

New York State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)



Artwork By: Eileen Stodut

Hiring Good People is Good Business

ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015



About the cover

The artwork on the cover of this year's State Rehabilitation Council Report was graciously provided by Ms. Eileen Stodut, an ACCES-VR consumer of services who is pursuing a career as a graphics designer and instructor. The beauty, energy and passion of the work is a reflection of Eileen Stodut's talents and is representative of the power VR consumers experience through personal growth and quality employment outcomes.

Thank you Eileen, for your contribution and inspiration

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ACCES Deputy Commissioner's Message



The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is an important partner in carrying out the New York State Adult Careers and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) mission to assist New Yorkers with disabilities to achieve meaningful employment and independent living outcomes through education, rehabilitation and placement services. Council members are consumer driven and represent the States' spectrum of vocational rehabilitation (VR) stakeholders. The SRC membership has drawn upon their extensive knowledge and experience to provide ACCES-VR and the State Education Department (SED) with critical advice, feedback and recommendations for continuous improvement.

ACCES has been hard at work this past year in responding to the opportunities and challenges in the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). New WIOA provisions call for improved services for youth with disabilities, introduces new cross systems accountability measures and stresses the need for improved VR partnerships with the business community, to name a few. The Council has assisted in the review of current policies; specifically policies related to transition services, On-The-Job Training and Work-Try-Out, ensuring revisions are consistent with the direction of WIOA. The Council has worked jointly with ACCES as we partnered with NYS entities on the development of the combined state plan and significantly enhanced our outreach into new businesses. The business connection is described later in this report. The Council has continued to be supportive in the implementation of the ACCES Strategic Plan, which was designed to increase access to services, improved service delivery and improve employment outcomes.

The SRC has both supported and challenged ACCES-VR as we developed services and programs that support an individual's successful navigation through the VR process into employment. As the following report will attest, the SRC has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to improved services and outcomes for the New Yorkers we serve. ACCES looks forward to continuing this great partnership into 2016.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Smith'.

Kevin Smith, ACCES Deputy Commissioner

SRC Chair's Message

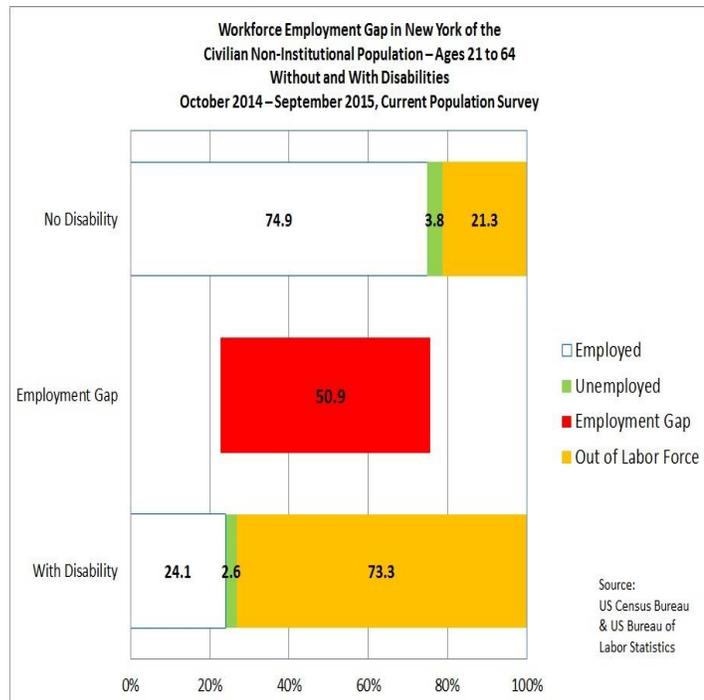


On behalf of the New York State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), I am pleased to introduce the 2014-2015 Annual Report.

Over the past year, the SRC has continued its tradition of offering support and advice to ACCES-VR and the New York State

Education Department (NYSED). Data from the past year indicates improvements in many areas (see Appendix A), although it is understood that much remains to be done. For instance, while overall ACCES-VR outcomes were down slightly over last year, the agency continues to grow its commitment to services for youth in transition from school to adult life, now representing nearly 50% of all direct services provided in the reporting year. Despite these concerns, ACCES-VR has continued its tradition of meeting or exceeding all other federal performance indicators with the exception of meeting the average state wage indicator. The disproportionately high wages in NYC has made that goal unattainable (see Appendix B).

The federal fiscal year 2014-2015 has been one of preparation, change and challenge as the implications of the federal WIOA have been explored and its implications on VR service delivery understood. The impact of WIOA has been overlaid on the ongoing changes driven by the recently concluded ACCES-VR strategic planning process. These structural changes to ACCES-VR's services are all focused on narrowing the long-standing employment gap between New Yorkers with and without disabilities (see graphic). Responses to these factors have created an active and productive year for the SRC.



Membership

The SRC represents a diverse cross-section of ACCES-VR consumers, agencies and organizational stakeholders committed to improving employment and quality of life outcomes for all people with disabilities (see membership - Appendix E). Title IV of WIOA (Rehabilitation Act) requires that at least 51% of the Council's voting membership be made up of qualified persons with disabilities. In addition, ex-officio representatives from a number of state agencies add valuable input and typically serve as liaisons back to their respective agencies. This has greatly enabled and enhanced effective communication and sharing of ideas. The SRC benefits from the work and input of several members who represent New York's Independent Living Center network, including the current Chair of the State Independent Living Council. This past year the NYS Board of Regents created the NYS Advisory Council on Access to Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities and an SRC member was appointed as our representative. The Council also includes active participation from a representative of SED'S P-12/Office of Special Education and a DOL representative with linkages from the State Workforce Development Board. The SRC's business and industry members are continually recruited and actively contribute to the work of the Workforce Development Committee (WDC).

Significant Activities in 2014-2015

The SRC held quarterly in-person meetings of the full Council in Albany, supplemented by monthly committee conference call meetings. In addition, members attended special events, participated on extra committees, and importantly, attended activities in their local areas such as “VR State Pan” public forums and National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) business recognition events. As a result of these activities, new ideas and opinions were brought back for the full Council’s consideration. Highlights of several the SRC formal recommendations for improved ACCES-VR effectiveness are included among the SRC committee summaries that follow. In all cases, ACCES-VR responded to these recommendations at the following quarterly meetings or through the appropriate committee.

The SRC Executive Committee consists of the SRC Chair and Vice-Chair, standing committee Co-Chairs and ACCES-VR Liaisons. They are responsible for coordinating the work of the full Council. A sampling of Executive Committee activities and actions this past year included:

- Creation of an Ad Hoc Committee to draft a letter from the SRC to the Governor’s Employment First Commission to advance a series of ideas and concerns from consumers that were collected during ACCES-VR’s State Plan public hearings to use in their deliberations. Upon approval from ACCES-VR and SED, the letter was revised and sent from the SED Commissioner (see Appendix C). It should be noted that the SRC continues to strongly endorse the value and work of the Employment First Commission and SRC quarterly meetings regularly include reports from ACCES-VR and SRC members who serve on the Commission.
- Delays encountered in seeking approval for the SRC to send correspondence to entities, other than ACCES-VR and SED, led to the development and adoption of an SRC policy/procedure regarding future correspondence.
- Following last year’s SRC adoption of a yearlong theme for quarterly meetings, the SRC chose a theme of “WIOA: Impact and Implementation” for 2015. Presentations from ACCES-VR at each meeting focused on different aspects and successful progress in meeting the broad-based requirements of the new law.
- The Workforce Development Committee took the lead in reiterating a long-standing request to ACCES-VR that they would share comprehensive data on its employment outcomes. The full SRC membership endorsed the request and, as a result, detailed data was provided during the past summer that will be used in ongoing committee work.
- Membership challenges occurred with the resignation of three voting members. However, the Membership Committee Chair promptly facilitated the identification of permanent and interim replacements as per our Guiding Principles (by-laws).
- Finally, the SRC strengthened communication with other Councils representing the NYS Commission for the Blind and Independent Living Centers by instituting routine updates from representatives of these sister Councils at all SRC quarterly meetings. Additionally, a commitment to joint meetings with these councils is being planned for FFY 2016.

The SRC continues to provide a forum for new ideas and offering advice on emerging issues. Over the past reporting year this focus included:

- Presentations and subsequent discussions about requirements associated with the passage of WIOA. In particular, substantial attention was placed on the new law's enhanced transition services for youth, outreach and relationship building with business and industry, cross systems collaboration between all four core titles of the statute and a new emphasis on the development of a Combined State Plan between ACCES-VR, NYS Commission for the Blind, and NYS Department of Labor and Adult Education.
- Responding to a set of common priorities to align SRC activities with key ACCES-VR priorities. In addition to the overall theme of "WIOA: Impact and Implementation" for 2015, each standing committee worked on addressing the priorities set by ACCES-VR specific to their particular focus. This work led to development of committee action plans and prioritized suggestions to guide ACCES-VR implementation efforts (see Appendix D).

- The emphasis on youth services in WIOA had been anticipated. Last year ACCES-VR created a new Transition and Youth Services statewide team and the SRC created a Transition to Adult Life standing committee to advise on the team efforts. Consumer data shows an increasing proportion of youth cases and the Transition to Adult Life Committee is working to increase the participation of special education providers on their committee.

