Washington, District of Columbia Rehabilitation Services Administration

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

2020-2023

Conducted by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The DCRSA and the Interwork Institute at San Diego District University jointly assessed the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing in Washington, D.C. A triennial needs assessment is required by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and is intended to help inform the Combined State Plan developed by the core partners in the DC workforce development systems. The data was gathered, analyzed, and grouped into the below sections. A summary of key findings is contained within each section. The full results are found in the body of the report.

Note: *The summary of findings here and throughout the report primarily identifies the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in Washington, D.C.* ***When a need is identified, it is not intended to imply that DCRSA or other service providers are not meeting it unless explicitly stated.***

Section I: Overall performance of DCRSA

In exploring the overall performance of DCRSA in terms of the needs of individuals with disabilities to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment (CIE), several themes emerged. There are needs related to:

- Improving the overall rate of employment of individuals upon exit from DCRSA services.
- Enhancing efforts to support people in maintaining employment in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exits.
- Exploring opportunities to increase the wage level of individuals receiving DCRSA services beyond the standard minimum wage in D.C.
- Identify strategies to engage individuals across all D.C. Wards, including those outlined in this report (e.g., outreach, communication, location of services, etc.).
- Expediting access to job placement opportunities. A reduced sense of urgency was highlighted regarding direct work with agency staff to find employment.
- Enhancing the use of communication tools to support strong connections with clients. Clients expressed a desire for more direct and frequent communication.
- Increasing responsiveness of counselors with clients. Limited follow-through on requests demonstrates counselors' inconsistency, leading to client delays and frustration.
- Expanding access to services beyond DCRSA's centralized office location and increasing the visibility of DCRSA programs in the overall D.C. community.

- Broadening skills assessment versus relying on a resume (i.e., a job history) to determine job goals.
- Recognizing the broad array of barriers and challenges faced by people with disabilities and the intersection of disability and other identity factors (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomics, and location).
- Increasing support to address the work-related stress of professionals supporting individuals receiving services through DCRSA.
- Expanding career advancement opportunities throughout D.C.
- Focusing on financial empowerment and literacy for individuals to ensure movement toward self-sufficiency.
- Increasing the quality of the services delivered by DCRSA.
- Increasing trust between the D.C. government and residents.
- Supporting a more robust case management and communication facilitation within and outside DCRSA.
- Offering viable transportation options across all areas of D.C.
- Using electronic and information/technology vs. paperwork and in-person signatures.
- Focusing attention on building job readiness skills training for individuals with disabilities.
- Reviewing the mechanics of the eligibility process.
- Expanding knowledge of counselors to include cultural competency

Recommendations for DCRSA related to overall performance include:
1. DCRSA should explore options to locate counselors in satellite or co-located offices to reach clients in all areas of D.C.
2. DCRSA is encouraged to create a training and staff development advisory group to inform the development and subsequent revisions of the New Employee Orientation process to ensure that it is comprehensive and designed to build initial capacity.
3. DCRSA is encouraged to develop a series of professional development training for VR staff and provider organizations to understand the broad needs of individuals with disabilities.
4. DCRSA is encouraged to review and revise the communication protocols and expectations with counselors and establish new performance standards to facilitate client relationships.
5. DCRSA may consider a broad outreach campaign, including opportunities for all staff to engage in community events to build public trust in the agency.
6. DCRSA may consider initiating projects focusing on career pathways and emerging fields (e.g., STEM, AI, etc.) to offer new opportunities to D.C. residents with disabilities.
7. DCRSA is encouraged to formulate an internal task force focused on improving processes such as eligibility, referral, client participation, engagement, retention,

and overall service delivery quality. The development of data-sharing agreements should be considered.

8. DCRSA should consider utilizing a more robust annual satisfaction survey to focus on understanding the root causes of challenges arising in the system, with solutions created to address the challenges.

9. DCRSA should explore partnerships with other DC agencies to address housing, mental health, and other basic needs of individuals with disabilities.

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

In discussions related to the specific needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, there were various emerging themes. There are needs related to:

- Accessing additional or creative accommodations to support people with complex needs in finding and maintaining employment.
- Improving the availability of supported employment and job coaching services for all people with disabilities, particularly those from the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.
- Providing individualized attention and person-centered support rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Accessing support from DCRSA counselors for those experiencing significant mental health challenges.
- Navigating and supporting individuals with the disclosure of significant hidden disabilities.
- Using diverse and specialized services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Broadening access to on-the-job training or apprenticeship programs to advance entry-level skills and employment.
- Addressing the significant financial insecurity felt by D.C. residents, with many individuals relying on public benefits and reporting a need for money management skills.
- Ensuring individuals with the most significant disabilities have the necessary job skills and training to succeed.
- Reducing caseload sizes will allow maximum time for individuals with more complex needs.

Recommendations for DCRSA related to the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including supported employment, include:

1. DCRSA should consider introducing adaptive technologies and assistive devices tailored to individual needs.

2. DCRSA should utilize the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) to provide job seekers, providers, and employers with accommodation options and best practices accessible to both job seekers and employers.

3. DSCRA may consider improving the availability of supported employment and job coaching services and increasing the funding for supported employment programs. DCRSA may consider implementing a survey of CRPs to explore potential barriers to engaging as a supported employment vendor.

4. DCRSA may consider extending the availability of these services to all disability communities, with special programs tailored to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

5. DCSRA should train staff to develop individualized employment plans that cater to each person's needs, preferences, and strengths. It should also implement regular reviews and updates to these plans to ensure they remain relevant and practical.

6. DCRSA should consider offering specialized training for DCRSA counselors in mental health first aid and trauma-informed care.

7. DCRSA may explore hiring or contracting mental health professionals to provide counseling and support directly within the DCRSA framework.

8. DCRSA should consider using specialized providers with expertise in particular services, such as customized employment and individual placement and support.

9. DCRSA should implement financial literacy programs that teach budgeting, saving, and money management skills and provide benefit counseling to help individuals understand and maximize public benefits while pursuing employment.

10. DCRSA should explore options to reduce caseload sizes by hiring more counselors, prioritizing individuals with complex needs, and investing in case management tools to free up counselor time for direct support.

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

Recurring themes around unserved and underserved populations were varied. There are needs related to:

- Supporting the diverse needs of all D.C. residents, including those who are undocumented, those with mental health issues, and those who are uninsured
- Focusing on communities with intersectional identities, particularly in Wards 7 and 8.
- Improving accessibility and inclusivity in the DCRSA offices and teams.
- Increasing availability of ASL interpreters for interviews and employment support.
- Overcoming biases and stigma, especially for people with significant disabilities and marginalized groups, including mental health support for the black community.
- Enhancing cultural sensitivity and awareness among DCRSA staff and vendors.

- Addressing cultural diversity in employment services and ensuring DCRSA staff are trained to understand the diverse clientele of the D.C. community.
- Broadening the geographic reach and access points for services focusing on underserved areas like Wards 7 and 8. Specifically implementing community-based service delivery, meeting clients within their communities and respecting their identities.
- Connect individuals with disabilities to housing, food, and employment support.
- Ensuring comprehensive support services to facilitate employment.
- Addressing language barriers, particularly for Spanish-speaking individuals and families.
- Establishing partnerships with community organizations (i.e., cultural centers, places of worship, foster care agencies, shelters, food banks, etc.).
- Increasing awareness and building trust within underserved communities.

Recommendations for DCRSA related to the needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved include:

1. DCRSA is encouraged to enhance the environment and culture of inclusion within its internal staff and vendor community through a deliberate and embedded approach to cultural understanding and inclusion. This may include providing tailored and immersive training on cultural sensitivity and effective responsiveness.

2. DCRSA is encouraged to use broad data-based decision-making to effectively improve outreach, employment, and training for underserved populations. Analyzing data and statistics to understand population-based service gaps should be incorporated into the agency's ongoing efforts.

3. DCRSA should consider introducing efforts to engage more ASL interpreters to serve clients better and more effectively. This may include reaching out to businesses regarding inclusive interview and hiring practices.

4. DCRSA should consider a broader community-based service delivery model by internal staff. This model should emphasize the importance of understanding and meeting clients where they are (i.e., in their respective communities) and acknowledging and respecting their intersectional identities.

5. DSRSA should continue to explore options to locate VR services with CRPs in satellite or co-located offices (i.e., beyond DOES) or other community cultural centers to ensure broad access.

6. DCRSA may consider establishing new partnerships and building on current partnerships with community organizations not typically engaged with VR but embedded in communities (i.e., cultural centers, places of worship, foster care agencies, shelters for the unhoused, food banks, and community centers). These efforts could increase awareness of their services and build trust within these underserved communities.

7. DCRSA is encouraged to recruit and hire additional bilingual staff, in alignment with the most spoken languages in D.C., to increase their communication ability with underserved populations.

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

Recurring themes in this area were also diverse. Specifically, there are needs related to:

- Expanding opportunities for summer youth employment for students with disabilities and broadening access to work-based learning.
- Removing access barriers for students associated with acquiring multiple service authorizations.
- Increasing opportunities for access to safe and reliable transportation for students in youth. Concerns were raised in this regard in some communities, particularly after dark.
- Clarifying the eligibility process for transition services for youth versus students with disabilities.
- Navigating the consent forms for students with IEPs, including the lack of understanding about the importance of consent and the difficulty of serving students with disabilities in the classroom.
- Increasing the array of transition supports to help students with disabilities navigate the complex systems in D.C.
- Accessing transition services for students in charter schools. Consistent concerns were mentioned about the inconsistent and sometimes non-existent access to VR services for students in the District's charters.
- Expanding opportunities for STEM skills training in schools.
- Improving cooperation between DC government agencies and public schools. Examples of missed opportunities and inefficiencies were cited, including missed opportunities to engage in Disability Innovation Fund proposals/projects.
- Increasing DCRSA presence in public and charter schools.
- Accessing support with post-secondary education and training.
- Creating more equitable experiences in the youth internship program. Concerns were identified about the consistent impact and relevance for students.

Recommendations related to the needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition include:

1. DCRSA should implement a stronger monitoring and data collection process to become more focused on student growth and development. This system would allow DSCRA to understand trends in real time and develop plans for improvement with their partners in education and workforce to address transition gaps.

2. DCRSA would benefit from re-establishing and nurturing relationships with charter and public schools and evaluating mechanisms for ensuring equitable access to services for students in charter schools.

3. DCRSA is encouraged to formulate an outreach plan to educate and support transition staff in all schools in reaching youth and families, and to ensure all students with disabilities have access to information about VR services.

4. DCRSA could consider establishing a transition systems task force to work with education and other partners to understand the root causes of complexity, access, and equity issues and develop improvement ideas.

5. DCRSA is encouraged to explore ways to increase and improve safe transportation options for youth with disabilities in DC. DCRSA might explore options with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to identify available options and solutions for developing additional transportation resources to keep youth safe.

Section V: The needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the districtwide Workforce Development System - Department of Employment Services (DOES)

Recurring themes in this area emerged and specifically highlighted the needs related to:

- Accessing DOES has been difficult for people with disabilities. Disclosure of disability is a particular issue.
- Increasing opportunities to access job fairs. These were identified as helpful, but more and broader opportunities should be available. When they do happen, they do not always accommodate the needs of deaf or visually impaired individuals.
- Delivering a more consistent customer experience. Participants noted mixed experiences with the Department of Employment Services (DOES) and American Job Centers. There was a need for increased visibility and collaboration between RSA and DOES.
- Increasing services in the workforce system for youth with disabilities, particularly in the areas of out-of-school youth and homelessness.
- Exploring opportunities for small business development.
- Accessing D.C.'s job training programs. Respondents mentioned the importance of early preparation and the program's innovative approach to job development.
- Growing consistency of services from the DOES. Some reported finding it helpful for job training, while others disagreed.

Recommendations for DCRSA and DOES in this section include:

1. DCRSA is encouraged to create and facilitate *disability awareness* training for DOES staff. Other opportunities for cross-training staff in both systems could be explored, and collaboration could be built across systems.

2. DCRSA is encouraged to increase the use of co-located or designated staff at each DOES office (and vice versa) whenever possible.

3. DOES should seek to broaden the use of effective collaborative practices highlighted by the Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth and other national

centers. An essential resource on advancing partnerships with WIOA Title I programs includes Unlocking the Potential of Title I. In addition, DCRSA could work collaboratively with DOES to develop training to support the opportunity populations intended to be served by Title I.

4. DCRSA, in partnership with DOES and Education, should explore opportunities to expand summer employment and work-based learning through program options outside of Title IV of WIOA (i.e., Title I and III).

Section IV: The need to establish, develop, or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) in Washington, D.C.

Recurring themes emerged related to CRPs, and these specific needs related to:
- Improving the communication and referral process between DCRSA and CRPs.
- Acknowledging the importance of CRPs in the rehabilitation process and seeking to build capacity to serve underserved populations who may not choose to engage with the current set of CRPs
- Exploring the financial feasibility of effectively serving youth and young adults through the current funding model, solidifying the CRP network to perform this work.
- Reviewing the payment mechanisms, rates, and structures used to engage CRPs to determine their effectiveness.
- Publicizing the list of CRPs and increasing the information available to individuals with disabilities in D.C.
- Increasing communication with service coordinators in other systems.
- Exploring options to support increased staffing within CRPs to meet the overall demand of individuals with disabilities.

Recommendations for DCRSA related to the development and improvement of CRPs include:

1. DCRSA may consider holding regular (e.g., quarterly) CRP engagement meetings that would include DCRSA critical leadership and CRP directors/staff to facilitate ongoing dialogue about emerging issues and opportunities for people with disabilities across D.C. This could evolve into a community of practice among CRPs to advance CIE across the District.

2. DCRSA is encouraged to develop a small working group of CRPs and DCRSA staff to address the needs associated with the current funding model and the ability of CRPs to engage effectively.

3. DCRSA may benefit from developing a network of additional CRPs to address the needs of individuals with disabilities from underserved communities. This activity may involve an environmental scan and analysis of some critical barriers and why some CRPs choose not to engage as DCRSA vendors.

Section VII: The needs of businesses in Washington, D.C.

This category captures the needs of businesses in Washington, D.C., regarding recruiting, hiring, retaining, and accommodating individuals with disabilities. It includes analyzing how DCRSA serves or partners with businesses. Overall themes in this area include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Increasing engagement and access to employment opportunities with the federal and city government agencies.
- Addressing the stigma associated with job seekers with disabilities and the bias that businesses have shown in hiring practices, including long application processes or online portals that lack accessibility.
- Broadening the businesses' knowledge of the ADA and the processes for accommodating employees with disabilities.
- Working with businesses with in-demand jobs that align with the labor market trends in D.C.
- Expanding access to knowledge and resources on identifying and supporting assistive technology in the workplace.
- Conducting general outreach to businesses to promote hiring people with disabilities and the benefits and incentives in engaging with a diverse workforce.

Recommendations for DCRSA related to this section include:

1. DCRSA may consider the development and implementation of a broad business outreach plan in partnership with DOES and other city systems. This outreach plan should include the opportunity to offer training on disability awareness, inclusion, and employment practices.

2. DCRSA should enhance business relationships to encourage employers to utilize flexible work arrangements such as remote work and flexible hours.

3. DCRSA is encouraged to develop a working group to investigate the use of assistive technology, artificial intelligence, and other emerging technologies to strengthen its support of the business community in providing accommodations to individuals with disabilities.

4. DCRSA should expand its work with the regional ADA center and national centers focused on employer practices to provide more significant resources to businesses operating within the city.

5. DCRSA may consider partnering with other VR systems to develop a community of practice related to best practices and strategies for business engagement.

6. DCRSA may consider developing a labor market taskforce in partnership with DOES, and key industry members in D.C. to develop a plan to support business in meeting these emerging needs.

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IMPETUS FOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) contains the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. It requires all district vocational rehabilitation agencies (SVRA) to assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities within their State to ensure the planning and establishment of goals and priorities for programs and services to address the 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 the State Plan must include the results of a jointly conducted comprehensive districtwide needs assessment (CSNA) every three years describing the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State.

In response to these mandates and to ensure adequate efforts are made to serve the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities in Washington, D.C., the DCRSA executed a contract with Promesa. Subsequently, Promesa initiated a sub-award to the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University to jointly develop and implement a CSNA of the vocational rehabilitation needs of Washington, D.C.'s residents with disabilities.

PURPOSE OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND UTILIZATION OF RESULTS

The CSNA aims to identify and describe the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in Washington, D.C. In particular, the CSNA seeks to provide information on the following:
- The overall performance of DCRSA in meeting the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the District.
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the 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 VR 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 with disabilities are served through other components of the statewide workforce development system.
- The need to establish, develop, and improve community rehabilitation programs within the District; and
- The needs of businesses in recruiting, hiring, accommodating, and retaining individuals with disabilities.

The data from the needs assessment process is expected to provide DCRSA information to inform the creation of the VR portion of the Unified State (District) Plan and support planning for future program development, outreach, and resource allocation. This CSNA covers quantitative data for Program Years (PY) 2020 through 2022 and qualitative data through November 2023.

METHODOLOGY

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

Analysis of Existing Data Sources

The project team at SDSU reviewed various existing data sources to identify and describe demographic data within Washington, D.C., including the total target population and sub-populations potentially served by DCRSA. Data relevant to the population of Washington, D.C., the population of people with disabilities in Washington, D.C., ethnicity of individuals, income level, educational levels, and other relevant population characteristics were utilized in this analysis. Sources analyzed include the following:

- The 2021 American Community Survey, 1- and 5-Year Estimates
- U.S. Census Annual Estimates of Resident Population, 2022
- Office of Rural Health Policy and the Office of Management and Budget, 2022
- 2022 Social Security Administration SSI/SSDI Data
- The Washington, D.C. Department of Education
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- University of New Hampshire's Disability Compendium
- DCRSA case service data was 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 RSA's Management Information System (MIS).

Individual and Focus Group Interviews

Instrument: The instruments used for the individual and focus group interviews (Appendix A) were developed by a research team at SDSU and reviewed and revised by the DCRSA team before utilization in the assessment process.

Interview population: The individual and focus group population consisted of DCRSA staff, partner organizations, individuals with disabilities, and businesses. Sixty-eight people indicated they wanted to be interviewed as part of the assessment, but only forty-three attended the interview/focus group sessions. The interviews occurred in person and virtually across the District in October and November 2023. In-person interviews and focus groups were held in various Washington, D.C., locations to accommodate individuals' travel needs and provide the broadest access to sessions.

Data collection: The general format of the interviews was consistent between participants regardless of their group and followed a pre-determined question protocol. First, participants were asked questions to ascertain their personal and professional experience with or knowledge of DCRSA. Participants were then asked open-ended questions about their perceptions of the needs of individuals with disabilities in Washington, D.C., including youth and students, those in need of supported employment, and those from underserved and underrepresented populations. Finally, participants were asked to share their perceptions of how DCRSA could improve their ability to help meet these needs, especially in assisting individuals with disabilities in obtaining and retaining employment.

Efforts to ensure respondent anonymity: The interviewers did not share names and other identifying characteristics with anyone. Participants were provided information on their rights and were informed of the anonymous reporting of all results. All collected data was consolidated with other respondents' information before the results were reported.

Data analysis: The interviewers took notes and sometimes (as the environment and setup of the space allowed) used Otter.ai to record communications to obtain a complete transcription of the discussions. The notes were analyzed by the researchers at SDSU using a thematic analysis construct. As themes or concerns were identified, the SDSU team compiled these responses to highlight common themes in the report narrative. To be recognized as a recurring theme, it had to occur at least three times and across groups if it applied to the diverse populations participating in the study.

Surveys

Instruments: The project team developed the instruments used for the electronic surveys of individuals with disabilities, community partners, DCRSA staff, and businesses. DCRSA reviewed and revised these surveys, which are contained in Appendices A-E.

Survey population: Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as individuals with disabilities who are potential, current, or former clients of DCRSA. Community partners include representatives of organizations who provide services, coordinate services, or serve an advocacy role for individuals with disabilities in Washington, D.C. DCRSA staff members include those working for the organization from October 15, 2023, through December 15, 2023. Businesses include employers for which DCRSA had a valid email address during the survey period.

Data collection: Data was gathered from the different populations using an online survey using Qualtrics. DCRSA and community programs serving individuals with disabilities broadly dispersed the electronic survey via an e-mail invitation. DCRSA identified individuals with disabilities, partners, staff, and businesses and invited them to participate in the electronic survey effort via e-mail, flyers (with QR codes), and social media blasts. These communications and surveys were provided in both English and Spanish. Once the survey was active, DCRSA sent an invitation and link to the study by e-mail. Approximately two weeks after the distribution of the initial invitation, another electronic notice was sent as a "thank you" to those who had completed the survey and a reminder to those who had not. Survey responses collected through the electronic survey approach were then analyzed using Qualtrics.

Efforts to ensure respondent anonymity: 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 before reporting results, further obscuring 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 Project Director at SDSU to place requests for alternate survey formats. In addition, the surveys were

provided in both English and Spanish to include responses from a more comprehensive array of individuals.

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

Number of completed surveys: The different groups submitted 891 valid surveys. A survey was considered valid if an individual completed it, even if they did not answer all the questions. If an individual started the survey and did not complete it, it was considered invalid. Gauging the return rate of the surveys is challenging. Many of the e-mail notices and invitations to take the survey could have come from forwarded email invitations, and the research team needed to be provided with the complete list of invited individual respondents to ensure data privacy and confidentiality were maintained throughout the process.

Nine hundred forty-nine individuals participated in this CSNA process (see Table a.1). The project team is confident that the information gathered accurately and thoroughly captures the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in Washington, D.C. It should be noted that the findings in Section VII on the needs of businesses in recruiting, hiring, accommodating, and retaining employees with disabilities and impairments should not be generalized to the population of companies and employers in Washington, D.C., as the sample size of 35 business is not ideal for generalizable findings. Despite significant efforts to increase business engagement, this population is historically difficult to engage.

Table a.1

	Survey	Focus Groups/Interviews	Total
Individuals with Disabilities	694	31	725
DC Partner Agencies/Community Rehabilitation Providers	102	15	117
DCRSA Staff	60	12	72
Businesses	35	0	35
			949

Analysis and Triangulation of Data
The researchers on the project team analyzed the data gathered from the national and agency-specific data sets, key informant interviews, surveys, and focus groups. They identified common themes regarding the needs of individuals with disabilities from each data source. They compared them to validate the existence of needs, especially as they pertained to the target populations of this assessment.

Dissemination Plans

The CSNA report is delivered to DCRSA and the District's Rehabilitation Council. We recommend that DCRSA publish the report on its website for public access. The SDSU team will present the findings at the SRC meeting, where the public can provide comments and feedback directly to DCRSA on potential ideas on how best to use this data to meet the employment needs of individuals with disabilities in D.C.

Study Limitations

Inherent in any research effort are limitations constraining the data's utility. Therefore, it is essential to highlight some of the most significant issues potentially limiting the ability to generalize the needs assessment findings to larger populations. The potential for bias in selecting participants is inherent in the methods used to collect data. The reported findings only reflect the responses of those who could be reached and willing to participate. The information gathered from respondents may only partially represent the broader opinions or concerns of all potential constituents and stakeholders. Data collected from consumers, for example, may reflect only the needs of individuals already receiving services, excluding those 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 the potential stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process in Washington, D.C.

FINDINGS

Section I: **Overall Agency Performance**

Section II: **Needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment**

Section III: **Needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program**

Section IV: **Needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition**

Section V: **Needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the districtwide Workforce Development System**

Section VI: **Need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs in Washington, D.C.**

Section VII: **Needs of businesses and effectiveness in serving employers**

SECTION I: OVERALL AGENCY PERFORMANCE

The first section of the CSNA reports on areas of general performance by DCRSA. General performance refers to how well DCRSA fulfills 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 to facilitate 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 Title IV of WIOA, and DCRSA policies and procedures. Finally, the overall performance also refers to how successfully DCRSA achieves its standard performance measures and the quantity and quality of employment outcomes its consumers achieve.

The structure of this section, as well as the following paragraphs, will include the following:
1. Data about the section in question, including observations based on the data
2. Electronic and hard copy survey results of the section
3. Recurring/consensual themes emerging during the individual interviews and focus groups
4. Recommendations to address the findings in each area of the assessment.

The comprehensive districtwide needs assessment utilizes publicly available data and direct data from DCRSA and their respective partners from July 1, 2020, through April 1. 2024. The data on agency performance included in this section comes from DCRSA's case management system and is compared to the available RSA-911 data submitted by DCRSA.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

Across the various aspects of the study, there were a broad group of needs identified:
- Improving the overall rate of employment of individuals upon exit from DCRSA services.
- Enhancing efforts to support people in maintaining employment in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exits.
- Exploring opportunities to increase the wage level of individuals receiving DCRSA services beyond the standard minimum wage in D.C.
- Identify strategies to engage individuals across all D.C. Wards, including those outlined in this report (e.g., outreach, communication, location of services, etc.).
- Expediting access to job placement opportunities. A reduced sense of urgency was highlighted regarding direct work with agency staff to find employment.
- Enhancing the use of communication tools to support strong connections with clients. Clients expressed a desire for more direct and frequent communication.
- Increasing responsiveness of counselors with clients. Limited follow-through on requests demonstrates counselors' inconsistency, leading to client delays and frustration.
- Expanding access to services beyond DCRSA's centralized office location and increasing the visibility of DCRSA programs in the overall D.C. community.
- Broadening skills assessment versus relying on a resume (i.e., a job history) to determine job goals.

- Recognizing the broad array of barriers and challenges faced by people with disabilities and the intersection of disability and other identity factors (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomics, and location).
- Increasing support to address the work-related stress of professionals supporting individuals receiving services through DCRSA.
- Expanding career advancement opportunities throughout D.C.
- Focusing on financial empowerment and literacy for individuals to ensure movement toward self-sufficiency.
- Increasing the quality of the services delivered by DCRSA.
- Increasing trust between the D.C. government and residents.
- Supporting a more robust case management and communication facilitation within and outside DCRSA.
- Offering viable transportation options across all areas of D.C.
- Using electronic and information/technology vs. paperwork and in-person signatures.
- Focusing attention on building job readiness skills training for individuals with disabilities.
- Reviewing the mechanics of the eligibility process.
- Expanding knowledge of counselors to include cultural competency.

National, State, Local, and Agency-Specific Data Related to Overall Agency Performance

General Trends of the VR with State and National Comparisons

Understanding the geographic composition of a state or territory and the structure of populations in the geographic area is beneficial for better serving the VR consumer. This section presents geographic information and demographic data regarding the D.C.'s population, age, income, home value, poverty, education, and national comparisons.

Geographic Composition

D.C. comprises one county and is divided into eight wards. Vocational Rehabilitation Services in D.C. are provided by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) via the D.C. Department of Disability Services (DDS). The D.C. Ward Boundaries (2022) map is taken from the D.C. Office of Planning website and approved for use in this CSNA report. The map displays the boundaries of the D.C. Wards within the county. Below the map is a table of geographic codes for the D.C. Territory and Wards used in this CSNA report.

Table 1: *Geographic Reference Codes: CSNA Report*

Geographic Area	Code
District of Columbia	D.C.
Ward 1	W1
Ward 2	W2
Ward 3	W3
Ward 4	W4

Ward 5	**W5**
Ward 6	**W6**
Ward 7	**W7**
Ward 8	**W8**

Population

Population (raw number of people in the area) and population density (number of people per square mile of land) provide a picture of where consumers may be in the county and assist in developing service delivery strategies (e.g., VR office locations and number of staff members) in a region. Table 2 contains the total population data for the D.C. The table cites the United States Census Bureau 2022 one-year NST population estimates for the Nation, and the D.C. Ward data is taken from the American Community Survey (ACS) Table DP05 2022 5-year estimates.

Map 1: *D.C. Wards*

Source: D.C. Office of Planning; https://opdatahub.dc.gov/documents/90c2eb6ee95c4131857eff02d2ab108f/explore
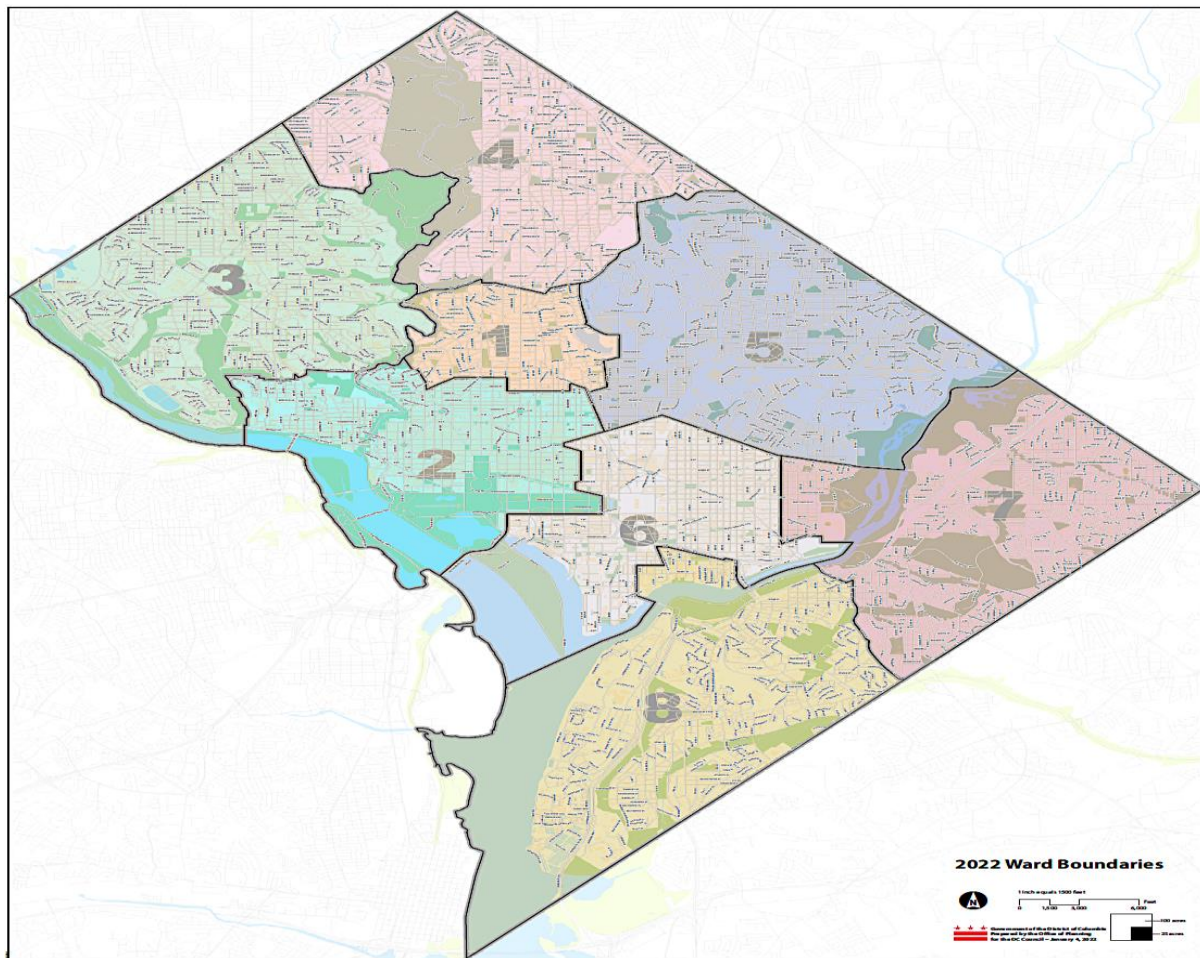
Table 2: *Local Region Population for the D.C.*

Geographic Area	Total population	Percent of D.C. Population
U.S.	334,914,895	----------
D.C.	678,972	D.C. = 0.2% of U.S. Pop
W1	79,448	11.8%
W2	77,904	11.6%
W3	79,851	11.9%
W4	86,071	12.8%
W5	89,628	13.4%
W6	80,772	12.0%
W7	89,870	13.4%
W8	87,043	13.0%

Source: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for the United States, Regions, States, D.C., and Puerto Rico: April 1, 2020, to July 1, 2023 (NST-EST2023-POP); U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The U.S. Census Bureau Annual Estimates of Resident Population Change State Rankings ending July 2022 indicated that D.C. increased in numeric population size (8,023) and ranked in the 49 positions for numeric growth compared to the 50 states during the period from July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023. The D.C.'s overall numeric population growth (-10,576) from April 20, 2020, to July 1, 2023, was negative 1.5 percent, or fortieth overall.

The U.S. Census Bureau collaborated with the U.S. Department of Commerce to determine population density rates from 2010 to 2020. In 2020, D.C. ranked first out of the 50 States and Puerto Rico, with an average population density of 11,280 people per square mile.

Land and Urbanization

The D.C. is landlocked and was formed by land ceded from Virginia and Maryland in 1788. Acts of Congress established it through legislation in 1790 and 1791. The total area of D.C. is 68 square miles (61 square miles of land; 7 square miles of water).

The D.C. is the smallest (56th) in the nation regarding land area, water area, and total area. The ranking includes the 50 States and the U.S. territories of Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and the D.C.

The criteria and definitions for rural and urban areas based on the 2020 Census are defined as follows:

- *Rural: Territory not defined as urban.*
- *Urban: Generally densely developed territory encompassing residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses within which social and economic interactions occur.*
- *Urban Area: A statistical geographic entity consisting of a densely settled core created from census blocks and contiguous qualifying territory that together have at least 2,000 housing units or 5,000 persons*

Based on the 2020 Census, 100% of D.C.'s population is considered urban, and none of the population resides in territories that are defined as rural. The U.S. Census Bureau published county-level urban and rural information for the 2020 census. Table 3 details the 2020 county-level, urban, and rural population density averages for D.C. and the percentage rates of the county population residing within urban and rural blocks.

The Office of Rural Health Policy and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) determine geographic eligibility for grant funding and various local programming. According to the 2021 update of the Office of Rural Health Policy's "List of Rural Counties and Designated Eligible Census Tracts in Metropolitan Counties," no location in D.C. is eligible for Rural Health Grants.

Table 3: *D.C. Urban and Rural Information: 2020 Census*

County/ Area	2020 Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 total blocks within the County	Percent of the 2020 Census Pop. of the County within Urban blocks	2020 Urban Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Urban within County	Percent of the 2020 Census Pop. in the County within Rural blocks	2020 Rural Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Rural within County
D.C.	11,280.74	6,012	100%	11,280.74	6,012	0.00%	0	0

Source: County-level Urban and Rural information for the 2020 Census (Updated September 2023); https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html

Report Note: Several tables throughout this report contain data from the United States Census Bureau. Unless otherwise noted, the Nation and D.C. data are taken from the Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 1-Year estimates. U.S. Census Bureau data referenced for the Wards are taken from the 2022 ACS 1-year and 5-year estimates unless otherwise noted.

Age, Income, and Home Value

Understanding a population's age composition provides insight into an area's changing phenomena and current and future social and economic challenges. Income is often used to determine well-being. Home value offers a picture of the housing situation in the area and insight into the local economic status.

Median Age and Median Working Age

The median age of residents in the nation is 39 years, and D.C.'s median age is 4.1 years lower (34.9 years). The median age in W3 exceeds the National average by less than one year (0.7 years). The median working age for individuals ages 16 to 64 in the United States is 39.5 years, and D.C.'s median working age is 35.8 years. Seven Wards have a median working age lower than the national average, and the range is between 1 and 6.6 years. W4's median working age is almost one year older than the national average. Table 4 provides the statistics for median and working ages in the U.S., the D.C., and the D.C. Wards.

Table 4: *Median Age and Median Working Age*

Geographic Area	Median Age	Median Working Age 16 to 64
United States	39	39.5
D.C.	34.9	35.8
W1	32.6	33.5
W2	33.9	32.9
W3	39.7	38.5
W4	38.2	40.4
W5	35.3	36.3
W6	34.1	34.2
W7	35.1	37.6
W8	32.2	36.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Median Household Income/ Median Home Value

The D.C. median household income ranks 1st in the Nation, exceeding the National average by $26,272. The D.C. median household income average exceeds New Jersey's, the state with the highest average ($96,346). Mississippi had the lowest average ($52,719). The median household income of D.C. Wards 1-6 exceeds the National average, which ranges between $17,643 to $58,835. W7's average is $12,512 lower than the National average, and W8's median household income ($48,609) is $26,146 lower than the U.S. average.

The D.C. median home value ($711,100) is over double the average of the United States ($320,900). Compared to U.S. state averages, D.C.'s statewide median home value ranks 3rd (ranking is from the highest to lowest dollar amount), with Hawaii's average securing the top position at $820,100. West Virginia's median home value ($155,100) ranks in the 50th position compared to the averages of the 50 states.

