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MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2015

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# MISSION STATEMENT

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## MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

*(Adopted Nov. 4, 1999)*

### Our **VISION**

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The Missouri State Rehabilitation Council envisions a society that values all of its members equally and provides opportunities so that all people are able to meet their needs, fulfill their dreams and participate in society.

### Our **MISSION**

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To ensure that persons with disabilities have opportunities to be as productive as possible by advising Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation that services provided to persons with disabilities are:

- ◆ of the highest quality.
- ◆ consumer directed.
- ◆ responsive to consumer choice.
- ◆ effective.
- ◆ individualized.
- ◆ culturally specific and relevant to labor market trends.

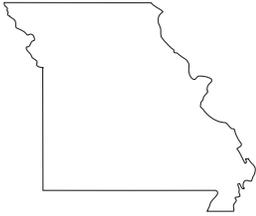
### Our **RESPONSIBILITIES**

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To work in partnership with Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation to achieve positive outcomes for persons with disabilities by:

- ◆ providing input on the state plan, policies and practices affecting services to persons with disabilities.
- ◆ identifying strategies to address the needs of people who are not being served or who are being underserved.
- ◆ obtaining and interpreting consumer input.
- ◆ identifying corrective action consistent with that input.
- ◆ advocating for adequate resources to ensure that the rehabilitation needs of all Missourians are met.

To support Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation in complying with applicable laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Workforce Investment Act, the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.



# MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

3024 Dupont Circle ■ Jefferson City, Missouri 65109  
Phone: 573-751-3251 ■ Fax: 573-751-1441

**Aimee Wehmeier**  
St. Louis  
Chairperson

**Tim Tadlock**  
Gallatin  
Vice Chairperson

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**James Ankrom**  
Smithville

**Dennis Atkins**  
Viburnum

**Daniel Cayou**  
Jefferson City

**Judy Heard**  
St. Louis

**Robert Hosutt**  
Eureka

**Gary Otten**  
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**Lori Pace**  
Rogersville

**Robert Qualls**  
Bolivar

**Mary Kay Savage**  
Kansas City

**Mary Stodden**  
St. Charles

**Mary Tallarico**  
St. Louis

**Brent Yerian**  
Jefferson City

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**C. Jeanne Loyd**  
Jefferson City  
Ex Officio Member  
VR Assistant Commissioner

December 31, 2015

The Honorable Jay Nixon  
Governor of Missouri  
State Capitol  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Governor Nixon:

On behalf of the members of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council, I am pleased to present the Council's annual report for fiscal year 2015. In these pages, you will find the progress made by Missouri citizens who were served by vocational rehabilitation programs.

Each Council member has unique experiences in advocating for the rights of our fellow Missourians whose physical or mental disabilities may pose barriers to productive employment. Through our quarterly meetings and committee deliberations, we have given our support to Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation to empower individuals with disabilities and to encourage decisions that lead to greater self-sufficiency.

We have advised Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation on innovative programming to reach underserved populations in the state, and we have recommended new methods of obtaining consumer satisfaction feedback.

It has been my great privilege to work with members of the Council, as well as with Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation staff, all of whom are dedicated to providing our citizens with the opportunity to make choices in obtaining meaningful employment. Employment is a key to independence.

Sincerely,

Aimee Wehmeier  
Chairperson

# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBERS



**Aimee Wehmeier**  
St. Louis  
Chairperson



**C. Jeanne Loyd**  
Jefferson City  
Ex Officio Member  
VR Assistant Commissioner



**Tim Tadlock**  
Gallatin  
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St. Louis



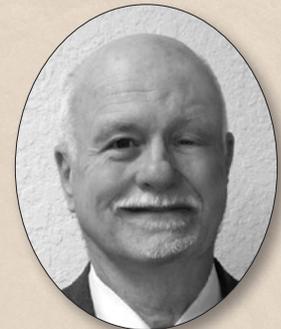
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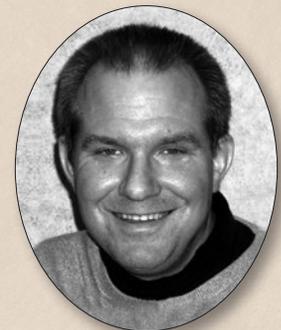
**Mary Kay Savage**  
Kansas City



**Mary Stodden**  
St. Charles



**Mary Tallarico**  
St. Louis



**Brent Yerian**  
Jefferson City

# COUNCIL'S PURPOSE

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was first authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended in 1998 (referred to hereafter as the Act). Section 105 of the Act requires the state vocational rehabilitation agency to establish a council.

The SRC was initially formed on June 1, 1993. Members are appointed by the governor and serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms. As required by the Act, SRC members represent the Statewide Independent Living Council; the Parent Training and Information Center; the Client Assistance Program; the Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program; the Office of Special Education, which is the state agency responsible for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the State Workforce Investment Board; community rehabilitation program service providers; disability advocacy groups; current or former applicants/recipients of vocational rehabilitation services; and business, industry and labor.

The SRC is responsible for reviewing, analyzing and advising VR regarding its performance on such issues as eligibility; the extent, scope and effectiveness of services; and any other functions affecting people with disabilities. Full SRC meetings are held quarterly on the first Thursday of February, May, August and November at the VR Central Office in Jefferson City. Subcommittees meet as needed throughout the year via conference calls.

## **During FY15, the SRC was actively involved with VR in the activities below.**

Provided recommendations to VR on policy revisions and rule changes

Coordinated and participated in presentations and activities with other councils and agencies including the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Client Assistance Program, the State Independent Living Council, the Department of Mental Health, the Parent Training and Information Center, Missouri Assistive Technology, the Hearing Loss Association, the Governor's Council on Disability, the Division of Workforce Development, and the Office of Special Education

Attended and participated in VR public hearings to provide input on the state plan

Evaluated and provided recommendations on the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services and consumer satisfaction feedback

Reviewed and provided recommendations to VR regarding the state plan's comprehensive statewide needs assessment, goals, priorities, standards and performance indicators, and comprehensive system of personnel development

Assisted VR staff in preparing the SRC's 2015 annual report for the governor and the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration on the status of vocational rehabilitation services in Missouri

Provided comments to VR regarding issues pertaining to waiting lists (Order of Selection)

Assisted in the recruitment and selection of a new impartial hearing officer and reviewed hearing decisions

# MISSION, VISION & PRINCIPLES

## Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation

### *Mission*

Our mission is to provide opportunities and resources to eligible individuals with disabilities leading to successful employment.