Federal Fiscal Year	Employment Outcomes Achieved (Youth – < age 25 at application)	New Applicants (Youth)	Total Caseload (Youth)
2015	11,284 (5,091; 45%)	36,161 (16,563; 46%)	52,896 (25,803; 49%)
2014	12,059 (5,407; 45%)	32,807 (14,260; 43%)	50,504 (23,813; 47%)
2013	12,025 (5,374; 45%)	33,570 (14,282; 43%)	52,361 (21,438; 41%)
2012	11,900 (5,135; 43%)	36,012 (12,976; 36%)	52,341 (21,474; 41%)
2011	12,194 (4,504; 37%)	37,866 (13,070; 35%)	54,359 (22,086; 41%)
2010	12,092 (4,318; 36%)	39,384 (14,469; 37%)	58,904 (25,154; 43%)

- The SRC continued to follow the implementation of the NYS Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Credential process across the State and SED's statewide implementation of the new High School Equivalency adult education and testing system. Although these programs are more a function of the special education and adult education systems respectively, developments in these service systems will represent continuing opportunities and challenges for the ACCES-VR service delivery. The SRC is particularly interested in ensuring cross-systems communication and seamless movement of students into employment supports.

The extensive work of SRC Standing Committees is presented below in their individual reports and will not be repeated here, although a number of highlights should be noted:

- The Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee (QAI) continued its ongoing work of reviewing and commenting on ACCES-VR quality assurance efforts and with SUNY Potsdam selected to administer ACCES-VR's statewide consumer satisfaction information gathering efforts, QAI will be spending significant time in 2015-2016 involved in monitoring the consumer satisfaction data gathering process. In addition, the QAI and Policy & Planning Committees (PPC) have been holding

joint sessions to ensure effective communication and actions on issues common to both Committees.

- The Policy and Planning Committee (PPC) made a number of formal 4.2 recommendations relating to policy design and is designated as the Committee that follows State Plan development. This is an even more important task now that ACCES-VR is actively engaged with the Department of Labor and other WIOA partners in the development of a NYS Coordinated Workforce Development State Plan.
- The Workforce Development Committee (WDC) continued to assist the ACCES-VR Business Relations Team's (BRT) network of Integrated Employment Specialists (IESs) and contracted job developers to explore new ways of increasing input and collaborations with business and industry. The past year's Champions of Change initiative in NYC was a model effort and the WDC will work with the BRT to replicate the effort across the State.
- In its second year, the Transition Committee renamed itself the Transition from School to Adult Life Committee and began a more extensive look at data and services through close connections to both the ACCES-VR's Transition Unit and remaining informed of transition services in public schools.

This past year has been both demanding and productive. It is anticipated that 2015-2016 will continue to provide opportunities for the SRC to fulfill its role and help foster connections between ACCES-VR and its constituents.

As Chair of the NYS SRC, I am honored to be part of this organization and look forward to continued excellence by assisting our statewide vocational rehabilitation program to exceed its goals. For more information the SRC and ACCES-VR, please visit us at <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr>.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Irwin
SRC Chair – 2014-2015

Committee Summaries

Workforce Development Committee (WDC)

The Workforce Development Committee (WDC) advises ACCES-VR strategies for achieving equal employment outcomes for New Yorkers with disabilities. It reviews important data, monitors economic developments and responds to business trends and perceptions related to hiring and employing people with disabilities. The Committee recognizes the need to continue to develop stronger partnerships with employers and the business community. The business community is clearly one of ACCES-VR's customers and a critical partner in achieving quality employment outcomes for the individuals with disabilities.

Adult Middle-Skill White Paper: Business and governmental agencies are becoming increasingly concerned that New York's current and emerging workforce is not prepared to meet emerging job market demands. There is a growing need for our high schools, adult education programs and community colleges to better prepare our workforce for "Middle-Skill" jobs. "Middle-skill" jobs are jobs that require more than a high school diploma but do not require a four-year degree. The SRC recognizes that it is essential that jobseekers have the skills necessary to enter this middle-skill job market, and that large numbers of our current workforce will require additional middle-skill training to meet growing demands in middle skill sectors. The WDC continues to develop the "Adult Middle Skills" White Paper highlighting these types of job opportunities and how ACCES-VR can assist jobseekers with disabilities to learn about, prepare for, and find employment in middle skills jobs. The National Skills Coalition Bureau of Statistics has indicated nearly 50% of all jobs in NYS are in the middle skills area. Data further indicates that 39% of new jobs being created will require middle skill competencies. This paper will identify additional employment opportunities and the associated training pathways that build the requisite skills necessary for New Yorkers with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency in today's workplace.

Support of ACCES-VR's Business Relations Team: The WDC regularly meets with the Business Relations statewide team of ACCES-VR. The team's membership includes all of the District's Integrated Employment Specialists (IESs) and other key personnel

Victor Calise, Commissioner,
Mayors Office for People with Disabilities and
ACCES-VR cordially invite you to attend

**Champions for Change
Business Leadership Summit**
Tuesday, November 18, 2014
8:30 am - 10:30 am

*A business to business discussion on recruiting, hiring
and training of people with disabilities for New York
City's workforce. Discover how to access this untapped
talent pool and the assistance and incentives
available to the business community.*

Hosted by
The Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park
50 Central Park South
(West 59th Street and 6th Avenue)
New York, NY

To RSVP
www.championsforchangebls.eventbrite.com

For further information contact 212.967.2714

from ACCES-VR's Central Office. Working with the Business Relations Team, members of the WDC achieved positive outcomes through the Champions of Change pilot event held in NYC on November 18, 2014. The Champions of

Champions of Change: a Model for Engagement

The ACCES-VR NYC District Office's Business Relations Team and the WDC collaborated in organizing a business development forum on workforce diversity with a focus on business exposure to ACCES-VR's services.

The initial forum included business representatives from 20 companies representing finance, legal, business services, transportation, utilities, hospitality and tourism, logistics, security, manufacturing and training. The Ritz Carlton New York, Central Park hosted the "Champions of Change" breakfast. Commissioner Victor Calise of NYC Mayor's Office for Persons with Disabilities shared how services of ACCES-VR provided him with the opportunity to go to college and connected him with potential employers that led to his ultimate success. Commissioner Calise presented the latest statistics on employment for New Yorkers with disabilities.

WDC member, Craig Wolfson, spoke on his approach to recruitment for Rosicki, Rosicki and Associates, LLC.

The Director of HR Compliance, Marriott Int., discussed the company's diversity of employees with disabilities within the Marriott family and presented the internal corporate video on the diversity of the company. The ensuing dialogue focused on the issues businesses face as they recruit talent, especially on how businesses gain access to qualified people with disabilities for their positions, and how to increase the awareness of staff regarding recruitment of people with disabilities; corporate culture; reasonable accommodations and disclosure.

To respond to these issues, Arnold Dorin and Maureen Anderson of ACCES-VR spoke to ACCES-VR's mission, services, and hiring incentives available to businesses. Most of the companies in attendance had no prior awareness of ACCES-VR's mission and virtually no name recognition of the agency. Follow-up to all participants took place the next day. Most of the companies in attendance have met with ACCES-VR business representatives and others are still being scheduled. ACCES-VR's Business Relations Team is implementing this model on a local level throughout the District Offices.

Change is an SRC & ACCES-VR employer engagement program model. The WDC continues to work with ACCES-VR to consider how this model of Business-to-Business networking events can be planned and implemented on a local level.

The Business Relations Team and WDC are also working to create a training module on Disability Awareness that employers can provide to their staff. Connecting with the business community requires building long-term relationships, not just identifying job leads. Speaking the same language as the employer and recognizing the employer is the other important customer in ACCES-VR's work, is essential in establishing mutually beneficial relationships. This training will include a certificate of completion for those who complete this program. Additionally, the WDC continues to provide recommendations about how best to engage and maintain long-term business relationships.

Employment First Policy for New York State: The Governor's "Employment First Commission Report" of March 2015, highlights a number systemic barriers that continue to contribute to the unemployment and under employment of New Yorkers with disabilities. ACCES-VR acknowledges its role as the largest provider of employment and employment training services for individuals with disabilities. The WDC has assisted ACCES-VR in understanding the need to better prepare transitioning high school students to enter a career path after graduation. The Committee also has discussed the need to expand Adult Education to include Career Readiness instruction as an adjunct to High School Equivalency preparation.

The WDC continues to focus on the need for comprehensive employment data that will assist ACCES-VR, State Education, and NYDOL to better provide effective services and supports for individuals with disabilities in their preparation for, finding and securing employment opportunities. The WDC continues to push for the employment data that needs to be available and accessible for Integrated Employment Specialists and the Business Relations Team. This information is critical when an IES provides employment information and answers questions from the business community.

Transition from School to Adult Life Committee (TC)

The mission of the Transition from School to Adult Life Committee (TC) is to "Identify and promote a positive movement on actionable recommendations that will enable ACCES-VR to improve outcomes for in-school transition and, out of school youth." Towards this end, the Committee reviews, evaluates, and comments on transition and youth services provided by ACCES-VR.

This year, the Committee provided feedback to members of the Transition and Youth Services workgroup on the Request for Proposal titled "*Youth Employment Initiative that will facilitate pre-employment transition services and target services to out of school youth.*" A sampling of other ongoing activities include: the review of ACCES-VR's protocol for managing referrals from school systems; identifying parent groups and youth organizations that could benefit from learning more about ACCES-VR services; and identifying transition-related topics that the SRC would benefit from learning more about, such as efforts to establish multiple pathways to a high school diploma in New York State. The full Council heard from Amy Steiner, ACCES-VR Statewide Transition and Youth Services Manager on a series of activities underway to operationalize the

new statewide team. The Transition and Youth Services Unit is comprised of 15 newly hired Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors who serve as District Office Transition Specialists. Additionally, ACCES-VR announced the grantees for the Regional Vocational Rehabilitation Community Employment Specialist intended to serve as a resource for schools in an effort to build relationships with ACCES-VR while making appropriate referrals in a timely fashion.