The median home values of the 8 D.C. wards exceed the National average by at minimum $71,800. Wards 1-7 would rank in the top 14 positions if placed on a ranking table of median home values within the 50 states. Two ward averages (W3 and W6) exceed the State of Hawaii's median home value average.

Table 5: *Median Household Income/ Median Home Value*

Geographic Area	*Median Household Income*	*Home Value 2022*	*Census Bureau Estimate Type*
U.S.	$74,755	$320,900	1-Year Supplemental
D.C.	$101,027	$711,100	1-Year Supplemental
W1	$118,395	$783,300	5-year
W2	$128,048	$741,700	5-year

W3	$141,393	$1,118,400	5-year
W4	$115,068	$792,700	5-year
W5	$92,398	$671,600	5-year
W6	$133,590	$848,000	5-year
W7	$62,243	$449,000	5-year
W8	$48,609	$392,700	5-year

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Supplemental Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Poverty

Poverty is defined as not having enough money to meet basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. Examining poverty in an area, in addition to income, provides further insight into determining the well-being of an area's population.

Poverty in D.C. for the Working Age 18 to 64 Years

The poverty rate for ages 18 to 64 years in D.C. Ward 8 (23.8%) is nearly double the National poverty rate for the same age group by 12.1 percentage points. Ward 8 has the 3rd largest population (87,043) in D.C. and has the lowest median household income out of the eight wards in D.C. Conversely, W4's poverty rate (8.5%) is 3.2 percentage points less than the National average. As noted in the income section of this report, W4 has significantly higher median household income and home value averages than the National averages.

Table 6 presents the average and range of poverty rates for the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP) ages 18 to 64. National and D.C. poverty rates are taken from the 2022 U.S. Census 1-year estimates. Poverty rates for the Wards are taken from 2022 U.S. 5-year estimates. Of note is the high poverty rates in Wards 7 and 8.

Table 6: *Poverty Rates: Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population (TCNP) - 18-64*

Geographic Area	Poverty Rate	Low-High
U.S.	11.7%	New Hampshire 7.1% -- West Virginia 17.7%
D.C.	11.8%	W4 8.5% -- W8 23.8%
Wards		
Ward	Poverty Rate	Rank (Low to High)
W1	8.9%	2
W2	12.6%	5
W3	10.0%	4
W4	8.5%	1
W5	14.4%	6
W6	9.9%	3

W7	**21.0%**	7
W8	**23.8%**	8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Internet Accessibility

Access to fast and reliable high-speed internet service offers the opportunity to participate equally in society and engage in the global community. Internet access has become an essential measure of capacity, function, and reliable transportation. The pandemic made high-speed, reliable internet service necessary for many jobs and integral to assessing individuals' ability to participate in rehabilitation services. A study of internet access is critical in a State with a large rural area, as previous studies have shown that many rural communities lack infrastructure and access to internet and satellite networks.

Internet Accessibility in the D.C.

At a minimum, 91 percent of households in the D.C. Wards have one or more computing devices. Note that Ward 8 has the lowest rate (91%), and the rates for the Wards range between 91 to 98.2 percent. When comparing the rates of internet subscription service in D.C.'s Wards, the rates vary from a low of 79.3 percent in W8 to 94.5 percent in W2. Residents in D.C. have higher rates of cellular data plan use in their households than broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL service. A key finding *is that over 20 percent of W8 households are without internet service, and roughly 12 to 18 percent of households in Wards 4, 5, and 7 are without internet access.* The lack of infrastructure and access to online services may impact VR's ability to reach consumers only via online or phone data services. Table 7 provides a picture of the availability of virtual accessibility in the U.S. and D.C., including the D.C. Wards.

Table 7: *Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions: U.S. and D.C., including Wards*

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions	United States	D.C.	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3
Total households	129,870,928	326,970	39,257	44,640	39,099
TYPES OF COMPUTERS					
Has one or more types of computing devices:	95.7%	96.8%	97.5%	98.2%	96.7%
Desktop or laptop	80.5%	87.6%	89.2%	92.2%	92.6%
Desktop or laptop with no other type of computing device	2.5%	1.7%	1.1%	1.3%	2.2%
Smartphone	91.3%	93.9%	95.7%	96.1%	93.0%
Smartphone with no other type of computing device	9.5%	5.8%	5.4%	3.8%	2.1%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer	63.9%	62.8%	68.7%	69.5%	70.8%

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Tablet or other portable wireless computer with no other type of computing device	0.7%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%	0.5%
Other computer	2.5%	2.8%	2.3%	2.1%	3.0%
Other computer with no other type of computing device	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
No computer	4.3%	3.2%	2.5%	1.8%	3.3%
TYPES OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS					
With an Internet subscription:	91.2%	93.0%	92.0%	94.5%	93.6%
Dial-up with no other type of Internet subscription	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Broadband of any type	91.0%	92.8%	91.9%	94.4%	93.5%
Cellular data plan	85.3%	86.2%	88.1%	90.6%	89.1%
Cellular data plan with no other type of Internet subscription	11.2%	8.6%	8.3%	7.1%	5.8%
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL	75.9%	82.5%	82.9%	85.8%	86.7%
Satellite Internet service	6.7%	3.7%	2.0%	3.3%	2.5%
Without an Internet subscription	8.8%	7.0%	8.0%	5.5%	6.4%

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	Ward 7	Ward 8
Total households	33,896	39,485	43,885	37,374	38,149
TYPES OF COMPUTERS					
Has one or more types of computing devices:	94.5%	94.1%	97.6%	92.1%	91.0%
Desktop or laptop	84.5%	80.8%	91.1%	71.7%	66.0%
Desktop or laptop with no other type of computing device	2.4%	1.9%	1.6%	2.9%	1.9%
Smartphone	90.4%	90.7%	95.1%	85.6%	86.9%
Smartphone with no other type of computing device	6.9%	9.0%	4.2%	13.3%	16.9%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer	64.2%	64.1%	68.3%	54.5%	54.7%

Tablet or other portable wireless computer with no other type of computing device	0.5%	0.6%	0.1%	1.1%	0.8%
Other computer	3.6%	2.8%	2.3%	2.6%	2.2%
Other computer with no other type of computing device	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
No computer	5.5%	5.9%	2.4%	7.9%	9.0%
TYPES OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS					
With an Internet subscription:	88.1%	87.8%	93.3%	82.4%	79.3%
Dial-up with no other type of Internet subscription	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Broadband of any type	88.1%	87.8%	93.3%	82.3%	79.1%
Cellular data plan	83.3%	80.9%	89.3%	71.4%	73.9%
Cellular data plan with no other type of Internet subscription	8.7%	9.1%	6.9%	12.2%	12.1%
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL	76.3%	76.5%	85.0%	67.7%	65.2%
Satellite Internet service	4.9%	3.6%	3.0%	4.1%	4.7%
Without an Internet subscription	11.9%	12.2%	6.7%	17.6%	20.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education completed, either in terms of the highest degree or the highest level of schooling. The level of education influences the job market, both in the public and private sectors.

The residents of D.C. achieve a significantly high level of educational attainment. Although Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6's rates for completing high school graduation are lower than the National average (and the range is between 7.7 to 23 percent lower), the Graduate or professional degree level of educational attainment for Wards 1 through 6 significantly exceeds the National average of 14 percent by a minimum of 13.5 percentage points and up to 45.3 percentage points.

W7 and W8's rates for those whose highest educational attainment is a high school graduate or equivalency over 25 are higher than the National rate by 4.5 to 7 percentage points. Wards 7 and 8's rates for achieving a Bachelor's degree are lower than the National and D.C. averages. W8's rate is the weakest in D.C. (13.2%), lower than the National average by 8.4 percentage points. The Graduate and professional degree attainment rate for W7 (15.8%) is almost two percentage points higher than the National average of 14 percent, and the W8 rate (13.5%) is less than one percentage point lower than the National average.

Table 8 provides rates for high school graduation and education at or above a bachelor's degree for the United States and D.C. population of 25 years and over. Ward rates are taken directly from the U.S. Census Bureau estimates table.

Table 8: *Educational Attainment: Population 25 years and over*

Area	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college, no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree	High school graduate or higher	Bachelor's degree or higher
U.S.	26.1%	19.1%	8.8%	21.6%	14.0%	89.6%	35.7%
D.C.	13.5%	11.5%	3.3%	26.4%	38.9%	93.7%	65.4%
W1	9.1%	7.0%	1.5%	30.4%	44.5%	92.5%	74.9%
W2	4.9%	4.9%	1.4%	33.5%	51.9%	96.7%	85.5%
W3	3.1%	5.5%	1.6%	28.8%	59.3%	98.3%	88.0%
W4	15.2%	13.4%	2.8%	24.3%	34.7%	90.4%	59.0%
W5	18.4%	16.0%	4.0%	25.6%	27.5%	91.6%	53.2%
W6	6.8%	6.5%	2.5%	33.7%	46.9%	96.5%	80.6%
W7	30.6%	20.6%	5.3%	15.4%	15.8%	87.8%	31.2%
W8	33.1%	22.3%	5.4%	13.2%	13.5%	87.6%	26.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disabilities Under Age 65

Understanding the general trends of a geographic area is essential, as is knowing the prevalence of disability in the state when engaging in strategic planning and allocating resources. This section provides detailed demographic data regarding the D.C.'s disability population, including age, disability type, income, poverty and education, with comparisons to the Nation and local regions.

Disability Status

The estimated average number of people with disabilities residing in the Nation in the year 2022 is 13.4 percent. The D.C.'s percentage is below the National average by 2.5 percent, averaging 10.9 percent. Of the civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 18 to 64 years in D.C., the reported disability rates from Wards 1 through 6 are lower than the National average of 11 percent. The average percentage rate for individuals 18 to 64 years reporting a disability in Ward 3 is 4.4 percent, which is 4.5 percent lower than the D.C. average and lower than the U.S. average by 6.6 percent. Disability Status estimates are calculated for the Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population (TCNP) by the U.S. Census Bureau. National, D.C. and Ward averages are provided in Table 9.

Table 9: *Disability Status: Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population*

Geographic Area	TCNP with a disability	Under 18 years with a disability	18 to 64 years with a disability
United States	13.4%	4.8%	11.0%
D.C.	10.9%	4.0%	8.9%
Ward 1	8.4%	3.6%	6.8%
Ward 2	7.3%	0.7%	5.0%
Ward 3	7.6%	0.6%	4.4%
Ward 4	10.3%	4.2%	8.3%
Ward 5	12.6%	4.5%	10.8%
Ward 6	7.9%	2.5%	6.0%
Ward 7	15.9%	6.7%	14.8%
Ward 8	16.7%	5.8%	16.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disability Types

Knowledge of the types of disabilities reported by region residents helps VR anticipate and prepare for meeting service needs and assisting the consumer in obtaining necessary accommodations to maximize function and employability.

The U.S. Census data classify disability into six categories and detail them by age. The data indicates that D.C.'s rates for those reporting specific disability types reflect the National rates, as D.C.'s rates are either equal to, higher, or lower than the National rate by less than two percentage points in each category.

Ward 7's disability type averages for the ages 18 to 64 rank the highest for hearing, vision, self-care and independent living disabilities when compared to the other wards. Ward 8 has the highest rates for cognitive and ambulatory disabilities for ages 18 to 64.

Cognitive disabilities and ambulatory disabilities are the most frequently reported disability types among individuals ages 18 to 64 in D.C. Ward 8's rate for individuals ages 18 to 64 reporting a cognitive disability is 3.2 percent higher than the National average, and W3's rate is lower than the National average by 3.1 percentage points. (It is important to note that mental health impairments are not included in the ACS data.)

Table 10 provides specific data for the total civilian noninstitutionalized population. The table categories include those under 18 and those aged 18 to 64.

Table 10: *Disability Types and Age: U.S. and the D.C., including Wards*

Disability Types and Age	Percent with a disability				
	United States	D.C.	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3

With a hearing difficulty	3.7%	2.0%	1.7%	1.6%	2.1%
Population under 18 years	0.5%	0.6%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%
Population 18 to 64 years	2.0%	1.0%	1.2%	0.7%	0.6%
With a vision difficulty	2.5%	2.2%	2.4%	2.0%	1.4%
Population under 18 years	0.8%	1.0%	1.3%	0.3%	0.1%
Population 18 to 64 years	2.1%	1.8%	1.7%	1.3%	1.1%
With a cognitive difficulty	5.7%	4.6%	3.6%	3.0%	2.8%
Population under 18 years	4.8%	4.2%	4.1%	1.4%	0.5%
Population 18 to 64 years	5.2%	4.2%	3.1%	2.7%	2.1%
With an ambulatory difficulty	6.7%	5.7%	3.7%	3.1%	3.6%
Population under 18 years	0.6%	0.9%	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%
Population 18 to 64 years	4.4%	3.7%	2.5%	1.4%	1.1%
With a self-care difficulty	2.6%	1.9%	1.6%	1.0%	1.6%
Population under 18 years	1.1%	1.8%	0.3%	0.6%	0.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	1.7%	1.1%	1.2%	0.3%	0.5%
With an independent living difficulty	6.0%	4.4%	2.7%	2.2%	3.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	3.9%	2.7%	2.2%	1.2%	1.0%

Disability Types and Age	Percent with a disability				
	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	Ward 7	Ward 8
With a hearing difficulty	1.7%	2.4%	1.9%	2.3%	1.4%
Population under 18 years	0.3%	1.0%	0.5%	1.6%	0.5%
Population 18 to 64 years	1.0%	1.8%	1.1%	1.7%	0.9%
With a vision difficulty	1.8%	2.6%	1.3%	3.3%	2.8%
Population under 18 years	0.2%	1.5%	0.4%	1.6%	1.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	1.9%	2.4%	1.1%	3.0%	2.8%
With a cognitive difficulty	4.5%	5.6%	2.9%	7.1%	8.7%
Population under 18 years	5.5%	4.6%	3.0%	5.9%	7.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	3.6%	5.2%	2.7%	6.7%	8.4%
With an ambulatory difficulty	5.5%	7.0%	3.9%	9.9%	10.4%

Population under 18 years	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	0.4%
Population 18 to 64 years	3.4%	4.7%	2.3%	7.8%	8.5%
With a self-care difficulty	2.2%	2.4%	0.9%	3.7%	3.2%
Population under 18 years	2.0%	1.2%	0.1%	2.0%	1.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	1.2%	1.6%	0.3%	2.7%	2.5%
With an independent living difficulty	5.2%	5.3%	2.6%	8.4%	8.5%
Population 18 to 64 years	3.2%	3.5%	1.3%	6.1%	5.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disabling Environments Index

The environment contributes to an individual's ability to engage in meaningful tasks by enabling participation (enablement) or creating barriers to participation (disablement). For example, blindness or having serious vision difficulty even when wearing glasses (= vision disability) may be more disabling in areas without a mass transit system. Researchers at the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) created the "Disabling Environments Index," which is designed to take a snapshot of the disabling nature of one's local environment and be used as an indicator of local area accessibility.

The Index examines the reporting of an independent living disability among the focus population ages 18-64 living in community settings who also reported a hearing, vision, ambulatory, or cognitive disability. In the 2023 Annual Disability Compendium, the Disabling Environments Index for civilians in the United States with hearing, vision, ambulatory, and/or cognitive disabilities who also reported an independent living disability in 2021 was 32.4 percent. Researchers at the NIDILRR graciously calculated State data by request. Table 11 contains the Disablement Index for the 50 States in ranking order from lowest index rate to the highest. D.C. ranks second lowest in the nation, indicating a potentially higher likelihood of individuals living in inclusion environments.

Table 11: *Disabling Environments Index: Ranking Order – Lowest to Highest*

Disabling Environments Index - United States					
United States Index = 32.4					
State Ranking Low to High			State Ranking Low to High		
Rank	State	Index	Rank	State	Index
1	North Dakota	17.8	27	Minnesota	32.4
2	District of Columbia	23.5	28	Massachusetts	32.5
3	Nebraska	24.3	29	Alabama	32.6
4	South Dakota	25.3	30	Oregon	32.7
5	Wyoming	26.3	31	Indiana	32.9

6	Idaho	27.1	32	Mississippi	33.0
7	Maryland	27.7	33	North Carolina	33.0
8	Nevada	28.4	34	Kentucky	33.2
9	Alaska	29.7	35	Tennessee	33.2
10	Colorado	29.7	36	Delaware	33.4
11	Texas	29.9	37	Illinois	33.5
12	Arizona	30.1	38	Connecticut	33.6
13	Vermont	30.3	39	Pennsylvania	33.6
14	Montana	30.8	40	Wisconsin	33.7
15	Ohio	30.9	41	Rhode Island	33.9
16	South Carolina	30.9	42	California	34.1
17	Virginia	30.9	43	Kansas	34.1
18	Iowa	31.2	44	Hawaii	34.2
19	Oklahoma	31.2	45	West Virginia	34.2
20	Utah	31.5	46	New Jersey	34.3
21	Louisiana	31.8	47	Michigan	34.8
22	Washington	32.0	48	New York	35.1
23	Florida	32.1	49	New Mexico	35.2
24	Missouri	32.1	50	Arkansas	35.8
25	New Hampshire	32.2	51	Maine	40.1
26	Georgia	32.3			

The source for the US rate is from Houtenville, A., Bach, S., and Paul, S. (2023). Annual Report on People with Disabilities in America: 2023. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. A. Houtenville prepared State Data specifically for Interwork and is not published in the Annual Report.

D.C. ranks in the 2nd position (lowest to highest rate scale) when examining how many individuals who reported a hearing, vision, ambulatory and/or cognitive disability also reported an independent living disability (23.5%). North Dakota ranked in the first position, with less than 18 percent of individuals reporting a specific disability and an independent living disability. Conversely, slightly more than 40 percent of individuals residing in the state of Maine who reported a specific physical disability also reported an independent living disability.

When examining the Disabling Environments Index, the following observation is noted: The top four states, excluding D.C., with the lowest ranking disabling environments scores have urban populations ranging between 57.2 to 73 percent, while the four states with the highest disabling environments scores have urban populations ranging between 38.6 to 87.4 percent. In previous years, the top four states with the lowest ranking index scores had urban populations of less than 66%, while the four states with the highest index scores had urban

populations of over 70 percent. More in-depth analysis of the Disabling Environments Index and State urban/rural population rates is needed to determine if there is a correlation between local environmental accessibility and urban/rural population rates.

Disability and Income

People with disabilities earn approximately $12,998 per year less than individuals without disabilities. In D.C., people with disabilities earn roughly $27,483 less than people without disabilities. People with disabilities residing in Ward 6 earn $63,808, which is $31,052 less than individuals without disabilities living in Ward 6.

Females with disabilities in Ward 3 have the highest earnings for females with disabilities in D.C., with an average that is higher than the National average for females with a disability by $38,895 and higher than the D.C. average for females by $17,914. Females with disabilities in W1 have the lowest earnings for females with disabilities in D.C. ($27,167), and the average is higher than the National average of $26,383 by $784. Females with disabilities in W3 and W8 earn more than males with disabilities in their respective Wards, and the range is between $5,226 and $12,328.

When comparing the median earnings for males with and without disabilities, males with disabilities in W6 earn $92,158, $67,384 higher than males with disabilities in W8, and $56,173 higher than the U.S. median earnings for males with disabilities. When compared to the National average for males with disabilities, Wards 1 through 7's median earnings for males with disabilities are significantly higher.

Table 12 provides statistics for median earnings (income) for the civilian noninstitutionalized population (CNP) with earnings and disabilities aged 16 and over. The numbers are rounded to the nearest dollar amount.

Table 12: *Median Earnings for People with Disabilities 16 Years and Older: U.S. and D.C, Including Wards*

Median Earnings: People with Disabilities	United States	D.C.	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3
Total CNP 16+ with earnings	$42,609	$74,507	$81,675	$88,490	$92,279
With a disability:	$30,885	$48,715	$45,337	$38,352	$53,650
Male	$35,985	$50,292	$48,886	$45,222	$52,950
Female	$26,383	$47,337	$27,167	-	$65,278
No disability:	$43,883	$76,198	$83,899	$90,989	$93,925
Male	$51,257	$82,344	$89,718	$102,344	$112,540
Female	$37,470	$71,950	$79,845	$80,183	$81,790
Median Earnings: People with Disabilities	**Ward 4**	**Ward 5**	**Ward 6**	**Ward 7**	**Ward 8**

Total CNP 16+ with earnings	$69,722	$65,781	$94,027	$50,763	$46,084
With a disability:	$40,593	$41,773	$63,808	$43,566	$25,706
Male	$41,394	$51,367	$92,158	$54,926	$24,774
Female	$36,343	$32,308	$53,500	$37,114	$30,000
No disability:	$71,717	$68,120	$94,860	$51,096	$47,446
Male	$75,429	$69,061	$103,195	$50,785	$45,781
Female	$69,077	$66,861	$85,006	$51,316	$50,770

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disability and Poverty

The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability and the United States Census Bureau publish statistics on disability and poverty. This section contains the most recent information published by both organizations.

University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability

According to the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability, in 2021, an estimated 36.5% of the noninstitutionalized civilians with disabilities ages 18 to 64 living in the D.C. area were living below the poverty line. The poverty rate for people without disabilities across D.C. was 11.4 percent. Table 13 summarizes the 2021 poverty rates in D.C. for ages 18 to 64.

Table 13: *Disability and Poverty Rates: Civilians Ages 18 to 64 - D.C.*

Disability and Poverty Rates: Civilians Ages 18 to 64 - D.C.						
	Disability			No Disability		
County	**Total**	**Count**	**% [1]**	**Total**	**Count**	**% [2]**
D.C.	41,512	15,158	36.5%	403,359	46,174	11.4%
Citation: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. https://data.census.gov. Based on a sample and subject to sampling variability.						
[1] The percentage of people with disabilities in poverty.						
[2] The percentage of people without disabilities in poverty						

United States Census Bureau

The official poverty measure compares thresholds of family size and age of the family members to an individual's or family's pre-tax cash income. The Census Bureau uses the thresholds to determine who is living in poverty. Poverty levels specified in this section of the CSNA report are calculated using the 2022 one-year estimate table "Age by Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months by Disability Status and Type" published by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau provided the following definition regarding income-to-poverty ratios:

"Income-to-poverty ratios represent the ratio of family or unrelated individual income to their appropriate poverty threshold. Ratios below 1.00 indicate that the income for the respective

family or unrelated individual is below the official definition of poverty. In contrast, a ratio of 1.00 or greater indicates income above the poverty level. A ratio of 1.25, for example, indicates that income was 125 percent above the appropriate poverty threshold" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

In this section, poverty and disability statistics are presented. Two different questions regarding poverty and disability are addressed:

1) What is the proportion of the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP) ages 18 and over who have a specific disability type and live in poverty? and
2) Of the total number of the civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 18 and over that live in poverty and have a disability, what proportion have a specific disability type?

Before reviewing disability and poverty statistics, note that D.C.'s percentage of residents 18 years and older (80.7%) is 2.7% higher than the national average. When answering question #1 concerning hearing, vision, and self-care disabilities, note that in each county represented in D.C., less than one percent of the TCNPs aged 18 years and older who live in poverty reported a hearing, vision, or self-care disability. Table 14 contains National and D.C. averages in response to question #1.

Table 14: *Poverty, Disability Type, and Population: Ages 18 and Over – 2022: U.S. and D.C.*

Poverty, Disability Type, and Population: Ages 18 and Over	United States	D.C.
TCNP:	324,481,864	638,570
18 years and over:	253,240,885	515,299
Percent of population 18 and over	78.0%	80.7%
Number of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio	29,341,173	29,341,173
Percent of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio	11.6%	12.6%
With a disability:	3.2%	3.3%
With a hearing difficulty	0.7%	0.4%
With a vision difficulty	0.7%	0.7%
With a cognitive difficulty	1.5%	1.7%
With an ambulatory difficulty	1.8%	2.0%
With a self-care difficulty	0.7%	0.8%
With an independent living difficulty	1.5%	1.3%
No disability	8.3%	9.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

In D.C., among individuals ages 18 and over who live in poverty and have a disability, ambulatory disability is the most frequently reported disability type, and more than 50 percent reported cognitive disabilities. Self-care disability was reported less frequently and ranked lowest in D.C. Table 15 identifies disability types for the population that lives in poverty and is age 18 and over (answering question #2).

Table 15: *Disability Types Among the 18+ Population Living in Poverty: Nation and D.C.*

Disability Types Among the 18+ Population Living in Poverty	United States	D.C.
Number of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio	29,341,173	64,994
Number of 18 years and over in Poverty with a Disability	8,230,762	16,816
With a disability:	28.1%	25.9%
With a hearing difficulty	20.5%	11.0%
With a vision difficulty	20.6%	22.1%
With a cognitive difficulty	45.7%	50.7%
With an ambulatory difficulty	55.0%	60.3%
With a self-care difficulty	22.0%	23.4%
With an independent living difficulty	45.4%	38.4%
No disability	71.9%	74.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

The United States Census Bureau also publishes a table (S1811) containing various specific economic statistics for the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP) ages 16 and over by disability status. Poverty status is an included dataset.

In 2022, over 31 percent of people with disabilities in Wards 5, 7, and 8 were living below the 100 percent poverty level, which is more than ten percentage points above the National average of 20.4%. In Ward 4, the rate was less than 19%.

Table 16 is a portion of the economic table published by the Census Bureau. The categories retrieved include the poverty status of the TCNP ages 16 and over for whom poverty status is determined and the percentage rates for people with and without disabilities living below and above specific poverty levels. Data is only available for some D.C. wards. Table 16 includes statistics for the Nation, D.C., and Wards 4, 5, 7 and 8.

Table 16: *Disability and Poverty: TCNP Ages 16 and Over*

	United States			D.C.		
	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
Age 16+ for whom poverty status is determined	261,763,712	41,075,211	220,688,501	524,835	66,192	458,643

	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
Below 100% poverty level	11.7%	20.4%	10.1%	12.5%	25.8%	10.6%
100% to 149% poverty level	7.1%	11.1%	6.4%	4.7%	8.5%	4.2%
At or above 150% poverty level	81.2%	68.5%	83.6%	82.7%	65.7%	85.2%
	Ward 4			**Ward 5**		
	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
Age 16+ for whom poverty status is determined	66,423	8,051	58,372	71,035	10,217	60,818
Below 100% poverty level	8.4%	18.6%	7.0%	14.9%	31.4%	12.2%
100% to 149% poverty level	5.0%	11.2%	4.2%	5.7%	9.0%	5.1%
At or above 150% poverty level	86.6%	70.2%	88.9%	79.4%	59.6%	82.7%
	Ward 7			**Ward 8**		
	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
Age 16+ for whom poverty status is determined	67,836	12,736	55,100	62,070	12,989	49,081
Below 100% poverty level	21.0%	35.1%	17.7%	25.3%	41.5%	21.0%
100% to 149% poverty level	6.9%	12.1%	5.7%	9.8%	14.8%	8.5%
At or above 150% poverty level	72.1%	52.8%	76.5%	64.9%	43.8%	70.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities

Table 17 contains educational attainment rates for individuals with disabilities for the civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP) aged 25 and older. Data is available for four of D.C.'s eight wards.

Table 17: *Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: United States and D.C*

Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: United States and D.C	United States		D.C.	
	With a Disability	**No Disability**	**With a Disability**	**No Disability**
TCNP Age 25 and Over	225,493,657		470,494	
Population Age 25 and Over	38,005,098	187,488,559	62,335	408,159
Less than high school graduate	17.0%	8.8%	16.5%	4.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	33.0%	24.4%	26.4%	11.2%
Some college or associate's degree	29.0%	27.7%	21.2%	13.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	21.0%	39.1%	35.8%	70.4%
	Ward 4		**Ward 5**	
	With a Disability	**No Disability**	**With a Disability**	**No Disability**
TCNP Age 25 and Over	60,225		63,333	
Population Age 25 and Over	7,653	52,572	9,622	53,711
Less than high school graduate	14.8%	8.8%	19.9%	6.2%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	27.2%	13.3%	31.9%	15.7%
Some college or associate's degree	21.5%	15.5%	25.9%	19.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	36.6%	62.5%	22.3%	59.1%
	Ward 7		**Ward 8**	
	With a Disability	**No Disability**	**With a Disability**	**No Disability**
TCNP Age 25 and Over	58,957		53,629	
Population Age 25 and Over	11,818	47,139	11,960	41,669
Less than high school graduate	20.7%	9.6%	25.1%	8.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	33.4%	28.9%	43.8%	30.5%
Some college or associate's degree	30.0%	25.7%	21.9%	29.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher	15.8%	35.8%	9.2%	31.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

In educational attainment at the college graduate level, individuals with disabilities have lower educational attainment rates than their peers without disabilities. The higher the level of educational attainment, the more significant the gap between those with and those without disabilities. In the review of the available data, Ward 4 has the highest bachelor's degree or higher attainment level for individuals with disabilities (36.6%), which exceeds the National average of 21 percent. Ward 5's bachelor's degree attainment rate for people with disabilities aged 25 and over also exceeds the national average by 1.3 percentage points. Ward 8 has the lowest rate of bachelor's degree or higher level of education attainment.

Ward 4 is noted to have the fourth-highest population in D.C. in 2022. Ward 4 statistics for 2022 include: 1) ranked 5th in D.C. for median household income; 2) ranked 3rd for median home value; 3) ranked 1st (from lowest to highest) for poverty rate for ages 18 to 64; and ranked 5th in D.C. for internet subscriptions.

In 2022, Ward 8 ranked 8th in D.C. for median household income, median home value, and internet subscriptions and had the highest poverty rate in D.C. for ages 18 to 64 compared to the other wards. Achievement of higher levels of education is an essential consideration for individuals with disabilities served by VR if they are to achieve self-sufficiency through employment.

General Trends of Employment, Occupations, Industries, and Labor Force Participation For the Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population

Local economies thrive based on employment, occupations, and industries available to area residents and the individual's participation in the labor force. Knowledge of the local area labor force, internet accessibility, employment rates, occupations, industries, and labor force participation facilitates helping customers find local job opportunities and securing appropriate job placement.

The labor force includes all civilians and members of the U.S. Armed Forces (people on active duty with the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard). The civilian labor force consists of people classified as employed or unemployed and actively looking for work. The labor force participation rate represents the proportion of the population in the labor force.

Internet Accessibility of Individuals in the Labor Force

The U.S. Census Bureau gathers data regarding the availability of the Internet to the working-age population based on employment status. The data for working-age individuals (ages 18 to 64) in Wards 1, 2, 3, and 6 of D.C. indicates that over 94 percent of the working-age population has access to broadband Internet subscriptions. The averages range between 94.6 to 97.1 percent. The rates for Wards 4, 5, 7, and 8 range between 84.8 to 93 percent for the same age group.

The employment status data includes civilians ages 16 and over, with no cut-off age. The data cites that those unemployed in W3 and W4 have higher rates in the category "percent without broadband internet" than those who do not participate in the labor force. The percentage rates

are almost equal for the two categories in W5. The difference gap for those who do not have broadband internet service and are unemployed or not in the labor force in Wards 3 and 4 ranges from 5.9 to 7.8 percentage points. Table 18 contains internet accessibility data for the United States, the D.C. and the Wards.

Table 18: *Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status for the U.S. and D.C*

Internet Accessibility: *Working Age and by Employment Status*	**United States**		
		Percent Broadband Internet	**Percent without Internet**	
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	260,431,565	92.3%	4.6%	3.0%
In labor force	168,284,498	95.1%	3.6%	1.3%
Employed	161,195,196	95.2%	3.5%	1.3%
Unemployed	7,089,302	92.5%	5.3%	2.1%
Not in labor force	92,147,067	87.2%	6.4%	6.2%
Internet Accessibility: *Working Age and by Employment Status*	**D.C.**		
	Total	**With a computer**		**Percent no computer**
		Percent Broadband Internet	**Percent without Internet**	
18 to 64 years	427,355	94.4%	4.4%	1.2%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	515,353	92.9%	4.6%	2.4%
In labor force	384,266	95.6%	3.5%	0.8%
Employed	366,196	95.8%	3.5%	0.6%
Unemployed	18,070	91.0%	4.9%	4.1%
Not in labor force	131,087	84.8%	7.8%	7.2%
Internet Accessibility: *Working Age and by Employment Status*	**Ward 1**		
	Total	**With a computer**		**Percent no computer**
		Percent Broadband Internet	**Percent without Internet**	
18 to 64 years	58,586	94.6%	4.3%	1.0%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	65,112	92.8%	5.1%	2.0%
In labor force	54,740	96.0%	3.3%	0.6%
Employed	52,292	96.5%	2.9%	0.5%
Unemployed	2,448	86.7%	10.7%	2.5%

	Total	Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	Percent no computer
Not in labor force	10,372	75.6%	14.7%	9.7%

		Ward 2		
Internet Accessibility:		**With a computer**		
Working Age and by Employment Status	**Total**	**Percent Broadband Internet**	**Percent without Internet**	**Percent no computer**
18 to 64 years	56,098	96.6%	3.0%	0.4%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	65,418	94.7%	3.8%	1.4%
In labor force	50,962	96.7%	2.8%	0.5%
Employed	49,654	96.8%	2.7%	0.5%
Unemployed	1,308	93.3%	5.2%	1.5%
Not in labor force	14,456	87.6%	7.6%	4.8%
		Ward 3		
Internet Accessibility:		**With a computer**		
Working Age and by Employment Status	**Total**	**Percent Broadband Internet**	**Percent without Internet**	**Percent no computer**
18 to 64 years	47,909	97.1%	2.8%	0.1%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	64,631	94.8%	3.0%	2.1%
In labor force	45,690	97.1%	2.8%	0.1%
Employed	44,048	97.4%	2.5%	0.1%
Unemployed	1,642	87.8%	11.4%	0.9%
Not in labor force	18,941	89.4%	3.6%	6.8%
		Ward 4		
Internet Accessibility:		**With a computer**		
Working Age and by Employment Status	**Total**	**Percent Broadband Internet**	**Percent without Internet**	**Percent no computer**
18 to 64 years	52,283	91.3%	6.6%	2.1%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	65,647	89.4%	6.8%	3.8%
In labor force	48,559	91.7%	6.3%	2.0%
Employed	45,476	92.3%	5.8%	1.9%
Unemployed	3,083	82.2%	14.1%	3.7%
Not in labor force	17,088	82.9%	8.2%	8.9%
		Ward 5		
Internet Accessibility:		**With a computer**		

Working Age and by Employment Status	Total	Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	Percent no computer
18 to 64 years	57,442	93.0%	4.9%	2.1%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	68,844	90.3%	5.8%	3.9%
In labor force	50,818	94.3%	4.5%	1.2%
Employed	47,119	94.7%	4.2%	1.0%
Unemployed	3,699	88.1%	9.1%	2.8%
Not in labor force	18,026	79.1%	9.3%	11.6%
Ward 6				
Internet Accessibility:		**With a computer**		
Working Age and by Employment Status	Total	Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	Percent no computer
18 to 64 years	61,299	95.6%	3.5%	0.8%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	69,250	94.0%	4.1%	1.9%
In labor force	56,601	96.6%	2.9%	0.5%
Employed	54,842	96.8%	2.7%	0.5%
Unemployed	1,759	89.9%	7.7%	2.4%
Not in labor force	12,649	82.4%	9.5%	8.1%
Ward 7				
Internet Accessibility:		**With a computer**		
Working Age and by Employment Status	Total	Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	Percent no computer
18 to 64 years	53,313	86.8%	9.2%	4.0%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	66,692	84.0%	9.5%	6.4%
In labor force	43,292	89.6%	7.1%	3.2%
Employed	36,694	91.2%	6.4%	2.3%
Unemployed	6,598	80.6%	11.2%	8.2%
Not in labor force	23,400	73.7%	13.9%	12.3%
Ward 8				
Internet Accessibility:		**With a computer**		
Working Age and by Employment Status	Total	Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	Percent no computer
18 to 64 years	50,566	84.9%	10.8%	4.3%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				

Civilian population 16 years and over	59,841	81.0%	11.9%	6.9%
In labor force	39,144	86.8%	10.1%	3.1%
Employed	33,265	87.6%	9.8%	2.6%
Unemployed	5,879	82.1%	11.7%	6.2%
Not in labor force	20,697	70.3%	15.2%	14.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Unemployment Rates

The Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) and the D.C. Department of Employment Services (DOES) Office of Labor Market Research and Performance publish monthly non-seasonally adjusted unemployment data for D.C. and its Wards.

