



**San Diego State University
Interwork Institute**

**The District of Columbia
Department on Disability Services
Rehabilitation Services Administration
And
The State Rehabilitation Council**

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Report

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Executive Summary

The District of Columbia's Department on Disability Services, Rehabilitation Services Administration, the State Rehabilitation Council, the Arc of DC and the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University jointly conducted an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of persons with disabilities residing in the District. The purpose of the assessment was to provide current and relevant information on the needs of individuals with disabilities so that DCRSA can develop programs and allocate resources that will address the identified needs. A triennial needs assessment is required by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and is intended to help inform the Unified State Plan developed by the core partners in The District's Workforce Development System.

The data was gathered analyzed and grouped into the sections listed below. A summary of key findings in each section is contained here. The full results are found in the body of the report.

Section One: Overall Performance of DCRSA

Recurring themes in this area include:

- *DCRSA is delivering services geographically to the areas and populations most in need of their services;*
- *DCRSA needs to broaden the range and types of employment outcomes they assist their consumers to obtain;*
- *The responsiveness of staff to consumers (return calls and emails) continues to be the most frequent criticism of the organization; and*
- *DCRSA has embarked on a Person-Centered Thinking initiative that many see as a positive step in improving the performance of the organization.*

Section Two: The needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment

Needs identified in this area included the following:

- *Individuals with cognitive, mental health and psychosocial impairments constitute the largest percentage of individuals with disabilities served by DCRSA;*
- *Individuals with the most significant disabilities continue to be concerned about how earning wages will affect their SSA benefits, and this affects their return to work behavior;*
- *The supported employment program at DCRSA is growing larger in numbers of individuals served; and*
- *The need for improved soft skills, job-driven training, affordable housing, increased literacy and computer skills were all recurring needs identified in the study.*

Section Three: The needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program

Needs identified in this area included the following:

- *Veterans appear to be an unserved population by DCRSA;*
- *Asian and Hispanic individuals continue to apply for DCRSA services at a lower rate than they appear in the general population of the District;*
- *Language barriers affect minority populations from participating in DCRSA services; and*
- *Individuals with physical disabilities may be an underserved population by DCRSA.*

Section Four: The needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition

Needs identified in this area included the following:

- *A lack of work skills, soft skills, work experience and knowledge regarding the expectations of the work force are all barriers to employment for youth with disabilities in the District;*
- *DCRSA has expanded their staff and commitment of resources to youth and students with disabilities;*
- *DCRSA has done a good job of developing and implementing strategies to provide pre-employment transition services; and*
- *The focus on pre-employment transition services may have overshadowed the larger transition picture.*

Section Five: The needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System

Needs identified in this area included the following:

- *The Workforce Development System partners have been making strides in working together to implement WIOA, but there is still progress that needs to be made;*
- *The American Job Centers still struggle to effectively serve individuals with disabilities in the District;*
- *The staff at the American Job Centers need to be continuously trained in how to effectively work with individuals with disabilities; and*
- *The “No Wrong Door” program represents a positive attempt and example to integrate service delivery systems and organizations serving individuals with disabilities in the District.*

Section Six: The need to establish, develop or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in the District

Needs identified in this area included the following:

- *There is a need to improve the quality of services provided by CRPs, especially job placement;*
- *There is a need to increase accountability for service providers;*
- *There is a need to develop services providers for individuals with sensory impairments; and*
- *There is a need to further develop customized employment as an employment outcome for DCRSA consumers.*

Section Seven: The needs of business

This category captures the needs of businesses in The District as it relates to recruiting, hiring, retaining and accommodating employees with disabilities. It includes an analysis of how DCRSA serves business and tries to meet their needs in each of these areas. ~~Common findings in this area include:~~

Needs identified in this area included the following:

- *DCRSA has expanded their Business Services Unit, but there is disagreement about what the focus of the unit should be;*
- *Businesses in The District continue to have misconceptions about the ability of individuals with disabilities; and*
- *Employer education about disability and DCRSA remains a major need, and DCRSA is addressing this through their marketing campaign.*

The project team provides recommendations associated with some of the needs identified in each of the categories. It is understood that many of the recommendations require the collaboration and partnership of multiple agencies over an extended period of time. Some of the recommendations may be much easier to adopt and implement than others. The project team offers the recommendations with this awareness and hopes that DCRSA, the SRC and other stakeholders will find some of the recommendations helpful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	2
Executive Summary.....	3
Table of Contents.....	6
Impetus for Needs Assessment.....	7
Purpose of Needs Assessment and Utilization of Results.....	7
METHODOLOGY.....	8
FINDINGS.....	15
SECTION 1: OVERALL AGENCY PERFORMANCE.....	16
SECTION 2: NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT.....	42
SECTION 3: NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, INCLUDING NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM.....	53
SECTION 4: NEEDS OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN TRANSITION.....	60
SECTION 5: NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.....	73
SECTION 6: NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN THE DISTRICT ...	81
SECTION 7: NEEDS OF BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYER.....	88
CONCLUSION.....	94
APPENDICES.....	95

Impetus for Needs Assessment

Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) contains the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended and requires all state vocational rehabilitation agencies to assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities within the respective State and relate the planning of programs and services and the establishment of goals and priorities to those needs. According to Section 102 of WIOA and Section 412 of the Rehabilitation Act, each participating State shall submit a Unified or Combined State Plan every four years, with a biannual modification as needed. In addition, title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 361.29 indicates that: The State Plan must include the “results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council every three years describing the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State.” In response to this mandate, and to ensure that adequate efforts are being made to serve the diverse needs of persons with disabilities in the District, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (DCRSA), in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council, entered into a contract with the Arc of DC and the Interwork Institute at San Diego District University for the purpose of jointly developing and implementing a comprehensive statewide needs assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing in the District.

Purpose of Needs Assessment and Utilization of Results

The purpose of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) is to identify and describe the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the District. In particular, the CSNA seeks to provide information on:

- The overall performance of DCRSA as it relates to meeting the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the State;
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities, and those who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;
- The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition, including their need for pre-employment transition services;
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals served through other components of the statewide workforce development system;
- The need to establish, develop and/or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and
- The needs of businesses in recruiting, hiring, accommodating and retaining employees with disabilities.

It is expected that data from the needs assessment effort will provide DCRSA and the SRC with direction when creating the VR portion of the Unified State Plan and when planning for future program development, outreach and resource allocation. This CSNA covers fiscal years 2014 through 2016.

METHODOLOGY

The comprehensive statewide needs assessment was conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry. The specific methods for gathering the data used in this assessment are detailed below.

Analysis of Existing Data Sources

The project team at the Arc of DC and SDSU reviewed a variety of existing data sources for the purposes of identifying and describing demographic data within The District including the total possible target population and sub-populations potentially served by DCRSA. Data relevant to the population of The District, the population of persons with disabilities in The District, ethnicity of individuals, the number of Veterans, income level, educational levels and other relevant population characteristics were utilized in this analysis. Sources analyzed include the following:

- The 2016 American Community Survey;
- The 2016/17 US Census Bureau Statistics;
- 2016 Social Security Administration SSI/DI Data;
- The Department of Education;
- US Bureau of Labor Statistics;
- Cornell University's Disabilitystatistics.org;
- Neighborhoodinfo.org;
- DCRSA case service data compiled at the request of the project team; and
- The Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration's RSA 911 data for DCRSA and data submitted and entered into RSA's Management Information System (MIS).

Key Informant Interviews

Instrument. The instruments used for the key informant interviews (Appendix A) was developed by the researchers at SDSU and reviewed and revised by DCRSA.

Interview population. The key informant population consisted of DCRSA staff, community partners, individuals with disabilities and businesses. A total of 54 people were interviewed individually for this assessment. The total number included 22 DCRSA staff members, 6 individuals with disabilities, 8 Partners and 18 businesspersons.

Data collection. Key informant interviews were conducted from June 2017 to August 2017. Forty-four of the interviews were conducted face-to-face and ten were conducted by telephone. The general format of the interviews was consistent between the members of each group regardless of their position within their respective organizations. First, participants were asked questions to ascertain their personal and professional expertise and their experience with DCRSA. Participants were then asked open-ended questions about their perceptions of the needs of individuals with disabilities in The District. Finally, participants were asked to share their

perceptions of how DCRSA could improve their ability to help meet those needs, especially as it relates to helping consumers obtain and retain employment.

Efforts to ensure respondent confidentiality. Names and other identifying characteristics were not shared with anyone by the interviewer. Participants were informed that their responses would be treated as confidential information, would not be reported with information that could be used to identify them, and would be consolidated with information from other respondents before results were reported.

Data analysis. The interviewers took notes on the discussions as they occurred. The notes were transcribed and analyzed by the researchers at SDSU. Themes or concerns that surfaced with consistency across the interviews were identified and are reported as common themes in the report narrative.

Surveys

Survey of Individuals with Disabilities

Instrument. The instrument used for the electronic survey of individuals with disabilities (Appendix B) was developed by the project team and reviewed and revised by DCRSA.

Survey population. Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as individuals with disabilities who are potential, former or current clients of DCRSA. The project team in coordination with DCRSA and community programs serving individuals with disabilities broadly dispersed the electronic survey via an e-mail invitation.

Data collection. Data was gathered from this population through the use of an Internet-based survey. DCRSA identified individuals with disabilities and invited them to participate in the electronic survey effort via e-mail. Once the survey was active, DCRSA sent an invitation and link to the survey by e-mail. Approximately two weeks after the distribution of the initial invitation, another electronic notice was sent as both a “thank you” to those who had completed the survey and a reminder to those who had not. A third and final invitation was sent two weeks after the second invitation. The project team using the Qualtrics software program analyzed survey responses.

Efforts to ensure respondent confidentiality. Respondents to the individual survey were not asked to identify themselves when completing the survey. In addition, responses to the electronic surveys were aggregated by the project team at SDSU prior to reporting results, which served to further obscure the identities of individual survey respondents.

Accessibility. The electronic survey was designed using an accessible, internet-based survey application. Respondents were provided with the name and contact information of the Research Director at SDSU in order to place requests for other alternate survey formats.

Data analysis. Data analysis consisted of computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. Open-ended survey questions, which

yielded narrative responses from individuals, were analyzed by the researchers for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents.

Number of completed surveys. A total of 268 electronic surveys were completed by individuals with disabilities. It is difficult to gauge the return rate as many of the e-mail notices and invitations to take the survey could have come from forwarded email invitations. However, it appears that the return rate for DCRSA-sent email message links was approximately 15%.

Partner Survey

Instrument. The instrument used for the electronic survey of community partners (Appendix C) was developed by the project team and reviewed and revised by DCRSA.

Survey population. Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as representatives of organizations that provide services, coordinate services, or serve an advocacy role for persons with disabilities in The District.

Data collection. Data was gathered from this population through the use of an Internet-based survey. DCRSA, in partnership with the SRC identified partners for participation in the survey effort. Once the survey was active, DCRSA sent an invitation and link to the survey by e-mail. Approximately two weeks after the distribution of the initial invitation, another electronic notice was sent as both a “thank you” to those who had completed the survey and a reminder to those who had not. A third and final invitation was sent two weeks after the second invitation. Survey responses collected through the electronic survey approach were then analyzed.

Efforts to ensure respondent confidentiality. Respondents to the partner survey were not asked to identify themselves or their organizations when completing the survey. In addition, the project team at SDSU prior to reporting results that served to further obscure the identities of individual survey respondents aggregated responses to the electronic surveys.

Accessibility. The survey was designed using an accessible, internet-based survey application. Respondents were also provided with the name and contact information for the Research Director at SDSU in order to place requests for other alternate survey formats.

Data analysis. Data analysis consisted of computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. Open-ended survey questions, which yielded narrative responses from individuals, were analyzed by the researchers for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents.

Number of completed surveys. A total of 37 surveys were completed electronically by representatives of partner organizations. DCRSA sent numerous reminders to partners to remind them of the survey and to encourage their response, but the numbers remained low.

DCRSA Staff Survey

Instrument. The instrument used for the electronic survey of DCRSA staff (Appendix D) was developed by the project team at SDSU and reviewed and revised by DCRSA.

Survey population. Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as all staff working for DCRSA between April 2017 and September 2017.

Data collection. Data was gathered from DCRSA staff through the use of an Internet-based survey. Staff was sent an electronic invitation and link to the survey from the Customer Relations Specialist. A survey reminder was sent out a week after the initial request. The project team then analyzed survey responses collected through the electronic survey approach.

Efforts to ensure respondent confidentiality. Respondents to the staff survey were not asked to identify themselves by name when completing the survey. Responses to the electronic surveys were aggregated by the project team prior to reporting results. This served to further protect the identities of individual survey respondents.

Accessibility. The survey was designed using an accessible, internet-based survey application. Respondents were also provided with the name and contact information for the Research Director at SDSU in order to place requests for other alternate survey formats.

Data analysis. Data analysis consisted of computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. Open-ended survey questions, which yielded narrative responses from individuals, were analyzed by the researchers for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents.

Number of completed surveys. A total of 25 electronic surveys were completed by DCRSA staff out of 104 total possible, for a response rate of 24%.

Business Surveys

Instrument. The instrument used for the survey of businesses in the District (Appendix E) was developed by the project team and reviewed by DCRSA.

Survey population. The survey population consisted of businesses of various sizes that operated within the District of Columbia during the period from April through September 2017. The businesses had varying levels of interaction with, and knowledge of, DCRSA. Some had worked closely with DCRSA and others had not heard of the organization.

Data collection. Data was gathered from businesses through the use of an Internet-based survey. Businesses were sent an electronic invitation and link to the survey from DCRSA and from the project team at SDSU-II. DCRSA sent the link to a list of the businesses that they had in their database, and the project team sent the survey link to a list of businesses they gathered from various sources. Survey responses collected through the electronic survey approach were then exported to SPSS by the project team for analysis.

Efforts to ensure respondent confidentiality. Respondents to the business survey were not asked to identify themselves or their organizations when completing the survey. In addition, responses to the electronic surveys were aggregated by the project team at SDSU prior to reporting results that served to further obscure the identities of individual survey respondents.

Accessibility. The survey was designed using an accessible, internet-based survey application. Respondents were also provided with the name and contact information for the Research Director at SDSU in order to place requests for other alternate survey formats.

Data analysis. Data analysis consisted of computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. Open-ended survey questions, which yielded narrative responses from persons, were analyzed by the researchers for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents.

Number of completed surveys. A total of 37 electronic surveys were completed by businesses in the District out of 180 total, for a response rate of 21%.

Focus Groups

A series of 15 focus groups were conducted in The District during the needs assessment effort. The focus group protocols are contained in Appendix F. All of the focus groups were held at the DCRSA offices. Four distinct stakeholder groups participated in the focus groups: individuals with disabilities; representatives of organizations that provide services to persons with disabilities, employers, and DCRSA staff. In addition, five telephone interviews were conducted with employers, six with partners, and six with consumers. A total of 48 individuals participated in the focus group research.

All focus group participants were identified and recruited by DCRSA staff. The format of the focus groups was consistent; a few minutes were devoted to introductions and building rapport in order to establish a productive focus group environment. The focus group moderator explained the purpose of the focus group and provided a brief description of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment. The moderator explained the role of the Arc of DC and the Interwork Institute in the needs assessment effort and reminded participants of the confidentiality of their statements.

The agenda for the focus groups conducted with individuals with disabilities was based upon the subject areas that form the different sections of this report. Participants were given the opportunity to introduce and discuss needs that did not appear on the agenda. Groups were allowed to deviate from the suggested order of topics, and the moderator allowed the discussion to shift to relevant issues of need as participants introduced subjects.

A note-taker recorded the discussions as they occurred. The notes were transcribed and analyzed by the project team. Themes or issues that emerged in three or more of the focus groups were identified and reported as consensual themes in the report narrative.

Efforts to ensure respondent confidentiality. Names and other identifying characteristics were not recorded by the note-taker. Focus group participants were informed that their responses

would be treated as confidential information, would not be reported with information that could be used to identify them, and that information from multiple focus groups would be consolidated before results were reported. In addition, DCRSA staff did not attend the focus groups consisting of individuals with disabilities and partner agencies in order to ensure an open dialogue amongst participants.

Accessibility. DCRSA included a request for reasonable accommodation in their electronic invitations to all of the research groups. There were no requests for accommodations received by the project team.

The total number of individuals that participated in the CSNA by type of group and method is contained in Table 1 below:

Table 1
Total Participants by Type and Method

Research Method	Research Group and Count				
	Consumer	Partner	Staff	Business	Total
Individual Interview	6	8	22	18	54
Electronic Survey	266	37	25	29	357
Focus Group	23	6	16	3	48
Totals	295	51	63	50	459

Analysis and Triangulation of Data

The data gathered from the national and agency-specific data sets, key informant interviews, surveys and focus groups were analyzed by the researchers on the project team. The common themes that emerged regarding needs of persons with disabilities from each data source were identified and compared to each other to validate the existence of needs, especially as they pertained to the target populations of this assessment. These common themes are identified and discussed in the Findings section.

Dissemination Plans

The CSNA report is delivered to DCRSA and the SRC. The project team received several requests by consumers and partner agencies to share the results of the CSNA. We recommend that DCRSA publish the report on their website for public access and that they notify the public of the availability of the report by e-mail.

Study Limitations

Inherent in any type of research effort are limitations that may constrain the utility of the data that is generated. Therefore, it is important to highlight some of the most significant issues that may limit the ability to generalize the needs assessment findings to larger populations. Inherent in the methods used to collect data is the potential for bias in the selection of participants. The findings that are reported reflect only the responses of those who could be

reached and who were willing to participate. Individuals who were disenfranchised, dissatisfied, or who did not wish to be involved with DCRSA may have declined to participate in the focus group and key informant interview research. A second significant concern is that the information gathered from respondents may not accurately represent the broader concerns of all potential constituents and stakeholders. Data gathered from service providers, for example, may reflect only the needs of individuals who are already recipients of services, to the exclusion of those who are not presently served. Although efforts were made to gather information from a variety of stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process, it would be imprudent to conclude with certainty that those who contributed to the focus groups and the key informant interviews constitute a fully representative sample of all of the potential stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process in The District.

FINDINGS

- Section 1: Overall agency performance**
- Section 2: Needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment**
- Section 3: Needs of individuals with disabilities that are minorities, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program**
- Section 4: Needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition**
- Section 5: Needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system**
- Section 6: Need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs in The District**
- Section 7: Needs of business and effectiveness in serving employers**

SECTION 1: OVERALL AGENCY PERFORMANCE

The first section of the CSNA reports on areas of general performance by DCRSA. General performance refers to how well DCRSA is fulfilling its mission of assisting people with disabilities to increase their independence and employment. The area of general performance also refers to how effectively DCRSA performs the processes that facilitate case movement through the stages of the rehabilitation process, how well DCRSA adheres to the timelines for this case movement identified in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA, and DCRSA's policies and procedures. Finally, overall performance also refers to how effectively DCRSA provides placement services to individuals with disabilities in The District as this process significantly impacts DCRSA's ability to fulfill their mission.

The structure of this section, as well as the following sections, will include the following:

1. Data that pertains to the section in question, including observations based on the data;
2. Electronic and hard copy survey results pertaining to the section;
3. Recurring/consensual themes that emerged during the individual interviews and focus groups; and
4. Recommendations to address the findings in each area of the assessment.

The time-period covered by this comprehensive statewide needs assessment is the three-year period from October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2016. Federal RSA data and DCRSA data is based on the Federal fiscal year. The time frame was determined by the requirement found in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended that VR programs perform a CSNA every three years at a minimum. The data on agency performance included in this section comes from the case management system used by DCRSA and is compared to the available RSA 911 data submitted by DCRSA.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following recurring themes emerged in the area of Overall Agency Performance

- *DCRSA is delivering services geographically to the areas and populations most in need of their services;*
- *DCRSA needs to broaden the range and types of employment outcomes they assist their consumers to obtain;*
- *The responsiveness of staff to consumers (return calls and emails) continues to be the most frequent criticism of the organization; and*
- *DCRSA has embarked on a Person-Centered Thinking initiative that many see as a positive step in improving the performance of the organization.*

***NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO
OVERALL AGENCY PERFORMANCE***

In order to understand the need for DCRSA services throughout the District, it is helpful to examine some demographic data by Ward of residence. The US Census Bureau projects higher than average population growth for Washington DC in the next 10 years. Consequently, allocation of resources and outreach strategies will need to remain focused on the areas of greatest need. Table 2 below contains several demographic elements for the District.

Table 2
Demographic Information by Ward for 2015-16

Demographic Information by Ward for 2015-16					
Ward	Unemp. Rate	Poverty Rate	Median Income	HS+ Ed. Level	Rate of Disability
1	4.5%	13.5%	\$61,196	91%	19.5%
2	4.3%	13.4%	\$189,324	99%	12.8%
3	4.0%	9.4%	\$216,193	98%	17.4%
4	5.6%	11.9%	\$83,592	82%	15.8%
5	7.7%	19.0%	\$60,351	91%	18.6%
6	5.0%	12.5%	\$122,500	91%	15.8%
7	10.9%	27.2%	\$31,271	74%	21.7%
8	13.3%	37.7%	\$24,096	75%	21.2%

It is clear from every indicator that Wards 7 and 8 are the areas in the greatest need. They have the highest unemployment rate, highest poverty rate, lowest median income, lowest educational levels and highest rate of disability. Ward 5 is also an area with indicators of need when viewed in the context of the other Wards. Table 3 below examines the population of each Ward by ethnicity.