### *Vision*

Our vision is to provide everyone with a great VR experience.

### *Operating Principles*

We will:

- ◆ Act with a sense of urgency.
- ◆ Provide quality customer service.
- ◆ Maximize our resources.
- ◆ Do the right thing.
- ◆ Put people first.
- ◆ Continuously evaluate our practices/processes.

*Helping people with disabilities work successfully*

December 31, 2015

The Honorable Jay Nixon  
Governor of Missouri  
State Capitol  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Governor Nixon:

The annual report presented to you from the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council for fiscal year 2015 provides information on the Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation employment program for individuals with disabilities.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation has operated under an Order of Selection since October 2003 due to the number of applicants requesting services, rising service costs and limited federal funding. The Rehabilitation Act requires eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities to receive services first. All other eligible individuals receive services as funds become available.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation cleared the waiting list for services during FY15 and helped 5,063 individuals reach successful employment outcomes. The program met six of the seven Federal Standards and Performance Indicators and had a success rate of 60.9 percent for the individuals who received services and exited the program.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation works closely with school districts across the state and provides transition services to eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities. In FY15, the program assisted over 1,700 youth with disabilities in reaching their employment goals with a 64.2 percent success rate.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation grant dollars expended for purchased client services from community vendors are effective and help local economies. In addition, the total annual increase in earnings from referral to closure for competitively employed clients in FY15 was over \$65 million. The program's customer satisfaction survey results are consistently among the top in the nation.

In closing, the Council and I offer our sincere appreciation for your personal interest and support in serving people with disabilities.

Sincerely,



C. Jeanne Loyd  
Assistant Commissioner  
Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services

# VR HIGHLIGHTS

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*Important items to note  
from FY15 regarding  
VR's positive impact  
on the quality  
of consumers' lives  
and the communities  
it serves include:*

- ★ **5,063** consumers with disabilities achieved successful employment outcomes.
- ★ **28,734** consumers worked with VR counselors.
- ★ **97%** of successfully employed consumers had significant disabilities.
- ★ **1,234** consumers were successfully employed through supported employment services.
- ★ **1,753** youth with disabilities reached successful employment outcomes.
- ★ **\$65,325,000** was the total annual increase in income from referral to closure for 5,025 competitively employed consumers.

# AGENCY OVERVIEW

Prepared on behalf of the SRC, this annual report highlights various programs and services of VR during federal fiscal year 2015 (Oct. 1, 2014, to Sept. 30, 2015).

On Oct. 1, 2003, due to insufficient funds to serve all eligible consumers, VR began operating under an Order of Selection with three priority categories. Eligible consumers with the most significant disabilities are required by law to receive services first (Category 1). Eligible consumers who have less significant disabilities are required to be placed on a waiting list for services (Categories 2 and 3).

During FY15, VR counselors worked with more than 28,000 people in various categories with an average daily census greater than 14,000. VR helped 5,063 consumers reach successful employment outcomes and cleared the waiting list for services.

Figures 1-2 (below) illustrate the number of successful outcomes and the percentages of success during the past five years. Figure 2 shows that in FY15, more than 60 percent of consumers who received services through VR were successfully employed. This figure is a percentage of all eligible consumers leaving VR who received services.

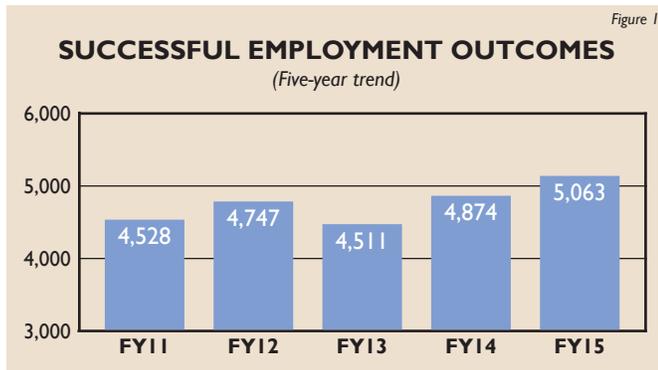


Westley Entz (left) works with his VR counselor, Wendy Molitor (right), on achieving his employment goals.

## State Funding and the Social Security Reimbursement Program

VR receives state funding from the general revenue fund, the Missouri Lottery and the Department of Mental Health. The match requirement is 21.3 percent state funding and 78.7 percent federal funding.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) reimburses state vocational rehabilitation agencies for the costs of providing services to assist SSA disability recipients in becoming gainfully employed. VR uses Ticket Tracker



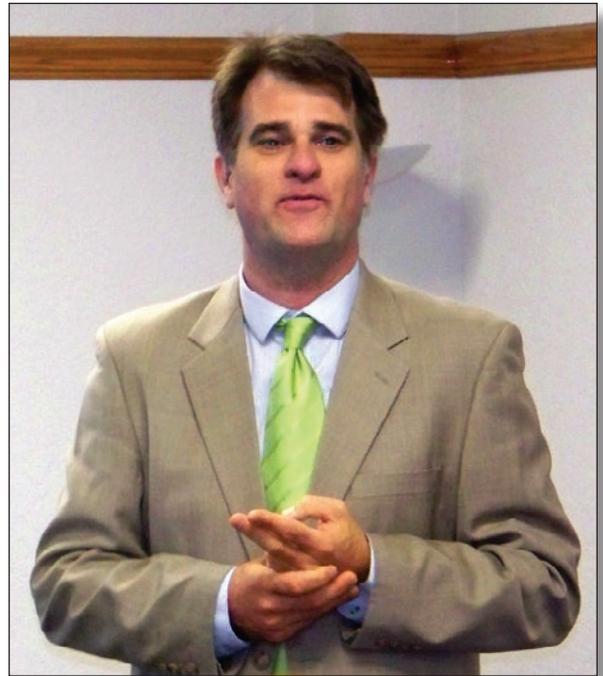
software to interface with VR's case-management system. The software matches and identifies consumers receiving SSA disability benefits whom VR helped in reaching their employment goals. Ticket Tracker has streamlined the consumer identification and reimbursement submission process, enabling VR to receive SSA reimbursements in a more timely and efficient manner. In FY15, VR received \$7,174,551 in reimbursement claims. A portion of this funding helps support the Centers for Independent Living.

