
WEST VIRGINIA DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

2008

ANNUAL REPORT



WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE ARTS



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Dear Colleagues:

The Office of the Secretary for West Virginia's Department of Education and the Arts and the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) are pleased to present this 2008 Annual Report. We are proud of the accomplishments reflected herein, and the DRS mission of enabling and empowering individuals with disabilities to work and live independently.

Once again, this report highlights the partnerships that assist DRS in serving West Virginians with disabilities. These include strong relationships with secondary and post-secondary schools, WorkForce West Virginia, Community Rehabilitation Programs, the Statewide Independent Living Council and the State Rehabilitation Council.

Through these affiliations and hard work, DRS and its valued employees provided vocational rehabilitation services to 10,500 West Virginians with disabilities in fiscal year 2008, a five percent increase from the previous year. More than 97 percent of those served were individuals with significant disabilities, a federally mandated priority of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998.

We acknowledge with pride the 1,773 determined individuals who, after receiving services from DRS, secured employment during the past year. These new working citizens represent the powerful impact of vocational rehabilitation with an average increase in annual earnings of 300 percent!

In difficult economic times, we are enormously encouraged by this success. Through continued dedication of resources for positive change, DRS is assisting West Virginians with disabilities in achieving successful, integrated employment and better lives.

Sincerely,



Kay Goodwin
Cabinet Secretary

Department of Education and the Arts



Deborah Lovely
Director

Division of Rehabilitation Services





Mission

The mission of DRS is to enable and empower individuals with disabilities to work and to live independently.

History

DRS has successfully fulfilled its mission of enabling and empowering individuals with disabilities to work for over 80 years. During this time, DRS has assisted many thousands of West Virginians with disabilities prepare for, get, keep or advance in jobs in the competitive labor market.

The program began in 1920 with passage of the Smith-Fess Act by the United States Congress. The Act offered vocational rehabilitation services to industrially injured workers and other people with disabilities.

Members of the state legislature established the West Virginia Division of Vocational Rehabilitation on April 14, 1921, as part of the Department of Education. In 1987, the agency was renamed the Division of Rehabilitation Services to reflect the wide range of services DRS provides. State legislation transferred DRS to the Department of Education and the Arts in 1994.

Today DRS' primary focus is to provide vocational rehabilitation services designed to assist people with disabilities obtain employment. Through development of an individualized plan for employment, DRS tailors services to meet the specific needs of each client.

In fiscal year 2008, 1,773 individuals with disabilities received vocational rehabilitation services that enabled them to become competitively employed. After receiving vocational rehabilitation services, those individuals increased their average annual earnings by 300 percent.

Since 1921, DRS has implemented numerous program innovations and advances. With help from its many workforce development partners, DRS today delivers the most comprehensive vocational rehabilitation programming available within West Virginia.

This annual report summarizes DRS activities and accomplishments occurring in fiscal year 2008.



FIELD SERVICES

One-on-one effective personal service is what people with disabilities receive from DRS. With 29 field offices across the state, DRS has specially trained rehabilitation counselors who assist clients with evaluating their skills and interests and obtaining vocational success and independence through planning, the provision of services necessary to be successful in employment and comprehensive support during the process.

DRS employs approximately 124 extensively trained vocational rehabilitation counselors who work directly with individuals with disabilities throughout the vocational rehabilitation process. Vocational rehabilitation counselors are required to meet a stringent certification criterion, which requires a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a related field.

Each of the field offices has a supervisor who, in addition to providing leadership and guidance to employees, takes the lead in developing partnerships with area employers, workforce centers, schools and other public and private service agencies within the community.

Through our statewide quality assurance program, DRS strives to ensure that the same level of high quality services is delivered to individuals with disabilities throughout West Virginia. Quality assurance specialists, located in each DRS district, work in their districts and as a team to develop client services policy, review casework practices, assure consistent interpretation of policy throughout the state and provide training on policy and casework.

DRS Field Offices

CHARLESTON DISTRICT

Charleston District and Branch Offices
Spencer Branch Office
Point Pleasant Branch Office

CLARKSBURG DISTRICT

Clarksburg District and Branch Offices
Weston Branch Office
Morgantown Branch Office
Fairmont Branch Office
Elkins Branch Office

WHEELING DISTRICT

Wheeling District and Branch Offices
Weirton Branch Office
Parkersburg Branch Office
Parkersburg South High School
Sistersville Branch Office

BECKLEY DISTRICT

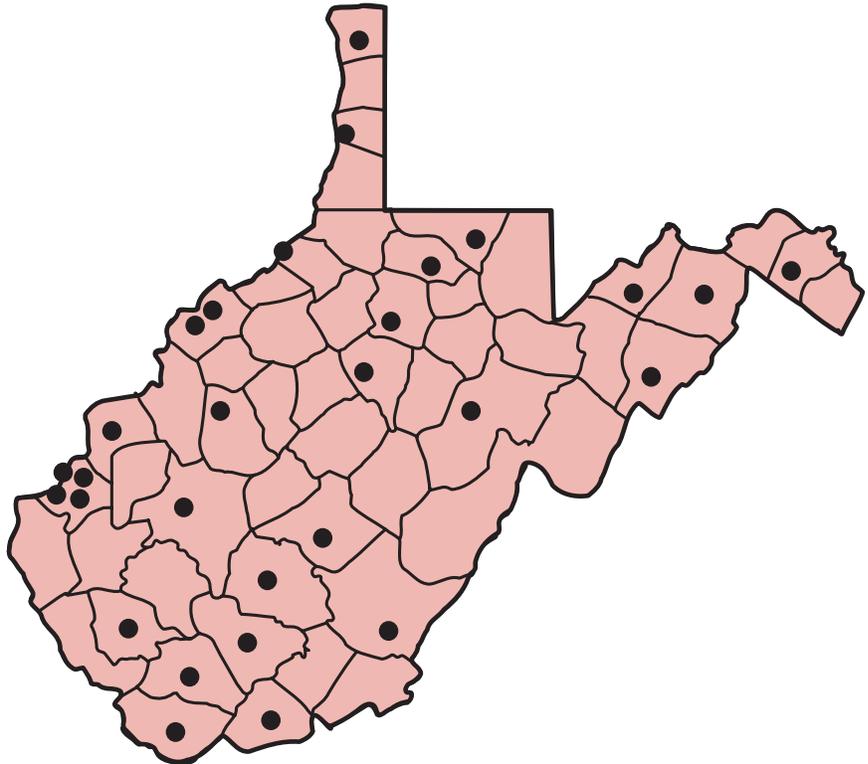
Beckley District and Branch Offices
Lewisburg Branch Office
Summersville Branch Office
Fayetteville Branch Office
Princeton Branch Office

HUNTINGTON DISTRICT

Huntington District and Branch Offices
Marshall University Branch Office
Cabell Midland High School
Huntington High School
Logan Branch Office
Mullens Branch Office
Welch Branch Office

MARTINSBURG DISTRICT

Martinsburg District and Branch Offices
Keyser Branch Office
Moorefield Branch Office
Romney Branch Office at West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind



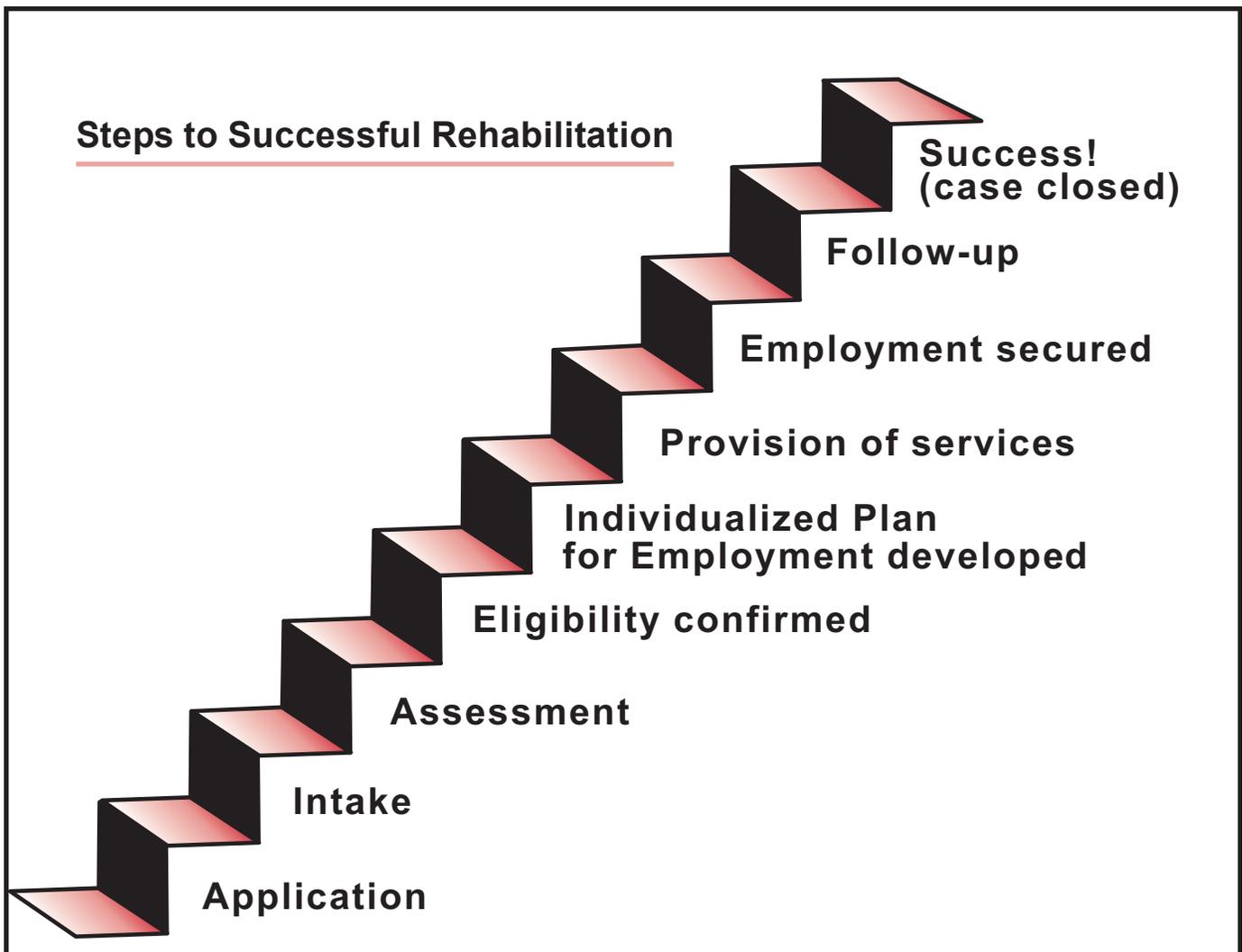
The Vocational Rehabilitation Process

The vocational rehabilitation process begins when an individual applies for services from DRS. An application is completed and an intake interview is held to explore the individual's medical, social, financial, educational and vocational experiences. This is an opportunity to explore the applicant's skills, abilities and interests and to understand his/her specific vocational rehabilitation needs. Further assessment of the individual's employment barriers is conducted when necessary to establish eligibility for services.

Once eligibility is established, the client and his/her vocational rehabilitation counselor work together to develop an individualized plan for employment (IPE). This plan describes the services that will be needed so that the individual can reach his/her employment goal.

Each client's program is individually tailored to assure that the services necessary to achieve his/her goals are provided. The anticipated outcome of the individual's vocational program is competitive employment in a career of the individual's choice.

Depending on the services needed, the program can last anywhere from a few months to several years. Follow-up services are provided by the rehabilitation counselor to assure that the individual's employment is stable and satisfactory. Advocacy and support services are available through the Client Assistance Program throughout the term of the individual's involvement with DRS.



Available Services

DRS is able to provide a variety of services to eligible individuals to help them achieve their employment goals. The eligible individual and the vocational rehabilitation counselor work together to determine which services are necessary and appropriate for the client's identified employment goal. The services provided to any eligible individual are determined by his/her unique employment barriers, his/her chosen employment goal and his/her individual circumstances. Examples of services available from DRS include:

Evaluation and diagnostic services may be provided to determine eligibility and the services needed for the individual to become employed.

Vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance is provided directly by a vocational rehabilitation counselor during the client's plan of services to accomplish a variety of objectives leading to successful employment.

Physical and mental restoration services may be provided to correct or substantially modify an individual's physical or mental condition.

Training services may be provided when necessary to meet the employment goal and may include vocational training, academic training, personal and vocational adjustment training, job coaching, on-the-job training, job seeking skills training, and books, tools and other training materials.

Specialized services for individuals who are blind, deaf and deaf-blind may include orientation and mobility training, interpreter services, note-taking services and reader services.

Rehabilitation technology services may include assistive technology devices, driver evaluation and education services, assistive technology services and rehabilitation engineering services to address barriers encountered by an individual in obtaining or retaining employment.

Placement services may be provided to assist an individual with a disability to find adequate and suitable employment in his/her chosen field.

Support services such as maintenance, transportation assistance, personal care assistance and services to family members may also be provided if necessary.

Post-employment services may be provided to previously rehabilitated individuals when needed to maintain or regain suitable employment.