Table 3
Population and Ethnicity by Ward 2016-17

Population and Ethnicity by Ward, 2016-17								
Ward	Total Population	Population % by Ethnicity						
		White	Black or African-American	Hispanic or Latino	Other	Asian	Multi-Racial	American Indian
1	76,197	48%	32%	20%	10%	4%	4%	<1%
2	79,915	71%	12%	9%	3%	8%	3%	<1%
3	77,152	83%	5%	7%	1%	6%	3%	<1%
4	75,773	24%	58%	18%	10%	1%	3%	<1%
5	74,308	16%	76%	6%	2%	1%	2%	<1%

6	76,598	49%	41%	4%	1%	4%	2%	<1%
7	71,068	1%	94%	2%	1%	1%	1%	<1%
8	70,712	3%	93%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%

Wards 7 and 8 have the lowest overall population in the District, followed by Ward 5. Each of these areas is predominantly African American. According to the DC State Data Center, the population of Whites has been steadily increasing since the turn of the 20th century, while the rate of Black population growth has been slowly but steadily declining in the last seven years.

Table 4 below identifies the percent of DCRSA applicants by Ward and year for the three years of this study.

Table 4
DCRSA Applicants by Ward and Year

Ward	% of DCRSA Applicants		
	2014	2015	2016
1	7.1%	7.3%	5.3%
2	1.7%	0.7%	0.8%
3	1.2%	1.8%	1.5%
4	10.8%	13.2%	12.0%
5	26.2%	27.5%	25.9%
6	4.4%	4.5%	4.2%
7&8	48.6%	45.1%	50.4%

Based on the demographic data available by Ward and detailed in Table 4 above, the Wards that are the most in need of DCRSA services are Wards 5, 7&8. DCRSA's service pattern is strongly reflective the areas where there is the greatest need. Over 75% of all of their applicants come from these three Wards.

According to Cornell University's Disability Statistics, the rate of prevalence of disability by type in the District of Columbia is:

- Visual disability: 2.5%
- Hearing disability: 1.8%
- Ambulatory disability: 6.2%
- Cognitive disability: 4.2%
- Self-care disability: 2.2%
- Independent living disability: 4.0%

The data above sets the backdrop for the agency-specific data analyzed in this report.

Table 5 below identifies various data elements that illustrate DCRSA's overall program performance for the three-year period of this assessment.

Table 5
General Performance Data for DCRSA 2014-2016

Data Item based on FFY	ALL CONSUMERS		
	2014	2015	2016
Number of Applications	2,563	2,409	2,665
Percent Found Eligible	86%	85%	90%
Average Time For Eligibility Determination	45	44	40
Significance of Disability			
Disabled	105	35	62
Percent of Total	4%	2%	2%
Significant	936	759	762
Percent of Total	38%	33%	29%
Most Significant	1,418	1,531	1,773
Percent of Total	58%	66%	68%
Percent Closed Prior to IPE Development	29%	25%	26%
Number of plans developed if application occurred 2014-2016	2,099	1,788	1,874
Average Time From Eligibility to Plan	54	56	50
Number of Cases Closed Rehabilitated	643	670	623
Rehabilitation Rate	58%	29%	22%
Average cost of all cases with application dates between 2014-2016	\$8,526	\$8,423	\$6,954
Median cost of all active cases with application dates between 2014-2016	\$1,750	\$4,000	\$5,787
Average cost of cases closed rehabilitated if application date between 2014-2016	\$4,793	\$6,078	\$5,117
Average cost of cases closed unsuccessful if application date between 2014-2016	\$4,144	\$5,386	\$5,168
Average cost of cases closed prior to plan when application date occurred between 2014-2016	\$183	\$98	\$121
Gender of Applicants			
Male	1,433	1,302	1,457
% of total	55.9%	54.0%	54.7%
Female	1,118	1,072	1,182
% of total	43.6%	44.5%	44.4%
Age of Applicants			
14-24 (youth)	802	688	790

	% of total	31.3%	28.6%	29.6%
	25-64 (working age)	1,684	1,634	1,790
	% of total	65.7%	67.8%	67.2%
	65+	77	87	82
	% of total	3.0%	3.6%	3.1%

Observations based on the data:

The number of applications for DCRSA services decreased from 2014 to 2015, but then rose by over 200 in 2016. The average time for eligibility determination declined by five days on average from 2014-2016, and is well below the maximum time frame of 60 days. The significance of disability for DCRSA consumers remained steady over the three years of the study, with the rate of those with the most significant disabilities rising by 10% from 2014-2016.

Approximately three out of four consumers that are found eligible for DCRSA services progress to plan development. The average time from the eligibility determination to the IPE being developed and completed in 2016 was 50 days, down from 56 the previous year. DCRSA successfully rehabilitated 670 consumers in 2015, which was an increase of 27 from the prior year. The rehabilitation rate however, dropped to 29% that same year.

The average cost of all cases with an application date between 2014 and 2016 was \$8,526. However, this average was brought up considerably by a handful of very high cost cases. In order to provide DCRSA with a clearer picture of cost, we identified the median cost of all plan for the same time period. The difference between the median and average for 2014 and 2015 is significant, varying from almost \$6,000 in 2014 to \$4,400 in 2015. The two costs were much closer in 2016, differing by only \$1,150. This is likely due to a reduction in the number of very high cost cases and a general increase in the cost of all cases. The average cost of cases closed unsuccessfully from plan was fairly consistent with cases closed successfully throughout the period covered by this study, and exceeded the average cost of those closed successfully in 2016. It is interesting to note that when a case is closed prior to plan development, the average cost per case hovers around \$100. This indicates that DCRSA is not spending a lot of money pre-plan on cases that do not progress to IPE development.

The data indicates that men comprise about 10% more of the applicants for DCRSA services than women. The rate of applicants by age group was constant throughout the three years of the study. Youth represent about 30% of applicants, working age adults represent about 67%, and individuals over the age of 65 represent about 3% of applicants.

Types of Employment Outcomes:

One of the recurring themes that emerged in this study was that DCRSA needed to improve the range and types of jobs that they helped consumers obtain. Participants indicated that DCRSA should be working to help consumers obtain higher skill, higher paying jobs in a variety of fields as compared to general labor positions that are lower skilled. In an effort to investigate this issue, the project team utilized the RSA 911 data to examine all of the employment outcomes by Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code for DCRSA compared to the all other State VR programs. Table 6 identifies these outcomes for 2015 by SOC categories and compares DCRSA to all VR programs for that year.

Table 6
Employment Outcomes by SOC Code for 2015

SOC Code Category	DCRSA Frequency	All VR Programs	Difference
Management Occupations	2.7%	2.4%	0.3%
Business and financial operations occupations	2.5%	1.4%	1.1%
Computer and Mathematical Operations	1.3%	1.1%	0.2%
Architecture and engineering occupations	0.4%	0.7%	-0.3%
Life, physical and social science occupations	0.9%	0.5%	0.4%
Community and social science occupations	2.5%	2.9%	-0.4%
Legal occupations	1.2%	0.4%	0.8%
Education, training and library occupations	2.5%	3.0%	-0.5%
Art, design, entertainment, sports and media occupations	0.7%	1.1%	-0.4%
Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	1.5%	2.7%	-1.2%
Healthcare support occupations	3.0%	4.1%	-1.1%
Protective service occupations	2.8%	1.6%	1.2%
Food preparation and serving related occupations	9.4%	11.3%	-1.9%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	26.0%	9.3%	16.7%
Personal care and service occupations	4.3%	5.7%	-1.4%
Sales and related occupations	5.4%	8.5%	-3.1%
Office and administrative support occupations	19.4%	15.8%	3.6%
Construction and extraction occupations	1.9%	0.6%	1.3%
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	2.4%	4.9%	-2.5%
Production occupations	1.3%	8.0%	-6.7%
Transportation and material moving occupations	7.5%	8.5%	-1.0%

The categories in which DCRSA differed by more than 2% from all other VR programs in the country are highlighted. A yellow highlight indicates that DCRSA was at least 2% higher in that category than the rest of the VR programs, and a blue highlight indicates that DCRSA was at least 2% lower than the rest of the VR programs. The data indicates that DCRSA was fairly consistent with the rest of the nation, but exceeded the rest of the VR programs by the rate of individuals closed in buildings and grounds cleaning (by a large margin) and maintenance occupations and office and administrative support occupations. They were more than 2% lower than other VR programs in sales and related occupations, installation, maintenance and repair and production occupations. The project team grouped all of the service and low skill category jobs together to give a snapshot of what all of these types of employment looked like comparatively. Table 7 below contains this analysis.

Table 7

Lower Skills Employment Categories by SOC Codes for 2015

SOC Code Category	DCRSA Frequency	All VR Programs	Difference
Food preparation and serving related occupations	9.4%	11.3%	-1.9%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	26.0%	9.3%	16.7%
Personal care and service occupations	4.3%	5.7%	-1.4%
Sales and related occupations	5.4%	8.5%	-3.1%
Office and administrative support occupations	19.4%	15.8%	3.6%
Construction and extraction occupations	1.9%	2.5%	-0.6%
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	2.4%	4.9%	-2.5%
Production occupations	1.3%	8.0%	-6.7%
Transportation and material moving occupations	7.5%	8.5%	-1.0%
Total	77.6%	74.5%	3.1%

The data indicates that 77.6% of all consumers closed rehabilitated in 2015 were working in what would be classified as lower skill jobs. This rate is 3.1% higher than the national average for VR programs and illustrative of the fact that the vocational rehabilitation program in the US needs to examine the quality and range of employment outcomes that are achieved by their consumers, and strive for higher paying, higher skill positions. In light of the new common performance measures in WIOA, this analysis is especially important and timely.

The project team gathered SOC code data for the entire US Workforce as a point of comparison for DCRSA. Table 8 below compares the outcomes of DCRSA consumers closed successfully in the job categories listed above with the entire US Workforce.

Table 8
DCRSA Consumers vs US Workforce

SOC Code Category	DCRSA Frequency	All US Workforce	Difference
Management Occupations	2.7%	5.1%	-2.4%
Business and financial operations occupations	2.5%	5.2%	-2.7%
Computer and Mathematical Operations	1.3%	3.0%	-1.7%
Architecture and engineering occupations	0.4%	1.8%	-1.4%
Life, physical and social science occupations	0.9%	0.8%	0.1%
Community and social science occupations	2.5%	1.4%	1.1%
Legal occupations	1.2%	0.8%	0.4%
Education, training and library occupations	2.5%	6.2%	-3.7%
Art, design, entertainment, sports and media occupations	0.7%	1.4%	-0.7%
Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	1.5%	5.9%	-4.4%
Healthcare support occupations	3.0%	2.9%	0.1%
Protective service occupations	2.8%	2.4%	0.4%
Food preparation and serving related occupations	9.4%	9.2%	0.2%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	26.0%	3.2%	22.8%
Personal care and service occupations	4.3%	3.2%	1.1%
Sales and related occupations	5.4%	10.4%	-5.0%
Office and administrative support occupations	19.4%	15.7%	3.7%
Construction and extraction occupations	1.9%	4.0%	-2.1%
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	2.4%	3.9%	-1.5%
Production occupations	1.3%	6.5%	-5.2%
Transportation and material moving occupations	7.5%	6.9%	0.6%

It is important to note that the outcome data above follows a similar study of outcomes noted in the last DCRSA CSNA report of 2014. Although there is still progress to be made in the diversity of employment outcomes achieved by DCRSA consumers, the building and grounds cleaning outcomes are 9% lower than the previous study. This indicates that DCRSA has made a concerted effort to increase the variety of outcomes in the last three years. The year 2015 is the last year that national data is available for the VR programs. The passage of WIOA and the definition of competitive integrated employment have further restricted the work environments that can be counted as successful rehabilitations for the VR program. Ability One work sites have historically represented a significant source of successful closures for DCRSA. It appears that many Ability One contracts will not be considered as competitive integrated employment, so this will likely contribute to the future diversity of employment outcomes for the agency's consumers.

A common theme in this study and in the previous two CSNAs is that there a large percentage of DCRSA consumers that return to the organization on a regular basis. The participants in this study indicated that they believed the high return rate was partially due to the fact that consumers were not obtaining employment that provided a self-sustaining wage in a high-demand occupation. Table 9 below examines the return rate of DCRSA for the three-year period of this study:

Table 9
Return Rate of Consumers to DCRSA

Return Rate for DCRSA Consumers by Year			
Case Number	Percent of Total by Year		
	2014	2015	2016
1	47%	41%	46%
2	27%	28%	26%
3	13%	17%	14%
4	7%	7%	6%
5+	7%	8%	7%

The data indicates that more than half of the total applicants to DCRSA have had a previous case with the organization, and more than a quarter of them have had at least two previous cases. This data should be interpreted cautiously as there may be many reasons unrelated to job type that a consumer might reapply to DCRSA. However, when triangulated with the findings in the other methods of data gathering, it will be important for the organization to analyze the types of employment outcomes obtained by consumers and determine if a change is warranted.

Common Performance Accountability Measures for the VR Program

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act established new common performance accountability measures for all of the core partners in WIOA. These common performance measures (CPMs) replaced the RSA Standards and Indicators for the VR program and include the following six measures:

- I. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- II. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;
- III. The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- IV. The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program;
- V. The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and
- VI. The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers.

DCRSA has not historically gathered data on consumers that exit the program. Consequently, they have not gathered information that would apply to measures one, two, three and four for those that have exited the program. DCRSA has received technical assistance from the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) on implementing the common performance measures, has begun to work with all of the core partners to gather and report data necessary for the CPMs. It will take some time to develop and implement the necessary systems to comprehensively respond to the new WIOA requirements, but there is some data available that can illuminate some of these outcome measures.

The target rates for some of the CPMs have been established for some of the core partners in the District's Workforce Development System. Table 10 below identifies the target rates for 2017 for the core partners in DC:

Table 10

Target Rates for the Common Performance Measures for 2017

District of Columbia	PY 2017 Employment (2nd Q) Adjusted Lvl	PY 2017 Employment (4th Q) Adjusted Lvl	PY 2017 Median Earnings (2nd Q) Adjusted Lvl	PY 2017 Credential Attainment Rate Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Measurable Skill Gains Adjusted
Adults	62.00	68.00	\$ 6,200.00	54.00	baseline
Dislocated Wrkrs	69.00	65.00	\$ 7,500.00	57.00	baseline
Youth	51.00	46.00	baseline	50.00	baseline
Adult Ed	baseline	baseline	baseline	baseline	42.00
Wagner-Peyser	50.00	79.00	\$ 5,500.00	n/a	n/a

Voc Rehab	baseline	baseline	baseline	baseline	baseline
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DCRSA will be gathering data that will form their baseline for the common performance measures for the next two years, but data on median earnings and the number of consumers in training can give an indication of results in these areas. It will be helpful for DCRSA to regularly examine this data and share it with staff and stakeholders to analyze their progress in setting their baseline measures.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

Individual Survey Results

Surveys were distributed electronically via a web-based survey application. There were 266 valid surveys were returned.

Respondent Demographics

Table 11 summarizes the self-reported gender of the 266 respondents to the individual survey. It should be noted that 57 of the respondents did not disclose their gender.

Table 11

Gender of Respondents

Individual Respondent Gender	%
Male	42%
Female	58%

A much larger percentage of females (58%) than males (42%) responded to the survey.

Individuals were asked to report their primary race or ethnic group. Responses to this question are detailed in Table 12.

Table 12

Ethnicity of Respondents

Individual Respondent Race or Ethnic Group	N	%
Caucasian/White	23	11.3%
African American/Black	154	75.5%
Hispanic/Latino	9	4.4%
Asian	4	2.0%
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	3	1.5%

Other - Multiple Races	11	5.4%
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African-American individuals comprised more than 75% of the survey respondents, followed by White at just over 11% and individuals that identify as being of multiple races. Respondents were also asked to identify here Ward of residence. This information is detailed in Table 13 below:

Table 13

Ward of Residence for Survey Respondents

Ward of Residence	%
1	4.9
2	5.4
3	4.3
4	17.3
5	10.8
6	12.4
7	16.2
8	28.6

Ward 8 had the largest percentage of respondents to the survey, followed by Wards 4, 7 and 5 respectively. This distribution is consistent with the Wards most in need of VR services based on prevalence of disability, with the exception of Ward 4.

Respondents were presented with a checklist and asked to identify their primary disabling condition. Table 14 summarizes the primary disabling conditions reported by the individual survey respondents.

Table 14

Primary Disability of Respondents

Primary Disability	N	%
Mental Health	81	35.1%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	22	9.5%
Physical	22	9.5%
Cognitive	21	9.1%
Blindness or visually impaired	11	4.8%
Communication	4	1.7%
Mobility	12	5.2%
Other (please describe)	12	5.2%
No impairment	16	6.9%

Individuals that identified a mental health impairment as their primary disability comprised the largest percentage of respondents. This is consistent with the general population

of individuals with disabilities served by DCRSA, as mental health impairments are comprise the largest consumer population. Respondents were also asked to identify their secondary disabling condition, if they had one. Table 15 details the secondary conditions reported by respondents.

Table 15
Secondary Disability of Respondents

Primary Disability	N	%
Mental Health	37	19.6%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	3	1.6%
Physical	29	15.3%
Cognitive	8	4.2%
Blindness or visually impaired	5	2.6%
Communication	8	4.2%
Mobility	13	6.9%
Other (please describe)	16	8.5%
No impairment	16	8.5%

Mental health impairments were the most frequently cited secondary disability by respondents, followed by physical disabilities. Some of the disabilities cited under the “other” category included lupus, diabetes, and TBI.

Association with DCRSA:

Individuals who responded to the survey were presented with a question that asked them to identify the statement that best described their association with DCRSA. Their responses to this question appear in Table 16.

Table 16
Respondent Association with DCRSA

Association with DCRSA	N	%
I am a current client of DCRSA	146	58.9%
I am a previous client of DCRSA, my case has been closed	51	20.6%
I have never used the services of DCRSA	22	8.9%
I am not familiar with DCRSA	9	3.6%
Other (please describe)	20	8.1%
Total	248	100.0%

Almost 60% of the survey respondents were current consumers of DCRSA, with another 20% having had a previously open case. Almost 9% had never used the services of DCRSA and 3.6% were not familiar with the organization.

Receipt of Social Security Disability Benefits

Respondents were presented with a checklist and asked to indicate whether they received Social Security disability benefits. Table 17 summarizes the responses to this series of questions. It should be noted that individuals were allowed to select more than one response in the series of items (for example, in the case of an individual who received both SSI and SSDI).

Table 17
SSA Benefit Status

SSA Beneficiary Status and Type	N	%
I do not receive Social Security disability benefits	124	47.0%
I receive SSI	60	22.7%
I receive SSDI	72	27.3%
I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits	8	3.0%

Exactly half the respondents were SSA beneficiaries, with a larger percentage receiving SSDI than SSI. The largest single percentage of respondents were those that did not receive any form of SSA benefit.

Employment-Related Needs

Respondents were presented with a series of yes/no questions about potential barriers to achieving their employment goals and were asked to indicate whether each was a barrier to achieving their employment goals. Table 18 summarizes the percent of individuals who identified each barrier as an obstacle to achieving their employment goals.

Table 18
Individual survey barriers to achieving employment goals.

Individual Survey Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals	Identified as barrier (%)
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	40.0
Other health issues	35.2
Other transportation issues	33.3
Not having education or training	33.2
Not enough jobs available	29.6
Lack of assistive technology	29.4
Mental health issues	28.1
Not having job skills	26.3
Not having job search skills	25.8
Housing issues	23.8
Not having disability-related personal care	22.9

Perceptions regarding impact of income on benefits	20.6
Disability-related transportation issues	20.3
Language barriers	9.5
Convictions or criminal offenses	8.1
Childcare issues	5.7
Substance abuse issues	3.5

The most frequently mentioned barrier to employment was employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities, followed by health and transportation issues. The survey responses support findings in other areas of investigation for this study. When prompted to respond to the three most significant barriers to employment, some common responses were:

I want to work. I have to sit down and work on desk because of knee injury.

My deafness. Some companies don't want to hire deaf people for some reason.

I don't have enough experience, and I haven't worked in quite a while.

Health issues and fear of losing healthcare if earn more than I am now

Employers understanding of medical requirements due to conditions even when explained in detail.

Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services

Respondents were presented with several questions describing potential barriers to accessing DCRSA services and asked to indicate whether the barriers had made it difficult for the respondents to access DCRSA services. Table 19 summarizes the responses of the ninety-eight individuals to the questions about barriers to accessing DCRSA services.

Table 19
Individual survey barriers to accessing DCRSA services.

Individual Survey, Barriers to Accessing DCRSA	Percent
Lack of information about DCRSA services	49.7
Difficulties scheduling meetings with counselor	33.3
Other difficulties working with DCRSA staff	33.0
Other challenges not already mentioned	22.6
Limited accessibility to DCRSA via public transportation	15.8
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment	15.6

Lack of disability-related accommodations	14.4
Other challenges related to the physical location of the DCRSA office	10.0
Difficulties completing the DCRSA application	7.0
Language barriers	5.8
DCRSA's hours of operation	0.7

The most commonly cited barriers to accessing DCRSA services were lack of information about DCRSA services, difficulties scheduling meetings with the counselor and other difficulties working with DCRSA staff. A separate question asked respondents to indicate where they usually met with their counselor. Sixty percent of respondents indicated that they went to the DCRSA office to meet with their counselor, 26% indicated that they did not have a DCRSA counselor, and 10% indicated that usually met with their counselor in the community/school.

