



ARIZONA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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Mission and Responsibilities of the Governor's State Rehabilitation Council

The Governor's State Rehabilitation Council mission also encompasses the Council's vision, operating principles, and goals:

Mission

Serving all citizens of Arizona, the mission of the Arizona Governor's State Rehabilitation Council is to advise, evaluate and partner with the public vocational rehabilitation program in support of improving access to employment and promoting a diverse workforce statewide.

Vision

The Arizona Governor's State Rehabilitation Council envisions a statewide workforce that values disability and diversity and is committed to full participation of its citizens.

Operating Principles

- Serve as an ally to the public vocational rehabilitation program in structuring and conducting business in ways that reflect the social, political, historical, and economical experiences of individuals with disabilities.
- Collaborate with state and other non-government agencies to promote meaningful and sustainable employment for everyone.
- Foster a broad definition of diversity that honors and appreciates disability alongside race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and religion as an integral part of human experience.
- Promote disability discourse, awareness and involvement, honor disability culture and pride.

Goals

- Advise the Vocational Rehabilitation Program in the development, implementation, evaluation and review of innovative rehabilitation services and programs.
- Support the development of public policy that improves opportunities for full participation for all citizens in the economic life of Arizona.
- Engage business and industry statewide in the creation of inclusive environments guided by the principles of universal design.
- Increase access and employment opportunities for people with disabilities through collaboration with outside agencies, councils, and community partners.
- Strengthen the VR Program through collaboration on the development of human resource infrastructure.

The Governor's State Rehabilitation Council functions, as defined in Title I, Part A, Section 105 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act, are as follows:

Review, analyze and advise the Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) regarding the performance of its responsibilities, particularly those related to eligibility (including order of selection); the extent and scope and effectiveness of services provided; and the functions performed by State

agencies that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services.

Partner with RSA to develop, review and agree to State goals and priorities in accordance with the VR State Plan. The Council and RSA evaluate the effectiveness of the VR program and submit reports of progress to the RSA Commissioner.

Advise the RSA on activities authorized to be carried out under the Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan. Assist in the preparation of the VR State Plan, and Amendments to the plan, applications, reports, Needs Assessments, and evaluations.

Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of Vocational Rehabilitation services and consumer satisfaction regarding functions performed, VR services provided, and employment outcomes achieved.

Prepare and submit an Annual Report to the Governor and the Federal U.S. Department of Education Commissioner of RSA on the status of Vocational Rehabilitation programs operated with the State of Arizona.

Coordinate activities with other disability related Councils with the State of Arizona. Establish working relationships between RSA, the Statewide Independent Living Council, and Arizona Centers for Independent Living.

Perform other functions consistent with VR services deemed appropriate by the Council.

Message From the Chair

Dear Constituents,

The mission of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), in partnership with the Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and in collaboration with disability groups, is to ensure quality vocational rehabilitation services for eligible individuals as they make informed choices to achieve employment. This mission is accomplished by reviewing programs, analyzing service delivery processes, and advising on policies and procedures.

As with past years, the SRC prioritized new member recruitment from the community stakeholder groups, various disability populations, and business, industry, and labor sectors across Arizona. Low membership due to staff vacancies and delays in the appointment process reduced capacity for critical SRC subcommittee activities. However, the SRC ended the calendar year with several new memberships. The SRC welcomed ten members representing education, business, industry, and labor sectors. Each newly appointed member received an onboarding package to support the navigation of the SRC's purpose, legislative background, expectations of membership, calendar events, and the structures surrounding improved access to Vocational Rehabilitation services and employment within Arizona. The SRC anticipates a significant increase in outcomes for council initiatives for the 2025 calendar year.