ECONOMIC IMPACT

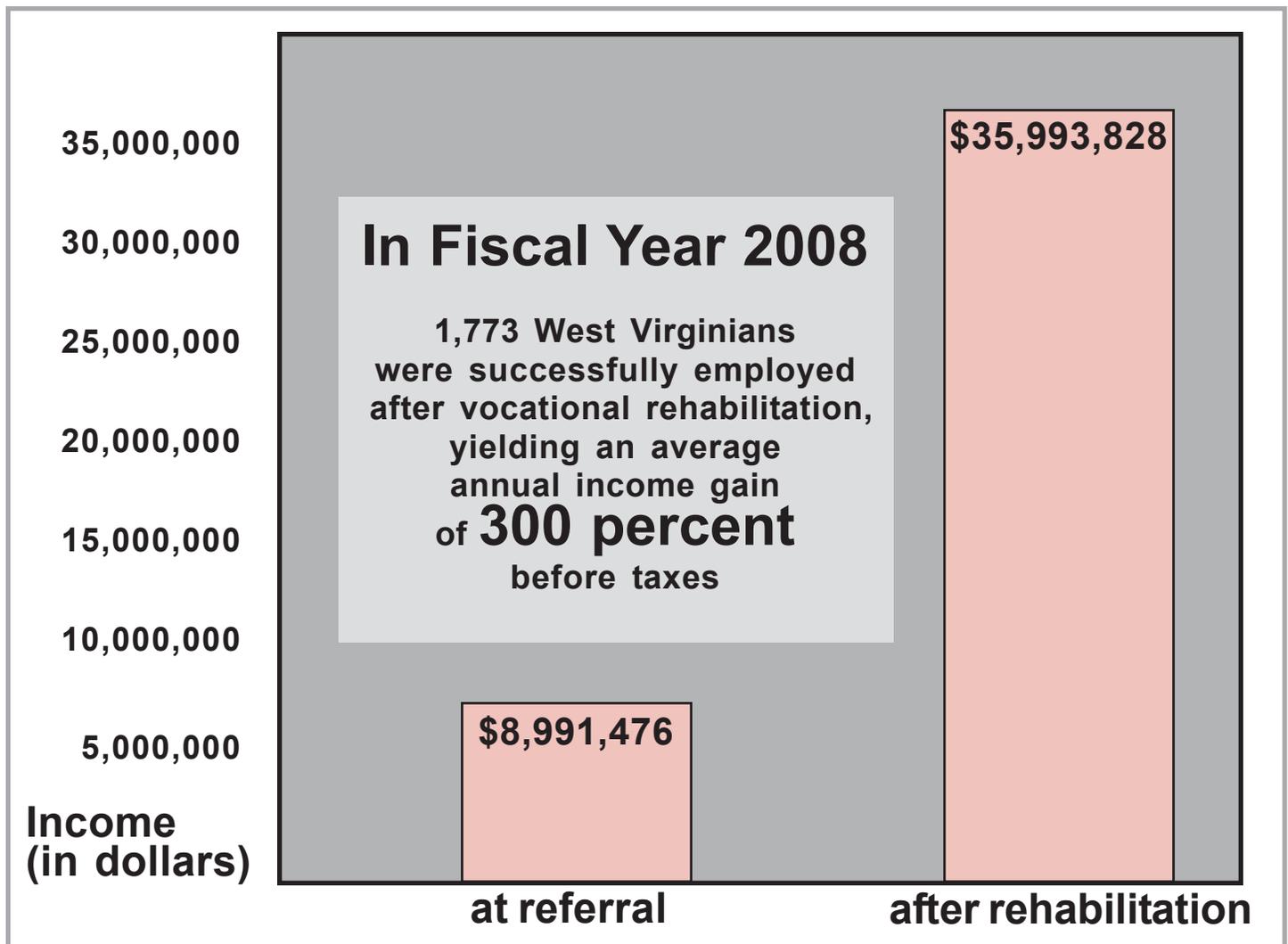
Measures of Performance

Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 requires the Rehabilitation Services Administration to establish program evaluation standards and performance indicators that DRS is expected to meet annually.

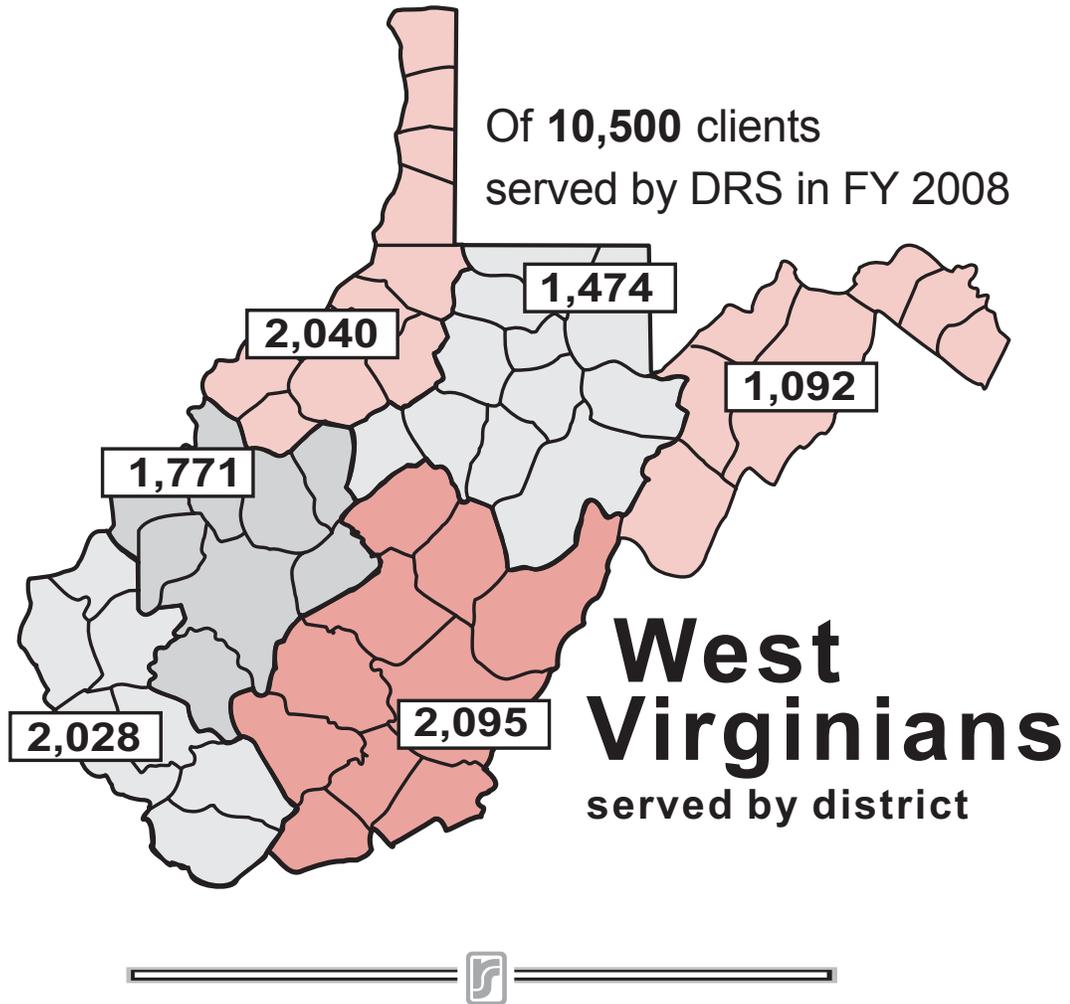
There are currently six standards on employment outcomes and one standard on equality of access to DRS services for persons with disabilities from minority and non-minority backgrounds. Individual indicators look at such items as number of rehabilitants, the rehabilitation rate, percentage of competitive rehabilitants with earnings equivalent to or greater than the prevailing minimum wage in an integrated work setting, percentage of competitive rehabilitants with significant disabilities, comparison of the average hourly earnings of competitive rehabilitants to the state hourly earnings, changes in reported personal income as the primary source of support for competitive rehabilitants at application and closure and service rate for people with disabilities from minority backgrounds. Poor performance could result in loss or reduction of federal funding.

Fiscal year 2008 data indicates that DRS met all requirements for standards and indicators by exceeding federal benchmarks for all indicators. DRS improved over its own fiscal year 2007 performance levels in three employment indicators including number of rehabilitants, the rehabilitation rate and average hourly earnings of competitive rehabilitants, as well as in the equality of access to services indicator.

