

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



**Rhode Island Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services
and
State Rehabilitation Council**



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Message from the Director of Department of Human Services

It is my pleasure to provide you with the Annual Report for Federal Fiscal Year 2016 for the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS). ORS is charged with empowering Rhode Islanders with disabilities who voluntarily wish to obtain and maintain employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence and full integration into society. Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI); and Disability Determination Services (DDS) provide a myriad of resources and services which enhance the quality of life for Rhode Islanders with disabilities.



Younger individuals with disabilities and their families work with vocational rehabilitation counselors in order to make that important transition from school to post-secondary education and careers. The business and labor community depend on ORS for trained, job-ready applicants. Rhode Islanders applying for Social Security disability benefits get accurate and timely decisions, and Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired provides services for individuals who have a visual impairment. ORS provides a comprehensive array of personalized services to Rhode Islanders with disabilities.

In FFY2016, 4,368 persons with disabilities were provided vocational rehabilitation, training, and employment services provided by ORS-approved vendors. The Disability Determination Services adjudicated 18,561 claims for Social Security disability benefits.

We are proud of the partnerships that our staff has developed with our citizen advisory councils, our customers and the community, which has contributed so much to the quality of life for individuals with disabilities in Rhode Island.

Melba Depeña Affigne

Message from the Associate Director

On behalf of the Office of Rehabilitation Services, I am pleased to present to you the 2016 Annual Report. The mission of the Office of Rehabilitation Services is to provide customized and comprehensive services to individuals with disabilities that will maximize their quality of life, self-reliance, and economic independence in the community. We have included success stories that reflect the diversity of our customers and their needs. We want to illustrate the partnership between our staff and our customer that makes rehabilitation work. These stories are only a small portion of the 651 individuals with disabilities placed in competitive and integrated employment, but provide great insight into the nature of our work.



Rhode Island faced many challenges this year. Effective July 1, 2015 the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) became law, superseding the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and amending the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (which authorizes the Vocational Rehabilitation program), with the primary goal of streamlining the statewide workforce development system and increasing participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. WIOA required a Unified State Plan for workforce development from all workforce partners in the State, which was developed and approved in 2016. We will be actively engaged working with other workforce partner agencies, the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and stakeholders across the State in developing and implementing the Unified Plan over the next four years.

We are also indebted to the Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council, Statewide Independent Living Council, and Governor's Advisory Council for the Blind & Visually Impaired, State Committee of Blind Vendors, and Rhode Island Council on Assistive Technology, for their partnership and help in maximizing the potential of persons with disabilities.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to our ORS staff; without them, none of the accomplishments in this report would be possible. They are truly the most amazing, dedicated, and compassionate group of people with whom I have ever worked.

Ronald Racine

Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program is the public State and Federally funded-program that assists individuals with disabilities to choose, prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment. Employment in an integrated, competitive setting at or above minimum wage being the successful outcome of services provided through the public Vocational Rehabilitation program. It is expected that individuals with disabilities who apply for services are interested in becoming employed and understand that this is the focus of the VR program.

A Masters level Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor works with the individual to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) that includes an employment goal. The time expected for the individual to reach the goal, the services that the individual chooses as necessary to reach the employment goal, and how the services will be provided are all individualized.

Vocational Rehabilitation services that may be incorporated in an Employment Plan include:

- Assistive Technology Services
- College or Vocational Training
- Counseling and Guidance
- Diagnostic Evaluations
- Housing Modifications
- Job Development and Job Placement Services
- Job Training and Job Supports
- Other Goods and Services
- Post-Employment Services
- Rehabilitation Technology Services
- Transition Services from School to Career
- Vehicle Modifications

Vocational Rehabilitation *(cont.)*

Deaf Services...

The Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) helps individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing obtain the services necessary to reach an employment goal, provides counseling and guidance to help plan vocational goals and services, and assists the individual to obtain employment. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor serves as a resource to professionals, state agencies, community organizations, and the public providing information related to employment, training, and accommodations for individuals with a hearing loss.

Independent Living Services...

The ORS purchases assessments and independent living services from the Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL) as part of preparing individuals with significant disabilities for employment.

Supported Employment...

