

MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL



2019 | ANNUAL
REPORT

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Note: This annual report for calendar year 2019 covers information and data from Program Year 2018 (July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019).

MISSION STATEMENT

Missouri State Rehabilitation Council

OUR VISION

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

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

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.
- 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.
- identifying strategies to address the needs of people who are not being served or who are being underserved.

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

(Adopted Nov. 4, 1999)

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



MISSOURI STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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

Bob Hosutt
Nixa
Chairperson

Joseph Matovu
Kansas City
Vice Chairperson

James Ankrom
Smithville

Dennis Atkins
Viburnum

Earl Brown
Salem

Daniel Cayou
Jefferson City

Barb Gilpin
Jefferson City

Judy Heard
St. Louis

Debra Lee
Jefferson City

Lydia Mitchell
Florissant

Gary Otten
St. Louis

Lori Pace
Rogersville

Mary Stodden
St. Charles

Tim Tadlock
Gallatin

Aimee Wehmeier
St. Louis

Timothy E. Gaines
Jefferson City
Ex Officio Member
VR Assistant Commissioner

December 31, 2019

The Honorable Michael L. Parson
Governor of Missouri
State Capitol
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Governor Parson:

On behalf of the members of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council, I am proud to present the Council's annual report for 2019. 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 the underserved populations in the state and on exploring additional methods of obtaining feedback on services provided.

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.

Respectfully,

Bob Hosutt
Chairperson

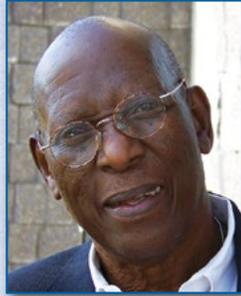
STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

CHAIRPERSON



BOB HOSUTT
Nixa

VICE CHAIRPERSON



JOSEPH MATOVU
Kansas City

VR ASSISTANT
COMMISSIONER



TIMOTHY E. GAINES
Jefferson City

EX OFFICIO MEMBER



JAMES ANKROM
Smithville



DENNIS ATKINS
Viburnum



EARL BROWN
Salem



DANIEL CAYOU
Jefferson City



BARB GILPIN
Jefferson City



JUDY HEARD
St. Louis



DEBRA LEE
Jefferson City



LYDIA MITCHELL
Florissant



GARY OTTEN
St. Louis



LORI PACE
Rogersville



MARY STODDEN
St. Charles



TIM TADLOCK
Gallatin



AIMEE WEHMEIER
St. Louis

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 Missouri Workforce Development 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. Subcommittees meet as needed throughout the year.

During 2019, the SRC was actively involved with VR in the activities below:

| MISSOURI | STATE | REHABILITATION | COUNCIL |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Attended and participated in VR public hearings to provide input on the combined state plan</p> <p>Evaluated and provided recommendations on the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services and satisfaction with those services</p> <p>Assisted VR staff in preparing the SRC's annual report for the governor and the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration on the status of vocational rehabilitation services in Missouri</p> | <p>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 Statewide 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 Office of Workforce Development, and the Office of Special Education</p> | <p>Reviewed and provided recommendations to VR regarding the combined state plan's comprehensive statewide needs assessment, goals, priorities, performance accountability measures and comprehensive system of personnel development</p> <p>Provided recommendations to VR on policy revisions and rule changes</p> | <p>Provided comments to VR regarding issues pertaining to waiting lists (Order of Selection)</p> <p>Reviewed hearing decisions and mediation outcomes</p> <p>Selected an impartial hearing officer</p> <p>Reviewed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and new regulations pertaining to Title IV</p> |

MISSION, VISION & PRINCIPLES

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation

MISSION

Empowering people with disabilities through employment

VISION

Transforming lives through a great VR experience for everyone

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.



LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR



Timothy E. Gaines
Assistant Commissioner

Office of Adult Learning and
Rehabilitation Services

3024 Dupont Circle • Jefferson City, MO 65109 • dese.mo.gov

December 31, 2019

The Honorable Michael L. Parson
Governor of Missouri
State Capitol
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Governor Parson:

The annual report presented to you from the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council for 2019 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.

During Program Year 2018, Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation helped 4,589 individuals reach successful employment outcomes with a success rate of 53.1 percent for individuals who received services and exited the program.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation works closely with school districts across the state. The program annually provides transition services, including pre-employment transition services, to approximately 10,000 high school students and youth with disabilities.

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 for individuals with successful outcomes was over \$66 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy E. Gaines". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Timothy E. Gaines
Assistant Commissioner
Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services

VR HIGHLIGHTS

Important items regarding VR's positive impact on the quality of individuals' lives and on communities served:



28,764 individuals worked with VR counselors.



4,589 individuals achieved successful employment outcomes.



1,858 youths reached successful employment outcomes.



1,505 successfully employed individuals received supported employment services.



523 successfully employed individuals received Individual Placement and Support services.



98% of successfully employed individuals had significant disabilities.



\$66,577,212 was the total annual increase in earnings for individuals with successful outcomes.

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Prepared on behalf of the SRC, this annual report highlights various programs and services of VR during Program Year (PY) 2018 from July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019. With the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, VR services will now be reported on a federal program year rather than a federal fiscal year.