For taxpayers and rehabilitation clients alike, the federal program standards and performance indicators assure a trend of successful outcomes for DRS programs and competitive job placement for West Virginians with disabilities.



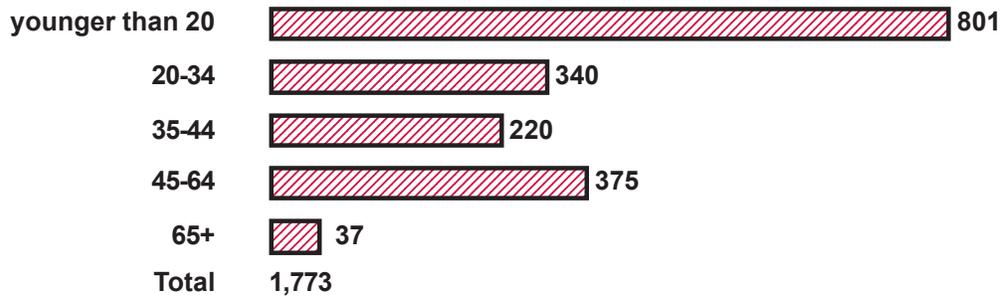
FISCAL YEAR 2008 DATA



Education at Application of Individuals Vocationally Rehabilitated

No formal schooling	1
Elementary education (grades 1-8)	32
Secondary education, no high school diploma (grades 9-12)	741
Special education certificate of completion/attendance	90
High school graduate or equivalency certificate (regular education students)	409
Post-secondary education, no degree	240
Associate degree or Vocational/Technical Certificate	131
Bachelor's degree	91
Master's degree or higher	38
Total	1,773

Age at Application of Individuals Vocationally Rehabilitated



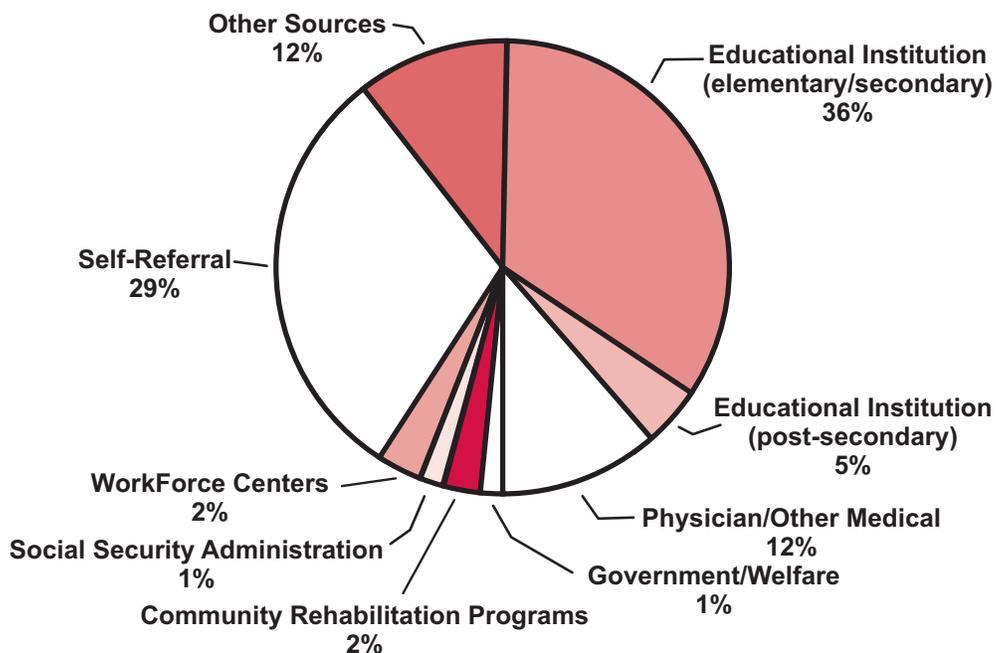
Race of Individuals Vocationally Rehabilitated

White	1,670
Black or African American	78
American Indian or Alaska Native	10
Asian or Pacific Islander	9
Hispanic or Latino	6
Total	1,773

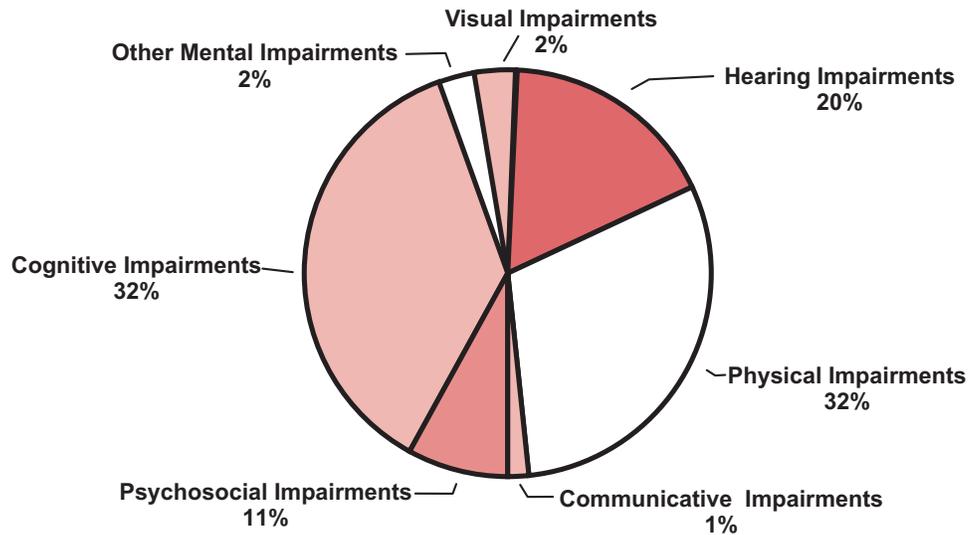
Gender of Individuals Vocationally Rehabilitated