The Committee has familiarized itself with data related to ACCES-VR's service to youth and welcomes WIOA's call for an expanded set of services and strategies to improve the number and the quality of employment outcomes youth in transition from school to adult life. The TC is committed to supporting ACCES-VR as they develop and offer a new set of pre-employment training and supports called for in the WIOA. The Committee will also promote and support ACCES-VR's collaboration with various stakeholders and the collection, maintenance and use of relevant data to guide service delivery for students and out of school youth.

Quality Assurance & Improvement Committee (QAI)

The Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee (QAI) primarily advises the ACCES-VR Quality Assurance & Monitoring Unit (QAMU), especially as it relates to oversight and ongoing evaluation of the quality of services provided by ACCES-VR personnel, contracted vendors, and contracted service providers.

Collaboration: In its efforts toward continued collaboration with the Policy and Planning Committee (PPC), two of the QAI Committee's 18 meetings were a joint QAI/PPC meeting. The purpose of meeting jointly was to facilitate smoother processes between ACCES-VR's policy implementation and program evaluation. One meeting provided an opportunity to promote the development of a plan to streamline the tracking and transparency of ACCES-VR's Quality Assurance Unit functions that include oversight and evaluation of staff and vendor performance, policy implementation, case reporting, data collection and program outcomes. The second meeting focused on the SRC's advisory role during the implementation of initiatives stemming from the recent enactment of WIOA.

Reviews: This year, the QAI Committee finalized its evaluation of the Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO) monitoring by reviewing a second full impartial hearing transcript. The Committee also reviewed the IHO training curriculum and made a formal 4.2 Recommendation to add a disability etiquette component to the curriculum for all future IHO trainings. This will include information about different types of disabilities and their potential impact on how consumers engage in the impartial hearing process.

The QAI Committee also completed its evaluation of review tools used by the QAMU to monitor the delivery of core rehabilitation services (CRS) in the areas of Work Readiness Services, Job Placement Services, and Supported Employment Services. The Committee provided feedback and recommendations, where applicable, on each of these monitoring tools.

Throughout the year, the QAI Committee received routine updates from various representatives of the ACCES-VR's Quality Assurance Management Unit (QAMU)

regarding District Office (DO) Case Reviews, Trainings, and ACCES-VR's Training and Assistance Group (TAG) initiatives.

The QAI Committee provided input on the ACCES-VR Consumer Satisfaction Survey Information Collection process. The Committee reviewed the results from the 2013 Consumer Satisfaction Survey and provided input on a Request for Proposal to select a vendor for future years. The Committee subsequently met with the representatives of SUNY Potsdam that was awarded the contract, to share their input on the initiative. The Committee also provided input on the development of survey questions for an abbreviated survey considered in summer and fall of 2015. It is the goal of the Committee to review the ongoing implementation of the grant to ensure it is conducted consistent with the agreed-upon contract.

WIOA: Importantly, given the implementation of WIOA, the QAI Committee identified its role in coming WIOA-related initiatives. The Committee spent considerable time reviewing the legislation, implications to vocational rehabilitation services, in general, and implications to the provision of services by ACCES-VR specifically. The Committee discussed the WIOA Common Performance Indicators and reviewed the new performance measures that will need to be collected going forward. It also reviewed proposed WIOA regulations this past Spring. The Committee also provided recommendations for consideration and inclusion into the Combined State Plan.

Looking ahead to next year, the QAI Committee will focus its efforts on WIOA-related initiatives especially concerning the development of a Combined State Plan. The Committee will continue to assist in the development and tracking of WIOA common performance indicators, as well as provide guidance in the evaluation of new programming and outcomes going forward. The QAI Committee will continue its oversight of the Consumer Satisfaction Information Collection grant, the IHO process, ACCES-VR District Office (DO) reviews and Core Rehabilitation Services, Youth Employment Services and Supported Employment provider reviews.

Policy & Planning Committee (PPC)

The Policy & Planning Committee (PPC) takes the lead in working with ACCES-VR (through the SRC) to ensure that policies are current and are effective in facilitating employment and careers for VR participants. The Committee reviews, analyzes and advises ACCES-VR on the development and implementation of all significant policies. The PPC also supports ACCES-VR's development of annual updates to the federal VR State Plan, and consults on special projects, interagency partnerships and legislative matters.

Technical Assistance Briefs: In continuation of PPC's contribution to the development of ACCES-VR's Technical Assistance Briefs (TABs) for people living with HIV or AIDS and the Justice-Involved consumers, PPC members gathered community advocates that work with people living with HIV or AIDS to comment on ACCES-VR's draft. The advocates' comments were incorporated into ACCES-VR's TAB and training has been completed with the counselors statewide. The Justice-Involved TAB will be considered in the next year.

Formal Recommendations: PPC formally recommended that it should be kept aware of all Statewide letters of agreement and/or Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) presented to ACCES-VR and that these documents with background information, be sent to the Committee for review prior to its enactment.

The PPC also recommended that ACCES-VR offer social pragmatic speech therapy services for people with autism and other consumers who require these services under or within the core rehabilitation services (CRS) system. ACCES-VR responded by reporting that a workgroup was convened to refine and develop new services, to assist individuals on the autism spectrum with training, employment and job retention. The PPC is asking for a full report of the 2015 workgroup activities and its future project outcomes by the 1st quarter of 2016.

The PPC serves as the lead committee in communicating SRC feedback and recommendations as ACCES-VR designs and develops the State Plan under WIOA. Annually, ACCES-VR conducts public State Plan meetings to solicit feedback on proposed changes to the VR State Plan. In order to potentially increase participation of service recipients in the State Plan meetings, it has been recommended by both the PPC and the QAI Committees that ACCES-VR notify service recipients of the dates, times, and locations of these meetings via routine mailings done through its offices, rather than sending notification to only a small number of randomly selected individuals, as has been done in the past.

SRC Membership Committee

The strength and effectiveness of the SRC is the direct result of the dedication and commitment of Council members, their various personal and professional networks, along with ACCES-VR support staff to represent the full range of VR stakeholders including, but not limited to: disability advocacy organizations, community rehabilitation programs, representatives of business and labor, current and former VR participants, independent living centers, parent and family services, transition coordinators and assistive technology specialists to name a few.

If you are a VR stakeholder with a passion for advancing employment and independent living for New York's youth and adults served by ACCES-VR and the State Education Department, please consider joining the SRC.

We seek to identify and invite individuals with and without disabilities to apply for membership consideration. Qualified individuals must be able to contribute to the mission of the SRC through active participation in quarterly meetings as well as in one of the Council's standing committees: Workforce Development, Transition from School to Adult Life, Quality Assurance and Improvement, and Policy and Planning.

To learn more about the SRC and/or to be considered for membership, please visit: <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/state-rehabilitation-council-src>.

Public Comment

If you would like to provide public comment or request to make a presentation at one of the SRC quarterly meetings, please submit your request to ACCESSRC@nysed.gov.

ACCES-VR Success Stories

Bernadette.... Cooking with a Twist on Success!

Occupation: "Entrepreneur - Rella's Originals"



Bernadette, a highly motivated individual knew that cooking was her goal when she applied for ACCES-VR services. She was particularly proud of an Italian marinara sauce she had created and felt and it was marketable. ACCES-VR evaluations confirmed that cooking was clearly a strength, however, success as an entrepreneur would require Bernadette to work through a set of personal challenges associated with organizational skills, self-direction, and improved interpersonal/communication skills.

Through perseverance, additional evaluations and counseling and guidance with her ACCES-VR Counselor, Darren Pohorecki, Bernadette was able to make considerable progress in overcoming and/or managing many of her initial challenges. Next steps focused on the specific services, equipment and products required for her to be successful as a Food Entrepreneur. Some aspects of planning and developing the business plan were challenging for Bernadette, however, her perseverance and determination drove her to successfully seek out and secure assistance from a variety of sources in addition to ACCES-VR.

After reviewing and approving Bernadette's business plan, ACCES-VR purchased business consulting services to assist her with learning to use QuickBooks. ACCES-VR then provided funding for ingredients, jars packing supplies and labels that allowed her to produce several cases of sauce for sampling and initial sales. She then arranged for Glen Industries, a division of The Arc of Schuyler, to create the sauce as per her recipes and close supervision. Glen industries also committed to bottle the sauce, label and pack the jars. At this phase, Bernadette assumed responsibility for purchasing all for the supplies for the initial Glen Industries production

Rella's Originals has been operating since 5/1/14 and Bernadette's product line now includes the Italian Marinara Sauce and a Spicy Riggie Sauce. The sauces are sold in several local stores throughout the Utica/Syracuse area and in the New York City area. In addition, Bernadette markets her products at farmers markets throughout the region including: the CNY Syracuse Regional Market, Whitesboro Farmers Market, Clinton Farmers Market and More Than a Market. Bernadette also regularly conducts taste testing events in the food stores currently selling her sauces.

Bernadette describes herself as self-driven and a perfectionist. She is passionate about the sauces she creates and sells. This passion has translated into consistent sales for Rella's Originals as Bernadette continues to demonstrate her entrepreneurial 'pasta abilities'.