## Consumer Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction with staff and services is a VR priority. The SRC is responsible for reviewing and analyzing consumer satisfaction. On behalf of the SRC, VR administers a consumer satisfaction survey (pages 22-23). Feedback is shared with management, supervisors and counselors. This information is used as a tool to improve services, evaluate staff performance and determine training needs.

During FY15, mail-out survey tools were utilized to obtain consumer feedback from a random sample of all cases open and closed. Results showed that 97 percent of consumers surveyed felt they were treated with respect, 95 percent felt that staff was available when needed and 93 percent felt their counselor explained their choices.

For a complete breakdown of the consumer satisfaction survey, see page 23.



Rob Honan, executive director of the Governor's Council on Disability, spoke to the SRC at its August meeting about his organization's various initiatives.



Yvonne Wright (right), director of workforce development and business outreach at VR, and Ron Williams (left), VR business specialist, spoke at the SRC's May meeting on ways they are reaching out to businesses to determine how VR can help fulfill staffing needs.

## Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

VR and the SRC jointly conduct an annual comprehensive statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of Missourians with disabilities. The conclusions and recommendations of the assessment are incorporated into VR's goals and priorities for the purpose of improving services for individuals with disabilities.

VR uses many methods to collect information for the assessment including consumer satisfaction surveys, public hearings, VR strategic teams, SRC input, VR case data and national census statistics.

Two areas that the assessment specifically focuses on are the needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals from populations that have been traditionally unserved or underserved by vocational rehabilitation programs. The needs assessment completed in FY15 identified the minority populations of Hispanics and African-Americans, along with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), as underserved.

The assessment also addresses the necessities of youth and students with disabilities including their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

VR implements several strategies to address these areas of need. For strategy information, see pages 17-18.

# INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

## **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law in 2014 to strengthen the workforce development system by aligning and improving employment, training and education programs. With regard to VR, WIOA makes amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Some of the areas in which this legislation affects the program include employment for individuals with disabilities, employer relationships, services for youth and students with disabilities, and collaboration with other federal/state agencies and partners.

WIOA requires the alignment of core programs in order to provide coordinated and streamlined services. These core programs include VR; Rehabilitation Services for the Blind; Adult Education and Literacy programs; Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs; Wagner-Peyser Employment Services; and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families programs. Teams composed of representatives from WIOA partner programs, as well as other partner organizations, have been formed to develop strategies for serving mutual clients. Teams have identified focus areas, such as best case practices and agency cross-trainings, that can be shared statewide and at local levels. All program partners strive to improve the workforce system and services to job seekers, employees and employers.

## **Department of Mental Health**

The Department of Mental Health's (DMH) Divisions of Behavioral Health (DBH) and Developmental Disabilities (DD) have been longstanding partners with VR in assisting eligible individuals seeking vocational rehabilitation services to gain employment. Partnership activities include the co-funding of DB101, a customized Missouri benefits-planning website. Cross-system collaboration remains ongoing through system change initiatives, grant and technical support opportunities, and local/regional trainings. VR has appointed a DMH liaison and a liaison specific to ASD to work with DMH's respective divisional liaisons.

A recent reorganization of DD service providers, updated regulations for home and community-based services that impact Medicaid waiver services, and WIOA implementation are central to current activities and planning for DMH-DD and VR staff. A series of regional agency cross-trainings are being developed to communicate these evolving changes, which support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

In partnership with DBH, Individual Placement and Support (IPS), an evidence-based supported employment service for adults with serious mental illness, has been a focus. IPS requires close program and clinical relationships between local mental health and vocational rehabilitation staff to ensure success.

## **Centers for Independent Living**

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are community-based nonresidential programs designed to promote independent living for people with disabilities. In Missouri, there are 22 CILs that offer independent living services. The CILs are funded through federal and state independent living grants and are managed by local boards composed of individuals with disabilities who have been successful in establishing their own independent lifestyles.

VR works with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the CILs to provide services to individuals with disabilities. Together, the SILC, VR and the CILs collaborate to develop the State Plan for Independent Living. The plan contains three main goals: 1) identify and respond to the unmet needs of individuals with disabilities in Missouri, 2) provide a responsive network of supports and services to meet the

needs of individuals with disabilities, and 3) improve the quality of life for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. ([Click here](#) to download the complete plan.)

As part of a collaborative effort to evaluate program effectiveness, VR and the SILC utilize an outcome-based measurement tool for the CILs. This tool measures consumer satisfaction with various services provided by the centers. The most recent survey results revealed that 97 percent of respondents were satisfied with adaptive equipment/rehabilitation technology services, personal assistance services and emergency assistance services.

## TRANSITION SERVICES

WIOA places a significant emphasis on services to youth and students with disabilities. The law’s intent is to ensure that young individuals with disabilities are better prepared and have more opportunities for competitive, integrated employment. WIOA requires that VR (in collaboration with local education agencies) provide pre-employment transition services to eligible or potentially eligible students with disabilities ages 16 to 21. Pre-employment services include job-exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs, workplace-readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy including peer mentoring.

VR has helped to develop and implement innovative pilot programs to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. VR also has established partnerships with the Hook Center, a regional professional-development facility at the University of Missouri; CILs; Community Rehabilitation Programs; businesses; and local school districts. With its partners, VR is working to expand pre-employment transition services to all parts of the state.

VR provides youth with disabilities ages 14 to 24 a variety of other transition services such as job placement, supported employment, training and rehabilitation technology. A team of professionals from VR, local school districts and other agencies has been assembled to offer support and technical assistance on these services.

### FY15 Transition Services Facts

- ◆ 1,753 youth with disabilities reached successful employment outcomes.
- ◆ 64% of all youth with disabilities who received VR services and exited the program achieved successful employment outcomes.



VR collaborates with Wonderland Camp on an internship program for youth with disabilities who work at the educational summer camp. From left to right: Elizabeth Howard, Ann Pomatto (intern director with Wonderland Camp), Shelby Howser and Rebecca Shelton.

# COMMUNITY REHAB PROGRAMS

VR strives to enhance community rehabilitation services throughout Missouri. VR and Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) collaboratively work with an outcome-based service model that emphasizes quality employment outcomes. CRPs are nonprofit organizations accredited by a recognized professional entity that has developed commonly accepted processes for evaluating employment-related services. All independently owned and operated, CRPs provide vocational planning, job development and placement services, skills training, specialized employment services, and supported employment.