Male	972
Female	801
Total	1,773

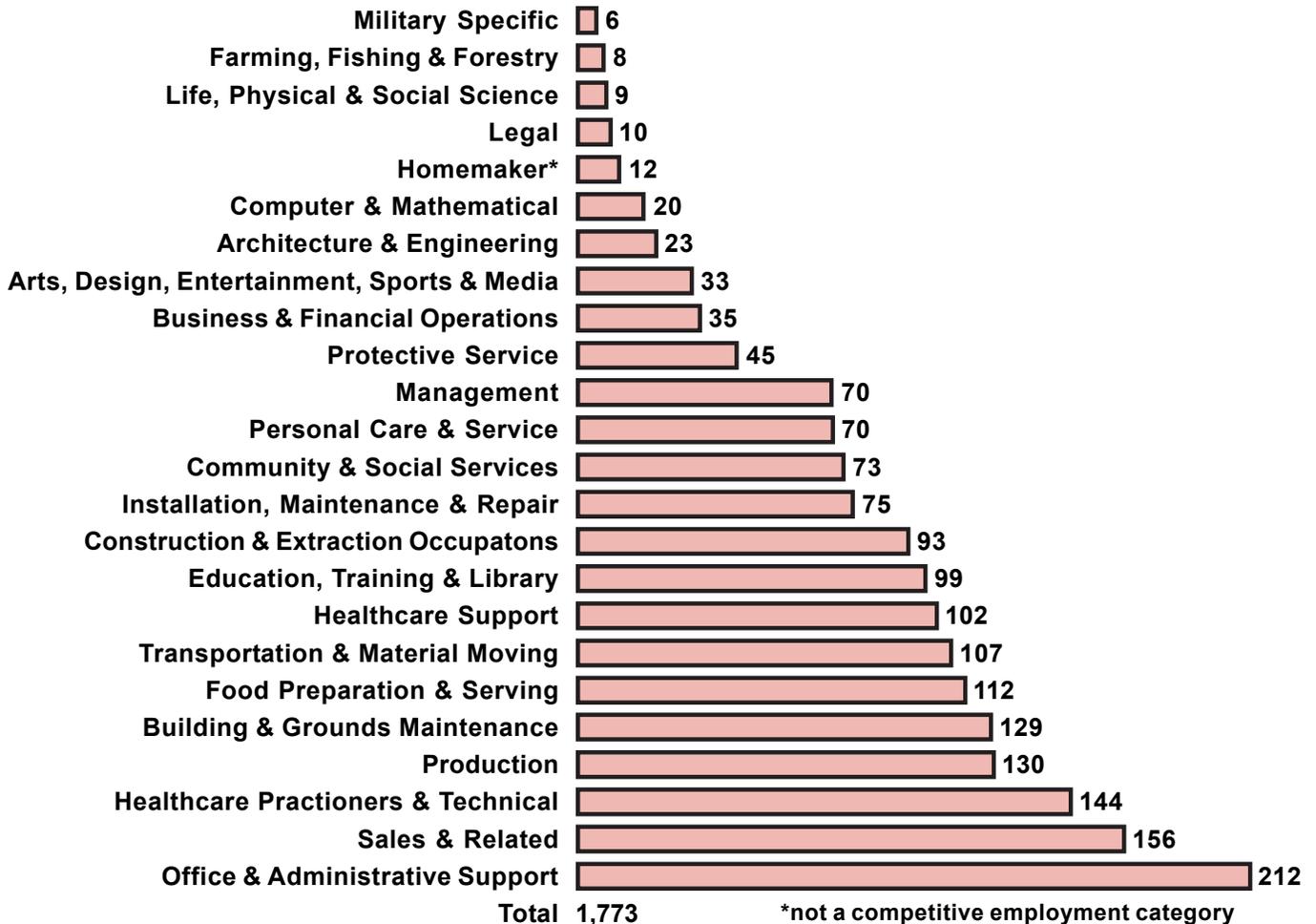
Referral Source of Individuals Vocationally Rehabilitated



Primary Disability of Individuals Vocationally Rehabilitated



Occupation of Individuals Vocationally Rehabilitated



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Transition Program

Successful transition from high school into appropriate vocational training, post-secondary education or employment is the goal of the transition program. DRS counselors can usually begin working with students with disabilities in the 11th grade to help them prepare for future employment.

Cooperative agreements between DRS, all 55 county school systems, the state Board of Education and the Schools for the Deaf and the Blind enabled 5,919 students with disabilities ages 16 to 21 to receive services during fiscal year 2008. This was 56 percent of the total number of individuals served by DRS. Of those students, 4,438 were referred directly from the schools to DRS for services. This high number of direct referrals can be attributed to DRS' commitment to serving members of the transition population.

Throughout West Virginia, 77 rehabilitation counselors are assigned to work with public and private schools, 30 of whom serve local education agencies full time. These counselors assisted 904 students with disabilities in developing individualized plans for employment. Comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services and careful planning that involved students, their families and school personnel resulted in the rehabilitation and subsequent employment of 885 transition clients through this program. This is 50 percent of our total number of rehabilitation closures during fiscal year 2008.

College Education Services

A college education provides increased opportunities for vocational success and independent living. DRS counselors are assigned liaison responsibilities with public and private colleges and universities throughout West Virginia. In fiscal year 2008, DRS authorized expenditures of more than \$3.22 million in tuition and other college expenses, helping 1,845 students obtain the education they needed.

Blind and Visually Impaired Services

DRS' Blind and Visually Impaired Services Department served a total of 800 people during fiscal year 2008 through its vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs.

Some rehabilitation counselors are specially trained to meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of people with blindness or significant vision impairments. These counselors served 394 people during fiscal year 2008. Among these clients were 42 people who entered or retained employment after completing their vocational rehabilitation programs.

Additionally, DRS operates the Visually Impaired Seniors In-home Outreach and Networking Services (VISIONS) program through an independent living grant from the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration. VISIONS provides individualized services such as low-tech adaptive aids and hand-held low vision aids, along with training in activities of daily living, orientation and mobility, computer-access technology, community integration and more.

In fiscal year 2008, 406 consumers were served through the VISIONS program.

Hearing Services

Specially trained rehabilitation counselors for the deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind served 1,715 clients in fiscal year 2008. Of the DRS clients successfully rehabilitated in fiscal year 2008, 238 were severely hard of hearing, deaf or deaf-blind.

DRS participates in several cooperative activities with the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the West Virginia Department of Education. Initiatives range from a statewide educational interpreter mentoring and certification process to the operation of an assistive equipment and resource loan program.

Rehabilitation Technology Services

The Rehabilitation Technology Department travels statewide to provide services to improve clients' independence in the workplace, home and community. DRS has a group of experienced engineers, computer specialists and technicians who specialize in job accommodations, custom-designed assistive technology and product fabrication. During fiscal year 2008, the department provided 660 services to 418 people, including 100 rehabilitation engineering services, 231 assistive technology services, 291 driver rehabilitation services and 38 environmental modification services.

Community Rehabilitation Programs

The state network of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) is critical to the effective and efficient delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with significant disabilities.

DRS maintains strong working relationships with CRPs in West Virginia that provide supported and direct employment, community-based assessment, job-site training, work adjustment and/or extended employment assessment. These services are commonly purchased by DRS to assist individuals with significant disabilities to achieve successful employment outcomes. There are 52 DRS-acknowledged CRPs with 81 service sites in West Virginia. Of those, 45 have non-profit status.

To better meet the needs of DRS and its clients, DRS works closely with the CRPs and other local community providers to expand programs, such as pre-vocational training, employment-readiness services and job coaching.

Through collaborative efforts, DRS, the CRPs and other local community providers will continue to identify needs, available resources, training opportunities and best practices to enable positive changes to assist West Virginians with disabilities to achieve successful, integrated employment outcomes.

To expand and improve on the identified needs for supported employment, life-skills and other community-based training services, DRS is currently providing additional financial support to several of the DRS-acknowledged CRPs. Through a one-time appropriation from the Governor and the West Virginia Legislature, as well as federal funds provided through the Rehabilitation Services Administration, DRS allocated \$788,793 for Community Resources Development Grants.

Through a competitive grant application process, 15 CRPs were awarded grants that will enable them to create new services and to expand needed services to DRS clients in their local communities. Additionally, DRS is revising its fee schedule to create opportunities for CRPs and other community services providers to extend their regular service areas so that more DRS clients may be served.