Submitted by:
Patti Williams, IES I, Utica District Office

Michael: “Abilities and Persistence Trumps Barriers”

Occupation: “Office Assistant”



Michael was referred to ACCES-VR as a high school student for services that would assist him in a successful transition from school to work and into adult life.

Michael utilizes a power wheelchair for mobility and has limited use of his arms and hands. Based on his interests and abilities, his original career goal was developed in consultation with his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC), Debbie Gabrione, to pursue a career in information technology.

Following Michael’s graduation from high school, he enrolled in college with financial assistance and related supports from ACCES-VR. New parenting demands, coupled with the time commitments associated with managing his health and disability-related supports prompted Michael to leave college after the first semester. He was subsequently referred by ACCES-VR for supported employment services and was provided an assistive technology assessment that identified equipment and technology to support him in employment. Despite the best efforts of the supported employment service provider and Michael’s commitment to the job search, a successful employment opportunity failed to materialize.

As his son grew older, Michael became a single parent with full financial responsibility for his son’s well-being. These events prompted him to be even more motivated than ever to work. He reconnected with ACCES-VR and his original VRC who recommended a change to a new service provider and secured an independent job developer. The job developer had very high expectations for Michael and together they worked on increasing Michael’s typing speed and overall productivity.

Michael was then certified under the NYS Civil Service 55-b program. The program facilitates access to entry-level employment opportunities throughout State government by identifying open positions and waves the initial civil service examination requirement.

Three months after Michael became 55-b eligible, he interviewed with the NYS Department of Taxation & Finance and was hired in temporary status as a Tax and Information Aide. The position turned out to be an excellent job match with Michael readily performing the functions of the job and has proved to be a very capable and dependable employee. After just three months on the job, he was offered a permanent position as an Office Assistant.

Michael states that this is the first time in his life that he is on a realistic career track and is already preparing for upcoming competitive promotional opportunities. Michael is now working successfully at a job he loves, and like many of his colleagues, takes great satisfaction in being able to provide for himself and his family.

Submitted by
Bryan D. Baszczuk, IES I, Albany District Office

Joseph.....Building a Future in Manufacturing
Occupation: Assembler/Production Operator



Joseph applied to ACCES-VR in late 2013 for assistance in finding employment. He had previous experience as a subcontract assembly worker and part-time cook, but was finding it difficult to obtain a full-time position that provided benefits. Joseph, who has bilateral deafness, was very actively engaged in looking for work when he came to ACCES-VR. He had applied to local corporations for assembly positions and had obtained some interviews, but unfortunately with no resulting job offers. Joseph's primary means of communication is American Sign Language (ASL). His ACCES-VR Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Kelly Steward, referred him to Catholic Charities for assistance with his job search and authorized ASL interpreter services to support Joseph in this process.

Within a few months, Joseph was offered the position of Assembler/Production Operator at a large corporation which manufactures forklifts. He quickly settled into the position, demonstrating an excellent work ethic. He has since had the opportunity to cross-train on other equipment in the facility, and reportedly is doing very well. ACCES-VR provided interpreters for Joseph's interview and his early training, following which his employer secured interpreters for key interactions and for quarterly employee meetings at the company. Joseph is very happy in the position, earning good wages with a full benefits package with the opportunity for career advancement.

Submitted by
Dot Marinaccio, IES II, Central New York Region

Ronald...Happy to join the Red Lobster Team!
Occupation: Silverware Roller



Ronald applied for ACCES-VR services in June 2014. Ronald received special education services in school, and completed his program at the age of 21. Ronald's disability makes it difficult for him to communicate with others. He had experience working in a sheltered work setting, completing packaging and assembly tasks, and had also performed copying services while in school at the regional Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES). Through his past work experiences Ronald had demonstrated he was very capable of a wide range of work related tasks with a hands-on approach to learning, and had the potential to successfully work in the community with the assistance of a Job Coach.

When Ronald felt he was ready to get a job in the community, his ACCES-VR Counselor, Mackenzie Eichhorn, referred him to Achieve's Supported Employment Program. Achieve assisted Ronald in his job search, including providing a job coach to accompany him on interviews. When Ronald was offered an interview at Red Lobster, the manager was very accommodating and recognized that Ronald's aptitude for the job

of silverware roller might not be conveyed in a conventional verbal interview. Instead, he showed Ronald the task, then asked him to demonstrate how he would complete it.

Ronald successfully completed the silverware rolling, and was offered the job. In addition to the job coaching Ronald received, ACCES-VR sponsored a Work Try-Out (employer wage reimbursement) at Red Lobster for the first few weeks of Ronald's employment.

Ronald enjoys the Red Lobster work environment, the repetitive nature of the silverware roller position and is very focused and responsible in performing his job. His attitude and attendance are excellent and he always displays a great smile. At his six-month evaluation Ronald was very happy to receive a raise. Red Lobster management is extremely pleased with his performance.

Submitted by
Dot Marinaccio, IES II, Central New York Region

Kevin...A Second Chance at Success **Occupation: "Building/Maintenance Worker"**



If you were to ask 52 year-old Kevin how his life has changed in the year since he became employed at Nassau Community College he would tell you "I was lost and now I'm found." For Kevin the opportunity to work has been the answer he was looking for.

Frustrated by an inability to learn how to read, Kevin dropped out of high school and with little adult guidance, he made poor choices and found the wrong friends. Although he always worked, Kevin moved from odd job to odd job and eventually became involved with drugs and run-ins with the law.

Kevin's life changed forever while incarcerated in 1991. As a participant in a work program, a 1300 lb. tractor rode over his back. As a result, he faced many physical challenges over the years. Eventually, Kevin decided that he needed to make a better life for himself and it was up to him to do so. He entered a recovery program and requested vocational services to learn a trade. He felt that having skills and the discipline of a job would help him stay focused on his recovery and help him develop a sense of self-worth and confidence he knew he was missing. Kevin moved into a sober house and successfully took on the challenge of becoming the manager of the facility.

Kevin then applied to ACCES-VR and after his counselor, Julie Harris, assessed his training and support needs, he was referred to TRI Business and Career Center. With ACCES-VR's guidance Kevin decided to train in the Building Maintenance /Hospitality program at TRI. Kevin took on various projects in the community that involved working with seniors in need and individuals with disabilities. As a result, Kevin grew in his ability to communicate with customers and grew as a team leader.

When the time came for TRI to assemble the first team to work at a local community college, Kevin was a natural choice. He advocated strongly for the chance to be part of

a team that represented TRI and for the opportunity to hold himself accountable for all the promises he had made to himself. He has chosen to work so that he can give back to his family and serve as a contributing member of his community.

Submitted by
Ella Craanen, IES II, Long Island Region

Fran....Empowerment at its finest
Occupation: Receptionist



I was at a point in my life where I wanted and needed a change. After several years out of the work world, my self-esteem and confidence was really low. Deciding to return to work was not going to be easy for me. I have Fibromyalgia and spinal stenosis. This diagnosis limits my ability to move around, sit for long periods of time and deal with pain. I frequently require bathroom breaks and my doctor thought that it would be best if I worked part-time.

In addition to my health issues, I am the caregiver for my two children: both have significant disabilities and require specialized assistance. In 2013, I went to Hempstead Works for help. After meeting with me and learning about my struggles, disabilities and needs, they referred me to ACCES-VR. My ACCES-VR Counselor, Nicole Bitel-Frost helped me to focus on my past skills and how they could still be relevant. Mrs. Bitel-Frost helped me see past my limitations and move toward identifying new career goals. ACCES-VR sent me for evaluations, provided career counseling and then offered me Business Skills training at ABILITIES Inc. Both ACCES-VR and ABILITIES Inc. were understanding of my situation and flexible with my training schedule. My children were hospitalized a few times during my training, so they allowed me to extend the training. Then after I completed the training, I needed extra help learning to present myself and speak with employers, so they gave me extra mock interview training and practice. When I was ready to work, ABILITIES only looked for part-time jobs that offered late morning or afternoon start times to accommodate my home schedule.

In November 2014, ABILITIES found me the perfect job as a receptionist. I did so well there that within the first three months my employer increased my duties and responsibilities from just doing reception to other clerical tasks. I was then cross-trained to fill in when my co-workers went on break or vacation. My co-workers are helpful and understanding. They encourage me to try new things and help me if I make mistakes.

Submitted by
Lorie Boyd, IES I, Garden City District Office

Steven...Building a Bright Future

Occupation: "Office Engineer"



Steven was referred to ACCES-VR by his guidance counselor at Nyack High School for transition services and possible college sponsorship. Despite being a very bright student, Steven struggled with grammar, reading, spelling, and written expression. As a result, he was provided accommodations that included extended time for testing, separate testing locations and having spelling requirements waived.

ACCES-VR completed a vocational evaluation at the high school and found that construction trades, installation, plumbing and maintenance were all strong areas of interest and aptitude. It was Steven's dream to attend Norwich University in Vermont, a private military college with a strong Construction Management program. In addition to his interest in this program, Steven wanted to be involved in the Corps of Cadet program at the university.

Throughout Steven's four years at Norwich University, ACCES-VR provided financial assistance toward tuition, fees, books, room and board, which Steven states "went a long way when it came to being able to afford college". Steven completed his Bachelor's degree in Undergraduate Construction Management with a Business Administration Minor, achieving an overall GPA of 3.36. Upon his graduation, Steven was offered a commission in the service, but decided to work in the private sector instead. The challenge that he faced after graduation was his lack of work experience. However, Norwich University has an excellent Career Development Center, which assisted Steven with his job search and resume development.

