

Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council

2004 Annual Report



October 1, 2003 - September 30, 2004



Vocational Rehabilitation Program Mission:
Assist Minnesotans with disabilities to reach their goals for working and living in the community.

State Rehabilitation Roles and Responsibilities

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meets 10 times per year, at least once in Greater Minnesota. It will hold public forums to gather information about the employment of people with disabilities. Every effort is made to provide a variety of avenues for public input whenever issues, concerns, or policy changes are considered.

Council appointments are made by the Governor and are based on personal qualifications and the needs of the Council. Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act requires that the Council consist of at

least 15 members and represent a cross section of Minnesotans who have a stake in Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services. The Council's membership must always include a representative from the Statewide Independent Living Council; a Parent Training and Information Center; the Client Assistance Project; the Department of Education; the Director of the designated State VR unit, and the Governor's Workforce Development Council. The director of an American Indian VR project; current or former applicants for, or recipients of, VR services; a representative of a community rehabilitation program; a VR Counselor; a variety of advocates; and four representatives of business, industry and labor.

The responsibilities of the SRC are defined in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The SRC is authorized to review, analyze and advise Rehabilitation Services on the performance of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. In partnership with Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Program, the SRC develops and reviews state goals and priorities, evaluates the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program, assists in the preparation of the Unified State Plan, reviews customer satisfaction, and prepares and submits an annual report to the Governor and Commissioner on the status of Vocational Rehabilitation.

State Rehabilitation Council Members

Scott Dehn Saint Paul Business	Lois Johnson Windom State Independent Living Council	David Leiseth Red Wing Community Rehabilitation Org. (Term ended Dec. 2003)	Thant Pearson Blaine Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
Rich Diedrichsen St. Cloud Advocate	Mickey Kyler, Vice-Chair Crookston Advocate	Mark Netzinger, Chair Cambridge Business	Anne Robertson Minneapolis Client Assistance Project (Term ended Aug. 2004)
Steve Ditschler Eagan Community Rehabilitation Program (Appointed June 2004)	Gloria LaFriniere Naytahwaush White Earth Reservation American Indian VR Program	Bob Niemiec Bloomington Business	Sarah Simmons Minneapolis Advocate (Term ended June 2004)
Kris Flaten Saint Paul Advocate	William Negaard Vernon Center Business (Appointed June 2004)	Justin Page Minneapolis Client Assistance Project (Appointed Nov. 2004)	Jayne Spain Roseville Special Education Department of Education
Anne Geoghegan Minneapolis Advocate		Rachel Parker Minneapolis Parent Training & Information Center	
Peter Hoialmen Minneapolis Business (Term ended June 2004)			

From the Chair

In times of uncertainty, Howard Glad has concluded his Director’s report to the SRC with a Chinese blessing, “May you live in interesting times.” Since I joined the Council in 1997, I think the entire time could fall under the description of “interesting times.”

I have seen two major and pivotal transitions. The first was the relocation of the Vocational Rehabilitation Offices to the WorkForce Centers, and the second, the merger of two large departments, the Department of Economic Security and the Department of Trade and Economic Development. Both of these transitions have positioned Vocational Rehabilitation to respond to the challenges posed by the economy and the VR wait list.

Location in the WorkForce Centers has enabled the sharing of resources and information. In response to the need for maximizing limited resources, Vocational Rehabilitation will continue to deepen their collaborative relationships with their WorkForce partners and the community at large.

DEED’s new mission statement is: “To support the economic success of individuals, businesses and communities by improving opportunities for growth.” Economic development promises to broaden employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

It has been an honor to serve the governor and the people of Minnesota, first as a State Rehabilitation Council member and for the last two years as the Chair. Although my tenure on the Council will soon be completed, I look forward to watching how the Council responds to future challenges.

Sincerely,



Mark Netzinger
Council Chair

The Council shall . . . prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Commissioner on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State, and make the report available to the public.

*Section 105 of the
Rehabilitation Act*

From the Director of Rehabilitation Services

F

For years it has been apparent that without a significant increase in federal or other funding for the public Vocational Rehabilitation Program, eventually we would have to further restrict the number of applicants for whom we could provide services. This has been further exacerbated by a growing demand for VR services and the ever increasing cost of delivering those services. Despite our best efforts to minimize the impact of flat funding and continuing high demand, beginning in January 2004 we found it necessary to place all new applicants on a wait list to ensure sufficient funding was available to bring previously approved plans to completion.

