Annual Report 2010
West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services

Building people and the economy
**DRS Office Contact Information**

**DRS State Office**  
State Capitol  
P. O. Box 50890  
Charleston, WV 25305-0890  
304-766-4600

**Beckley District**  
800 New River Town Center  
Beckley, WV 25801  
304-256-6900

**Cabell Midland High School**  
2300 US Route 60 East  
Ona, WV 25545  
304-743-7496

**Charleston District**  
P. O. Box 547  
Institute, WV 25112  
304-766-2634

**Disability Determination Section**  
Charleston  
500 Quarrier Street, Suite 500  
Charleston, WV 25301  
304-343-5055

**Disability Determination Section**  
Clarksburg  
Federal Center  
320 West Pike Street, Suite 120  
Clarksburg, WV 26301  
304-624-0200

**Clarksburg District**  
107 Cambridge Place  
Bridgeport, WV 26330  
304-842-2951

**Elkins Branch Office**  
1025 North Randolph Avenue  
Elkins, WV 26241  
304-637-0205

**Fairmont Branch Office**  
Veterans Square  
320 Adams Street, Suite 106  
Fairmont, WV 26554  
304-367-2714

**Huntington District**  
2699 Park Avenue, Suite 200  
Huntington, WV 25704  
304-528-8585

**Huntington High School**  
Highlander Way  
Huntington, WV 25701  
304-528-6511

**Keyser Branch Office**  
603 Locust Street  
Keyser, WV 26726  
304-788-2313 or 301-777-0787

**Lewisburg Branch Office**  
Suite 105  
777 North Jefferson Street  
Lewisburg, WV 24901  
304-647-7515

**Logan Branch Office**  
216 Dingess Street  
Logan, WV 25601  
304-792-7060

**Martinsburg District**  
891 Auto Parts Place, Suite 131  
Martinsburg, WV 25403  
304-267-0005 or 304-267-0009

**Morgantown Branch Office**  
124 South High Street  
Morgantown, WV 26501  
304-285-3155

**Mullens Branch Office**  
316 Howard Avenue  
Mullens, WV 25882  
304-294-5653

**Parkersburg Branch Office**  
State Office Building  
400 5th Street  
Parkersburg, WV 26101  
304-420-4580

**Prestera Center**  
3375 U.S. Rt. 60 E  
Huntington, WV 25705  
304-399-7768

**Princeton Branch Office**  
195 Davis Street  
Princeton, WV 24740  
304-425-1256

**Putnam County Branch Office**  
WorkForce Building  
Space #20, Putnam Village  
Hurricane, WV 25560  
304-993-7116

**Ripley Branch Office**  
206 Stone Drive  
Ripley, WV 25271  
304-373-0313

**Romney Branch Office**  
WV Schools for the Deaf & Blind  
P. O. Box 943  
Romney, WV 26757  
304-822-3957  
304-822-3233

**Sistersville Branch Office**  
714 Wells Street  
Sistersville, WV 26175  
304-652-2354

**Spencer Branch Office**  
321 Market Street  
Spencer, WV 25276  
304-927-0954

**Summersville Branch Office**  
830 Northside Drive, Suite 113  
Summersville, WV 26651  
304-872-0813

**Weirton Branch Office**  
100 Municipal Plaza, Suite 200  
Weirton, WV 26062  
304-723-5311

**Welch Branch Office**  
110 Park Avenue  
Welch, WV 24801  
304-436-3175

**Weston Branch Office**  
346 Market Place Mall  
Weston, WV 26452  
304-269-0547

**Wheeling District**  
Central Union Building  
40 14th Street, Suite 102  
Wheeling, WV 26003  
304-238-1092
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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 2010 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 12,592 West Virginians with disabilities in fiscal year 2010, a 8.9 percent increase from the previous year. More than 96 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 2,169 determined individuals who, after receiving services from DRS, secured employment during the past year. These new on-the-job citizens represent the powerful impact of vocational rehabilitation with an average increase in annual earnings of 192 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
Field Services

One-to-one effective personal service is what clients receive from DRS. In 32 field offices across the state, DRS rehabilitation counselors carefully evaluate clients’ skills and interests. Vocational success is achieved by providing the services and comprehensive support each client needs for successful employment.

