	1	3	0%
Daniel Beal	5	6	1	12	45%
David Tanner/Tanners Assistive Technology Services	0	2	0	2	0%
Debbie Bock/Hands On Tech Inc	3	4	1	8	43%
Dimensions Life Coaching	1	0	0	1	100%
Helen Keller National Center	1	0	0	1	100%
Jan Bailey/JB Rehab Enterprises LLC	1	0	0	1	100%
John Higgins/Invision Services Inc	5	8	1	14	38%
Jon Swenson-Tellekson/The Speech Gurus LLC	5	12	0	17	29%
Kelly Jo Harrison/Harrison Resources	7	8	0	15	47%
Linda Spaulding/Independent Mobility LLC	0	0	1	1	--%
Mary Kautto	6	4	1	11	60%
Mary Nicklawske/Compass Mobility LLC	1	4	0	5	20%

<sup>1</sup> Invalids are records for which the email address for the customer provided by SSB is either incorrect, unable to be loaded, bounced, undeliverable, or a technical issue is noted by the customer preventing them from completing the survey from their link.

<sup>2</sup> The response rate is determined by: the number of completed interviews divided by the total number of records minus the number of invalid records [(# of completed interviews / (# of total records - # of invalid records)].

# SRC-B Committee Reports

Individual Vendors	Completed Interview	No Response	Invalid	Total	Response Rate
Ruth Ann Marsh/Marsh Orientation & Mobility Services	2	5	0	7	29%
Sam Jasmine	1	3	0	4	25%
Sharee Marcus	2	1	1	4	67%
Stephen Guerra/Guerra Access Technology Training	0	2	0	2	0%
Steven Wasserman	1	0	0	1	100%
The Low Vision Store	0	1	0	1	0%
VaShaun Jones/Fedora Outlier LLC	0	1	0	1	0%
Wendy DeVore/Career Ventures Inc.	1	4	0	5	20%
Individual Vendor sub-total	42	67	8	117	39%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>37%</b>

For the purpose of the online study, a 50 percent response rate was deemed sufficient to yield accurate and representative vendor results. Of the above 25 vendors, only one of the vendors had 5 or more completed responses and a response rate of 50 percent or more, the benchmark for inclusion within this report.

Please note that with smaller sample sizes, a single extreme opinion has more effect on the overall score than it would have on a larger sample. Additionally, lower response rates increase the likelihood that the results do not reflect the entire population.

The reader is reminded that the results of this customer survey should be reviewed taking into account several factors. First, there are a relatively small number of customers for many service providers. Also, the statistics and customer comments should be combined with other information, such as that gained from a personal tour or interview, and any other information available, in order to make the most informed choice as possible for these services.

The reader should be aware respondents continued to face the evolving training environment and the unique circumstances presented as a result of navigating procedures and policies around the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. While ATB training centers and vendors worked to minimize the number of service disruptions, it is an inevitable fact that service delays, mid-training disruptions, and center/vendor restrictions have and will continue to affect ATB training services due to impacts directly or indirectly related to COVID-19.

## Addendum for January 2021 through June 2021

As stated in last year's Customer Service Satisfaction Survey report, due to the adjustment in survey administration to a quarterly basis an addendum would be placed within the July 2021 through June 2022 report. Due to the low number of respondents, thirty-two (32), for the January 2021 through June 2021 survey, there will be no data reported aside from the previously mentioned total number of respondents (32). The decision to omit reporting data for the unreported period was made to ensure consistency, impartiality, and an unbiased cohort of data. Additionally, inclusion of this data could strip objective interpretation and the anonymous nature of the survey respondents.

## Overall Results for ALL WDU Respondents

### 3. First, did you complete your training with [fill provider]?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Yes	50%
No, never started the training	4%
No, dropped out of training	8%
No, I'm still in training	28%
DK/Refused	10%
N Size	72

#### Q1a Could you tell me why you were not able to start the training?

- I don't have any idea what this training is or about.
- Bad weather conditions. Vacation. Mary does an awesome job with training and I am so grateful for having her trained me. I do feel that I need a little bit more training with her with some things just for my comfort so I can feel more independent on my own.