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

During PY 2018, VR counselors worked with more than 28,000 individuals in various categories and helped 4,589 individuals reach a successful employment outcome. On an average daily basis, VR served more than 14,000 individuals.

In PY 2018, 53.1 percent of individuals who received services through VR were successfully employed. This statistic is a percentage of all eligible individuals leaving VR who received services.



Alison Corgan, a student at Northwest High School, worked at Schnucks Dillon in High Ridge as part of a summer work experience program. Schnucks, VR and NextStep for Life partnered together to provide the work experience.

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 individuals 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 PY 2018, VR received \$1,707,255 in reimbursement claims. A portion of this funding helps support the Centers for Independent Living in Missouri.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into federal law in 2014 to strengthen the workforce development system by aligning and improving employment, training and education programs. WIOA makes changes to programs authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, especially the VR program. Areas in which this legislation affects the program include employment for individuals with disabilities, employer relationships, services for youth and



Ollie Green, VR legal counsel, presented at the August meeting of the SRC.

students with disabilities, and collaboration with other federal and state agencies and partners.

With regard to VR, the law focuses on providing services to individuals with disabilities, including youth and students with disabilities, to assist them in achieving competitive, integrated employment. VR continues to help individuals with disabilities prepare for, secure, retain, advance in or regain employment. VR is committed to developing new relationships with employers and providing flexible strategies like on-the-job training, internships, apprenticeships and customized employment. VR has worked with other agencies to create a combined state plan that describes how VR and its partners will collaboratively deliver integrated services to Missouri’s job seekers, workers and employers under WIOA.



Bob Hosutt (left) and **Joseph Matovu** (right) were elected in May to serve as chairperson and vice chairperson of the State Rehabilitation Council.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

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

VR uses many methods to collect information for the assessment including customer 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 PY 2018 needs assessment identified the minority populations of Hispanics and African-Americans, along with individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI), and justice and foster care involved students with disabilities, as underserved. Figure 1 (page 12) reflects the closure percentages by ethnicity for PY 2018.



VR, MERS Goodwill, Doniphan R-I High and Diversity Placement Services collaborated to provide a summer work experience for VR-eligible students. From left to right: **Robbie Freeman**, **Wyatt Wayman**, VR Counselor **Gwen Jackson**, **Gavyn Dees** and **Brett Cave**.

VR remains committed to improving services for underserved populations, increasing their employment outcomes and reducing the number of individuals from these populations who drop out prior to receiving services.

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

- VR employs a part-time diversity consultant to assist with improving services to underserved areas, developing training programs and establishing outreach strategies for individuals from diverse cultures.
- The Cultural Diversity Team (composed of community rehabilitation program staff, the diversity consultant, and VR management and district office staff) meets throughout the year to develop strategies for serving individuals from diverse cultures.
- VR provides employees with training opportunities on cultural competency that cover aspects of diversity.
- VR has appointed an autism services liaison to serve as a resource for its staff throughout the state. This liaison works with providers on strategies for better serving individuals with ASD.
- VR has developed Employment Services Plus, which is designed to assist individuals with ASD, TBI or deafness/hearing loss who require additional supports to reach successful employment outcomes.
- VR has developed two pilot projects designed to provide the pre-employment transition service of peer mentoring to students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems.



Elizabeth Perkins (right), VR director of Workforce Development and Community Rehabilitation Programs, spoke with Lt. Gov. **Mike Kehoe** (left) at the third annual AccessAbility Business Summit in May in Jefferson City.

The assessment also addresses the necessities of youth and students with disabilities including their need for pre-employment or other transition services. Another of VR’s goals is to increase the number of employment outcomes for youth with disabilities. For strategy information on this area of need, see page 15.

Closure Percentages by Ethnicity – PY 2018

| STATUS | WHITE | AFRICAN-AMERICAN | OTHER |
|--|-------|------------------|-------|
| 4,589 successful employment outcomes | 77% | 18% | 5% |
| 4,055 closed unsuccessfully after services | 70% | 25% | 5% |
| 4,501 closed after eligibility before services | 71% | 23% | 6% |

Figure 1

PARTNERING

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Partners

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

VR collaborates, coordinates and cooperates with partner programs to ensure that individuals with disabilities benefit from seamless access to career services, education and training.

VR also participates in business services teams within the workforce system to better serve employers' needs. VR offers a dual-customer approach by supporting its job candidates and businesses in order to achieve successful outcomes for both.

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 and the CILs work together on a regular basis to share referrals and provide services to mutual clientele. A number of CILs have VR district office staff as active board members. VR and the CILs have developed a summer work experience program to provide pre-employment transition services. The CILs offer potentially VR-eligible students access to job exploration activities, workplace-readiness training, social support and instruction on self-advocacy (including peer mentoring). Last summer, nine CILs were involved in the program and worked with 46 students.

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 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 DMH has representation on WIOA teams consisting of combined partner programs and other partner agencies.

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



In October, the fifth annual EmployAbility Inclusion event was held in Springfield. This event gave employers information on the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. VR, the Ozark Workforce Development Board, Missouri Job Center, CRPs, the Springfield Human Resources Association and others collaborated to present this event.

Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program

Gov. Michael Parson is supportive of fully integrating individuals with disabilities into the workforce and has announced that Missouri will become a Model Employer state. Missouri also is one of 11 states that has been selected to participate in the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program, which will help the state in reaching its goal of hiring more individuals with disabilities. Through this program, Missouri will receive assistance with its Model Employer implementation and will work with other states and national experts to create the capacity necessary to improve employment opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities. Participating are representatives from the governor's office; VR; Paraquad, a community rehabilitation services provider; Office of Administration; DMH DBH-DD; Department of Social Services; Office of Workforce Development; Governor's Council on Disability; Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council; and the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



The Missouri as a Model Employer Talent Showcase was held in October at the Capitol. The showcase provided individuals with disabilities an opportunity to display their talents to potential employers. From left to right: **Duane Shumate** and **Bianca Farr**, Department of Mental Health; Gov. **Michael Parson**; **Rebecca Maynard**, VR; and **Brian Crouse**, Missouri Chamber of Commerce.

Community Rehabilitation Programs

VR and community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) collaboratively work with an outcome-based service model that emphasizes quality employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. CRPs are nonprofit organizations accredited by recognized professional associations that have developed commonly accepted processes for evaluating employment-related services. All independently owned and operated, CRPs provide services that may include vocational planning, job development and placement services, skills training, specialized employment services, supported employment, and transition services.

Multiple ad hoc teams composed of VR and CRP staff have worked together to develop and design new processes. VR and its CRP partners have implemented several projects to improve services. During summer 2019, a six-week work experience program for students with disabilities was held. Twenty-nine CRPs and 653 VR-eligible students participated. 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.

Missouri Reentry Process

VR participates in the Missouri Reentry Process, which encourages collaboration among government and local agencies to improve the transition of offenders leaving prison and returning to local communities and work. State government agencies are the Departments of Corrections, Economic Development, Elementary and Secondary Education, Health and Senior Services, Mental Health, Public Safety, Revenue, Social Services, Transportation, and the Office of the State Courts Administrator. Other partnering agencies include the federal probation system along with local law enforcement, faith-based organizations, service providers and treatment programs.

In addition, VR is participating in a pilot program with the Department of Corrections in southern Missouri. VR is providing career counseling and coordinating services with other agencies for six-month pre-release offenders with disabilities to assist them with finding employment and returning to their communities.

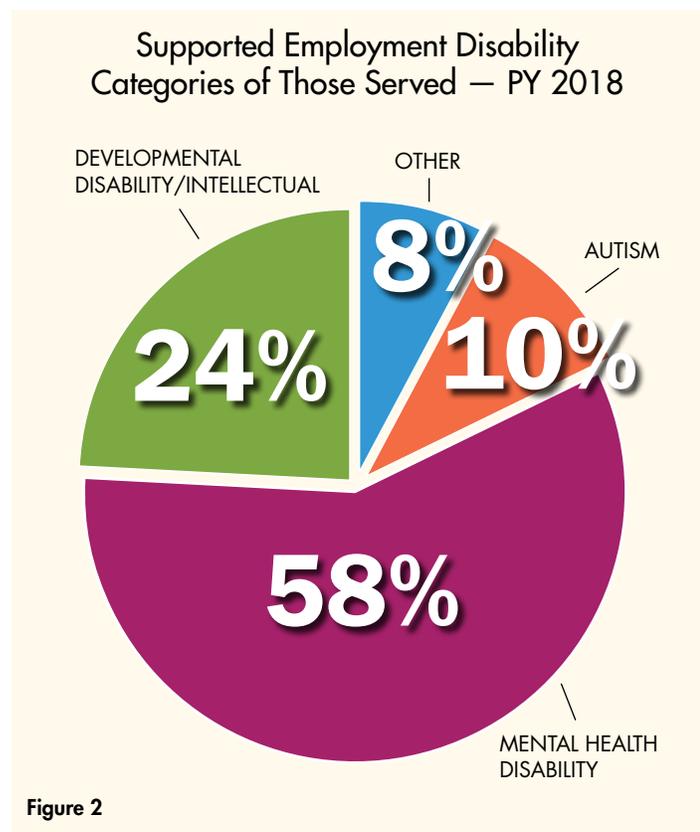
VR SERVICES

Transition Services

WIOA places a significant emphasis on services to youth and students. 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 16 to 21. These 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 programs to provide pre-employment transition services. VR also has established partnerships with the University of Missouri's College of Education, CILs, CRPs, 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.



Supported Employment

VR provides supported employment (SE) services to a diverse population as indicated by Figures 2-3 (pages 15-16). Some of these services are jointly provided by DMH DBH-DD. SE is defined as competitive work in an integrated work setting with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. During PY 2018, 53 percent of individuals who received SE services and exited the program were successfully employed.

In PY 2018, VR worked with 117 CRPs that provide SE services and cover all counties in Missouri. An outcome-based model of SE services is used that features a period of discovery and exploration with the individual 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.

VR places an emphasis on the development of natural support systems to help individuals participating in supported employment successfully remain in the workforce. These natural supports help to reduce the cost of providing SE services. Figure 4 (page 16) shows the average cost of services, hourly wages and other statistics for supported employment.