DRS employs approximately 127 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 level 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.

District and Branch Offices
Fiscal Year 2010 Highlights

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

- 12,592 individuals with disabilities served
- 2,169 successfully rehabilitated
- 96 percent of individuals served had significant disabilities
- 192 percent increase in average annual earnings due to rehabilitation services
- Dramatically increased client services budget by 250 percent over the last three years, spending nearly $20 million in FY 2010, focusing on customer service improvements for vocational rehabilitation throughout West Virginia
- Reached 27 percent more people in FY 2010 than in 2007, improving the availability of and access to vocational rehabilitation services for West Virginians with disabilities
- Expanded the availability and utilization of community rehabilitation provider services throughout the state, dramatically increasing payments to community rehabilitation providers by 263 percent over the last three years
- Since 2009, DRS has invested approximately $5.2 million in expanding services that assist individuals with disabilities in preparing for employment and obtaining jobs throughout West Virginia, awarding 63 grants to CRPs to provide services throughout the state
- Spent more than $6.6 million in tuition and other college expenses, helping 2,474 students get the education needed to meet their work-related educational goals
- Exceeded the federal benchmarks for all program evaluation standards and performance indicators

Disability Determination Services

- Cleared 47,889 disability claims
- Met workload, processing time and accuracy goals
- Processed 98 percent of its disability claims electronically
- Hired 59 new employees ending FY 2010 with 227 full-time employees
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 client 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. DRS services 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 therapeutic services** may be provided to correct or substantially modify an individual’s physical or mental condition.

**Training services** may be provided to meet the employment goal and may include vocational training, college or other 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

Return on Investment

The DRS State Plan and Program Evaluation Unit recently performed a study and prepared a report on the Economic Impacts of the DRS Program on Consumers with Significant Disabilities in West Virginia -- A Realistic Return-on-Investment Model for State/Federal VR Programs using fiscal year 2007 data. The results show that the state/federal vocational rehabilitation program operated by DRS is efficient and accountable.

The study included a sample of closed cases of consumers who were rehabilitated into employment and closed cases of consumers who received services without achieving competitive employment. (Sample population = 370; Total population = 2,521)

Economic Benefits of Vocational Rehabilitation in West Virginia

- Vocational rehabilitation services impact current and potential earnings of consumers.
- Post-vocational rehabilitation earnings produce tax revenues for federal and state government.
- Vocationally rehabilitated consumers results in savings to social security benefit payments (SSI and SSDI)
- Every dollar spent results in a return on investment of $5.75, which builds the individual’s earnings and builds the economy by increasing tax revenues and reducing Social Security benefits.
Evaluation Standards and Performance Indicators

The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 require the Rehabilitation Services Administration to establish program evaluation standards and performance indicators that DRS is expected to annually meet. Fiscal year 2010 data indicates that DRS exceeded the federal benchmarks for all indicators. Federal performance requirements assure a trend of successful employment outcomes for West Virginians with disabilities, benefiting taxpayers and rehabilitation clients alike.

**Evaluation Standard 1 – Employment Outcomes.** DRS assists eligible individuals to obtain, maintain or regain high quality employment.

**Performance Indicator 1.1 — Change in Employment Outcomes**
The number of individuals who achieved an employment outcome in the current year must equal or exceed the number from the previous year. (Federal Requirement – equal to or greater than prior year)

- FY 2010 – 2,169
- FY 2009 – 1,867
- FY 2008 – 1,773
- FY 2007 – 1,587

**Performance Indicator 1.2 — Percent of Employment Outcomes**
The percentage of individuals exiting the program during the current year who have achieved an employment outcome after receiving services. (Federal Requirement – 55.8%)