At the end of September 2023, the National non-adjusted unemployment rate was 3.6%, and the rate for the D.C. was 5.3 percent. Throughout the last four months of 2023, the D.C. unemployment rate ranked in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd positions on a ranking scale from high to low when compared to the 50 states in the U.S. The 2023 Annual unemployment rate for D.C. was the second highest in the Nation.

Table 19 contains unemployment rates for the last four months of 2023 and annual 2023 rates for the U.S., D.C. and wards. National and D.C. rates are from BLS. Ward data is provided from DOES. We recommend that the reader note the differences in Ward's unemployment rates when determining VR needs.

Table 19: *Local Area Unemployment Rates*

Area	Sept-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Annual-2023
US	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.6
DC	5.3	5.2	4.8	4.8	4.9
W1	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.6	NA
W2	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.5	NA
W3	3.7	3.7	3.3	3.2	NA
W4	4.9	4.7	4.2	4.1	NA
W5	6.6	6.4	5.9	5.8	NA
W6	4.5	4.5	3.9	3.9	NA
W7	8.9	8.7	8.2	8.3	NA
W8	10.7	10.6	10.2	10.1	NA

https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t01.htm; https://does.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/

Occupations

Occupation describes the kind of work a person does on the job.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provides data for the most significant occupations within the various States, U.S. Territories, and the Nation. The largest occupations in D.C. do not reflect the National list. One of the top 10 occupations (General and Operations Managers) in D.C. is also listed in the top 10 occupations in the U.S. and matches in rank order. Note that six occupations on the D.C. list require education above a high school diploma, may earn significantly higher wages than most of the U.S. top 10 occupations, and may not be as physically demanding as four of the top 5 occupations listed on the United States list. Tables 20 and 21 contain the ten largest occupations in the U.S. and D.C. Map 2 provides a visual image of the unemployment rate of the D.C. wards in December 2023.

Map 2

Ward 4: 4.1%

Ward 3: 3.2%

Ward 1: 3.6%

Ward 5: 5.8%

Ward 2: 3.5%

Ward 7: 8.3%

Ward 6: 3.9%

Ward 8: 10.1%

https://does.dc.gov/page/dc-monthly-labor-market-indicators
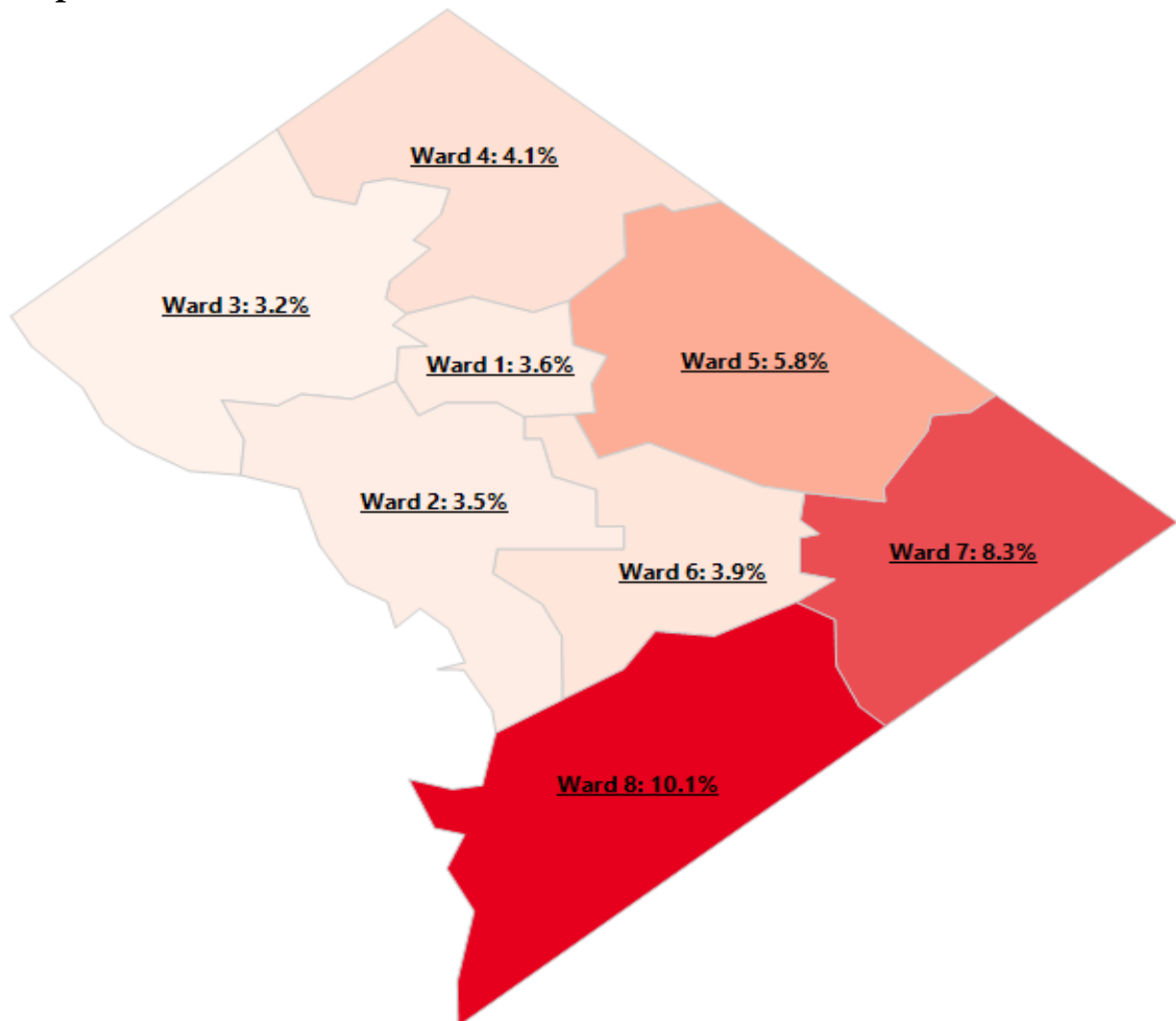
Table 20: *Occupational Employment Statistics for the U.S.*

Largest occupations in the United States, May 2022	
Occupation	**Employment**
Retail Salespersons	3,640,040
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	3,504,230
General and Operations Managers	3,376,680
Fast Food and Counter Workers	3,325,050
Cashiers	3,296,040
Registered Nurses	3,072,700
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,934,050
Customer Service Representatives	2,879,840
Stockers and Order Fillers	2,842,060
Office Clerks, General	2,517,350

Source: https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/area_emp_chart/area_emp_chart.htm

Table 21: *Occupational Employment Statistics for the D.C.*

Largest occupations in D.C., May 2022	
Occupation	**Employment**
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	36,950
Lawyers	33,610
General and Operations Managers	32,040
Managers, All Other	19,930
Management Analysts	19,230
Computer Occupations, All Other	17,880
Public Relations Specialists	17,400
Security Guards	14,440
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	13,090
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	12,630

Source: https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/area_emp_chart/area_emp_chart.htm

Local Employers in Washington, D.C.

This section provides two sets of information. One list of local area employers is from the D.C. Networks Labor Statistics LMI Dashboard affiliated with the D.C. Department of Employment Services (DOES). The second list is from a Labor Economist at the D.C. DOES Labor Market Information Office. The list differences are defined within the respective section.

D.C. Networks LMI Dashboard

The D.C. Networks Labor Statistics LMI Dashboard contains labor force and economic data that identifies local industries and local employers in Washington, D.C. The list provided in Table 22 is the data set published in response to the labor market fact question, "What are the largest employers in an area?" The data of the top 15 largest employers in D.C. is generated from Data Axle and contains information released in September 2023. The list includes the business description, estimated number of employees, and sector entity.

Table 22: *D.C. Networks: Top 15 Largest Employers in Washington, D.C.*

Top 15 Largest Employers in the D.C.				
Company Name	**Zip Code**	**Estimated number of employees**	**Business Description**	**Sector Entity**
George Washington University	20052	10,000+	Schools-Universities & Colleges Academic	Private
US Department of Commerce	20230	10,000+	Government Offices-Federal	Federal
Naval Research Lab-Patent CNCL	20375	5,000 to 9,999	Federal Government-National Security	Federal
Medstar WA Hospital Ctr	20010	5,000 to 9,999	Hospitals	Private
Children's National Health	20010	5,000 to 9,999	Health Care Management	Private
Alcohol Tobacco Firearms	20226	5,000 to 9,999	Federal Government-Police	Federal
Metropolitan Police Headquarters	20001	1,000 to 4,999	Police Departments	Private
Medstar Georgetown Univ Hosp	20007	1,000 to 4,999	Hospitals	Private
US Commerce Dept	20230	1,000 to 4,999	Federal Government-Economic Program Administration	Federal
Carefirst	20002	1,000 to 4,999	Insurance	Private
United States Postal Service	20066	1,000 to 4,999	Post Offices	Private
Metropolitan Police Dept	20024	1,000 to 4,999	Police Departments	Private
Board Governors Federal Reserve	20006	1,000 to 4,999	Government Offices-Federal	Federal

US Army Engineers Research Development	20548	1,000 to 4,999	Research Service	Private
Architect of the Capitol	20515	1,000 to 4,999	Federal Government-General Offices	Federal

Source: DC Networks - Labor Statistics; https://www.dcnetworks.org

Local Employers in D.C.

A labor economist at the D.C. DOES Labor Market Information Office provided a list of the top 200 local D.C. employers by class size for this report. The list comprises the most recent ranked file from the first quarter of 2023 employer self-reported demographics and does not include government agencies. Table 23 contains the top 25 local employers in D.C. from the provided list. All the employers have an estimated 1000+ employees.

Table 23: *LMI Top 25 Employers by Size Class*

Rank	Company Name	Business Description
1	Georgetown University	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools
2	Children's National Medical Center	Children's hospitals, general
3	Washington Hospital Center	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
4	George Washington University	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools
5	American University	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools
6	Georgetown University Hospital	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
7	Booz Allen & Hamilton Inc.	Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services
8	Universal Protection Service LLC	Security Guards and Patrol Services
9	Insperity PEO Services LP	Professional Employer Organizations
10	Howard University	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools
11	Medstar Medical Group LLC	Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)
12	Catholic University of America	Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools
13	George Washington University Hospital	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
14	Red Coats	Janitorial Services
15	Justworks Employment Group LLC	Professional Employer Organizations

16	Sibley Memorial Hospital	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
17	Deloitte Consulting LLP	Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services
18	Howard University Hospital	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
19	Monumental Sports	Promoters of Performing Arts, Sports, and Similar Events with Facilities
20	The Washington Post	Newspaper Publishers
21	Whole Foods Market Group Inc.	Supermarkets and Other Grocery Retailers (except Convenience Retailers)
22	Pricewaterhouse Coopers Public Sector	Offices of Certified Public Accountants
23	Kipp DC/Key Academy	Elementary and Secondary Schools
24	Security Assurance Management Inc.	Security Guards and Patrol Services
25	Aramark Campus LLC	Food Service Contractors

Source: DC Department of Employment Services; https://does.dc.gov/

Regional Industries

The term industry in this section of the report refers to the business conducted by a person's employing organization.

The US Census Bureau publishes data from the American Community Survey detailing information on the top industries by employment. For 2022, D.C.'s list of leading industries by employment is different from the National list, and two industry differences and rank order differences of matching industries exist. Retail Trade and Manufacturing rank in the third and fourth positions in the U.S. and are not part of the top 5 leading industries in D.C. Note that retail trade is among the top five sectors in Wards 7 and 8. Professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management services and public administration are leading industries in D.C. Public administration ranks as the 10th leading industry in the United States. Table 24 displays the top five sectors with the most employees in the Nation, D.C. and each ward.

Table 24: *Local Area Top Industries by Employment: U.S., D.C., Including Wards*

Geographic Area	Industries	Percent
United States	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	23.1%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	12.6%
	Retail trade	11.1%
	Manufacturing	9.9%

	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	8.7%
D.C.	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	24.6%
	Public administration	18.1%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	17.8%
	Other services, except public administration	10.5%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7.5%
W1	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	28.4%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	16.8%
	Public administration	15.5%
	Other services, except public administration	12.0%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	6.7%
W2	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	33.0%
	Public administration	15.2%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	14.9%
	Other services, except public administration	10.1%
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	9.3%
W3	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	28.0%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	19.9%
	Public administration	16.8%
	Other services, except public administration	9.3%
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	8.6%
W4	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	20.9%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	19.7%
	Public administration	16.4%

	Other services, except public administration	10.4%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.6%
W5	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	20.7%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	18.8%
	Public administration	16.8%
	Other services, except public administration	10.0%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	8.7%
W6	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	29.4%
	Public administration	22.6%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	12.9%
	Other services, except public administration	10.8%
	Information	5.8%
W7	Public administration	19.9%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	19.0%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	17.3%
	Retail trade	11.1%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	8.7%
W8	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	21.4%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	18.9%
	Public administration	14.5%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	12.4%
	Retail trade	7.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Employment, Occupations, Industries and Labor Force Participation for People with Disabilities

Government bureaus and research institutes collect and analyze data on employment, occupations, industries, and labor force participation for people with disabilities. This section

presents statistics from these agencies regarding people with disabilities and their participation in the labor force.

Occupations and Employees with Disabilities

The U.S. Census Bureau collects and analyzes data for the most significant occupations within the United States and the U.S. Territories for people with disabilities who are part of the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP).

The following tables summarize the percentage rates of the occupations in which people with disabilities are employed. Table 25 documents the U.S. and D.C. averages. Statistics for the wards with data available are provided in Table 26. Data for the Nation and D.C. is taken from 2022 one-year estimates, and data for the wards is from 2022 five-year estimates.

Table 25: *Percent Distribution of Employed Individuals by Disability Status and Occupation: U.S. and D.C.*

	United States			D.C.		
	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	42.5%	34.2%	43.2%	72.4%	56.7%	73.5%
Service occupations	16.1%	20.1%	15.8%	9.9%	22.7%	9.1%
Sales and office occupations	19.8%	21.7%	19.7%	13.1%	15.9%	12.9%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	8.5%	8.4%	8.5%	1.0%	2.1%	0.9%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	13.0%	15.5%	12.9%	3.6%	2.6%	3.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 26: *Percent Distribution of Employed Individuals by Disability Status and Occupation: D.C. Wards*

	Ward 4			Ward 5		
	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	63.6%	39.6%	64.7%	63.9%	51.7%	64.7%
Service occupations	16.1%	23.6%	15.7%	13.8%	32.1%	12.7%

	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
Sales and office occupations	13.2%	19.2%	13.0%	13.0%	10.2%	13.1%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	3.7%	7.4%	3.5%	4.6%	2.9%	4.7%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	3.4%	10.2%	3.1%	4.7%	3.1%	4.8%
	Ward 7			**Ward 8**		
	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	46.7%	51.5%	46.2%	45.5%	29.2%	46.9%
Service occupations	20.2%	20.4%	20.1%	24.3%	29.9%	23.8%
Sales and office occupations	22.4%	16.9%	22.8%	19.6%	29.0%	18.8%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	3.7%	4.1%	3.6%	3.4%	6.5%	3.2%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	7.2%	7.1%	7.2%	7.2%	5.4%	7.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Regional Industries and Employees with Disabilities

The U.S. Census Bureau publishes data that provides information on the top industries by employment for people with disabilities. The data represents the total civilian employed population ages 16 and over.

The table is designed to identify the industries that have the highest rates of employees with disabilities and compare the percentage rates of employees with disabilities with the rates of employees without disabilities. Table 27 displays the top six industries in the U.S. and D.C. Four of the D.C.'s most highly populated wards have data available. The ward population rankings and the disability population count for ages 16 and over are documented in the table for reference.

Table 27: *Local Area Top Industries by Employment: People with and without Disabilities Ages 16 and Over*

Geographic Area	Industries	Employees with Disabilities	Employees without Disabilities
United States Disability Pop 16+ = 41,295,440	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.3%	23.1%
	Retail trade	13.7%	10.9%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11.7%	12.7%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.6%	8.6%
	Manufacturing	9.3%	9.9%
	Construction	6.1%	7.0%
D.C. Disability Pop 16+ = 68,270	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	23.2%	17.4%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	19.0%	24.9%
	Public administration	17.1%	18.2%
	Other services (except public administration)	9.7%	10.5%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7.9%	7.5%
	Retail trade	7.2%	4.8%
W4 Disability Pop 16+ = 8,051 Pop. Rank = 4	Public administration	17.3%	16.3%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	16.1%	19.8%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	14.4%	9.4%
	Other services (except public administration)	13.7%	10.3%
	Retail trade	9.5%	5.0%
	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	8.8%	3.7%
W5	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	33.5%	17.9%

Disability Pop 16+ = 10,486 Pop. Rank = 2	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	13.7%	21.1%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	13.2%	8.4%
	Public administration	11.4%	17.2%
	Retail trade	6.7%	4.8%
	Other services (except public administration)	6.5%	10.2%
W7 Disability Pop 16+ = 12,736 Pop. Rank = 1	Public administration	23.8%	19.6%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	15.7%	19.3%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	14.4%	17.5%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	12.6%	8.4%
	Retail trade	11.5%	11.0%
	Other services (except public administration)	6.0%	6.6%
W8 Disability Pop 16+ = 12,989 Pop. Rank = 3	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	34.0%	20.2%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	16.4%	12.1%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11.0%	19.6%
	Retail trade	10.9%	6.6%
	Public administration	8.5%	14.9%
	Other services (except public administration)	5.1%	5.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

United States Department of Labor Disability Employment Statistics

The U.S. Department of Labor provides monthly Disability Employment Statistics. The labor force participation rate refers to the percentage of non-institutionalized U.S. citizens in the labor force. The unemployment rate measures the percentage of the labor force currently unemployed.

The data indicates that labor force participation rates for individuals with disabilities are consistently over 43 points higher than the rate for individuals without disabilities. In addition,

the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is consistently at least between 2.5 and 4 percentage points higher than that of individuals without disabilities. Table 28 contains the statistics for October 2023 through January 2024 and includes the Annual 2023 averages for individuals without and with a disability in the U.S. ages 16 and over.

Table 28: *Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates for PWD in the U.S*

Group	Labor Force Participation Rates				
	23-Oct	**23-Nov**	**23-Dec**	**Annual-23**	**Jan-24**
People with Disabilities	24.4%	24.8%	24.5%	24.3%	24.5%
People without Disabilities	68.2%	68.2%	67.6%	68.1%	67.6%
Unemployment Rate					
People with Disabilities	7.4%	7.3%	6.7%	7.2%	6.6%
People without Disabilities	3.4%	3.3%	3.4%	3.4%	3.9%

https://www.bls.gov

National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research: Disability Employment Statistics

The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) released the 2022 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium in February 2022, which contains data on employment for people with disabilities ages 18 to 64 years based on the 2021 Public Use Microdata Sample. According to the report, the National employment percentage for individuals ages 18 to 64 living in the community was significantly higher for people without disabilities (76.6%) versus people with disabilities (40.7%). The employment gap, which is the difference between the employment percentage for people with and without disabilities, is 35.9% for the Nation. In 2021, D.C.'s employment rate for individuals with disabilities ages 18 to 64 was 40.3%, and the employment rate was 77.8% for individuals without disabilities. The employment gap for D.C. was 37.5%. Compared to the 50 states, D.C.'s employment gap ranked 35th in the Nation (lowest rate to highest rate rank order).

The NIDILRR also publishes statistics regarding employment based on disability type for ages 18- to 64-year-old individuals with disabilities. The following data in Table 29 contains the National and D.C. employment rates by disability type from 2021 published in the 2022 Annual Compendium. The categories are for non-institutionalized civilians ages 18 to 64, male and female, from all ethnic backgrounds and include all education levels.

Table 29: *2021 Employment by Disability Type for Civilians Ages 18 to 64*

Disability Type	U.S. Percent Employed	Percent Employed
Any Disability	40.7%	40.3%
Hearing Disability	55.1%	47.2%
Visual Disability	47.9%	46.7%
Cognitive Disability	33.6%	37.2%
Ambulatory Disability	26.4%	30.4%
Self-Care Disability	15.7%	16.6%
Independent Living Disability	20.2%	20.3%

Source: Paul, S., Rogers, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A. (2023). Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2023. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability.

U.S. Census Bureau Labor Force Participation (LPF) Statistics

The United States Census Bureau publishes various statistics regarding people with disabilities and their participation in the labor force. The following three statistics contain data regarding labor force participation and employment of people with disabilities.

Labor Force Participation Rates (LPF): The labor force participation rate represents the proportion of the population in the labor force.

Of the total population aged 16 years and older residing in the United States who report having a disability, 28.1% are employed and participating in the labor force, while approximately 69.2% are not in the labor force. D.C.'s average for those who report a disability and are employed is 34.5%, while 61.9% are not engaged in the labor force.

Table 30 provides data based on disability status and employment for ages 16 and over from the U.S. Census Bureau for 2022 for the Nation and D.C. Table 31 details the information for the wards with rates available, and the data is from the 2022 5-year estimates.

Table 30: *LFP - Total Civilian Non-institutionalized Population (TCNP) Age 16 and Over: U.S. and D.C.*

Labor Force	United States			D.C.		
Participation Rates	TCNP	With Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With Disability	No Disability
Population Age 16 and Over	264,618,455	41,295,440	223,323,015	547,233	68,270	478,963
Employed	61.4%	28.1%	67.6%	68.5%	34.5%	73.4%

| Not in Labor Force | 35.8% | 69.2% | 29.70% | 27.8% | 61.9% | 22.9% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 31: *LFP - Total Civilian Non-institutionalized Population (TCNP) Age 16 and Over Wards*

Labor Force Participation Rates	Ward 4			Ward 5		
	TCNP	With Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With Disability	No Disability
Population Age 16 and Over	66,453	8,051	58,402	72,649	10,486	62,163
Employed	68.5%	26.3%	74.4%	66.1%	26.5%	72.7%
Not in Labor Force	26.7%	70.5%	20.6%	28.4%	67.2%	21.9%
Labor Force Participation Rates	**Ward 7**			**Ward 8**		
	TCNP	With Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With Disability	No Disability
Population Age 16 and Over	67,836	12,736	55,100	62,070	12,989	49,081
Employed	54.4%	23.1%	61.6%	54.3%	21.1%	63.1%
Not in Labor Force	35.7%	68.0%	28.3%	35.6%	71.5%	26.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Employment to Population Ratio – People with Disabilities

The employment-to-population ratio is derived by dividing the civilian noninstitutional population 18 to 64 years who are employed by the total civilian noninstitutional population 18 to 64 years and multiplying by 100. The employment-to-population ratio indicates the employed civilian labor force ratio compared to the total working-age population of the designated geographic area. This ratio is different from the labor force participation rate because the labor force participation rate includes the presently employed and those who are unemployed but actively looking for work.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau collect and analyze the employment-population ratio for people with disabilities by state, county, urban and rural geography, and other designated census areas and divisions. Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) and congressional district distribution are included to provide information regarding the D.C.

The D.C.'s employment-to-population ratio for people with disabilities is 5.3 percent higher than the Nation's. The D.C. ranked 14th highest for employment-to-population ratio for people with disabilities in 2022 when compared to other states in the Nation and the territory of Puerto Rico. The east PUMA has a significantly lower ratio of people with disabilities working within the PUMA boundaries, noting that the ratio is seven percentage points lower than the National ratio and 12.3 percentage points lower than the D.C. ratio. Although D.C. ward boundaries do

not align with the PUMA boundaries, the significant rate differences warrant a closer look at the business and employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the designated areas and geographic boundaries. Table 32 contains the 2022 employment-to-population ratios for the Nation and the D.C.

Table 32: *Employment to Population Ratio for People with Disabilities Ages 18-64: 2022*

EMPLOYMENT TO POPULATION RATIO FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY Territory/Congressional District/PUMA	
Geographic Area	**Percent**
United States	44.5
District of Columbia	49.8
Washington city, District of Columbia	49.8
Congressional Districts	
Delegate District (at Large) (118th Congress), District of Columbia	49.8
PUMA (Public Use Microdata Area)	
District of Columbia (West) PUMA; District of Columbia	48.2
District of Columbia (North) PUMA; District of Columbia	45
District of Columbia (Northeast) PUMA; District of Columbia	60
District of Columbia (East) PUMA; District of Columbia	37.5
District of Columbia (Central) PUMA; District of Columbia	63.5
District of Columbia (South Central) PUMA; District of Columbia	59.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Employment Status by Disability Type

The U.S. Census estimates employment status and disability type for 18 to 64. The highest employment rates among those reporting a disability in D.C. are individuals reporting a cognitive disability (39.9%) and an ambulatory difficulty (31.7%). Self-care difficulty is the least frequently reported disability category among those employed and reporting a disability in the Nation and the D.C. Table 33 contains one-year data from 2022 for the United States and D.C.

Table 33: *Employment Status by Disability Status and Type: U.S. and D.C.*

Employment Status by Disability Status and Type: U.S. and D.C.	United States	District of Columbia
Total 18 - 64 years:	199,645,753	452,173
In labor force:	78.5%	82.3%
Employed:	95.8%	95.0%
With a disability	6.5%	5.7%
Hearing	23.6%	13.7%

Vision	22.1%	23.2%
Cognitive	41.1%	39.9%
Ambulatory	26.6%	31.7%
Self-care	6.1%	4.8%
Independent Living	18.9%	15.3%
No disability	93.5%	94.3%
Unemployed:	4.2%	5.0%
With a disability	15.1%	13.0%
No disability	84.9%	87.0%
Not in labor force:	21.5%	17.7%
With a disability	26.1%	22.3%
No disability	73.9%	77.7%
LFP employed & unemployed w/ disability	6.9%	6.1%
LFP employed & unemployed w/o disability	93.1%	93.9%
Total Pop w/ disability	11.0%	8.9%
Total Pop w/o disability	89.0%	91.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Employment status by disability status data from the U.S. Census Bureau is available for ages 18 to 64 in the D.C. wards. Employment and disability type data are not available for the wards. Table 34 addresses employment status and disability estimated for the population aged 18 to 64 in the D.C. wards. This information is presented to help VR engage in strategic planning for the future.

Table 34: *Employment Status by Disability Status: Wards*

Employment Status by Disability Status: Wards				
	Ward 1	**Ward 2**	**Ward 3**	**Ward 4**
Total 18 - 64 years:	61,556	63,320	50,199	52,907
In labor force:	87.6%	80.0%	82.5%	84.7%
Employed:	95.4%	96.8%	96.3%	93.2%
With a disability	3.8%	3.2%	2.4%	4.1%
No disability	96.2%	96.8%	97.6%	95.9%
Unemployed:	4.6%	3.2%	3.7%	6.8%
With a disability	22.1%	12.0%	12.0%	8.4%
No disability	77.9%	88.0%	88.0%	91.6%

Not in labor force:	12.4%	20.0%	17.5%	15.3%
With a disability	22.1%	11.4%	11.7%	30.0%
No disability	77.9%	88.6%	88.3%	70.0%
LFP employed & unemployed w/ disability	4.7%	3.4%	2.8%	4.4%
LFP employed & unemployed w/o disability	95.3%	96.6%	97.2%	95.6%
Total Pop w/ disability	6.8%	5.0%	4.4%	8.3%
Total Pop w/o disability	93.2%	95.0%	95.6%	91.7%
	Ward 5	**Ward 6**	**Ward 7**	**Ward 8**
Total 18 - 64 years:	60,770	61,731	53,921	51,158
In labor force:	81.4%	88.7%	77.2%	74.7%
Employed:	92.2%	96.7%	84.5%	84.2%
With a disability	5.1%	3.7%	7.5%	7.4%
No disability	94.9%	96.3%	92.5%	92.6%
Unemployed:	7.8%	3.3%	15.5%	15.8%
With a disability	17.1%	14.2%	17.3%	15.6%
No disability	82.9%	85.8%	82.7%	84.4%
Not in labor force:	18.6%	11.3%	22.8%	25.3%
With a disability	32.1%	21.7%	34.4%	38.0%
No disability	67.9%	78.3%	65.6%	62.0%
LFP employed & unemployed w/ disability	6.0%	4.0%	9.0%	8.7%
LFP employed & unemployed w/o disability	94.0%	96.0%	91.0%	91.3%
Total Pop w/ disability	10.8%	6.0%	14.8%	16.1%
Total Pop w/o disability	89.2%	94.0%	85.2%	83.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Agency-Specific Data Related to Overall Performance

General Information for All Individuals Served

The SDSU project team requested data from DCRSA on overall agency performance and case movement. The data provided by DCRSA is presented in the applicable areas throughout the report. Table 35 contains general information for all DCRSA consumers for Program Years 2020-2022.

Table 35: General Data for all DCRSA clients PYs 2020-2022

Item	All Participants		
	2020	**2021**	**2022**
Applications	1450	1410	1253
Percent of all applications	100%	100%	100%
Percent of apps found eligible	81%	94%	92%
Percent of apps that had a determination made within 60 days	77%	88%	87%
Significance of Disability	1992	2250	3485
Disabled	47	75	46
% of total	2%	3%	1%
Significant	557	585	928
% of total	28%	26%	27%
Most significant	1388	1590	2511
% of total	70%	71%	72%
Percent closed prior to IPE development	1%	1%	1%
Plans developed	1242	1266	914
Percent of plans developed within 90 days	98%	96%	98%
Number of consumers in training by type			
Vocational	89	98	482
Undergraduate	728	555	511
Graduate	82	55	49
Credential attainment rate	60%	52%	55%
MSG Rate	16%	16%	16%
Number of cases closed rehabilitated	612	651	625
Employment rate at exit	38%	42%	44%
Employment rate in 2nd quarter after exit	21%	35%	56%
Employment rate in 4th quarter after exit	5%	33%	51%
Median wages of all exited participants	$15	$15.50	$16.50
Total number of cases served	2640	2977	4582
Avg. cost of all cases	$3,006	$3,100.13	$3,099.66
Avg. cost of cases closed rehabilitated	$6,221	6,375.85	$6,476.39
Avg. cost per case closed unsuccessful	$2,581	$2,917.60	$2,631.07
Avg. cost per case closed prior to plan	$49	$77.85	$24.52

The data indicates the number of individuals who applied for services from DCRSA decreased from 1450 in PY 2020, amid the pandemic, to 1253 in 2022. The reduced number of applications in PY 2022 deviates from a national trend of SVRA's rebounding after the pandemic, demonstrating an increase in applications and enrollments. With 68,270 individuals with disabilities between the ages of 16-64, there is a significant number of individuals who could

avail themselves of DCRSA services provided the opportunity. However, the percentage of applications found eligible across the three years ranges from 81% (PY20) to 94% (PY21) and 92% (PY22), with a consistent rate of those applicants found eligible within 60 days, moving from 77% (PY20) to 88% (PY21) to 87% (PY22). The required threshold for this from U.S. RSA in their monitoring reviews is a minimum of 90% of applicants found eligible for two consecutive quarters. DCRSA should work to close this gap and bring the agency into compliance with eligibility determinations within 60 days, as required by 34 CFR 361.42.

Further, it should be emphasized that the impact of the delays in eligibility determinations is more than a compliance concern. Delays in engagement can lead to job seekers desiring to forgo services due to frustration, trust, or other pressing matters. Similarly, the number of IPEs developed by DCRSA decreased from PY20 to PY22 by 328 individuals, and the percentage of those found eligible that then moved to a plan also reduced from 86% in PY20 to 73% in PY22. When combined, these data points highlight a need for a robust outreach and engagement effort to ensure the employment needs of DC residents with disabilities are not unmet and for a thorough analysis of the processes to determine any root causes of these issues.

Next, a review of the DCRSA data indicates the number of individuals receiving training support has decreased in the graduate and undergraduate arenas by nearly 250 individuals, but the number engaged in vocational training increased significantly – by almost 400 people. This influx should be explored in more detail to understand the cause and determine if the increase in vocational training leads to better employment outcomes, measurable skill gains, or credential attainment. In fact, according to the RSA 911 Case Service Data, the Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) rate for DCRSA for PY22 was 35.5% compared to the national average of 43.3%. Given the influx of those attending vocational training in PY22, it will be critical for DCRSA to review their PY23 and PY24 data to understand if the training received in PY22 led to employment outcomes in future years.

The overall employment rate at exit of individuals ranged from 38-44% across the three years from 2020-2022. On the other hand, participants of DCRSA experienced more dramatically increased employment rates in the second quarter after exit over the three years, moving from 21% to 56%, and thereby above the national average of 48.6%. The employment rate in the fourth quarter after exit also increased from 5% in PY20 to 51% in PY22—again, well above the national average of 44%. This increase should be analyzed and monitored closely to better understand the contributing drivers to these increases. The median wage of all exited participants moved from $15.00 hr. (PY20) to $16.50 hr. (PY22). While this demonstrates a modest increase in the average hourly rate, it does not account for the variance in hours worked at this wage, which would be reflected in a median quarterly wage report. As such, this trend should be explored more deeply, particularly considering an increased minimum wage over time, which mandated a $15 per hour minimum wage in 2020, $15.20 in 2021, and $16.10 in 2022. This means the average salary for individuals who received support from DCRSA in those years kept pace with the required minimum wage. On an annualized basis, this indicates that DCRSA consumers are earning $16,654 less than their peers with disabilities and $43,837 less than their peers without disabilities.

Finally, the average cost for all cases remained consistent across all populations. However, in contrast, the average cost for individuals who closed successfully increased by $255 during this period. This is a positive trend of keeping cost increases down.

General Information by Gender and Age

The SDSU project team requested data from DCRSA by gender to explore potential differences in services for any group. Table 36 contains the results of this analysis.

Table 36: *General Data by Gender and Age*

Item	Year		
	2020	**2021**	**2022**
Percent of female consumers	47%	49%	49%
Percent of male consumers	53%	51%	51%
Employment rate at exit for females	40%	43%	47%
Employment rate at exit for males	37%	39%	41%
Median earnings of those closed as successfully rehabilitated - female	$15.00	$15.50	$16.50
Median earnings of those closed as successfully rehabilitated - male	$15.00	$15.40	$16.50
Avg. cost of cases closed rehabilitated - females	$5,336.37	$6,856.42	$6,892.12
Avg. cost of cases closed rehabilitated - males	$7,457.04	$6,361.77	$6,688.79
Percent of all served - Ages 14-24	29%	36%	36%
Percent of all served - 25-64	66%	60%	59%
Percent of all served - 65 and over	5%	4%	5%

The data from the period indicates that those identified as male applied for services at a rate 6% percent higher than females. Yet females consistently achieved higher employment rates at exit, with gaps as high as 6% in PY22 and as low as 3% in PY20. Yet, no significant differences were observed in median earnings over the three years. The cost of closed cases varies by year and by gender, where the cost for a successful case closure in 20 was $2121.67 for males, yet in PY21 and 22, the costs of closures for females were $494.64 and $203.33 higher. Next, the data demonstrates consistency in service delivery across age categories. Given the emphasis on serving youth, particularly students, DCRSA should explore this in greater detail, considering potential changes in the law and the current focus on serving students and youth more broadly. When comparing the population size to expenditures (see Table 37), a significant amount of funds are being directed at the youth/student population.

Table 37: *Case Service Expenditures*

Expenditure by Service Category			
Service Category	**Amount spent per program year**		
	2020	**2021**	**2022**
Assessment	147,508.39	218,597.52	285,250.46
Career Services: Employment Services, Customized, Counseling and Guidance	1,371,203.23	1,751,971.60	1,564,128.20
Pre-Employment Services	2,936,366.45	2,900,522.79	2,936,626.09

Training: Disability Related Skills, On-the-job, Occupational Skills, Job Readiness, Vocational, Apprenticeship, Basic Academic Remedial or Literacy	1,073,619.96	1,083,644.59	1,613,398.88
Community college or Four-year college/Universities	1,958,723.27	1,572,267.78	1,413,413.55
Assistive Technology	43,072.96	31,374.49	24,629.01
Interpreter/translator	98,352.21	81,538.21	128,717.02
Benefits Counseling	0	0	0
Transportation Support	2,501.16	3,908.00	82.50
Reading and literacy Services	0	0	0
Personal Assistance Services	0	0	0
Maintenance	90,712.07	114,315.50	128,287.50
Other Goods and Services	1,558,955.56	2,568,181.00	2,020,043.02

Case Service Expenditures

The SDSU project team examined the case service expenditures by category for DCRSA for the three years under study. The examination explored the primary service categories outlined in Table 37 but is not a specific case service code analysis. Three categories (i.e., benefits counseling, reading and literacy services, and personal assistance services) did not include expenditures.