Since August, applicants have been gradually moved off the list and into services designed to achieve their employment aspirations. It has become apparent, however, that many otherwise eligible recipients will not get the full range of services we would normally provide; these applicants simply do not qualify under a very stringent priority of service regimen designed to ensure limited resources are expended on those applicants with the most limiting disabilities. This is an unfortunate circumstance and plans are being formed to expand the depth and breadth of information and referral services for individuals who are turned away.

The public Vocational Rehabilitation Program is designed to help individuals with significant disabilities achieve self-sufficiency through employment and independent living. Historically, the focus has been directed toward securing and maintaining employment with limited regard for the individual's drive—or intention—to achieve self sufficiency. The time has come to enter into a serious discussion about basic program assumptions and expectations. I firmly believe that consumers also have responsibilities, and one of those is an expression of intent to seek the highest level of self-sufficiency and independence possible.

This is a serious and long overdue discussion in which the State Rehabilitation Council should play an important role. I know the Council is up to the challenge and I look forward to your insight.

I am proud of the strong partnerships the State Rehabilitation Council and Rehabilitation Services have forged with partners across the disability community—it is through these partnerships and a close and focused interaction that we will prevail despite current and future challenges. Godspeed!



Howard Glad
Director of Rehabilitation Services

Individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, are capable of achieving competitive, high-quality employment in integrated settings and living full and productive lives in their communities.

RSA Guiding Principles

Principles

The State Rehabilitation Council Principles have been proven by the test of time. The Council originally developed the Principles for guidance during the merger of the Department of Economic Security and the Department of Trade and Economic Development. The Council now turns to them during times of debate.

Consumer Choice

Individuals with disabilities and their representatives are full partners in a VR program and must be involved in meaningful and informed choices with the selection of employment outcomes, services needed, service providers, and the methods used to secure such services.

Legal/Due Process

The legal rights of consumers (data privacy, confidentiality, and the rights established under the Americans with Disabilities Act) must be protected. Opportunities to resolve differences through due process must be safeguarded.

Relationships

Valued relationships developed by the VR program must be preserved and enhanced. This includes relationships with consumers, the State Rehabilitation Council, stakeholders, other existing advisory bodies, vendors, and providers.

VR Program Services

The VR program must continue to improve and streamline services for consumers. This includes easy access to both programs and facilities. Any relocation or organizational restructuring must assure that individualized services and consumer programs are uninterrupted.

The individualized, one-on-one relationship between the consumer and the VR counselor must be preserved.

The VR program must continue its efforts to provide services to individuals with disabilities in under-served populations such as transition-age youth, deaf/hard of hearing people, people with traumatic brain injuries, serious mental illnesses, HIV infection, chemical dependency, hidden disabilities, and others in new and emerging groups.

Administrative

The VR Program must be managed and directed by VR personnel.

VR must have the autonomy and the freedom to operate in a way that promotes staff creativity, informed choice by consumers, and efficient use of program funds.

At a minimum, the VR program, Extended Employment program, Independent Living program, Disability Determination Services, and State Services for the Blind should remain aligned within the same department.

Workforce Development

The VR program is an employment program under Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act and must be a fully participating partner in all Minnesota workforce development activities. As such, the VR program must demonstrate an ongoing effort in advocating for people with disabilities to be included as valued members of Minnesota's workforce. VR must continue its efforts to work collaboratively with the business community to increase employers' access to qualified workers with disabilities.

the Numbers . . .

October 1, 2003 - September 30, 2004

Who we serve

- The Vocational Rehabilitation program served 19,139 Minnesotans.
- There were 9,309 new applicants.
- 8,512 applicants were determined eligible and of these applicants, 5,159 were placed on the wait list.
- In 2002, 74 percent of VR's caseload had three or more serious functional limitations. By 2004, 85 percent of VR's caseload had three or more serious functional limitations.
- 30 percent of Vocational Rehabilitation's caseload is school transition-age, between 16 and 21.

