

Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council

Promoting and supporting high-quality employment opportunities for people with disabilities



Federal Fiscal Year
2022 Annual Report

INTRODUCTION

The State Rehabilitation Council, commonly known as the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council (WRC), was established by then Governor Tommy Thompson in 1993 through executive order #196, and reconstituted by the governor in 1999 under Executive Order #363. The WRC is required under Code of Federal Regulations Title 34 (CFR) §361.16 and is charged with advising and assisting the Department of Workforce Development's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). Information on the mission and objectives of WRC can be found on page two of this report.

WRC is comprised of appointed members with disabilities, as well as those who represent individuals with a broad range of disabilities, such as family members and advocates representing groups and associations.

WRC is required to deliver an annual report to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and the Wisconsin Governor of its findings regarding the operations of DVR and its services to consumers throughout the state. The data, graphics, and stories in this annual report are attributed to work conducted by DVR staff, WRC Committees, and the full Council during Federal Fiscal Year 2022, which took place between October 1, 2021 and September 30, 2022.

Data in this report was compiled through daily activities of DVR staff located around the state. DVR staff are trained and required to maintain detailed documentation for each Wisconsin consumer who applies for DVR services. Data is entered and maintained in Wisconsin's Integrated Rehabilitation Information System, DVR's official case management system.



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MESSAGE FROM WRC CHAIR

As we mark the conclusion of the 2021-2022 program year, let us celebrate the successes of vocational rehabilitation consumers who have obtained, maintained, or advanced in employment aided by services from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). It has been a privilege to serve the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council (WRC) in our efforts to support DVR's important work. I extend my deepest appreciation to DVR personnel and the dedicated WRC volunteers as we collaborate toward a shared goal of helping Wisconsinites with disabilities reach full employment in rewarding careers.

In our prior program year (2020-2021), the council had formalized restructuring plans to move the bulk of our work to topic-focused committees, creating efficiencies compared to detailed discussions in large full-council meetings. In this recent program year (2021-2022), we focused on operationalizing the new structure by "putting our committees to work." See page four of this annual report for the committee list with descriptions of each topic area.

We built on committee discussions and recommendations to act on numerous topics as a full council. To inform a process of substantial regulation change that DVR was undergoing, the council held multiple committee meetings about the proposed regulation changes and held a special meeting of the full council to provide further feedback. The regulations about which the council provided feedback were DWD 68 (dealing with confidentiality of DVR consumer records), DWD 65 (dealing with the order of selection when demand for VR services rises to the level requiring a wait list, and DWD 75 (dealing with the process of appealing DVR decisions). The council gave feedback on regulatory changes proposed by DVR and also proposed several of its own changes that the council believed may enhance DVR services or operations. While DVR made independent decisions after receiving the feedback, and declined to incorporate some aspects of the feedback, the council was pleased that much of its feedback led to improvements in the final amendment. DVR preserved key positive changes, adjusted some of the proposed changes that council members raised concerns about, and added changes that the council had suggested as possible improvements. This regulation development and feedback process took significant work by DVR leadership and WRC members, and it led to regulations that better comply with federal laws and better serve Wisconsinites with disabilities.

The full council provided feedback on general DVR operations during quarterly updates from the DVR Administrator, stayed updated on federal funding opportunities including periodic updates on the Disability Innovation Fund Career Pathways grant that DVR leadership secured, developed a working relationship with the redesignated leadership of the Client Assistance Program (CAP), received data from the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), provided feedback on priorities in response to key data, delivered feedback on a proposed revised fee schedule and technical specifications governing services that DVR contracts to provide, and advised on a range of other policy topics.

Finally, the full council also made progress toward a written resource plan. Federal regulations require State Rehabilitation Councils to have a resource plan, and Wisconsin had historically fulfilled this purely through conversation between the council and the DVR Administrator rather than with a written document. As part of enhancing professionalism of the council's work, we developed a written plan that was pending full council approval at the end of this program year.

We hope you will consider service toward the important work of advancing career success of Wisconsinites with disabilities. Turn to page 20 of this Annual Report to learn ways to become involved.



Steven C. Wheeler, Chair
Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council

WRC MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

MISSION to work on behalf of Wisconsin residents with disabilities to review, analyze, and advise DVR regarding the performance of its responsibilities in providing quality services to people with disabilities.

VISION people with disabilities will enjoy full equality of opportunity, complete integration in the life of our communities, and appropriate employment which fulfills each individual's needs and aspirations.

OBJECTIVES of the WRC and its members include:

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS among people with disabilities, providers of employment services, advocacy organizations, and other groups that can and should participate in the accomplishment of the Council's mission and vision.

REACHING OUT TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES throughout the state to create a true spirit of inclusion for every Wisconsinite, including an opportunity to contribute to the work of the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council.

HEARING AND RESPONDING to the concerns and issues raised by people with disabilities, their advocates, and other concerned individuals so that the work of the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council is as effective as possible and serves as a true catalyst for positive change.

FORGING A SPIRIT OF TRUST AND COOPERATION with the administration and staff of DVR and advocacy organizations for people with disabilities to optimize the use of scarce resources for accomplishing the mission and vision and create conditions for acquiring additional resources.

The WRC performs several functions as outlined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, amendments under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, and the WRC by-laws.

1.

Review and analyze state-level data to advise DVR regarding performance in areas that impact the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve employment outcomes using services under this title.

2.

Advise and assist DVR in the preparation of the state plan based on the needs assessment, reports, and evaluations.

3.

Conduct a review of Administrative Law Judge hearing decisions and available data on consumer satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services.

4.

Work with DVR to prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and Rehabilitation Services Administration Commissioner on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs.

5.

Coordinate the work of the WRC with the activities of other disability-related councils, including the State Rehabilitation Advisory Council, through dual memberships and information sharing.

WISCONSIN REHABILITATION COUNCIL

MEMBERS

WRC is comprised of 24 members appointed directly by the governor, each serve staggered three-year terms. The WRC by-laws dictate a set number of seats for specific groups or demographics to ensure proper representation and obtain unique perspectives.