The expenditure data provided by DCRSA indicates that Pre-Employment Transition Services and Other Goods and Services comprise the most significant percentage (48-53%) of case service dollars spent from 2020 to 2022. Depending on the program year, career services, training, and post-secondary educational support all see a similar expenditure commitment of 10-20%. These expenditures demonstrate a clear commitment to the transition process and education but a more minor focus on careers. This warrants further investigation to understand the impact this may have on adults seeking support from DCRSA to ensure equitable access to services.

Survey Results by Type

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

The Overall Performance section of the report presents general information about the individual survey respondents and responses to questions that address consumer perspectives about DCRSA's overall performance. Results consistent with the other report portions will be reported in those sections.

Surveys were distributed electronically via Qualtrics, a web-based survey application. There were 694 respondents to the individual survey. In some cases, individual respondents chose not to answer select questions on the survey but did complete and submit the entire survey. This accounts for the variance in survey responses to some questions.

Individual Survey: Respondent Demographics

Individuals participating in the survey were presented with three questions to obtain basic demographic information regarding survey participants.

Age of Respondents

Individual survey respondents were asked to identify their age. A total of 525 respondents indicated their age. The most significant percentage of respondents were between 25 and 64 (75.2 percent), followed by individuals under 25 (14.7 percent). Table 38 summarizes the age of the respondents.

Table 38: *Individual Survey: Age of Respondents*

Age Range of Respondents	Number	Percent
25-64	395	75.2%
under 25	77	14.7%
65 and over	53	10.1%
Total	525	100.0%

Gender

Respondents were also asked to describe their gender. Five hundred twenty-four respondents answered the question. Most respondents (98.1%, n=514) indicated they were either male or female. Ten respondents selected non-binary or transgender survey options or declined to identify their gender. Table 39 contains the survey results in response to the question regarding gender.

Table 39: *Individual Survey: Gender*

Gender	Number	Percent
Female	309	59.0%
Male	205	39.1%
Prefer not to say	6	1.2%
Non-binary	3	0.6%
Transgender	1	0.2%
Genderqueer	0	0.0%
Gender not listed	0	0.0%
Total	524	100.0%

Region of DC Residence

Respondents were asked to identify the local region of D.C. where they live to determine the DCRSA service region where the respondent receives vocational rehabilitation services. The results of this question are almost equally divided and reflect the state's total population, as the District of Columbia's population is almost equally divided among the 8 Wards, with the percentage rates ranging between 11.6 percent and 13.4 percent. Notably, 13.4 percent of the DC population resides in Ward 5, and about 13.4 percent live in Ward 7. Table 40 details the survey results.

Table 40: *Individual Survey: Region of DC Residence*

Region of Residence	Number	Percent
Northwest	160	31.5%

Southeast	160	31.5%
Northeast	149	29.3%
Southwest	28	5.5%
I am not sure	11	2.2%
Total	508	100.0%

Individual Survey: Specific Disability Types

Specific Disabilities

Respondents were presented with a checklist and asked to identify their disability(ies). Individual survey respondents were asked one question regarding their disability. A total of 499 individuals identified their disabilities. The margin of difference between the most frequently cited disability by individual survey respondents (mental health) and physical disability, the second most cited disability in response to the question, is about 16 percent. Items listed in the narrative comments in response to the item "other" included various physical and learning disabilities: arthritis; absent seizures; ADHD; amputations; autoimmune disorder; bipolar disorder; low vision/blindness; cancer; blood disorder; dyslexia; epilepsy; GERD; HIV; PTSD; thyroid disease; lupus; sociopath; spinal cord injury; and recovered substance abuse. Table 41 details the survey results in response to the question.

Table 41: *Individual Survey: Specific Disabilities*

Specific Disabilities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Mental Health	214	42.9%
Physical	133	26.7%
Intellectual Disability (ID)	93	18.6%
Other (please describe)	85	17.0%
Developmental Disability (DD)	72	14.4%
Mobility	66	13.2%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	53	10.6%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	37	7.4%
Substance use disorder	**33**	**6.6%**
Communication	30	6.0%
Traumatic Brain Injury	27	5.4%
No impairment	23	4.6%
Deaf-Blind	11	2.2%
Total	877	

Individual Survey: Association with DCRSA

Individuals who responded to the survey were asked two questions: one asking them to identify the statement that best described their association with DCRSA and the other asking them to identify their consumer status and reasons for seeking DCRSA assistance.

Consumer Status

A narrow majority of respondents (32.1%) indicated they were current consumers of DCRSA. Thirty-five individuals out of the 40 respondents who selected "other" and provided a narrative response stated that they were past consumers, potential consumers who ended up not receiving services, parents, family members of current or former consumers, referral partners, former RSA contractual workers, consumers who received DCRSA services in Virginia, and current consumers who are not sure if they have services. The responses to this question appear in Table 42.

Table 42: *Individual Survey: Consumer Status*

Consumer Association with DCRSA	Number	Percent
I am a current consumer of DCRSA	179	32.1%
I am a previous consumer of DCRSA, my case has been closed	169	30.3%
I have never used the services of DCRSA	91	16.3%
I am not familiar with DCRSA	78	14.0%
Other (please describe)	40	7.2%
Total	557	100.0%

Length of Association with DCRSA

The survey asked respondents to identify the statement that best described their length of association with DCRSA. Although about 38% of the respondents reported that they had been associated with DCRSA for one year or less than one year, roughly 35 percent of the 370 respondents indicated that they had been associated with DCRSA for two to five years. The responses to this question appear in Table 43.

Table 43: *Individual Survey: Length of Association with DCRSA*

Length of Association with DCRSA	Number	Percent
2-5 years	129	34.9%
Less than 1 year	84	22.7%
1 year	57	15.4%
10 years or greater	56	15.1%
6-9 years	44	11.9%
Total	370	100.0%

Individual Survey: Relationship with Counselor

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their relationship with their DCRSA counselor.

Meeting Location

When asked where they usually met with their counselor, over one-third of the respondents indicated they do not have a DCRSA counselor. One-quarter of the respondents indicated that

they meet remotely by phone. Four percent meet with their counselor remotely by video conference. Table 44 summarizes the meeting locations reported by respondents.

Table 44: *Individual Survey: Meeting Location*

Meeting Location	Number	Percent
I don't have an DCRSA counselor	146	36.3%
I go to the DCRSA office	119	3.0%
We meet remotely by phone	100	24.9%
In my community/school	21	5.2%
We meet remotely by video conference	16	4.0%
Total	402	

Number of DCRSA Counselors

A separate question asked respondents to indicate how many counselors they have had. Nearly 25 percent of the 402 respondents reported needing a counselor. Respondents with three or more counselors make up 19.6 percent of the respondents (n=79). Table 45 includes the survey results.

Table 45: *Individual Survey: Number of DCRSA Counselors*

Number of DCRSA Counselors	Number	Percent
1	134	33.3%
I have never had a DCRSA counselor	99	24.6%
2	90	22.4%
3	31	7.7%
More than 4	29	7.2%
4	19	4.7%
Total	402	100%

Ability to Reach a Counselor

Individual survey respondents were presented with a five-point response scale (with responses ranging from "always" to "never") and asked to indicate how often they were able to reach their counselor when needed. Almost an equal number of the respondents stated that they were either "sometimes," "usually," or "always" able to reach their counselor when needed. In contrast, most respondents cited never being able to connect to their counselor. The responses to this question are found in Table 46.

Table 46: *Individual Survey: Ability to Reach a Counselor*

Ability to Reach Counselor	Number	Percent
Never	99	25.8%
Sometimes	85	22.1%
Always	84	21.9%
Usually	81	21.1%

Rarely	35	9.1%
Total	384	100.0%

Ability to Get Along with Counselor

Respondents were presented with another five-point response scale (with responses ranging from "extremely well" to "not well") and asked to rate their ability to get along with their counselor. Although a narrow majority (slightly more than one-fourth) of the 377 respondents selected "extremely well" when asked how well they get along with their counselor, one-fourth preferred not to indicate how well they got along. The response results are identified in Table 47.

Table 47: *Individual Survey: Getting Along with Counselor*

Getting Along with Counselor	Number	Percent
Extremely well	107	28.4%
Prefer not to say	95	25.2%
Well	91	24.1%
Moderately well	52	13.8%
Not well	32	8.5%
Total	377	100.0%

Individual Survey: DCRSA Services Delivered Remotely Since COVID

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DCRSA offices modified service delivery for consumers to include remote services. Individual survey respondents were asked two questions regarding the remote services.

Services Delivered Remotely Since COVID

Individual respondents were provided a list of services and asked to identify the services delivered to them remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Slightly more than one-third of the survey respondents (n=202 out of 389) who answered the question indicated that they did not receive remote DCRSA services during the COVID pandemic. Less than 15% of respondents indicated receiving career counseling services. Of the 68 narrative responses received, 36 responses (slightly more than 50% of the responses) indicated phrases such as "none," "I don't know," or "never," along with various frustrations about why help was not received. The remaining responses indicated items including but not limited to counseling services, education/tuition/scholarship assistance, orientation and mobility training, assessments, paperwork completion, job search skills, transportation assistance, and securing employment.

Table 48: *Individual Survey: DCRSA Services Delivered Remotely Since COVID*

DCRSA Services Delivered Remotely Since COVID	Number	Percent
I have not received any services from DCRSA remotely during the pandemic	202	37.1%
Career Counseling	80	14.7%
Other (please describe)	77	14.2%
Job development and/or job placement	75	13.8%

Job support to keep a job	45	8.3%
Benefits counseling	40	7.4%
Assistive technology	25	4.6%
Total	544	100.0%

Effectiveness of DCRSA Remote Services

The respondents who utilized remote services were asked to rate the effectiveness of the services. One hundred eighty-two respondents answered the subsequent question. A gap of 13.2% and a difference of 24 respondents separates the "effective" and "somewhat effective" options when rating the effectiveness of DCRSA's remote services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Roughly 32% of respondents (n=58) indicated that remote services during the pandemic were either "somewhat less effective" or "not effective at all." Table 49 details the effectiveness ratings for remote services as cited by respondents

Table 49: *Individual Survey: Effectiveness of Remote Services*

Effectiveness of Remote Services	Number	Percent
Effective	74	40.7%
Somewhat effective	50	27.5%
Not effective at all	38	20.9%
Somewhat less effective	20	11.0%
Total	182	100.0%

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Survey: Respondent Characteristics

The first survey question asked partners to classify their organization. All organization categories were represented in the survey except for Veterans' agencies. A narrow majority of respondents (22.1%) cited their organization as "other federal, state or local government entity." Organization types identified in the narrative comments included non-profits, transition programs, self-advocacy organizations, parents, academic services, and agencies serving individuals with disabilities. Table 50 identifies the organization types reported by partner respondents.

Table 50: *Partner Survey: Organization Type*

Organization Type	Number	Percent
Other Federal, State, or Local Government Entity	17	22.1%
Community Rehabilitation Program/Provider of VR Services	16	20.8%
Developmental Disability Organization	12	15.6%
Other (please describe)	10	13.0%
Individual Service Provider	7	9.1%
Secondary School	4	5.2%
Mental Health Provider	3	3.9%
Consumer Advocacy Organization	3	3.9%
Other Public or Private Organization	3	3.9%

Postsecondary school	1	1.3%
Medical Provider	1	1.3%
Veteran's Agency	0	0.0%
Total	77	100.0%

Partners were provided a list and asked to identify the part of the DC area their organization served. There was no limit to the number of regions a partner could choose. A total of 77 respondents answered the question. The results suggest that partner agencies are serving the entire DC area. Almost an equal number and percentage of the respondents serve in DCRSA's southeast and southwest regions. Table 51 includes this information.

Table 51: *Partner Survey: Region Served by Community Partner Organizations*

Area Work In	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Northeast	59	76.6%
Northwest	56	72.7%
Southwest	46	59.7%
Southeast	45	58.4%
Total	206	

Partners were given a list and asked to identify the consumer populations they worked with regularly. There were no limitations to the number of consumer populations a partner respondent could choose. A numeric difference of three partners (n=3) and a 4.6 percentage point difference exists between the consumer population of "individuals who are racial or ethnic minorities" (67.7%, n=44 partners) and "individuals from unserved or underserved populations" (63.1%, n=41 partners) in response to the question. An equal number of partners serve individuals with the most significant disabilities and individuals with autism spectrum disorder. The consumer population of "veterans" was identified least frequently by partners. Respondents who selected the "other" category reported various disability populations and ages. Two narrative comments identified that their agencies do not work directly with consumers.

Table 52: *Partner Survey: Consumer Populations Served Regularly*

Consumer Populations Served	Number of times chosen	Percent of total number of respondents
Individuals who are racial or ethnic minorities	44	67.7%
Individuals from unserved or underserved populations	41	63.1%
Individuals with the most significant disabilities	39	60.0%
Individuals with autism spectrum disorder	39	60.0%
Transition-age youth (14-24)	38	58.5%
Individuals who access supported employment	36	55.4%
Individuals who are deaf	23	35.4%
Individuals who are blind	22	33.8%

Individuals served by Department of Employment Services - American Job Center (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers)	17	26.2%
Veterans	11	16.9%
Other (please describe)	7	10.8%
Total	317	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: Respondent Characteristics

The first survey question asked staff to identify their job classification. Almost fifty-eight percent of the staff respondents identified as a vocational rehabilitation specialist. Table 53 details the job titles and the selections of the staff respondents.

Table 53: *Staff Survey: Staff Job Classification*

Job Classification	Number	Present
Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist	26	57.8%
Support Staff	8	17.8%
Supervisor/Manager	7	15.6%
Business Services Representative	2	4.4%
Administrator/Executive	2	4.4%
Total	45	100.0%

The second survey question asked staff to indicate the number of years they have held their current position. The results in Table 54 indicate most staff are relatively new to the job, serving in their current roles for one year and up to five years (43.2%).

Table 54: *Staff Survey: Years in Current Role*

Years in Current Role	Number	Percent
1-5 years	19	43.2%
6-10 years	10	22.7%
11-20 years	8	18.2%
21+ years	4	9.1%
Less than one year	3	6.8%
Total	44	100.0%

The third survey question asked staff respondents to identify the area(s) where they work. There was no limit to the number of response options a respondent could choose. A total of 33 staff responded to this survey item. Staff selected The Northwest area the fewest times in response to the question. Table 55 details the information.

Table 55: *Staff Survey: Regions Served*

Area Work In	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Southwest	24	72.7%
Northeast	12	36.4%
Southeast	10	30.3%
Northwest	9	27.3%

Total	55	

Staff Survey: Services that DCRSA is Most Effective in Providing

Respondents were provided a list of 18 items related to the organization's overall performance and asked to identify the services that DCRSA delivers most effectively to consumers, directly or through community partners. There was no limit to the number of items a staff respondent could choose. A total of 35 staff responded to the question.

Almost 75 percent of staff cited "job development," and nearly 63 percent cited "job training" as the services DCRSA provides most to consumers. The open-ended category "other" was selected by four respondents. Two items mentioned in the narrative comments were "counseling and guidance" and "pre-ETS." Table 56 lists the services, the number of times each item was selected, and the percent of the total number of respondents that answered the question.

Table 56: *Staff Survey: Services DCRSA is Most Effective in Providing Consumers Directly or Through Partners*

Services Most Effectively Delivered by Service Providers	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Job development services	26	74.3%
Job training services (TWE, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)	22	62.9%
Other education services	15	42.9%
Assistive technology	15	42.9%
Benefit planning assistance	11	31.4%
Other transportation assistance	9	25.7%
Career Ladder/Pathways counseling	9	25.7%
Mental health treatment	5	14.3%
STEM skills training	5	14.3%
Other (please describe)	4	11.4%
Substance use treatment	3	8.6%
Housing	3	8.6%
Financial literacy training	3	8.6%
Vehicle modification assistance	2	5.7%
Medical treatment	2	5.7%
Personal care attendants	2	5.7%
Health insurance	2	5.7%
Income assistance	1	2.9%
Total	139	

Staff Survey: Top Three Changes that Enable Staff to Better Serve Consumers

Staff were presented with a list of sixteen options and asked to identify the top three changes that would enable them to assist consumers better. A total of thirty-six staff responded to this question. The top three changes identified by staff were smaller caseloads, better data management tools, and more streamlined processes. The four narrative responses received cited acquiring a new case management system, providing job training and development after intake that includes computer skills, internet skills, interviewing skills, and soft skills, and

reducing caseloads to less than 200. Table 57 details the staff responses identifying the top three changes that would enable them to serve DCRSA consumers better.

Table 57: *Staff Survey: Top Three Changes that Enable Staff to Better Serve Consumers*

Top Three Changes to Better Serve RSA Consumers	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Smaller caseload	17	47.2%
Better data management tools	10	27.8%
More streamlined processes	9	25.0%
Accountability for poor performance by service providers	8	22.2%
More effective community-based service providers	7	19.4%
Additional training	7	19.4%
Better assessment tools	6	16.7%
Improved business partnerships	6	16.7%
More administrative support	5	13.9%
More community-based service providers for specific services	5	13.9%
More supervisor support	4	11.1%
Other (please describe)	4	11.1%
Increased outreach to consumers	4	11.1%
Increased options for technology use to communicate with consumers	3	8.3%
Incentives for high performing service providers	3	8.3%
Increased collaboration with other workforce partners including Job Centers	3	8.3%
Total	101	

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

In exploring the overall performance of DCRSA in supporting the needs of individuals with disabilities to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment (CIE), several themes emerged. There are needs related to:

- Expediting access to job placement opportunities. A lack or reduced sense of urgency was a highlighted concern regarding direct work with agency staff to find employment. Individuals reported the process of accessing services and the array of steps once eligibility is determined, which all serve as barriers to timely job placement.
- Enhancing the use of communication tools to support strong connections with clients. Clients expressed a desire for more direct and frequent communication. It was highlighted that communication preferences are very individualized, and therefore, how clients want to engage (i.e., text, phone, email, in-person) will vary and should be considered by the counselors.
- Increasing responsiveness of counselors with clients. Limited follow-through on requests demonstrates counselors' inconsistency, leading to client delays and frustration. Clients reported needing a consistent protocol for the cadence of follow-up, and often, clients wondered about the next step in the process.

- Expanding access to services beyond DCRSA's centralized office location and increasing the visibility of DCRSA programs in the overall D.C. community. Individuals who resided in Wards 7 and 8 reported a need for access to services in community locations that were easy to get to and familiar to them.

- Broadening skills assessment versus relying on a resume (i.e., a job history) to determine job goals. Some respondents feel that a strong focus on the resume only deters them from the other skills they have to offer employers.

- Recognizing the broad array of barriers and challenges faced by people with disabilities and the intersection of disability and other identity factors (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomics, and location). Individuals indicated that, in some instances, they did not feel all the barriers they faced were effectively acknowledged.

- Increasing support to address the work-related stress of professionals supporting individuals receiving services through DCRSA. Professionals in the field highlighted the stress associated with working there and recognized they do not always have appropriate outlets available to support this stress.

- Expanding career advancement opportunities throughout D.C. While employment was highlighted as a focus area, some respondents reported wanting to focus on careers vs. just any job.

- Focusing on financial empowerment and literacy for individuals to ensure movement toward self-sufficiency. There was an ongoing theme about the difficulty of the economy and the cost of living. Many people do not know how to overcome the benefits challenges.

- Increasing the quality of the services delivered by DCRSA. Some respondents highlighted the quality of services (i.e., communication, engagement, nature of support) that DCRSA offered.

- Increasing trust between the D.C. government and residents. Several references throughout the discussions with participants regarding the lack of confidence in government. This is a barrier that should not be underestimated.

- Supporting a more robust case management and communication facilitation within and outside DCRSA.

- Offering viable transportation options across all areas of D.C. As in many states and localities, transportation is a concern. In D.C. the areas that fell off the metro line were of the greatest concern.

- Using electronic and information/technology vs. paperwork and in-person signatures. Respondents expressed concern about the "old-school" way of working and wondered why more technology could not be used.

- Focusing attention on building job readiness skills training for individuals with disabilities.

- Reviewing the mechanics of the eligibility process. The timing and process for eligibility was a concern raised, as it often added confusion and concerns about trust/follow-through into the relationship.

- Expanding knowledge of counselors to include cultural competency. Some respondents offered considerations about staff needing to fully understand the cultural lens through which individuals look at the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. DCRSA should explore options to locate counselors in satellite or co-located offices to reach clients in all areas of D.C.

2. DCRSA is encouraged to create a training and staff development advisory group to inform the development and subsequent revisions of the New Employee Orientation process to ensure that it is comprehensive and designed to build initial capacity.

3. DCRSA is encouraged to develop a series of professional development training for VR staff and provider organizations to understand the broad needs of individuals with disabilities.

4. DCRSA is encouraged to review and revise the communication protocols and expectations with counselors and establish new performance standards to facilitate client relationships.

5. DCRSA may consider a broad outreach campaign, including opportunities for all staff to engage in community events to build public trust in the agency.

6. DCRSA may consider initiating projects focusing on career pathways and emerging fields (e.g., STEM, AI, etc.) to offer new opportunities to D.C. residents with disabilities.

7. DCRSA is encouraged to formulate an internal task force focused on improving processes such as eligibility, referral, client participation, engagement, retention, and overall service delivery quality. The development of data-sharing agreements should be considered.

8. DCRSA should consider utilizing a more robust annual satisfaction survey to focus on understanding the root causes of challenges arising in the system, with solutions created to address the challenges.

9. DCRSA should explore partnerships with other DC agencies to address housing, mental health, and other basic needs of individuals with disabilities.

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

Section II assesses 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 the general needs of DCRSA consumers were included here, with specific needs identified relating to supported and customized employment.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following themes emerged around the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services.

- Accessing additional or creative accommodations to support people with complex needs in finding and maintaining employment.
- Improving the availability of supported employment and job coaching services for all people with disabilities, particularly those from the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.
- Providing individualized attention and person-centered support rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Accessing support from DCRSA counselors for those experiencing significant mental health challenges.
- Navigating and supporting individuals with the disclosure of significant hidden disabilities.
- Using diverse and specialized services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Broadening access to on-the-job training or apprenticeship programs to advance entry-level skills and employment.
- Addressing the significant financial insecurity felt by D.C. residents, with many individuals relying on public benefits and reporting a need for money management skills.
- Ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities have the necessary job skills and training to succeed.
- Reducing caseload sizes will allow maximum time for individuals with more complex needs.

National and Agency-Specific Data Related to the Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities, Including Their Need for Supported Employment

The project team examined the number and rate of applicants by disability type for DCRSA to determine the demographic makeup of the agency's clients. The results of this analysis are contained in Table 58.

Table 58: *DCRSA Applicants by Disability Type*

Disability	Number of Applications by Year		
	2020	**2021**	**2022**
Visual Impairment			
Percent of all applications	2%	3%	2%
Physical Impairments			
Percent of all applications	14%	9%	12%
Communicative Impairments			
Percent of all applications	5%	3%	3%

ID/DD or other Cognitive			
Percent of all applications	36%	44%	34%
Mental Health Impairments			
Percent of all applications	43%	41%	49%

The data shows that individuals with mental health impairments represent the most significant percentage of DCRSA service applicants, followed by those with intellectual/developmental disabilities (ID/DD) or other cognitive impairments. Over a three-year period, applicants with mental health impairments and ID/DD together account for 82% of individuals seeking DCRSA services. However, since a higher percentage of D.C.'s overall population reports ambulatory or visual impairments, DCRSA may have an opportunity to explore outreach in these areas to ensure that the needs of all individuals are addressed.

Table 59: *DCRSA Applicants Receiving Supported Employment and SSA Benefits*

	Supported Employment			SSA Beneficiaries		
	2020	**2021**	**2022**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Applications	429	410	356	471	450	392
Percent of all applications	30%	29%	28%	62%	63%	62%

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The project team conducted a more in-depth analysis of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, focusing on those classified under supported employment (refer to Table 59). On average, 62% of the individuals served by DCRSA receive benefits from the SSA. Given the presumed eligibility for VR services among SSA beneficiaries, it is likely that most of these individuals will receive more intensive support. This group includes individuals identified as having the most significant disabilities.

Survey Results by Type

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS – MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

Individual Survey: Receipt of Social Security Benefits

Individual survey respondents were presented with a checklist and asked to indicate whether they received Social Security disability benefits. The total number of respondents who answered this question is 485. Based on the table data, the inference can be made that almost one-half of the individual survey respondents do not receive Social Security benefits. Table 60 summarizes the responses to this question. Note that individuals were allowed to select multiple options in the series of items (e.g., in the case of an individual who received both SSI and SSDI).

Table 60: *Individual Survey: Social Security Benefit Status*

Social Security Benefits Status	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
I do not receive Social Security disability benefits	239	49.3%
I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance. SSDI is provided to individuals that have worked in the past and is based on the amount of money the individual paid into the system through payroll deductions)	102	21.0%
I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a means-tested benefit generally provided to individuals with little or no work history)	93	19.2%
I have received benefits in the past, but no longer receive them	51	10.5%
I receive a check from the Social Security Administration every month, but I do not know which benefit I get	29	6.0%
I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits	14	2.9%
Total	528	

Individual Survey: Finances and Money Management

The survey team included questions to identify respondents' financial management competency and how fiscal issues impact their ability to function independently. Respondents to the individual survey were asked four questions regarding finances and money management.

Financial Situation

Respondents were given a list of statements and asked to identify each statement that describes their financial situation. A total of 335 respondents participated in answering this survey item. Note that roughly one-half of the respondents cited each statement in the table. Table 61 details the ratings for each of the statements.

Table 61: *Individual Survey: Financial Situation*

Financial Situation	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Because of my money situation, I feel like I will never have the things I want in life	171	51.0%
I am just getting by financially	169	50.4%
I am concerned the money I have, or will have, won't last	168	50.1%
Total	508	

Managing Money

Individual survey respondents were presented with a checklist of statements regarding money management and asked to indicate whether the item represents how they manage money. Although over 42 percent of respondents indicated they have monthly budgets in addition to checking accounts, the results suggest that roughly 89 percent of respondents need to invest money. About 40% of the respondents want to learn more about managing money. Table 62 contains the number of times respondents selected each item and the accompanying percentage rates for each item.

Table 62: *Individual Survey: Managing Money*

Managing Money	**Number**	**Percent of total number of respondents**
I have a checking account	182	50.4%
I have a monthly budget	154	42.7%
I would like to learn more about managing my money	144	39.9%
I have a savings account	114	31.6%
I invest my money	39	10.8%
Total	633	

Money Left by the End of the Month

Respondents were asked: "How often do you have money left over at the end of each month?" Of the 370 individuals who answered the question, the rating of "never" was selected by almost one-third of respondents, and roughly one-quarter of the respondents selected either "rarely" or "sometimes." Table 63 summarizes the details reported by respondents.

Table 63: *Individual Survey: Money Left by the End of the Month*

Money Left at the End of the Month	**Number**	**Percent**
Never	120	32.4%
Rarely	96	26.0%
Sometimes	94	25.4%
Always	36	9.7%
Often	24	6.5%
Total	370	100.0%

Finances Control Life

In the final survey question regarding finances and money management, individual survey respondents were presented with a five-point response scale (with responses ranging from "always" to "never") and asked to indicate how often they feel like finances control their lives. Most respondents selected "always," while 7.8% selected "rarely." Table 64 includes this information.

Table 64: *Individual Survey: Finances Control Life*

Finances Control Life	Number	Percent
Always	148	39.8%
Often	85	22.9%
Sometimes	73	19.6%
Never	37	10.0%
Rarely	29	7.8%
Total	372	100.0%

Individual Survey: Barriers to Employment

Individual survey respondents were asked questions to identify barriers to employment.

Identifying Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

Respondents were presented with a list of 19 potential barriers to getting a job and asked to indicate whether the item had been a barrier that impacted their ability to obtain a job. "Lack of training" was cited by more than one-third of the respondents (36.7%, n=158).

Seven items on the list (employers hesitant to hire people with disabilities; lack of job skills; lack of available jobs; employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability; age; lack of education; mental health concerns) were cited by over 25% of respondents, and the rates range between 25.8 to 29.5 percent of the total number of respondents (n=430) who answered the question. The two lowest-ranking barriers were limited English skills and substance abuse. Table 65 summarizes the barriers and the impact on getting a job.

Table 65: *Individual Survey: Identifying Barriers to Getting a Job*

Identify Barriers to Getting a Job	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of training	158	36.7%
Employers hesitant to hire individuals with disabilities	127	29.5%
Lack of job skills	125	29.1%
Lack of available jobs	118	27.4%
Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability	118	27.4%
Age	115	26.7%
Lack of education	112	26.0%
Mental health concerns	111	25.8%
Lack of job search skills	93	21.6%

Lack of reliable transportation	78	18.1%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	78	18.1%
Lack of housing	59	13.7%
Lack of assistive technology	43	10.0%
Criminal Record	37	8.6%
Lack of reliable Internet access	34	7.9%
Lack of childcare	25	5.8%
Lack of attendant care	21	4.9%
Limited English skills	13	3.0%
Substance use	12	2.8%
Total	1,477	

Top Three Barriers to Getting or Keeping a Job

Subsequently, individual survey respondents were asked to identify their top three barriers to getting or keeping a job. Four hundred individuals answered the question.

Two of the top three barriers to getting or keeping a job selected by individuals are listed in the top three positions cited most frequently in the question related to identifying barriers (lack of training; lack of job skills). The three items that ranked lowest and received less than a 2 percent response rate were also ranked in the last three positions in the previous Table 66 (lack of attendant care; substance abuse; limited English skills).

"Age" was not presented to survey respondents as an option in response to the question regarding top barriers, although it ranked 6th out of 19 on the "identify barrier" list. Table 66 contains the numeric count and percentage rates calculated for the items selected by the individual survey respondents in response to the question.

Table 66: *Individual Survey: Top Three Barriers to Getting or Keeping a Job*

Top Three Barriers to Getting or Keeping a Job	**Times identified as a barrier**	**Percent of number of respondents**
Lack of training	127	31.7%
Lack of job skills	107	26.7%
Lack of education	100	24.9%
Lack of available jobs	99	24.7%

Mental health concerns	96	23.9%
Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability	95	23.7%
Employers hesitant to hire individuals with disabilities	93	23.2%
Lack of job search skills	57	14.2%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	52	13.0%
Lack of reliable transportation	47	11.7%
Criminal Record	35	8.7%
Lack of housing	32	8.0%
Lack of assistive technology	21	5.2%
Lack of childcare	19	4.7%
Lack of reliable Internet access	14	3.5%
Lack of attendant care	7	1.7%
Substance use	7	1.7%
Limited English skills	6	1.5%
Total	1,014	

Other Barriers to Obtaining or Keeping a Job

Individuals were presented with an open-ended question asking them to identify other barriers they may have experienced that prevented them from getting a job. Ninety-seven individuals provided a narrative response to the question. Content analysis of the responses indicated the following are "other barriers" preventing respondents from obtaining or keeping a job: ageism; racism and Afrocentric racism as employers only hire people of color; gaps in employment; VR not assisting; physical limitations; health conditions; lack of training; still in high school; disability prevents from working; domestic violence; lack of work experience; scheduling conflicts with medical appointments; pay; lack of education; lack of health benefits; lack of jobs in field of choice, lack of networking supports; and not being selected after interviewing.

Individual Survey: Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services

Respondents were asked three questions regarding their experience accessing DCRSA services.

Barriers to Accessing DCRSA

Respondents were presented with a list of 11 questions describing potential barriers to accessing DCRSA services and asked to indicate whether the barrier had made it difficult for the respondent to access DCRSA services. A total of three hundred thirty respondents answered the question.

Almost half of the respondents cited a lack of information about available services as a barrier. Roughly one-fourth cited difficulty reaching DCRSA staff, difficulties scheduling meetings with the counselor, and a lack of disability-related accommodations as barriers. The least common barrier respondents chose, receiving a 4.8 percent rate, was language barriers.

Table 67: *Individual Survey: Identify Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services*

Identify Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of information about available services	158	47.9%
Difficulty reaching DCRSA staff	96	29.1%
Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor	84	25.5%
Lack of disability-related accommodations	77	23.3%
Other difficulties with DCRSA staff	69	20.9%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	55	16.7%
Reliable Internet access	55	16.7%
Difficulties completing the DCRSA application	39	11.8%
The DCRSA office is not on a public bus route	26	7.9%
DCRSA's hours of operation	25	7.6%
Language barriers	16	4.8%
Total	700	

Top Three Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services

Individual survey respondents were presented with a list and were asked to identify the three top barriers to accessing DCRSA services.

Although "lack of information about available services," "difficulty reaching DCRSA staff," and "other difficulties with DCRSA staff" were the three most frequently cited barriers to accessing DCRSA services, more than one-quarter of respondents indicated that they did not experience any barriers to accessing DCRSA, which was the second most frequently selected item in response to the question. Table 68 lists the barriers along with the number of times each of the barriers was cited.

Table 68: *Individual Survey: Top Three Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services*

Top 3 Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of information about available services	131	37.6%
I have not had any barriers to accessing DCRSA services	95	27.3%
Difficulty reaching DCRSA staff	88	25.3%
Other difficulties with DCRSA staff	81	23.3%
Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor	77	22.1%
Lack of disability-related accommodations	58	16.7%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	36	10.3%
Reliable Internet access	35	10.1%
Difficulties completing the DCRSA application	34	9.8%
The DCRSA office is not on a public bus route	24	6.9%
DCRSA's hours of operation	17	4.9%
Language barriers	10	2.9%
Total	686	

Other Challenges to Accessing DCRSA Services

Respondents were presented with a yes/no question asking if there were any additional challenges or barriers not previously mentioned that made it difficult to access DCRSA services. Of the 315 responses received, 90 indicated "yes," and 87 respondents provided a narrative response. Content analysis of the narrative responses revealed that 56 respondents (64.4% of n=87) detailed specific difficulties with DCRSA counselors and the DCRSA process that made accessing or receiving services difficult. Eight responses cited disability-related issues that prevented access to services. Two comments cited problems with obtaining education or obtaining computer skills. The remaining comments included a lack of metro funds, not receiving assistance with entrepreneurship, lack of accommodations, problems with SSI and PSH benefits, and a lack of financial resources from family. Afrocentric racism, lack of childcare, and limited English skills were each cited one time in the narrative comments.

Individual Survey: Employment Goals

Individual survey respondents were asked questions related to achieving their employment goals.

Current Employment Goal

Individual survey respondents were asked an open-ended question asking them to identify their current employment goal. A total of 308 survey participants responded to the question. One hundred narrative responses cited "wanting a job/be employed/finding employment" but did not specify the career or job type the consumer preferred. Eighty-two comments contain specific career positions or business types they want to own as the employment goal. Thirty-two comments identified salary amounts and income as their employment goal without specifying a type of job or career position. Nine narrative comments identified education pursuits as their employment goal, and nine comments cited maintaining their current position. Seven comments cited remote work as their employment goal. Fourteen comments cited desiring a federal job. Thirty-eight comments indicated none/unemployed/not sure/do not want to work in response to the question. Content analysis of the narrative responses suggests that at least one-half of the respondents do not know what type of job or what career path to pursue.

DCRSA Assistance with Progress Towards Employment Goal

Respondents answered a follow-up yes-no question: "Has DCRSA helped you progress toward your employment goal?" A narrow majority of 37.3 percent (n=148) of the respondents indicated that DCRSA helped them progress toward their employment goals, and 35.5 percent (n=141) stated that they did not receive assistance from DCRSA. Table 69 details the number of times a response choice was selected, and the percentage rate based on the number of respondents who answered the question.

Table 69: *Individual Survey: DCRSA Helped Progress to Employment Goal*

DCRSA Helped Progress to Employment Goal	Number	Percent
Yes	148	37.3%
No	141	35.5%
I have not worked with DCRSA	108	27.2%
Total	397	100.0%

Thought Towards Next Job

Individual survey respondents were asked whether they had thought about their next job once their employment goal was achieved. Respondents were provided with three response options. Roughly one-half of the respondents indicated "yes." Table 70 contains the number of times and the percentage rate that either yes, no, or the phrase "I don't know" was identified.

Table 70: *Individual Survey: Thought Towards Next Job*

Thought Towards Next Job	Number	Percent
Yes	183	49.7%
I don't know	96	26.1%
No	89	24.2%
Total	368	100.0%

Need Additional Training for Next Job

Respondents were also asked whether they would need more training or help to get their next job. Almost 72% of the 188 respondents who answered the question indicated "yes." Table 71 details the results.