With the Career Development Center's assistance, Steven found a job as an Office Engineer at a construction firm in Vermont, earning \$52,000 per year with benefits and a 401K Plan. He is working on major projects at this time and is an essential part of the day-to-day operation. He enjoys his job very much and can see himself making a lifelong career with this company. The construction firm has a Leadership Development Program which provides employees exposure to all aspects of the business and offers the opportunity to follow the career path most suitable to their own personal goals. Steven hopes to take advantage of this opportunity in the future.

Regarding ACCES-VR's college sponsorship, Steven said "Not having to worry about financial issues during college really helped me stay focused on my studies, which contributed to my success. Despite coming from a low income family, I was given the opportunity to attend and afford a great college where I grew and developed as an individual".

Submitted by
Michele P. Green, IES I, White Plains District Office

Appendix A Data Elements

ACCES-VR Dashboard

Federal Fiscal Year	Employment Outcomes Achieved *(Youth-under age 25 at application)	New Applicants (Youth)	Total Caseload 02-24 (Youth)	Youth with Disability ***(Student with Disability)	Total Caseload with SSI/SSDI ****(All VR participants)	ACCES-VR Counselors	Counselor/Consumer Ratio 02-24	Vocational Rehabilitation Program Costs RSA-2; Line 4	Average Hourly Wage at Closure (Youth)	Consumer Satisfaction (survey completed every 3 years)
2015	11,284 (5,091; 45%)	36,161 (16,563; 46%)	52,896 (25,803; 49%)	25,803 (18,226; 71%)	14,312 (27%)	293	181	NA	\$11.47 (\$10.59)	NA
2014	12,059 (5,407; 45%)	32,807 (14,260; 43%)	50,504 (23,813; 47%)		14,838 (29%)	289	175	***\$211,163,146	\$11.10 (\$10.27)	NA
2013	12,025 (5,374; 45%)	33,570 (14,282; 43%)	52,361 (21,438; 41%)		15,199 (29%)	289	181	\$242,602,238	\$10.92 (\$9.97)	86%
2012	11,900 (5,135; 43%)	36,012 (12,976; 36%)	52,341 (21,474; 41%)		14,692 (28.1%)	318	165	\$215,656,645	\$10.95	NA
2011	12,194 (4,504; 37%)	37,866 (13,070; 35%)	54,359 (22,086; 41%)		14,542 (26.75%)	328	166	\$198,751,487	\$10.88	NA
2010	12,092 (4,318; 36%)	39,384 (14,469; 37%)	58,904 (25,154; 43%)		15,095 (25.63%)	336	175	\$228,401,437	\$10.70	77%

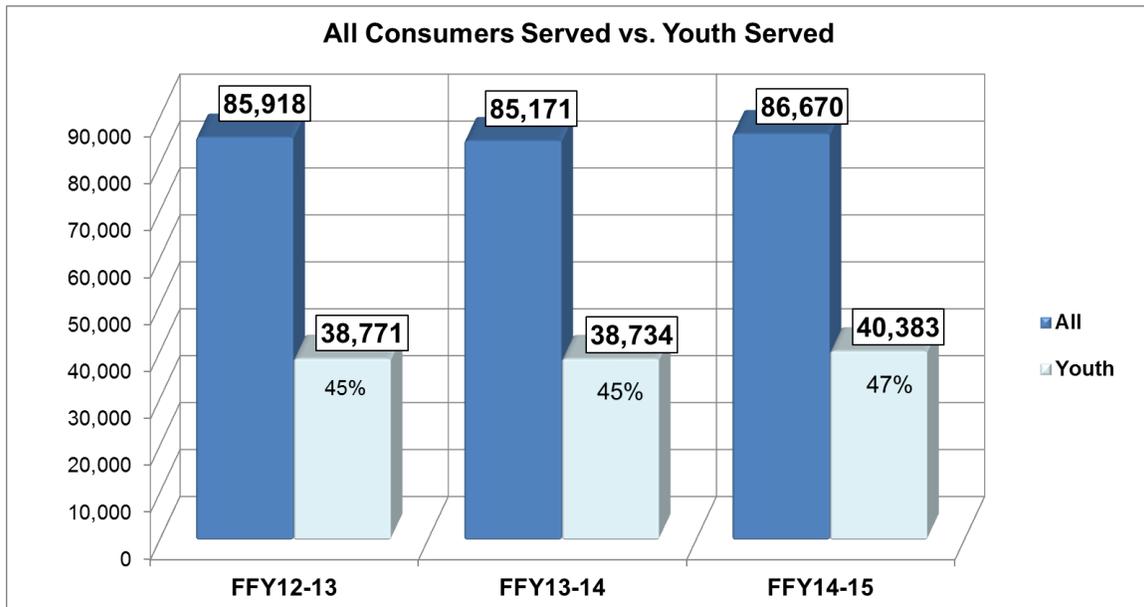
* Prior to 2013; definition of Youth was 14- 21 years old at application

** Student with Disability- student in secondary school with an IEP or 504 plan and 16-21 years old at application

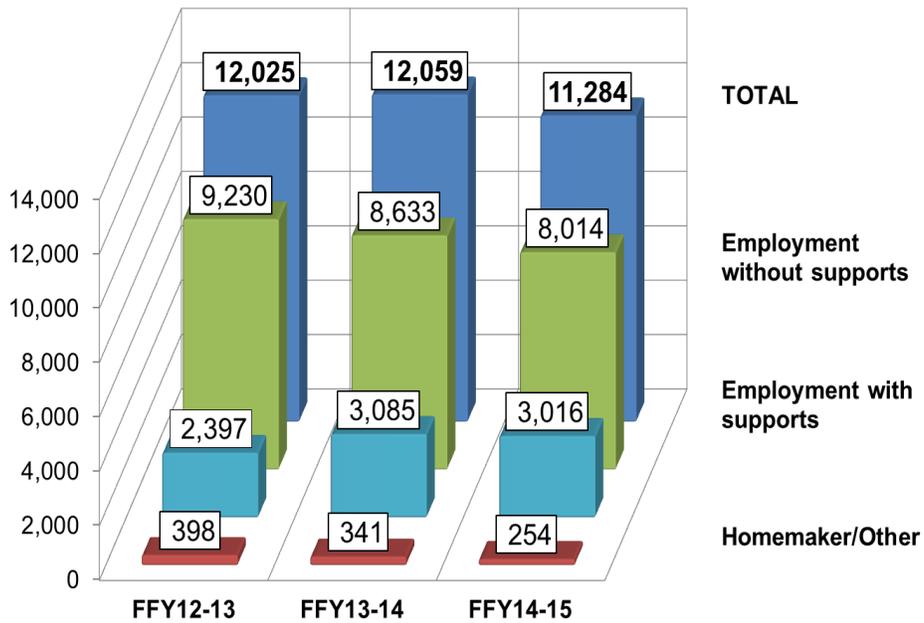
*** 2015 RSA-2 report is due to RSA December 31, 2015

**** Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/ Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)- may include duplicate counts

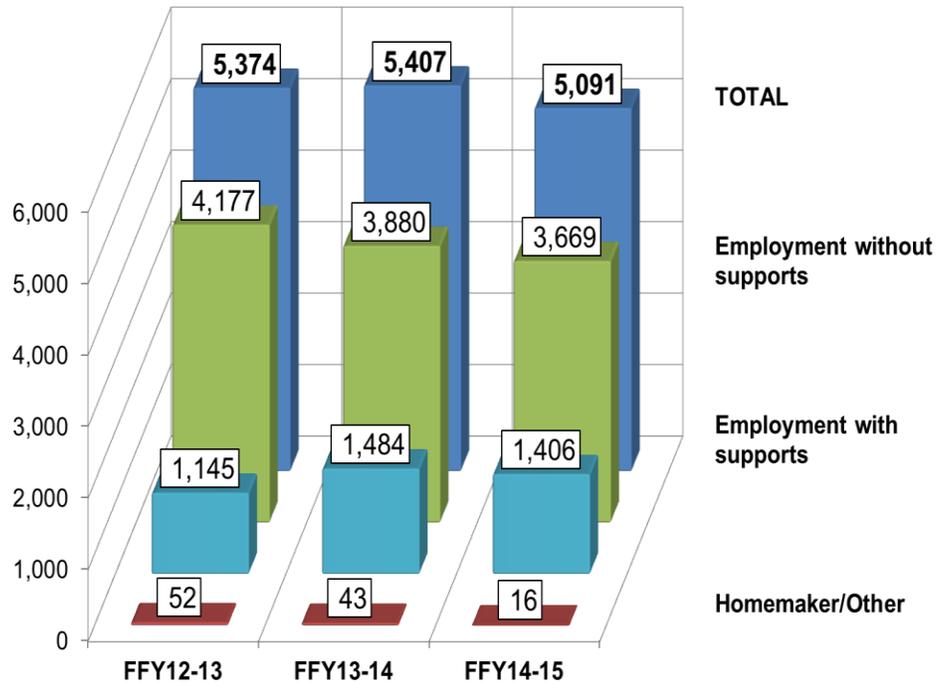
ACCES-VR Employment Outcomes & Consumer Characteristics