The ORS Supported Employment Services Program assists individuals with the most significant disabilities to acquire the skills and experience, along with the appropriate supports, to obtain and maintain competitive, integrated employment. As a result of the Consent Decree between the Department of Justice (DoJ) and the State of Rhode Island, ORS has contributed to, along with the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) & Department of Education (RIDE), an Employment First philosophy within the State. All agencies are organizing and coordinating a service-delivery system intended to ensure adults and youth with significant intellectual and/or developmental disabilities have the opportunity to experience integrated, competitive employment at or above minimum wage. Implementation of Employment First, in practice and

Vocational Rehabilitation (cont.)

philosophy, means that services to individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities must be based on the premise that all, given the right supports, are capable of working in integrated, competitive jobs.

ORS assisted 1,143 adults with intellectual developmental disabilities (192 were new applicants) of which 124 obtained integrated, competitive employment. In addition, 54 youth with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities obtained employment in FFY2016. ORS is continuing this successful collaboration with other State partners to ensure seamless service delivery from high school through adulthood.

Home Modification Program...

The Office of Rehabilitation Services administers Federal and State independent living funds which provide home accessibility and adaptive equipment for individuals who are significantly disabled, to enable them to participate in employment efforts.

State PCA Program...

The Office of Rehabilitation Services has contracted with Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL) to be the fiscal agent for the State Personal Care Assistance program for individuals who were not eligible for Medicaid-funded waivers. Through this program, individuals were able to continue living in the community rather than in a nursing home.

Program Showcase: Pre-Employment and Transition Services

The Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) has had a Transition Program in collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) for over 16 years. This program is based on a Cooperative Agreement between ORS and RIDE that provides each high school in RI with an ORS Masters level Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor provides technical assistance to school personnel, consults about specific students, and accepts referrals of students with disabilities, supported by parents, from the school. The VR Counselor meets with the student and family to explain the program, facilitate an eligibility decision, and generate an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE).

Through the Pre-Employment and Transition Program, ORS funds and provides an array of services depending on the needs of the student. These services can include: job exploration, community-based work experiences, summer work, assessments, access to AT grant services such as AT loans and demonstrations, work-based learning experiences, and travel training.

The well-established ORS Transition Program has been critical in meeting the Agency's obligations to the Department of Justice and State of RI Consent Decree, as well as the new Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) mandated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). All students with disabilities, including those with significant intellectual disabilities, have had access to the full array of Transition and Pre-ETS services. In addition, the ORS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors present to and collaborate with school-based Life Skills and Special Education Teachers about Agency services and community integrated employment. ORS collaborated with RIDE, BHDDH and Local Educational Authorities to provide vocational services for students with Intellectual Disabilities. **Career Development Plans** became more meaningful and consistent for students with intellectual disabilities. ORS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors participated in over **110 Career Development Plan Meetings** with school personnel, families, and students.

Program Showcase: Pre-Employment and Transition Services (cont.)

SERVICE DELIVERY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Miriam Hospital Project Search: 2015/16 was the second year of the Miriam Hospital Project Search Program. ORS is the license holder and functions as the lead Agency for the Steering Committee. ORS continued to partner with the Providence School Department, BHDDH, Perspectives Corporation, and Miriam Hospital and provided the services to eight students with intellectual disabilities. Two of those students have been hired by Miriam Hospital. Two have been hired at positions in the community, and the remaining students are involved in job development with Perspectives Corporation, an approved ORS vendor.

Blue Cross Project Search: ORS led the expansion process to open a second Project Search site this year in collaboration with the Cranston School Department, BHDDH and West Bay Collaborative. ORS, as the license holder, provided and coordinated the technical assistance and vocational services of the program. Of the seven students who participated in the program, one was hired by the Epicurean Feast, which provides the cafeteria services for Blue Cross. Two were hired in security, and the remaining are involved in job development. Blue Cross has expanded their internship site capacity by five for next year.

Newport Hospital Project Search: ORS has secured a third Project Search site in collaboration with Lifespan, BHDDH and the Newport County Regional Special Education Program. A teacher has been hired and students have been interviewed. ORS began services for eight students with intellectual disabilities in September 2016.