- FY 2010 - 70.5%
- FY 2009 - 69.0%
- FY 2008 - 70.8%
- FY 2007 - 63.0%

**Performance Indicator 1.3 — Competitive Employment Outcomes**
The percentage of individuals who achieved an employment outcome and are earning at least the minimum wage. (Federal Requirement – 72.6%)

- FY 2010 – 96.1%
- FY 2009 – 83.6%
- FY 2008 – 85.6%
- FY 2007 – 91.1%

**Performance Indicator 1.4 — Significance of Disability**
Of those earning at least the minimum wage, the percentage who have significant disabilities. (Federal Requirement – 62.4%)

- FY 2010 – 91.3%
- FY 2009 – 92.2%
- FY 2008 – 92.4%
- FY 2007 – 97.2%
Performance Indicator 1.5 — Earnings Ratio
The ratio of the average hourly earnings of all individuals earning at least the minimum wage to the average hourly earnings of all employed individuals in the state. (Federal Requirement – Ratio of .52)
- FY 2010 – .63
- FY 2009 – .680
- FY 2008 – .676
- FY 2007 – .682

Performance Indicator 1.6 — Self-Support
Of those earning at least the minimum wage, the difference in the percentage of individuals who at program entry reported their income as the largest single source of support, and the percentage that reported their personal income as the largest single source of support at program exit. (Federal Requirement – 53% mathematical difference)
- FY 2010 – 58.1%
- FY 2009 – 61.5%
- FY 2008 – 65.2%
- FY 2007 – 75.2%

DRS must ensure that individuals from minority backgrounds have equal access to services.

Performance Indicator 2.1 — Minority Background Service Rate
The services rate for individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all non-minorities with disabilities. (Federal Requirement – Ratio of .80)
- FY 2010 – .811
- FY 2009 – .847
- FY 2008 – .977
- FY 2007 – .861
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

DRS received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding for three separate and distinct programs that directly benefit West Virginians with disabilities.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program - $4,312,919
ARRA funds are being used to provide and support vocational rehabilitation programs for West Virginians with disabilities and include the following initiatives:

- Awarded 21 grants to 18 Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP) to create new services and to expand needed services to DRS clients in their local.
- Awarded grants to four Workforce Investment Boards to create summer employment programs for youth with disabilities.
- Expanded Randolph-Sheppard services by purchasing equipment to assist individuals who are legally blind who operate vending stands on state and federal property.

Older/Blind Program (VISIONS) - $252,612
ARRA funds are being used to provide independent living services to older individuals who are blind and include the following initiatives:

- Conducting training projects to increase staff expertise in the field of blindness and significant vision loss in order to improve the quality of services provided.
- Implementing new training programs that teach consumers to conduct peer-to-peer mentoring support groups.
- Upgrading software to make the data collection system more responsive to the needs of trainers.
- Purchasing video magnifiers and adaptive aids to assist older people with visual impairments and enable them to read any standard print and be better able to participate in home and community activities.

State Independent Living Services Program - $242,913
ARRA monies are being utilized for initiatives to enhance independent living services to individuals with significant disabilities, including:

- Supporting operation of centers for independent living and expansion and improvement of independent living services.
- Providing training on the independent living philosophy and outreach to unserved and underserved populations.
- Conducting studies and analysis and presenting information to policymakers to improve independent living services.
- Supporting activities that increase the capacity of independent living service providers.
Fiscal Year 2010 Data
*based on preliminary data submitted to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration

West Virginians served by district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total Served</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charleston</td>
<td>2,402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarksburg</td>
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<td>Wheeling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beckley</td>
<td>2,325</td>
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<tr>
<td>Huntington</td>
<td>2,576</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martinsburg</td>
<td>1,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total served</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,592</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational Attainment of Individuals Rehabilitated