VR's Outcomes

- This year 2,820 Vocational Rehabilitation Participants obtained employment. 95 percent of the jobs were at minimum wage or above. All jobs were in the community.
- Of all working, 18.5 percent utilized formal supports.
- Of the 5 percent working below minimum wage, 91 percent utilized formal supports.
- The average wage of competitive participants who did not require long-term support was \$10.20.
- \$10.20 compares favorably with \$10.85—the average wage for all job vacancies listed during the fourth quarter of 2004.
- The average wage of those placed above minimum wage who required supports on the job was \$7.10.
- Upon completion of the VR program, participants working above minimum wage worked an average of 29 hours per week.

If the designated State unit is unable to provide the full range of vocational rehabilitation services to all eligible individuals. . . the State plan must assure that—

(A) In accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection, individuals with the most significant disabilities will be selected first for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

Section 101 of the Rehabilitation Act

Vocational Rehabilitation Budget

Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation has had relatively flat funding for many years. Additionally, VR continues to experience high demand for services in a world where the cost of providing services is escalating. To assure that commitments to all VR participants currently receiving services were honored, VR found it necessary to place all new applicants on a wait list beginning in

January 2004. The Council was concerned, asked questions, and gave advice.

By September, the VR wait list had grown to 6,000. With the common goal of decreasing the wait list without jeopardizing the quality of employment outcomes, VR and the SRC continue to discuss new ways of providing services. This topic will be a priority in the upcoming year.

Future VR Rule Change

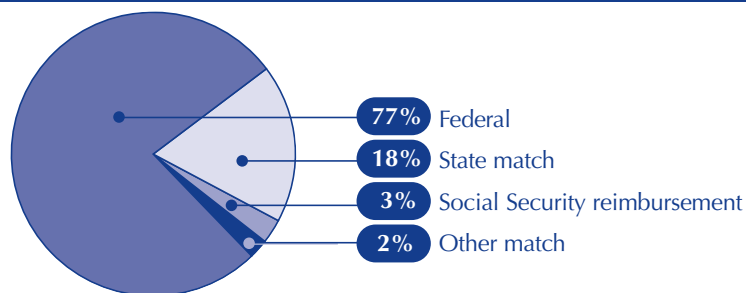
In response to budgetary concerns, VR is examining Minnesota's VR Rule. In June, preliminary rule changes were brought to the SRC for discussion. Although the August SRC public forum was not an official public hearing for purposes of rule change, members of the public were invited to comment. The SRC has asked Rehabilitation Services to give careful consideration to their advice and report back early in 2005. Monitoring the process of rule revision will be an important part of next year's work for the SRC.

the Numbers . . .

Vocational Rehabilitation Expenditures (in millions) 2004



Vocational Rehabilitation Funding Sources 2004



Estimates of Minnesotans with Disabilities

Minnesotans aged 18-64 with an employment disability	267,524 ^{1,2}
Students between 18-21 in special education	6,483 ³
Minnesotans on Social Security Disability Income	74,630 ⁴
Minnesotans (18-64) on Supplemental Security Income	42,476 ⁴
Minnesotans (18-65) unemployed with Serious Mental illness	152,008 ^{5,6,7}
Minnesotans (18-64) living with HIV/AIDS	4,866 ⁸
Minnesotans (20-64) living with a disability resulting from a traumatic brain injury	62,742 ⁹
Minnesotans (18-64) who are deaf or hard of hearing	303,100 ¹⁰
Minnesotans (18-64) who are deaf or hard of hearing seeking employment	12,734 ¹⁰

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2003 Data profile, Tabular Profile for MN-Table2. www.census.gov/acs

² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey defines disability as long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition that can make it difficult for a person to do activities such as walking, climbing stairs, dressing, bathing, learning, or remembering. www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/Def

³ Minnesota Department of Education.

⁴ Social Security Administration, duplicate count. An estimated 30% of recipients receive both SSI and SSDI.

⁵ Jans, L., Stoddard, S. & Kraus, L. (2004). Chartbook on Mental Health and Disability in the United States.

Washington, DC; U.S. Department of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau data estimates for 2003.

⁷ Anthony, W.A., Cohen, Farkas, M., & Gagne, C. (2002). Psychiatric Rehabilitation (2nd ed.).

⁸ Minnesota Department of Health, estimate for 2004.

⁹ Based on National Center for Disease Control prevailing estimates.