Respondents were presented with an open-ended question asking them to describe desired changes to DCRSA services that would improve their experience with DCRSA and help them to achieve their employment goals. There were a total of 148 individuals that provided narrative responses to this question. Content analysis of the responses indicated a desire for:

- *Increased response, help and compassion from their counselor (n=52)*
- *Educational opportunities to increase employment options (n=17)*
- *Better information on available services (n=14)*

Partner Survey Results:

The partner survey was distributed to representatives of partner organizations that provide services to individuals with disabilities and work with DCRSA. A total of 37 valid partner surveys were completed. Questions appearing on the partner survey addressed four general areas:

- Services readily available to persons with disabilities
- Barriers to achieving employment goals
- Barriers to accessing DCRSA services
- Desired changes in DCRSA services

Respondent Characteristics

The first survey question was an open-ended question asking respondents to indicate the type of organization where they are employed. The most common organizations cited were community rehabilitation programs, advocacy organizations and individual service providers. Respondents were provided with a list and asked to identify which client populations they worked with on a regular basis. Table 20 illustrates the client populations indicated by the survey respondents.

Table 20

Client populations served regularly by respondents.

Client Populations	Number
Individuals from unserved or underserved populations	27
Individuals that are racial or ethnic minorities	26
Individuals that need long-term supports and extended services to maintain employment	26
Individuals with the most significant disabilities	20
Transition-aged youth (14-24)	17
Individuals served by America's Job Centers	12

The largest number of respondents work with individuals from unserved or underserved populations followed by racial or ethnic minorities and those that need long-term supports to maintain employment.

The partner survey respondents were asked to identify the Wards in which they provide services. Table 21 includes the response to this question.

Table 21

Partner Service Area by Ward

Provider Service Area by Ward	Number
1	20.0
2	19.0
3	21.0
4	23.0
5	25.0
6	24.0
7	24.0
8	28.0

The service areas for partner respondents were fairly evenly spread out across the District. Ward 8 led the service areas with 28 individuals indicating that they served this area, which is consistent with the Ward that has been identified as having the greatest need.

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

Partner survey respondents were given a list of barriers and asked to identify the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers. Table 22 below lists the barriers

along with the number of times each of the barriers was mentioned as one of the top three barriers by partner survey respondents.

Table 22

Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals for DCRSA Consumers

Top three barriers to achieving employment goals – General	Times identified as a barrier (n)
Not having education or training	20
Convictions for criminal offenses	11
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	9
Not having job skills	9
Mental health issues	5
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	5
Not enough jobs available	5
Poor social skills	3

The lack of adequate education or training was cited most frequently by respondents, followed by convictions for criminal offenses, employer perceptions and not having job skills. These reasons differ from the individual survey results and may reflect the population that are most in need of provider services for assistance in obtaining employment.

Difficulties Accessing DCRSA Services

Respondents were presented with a question that prompted them to indicate the top three reasons that people with disabilities might find it difficult to access DCRSA services. Table 23 below lists the barriers to DCRSA access along with the number of times each of the barriers was mentioned as one of the top three barriers by the partner survey respondents.

Table 23

Top Three Reasons People Find It Difficult to Access DCRSA Services

Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services – General	Times identified as a Barrier (n)
Slow service delivery	13
DCRSA staff are not responsive to communication from clients or potential clients	12
Difficulties accessing training or education programs	7
Difficulties completing the application	5
DCRSA staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	4

The partner respondents indicated that slow service delivery was one of the top three barriers to individuals with disabilities accessing DCRSA services more than any other reason cited in the survey. Unresponsive staff and difficulties accessing training and education programs were the next two most frequently cited barriers to access.

Desired Changes

Partner survey respondents were presented with an open-ended question that asked them to describe the most important change DCRSA could make to support consumers' efforts to achieve their employment goals. There were 21 individuals that provided narrative responses to this question. An increase in responsiveness of staff was the most frequently cited change, followed by speeding up service delivery, reducing counselor caseloads and meeting clients in the community.

Staff Survey Results:

A total of 25 valid staff surveys were completed. Questions appearing on the staff survey addressed four general areas:

- Services readily available to persons with disabilities
- Barriers to achieving employment goals
- Barriers to accessing DCRSA services
- Desired changes in DCRSA services

Respondent Characteristics

The first survey question was an open-ended question asking respondents to indicate their job title. The most frequent job title cited was Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist, followed by Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Supervisor, Project Manager and Business Support Specialist.

Respondents were provided with a list and asked to identify which client populations they worked with on a regular basis. Table 24 illustrates the client populations indicated by the staff survey respondents.

Table 24

Client populations served regularly by staff.

Client Populations Served by DCRSA Staff	Number
Individuals with chronic mental illness	16
Individuals from unserved or underserved populations	15
Individuals with the most significant disabilities	15
Individuals with developmental disabilities	15
Individuals that are racial or ethnic minorities	14

Individuals that need long-term supports and extended services to maintain employment	14
Transition-aged youth (14-24)	12
Individuals with sensory impairments	10
Individuals served by America's Job Centers	8

DCRSA staff that responded to the survey indicated that they work most frequently with individuals with chronic mental illness, followed by those from underserved populations, those with the most significant disabilities and individuals with developmental disabilities. These results are consistent with the data on DCRSA consumers.

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

Staff survey respondents were given a list of 19 barriers and asked to identify the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers. Table 25 below lists the barriers along with the number of times each of the barriers was mentioned as one of the top three barriers by staff survey respondents.

Table 25

Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals for DCRSA Consumers

Top three barriers to achieving employment goals - General	Times identified as a barrier (n)
Not having education or training	10
Convictions for criminal offense	10
Poor Social Skills	6
Not having job skills	5
Housing issues	5
Substance abuse issues	5
Mental health issues	4
Not having job search skills	4
Other (please describe)	4
Other transportation issues	3
Employers perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	3
Disability-related transportation issues	3
Not having disability-related accommodations	3
Childcare issues	3
Perceptions regarding impact of income on Social Security benefits	1
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	1
Language barriers	1

DCRSA staff identified not having education or training and convictions for criminal offenses most frequently as the one of the top three barriers to consumers achieving their employment goals. These results are consistent with the partner surveys results. Poor social skills, a lack of job skills and housing and substance abuse issues were the next most commonly cited barriers.

Respondents were presented with questions that prompted them to indicate the top three reasons that people with disabilities might find it difficult to access DCRSA services. Table 26 below lists the barriers to DCRSA access along with the number of times each of the barriers was mentioned as one of the top three barriers by the staff survey respondents.

Table 26

Top Three Reasons People Find it Difficult to Access DCRSA Services

Barriers to Accessing (agency) Services - General	Times Identified as a Barrier (n)
Slow service delivery	9
Difficulties accessing training or education program	6
Other (please describe)	5
Difficulties completing application	5
Inadequate assessment services	5
Difficulties completing the IPE	4
DCRSA staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	3
Language barriers	3
Other challenges related to the physical location of the DCRSA office	2
Limited accessibility of DCRSA via public transportation	1

DCRSA staff identified slow service delivery with the greatest frequency when asked to identify the top three barriers to accessing DCRSA services. Difficulties accessing training or education programs was the second most frequent choice followed by other and difficulties completing the application and the IPE. A few of the barriers to accessing services noted in the “other” category were:

- *Lack of a resource room for clients*
- *Inadequate job readiness training prior to referral*
- *Limited outreach*
- *Staff not completing tasks on time*

Desired Changes

Staff survey respondents were presented with an open-ended question that asked them to describe the most important change DCRSA could make to support consumers' efforts to achieve their employment goals. There were 13 narrative responses to this question. Responses included the following:

- *More competent vendors*
- *Mandatory job readiness classes*
- *Provide career counseling and don't just put clients in a job to meet numbers*
- *A comprehensive training program for new counselors*
- *Move to a person-centered organization*
- *Being able to initiate housing resources*
- *Hold job development vendors accountable*
- *Accountability for counselors and vendors*

Staff were presented with a list of 11 options and asked to identify the top three changes that would enable them to better assist their consumers. Table 27 details the staff responses to this question.

Table 27

Top three changes that would enable staff to better assist consumers.

Changes That Would Enable Staff to Better Serve Consumers	Times Identified among Top Three Changes (n)
Smaller caseloads	14
More effective community-based providers	10
Better data management tools	8
More administrative support	7
More streamlined processes	6
Improved business partnerships	4
Additional training	4
Better assessment tools	3
Increased outreach to clients in their communities	3
Decreased procurement time	2
More supervisor support	1

Staff identified the need for smaller caseloads as the most frequent change that DCRSA could make that would help them better serve their consumers. More effective community-based providers were the second most common choice, which is consistent with findings throughout the study.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the individual interviews conducted for this assessment as it relates to overall program performance for DCRSA:

- DCRSA has moved into new facilities since the last assessment. The new accommodations are clean, large and very inviting. To a person, the building was praised for its welcoming environment and its appeal. Several participants indicated that staff morale has improved because of the facilities and they are proud to work there;
- DCRSA has embarked on a Person-Centered Thinking (PCT) philosophy in their organization. Numerous individuals cited this initiative as a positive move by the organization that focuses on the counselor-client relationship;
- The organization has been using data to drive decision-making and to establish goals for outcomes. This process has allowed staff to understand the “why” of decisions and planning and to target areas in need of growth and improvement;
- Several individuals indicated that DCRSA needs to continue to push for higher quality employment outcomes for their consumers. Although there was a general indication that the agency has improved in the last three years, there is still a need to focus on in-demand job-driven employment goals that will increase self-sufficiency of consumers;
- Several individuals indicated that the focus on production numbers impacts the quality of work that consumers are obtaining on the whole. WIOA has shifted the focus on retention in employment, but jobs that are easily obtained in the short-term are often low-skilled, low-paying, high turnover positions that often do not result in long-term retention. DCRSA has embarked on training in the new common performance measures and the culture shift required in the VR program for these measures to be embedded in several system throughout the agency;
- Although the organization has implemented several policies and procedures to address responsiveness, the lack of responsiveness of staff remains the most common criticism of the organization by the individuals interviewed for this study. The lack of return calls or emails was cited as a frequent source of frustration for consumers and providers;
- A recurring theme in the individual interviews was the need to improve the quality of IPEs for consumers. A need for consumer accountability in the rehabilitation process was mentioned by several participants, and the IPE was where most felt accountability should be embedded;

- The return rate of consumers was a concern expressed by several interview participants. The factors that lead to clients returning for services were identified as a lack of training in high demand occupations, poor work ethic and work skills, inadequate IPES, and a lack of support services;
- It was widely reported that DCRSA encourages their staff to help consumers obtain “in the meantime” jobs. These are survival jobs that help consumers earn money to live while they attend some kind of postsecondary education that will prepare them for the employment goal identified in their IPE. This type of service was widely supported and was seen as an important source of soft and hard skill development, especially for youth;
- The need for a resource room for consumers was cited by several participants. There is a place in the building now where consumers can use the Internet for career exploration and job search, but several people indicated that a complete resource room would be helpful and could serve a greater number of consumers;
- The large caseload sizes were often cited as contributing to performance challenges;
- The processing requirements were frequently mentioned as having an adverse effect on the ability of counselors to spend quality time with their consumers;
- The high turnover of staff was frequently mentioned as having an adverse effect on continuity and positive performance in the organization;

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following recurring themes emerged across all of the focus groups completed in the District as they relate to overall agency performance:

Positive and Negative Experiences with DCRSA:

Clients in all of the focus groups described **positive experiences** with their counselors. Counselors were described as “very encouraging”, “someone I can reach out to”, “gives pointers and tips that are helpful,” “very friendly and professional,” “emailed quickly and by the next day,” and “left alternate [phone] numbers”. Several consumers were very thankful for the help they received. “It is a really useful program for going to college and getting a job.” “Overall positive experience with education.” “RSA paid for college tuition, maintenance and computer.” Some of the other positive statements include:

- *My counselor is someone I can reach out to. She is encouraging and talks to my employer for me when I need help.*
- *The process at DCRSA was very smooth for me. I got a counselor right away and she was very informative.*

On the other hand, clients also described unsatisfactory interactions with RSA. In these cases, the main reason for the dissatisfaction was the poor communication with their counselors. The lack of return phone calls or emails was the most frequent criticism, including a lack of follow-through and the timeliness of service delivery. The inefficiency of services was mentioned in several groups. Examples focused on the “fragmentation of services” and counselors not knowledgeable about vendors and services RSA can pay for. Other examples referred to counselors losing forms clients completed and having to re-submit forms to re-open cases. A related theme was the high turnover in staff and counselors being overwhelmed. Clients referred to good counselors leaving and counselors taking off for long periods. One client reported having four counselors in 1-1/2 years. Another client said he “lost count of the number of counselors he’s had at RSA.” The challenge for clients is they “have to start all over each time” they are assigned a new counselor. On the other hand, counselors were described as “overwhelmed, overworked, and stressed.”

Quality of Employment Outcomes:

Several focus group participants expressed concern about the quality of the employment outcomes obtained by DCRSA consumers. Although DCRSA was routinely praised for helping consumers get postsecondary education, the link between that training and employment was not consistent. The job placement services were characterized as poor and not necessarily linked to the experience or education of clients. In addition, many focus group participants did not feel that DCRSA consumers were being trained to work in the 21st century job market, and that the consumers are not held accountable for their role in the rehabilitation process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to DCRSA based on the results of the research in the **Overall Agency Performance** area:

- DCRSA should strive to increase the range and types of jobs that consumers obtain. Individuals that are trained to obtain higher paying, career-level jobs will retain those positions for longer and will support DCRSA’s achievement of their common performance measures. One of the ways to make this happen is by encouraging consumer participation in postsecondary education programs, including graduate level education. Although many participants in this study characterized DCRSA consumers as needing to go to work immediately and unable to pursue higher education, DCRSA can promote the ability to assist consumers to obtain part-time jobs while they attend school and support those jobs with service delivery. This initiative requires a significant culture shift and is likely going to require a sustained message that is reinforced at all levels of the organization. DCRSA has already taken many positive steps to make this culture shift, including receiving training and technical assistance in the common performance measures and their potential impact on numerous system in the VR program. The agency is encouraged to continue with this training process and to

reinforce the message of achieving in-demand career-level jobs at every level of the organization. The agency is also encouraged to examine its key performance indicators and ensure that they are aligned with the common performance measures.

- It will be important for DCRSA to help educate the Mayor's office about the new common performance measures in WIOA and how these measures impact the definition of success in the Workforce Development core partners and the data that is reported. It will be important for this education process to continue until there is consistency in the expectation and reward systems on the Federal and local level.
- Another possible way that DCRSA can increase the range and types of jobs that consumers obtain is through regular use of labor market information in the career exploration and vocational planning process. LMI is available through the American Job Centers, and it is also freely available utilizing the Career Index Plus (TCI+) program at www.thecareerindexplus.com. DCRSA can request training on the use of TCI+ by contacting the WINTAC.
- The need to develop a culture of responsiveness and customer service should remain a priority for the organization. DCRSA has established a response time frame (24 hours), provided cell phones for counselors, and focused on person-centered thinking as ways to encourage excellent customer service. However, responsiveness to clients and partners and follow-through remains an area in need of development. DCRSA should consistently express the message of excellent customer service and find ways to reward those individuals that model this behavior:
- DCRSA is encouraged to utilize technology to help ensure accountability in the rehabilitation process for consumers. For instance, if counselors are using an LMI program like TCI+ with their consumers, they can track their consumer's activity in career exploration, job seeking and application. Counselors and clients can establish reasonable expectations for engagement by the consumer and create a profile for the consumer that monitors the activity and engagement in the job search process. TCI+ is not the only program that does this, but it is one free option for DCRSA to consider.

SECTION 2

NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Section 2 includes an assessment of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment. This section includes the rehabilitation needs of DCRSA consumers as expressed by the different groups interviewed and surveyed. All of the general needs of DCRSA consumers were included here, with specific needs identified relating to supported employment.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities including their need for supported employment:

- *Individuals with cognitive, mental health and psychosocial impairments constitute the largest percentage of individuals with disabilities served by DCRSA;*
- *Individuals with the most significant disabilities continue to be concerned about how earning wages will affect their SSA benefits, and this affects their return to work behavior;*
- *The supported employment program at DCRSA is growing larger in numbers of individuals served; and*
- *The need for improved soft skills, job-driven training, affordable housing, increased literacy and computer skills were all recurring needs identified in the study.*

NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT:

An analysis of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for SE begins with an analysis of the primary disability types served by DCRSA, the significance of disability categories and the rate of SSA beneficiaries served by the organization.

Table 28 identifies the significance of disability rating for closed cases for 2014, 2015, 2016.

Table 28

Significance of Disability for DCRSA Consumers

Significance of Disability	2014	2015	2016
Disabled	105	35	62
Percent of Total	4%	2%	2%

Significant	936	759	762
Percent of Total	38%	33%	29%
Most Significant	1,418	1,531	1,773
Percent of Total	58%	66%	68%

DCRSA's consumers are overwhelmingly individuals with the most significant disabilities. Almost 70% of individuals with disabilities that were found eligible for services in 2016 fell into the most significantly disabled category, a rate that steadily increased over the three years of this study. Correspondingly, the rate of individuals that were not significantly disabled remained below 5% throughout the study and stayed at 2% for the 2015 and 2016.

Table 29 below identifies the type of primary disability reported by applicants for VR services from 2014-16. A recurring theme in the last two CSNAs and in this study is that DCRSA primarily serves individuals with mental health impairments, cognitive impairments or substance use disorders. In order to determine if this was the case, the project team identified the primary and secondary disabilities of applicants.

Table 29
Primary Disability of DCRSA Applicants

Primary Disability	Percent of Total		
	2014	2015	2016
Blindness and Vision Impairment	2.5%	2.4%	1.3%
Cognitive Impairments	34.9%	32.4%	28.1%
Communicative Impairments	2.1%	0.8%	0.9%
Deaf and Hearing Impaired	3.8%	4.1%	4.3%
Physical	13.0%	13.7%	10.4%
Mobility	3.1%	2.7%	2.9%
Mental and Psychosocial Impairments	38.6%	42.4%	50.1%

The data indicates that the rate of individuals with blindness and visual impairments has declined in the three years under investigation. DCRSA should look into why this is the case and determine if increased outreach to organizations serving this population is warranted. Individuals that reported mental and/or psychosocial impairments as their primary disability constituted just over half of the total applicants. Individuals with cognitive impairments as the primary disabling condition constituted 28% of applicants in 2016, a reduction nearly 7% from 2014.

Table 30 identifies the rate of applicants that reported either cognitive or mental/psychosocial as their secondary impairment:

Table 30
Secondary Disability of Applicants

Secondary Disability	Percent of Total		
	2014	2015	2016
Cognitive Impairments	15.0%	17.6%	13.0%
Mental and Psychosocial Impairments	27.5%	27.5%	34.5%

The project team combined the primary and secondary disability information in the two most frequently reported areas and this information are included in Table 31 below:

Table 31
Rate of Most Common Primary and Secondary Disability Type

Rate of DCRSA Consumers with Primary or Secondary Disability Type	Percent of Total		
	2014	2015	2016
Cognitive Impairments	49.9%	50.0%	41.1%
Mental and Psychosocial Impairments	66.1%	69.9%	84.6%

The data supports the findings from other methods of investigation in this study. Historically, between 40 and 50% of all applicants for DCRSA services have either a primary or secondary disability reported as a cognitive impairment. In 2016, 84.6% of all applicants reported either a primary or secondary disability of a mental or psychosocial impairment.

An indicator of the rate of individuals with the most significant disabilities being served by the VR program is the rate of individuals that are SSA beneficiaries. Table 32 below identifies the rate of SSI and SSDI recipients from 2014-2016.

Table 32
SSA Beneficiaries

Beneficiary Type	2014	2015	2016
SSI	685	790	725
% of total	27%	33%	27%
SSDI	685	259	315
% of total	3%	11%	12%
Total Rate of SSA Beneficiaries	30%	44%	39%

The data indicates that almost 40% of the applicants for DCRSA services are either receiving SSI or SSDI, with SSI having the larger percentage by 2-3 times the number of SSDI recipients. The high rate of SSA beneficiaries has potentially significant implications for the SSA reimbursement dollars available to DCRSA. It will be important for DCRSA to examine the employment outcomes of this group to determine if they are pursuing full-time employment,

or whether they are purposefully trying to earn less than substantial gainful activity so that their benefits are not affected (for SSDI) recipients) or trying to avoid falling off the SSI cash cliff.