#### Q1b Could you tell me why you were not able to complete the training?

- Do to his time conflict, at the University of Minnesota. Although when me and him worked with each other in the summer, it was fine. But I've been assigned a new trainer, who's amazing!
- Because he's not finished with the project completely yet.
- Environment was discouraging. They wouldn't modify their teaching to meet my goals and interests.
- We are not finished yet, because we're still have more to go.
- I have not finished the training yet, I have yet to find a job and transport to help me move around with my disability.
- Still doing it
- New eye issues, cardiologist and cancer genetic workup and surgical removal ongoing. Had to report to patient affairs with lack of care and employee family insurance at state and national levels. This is second time since starting SSB. Medical distractions of cancer.

- Still in training.
  - Still training.
  - I am in still in training with Kelly Jo Harrison.
  - I returned from a vacation to find that Debbie's contract needed to be renewed.
  - She returned home for summer and is not available again until September.
  - I have not learned enough yet.
  - Graduating soon.
  - I am still in training.
  - I went out of town but am planning on continuing training when I return.
  - Had an injury to my hip so I had to take a break.
  - My eye doctor told me that I will be dead before I'm blind. Therefore, I don't need to know braille, tech, cooking, techniques of daily living, or even white cane training then.
  - I did not like wearing the blinders all day. I still have some limited vision and would like to use it while I still have it. I need help with adapting to my current visual problems and disabilities.
4. Did you attend the training full-time or part-time? Full-time is 30 or more hours per week and part-time is less than 30 hours per week.

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Full-time (30 or more hours per week)	13%
Part-time (less than 30 hours per week)	83%
DK/Refused	3%
N Size	30

5. To what degree do you feel the training you received was tailored to your particular needs? Do you feel it was very well tailored, somewhat tailored, or not tailored to your needs?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Very well-tailored	69%
Somewhat tai-lored	21%
Not tailored	5%
DK/Refused	5%
N Size	42

6. How often do you feel you were treated respectfully during the training? Do you think you were treated with respect all of the time, much of the time, only some of the time, or never?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
All the time	79%
Much of the time	18%
Only some of the time	0%
Never	3%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	39

7. How was the pace of the training? Would you say the pace was way too fast, a little too fast, just right, a little too slow, or way too slow?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Too fast	0%
A little too fast	10%
Just right	83%
A little too slow	5%
Way too slow	3%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	40

8. Please describe the primary method used to interact with [your ATB vendor name] to receive your ATB training.

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
In-person meeting	64%
Phone call	10%
Email	3%
Online meeting (e.g. Zoom, WebEx, Skype platforms)	18%
Other non-traditional method, please describe: (none were listed)	5%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	39

9. Please explain what you liked or didn't like about the process of meeting in a non-traditional way (e.g. Phone, Email, Online meeting, Other) with [your ATB vendor name].

- Good
- I do not know?
- *The problem we had with on-line is that the computer I was given (from SSB) seemed to have many problems to fix and the hour was spent working on computer glitches. By the time it came to learning something new, the hour was nearly over and we were crunched for time.*
- *I did not think I could learn virtually but I was very pleased with the training. It was very easy to communicate this way. Jon is an amazing trainer/ teacher. I was able to regularly work on items I wanted to learn and understand how to use the tools available with Fusion.*
- *Helped a lot to learn Excel.*
- *I was waiting until back to training since 2 years during Covid-19 that was time it was ok good reason more safe, don't want spreading sick to people.*
- *I did not like that it wasn't in person because I feel that I learn more if I am in person with the instructor.*
- *I met in person and believed that you miss the entire point if you turn this program into an online experience. The greater need for this program is in the ADJUSTMENT to blindness. The actual adjustment is not done in watching videos! It's being surrounded by people just like you who are struggling. Blindness in itself is isolating. This is the place to be educated by possibilities but more importantly supported by fellow students and trying out the things you are taught in person with guidance.*
- *Like ability to continue services. In person services, sometimes, may have helped Jan know more about how I was doing.*
- *We did both phone and Zoom to meet our needs.*



# SRC-B Committee Reports

10. Did you receive training in traveling? This could include using buses, using a white cane, or planning a shopping trip? *[Prompt if needed: Sometimes this is called Orientation and Mobility, or Travel Training].*

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Yes	73%
No	27%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	41

11. To what degree did you feel safe during this training? Did you feel very safe, somewhat safe, or not safe?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Very safe	86%
Somewhat safe	10%
Not safe	0%
DK/Refused	3%
N Size	29

12. Compared to before you received training, do you feel more or less confident traveling by yourself to unfamiliar places at any time of the day or night? Do you feel much more confident, somewhat more confident, about the same, or less confident?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more confident	52%
Somewhat more confident	28%
About the same	21%
Less confident	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	29

13. Did you receive training in daily living skills such as preparing food and house cleaning? *[Prompt if needed: This might have been called Techniques of Daily Living.]*

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Yes	37%
No	59%
DK/Refused	5%
N Size	41

14. Compared to before you received training, do you feel more or less confident cooking food in your home? Do you feel much more confident, somewhat more confident, about the same, or less confident?