- Master's degree or higher: 120 (At referral), 321 (After rehabilitation)
- Bachelor's degree: 128 (At referral), 430 (After rehabilitation)
- Associate's degree or vocational/technical certificate: 189 (At referral), 313 (After rehabilitation)
- Post-secondary education, no degree: 298 (At referral), 730 (After rehabilitation)
- High school graduate or GED: 101 (At referral), 621 (After rehabilitation)
- Special education certificate of completion/attendance: 102 (At referral), 131 (After rehabilitation)
- Secondary education, no diploma grades 9-12: 20 (At referral), 728 (After rehabilitation)
- Elementary education grades 1-8: 30 (At referral)
- No formal schooling: 2 (At referral)

*based on preliminary data submitted to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration
Age of Individuals Rehabilitated

*based on preliminary data submitted to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Younger than 20</td>
<td>712</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-34</td>
<td>418</td>
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<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>288</td>
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<tr>
<td>41-64</td>
<td>669</td>
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<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>82</td>
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Gender of Individuals Rehabilitated

*based on preliminary data submitted to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1,211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>712</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Occupations of Individuals Rehabilitated

*based on preliminary data submitted to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration

- Office & Administrative Support: 264
- Sales & Related: 208
- Transportation & Material Moving: 179
- Production: 176
- Bldg. & Grounds Cleaning/Maintenance: 173
- Food Preparation & Serving: 137
- Healthcare Practitioners & Technical: 119
- Construction & Extraction: 113
- Education, Training & Library: 110
- Personal Care & Service: 104
- Management: 103
- Healthcare Support: 102
- Community & Social Services: 100
- Installation, Maintenance & Repair: 89
- Protective Services: 47
- Business & Financial Operations: 35
- Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media: 25
- Farming, Fishing & Forestry: 15
- Architecture & Engineering: 15
- Computer & Mathematical: 14
- Life, Physical & Social Sciences: 13
- Legal: 11
- Homemaker: 7
- Military: 4
- Unpaid Family Worker: 3
- Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Operator: 2
- Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Clerk: 1
Referral Sources of Individuals Rehabilitated

- Self-referral
- Other Resources
- Educational Institutions, Primary/Secondary
- Physicians, Other Medical Personnel
- Welfare Agencies
- Community Rehabilitation Programs
- Social Security Administration
- One Stop Employment/Training Centers

Primary Disability of Individuals Rehabilitated

- Physical Impairments
- Cognitive Impairments
- Visual Impairments
- Hearing Impairments
- Other Mental Impairments
- Psychosocial Impairments

*based on preliminary data submitted to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration
Programs and Services

Transition Program

A successful and seamless transition from high school into appropriate vocational training, post-secondary education or employment is the goal of the transition program. DRS counselors begin working with students with disabilities in the 11th grade to help them determine their vocational and career directions and to prepare for employment.

DRS maintains cooperative agreements with each of the 55 county school systems, the state Board of Education and the Schools for the Deaf and the Blind to ensure effective collaboration for school-aged youth with disabilities. Throughout West Virginia, 79 rehabilitation counselors are assigned to work with public and private schools, 33 of whom serve local education agencies full time.

Comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services and careful planning that involved students, their families and school personnel garnered the following results:

- 6,197 students with disabilities (ages 16 to 21) served, which is 49.2 percent of the total number of individuals served by DRS.
- 4,670 transition students were referred directly from the schools to DRS.
- 1,453 students with disabilities developed individualized plans for employment.
- 778 transition clients gained employment, which is 35.9 percent of the total number of rehabilitation closures.

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.

- Assisted 2,474 students with college education services they needed to meet their work-related educational goals.
- Authorized expenditures of more than $6.6 million in tuition and other college expenses.
Blind and Visually Impaired Services

DRS has specially trained rehabilitation counselors to meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of people with blindness and significant vision impairments.

- Served 572 people with blindness or significant vision impairments.
- 97 people obtained or retained employment after completing their vocational rehabilitation programs.

DRS offers individualized and intensive training to those clients who need to learn skills to effectively compensate and live independently with blindness or limited vision. This training may include orientation and mobility, computer literacy and access technology, Braille, home economics, activities of daily living, individual and group counseling and career development.