VR and its CRP partners reached several accomplishments over the past year to improve services. Multiple ad hoc teams composed of VR and CRP staff worked together to develop and design new processes. One team developed annual training requirements for CRP staff members. Additionally, a successful pilot program was created that provided a six-week work experience for students with disabilities during the summer of 2015. Recently, two VR district offices and a CRP in mid-Missouri have begun piloting a newly designed supported employment model for individuals diagnosed with ASD.

Collaboration and partnership are cornerstones of the relationship between VR and CRPs and have fostered an environment of creativity and innovation. The VR-CRP steering committee meets regularly to review progress on their organizations' joint projects and on service delivery.

## SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

VR provides Supported Employment (SE) services to a diverse population of consumers as indicated by Figures 3-5 (pages 15-16). Some of these services are jointly provided by the Divisions of Behavioral Health (DBH) and Developmental Disabilities (DD). SE is defined as competitive work in an integrated work setting with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. During FY15, 62.7 percent of consumers who received SE services and exited the program were successfully employed.

In FY15, VR worked with 81 CRPs that provide SE services and cover all counties in Missouri. The CRP/VR Team has developed an outcome-based model of SE services that features a period of discovery and exploration with the consumer to develop vocational direction and community-based job exploration. Outcomes include job placement, 30 days of independent employment and 90 days of employment. In addition to these milestones, on-the-job and off-site supports may also be authorized for consumers.

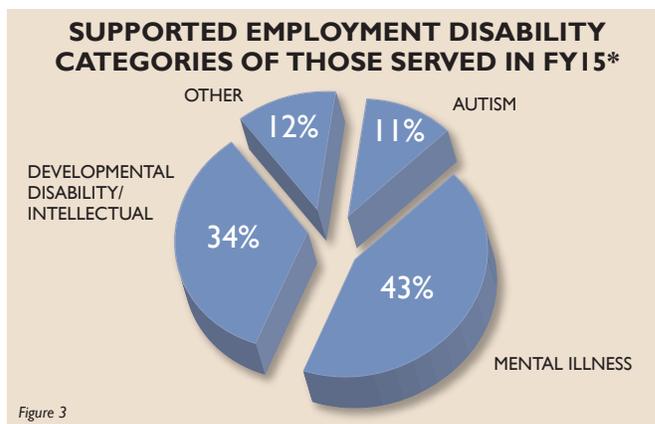


Figure 3

### Other Supported Employment Statistics

VR places an emphasis on the development of natural support systems to help consumers participating in supported employment successfully remain in the workforce. These natural supports help to reduce the costs of providing SE services. Figure 6 (page 16) shows the hourly wages, average costs of services and other statistics for supported employment.

**SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT ETHNICITY AND GENDER OF THOSE SERVED\*  
• FY15 •**

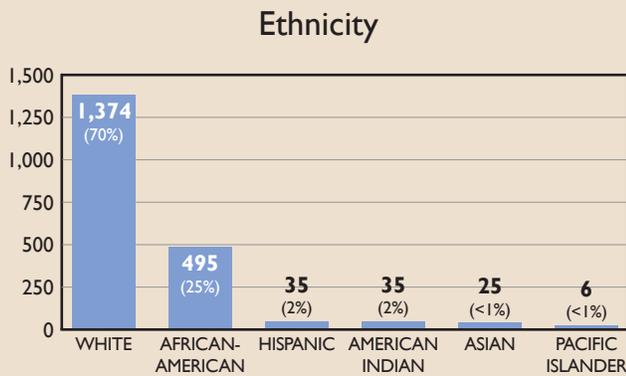


Figure 4

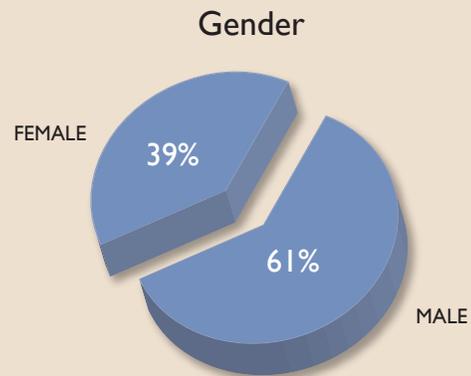


Figure 5

**OTHER SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS FOR FY15**

Figure 6

Average cost of supported employment per consumer .....	\$3,355*
Average hourly wage per consumer .....	\$8.61
Average hours per week worked per consumer .....	24
Success rate .....	62.7%*
Successful outcomes .....	1,234
Unsuccessful outcomes after services rendered .....	736

\*Statistics are based on the number of consumers who exited the program either successfully or unsuccessfully after receiving SE services.

# REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY

In FY15, VR provided a variety of rehabilitation technology services, assistive devices and equipment to 1,031 individuals who received services and exited the program for a total cost of \$5,098,549. VR purchases assistive devices to help consumers with increasing, maintaining or improving functional capabilities. These devices may be purchased commercially or modified/customized by a technology specialist. Devices could be as simple as a modified door handle or as sophisticated as a voice-controlled computer system. Other types include prosthetic and orthotic equipment, hearing aids, wheelchairs, and other powered mobility equipment. Rehabilitation technology services include evaluation, design, customization, adaptation, maintenance, repair, therapy and technical training.

VR and Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT) have collaborated to develop a cooperative agreement to ensure the maximum statewide utilization of services. The agreement provides a plan for service coordination; for using resources to the best advantage; for information sharing, technical support and training; to facilitate the referral of potentially eligible individuals between agencies; and to help eligible people obtain rehabilitation technology services. A VR staff member is a representative on the MoAT Advisory Council.

VR has appointed a Rehabilitation Technology Team to help meet consumers' needs. Issues the team focuses on include best case practices; ongoing training; vehicle modification guidelines; and mobility, augmentative and computer assistive technology assessments. The team has recommended statewide rehabilitation technology training and the development of a resource guide for all VR staff.

In April, MoAT sponsored the statewide Power Up 2015 Conference and Expo that was open to service providers, consumers, independent living specialists, VR staff and other professionals in the rehabilitation field. Eleven of VR's professional staff attended the event. The conference was successful in providing consumers and professionals with an opportunity to view state-of-the-art technology and equipment designed to enhance and promote the independence and quality of life of people with disabilities.