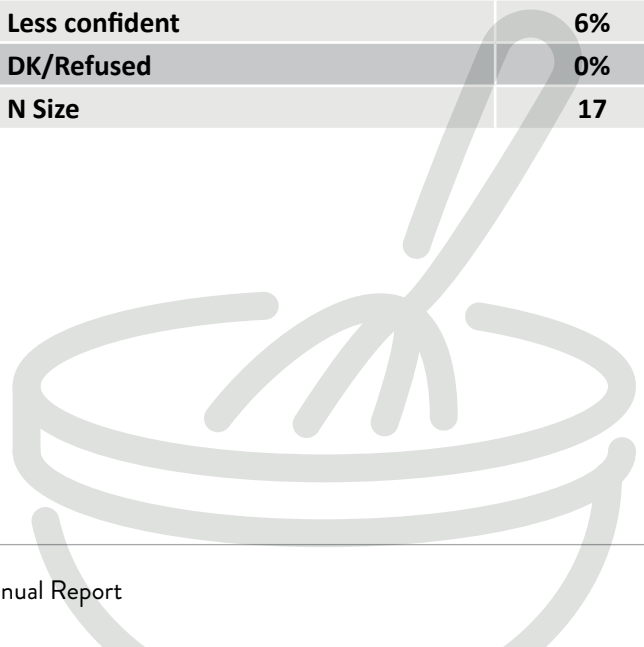
Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more confident	80%
Somewhat more confident	20%
About the same	0%
Less confident	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	16

15. Did you receive training in how to use a computer keyboard?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Yes	43%
No	58%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	40

16. Compared to before you received training, do you feel more or less confident when you need to type something? Do you feel much more confident, somewhat more confident, about the same, or less confident?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more confident	59%
Somewhat more confident	12%
About the same	24%
Less confident	6%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	17





17. Did you receive training in the use of technology or software, such as using a computer or computer programs, a Braille note-taking device, or Apple products like the iPad or iPhone?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Yes	49%
No	51%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	41

18. Compared to before you received this training, do you feel more or less confident, using this technology? Do you feel much more confident, somewhat more confident, about the same, or less confident?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more confident	68%
Somewhat more confident	16%
About the same	16%
Less confident	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	19

19. Did you receive training in Braille?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Yes	29%
No	71%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	42

20. Compared to before you received this training, are you reading Braille materials more or less often? Are you reading much more often, somewhat more often, about the same, or less often?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more often	42%
Somewhat more often	50%
About the same	8%
Less often	0%
Too soon to know	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	12

21. Compared to before you received this training, are you writing Braille more or less often? Are you writing much more often, somewhat more often, about the same, or less often?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more often	25%
Somewhat more often	67%
About the same	8%
Less often	0%
Too soon to know	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	12

22. Overall, to what degree do you feel the training you received was practical for everyday use? Was it very practical, somewhat practical, or not practical?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Very practical	81%
Somewhat practical	14%
Not practical	5%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	37

23. Compared to before you received training, are you going to social activities like club meetings or visiting friends more or less often? Are you going out much more often, somewhat more often, about the same, or less often? [Or, too soon to know]

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more often	30%
Somewhat more often	16%
About the same	38%
Less often	5%
Too soon to know	11%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	37

# SRC-B Committee Reports

24. Compared to before you received training, do you feel more or less comfortable talking about your vision loss with family and friends? Do you feel much more comfortable, somewhat more comfortable, about the same, or less comfortable?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more comfortable	26%
Somewhat more comfortable	23%
About the same	40%
Less comfortable	9%
DK/Refused	3%
N Size	35