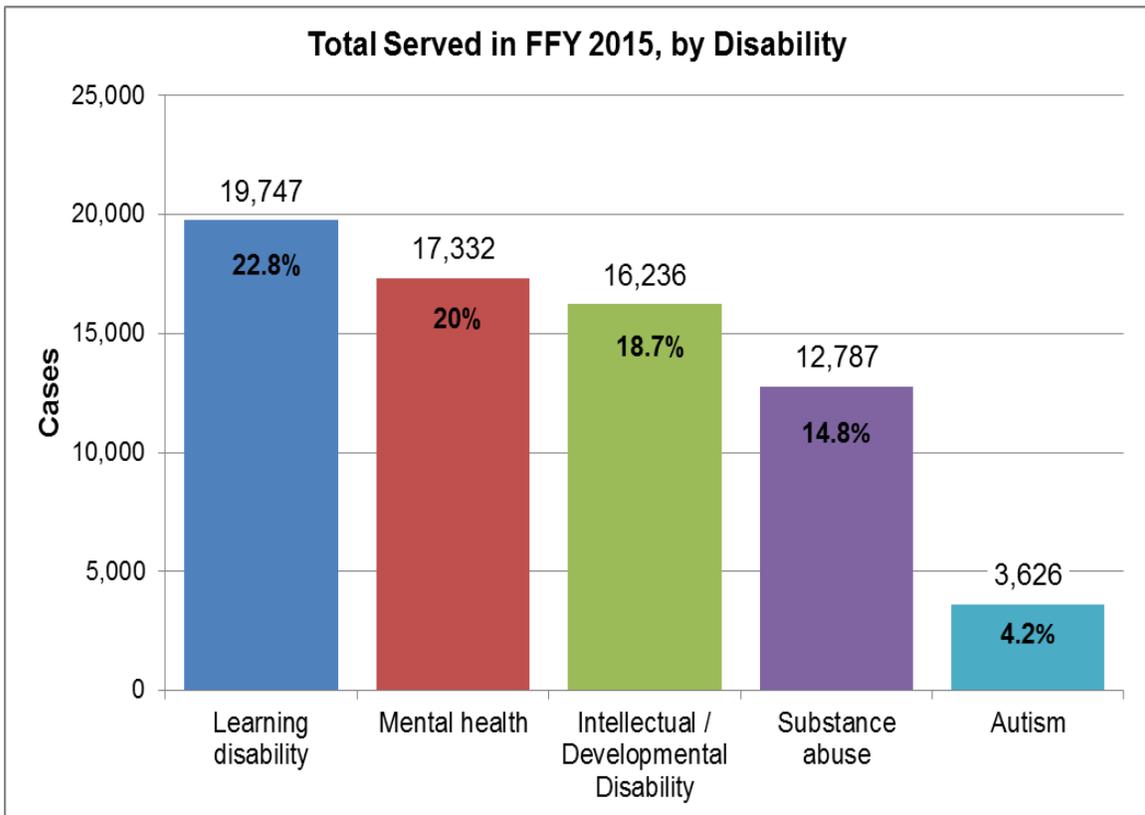
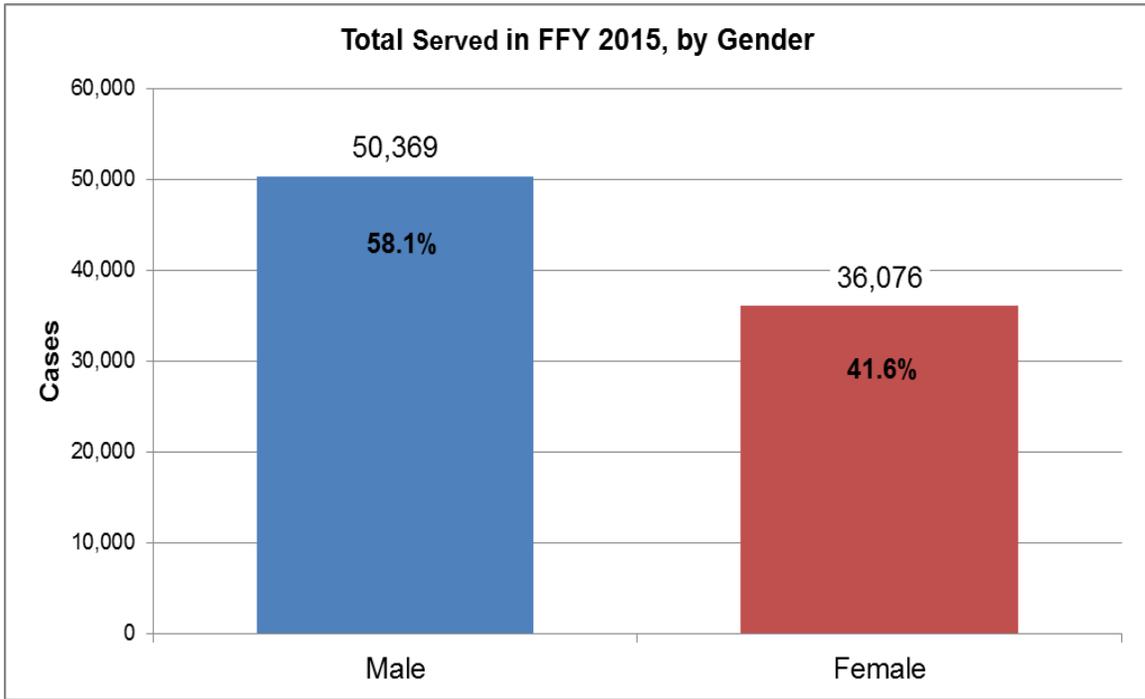


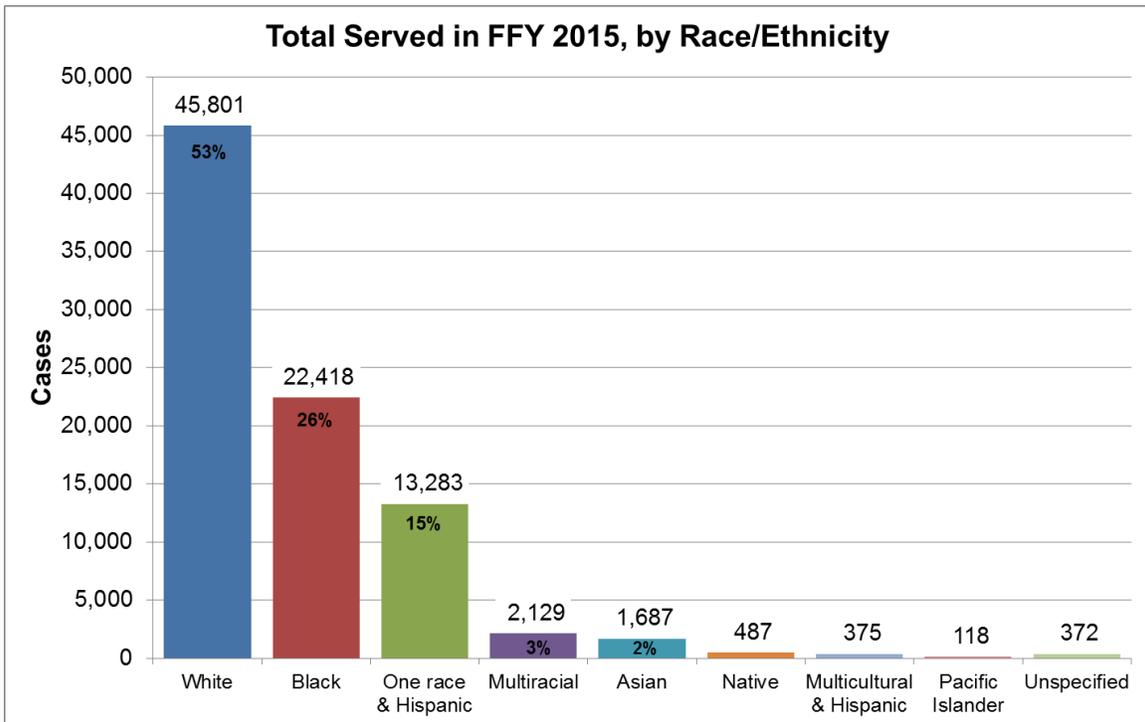
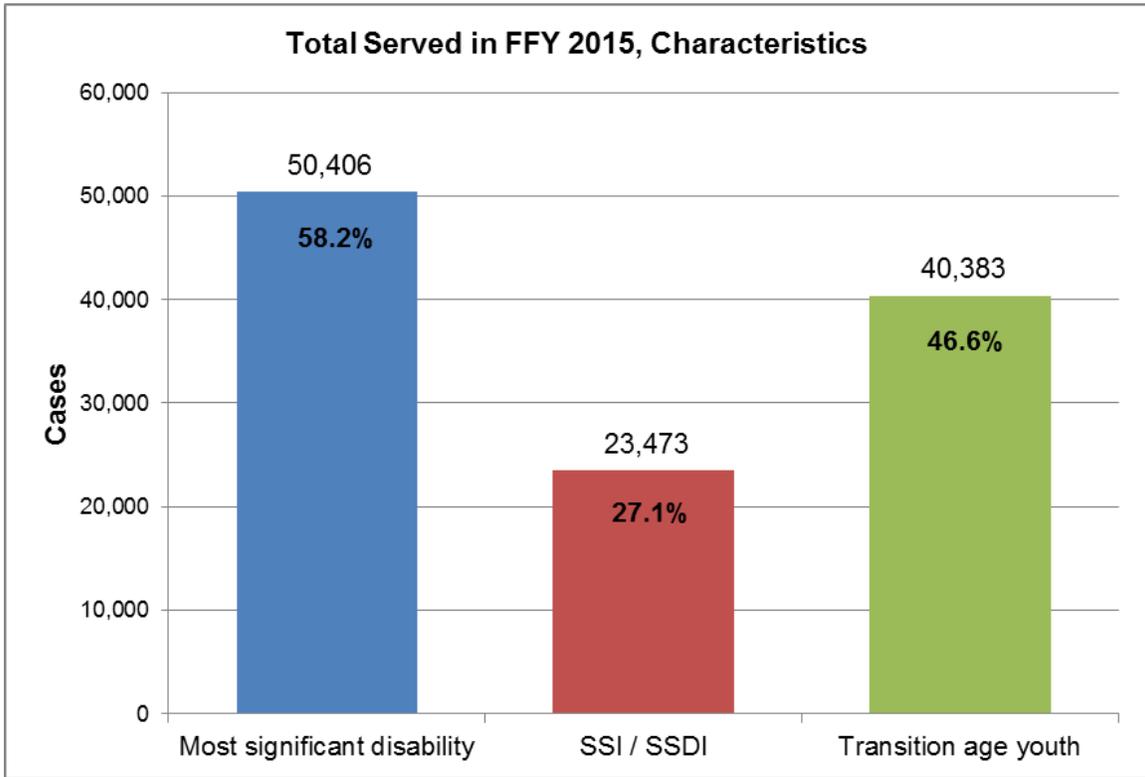
Employment Outcomes for ACCES-VR Consumers in Integrated Settings