Table 71: *Individual Survey: Need More Training or Help to Get Next Job*

Need More Training or Help to Get Next Job	Number	Percent
Yes	135	71.8%
I don't know	32	17.0%
No	21	11.2%
Total	188	100.0%

Individual Survey: How Can DCRSA Change to Help Get, Keep, or Obtain a Better Job

Individual respondents were asked an open-ended question asking them for suggestions on how DCRSA could change their services to help consumers get a job, keep their current job, or get a better job. A total of 274 survey participants responded to the question.

Over 50 comments had no suggestion as comments cited phrases "I do not need assistance/none/don't know." Keywords found in the narrative comments were "better communication," "assist," "communication," "provide information regarding services," and "understand and support." Twelve commented that they appreciated DCRSA and its services, while others cited specific frustration with DCRSA staff and counselors and suggested improvement. Quotes from the comments are:

- *"DCRSA has a tested measure that works well when finding a job. They give you the tools needed to succeed."*
- *"I primarily used DCRSA to support my higher education goals, which helped me to get my first job as an adult, and I was able to close my case successfully."*
- *"Putting you in touch with employers that the DCRSA have a relationship with, helping with training for a job."*
- *"DCRSA needs staff that can assist consumers with professional degrees."*
- *"Answer the phone and speak directly to the clients."*
- *"Communicate better and let more people know about their services."*
- *"More training needs to be available."*
- *"Be transparent. Set realistic expectations for clients. Honor commitments. Think about your policies and procedures from the client's perspective because they mentally strain clients."*

COMMUNITY PARTNER RESULTS – MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals
Partners were asked two questions regarding the barriers consumers face when pursuing their employment goals.

Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – General DCRSA Consumers

Partner survey respondents were given a list of 20 barriers and asked to identify the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers. The number of barriers a respondent could choose was unlimited.

Partner and individual survey respondents were asked similar questions regarding common barriers and had slightly different lists from which to choose. Partners and individual respondents agreed that more education, training and job skills were common/top consumer employment barriers. Narrative comments received in the category "other, please describe" are:

- *"Fear of losing SS benefits, which they think will make them ineligible for Medicaid, even though that it's true. They also lack financial literacy skills and support to understand the positive impact of earning."*

- *"How to deal with employee's needs for regular extended time off for disability-related healthcare."*

Table 72: *Partner Survey: Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - General VR Consumers*

Most Common Barriers to Employment Goals - General Consumers	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Little or no work experience	31	81.6%
Not having education or training	28	73.7%
Not having job skills	26	68.4%
Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities	25	65.8%
Not having job search skills	22	57.9%
Mental health issues	19	50.0%
Poor social skills	18	47.4%
Housing issues	17	44.7%
Convictions for criminal offenses	17	44.7%
Disability-related transportation issues	15	39.5%
Not having disability-related accommodations	14	36.8%
Language barriers	13	34.2%
Substance use issues	12	31.6%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	12	31.6%

Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care	11	28.9%
Childcare issues	10	26.3%
Not enough jobs available	9	23.7%
Other transportation issues	7	18.4%
Other health issues	6	15.8%
Other (please describe)	2	5.3%
Total	314	

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities

Partner survey respondents were given a list of 20 barriers, including an option for "other." They were asked to identify the barriers that prevent DCRSA consumers with the most significant disabilities from achieving their employment goals. The sample size was 36 respondents.

The top five barriers to achieving employment goals selected by partners for consumers with the most significant disabilities match the top five barriers partners cited for the general population of consumers. Two narrative comments in response to the item "other, please describe" are quoted:

- *"Fear of losing cash and healthcare benefits, and inadequately informed staff to guide them."*
- *"Understanding of DC's adult service system."*

Table 73 summarizes the partners' responses to the question.

Table 73: *Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities*

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Most Significant Disabilities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Little or no work experience	31	86.1%
Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities	27	75.0%
Not having education or training	26	72.2%
Not having job skills	22	61.1%
Not having job search skills	22	61.1%
Not having disability-related accommodations	19	52.8%
Mental health issues	19	52.8%
Disability-related transportation issues	18	50.0%

Poor social skills	18	50.0%
Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care	15	41.7%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	14	38.9%
Language barriers	12	33.3%
Not enough jobs available	12	33.3%
Other transportation issues	10	27.8%
Substance use issues	10	27.8%
Housing issues	10	27.8%
Other health issues	7	19.4%
Convictions for criminal offenses	7	19.4%
Childcare issues	4	11.1%
Other (please describe)	2	5.6%
Total	305	

Partner Survey: Top Three Reasons for Difficulty Accessing VR Services

Respondents were presented with a question prompting them to indicate the top three reasons people with disabilities might find it difficult to access DCRSA services. Twelve response options were provided.

Two top reasons are discovered when reviewing the partners' responses to the question. "Slow service delivery" was identified by slightly more than one-third of partners and ranked as the partners' top reason why people with disabilities have difficulty accessing DCRSA services. The second top reason, selected by one-quarter of the partners, relates to DCRSA staff meeting consumers in the communities where the consumers live. Partners identified four items an equal number of times, which deflects determining the partners' choice for the third top reason why people with disabilities find it difficult to access services.

Table 74: *Partner Survey: Top Three Reasons for Difficulty Accessing DCRSA Services*

Top Three Reasons Difficulty Accessing DCRSA Services	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Slow service delivery	14	38.9%
VR staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	9	25.0%

Limited accessibility of DCRSA via public transportation	8	22.2%
Difficulties completing the application	8	22.2%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	8	22.2%
Inadequate assessment services	8	22.2%
Language barriers	7	19.4%
Other (please describe)	7	19.4%
Lack of options for the use of technology to communicate with DCRSA staff such as Zoom, Skype, text, etc.	7	19.4%
Other challenges related to the physical location of the DCRSA office	6	16.7%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	6	16.7%
Difficulties accessing training or education programs	6	16.7%
Total	94	

Partner Survey: Most Important Change DCRSA Could Make to Better Serve Individuals with Disabilities

Partner survey respondents were presented with an open-ended question and asked to identify the most crucial change DCRSA could make to serve individuals with disabilities better. Eighteen respondents provided a narrative response.

The "transportation" and "communication with consumers" were each mentioned three times in the narrative comments. Other comments included improving the quality of DCRSA counselors, improving training and providing more training for consumers, increasing the availability of vocational assessments, more outreach to bilingual consumers of various races and ethnic groups, smaller caseloads, hiring more counselors, and improving the speed of receiving services such as benefits counseling and approvals for services.

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS – MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – General DCRSA Consumers

Staff survey respondents were given a list of 26 barriers to employment and asked to identify the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for the general population of DCRSA consumers. The number of barriers a respondent could choose was unlimited.

Although the list presented to the staff was longer than the list given to partners, the top three items selected by staff match the top three common barriers identified by partners. One item

that ranked in the fourteenth position on the staff results list, "employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities," was the fourth choice of partners when asked to identify the top three barriers that prevent consumers from getting or keeping a job. Lack of internet access was selected by 20.6 percent of staff (n=7) and 7.9% (n=34) individual respondents who identified barriers to employment. Table 75 details the results of the staff questions from the survey.

Table 75: Staff Survey: Identify the Most Common Barriers to Employment Goals - General DCRSA Consumers

ID Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – General DCRSA Consumers	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Not having education or training	24	70.6%
Little or no work experience	24	70.6%
Not having job skills	22	64.7%
Not having job search skills	19	55.9%
Poor social skills	18	52.9%
Mental health issues	17	50.0%
Housing issues	16	47.1%
Childcare issues	15	44.1%
Convictions for criminal offenses	15	44.1%
Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways	15	44.1%
Substance use issues	13	38.2%
Language barriers	11	32.4%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	11	32.4%
Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities	9	26.5%
Lack of access to technology	9	26.5%
Lack of financial literacy	8	23.5%
Not enough jobs available	7	20.6%
Other transportation issues	7	20.6%

Other health issues	7	20.6%
Lack of reliable Internet access	7	20.6%
Community or systemic racism	7	20.6%
Disability-related transportation issues	6	17.6%
Not having STEM skills	5	14.7%
Not having disability-related accommodations	4	11.8%
Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care	3	8.8%
Other (please describe)	3	8.8%
Total	302	

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - General DCRSA Consumers

Staff survey respondents were given a list of 26 barriers, including an option for "other." They were asked to identify the five most significant barriers that prevent DCRSA consumers from achieving their employment goals. There was no limit to the number of barriers a respondent could choose. A total of 31 staff respondents answered the question.

The five most significant barriers selected by staff include mental health issues and convictions for criminal offenses, along with not having education or training and little or no work experience. The items "poor social skills" and "not having job skills" ranked in a tie for the fifth position as barriers to achieving employment goals for the general population of consumers as selected by staff in response to the question. Note that the three top barriers to employment that individual survey respondents selected appear on the list of the five most prominent barriers to employment staff selected for consumers.

Three phrases were received in the narrative comments in response to the category "other." The quotes are:
- *"In-house AT /Rehab Teacher to serve IL /ILOB clients with basic training."*
- *"Job readiness"*
- *"Lack of service providers"*

Table 76 lists the barriers presented to staff and the number of times staff survey respondents cited a barrier.

Table 76: *Staff Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - General DCRSA Consumers*

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – General DCRSA Consumers	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Not having education or training	17	54.8%
Mental health issues	16	51.6%

Little or no work experience	14	45.2%
Convictions for criminal offenses	13	41.9%
Not having job skills	10	32.3%
Poor social skills	10	32.3%
Housing issues	8	25.8%
Not enough jobs available	6	19.4%
Substance use issues	6	19.4%
Childcare issues	6	19.4%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	6	19.4%
Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities	5	16.1%
Not having job search skills	4	12.9%
Language barriers	4	12.9%
Other transportation issues	4	12.9%
Other (please describe)	4	12.9%
Community or systemic racism	3	9.7%
Not having disability-related accommodations	2	6.5%
Disability-related transportation issues	2	6.5%
Other health issues	2	6.5%
Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways	1	3.2%
Lack of access to technology	1	3.2%
Lack of financial literacy	1	3.2%
Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care	0	0.0%
Not having STEM skills	0	0.0%
Lack of reliable Internet access	0	0.0%
Total	145	

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Most Significant Disabilities

Staff respondents were also asked to identify the five most prominent barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers with the most significant disabilities. Compared to the partner survey, the list contained six additional options for staff. A total of 30 respondents answered the question.

Staff selected the same five most prominent barriers to employment for those with the most significant disabilities as staff identified for the general population of DCRSA consumers. Three of the five most significant barriers the staff identified match the barriers the partner respondents selected in response to a similar question. Still, the partners ranked the barriers in a different order. The statements received in the category "other" are quoted:

- *"Consumers are not interested in working, and providers and VRCs are sabotaging efforts."*
- *"Family not wanting to lose benefits."*

Table 76 summarizes the staff respondents' ranking of the barriers for those with significant disabilities

Table 76: *Staff Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Most Significant Disabilities*

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Most Significant Disabilities	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Not having education or training	19	63.3%
Little or no work experience	15	50.0%
Not having job skills	12	40.0%
Mental health issues	12	40.0%
Poor social skills	11	36.7%
Convictions for criminal offenses	6	20.0%
Not having job search skills	5	16.7%
Not enough jobs available	5	16.7%
Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities	5	16.7%
Other health issues	5	16.7%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	5	16.7%
Not having disability-related accommodations	4	13.3%
Other transportation issues	4	13.3%
Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways	4	13.3%
Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care	3	10.0%
Substance use issues	3	10.0%
Housing issues	3	10.0%
Not having STEM skills	3	10.0%
Language barriers	2	6.7%
Disability-related transportation issues	2	6.7%
Other (please describe)	2	6.7%
Lack of access to technology	2	6.7%
Community or systemic racism	2	6.7%
Lack of reliable Internet access	1	3.3%
Lack of financial literacy	1	3.3%
Childcare issues	0	0.0%
Total	136	

Staff Survey: Top Three Reasons for Difficulty Accessing DCRSA Services

Staff were presented with a question that prompted them to indicate why individuals with disabilities might find it challenging to access DCRSA services. Fourteen response options were provided. Thirty-four respondents answered the question.

Like partners, three top reasons are difficult to determine when reviewing the staff responses to the question. "Slow service delivery" was identified by slightly more than one-quarter of staff and ranked as the second top reason people with disabilities have difficulty accessing DCRSA services.

The most frequently cited item in response to the question was "other, please describe." Three comments cited "n/a." Content analysis of the narrative comments indicated that the lack of understanding /knowledge of DCRSA services and process and the need for better advertising/community outreach (x3); loss of contact/lack of contact with consumers (x3); lack of resources for the blind and visually impaired (x1); no electronic options for signatures, uploading required documents (x1); lack of basic skills to be able to obtain a job in a competitive environment like DC (x1); and staff fail to meet consumers at local libraries and community facilities (x1). Like the partners, staff identified three items an equal number of times, which deflects the determination of staff opinion of the three top reasons people with disabilities find it difficult to access services. Table 77 summarizes the staff choices in response to the question.

Table 77: *Staff Survey: Top Three Reasons for Difficulty Accessing DCRSA Services*

Top Three Reasons Difficulty Accessing DCRSA Services	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Other (please describe)	12	35.3%
Slow service delivery	10	29.4%
Language barriers	8	23.5%
Difficulties completing the application	8	23.5%
Difficulties accessing training or education programs	8	23.5%
Limited accessibility of DCRSA via public transportation	7	20.6%
Community or systemic racism	6	17.6%
Other challenges related to the physical location of the DCRSA office	5	14.7%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	5	14.7%
Lack of options for the use of technology to access remote services such as text, videoconferencing applications (Zoom, Skype, etc.)	5	14.7%
Lack of options for the use of technology to communicate with DCRSA staff such as text, videoconferencing applications (Zoom, Skype, etc.)	3	8.8%
Inadequate assessment services	2	5.9%
DCRSA staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	2	5.9%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	1	2.9%
Total	82	

Staff Survey: Remote DCRSA Services

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, modified consumer service delivery included remote services. Staff respondents were asked a series of questions regarding remote service delivery.

Consumers Received Remote DCRSA Services During COVID

Staff were first asked, "Have any of the consumers you serve received services delivered remotely since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic?" Thirty-one respondents (83.8%)

indicated "yes" out of a total of 37 responses that were received. In contrast, 37.1% of individual survey respondents reported not receiving any DCRSA services remotely (202 out of 389 individual respondents). Table 78 details the responses from the staff.

Table 78: *Staff Survey: Consumers Received Remote DCRSA Services During COVID*

Received Remote DCRSA Services During COVID	Number	Percent
Yes	31	83.8%
No	6	16.2%
Total	37	

Effectiveness of Remote Service During Covid Delivered by DCRSA Staff

The second question presented to staff asked respondents to rate the efficacy of remote services delivered by DCRSA staff during the COVID pandemic. Thirty-two respondents answered the question. Staff were divided on the degree of effectiveness of remote services during the pandemic. Only one respondent selected "somewhat ineffective," whereas the vast majority rated the services as effective or greater. Table 79 summarizes the staff responses to the question.

Table 79: *Staff Survey: Effectiveness of Remote Services Delivered by DCRSA Staff During Pandemic*

Effectiveness of Remote Services Delivered by DCRSA Staff During Pandemic	Number	Percent
Somewhat effective	16	50.0%
Effective	15	46.9%
Somewhat ineffective	1	3.1%
Not effective at all	0	0.0%
Total	32	100.0%

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS – MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

In discussions with individuals with disabilities, partners, and staff related to the specific needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, there were various emerging themes. Needs in this area relate to:

- Introducing options for more creative and additional accommodations. Respondents offered the need to explore new technology methods to provide cost-effective or no-cost accommodations to employers for people with more significant disabilities.
- Implementing innovative solutions and technologies to community rehabilitation providers. Like the need for accommodations within business, some individuals felt services could be further enhanced using technology.
- Developing more streamlined and broadly accessible forms and processes for individuals with various reading levels and disabilities. Some respondents indicated it

was difficult to read or understand the process due to the forms and some of the terminology.

- Addressing employer knowledge gaps on accommodations, such as employers' flexible work arrangements. Respondents highlighted the negative views they experience from employers and co-workers and how this affects their employment.
- Increasing the availability of intensive employment supports to address the retention of individuals. Some individuals felt they could have benefited from additional on-site support but were unaware of supported employment services.
- Providing specialized support services to specific individuals with disabilities, including the deaf and hard of hearing and those with significant cognitive disabilities. The need for more ASL interpreters and staff who are fluent in ASL was highlighted on several occasions.
- Integrating more individualized and person-centered supports for all individuals. Respondents felt the process was not flexible enough to meet the needs of a diverse workforce of job seekers with disabilities.
- Understanding of mental health, trauma, and hidden disabilities, and the subsequent interaction with the employment process. In particular, the need for more disclosure information was mentioned.
- Increasing awareness of the type and availability of services offered by DCRSA
- Developing customized training programs. Several respondents desired to receive trades-related training but were unaware of these options.
- Promoting continuous learning and upskilling of individuals with the most significant disabilities once employed.
- Increasing the engagement with families. Some respondents indicated that their family and circle of support were unengaged despite wanting more involvement.
- Building the financial literacy skills of individuals with disabilities and the support staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. DCRSA should consider introducing adaptive technologies and assistive devices tailored to individual needs.

2. DCRSA should utilize the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) to provide job seekers, providers, and employers with accommodation options and best practices accessible to both job seekers and employers.

3. DSCRA may consider improving the availability of supported employment and job coaching services and increasing the funding for supported employment programs,

4. DCRSA may consider extending the availability of these services to all disability communities, with special programs tailored to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

5. DCSRA should train staff on developing individualized employment plans that cater to each person's specific needs, preferences, and strengths. It should also implement regular reviews and updates to these plans to ensure they remain relevant and practical.

6. DCRSA should consider offering specialized training for DCRSA counselors in mental health first aid and trauma-informed care.

7. DCRSA may explore hiring or contracting mental health professionals to provide counseling and support directly within the DCRSA framework.

8. DCRSA should consider using specialized providers with expertise in particular services, such as customized employment and individual placement and support.

9. DCRSA should implement financial literacy programs that teach budgeting, saving, and money management skills and provide benefit counseling to help individuals understand and maximize public benefits while pursuing employment.

10. DCRSA should explore options to reduce caseload sizes by hiring more counselors, prioritizing individuals with complex needs, and investing in case management tools to free up counselor time for direct support.

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

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

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following themes emerged around the needs of individuals with disabilities from different racial/ethnic groups, including individuals who may have been unserved or underserved by DCRSA:

- Supporting the diverse needs of all D.C. residents, including those who are undocumented, those with mental health issues, and those who are uninsured
- Focusing on communities with intersectional identities, particularly in Wards 7 and 8.
- Improving accessibility and inclusivity in the DCRSA offices and teams.

- Increasing availability of ASL interpreters for interviews and employment support.
- Overcoming biases and stigma, especially for people with significant disabilities and marginalized groups, including mental health support for the black community.
- Enhancing cultural sensitivity and awareness among DCRSA staff and vendors.
- Addressing cultural diversity in employment services and ensuring DCRSA staff are trained to understand the diverse clientele of the D.C. community.
- Broadening the geographic reach and access points for services focusing on underserved areas like Wards 7 and 8. Specifically implementing community-based service delivery, meeting clients within their communities and respecting their identities.
- Connect individuals with disabilities to housing, food, and employment support.
- Ensuring comprehensive support services to facilitate employment.
- Addressing language barriers, particularly for Spanish-speaking individuals and families.
- Establishing partnerships with community organizations (i.e., cultural centers, places of worship, foster care agencies, shelters, food banks, etc.).
- Increasing awareness and building trust within underserved communities.

National and Agency-Specific Data Related to the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities from Different Ethnic Groups, Including Needs of Individuals that May Have Been Unserved or Underserved By VR

Race and Ethnicity: Understanding the local population's ethnic diversity is needed to better serve the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups in the community.

Race: "The U.S. Census Bureau collects race data per guidelines provided by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and these data are based on self-identification. The racial categories in the census questionnaire generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. In addition, it is recognized that the categories of the race question include race and national origin or sociocultural groups. OMB requires that race data be collected for a minimum of five groups: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. OMB permits the Census Bureau also to use a sixth category – Some Other Race. Respondents may report more than one race."

Ethnicity: "The U.S. Census Bureau adheres to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) definition of ethnicity. There are two minimum ethnic categories: Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. OMB considers race and Hispanic origin to be two separate and distinct concepts. Hispanics and Latinos may be of any race." https://www.census.gov/glossary/

Race and Ethnicity for the Total Population
The D.C. averages exceed the National averages for race and ethnic diversity in Black or African American (29.8% higher than the National average) and for Two or More Races (0.7% higher than the National average). The D.C. average for Hispanics or Latinos is 7.4 percentage points lower than the national average, and the D.C. rate for Asians is 1.7 percent lower than the

national average. The rate for American Indians and Alaska Natives in D.C. is 0.3% lower than the Nation's average. Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders comprise roughly 1 percent of D.C.'s population. Whites comprise approximately 37 percent of D.C.'s population, and the rate is 21 percent lower than the National average.

Wards 7 and 8 have the highest percentage of Black Americans in D.C., as the rates exceed 80 percent of the population in each ward. Ward 2 has the highest percentage of Asians (9.7%). The rates for Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders residing in Wards 1, 2, and 5 are one percentage point lower than the Nation's average.

Two wards have over 20 percent of individuals reporting Hispanic and Latino ethnicity. Wards 7 and 8 have the lowest rates for Whites in D.C. Whites comprise roughly one-quarter of the population in Wards 4 and 5. Table 80 contains information regarding the race and ethnic diversity of the District of Columbia and its wards.

Table 80: *Race and Ethnicity: Total Population*

Area	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	White alone	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	Two or More Races
U.S.	19.1%	57.7%	11.9%	0.5%	5.8%	0.2%	4.3%
D.C.	11.7%	36.7%	41.7%	0.2%	4.1%	0.1%	5.0%
W1	20.4%	45.5%	22.7%	0.2%	5.9%	0.1%	4.6%
W2	13.6%	61.2%	10.9%	0.1%	9.7%	0.1%	4.1%
W3	10.7%	69.8%	8.3%	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	4.2%
W4	21.1%	25.0%	47.5%	0.1%	1.7%	0.0%	3.9%
W5	10.1%	23.5%	59.0%	0.1%	3.0%	0.1%	3.7%
W6	8.5%	59.0%	22.9%	0.0%	4.6%	0.0%	4.4%
W7	5.0%	6.7%	83.4%	0.3%	0.6%	0.0%	3.5%
W8	3.6%	9.0%	82.2%	0.2%	0.9%	0.0%	3.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Race/Ethnicity and Poverty for the General Population

The United States Census Bureau calculates poverty as related to race and ethnicity for the total population. Poverty rates in the District of Columbia are lower or equal to the National averages for each race and ethnic category except Asians. Not enough data was received for the State in

the category of American Indian and Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders. Although the poverty rates for Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders in Ward 8 exceed 88 percentage points, note that the percentage rates for the number of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders residing in Ward 8 is zero, and the numeric count is 17 according to the Census Bureau DP05 2022 5-year estimates table. Although the poverty levels are calculated for the entire population based on race and ethnicity, the data is vital for understanding the impact of poverty, population size, race and ethnicity when addressing the VR needs of individuals with disabilities. Table 81 identifies the percentage of individuals designated by race and ethnic categories living below poverty levels in the United States, the District of Columbia and the D.C. wards.

Table 81: *Race/Ethnicity and Poverty for the General Population: U.S., D.C. and the D.C. Wards*

Race/Ethnicity and Poverty for the General Population	Percent below poverty level						
	White alone	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)
U.S.	9.9%	21.3%	21.7%	10.1%	17.6%	14.8%	16.8%
D.C.	6.1%	21.3%	N	11.9%	N	7.4%	10.4%
W1	3.7%	29.6%	22.4%	5.5%	40.0%	10.0%	15.5%
W2	8.9%	24.8%	15.1%	24.1%	9.0%	11.2%	13.0%
W3	4.9%	27.7%	14.1%	13.1%	0.0%	5.5%	6.4%
W4	2.5%	10.9%	63.9%	3.4%	0.0%	5.8%	11.8%
W5	10.3%	18.2%	11.5%	6.5%	0.0%	15.2%	17.8%
W6	4.0%	31.8%	1.4%	14.9%	20.0%	5.0%	7.6%
W7	5.9%	25.6%	38.5%	15.1%	0.0%	27.5%	15.9%
W8	7.2%	30.0%	11.6%	6.9%	88.9%	23.5%	14.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Race/Ethnicity and Educational Attainment for the General Population

The VR consumer's educational attainment impacts the vocational choices available to the consumer. Understanding the educational attainment rates in a local area is crucial to identifying available workforce members to meet local business workforce needs. The U.S. Census Bureau collects data on race and ethnicity as related to educational attainment. The data suggests that individuals of all races and ethnicities residing in the District of Columbia Wards have access to education beyond high school graduation.

The high school graduation and bachelor's degree attainment rates for Asians, individuals reporting Two or more races, and Whites in the D.C. Wards are higher than the National rates. The high school graduation attainment rates for the Black race in Wards 3, 4, and 5 are higher than the National high school graduation attainment rates for Blacks by roughly 2.4 to 6.5 percentage points. Bachelor's degree attainment rates for Blacks in Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6

exceed the National rate for Blacks by more than 11 percentage points. Ward 7's bachelor's degree attainment rate for Blacks is 1.1 percent lower than the National rate of 25.4%. Although high school graduation attainment rates for Hispanics and Latinos are lower than the National average in Wards 4 and 5, the rates for Wards 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 exceed the National average of 73.1 by more than three percentage points. Bachelor's degree attainment rates for Hispanics and Latinos in all eight D.C. Wards exceed the National average of 20.4%, and the range is 11.5 to 60.6 percentage points.

It is important to note that the U.S. Census Bureau 2022 DP05 5-year estimates table indicates that the total numeric count for American Indians and Alaskan Natives in the D.C. Wards is 1,694, and the total for Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders in the Wards of D.C. is 361. Table 82 contains averages for educational attainment at the high school and bachelor's degree level in each race/ethnic category for the 25-year-old population in the U.S., the District of Columbia, and the D.C. Wards.

Table 82: *Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity: U.S. and D.C. Rates for the Total Population Aged 25 and over*

Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity: U.S. and D.C. Rates for the Total Population Age 25 and over						
Race/Ethnicity	**Degree level and higher**	**United States**	**D.C.**	**Ward 1**	**Ward 2**	**Ward 3**
White alone	High school graduate or higher	93.7%	99.4%	97.4%	99.1%	99.2%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	39.0%	92.2%	91.9%	93.5%	91.4%
Black alone	High school graduate or higher	88.3%	89.0%	86.0%	85.2%	94.8%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	25.4%	34.9%	40.4%	41.1%	64.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	High school graduate or higher	78.1%	N	80.0%	100.0%	65.9%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	16.8%	N	54.5%	4.5%	65.9%
Asian alone	High school graduate or higher	88.2%	95.5%	94.6%	94.4%	97.5%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	57.4%	87.5%	83.4%	85.3%	88.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	High school graduate or higher	87.6%	N	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	19.8%	N	69.3%	51.0%	100.0%
Two or more races	High school graduate or higher	81.3%	95.4%	93.0%	99.1%	95.3%

Race/Ethnicity	Degree level and higher				
	Bachelor's degree or higher	27.9%	74.5%	69.5%	86.9%	81.9%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	High school graduate or higher	73.1%	87.5%	76.2%	92.4%	93.5%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	20.4%	65.7%	50.8%	81.0%	77.5%

Race/Ethnicity	Degree level and higher	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	Ward 7	Ward 8
White alone	High school graduate or higher	97.3%	97.7%	99.7%	98.0%	97.5%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	88.7%	87.0%	93.5%	85.6%	79.6%
Black alone	High school graduate or higher	93.2%	90.7%	87.0%	86.6%	86.1%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	46.9%	37.3%	41.0%	24.3%	17.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	High school graduate or higher	79.0%	94.8%	100.0%	64.6%	100.0%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	49.6%	45.0%	0.0%	23.1%	67.5%
Asian alone	High school graduate or higher	96.9%	92.8%	95.1%	100.0%	100.0%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	91.7%	85.4%	86.3%	74.8%	70.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	High school graduate or higher	N	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	N	96.9%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Two or more races	High school graduate or higher	86.9%	91.7%	98.5%	91.0%	90.3%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	62.8%	57.7%	84.3%	48.2%	47.3%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	High school graduate or higher	65.4%	71.3%	98.5%	90.0%	87.8%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	31.9%	38.5%	80.7%	44.8%	45.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disability and Race/Ethnicity

The U.S. Census collects data on disability among ethnic categories for the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP). Consider the race/ethnic category's population size with the percentage of individuals reporting a disability. Table 83 identifies the estimated average disability rates among race and ethnic categories in the U.S., the District of Columbia, and the D.C. Wards.

Table 83: *Disability and Race/Ethnicity: U.S., District of Columbia, and Wards*

	White alone	**Black or African American alone**	**American Indian and Alaska Native alone**	**Asian alone**	**Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone**	**Two or more races**	**Hispanic or Latino (of any race)**
Percent with a disability							
U.S.	14.4%	14.9%	15.7%	8.3%	12.5%	11.6%	10.5%
D.C.	6.3%	16.3%	N	4.6%	N	8.4%	9.8%
W1	4.6%	18.8%	21.0%	2.6%	33.7%	6.7%	7.5%
W2	5.4%	20.5%	8.4%	8.1%	0.0%	5.3%	6.3%
W3	6.9%	15.7%	9.1%	5.5%	0.0%	7.3%	6.0%
W4	4.6%	14.2%	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%	13.4%	9.6%
W5	5.7%	16.9%	13.0%	1.4%	0.0%	10.1%	7.5%
W6	3.8%	18.5%	0.0%	7.6%	0.0%	10.8%	4.9%
W7	6.9%	16.4%	44.6%	13.1%	0.0%	19.6%	12.7%
W8	7.6%	18.1%	15.3%	0.0%	0.0%	12.1%	6.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 83a identifies the actual application rates across race and ethnic categories in the District of Columbia. The largest percentage of applications were from individuals who identified as black/African American, which outpaces the percentage in the total population, and may indicate need to explore a potential gap in serving the Hispanic Latino population.

Table 83a: DCRSA Applications by Race/Ethnicity

	2020	2021	2022
White	3%	3%	4%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	N	N	N
American Indian	N	N	N
Asian	N	1%	1%
Hispanic/Latino	6%	6%	5%
African American	88%	88%	88%
Multi-Race	2%	2%	2%

Disability, Race, Ethnicity and Poverty Rates

The 2023 Annual Disability Statistics Supplement published data on poverty, disability, race and ethnicity for the total population. The trends were produced using data from the Current Population Survey-Annual Social and Economic Supplement (distributed annually in March) and the 2021 American Community Survey. Table 84 presents population raw numbers, percentage rates, and the differences (gaps) between the poverty rates for individuals with and without disabilities for five race and ethnic categories in the U.S. and the District of Columbia. The population numbers accurately represent the percentage rate differences in this table. The most significant poverty rate and gap of difference between individuals with and without disabilities is noted in the Asian Population. Note that the numeric count of Asians is significantly lower than all races and ethnicities in the District of Columbia.

Table 84: *Race and Ethnicity, Disability, and Poverty Rates: U.S. and the District of Columbia*

United States							
	With Disabilities in Poverty			**Without Disabilities in Poverty**			
Race	**Total w/ Disability**	**Poverty**		**Total w/o Disability**	**Poverty**		**GAP**
		Count	**Percent**		**Count**	**Percent**	
White	27,016,547	4,756,567	17.6	163,082,331	15,476,795	9.5	8.1
Black	5,522,115	1,692,472	30.6	32,530,825	7,053,309	21.7	8.9
Asian	1,454,941	254,780	17.5	17,360,003	1,876,824	10.8	6.7
Other Race	2,439,380	633,005	25.9	15,742,813	2,392,273	15.2	10.7
Hispanic	6,169,016	1,544,545	25	55,624,807	9,908,632	17.8	7.2
District of Columbia							
	With Disabilities in Poverty			**Without Disabilities in Poverty**			
Race	**Total w/ Disability**	**Poverty**		**Total w/o Disability**	**Poverty**		**GAP**
		Count	**Percent**		**Count**	**Percent**	
White	14,954	3,349	22.4	225,602	20,870	9.3	13.1
Black	50,930	16,314	32	229,088	67,084	29.3	2.7
Asian	1,539	924	60.0	24,322	4,907	20.2	39.8
Other Race	4,657	2,012	43.2	32,458	5,310	16.4	26.8
Hispanic	5,802	1,425	24.6	70,370	8,597	12.2	12.4

Citation: Paul, S., Rogers, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A. (2023). Annual Disability Statistics Supplement: 2023. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. Note: Authors' calculations using the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2021, subject to sampling variation.

United States Department of Labor Annual Labor Force Statistics by Disability Status and Race/Ethnicity

The U.S. Department of Labor, in collaboration with (ODEP), published the 2023 Annual Labor Force Statistics by disability status, race, and ethnicity. Statistics provided include the labor force participation rate, employment-to-population ratio, and unemployment rate by disability status and race/ethnicity for ages 16 to 64. Table 85 contains the annual 2023 data.

Table 85: *2023 Annual Labor Force Statistics By Disability Status and Race/Ethnicity*

2023 Annual Labor Force Statistics by Disability Status and Race/Ethnicity						
Persons with a Disability, Aged 16-64, 2023						
	Hispanic	**White**	**Black**	**Asian**	**Other**	**Total**
Labor Force Participation Rate	39.6%	42.7%	32.6%	37.1%	37.5%	40.3%
Employment-Population Ratio	35.9%	39.8%	29.2%	34.3%	34.4%	37.2%
Unemployment Rate	9.4%	6.8%	10.2%	7.5%	8.4%	7.7%
Persons without a Disability, Aged 16-64, 2023						
	Hispanic	**White**	**Black**	**Asian**	**Other**	**Total**
Labor Force Participation Rate	75.2%	79.4%	76.3%	75.6%	73.5%	77.7%
Employment-Population Ratio	71.9%	77.2%	72.1%	73.4%	69.3%	75.0%
Unemployment Rate	4.5%	2.7%	5.4%	2.9%	5.6%	3.5%
Source: Current Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics						
Notes: The category labelled "Other" combines the three categories of American Indian and Alaska Native, Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and multiple races; all categories after Hispanic are limited to non-Hispanics.						

University of New Hampshire Disability Statistics – Employment by Disability Type, Age, and Race/Ethnicity

The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability prepared statistics for employment by disability type, age, and race/ ethnicity. The categories include non-institutionalized civilians ages 16 to 64, male and female, from all education levels. Limited data was available for Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders due to the limited count available from the population size in the District of Columbia. Data suggests that access to employment is available to all race and ethnic groups and most disability types in D.C.

Table 86: *2022 D.C. Employment by Disability Type, Age, and Race/Ethnicity for Non-institutionalized Population Ages 16-64*

Employment by Disability Type, Race and Ethnicity Ages 16 to 64	**Percent Employed by Disability Type**						
	Any	**Visual**	**Hearing**	**Ambulatory**	**Cognitive**	**Self-care**	**Independent Living**
White, non-Hispanic	62.0%	79.0%	65.5%	58.4%	53.8%	24.8%	23.4%

Black/African American, non-Hispanic	37.3%	40.4%	46.4%	34.5%	28.3%	12.0%	21.8%
American Indian and Alaskan Native, non-Hispanic	89.7%	--	--	--	--	--	--
Asian, non-Hispanic	61.0%	--	--	62.5%	53.9%	--	--
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Some Other Race, non-Hispanic	38.2%	56.4%	80.7%	10.0%	30.9%	49.2%	21.7%
Hispanic/Latino	61.9%	50.3%	80.2%	38.0%	42.6%	--	15.2%

Source: 2022 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates. Prepared 01/19/2024 by S. Bach, UNH

Survey Results by Type

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS-UNDERSERVED

Individual Survey: Race, Ethnicity, and Preferred Language

Individuals were asked to report their primary race or ethnic group and identify their preferred communication language.

Race or Ethnic Group

The number of respondents who answered the ethnicity question was 389. Over 83 percent of respondents identified as African American/Black. An equal percentage of respondents cited either Asian or Hispanic/Latino. Whites comprise roughly 6 percent of the District of Columbia population based on the U.S. Census Bureau data from 2022, and 8.7 percent of the respondents reported being White when answering the question.

Note the ranking order of the results in Table 87, which represents the ethnicity of the respondents compared to the ranking order and percentage rates of the state's race and ethnic demographic category ranking based on the U.S. Census Bureau data from 2022. Of the ten narrative responses received in the "other" category, five comments cited "mixed/two or more races." The remaining comments cited: Aramaic, Indigenous, N/A, and American Black.