25. When you think back on your training, what part do you think was most valuable to you and why was it valuable?

- *I appreciated Mary's kindness and her ability to enter into unfamiliar places to teach me their layout. This latter quality is one that I find truly astounding.*
- *The thing that it would've been more helpful is that the training could've been associated with the NFB Philosophy and the way the Cane Travel was taught at the NFB Training Centers.*
- *I think that using technology was of use to me.*
- *Crossing streets with the use of a cane.*
- *Computer, technologies.*
- *The cooking training was most valuable to me.*
- *Repeated practice of my routes.*
- *The most valuable part is to I got to figure out near by bus stations and train stations.*
- *Jon was very helpful in pointing out shortcuts.*
- *Learning how to navigate a computer, but with my short term memory, I never got in the mode of repetition to remember what I had learned.*
- *Travel life skills and technology.*
- *Learning my neighborhood and developing a good walking route to a couple places.*
- *Bus training.*
- *Use of the white cane and techniques for getting around.*
- *Orientation mobility, technology and home management.*

- *Learning about JAWS help!*
- *Productive use of time.*
- *It was horrible, felt I was racially profiled and was not treated as a person.*
- *Yes I like learning kitchen skills area and braille is very hard to learn take long time that sure everything is fine.*
- *The way to use white cane correctly.*
- *Learning how to communicate with other people who are Deaf and Blind.*
- *The one-on-one cooking and orientation lesson I had with one of their instructors on the last day there.*
- *I liked the techniques of daily living and meeting new people.*
- *Debbie not only EXAINED HOW TO and SHOWED ME how to do things, she had ME DO the tasks so I now have some "muscle memory" if HOW TO DO SOMETHING as well as the why/HOW to do it!!!! More importantly, I KNOW that I can always CALL her if I have forgotten something or have ANY questions!!!! GOOD WOMAN/TEACHER!!!!*
- *Having my needs being heard.*
- *Connections and growth with people experiencing the same struggles as me.*
- *When I look back on my training, the most valuable thing was orientation and mobility. I'm much more confident with street crossings, traveling by bus, and getting places on my own.*
- *The good ideas that Jan gave.*
- *The confidence to be able to take walks on my own or to go to the gas station when I want*
- *Using computer on my own.*
- *Braille and computer.*

26. What part of the training do you think was of least use to you?

- *The thing that was least useful was the fact it was in a noisy environment and there was times where I wasn't comfortable being in a noisy environment and being touched without warning and without permission.*
- *I don't know.*
- *Braille*

- *The technology training was least useful to me.*
  - *Listening to recordings describing the roots.*
  - *None*
  - *Learning how to navigate a computer that is not practical.*
  - *Everything was useful.*
  - *Nothing*
  - *I would have liked an orientation that showed things we could do. I asked about bus travel and think there is a metro card blind folks can get but I never got that or asked for it more forcefully. Not a big deal though I will just call the bus people if I need to. Daniel did a good job and this training really helped my state of mind heck helped me get out and walk next to my wife instead of behind her worried about tripping or running into people. This was the most life changing part of the training for me but I'm 50 and still have a bit of vision left.*
  - *None*
  - *Not sure.*
  - *My trainings were well tailored so I don't think there was no "less useful" stuff.*
  - *I felt none of the training was useful because it is hard to be trained when you feel you are being subjected to racial bias.*
  - *Their very well job to do training to student in class.*
  - *None of the training had least use to me, all of the training was important.*
  - *To coordinate schedules so that I could get my training.*
  - *I think all the training was useful because I learned something new from everyone.*
  - *NOTHING!*
  - *Nothing*
  - *During my attendance there was a lapse in tech staff and the training I did receive was based on the immediate questions I had. I think the program needed to be revamped with skills we could use to get jobs in the current time like use of Word, Outlook, adapting our personal computers to fit our current jobs. More skills based with practice time to become viable in the current workforce.*
  - *None*
  - *All was good.*
  - *Cane travel.*
27. Was there anything you would have liked to have learned during the training that was not covered?
- *I would've wanted to learn more about the NFB way of Cane Travel and not having anybody in a noisy environment making me nervous in any way. Some of the Cane Travel does clash with the NFB's method of Cane Travel.*
  - *Nothing*
  - *I need to practice more computer.*
  - *I would've like to learn and practice more campus exploration that wasn't directly related to my routes.*
  - *I'm not sure.*
  - *I still need work on navigating a computer, but I need help in knowing what computer would work best for the kind of vision problems I have. I recently got an I-phone that I could use help with in how to make it work best for me.*
  - *Yes, more hours in technology.*
  - *Nothing*
  - *I wish we had a little more time. I wasn't able to attend the last session and we were walking outdoors in November in less than ideal weather conditions. Time ran out.*
  - *None*
  - *Nothing I can think of as for now.*
  - *I would have loved to have learned more but the environment of racism I felt made it hard to learn.*
  - *It's same thing.*
  - *Travelling through buses or any other transportation.*
  - *How to Cook!*
  - *None*
  - *See above, and more social networking and helping us find and see and experience some of the resources that are out there in the community for us. Such as guest speakers or going to a blindness community online or in person with other students to learn to reach out.*
  - *No*
  - *Training in Orcam glasses.*
  - *I am not sure this question.*