Supported Employment Ethnicity and Gender of Those Served — PY 2018

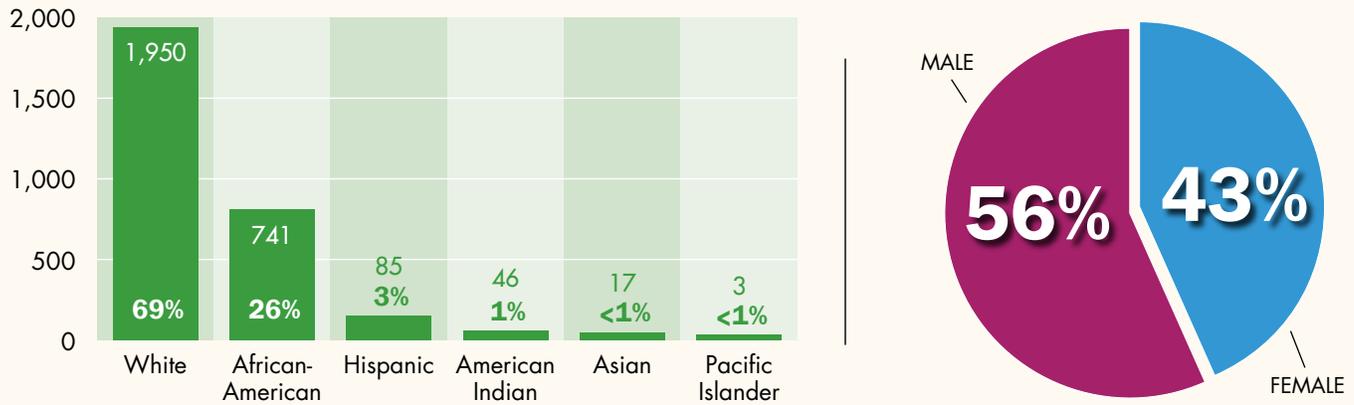


Figure 3

Note: Less than 1 percent did not wish to self-identify gender, and less than 1 percent did not answer.

Other Supported Employment Statistics — PY 2018

| | |
|--|---------|
| Average cost of supported employment services per person | \$1,742 |
| Average hourly wage per person | \$9.42 |
| Average hours per week worked per person | 24 |
| Success rate | 53% |
| Successful outcomes | 1,505 |
| Total participants | 2,842 |

| Age | Number | Percentage |
|--------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Less than 25 years | 866 | 30% |
| 25 through 34 | 724 | 25% |
| 35 through 44 | 558 | 20% |
| 45 through 54 | 423 | 15% |
| 55 through 64 | 243 | 9% |
| 65 and over | 28 | 1% |
| TOTAL | 2,842 | 100% |

Figure 4

Note: All information in figures 2-4 applies to Supported Employment (SE) services only. Statistics are based on the number of individuals who exited the program either successfully or unsuccessfully after receiving SE services.

Rehabilitation Technology

In PY 2018, VR provided a variety of rehabilitation technology services, assistive devices and equipment to 770 individuals who received services and exited the program for a total cost of \$5,586,244. VR purchases assistive devices to help with increasing, maintaining or improving functional capabilities. Devices could include hearing aids and other personal listening and communication devices, vehicle and home modifications, wheelchairs, and other powered mobility equipment. Rehabilitation technology services include consultation, 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.

Several VR counselors have specialized caseloads in the area of rehabilitation technology. Located throughout Missouri are seven VR counselors and one assistant director who are skilled in manual communication for the deaf and hard of hearing. Also, designated hard of hearing specialists in the Kansas City area are acquiring additional education on hearing aids and rehabilitation technology for individuals with hearing loss.

VR utilizes assistive technology demonstration sites located at CILs across the state for exploring, reviewing and demonstrating various devices, services and resources that are available to individuals with alternative communication needs. VR counselors are allowed to borrow rehabilitation technology equipment from MoAT for individuals to test before purchase.

In April, MoAT presented the Power Up 2019 Assistive Technology Conference and Expo. The conference was open to service providers, consumers, independent living specialists, VR staff and other professionals in the rehabilitation field. Fourteen VR staff members attended the event. The conference was successful in providing an opportunity to view state-of-the-art technology and equipment designed to enhance and promote independence and quality of life.



Aaliyah Coursey (left) and **Danielle Aubuchon** (right) both participated in a summer work experience program. Coursey worked at Cash Savers in Poplar Bluff, and Aubuchon worked at Town & Country in Doniphan. **Leanna Waller** (center) of East Carter R-II High was a job coach at the Town & Country site.

Kelsey Redding



Kelsey Redding wasn't sure if VR was right for her when she first

became aware of the program. She had been going through a difficult time in her life, living first with a friend and then with a married couple who worked as teachers at her high school. She had no confidence she would even be able to get a job.

However, Kelsey persisted and participated in a VR work experience during the summer between her junior and senior years at East Carter High School in Ellsinore. She started out as a shelf stocker at the Town & Country grocery store in Doniphan, then moved up to working as a checker.

"Having a job felt really good," she said, "especially saving money up for a car."

The summer work experiences paid for by VR allow young individuals the chance to understand what it's like to be employed and how they might use employment to envision a brighter future. For Kelsey, who has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder, the experience continued on past the summer.

"The great thing was that as soon as I was done with the program, the manager asked me to come work for him," she said. "I kept that job for over a year."

Another experience that helped boost Kelsey's confidence was her involvement in the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, a career-development conference for students with disabilities. She initially participated as a delegate but then reapplied the following year and served as a facilitator who spoke to groups of students. Kelsey said she has always enjoyed public speaking and rarely gets nervous anymore.