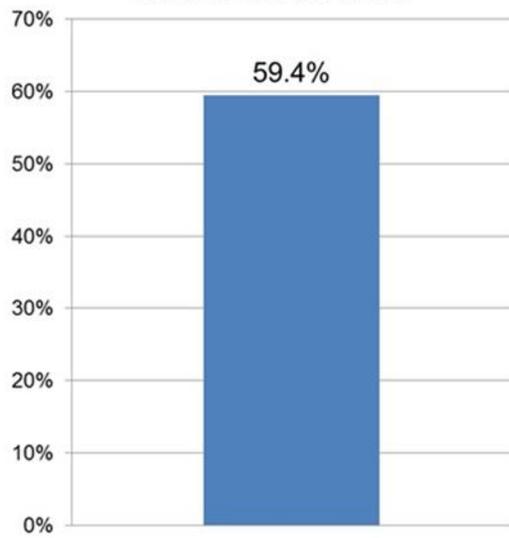
Employment Outcomes for ACCES-VR Youth Consumers in Integrated Settings



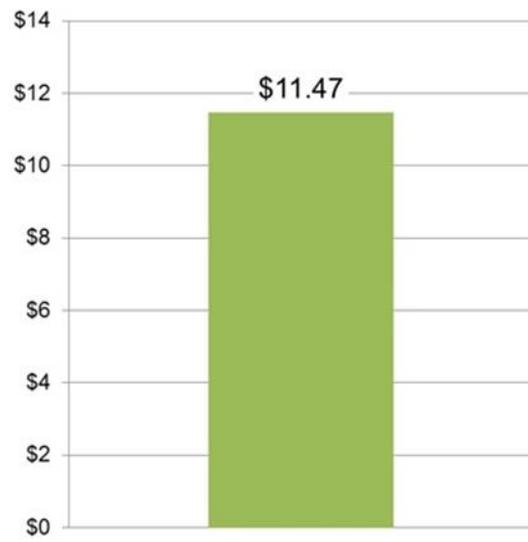




Percentage of Individuals with Employment Outcome after ACCES-VR Services



Average Wage of Individuals with Employment Outcome



Employment outcomes are defined as 90 days of continuous employment.

Appendix B
ACCES-VR Performance Standards

Performance Indicator & Performance Standard	ACCES-VR Data	Performance Successful?
<p>Performance Indicator 1.1 Change in employment outcomes</p> <p>Standard: Employment outcomes for individuals exiting the VR program must be equal or exceed the employment outcomes for individuals from the previous year.</p>	<p>Total employment outcomes FFY 2014 12,059</p> <p>Total employment outcomes FFY 2015 11,284</p>	NO
<p>Performance Indicator 1.2 Percent of employment outcomes</p> <p>Standard: A minimum of 55.8% of all ACCES-VR consumers will have achieved an employment outcome.</p>	<p>59.4% of ACCES-VR consumers that received services and exited the VR program achieved employment outcomes</p>	YES
<p>Performance Indicator 1.3 Percent of competitive employment outcomes</p> <p>Standard: A minimum of 72.6% of all ACCES-VR consumers that achieve an employment outcome will engage in competitive work at earnings equal to or above minimum wage.</p>	<p>97.6% of ACCES-VR consumers achieving competitive employment outcomes with earnings above minimum wage</p>	YES
<p>Performance Indicator 1.4 Percent of competitive employment with significant disabilities</p> <p>Standard: A minimum of 62.4% of all ACCES-VR consumers that achieve an employment outcome at or above minimum wage are considered to have a significant disability.</p>	<p>98.9% of ACCES-VR consumers that achieved competitive employment outcomes with earnings equal to or above minimum wage for individuals with significant disabilities.</p>	YES
<p>Performance Indicator 1.5 Ratio of average VR wage to average State wage</p> <p>Standard: The average hourly earnings of ACCES-VR consumers that exit the VR program will be equal to or exceed the ratio of 0.52 (average VR wage/average State wage).</p>	<p>ACCES-VR consumers earned an average wage of \$11.47 an hour as compared to the State average of \$31.71 per hour for a ratio of 0.36.</p>	NO
<p>Performance Indicator 1.6 Difference between self-support at application</p>	<p>ACCES-VR consumers reporting the largest</p>	

<p>and closure</p> <p>Standard: The minimum of 53.0% or greater of all ACCES-VR consumers who report a difference between self-support at application and closure.</p>	<p>single source of economic support at closure to be their own income compared consumers reporting their own income as the largest single source of economic support at application.</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p>Performance Indicator 2.1 Ratio of minority service rate</p> <p>Standard: The minimum of .80 or greater for the ratio of minority service rate to non-minority service rate of ACCES-VR consumers.</p>	<p>0.82 ratio between the service rate for ACCES-VR consumers from minority backgrounds and the service rate for ACCES-VR consumers from non-minority backgrounds.</p>	<p>YES</p>

Appendix C
NYS Employment First Commission Correspondence



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Commissioner of Education
President of the University of the State of New York
89 Washington Avenue, Room 111
Albany, New York 12234

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August 21, 2015

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of the State of New York
The Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Ensuring that New York continues to produce a workforce that can compete and thrive in the 21st century and beyond is integral to the State Education Department's mission. A critical aspect of SED's workforce development agenda includes our shared commitment to advancing and employment opportunities for New Yorkers with disabilities.

This is an area that represents significant opportunity for collaboration and is timely in that the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act provides an opportunity to reflect on the many barriers to full participation and economic self-sufficiency individuals with disabilities continue to confront. The recent reauthorization of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) more explicitly calls on SED and executive branch agencies to partner in providing innovative services and strategies that advance quality employment outcomes for New York's youth and adults with disabilities.

It is in this spirit of collaboration that I write to express the Department's full support of your issuance of your Executive Order #136 that established an Employment First initiative to increase integrated employment for New Yorkers with disabilities.

SED's Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services – Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) Deputy Commissioner, Kevin Smith, represents the Department at the Employment First Commission and ACCES benefits from the valued advice and recommendations of their federally mandated State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

Both ACCES and the SRC have concluded that the release of the Employment First Commission's Report represents an important milestone in efforts to ameliorate long-standing issues that contribute to the unemployment and under employment of New Yorkers with disabilities.

Concurrent with the release of the report, ACCES-VR and the SRC held statewide forums to solicit public feedback and recommendations on the development of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Plan component of the Unified Workforce Development State Plan. The VR portion of the State Plan describes:

- ACCES-VR's commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities in attaining high quality employment outcomes;
- ACCES-VR's priorities, goals and strategies for engaging individuals with disabilities in their pursuit of careers consistent with their strengths, interests, abilities and capabilities; and,
- The development, monitoring and reporting of performance measures to assure that VR services meet the standards established in the federal Rehabilitation Act/WIOA and that the VR program is accountable to the public we serve.

This past winter the VR State Plan forums posed the following topics for discussion:

- How can ACCES-VR and the Department of Labor (DOL) collaborate in providing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities;
- How can we improve employment outcomes for youth;
- What can ACCES-VR do to educate the business community about hiring individuals with disabilities; and,
- How can ACCES-VR's supported employment services be improved?