One of the recurring themes in this study was that supported employment was a common employment outcome for DCRSA consumers and that the relationship between DCRSA and DDA has continued to progress to a point where the two agencies are engaged in regular productive communication. In addition, a recurring theme was that self-employment was an underutilized service for DCRSA consumers. In order to investigate these two areas, we examined the number and rate of types of IPE written in the three years of this study. Table 33 below includes this information:

Table 33
Types of IPEs

IPE Type	2014	2015	2016
Job Retention	4	4	2
Self-Employment	0	2	1
Supported Employment	324	482	689
Percent of Total	17%	27%	33%
General VR	1546	1300	1407
Percent of Total	82%	73%	67%

It is clear from the data that self-employment is rarely, if ever, identified as an employment outcome in the IPE of DCRSA consumers. On the other hand, supported employment outcomes have risen dramatically from 2014-16. The number of IPEs that note SE as the employment outcome has risen to 1/3 of all IPEs written by DCRSA in 2016. The rise is so significant, that DCRSA will need to investigate whether counselors are clear about the requirements for an SE plan and whether there are sufficient resources available to provide extended services to such a large number of individuals. It may be that the rise in SE cases is due primarily to the positive relationship between DCRSA and the Department of Behavioral Health. Supported employment is a common outcome for individuals with significant mental health impairments that are being served by DBH and referred for DCRSA services.

One of the recurring themes that emerged from the study of individuals identified as needing supported employment was that the outcomes for this population were very low. As a result of this information, the project team examined the rehabilitation rate of those individuals coded as SE and closed after receiving services with the general population of VR consumers closed after receiving services. Table 34 below contains the results of this analysis:

Table 34
Rehabilitation Rate of Supported Employment

Closure Status	Closure Rate by Year								
	2014			2015			2016		
	SE	All Cases	Diff.	SE	All Cases	Diff.	SE	All Cases	Diff.
Successful Rehabilitation	56.5%	58.0%	-1.5%	34.6%	29.0%	5.6%	44.1%	22.0%	22.1%

Although the perception of staff and partners is that the rehabilitation rate for SE consumers is low, they outperformed the general population of DCRSA consumers by 5.6% in 2015 and 22.1% in 2016.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

Partner survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment for Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities

Respondents were asked if the barriers to achieving employment goals for individuals with the most significant disabilities were different from the overall population of persons with disabilities. Of the 26 respondents, 77% (n = 20) indicated that the barriers to achieving employment goals were different for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Respondents were then asked to indicate the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers with the most significant disabilities from a list of 20 barriers. Table 35 lists the barriers along with the number of times each of the barriers was mentioned as one of the top three barriers for DCRSA consumers with the most significant disabilities by partner survey respondents.

Table 35
Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals for DCRSA Consumers with Most Significant Disabilities.

Top three barriers to achieving employment goals - MSD	Times identified as a barrier (n)
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	13
Not having job skills	8
Not having education or training	6
Not enough jobs available	4
Not having disability-related accommodations	3
Other (please describe)	3
Disability-related transportation issues	2

Perceptions regarding the impact of income on benefits	2
Little or no work experience	2
Convictions or criminal offenses	2
Childcare issues	1
Poor social skills	1
Mental Health issues	1
Not having disability-related personal care	1
Other transportation issues	1
Other health issues	1
Not having job search skills	0
Language barriers	0
Substance abuse issues	0
Housing issues	0

The community partner respondents identified employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities the most frequently as one of the top three barriers to individuals with the most disabilities achieving their employment goals. Not having job skills and not having education or training were the next two most commonly cited barriers.

Staff survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals for Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities.

Staff survey respondents were asked if the barriers to achieving the employment goals for individuals with the most significant disabilities were different from the overall population. There were 19 individuals that responded to this question and 8 (42%) indicated that the barriers were different for individuals with the most significant disabilities. This is 35% lower than the partner survey response to this question. The eight individuals, who indicated that the barriers were different, were asked to identify the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers with the most significant disabilities. Table 36 details their responses to this question. This table only includes responses that occurred more than two times.

Table 36

Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals for Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities, Staff Survey.

Staff: Top three reasons consumers find it difficult to achieve employment goals	N
Not having job skills	5
Employers' perceptions about employing people with disabilities	4
Poor social skills	3
Convictions for criminal offenses	2

Not having job skills, employer's perceptions about employing people with disabilities and poor social skills were the most frequently cited top three barrier to achieving employment goals for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The low response rate to this question makes generalizing these barriers to the larger perception of DCRSA staff difficult. The majority of staff respondents did not feel there was a difference in the general population of consumers they serve and those with the most significant disabilities. This is likely due to the fact that they primarily serve individuals with the most significant disabilities, so there would be few differences noted.

Partner survey: Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services for Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities

Partner survey respondents were asked if the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by individuals with most significant disabilities were different from the general population of persons with disabilities. Of the 22 respondents, 46% (n = 10) indicated that the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by individuals with most significant disabilities were different from the general population of persons with disabilities. These respondents were then asked to indicate the top three reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by individuals with most significant disabilities. Table 37 lists the reasons along with the number of times each was mentioned as one of the top three barriers for individuals with most significant disabilities. Only those answers that had two or more responses are included in this table.

Table 37

Difficulties Accessing DCRSA Services for Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities

Barriers to Accessing (agency) Services - MSD	Times Identified as a Barrier (n)
Slow service delivery	8
DCRSA staff are not responsive to communication from clients or potential clients	7
Inadequate assessment services	4
Difficulties accessing training or education programs	4
Difficulties completing the application	3

Slow service delivery and unresponsive staff were the most frequently cited barriers to accessing DCRSA by the community partners that completed the survey. Inadequate assessment service and difficulties completing the application were the only other two answers that received more than two responses.

Staff survey: Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services for Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities

Staff survey respondents were asked if the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by individuals with most significant disabilities were different from the general population of persons with disabilities. Of the 18 respondents to this question, only 22% (n = 4) indicated that the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by individuals with the most significant disabilities were different from the general population of persons with disabilities. Consequently, the results are not included in this section.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the individual interviews conducted for this assessment regarding the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment:

- A lack of work experience, literacy challenges, low math skills, poor soft skills, and accessible public places were frequently cited as needs of individuals with disabilities in the District;
- The need for the development of customized employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities was cited frequently;
- DCRSA continues to serve a large number of individuals with mental health impairments, and these individuals often require SE services to be successful on the job;
- Several participants stressed that DCRSA’s relationship with the Development Disability Administration (DDA) and the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) is better than ever, and this is a product of a sustained outreach and partnering effort by the administration of DDS and DCRSA;
- Housing and transportation were once again cited as important needs of individuals with disabilities in the District;
- The changes in WIOA regarding supported employment were generally viewed as favorable and likely to lead to an increase in expenditures in the program. Specifically, the ability of DCRSA to keep SE cases open for a longer period of time and the requirement to expend 50% of the SE budget on youth were cited as positive changes to the program found in WIOA;
- DCRSA continues to serve a large number of Social Security beneficiaries. As a consequence, many of these beneficiaries are worried about how working will affect their benefits and often want to work at a level that is below substantial gainful activity (SGA), or will not result in them falling off the “cash cliff” if they receive SSI. This results in them achieving low-paying, part-time jobs that result in poor retention and high turnover. These outcomes are not supported by the new common performance measures in WIOA,

and many staff indicated that the need for benefits planning is greater than ever because of this scenario;

- The need for soft skills and work hardening were cited frequently by participants, especially for individuals with significant mental health impairments;
- The need to develop basic computer skills was cited as a common need for adults with the most significant disabilities that come to DCRSA for services;
- Individuals with the most significant disabilities have a need for assistive technology and the training in how to use the technology. A few individuals reported that DCRSA will purchase the AT for consumers, but the training is not part of the package, which lessens the impact of the technology;
- DCRSA's traditional SE program has not been as successful as they would like in terms of employment outcomes. The evidence-based SE program, by contrast, was described as very successful;

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following recurring themes emerged across all of the focus groups completed in the District for all groups as they relate to the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for Supported Employment:

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals:

Several barriers to employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities were consistently cited across groups. These barriers/needs included:

- Employer discrimination against individuals with disabilities;
- Mental health concerns;
- Lack of soft and hard skills;
- Lack of affordable housing;
- Child care;
- Lack of computer skills;
- Low levels of literacy;
- Fear of SSA benefit loss;
- Substance abuse; and
- Lack of high quality service providers;

Social Security Beneficiaries:

Although benefits planning and counseling is readily available for DCRSA consumers, the fear of benefit loss still affects the return-to-work behavior of DCRSA's current consumers. Many request to pursue employment that will ensure they earn less than substantial gainful activity, or that they do not fall off the "cash-cliff" for SSI. This presents a challenge for the organization because they may have every intention of helping a consumer obtain an in-demand high-paying job, but may be thwarted by the fear of benefit loss.

Supported Employment:

Most focus group participants indicated that the SE program was moving in the right direction and has made progress over the last three years, primarily due to improved relationships between DCRSA and DDA. However, the outcomes for the traditional SE program were characterized as low by many focus groups and this performance was primarily identified as a provider issue. The evidence-based SE program that serves individuals with mental health impairments was routinely cited as successful and a model for how SE should function. Many individuals cited the clear and extensive support system available to consumers as one of the reasons for the success of the evidence-based SE program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to DCRSA based on the results of the research in the **Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities, including their need for Supported Employment** area:

- DCRSA should conduct focused outreach to programs and organizations serving people with significant physical disabilities. These include physicians, spinal cord centers, United Cerebral Palsy, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the Epilepsy Foundation, and others.
- Because of the need for ongoing, on-demand benefits planning for SSA beneficiaries, DCRSA should consider contacting the World Institute on Disability to develop a Disability 101 website that can act as a benefits planning tool for counseling staff and consumers. Examples of state DB101 sites can be found at <https://www.db101.org>. The contact information for WID is:
Anita Aaron, Executive Director
World Institute on Disability
3075 Adeline Street, Suite 155
Berkeley, CA 94703
Main Phone: 510.225.6400
Direct Phone: 510.225.6326
Email: anita@wid.org

- When purchasing assistive technology for consumers, DCRSA should ensure that appropriate training is authorized so consumers can effectively use the AT;
- DCRSA should continue to provide training to their staff and service providers on the traditional model of supported employment, focusing on the changes in SE contained in WIOA. This training is available through the WINTAC free of charge to the organization;
- DCRSA is entering into an intensive TA agreement with the WINTAC and the Y-TAC to provide training to their staff and service providers in customized employment. The organization is encouraged to fully implement this training program throughout the District to provide an option for individuals with the most significant disabilities to obtain and maintain competitive employment.
- The rise in SE cases necessitates a review of the available resources for extended service provision for these cases. DCRSA should determine if natural supports are being identified and utilized for individuals that do not qualify for traditional Medicaid-waiver based services.
- DCRSA should investigate why individuals with blindness are not applying for services at the same rate as in previous years. If targeted outreach to community organizations serving the blind is needed, DCRSA should implement plans to increase that outreach.

SECTION 3
NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, INCLUDING NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM

Section 3 includes an identification of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who have been potentially unserved or underserved by DCRSA.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including individuals who have been potentially unserved or underserved by the VR program:

- *Veterans Appear to be an unserved population by DCRSA;*
- *Asian and Hispanic individuals continue apply for DCRSA services at a lower rate than they appear in the general population of the District;*
- *Language barriers affect minority populations from participating in DCRSA services; and*
- *Individuals with physical disabilities may be an underserved population by DCRSA.*

NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, INCLUDING NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS THAT HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY DCRSA

One of the ways to determine if a particular ethnicity may be underserved by DCRSA is to examine the ethnicity of DCRSA consumers compared to the occurrence of these ethnicities in the general population in the District. Table 38 below compares the ethnicity of individuals in Washington DC for all populations to the ethnicity of consumers that applied for DCRSA services. The comparison applies only to 2016, as that is the most recent year available by the US Census Bureau.

Table 38
Ethnicity of DCRSA Residents vs DCRSA Consumers for 2015

Rate of Ethnicity for All Applicants for DCRSA					
Ethnicity	2014	2015	2016	All DC 2016	Difference
White	6.0%	7.3%	5.6%	35.2%	-29.6%

Black or African American	86.0%	85.5%	87.1%	46.3%	40.8%
Hispanic or Latino	4.5%	4.7%	5.0%	8.3%	-3.3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.05%	-0.05%
Asian	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	3.2%	-2.7%
Two or more races	2.3%	1.6%	1.4%	2.9%	-1.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%

The ethnicity data indicates that African American applicants comprise well over 85% of all individuals applying for services from DCRSA. Although they are overrepresented when compared to the general population of DC, African Americans are over 90% of the population in the Wards with the greatest socioeconomic need and disability rates (Wards 5,7 and 8). Consequently, one would expect that if DCRSA is providing service to those that need them most, this population distribution of applicants would be consistent with the areas of greatest need. The rate of Hispanic applicants has slowly but steadily increased over the three years of this study, but remains lower than they appear in the general population. The rate of Asian applicants is very low and has remained at less than one percent from 2014-2016. The rate of White applicants is significantly lower than their rate in the general population of DC, but they comprise the largest population of the more affluent Wards in the District, so their need for services from DCRSA would be expected to be low.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

Partner survey: Barriers to Employment for Consumers who are Racial or Ethnic Minorities

Respondents were asked if the barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities were different from the overall population of persons with disabilities. Of the 24 respondents, 54% (n = 13) indicated that the barriers to achieving employment goals were different for consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities. Respondents were then asked to indicate the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities from a list of 20 barriers. Table 39 lists the barriers along with the number of times each of the barriers was mentioned as one of the top three barriers for consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities by partner survey respondents. The table only includes responses that occurred at least two times.

Table 39

Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals for Consumers who were Racial or Ethnic Minorities

Top three barriers to achieving employment goals - Racial or Ethnic Minorities	Times identified as a barrier (n)
Not having education or training	10

Not having job skills	8
Language barriers	5
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	4
Poor social skills	3
Not having job search skills	2
Little or no work experience	2
Not enough jobs available	2
Childcare issues	2
Housing issues	2

Not having education or training was chosen the most number of times as a barrier to achieving employment goals for racial or ethnic minorities. Not having job skills and language barriers were cited the second most frequently by respondents.

Partner survey: Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services for Consumers who are Racial or Ethnic Minorities

Partner survey respondents were asked if the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities were different from the general population of persons with disabilities. Of the 23 respondents, 30% (n = 7) indicated that the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities were different from the general population of persons with disabilities. Respondents were then asked to indicate the top three reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities. Table 40 lists the reasons along with the number of times each was mentioned as one of the top three reasons for consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities. The barrier had to be chosen at least twice to be included in the table.

Table 40

Difficulties Accessing DCRSA Services for Consumers who are Racial or Ethnic Minorities

Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services - Racial or Ethnic Minorities	Times identified as a Barrier (n)
Language barriers	5
Slow service delivery	5
Difficulties completing the application	4
Other (please describe)	2
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment	2
DCRSA staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	2
Inadequate assessment services	2

The community partners identified language barriers and slow service delivery most frequently as being one of the top three barriers to accessing DCRSA services. Difficulties completing the application and IPE and inadequate assessment services were chosen at least twice by respondents.

Staff survey: Barriers to Employment for Consumers who are Racial or Ethnic Minorities

Staff survey respondents were asked if the barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities were different from the overall population of persons with disabilities. Of the 18 staff respondents, 44% (n = 10) indicated that the barriers to achieving employment goals were different for consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities. These 10 respondents were then asked to indicate the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities from a list of 20 barriers. Table 41 lists the barriers along with the number of times each of the barriers was mentioned as one of the top three barriers for consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities by staff survey respondents. An item had to be chosen at least twice to appear in the table.

Table 41

Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals for Consumers who were Racial or Ethnic Minorities

Top three barriers to achieving employment goals - Racial and Ethnic Minorities	Times identified as a barrier (n)
Convictions for criminal offenses	3
Language barriers	2
Not having training or education	2
Not having job skills	2
Not having high school diploma or GED	2
Poor social skills	2
Not having disability-related accommodations	2
Other transportation issues	2
Mental health issues	2

The only barrier to achieving employment goals with more than two responses was conviction for criminal offenses, with three. The lack of agreement is at least partially explained by the small response size.

Staff Survey: Barriers to Accessing (agency) Services for Consumers who are Racial or Ethnic Minorities

Staff survey respondents were asked if the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities were different from the general population of persons with disabilities. Of the 18 respondents 22% (n = 4) indicated that the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by consumers who were racial or

ethnic minorities were different from the general population of persons with disabilities. Respondents were then asked to indicate the top three reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities. The only answer that the respondents agreed to with any consensus was difficulty completing the application process, which was chosen by all four of the respondents.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the individual interviews conducted for this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who have been potentially unserved or underserved by the VR program:

- Veterans appear to be an unserved population by DCRSA. The individual interview results supported the data that there are no Veterans being served by DCRSA. The organization has recently established a liaison relationship with the Mayor's Veteran's service organization, so the number of Veterans served by DCRSA should increase as a result of this referral source;
- The need for bilingual counselors, especially Spanish, was a recurring theme. Although interpreters are readily available, counselors that speak Spanish and other frequently spoken languages in the District contribute to the sense that the organization values diverse cultures and encourages their application for services;
- Individuals with the most significant physical disabilities were cited as being potentially underserved. Several individuals noted that the focus on services to individuals with cognitive and psychiatric disabilities may have resulted in a reduction in service to individuals with physical disabilities over the years;
- Native Americans were identified as possibly being underserved by DCRSA. The partnership between DCRSA and the American Indian tribes was noted as being sporadic and in need of improvement;
- Individuals that are Asian were characterized as likely being underserved. They have historically not accessed services from DCRSA at the same rate that they appear in the population of the District. Efforts to increase outreach do not seem to have had an effect on the number of Asians applying for services or being served.
- Individuals that are Hispanic continue to be mentioned as a potentially underserved population;
- Several individuals interviewed for this study indicated that DCRSA has significantly increased their outreach to the community over the last few years and this outreach has resulted in VR services being readily available to all ethnic and disability groups.

Outreach to the Ethiopian population was frequently cited as an example of DCRSA's efforts in this area.

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following recurring themes emerged across all of the focus groups completed in the District as they relate to the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program:

- Veterans were identified as a potentially underserved population by DCRSA. Participants were not clear as to why this was the case and why it has historically been the case, except to indicate that Veterans may not need services since they are served by the Veteran's Administration. One participant said:

"I don't think Veterans need services. They get what they need from the VA so they don't come to DCRSA."

- Most focus group participants struggled to identify any other groups of individuals, other than Veterans, that might be underserved by DCRSA. A few groups that were mentioned more than once included individuals with the most significant physical disabilities, Hispanic and Asian individuals and the homeless.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to DCRSA based on the results of the research in the **Needs of Individuals with Disabilities from Different Ethnic Groups, including needs of Individuals who have been Unserved or Underserved by the VR Program** area:

- DCRSA should investigate why there are no individuals coded as Veterans that receive services from the organization. Veterans were identified as an underserved group in the last assessment and would classify as an unserved population if the case management system coding is correct. It is recommended that the agency first determine if there has been some kind of coding or documentation error in the case management system or by counselor input. If not, DCRSA should establish relationships with community organizations that serve Veterans in order to increase services to this population.
- DCRSA should recruit bilingual counselors as a matter of course for every vacant counseling position. The pool of bilingual applicants may increase with the new counselor educational requirements in WIOA and should provide DCRSA with a more diverse group of candidates.

- DCRSA should investigate why the rate of individuals that are Asian and Hispanic that are being served by the organization continue to remain significantly below their occurrence in the general population of The District. DCRSA should develop strategies to encourage referral and service delivery to this population. The addition of a counselor or counselors that speak Spanish and any of the Asian languages may help with establishing community relationships with programs that serve these populations, which may potentially increase referrals.

SECTION 4 NEEDS OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN TRANSITION

The reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act under WIOA places a greater emphasis on the provision of transition services to youth and students with disabilities, especially their need for pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS). The Final Rule for 34 CFR 361 and 363 indicates that the comprehensive statewide needs assessment must include an assessment of the needs of youth and students with disabilities in the State, including their need for Pre-ETS. This section contains information about the needs of transition-age youth with disabilities (14-24) and the needs of students with disabilities (16-21) for pre-employment transition services.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following themes emerged across all data gathering methods regarding the needs of youth with disabilities in transition in the District:

- *A lack of work skills, soft skills, work experience and knowledge regarding the expectations of the work force are all barriers to employment for youth with disabilities in the District;*
- *DCRSA has expanded their staff and commitment of resources to youth and students with disabilities;*
- *DCRSA has done a good job of developing and implementing strategies to provide pre-employment transition services; and*
- *The focus on pre-employment transition services may have overshadowed the larger transition picture.*

NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS IN TRANSITION

The project team examined the number of individuals served by DCRSA that are classified as “youth with disabilities” and “students with disabilities” under WIOA. A youth with a disability is an individual that is age 14-24. A student with disability is in an education program and is between the ages of 16-21. Table 42 identifies these groups and their percent of the total applicants for the three-year period of the study.

Table 42
Youth and Students in DCRSA

Group	2014		2015		2016	
	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total	No.	% of Total
Youth (14-24)	802	31.3%	688	28.6%	689	25.9%

Students (16-21)	424	16.5%	521	21.6%	627	23.5%
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The data indicates that the number of youth served by DCRSA declined from 201-2015, but increased by one in 2016. The rate of youth compared to the overall total of DCRSA consumers overall decreased during the three years from 31.3% to 25.9%. However, the number of students increased in number and in rate during the three years of the study. This data would be consistent with the pre-employment transition services requirements of WIOA.

The project team examined the case movement progress for youth and the rehabilitation rate for this population. Table 43 contains this data.