# SRC-B Committee Reports

28. Finally, would you recommend this trainer to others? Would you definitely recommend, probably recommend, or not recommend this trainer to others?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Definitely recommend	76%
Probably recommend	14%
Not recommend	5%
DK/Refused	5%
N Size	37

## Overall Results for Mary Kautto

1. First, did you complete your training with Mary Kautto?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Yes	66%
No, never started the training	17%
No, dropped out of training	0%
No, I'm still in training	17%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	6

### Q1a *Could you tell me why you were not able to start the training?*

- Bad weather conditions. Vacation. Mary does an awesome job with training and I am so grateful for having her trained me. I do feel that I need a little bit more training with her With some things just for my comfort so I can feel more independent on my own.

2. Did you attend the training full-time or part-time? Full-time is 30 or more hours per week and part-time is less than 30 hours per week.

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Full-time (30 or more hours per week)	0%
Part-time (less than 30 hours per week)	100%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	4

3. To what degree do you feel the training you received was tailored to your particular needs? Do you feel it was very well tailored, somewhat tailored, or not tailored to your needs?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Very well-tailored	75%
Somewhat tai-lored	25%
Not tailored	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	4

4. How often do you feel you were treated respectfully during the training? Do you think you were treated with respect all of the time, much of the time, only some of the time, or never?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
All the time	75%
Much of the time	25%
Only some of the time	0%
Never	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	4

5. How was the pace of the training? Would you say the pace was way too fast, a little too fast, just right, a little too slow, or way too slow?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Too fast	0%
A little too fast	0%
Just right	75%
A little too slow	25%
Way too slow	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	4

6. Please describe the primary method used to interact with [your ATB vendor name] to receive your ATB training.

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
In-person meeting	100%
Phone call	0%
Email	0%
Online meeting (e.g. Zoom, WebEx, Skype platforms)	0%
Other non-traditional method, please describe: (none were listed)	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	4

7. Please explain what you liked or didn't like about the process of meeting in a non-traditional way (e.g. Phone, Email, Online meeting, Other) with [your ATB vendor name].

8. Did you receive training in traveling? This could include using buses, using a white cane, or planning a shopping trip? [*Prompt if needed: Sometimes this is called Orientation and Mobility, or Travel Training*].

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Yes	75%
No	25%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	4

9. To what degree did you feel safe during this training? Did you feel very safe, somewhat safe, or not safe?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Very safe	100%
Somewhat safe	0%
Not safe	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	3

10. Compared to before you received training, do you feel more or less confident traveling by yourself to unfamiliar places at any time of the day or night? Do you feel much more confident, somewhat more confident, about the same, or less confident?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more confident	33%
Somewhat more confident	33%
About the same	33%
Less confident	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	3

11. Did you receive training in daily living skills such as preparing food and house cleaning? [*Prompt if needed: This might have been called Techniques of Daily Living.*]

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Yes	0%
No	100%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	4

12. Compared to before you received training, do you feel more or less confident cooking food in your home? Do you feel much more confident, somewhat more confident, about the same, or less confident?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more confident	0%
Somewhat more confident	0%
About the same	0%
Less confident	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	0



# SRC-B Committee Reports

13. Did you receive training in how to use a computer keyboard?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Yes	0%
No	100%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	4

14. Compared to before you received training, do you feel more or less confident when you need to type something? Do you feel much more confident, somewhat more confident, about the same, or less confident?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more confident	0%
Somewhat more confident	0%
About the same	0%
Less confident	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	0

15. Did you receive training in the use of technology or software, such as using a computer or computer programs, a Braille note-taking device, or Apple products like the iPad or iPhone?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Yes	25%
No	75%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	4

16. Compared to before you received this training, do you feel more or less confident, using this technology? Do you feel much more confident, somewhat more confident, about the same, or less confident?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more confident	100%
Somewhat more confident	0%
About the same	0%
Less confident	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	1