Members of WRC include:

- Current or former recipients of vocational rehabilitation services
- Disability advocacy group representatives
- Parents, family members, guardians, or authorized representatives of people with disabilities
- Business, industry, and labor representatives
- Department of Public Instruction representative
- Statewide Independent Living Council representative
- DVR Administrator, serving as an Ex-Officio member

MEGAN BISONETTE, Hayward
Native American Vocational
Rehabilitation Program

ANNTRICE BROWN, Milwaukee
Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

JULIE BURISH, Brookfield
Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

NATALIA GRAF, Arbor Vitae
Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

JENNIFER FELTY, La Crosse
Community Rehabilitation Service
Provider

ANN FRANZ, Kaukauna
Council on Workforce Investment

DEB HENDERSON-GUENTHER,
Madison
Client Assistance Program

MICHAEL JACKSON, Milwaukee
Business, Industry and Labor

ALAN KALTENBERG, Arlington
Business, Industry and Labor

LORI KARCHER, Milwaukee
Parent Training and Information Center

EDWARD KASTERN, Oshkosh
Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

ELIZABETH KENNEDY, Prairie du Sac
Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

KYLE KLEIST, Menomonie
State Independent Living Council

LINDSEY KREITZMAN, Waunakee
Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

NORENE LUECK, Eau Claire
Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

DELORA NEWTON, Madison
Director of Designated State Unit

DR. DEBORAH LEE, Middleton
Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

ALICIA REINHARD, Madison
Department of Public Instruction

ALEXIS RIGGS, Madison
Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

RICHARD STRAUB, Brooklyn
Business, Industry and Labor

GADEEN TAYLOR-DUKE, Hayward
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

JOALYN TORGERSON, La Crosse
Business, Industry and Labor

JOLENE WANERK, Green Bay
Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

STEVEN WHEELER, Madison
Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

WRC is thankful for the contributions of the following Council members who completed their service in 2022:

BECKY HEBDA

MARY KESSENS

RAMSEY LEE

DEBRA NOTSTAD

ANN ZENK

WRC COMMITTEES

The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council has **five** committees that meet regularly to support WRC work.

Executive

Chair: Steven Wheeler

Purpose: Coordinate activities of the full council, including identifying and prioritizing areas in which council review may improve DVR program delivery, maintaining open communication and transparency to ensure the council is an effective resource for stakeholder oversight of DVR, and identifying and implementing methods to improve council operations.

In 2022, the Executive Committee sought to professionalize council operation. Leadership assigned priority topics for full-council and committee work, provided feedback on DWD regulation changes, conducted an annual review of issues revealed from appeal decisions, developed WRC's first written resource plan, and supplemented the work of topic-focused committees in key areas such as leadership development, needs assessment, and several specific policy issues.

Policy Review and Administration

Chair: Steven Wheeler

Purpose: Review, analyze, and provide input on the policies, practices, and administration operations with a focus on ensuring effective delivery of DVR services, including addressing administrative matters that do not fall within the scope of another committee. Areas of focus include reviewing state administrative code changes, DVR program policy and fiscal manuals, advising on the State Plan, and reviewing guidance documents, procedures, and best practices.

In 2022, the restructured committee set goals and selected leadership, provided input on DWD regulation changes, reviewed proposed DVR policy manual changes, and analyzed possible improvements to a range of topic-specific policies including training grants, transportation provider qualifications, mileage reimbursements, retention services, services to Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries, speed of consumer engagement, transition services, and other topics.

Council Engagement

Chair: Deb Henderson-Guenther

Purpose: Encourage WRC member engagement, solicit executive committee nominees, and recruit new members.

In 2022, the committee created processes to welcome new council members and solicit feedback from exiting council members regarding their service on the council. The committee also created an acronym list for council members to understand DVR programs, partners, and services, and wrote a newsletter article highlighting the council work and to encouraging interested folks to participate in council meetings or how to become a WRC member.

Services to Business

Chair: Becky Hebda

Purpose: Ensure that DVR's services to business are delivered in a way that assists job seekers with disabilities to connect to employment.

In 2022, the committee began a process of transitioning committee leadership and revisiting committee goals.

Performance Measures & Quality Assurance

Chair: Julie Burish

Purpose: Devise methods for ensuring DVR's delivery of services and data collection are compliant with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and federal reporting standards. The committee also reviews, analyzes, and provides input on the effectiveness of VR services and stakeholder satisfaction with VR services.

In 2022, the restructured committee set goals and selected leadership, provided guidance on consumer survey plans and provider survey goals, reviewed the fee schedule and technical specifications for statewide services including in-depth review of benefits analysis, provided input on priorities emerging from the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, and received updates on retention services.

WRC AND DVR PARTNERSHIP

In July 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was passed by the U.S. Congress to reauthorize the public law formerly known as the Workforce Investment Act. WIOA is designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers. Title IV of WIOA with Title IV of WIOA amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. DVR provides the consumer services required under Title IV.

Under WIOA, WRC is required to meet quarterly and participate in the following activities related to DVR's provision of vocational rehabilitation services:

- Consult with DVR on the development, implementation, and revision of DVR policies and procedures
- Collaborate with DVR staff and administration to annually develop, agree to, and review DVR goals and priorities
- Work jointly with DVR to prepare and submit an annual progress report

DVR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

MISSION: To obtain, maintain, and improve employment for people with disabilities by working with vocational rehabilitation consumers, employers, and other partners.

PURPOSE: To provide individualized services to Wisconsin residents with disabilities experiencing significant barriers to employment. Primary DVR services include vocational guidance and counseling, job training, assistive technology, and job placement services.

WHAT DOES DVR DO?

- Provide employment services and counseling to people with disabilities
- Administer or arrange for services to enable an individual to go to work
- Offer training and technical assistance to employers regarding disability employment issues

WHO DOES DVR SERVE?

- Individuals with disabilities in Wisconsin who face a significant barrier to employment
- Wisconsin employers seeking qualified talent

WHERE IS DVR LOCATED?

- DVR has offices in 22 Comprehensive Job Centers and 19 additional service locations throughout Wisconsin
- DVR staff are able to provide services in most locations within the state using remote access technology

HOW DOES DVR PROVIDE SERVICES?

- Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) identify employment goals and necessary rehabilitative services
- IPEs are developed and co-signed by a licensed Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and the DVR consumer
- DVR staff work in teams to assist consumers in achieving their employment goals

DVR core **VALUES** include:

- Enabling the individual with a disability to increase self-sufficiency through education and employment
- Working with community partners and collaborators who share the expectation to increase individual self-sufficiency through education and employment
- Maintaining a team of employees and colleagues who are knowledgeable in rehabilitation and committed to serving individuals with disabilities to increase their self-sufficiency and employment
- Elevating DVR leaders who demonstrate the commitment, knowledge, and experience to lead the program and employees to increase education and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities
- Ensuring sound fiscal and administrative practices that support all DVR personnel, community partners, and individuals with disabilities

DVR OFFICES

DVR is organized into 11 Workforce Development Areas (WDA), which are each overseen by an area director. In total, DVR operates out of 43 offices located throughout the WDAs based on area population. Below are the cities with DVR office locations, the WDA directors, and main WDA phone numbers.

WDA 1 - Elkhorn, Kenosha, Racine
Director: Susan Chandek
262-956-6935

WDA 2 - Milwaukee (2), West Allis
Director: Jennifer Fogarty
414-250-6551

WDA 3 - Waukesha, Mequon, Pewaukee, West Bend
Director: Amy May
262-956-6830

WDA 4 - Fond Du Lac, Menasha, Oshkosh
Director: Craig Wehner
920-930-6734

WDA 5 - Green Bay, Manitowoc, Marinette, Shawano, Sheboygan, Sturgeon Bay
Director: Jennifer Bscherer
920-930-6733

WDA 6 - Rhinelander, Stevens Point, Wausau, Wisconsin Rapids
Director: Patricia Noland
715-261-8760

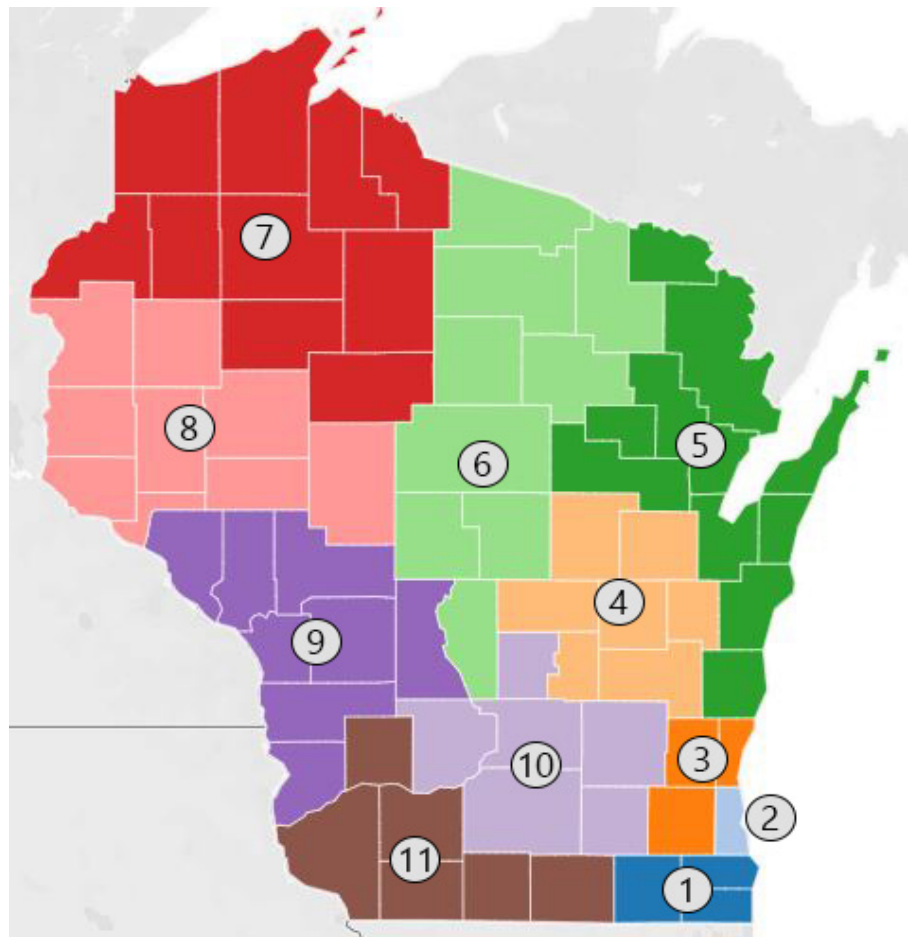
WDA 7 - Ashland, Hayward, Ladysmith, Medford, Superior
Director: Thomas Draghi
715-392-7896

WDA 8 - Eau Claire, Menomonie, Rice Lake
Director: Thomas Draghi
715-836-4001

WDA 9 - La Crosse, Viroqua
Director: Amy Grotzke
608-405-4120

WDA 10 - Baraboo, Beaver Dam, Jefferson, Madison (2), Portage
Director: Jennifer Klein
608-242-4800

WDA 11 - Dodgeville, Janesville, Richland Center
Director: Andrea Simon
800-228-2648



MESSAGE FROM DVR ADMINISTRATOR

The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council assisted the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation with two major policy processes in Federal Fiscal Year 2022 (October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022).

1. Results of the latest Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) became available in early 2022 and were reviewed by WRC and DVR. San Diego State University was contracted to oversee the CSNA and made several recommendations to improve DVR's services to both individuals and businesses. WRC asked DVR to prioritize recommendation responses and report on activity progress. The prioritized recommendations will be considered for inclusion into Wisconsin's 2024-27 Combined State Plan. WRC and DVR will work collaboratively for much of calendar year 2023 to determine which will be established as goals in the upcoming State Plan.

2. WRC was actively engaged in the process of updating three DVR Administrative Rules:

- a. DWD 65 - Order of Selection which describes priority for service categories.
- b. DWD 68 - Confidentiality which governs the scope of permission needed to share information from a consumer's case file.
- c. DWD 75 - Appeals which stipulates the process used by consumers who wish to have DVR decisions reviewed and possibly overruled by an Administrative Law Judge.