Table 87*: Individual Survey: Race or Ethnic Group*

Primary Race or Ethnic Group	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
African American/Black	420	83.3%
Caucasian/White	44	8.7%
Asian	19	3.8%
Hispanic/Latino	19	3.8%

Other (please describe)	12	2.4%
American Indian or Alaska Native	9	1.8%
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	0.4%
Total	525	

Individual Survey: Cultural Identity

Individuals were asked a series of questions regarding cultural identity.

Honor and Respect Cultural Identity

Individuals were asked whether DCRSA honors and respects their cultural identity. Over one-third of the respondents did not know, and less than 7 percent reported that DCRSA needs to honor and respect their cultural identity. The results are found in Table 88.

Table 88: *Individual Survey: Honor and Respect Cultural Identity*

Honor Respect Cultural ID	Number	Percent
Yes	291	55.5%
I don't know	198	37.8%
No	35	6.7%
Total	524	100.0%

Situation When DCRSA Did Not Honor nor Respect Cultural Identity

Individuals were asked a subsequent yes-no question: "Have you ever been in a situation when you felt that DCRSA did not honor your cultural identity?" A total of 506 respondents answered the question. The number of respondents who responded to this question is eighteen, less than the previous Table 89.

Inconsistency is noted when comparing the results of this question to those indicated in the previous Table 88. As pointed out in the last table, five additional respondents indicated that DCRSA did not respect their cultural identity in response to this question. Of the 31 narrative responses received, seven cited "NA/don't know," and one cited not being with DCRSA long enough to notice cultural identity. Content analysis of the remaining quotes from the item "Yes, please describe" contained specific incidents of cultural disrespect. The comments are classified into four categories and are detailed in Table 90. Detailed information on the yes-no results is found in Table 89.

Table 89: *Individual Survey: Situation When DCRSA Did Not Honor nor Respect Culture ID*

DCRSA Not Honor Cultural ID	Number	Percent
No	466	92.1%
Yes (please describe)	40	7.9%
Total	506	100.0%

Table 90: *Individual Survey: Incidents of Cultural Disrespect*

Incidents of Cultural Disrespect	
Race/Ethnicity/	*"I have been feeling that I've been treated a little bit rough that may be related to my ethnicity."*
Language	*"When my cultural identity was revealed, I received the same discrimination I received from every other consumer program that I have been a part of. Very distasteful."*
	"DC government does not like to provide ANY services to non-negro people"
	"They only help the blacks"
	"They seemingly interact with other races better than black as if they have been programmed to act that way."
	"it is in the method chosen by a bi-lingual worker who is not from my origin. Unclear why I was assigned to someone with their background when I have no connection. it appears the work ethic." "Is different and noticeable. It is problematic to going forward to achieve my goal to get a job. I did not apply with the department to attend workshops."
	"Language barriers of other culture speech. I felt I was frustrating the staff because I could not understand what she was saying."
Disability Type	*"When you are of High-Functioning Autism, they treat you as if you don't have full-independent living needs. If you are in a wheelchair, they are quick to help you as if there is no tomorrow."*
	"I feel like deaf unit doesn't believe in the people they serve. I got more assistance for those outside the unit."
	"Some staff don't understand what I say sometimes. I am Deaf. I use ASL and other international sign languages.it is hard to communicate with them sometimes."
	"I think there is not enough deaf/hard of hearing people with ASL to work with the clients who are deaf/hard of hearing."
Comments Noting DCRSA Staff	*"After all my efforts, they never assisted me. They closed my case under the guise that they lost contact when my preferred contact is email. I've never gotten assistance from you."*
	"It didn't help me. They kept sending me to different organizations to make me leave"
	"They never call you back or respond to questions and concerns"
	"When I got to a certain age, they cut me off"
	"They don't do what they say they are going to do"
	"Honor in what context? My case worker was fine but the counselors I was referred to were awful."
	"I needed a lot of support but never received the help because the staff kept quitting and it took a super long time to replace the person. Resulting in them closing my case."
	"In an effort to receive services to return to work, I was told to, 'Write a book!' "
Other	*"To make it fair"*

	"The paperwork assumes a lot"
	"I was fired and given Sarcoidosis from a work site they put me in. The job was belittling and now I must get surgery. They messed my credit up Just the other day my Character was defamed and discriminated against."
	"Waiting for a job opportunity and still have not received one yet."

Helping DCRSA Staff Understand Culture

The final question related to cultural identity presented to individual survey respondents was an open-ended question that asked, "What can DCRSA do to help its staff understand your culture?" Thirty-four narrative responses were received. Nine comments contained phrases such as "not sure" and "I don't know." The remaining quotes are provided in Table 91, as the content analysis revealed three key topics.

Table 91*: Individual Survey: Helping DCRSA Staff Understand Culture*

Helping DCRSA Staff Understand Culture	
Ways to Demonstrate Honor and Respect for Culture	*"DC culture is politically hostile. When conflict is mentioned, some of us are ridiculed and labeled as difficult. Also, DC government is Federally controlled. Many who work here are not long term established residents and do not know the conflicting communication barriers demonstrated by various DC services. Today, too many service staff dismissively give up on patrons experiencing disabilities: mentally or physically."*
	"Cultures and ethnicity are not monoliths. My name is foreign, but I was born in DC. I'm more American than anything else despite the way I look or my name."
	"Be honest with each other and tell people the truth"
	"DCRSA needs to provide better service for the Deaf and HH community. I have used this service in 1990's, it was better, but I didn't need a job because I was a student. When I was done with my program, I had a student job to earn a living, but the VRS closed my case, and it was not fair. I wanted to get MA, but I could not".
	"Diversify staff across all sectors of the city. Stop excluding non-negro, non-Hispanics. That is racism."
	"Have a conversation with clients to hear the concerns and issues"
	"Hire more East Asians"
	"Just basics: express humanity, kindness, respect, be educated and have a sense of mission"
	"Move all of them and insert fresh energy and minds. Obtain upper management that are non-bias in decision making"
	"Put the effort in helping"
	"Show you care. A lot of staff has attitudes as if they are doing the veterans a favor. Make me feel disrespected."
	Extend consideration and improve communication for everyone"
	"Stop being understaffed and overbooked"
	"Stop delaying requests"

	"Stop discriminating and stop acting unprofessional, rude and lacking empathy"
Need for **Training**	*"DCRSA staff need a lot more training. Shorten their turn around time to assist us better. Have a better support system in place when a pandemic arises."*
	"Training"
	"They should understand about culture and languages."
	"Go thru a cultural awareness class and/or a program to better overstand those living under oppression and tyranny of evil men AND woman of European decent."
	"Learn more how systematic racism affects African American. Especially those who are extremely vulnerable."
Address **Specific Needs**	*"I need a suitable worker who can provide services that comprehend my goals."*
	"Provide me an evaluation of my skills and match a job"
	"Follow up with my Case"
	"Get me a job"
	"Work to help me get and keep a job"

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS - UNDERSERVED

Partner Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Minorities

Partners were provided a list of 20 barriers and asked to identify the five most significant barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities. The first ranking item, "little or no work experience," was selected by 80% of the partners as the most significant barrier to achieving employment goals for minorities. "Not having education or training" and "not having job search skills" tied for the second position. "Not having job skills" and "employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities" round up the five most prominent barriers to achieving employment goals for minorities as selected by community partner respondents.

Table 92: Partner Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Minorities

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Minorities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Little or no work experience	28	80.0%
Not having education or training	24	68.6%
Not having job search skills	24	68.6%
Not having job skills	22	62.9%
Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities	20	57.1%
Language barriers	18	51.4%
Mental health issues	17	48.6%
Poor social skills	15	42.9%

Convictions for criminal offenses	14	40.0%
Substance use issues	12	34.3%
Housing issues	12	34.3%
Not having disability-related accommodations	11	31.4%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	11	31.4%
Not enough jobs available	10	28.6%
Disability-related transportation issues	9	25.7%
Other health issues	8	22.9%
Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care	7	20.0%
Other transportation issues	7	20.0%
Childcare issues	7	20.0%
Other (please describe)	3	8.6%
Total	279	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS - UNDERSERVED

Staff Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Minorities

Staff were presented with a list of 26 items and asked to identify the five most significant barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities. The number of items staff could choose was unlimited.

Staff cited that "language barriers" are the most significant barrier that prevents consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities from achieving their employment goals, while the item ranked in the 6th position on the partner results list. Staff and partners agreed that "not having education or training," "not having job skills,' and "little or no work experience" are part of the top five most prominent barriers to employment for minorities. "Community or systemic racism" tied for the position of fifth-biggest barrier with "poor social skills" on the staff results list. "Community or systemic racism" was not an item for partners to choose, and partners did not indicate racism/discrimination in the narrative comments. Note that slightly less than 8 percent of 506 individual respondents (n=40) cited a situation when DCRSA did not understand the culture and provided suggestions for increasing DCRSA's understanding of culture.

Table 93: Staff Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Minorities

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Minorities	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Language barriers	14	46.7%
Not having education or training	13	43.3%
Not having job skills	10	33.3%
Little or no work experience	9	30.0%
Poor social skills	8	26.7%
Community or systemic racism	8	26.7%
Mental health issues	7	23.3%
Substance use issues	6	20.0%
Housing issues	6	20.0%

Not having job search skills	5	16.7%
Not enough jobs available	5	16.7%
Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities	5	16.7%
Childcare issues	5	16.7%
Not having disability-related accommodations	4	13.3%
Disability-related transportation issues	4	13.3%
Convictions for criminal offenses	4	13.3%
Other health issues	3	10.0%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	3	10.0%
Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways	3	10.0%
Other transportation issues	2	6.7%
Other (please describe)	2	6.7%
Lack of reliable Internet access	2	6.7%
Lack of financial literacy	2	6.7%
Not having STEM skills	1	3.3%
Lack of access to technology	1	3.3%
Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care	0	0.0%
Total	132	

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

Recurring themes around unserved and underserved populations, including those from various racial and ethnic categories, were varied. Careful analysis and data triangulation provide some critical insights for DCRSA to consider. Specifically, these areas include:

- Serving people and communities in D.C. where the intersectional factors of socio-economic status and race/ethnicity impact disability status. Several comments were captured regarding a desire for staff to understand the various struggles people bring when they access services and the challenges this can create for people.
- Supporting people who are undocumented to navigate DCRSA and gain access to other D.C. supports. Several community members indicated the struggle with effectively helping people gain support access.
- Broadening access to American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters to connect with individuals from the deaf and hard of hearing community. As noted in other sections, without this service, respondents reported being frustrated and feeling not respected by the agency.
- Removing general biases across internal and external partner staff, especially regarding people with significant disabilities and marginalized groups, including the stigma associated with mental health in the black community. Respondents are seeking a culturally safe service environment that engages their whole selves. Many comments in the survey and focus group highlight these biases and the struggles they create for people.

- Offering services that are mobile/virtual or in the communities where people live. Several concerns were raised about the location of government buildings concerning where individuals with disabilities live in D.C.
- Building stronger connections to housing, food, and energy assistance programs, and many people discussed the impact of lack of access or coordination of these supports raised concerns about seeking employment. Some feedback obtained highlighted how not having one's basic needs met impacts the ability to pursue employment.
- Increasing support to people with English as a second language. Respondents indicated a specific need for Spanish-speaking staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering all the findings associated with underserved populations, we offer several key recommendations to DCRSA to enhance its service delivery, outreach, and internal cultural competence to support better and connect with diverse and underserved communities in Washington, D.C.

1. DCRSA is encouraged to enhance the environment and culture of inclusion within its internal staff and vendor community through a deliberate and embedded approach to cultural understanding and inclusion. This may include providing tailored and immersive training on cultural sensitivity and effective responsiveness.

2. DCRSA is encouraged to use broad data-based decision-making to effectively improve outreach and training for underserved populations. Analyzing data and statistics to understand population-based service gaps should be incorporated into the agency's ongoing efforts.

3. DCRSA should consider introducing efforts to engage more ASL interpreters to serve clients better and more effectively. This may include reaching out to businesses regarding inclusive interview and hiring practices.

4. DCRSA should consider a broader community-based service delivery model by internal staff. This model should emphasize the importance of understanding and meeting clients where they are (i.e., in their respective communities) and acknowledging and respecting their intersectional identities.

5. DSRSA should continue to explore options to locate VR services with CRPs in satellite or co-located offices (i.e., beyond DOES) or other community cultural centers to ensure broad access.

6. DCRSA may consider establishing new partnerships and building on current partnerships with community organizations not typically engaged with VR but embedded in communities (i.e., cultural centers, places of worship, foster care agencies, shelters for the unhoused, food banks, and community centers). These efforts could increase awareness of their services and build trust within these underserved communities.

7. DCRSA is encouraged to recruit and hire additional bilingual staff, in alignment with the most spoken languages in D.C., to increase their communication ability with underserved populations.

SECTION IV: NEEDS OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN TRANSITION

The reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act under WIOA places a greater emphasis on providing transition services to youth and students with disabilities, especially their need for pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS). Title 34, Section 361.29 of the Code of Federal Regulations indicates that the CSNA 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 rehabilitation needs of transition-aged youth with disabilities (14 to 24) and the needs of students with disabilities (14 to 21) for Pre-ETS.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The needs of youth and young adults with disabilities are a vital focus of any VR agency. The following statements capture the themes highlighted in association with the needs of students and youth in the transition from school-age support to adult support. Needs in this realm include:

- Expanding opportunities for summer youth employment for students with disabilities and broadening access to work-based learning.
- Removing access barriers for students associated with acquiring multiple service authorizations.
- Increasing opportunities for access to safe and reliable transportation for students in youth. Concerns were raised in this regard in some communities, particularly after dark.
- Clarifying the eligibility process for transition services for youth versus students with disabilities.
- Navigating the consent forms for students with IEPs, including the lack of understanding about the importance of consent and the difficulty of serving students with disabilities in the classroom.
- Increasing the array of transition supports to help students with disabilities navigate the complex systems in D.C.
- Accessing transition services for students in charter schools. Consistent concerns were mentioned about the inconsistent and sometimes non-existent access to VR services for students in the District's charters.
- Expanding opportunities for STEM skills training in schools.
- Improving cooperation between DC government agencies and public schools. Examples of missed opportunities and inefficiencies were cited, including missed opportunities to engage in Disability Innovation Fund proposals/projects.
- Increasing DCRSA presence in public and charter schools.

- Accessing support and resources to participate in post-secondary education and training.
- Creating more equitable experiences in the youth internship program. Concerns were identified about the consistent impact and relevance for students

National and Agency-Specific Data Related to the Needs of Individuals in Transition

Vocational Rehabilitation services for youth with disabilities enable individuals to pursue meaningful employment that corresponds with their abilities and interests. This section contains various statistics regarding the general trends of youth and youth with disabilities in the Nation and Washington, D.C.

Educational Attainment: 18 to 24 Years

The data indicates that the rate of individuals ages 18 to 24 years whose highest educational attainment is a high school graduate or the equivalent in the District of Columbia is 15.4 percentage points lower than the U.S. average.

Ward 2 has the lowest rate of individuals 18 to 24 years old for whom high school graduation was their highest educational attainment (13.9%). Although Ward 8 had the lowest percentage of youth who attained at least a Bachelor's degree (9 percent), the rates for individuals ages 18 to 24 who have achieved some college or an associate degree in W8 exceeds 26 percentage points, indicating that roughly one-quarter of students in W8 start college at rates like other wards in D.C. and in the Nation, but are not attaining bachelor's degree educational goals. Ward 6's bachelor's degree attainment rate is the highest in the District of Columbia, exceeding the U.S. average by 44 percentage points. Table 94 contains Educational Attainment rates for people aged 18 to 24, including high school graduation rates and bachelor's degree achievement.

Table 94: *Educational Attainment for Ages 18 to 24 Years: District of Columbia*

Educational Attainment: Ages 18 to 24 Years	Less than high school graduate	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college or associate's degree	Bachelor's degree or higher
United States	11.6%	35.4%	39.6%	13.4%
D.C.	6.5%	20.0%	41.7%	31.7%
Ward 1	3.2%	18.4%	33.2%	45.1%
Ward 2	1.1%	13.9%	52.5%	32.4%
Ward 3	2.3%	14.5%	54.3%	28.9%

Ward 4	18.4%	26.1%	28.6%	26.8%
Ward 5	10.3%	33.7%	34.0%	22.1%
Ward 6	4.1%	17.2%	21.3%	57.4%
Ward 7	17.2%	43.9%	23.7%	15.2%
Ward 8	16.3%	48.5%	26.2%	9.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

School Enrollment, Educational Attainment and Employment Status: Ages 16 to 19 Years

Data in Table 95 represents school enrollment, educational attainment and employment status for individuals ages 16 to 19. The rate for youth in the labor force categorized as "high school graduates (including equivalency) employed" in District of Columbia Wards 1 and 2 are significantly higher than the U.S. average. In contrast, the rates for the remaining Wards are lower than the U.S. average of 64.8%. The total youth labor force participation rates in the District of Columbia Wards are lower than the U.S. average of 40.7%, ranging between 24 to 33.8 percent.

Note for this table, the National data is calculated from 2022 1-year estimates and the District of Columbia and wards statistics are computed from 2022 5-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 95: *Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19 Years: United States and the District of Columbia*

Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19 Years: United States, District of Columbia, and Wards				
U.S. and D.C.	**U. S.**		**D.C.**	
	Total	**Percent of Enrolled**	**Total**	**Percent of Enrolled**
	Population	**Not Enrolled**	**Population**	**Not Enrolled**
Total	17,402,141	-----	26,932	-----
Enrolled in school:	14,605,120	83.9%	23,795	88.4%
Employed	4,583,966	31.4%	4,133	17.4%
Unemployed	583,897	4.0%	1,409	5.9%
Not in labor force	9,437,257	64.6%	18,253	76.7%
Not enrolled in school:	2,797,021	16.1%	3,137	11.6%

High school graduate (includes equivalency):	2,115,074	75.6%	2,474	78.9%
Employed	1,370,664	64.8%	1,168	47.2%
Unemployed	206,956	9.8%	823	33.3%
Not in labor force	537,454	25.4%	483	19.5%
Not high school graduate:	681,947	24.4%	663	21.1%
Employed	276,946	40.6%	127	19.2%
Unemployed	66,340	9.7%	130	19.6%
Not in labor force	338,661	49.7%	406	61.2%
Total Labor Force Participation	7,088,769	40.7%	7,790	28.9%
Total Not in labor force	10,313,372	59.3%	19,142	71.1%

	W1		W2	
	Total	**Percent of Enrolled**	**Total**	**Percent of Enrolled**
	Population	**Not Enrolled**	**Population**	**Not Enrolled**
Total	2,856	-----	4,594	-----
Enrolled in school:	2,588	90.6%	4,558	99.2%
Employed	367	14.2%	1,102	24.2%
Unemployed	101	3.9%	133	2.9%
Not in labor force	2,120	81.9%	3,323	72.9%
Not enrolled in school:	268	9.4%	36	0.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	241	89.9%	27	75.0%
Employed	191	79.3%	27	100.0%
Unemployed	18	7.5%	0	0.0%
Not in labor force	32	13.3%	0	0.0%
Not high school graduate:	27	10.1%	9	25.0%
Employed	10	37.0%	0	0.0%
Unemployed	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Not in labor force	17	63.0%	9	100.0%
Total Labor Force Participation	687	24.1%	1,262	27.5%
Total Not in labor force	2,169	75.9%	3,332	72.5%

	W3		W4	
	Total	**Percent of Enrolled**	**Total**	**Percent of Enrolled**
	Population	**Not Enrolled**	**Population**	**Not Enrolled**
Total	3,959	-----	2,598	-----
Enrolled in school:	3,840	97.0%	2,432	93.6%
Employed	869	22.6%	517	21.3%
Unemployed	319	8.3%	44	1.8%
Not in labor force	2,652	69.1%	1,871	76.9%
Not enrolled in school:	119	3.0%	166	6.4%

	Total	Percent of Enrolled	Total	Percent of Enrolled
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	71	59.7%	121	72.9%
Employed	21	29.6%	62	51.2%
Unemployed	0	0.0%	57	47.1%
Not in labor force	50	70.4%	2	1.7%
Not high school graduate:	48	40.3%	45	27.1%
Employed	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Unemployed	0	0.0%	39	86.7%
Not in labor force	48	100.0%	6	13.3%
Total Labor Force Participation	1,209	30.5%	719	27.6%
Total Not in labor force	2,750	69.5%	1,879	72.3%
	W5		**W6**	
	Total	**Percent of Enrolled**	**Total**	**Percent of Enrolled**
	Population	**Not Enrolled**	**Population**	**Not Enrolled**
Total	3,381	-----	1,999	-----
Enrolled in school:	2,829	83.7%	1,700	85.0%
Employed	401	14.2%	294	17.3%
Unemployed	98	3.5%	29	1.7%
Not in labor force	2,330	82.4%	1,377	81.0%
Not enrolled in school:	552	16.3%	299	15.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	476	86.2%	148	49.5%
Employed	300	63.0%	82	55.4%
Unemployed	84	17.6%	35	23.6%
Not in labor force	92	19.3%	31	20.9%
Not high school graduate:	76	13.8%	151	50.5%
Employed	71	93.4%	6	4.0%
Unemployed	0	0.0%	33	21.9%
Not in labor force	5	6.6%	112	74.2%
Total Labor Force Participation	954	28.2%	479	24.0%
Total Not in labor force	2,427	71.8%	1,520	76.0%
	W7		**W8**	
	Total	**Percent of Enrolled**	**Total**	**Percent of Enrolled**
	Population	**Not Enrolled**	**Population**	**Not Enrolled**
Total	3,917	-----	3,628	-----
Enrolled in school:	3,170	80.9%	2,678	73.8%
Employed	399	12.6%	184	6.9%
Unemployed	346	10.9%	339	12.7%
Not in labor force	2,425	76.5%	2,155	80.5%
Not enrolled in school:	747	19.1%	950	26.2%

High school graduate (includes equivalency):	620	83.0%	770	81.1%
Employed	145	23.4%	340	44.2%
Unemployed	392	63.2%	237	30.8%
Not in labor force	83	13.4%	193	25.1%
Not high school graduate:	127	17.0%	180	18.9%
Employed	40	31.5%	0	0.0%
Unemployed	0	0.0%	58	32.2%
Not in labor force	87	68.5%	122	67.8%
Total Labor Force Participation	1,322	33.8%	1,158	31.9%
Total Not in labor force	2,595	66.2%	2,470	68.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Bureau of Labor Statistics Youth Labor Force and Unemployment Rates Including Youth with Disabilities

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics collects information on the Nation's youth labor force participation and unemployment by age. The data indicates that the labor force participation rates for youth with disabilities are lower compared to individuals without disabilities when youth are ages 16 to 19, and the difference ranges between 1.7 to 8.7 percentage points. The margin of difference in the Annual 2023 LFP rate is 10.5 percent for 16 to 19 years. When the group ages 20 to 24 years, the disparity ranges between 21 to 25.7 percentage points and the annual difference for 2023 is 20.7 percentage points.

From October through December 2023, the unemployment rate difference between those with and without disabilities ages 20 to 24 ranged between 0.4 and 6.5%, significantly lower than the range in the first four months of 2023, which was 6.3 to 10%. In January 2024, the unemployment rates for youth with disabilities in both age categories were lower than for youth without disabilities.

Table 96 details the National labor force participation and unemployment data for youth ages 16 to 19 and 20 to 24 with and without disabilities.

Table 96: *Youth Labor Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate: October - December 2023, January 2024, and Annual 2023 Averages*

Group	Youth Labor Force Participation Rate									
	Oct-23		Nov-23		Dec-23		Annual 2023		Jan-24	
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability

Age 16 to 19	28.5%	37.2%	34.3%	36.0%	29.9%	35.1%	27.0%	37.5%	33.8%	22.0%
Age 20 to 24	50.2%	71.9%	51.3%	72.3%	45.9%	71.6%	51.8%	72.5%	71.2%	49.0%
	Youth Unemployment Rate									
	Disability	**No Disability**	**Disability**	**No Disability**	**Disability**	**No Disability**	**Disability**	**No Disability**	**Disability**	**No Disability**
Age 16 to 19	20.5%	12.8%	23.7%	10.4%	15.8%	10.0%	18.0%	11.0%	11.1%	13.4%
Age 20 to 24	7.0%	6.6%	9.5%	5.9%	12.0%	5.5%	11.8%	6.4%	6.6%	13.2%

Source: Borbely, James @bls.gov

University of New Hampshire Disability Statistics – Employment by Disability Type and Race/Ethnicity

The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability prepared statistics for employment by disability type and race/ethnicity for non-institutionalized civilians ages 16 to 20, male and female, from all education levels. Limited data was available due to the small population size and age range. Although the data is limited, it suggests that access to employment is available to youth who report being Black/African American, some other race, White, and Hispanic/Latino in the District of Columbia.

Table 97: *2022 D.C. Employment by Ethnicity and Disability Type for Non-institutionalized Population Ages 16-20*

Employment by Disability Type and Ethnicity Ages 16 to 20	*Percent Employed by Disability Type*						
	Any	*Visual*	*Hearing*	*Ambulatory*	*Cognitive*	*Self-care*	*Independent Living*
White, non-Hispanic	16.5%	--	14.3%	--	20.7%	--	--

Black/African American, non-Hispanic	21.4%	44.7%	--	--	--	--	--
American Indian and Alaskan Native, non-Hispanic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Asian, non-Hispanic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Some Other Race, non-Hispanic	37.6%	--	--	--	11.6%	--	--
Hispanic/Latino	58.8%	--	--	--	--	--	--

Source: 2022 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates; Prepared 01/19/2024 by S. Bach, UNH

Survey Results by Type

PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS - YOUTH

Partner survey respondents were asked to indicate the five most significant barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition from a list of 20 barriers. The number of barriers a partner respondent could choose was unlimited. A total of 35 respondents answered the question.

The five most prominent barriers to employment that partners selected for youth in transition match the five most significant barriers identified for the general population of DCRSA consumers and the five biggest barriers partners cited for consumers with the most significant disabilities. The biggest barrier for youth in transition selected by the partners is "little or no work experience." Three of the four comments received in the category "other" are quoted:

- *"Locations of employment opportunities in a neighborhood they won't go to/can't get to"*
- *"Understanding of DC Service system and how to obtain/maintain eligibility, navigating scheduling challenges to build time for DCRSA services while attending school and adhering to academic/in-seat time requirements."*
- *"Well-informed adults in their life to dispel myths about earning; financial education and planning; need for Discovery assessments and more work-based learning and paid work while in school."*

Table 98 lists the barriers for youth in transition identified by partner respondents.

Table 98*: Partner Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Youth in Transition*

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Youth in Transition	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Little or no work experience	30	90.9%
Not having education or training	27	81.8%
Not having job skills	25	75.8%
Not having job search skills	21	63.6%
Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities	18	54.5%
Mental health issues	15	45.5%
Poor social skills	14	42.4%
Not having disability-related accommodations	13	39.4%
Disability-related transportation issues	12	36.4%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	12	36.4%
Other transportation issues	11	33.3%
Housing issues	10	30.3%
Language barriers	9	27.3%
Not enough jobs available	8	24.2%
Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care	8	24.2%
Substance use issues	6	18.2%
Convictions for criminal offenses	6	18.2%
Other health issues	5	15.2%
Childcare issues	5	15.2%
Other (please describe)	4	12.1%
Total	259	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS -YOUTH

Staff Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Youth in Transition

Staff survey respondents were asked to indicate the five largest barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition from a list of 26 barriers. The number of barriers a staff respondent could choose was unlimited.

Staff and partner respondents agreed on three of the five most significant barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition, with "little or no work experience" as the number one barrier on the staff list. Staff selected the open-ended category "other" once. The comment cited the phrase "lack of motivation." Table 99 lists the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition chosen by staff.

Table 99: *Staff Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Youth in Transition*

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Youth in Transition	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Little or no work experience	18	66.7%
Not having job skills	17	63.0%
Not having education or training	13	48.1%
Mental health issues	11	40.7%
Poor social skills	10	37.0%
Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways	8	29.6%
Not having job search skills	6	22.2%
Housing issues	6	22.2%
Disability-related transportation issues	5	18.5%
Substance use issues	5	18.5%
Not having STEM skills	4	14.8%
Not enough jobs available	3	11.1%
Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities	3	11.1%
Other health issues	3	11.1%
Childcare issues	3	11.1%
Convictions for criminal offenses	3	11.1%
Community or systemic racism	3	11.1%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	2	7.4%
Lack of reliable Internet access	2	7.4%
Language barriers	1	3.7%
Not having disability-related accommodations	1	3.7%
Other (please describe)	1	3.7%
Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care	0	0.0%
Other transportation issues	0	0.0%
Lack of access to technology	0	0.0%
Lack of financial literacy	0	0.0%
Total	128	

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The heightened focus on effectively serving youth and students, nearly ten years after the passage of WIOA, remains evident in Washington, D.C. Recurring themes in this area were also varied and related explicitly to needs for:

- Expanding employment opportunities. Respondents commented on the desire for more employment opportunities for youth and students and needed clarification about the path to those goals.
- Increasing summer youth employment opportunities for youth with disabilities. Summer employment opportunities were highlighted as a positive component of the DC system, but we wanted to highlight the importance of expansion in this area.

- Broadening the access to work-based learning programs to youth from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Specific feedback was received concerning the equitable access to these supports by youth from all Wards in D.C.
- Removing cumbersome barriers (i.e., authorization, paperwork, and eligibility) to expedite access to support. Respondents indicated these processes serve as a deterrent to many youths and families for a variety of reasons (i.e., trust in systems, sustained motivation, and family/individual crisis)
- Exploring mechanisms to improve safe and reliable student transportation options, especially after dark. With so many employment opportunities for youth occurring after school hours and into the evening, respondents recognized that many of these are eliminated due to transportation challenges.
- Clarifying the eligibility process for transition services, in particular, Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Respondents highlighted the uncertainty about serving potentially eligible students with disabilities and the opportunity.
- Simplifying the referral process for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 plans. It was highlighted that the processes of eligibility, consent forms, and plan development could be more integrated with current school processes.
- Enhancing the variety of transition supports to help students navigate complex systems. Some youth and families still need clarification about where to go for the most appropriate support and when they should be doing so.
- Addressing the inconsistent access to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services in charter schools. While DCRSA's work with public schools around transition has been positive, the gap for students in the many D.C. charter schools is significant.
- Expanding STEM skills training opportunities in schools. Many students are interested in STEM careers, but without the necessary accommodations to the curriculum, these opportunities are not in reach for students with disabilities.
- Providing a clear pathway for post-secondary education and training. Post-secondary education and training opportunities are available, but the path to these programs is viewed by many as unattainable.
- Creating more equitable experiences in youth internship programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided to DCRSA related to the needs of youth with disabilities in transition:

1. DCRSA should implement a stronger monitoring and data collection process to become more focused on student growth and development. This system would allow DSCRA to understand trends in real time and develop plans for improvement with their partners in education and workforce to address transition gaps.

2. DCRSA would benefit from re-establishing and nurturing relationships with charter and public schools and evaluating mechanisms for ensuring equitable access to services for students in charter schools.

3. DCRSA is encouraged to formulate an outreach plan to educate and support transition staff in all schools in reaching youth and families, and to ensure all students with disabilities have access to information about VR services.

4. DCRSA could consider establishing a transition systems task force to work with education and other partners to understand the root causes of complexity, access, and equity issues and develop improvement ideas.

5. DCRSA is encouraged to explore ways to increase and improve safe transportation options for youth with disabilities in DC. DCRSA might explore options with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to identify available options and solutions for developing additional transportation resources to keep youth safe.

SECTION V: THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The following information was gathered during this assessment regarding the needs of individuals with visual impairments served through other Statewide Workforce Development System components. Throughout this section, DOES Washington, D.C., will refer to services provided by the American Job Centers (AJCs). Unless explicitly stated, the information and comments noted in this Section only refer to DCRSA's partners, not DCRSA.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

Overall, in reviewing all sources of data obtained in the assessment process, a series of key theme's for DCRSA and DOES to collectively consider are as follows:

- Accessing DOES has been difficult for people with disabilities. Disclosure of disability is a particular issue.
- Increasing opportunities to access job fairs. These were identified as helpful, but more and broader opportunities should be available. When they do happen, they do not always accommodate the needs of deaf or visually impaired individuals.
- Delivering a more consistent customer experience. Participants noted mixed experiences with the Department of Employment Services (DOES) and American Job Centers. There was a need for increased visibility and collaboration between RSA and DOES.
- Increasing services in the workforce system for youth with disabilities, particularly in the areas of out-of-school youth and homelessness.
- Exploring opportunities for small business development.
- Accessing D.C.'s job training programs. Respondents mentioned the importance of early preparation and the program's innovative approach to job development.

- Growing consistency of services from the DOES. Some reported finding it helpful for job training, while others disagreed.

Survey Result by Type

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS: DC DOES

Individuals with disabilities in the District of Columbia were asked about their use and opinion of DC DOES American Job Centers.

DC DOES American Job Centers - Use and Accessibility

Less than half of the respondents cited "yes" when asked if they had used the DC DOES American Job Centers beyond an online account. Of the respondents who utilized the DC DOES centers to create an online account, physical accessibility of the building was difficult for about one-fifth (n=31), and access to programs was challenging for roughly 32% (n=50). The narrative responses regarding physical concerns indicated that the buildings are not wheelchair accessible; doors do not work correctly; would not allow the use of the nearest entrance and exit to the building; vision or mobility issues impeded the equipment and access to the equipment; and the office was too far to travel to. Additional comments referenced long wait times, unprofessional and rude staff and security staff, no assistance with using the programs, no jobs available in the field of interest, no Spanish programs, and too many requirements for resumes and having to write a new resume for every job.

Table 99: *Individual Survey: DC DOES American Job Centers – Use and Accessibility*

Accessibility Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Have you ever tried to use the services of the DC DOES American Job centers beyond creating an online account? (this may include testing, preparing for or finding employment, job coaching, training assistive technology or other services)	159	44.0%	202	56.0%	361
Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?	31	19.6%	127	80.4%	158
Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the DC DOES American Job centers (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?	50	31.9%	107	68.2%	157

DC DOES American Job Centers – Training and Employment

Individuals indicated that the services they sought at the Job Centers did not result in the desired outcomes for most respondents. Sixty survey respondents (37.7% of 159) attended training at a Center. Seventeen individuals (28.3%) indicated that they received the training they were seeking, and 15 individuals (24.6%) found work due to the training. One hundred-three (65.6%) out of 157 individuals went to the Center to seek assistance to find a job. One hundred-three respondents answered the question regarding receiving help that resulted in employment, with 67% indicating that they did not receive assistance in finding employment. Table 100 details the results of using the DC DOES American Job Centers to seek training and employment.

Table 100*: Individual Survey: DC DOES American Job Centers – Training and Employment*

Training and Employment Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Did you go to the DC DOES American Job Center to get training?	60	37.7%	99	62.3%	159
Did you get the training that you were seeking?	17	28.3%	43	71.7%	60
Did the DC DOES American Job center training result in employment?	15	24.6%	46	75.4%	61
Did you go to the DC DOES American Job Center to find a job?	103	65.6%	54	34.4%	157
Did the DC DOES American Job Center staff help you find employment?	34	33.0%	69	67.0%	103

DC DOES American Job Centers – Helpfulness and Effectiveness

The concepts of helpfulness and effectiveness are evaluated in this study with respect to the DC DOES American Job Centers services. Overall, Job Centers' ratings indicate mixed reviews on the helpfulness and effectiveness of the services.

DC DOES American Job Centers – Helpfulness

One hundred fifty-three respondents answered the question regarding staff helpfulness in the individual survey. Many respondents (34%) found the Job Centers' staff helpful. Note the margin of difference between "very helpful" and "not helpful" is two respondents. Table 101 summarizes the results.

Table 101*: Individual Survey: Helpfulness of DC DOES American Job Centers' Staff*

DC DOES Center Staff Helpful	Number	Percent
They were somewhat helpful	52	34.0%
Yes, they were very helpful	43	28.1%

	Number	Percent
No, they were not helpful	41	26.8%
They were somewhat unhelpful	17	11.1%
Total	153	100.0%

DC DOES American Job Centers – Effectiveness

Regarding the effectiveness of the DC DOES American Job Centers, 35.3% of the respondents found the Centers' services to be "somewhat effective" in serving individuals with disabilities. Regarding the overall effectiveness rating, roughly one-fourth of the respondents selected "somewhat effective." A 1.9 percent margin of difference (n=3) exists between the rate of respondents who selected the response option "very ineffective" and the rate of respondents who cited "somewhat effective." Almost an equal number of respondents cited "I don't know," "very effective," or "somewhat ineffective." Table 102 identifies the effectiveness of the Job Centers' services cited by the individuals.