17. Did you receive training in Braille?

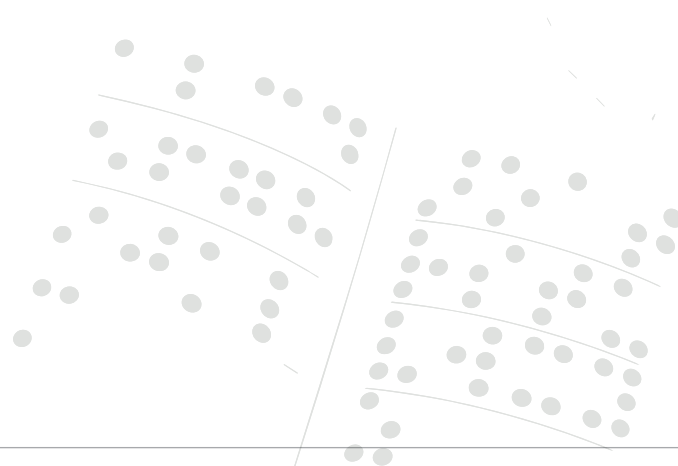
Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Yes	25%
No	75%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	4

18. Compared to before you received this training, are you reading Braille materials more or less often? Are you reading much more often, somewhat more often, about the same, or less often?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more often	100%
Somewhat more often	0%
About the same	0%
Less often	0%
Too soon to know	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	1

19. Compared to before you received this training, are you writing Braille more or less often? Are you writing much more often, somewhat more often, about the same, or less often?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more often	0%
Somewhat more often	100%
About the same	0%
Less often	0%
Too soon to know	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	1



20. Overall, to what degree do you feel the training you received was practical for everyday use? Was it very practical, somewhat practical, or not practical?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Very practical	67%
Somewhat practical	33%
Not practical	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	3

21. Compared to before you received training, are you going to social activities like club meetings or visiting friends more or less often? Are you going out much more often, somewhat more often, about the same, or less often? [Or, too soon to know]

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more often	0%
Somewhat more often	0%
About the same	75%
Less often	25%
Too soon to know	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	4

22. Compared to before you received training, do you feel more or less comfortable talking about your vision loss with family and friends? Do you feel much more comfortable, somewhat more comfortable, about the same, or less comfortable?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Much more comfortable	25%
Somewhat more comfortable	0%
About the same	50%
Less comfortable	25%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	4

23. When you think back on your training, what part do you think was most valuable to you and why was it valuable?

- *I appreciated Mary's kindness and her ability to enter into unfamiliar places to teach me their layout. This latter quality is one that I find truly astounding.*
- *The thing that it would've been more helpful is that the training could've been associated with the NFB Philosophy and the way the Cane Travel was taught at the NFB Training Centers.*
- *Learning my neighborhood and developing a good walking route to a couple places.*
- *Productive use of time*

24. What part of the training do you think was of least use to you?

- *The thing that was least useful was the fact it was in a noisy environment and there was times where I wasn't comfortable being in a noisy environment and being touched without warning and without permission.*
- *Nothing*
- *My trainings were well tailored so I don't think there was no "less useful" stuff.*

25. Was there anything you would have liked to have learned during the training that was not covered?

- *I would've wanted to learn more about the NFB way of Cane Travel and not having anybody in a noisy environment making me nervous in any way. Some of the Cane Travel does clash with the NFB's method of Cane Travel.*
- *I wish we had a little more time. I wasn't able to attend the last session and we were walking outdoors in November in less than ideal weather conditions. Time ran out.*
- *Nothing I can think of as for now.*

# SRC-B Committee Reports

26. Finally, would you recommend this trainer to others? Would you definitely recommend, probably recommend, or not recommend this trainer to others?

Responses	Jul21-Jun22
Definitely recommend	75%
Probably recommend	25%
Not recommend	0%
DK/Refused	0%
N Size	4

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Daniel Ashman, Chair*

---

## SSB 2022 Funding

State Services for the Blind’s vocational rehabilitation program is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education with a state match. For Federal Fiscal Year 2022, the total amount of federal grant funds used for these services is []







# State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

2200 University Avenue West, Suite 240  
St. Paul, MN 55114

[www.mnssb.org](http://www.mnssb.org)

---

State Services for the Blind's vocational rehabilitation program is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education with a state match. For Federal Fiscal Year 2022, the total amount of federal grant funds used for these services is \$9,296,238 (78.7 percent). The state match appropriation is \$2,516,008 (21.3 percent).

---

Upon request, the information in this document can be made accessible for persons with disabilities.

Equal opportunity employer and service provider.

**JANUARY 2023**