In addition to compensatory skills training, blind and visually impaired clients may receive job training, job placement or access technology to assist in training or to help them function on the job.

DRS also administers the Visually Impaired Seniors In-home Outreach and Networking Services (VISIONS) program, through an independent living grant from the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration.

This program serves individuals age 55 and older with vision loss, providing 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 2010, 686 consumers were served through the VISIONS program.

Hearing Services

DRS has specially trained rehabilitation counselors to meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

- Served 1,478 clients who listed hearing impairments as their primary or secondary disability, which includes people who are deaf or deaf-blind.
- 520 clients with hearing impairments achieved their employment goals.

In conjunction with the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, DRS serves on a taskforce chartered by the West Virginia Legislature to develop a certification process for sign language interpreters throughout the state. Assistive technology devices for the deaf and hard of hearing can be provided to clients through regular case management and through access to existing resource loan programs.
Rehabilitation Technology Services

The Rehabilitation Technology department travels statewide to provide services to improve DRS clients’ independence in the workplace, home and community. DRS has a group of experienced engineers, computer specialists, driving instructors and technicians who specialize in job accommodations, custom-designed assistive technology, product fabrication and driver education, including bioptic driving training, a specialized program for drivers whose vision falls below the normal legal limits that allows them to qualify for a Class G driver’s license.

- Served 556 people, providing 925 services which included 163 rehabilitation engineering services, 325 assistive technology services, 310 driver rehabilitation services, 60 environmental modification services and 67 bioptic driving services.

Community Rehabilitation Programs

The state network of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) 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, jobsite 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 56 DRS-acknowledged CRPs in West Virginia.

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.

DRS continues to collaborate with the CRPs and other local community providers 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.

In fiscal year 2009, DRS began a significant initiative to expand services that assist individuals with disabilities in preparing for employment and obtaining jobs throughout West Virginia. These expansion opportunities have been offered to CRPs through grants awarded using a competitive request for proposals process. DRS encouraged proposals targeting areas of the state where services have been limited or unavailable.

This initiative began with the assistance of the West Virginia Legislature through a supplemental appropriation during the 2008 Legislative Session. Since then, DRS has continued this initiative using federal vocational rehabilitation funds, as well as American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds. DRS has invested approximately $5.2 million in this initiative, awarding 63 grants to CRPs to provide services throughout the state.
Randolph-Sheppard Program

DRS serves as the State Licensing Agency for the Randolph-Sheppard Program in West Virginia. The purpose of the Randolph-Sheppard Act is to provide profitable employment for individuals who are blind. 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 include upward mobility training, in-service training, food service training, maintenance of equipment and inventory management.

The program has 21 self-employed blind vendors providing concession services to 167 governmental facilities throughout the state. The average income for vendors in the West Virginia program is $65,179 for fiscal year 2010.

Employment Services Program

DRS employs 11 employment specialists who 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 increase their ability to 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.

Employment specialists also assist employers in understanding job accommodation needs, tax credits for hiring people 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 economic development groups, job fairs, employer advisory councils and business services teams.
Disability Determination Services

Under contract with the Social Security Administration (SSA), Disability Determination Services (DDS) makes eligibility determinations on disability claims filed by West Virginians for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). SSA, which fully funds DDS, authorized $22 million to fund DDS in fiscal year 2010.

During fiscal year 2010, DDS cleared 47,889 cases meeting processing time and accuracy goals. DDS increased the percentage of claims process electronically from 95 percent to 98 percent. SSA and DDS continue to test and implement new procedures and new software to make the electronic disability process better and more efficient. DDS medical professional relations personnel work to increase the number of medical providers who will receive requests for evidence and submit medical records electronically.

In an effort to maintain adequate staff to handle increasing workloads, DDS hired 59 new employees ending the fiscal year with 227 full-time employees. This was a net increase of 38 employees over the number at the close of fiscal year 2009. Training and mentoring these new employees, while maintaining productivity and quality goals, was a major challenge for the DDS.