Employment Services Program

Eleven employment specialists work statewide to help clients achieve competitive employment. They are a link between job seekers and employers. Career resources and guidance help clients learn skills that make it more likely they will find a job, maintain current employment or advance to the next level in their career path. Instruction in résumé writing and preparation, interviewing skills, networking, job leads and labor market assistance are available to DRS clients as they prepare for and obtain employment.

The employment specialists are partners in the Workforce WV regions. They offer assistance to employers in understanding job accommodation needs, tax credits for hiring individuals with disabilities, the Americans with Disabilities Act, on-the-job training and disability awareness. Employment specialists are actively involved in their communities to better understand business and employment trends by participating in inclusion teams, economic development groups, job fairs, employer advisory councils and business services teams.

Randolph-Sheppard Program

In West Virginia, DRS serves as the State Licensing Agency for the Randolph-Sheppard Program. The purpose of the Randolph-Sheppard Act is to provide remunerative employment for blind individuals. In carrying out the legislative intent of Congress and the West Virginia Legislature, the Randolph-Sheppard Program promotes economic opportunity and profitability through self-employment for people who are legally blind.

The Randolph-Sheppard Program provides training in food service management to DRS clients who are blind and who meet eligibility requirements under the Randolph-Sheppard Act. These individuals are referred to the vending training program by field rehabilitation counselors. Other services provided include upward mobility training, in-service training, accounting services, maintenance of equipment and inventory management.

The program has 24 self-employed blind vendors providing concession services to 82 governmental facilities throughout the state. The average income for vendors in the West Virginia program is \$34,389 for fiscal year 2008.

DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES

Under contract with the Social Security Administration (SSA), Disability Determination Services (DDS) adjudicates Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability applications filed by West Virginians.

In fiscal year 2008, DDS cleared 40,835 disability claims, processing 86 percent of all clearances as certified electronic folders. In October 2008, DDS received a software upgrade which permits electronic processing of Continuing Disability Reviews and the reactivation and reopening of some cases. Additional software and procedural modifications expected during fiscal year 2009 will allow the DDS to process additional claims electronically. With this new capability, DDS expects to process 90 to 95 percent of its cases electronically by 2010.

The Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability programs significantly impact West Virginians with disabilities and their families. In 2007, an estimated 161,272 West Virginians received over \$1.6 billion in Social Security and/or Supplemental Security Income payments based on disability or blindness. In addition, over \$86 million was paid to 23,912 spouses and children of disabled workers from the Social Security Disability Insurance trust fund.

Individuals eligible for SSI disability payments also receive Medicaid. Those eligible for Social Security disability payments for over 24 months receive Medicare. The \$1.7 billion in cash payments and medical insurance significantly affect the state's economy and the quality of life for recipients.

PARTNERSHIPS

WorkForce West Virginia

DRS is one of eight state agencies represented in the Interagency Collaborative Team (ICT) of WorkForce West Virginia. As the ICT identifies ways to more effectively serve citizens seeking employment and employers who need trained, qualified workers, DRS involvement ensures that people with disabilities are given due consideration.

During fiscal year 2008, the ICT continued its focus on expanding business services teams so that all seven workforce regions can better serve employers by coordinating visits and sharing resources. All DRS employment specialists are members of those teams, and they offer their unique abilities and expertise in helping individuals with disabilities to become employed and self-sufficient.

Memorandums of Understanding between DRS and its WorkForce partners specify how DRS will contribute needed expertise, share costs and otherwise support the WorkForce West Virginia infrastructure. DRS also is an active partner in planning the annual state WorkForce Conference attended by more than 400 workforce professionals, providing needed training in the area of education about disability and accommodation.

DRS actively assists WorkForce West Virginia in honoring the commitment of seamless access to employment services for all citizens.

Statewide Independent Living Council

In partnership with DRS, the Statewide Independent Living Council is responsible for jointly planning and submitting a State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) every three years. The council also monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the plan. DRS contracts with the council to administer the Ron Yost Personal Assistance Services Program, which reimburses West Virginians with various disabilities an hourly rate to hire a personal assistant(s) to help them live independently.

The council, in cooperation with DRS and the centers for independent living, coordinates a survey of consumer satisfaction of all individuals who receive independent living services each year. Through collaboration and systems advocacy, the council works to ensure the development of appropriate public policies affecting people with disabilities.

In the 2008 fiscal year, the council's activities have been re-evaluated and revised after an on-site monitoring review by the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration. The council's mission remains unchanged: to ensure that people with disabilities have access to community-based resources that promote personal choice and facilitate the fulfillment of their independent living goals.

The governor of West Virginia appoints council members in accordance with provisions of the federal Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 and the West Virginia Independent Living Act of 2001.



State Rehabilitation Council

The West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a federally mandated partner with DRS and assists in the development of goals and priorities, programs and policies. Additionally, the SRC contributes toward the development of the DRS State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment.



Each year the SRC conducts a consumer satisfaction survey asking consumers to rate the effectiveness of and satisfaction with services they received through DRS. This information is reviewed and analyzed, and a report is made available annually to staff and the general public.

Members of the SRC are appointed by the governor, according to the provisions of the federal Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, which are dedicated to helping ensure that people with disabilities identify and achieve their vocational rehabilitation goals.

Community Living Services Program

The Community Living Services Program (CLSP) assists eligible individuals with disabilities to return to or remain in their homes and communities by enabling them to function more independently.

As provided in the West Virginia State Plan for Independent Living, state and federal funds for this program provide services such as home modifications, assistive devices and equipment, communication services, vehicle modifications and durable medical equipment.

Under administrative oversight by the Division of Rehabilitation Services, in partnership with the West Virginia Statewide Council for Independent Living, CLSP services are provided statewide through the four federally recognized centers for independent living (CIL) in West Virginia: Appalachian CIL, Mountain State CIL-Beckley, Mountain State CIL-Huntington and Northern West Virginia CIL.

When requests are received for services, CIL staff make every effort to locate the resources necessary to help that individual, including donations by third parties. If the necessary funds are not available, the individual is put on a waiting list and served in order of request as funds are received. During fiscal year 2008, 117 consumers were successfully served.



ABILITY WORKS

The Ability Works Recognition Ceremony honors individuals who have achieved their vocational goals by means of their own perseverance and with assistance from the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services. The following stories highlight the accomplishments of six individuals honored during the 2008 ceremony.

Jonathan Edwards • State Winner

Jonathan Edwards is a loyal worker and an award-winning plumber with a great love for his career. His determination and hard work earned him recognition as the 2008 State Ability Works winner. Edwards represents DRS' Clarksburg District.

Edwards was deaf at birth. He grew up in Morgantown and attended the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind, in Romney, where he learned American Sign Language. After graduating in 2005, he began to focus on his future. DRS provided a stepping stone to his chosen career.

"When I met with the counselor, I was hoping they would help me because I needed to go to a vocational school," Jonathan said. "I was interested in plumbing and wanted some help getting into school."

DRS provided Edwards with counseling and life skills training, and paid for his training costs to attend Putnam Career and Technical Center's plumbing technology program. His DRS counselor also arranged for job placement services and a sign language interpreter at the school.

Edwards graduated two years later, and proved himself soon afterward by earning first place in the W.Va. Vocational Skills Competition. That earned him a trip to the National Skills Competition in Kansas City, Missouri, where he was ranked fifth in the nation for his superb plumbing skills.