WRC members offered significant input to the rule making process which helped clarify rule intent and improve consumer processes.

DVR kept WRC members apprised of progress of several major initiatives throughout the year. DVR received a \$14 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education as Federal Fiscal Year 2021 closed. DVR is using the five-year Career Pathways Advancement Grant to provide skills, training, and education for up to 500 individuals who desire initial or advanced employment in one of four high demand career pathways - Healthcare, Digital/Information Technology, Construction or Manufacturing. By the end of Federal Fiscal Year 2022, about 100 individuals were enrolled in the grant program.

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) are important components for DVR to better serve consumers as well as recruit and retain skilled employees who reflect the racial diversity of Wisconsin's population. To develop a new DEI Plan, DVR hired Roadmap Research Global (a research, communications, and project management company) to survey DVR staff, review DVR's consumer policies, and make recommendations for process and communication improvements. The DEI Plan is currently being finalized with implementation forthcoming. WRC's support of this initiative is greatly appreciated.

Wisconsin's Integrated Rehabilitation Information System, a case management and fiscal tracking system, had its last major update in 2010. Hundreds of system updates were made over the past 12 years, but a major overhaul remained necessary. DVR is in the process of exploring the system's best modernization option to efficiently record required data, easily analyze it, and facilitate delivery of best practices and services to consumers. WRC member feedback on data results is important to assist DVR in providing quality consumer services.

DVR thanks WRC members for their passion towards improving workforce opportunities for individuals with disabilities, their dedication in serving on the Council, and providing meaningful feedback on proposed policy and process updates intended to better serve consumers.



DELORA NEWTON, Administrator
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION IMPACT

DVR receives **78.7%** of its funding from the U.S. Department of Education and a required **21.3%** match from State of Wisconsin General Purpose Revenues.

In addition, Wisconsin can apply for Social Security reimbursement dollars. These dollars are earned when DVR services help to place a consumer in a job that pays a high enough wage that the consumer no longer receives Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Income. When this occurs, the Social Security Administration reimburses DVR for the cost of case services provided to the consumer.

In federal fiscal year 2022, DVR received **\$66,303,351** in federal funding and a **\$17,944,872** state match. In addition to these primary funding sources, in FFY 2022 DVR received **\$5,079,688** million in Social Security reimbursement dollars.

DVR PRIMARY FUNDING SOURCES

State: \$17,944,872 Federal: \$66,303,351
Social Security Reimbursement: \$5,079,688

Cost of DVR Services: \$51,481,519
Estimated Annual Earnings: \$72,496,196
* Individual DVR consumers whose cases were closed in federal fiscal year 2022
Wisconsin Return on Investment:
\$21,014,677

Why is this important?

Wisconsin Vocational Rehabilitation helps fuel Wisconsin's economic engine. In Federal Fiscal Year 2022, DVR saw a higher return on investment than what it spent to provide services to individuals with disabilities. These services generated more than \$21 million in earnings across Wisconsin.

DVR successfully transitions Wisconsin residents with disabilities off federal programs such as Supplemental Security Income and/or Social Security Disability Income.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2022, 383 DVR consumers successfully maintained employment and transitioned off federal benefits. This figure demonstrates the profound economic impact that DVR has not only on individual consumers, but on the State of Wisconsin as a whole.

CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHICS

In Federal Fiscal Year 2022, DVR provided services and support to 26,040 individuals. These individuals received a variety of support and services through DVR offices around the state with 3,446 successfully maintaining employment for at least 90 days while DVR tracked their progress. These individual cases were then successfully closed per DVR policy.

By Race

	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hawaiian Pacific	Multi Race	White	No Report
Served	719	473	4,064	62	881	19,428	413
Successfully Closed	64	66	330	10	74	2,872	30

By Age

	Under 24	25 - 54	55 - 64	Over 64
Served	11,070	10,982	3,096	892
Successfully Closed	1,172	1,635	512	127

By Gender

	Female	Male	No Report
Served	11,081	14,701	258
Successfully Closed	1,377	2,050	19

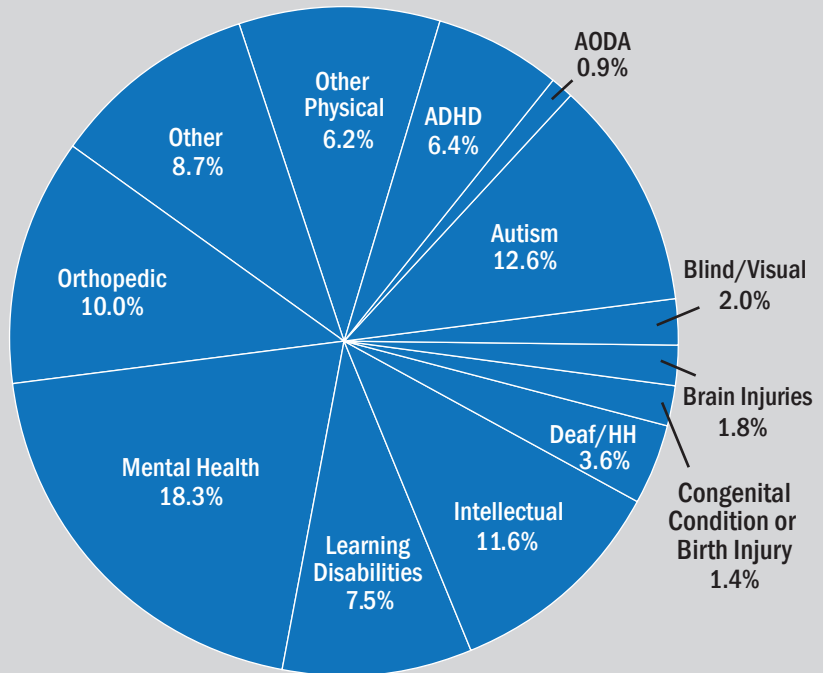
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY

During Federal Fiscal Year 2022, DVR contracted with Roadmap Research Global to survey DVR staff, review DVR's consumer policies, and make recommendations for process and communication improvements. The recommendations will produce a strategic plan that will help create new initiatives and grow existing efforts to ensure DVR is a leader in supporting individuals with disabilities and staff members with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

DISABILITY TYPE

DVR CONSUMER DISABILITY TYPES: FFY 2022

This visual shows the distribution of disability types reported as primary disabilities by 26,040 DVR consumers in federal fiscal year 2022.