SSDI and SSI disability programs have a significant economic impact for West Virginians with disabilities and their families. In 2010, an estimated 167,337 West Virginians received nearly $1.8 billion in Social Security and/or Supplemental Security Income payments based on disability or blindness. In addition, $92 million was paid to approximately 23,871 spouses and dependent children of disabled workers from the SSDI trust fund.

Individuals eligible for SSI disability payments also receive Medicaid. Those eligible for Social Security disability payments for more than 24 months receive Medicare. The nearly $1.9 billion in cash payments and the 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 on 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 and qualified workers, DRS involvement ensures that people with disabilities are given due consideration.

During fiscal year 2010, 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.

DRS actively supports and assists WorkForce West Virginia in honoring the commitment of seamless access to employment services for all citizens. Formal agreements among DRS and its WorkForce partners specify how DRS will contribute needed expertise, share costs and otherwise support the WorkForce West Virginia infrastructure.

In fiscal year 2010, DRS granted nearly $350,000 to four Workforce Investment Boards to expand existing services to youth with disabilities and to develop new programs designed to improve the employment prospects for these individuals.

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. The SRC also contributes toward the development of DRS’ State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment.

The SRC annually conducts two consumer satisfaction surveys, one of which targets youth with disabilities who are transitioning from high school to post-secondary education or employment and one that targets the remaining DRS client population. The surveys ask consumers to rate the effectiveness of services received through DRS. This information is reviewed, analyzed and reports are made available annually to DRS staff and the general public.

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

In partnership with DRS, the Statewide Independent Living Council is responsible for jointly planning and submitting the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIIL) 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 to help them live independently.

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

The council’s mission is 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.


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 DRS, in partnership with the West Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council, CLSP services are provided statewide through the four state-recognized centers for independent living (CILs) 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 employees make every effort to locate needed resources, including donations by third parties. If the necessary funds are not available, applicants are prioritized in order of request and are served as funds are received. A total of 403 consumers remained on waiting lists for CLSP services as of June 30, 2010, with a projected average waiting time of at least two years.

In state fiscal year 2010, 142 consumers were successfully enabled to remain in their own homes at an average cost of $5,044 per consumer. At least 32 of the successful consumers were determined to have been at risk of institutionalization. Program services to those consumers resulted in estimated annual savings of $2.2 million in potential costs for nursing home care.
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 2010 ceremony.

**James Cowie III, Charleston District, state winner**

James Cowie III, 42, of Charleston is a mechanic and metal fabricator for ALCO Manufacturing in St. Albans and the state winner of the 2010 Ability Works Award.

After a devastating fall damaged his spine and left him unable to walk, Cowie learned that DRS had resources that could help him return to work. Later he met with his DRS vocational rehabilitation counselor to discuss employment options, available resources and his goals. With help from DRS, he had hand controls installed in his truck, so that he could get to and from work.

Cowie is happily and successfully employed at ALCO Manufacturing that makes products to assist people, including those with disabilities. His supervisor describes him as a great employee with a strong work ethic and a positive attitude.

**Michael Carothers, Clarksburg District**

Michael Carothers, 23, of Franklin, Pennsylvania is a career counselor with the Venango Training and Development Center and the Clarksburg District Ability Works Award winner.

While Carothers was a senior at Bridgeport High School, he sought out DRS services because of a congenital heart condition.

After he and his vocational rehabilitation counselor assessed his interests, talents and abilities, Carothers decided to become a secondary education teacher. He attended West Virginia Wesleyan College to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in sociology. DRS provided financial assistance for that, and links to other assistance. Now he is a well-respected professional working with high school students to help them set and achieve their adult employment goals.
Shannon Dunbar, Beckley District

Shannon Dunbar, 36, of Gap Mills, Monroe County, is an information specialist at the Greenbrier Valley One Stop in the Fairlea area and the Beckley District winner of the 2010 Ability Works Award.