"I enjoy my work," he said. "I like hands-on work."

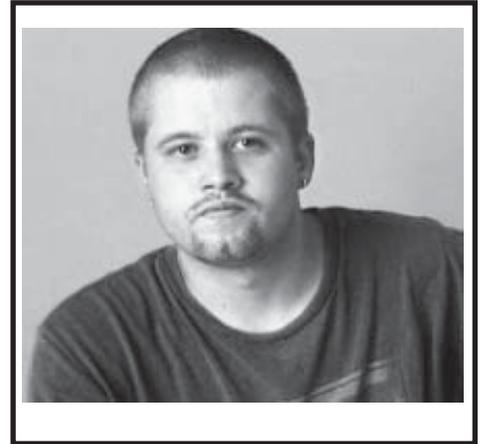
Edwards is now employed with King Brothers Services in Morgantown. He has worked on townhouses, apartments, and condominiums in that area.

"Jonathan works very well with everyone," said David King, Jonathan's employer and part-owner of King Brothers Services. "He has a good sense of humor. If anyone on the job site ever said anything negative about Jonathan, he'd have everyone around him defending him."

Although he can't hear instructions from his supervisor and works without an interpreter, Edwards' co-workers often write him notes and draw pictures with instructions for installations and what needs to be done on the job. They also accommodate him by sending text messages to his cell phone when they are working too far from him to communicate directly.

His counselor, Christine Boggs, said Edwards was his own training program.

"He is always smiling," said Boggs. "He's not afraid, and that's what it takes when you have a disability – to not be afraid to get out there."



Stephen Reedy • Charleston District

You don't have to talk for long with 24-year-old Stephen Reedy to discover how much he loves teaching and interacting with his social studies students.

"I like working with kids," Reedy said. "It's nice talking to young people who have optimistic views of the country for a change."

Reedy didn't always plan to teach. When he first contacted a DRS counselor, he hoped to find a way to attend law school.

"I took a few teaching classes," he said. "I enjoyed it and decided to go into teaching, and I don't regret it."

Reedy inherited a neurological disorder called Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, characterized by loss of muscle tissue and touch sensation. As a result, he often experiences muscle weakness in his hands.

DRS helped him become a first-generation college graduate by sponsoring his tuition and providing him with a note-taker during class lectures. "My disability prevents me from writing well, and taking notes for a 90-minute to three-hour class was impossible," said Stephen.

Reedy earned his bachelor's degree in education at Concord University, then worked as a part-time history teacher at Buffalo High School in Putnam County. His first full-time teaching job was at nearby Poca Middle School, and he was fortunate to transfer back to Buffalo this year as a full-time teacher.

"I liked having him on my staff," said Buffalo High School Principal Richard Grim. "He graduated from Buffalo High School and is well-liked in the community. He is very compassionate and organized, and he gets things done the right way."

Beth Ann Swann, Reedy's rehabilitation counselor, thinks he made a great career choice. "He had some different goals in the beginning," she said, "but his love for the students and his love for teaching drew him to teaching."

When she visited his classroom, Swann was impressed with the way his students respond to him. "They look up to him so much."

Graduating from college is Reedy's proudest achievement so far, and it's something he hopes his students will experience someday, too.

"While attending college, I opened an auction house which I continue to run today. I'm proud that I was able to work all through my college years and still graduate with my degree. Through teaching, I'm able to at least help a lot of students get to college and give it a shot," said Reedy.



Anthony Bailey • Wheeling District

At Hayes Middle School in St. Albans, 28-year-old Tony Bailey is the math teacher everybody wishes they'd had – sharp, enthusiastic and interested in his students. But nine years ago, when doctors calculated his chances of recovery from a devastating car accident, "guarded" was the word they used to describe his prognosis.

"When I first got hurt, I didn't know what to do," Bailey recalled. "It was like my world was over."

The accident in August 1999 changed his life, fracturing several vertebrae, causing paralysis from his chest down, partially paralyzing his arms. A month later, full of optimism, 19-year-old Tony Bailey contacted a rehabilitation counselor at the DRS office in Parkersburg. He was going to walk again, and he was going to work.

"There are those rare clients who come into the office, you just know from the beginning will be a special experience," said Sarah Feick, the DRS counselor who nominated Bailey for the Wheeling District award.



At 28, Bailey teaches eighth grade mathematics at Hayes Middle School in St. Albans. His optimism is undimmed.

“His attitude, his personality, and his determination not to let his accident get in the way of living a good life is amazing,” Feick said.

Scott Monty, principal of Hayes Middle School, has high praise for this teacher.

“He knows what it takes to teach kids today, and he connects with them,” Monty said. “That’s important in dealing with kids today, especially at the middle school level. They respect him, and he respects them.”

“They sent me to Institute after I got out of rehabilitation, because my insurance was done paying for their 60 days and I still needed a lot of rehab. So that was one of the big things that helped me.”

DRS made it possible for him to go to college, and helped modify his home and make it accessible to a wheelchair. Seven years later, he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education from West Virginia University at Parkersburg. There were too many barriers to getting a job locally, so he searched throughout the state and found his present job in 2006.

Hayes Middle School is fairly accessible, Monty said, and awareness of accessibility is increasing since “Mr. Bailey” arrived on campus. During a recent student project to redesign the school’s courtyard, the plans included wheelchair access.

Parent volunteers helped set up his classroom this year, preparing bulletin boards and arranging the furnishings to suit him, Monty said. A “smart board” will allow Tony to draw or write on a handheld tablet anywhere in the classroom, and to have his work projected for the class.

These are small adjustments to make for a teacher who motivates students to learn, Monty emphasized.

“Kids grab their lunch and go to his room and hang out with him,” Monty said. “He talks to them. He’s a mentor to them. He is a great role model for our kids.”



Joshua Rebich • Beckley District

You may never meet a more dedicated employee – or a more cheerful one – than 28-year-old Joshua Rebich.

If you ever shop at the Food Lion supermarket in Beckley, you may have a chance to see him at work as a courtesy clerk. It’s likely you’ll find him walking briskly out to the parking lot to retrieve shopping carts (and returning with the same enthusiasm), restocking products on the shelves or bagging groceries at one of the front cash registers. Josh works with a smile on his face and a spring in his step.



His attitude and his perseverance have earned Josh recognition as the 2008 Ability Works winner representing the Beckley District of DRS.

Josh makes it look easy, although in some ways it hasn’t been. Josh was diagnosed with autism at the age of two. Growing up, he sometimes had difficulty with all kinds of social interactions. In high school he was referred to DRS for help in making the transition from school to full employment.

With his mother’s help and encouragement, Josh came to DRS to prepare himself for working and living as independently as possible. He was confident he could work and his work ethic was unquestionable, but it seemed there were no jobs available for him.

When Josh’s mother passed away, a few months before he returned to DRS in the spring of 2006, Josh and his father persisted in trying to find him work. Josh doesn’t drive, and now he was alone at home while his father and two younger brothers went to work. He’d proved he could take care of himself, but he wanted the income a job would provide – and again he had the full support of his family.

DRS Counselor Kelli White arranged for job placement assistance in Beckley through REM Community Options. More importantly, she worked with Josh’s employer to accommodate a few special needs he would have. By November 2006, he was working at Food Lion. He hasn’t missed a day of work since.