Rhode Island Health Department Project Search: ORS is in preliminary conversations the Health Department and the Pawtucket School Department to welcome Rhode Island's fourth Project Search site with a tentative commitment for the 2017/2018 school year. It is anticipated that eight students will participate.

Program Showcase: Pre-Employment and Transition Services (cont.)

Pilgrim Employment Pilot: ORS has partnered with Pilgrim High School and the West Bay Collaborative for three years to provide 100- hour individualized paid internships in the community along with weekly work readiness training for ten students with disabilities in their junior or senior year of high school. This program expanded to include other Warwick High Schools this year.

Central Falls Tri-employment Program: ORS has partnered with Central Falls High School and Goodwill Industries for the past four years to provide 100 hours of individualized paid internships in the community along with weekly work readiness training for ten students with disabilities in their junior or senior year

East Providence Employment Pilot: ORS began a new partnership with East Providence High School and the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative that began in September 2016 to provide 100 hours of individualized paid internships in the community along with weekly work readiness training for ten students with disabilities in their senior year of high school.

North West Pilot: ORS partnered with the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative to provide comprehensive employment services to fifteen students in this rural community. The pilot enables services to be provided in the students' home community. Services include work job exploration, community-based work experiences, summer work, job development, and placement.

Planning for the Future: The Department of Labor & Training (DLT)/ORS Pilot to collaboratively utilize each Agency's funding to provide services to students at South Kingstown High school. ORS funded the 1st year summer work, and DLT provided work readiness and 2nd year services. Collaboratively this will assist students to enter employment.

Summer Work: ORS assisted youth with disabilities to experience paid employment by sponsoring summer work experiences to 220 students with an array of disabilities. ORS collaborated with ten employment service agencies to develop integrated work sites in the community and fund students (at minimum wage) to work for 80 hours over a four-week period. Four of the agencies work specifically with students with intellectual disabilities.

Program Showcase: Pre-Employment and Transition Services (cont.)

Summer Employment Alliance/Providence: ORS entered into a Service Agreement with the Providence School System and the West Bay Collaborative to offer a paid integrated summer work experience for students with intellectual disabilities in their extended school year program. Providence staff provided job coaching, ORS funded wages, and the West Bay Collaborative provided the technical assistance to insure integrated community-based placements based on the interests/aptitudes of the participants. Ten students worked for 4 weeks at summer positions.

COLLABORATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

RI Transition Institute – March 10-11, 2016 – Rhode Island College: The purpose of the two-day Institute is to build transition capacity within the Rhode Island high schools. The Office of Rehabilitation Services had 20 staff function as school team members to the 31 local school districts represented. The ORS Associate Director gave a welcoming address and the ORS Assistant Administrator for Transition was available to all the teams. ORS also presented at two breakout sessions: Blue Cross Project Search in RI and expansion and what teachers need to know about employment. A session presented by successfully employed ORS clients who transitioned from high school to employment was very well received

The Teachers of Life Skills Network (TLS) is a collaboration of educators of students who have ID/D to share valuable resources and experiences. ORS participated in sessions that included 90 Life Skills teachers in 3 Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) coordinated sessions.

Family Employment Awareness Training (F.E.A.T). FEAT is a one day informational session explaining services available to assist parents and students with severe disabilities to enter employment. In collaboration with the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN) and The Sherlock Center, ORS participated in 9 sessions reaching approximately 275 participants.

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors presented to the Special Education Departments at 30 area high schools to explain Vocational Rehabilitation Services and to coordinate referrals from the schools.

Program Showcase: Pre-Employment and Transition Services (cont.)

The West Bay, East Bay, and Northern Collaboratives, Providence and RI School for the Deaf each run **Transition Academies**, which provide students an opportunity to meet their high school transition requirements and learn employment skills. ORS funding is used for integrated community work experiences (60 days experience and Job Readiness to prepare students for the workforce). Fifty students with various disabilities participated throughout the 5 programs. ORS also finalized an agreement to collaborate with the Certificate of Community Studies at Rhode Island College to begin in the Spring of 2016.

Statewide Conference - Transition 101 for Parents – November 13, 2015: The Regional Transition Centers in collaboration with the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN) held a conference providing an overview of the Transition process to 159 parents. ORS staffed an information booth and answered parents' questions about ORS. In addition, ORS conducted a session about ORS and adult services.