Table 43
Case Movement and Rehabilitation Rate for Youth

Item	2014			2015			2016		
	Youth	All	Diff	Youth	All	Diff	Youth	All	Diff
Ave. Eligibility Determination - days	46	45	1	56	44	12	51	40	11
Ave. Plan Development – Days	61	54	7	60	56	4	65	50	15
Rehabilitation Rate	33%	58%	-25%	33%	29%	4%	44%	22%	22%

The data indicates that the determination of eligibility and plan development time for youth exceeds the average time of all DCRSA consumers for all three years of the study. However, all of the processing times are well within the 60-day eligibility time frame and 90-day plan time frame. The rehabilitation rate exceeded the average for all consumers in 2015 and 2016, with the final year at 22% higher than the average.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

The Rehabilitation Act as amended and reauthorized in WIOA requires VR programs to expend at least 15% of their Federal allotment annually on pre-employment transition services. These services must be made available to all eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities in the District that have need of such services. It is clear from the interviews and the survey results that youth with disabilities in the District have a need to receive pre-employment transition services. These services include:

1. Job exploration counseling;
2. Work-based learning experiences;
3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living (often referred to as soft skills); and
5. Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring

Each of these pre-ETS services was noted as a need on a recurring basis when discussing the needs of transition-age youth in the District.

The Rehabilitation Act, as reauthorized in WIOA, also indicates that the following authorized services can be provided if funds remain after the provision of the five required services noted above:

1. Implementing effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces;
2. Developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary education experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment;
3. Providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities;
4. Disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of this section;
5. Coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.);
6. Applying evidence-based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel, in order to better achieve the goals of this section;
7. Developing model transition demonstration projects;
8. Establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving States, local educational agencies, designated State units, developmental disability agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goals of this section; and
9. Disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally unserved populations.

In order to determine if a VR agency can move from the five required services to the nine authorized services, a fiscal forecasting model must be utilized which identifies the expenditures on the required services and on coordination services and then forecasts how much of the remaining funds, if any, can be utilized to pay for authorized services. The project team includes a completed model of movement from the required to authorized services for DCRSA below. This model has been reviewed and approved by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Fiscal Forecasting for DCRSA for Pre-employment Transition Services

Step 1: Determine the number of “students with disabilities” in the State to get total number of “potentially eligible” students with disabilities in the State.

DCRSA was able to obtain data from DCPS on the number of students with disabilities in the District that attend public schools. These numbers for SY 2016-17 and 2017-18 are included below:

- a. SY 2016-17: **1006 potentially eligible DCPS students** (number does not include DCPCS or DDA eligible students)

- b. SY 2017-18: **1642 potentially eligible DCPS students** (number does not include DCPCS or the 96 DDA eligible DCPS students)

The total number of students with disabilities served by charter schools was not available, but the DC Public Charter School Board data indicates that the number is at least equivalent to the public school system.

Step 2: Identify the method you used to determine the need for pre-employment transition services in your State. These needs should be described in the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA). If the CSNA was done prior to WIOA, then the VR program should indicate that the needs will be identified in the next CSNA and articulate how they are identifying the needs in the meantime.

The need for all of the five required pre-employment transition services was repeatedly noted in this comprehensive statewide needs assessment process. In addition, DCRSA identified the need in consultation with school staff and transition counselors in the District.

Step 3: Demonstrate that the required services have been made available to all that need them.

DCRSA provides pre-employment transition services directly with their own transition staff and through contracting with service providers. They have increased their transition staff to two full units and fund for Workforce Development Coordinators in the schools. They have developed MOAs with the public schools and have established a strong foundation for the delivery of pre-employment transition services to students that need these services. A description of the different ways that pre-employment transition services are currently provided in the District follows:

OSSE 4th Annual Parent & Family Engagement Summit (October 2017): Partnership between the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), high schools, and parent/family members for all attendees to provide input on the State Education plan. Self-Advocacy training is an important focus.

10th Annual Mayor's Disability Expo Awareness Expo (October 2017) and 3rd Annual DC Dept. on Disability Services Community Resource Fair (October 2017): The Fair and expo offer a unique opportunity for individuals with disabilities, service providers, educators & families to learn about support services available from an array of Service Providers offering transition supports for students and DC Youth. All five of the required services are offered here including:

- Counseling on Post-secondary education programs
- Self-Advocacy
- Workplace readiness training
- Work-based Learning Experience
- Job Exploration Counseling

DC SpEd Co-Op Next Steps Transition Fair (August & November 2017) – DCPCS:

Educators and stakeholders from DC's public charter schools are invited to attend a post-secondary education and training fair. This fair is designed to expose students with disabilities to the many different postsecondary education and transition programs that support their employment and educational goals. Attendees will participate in breakout sessions that include career explorations, independent living and self-advocacy, and financial literacy counseling.

Required services provided include:

- Counseling on postsecondary education programs
- Self-Advocacy
- Workplace readiness training

MBSYEP JumpStart Program (June-August 2017) – DCPS & DCPCS: JumpStart is a supported employment program designed to provide youth with disabilities with the individualized supports they need in order to successfully complete and learn from their Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) worksite placements. Students attended Pre-Employment Boot Camp prior to starting their SYEP worksite placements, received individualized support during their work experiences, Engaged in activities with School Talk's Youth Leadership Network; and Took part in a three-day Close Out session at the end of SYEP to reflect on and celebrate their employment experiences. SYEP is a short-term summer employment and training program that provides District youth ages 14 to 24 with enriching and constructive summer work experiences through subsidized placements in the private and government sectors. Youth earn money and gain meaningful work experience; Learn and develop the skills, attitudes, and commitment necessary to succeed in today's world of work; Gain exposure to various exciting career industries; and, Interact with dynamic working professionals in a positive work environment. Goal is to introduce youth to employers who will positively impact their futures.

Required services covered here include:

- Self-Advocacy
- Workplace readiness training
- Work-based Learning Experience
- Job Exploration Counseling

Pre-ETS Summer College Experience hosted by American University and Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind (July 2017): Students spend three weeks on the campus of American University, living in a dormitory and engaging in workshops and activities designed to enhance self-advocacy skills, boost employment readiness skills, and build independent living skills.

Required services include:

- Counseling on postsecondary education programs
- Self-Advocacy
- Workplace readiness training

RSA-Funded Internship Programming: (October 2017-May 2018): Internships include CVS Externship Program, CEO Mentoring Academy (DCPS), Career Prep Academy (DCPCS), High School Internship Program (DCPCS), Project SEARCH, WDC@River Terrace, General Explorations Internship Program (DCPS), and Alternative Spring Break Program (DCPCS). These programs are for potentially eligible / eligible students who want to engage in direct pre-ETS through paid internship programs during the school year. Students will begin work-based

learning experiences/internships during 2nd advisory of the school year (Fall 2017 cohorts) in addition to attending career workshops for professional development in employability skills.

Required services offered include:

- Work-based learning experiences
- Workplace readiness training
- Job exploration
- Self-advocacy instruction
- Counseling on post-secondary education & training

School-Based Pre-ETS Instruction (September 2017 – June 2018): Monthly pre-employment transition services, initial intake sessions, and IPE development meetings for students coordinated by RSA counselors at the school level. Pre-ETS sessions include career and employability skills workshops, guest speakers, field trips, community-based instruction, group activities and assistance with RSA referral process. All five required services are included.

Step 4: Identify the amount of reserve funds that will be necessary to provide the required pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities.

- A. Identify the number of students with disabilities that DCRSA is currently providing pre-employment transition services to:

SY 2016-17: 558 (284 DCPS + 247 DCPCS)

284 DCPS students were referred to RSA; 199 DCPS students participated in work-based learning experiences

197 DCPCS students were referred to RSA; 247 DCPCS students participated in Pre-ETS activities; 49 DCPCS students participated in work-based learning experiences

2017-18 SY: 600 (400 DCPS + 200 DCPCS)

Pre-ETS Program and Number of Participants

Project SEARCH (DCPS)

SY 2016-17: 9

SY 2017-18: 12

Workforce Development Center @ River Terrace

SY 2016-17: 37

SY 2017-18: 45

CVS Externship Program

SY 2016-17: 41 (28 DCPS and 13 DCPCS)

SY 2017-18: 60 (30 DCPS and 30 DCPCS)

CEO Competitive Employment Opportunities Mentoring Program (DCPS)
 SY 2016-17: 40
 SY 2017-18: 70

CPA Career Prep Academy Program (DCPCS)
 SY 2016-17: n/a
 SY 2017-18: 15

High School Internship Program (DCPCS) / General Exploration Internship Program (DCPS)
 SY 2016-17: 88 (67 DCPS and 21 DCPCS)
 SY 2017-18: 350 (200 DCPS and 150 DCPCS)

Alternate Spring Break Program (DCPCS)
 SY 2016-17: 24
 SY 2017-18: 30

- B. Determine the average cost per student that DCRSA spent to provide pre-employment transition services.

SY16 – 17: \$2.4 Mil/558 students = **\$4,081 / student**

- C. Project the number or increased number of students with disabilities that DCRSA thinks they will be able to provide pre-employment transition services in fiscal year 2017/18 based on all of the way that they provide pre-employment transition services:

DCRSA projects that they will be able to serve 600 students with disabilities in 2017-18.

- D. Project the average cost per student to that it will cost DCRSA to provide pre-ETS this year.

SY17 – 18: \$2.4 Mil/600 students = **\$4,000 / student**

- E. Determine the cost of coordination services for the year

DCRSA does not separate coordination services out from other pre-employment transition services in their projection.

- F. Add the amount DCRSA projects to spend on pre-ETS based on the per-client cost they project and the number of clients they project to serve. Add that number to your coordination costs, subtract that total from the minimum 15% required reserve amount and the remainder is the minimum amount DCRSA has to spend on authorized activities for the year.

Projected expenditure = 600 students x \$4,000 average cost per student = \$2,400,000.

Reserve amount = 15% of \$16,116,707 = **\$2,417,506**

DCRSA projects that their entire 15% will be spent on the five required pre-employment transition services. Any funds they expend on authorized activities will be above and beyond the 15% reserve requirement.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

Partner survey: Barriers to Employment for Youth in Transition

Respondents were asked if the barriers to achieving the employment goals for youth in transition were different from the overall population of persons with disabilities. Of the 23 partner respondents, 52% (n = 12) indicated that the barriers to achieving employment goals were different for youth in transition. Respondents were then asked to indicate the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition from a list of 20 barriers. Table 44 lists the barriers along with the number of times each of the barriers was mentioned as one of the top three barriers for youth in transition by partner survey respondents. Only those barriers that were chosen as least twice are included in the table.

Table 44

Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals for Youth in Transition

Top three barriers to achieving employment goals - Youth in Transition	Times identified as a barrier (n)
Not having job skills	10
Not having education or training	8
Poor social skills	5
Little or no work experience	3
Not having job search skills	3
Other transportation issues	3
Not enough jobs available	2
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	2
Housing issues	2

The respondents from partner agencies chose not having job skills, not having education or training and poor social skills as the top three barriers to youth in transition achieving their employment goals.

Partner survey: Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services for Youth in Transition

Partner survey respondents were asked if the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by youth in transition were different from the general population of persons with disabilities. Of the 24 respondents, 38% (n = 9) indicated that the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by youth in transition were different from the general population of persons with disabilities. These respondents were then asked to indicate the top three reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by transition-aged youth. Table 45 lists the reasons along with the number of times each was mentioned as one of the top three barriers to access for youth in transition.

Table 45

Difficulties Accessing DCRSA Services for Youth in Transition.

Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services for Youth in Transition	Times identified as a Barrier (n)
Inadequate assessment services	4
Slow service delivery	4
DCRSA staff are not responsive to communication from clients or potential clients	4
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment	2
Difficulties completing the application	2

Inadequate assessment services, slow service delivery and unresponsive staff were cited the most frequently as the top; three barriers to accessing DCRSA services for youth in transition. These findings are consistent with the other data gathering methods.

Staff survey: Barriers to Employment for Youth in Transition

Staff respondents were asked if the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition were different from the overall population of persons with disabilities. Of the 19 staff respondents, 53% (n = 10) indicated that the barriers to achieving employment goals were different for youth in transition. Respondents were then asked to indicate the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition from a list of 20 barriers. Table 46 lists the barriers along with the number of times each of the barriers was mentioned as one of the top three barriers for youth in transition by staff survey respondents. Only barriers chosen at least twice are included in the table.

Table 46

Top Three Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals for Youth in Transition

Top three barriers to achieving employment goals - Youth in Transition	Times identified as a barrier (n)
Poor social skills	6

Not having education or training	5
Not having job skills	4
Convictions for criminal offenses	3
Language barriers	3
Not enough jobs available	3
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	2
Disability-related transportation issues	2
Not having disability-related accommodations	2
Substance abuse issues	2

Staff respondents identified not having job skills, education or training and poor social skills as the most common top three barriers to achieving employment goals for transition-age youth. These identified barriers are consistent with the partner survey results.

Staff survey: Barriers to Accessing (agency) Services for Youth in Transition

Staff survey respondents were asked if the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by youth in transition were different from the general population of persons with disabilities. Of the 18 respondents, 28% (n = 5) indicated that the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by youth in transition were different from the general population of persons with disabilities. These respondents were then asked to indicate the top three reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by transition-aged youth. Table 47 lists the reasons along with the number of times each was mentioned as one of the top three barriers to access for youth in transition. The table includes those barriers that had been chosen at least two times.

Table 47

Difficulties Accessing DCRSA Services for Youth in Transition.

Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services - Youth in Transition	Times Identified as a Barrier (n)
Difficulties completing the application	3
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment	3
Slow service delivery	2
Inadequate assessment services	2

DCRSA staff identified challenges with completing the application and IPE process as the most common top three barriers to accessing services, followed by slow service delivery and inadequate assessment services. These findings, although based on a very small sample size, reinforce the recommendation that DCRSA consider more effective and engaging ways to interact with youth. Traditional VR processes may need to be modified and utilize progressive technology and platforms to help young people navigate through the VR process.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The following themes were recurring from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the needs of youth with disabilities in transition:

- DCRSA increased its transition services to two units. This increase illustrates the focus that the agency has placed on youth and reflects the emphasis in WIOA;
- Several individuals interviewed for this report expressed concern that the focus on pre-employment transition services may have overshadowed transition services as a whole;
- Recurring needs that emerged for youth in the District included job search skills, literacy, job training, soft skills, and assistance understanding the world of work;
- A history of substance abuse is common among the youth that are served by DCRSA. This history impairs the youth's ability to obtain employment and their motivation to go to work, which makes obtaining and retaining employment difficult;
- Most youth that come to DCRSA do not have any work experience, so they need to be exposed to what is required in the work place;
- A number of individuals indicated that the youth they are serving have not developed a good work ethic. They do not understand what is required in terms of paying attention at work and staying on task. Youth were characterized as having low resiliency and tolerance for difficult work.
- One of the challenges that was cited frequently related to transition-age youth was the loss of contact once they exit the school system.
- Understanding and applying appropriate social interaction was the most frequently cited soft skills need;
- The addition of transition services as a core service for the Centers for Independent Living has resulted in DCRSA and the CILs in the District partnering more effectively. The CIL transition staff go into the schools and provide training in self-advocacy for students with disabilities;

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The following recurring themes emerged across all of the focus groups completed in The District for all groups as they relate to the needs of youth with disabilities in transition:

- DCRSA consistently received high praise from focus group participants regarding their approach and efforts in serving transition-age youth. Their partnership with DC public schools was repeatedly mentioned as a strength and their efforts to serve the numerous charter schools in the District was commended. Some comments received in this area are cited below:

DCRSA has invested a lot of time and energy in establishing strong relationships with the DC public schools. They are working with the right people in DCPS and it is paying off.

DCRSA staff in their transition units are younger and more in tune with youth. Their morale is high and it is paying off.

The internship programs are very promising. They are fairly recent, but some students are already getting employed.

DCRSA is working to strengthen the relationships with independent, private and charter schools. They are doing a very good job there.

- The need for skills training, soft skill development, and work experience for youth were mentioned frequently by participants in the focus groups;
- Greater communication with parents was a recurring theme;
- Several focus group participants indicated a need to have options to college training for youth. Career-technical training and other short-term vocational training programs were mentioned as viable options for transitioning youth. A representative statement in this area is quoted below:

College is not for everyone. There needs to be realistic goals for youth that may not do well in college, like vocational training that will result in a good job.

- The need to reach students with blindness and vision impairments prior to graduation was cited by some participants. Concern was expressed about their ability to successfully transition to postsecondary education or work without early exposure to assistive technology or work experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations are offered to DCRSA based on the results of the research in the **Needs of Youth with Disabilities in Transition** area:

- The transition population represents a group that can greatly benefit from the pursuit of postsecondary education and increase the quality and pay of employment that they obtain in the future. Counselors should ensure that they are having in-depth discussions with transition-age youth about higher education opportunities and that they are exploring the possibility of helping those youth obtain part-time jobs while they go to school. Wherever appropriate, counselors should be encouraging youth to set their sights high and strive for in-demand, career-level positions. This is consistent with the Rehabilitation Act as amended by WIOA, and fully supports the new common performance measures in WIOA. In order to full realize this potential for youth, DCRSA will need to ensure that they are identifying “504” students in addition to those students being served by Special Education. These students need to receive encouragement to apply for DCRSA services and DCRSA counselors should meet them at their school sites whenever possible.
- DCRSA needs to work with schools and CRPs to develop more work-based learning sites. Work experience helps to meet numerous needs found in transition-age youth as it relates to employment, including soft and hard skill development, establishing a good work ethic, and simply understanding what is required in the work force.
- The development of soft skills early in the youth’s life was stressed repeatedly by participants. DCRSA should ensure that this pre-employment transition service is available and provided in as many formats as possible to ensure that youth have been adequately trained. The earlier this can be provided in high school, the better.
- The transition focus since the passage of WIOA has understandably been on providing pre-employment transition services. However, it will be important for DCRSA to be sure that they do not lose sight of transition overall in their effort to implement pre-employment transition services. It will be important for the organization to ensure that their transition staff are focused on ensuring a seamless transition to postsecondary education and employment as well as on whether they expend the reserve requirement.
- DCRSA should continue to examine ways to engage youth in the VR progress by utilizing technology and social media. There has been considerable progress in this area in the last few years by DCRSA, but challenges with the VR process and DCRSA responsiveness continue to emerge. The organization should try and identify ways to communicate with youth using platforms that they are comfortable with and adept at using.

SECTION 5

**NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED THROUGH
OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**

The following information was gathered during this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system. Throughout this section, the term American Job Center (AJC) is used to refer to the sites where Title I and III WIOA services are provided.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system:

- *The Workforce Development System partners have been making strides in working together to implement WIOA, but there is still progress that needs to be made;*
- *The American Job Centers still struggle to effectively serve individuals with disabilities in the District;*
- *The staff at the American Job Centers need to be continuously trained in how to effectively work with individuals with disabilities; and*
- *The “No Wrong Door” program represents a positive attempt and example to integrate service delivery systems and organizations serving individuals with disabilities in the District.*

***NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO THE
NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED THROUGH THE WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN WASHINGTON DC***

The project team examined the number of referrals that were identified in the case management system as coming from the Department of Employment Services and the American Job Centers during the three-year period of this study. Table 48 contains this information.

Table 48
Referrals to DCRSA from DOES

Referral Source	2014	2015	2016
One-Stop Career Center	14	14	0
DOES - all sites	1	44	69

The data indicates that referrals from the Title I and Title III programs increased over the three-years of this study. It would be helpful if there were a formal way to track services provided by DOES to DCRSA consumers in order to track shared cases where planning and service provision have been provided by both entities.

SURVEY RESULT BY TYPE:

Individual Survey – American Job Center Usage and Results:

The individual survey utilized for this assessment asked respondents a series of questions related to their usage of and experience with the American Job Centers. The first question asks whether respondents had ever tried to use the services of the AJCs. There were 209 responses to this question, with 38% (n=80) indicating yes.

The next question asked the 80 respondents who had used the AJCs in the District if they experienced any issues with accessibility. There were ten positive responses to this question. All positive respondents were asked to describe what their accessibility issues were. The majority of the responses had to do with poor customer service as opposed to physical accessibility, but there were two comments related to the walking distance to get to the AJC and the lack of braille signage. Respondents were asked about programmatic access at the AJC. A total of 17 respondents (20.5%) indicated that they had difficulty accessing the programs at the AJC, and these comments were also related to negative experiences the individuals had interacting with AJC staff, not related to lack of screen readers or other TA.

Respondents were asked a series of questions about training they may have been seeking or received at the AJC. Nearly 30% of 85 respondents indicated yes to this question. The next question asked if those who were seeking training received the training, and 17, or 65% said yes. The next question asked if the training received from the AJC resulted in employment. There were seven positive responses to this question, or 27% of those that received training obtained employment as a result of that training.

The next two questions in this area ask if respondents went to the AJC to get a job and if so, whether they received help obtaining employment. Results indicate that 81% of respondents went to the AJC to get a job, and 24% (n=16) indicated that they actually obtained employment.