ADHD	1,655	6.4%
AODA	247	0.9%
Autism	3,271	12.6%
Blind/Visual	518	2.0%
Brain Injuries	475	1.8%
Congenital Condition or Birth Injury	360	1.4%
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	946	3.6%

Intellectual	3,021	11.6%
Learning Disabilities	1,948	7.5%
Mental Health	4,757	18.3%
Orthopedic	2,596	10.0%
Other	2,255	8.7%
Other Physical	1,615	6.2%
TOTAL	26,040	100.0%

Data is tracked and maintained by DVR and is provided to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration under the U.S. Department of Education. When individuals apply for DVR services, they report their primary disability. The tables above demonstrates the diversity of eligible consumers for DVR services in Federal Fiscal Year 2022.

CONSUMER OUTCOMES

For each of the last three fiscal years, DVR has assisted over 3,000 job seekers with disabilities in reaching employment goals. The chart below shows federal fiscal year 2022 statistics by employment status category. Each employment category saw a year-over-year increase in average hourly wages as more consumers successfully obtained employment in higher-earning positions.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	TOTAL	AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS	AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE	AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE	FFY21 AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE
Employment without Supports in Integrated Setting	2,608	28	\$481	\$15.81	\$15.56
Employment with Supports in Integrated Setting	825	14	\$160	\$10.77	\$10.45
Self-employment (except BEP)	13	25	\$595	\$24.70	\$18.79
All Consumers	3,446	25	\$405	\$14.64	\$15.08

- **Employment without supports** refers to traditional employment where a candidate is hired by a business.
- **Employment with supports** refers to individuals who are hired by a business and receive some supports, such as job coaching, funded by a source other than the business.
- **Integrated setting** refers to competitive jobs in the community. Vocational rehabilitation services must be directed toward obtaining competitive jobs in the community.
- **Self-employment** involves starting one's own business or receiving help to accommodate the disability so a business owner can continue to operate their business.

SUCCESSFULLY CLOSED CASES (STATUS 26)

DVR works with individuals with disabilities to find the best employment outcomes to meet job goals. This is done through specifically tailored conversations and the development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), which is an agreement between the individual and DVR staff that includes the services and supports DVR will help provide.

When DVR consumers successfully obtain a job, it is DVR policy for staff to monitor and maintain communication with the consumer for up to 90 days. During this time, DVR staff will ensure the job is going well, the consumer is fulfilled, and the employer pays accurate wages.

If the consumer has met their IPE goals at the conclusion of the 90-day monitoring, DVR staff will notify the consumer that their case will be closed successfully. Once the case is closed, DVR services conclude. Consumers can reapply for DVR services in the future if needed.

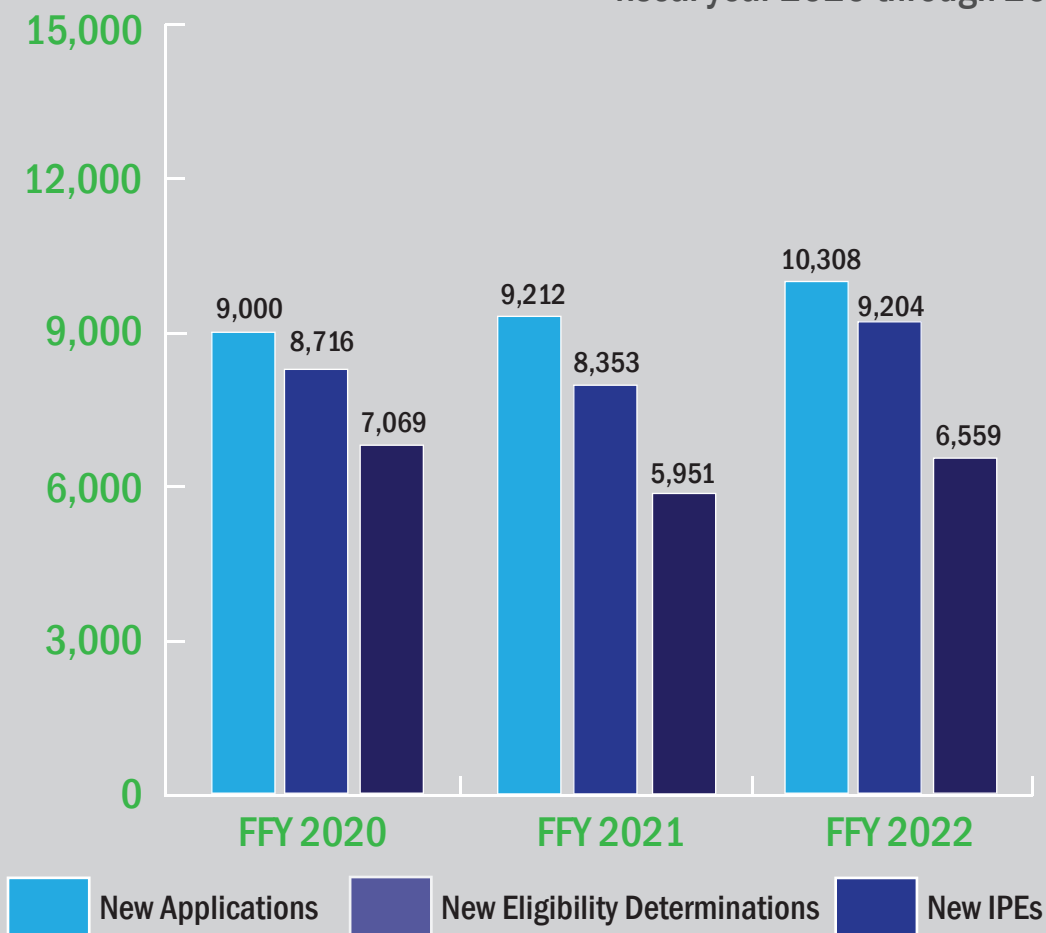
DVR PERFORMANCE METRICS

Throughout federal fiscal year 2022, DVR engaged with a total of **26,040** Wisconsin residents. Individuals included in this figure participated in at least one activity with DVR over the course of the year. Engagement activities with DVR include application for services, eligibility determination, Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) development, active DVR services, or case closure, either through successful community employment or informed choice. Of those who engaged with DVR during the 2022 federal fiscal year, **23,664** were eligible DVR consumers.