## DIVERSITY & UNDERSERVED

Improving services for underserved populations and workplace diversity are two significant priorities for VR and the SRC. Figure 7 (below) reflects the closure percentages by ethnicity for FY15. VR remains committed to improving services, increasing employment outcomes and reducing the number of consumers from underserved populations who drop out prior to receiving services.

### Cultural Diversity and Underserved Populations

During FY15, VR provided employees with training opportunities on cultural competency that covered aspects of diversity. VR conducted a comprehensive statewide needs assessment that identified individuals with ASD, individuals with TBI, and individuals from the Hispanic and African-American communities as being underserved.

VR utilizes the following strategies to address these areas of need:

CLOSURE PERCENTAGES BY ETHNICITY (FY15 consumers)			
STATUS	WHITE	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	OTHER
5,063 successful employment outcomes	75%	21%	4%
3,238 closed unsuccessfully after services	70%	26%	4%
5,328 closed after eligibility before services	69%	27%	4%
	FY15	FY15	FY15

Figure 7

- ◆ VR employs a part-time diversity consultant to assist with improving services to underserved areas, developing training programs and establishing outreach strategies for consumers from diverse cultures.
- ◆ The Cultural Diversity Team (composed of CRP staff, the diversity consultant and VR district office staff) meets throughout the year to develop strategies for serving individuals from diverse cultures.
- ◆ VR has appointed an autism services liaison to serve as a resource for its staff throughout the state. This liaison works with providers and DMH-DD on strategies for better serving individuals with ASD.
- ◆ In partnership with one of its providers, VR has developed a supported employment model for individuals with ASD in the mid-Missouri area.
- ◆ VR has developed Employment Services Plus, which is designed to assist individuals with ASD, TBI or cultural deafness/hearing loss who require additional supports to reach successful employment outcomes.

## Diversity in the Workplace

VR strives to recruit, hire and maintain a diverse workforce. To attract individuals with culturally diverse backgrounds, all job openings are listed on the VR and Missouri Career Source websites and are sent to the CILs. Vacancies are advertised in local newspapers as well as African-American and Hispanic newspapers. All VR counselor vacancy notices are sent to historically black colleges and universities. Recruitment contacts have been made with all colleges in Missouri that have a high population of minority students. VR continues to participate in recruitment activities, career fairs and various community programs.

VR also works to recruit individuals with disabilities. All district supervisors and counselors receive job vacancy notices. Many of the individuals referred by staff are interviewed and hired or participate in field experiences and internships sponsored by VR. At the time of this report, approximately 33 percent of the counselor positions were held by individuals with disabilities.

In addition to VR's recruitment efforts, all staff participate in cultural diversity training initially provided during new employee orientation. This ongoing training, held across the state during FY15, has received positive feedback and is an outcome of one of the Cultural Diversity Team's recommendations.

# WORKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

BY SARA MANTOOTH,  
JEFFERSON CITY VR CENTRAL OFFICE

“I was a little bit nervous when I started the program,” said Domyne Mejas, a student receiving pre-employment transition services who recently participated in a new opportunity for youth with disabilities to gain valuable work experience. “But, just kind of be yourself. Be yourself – that’s the whole thing.”

In 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law. Among the services provided through WIOA are programs designed to help individuals with disabilities prepare to enter the workforce. VR is required by the law to provide pre-employment transition services to students who are eligible (or may be eligible) for VR services.

VR’s response to this requirement was the development of the VR Summer Work Experience pilot program in 2015. This six-week initiative provided a paid, competitive and integrated employment opportunity for students entering their senior year of high school. Participating students worked 20 hours per week; four of those hours were spent in a classroom learning soft skills such as effective communication, teamwork, problem solving and critical thinking.

“I know I can do many things that are different,” said Mejas, who worked at University Hospital in Columbia this summer. “It has helped my confidence and helped me a lot to be independent.”

Fifteen CRPs participated in the program. Their staff worked with 143 students at 34 job sites across the state. The CRPs were responsible for contacting employers and developing agreements to allow the students to work there. VR counselors then referred students to specific jobs. Sites included University Hospital, Shelter Insurance in Columbia, Mexico Veterans Home, and other public and private businesses.

Greg Wingert, president and CEO of MORE



Alex Kessel examines a tire during his time working for Shelter Insurance as part of the VR Summer Work Experience pilot program. Because of its success, the pilot program will be offered again next summer.

Group, said the summer program was fast-paced and rewarding for the company and students alike.

“Our host business partners (University Hospital and Mexico Veterans Home) provided meaningful work experiences that allowed (students) to work side-by-side with other employees,” Wingert said. He also said the business partners reported that the students “demonstrated high-quality work performance and commendable work ethics.”

“Our VR-referred students leapt at the opportunity, and their mentors at Shelter Insurance fully embraced the dual roles of supervisors and teachers,” said Ben Falby, an employment consultant at Job Point. “The project presented an ideal duration: long enough for students to adapt to the workplace and short enough that Shelter mentors could fully dedicate themselves to the education portion of the relationship.”



Jonathan Bias washes one of Shelter Insurance’s corporate cars. He and other participants in the pilot program gained valuable work experience as well as soft skills that will help lead to future success.

Brenda Overkamp, director of marketing, research and rehabilitation at Job Point, said Falby’s experience and ability to relate to the students were key to making him the right job coach for the program.

“He did an outstanding job for us serving as the conduit between the organization, the students and Shelter,” Overkamp said.

Paul LaRose, vice president of human resources at Shelter, said he was also pleased with the results of the program. The students experienced what it was like to work at a job, and Shelter employees learned something as well.

“The program helped all of us here at Shelter gain more insight into how younger workers view the working world,” LaRose said.

Two students who worked at Shelter this summer, Joseph Smith and Alex Kessel, had many positive things to say about the program and their employment experiences.

“I thought it was exciting because the people were really nice when they first met me for the job, and they showed me around like I was their family,” Smith said.

Smith worked in a variety of areas from the print shop to landscaping at Shelter Gardens (a 5-acre public garden located at the corporate office) to working with mechanics on Shelter’s company cars. He said he enjoyed that there were different tasks to be done every day, and he learned a lot about the type of work he might like to do in future jobs.