Both of these successes in her life helped propel her to test out of special education services for her senior year of high school. She has since graduated and is currently a full-time student at Three Rivers College in Poplar Bluff. She also works as a resident adviser on campus. While she is realistic about her career goals, her dream job is to become a motivational speaker.

"I like telling an interesting story and letting people know that, even if you're going through a rough time, you can make it," she said. "Just look at me." ■



As both a sculptor and a cartographer, Mellora Hall has worked with the concept of space — how to bring things together to fill it as a self-described “junk artist,” and how to map it in her professional career in geospatial information systems.

“This is where they go together — they’re both spatial,” she said. “You know, I just love the whole concept of using trash. I’m the ultimate recycler.”

Diagnosed with severe ADHD, Mellora credits VR with helping her progress through various stages of her education and employment. Her VR counselor, Jonathan Richards, said he could immediately tell she was intelligent at their first meeting, but he sensed she was struggling and feeling financially limited by her role as a part-time adjunct professor without a path toward tenure. He referred her to a job developer paid for by VR, Preferred Family Healthcare, that helped Mellora work on preparing the best-possible résumé and representing herself well in job interviews.

“I had hit a block,” she said. “Even though I had two master’s degrees and I knew how to do research and write reports, I wasn’t so great at the nuts and bolts of getting a job.”

“Mel is very motivated, and she was really just at a point where she needed a helping hand,” Richards said. “She needed some people in her corner to help her manage her current situation.”

Working with the job developer paid off as Mellora was able to secure employment in Illinois as a cartographer with the federal government. (VR provided financial assistance for the move.) Since then, she has moved up the federal ranks and currently works on the military base at Fort Gordon in Georgia.

“I’m not the smartest person in the world, but I think I’m the most tenacious,” she said.

When it comes to vocational rehabilitation, she is an enthusiastic supporter of VR’s services, especially for individuals like herself — a first-generation college student who has had to overcome both poverty and a disability.

“I’m really grateful,” she said. “Ultimately you have to put the work in, too, but it’s an amazing resource.” ■

SATISFACTION SURVEY

Satisfaction with staff and services is a VR priority, and the SRC's Program Evaluation Committee continues to work with VR on reviewing and analyzing feedback from individuals who receive VR services. This feedback is shared with management, supervisors and counselors and is used as a tool to improve services, evaluate staff performance and determine training needs.

During PY 2018, survey letters and postage-paid envelopes were mailed to a random sample of 9,893 individuals at various stages in the rehabilitation process (with a response rate of 14 percent). Survey feedback was positive. Results showed that 98 percent of those surveyed felt they were treated with respect, 95 percent felt that staff was available when needed and 94 percent felt their counselor explained their choices. The overall results are listed on page 21.

Survey Comments

"VR has given me hope for *a future of self-sufficiency and employment security* that I thought I wouldn't have again."

"They helped give me *the confidence I needed* to enter the workforce."

"I feel *someone is on my side* and willing to help me."

"It helped me *get the training I needed* to find *meaningful work*."

"I *graduated college with the help of Vocational Rehabilitation*, which enabled me to get into a career and *pursue work that I love doing*."

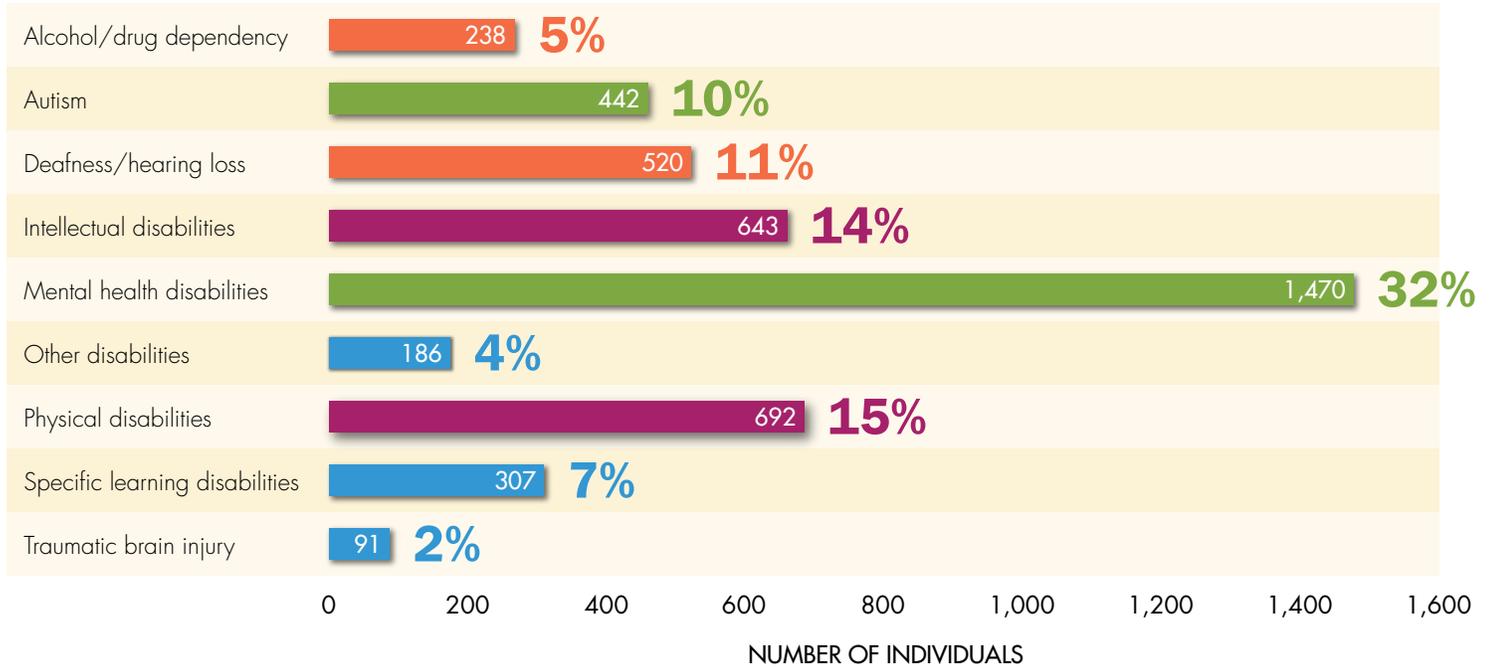
"They helped me *merge back into society*."

