

# Steadfast and Resilient: FY 21 Report to the Community

The Department on Disability Services (DDS) includes the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). We coordinate a diverse network of service providers to assist people with disabilities in leading vibrant, self-directed lives. The agency also houses the Disability Determination Division (DDD), which processes the Social Security Administration's (SSA) disability claims, including Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) for District of Columbia residents. DDD examines the cases to render a medical determination of eligibility. SSA makes the final approval or denial of District claims.

## FY 21 Highlights

From October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021, DDS provided support services to **8,479 people with disabilities**, of whom:

- **2,414** received support services through DDA; and
- **6,065** received support through RSA.

In FY 21, 609 people supported by RSA gained employment; this is 16 percent above the successful closures in FY 20. Aligned with our commitment to preparing people with disabilities for careers, people gained employment in various high-demand fields such as hospitality, healthcare, and IT. The average wage was \$17.33, approximately 14 percent higher than the District's minimum wage and living wage\*.

Of the 609 people who achieved competitive and integrated employment supports from RSA during FY 21, 527 or 87 percent were employed in the high-demand fields listed in the chart below. The remaining clients served were hired in various career cluster fields, including business, education, and human services.

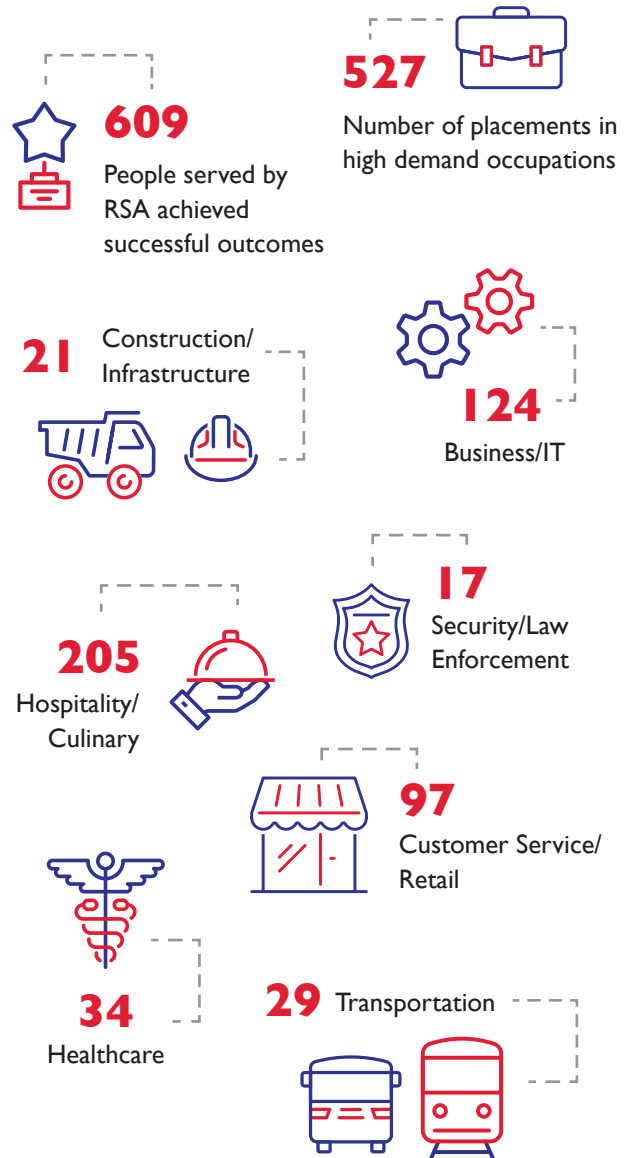


**Andrew P. Reese**  
Director

## Our Mission

The mission of the Department on Disability Services (DDS) is to provide innovative high-quality services that enable people with disabilities to lead meaningful and productive lives as vital members of their families, schools, workplaces, and communities in every neighborhood in the District of Columbia.

## People Employed in High-Demand Occupations



RSA provided Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for approximately 2898 students. Pre-ETS prepares students with disabilities ages of 14-22 to transition from high school to a post-secondary career path, including post-secondary education, training, or employment

\*Effective July 1, 2020, the living and minimum wage rates were reported as \$15.00 per hour. By July 1, 2021, per the Fair Shot Minimum Wage Amendment of 2016, the living and minimum wage in the District of Columbia was increased to the rate of \$15.20 per hour.

Based on this table, there was a significant increase in people placed in high-demand industries (17%). DCRSA specifically showed growth in Construction/Infrastructure (40%), Business/IT (38%), and Healthcare (31%), while there was a decrease in the high-demand industry of Transportation (-3.3%).

## Excellence in Service Award

In December 2020, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued emergency-use authorization for COVID-19 vaccines. DDS partnered with D.C. Health, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and Giant Pharmacy to host **vaccine clinics** from January through March 2021 to encourage people with disabilities to take the shot. Nearly 1,800 people supported by our agency received their first and second vaccinations at these clinics; more than 4,200 provider staff were vaccinated.

DDS received the **Mayor's Excellence in Service Award**, presented May 21, 2021, at the District's Annual Employee Appreciation Ceremony. Mayor Bowser recognized various agencies for their efforts to support residents during the public health emergency. Our vaccine clinics were a

lifesaving strategy that led to more than 95 percent of all people living in congregate facilities receiving at least one vaccine shot. Supervisory Nurse Consultant Dr. Chioma Nwachukwu accepted the award on behalf of Director Reese. DDS also produced four animated videos to help people with disabilities learn about the vaccines and to understand their rights during a pandemic. The videos are posted on our website and were shared on Facebook and Twitter and shown to Project ACTION!



## Hanging with Dr. Fauci



*Van Bly Berg (L) has received support services through DDA since 2010. He met Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top immunologist, at a Project SEARCH event in 2021. Sarah Benson (R) is his Service Coordinator.*

For the past ten years, Van Bly Berg has been a Patient Transport Escort at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clinical Center. He collects and cleans wheelchairs, makes specimen pickup rounds throughout the hospital, and picks up and delivers equipment as requested. Berg is a graduate of Project SEARCH with Ivy Mount, NIH, and SEEC.

Last summer Berg and other Project Search NIH post-hires had the opportunity to attend an event featuring Dr. Anthony Fauci as a guest speaker. Berg introduced himself to the world-renowned immunologist and shared what he does at NIH. During his speech, Fauci expressed gratitude to Berg and the other Project SEARCH post-hires for their 'great work during the pandemic.' Berg has been engaged in Supported Employment since 2016; Sarah Benson is his service coordinator.

## Vaccination Rates in FY 21

Number of People Supported who were vaccinated

1821 (78%)

Number of People Supported who contracted COVID 19

444

Number of People Supported who died from COVID 19

38

Number of Provider Staff who were vaccinated

4736 (80%)

Number of Provider Staff who contracted COVID-19

732

Number of Provider Staff who died from COVID-19

10

To read the full FY 21 Report to the Community, visit our website at [www.dds.dc.gov](http://www.dds.dc.gov)

### Department on Disability Services

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#### Office Hours

Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 5 pm



#### Parking

Limited street parking,  
several parking garages nearby



#### Nearest Metro

Federal Center SW



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