The final question in the series asks respondents to rate the helpfulness of the staff at the AJC. Table 49 contains the results of this question:

Table 49

Helpfulness Rating of AJC Staff

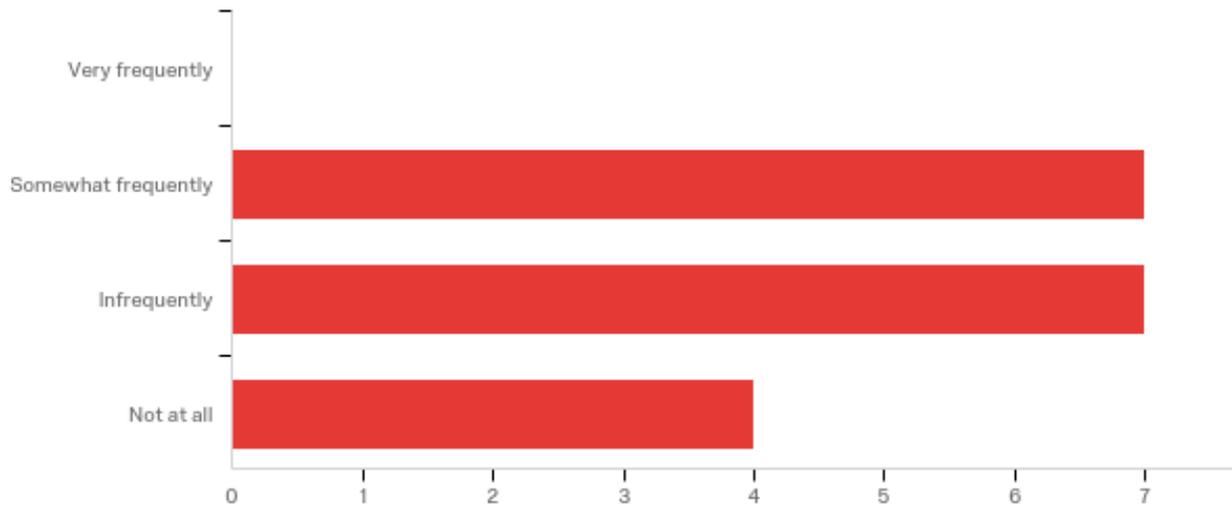
Helpfulness of Staff at the AJC	Number	Percent
Very helpful	21	25.6%
Somewhat helpful	33	40.2%
Not helpful	28	34.2%

Approximately one-quarter of individuals found the AJC staff to be very helpful, while 40% found them to be somewhat helpful and 34% rated the staff as not helpful.

Staff Survey Results – American Job Centers

DCRSA staff members were asked a series of questions regarding their use and assessment of the AJCs in the District. The first question asked staff to identify how frequently they interact with the AJCs. Figure 1 below includes the results of this question.

Figure 1
Frequency of Interaction with AJC Staff

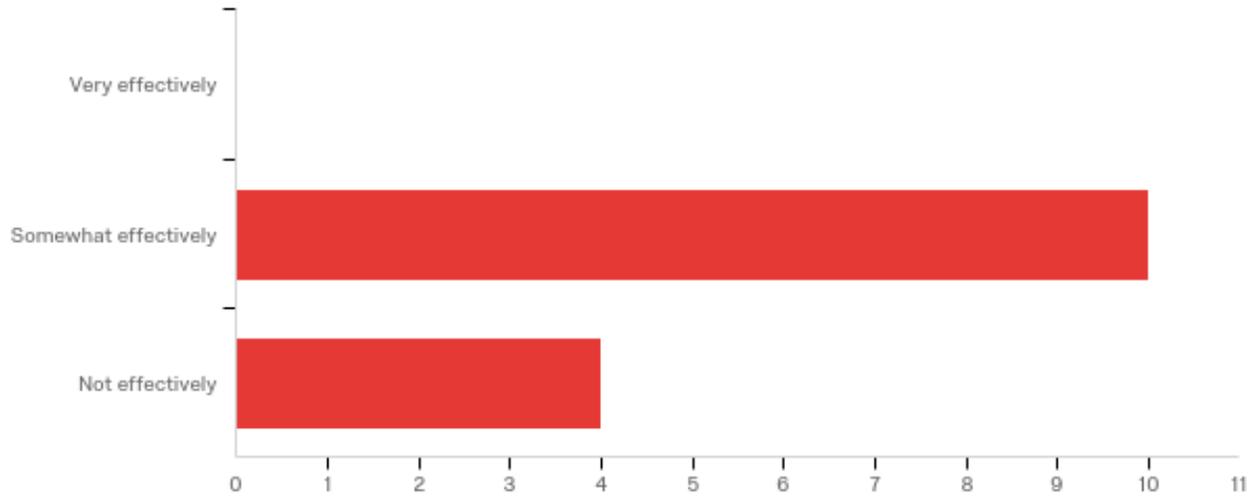


#	Answer	%	Count
1	Very frequently	0.00%	0
2	Somewhat frequently	38.89%	7
3	Infrequently	38.89%	7
4	Not at all	22.22%	4
	Total	100%	18

Slightly over 60% of the respondents indicated that they do not interact with AJC staff with any frequency, and no respondents indicated a very frequent interaction process.

The next question in this series asked staff to evaluate the effectiveness of the AJCs in serving individuals with disabilities. Figure 2 below contains the results of this question that was answered by 14 staff:

Figure 2
Effectiveness of AJCs

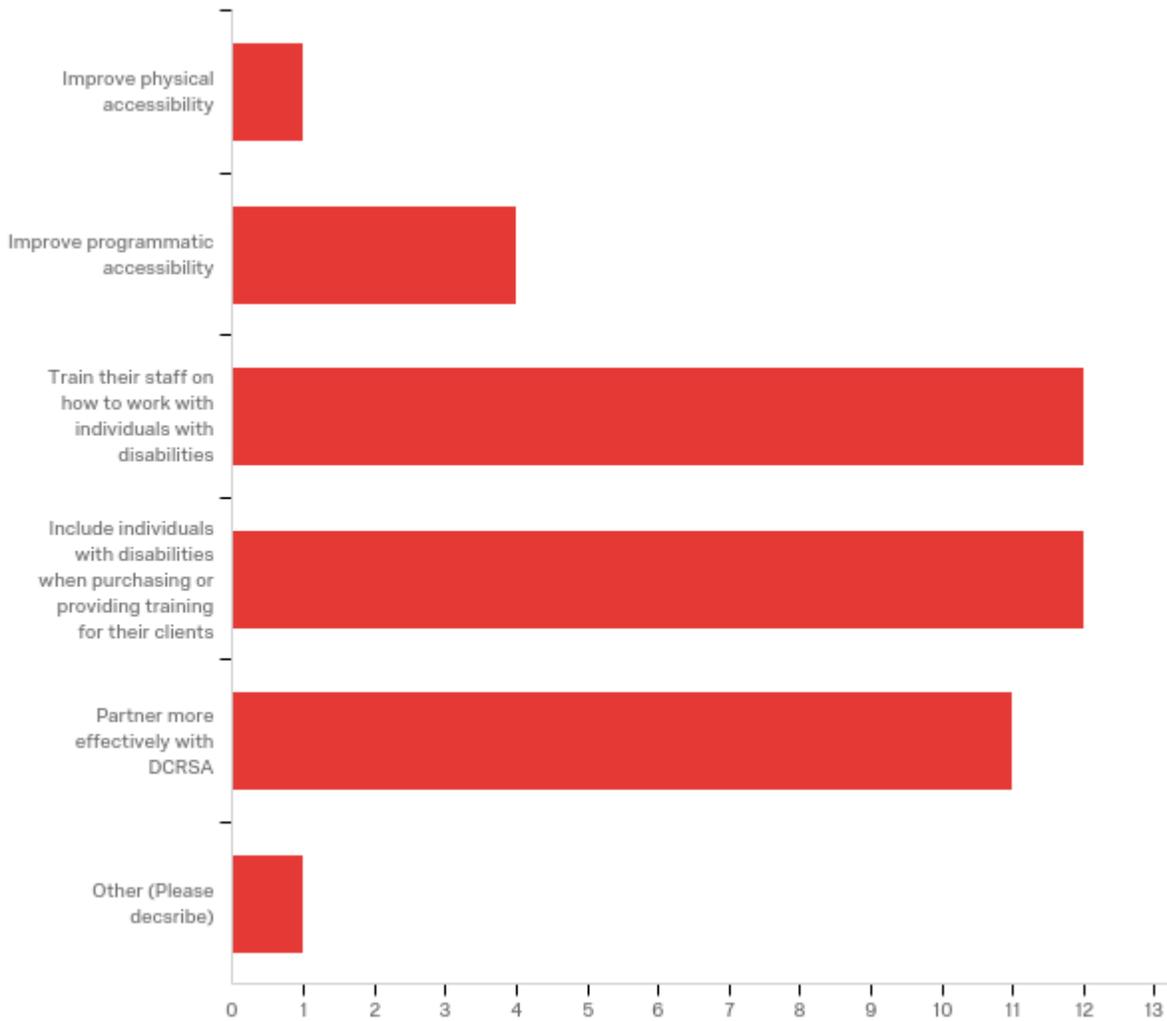


#	Answer	%	Count
1	Very effectively	0.00%	0
2	Somewhat effectively	71.43%	10
3	Not effectively	28.57%	4
	Total	100%	14

There were no staff that found the AJCs very effective in serving individuals with disabilities, but 71% found them to be somewhat effective, which represents a more optimistic picture than emerged from the interviews or focus groups.

The final question in this series asked DCRSA staff to identify what AJC staff could do to improve services to individuals with disabilities. The staff respondents were given a list of six options and asked to check all that apply. The results are contained in Figure 4 below:

Figure 4
Improvement of Services



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Improve physical accessibility	2.44%	1
2	Improve programmatic accessibility	9.76%	4
3	Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities	29.27%	12
4	Include individuals with disabilities when purchasing or providing training for their clients	29.27%	12
5	Partner more effectively with DCRSA	26.83%	11
6	Other (Please describe)	2.44%	1
	Total	100%	41

The need for AJCs to train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities, including when purchasing training, and more effectively partnering with DCRSA were cited by more than a quarter of all staff respondents. These changes are consistent with recommendations made in this section based on feedback from other data gathering methods.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The following information was gathered from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System:

- The AJCs in the District were frequently characterized as continuing to struggle to effectively serve individuals with disabilities. Although DCRSA staff are embedded in the AJCs throughout the District, there continues to be challenges for individuals with disabilities to receive equitable services and to have full programmatic access. The lack of access is especially prevalent for deaf individuals as the AJCs do not have interpreters;
- Several DDS agencies are participating in a “No Wrong Door” program that seeks to integrate different agencies responsible for long-term care and supports and to streamline the access to and delivery of those services. This program was mentioned by several participants as a positive example of agencies trying to integrate and align services and systems to improve services to individuals with disabilities in the District. Several participants expressed hope that this type of program could be replicated for the core Workforce partners if it is successful.
- DCRSA works closely with the Department of Employment Services (DOES) in their summer youth program that provides work experiences for young people throughout the District;
- Shared funding of cases between DCRSA and the AJCs remains an infrequent occurrence, and many individuals indicated that they are unaware of any internal process to track when this occurs;
- The need to cross-train staff at the AJCs remains a frequently cited need;
- DOES was frequently characterized as lacking in youth service provision outside of the summer youth program.

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following recurring themes emerged across all of the focus groups completed in the District for all groups as they relate to the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System:

- The relationship between DCRSA and DOES was frequently characterized as good or very good by focus group participants. The two organizations communicate frequently and DCRSA work onsite in the AJCs;
- The effectiveness of the AJCs in working with individuals with disabilities was still in need of improvement according to many participants;
- The turnover of staff at the AJCs was cited as problematic for continuity and results in a need for frequent and regular training in how to work effectively with individuals with disabilities;
- The placement of AJCs in the different communities in DC was seen as a strength by individuals with disabilities. The immediate access was a benefit, but the receipt of services was not consistent;
- The job fairs that are held by the AJCs were cited as helpful to job seekers, but positive results for individuals with disabilities was infrequent.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations are offered to DCRSA based on the results of the research in the **Needs of Individuals with Disabilities served through other Components of the Statewide Workforce Development System** area:

- The need for cross-training among DCRSA and the other core partners remains an ongoing recommendation. The AJC staff, due to regular and frequent turnover, need ongoing training on DCRSA processes and requirements. This is true for DCRSA staff regarding Adult Education as well. In addition, AJC staff need to receive training on how to use the assistive technology that they have at their sites. The technology is there in many cases, but the staff turnover results in the new employees being unable to operate the technology properly.
- DCRSA and DOES should meet to identify ways that both programs can provide youth services in partnership and share resources to improve transition services to youth in the District.

- The relationship between Adult Education and Family Literacy and DCRSA should be strengthened through formal partnerships and shared planning. Although it was widely reported that DCRSA counselors use Adult Ed to help their consumers to get their GEDs, many were not aware that Adult Ed is a core partner under WIOA. The opportunities for developing and growing the relationship between the two agencies are high and fully supported by WIOA. This partnership is especially important in the District, where literacy was frequently mentioned as need for DCRSA consumers.
- DCRSA and DOES should work to ensure that individuals with disabilities are actively targeted for training and employment opportunities available through the AJCs or as a result of job fairs. Customized training opportunities that target a percentage of slots for individuals with disabilities remains a good option for ensuring equal access to Title I training programs and facilitates the partnership with DCRSA.

SECTION 6 NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN THE DISTRICT

Section 6 identifies the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs in the District that serve individuals with disabilities. It is important for the reader to understand that the development of a fully functioning CRP requires a considerable commitment of resources and considerable risk for an organization or individual. All findings and recommendations articulated here should be read with this understanding.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following themes emerged in the area of the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with disabilities in the District:

- *There is a need to improve the quality of services provided by CRPs, especially job placement;*
- *There is a need to increase accountability for service providers;*
- *There is a need to develop services providers for individuals with sensory impairments; and*
- *There is a need to further develop customized employment as an employment outcome for DCRSA consumers.*

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

Partner survey: Services Readily Available to Individuals with Disabilities

Respondents were provided with a list and asked to identify which of the services listed were readily available to individuals with disabilities who were served by DCRSA. Table 50 summarizes the responses of the 20 partner survey respondents.

Table 50
Services readily available to individuals with disabilities.

Services Readily Available	% Indicating Available
Job training services	87.5
Job search services	83.3
Health insurance	75.0
Income assistance	58.3
Assistive technology	50.0

Mental health treatment	50.0
Vehicle modification assistance	45.8
Housing	45.8
Substance abuse treatment	45.8
Personal care attendant	41.7
Benefit planning assistance	37.5
Medical treatment	37.5
Other transportation assistance	16.7

The community partner respondents indicated that job training and job search services were the most readily available services in the District to individuals with disabilities.

Partner survey respondents were asked if the network of rehabilitation service providers in the District was able to meet DCRSA consumers' vocational rehabilitation service needs. There were 35 responses to this question, and 18 partners respond "yes" to this question, while 17 responded no. Those who indicated that the network of rehabilitation service providers was not able to meet DCRSA consumers' vocational rehabilitation service needs were asked to identify the service needs that the network of providers was unable to meet. Table 51 identifies the service areas that partner respondents indicated were not met by providers.

Table 51
Services Needs not met by Providers

Services Needs that Providers are Unable to Meet	Number indicating the need is not met
Job search services	7
Income assistance	6
Housing	6
Employment preparation services	5
Job development and placement services	5
Assistive technology	5
Vehicle modification assistance	5
Benefit planning assistance	5
Substance abuse treatment	4
Transportation assistance	4
Mental health treatment	3
Personal care attendant	3
Medical treatment	2

There were several service needs that were identified as unmet by partners including job search services, income assistance, and housing. These same respondents were provided with a list of responses and asked to identify the primary reasons that vocational rehabilitation service

providers were unable to meet consumers' service needs. Table 52 summarizes the responses to this question.

Table 52

Reasons providers are unable to meet consumers' needs.

Reasons Provider are Unable to Meet Consumers' Needs	n
Not enough providers available in area	9
Low quality of provider services	6
Client barriers prevent successful interactions with providers	5
Other (please describe)	5

The most commonly identified reasons that the network of rehabilitation service providers was unable to meet consumers' vocational rehabilitation services needs were not enough providers in the area and low quality of service providers. Client barriers preventing successful interactions with providers was noted by five respondents.

Staff Survey: Services Readily Available to Individuals with Disabilities

Respondents were provided with a list and asked to identify which of the services listed were readily available to individuals with disabilities who were served by DCRSA. Staff respondents indicated that job search and transportation were the most readily available services, while housing and income assistance were the least available.

Staff survey respondents were asked if the network of rehabilitation service providers in the District was able to meet DCRSA consumers' vocational rehabilitation service needs. There were 23 responses to this question and 65% (n = 15) indicated that the network of service providers was not able to meet DCRSA consumers' needs. This result is 20% higher than the partner survey results. Those who indicated that the network of rehabilitation service providers was not able to meet DCRSA consumers' vocational rehabilitation service needs were asked to identify the service needs that the network of providers was unable to meet. Table 53 identifies the results of this question.

Table 53

Services Providers are Unable to Meet – Staff Survey

Services Needs that Providers are Unable to Meet	Number indicating the need is not met
Job development and placement services	9
Housing	8
Employment preparation services	7
Job search services	6
Income assistance	5

Substance abuse treatment	5
Transportation assistance	4
Assistive technology	3
Vehicle modification assistance	3
Mental health treatment	3
Medical treatment	3
Benefit planning assistance	1
Personal care attendant	1

Staff respondents indicated that job development and placement, housing, and employment preparation services were not able to be met by service providers. Housing remains a concern for many DCRSA consumers and has been reported as a challenge for several assessments. The concern expressed with job development and placement services is not there is a lack of providers, but that the outcomes are low by the existing providers.

Staff were asked to identify the primary reasons that vocational rehabilitation service providers were unable to meet consumers' service needs. Table 54 summarizes the responses to this question.

Table 54

Reasons providers are unable to meet consumers' needs.

Reasons Provider are Unable to Meet Consumers' Needs	N
Low quality of provider services	11
Low levels of accountability for poor performance by vendors	9
Vendor staffing shortages	8
Not enough providers available in area	6
Client barriers prevent successful interactions with providers	5
Consumers are not prepared to enter their designated occupation	5
Other (please describe)	5
Low rates paid for services	2

The low quality of vendor services, lack of accountability and vendor staffing shortages were all cited as the most common reason that DCRSA felt that providers were unable to meet consumers' needs. These findings are consistent with other data gathering methods and form the foundation for the recommendations made in this section.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The following themes were recurring from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with disabilities in the District:

- Several individuals indicated that the new requirement to be a certified business enterprise (CBE) in order to receive government contracts for services has affected the number of available service providers in the District. Any business outside of the District must subcontract with a DC-based business in order to provide services through DCRSA. This law has affected medical services to DCRSA clients as many of the doctors that DCRSA worked with in the past are not eligible to become a CBE because their business is not in the District;
- The need for a CBE has also adversely affected the speed of service development and delivery in the District. When a subcontract must be set up with a CBE, this impacts the time it takes to develop a needed service.
- The lack of performance in terms of employment outcomes by providers was universally cited as a concern. Although there are many referrals to CRPs for job placement, the actual outcomes are very low, often in the low teens as a percentage. There appears to be confusion and misunderstanding about the fee structure for placement and how this potentially affects placement.
- There was a need cited for customized employment as a service for individuals with the most significant disabilities. DCRSA is developing training for this service that will be provided to their staff and CRP staff as part of the intensive TA agreement they are developing with the WINTAC and Y-TAC.
- The quality of the documentation and reports submitted by service providers was consistently characterized as lacking and of poor quality. Numerous individuals indicated that providers need to be held accountable for the quality of their work;
- DCRSA has instituted changes and implemented systems to help ensure that providers are accountable for their work. They have a comprehensive quality assurance system with evaluation criteria, and they have improved reporting by allowing HCA providers to have access to non-confidential portions of client case files to improve reporting of progress;
- The need for a vendor report card was cited by several individuals. DCRSA has been working on such as system for a long time, but it has not been deployed to date;
- There was a need for CRPs that provide vocational assessment services to transition-age youth;

- A need for more Spanish speaking providers was cited by several participants;
- There is a need for providers of services to individuals that are blind, including job placement and assistive technology;
- A need for service providers for the deaf was cited by several individuals. There is only one supported employment provider that works with deaf consumers in the District. In addition, there is no language and skill development program for the deaf in the District. Literacy levels were cited as a common need for deaf consumers, so the lack of language skills program adversely impacts the ability of deaf individuals to prepare for and obtain high-paying jobs. It was reported by participants that there are currently no service providers that use sign language;

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The following recurring themes emerged across all of the focus groups completed in the District for all groups as they relate to the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with disabilities in the District:

Quality of CRP services: Several participants expressed concern about the lack of employment outcomes produced by HCA providers in the District. There were varying conclusions as to why the outcomes were so low ranging from inadequately prepared consumers to a flawed payment system.

Providers for consumers with sensory impairments: Numerous focus group participants noted that there was a need for vocational service providers that work with individuals that are deaf and individuals that are blind. It was reported that there are no providers that use sign language, and the level of knowledge about AT for the blind is limited. While there are IL programs that serve individuals with blindness that are effective, the need for job placement and other vocational services was a recurring theme.