| Survey Results (Specific group responses) | 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 |
| Total responses | 1,548 | 95% | 5% | 98% | 2% | 96% | 4% | 92% | 8% | 94% | 6% |
| Open cases | 741 | 96% | 4% | 98% | 2% | 96% | 4% | 96% | 4% | 96% | 4% |
| Successful outcomes | 540 | 97% | 3% | 99% | 1% | 97% | 3% | 94% | 6% | 96% | 4% |
| Unsuccessful outcomes; closed before services | 76 | 83% | 17% | 96% | 4% | 92% | 8% | 61% | 39% | 79% | 21% |
| Unsuccessful outcomes; closed after services | 191 | 86% | 14% | 95% | 5% | 93% | 7% | 80% | 20% | 86% | 14% |
| Supported employment individuals | 420 | 95% | 5% | 99% | 1% | 98% | 2% | 94% | 6% | 96% | 4% |
| Individuals under 25 at application | 555 | 95% | 5% | 99% | 1% | 95% | 5% | 92% | 8% | 93% | 7% |
| Individuals with autism | 188 | 94% | 6% | 97% | 3% | 98% | 2% | 91% | 9% | 94% | 6% |
| Individuals with deafness/hearing loss | 142 | 99% | 1% | 98% | 2% | 93% | 7% | 97% | 3% | 98% | 2% |
| Individuals with mental health disabilities | 485 | 95% | 5% | 98% | 2% | 95% | 5% | 91% | 9% | 92% | 8% |
| Individuals with physical disabilities | 259 | 95% | 5% | 97% | 3% | 97% | 3% | 90% | 10% | 94% | 6% |
| Individuals with traumatic brain injury | 31 | 100% | 0% | 100% | 0% | 97% | 3% | 100% | 0% | 100% | 0% |
| Individuals with other disabilities | 208 | 94% | 6% | 99% | 1% | 92% | 8% | 92% | 8% | 95% | 5% |

PROGRAM DATA

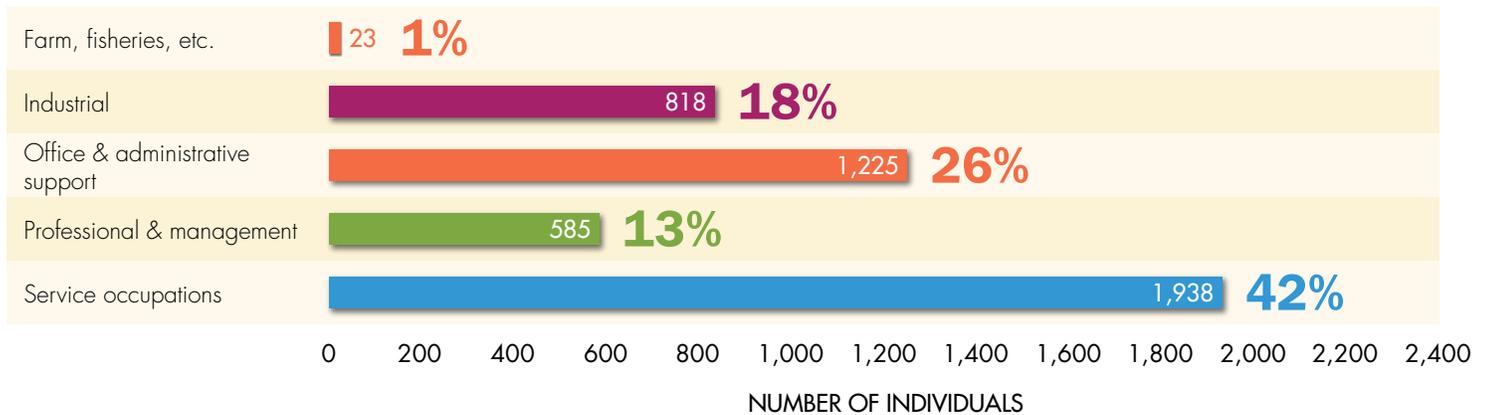
Disability Categories — 4,589 individuals with successful employment outcomes (PY 2018)

TYPE OF DISABILITY



Occupations — 4,589 individuals with successful employment outcomes (PY 2018)