This past year, council members supported RSA leadership in identifying critical need areas related to building agency-wide capacity for timely and effective service delivery. The SRC evaluated and provided recommendations for specific programmatic outcomes associated with RSA Fair Hearing processes and decisions, findings from the Client Satisfaction Survey, and the provision of services such as Pre-Employment Transition Services. The SRC remains dedicated to providing collaborative effectiveness as RSA continues enhancing quality service provisions to vocational rehabilitation clients. It has been an honor to serve as a member and chair for the Council, alongside our other members focused on improved competitive employment outcomes for all Arizonans with disabilities using RSA programming and services.

Lisa Livesay

Council Committees

Employment and Community Partnerships Committee

The goal of the **Employment and Community Partnerships Committee** is to focus on the competitive integrated employment of individuals with disabilities and the Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration/Vocational Rehabilitation Program (AZRSA/VR). This committee advises RSA on the marketing of the VR program and develops collaborative relationships with the community, advocacy groups, employers, and other councils as related to employment activities and initiatives. Due to limited council member capacity, efforts within the subcommittee were halted. Activities will resume upon the appointment of additional SRC members.

Executive Committee

The goal of the **Executive Committee** is to provide leadership to the SRC in furthering its mission, vision, and goals. It is composed of all SRC Committee Chairs. This committee monitors the AZRSA achievement related to the Federal Performance Measures, provides feedback and input into Corrective Action Plans, advises AZRSA on strategic plans and initiatives, and focuses on diversity efforts within AZRSA and SRC. This committee will follow up on any membership and/or recruitment efforts on behalf of the council.

Program Review Committee

The goal of the **Program Review Committee** is to focus on the following issues as they relate to the competitive integrated employment of individuals with disabilities and the Rehabilitation Services Administration/Vocational Rehabilitation Program (RSA/VR): Youth and Transition services, the VR section of the Arizona State Workforce Development Plan, Client Satisfaction Survey data, the RSA Comprehensive System of Personnel Development, and RSA employee satisfaction.

2024 Governor's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Membership

Lisa Livesay, Chair
ADE Representative, Special Education
Term: 2021-2023

Ceci Hartke, Vice Chair
Parent Training and Information Center Representative
Term: 2021-2024

Adam Robson, Sargent at Arms
Specific Disability Groups Representative
Term: 2021-2024

David Carey
Statewide Independent Living Council Representative
Term: 2023-2026

Paula Seanez
American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Term: 2022-2025

Linda Fischer
Client Assistance Program Representative
Term: 2023-2024

Diana Gomez Reyes
Specific Disability Groups Representative
Term: 2023-2026

Melissa Wojtak
Business Industry/Labor Representative
Term: 2023-2025

Jamie Gonzalez
Community Rehabilitation Program and Service Provider Representative
Term: 2024-2026

Michael "Lenny" Ovadia
Business Industry/Labor Representative

Term: 2023-2024

Zane Lambros
Specific Disability Groups Representative
Term: 2023-2024

Julie Oliver
Specific Disability Groups Representative
Term: 2023-2024

Martin Appel
Disability Advocacy Representative
Term: 2024-2025

Janette Lopez
Disability Advocacy Representative
Term: 2024-2025

George Garcia
Current/Former Applicant/Recipient of VR Services
Term: 2024-2026

Bibiana Ronquillo
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Representative
Term: 2024-2026

Kristen Mackey
VR State Agency, Ex-Officio
Term: No limit

Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation Program Basics

The mission of the Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR) is to work with individuals with disabilities to achieve gainful employment through the provision of comprehensive rehabilitative and employment support services in a partnership with all stakeholders. The VR Program provides a variety of specialized services to individuals who have physical, mental, and emotional impairments that create barriers to employment.

Eligibility for the VR program is determined by the following: an individual wants to become or remain economically independent through work; an individual's disability is serious enough to make it hard to get or keep a job; available services can help the individual get or keep a job; the VR Program is the only or best place to provide the individual with the help he or she may need to obtain employment.