¹⁰ University of Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Type of Medical Insurance at Closure 2004

Type of Medical Insurance	Number of Consumers	Percent of Total
Medicaid	935	33.2%
Consumer's job	813	28.8
Other Private Insurance	450	16.0
None	309	11.0
Medicare	167	5.9
Minnesota Care	142	5.0
Workers Compensation	4	0.1
Total	2,820	100.0

There are 163 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, down from a high of 176 in 2000.

Vocational Rehabilitation at a Glance

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the Numbers . . .

12 Largest Disability Groups Served by Vocational Rehabilitation 2004

Primary Disability Group	Consumers Served	Percent of Caseload	Percent of Total Employment Outcomes
Serious Mental Illnesses	6,277	32.8%	29.8%
Learning Disability	2,843	14.9	16.2
Mental Retardation	1,859	9.7	13.5
Other Orthopedic & Neurological Impairments	1,675	8.8	8.8
Traumatic Brain Injury/Stroke	1,018	5.3	5.7
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	929	4.9	5.0
Chemical Dependency	765	4.0	3.8
Respiratory & Other Physical Impairments	443	2.3	1.8
Cerebral Palsy	374	2.0	1.3
Autism	324	1.7	.9
Spinal Cord Injury	303	1.6	1.5
Arthritis & Rheumatism	300	1.6	1.7

Consumers Served by Cultural/Ethnic Group

Percent of Total MN Population ¹	Cultural/Ethnic Group	Percent of Total	Percent of Total Employment Outcomes
4.0%	African American	9.9%	6.5%
1.0	American Indian	1.9	1.8
3.0	Asian/Pacific Islander	2.3	2.0
90.0	Caucasian	83.0	86.8
4.0 ²	Latino/Hispanic	2.0	2.2
1.0	Multiple Ethnicity	0.8	0.7
—	Not Reported ³	0.1	0.0
	Total	100.0	100.0

¹ Minnesota Population Projections by Race and Hispanic Origin, MN State Demographic Center

² Duplicate Count

³ VR allows participants to "not report" ethnicity. The Census requires a cultural/ethnic group.

Vocational Rehabilitation Participants Receiving SSI/SSDI at Application

SSI	SSDI	SSI & SSDI	Total	Percent of Total VR Caseload
2,610	2,519	519	5,648	29.5%

Competitive Employment Placements 2004 —Without Supports

Occupation	Number of Consumers	Percent of Total	Average Hourly Wage	Average Hours/Week
Professional/Technical/Managerial	406	17.8%	\$13.89	33
Clerical/Sales	562	24.6	9.53	29
Service	648	28.3	8.58	26
Farming/Fishing/Forestry	48	2.1	9.08	34
Industrial Trades	442	19.3	10.51	35
Misc. Occupations	181	7.9	9.69	33
Total	2,287	100.0	10.20	30

Competitive Employment Placements 2004 —With Supports

Occupation	Number of Consumers	Percent of Total	Average Hourly Wage	Average Hours/Week
Professional/Technical/Managerial	16	4.2%	\$10.78	27
Clerical/Sales	72	18.8	7.20	22
Service	204	53.4	7.14	19
Farming/Fishing/Forestry	6	1.6	7.25	18
Industrial Trades	46	12.0	6.66	24
Misc. Occupations	38	10.0	6.56	24
Total	382	100.0	7.10	21

Employment Outcomes by Type of Employment

	2002	2003	2004	Percent of 2004 Placements
Competitive employment	2,742	2,583	2,236	79.3%
Self-employment	93	101	62	2.2
Supported employment	721	652	521	18.5
Unpaid homemaker	15	10	1	0.0
Total	3,571	3,346	2,820	100.0

When adjusted for inflation, Vocational Rehabilitation funding has about the same purchasing power as in 1987.

Minnesota State Plan

The State Rehabilitation Council shall, after consulting with the Governor's Workforce Development Council, advise DEED and Rehabilitation Services/ Vocational Rehabilitation and assist in the preparation of the State plan.

Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act

July 2005 will be the beginning of the next five-year cycle for the Minnesota State Plan for Workforce Development, more commonly known as the "Unified State Plan." This year, the SRC began to collaborate on drafting of the Rehabilitation Services portion of the Unified State Plan by meeting in small groups to review the SRC/RS Joint Strategic Goals.