Dunbar is the survivor of a motor vehicle accident that nearly killed her and caused a traumatic brain injury that threatened to rob her of her ability to work. When she contacted DRS about working toward competitive employment, her DRS vocational rehabilitation counselor provided guidance counseling, testing, résumé assistance and job search help. Dunbar supplied the most important elements for vocational success: persistence and hard work.

According to her rehabilitation counselor, Dunbar is a perfect fit for the information specialist job, because of her strengths that include a proclivity for neatness, people skills, organizational skills and internal motivation for work excellence. Moreover, Dunbar said, she loves the job.

Katrina Blankenship, Wheeling District

Katrina Blankenship, 36, of West Union is an office assistant at the Doddridge County Day Report Center and the Wheeling District winner of the 2010 Ability Works Award.

Blankenship has cerebral palsy and sought DRS vocational guidance and job placement assistance to work from her home. However, when an employment specialist became aware of a sheriff’s department job opening that appeared to be a good fit, Blankenship embraced the job and impressed her former supervisor, Doddridge County Sheriff Worthy Underwood.

When the federal grant funding her position expired, Sheriff Underwood recommended her for an office assistant job at the Day Report Center. Her supervisor, Tammy Satterfield, speaks highly of Blankenship’s punctuality, organizational skills and cooperative attitude.
Krystal Baumann, Huntington District

Krystal Baumann, 23, of Huntington is an algebra teacher at Huntington High School and the Huntington District winner of the 2010 Ability Works Award.

As a freshman at Alice Lloyd College in Kentucky, Baumann lost her left foot and lower left leg as a result of a car wreck. Her father, an assistant high school principal, knew about DRS, so he helped his daughter apply. Baumann persevered through the challenges of recovery while refusing to give up on her goal of becoming a math teacher. Upon returning to college, she took heavy course loads and completed her four-year teaching degree on time. DRS helped along the way with some vocational counseling and assistance with books and supplies.

In August 2009, the Cabell County Board of Education hired Baumann to teach algebra at Huntington High. Later when a vacancy for a coach of the girls volleyball team occurred, she enthusiastically took on the second role to help the school and students.

Veronica Wilson, Martinsburg District

Veronica Wilson, 38, of Berkeley Springs is a stained glass artist with Frog Valley Artisans and the Martinsburg District winner of the 2010 Ability Works Award.

When multiple sclerosis impaired her endurance, coordination and balance, fellow artisans encouraged Wilson to contact DRS to find ways to continue her job. A DRS rehabilitation counselor worked with Wilson to provide workplace accommodations that empowered Wilson to continue her art career.

DRS purchased Wilson a mobility scooter and lift for her van to help with her mobility challenges and fatigue. Rehabilitation engineers designed and built her a custom work table, as well as a network of decks to connect the cluster of buildings on the seven-acre grounds of Frog Valley Artisans.

“I nominated Veronica because I admired her natural talent, as well as her ambition,” explained Chris Cobian, a DRS senior rehabilitation counselor. “She is a pillar of her community.”
West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services
Statement of Funds and Expenses for the year ended June 30, 2010

Source of Funds

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<tr>
<th>Fund Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>State Appropriations</td>
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<td>Federal Grants</td>
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<td>Program Income</td>
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<td>Special Revenue</td>
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<td><strong>Total Funds</strong></td>
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Expenditure by Program Category

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<th>Program Category</th>
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<td>Administration</td>
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<td>Rehabilitation Services:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counseling, Guidance and Placement</td>
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<td>Disability Determination Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
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<td>Assistive Technology</td>
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<td>Employment Attendant Care Program</td>
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<td>Benefits Planning</td>
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<td>Randolph-Sheppard</td>
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<td>Recreation</td>
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<td>Ron Yost Personal Assistance Fund</td>
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<td>Staff Development</td>
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<td>Supported Employment</td>
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<td>Supported Employment Extended Services</td>
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<td>Workshop Development</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenditures</strong></td>
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Classification of Expenditures

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<td>Personal Services</td>
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<td>Repairs &amp; Alterations</td>
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<td>Equipment</td>
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<td>Purchased Case Services</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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