Partnership with DCRSA: The need for DCRSA and HCA providers to work closely together and effectively communicate was a recurring theme. Several providers indicated that they would like to engage in regular and consistent communication with DCRSA about expectations, policy, procedures, reporting and problem resolution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to DCRSA based on the results of the research in the **Need to Establish, Develop or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in the District** area:

- Provide customized employment training for Human Care Agreement providers and DCRSA staff as part of the project with the WINTAC. The customized employment training will develop the capacity of DCRSA staff and the CRP network throughout the District to provide CE to DCRSA consumers;
- DCRSA is encouraged to expedite the development and use of the vendor report card system they have been working on for several years;
- Although the need for a CBE is problematic, DCRSA should recruit providers for services to the blind and deaf, especially job placement and supported employment;
- Whenever possible, DCRSA should invite providers to be a part of any training provided to staff;
- DCRSA should work in partnership with Deaf Reach to determine if they are able to provide a communication and language skills program for deaf consumers. If not, the agency should recruit for this service;
- DCRSA should ensure that the payment structure for job development and placement is shared widely and frequently with staff to help reduce the confusion about how vendors are paid for placement services;
- As a part of the review of the payment structure for job placement, DCRSA should consider establishing contracts that support consumers achieving the milestones contained in the common performance measures in WIOA. These would include payment for consumers that retain employment during the second and fourth quarter after exit from the VR program. Incentives might also be considered for high-paying jobs that exceed the median earnings of all clients;
- DCRSA should establish and maintain a communication network with the service providers in the District. There have been a few attempts at this over the past few years, but they have not been sustained and have consisted primarily of DCRSA conveying information, rather than a network of people coming together to share information and provide support to one another.

SECTION 7 NEEDS OF BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

The need for the VR program to engage with the business community and provide services to employers has been included as a common performance measure for the core partners in WIOA. WIOA has moved the discussion from whether or not VR programs should serve the business community to how well VR programs are serving this community. Consequently, it will be important for every VR program to do a self-assessment of how well they are serving employers. The project team is hopeful that this section of the report will be useful to DCRSA as they engage in the evaluation of how effectively they are providing services to employers.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of business and effectiveness in serving employers:

- *DC businesses have a need to receive assistance with recruiting and hiring qualified candidates with disabilities and DCRSA is seen as an important partner to provide this service;*
- *There are mixed opinions about whether the movement of the staff from the Business Relations Unit to the supervisory units improved service to business; and*
- *The businesses that participated in this study and that had worked with DCRSA were very pleased with the services they received.*

SURVEY RESULTS

Business Survey Responses

A link to an Internet-based survey was distributed by DCRSA staff to representatives of the business community. A total of 28 valid business surveys were completed and submitted during the survey period. Questions appearing on the business survey addressed five general areas. The first pertained to disability in the workplace, the second section addressed applicants with disabilities, the third pertained to employees with disabilities, the fourth section prompted respondents indicate their familiarity with DCRSA, and the fifth section asked respondents to share general demographic information regarding their businesses.

With respect to the “Disability in the Workplace” section of the survey, business respondents were presented with eight questions about whether their business needed help with a variety of concerns related to disability and employment. The questions were structured in a yes/no response format. Table 55 summarizes the results of the responses to the eight questions

according to the percentage of respondents who indicated a need for help with respect to the need or needs indicated in the question.

Table 55

Disability in the Workplace

Does your business need help	Yes (valid %)
Recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities?	92
Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment?	63
Obtaining information on the training programs available for workers with disabilities?	58
Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities?	57
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?	50
Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities?	50
Identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?	33
Understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Rehabilitation Act as amended?	25

The business respondents indicated that almost all of them (92%) need help recruiting job applicants with disabilities. This represents fertile ground for DCRSA's Business Services Representative or Employment Coordinators. In addition, there was a strong need expressed across multiple areas for training on disability. DCRSA may be able to meet this need by providing educational and/or training opportunities for businesses as a community service. This could lead to establishing partnerships that result in employment opportunities for clients in the future. It is important to know that businesses need and want this training.

Regarding assistance with applicants with disabilities, employers were asked to provide responses to six questions, each with a yes/no response format. Table 56 summarizes the results of the responses to the six questions according to the percentage of respondents who indicated a need for help with respect to the question.

Table 56

Applicants with Disabilities

Does your business need help	Yes (valid %)
Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?	89

Recruiting applicants with good work habits?	89
Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?	82
Assessing applicants' skills?	44
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?	44
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?	39

Business respondents overwhelming identified assistance with recruiting qualified applicants with disabilities that have good work habits and soft skills as the most pressing need.

With respect to employees with disabilities, business survey respondents were presented with a list of nine job-related challenges and asked to identify the top three barriers to job retention that they had experienced. Table 57 presents the percentage of business survey respondents who identified each challenge as among the top three barriers to job retention.

Table 57

Barriers to Job Retention

Top three barriers to job retention	Number of times chosen
Poor attendance	9
Slow work speed	8
Difficulty learning job skills	6
Physical health problems	5
Identifying effective accommodations	5
Poor social skills	4
Other (please describe)	4
Mental health concerns	4
Poor work stamina	2
Language barriers	1

Business respondents chose poor attendance the most frequently when asked to identify barriers to job retention for the individuals with disabilities they employed. Slow work speed and difficulty learning job skills were also frequently cited. The importance of showing up to work everyday and being dependable is one of the cornerstones of soft skills, so DCRSA should ensure that this is being taught for their work ready consumers.

Business survey respondents were asked to rate their knowledge of DCRSA and the services that DCRSA can provide to businesses using a three-point scale. Ten respondents selected "Very knowledgeable," 17 respondents selected "Somewhat knowledgeable", and one respondent selected "Little or no knowledge". Respondents were also asked if they had utilized any of the services that are provided to businesses by DCRSA. Nineteen respondents indicated

that they had utilized DCRSA business services while four respondents had not utilized DCRSA business services, and five said that they did not know if they had used DCRSA services.

Those who indicated that they had utilized DCRSA business services were provided with a list of 15 DCRSA business services and asked to identify the services that DCRSA provided to their business. Table 58 illustrates the number of times each service was identified by respondents.

Table 58
Business Services Utilized by Respondents

Which of the following services did DCRSA provide to your business?	n
Recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities?	18
Recruiting job applicants who meet the job qualifications?	13
Recruiting applicants with good work habits?	8
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities?	5
Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment?	5
Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?	5
Training in understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Rehabilitation Act as amended?	4
Assistance identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?	4
Assessing applicants' skills?	4
Obtaining training on different types of disabilities?	3
Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities?	3
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?	2
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?	1

The most commonly used services to business provided by DCRSA were all related to recruitment activities. Business respondents noted that recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities, recruiting job applicants who meet the job qualifications, and recruiting applicants with good work habits were the DCRSA services utilized most frequently.

Those who indicated that they had utilized business services (n=23) were presented with a five-point response scale (with responses ranging from “very satisfied” to “very dissatisfied”) and asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the services they received from DCRSA. Over 95% of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the services they received from DCRSA. These results are very impressive and the agency is to be commended for so effectively meeting the needs of the employers they work with.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The following information was gathered from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of Needs of Business and Effectiveness in Serving Employers:

- DCRSA’s Business Relations Unit (BRU) has undergone a significant change since the last assessment. The BRU is no longer a stand-alone unit. The Business Relations Specialist and Employment Coordinators that comprised the BRU are now embedded in the supervisory units of the organization. These employees work more directly with clients for job placement. Although they still outreach to employers to develop relationships, this is done primarily in the context of trying to connect a specific client to a job.
- There are conflicting desires for the role of the employees formerly in the BRU and now in the units. Some want them to do more employer outreach, while others want them to focus primarily on job development and placement. The need to clearly define the role of these individuals was a recurring theme.
- Prior to the dissolution of the BRU, there were employer roundtable events that were held regularly with local businesses. Although many individuals that were interviewed for this study understand the need to assign the former BRU staff to units, several individuals expressed a desire to see these roundtable events continue.
- Business leaders indicated that it is a challenge to find qualified candidates with disabilities for the jobs that are available. They indicated a willingness to hire, but there were limited referrals for openings;
- The members of the business community that interviewed for this study indicated that they prefer that an individual with disability disclose that they have a disability up front so that they can work on obtaining the needed accommodations for employment;
- The business representatives that had been connected with the BRU prior to its dissolution indicated that they used to communicate with DCRSA frequently through the DCRSA Business Rep representative. This communication has not continued since the BRU ended, and the lack of communication was described as a loss by the employers;

- DCRSA is beginning an internship program with the city to help get DCRSA consumers into city government employment. The program pays prevailing wage for the individual in a city government internship position that is likely to result in a vacancy, so when the vacancy happens, there will be a job for which the individual is qualified;

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The following recurring themes emerged from the focus groups regarding the needs of business and DCRSA's effectiveness in serving employers:

- DCRSA has established valuable partnerships with many local employers;
- The businesses in the District are generally unaware of DCRSA and the opportunities of hiring PWDs, which presents a good opportunity for the agency;
- There is a need to educate and create awareness of not only DCRSA but the scope of services in general;
- The District is undergoing a massive infrastructure development program that would mean a great many job opportunities. This is an opportunity for this agency to partners with city government and the workforce system to create jobs:
- There is a skills gap in that youth leaving high school either go to college or into entry-level jobs. Many youth are not aware of opportunities through trade schools. This scenario presents an opportunity of RSA to partner with trade schools and community college to develop accessible training opportunities;
- The summer youth program provides an important opportunity for youth to obtain exposure to the world of work and DCRSA is to be commended for their development of the internship program;
- Traditional operation cuts to large employers could present an opportunity for RSA to fill some employment needs through Customized Jobs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered based on the information gathered in **the Needs of Business and Effectiveness in Serving Employers** section:

- The role of the former employees of the BRU was unclear to several individuals and focus group participants interviewed for this study. It would be helpful for the role to be

clearly articulated for all staff. Whether the primary role is job development and placement, employer outreach and education/training, or a mixture of the two, confusion would be minimized by sharing the role among staff and partners.

- DCRSA should consider trying to find a way to sustain the employer roundtable events that were held prior to the dissolution to the BRU. These events were touted as an excellent form of outreach to employers and a valuable service to clients.
- DCRSA should engage in conversations with employers about the skills that are needed for the available in-demand occupations in the District. This will help ensure that consumers are engaging in training that is job-driven;
- DCRSA is encouraged to examine whether is a way that the existing Business Services Representatives or Employment Coordinators can establish the regular communication with employers that they established prior to the ending of the BRU. This was considered a valuable line of communication by the employers interviewed for this study, and an important recruiting method;
- DCRSA should ensure that their internal staff focused on business relations and job development attend the customized employment training when it is offered.

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive statewide needs assessment for the District of Columbia involved quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry to identify the needs of individuals with disabilities currently, formerly, or potentially served by DCRSA. The results of the CSNA indicate that individuals with disabilities in the District have multiple vocational rehabilitation needs that are met with varying degrees of success by the Workforce Development System. The CSNA includes an identification of needs for each of the focus areas as well as a summary of the findings and recommendations to more effectively meet the needs. It is the project team's hope that the information proves helpful and beneficial to DCRSA and their consumers.

Appendices

**Appendix A:
Key Informant Individual Interview Protocol**

1. Please identify your name, title, time with DCRSA and time in your current role.
2. Briefly describe your duties and service areas?

Overall Agency Performance

3. Regarding DCRSA's overall performance as an agency, how effectively is the organization fulfilling its mission of helping people with disabilities obtain employment?
 - A. How would you describe the changes, if any, that have occurred in the agency in the last three years?
 - B. What are the major challenges that DCRSA consumer's face in obtaining and retaining employment?
 - C. What are the major challenges that you face that impact your ability to help consumers obtain and retain employment?

MSD and SE

4. What are the needs of people with people with the most significant disabilities in the District and how effectively is DCRSA meeting those needs?
5. What disability types are the most in need and what are the challenges they face in obtaining and retaining employment?
6. Do you provide SE services? If so, please describe the model of SE services you use.
 - A. How long does job coaching typically last?
 - B. Who provides extended services
 - C. How many providers do you have and how effective are they?
 - D. What populations generally receive SE services?
7. Do you provide customized employment services to individuals with disabilities in the District? Please describe this service.
8. What would you recommend to improve services to individuals with the most significant disabilities?
9. What would you recommend to improve your SE program?

Unserved/Underserved Populations

10. What geographic areas/wards are underserved and why?
11. What racial/ethnic minority groups are underserved and why?
12. What are the rehabilitation needs of the minority populations that you serve?
13. What disability types are underserved and why?
14. How effective is DCRSA's outreach to these groups/areas and what can be done to improve outreach to them?
15. What do you recommend to improve service to these areas or populations?
16. Are there any other groups that are underserved, and if so, why do you think that is and what can be done to improve services to this group?

Transition

17. Please describe how transition services works in the District. Comment on:

- A. Partnerships with schools
 - B. Outreach and intake/referral/plan processes
 - C. Services provided
18. What are the greatest needs of transition-aged youth and how well are DCRSA and the schools meeting these needs?
 19. Are you involved in pre-employment transition services? If yes, please describe how this works in the District.
 20. Do you serve foster care youth or youth involved with the juvenile justice system?
 21. What can be done to improve youth and/or transition services in the District?

CRPs

22. How effective are the CRPs in the District?
23. What are the greatest challenges you face as a CRP, or in working with CRPs?
24. What needs to happen to improve or increase CRPs in the District?
25. Is there a need to develop CRPs to serve any specific population or geographic areas?

Workforce Development System

26. How well is the Workforce Development System in the District meeting the needs of people with disabilities? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the system?
27. What is the relationship like between DCRSA and America's Job Centers? Are DCRSA staff still out-stationed at the AJCs?
28. Are there shared-funding of cases between DCRSA and the AJCs?
29. What has to happen to improve the relationship between the two organizations? Has there been a noticeable improvement in the relationship over the last three years?
30. Do you work closely with Adult Education and Family Literacy? Please describe.
31. Are there other workforce agencies that serve people with disabilities in the District? If so, please identify them and the service they provide to your consumers as well as DCRSA's relationship with them.

Business Partnerships

32. Please describe the ways that DCRSA partners with businesses in the District to promote the employment of people with disabilities.
33. What can DCRSA do to improve business partnerships and to engage employers in recruiting and hiring people with disabilities?
34. What would you recommend that DCRSA do as an organization to maximize its effectiveness in fulfilling its mission and providing excellent customer service during the next three years?

Appendix B:
2017 DCRSA Individual Survey

Q1 District of Columbia Rehabilitation Services Administration Individual Survey The District of Columbia Rehabilitation Services Administration (DCRSA) is working collaboratively with the State Rehabilitation Council and staff at the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University in order to conduct an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities who live in the District of Columbia. The results of this needs assessment will inform the development of the DCRSA Unified State Plan for providing rehabilitation services and will help planners make decisions about programs and services for persons with disabilities. The following survey includes questions that ask you about the unmet, employment-related needs of persons with disabilities. We anticipate that it will take about 20 minutes of your time to complete the survey. If you prefer, you may ask a family member, a personal attendant, or a caregiver to complete the survey for you. If you are a family member, personal attendant or caregiver for a person with a disability and are responding on behalf of an individual with a disability, please answer the survey questions based upon your knowledge of the needs of the person with the disability. Your participation in this needs assessment is voluntary. If you decide to participate, your responses will be anonymous, that is, recorded without any identifying information that is linked to you. You will not be asked for your name anywhere in this survey. If you have any questions regarding this survey or if you would prefer to complete this survey in an alternate format, please contact Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address: ccompton@interwork.sdsu.edu

Q2 Which statement best describes your association with DCRSA? (Select one response)

- I have never used the services of DCRSA
- I am a current client of DCRSA
- I am a previous client of DCRSA, my case has been closed
- I am not familiar with DCRSA
- Other (please describe) _____

Q3 Please indicate whether you receive the following Social Security disability benefits (please check all that apply).

- I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income)
- I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance)
- I do not receive Social Security disability benefits
- I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits

Q4 Employment-Related Needs The next several questions ask you about employment-related needs that you may have.

Q5 Do you have the education or training to achieve your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q6 Do you have the job skills to achieve your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q7 Do you have the job search skills to achieve your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q8 Have you been prevented from achieving your employment goals because of prior convictions for criminal offenses?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q9 Do you have the language skills to achieve your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q10 Have you been prevented from achieving your employment goals because there were not enough jobs available?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q11 Have employers' perceptions of people with disabilities prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q12 Has a lack of assistive technology prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q13 Has a lack of disability-related personal care prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q14 Has a lack of disability-related transportation prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q15 Have other transportation issues, such as not having a reliable means to go to and from work, prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q16 Have mental health issues prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q17 Have substance abuse issues prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q18 Besides mental health and substance abuse issues, have any other health issues prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

- Yes (please describe) _____
- No
- I don't know

Q19 Have issues with childcare prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q20 Have issues with housing prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q21 Have concerns regarding the possible impact of employment on your Social Security benefits prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q22 Is there anything else that has prevented you from achieving your employment goals?

- Yes (please describe) _____
- No
- I don't know

Q23 What is the most significant barrier to achieving your employment goals?

Q24 Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services The next several questions ask you about barriers to accessing DCRSA services.

Q25 Has limited accessibility to DCRSA via public transportation made it difficult for you to access DCRSA services?

- Yes
- No
- I have never tried to access DCRSA services

Condition: I have never tried to acces... Is Selected. Skip To: The next set of questions asks you ab....

Q26 Have other challenges related to the physical location of the the DCRSA office made it difficult for you to access DCRSA services?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q27 Have DCRSA's hours of operation made it difficult for you to access DCRSA services?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q28 Has a lack of information about the services available from DCRSA made it difficult for you to access DCRSA services?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q29 Has a lack of disability-related accommodations made it difficult for you to access DCRSA services?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q30 Have language barriers made it difficult for you to access DCRSA services?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q31 Have difficulties scheduling meetings with your counselor made it difficult for you to access DCRSA services?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q32 Have other difficulties working with DCRSA staff made it difficult for you to access DCRSA services?

- Yes (please describe) _____
- No
- I don't know

Q33 Have difficulties completing the DCRSA application made it difficult for you to access DCRSA services?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q34 Have difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment made it difficult for you to access DCRSA services?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q35 Have you had any other challenges or barriers not already mentioned that have made it difficult for you to access DCRSA services?

- Yes (please describe) _____
- No
- I don't know

Q36 Where do you usually meet with your counselor?

- I usually meet with my counselor in my community
- I go to DCRSA's main office to meet with my counselor
- I don't have a DCRSA counselor
- I don't know

Q37 Please describe what has been positive about your work with DCRSA

Q38 What changes to DCRSA services might improve your experience with DCRSA and help you to achieve your employment goals?

Q39 The next set of questions asks you about your experience with the American Job Centers (formerly DC Works!).

Q40 Have you ever tried to use the services of American Job Centers (formerly DC Works!)?

- Yes
- No

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: Demographic Information.

Q41 Did you experience any difficulty with the physical accessibility of the building?

- Yes. If yes, please describe the difficulty you experienced _____
- No

Q42 Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the Center (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?

- Yes
- No

Q43 Did you go to the Center to get training?

- Yes
- No

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: Did you go to the Center to find a job?.

Q44 Did you get the training you were seeking?

- Yes
- No

Q45 Did the training result in employment?

- Yes
- No

Q46 Did you go to the Center to find a job?

- Yes
- No

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: Please describe your opinion of the h...

Q47 Did they help you find employment?

- Yes
- No

Q48 Please describe your opinion of the helpfulness of the staff at the Center.

- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Not helpful

Q49 Please describe your opinion of the value of the services at the Center.

- Very valuable
- Somewhat valuable
- Not valuable

Q50 Demographic Information

Q51 Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

Q52 In what year were you born

Q53 What is your race or ethnic group?

- African American/Black
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Caucasian/White
- Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- Other (please describe) _____
- I don't know

Q54 What Ward do you live in?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- Other (please describe) _____
- I don't know

Q55 Which of the following would you use to describe your primary disabling condition? (select one)

- Blindness or visual impairment
- Cognitive impairment
- Communication impairment
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness or hearing impairment
- Mental health impairment
- Mobility impairment
- Physical impairment
- Other (please describe) _____
- No impairment

Q56 If you have a secondary disabling condition, which of the following would you use to describe it? (select one) If you do not have a secondary disabling condition, please select "No impairment" below.

- Blindness or visual impairment
- Cognitive impairment
- Communication impairment
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness or hearing impairment
- Mental health impairment
- Mobility impairment
- Physical impairment
- Other (please describe) _____
- No impairment

Q57 Is there anything else you would like to add about DCRSA or its services?

Q58 This is the end of the survey! Your information and feedback is valuable to DCRSA, thank you for completing the survey. Please select the "Next Page" button below to submit your responses.

Appendix C
2017 DCRSA Partner Survey

Q1 District of Columbia Rehabilitation Services Administration Community Partner Survey The District of Columbia Rehabilitation Services Administration (DCRSA) is working collaboratively with the State Rehabilitation Council and staff at the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University in order to conduct an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities who live in the District of Columbia. The results of this needs assessment will inform the development of the DCRSA Unified State Plan for providing rehabilitation services and will help planners make decisions about programs and services for persons with disabilities. The following survey includes questions that ask you about the unmet, employment-related needs of persons with disabilities. You will also be asked about the type of work you do and whether you work with specific disability populations. We anticipate that it will take about 20 minutes of your time to complete the survey. Your participation in this needs assessment is voluntary. If you decide to participate, your responses will be anonymous; that is, recorded without any identifying information that is linked to you. You will not be asked for your name anywhere in this survey. If you have any questions regarding this survey or would like to request the survey in an alternate format, please contact Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address: ccompton@interwork.sdsu.edu

Q2 What type of organization do you work for?