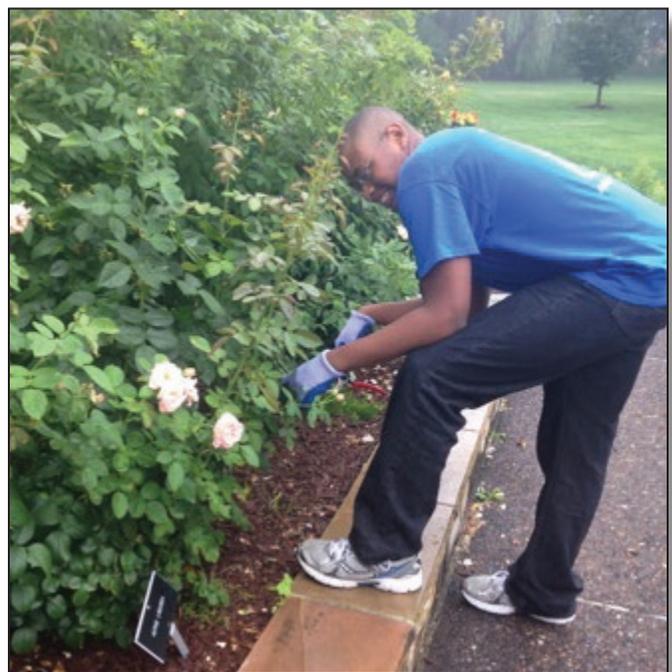
Kessel said he also was confident that the skills he learned would be helpful in the future.

“Before I did it, I didn’t think I would be able to keep a job or get up in the morning and go to work every day,” he said. “So I learned that I was able to do that.”

An even larger turnout in the program is anticipated for next year. Due to its success, the VR Summer Work Experience will again be offered as a pilot program.

When asked what advice they would give to future students entering the program, all of this year’s participants stressed the importance of giving your all.

“If you want to be in the program, you have to put in 100 percent effort, or you’re not going to really learn anything or have them appreciate what you’re doing,” Kessel said.



Joseph Smith helps to landscape Shelter Gardens. A daily variety of tasks gave Smith insight on what jobs he might seek in the future. He also worked in Shelter’s print shop and on the company’s fleet of vehicles.

# APPENDICES

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# CONSUMER SATISFACTION

The SRC's Program Evaluation Committee continues to work with VR on surveying and monitoring consumer satisfaction. Survey letters, along with postage-paid envelopes, were mailed to open and closed cases. On behalf of the SRC, VR surveyed a random sample of 5,520 consumers at various stages in the rehabilitation process with a response rate of 13 percent. Survey feedback was positive; the results are listed on page 23.

## FY15 CONSUMER COMMENTS

VR has given me hope for **A FUTURE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND EMPLOYMENT SECURITY** that I thought I wouldn't have again.

For the first time in a long time, **I FEEL SOMEONE IS ON MY SIDE AND WILLING TO HELP ME.**

VR has made my dreams come true!  
**MY FUTURE LOOKS AMAZING.**

VR helped me **GET MY LIFE BACK!**

VR helped me **BECOME MOTIVATED.**  
This is a great program.

They **GAVE ME HOPE**, which I desperately needed.

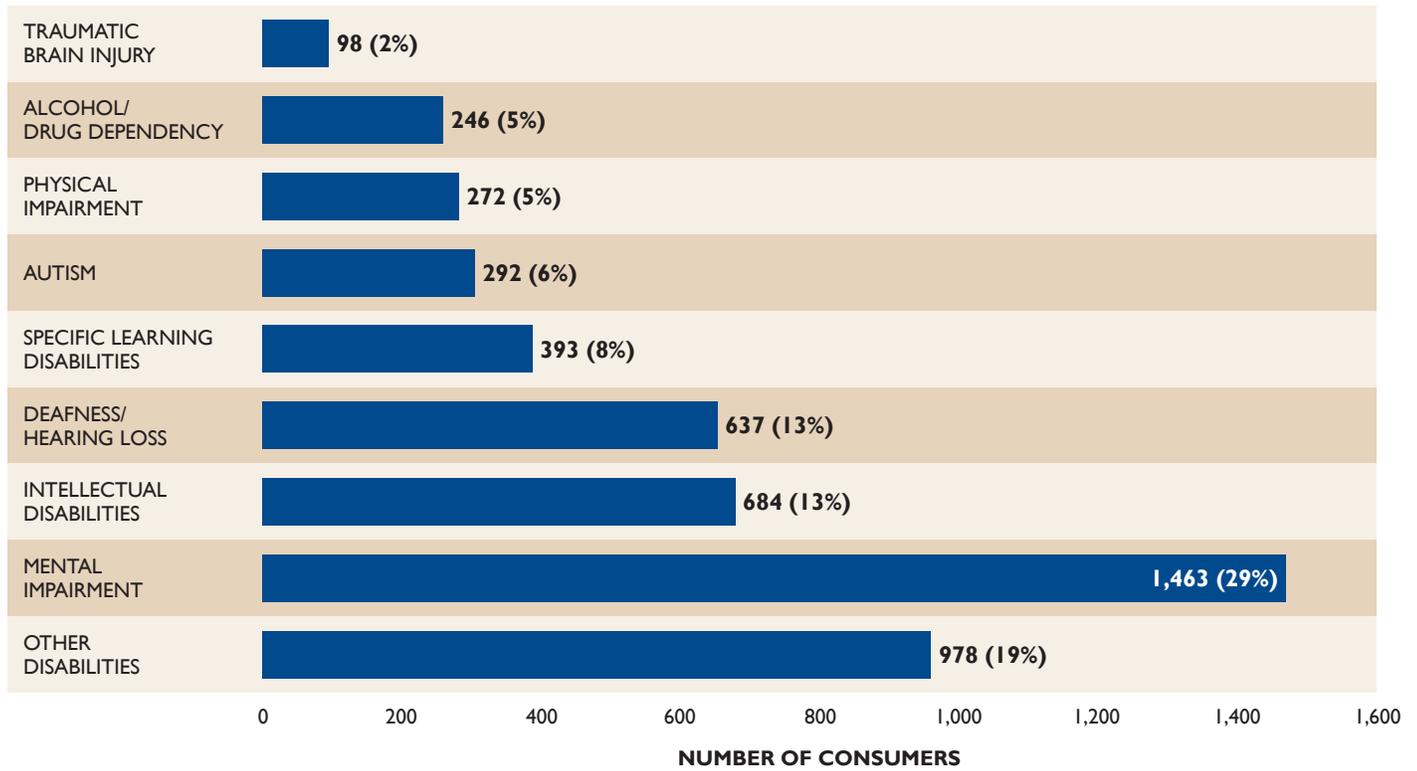
They **BROADENED MY IDEA OF WHAT FIELDS I COULD ENTER** and hope that I could get a job.