The number of Arizonans employed because of VR Services:

FFY 2024 – 1,660

FFY 2023 – 1,324

FFY 2022 – 1,611

The Total Individuals Receiving VR Services by Disability:

Blindness 577

Other Visual Impairments 357

Deafness/Hearing Loss 919

Other Hearing Impairments (Tinnitus, Menier's Disease, hyperacusis etc.) 13

Deaf-Blindness 64

Communicative Impairments (expressive/receptive) 643

Mobility Orthopedic/Neurological Impairments 442

Manipulation/Dexterity Orthopedic/Neurological Impairments 392

Respiratory Impairments 29

General Physical Debilitation (fatigue, weakness, pain, etc.) 291

Other Physical Impairments (not listed) 317

Cognitive Impairments (impairments involving learning, thinking, processing information and concentration 5590

Psychosocial Impairments (interpersonal and behavioral impairments, difficulty coping) 5193

Other Mental Impairments 629

Grand total – 15,456

Client Satisfaction Survey Results FFY2024

In SFY2013, the RSA Client Satisfaction Survey was revised to incorporate input from the SRC to survey clients throughout the vocational rehabilitation process. The same survey instrument was used throughout SFY2019. As part of a larger initiative to evaluate and improve customer service within the VR program, the VR Client Satisfaction survey has undergone revision and a new method of collecting and sharing survey results began on April 1, 2020. Revised survey questions are attached, and highlights of the new methodology are as follows:

- Surveys are distributed via Survey Monkey during the first week of every quarter (survey is sent via email during week 1 of the quarter and will remain open for completion throughout the quarter).
- Surveys will be sent to a randomized sample of individuals with email addresses on file with VR every quarter as follows:
 - Clients who, as of the first day of the quarter, have active VR cases in IPE development through job placement (status 10, 13, 20, and 22); and
 - Clients who, within 2 weeks prior to the start of the quarter, had their VR case closed with and without employment (status 26 and 28).
 - Survey respondents can now provide their name and contact information at the bottom of each survey if they would like to share additional information about their VR experience.

1. I was treated with courtesy and respect by staff in the VR office:

59% of individuals responded with Strongly Agree
24% of individuals responded with Agree
6% of individuals responded with Disagree
11% of individuals responded with Strongly Disagree
124 individuals responded to this question, 1 individual skipped this question

2. I am satisfied with the amount of contact I had with my VR counselor:

45% of individuals responded with Strongly Agree
24% of individuals responded with Agree
20% of individuals responded with Disagree
11% of individuals responded with Strongly Disagree
125 individuals responded to this question

3. My counselor provided me with assistance relevant to my situation:

42% of individuals responded with Strongly Agree
24% of individuals responded with Agree

19% of individuals responded with Disagree
15% of individuals responded with Strongly Disagree
124 individuals responded to this question, 1 individual skipped this question

4. I participated in the development of my Individualized Plan for Employment:

49% of individuals responded with Strongly Agree
33% of individuals responded with Agree
8% of individuals responded with Disagree
10% of individuals responded with Strongly Disagree
125 individuals responded to this question

5. I received VR services in a timely manner:

38% of individuals responded with Strongly Agree
28% of individuals responded with Agree
17% of individuals responded with Disagree
17% of individuals responded with Strongly Disagree
124 individuals responded to this question, 1 individual skipped this question

6. Based on my experiences, I would recommend the VR program to another person:

52% of individuals responded with Strongly Agree
20% of individuals responded with Agree
8% of individuals responded with Disagree
20% of individuals responded with Strongly Disagree
125 individuals responded to this question

7. I am open to being contacted regarding my experiences in the VR program:

59% of individuals responded with Yes
41% of individuals responded with No
124 individuals responded to this question, 1 individual skipped this question

The average hourly wage of cases closed with employment (Status 26)

SFY 2022 - \$15.28
SFY 2023 - \$16.69
SFY 2024 - \$17.83

RSA Offices

Vocational Rehabilitation clients and individuals interested in VR are invited to visit the Office Locator webpage to find an office closest to them:

<https://azdes-community.my.salesforce-sites.com/EOL/>