- Community Rehabilitation Program
- Secondary school system
- Postsecondary school system
- Federal agency
- Local public agency
- Other private agency
- Center for Independent living
- Disability advocacy organization
- Individual service provider
- Other (please describe) _____

Q3 How long have you worked in the job that you have now?

Q4 Please indicate which client populations you work with on a regular basis (please check all that apply).

- Individuals with most significant disabilities
- Individuals that need supported employment services
- Individuals that are racial or ethnic minorities
- Individuals from unserved or underserved populations
- Transition-age youth (14 - 24)
- Individuals served by America's Job Centers (formerly referred to as DC Works! or One-Stops or Workforce Investment Act-funded programs)
- Other (please describe) _____

Q5 Which Ward(s) of the District do you provide services in (please check all that apply)?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- Not applicable

Q6 Please indicate which of the following services are readily available to individuals with disabilities in the District. By "readily available" we mean that services are available in the area to individuals with a range of disabilities (check all that apply).

- Employment preparation services
- Job search services
- Job development and placement services
- Job training
- Postsecondary education training
- Transportation assistance
- Vehicle modification
- Assistive technology
- Income assistance
- Housing assistance
- Mental health treatment
- Medical treatment
- Substance abuse treatment
- Personal care attendants
- Health insurance
- Benefits Planning
- Other (Please describe) _____

Q7 In your experience, is the network of rehabilitation service providers in the District of Columbia able to meet DCRSA consumers' vocational rehabilitation service needs?

- Yes
- No

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To Below is a list of potential reasons ...

Q8 What service needs are the network of rehabilitation service providers in the District of Columbia unable to meet? (Check all that apply)

- Employment preparation services
- Job search services
- Job development and placement services
- Job training
- Postsecondary education training
- Transportation assistance
- Vehicle modification
- Assistive technology
- Income assistance
- Housing assistance
- Mental health treatment
- Medical treatment
- Substance abuse treatment
- Personal care attendants
- Health insurance
- Benefits Planning
- Other (Please describe) _____

Q9 What are the primary reasons that vocational rehabilitation service providers are generally unable to meet consumers' service needs?

- Not enough providers available in area
- Low quality of provider services
- Client barriers prevent successful interactions with providers
- Other (please describe) _____

Q10 Below is a list of potential reasons that DCRSA consumers might find it difficult to achieve their employment goals. For each potential barrier, please indicate whether you believe that: It is

a barrier, and DCRSA services adequately address the barrierIt is a barrier, and DCRSA services do not adequately address the barrierIt is not a barrierYou do not know if it is a barrier

	Barrier, adequately addressed by DCRSA services	Barrier, NOT adequately addressed by DCRSA services	Not a barrier	Don't know
Not having education or training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not having job skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not having job search skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Convictions for criminal offenses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language barriers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor social skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not enough jobs available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not having disability-related accommodations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability-related transportation issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other transportation issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental health issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Substance abuse issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other health issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Childcare issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housing issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please describe)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11 What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) _____

Q12 Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers with the most significant disabilities different from the overall population of individuals with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Are the barriers to achieving employm...

Q13 What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers with the most significant disabilities (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) _____

Q14 Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition different from the overall population of individuals with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Are the barriers to achieving employm...

Q15 What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) _____

Q16 Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities different from the overall population of individuals with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Is there anything else we should know...

Q17 What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) _____

Q18 Is there anything else we should know about the primary barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers?

Q19 The next set of questions asks you about the difficulty that individuals with disabilities might have in accessing DCRSA services

Q20 What would you say are the top three reasons that people with disabilities find it difficult to access DCRSA services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of DCRSA via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the DCRSA office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- DCRSA staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- DCRSA staff are not responsive to communication from clients or potential clients
- Other (please describe) _____

Q21 Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by individuals with the most significant disabilities different from the general population of people with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Are the reasons for finding it diffic...

Q22 What would you say are the top three reasons that individuals with the most significant disabilities find it difficult to access DCRSA services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of DCRSA via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the DCRSA office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- DCRSA staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- DCRSA staff are not responsive to communication from clients or potential clients
- Other (please describe) _____

Q23 Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by youth in transition different from the general population of people with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Are the reasons for finding it diffic...

Q24 What would you say are the top three reasons that youth in transition find it difficult to access DCRSA services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of DCRSA via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the DCRSA office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- DCRSA staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- DCRSA staff are not responsive to communication from clients or potential clients
- Other (please describe) _____

Q25 Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities different from the general population of people with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Is there anything else we should know...

Q26 What would you say are the top three reasons that consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities find it difficult to access DCRSA services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of DCRSA via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the DCRSA office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate accessing assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- DCRSA staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- DCRSA staff are not responsive to communication from clients or potential clients
- Other (please describe) _____

Q27 Is there anything else we should know about why individuals with disabilities find it difficult to access DCRSA services?

Q28 What is the most important change that DCRSA could make to support consumers' efforts to achieve their employment goals?

Q29 What is the most important change that the network or rehabilitation service providers in the District of Columbia could make to support consumers' efforts to achieve their employment goals?

Q30 The next set of questions asks about your experience working with the American Job Centers (formerly known as DC Works!) in the District.

Q31 Have you ever worked with, or referred consumers to, the American Job Centers in the District?

- Yes
- No

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: Your feedback is valuable to us, and

Q32 How effectively do the American Job Centers in the District work with individuals with disabilities?

- Very effectively
- Somewhat effectively
- Not effectively

Q33 What would you recommend to improve the ability of the American Job Centers in the District to work with individuals with disabilities? (Check all that apply)

- Improve physical accessibility
- Improve programmatic accessibility
- Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities
- Include individuals with disabilities when the purchase or provide training for their clients
- Partner more effectively with DCSRA
- Other (Please describe) _____

Q34 Your feedback is valuable to us, and we would like to thank you for taking the time to complete the survey! Please select the "Next Page" button below to submit your responses.

Appendix D
2017 DCRSA Staff Survey

Q1 District of Columbia Rehabilitation Services Administration Staff Survey The District of Columbia Rehabilitation Services Administration (DCRSA) is working collaboratively with the State Rehabilitation Council and staff at the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University in order to conduct an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities who live in the District of Columbia. The results of this needs assessment will inform the development of the DCRSA State Plan for providing rehabilitation services and will help planners make decisions about programs and services for persons with disabilities. The following survey includes questions that ask you about the unmet, employment-related needs of persons with disabilities. You will also be asked about the type of work you do and whether you work with specific disability populations. We anticipate that it will take about 20 minutes of your time to complete the survey. Your participation in this needs assessment is voluntary. If you decide to participate, your responses will be anonymous; that is, recorded without any identifying information that is linked to you. You will not be asked for your name anywhere in this survey. If you have any questions regarding this survey or would like to request the survey in an alternate format, please contact Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address: ccompton@interwork.sdsu.edu

Q2 What is your job title?

Q3 How long have you worked in the job that you have now?

Q4 Please indicate which client populations you work with on a regular basis (please check all that apply).

- Individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Individuals that need supported employment services
- Individuals that are racial or ethnic minorities
- Individuals from unserved or underserved populations
- Transition-aged youth (14 - 24)
- Individuals served by America's Job Centers (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Workforce Investment Act-funded programs)

Q5 What Ward(s) of the District do you provide services in (please check all that apply)?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- Not applicable

Q6 Please indicate which of the following service are readily available to DCRSA consumers. By "readily available" we mean that services are available in the area to individuals with a range of disabilities (check all that apply).

- Employment preparation services
- Job search services
- Job development and placement services
- Job training
- Postsecondary education training
- Transportation assistance
- Vehicle modification assistance
- Assistive technology
- Income assistance
- Housing assistance
- Mental health treatment
- Medical treatment
- Substance abuse treatment
- Personal care attendants
- Health insurance
- Benefit planning assistance
- Other (please describe) _____

Q7 In your experience, are vendors able to meet DCRSA consumers' vocational rehabilitation service needs?

- Yes
- No

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To What services do you feel DC-RSA does...

Q8 What service needs are the network of rehabilitation service providers in the District of Columbia unable to meet? (Check all that apply)

- Employment preparation services
- Job search services
- Job development and placement services
- Job training
- Postsecondary education training
- Transportation assistance
- Vehicle modification assistance
- Assistive technology
- Income assistance
- Housing assistance
- Mental health treatment
- Medical treatment
- Substance abuse treatment
- Personal care attendants
- Health insurance
- Benefit planning assistance
- Other (please describe) _____

Q9 What are the primary reasons that vendors are generally unable to meet consumers' service needs?

- Not enough vendors available in area
- Low quality of vendor services
- Low rates paid for services
- Low levels of accountability for poor performance by vendors
- Client barriers prevent successful interactions with vendors
- Other (please describe) _____

Q10 What services do you feel DCRSA does the best job providing to its clients (either directly or through community partners)?

Q11 Below is a list of potential reasons that DCRSA consumers might find it difficult to achieve their employment goals. For each potential barrier, please indicate whether you believe that: It is

a barrier, and DCRSA services adequately address the barrierIt is a barrier, and DCRSA services do not adequately address the barrierIt is not a barrierYou do not know if it is a barrier

	Barrier, adequately addressed by DCRSA services	Barrier, NOT adequately addressed by DCRSA services	Not a barrier	Don't know
Not having education or training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not having job skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not having job search skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Convictions for criminal offenses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language barriers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor social skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not enough jobs available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not having disability-related accommodations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disability-related transportation issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other transportation issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental health issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Substance abuse issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other health issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Childcare issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housing issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please describe)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12 What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) _____

Q13 Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers with the most significant disabilities different from the overall population of individuals with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Are the barriers to achieving employm...

Q14 What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers with the most significant disabilities (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) _____

Q15 Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition different from the overall population of individuals with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Are the barriers to achieving employm...

Q16 What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) _____

Q17 Are the barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities different from the overall population of individuals with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Is there anything else we should know...

Q18 What would you say are the top three barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities (please select a maximum of three barriers to achieving employment goals)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe) _____

Q19 Is there anything else we should know about the primary barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers?

Q20 The next set of questions asks you about potential barriers to accessing DCRSA services for individuals with disabilities

Q21 What would you say are the top three reasons that people with disabilities find it difficult to access DCRSA services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of DCRSA via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the DCRSA office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- DCRSA staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- Other (please describe) _____

Q22 Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by individuals with the most significant disabilities different from the general population of people with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Are the reasons for finding it diffic...

Q23 What would you say are the top three reasons that individuals with the most significant disabilities find it difficult to access DCRSA services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of DCRSA via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the DCRSA office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- DCRSA staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- Other (please describe) _____

Q24 Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by youth in transition different from the general population of people with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Are the reasons for finding it diffic...

Q25 What would you say are the top three reasons that youth in transition find it difficult to access DCRSA services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of DCRSA via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the DCRSA office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- DCRSA staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- Other (please describe) _____

Q26 Are the reasons for finding it difficult to access DCRSA services by consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities different from the general population of people with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Is there anything else we should know...

Q27 What would you say are the top three reasons that consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities find it difficult to access DCRSA services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- Limited accessibility of DCRSA via public transportation
- Other challenges related to the physical location of the DCRSA office
- Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- DCRSA staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- Other (please describe) _____

Q28 Is there anything else we should know about why individuals with disabilities find it difficult to access DCRSA services?

Q29 What is the most important change that DCRSA could make to support consumers' efforts to achieve their employment goals?

Q30 What is the most important change that vendors could make to support consumers' efforts to achieve their employment goals?

Q31 What are the top three changes that would enable you to better assist your DCRSA consumers (please select a maximum of three changes)?

- Smaller caseload
- More streamlined processes
- Better data management tools
- Better assessment tools
- Additional training
- More administrative support
- More supervisor support
- Improved business partnerships
- Decreased procurement time
- More effective community-based service providers
- Increased outreach to clients in their communities
- Other (please describe) _____

Q32 The next set of questions asks you about the American Job Centers in the District (formerly known as DC Works!)

Q33 How frequently do you work with the American Job Centers in the District?

- Very frequently
- Somewhat frequently
- Infrequently
- Not at all

Condition: Not at all Is Selected. Skip To: Your feedback is valuable to us, and

Q34 In your opinion, how effectively do the American Job Centers serve individuals with disabilities?

- Very effectively
- Somewhat effectively
- Not effectively

Q35 What can the American Job Centers do to improve services to individuals with disabilities (Check all that apply)?

- Improve physical accessibility
- Improve programmatic accessibility
- Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities
- Include individuals with disabilities when purchasing or providing training for their clients
- Partner more effectively with DCRSA
- Other (Please describe) _____

Q36 Your feedback is valuable to us, and we would like to thank you for taking the time to complete the survey! Please select the "Next Page" button below to submit your responses.

Appendix E
2017 DCRSA Business Survey

Q1 District of Columbia Rehabilitation Services Administration Vocational Rehabilitation Program Business Survey The purpose of this survey is to learn more about the needs of businesses and employers with respect to partnering with the District of Columbia Rehabilitation Services Administration (DCRSA) and employing and accommodating workers with disabilities. The information that you provide will help DCRSA to more effectively respond to the needs of businesses and will influence the planning and delivery of vocational services to persons with disabilities. For the purposes of our survey, an individual with a disability is a person who: Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, or has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. This survey will take approximately five minutes to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential and you will not be asked for your name or the name of your organization anywhere in the survey. Please select the response to each question that best describes your needs at this time. Thank you for your time and input!

Q2 Disability in the Workplace: Does your business need help... (select one response for each)

	Yes	No
Understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3 If you would like to comment further on any of your answers above, or if you have additional comments or needs regarding disability in the workplace, please describe them in the space below.

Q4 Applicants with disabilities: With respect to applicants with disabilities, does your business need help... (select one response for each)

	Yes	No
Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruiting applicants with good work habits?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessing Applicants' skills?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5 If you would like to comment further on any of your answers above, or if you have additional comments or needs regarding applicants with disabilities, please describe them in the space below.

Q6 Employees with disabilities: With respect to employees with disabilities you have now or have had in the past, what are the top three challenges you have experienced with them regarding job retention (select a maximum of three items)?

- Poor attendance
- Difficulty learning job skills
- Slow work speed
- Poor work stamina
- Poor social skills
- Physical health problems
- Mental health concerns
- Language barriers
- Identifying effective accommodations
- Other (please describe) _____

Q7 If you would like to comment further on any of your answers above, or if you have additional comments or needs regarding employees with disabilities, please describe them in the space below.

Q8 How would you rate your knowledge of DCRSA and the services they can provide to businesses?

- Very knowledgeable
- Somewhat knowledgeable
- Little or no knowledge

Q9 Have you utilized any of the services provided to businesses by DCRSA?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Condition: No Is Selected. Skip To: Which of the following best describes....

Q10 Which of the following services did DCRSA provide to your business (please select all that apply)?

- Training in understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act?
- Assistance identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?
- Recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities?
- Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment?
- Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities?
- Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities?
- Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?
- Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities?
- Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?
- Recruiting applicants with good work habits?
- Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?
- Assessing Applicants' skills?
- Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?
- Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?
- Other (please describe) _____

Q11 How satisfied were you with the services you received from DCRSA?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Q12 Which of the following best describes your type of business? (select one response)

- Service
- Retail
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing
- Construction
- Government
- Education
- Health care
- Banking/Finance
- Other (please describe) _____

Q13 If your business has any needs related to applicants or workers with disabilities that are not currently being met please describe them here:

Q14 How many years has your business been in operation?

Q15 How many people are employed at your business? (select one response)

- 1 - 15
- 16 - 50
- 51 - 250
- 251 - 999
- 1,000 or more

Q16 Your feedback is valuable to us, and we would like to thank you for taking the time to complete the survey! Please select the "Next Page" button below to submit your responses.

**Appendix F:
Washington DC, CSNA 2017
Focus Group Protocols**

[Introductions/confidentiality/purpose statements]

Focus Group Protocol - Individuals with Disabilities:

Employment goals

- What barriers do people with disabilities in DC face in getting or keeping a job?
Follow up: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options

DCRSA Overall Performance

- What has your experience with DCRSA been like? What have been the positives and negatives?
- What services were helpful to you in preparing for, obtaining and retaining employment?
- What services did you need that were not available or provided and why weren't you able to get these services?
- What can DCRSA do to help consumers get and keep good jobs?

Barriers to accessing services

- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services? (prompts if necessary -- mobility, communication, structural)

Workforce Development System Partners

- Has anyone had used or tried to use the services of DC Works!/American Job Centers?
Follow-up: What was that experience like for you?

Needs of minorities and/or underserved groups with disabilities

- What groups of individuals do you think are well-served or adequately served by DCRSA?
- What groups of individuals would you consider unserved or underserved by DCRSA? (Prompt if needed for different disability groups, minority status, other characteristics) (For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?
- How can DCSRA improve services to these groups?

Need for establishment of CRPs

- Have you received services from a CRP (prompt if needed – National Children's Center, Kennedy, Anchor, Deaf REACH)? If so, how was your service? How effective was it? What can be done to improve the future service delivery by CRPs?
- What programs or services should be created that focus on enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families, meeting basic needs and ensuring inclusion and participation? Of these services now in existence, which need to be improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations in order to meet people's needs?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive?

Focus Group Protocol - Partner Agencies:

Employment Goals

- What barriers do people with disabilities in DC face in getting or keeping a job?
Follow up: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options

Barriers to accessing services

- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services?

Impressions of needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities and SE

- What are the rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities and how well are these needs being met by DCRSA? By service providers?
- Please describe how effective the SE program is in DC. What populations are receiving SE services? What SE needs are not being met?
- What do you recommend to improve supported employment services in the District?
- Do you provide or are you familiar with customized employment?

Needs of minorities and underserved groups with disabilities

- What groups of individuals would you consider unserved or underserved by DRSA? (Prompt for different disability groups, minority status, other characteristics)
(For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?
- What can be done to improve services to these groups?

Transition-related needs

- What are the rehabilitation needs of youth with disabilities in transition?
- How well are these needs being met by DCRSA? Schools? Service providers?
- What would you recommend to improve transition services in DC?

Needs of individuals served through the Workforce Development System

- How effectively does the workforce development system in DC serve individuals with disabilities?
- How effectively is DCRSA working in partnership with the AJCs? Do you have any recommendations about how to improve this partnership if needed?
- What would you recommend to improve the workforce development system's service to people with disabilities in DC?

Need for establishment, development or improvement of CRPs

- In your opinion, how effective is the system of service providers in DC in meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities?
- What community-based rehabilitation programs or services need to be created, expanded or improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations in order to meet people's needs?
- What community-based rehabilitation services are most successful? How are they most successful or what makes them so?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive?
- What can DCRSA do specifically to improve their ability to provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities in the District?

Focus Group Protocol - DCRSA staff:

Employment Goals

- What barriers do people with disabilities in DC face in getting or keeping a job?
Follow up: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options

Barriers to accessing services

- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services?

Impressions of needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities and SE

- What are the rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities and how well are these needs being met by DCRSA? By service providers?
- Please describe how effective the SE program is in DC. What populations are receiving SE services? What SE needs are not being met?
- What do you recommend to improve supported employment services in the District?
- Do you provide or are you familiar with customized employment?

Needs of minorities and underserved groups with disabilities

- What groups of individuals would you consider unserved or underserved by DCRSA? (Prompt for different disability groups, minority status, other characteristics)
(For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?
- What can be done to improve services to these groups?

Transition-related needs

- What are the rehabilitation needs of youth with disabilities in transition?
- How well are these needs being met by DCRSA? Schools? Service providers?
- What would you recommend to improve transition services in DC?

Needs of individuals served through the Workforce Development System

- How effectively does the workforce development system in DC serve individuals with disabilities?
- How effectively is DCRSA working in partnership with the AJCs? Do you have any recommendations about how to improve this partnership if needed?
- What would you recommend to improve the workforce development system's service to people with disabilities in DC?

Need for establishment, development or improvement of CRPs

- In your opinion, how effective is the system of service providers in DC in meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities?
- What community-based rehabilitation programs or services need to be created, expanded or improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations in order to meet people's needs?

- What community-based rehabilitation services are most successful? How are they most successful or what makes them so?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive?
- What can DCRSA do specifically to improve their ability to provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities in the District?

Focus Group Protocol – Businesses

- 1. Please discuss your familiarity with DCRSA and the services they provide to people with disabilities and to businesses**
- 2. What needs do you have regarding recruiting people with disabilities for employment?**
 - Do you do anything specific to attract candidates with disabilities? Please describe
- 3. Please discuss how qualified and prepared individuals with disabilities are when they apply for employment with your business**
- 4. What needs do you have regarding applicants with disabilities?**
 - Are you aware of the incentives for hiring people with disabilities?
 - Would these incentives influence your decision to hire?
- 5. What are the qualities you are looking for in an applicant for a given job and an employee?**
- 6. What needs do you have regarding employees with disabilities?**
 - Sensitivity training?
 - Understanding and compliance with applicable laws?
 - Reasonable accommodations?
- 7. What challenges do your employees with disabilities face with job retention if any?**
- 8. On a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being the highest) how would you rate DCRSA's reputation within the business community?**
- 9. What services can DCRSA provide to you and to other businesses to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities in DC?**