OCCUPATION

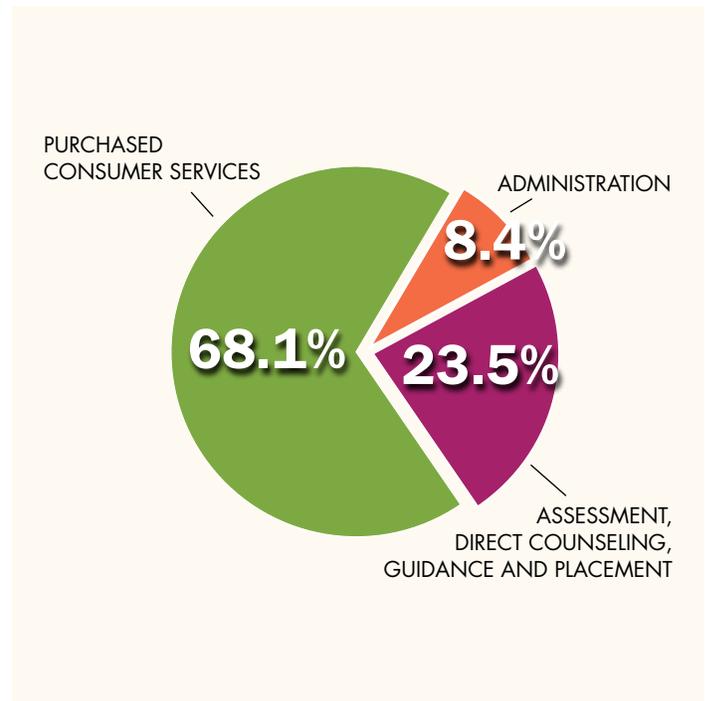


Impact of VR Services — PY 2018



With an increase in average weekly earnings of \$279 for 4,589 individuals with successful outcomes, the total annual increase in income amounted to \$66,577,212.

Expenditures — PY 2018



Characteristics — Individuals with successful employment outcomes (PY 2018)

| Gender | Number | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Male | 2,632 | 57% |
| Female | 1,934 | 42% |
| Did not wish to self-identify | 22 | <1% |
| Did not answer | 1 | <1% |
| TOTAL | 4,589 | 100% |

| Ethnicity | Number | Percentage |
|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| White | 3,512 | 77% |
| African-American | 843 | 18% |
| Hispanic | 124 | 3% |
| American Indian | 65 | 1% |
| Asian | 35 | <1% |
| Pacific Islander | 10 | <1% |
| TOTAL | 4,589 | 100% |

| Age | Number | Percentage |
|--------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Less than 25 years | 1,617 | 35% |
| 25 through 34 | 914 | 20% |
| 35 through 44 | 693 | 15% |
| 45 through 54 | 645 | 14% |
| 55 through 64 | 522 | 12% |
| 65 and over | 198 | 4% |
| TOTAL | 4,589 | 100% |