Survey Results (Specific group responses during FY15)	TOTAL RESPONSES RECEIVED	STAFF WAS AVAILABLE		STAFF TREATED ME WITH RESPECT		I KNEW PURPOSE OF VR SERVICES		COUNSELOR HELPED PLAN SERVICES		COUNSELOR EXPLAINED CHOICES	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	698	95%	5%	97%	3%	92%	8%	89%	11%	93%	7%
CONSUMERS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES (CATEGORIES I AND II)	668	95%	5%	97%	3%	92%	8%	89%	11%	93%	7%
OPEN CASES	406	97%	3%	99%	1%	94%	6%	93%	7%	96%	4%
SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES	179	98%	2%	98%	2%	94%	6%	93%	7%	96%	4%
UNSUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES; CLOSED BEFORE SERVICES	41	85%	15%	92%	8%	78%	22%	68%	32%	78%	22%
UNSUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES; CLOSED AFTER SERVICES	72	81%	19%	86%	14%	81%	19%	67%	33%	72%	28%
MALE	363	96%	4%	98%	2%	92%	8%	89%	11%	92%	8%
FEMALE	335	94%	6%	96%	4%	92%	8%	90%	10%	93%	7%
SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT CONSUMERS	118	96%	4%	96%	4%	91%	9%	84%	16%	89%	11%
CONSUMERS WITH ALCOHOL OR DRUG DEPENDENCY	26	92%	8%	96%	4%	88%	12%	88%	12%	88%	12%
CONSUMERS WITH AUTISM	46	98%	2%	100%	0%	91%	9%	87%	13%	91%	9%
CONSUMERS WITH DEAFNESS/HEARING LOSS	89	99%	1%	100%	0%	98%	2%	96%	4%	99%	1%
CONSUMERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES	83	91%	9%	95%	5%	90%	10%	87%	13%	90%	10%
CONSUMERS WITH MENTAL IMPAIRMENTS	193	92%	8%	95%	5%	91%	9%	85%	15%	89%	11%
CONSUMERS WITH PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENTS	129	98%	2%	100%	0%	91%	9%	94%	6%	97%	3%
CONSUMERS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES	44	91%	9%	95%	5%	83%	17%	84%	16%	93%	7%
CONSUMERS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY	10	80%	20%	80%	20%	90%	10%	80%	20%	80%	20%
CONSUMERS WITH OTHER DISABILITIES	164	99%	1%	99%	1%	97%	3%	94%	6%	98%	2%

# DISABILITY CATEGORIES of the 5,063 consumers with successful employment outcomes

FY15

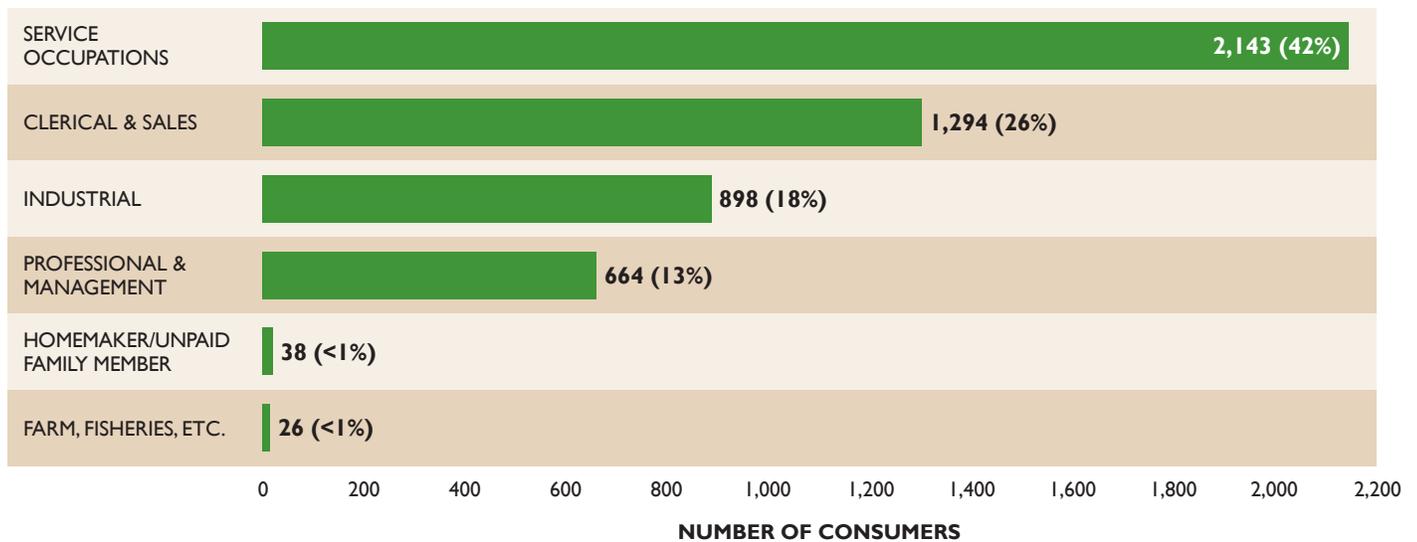
## TYPE OF DISABILITY



# OCCUPATIONS of the 5,063 consumers with successful employment outcomes

FY15

## OCCUPATION



# IMPACT OF VR SERVICES on weekly earnings of consumers with successful employment outcomes

FY15



With an increase in average weekly earnings of \$250 for the 5,025 competitively employed consumers, the total annual increase in income from referral to closure amounted to \$65,325,000.