Table 102: *Individual Survey: Effectiveness of DC DOES American Job Centers Services*

DC DOES Centers Services Effective	Number	Percent
The services were somewhat effective	54	35.3%
No, the services were not effective	48	31.4%
Yes, the services were very effective	26	17.0%
The services were somewhat ineffective	25	16.3%
Total	153	100.0%
Effectiveness Rating	**Number**	**Percent**
Somewhat effective	40	26.1%
Very ineffective	37	24.2%
I don't know	26	17.0%
Very effective	25	16.3%
Somewhat ineffective	25	16.3%
Total	153	100.0%

Recommendations for DC DOES American Job Centers

Individual survey respondents were asked: "What recommendations do you have for DC DOES American Job Centers to improve their services to individuals with disabilities in D.C.?" Respondents were asked to provide a narrative response.

Thirty-six narrative comments offered suggestions on improving staff attitude, hiring professional staff, increasing knowledge about people with disabilities, communication, responsiveness, and helpfulness. Twenty-two comments cited improving the Job Center services by providing more job opportunities and training, providing specialized service for people with disabilities, and improving community outreach to employers. Seven comments provided suggestions for educating staff on disability types and cultures, including addressing bias toward blacks, whites and those with criminal records. Three comments addressed improving the accessibility, hours of operation and cleanliness of the Job Centers.

Anything Else Regarding the DC DOES American Job Centers

Individual survey respondents were presented with another open-ended question asking if there were anything else they would like to share regarding DC DOES and its services. A total of one hundred-sixty-one responses were received. Eighty-seven comments (54% of 161) cited "no/NA/not at this time." Seventeen respondents cited "never hearing about/unaware of" the DC DOES American Job Centers. The remaining 57 narrative comments contained a variety of suggestions and feedback for the DC DOES and included comments directed to DCRSA. Quotes are:

- *"Effective and worthwhile to the community."*
- *"Several people at DOES did an excellent job conveying information and helping with resumes. The problem was linking a disabled client to service at their locations. Some training centers did not return calls or follow up even after physically making trips to the vendor's location to inquire about the lack of response/response. Programs, vendors, and agencies must communicate more along the processes to ensure no one drops the ball. Some agencies offer very little for those who experience age discrimination and may need an internship, apprenticeship, and exemptions without being penalized for trying to become gainful employees under SSI. There isn't real support for SSI clients; only SSDI clients are supported with realistic means return to work..."*
- *"This organization has the potential to make exponential improvements in the community, but the staff deters people from the services."*
- *"I hope they fix the service programs and develop more programs and not make a client suffer more like I am now."*
- *"DC DOES is focused on very common jobs and careers. It would be more helpful if you have a particular trade or skill or are interested in office administration or medical record-keeping. As someone looking to leave sales and customer service, I found it was not helpful at all. I prepared my resume to find some other kind of work, but no one looked at my resume on the DOES site. Because I had the job title "Account Executive," I had an extremely difficult time being considered for anything besides sales."*
- *"My representative was very hands-off, did not have POC's at the job centers posted on the DOES American Job Center site, and did not appear interested in helping me find employment. I was unemployed on Workmen's Compensation and attending undergraduate classes then. It seems like the DOES function is only to assist persons on public assistance or with criminal records. They seem unobligated to help educated; experienced black women find professional employment in office settings."*

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS: DC DOES

Partner survey respondents were asked questions regarding their opinion and use of the DC DOES American Job Centers. It is important to note that the sample size for this section of the report ranges between 21 and 36 respondents.

DC DOES American Job Centers - Use and Accessibility

The project team asked respondents to identify their frequency of interaction with the DC DOES American Job Centers. The results suggest that the partners are not familiar enough with the DC DOES American Job Centers to determine if the services are accessible to consumers.

The sample size ranges between 21 to 26 respondents for this report section. Slightly more than three-fourths (77.8%) of the partner respondents either need to interact with the DC DOES American Job Centers or infrequently interact with the Centers. Less than 9% (n=3) of the partner respondents interact very frequently with the Job Centers.

The survey asked about the physical and programmatic accessibility of the DC DOES Job Centers. Eight partner respondents (38.1%) indicated that the Job Centers were somewhat physically accessible. Note that an equal number of partners (n=5) cited that the Job Centers are either fully accessible or indicated that they did not know if they were physically accessible.

An equal number of partner respondents (n=7) indicated that the DC DOES American Job Centers were either somewhat programmatically accessible or somewhat programmatically inaccessible, and five respondents indicated that they did not know about the centers' programmatic accessibility. Individual respondents differed in their report, as the majority (68.2%) indicated that they did not have difficulty accessing the programs at the Job Centers.

Tables 103-105 summarize the responses from DCRSA's community partners regarding the interaction and accessibility of the DC DOES American Job Centers.

Table 103*: Partner Survey: Frequency of Interaction with DC DOES American Job Centers*

Frequency of Interaction with DOES American Job Centers	Number	Percent
Not at all	15	41.7%
Infrequently	13	36.1%
Somewhat frequently	5	13.9%
Very frequently	3	8.3%
Total	36	100.0%

Table 104*: Partner Survey: Physical Accessibility of the DC DOES American Job Centers*

Physical Accessibility of the DOES American Job Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat accessible	8	38.1%
Fully accessible	5	23.8%
I do not know	5	23.8%
Somewhat inaccessible	3	14.3%
Not accessible	0	0.0%
Total	21	100.0%

Table 105*: Partner Survey: Programmatic Accessibility of the DC DOES American Job Centers*

Programmatic Accessibility of the DOES American Job Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat accessible	7	33.3%
Somewhat inaccessible	7	33.3%
I do not know	5	23.8%
Fully accessible	2	9.5%
Not accessible	0	0.0%
Total	21	100.0%

DC DOES American Job Centers – Effectiveness Rating

Partners and individual survey respondents were somewhat similar in their viewpoints when asked about the overall effectiveness (see Table 106) of the DC DOES American Job Centers in serving people with disabilities. Eighty-one of the partners indicated that the centers do not effectively serve people with disabilities, which is different from the results of the individual survey respondents.

Table 106*: Partner Survey: DC DOES American Job Centers – Effectiveness Rating*

Effectiveness of DOES American Job Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat ineffectively	11	52.4%
Not effectively	6	28.6%
Effectively	2	9.5%
Very effectively	1	4.8%
They do not serve individuals with disabilities	1	4.8%
Total	21	100.0%

DC DOES American Job Centers – Improving Services

In the final survey question related to the DC DOES American Job Centers, the respondents were asked what the Centers could do to improve services for individuals with disabilities. Partners were presented with six items and asked to select all that apply.

Slightly less than 86% of respondents indicated that the Job Centers should train their staff to work effectively with individuals with disabilities, and over 71 percent of partners indicated that the Centers should "include individuals with disabilities when purchasing training for their clients" (see Table 107). About 38 percent of partners (n=8) would like the Job Centers to improve their programmatic accessibility, even though about 24 percent of partners do not know if the Centers are programmatically accessible, and 77.8 percent do not or rarely interact with them. Two narrative comments were received in response to the item "other; please describe" and are quoted:

- *"Do targeted outreach to people with disabilities, making their business services available to RSA counselors, vendors/providers, and jobseekers."*
- *"Unsure, outside of our purview"*

Improving Service of the DOES American Job Centers to Effectively Serve PWD	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities	18	85.7%
Include individuals with disabilities when purchasing training for their clients	15	71.4%
Partner more effectively with VR	13	61.9%
Improve programmatic accessibility	8	38.1%
Improve physical accessibility	3	14.3%
Other (please describe)	3	14.3%
Total	60	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS: DC DOES

Staff survey respondents were asked questions regarding their opinion and use of the DC DOES American Job Centers. For this section of the report, the sample size ranges between 32 and 34 respondents.

DC DOES American Job Centers - Use and Accessibility

The staff was almost equally divided into fourths in their response to the question regarding their frequency of interaction with the American Job Centers. Almost an equal percentage of staff respondents indicated "not at all' or "very frequently" as their level of interaction with the DC DOES Job Centers, and the difference is one respondent. Additionally, 23.5 percent of staff selected "infrequently". In contrast, 20.6 percent of staff cited "somewhat frequently", and the difference is one respondent." The staff and partner results are different in response to this question.

The survey asked about the physical and programmatic accessibility of the Job Centers. Staff respondents were almost equally divided when asked about the physical accessibility of the Job Centers, and one respondent cited "not accessible."

Like partner respondents, staff responded with mixed responses regarding the Job Centers' program accessibility. While 44.1% of staff indicated that the DC DOES American Job Centers were somewhat programmatically accessible, almost 30 percent did not know if the programs were accessible to consumers. Note again, over 68 percent of individual survey respondents indicated that they did not have difficulty accessing the programs at the Job Centers.

Tables 108-110 summarize the responses from DCRSA staff regarding interaction and accessibility of the DC DOES American Centers.

Table 108: *Staff Survey: Frequency of Interaction with DC DOES American Job Centers*

Frequency of Interaction with DOES American Job Centers	Number	Percent

Not at all	10	29.4%
Very frequently	9	26.5%
Infrequently	8	23.5%
Somewhat frequently	7	20.6%
Total	34	100.0%

Table 109*: Staff Survey: Physical Accessibility of the DC DOES American Job Centers*

Physical Accessibility of the DOES American Job Centers	Number	Percent
Fully accessible	11	32.4%
Somewhat accessible	11	32.4%
I do not know	11	32.4%
Not accessible	1	2.9%
Somewhat inaccessible	0	0.0%
Total	34	100.0%

Table 110*: Staff Survey: Programmatic Accessibility of the DC DOES American Job Centers*

Programmatic Accessibility of the DOES American Job Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat accessible	15	44.1%
I do not know	10	29.4%
Fully accessible	7	20.6%
Not accessible	2	5.9%
Somewhat inaccessible	0	0.0%
Total	34	100.0%

DC DOES American Job Centers – Effectiveness Rating

Over 59 percent of staff indicated that the DC DOES American Job Centers are somewhat effectively serving people with disabilities, which differs from partner and individual survey results (see Table 111).

Table 111*: Staff Survey: DC DOES American Job Centers – Effectiveness Rating*

Effectiveness of DOES American Job Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat effectively	19	59.4%
Somewhat ineffectively	6	18.8%
Very effectively	4	12.5%
Not effectively	2	6.3%
They do not serve individuals with disabilities	1	3.1%
Total	32	100.0%

DC DOES American Job Centers – Improving Services

Staff respondents were presented with six items and asked what the DC DOES American Centers could do to improve services for individuals with disabilities. There was no limit to the number of suggestions a respondent could choose. A total of 32 respondents answered the question.

The rank order of the responses to the question cited by staff matches the rank order of the responses selected by partners. Approximately 41% of respondents indicated that the Job Centers should partner more effectively with DCRSA. Also similar to partner results, staff would like the Job Centers to improve their programmatic accessibility even though: 1) 29.4 percent of staff do not know if the Center is programmatically accessible; 2) about 52.9 percent of staff do not or rarely interact with the Centers; and 3) the majority of individual respondents (68.2%, n=107 out of 157) indicated that they did not have difficulty accessing the programs at the Job Centers. Five comments were received in the category "other, please describe." Two comments contained suggestions for improving services, and the quotes are:

- *"Have more programs accessible for individuals with sensory impairment."*
- *"Train on working with individuals who are Blind and or Visually Impaired. Deaf and hard of hearing."*

Table 112 summarizes the staff responses to the survey question regarding improving DC DOES American Job Center services for individuals with disabilities.

Table 112: *Staff Survey: Improving Service of DC DOES American Job Centers for Individuals with Disabilities*

Improving Service of the DOES American Job Centers to Effectively Serve PWD	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities	17	53.1%
Include individuals with disabilities when purchasing training for their clients	14	43.8%
Partner more effectively with DCRSA	13	40.6%
Improve programmatic accessibility	12	37.5%
Improve physical accessibility	6	18.8%
Other (please describe)	5	15.6%
Total	67	

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The following information was gathered from the individuals interviewed for this assessment regarding the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System (i.e., Washington, D.C. DOES). Needs raised included:

- Addressing concerns of accessibility. There are significant challenges in accessing the Department of Employment Services (DOES) for people with disabilities, particularly concerning the disclosure of disability. Sentiments highlighted that these access issues impact people's willingness to connect with DOES for services.
- Increasing the inclusivity of Job Fairs. While job fairs are helpful, there is a need for more inclusive events that accommodate individuals who are deaf or visually impaired.

- Facilitating awareness of DOES in the community and schools. There's a gap in connecting students with disabilities to workforce development programs, primarily due to a lack of understanding about accessing these resources.
- Expanding the use of resources for youth. There is a perception of underspending on services for youth with disabilities, particularly those who are out-of-school or homeless. Not all partners know how to access summer youth employment through DOES.
- Supporting opportunities for small business development and/or self-employment was noted as a potential area for growth.
- Expanding opportunities for new training programs. D.C.'s job training program is recognized for its early preparation and innovative approach, but it is necessary to extend it to more people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. DCRSA is encouraged to create and facilitate *disability awareness* training for DOES staff. Other opportunities for cross-training staff in both systems could be explored, and collaboration could be built across systems.

2. DCRSA is encouraged to increase the use of co-located or designated staff at each DOES office (and vice versa) whenever possible.

3. DOES should seek to broaden the use of effective collaborative practices highlighted by the Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth and other national centers. An essential resource on advancing partnerships with WIOA Title I programs includes Unlocking the Potential of Title I.

4. DCRSA, in partnership with DOES and Education, should explore opportunities to expand summer employment and work-based learning through program options outside of Title IV of WIOA (i.e., Title I and III).

SECTION VI: NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Section VI identifies the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs in Washington, D.C., that serve individuals with disabilities. DCRSA provides many services to its consumers through a network of qualified vendors/community rehabilitation programs.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following themes emerged around the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with disabilities in Washington, D.C.:

- Improving the communication and referral process between DCRSA and CRPs.
- Acknowledging the importance of CRPs in the rehabilitation process and seeking to build capacity to serve underserved populations who may not choose to engage with the current set of CRPs
- Exploring the financial feasibility of effectively serving youth and young adults through the current funding model, solidifying the CRP network to perform this work.
- Reviewing the payment mechanisms, rates, and structures used to engage CRPs to determine their effectiveness.
- Publicizing the list of CRPs and increasing the information available to individuals with disabilities in D.C.
- Increasing communication with service coordinators in other systems.
- Exploring options to support increased staffing within CRPs to meet the overall demand of individuals with disabilities.

Survey Results by Type

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS: CRPs

Individual survey respondents were asked questions identifying their use of DCRSA referrals, their service provider's quality, effectiveness, and responsiveness, and whether they would recommend their service provider to others.

Use of a DCRSA Referral

The first question asked individual survey respondents to indicate whether they received services from a service provider that DCRSA referred to them. A total of 370 respondents answered the question. Almost 56 percent of respondents indicated they did not receive service provider services from a DCRSA referral. Table 113 summarizes the results.

Table 113*: Individual Survey: Use of a DCRSA Referral*

Use of VR Referral	Number	Percent
No	206	55.7%
Yes	105	28.4%
I am not sure	59	16.0%
Total	370	100.0%

Quality of Service from Service Provider

Individuals were asked to rate the quality of service from the service provider. A total of 332 responses were received, and almost an equal percentage of respondents indicated that the service provider's service quality was either "fair" or "poor." Table 114 details the results.

Table 114*: Individual Survey: Quality of Service from Service Provider*

Effectiveness of Services: Service Provider	Number	Percent
Fair	94	28.3%

	93	28.0%
Poor	93	28.0%
Excellent	73	22.0%
Good	72	21.7%
Total	332	100.0%

Effectiveness of Service Provider Services

Individual survey respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of the service provider's services. Slightly less than one-third of the respondents indicated that the services were ineffective, and 26.3% cited the services as somewhat effective. The results are detailed in Table 115.

Table 115: *Individual Survey: Effectiveness of Service from Service Provider*

Effectiveness of Services: Service Provider	Number	Percent
Ineffective	109	32.9%
Somewhat effective	87	26.3%
Very effective	83	25.1%
Somewhat ineffective	52	15.7%
Total	331	100.0%

Responsiveness of Service Provider

Respondents were also asked to rate the service provider's responsiveness. The margin of difference between "poor" and "excellent" in response to the question is small (n=2). Most respondents rated the service provider's responsiveness as "fair." Table 116 summarizes the results.

Table 116: *Individual Survey: Responsiveness of Service Provider*

Responsiveness of Service Provider	Number	Percent
Fair	100	30.4%
Poor	83	25.2%
Excellent	81	24.6%
Good	65	19.8%
Total	329	100.0%

Recommend Service Provider

The final question asked of individuals regarding service providers was, "Would you recommend your service provider to others served by DCRSA?" Although one-third of respondents cited "not sure," almost 43 percent indicated that they would recommend their service provider to others. The response ratings are contained in Table 117.

Table 117: *Individual Survey: Recommend Service Provider*

Recommend Service Provider	Number	Percent
Yes	145	42.9%
Not sure	113	33.4%
No	80	23.7%
Total	338	100.0%

PARTNER SURVEY RESPONSE - CRPs

Partner survey respondents were asked questions regarding rehabilitation service provider services to identify their availability to consumers and whether the services meet their needs.

Services Readily Available to VR Consumers

Partners were given a list of 18 items and asked to respond in a "yes or no" format to identify whether the service is readily available to DCRSA consumers.

Ten items were cited as readily available by 70 percent or more of the respondents who cited "yes, the service is readily available." Pre-employment transition services were identified as the most frequently available service for DCRSA consumers. Employment and supported employment services were identified as the following two most readily available services. Reader services and registered apprenticeship training were cited the fewest times as readily available. The narrative comments cited academic supports, career assessments, in-home support, companions, respite services, interpreter services, and work-based learning in response to the item "other; please describe."

Table 118: *Partner Survey: Services Readily Available*

Services Readily Available	Yes, the service is readily available		No, the service is readily available		Total
Service	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Pre-employment transition services	37	86.1%	6	14.0%	43
Employment services (job search, job development and placement)	34	85.0%	6	15.0%	40
Supported employment services	32	76.2%	10	23.8%	42
Interpreter and translator services	31	81.6%	7	18.4%	38
Community college or four-year college or university training	30	76.9%	9	23.1%	39
Occupational or vocational training	30	75.0%	10	25.0%	40
Benefits counseling	29	76.3%	9	23.7%	38
Transportation	29	78.4%	8	21.6%	37
Customized employment services	28	70.0%	12	30.0%	40
Assistive technology services	26	70.3%	11	29.7%	37
On-the-job training	25	67.6%	12	32.4%	37
Disability-related skills training (orientation and mobility, Braille, etc.)	25	73.5%	9	26.5%	34

Maintenance or other income assistance	17	54.8%	14	45.2%	31
Personal assistance services	17	51.5%	16	48.5%	33
Literacy training	16	50.0%	16	50.0%	32
Registered apprenticeship training	15	48.4%	16	51.6%	31
Reader services	15	53.6%	13	46.4%	28
Other (please describe)	3	60.0%	2	40.0%	5

Service Providers Meeting Consumer Needs

Partner survey respondents were asked to identify how frequently service providers in the District of Columbia could meet DCRSA consumers' rehabilitation service needs. Almost an equal percentage of partner survey respondents indicated that service providers meet the needs of DCRSA consumers either "some of the time" or "most of the time." Table 119 summarizes the results of this question.

Table 119: *Partner Survey: Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Needs*

Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Needs	Number	Percent
Some of the time	19	41.3%
Most of the time	18	39.1%
All the time	9	19.6%
None of the time	0	0.0%
Total	46	100.0%

Services Most Effectively Delivered by Service Providers

Partners were provided a list of 15 items and asked to identify the services service providers most effectively provided to DCRSA consumers. The number of services a partner could choose was unlimited.

Partners indicated that the most effective services CRPs provide are job development and training services. These two services were chosen more than 57% of the time, while the third choice of other education services was chosen by less than 32% of respondents. Five comments were received in the category "other." One comment cited the phrase "I don't know." The four remaining comments are quoted:

- *"Counselor support"*
- *"Discovery/CE, although there could be much more by more providers."*
- *"Vocational Evaluations"*
- *"Waiver services"*

Table 120 lists the services and the number of times each item was selected.

Table 120*: Partner Survey: Services Most Effectively Delivered by Service Providers*

Services Most Effectively Delivered by Service Providers	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents

Job development services	27	71.1%
Job training services (trial work experiences, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)	22	57.9%
Other education services	12	31.6%
Benefit planning assistance	11	28.9%
Assistive technology services	9	23.7%
Other transportation assistance	7	18.4%
Mental health treatment	7	18.4%
Substance use treatment	6	15.8%
Personal care attendants	6	15.8%
Other (please describe)	6	15.8%
Vehicle modification assistance	4	10.5%
Income assistance	3	7.9%
Medical treatment	2	5.3%
Health insurance	2	5.3%
Housing	2	5.3%
Total	126	

Rehabilitation Needs Service Providers are Unable to Meet

Partners were asked an open-ended question to identify the rehabilitation needs that service providers could not meet in their area. A total of 17 narrative responses were received in response to the question. Transportation and transportation for youth; customized employment; apprenticeships; access to career pathways; benefits counseling; food waivers; resume writing; jobs for high school graduates because they are not finding employment; work-based learning; service for the deaf-blind; caregiver support; timely assessments; interpreter services; accountability for providers by DCRSA; and training for staff to be able to assist program participants are the needs partners identified as not being met for consumers.

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Consumers' Needs

Partners were given a list of six reasons and asked to identify why community service providers could not meet consumers' service needs. A total of 30 respondents answered the question.

The most common response was "Consumer barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers," followed by "Not enough service providers available in the area" and "Other, please describe." Eight quotes from the item "other" are as follows:

- *"Difficult to have referrals."*
- *"Funding"*
- *"Not enough provider staff that are bilingual"*
- *"Hourly rates paid to staff"*
- *"Providers not paid timely for services rendered."*
- *"Regulations"*
- *"Internal staff issue"*
- *"They may need to be educated and supported to utilize other partners and to understand/provide financial literacy so that benefits counseling is more highly utilized."*

Table 121 details the partner's responses to this question.

Table 121*: Partner Survey: Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Consumers' Needs*

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Consumers' Needs	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Consumers barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers	11	36.7%
Not enough service providers available in area	9	30.0%
Other (please describe)	9	30.0%
Low rates paid for services	8	26.7%
Low quality of service provider services	8	26.7%
Low levels of accountability for poor performance by service providers	2	6.7%
Total	47	

Top Three Changes to Help Better Serve DCRSA Consumers

Partner survey respondents were presented with a list and asked to identify the top three changes that would help them better serve DCRSA consumers. Thirty-six respondents answered the question. Partners cited improved business partnerships the most frequently. Three items were cited an equal number of times and ranked in the second, third and fourth positions, indicating that the partners are divided on the top three changes that would help them better serve consumers. Increased options for using technology to communicate with consumers were chosen the least number of times (n=2). Table 122 lists the changes and the number of times each was identified as one of the top three changes that would help better serve DCRSA consumers.

Table 122*: Partner Survey: Top Three Changes to Help Better Serve DCRSA Consumers*

Top Three Changes to Better Serve RSA Consumers	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Improved business partnerships	14	38.9%
Smaller caseload	12	33.3%
Reduced documentation requirements	12	33.3%
Referral of appropriate individuals	12	33.3%
Improved communication with referring VR counselor	11	30.6%
More streamlined processes	11	30.6%
Additional training	8	22.2%
Higher rates paid by VR for services	7	19.4%
Incentives for high performance paid by VR	7	19.4%
Other (please describe)	5	13.9%
Increased collaboration with DOES	5	13.9%
Increased options for technology use to communicate with consumers	2	5.6%

	Total	106	

Most Important Change Service Providers Could Make to Support Consumer Efforts to Achieve Employment Goals

Partners were asked to identify the most crucial change that service providers in the District of Columbia could make to support consumers' efforts to achieve their employment goals. Twenty-nine narrative responses were received. Topics cited in the comments include accessibility in the workplace; actively working to get all consumers into employment; adding more programs; more job training and employment support training; hiring more qualified staff; changing hours of operation beyond 9 to 5 pm; providing consumers with unrestricted access to ask questions and listen to their needs; create more jobs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities; create more partnerships with employers; more service providers; more support and collaboration with families; more comprehensive long-term planning; keep up with the trend of employment services; and writing skills training.

STAFF SURVEY RESPONSE - CRPs

Staff survey respondents were asked six questions regarding rehabilitation service provider services. The questions aim to identify the availability of services that DCRSA refers to or recommends and to understand whether the services meet the consumers' needs.

Services Readily Available to VR Consumers

Staff were given a list of 19 items and asked to identify the services readily available to DCRSA consumers. The results of staff and partners in response to the question are different, as partners had a slightly different list of options. At least 61 percent of staff cited three items (job development services, job training services, and assistive technology) as services readily available to DCRSA consumers. Table 123 details the staff choices of readily available services.

Table 123: *Staff Survey: Services Readily Available*

Services Readily Available	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Job development services	36	87.8%
Job training services (TWE, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)	30	73.2%
Assistive technology	25	61.0%
Other transportation assistance	23	56.1%
Other education services	22	53.7%
Career Ladder/Pathways counseling	21	51.2%
Benefit planning assistance	20	48.8%
Remote service delivery (tele counseling, remote job supports, etc.)	20	48.8%
Vehicle modification assistance	11	26.8%
STEM skills training	9	22.0%
Financial literacy training	9	22.0%
Mental health treatment	6	14.6%
Medical treatment	5	12.2%

Personal care attendants	5	12.2%
Substance use treatment	4	9.8%
Other (please describe)	4	9.8%
Income assistance	3	7.3%
Health insurance	3	7.3%
Housing	2	4.9%
Total	258	

Services Not Readily Available or Do Not Exist

Staff were asked to indicate what services were not readily available or did not exist around the District of Columbia where they work. The number of services that could be chosen was unlimited. A total of 31 staff respondents answered the question.

Staff displayed some consistency in their choices for available and not available services. The items selected as services that are not readily available or do not exist are listed at the top of Table 124 below and at the bottom of the list of services that staff indicated as readily available. Two comments were received in the category "other" and are quoted:

- *"In-house Assistive Technology and Rehabilitation Teacher Specialist for Blind and VI clients."*
- *"Job placement and counseling and guidance"*

Table 124 details the staff choices of services that are not readily available or that DCRSA consumers cannot access in the District of Columbia.

Table 124: *Staff Survey: Services Not Readily Available or Do Not Exist*

Services Not Readily Available or Do Not Exist	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Housing	22	71.0%
Health insurance	19	61.3%
Medical treatment	18	58.1%
Substance use treatment	17	54.8%
Personal care attendants	17	54.8%
Mental health treatment	16	51.6%
Income assistance	14	45.2%
Vehicle modification assistance	13	41.9%
Financial literacy training	9	29.0%
STEM skills training	7	22.6%
Career Ladder/Pathways counseling	5	16.1%
Remote service delivery (tele counseling, remote job supports, etc.)	4	12.9%
Job training services (TWE, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)	3	9.7%
Assistive technology	3	9.7%
Other transportation assistance	2	6.5%
Benefit planning assistance	2	6.5%

Other (please describe)		2	6.5%
Job development services		2	6.5%
Other education services		1	3.2%
	Total	176	

Service Providers Meeting Consumers' Needs

Staff survey respondents were asked to identify how frequently service providers in the District of Columbia could meet DCRSA consumers' rehabilitation service needs.

Many respondents (52.5%) indicated that service providers were meeting the needs of DCRSA consumers most of the time. A significantly lower rate of respondents indicated that service providers always meet consumers' needs. Note that roughly 43 percent of survey respondents would recommend their service provider.

Table 125*: Staff Survey: Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Consumers' Needs*

Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Needs	Number	Percent
Most of the time	21	52.5%
Some of the time	14	35.0%
All of the time	5	12.5%
None of the time	0	0.0%
Total	40	100.0%

Rehabilitation Needs Service Providers are Unable to Meet

Staff survey respondents were given an open-ended question and asked to identify the rehabilitation needs that service providers could not meet in their area. Twenty-three respondents provided a narrative response indicating various service gaps.

Four comments did not identify rehabilitation needs and contained "unknown/unsure." Six narrative comments detailed the lack of job development/placement services. Two comments cited customized employment, and two cited serving deaf and hard-of-hearing consumers. Other comments included long-term placement, access to and knowledge of resources available, finding career jobs and competitive employment, substance use disorders and rehabilitation, mental health services, and financial literacy services.

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Consumers' Needs

Staff survey respondents were given a list of seven reasons and asked to identify the primary reasons vocational rehabilitation service providers could not meet consumers' service needs. Respondents could select more than one item if desired. A total of 32 staff respondents answered the question.

Staff and partners differed in their choices because the consumers' rehabilitation service needs were not being met. Over 43 percent of staff cited the low quality of service provider services, low levels of accountability for poor performance by service providers and service provider staff turnover as the primary reasons service providers are unable to meet consumers' needs. Quotes from the narrative comments are:

- *"Consumers are not interested in working and are motivated to obtain services from others or for unknown reasons. Also, providers need to be open to working with the consumer's support team."*
- *"Excessive time for provider invoices to be paid."*
- *"Funding being available to pay providers for approved services."*
- *"High turnover"*
- *"I would assume cultural barriers."*
- *"Lack of selection and supervision of providers is the main problem."*
- *"Some providers have never worked with sensory-impaired clients, so they may not have accessible equipment available. RSA helps to provide the necessary accommodations."*

Table 126 summarizes the staff responses to the question.

Table 126: *Staff Survey: Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Consumers' Needs*

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Consumers' Needs	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Low quality of service provider services	15	46.9%
Low levels of accountability for poor performance by service providers	14	43.8%
Service provider staff turnover	14	43.8%
Not enough service providers available in area	13	40.6%
Consumer barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers	9	28.1%
Other (please describe)	8	25.0%
Low rates paid for services	2	6.3%
Total	75	

Most Important Change Service Providers Could Make to Support Consumers' Efforts to Achieve Employment Goals

Staff respondents were asked an open-ended question to identify the most critical change that service providers could make to support consumers' efforts to achieve their employment goals. A total of 23 responses were received, and the changes noted in the partner survey were reflected. Content analysis indicated improved accountability, supervision, training, and quality of service provider service delivery (x8); hiring of more staff and increase the number of hours allowed to spend with consumers (x4); improve services by active listening, understanding and meeting specific needs of consumers (x4); improve job readiness programs for older adults who need technology training (x1); hands-on programs (x1); multimodal and person-centered planning (x1); provide customized employment (x1); Have relevant, up-to-date information and resources (x1); more employment contacts (x1).

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS - CRPs

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

- Improving the access to community rehabilitation programs. There is a need to understand and improve upon the referral and engagement process. CRPs reported needing more confidence about the referral process and the timelines to receive referrals from people. Providers struggle to engage clients due to limited resources or information to connect with referrals initially.
- Increasing the collaboration and communication with service coordinators in other systems. The reported breakdowns in communication across systems impact how CRPs serve people across D.C.
- Increasing the information provided to individuals about CRPs. Participants and CRPs indicated very little information was provided to individuals so they could make an informed decision.
- Offering additional options for individuals to connect with outside providers to provide extra services (e.g., workforce, cultural centers, and other community service programs). Individuals identified needs that sometimes fall outside the work of DCRSA but are essential to obtaining and maintaining work.
- Supporting current CRPs in navigating the financial challenges of running programs. CRPs reported increasing difficulty in running effective programs without diversifying funding.
- Increasing efforts to recruit, hire, and retain adequate support staff in the CRPs. CRPs indicated the need for professional development and training to provide skills to their staff on effective practices in achieving competitive integrated employment.
- Ensuring the payment and vendor system is effective. CRPs expressed the payment process as a barrier to effective program delivery. Issues related to paying service providers and the need for a different payment mechanism.
- Creating awareness about current CRP vendors. The vendor list is updated internally but not publicly, leading to confusion and lack of accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendation is offered to DCRSA based on the results of the research in the Need to Establish, Develop or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in DCRSA:

1. DCRSA may consider holding regular (e.g., quarterly) CRP engagement meetings that would include DCRSA critical leadership and CRP directors/staff to facilitate ongoing dialogue about emerging issues and opportunities for people with disabilities across D.C.

2. DCRSA is encouraged to develop a small working group of CRPs and DCRSA staff to address the needs associated with the current funding model and the ability of CRPs to engage effectively.

3. DCRSA may benefit from developing a network of additional CRPs to address the needs of individuals with disabilities from underserved communities. This activity may involve an environmental scan and analysis of some critical barriers and why some CRPs choose not to engage as DCRSA vendors.

SECTION VII: NEEDS OF BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

The need for the VR program to engage with the business community and effectively provide services to employers is one of the common performance measures for the core partners in WIOA. Every VR program needs to do a self-assessment of how well they are meeting the needs of employers related to recruiting, hiring, retaining, and accommodating employees with disabilities. The project team hopes this report section will be helpful to DCRSA as they seek to identify employer needs and develop strategies to increase business engagement. However, please note that only ten businesses participated in some way in the CSNA, with ten completing a survey. The reader is cautioned to interpret any findings with the low participation rates in mind.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

This category captures the needs of businesses in Washington, D.C., regarding recruiting, hiring, retaining, and accommodating individuals with disabilities. It includes analyzing how DCRSA serves or partners with businesses. Overall themes in this area include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Increasing engagement and access to employment opportunities with the federal and city government agencies.
- Addressing the stigma associated with job seekers with disabilities and the bias that businesses have shown in hiring practices, including long application processes or online portals that lack accessibility.
- Broadening the businesses' knowledge of the ADA and the processes for accommodating employees with disabilities.
- Working with businesses with in-demand jobs that align with the labor market trends in D.C.
- Expanding access to knowledge and resources on identifying and supporting assistive technology in the workplace.
- Conducting general outreach to businesses to promote hiring people with disabilities and the benefits and incentives in engaging with a diverse workforce.

Survey Results by Type
Disability in the Workplace: Employer Needs

In the "Disability in the Workplace" section, business survey respondents were asked eight questions about whether their business needed help with various concerns related to disability and employment. The questions were structured in a yes-no format. The sample size ranges between 24 and 27 in response to employer needs regarding disability in the workplace.

Business survey respondents indicated that they need assistance regarding disability in the workplace. Over fifty-four percent of respondents cited "yes" to seven of the eight survey questions regarding employer needs. Table 127 details the results of the responses to the questions.

Table 127: *Disability in the Workplace: Employer Needs*

Does your business need help...	Number of times Yes was chosen	Percent of time Yes was chosen	Number of times No was chosen	Percent of time No was chosen	Total
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities?	21	84.0%	4	16.0%	25
Recruiting job applicants who are individuals with disabilities?	18	66.7%	9	33.3%	27
Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities?	18	72.0%	7	28.0%	25
Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities?	18	69.2%	8	30.8%	26
Identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?	16	61.5%	10	38.5%	26
Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment?	14	56.0%	11	44.0%	25
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?	13	54.2%	11	45.8%	24
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?	10	38.5%	16	61.5%	26

In a supplemental open-ended question, business respondents were asked if they would like to further comment on needs regarding disabilities in the workplace. One response was received and is quoted as follows:

- *"Ideas on how to improve the work environment for those with disabilities could be helpful."*

Applicants with Disabilities: Recruitment Process

Business respondents were asked six questions regarding the need for recruitment assistance for applicants with disabilities. They were asked to respond in a yes-no format. Over 55 percent

of the business respondents indicated that they need help discussing and identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants and recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications, have good work habits and have good interpersonal skills.

Table 128 summarizes the results of the responses to the six questions according to the percentage of respondents who indicated a need for help concerning the item stated in each question.

Table 128: *Applicants with Disabilities: Recruitment Process*

Does your business need help…	Number of times Yes was chosen	Percent of time Yes was chosen	Number of times No was chosen	Percent of time No was chosen	Total
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?	18	69.2%	8	30.8%	26
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?	17	63.0%	10	37.0%	27
Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?	16	59.3%	11	40.7%	27
Recruiting applicants with good work habits?	16	61.5%	10	38.5%	26
Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?	14	56.0%	11	44.0%	25
Assessing applicants' skills?	11	44.0%	14	56.0%	25

Business respondents were asked if they would like to further comment on their answers to the previous question or if they had additional comments or needs regarding recruiting applicants with disabilities. One response was received. The comment stated the organization always needs applicants with good work habits and social/interpersonal skills as the organization has business lines that require face-to-face interactions with customers daily.