- 1) *Provide efficient and improved employment outcomes that respond to consumer needs.*
- 2) *Build strong coalitions with stakeholders—consumers, employers, advocacy groups, schools, and social service agencies.*
- 3) *Collaborate in the Minnesota WorkForce Center System so that VR services are available and provided compatible with the intent and integrity of the Rehabilitation Act.*
- 4) *Build a healthy and productive work environment within RS-VR teams.*

For the next five years, one of the Council's annual tasks will be to continue to review the performance indicators established for each of these strategic goals, and report to the Governor and the Commissioner via the SRC annual report.

State Rehabilitation Council Recommendations

The Joint Strategic Goals established for the unified State Plan are used as a framework for the SRC to evaluate the VR program.

The SRC's work on the strategic goals frequently results in recommendations to the Council and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The following two pages describe recommendations that originated from the work of strategic goal 2 and strategic goal 4 work groups.

The primary role of VR agencies and other RSA funded entities is to empower individuals with disabilities by providing the information, skills training, education, confidence, and support services individuals need to make informed choices about their professional and personal lives.

RSA Guiding Principles

Build Strong Coalitions With Stakeholders

The SRC shall invite Dr. Roy Grizzard, Department of Labor Assistant Secretary for Disability and Employment Policy (ODEP), to speak at a public meeting of the SRC on the relationship between the Office of Disability Employment Policy, special education, and Rehabilitation Services.

This recommendation culminated in a meeting with Dr. Grizzard at the September 2004 SRC meeting. ODEP provides leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities. This visit provided the SRC an important opportunity to learn how

the Department of Labor can work in concert with the Department of Education and Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Dr. Grizzard reviewed the many programs, grants, and initiatives within ODEP. He spoke of the positive effects of

the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act on young people with disabilities and called for society to have high expectations for students with disabilities. He recommended strong connections between secondary education transition, job training and vocational rehabilitation.

As always, the meeting was open to the public. The Council hosted visitors from the Minnesota State Council on Disability, State Services for the Blind, Regional Area Managers, and the Independent Living Centers.

The SRC informs itself through presentations:

To assure they stay informed on emerging disability issues, the Council received the following presentations:

- Ticket to Work
- School to Work Transition
- Project C3: Connecting Youth with Communities and Careers
- Mental health disabilities and Rehabilitation Services
- The Governor's Workforce Development Council
- Open meeting law
- Customized employment

Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (TWWIIA) authorized three programs to promote self-sufficiency for Social Security recipients. In Minnesota, these are known as the Ticket to Work program; Medical Assistance for Employed People with Disabilities, and the Work Incentives Connection, all of which have a positive effect on recipients capacity to become economically self-sufficient.

2004 was Minnesota's first full year of implementation of the Ticket to Work program. One of the cornerstones of the program is consumer choice of vendor. Minnesotans now have a choice of 34 vendors, known as Employment Networks. Nonetheless, 90 percent of the 425 tickets used by Minnesota's ticket holders requested employment services from Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation.

The SRC will periodically revisit this issue to assess the impact on program resources, especially program income. The SRC congratulates Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation on an excellent start in the implementation of the Ticket to Work program.



Mickey Kyler, SRC member, and Dr. Roy Grizzard at the September 2004 meeting.

NOTE—

For more information on ODEP see: www.dol.gov/odep

Build a Healthy and Productive Work Environment

Concerned that up to one-third of the VR Program's vocational rehabilitation counselors and managers are likely to retire within the next five years, the SRC hosted a forum on Counselor Recruitment and Retention in August of 2003. Based on advice provided by a panel of graduate students, university professors, VR managers, counselors and job developers, the Council worked this year to develop the following recommendations:

- 1) *It is recommended that Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Employment and Economic Development, and the Department of Employee Relations study the current classification and compensation of Master-level Rehabilitation Counselors, including a Hay study as soon as possible, so that objective information can inform discussion of counselor classification and compensation.*
- 2) *It is recommended that Rehabilitation Services staff develop and make information about careers in vocational rehabilitation available to secondary and post-secondary students in Minnesota, particularly in regard to recruitment of persons of color and persons with significant disabilities. Mindful that time and resources are scarce, the Council notes that very modest efforts, at the agency's discretion, are likely to make a difference and that*

collaboration with professional organizations and the area's Rehabilitation Counseling Programs will also raise awareness about the profession and magnify staff efforts.