VR OFFICES

1) CAPE GIRARDEAU VR

3102 Blattner Drive, Suite 103
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703
Toll-free: 877-702-9883

2) CENTRAL OFFICE VR

3024 Dupont Circle
Jefferson City, MO 65109
Toll-free: 877-222-8963

3) CHILLICOTHE VR

603 W. Mohawk Road
Chillicothe, MO 64601
Toll-free: 866-572-4049

4) COLUMBIA VR

900 W. Nifong Blvd., Suite 210
Columbia, MO 65203
Toll-free: 877-222-8961

5) FARMINGTON VR

901 Progress Drive, Suite 100
Farmington, MO 63640
Toll-free: 800-640-7110

6) HANNIBAL VR

112 Jaycee Drive
Hannibal, MO 63401
Toll-free: 877-222-8960

7) JEFFERSON CITY VR

1500 Southridge Drive,
Suite 200
Jefferson City, MO 65109
Toll-free: 866-661-9106

8) JOPLIN VR

801 E. 15th St., Suite B
Joplin, MO 64804
Toll-free: 877-222-8964

9) KANSAS CITY DOWNTOWN VR

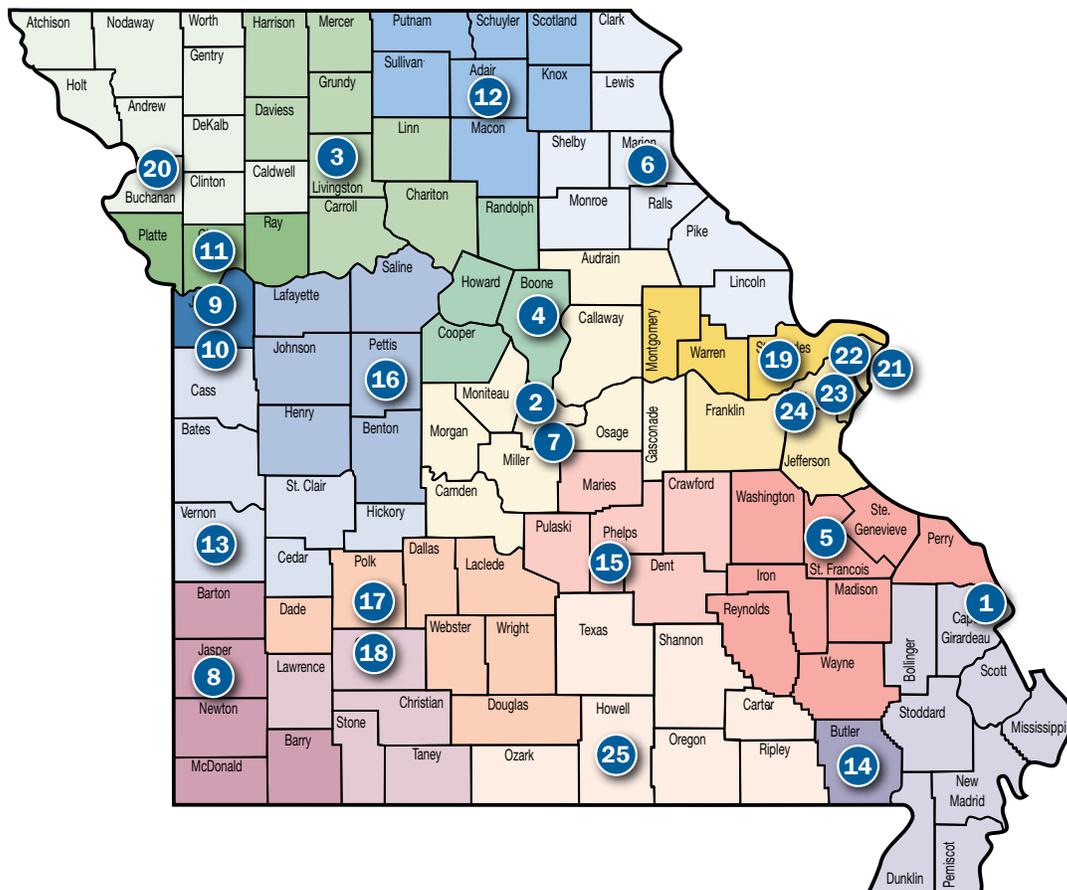
615 E. 13th St., Suite G-3
Kansas City, MO 64106
Toll-free: 866-971-8568

10) KANSAS CITY EAST/ TRANSITION VR

Joseph P. Teasdale State
Office Building
8800 E. 63rd St., Suite 260
Raytown, MO 64133
Toll-free: 866-831-1363

11) KANSAS CITY NORTH VR

8030 N. Oak Trafficway
Kansas City, MO 64118
Toll-free: 877-270-0198



12) KIRKSVILLE VR

1612 N. Osteopathy, Suite B
Kirksville, MO 63501
Toll-free: 877-222-8962

13) NEVADA VR

621 E. Highland Ave., Suite 2
Nevada, MO 64772
Toll-free: 800-598-3471

14) POPLAR BLUFF VR

1903 Northwood Drive, Suite 3
Poplar Bluff, MO 63901
Toll-free: 800-281-9894

15) ROLLA VR

1101A Kingshighway St.
Rolla, MO 65401
Toll-free: 800-890-2867

16) SEDALIA VR

2115 W. Broadway Blvd.
Sedalia, MO 65301
Toll-free: 800-924-0419

17) SPRINGFIELD NORTH VR

613 E. Kearney St.
Springfield, MO 65803
Toll-free: 877-222-8965

18) SPRINGFIELD SOUTH VR

1735 W. Catalpa St., Suite C
Springfield, MO 65807
Toll-free: 877-222-8967

19) ST. CHARLES VR

3737 Harry S. Truman Blvd.,
Suite 400
St. Charles, MO 63301
Toll-free: 855-283-2681

20) ST. JOSEPH VR

State Office Building
525 Jules St., Room 201
St. Joseph, MO 64501
Toll-free: 877-702-9876

21) ST. LOUIS DOWNTOWN VR

220 S. Jefferson Ave., Suite 110
St. Louis, MO 63103
Toll-free: 866-971-8569

22) ST. LOUIS NORTH VR

4040 Seven Hills Drive,
Suite 257
Florissant, MO 63033
Phone: 314-475-7999

23) ST. LOUIS SOUTH VR

St. Louis South Service Center
7545 S. Lindbergh Blvd.,
Suite 100
St. Louis, MO 63125
Toll-free: 877-222-8968

24) ST. LOUIS WEST/ TRANSITION VR

9900 Page Ave., Suite 104
St. Louis, MO 63132
Phone: 314-587-4877

25) WEST PLAINS VR

3417 Division Drive, Suite 2
West Plains, MO 65775
Toll-free: 877-222-8959



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The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program is funded, in part, with a federal grant awarded by the Department of Education. In FFY 2019, the program received \$61,980,296 of federal funds and \$16,715,882 of state funds for VR services. Total funding of \$78,696,178 was comprised of 78.7% federal monies and 21.3% of state matching funds. The Supported Employment (SE) program is funded, in part, with a federal grant awarded by the Department of Education. In FFY 2019, the program received \$271,772 of federal funds and \$14,592 of state funds for SE services. Total funding of \$286,364 was comprised of 95% federal monies and 5% state matching funds. The Independent Living (IL) program is funded, in part, with a federal grant awarded by the Department of Health and Human Services. In FFY 2019, the program received \$338,717 of federal funds and \$37,635 of state funds for IL services. Total funding of \$376,352 was comprised of 90% federal monies and 10% state matching funds. In FFY 2019, the IL program received additional state funding for an overall total of \$3,990,690.