Employees with Disabilities: Positive Employee Traits Related to Job Retention

Business survey respondents were presented with a list of 11 positive employee traits and asked the question, "For employees with disabilities you have now or have had in the past, what are the positive employee traits you have experienced with them regarding job retention?"

Twenty-four responses were received regarding this question. Over 70 percent of the respondents identified reliability, positive attitude, and determination/dedication. Skills related to the ability to attend to detail and be organized were cited by 25 percent or less of the business respondents. Table 129 summarizes the percentage of business survey respondents who identified each trait as a part of job retention.

Table 129: *Employees with Disabilities: Positive Employee Traits Related to Job Retention*

Positive Employee Traits	Number of Times Chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Reliability	19	79.2%

Positive attitude	18	75.0%
Determined/dedicated	17	70.8%
Honesty/Integrity	14	58.3%
Punctual	14	58.3%
Works well with their team	13	54.2%
Initiative/Ambition	11	45.8%
Flexibility	8	33.3%
Independent	8	33.3%
Organized	6	25.0%
Attention to detail	5	20.8%
Total	133	

Employees with Disabilities: Challenges to Job Retention

Business survey respondents were presented with a list of 14 job-related challenges and asked to identify the challenges they have now or have experienced in the past concerning individuals with disabilities. A total of 23 respondents answered the question. The narrative comment received in response to the item "other" cited communication, networking, and self-advocacy. Table 130 presents the percentage of business survey respondents who identified each item as challenging job retention.

Table 130*: Challenge Related to Job Retention: Employees with Disabilities*

Challenges to Job Retention	Number of Times Chosen	Percent of number of respondents
I have no knowledge of any challenges we have had retaining employees with disabilities	9	39.1%
Lack of transportation	6	26.1%
Difficulty learning job skills	5	21.7%
Poor social skills	5	21.7%
Physical health problems	5	21.7%
Identifying effective accommodations	5	21.7%
Poor work stamina	4	17.4%
Mental health concerns	4	17.4%
Language barriers	4	17.4%
Poor attendance	3	13.0%
Slow work speed	3	13.0%
Lack of ongoing support due to case closure	2	8.7%
Other (please describe)	1	4.3%
Substance use	1	4.3%
Total	57	

Business survey respondents were asked an open-ended question if they would like to further comment on their answers to the previous question or if they had additional comments or needs

regarding challenges experienced by employees with disabilities. Respondents were allowed to provide a narrative response. Two narrative responses were received and are quoted:

- *"The items checked above are no different for team members with identified and others without disabilities. This is a workforce issue, not a disability issue."*
- *"We would like to get more information on sign language resources to help our associates."*
-

Services Provided to Employers by DCRSA: Knowledge and Use

Business survey respondents were asked three questions regarding their knowledge of DCRSA business services efforts, and their utilization of services provided by the agency. Most business respondents (45.8%) cited being somewhat knowledgeable regarding DCRSA services for businesses. Seven business respondents reported using DCRSA services for their business. The business respondents needed to identify three services as being used by them. (obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities; discussing and identifying reasonable job accommodations with applicants). Tables 131-133 include the results of three questions.

Table 131: *Knowledge of DCRSA Services to Businesses*

Knowledge of DCRSA and the DCRSA Services	Number	Percent
Somewhat knowledgeable	11	45.8%
Little knowledge	7	29.2%
Very knowledgeable	5	20.8%
No knowledge	1	4.2%
Total	24	100.0%

Table 132: *Employer Usage of DCRSA Services*

Employer Usage of DCRSA Services	Number	Percent
I don't know	9	37.5%
No	8	33.3%
Yes	7	29.2%
Total	24	100.0%

Table 133: *Identify DCRSA Services Used by Employers*

Services Provided to Employers by DCRSA	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Recruiting job applicants who are individuals with disabilities?	5	71.4%
Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?	3	42.9%
Assistance identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?	2	28.6%
Recruiting applicants with good work habits?	2	28.6%
Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?	2	28.6%
Assessing applicants' skills?	2	28.6%

	Number	Percent
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?	1	14.3%
Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment?	1	14.3%
Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities?	1	14.3%
Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities?	1	14.3%
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities?	1	14.3%
Other (please describe)	0	0.0%
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?	0	0.0%
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?	0	0.0%
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?	0	0.0%
Total	21	

Employer Satisfaction with Services Provided by DCRSA

Business survey representatives who utilized DCRSA services 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 agency's services. Seven representatives answered the question. Table 134 contains the results.

Table 134: *Satisfaction Rating*

Satisfaction Rating	Number	Percent
Very satisfied	4	57.1%
Satisfied	3	42.9%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0	0.0%
Dissatisfied	0	0.0%
Very dissatisfied	0	0.0%
Total	7	100.0%

Seek Again or Recommend DCRSA Business Services

Business respondents who utilized DCRSA services for their business were presented with a five-point response scale (with responses ranging from "very likely" to "very unlikely") and asked if they would seek out DCRSA again or recommend DCRSA services to other employers. Seven respondents answered the question, and five cited "very likely."

Table 135: *Use Again or Recommend DCRSA Business Services to Others*

Seek Again or Recommend DCRSA Services	Number	Percent
Very likely	5	71.4%
Likely	2	28.6%
Neither likely nor unlikely	0	0.0%
Unlikely	0	0.0%

Very unlikely		0	0.0%
Total		7	100.0%

Employer Needs: Applicants or Employees with Disabilities

Business survey respondents were asked an open-ended question asking if their business has any needs related to applicants or workers with disabilities that are not currently being met and to describe them in a narrative format. Three responses were received and are quoted:

- *"More training of all employees: interviewing applicants with disabilities, etiquette when interacting with individuals with disabilities."*
- *"Need assistance identifying jobs at other DC government agencies when we seek reassignment as the accommodation."*
- *"Training for staff on accommodating career training students with disabilities"*

Business Demographics

Business survey respondents described their respective business types and the number of employees the business currently employs. In response to the question regarding business types, the business types reported in the category "other, please describe" are administrative management and general management consulting services; career technical training; contracting; custodial; hospitality (x3); museum; non-profit; security; and travel arrangements.

In response to the question regarding organization size, the most frequently cited size was 251 - 999 employees. Tables 136-137 indicate the various business types, and the size of the organization based on the number of employees.

Table 136: *Business Type*

Business Type	Number	Percent
Other (please describe)	11	32.4%
Government	7	20.6%
Service	6	17.7%
Retail	3	8.8%
Education	3	8.8%
Banking/Finance	2	5.9%
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	1	2.9%
Health care	1	2.9%
Manufacturing	0	0.0%
Construction	0	0.0%
Gambling/Casino	0	0.0%
Total	34	100.0%

Table 137: *Number of Employees*

Number of Employees	Number	Percent
251 - 999	12	35.3%
1,000 or more	10	29.4%
51 - 250	8	23.5%
One - 15	2	5.9%
16 - 50	2	5.9%
Total	34	100.0%

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS - BUSINESS

This category captures the needs of businesses in Washington, D.C., regarding recruiting, hiring, retaining, and accommodating individuals with disabilities. Note, due to low interest by employers to participate in focus groups, these findings consist of a summary of what individuals with disabilities, staff, and partners offered concerning the needs of business. Overall needs related to business included:

- Increasing opportunities to collectively engage business as a system (i.e., DCRSA, DOES, partner organizations, trade groups, and other agencies in D.C. tasked with engaging employers). A siloed and fragmented approach results in many people soliciting business for opportunities.

- Supporting businesses to understand the benefits of inclusive workplace environments. There is evidence of several tools and resources available to support this realm, but there is a belief that these resources are only available to some business leaders.

- Working to build mechanisms for more robust communications with business and feedback on candidates fit concerning those of business. Sentiments emerged regarding the minimal feedback obtained from businesses regarding the candidate, and therefore, it is challenging to support individuals to improve.

- Broadening the partnership with the federal government and D.C. government as employers to create viable avenues into good jobs. Many people reported the pathway into these jobs for people with disabilities despite sections 501 and 503 of the Rehabilitation Act.

- Supporting businesses in understanding the negative impact of long application processes that may be online or require multiple complicated steps. Some businesses are not recruiting qualified applicants with disabilities due to their processes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. DCRSA may consider the development and implementation of a broad business outreach plan in partnership with DOES and other city systems. This outreach

plan should include the opportunity to offer training on disability awareness, inclusion, and employment practices.

2. DCRSA should enhance business relationships to encourage employers to utilize flexible work arrangements such as remote work and flexible hours.

3. DCRSA is encouraged to develop a working group to investigate the use of assistive technology, artificial intelligence, and other emerging technologies to strengthen its support of the business community in providing accommodations to individuals with disabilities.

4. DCRSA should expand its work with the regional ADA center and national centers focused on employer practices to provide more significant resources to businesses operating within the city.

5. DCRSA may consider partnering with other VR systems to develop a community of practice related to best practices and strategies for business engagement.

6. DCRSA may consider developing a labor market taskforce in partnership with DOES, and key industry members in D.C. to develop a plan to support business in meeting these emerging needs.

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive districtwide needs assessment for the DCRSA utilized qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the State. The combination of surveys and interviews resulted in 949 people participating in the assessment. The project team at San Diego State University's Interwork Institute hopes the findings and recommendations will be useful in informing the VR portion of the Combined State Plan and future planning and resource allocation for the agency.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Individual and Focus Group Interview Protocols

[Introductions/confidentiality/purpose statements]

Focus Group Protocol - Individuals with disabilities

Employment goals

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

RSA 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 unavailable or provided, and why weren't you able to get these services?
- What can DCRSA do differently to help people get and keep good jobs?

Barriers to accessing services

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

VR Workforce Partners

- Has anyone used or tried to use the services of the Washington, D.C. DOES Job Centers? Follow-up: What was that experience like for you? What can they do differently to serve individuals with disabilities better?

Transition

- What needs do young people with disabilities in transition from high school have as far as preparing for, obtaining, or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in Washington, D.C., preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- What can DCRSA do to improve services to youth in transition?

Needs of underserved groups with disabilities

- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?

Need for establishment of CRPs

- Have you received services from a CRP? 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 needs to be improved?

- What services need to be offered in new locations to meet people's needs?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes.

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services people receive in Washington, D.C.

Focus Group Protocol - Partner Agencies:

Employment Goals

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

Barriers to accessing services

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

Impressions of needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities

- What is the unmet rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant or most significant disabilities?
- What needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities are being met the best/most extensively?

Needs of underserved groups with disabilities

- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?

Need for supported employment.

- Please describe how effective the SE and CE programs are in Washington, D.C. What populations are receiving SE and CE services?
- What is the SE or CE needs not being met?
- What do you recommend for meeting the needs of SE or CE?

Transition

- What needs do young people with disabilities in transition from high school have for preparing for, obtaining, or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in Washington, D.C., preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- How would you characterize a relationship/partnership with the secondary school system in Washington, D.C.?

- How well is DCRSA serving youth in transition in terms of preparing them for postsecondary education or employment?
- What can DCRSA do to improve services to youth in transition?

Needs of individuals served through the Washington, D.C. DOES Centers or WIOA system.
- How effectively does the Workforce Center system in Washington, D.C., serve individuals with disabilities?
- Are there any barriers to individuals with disabilities accessing services through the DOES Centers? If so, what are they, and what can be done to change this?
- How effectively is DCRSA working in partnership with the DOES Centers? Do you have any recommendations about how to improve this partnership if needed?
- What would you recommend to improve the DOES Center's ability to serve individuals with disabilities in Washington, D.C.?

Need for establishment, development, or improvement of CRPs
- What community-based rehabilitation programs or services must be created, expanded, or improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations 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?

Focus Group Protocol – VR staff:

Employment Goals
- What barriers do people with disabilities in Washington, D.C., face in getting or keeping a job?
  Follow up: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communication, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

Barriers to accessing services
- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from RSA?

Impressions of needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities
- What is the unmet rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant or most significant disabilities?
- What needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities are being met the best/most extensively?

Needs of underserved groups with disabilities
- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?
  (Prompt for different disability groups, minority status, geographic area, or other characteristics).
  (For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?

Need for supported employment.
- Please describe how effective the SE and CE programs are in Washington, D.C. What populations receive SE and CE services?
- What are SE or CE needs needing to be met?

Transition
- What needs do young people with disabilities in transition from high school have for preparing for, obtaining, or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in DCRSA preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- How would you characterize DCRSA's relationship/partnership with the secondary school system in Washington, D.C.?
- How well is DCRSA serving youth in transition in terms of preparing them for postsecondary education or employment?
- What can DCRSA do to improve services to youth in transition?

Needs of individuals served through the DOES system in WASHINGTON, D.C. serve individuals with disabilities?
- Are there any barriers to individuals with disabilities accessing services through the DOES Centers? If so, what are they, and what can be done to change this?
- How effectively is DCRSA working in partnership with the DOES Centers? Do you have any recommendations about how to improve this partnership if needed?
- How would you recommend improving the DOES Centers' ability to serve individuals with disabilities in Washington, D.C.?

Need for establishment, development, or improvement of CRPs
- What community-based rehabilitation programs or services need to be created, expanded, or improved?
- What services must be offered in new locations 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

Focus Group Protocol – Businesses

Please discuss your familiarity with DCRSA and the services they provide to people with disabilities and businesses.

What needs do you have regarding recruiting people with disabilities for employment?
- Do you do anything specific to attract candidates with disabilities? Please describe

Please discuss how qualified and prepared individuals with disabilities are when they apply for employment with your business.

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?

What qualities are you looking for in an applicant for a job and an employee?

What needs do you have regarding employees with disabilities?
- Sensitivity training?
- Understanding and compliance with applicable laws?
- Reasonable accommodations?

What challenges do employees with disabilities face with job retention?

What services can DCRSA provide you and other businesses to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Washington, D.C.?

Appendix B: Individual Survey

The Washington D.C. Rehabilitation Services Administration DCRSA is working collaboratively with staff at the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University to assess the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities who live in the District of Columbia. The results of this need assessment will inform the development of the D.C. Unified State Plan for providing rehabilitation services. They will help planners decide about programs and services for individuals with disabilities.

The following survey includes questions about the unmet employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities. We anticipate it will take about 20 minutes to complete. If you prefer, you may ask a family member, a personal attendant, or a caregiver to complete the survey with you. Your participation in this needs assessment is voluntary. If you decide to participate, your responses will be anonymous. You will not be asked for your name anywhere in this survey.

Q2 Which statement best describes your association with DCRSA? (select one response)
- I have never used the services of DCRSA
- I am a current consumer of DCRSA
- I am a previous consumer of DCRSA; my case has been closed

- I am not familiar with DCRSA
- Other (please describe)

  _____

Q3 How long have you been working with DCRSA?
- Less than 1 year
- 1 year
- 2-5 years
- 6-9 years
- 10 years or greater

Demographic Information
Q5 What is your age?
- under 25
- 25-64
- 65 and over

Q6 Which most closely describes your gender?
- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- Genderqueer
- Gender not listed
- I prefer not to say

Q7 What is your primary race or ethnic group (check all that apply)?
- African American/Black
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Caucasian/White
- Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- Other (please describe)

  _____

- I prefer not to say

Q8 Do you feel that DCRSA honors and respects your cultural identity?
- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q9 Have you ever been in a situation when you felt that DCRSA did not honor your cultural identity?

- Yes (please describe)

  _____

- No

Q10 What can DCRSA do to help its staff understand your culture?

_____

Q11 Please identify the local region of DC where you live.
- Northeast
- Northwest
- Southeast
- Southwest
- I am not sure

Q12 If you have one or more disabilities, please identify them below (select as many that apply):
- Intellectual Disability (ID)
- Developmental Disability (DD)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Communication
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Deaf-Blind
- Mental Health
- Mobility
- Physical
- Substance use disorder
- Other (please describe)

  _____

- No impairment

Q13 Please indicate whether you receive the following Social Security disability benefits (please check all that apply).
- I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a means-tested benefit generally provided to individuals with little or no work history)
- I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance. SSDI is provided to individuals who have worked in the past and is based on the amount of money the individual paid into the system through payroll deductions)
- I receive a check from the Social Security Administration every month, but I need to know which benefit I get.
- I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits
- I do not receive Social Security disability benefits
- I have received benefits in the past but no longer receive them

Employment-Related Needs

The next several questions will ask you about your employment-related needs.
Q15 Please identify which of the following barriers to getting a job. (select all that apply)
- Lack of education
- Lack of training
- Lack of job skills
- Lack of job search skills
- Lack of reliable Internet access
- Criminal Record
- Limited English skills
- Lack of available jobs
- Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- Age
- Lack of assistive technology
- Lack of attendant care
- Lack of reliable transportation
- Mental health concerns
- Substance use
- Lack of childcare
- Lack of housing
- Employers are hesitant to hire individuals with disabilities
- Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

Q16 Please identify the top three barriers to getting a job. Please choose only three.
- Lack of education
- Lack of training
- Lack of job skills
- Lack of job search skills
- Lack of reliable Internet access
- Criminal Record
- Limited English skills
- Lack of available jobs
- Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- Lack of assistive technology
- Lack of attendant care
- Lack of reliable transportation
- Mental health concerns
- Substance use
- Lack of childcare
- Lack of housing
- Employers are hesitant to hire individuals with disabilities
- Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

Q17 If you have experienced other barriers to getting a job not mentioned above, please list them here.

_____

Barriers to Accessing DCRSA Services

The following several questions ask you about barriers to accessing DCRSA services.

Q19 Please indicate which of the following has hindered you from accessing DCRSA services. (select all that apply)

- The DCRSA office is not on a public bus route
- DCRSA's hours of operation
- Lack of information about available services
- Lack of disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor
- Difficulty reaching DCRSA staff
- Other challenges with DCRSA staff
- Difficulties completing the DCRSA application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
- Reliable Internet access

Q20 What have been the top three barriers to you accessing DCRSA services? Please choose up to three.
- The DCRSA office is not on a public bus route
- DCRSA's hours of operation
- Lack of information about available services
- Lack of disability-related accommodations
- Language barriers
- Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor
- Difficulty reaching DCRSA staff
- Other difficulties with DCRSA staff
- Difficulties completing the DCRSA application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
- Reliable Internet access
- I have not had any barriers to accessing DCRSA services

Q21 Have you had any other challenges or barriers that have yet to be mentioned that have made it difficult for you to access DCRSA services?
- Yes (please describe)

  _____

- No

Q22 Where do you usually meet with your DCRSA counselor?

- In my community/school
- I go to the DCRSA office
- We meet remotely by phone
- We meet remotely by video conference
- I don't have a DCRSA counselor

Q23 How many DCRSA counselors have you had?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- More than 4
- I have never had a DCRSA counselor

Q24 How often can you reach your counselor when you need to?

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Q25 How well do you get along with your DCRSA counselor?

- Extremely well
- Well
- Moderately well
- Not well
- I prefer not to say

Q26 Has DCRSA helped you to make progress towards your employment goal?

- Yes
- No
- I have not worked with DCRSA

Q27 Which DCRSA services have you received remotely (by phone, email or video conference) since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic? (select all that apply)

- Career Counseling
- Job development and/or job placement
- Job support to keep a job
- Benefits counseling
- Assistive technology
- Other (please describe)

  _____

- I have not received any services from DCRSA remotely during the pandemic

Q28 How would you rate the effectiveness of the services delivered remotely during the pandemic?
- Effective
- Somewhat effective
- Somewhat Less effective
- Not effective at all

Q29 How can DCRSA change its services to help you get a job, keep it, or get a better one?

_____

_____

Q30 Please tell us how you manage money by choosing the true statements for you. (select all that apply)

- I have a monthly budget
- I have a savings account
- I have a checking account
- I invest my money
- I would like to learn more about managing my money

Q31 Which of the following statements are true for you? (select all that apply)
- Because of my financial situation, I will never have the things I want in life
- I am just getting by financially
- I am concerned the money I have or will have, won't last

Q32 How often do you have money left over at the end of each month?
- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Q33 How often do you feel your finances control your life?
- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Q34 What is your current employment goal?

_____

Q35 Have you thought about what your next job might be after reaching your current employment goal?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q36 Will you need more training or help to get your next job?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q37 Have you received services from an organization or individual that DCRSA referred you to outside of DCRSA? (This may include an assessment, preparing for or finding employment, job coaching, training, assistive technology, or other services)

- Yes
- No
- I am not sure

Q38 How effective were the services you received from the service provider?

- Very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Somewhat ineffective
- Ineffective

Q39 How would you rate the quality of services you received from your service provider?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Q40 How would you rate the responsiveness of your service provider?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Q41 Would you recommend your service provider to others served by DCRSA?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

DC Department of Employment Services (DC DOES)
The following several questions ask you about experiences you may have had with the DC Department of Employment Services (DC DOES) American Job Centers or the One-Stop

Career Centers. These questions refer <u>only</u> to your experience with the DC DOES American Job Centers staff or services rather than with DCRSA staff who may be working at the centers.

Q43 Have you tried using the DC DOES American Job Centers services beyond creating an online account? (this may include testing, preparing for or finding employment, job coaching, training assistive technology or other services)
- Yes
- No

Q44 Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?
- Yes (If yes, please describe the difficulties you experienced)

_____
- No

Q45 Did you need help accessing the programs at the DC DOES American Job centers (i.e., no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?
- Yes
- No

Q46 Did you go to the DC DOES American Job Center to get training?
- Yes
- No

Q47 Did you get the training that you were seeking?
- Yes
- No

Q48 Did the DC DOES American Job Center training result in employment?
- Yes
- No

Q49 Did you go to the DC DOES American Job Center to find a job?
- Yes
- No

Q50 Did the DC DOES American Job Center staff help you find employment?
- Yes
- No

Q51 Was the DC DOES American Job Center staff helpful?
- Yes, they were very helpful
- They were somewhat helpful
- They were somewhat unhelpful
- No, they were not helpful

Q52 Were the services at the DC DOES American Job Center effective?
- Yes, the services were very effective
- The services were somewhat effective
- The services were somewhat ineffective
- No, the services were not effective

Q53 Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the DC DOES American Job Center in serving individuals with disabilities?
- Very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Somewhat ineffective
- Very ineffective
- I don't know

Q54 What recommendations do you have for the DC DOES American Job Center to improve their services to individuals with disabilities in D.C.?

_____

Q55 Is there anything else you want to add about DC DOES American Job Center or its services?

_____

Q56 This is the end of the survey! Your information and feedback are valuable to DC DOES and DCRSA, so thank you for completing it.

Appendix C: Partner Survey

The District of Columbia Rehabilitation Services Administration is working with the State Rehabilitation Council and staff at the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University to conduct a needs assessment of the district residents with disabilities. The results of this need assessment will inform the development of the DCRSA Unified State Plan for providing rehabilitation services. They will assist planners in making decisions about programs and services for individuals with disabilities. The following survey includes questions about the unmet employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities. You will also be asked about your work and whether you work with specific populations of individuals with disabilities. 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 and recorded without any identifying information linked to you. You will not be asked for your name anywhere in this survey.

Q2 How would you classify your organization?
- Community Rehabilitation Program/Provider of VR Services
- Secondary School

- Postsecondary school
- Mental Health Provider
- Medical Provider
- Developmental Disability Organization
- Veteran's Agency
- Client Advocacy Organization
- Other Federal, State, or Local Government Entity
- Other Public or Private Organizations
- Individual Service Provider
- Other (please describe)

_____

Q3 What area(s) do you work in? (check all that apply)
- Northeast
- Northwest
- Southeast
- Southwest

Q4 Please indicate which VR consumer populations you work with regularly (please check all that apply)
- Individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Individuals who are blind
- Individuals who are deaf
- Individuals who access supported employment
- Individuals with autism spectrum disorder
- Individuals who are racial or ethnic minorities
- Individuals from unserved or underserved populations
- Transition-age youth (14-24)
- Individuals served by Department of Employment Services - American Job Center (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers)
- Veterans
- Other (please describe)

_____

Vocational Rehabilitation Services
The following series of questions asks about services available to VR consumers either directly or by service providers.

Q6 Please indicate which services are readily available to DCRSA consumers in the geographic area where you provide services. By readily available, we mean the service can be provided directly by DCRSA or the network of service providers in the area. (check all that apply).

	Yes, the service is readily available	No, the service is not readily available

Pre-employment transition services	●	●
Community college or four-year college or university training	●	●
Occupational or vocational training	●	●
On-the-job training	●	●
Registered apprenticeship training	●	●
Literacy training	●	●
Employment services (job search, job development and placement)	●	●
Disability-related skills training (orientation and mobility, Braille, etc)	●	●
Supported employment services	●	●
Customized employment services	●	●
Benefits counseling	●	●
Transportation	●	●
Maintenance or other income assistance	●	●
Assistive technology services	●	●
Personal assistance services	●	●
Interpreter and translator services	●	●
Reader services	●	●
Other (please describe)	●	●

Q7 In your experience, how frequently can service providers meet the rehabilitation service needs of DCRSA consumers in your area?

- All of the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- None of the time

Q8 What rehabilitation needs are service providers unable to meet in your area?

_____

Q9 What are the primary reasons service providers cannot meet consumers' needs?

- Not enough service providers are available in the area
- Low quality of service provider services
- Low rates paid for services
- Low levels of accountability for poor performance by service providers
- Consumers barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers
- Other (please describe)

  _____

Q10 What is the most important change service providers could make to support consumers' efforts to achieve their employment goals?

_____

Q11 What services do providers most effectively deliver to DCRSA consumers (check all that apply)?

- Job development services
- Job training services (trial work experiences, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)
- Other education services
- Assistive technology services
- Vehicle modification assistance
- Other transportation assistance
- Income assistance
- Medical treatment
- Mental health treatment
- Substance use treatment
- Personal care attendants
- Health insurance
- Housing
- Benefit planning assistance
- Other (please describe)

  _____

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

The next series of questions asks about VR consumers' barriers to achieving their employment goals.

Q13 What are the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers (check all that apply)?
- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Little or no work experience
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance use issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe)

_____

Q14 What barriers prevent DCRSA consumers with the **most significant disabilities** from achieving their employment goals? (check all that apply)

- Not having education or training.
- Not having job skills.
- Little or no work experience
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues

- Substance use issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe)

_____

Q15 What barriers prevent DCRSA consumers who are **transition-age youth** from achieving their employment goals? (check all that apply)

- Not having education or training.
- Not having job skills.
- Little or no work experience
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance use issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe)

_____

Q16 What barriers prevent VR consumers who are **racial or ethnic minorities** from achieving their employment goals? (check all that apply)

- Not having education or training.
- Not having job skills
- Little or no work experience
- Not having job search skills
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available

- Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance use issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Other (please describe)

_____

Q17 What are the top three reasons individuals 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 (IPE)
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery
- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- Lack of options for the use of technology to communicate with DCRSA staff, such as Zoom, Skype, text, etc.
- VR staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- Other (please describe)

_____

Q18 What changes can DCRSA make to better serve individuals with disabilities in D.C.?
_____

Q19 What are the top three changes that would assist you in serving DCRSA consumers better (please select a maximum of three changes)?
- Smaller caseload
- More streamlined processes
- Reduced documentation requirements
- Improved communication with referring VR counselor
- Additional training
- Higher rates paid by VR for services
- Referral of appropriate individuals
- Improved business partnerships

- Incentives for high performance paid by VR
- Increased options for technology use to communicate with consumers
- Increased collaboration with DOES
- Other (please describe)

_____

Department of Employment Services (DOES)
The following series of questions ask you about the DOES American Job Centers.

Q21 How frequently do you work with the DOES American Job Centers (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers)?
- Very frequently
- Somewhat frequently
- Infrequently
- Not at all

Q22 How physically accessible are the DOES American Job Centers for individuals with disabilities?
- Fully accessible
- Somewhat accessible
- Somewhat inaccessible
- Not accessible
- I do not know

Q23 How accessible are the programs and services at the DOES American Job Centers?
- Fully accessible
- Somewhat accessible
- Somewhat inaccessible
- Not accessible
- I do not know

Q24 In your opinion, how effectively do the DOES American Job Centers serve individuals with disabilities?
- Very effectively
- Effectively
- Somewhat ineffectively
- Not effectively
- They do not serve individuals with disabilities

Q25 What can the DOES 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 training for their clients
- Partner more effectively with VR
- Other (please describe)

   _____

Appendix D: VR Staff Survey

Q2 What is your job classification?
- Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist
- Supervisor/Manager
- Support Staff
- Business Services Representative
- Administrator/Executive

Q3 What area do you work in? (check all that apply)
- Northeast
- Northwest
- Southeast
- Southwest

Q4 How long have you worked in the job that you have now?
- Less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21+ years

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The following series of questions asks about services available to DCRSA consumers either directly or by service providers.

Q6 Please indicate which services are immediately available to DCRSA consumers (check all that apply).
- Job development services
- Job training services (TWE, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)
- STEM skills training
- Career Ladder/Pathways counseling
- Other education services
- Remote service delivery (tele counseling, remote job support, etc.)
- Assistive technology
- Vehicle modification assistance
- Other transportation assistance
- Income assistance
- Medical treatment
- Mental health treatment
- Substance use treatment
- Personal care attendants
- Health insurance
- Housing
- Benefit planning assistance
- Financial literacy training

- Other (please describe)

  _____

Q7 Please indicate which of the following services are not immediately available or do not exist in the State where you work (check all that apply).
- Job development services
- Job training services (TWE, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)
- STEM skills training
- Career Ladder/Pathways counseling
- Other education services
- Remote service delivery (tele counseling, remote job support, etc.)
- Assistive technology
- Vehicle modification assistance
- Other transportation assistance
- Income assistance
- Medical treatment
- Mental health treatment
- Substance use treatment
- Personal care attendants
- Health insurance
- Housing
- Benefit planning assistance
- Financial literacy training
- Other (please describe)

  _____

Q8 In your experience, how frequently can service providers meet the rehabilitation service needs of DCRSA consumers in your area?
- All the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- None of the time

Q9 What rehabilitation needs are service providers unable to meet in your area?

  _____

_

Q10 What are the primary reasons service providers cannot meet consumers' needs?

- Not enough service providers are available in the area
- Low quality of service provider services
- Low rates paid for services
- Low levels of accountability for poor performance by service providers
- Consumer barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers
- Service provider staff turnover
- Other (please describe)

  _____

Q11 What is the most important change that service providers could make to support consumer's efforts to achieve their employment goals?

Q12 What services do you feel DCRSA is most effective in providing to its consumers directly or through community partners (check all that apply)
- Job development services
- Job training services (TWE, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)
- STEM skills training
- Career Ladder/Pathways counseling
- Other education services
- Assistive technology
- Vehicle modification assistance
- Other transportation assistance
- Income assistance
- Medical treatment
- Mental health treatment
- Substance use treatment
- Personal care attendants
- Health insurance
- Housing
- Benefit planning assistance
- Financial literacy training
- Other (please describe)

  _____

Q13 Have any of the consumers you serve received services delivered remotely since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Yes
- No

Q14 How would you rate the effectiveness of these services?

- Effective
- Somewhat effective
- Somewhat ineffective
- Not effective at all

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals
 The next series of questions asks about barriers that DCRSA consumers face in achieving their employment goals.

Q16 What are the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers (check all that apply)?

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having STEM skills
- Little or no work experience
- Not having job search skills
- Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Community or systemic racism
- Lack of access to technology
- Lack of reliable Internet access
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance use issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Lack of financial literacy
- Other (please describe)

_____

Q17 What are the five biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers? (please pick only five)

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having STEM skills
- Little or no work experience
- Not having job search skills
- Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Community or systemic racism
- Lack of access to technology
- Lack of reliable Internet access
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance use issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Lack of financial literacy
- Other (please describe)

_____

Q18 What are the five biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers with the **most significant disabilities**? (please pick only five)

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having STEM skills
- Little or no work experience
- Not having job search skills
- Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Community or systemic racism
- Lack of access to technology
- Lack of reliable Internet access

- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance use issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Lack of financial literacy
- Other (please describe)

_____

Q19 What are the five biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers who are transition-age youth? (please pick only five)
- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having STEM skills
- Little or no work experience
- Not having job search skills
- Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Community or systemic racism
- Lack of access to technology
- Lack of reliable Internet access
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance use issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Lack of financial literacy

- Other (please describe)

_____

Q20 What are the five biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for DCRSA consumers who are **racial or ethnic minorities**? (please pick only five)
- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having STEM skills
- Little or no work experience
- Not having job search skills
- Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Community or systemic racism
- Lack of access to technology
- Lack of reliable Internet access
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of assistance with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance use issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Lack of financial literacy
- Other (please describe)

_____

Q21 What are the top three reasons people with disabilities find it challenging 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
- Community or systemic racism
- Difficulties completing the application
- Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
- Inadequate assessment services
- Slow service delivery

- Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- Lack of options for using technology to communicate with DCRSA staff, such as text and videoconferencing applications (Zoom, Skype, etc.)
- Lack of options for using technology to access remote services such as text and videoconferencing applications (Zoom, Skype, etc.)
- DCRSA staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- Other (please describe)

_____

Q22 What are the top three changes that would assist you in serving DCRSA consumers better (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 supervisors support
- Improved business partnerships
- More community-based service providers for specific services
- More effective community-based service providers
- Accountability for poor performance by service providers
- Incentives for high-performing service providers
- Increased outreach to consumers
- Increased options for technology use to communicate with consumers
- Increased collaboration with other workforce partners, including Job Centers
- Other (please describe)

_____

Washington D.C. Department of Employment Services (DOES)
The following series of questions ask you about the DOES American Job Centers.

Q24 How frequently do you work with the DOES American Job Centers (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers)?
- Very frequently
- Somewhat frequently
- Infrequently
- Not at all

Q25 How physically accessible are the DOES American Job Centers for individuals with disabilities?
- Fully accessible
- Somewhat accessible
- Somewhat inaccessible
- Not accessible

- I do not know

Q26 How programmatically accessible are the DOES American Job Centers?
- Fully accessible
- Somewhat accessible
- Somewhat inaccessible
- Not accessible
- I do not know

Q27 In your opinion, how effectively do the DOES American Job Centers serve individuals with disabilities?
- Very effectively
- Somewhat effectively
- Somewhat ineffectively
- Not at all effectively
- They do not serve individuals with disabilities

Q28 What can the DOES 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 training for their clients
- Partner more effectively with DCRSA
- Other (please describe)

  _____

Appendix E: Business Survey

Q2 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
- Gambling/Casino
- Other (please describe)

  _____

Q3 How many people are employed at your business? (select one response)
- 1 - 15

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

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 as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Rehabilitation Act as amended?
- Identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?
- Recruiting job applicants who are individuals 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?

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

_____

Applicants with disabilities:

Concerning applicants with disabilities, does your business need help… (select one response for each).   Yes   No
- 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?

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

_____

Q8 Concerning employees with disabilities you have now or have had in the past, what are the positive employee traits you have experienced with them regarding job retention? (check all that apply)
- Flexibility
- Reliability
- Initiative/Ambition

- Honesty/Integrity
- Works well with their team
- Positive attitude
- Determined/dedicated
- Independent
- Punctual
- Organized
- Attention to detail

Employees with disabilities:

For employees with disabilities you have now or have had in the past, what are the challenges you have experienced with them regarding job retention?

- I do not know any challenges we have had retaining employees with disabilities.
- Poor attendance
- Difficulty learning job skills
- Slow work speed
- Poor work stamina
- Poor social skills
- Physical health problems
- Substance use
- Mental health concerns
- Language barriers
- Identifying effective accommodations
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of ongoing support due to case closure
- Other (please describe)

_____

Q10 If you would like to comment further on any of your answers above or have additional comments or needs regarding employees with disabilities, please describe them in the space below.

_____

Q11 How would you rate your knowledge of DCRSA and the services they can provide to businesses?

- Very knowledgeable
- Somewhat knowledgeable
- Little knowledge
- No knowledge

Q12 Has your business utilized any of the services that DCRSA provides?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q13 Which of the following services did DCRSA provide to your business (please select all that apply)?

- Do you need training to understand disability-related legislation, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Rehabilitation Act, as amended?
- Assistance identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?
- Recruiting job applicants who are individuals 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)

  _____

Q14 How satisfied were you with the services you received from DCRSA?

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

Q15 How likely would you be to seek out services from DCRSA again or recommend DCRSA to another employer?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely

Q16 If your business has any needs related to applicants or workers with disabilities that are not currently being met, please describe them here:

_____