“This is the best job for him,” White said, “because if he needs to take a break, he can. If he needs extra help, there are those around him – his co-workers – that are willing to jump in and help him. But he works independently, and this has been a really good fit for him.”

So good, in fact, that Josh Rebich was named Food Lion’s “employee of the quarter,” an accomplishment that makes White proud. He’s still learning, though. Even now, a job coach visits him twice a month to assess his situation and teach any new skills that might be needed.

“Probably my motivation in working so diligently, and why this case is important to me, is that I have a daughter with autism,” said White. “I’m very familiar with the needs, the importance for the job tasks to stay the same, the importance of scheduling. And all those things needed to be in place in order for Josh to be successful. “Food Lion has done those things, and he has just done a tremendous job.”

Don Smith, his manager at Food Lion, says Josh is upbeat and polite to customers. Everyone likes to be around such a person, so Josh fits the job well. “Josh is a great person to be around,” Smith said. “He’s full of energy, very loyal. Anything that I ask or tell him to do, he’s happy to do and just goes at it full strength.”



Lindsay Huddleston • Huntington District

Enthusiastic. Self-assured. Capable. These are the first impressions conveyed by Lindsay Huddleston, a vocational rehabilitation counselor for the deaf and hard of hearing at the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) in San Antonio, Texas.

Huddleston, who was deaf at birth, is fluent in American Sign Language. That works very much in her favor at this job, but it’s all her other attributes that add up to a winning formula for success.

After one year on the job, 24-year-old Huddleston was recommended for a promotion. That’s no surprise to Jill Kelley, Huddleston’s former rehabilitation counselor at DRS, who nominated her to represent the Huntington District.

“Lindsay was always a hard worker,” Kelley said. “She loved academic challenges. She faced those with no fear, in high school and in college both. She really never saw herself – that I could see – as having any limitations. A very motivated young lady. Very bright, very personable. I knew she’d do well, never had a doubt in my mind that Lindsay would go places.”

San Antonio is a long way from where she grew up in Leon, WV. In more ways than one, Lindsay Huddleston is going places.

“Originally I wanted to be a teacher,” Huddleston said. “But I changed my career from teaching to a different career, and DRS helped a lot.”

Her enthusiasm impresses clients, co-workers and others she interacts with on the job.

“One of the things that makes her an outstanding employee is the fact that she has that sensitivity to individuals who are profoundly deaf,” explained Reuben Garcia, DARS area manager for northeast San Antonio. “She is an excellent role model. She’s sensitive to the culture of the deaf community, and she’s really highly motivated.”

When Huddleston is at work meeting with clients, the Texas agency sometimes provides a sign language interpreter for her. On the telephone, she has the option of using TDD (telecommunications device for the deaf) or a voice interpreter. She also communicates a lot with e-mail. In work-related trainings, she has the option of using Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), also known as realtime captioning.

Her boss thinks Huddleston’s success may inspire some of her own clients, and others who have doubts about their abilities.



“I can tell them, ‘Look at Lindsay. Lindsay can do it. You can do it, too,’” said Garcia. “People can look at Lindsay and see how successful she is.”

Her friendly personality has influenced the people she works with, too.

“We’re actually doing our own training here ... learning how to sign and learn some basic communication,” Garcia said. “She took that on herself. There was interest from co-workers who say, ‘How do you sign for this?’ or ‘How do you say this?’ and she’s very accommodating in that she’s helping us to learn some of the basic signs. She’s part of the team.”



Kelley Rankin • Martinsburg District

Kelley Rankin, a young physical therapist, had a vision. At 35 years old, he was already providing physical therapy services at his own offices in Martinsburg and Berkeley Springs. He dreamed of a new facility in Berkeley Springs, his hometown. There he would offer physical therapy in a spa-like setting. It would be a place where people could come not only for intensive physical therapy, but for fitness and weight training to keep them healthy.

With the help of Jennifer, his wife of less than three months, the dream was coming true. They worked hard, and everything was moving in the right direction, and in August 2005, Kelley took time off to go mountain biking with some college friends at Snowshoe Mountain Resort.

On one of the runs, his bike flipped. Suddenly, his world was turned upside down by a spinal cord injury that paralyzed him from the chest down. As he recovered, his thoughts dwelled on Jennifer and their shared dreams.

“I can still remember her sitting at my bedside telling me that we had to go on with our plans for the new building,” Kelley said. “She told me that even more than before, ‘we have to go forward in life, not backwards.’ Jennifer has and always will be my inspiration. I love her so much, and don’t want her to miss out on anything in life.”

In April 2007, the \$3 million Rankin Physical Therapy and Fitness Center grand opening included a visit from Gov. Joe Manchin. So the vision is now a reality, and the Rankins own and operate an 18,000-square-foot facility that boasts state-of-the-art therapies including an underwater treadmill.

Brenda Orndorff, DRS quality assurance specialist and 10-year veteran rehabilitation counselor, worked with Rankin immediately after his accident to help him get back to work.

“There was also a psychological component to his adjustment to his disability, because you’re talking of somebody who was very mobile, very brilliant, and within just a minute – a second – everything had changed.”

There was a lot to grieve, yet much to be grateful about, too. Rankin was fortunate to have the full support of his wife, family and others in the Berkeley Springs community.

“Our employees, our friends and my family – they just really pulled together and kinda helped me to get back to my old self. ... They’ve done so much more than I could ever do for them.”

DRS provided Rankin with Dragon Medical Solutions – software that would transcribe his spoken word into text, allowing him to make notes on his physical therapy clients – and evaluated and recommended hand controls for his vehicle. The agency’s environmental modifications unit assisted him with accessibility accommodations in his home.

Working with DRS may have helped Kelley Rankin to clarify his vision and refine his business plans in ways he had not foreseen.

“Through my injury, and my experience with DRS, it made me think not just about myself and my return to work, but how we can make this facility more accessible and more friendly to everyone who comes in and uses it,” he said.



FISCAL YEAR 2008 FINANCIAL REPORT

West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services
Statement of Funds and Expenses for the year ended June 30, 2008

Source of Funds

State Appropriations	13,661,185
Federal Grants	33,897,903
Program Income	1,749,237
Special Revenue	52,741

Total Funds 49,361,066

Expenditure by Program Category

Administration	11,885,119
Rehabilitation Services	
Case Services	6,854,032
Counseling, Guidance and Placement	10,832,555
Disability Determination Program	17,031,193
Other	
Assistive Technology	424,914
Employment Attendant Care Program	169,992
Benefits Planning	254,684
Independent Living	320,212
Medicaid Infrastructure Grant	469,097
Older Blind (VISIONS)	121,276
Pell	999
Randolph-Sheppard	114,228
Recreation	91,746
Ron Yost Personal Assistance Fund	340,000
Staff Development	85,149
Supported Employment	128,045
Supported Employment Extended Services	119,032
Traumatic Brain Injury	118,793

Total Expenditures 49,361,066

Classification of Expenditures

Personal Services	26,324,685
Current Expense	6,219,885
Repairs & Alterations	353,548
Equipment	669,475
Grants	4,333,599
Purchased Case Services	11,459,874

Total Expenditures 49,361,066

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