It is further recommended that the widely used publication MN Careers and other resources available through the WorkForce Center System include information about Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling as a professional career.

- 3) *It is recommended that use of paid internships, which has proven highly effective in the recruitment of recently graduated counselors, be continued and strengthened as a counselor recruiting tool, and that compensation for interns be increased from \$8.50 per hour to \$10.00 per hour.*

- 4) *It is recommended that the paid education and development of Rehabilitation Services' support staff and paraprofessional staff representative of people of color and of people with disabilities, which has proven an effective means of recruiting such persons into counseling positions, be pursued strategically by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, that is, with established objectives.*



Collaboration

Strategic Goal Two Work group, “Build strong coalitions with stakeholders—consumers, employers, advocacy groups, schools, and social service agencies,” reviewed the interagency agreements that Vocational Rehabilitation maintains. The SRC received a presentation on the interagency agreement between Rehabilitation Services, State Services for the Blind and the Minnesota Department of Education. This agreement outlines a continuum of services to students with disabilities enrolled in public schools and is an excellent example of an interagency agreement. Objectives of this agreement are to:

- Provide guidance to RS/SSB staff, and school personnel when serving students with disabilities transitioning from school to employment.
- Be a vehicle for consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
- Provide guidance on the development of policies and procedures that facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to employment, and
- Promote flexible, coordinated and collaborative planning and service delivery among MDE, RS, and SSB for eligible youth transitioning from school to employment.

The most effective VR, Independent Living, Training and other programs result from a strong alliance between individuals with disabilities, grantee agencies, service providers, and organizations representing each. These alliances encourage accountability through systematic and ongoing assessments of a grantee’s policies, programs and practices.

RSA Guiding Principles

The Work Incentives Connection is a valuable resource for analysis of work benefits and how those will affect financial and medical supports for Vocational Rehabilitation participants. These individual studies prepare the participants for a truly profitable work experience. For the next year, the Work Incentives Connection will be jointly funded by RS-VR, the Department of Human Services and the Social Security Administration.

Top Six 2004 Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Sources

1. Educational Institutions	26%
2. Self-Referral	19%
3. Government Agencies	13%
4. Community Rehabilitation Programs	8%
5. Health Care	8%
6. WorkForce Center Partner	7%

Public Forum

The August meeting of the SRC was held in Monticello, Minnesota. Citizens were encouraged to provide testimony on all topics pertaining to Vocational Rehabilitation; in particular, the SRC sought comments on supported employment and the proposed rule change.

Public testimony was given nonstop throughout the day. Comments were provided by Community Rehabilitation Providers, Centers for Independent Living, VR participants, the local Workforce Investment Board, the Minnesota Aids Council, and other local partners. Among other things, the public gave the Council important feedback on the impact of proposed VR rule changes, frustration with the VR waiting list, insufficient funding for supported employment, the importance of increased collaboration between community partners, WorkForce Center and universal services access, and how proposed tuition changes would jeopardize leadership development in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community.

This testimony will be used by the SRC as it advises the state on the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

The State Rehabilitation Council is authorized to hold such hearings and forums as the Council may determine necessary to carry out its duties.

*Section 105 of the
Rehabilitation Act*

Individuals with disabilities are able to make informed choices about their own lives—including their employment options, the types of services they need, the selection of service providers—and are able to assume responsibility for their decisions.

RSA Guiding Principles

We believe that anybody, no matter what skill level, with the right amount of support, is able to work and contribute to our communities. The economic and personal benefits of helping people gain and keep employment is tremendous. . . But there is a gap. The gap is supported employment and customized employment dollars to help place and support people on jobs.

CRP Provider

I get one or two calls a week from parents wondering; “How do I prepare for my son’s or daughter’s graduation one year from now?”

CRP Provider in Greater Minnesota

Deaf people do not get the same employment or scholarship opportunities. If the discussed tuition decreases occur, opportunities for deaf people will be extremely limited. Tuition costs are increasing, so funding should maintain or increase.

*Former VR participant and President of the
Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens*

We are seeing increased contact between local offices of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Independent Living Centers and hope this will be the springboard for additional opportunities.

