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

October 1, 2003 - September 30, 2004
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.

**State Rehabilitation Council Members**

- **Scott Dehn**
  - Saint Paul Business

- **Rich Diedrichsen**
  - St. Cloud Advocate

- **Steve Ditschler**
  - Eagan Community Rehabilitation Program
  - (Appointed June 2004)

- **Kris Flaten**
  - Saint Paul Advocate

- **Anne Geoghegan**
  - Minneapolis Advocate

- **Peter Hoialmen**
  - Minneapolis Business
  - (Term ended June 2004)

- **Lois Johnson**
  - Windom
  - State Independent Living Council

- **Mickey Kyler, Vice-Chair**
  - Crookston Advocate

- **Gloria LaFriniere**
  - Naytahwaush
  - White Earth Reservation
  - American Indian VR Program

- **William Negaard**
  - Vernon Center Business
  - (Appointed June 2004)

- **David Leiseth**
  - Red Wing Community Rehabilitation Org.
  - (Term ended Dec. 2003)

- **Mark Netzinger, Chair**
  - Cambridge Business

- **Bob Niemiec**
  - Bloomington Business

- **Sarah Simmons**
  - Minneapolis Advocate
  - (Term ended June 2004)

- **Thant Pearson**
  - Blaine Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

- **Anne Robertson**
  - Minneapolis Client Assistance Project
  - (Term ended Aug. 2004)

- **Jayne Spain**
  - Roseville Special Education

- **Rachel Parker**
  - Minneapolis
  - Parent Training & Information Center

- **Steve Ditschler**
  - Eagan Community Rehabilitation Program
  - (Term ended Dec. 2003)

- **Anne Robertson**
  - Minneapolis Client Assistance Project
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- **Sarah Simmons**
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  - Roseville Special Education

- **Rachel Parker**
  - Minneapolis
  - Parent Training & Information Center
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
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
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.
Vocational Rehabilitation at a Glance

the Numbers . . .

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.

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.

October 1, 2003 - September 30, 2004

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.
Vocational Rehabilitation at a Glance

the Numbers...

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

Vocational Rehabilitation Expenditures (in millions) 2004

- $16.3 Services purchased for consumers
- $18.0 Services provided to consumers by VR Staff
- $2.8 Vocational Rehabilitation administrative costs
- $2.7 Field office operations
- $3.0 State and DEED direct and indirect charges

Vocational Rehabilitation Funding Sources 2004

- 77% Federal
- 18% State match
- 3% Social Security reimbursement
- 2% Other match

Estimates of Minnesotans with Disabilities

- Minnesotans aged 18-64 with an employment disability 267,524
- Students between 18-21 in special education 6,483
- Minnesotans on Social Security Disability Income 74,630
- Minnesotans (18-64) on Supplemental Security Income 152,008
- Minnesotans (18-65) unemployed with Serious Mental illness 4,866
- Minnesotans (18-64) living with HIV/AIDS 62,742
- Minnesotans (18-64) who are deaf or hard of hearing 12,734

Type of Medical Insurance at Closure 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Medical Insurance</th>
<th>Number of Consumers</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer’s job</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Private Insurance</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicare</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Care</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers Compensation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,820</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are 163 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, down from a high of 176 in 2000.
### 12 Largest Disability Groups Served by Vocational Rehabilitation 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Disability Group</th>
<th>Consumers Served</th>
<th>Percent of Total Employment Outcomes</th>
<th>Percent of Total Consumers Served</th>
<th>Percent of Total Consumers Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serious Mental Illnesses</td>
<td>6,277</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
<td>2,843</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Retardation</td>
<td>1,859</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Orthopedic &amp; Neurological Impairments</td>
<td>1,675</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traumatic Brain Injury/Stroke</td>
<td>1,018</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf/Hard of Hearing</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Dependency</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory &amp; Other Physical Impairments</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cerebral Palsy</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinal Cord Injury</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthritis &amp; Rheumatism</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Consumers Served by Cultural/Ethnic Group

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSI</th>
<th>SSDI</th>
<th>SSI &amp; SSDI</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent of Total VR Caseload</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,610</td>
<td>2,519</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>5,648</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Competitive Employment Placements 2004

**—Without Supports**

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

**—With Supports**

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

### Employment Outcomes by Type of Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>Percent of 2004 Placements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitive employment</td>
<td>2,742</td>
<td>2,583</td>
<td>2,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employment</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported employment</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid homemaker</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,571</td>
<td>3,346</td>
<td>2,820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

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.

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
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.

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.
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 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.

RSA Guiding Principles

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.

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%
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.
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.

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

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

#### TOTAL SERVED
- 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
- FREEBORN: 59
- 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
- MEEKER: 67
- MEEKER: 55
- MILE 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
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

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**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

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

Speech-to-speech telephone re-voice: 1.877.627.3848