The SRC was so impressed with the recommendations we received at the public forums that I am transmitting them to the Employment First Commission for consideration. Highlights of the public forum recommendations include:

- Applying for Support Services: Where possible and practical, develop universal systems that allow New Yorkers with disabilities to access available safety net services through multiple routes. This would increase access to safety net services and decrease the current wait times for these supports.
- Service providers/Counselors: Our State is culturally diverse and we need to be sure that the individuals providing services are comfortable with the diverse populations that are seeking services they need to succeed. All State service systems need to assess and develop their capacity for cultural sensitivity. Staffing should reflect the populations they serve in order to instill confidence among the people seeking services. Peers who have been successful in managing their disabilities should serve as service providers and mentors to the greatest extent possible.
- Transition from School to Adulthood: Every agency that has a children's agenda is working to develop transition plans for students with disabilities. Our State must establish a cross systems approach to transition coordination. ACCES-VR has taken steps to significantly improve its work on behalf of transitioning youth. Specific recommendations included:

- Employment and VR Counselors should be in schools and make earlier connections with youth by 9th grade.
 - Institute communication processes that meet the needs of the today's student e.g., text messages and use of other technological devices to keep students engaged in the career discovery process and supportive relationships.
 - Youth need to observe people with disabilities in leadership positions as role models. Identify leaders and bring them to the table for planning.
 - Support the capacity of school districts' to offer occupational studies earlier for students with disabilities'. There is a need to develop more options for occupational studies and stronger partnerships with existing systems - including ACCES-VR's new Transition Specialists and the Core Rehabilitation Services Youth Employment Services (YES) to prepare students to enter the workforce.
- Self-Sufficiency Services: Increase the availability of benefits counseling and use plain language in advising people on how working makes sense. Increase opportunities for work try-outs and on-the-job training as part of the discovery process, enhance and increase the number of job clubs with peers, and provide more pre-employment skills training for job seekers to increase success in employment and careers.
 - Training: Include in both student transition plans, and VR individualized plans for employment (IPEs), ways to explore how targeted skill training might supplement or replace traditional academic training to prepare students for employment. This would include assistance in obtaining High School Equivalency (HSE) diplomas; Increasing the number of training opportunities for individuals whose disability requires a change in job fields and promoting the quality of proprietary school training programs to ensure that students are engaged in vocational training that will actually leads to employment.
 - Supported Employment: This service offers job seekers many opportunities to succeed. Businesses learn how to provide accommodations so that the new employee can successfully meet employer expectations. These services need to be coordinated for improved consistency across State agencies.
 - Self-Employment: There is a need to involve individuals with disabilities who are entrepreneurs with the local and Regional Economic Development Councils; and we hope that the State will consider the development of a certification for disability owned businesses similar to the minority and women owned business certification in place today.
 - Employers: Additional supports for employers would translate into increased hiring of people with disabilities. Employers require education on how best to develop accommodations that meet the needs of individual workers with limited, or no impact on the company's "bottom line". Opportunities such as more part-time employment opportunities and development of internship programs with mentors who have a disability should be examined.

- System Partnerships/Issues: There is a need to bridge the DOL and VR "gap". Additional support is needed to increase the numbers of Disability Program Navigators (DPN), now called Disability Resource Coordinators at DOL One-Stop Career Centers.
 - Fear of the loss of benefits hinders SSI/SSDI recipients from achieving successful employment outcomes. As a State, we need to promote broader awareness and utilization of employment related health care supports available through the Medicaid Buy-In program.
 - The State should support the regional development of Employment Consortiums, such that all businesses are accessing the best potential employees through a consistent vetting process. This would also result in improved collaboration between vocational training programs and job placement resources so that more job seekers are independently able to secure employment after graduation from high school, colleges and/or training programs.
- Transportation: Simply stated, individuals need reliable and affordable transportation options to improve access to employment.
- Outreach: As the new system unfolds, the State needs to develop ways to share information about success stories online, in newspapers, and on local television newscasts.

In addition to considering the recommendations above, SED and the SRC recommend the Employment First Commission establish initiative-specific timelines and measurable benchmarks as part of an NYS Employment First implementation plan.

Thank you again for your leadership in this vital area, and please do not hesitate to call on me, the Department, or the SRC for assistance and support in advancing independent living, self-supporting employment outcomes and Employment First for New Yorkers with disabilities.

Sincerely,



Mary Ellen Elia
Commissioner

c: Chancellor Merryl H. Tisch
Elizabeth Berlin
Kevin Smith
Debora Brown-Johnson

Appendix D

ACCES-VR and SRC Common Priorities for 2015

Workforce

- Adult middle skills white paper (Part II)
- Bringing in new businesses (e.g. Ritz Carlton event)
- Customized Employment as a new VR services – employer role
- Training Businesses on Hiring Persons with disabilities (e.g. reasonable accommodations)
- Incentives – Tax, Work Tryout (WTO), On-The-Job Training (OJT), etc.

Quality Assurance and Improvement

- Information Collection and Satisfaction Survey Contract Implementation with Potsdam
- Hearing Officers Updates
- Policy and Program Evaluations: CRS Providers; DO Case Reviews; TAG activities
- Development and Review of Common WIOA Performance Measures and VR State Plan Goals and Measures

Policy

- Youth Policy
- WIOA Implementation – Pre-Employment Transition Services/Customized
- DOL Partnerships and Unified State Plan
- HIV TAB and Training
- Training and Staff Development Activities related to Strategic Planning and Policy Implementation
- Implementation of Postsecondary training and Benefits Counseling toward living wage employment

Transition and Youth

- Review and input on Youth Employment Initiatives
- Review and input on Youth Data and performance measures
- Review and input on efforts to extend “transition” to out of school youth and youth involved in postsecondary programs
- Ongoing updates and input on the activities of the Statewide Transition and Youth Services Team

Appendix E SRC Membership Listing

State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Chair

Michael Irwin, Program Director, Greater Syracuse Works, 516 Burt Street, Syracuse, NY 13202

State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Vice-Chair

LaWanda H. Cook, PhD., CRC, Extension Faculty, Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability, Cornell University, 201 Dolgen Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853

Representative of NYS Education Department

Sophie McDermott, New York State Education Department, Special Education, Program Development, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234

Representatives of community rehabilitation program service providers

Fredda Rosen, Executive Director, Job Path, 22 West 38th Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10018

Joann Marshall, Rehabilitation Counselor II, Central New York Psychiatric Center, 9005 Old River Road, Marcy, NY 13403

Joanie Parker, Associate Vice President of Education and Employment, Heritage Christian Services, 349 West Commercial St, Suite 2795, East Rochester NY 14445

Tonya Robinson-Mayer, Partners in Transition Coordinator, Champlain Valley Educational Services, CV-TEC, 194 US Oval, Suite 228, Plattsburgh, NY 12903

C. William Schultz, Program Director - Vocational/Employment Programs, People Inc., 1219 North Forest Road, Williamsville, NY 14231

Michael A Sherman, Peer Counselor Coordinator/IL Specialist, North Country Center for Independence, 80 Sharron Ave, Plattsburgh, NY 12901

Representatives of a Parent Training and Information Center established pursuant to the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA)

Helene Fallon, Project Director, Center for Community Inclusion (LIPC), LIU 720 Northern Blvd. Brookville, NY 11548

Lourdes Rivera-Putz, Executive Director, United We Stand of New York, 91 Harrison Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11206

Representatives of disability advocacy groups

Paul Czech, Esq., Paul Czech & Associates, 68 Indian Pipe Drive, Wynantskill, NY 12198

Roger Purdy, Director, Disability Support Services, Le Moyne College, 4158 Cherrywood Drive, Syracuse, NY 13215

Lourdes Rosa-Carrasquillo, Esq., Director of Advocacy/Community Organizer, Center for Independence of the Disabled, 841 Broadway, Suite 301, New York, NY 10003

Representatives of business, industry, and labor

Deborah Croce, Director of Human Resources, Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park, 50 Central Park South, New York, NY 10019

Martha Jackson, Disability Employment & Business Relations, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, 100 Gold Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10038

Beatrice Schmidt, Corporate Services Specialist, National Business & Disability Council (NBDC), 201 I. U. Willets Road, Albertson, NY 11507-1599

Craig Wolfson, Esq., Partner, Rosicki, Rosicki & Associates, 51 East Bethpage Road, Plainview NY 11803

Representative of Native American Projects (Section 121)

Holley Boots, Counselor Vocational Rehabilitation Program, Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, 412 State Route 37, Akwesasne, NY 13655

Representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council (NYSILC)

Chad Underwood, COO, Access to Independence of Cortland County, Inc., 26 North Main St., Cortland, NY 13045

Current or former Applicant/recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Shain Anderson, Disability Advocate, Kew Gardens, NY 11415

Jennifer M. Machucki, Disability Advocate, Williamsville, NY 14221

Representative of the Client Assistance Program (CAP) (ongoing)

Erica Marie Molina, Esq., CAP Director, DISABILITY RIGHTS NEW YORK, 725 Broadway, Suite 450, Albany, NY 12207

Representative of the State Workforce Investment Board

Alan Gallagher, State Lead for the New York State Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) - Division of Employment & Workforce Solutions, NYS Department of Labor (DOL), State Office Campus, Albany, NY 12240

Ex-Officio Members

Debora Brown-Johnson, Assistant Commissioner, New York State Education Department's Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR), 89 Washington Ave, Albany, NY 12234

Julie Hovey, Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, NYS Office of Children and Family Services, NYS Commission for the Blind (NYSCB), 843 Union Ave, 2nd Fl., New Windsor, NY 12553

Ceylane Meyers-Ruff, Director, Employment & Meaningful Community Activities, NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), 44 Holland Ave., Albany, NY 12229

Liam McNabb, Director of the Rehabilitation Services, NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH), 44 Holland Ave., Albany, NY 12229

Lisa Rosano-Kaczowski, Director, TRAIID/AH Programs, NYS Justice Center, 161 Delaware Avenue, Albany, New York 12054

ACCES-VR Committee Liaisons

Dennis Martinez, Integrated Employment Specialist 2, liaison to the Workforce Development Committee

Robert Linton, Associate Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Resource Development, liaison to the Policy and Planning Committee

Michael Peluso, Manager, Interagency, Legislative, & Community Relations, liaison to the Executive Committee

Patricia Mazzariello, Rehabilitation Provider Specialist, QA/Monitoring Unit, liaison to the Quality Assurance & Improvement Committee

Elizabeth Skender, Senior Transition and Statewide Youth Services Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, liaison to the Transition from School to Adult Life Committee