DVR ENGAGEMENT BY ACTIVITY

FFY 2020-2022

Number of new DVR applications, eligibility determinations, and Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) during each federal fiscal year 2020 through 2022.



JOB TYPES OBTAINED BY DVR CONSUMERS

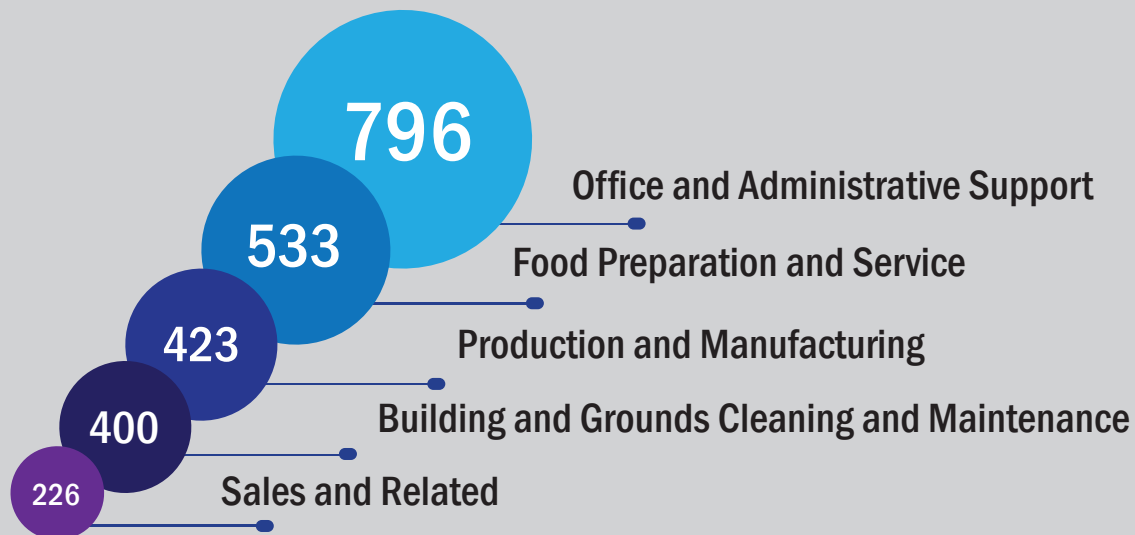
The tables below show the types of jobs obtained by the **3,446** DVR consumers who successfully achieved their employment goal in federal fiscal year 2022.

Architecture and Engineering	43
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	31
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	400
Business and Financial Operations	48
Community and Social Service	76
Computer and Mathematical	57
Construction and Extraction	31
Education, Training, and Library	82
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	10
Food Preparation and Service	533
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	78
Healthcare Support	58

Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	73
Legal	6
Life, Physical, and Social Science	9
Management	59
Office and Administrative Support	796
Personal Care and Service	170
Production and Manufacturing	423
Protective Service	25
Sales and Related	226
Transportation and Material Moving	211
TOTAL	3,446

TOP 5 CONSUMER JOB TYPES

Number successfully employed in the five most common industries for DVR consumers, FFY 2022



CONSUMER CASE

SERVICE EXPENDITURES

Post-pandemic service caseloads are now comparable to pre-pandemic levels; however DVR saw more individuals successfully obtain employment in FFY22 than the previous year.”

“Other Services” include services that cannot be recorded elsewhere, including foreign language interpreter services, Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS) plans, vocational guidance and counseling, post-secondary counseling offered as part of DVR’s pre-employment transition services, Business Enterprise Program operator supplies, and occupational licenses.

SERVICE	FFY 2021	FFY 2022
Assessment	\$1,835,338	\$2,189,312
Benefits Analysis	\$1,784,300	\$2,250,332
College/University Training	\$2,114,895	\$1,652,476
Disability Skills Training	\$200,555	\$246,143
Eligibility/Order of Selection Assessment	\$1,483,247	\$1,813,860
Interpreter/Note-Taker for the Deaf	\$144,786	\$134,787
Job Development	\$11,502,302	\$10,559,043
Low Vision Aid/Adjustment Services	\$117,003	\$104,764
Maintenance	\$222,370	\$299,149
Occupational/Vocational Training	\$441,695	\$313,291
On-the-Job Supports	\$3,629,356	\$5,112,816
Other Services	\$256,770	\$290,248
Personal Assistance	\$18,776	\$40,242
Rehabilitation Technology	\$2,358,257	\$2,460,755
Medical Restoration	\$45,811	\$38,422
Services/Family Members	\$11,052	\$34,052
Small Business Services	\$87,308	\$42,172
State Limited Term Employment	\$5,529	\$13,533
Supported Employment	\$7,618,998	\$8,960,094
Temporary Work	\$4,683,676	\$4,432,617
Training	\$2,578,292	\$2,759,529
Transportation	\$870,131	\$1,533,019
Work-Related Materials/Tools	\$134,856	\$207,940
Youth OJT	\$34,955	\$48,350
TOTAL	\$42,180,258	\$45,429,946

As additional individuals with disabilities seek DVR services and competitive integrated employment, DVR is providing more mileage reimbursement to support DVR consumers for their work commute.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT

TRANSITION SERVICES

In Federal Fiscal Year 2022, DVR spent over \$10.5 million on pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) statewide for students ages 14 to 21.