## CHARACTERISTICS of consumers with successful employment outcomes

FY15

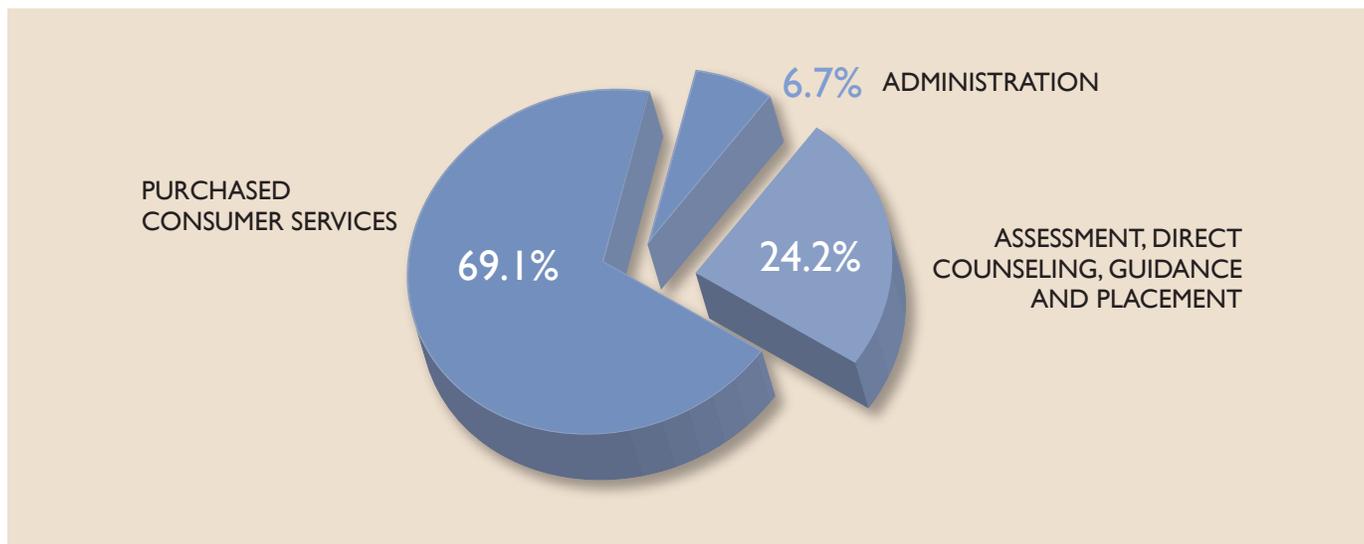
GENDER	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Male	2,901	57%
Female	2,162	43%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,063</b>	<b>100%</b>

AGE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Less than 20 years	468	9%
20 through 34	2,091	41%
35 through 44	808	16%
45 through 64	1,484	30%
65 and over	212	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,063</b>	<b>100%</b>

ETHNICITY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
White	3,779	75%
African-American	1,089	21%
Hispanic	83	2%
American Indian	71	1%
Asian	28	<1%
Pacific Islander	13	<1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,063</b>	<b>100%</b>

INDICATORS	FEDERAL STANDARDS	MISSOURI VR RESULTS
1.1 Change in Employment Outcomes	≥ Previous year	+189
1.2 Percentage of Employment Outcomes	55.8%	60.9%
1.3 Competitive Employment Outcomes	72.6%	99.2%
1.4 Competitive Employment Outcomes with a Significant Disability	62.4%	96.5%
1.5 Ratio of Exit Wage to State Average Pay	.52	.51
1.6 Difference in the Exiter vs. Application Income as a Single Source of Support	53%	63%
2.1 Service Rate of Minority to Non-Minority Individuals with Disabilities	.80	.92

## EXPENDITURES



# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION OFFICES

## **Cape Girardeau VR**

3102 Blattner Drive, Suite 103  
P.O. Box 1087  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703-1087  
Phone: 573-290-5788  
Fax: 573-290-5921  
Toll-free: 877-702-9883  
Janet Childers, Supervisor

## **Central Office VR**

3024 Dupont Circle  
Jefferson City, MO 65109-6188  
Phone: 573-751-3251  
Fax: 573-751-1441  
Toll-free: 877-222-8963  
C. Jeanne Loyd, Assistant  
Commissioner

## **Chillicothe VR**

603 W. Mohawk Road  
Chillicothe, MO 64601-3919  
Phone: 660-646-1542  
Fax: 660-646-9741  
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Robert Zirfas, Supervisor

## **Columbia VR**

1500 Vandiver Drive, Suite 111  
Columbia, MO 65202-3932  
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Fax: 573-884-5250  
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Louis Gatewood, Supervisor

## **Farmington VR**

901 Progress Drive, Suite 100  
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Fax: 573-218-6107  
Toll-free: 800-640-7110  
Louella McNeill, Supervisor

## **Hannibal VR**

112 Jaycee Drive  
Hannibal, MO 63401-3673  
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Fax: 573-248-2409  
Toll-free: 877-222-8960  
Jo Moncrief, Supervisor

## **Jefferson City VR**

1500 Southridge Drive, Suite 200  
Jefferson City, MO 65109-5710  
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Fax: 573-526-4474  
Toll-free: 866-661-9106  
Dee Ann Fuller, Supervisor

## **Joplin VR**

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Fax: 417-629-3148  
Toll-free: 877-222-8964  
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## **Kansas City Downtown VR**

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Fax: 816-889-2586  
Toll-free: 866-971-8568  
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Fax: 816-622-0610  
Toll-free: 866-831-1363  
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## **Kansas City North VR**

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Toll-free: 877-270-0198  
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## **Kirkville VR**

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Fax: 660-785-2552  
Toll-free: 877-222-8962  
James Higgins, Supervisor

## **Nevada VR**

621 E. Highland, Suite 2  
Nevada, MO 64772-1088  
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Fax: 417-448-1351  
Toll-free: 800-598-3471  
Raymond Drake, Supervisor

## **Poplar Bluff VR**

1903 Northwood Drive, Suite 3  
Poplar Bluff, MO 63901-2400  
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Fax: 573-840-9551  
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Janet Childers, Supervisor

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Fax: 573-368-2382  
Toll-free: 800-890-2867  
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Fax: 660-530-5567  
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Laura Wallen, Supervisor

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Toll-free: 866-971-8569  
Jeather Smith, Supervisor

## **St. Louis North VR**

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Lydia Mitchell, Supervisor

## **St. Louis South VR**

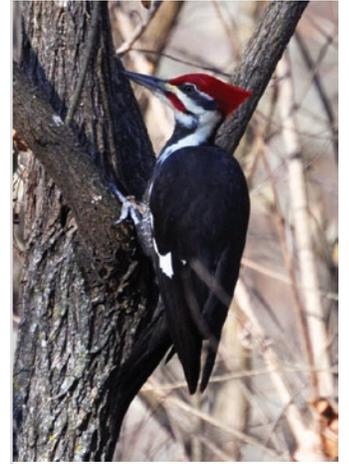
3256 Laclede Station Road,  
Suite 103  
St. Louis, MO 63143-3709  
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Fax: 314-877-1920  
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