Director of Metro Independent Living Center

I don’t want to see a cookie-cutter approach to post-secondary education funding. I do see a need to cap tuition, but I am concerned that we are going to cut people off from their career goals. . . We need an appeal process when the career goal requires specialized training or there are only one or two places where you can receive the training.

Current VR Participant

Goodbye to Peter Hoialmen

P

Peter Hoialmen, long-time SRC member, died of natural causes at his home on October 9, 2004. Council members will remember Peter for his love of life, sharp mind, quick laugh, and interest in anything to do with sports. Thank you Peter for the work you did to further the interests of people with disabilities.



Peter Hoialmen

The SRC wishes to thank Medtronic, a company with demonstrated commitment to furthering the employment of people with disabilities, for their support of Peter's participation on the State Rehabilitation Council.

**State Rehabilitation Council member:
March 1998 to June 2004**

Vice-Chair: October 2000 to January 2001

The State Rehabilitation Council Speaks Out

The SRC closely follows legislative proposals, and when needed, will work with legislators to provide them information useful in their deliberations. For example, the letter below was sent to key members of the House and Senate in response to proposed cuts in the Extended Employment for Persons with Serious Mental Illness (EE-SMI) program.

“Since its inception in 1992, 2,541 people with mental illnesses have secured employment through EE-SMI support. Demand for the program continues to grow. In 2003, 1,023 persons received employment support to maintain or advance their jobs through the program. EE-SMI has a positive impact on Minnesota's economy. Earnings from employment averaged \$7.69 per hour with combined annual earnings of \$2.3 million dollars.”

Excerpt from SRC letter sent to key legislators

The Council shall . . . review, analyze, and advise . . . on functions performed by DEED that affect or that potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes. . .

Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act

Number of Vocational Rehabilitation Participants by County

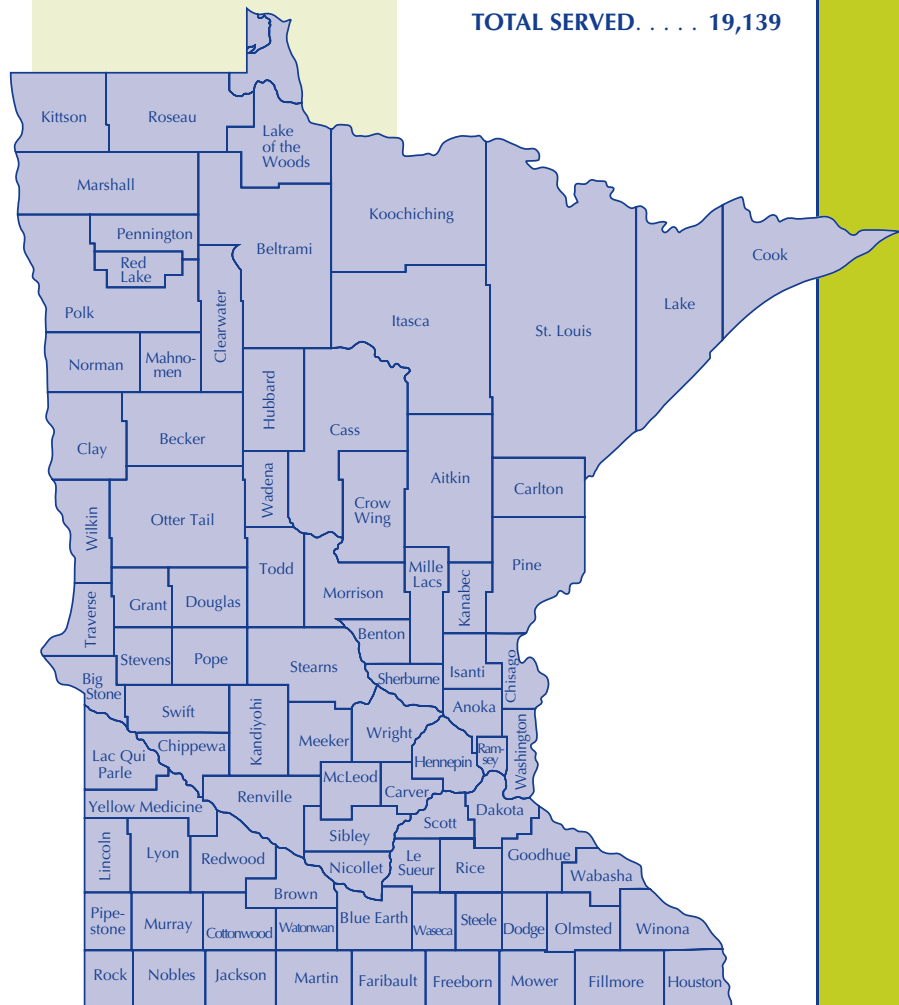
Rehabilitation Participants by County

AITKIN	15
ANOKA	942
BECKER	55
BELTRAMI	214
BENTON	216
BIG STONE	19
BLUE EARTH	298
BROWN	76
CARLTON	110
CARVER	178
CASS	113
CHIPPEWA	32
CHISAGO	161
CLAY	299
CLEARWATER	38
COOK	13
COTTONWOOD	40
CROW WING	289
DAKOTA	1,678
DODGE	55
DOUGLAS	77
FARIBAULT	47
FILLMORE	59
FREEBORN	133
GOODHUE	130
GRANT	24
HENNEPIN	4,091
HOUSTON	117
HUBBARD	73
ISANTI	146
ITASCA	116
JACKSON	41
KANABEC	68
KANDIYOHI	134
KITTSON	22
KOOCHICHING	58
LAC QUI PARLE	10
LAKE	39
LAKE OF THE WOODS	11
LE SUEUR	119
LINCOLN	22
LYON	103
MCLEOD	77
MAHNOMEN	12
MARSHALL	26
MARTIN	67
MEEKER	55
MILLE LACS	66
MORRISON	86
MOWER	163
MURRAY	18
NICOLLET	107

NOBLES	72
NORMAN	17
OLMSTED	579
OTTER TAIL	217
PENNINGTON	52
PINE	115
PIPESTONE	34
POLK	122
POPE	23
RAMSEY	2,429
RED LAKE	13
REDWOOD	54
RENVILLE	34
RICE	219
ROCK	21
ROSEAU	68
SAINT LOUIS	1,012
SCOTT	239
SHERBURNE	198

SIBLEY	45
STEARNS	642
STEELE	96
STEVENS	22
SWIFT	33
TODD	107
TRAVERSE	7
WABASHA	30
WADENA	54
WASECA	42
WASHINGTON	677
WATONWAN	43
WILKIN	13
WINONA	261
WRIGHT	308
YELLOW MEDICINE	31

NOT IN MINNESOTA . . . 48
 UNKNOWN 4
TOTAL SERVED 19,139



Public Input

The Council Wants Public Input

There are many ways to let the Council know your thoughts.

You can call:

Voice: 651.296.5629 or 1.800.328.9095

TTY: 651.296.3900 or 1.800.657.3973

Speech-to-speech telephone re-voice:
1.877.627.3848

You can write:

State Rehabilitation Council
Department of Employment
and Economic Development
Vocational Rehabilitation
1st National Bank Building
332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1351

You can fax:

651.297.5159

You can attend a meeting:

All State Rehabilitation Council meetings are public. Meetings are the fourth Wednesday of every month except July and a combined November/December meeting held the first Wednesday in December. Locations and time are in the Minnesota State Register at a public library or on the Internet:

www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore/stateregister.asp

www.deed.state.mn.us/rehab/index.htm

The State Rehabilitation Council invites you to become a member:

If you are interested in becoming a member of the State Rehabilitation Council, an application form can be obtained by calling 651.296.5629.

or on the Internet:

www.sos.state.mn.us/openapp/forms.html

We have moved!

The final step in the merger of the Department of Economic Security and the Department of Trade and Economic Development was completed by bringing the two former departments together under one roof. Please note our new name and address:

Department of Employment and
Economic Development (DEED)
State Rehabilitation Council
Vocational Rehabilitation
1st National Bank Building
332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200
Saint Paul, MN 55101-1351

positively Department of Employment
and Economic Development
Minnesota

This report can be made available in Braille, high-contrast, large print, audiotape, or other formats upon request by calling:

**651.296.5629
1.800.328.9095
or TTY 1.800.657.3973**

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telephone re-voice:
1.877.627.3848**