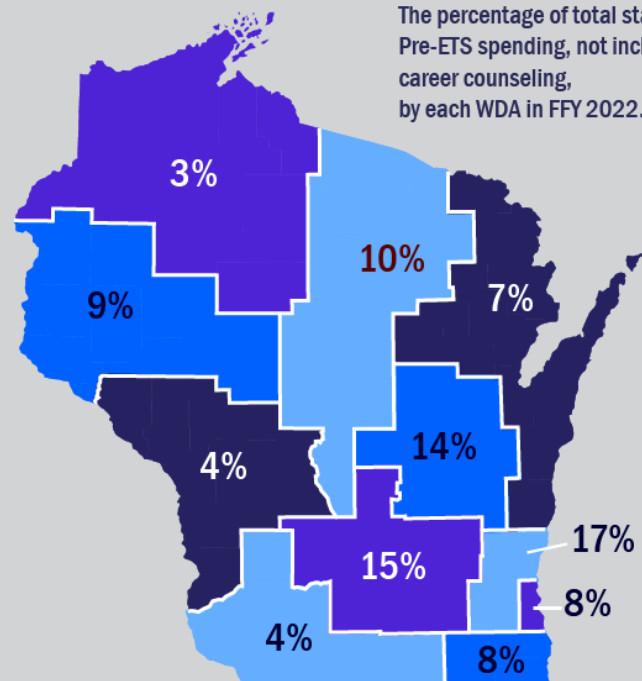
PRE-ETS CATEGORY	2021 SPENDING	2022 SPENDING
Work-Based Learning	\$7,112,865	\$6,873,231
Job Exploration Counseling	\$590,992	\$601,849
Workplace Readiness Training	\$1,695,770	\$1,696,757
Career Counseling (Staff Time)	\$999,941	\$1,188,405
Self-Advocacy Training	\$131,082	\$162,853
Post-Secondary Counseling	\$68,170	\$51,795
STATEWIDE TOTAL	\$10,598,820	\$10,574,890

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires vocational rehabilitation agencies to set aside at least 15 percent of funding to provide services to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services. This table includes all Pre-ETS expenditures outlined in WIOA.

The Percentage of Pre-ETS Dollars Spent by WDA, or Workforce Development Area, map includes all Pre-ETS spending categories noted above except career counseling, as staff time expenditure data is not available by WDA.

PERCENTAGE OF PRE-ETS DOLLARS SPENT STATEWIDE BY WDA

The percentage of total statewide Pre-ETS spending, not including career counseling, by each WDA in FFY 2022.



HIGHLIGHT ON BUSINESS SERVICES

Wisconsin's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is committed to helping people with disabilities find a job, keep a job, and get a better job. To do this, DVR Business Service Consultants (BSC) are located in each Workforce Development Area (WDA) around the state, ready to work with employers seeking to hire new employees and create a workplace that is supportive of people of all abilities.

BSCs can assist businesses in many ways:

- Recruit qualified workers with disabilities
- Build staff diversity through DVR's broad pool of skilled job candidates
- Retain well-trained and productive employees
- Access workforce planning resources and labor market information

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WDA 4

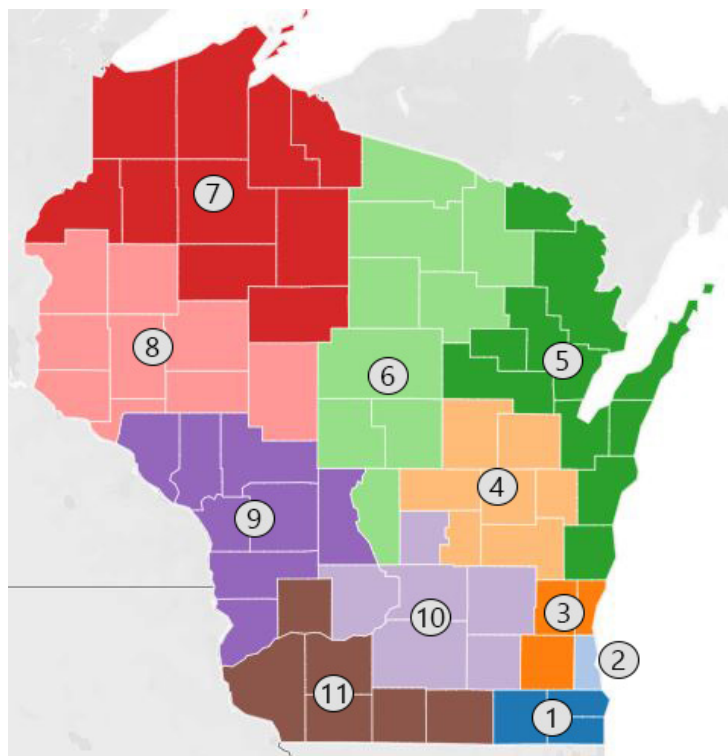
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BUSINESS SERVICES SUCCESS

SSM Health is committed to finding meaningful work and stable, long-term career opportunities within its organization for individuals with disabilities. In 2019, the St. Louis-based SSM Health, with locations in Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma and Wisconsin, launched the Ability Forward Program to positively impact the rate of employment of individuals with disabilities.

“SSM Health’s mission is to provide exceptional care for our patients which begins with finding exceptional and diverse caregivers representative of the people in our communities,” said Jacqueline Jefferson, SSM Health lead for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. “Ability Forward allowed us to tap into previously untapped sources for talented people to join our teams.”



The launch of the program coincided with the start of the global COVID-19 pandemic requiring SSM Health to shift its perspective on how to recruit job candidates, including those with disabilities. “People with disabilities are historically under-represented in the workforce even in the most robust economic times,” Jefferson said. “The pandemic further exacerbated this longstanding problem.”

Despite the constraints of the pandemic, SSM Health decided to go ahead with the Ability Forward Youth Internship Program, which is designed to open the doors to employment within healthcare for individuals with disabilities. This customized and immersive internship program allowed the interns to learn relevant, marketable skills from within the healthcare field by working alongside peers and receiving coaching from mentors.

Building upon an existing, successful high school internship program, the Ability Forward internships launched in Wisconsin in 2020 with high school students from the Madison Metro School District who were interested in exploring healthcare careers. Interns from five cohorts successfully completed the program within six participating SSM Health Wisconsin hospital departments. Five of the interns that were interested in healthcare were hired after completing their internships.

The program’s executive sponsors were Kyle Nondorf, President of SSM Health St. Mary’s Hospital – Madison and Katherine Vergos, President of SSM Health St. Agnes Hospital in Fond du Lac. Together with Senior Human Resources Directors Mike Bledsoe and Sandi Hill-Ferrigno, and an internship committee, discuss strategies to establish and maintain the program.

In the summer of 2020, SSM Health partnered with Nicole Greetan, Patricia Johnson and Chantel Kilmer of the Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to implement a pilot program called Launch with a Leader to raise awareness with SSM Health’s leaders about how our organization might identify and hire individuals with disabilities who are looking to start a new career or make a career change.

The partners held a two-part series to raise awareness about the new program and offer a detailed look into healthcare professions and how interested applicants might discover job opportunities to launch a career within SSM Health.

Vocational rehabilitation counselors and healthcare providers participated in the sessions, which concluded with a 30-day online hiring fair which gave DVR consumers exclusive access to a job portal with open positions that had been pre-identified as appropriate by vocational rehabilitation counselors. Thanks to this program, as of May 2022, nine applicants have been hired by SSM Health. Discussions are underway to partner on another Launch with a Leader series in 2023.

“These new programs and partnerships have been instrumental in diversifying and strengthening our workforce,” Jefferson said.

CONSUMER SUCCESS

Clarence “Butch” Ortell was a successful plumber and a mechanic before suffering from debilitating pain in his leg and back from lifting heavy water heaters and furnaces. After multiple treatments and surgeries, Butch’s doctor told him to stop.

“I felt sick about it when my doctor told me to stop working,” Butch said. “I was still young at the time, and I had a family to support. I didn’t want to go back to feeling useless.”

Thankfully, Butch’s doctor told him about the Department of Workforce Development Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), which Butch was unfamiliar with.

Through DVR, Butch enrolled in a six-week entrepreneur class at his area technical college. Working closely with local DVR staff and partners, Butch developed a business plan that included the accommodations he would need to minimize his health issues while working. In 2003, he opened Butch’s Service LLC, an automotive repair shop in Marshfield.



Butch and his former DVR counselor Paul Untiet in front of Butch’s Service LLC.

In 2019, his back issues returned along with some hearing loss. Butch asked DVR for additional help so that he could continue to work fulltime. “DVR gave me the opportunity to support my family,” said Butch.

Butch received Governor Evers’ Exemplary Employer Award in October 2021 during National Disability Employment Month (NDEAM), for his commitment to working with DVR and supporting individuals with disabilities. Butch’s story exemplifies how helping people with disabilities achieve their employment goals provide tremendous benefits to the individuals and communities they live in.

“Just because you have a disability, doesn’t mean you can’t be useful,” Butch said. “For almost two decades, I have been able to have a successful business, support my family, and have sense of purpose – all because of DVR.”

In March 2016, Annie Heathcote, a 17-year-old junior at Wisconsin Heights High School in Mazomanie, WI, began working with DVR to pursue her career goal of becoming a graphic designer.

Annie was born with Spinal Muscular Atrophy Type 2, a genetic disorder that affects the nerves and causes muscles to become increasingly weak and deteriorate over time. Because of her disability, Annie uses a power wheelchair for mobility.

Annie graduated high school in spring 2017 and learned more about marketing and graphic design through job shadows at Culver’s and ERI. By the fall, DVR helped with mileage reimbursement and with purchasing a laptop to support her through Madison College’s Graphic Arts Programs, where she graduated in 2021 with an Associate degree in Graphic Design and Illustration and another in Web and Digital Media Design.

DVR also played a critical role in helping her obtain a drivers license and incorporate vehicle modifications into her van. This helps her drive independently, which allows her to meet with clients during her busy days running her own graphic and web design business, Annie Designs LLC.



BECOME A WRC MEMBER

APPOINTMENT

Members of the Council are appointed by the Governor. The Council may forward recommendations to the Governor after soliciting recommendations from organizations representing the broad range of individuals with disabilities. In selecting members, the Governor shall consider, to the greatest extent practicable, representation of minority populations on the Council.

QUALIFICATIONS

A majority of Council members shall be persons who are:

1. Individuals with disabilities; and
2. Not employed by the DWD

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

1. Each member of the Council shall be appointed for a term of no more than three years and may serve no more than two consecutive terms.
2. A member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the end of the term for which a predecessor was appointed shall be appointed for the remainder of the predecessor's term.
3. The terms of service of the members initially appointed must be for varied numbers of years to ensure terms expire on a staggered basis.

APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP

evers.wi.gov/Pages/Application_Process.aspx

“ The WRC and its members bring real-life experiences from many and varied perspectives. Each member represents stakeholders who are impacted by the services provided through DVR. Bringing this diverse group of people together to advise DVR on policies, practices, and procedures provides DVR the opportunity to receive the feedback necessary to make positive changes for their consumers. ”

LORI KARCHER

Representative, Parent Training and Information Center

YOUR INPUT MATTERS

CONTACT WRC

The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council (WRC) welcomes and appreciates input from the public, using feedback to advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and direct the Council's focus. If you have any questions or comments about this report or WRC's work, contact WRC using any of the methods below:



CALL

800-442-3477 (Voice)
888-877-5939 (TTY)



FAX

608-266-1133



EMAIL

dvrwirehabcouncil@dwd.wisconsin.gov



WRITE

Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council
201 E. Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 7852
Madison, WI 53707-7852



ATTEND A MEETING

WRC meets quarterly. Meetings are open to the public, with schedules available at: publicmeetings.wi.gov/



BECOME A MEMBER

If you are interested in becoming a WRC member, please contact us using any of the above methods.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

DVR SERVICES FOR JOB SEEKERS WITH DISABILITIES

dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/job-seekers/

DVR SERVICES FOR BUSINESS

dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/business/

WISCONSIN REHABILITATION COUNCIL

dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/partners/wrc/wrc-info.htm

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITIES ACT

www.doleta.gov/wioa/

REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

rsa.ed.gov/

NATIONAL COALITION OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCILS

www.ncsrc.net/