Participation in Transition Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings:

Member: ORS Rehabilitation Counselors attended 21 TAC meetings around the State

Real World Transition Fair on January 14, 2016 - a conference, which had 148 participants to learn about transition

Transition Night on January 12, 2016 - ORS sponsored an information booth and had a benefits counseling presentation

Pathways to Prosperity - a seminar with 93 student participants from around the State heard about transition and employment

The Office of Rehabilitation Services is also a member of the **State Transition Advisory Council**. This involves developing the Statewide Transition Plan and attending quarterly meetings with other State agencies serving youth.

Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired (SBVI)

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) offers a wide array of services to eligible individuals who are blind or visually impaired through its Vocational Rehabilitation Unit, Business Enterprises Program, and Social Services Program. The various services offered by these programs are designed to help individuals of all ages achieve independence at home, in the community, and in the workplace.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program...

A Federal/State Program created to assist people who are blind or visually impaired to obtain or maintain employment. Services provided include evaluation, orientation, mobility training, rehabilitation technology, guidance and counseling, career assessment, educational planning, vocational training, provision of adaptive equipment, job development, job placement, and follow-up services.

Business Enterprises Program...

A Federal/State Program which establishes vending facilities in state, federal, or private buildings for operation by persons who are legally blind. Licensed blind vendors operate vending facilities at 14 locations throughout the state and are assigned to these locations on the basis of their seniority within the program. Types of facilities range from small snack bars serving light snacks and beverages to larger food-service sites serving hot and cold entrees prepared on-site. All operate under the name of "Coffee Plus".

Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP)...

The Office of Rehabilitation Services is the lead Agency for the Rhode Island Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP). ATAP is a statewide program funded under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, which works to reduce or eliminate barriers that impede access to, and funding for, assistive technology devices and services for individuals with disabilities of all ages.

Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired (SBVI) *(continued)*

Social Services Program...

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired coordinates a federal comprehensive service program which focuses primarily on children from birth through age 14, elderly individuals, and individuals for whom a vocational goal is not feasible.

Children's Case Management Services include family casework, coordination with Early Intervention Programs, educational guidance, summer camp for youths, arrangement of ophthalmologist and low vision evaluations, and information and referral to appropriate community programs.

Independent Living for Older Blind Program provides case management services, along with ancillary services for mobility and orientation, rehabilitation teaching for skills training in activities of daily living, management of low vision, provisions of adaptive equipment, and information and referral to support groups and appropriate community services.

Adaptive Telephone Equipment Loan (ATEL) Program...

The ATEL Program loans telephone equipment to residents of the State of Rhode Island who have hearing, speech, or neuro-muscular (unable to dial or hold a receiver) impairments and have a signed certificate of disability. Equipment is issued on a first-come, first-serve basis. For the past four years, ATEL sought to have legislation passed to insure access to wireless devices for these individuals. This legislation passed this year and allows the ATEL program to distribute wireless telephone devices to program participants.

Disability Determination Services (DDS)

The Rhode Island Disability Determination Services (RI DDS) is a unit within the Office of Rehabilitation Services, which operates under a “state-federal” partnership. The function of the RI DDS is to make determinations as to the medical eligibility of adults and children with physical and/or mental impairments who have applied for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. The RI DDS is assigned a budgeted workload under a regulatory agreement with the Social Security Administration (SSA). The RI DDS is 100 percent financed by SSA to adjudicate initial disability applications, appeals of cases initially denied, and continuing disability reviews. The RI DDS also performs disability hearings on cases in which benefits have been terminated. In total, the RI DDS processed 18,459 disability cases this year, and anticipate processing about the same number in FFY2016.

SSA has engaged in a major retooling of the disability adjudication process with the intention of improving upon the delivery of high quality, citizen-centered service to the applicants. The foundation for the future was established with the migration from a paper-based product to a predominantly electronic process (eDib). Although hardware and software enhancements are an ongoing process, the RI DDS is now processing the majority of cases electronically. SSA has developed eCAT, which is Electronic Case Analysis Tool. To date RI DDS is processing most claim types using this adjudicative tool. The expansion of the electronic case system has allowed the RI DDS to participate in an emerging claims processing methodology, the Electronic Case Analysis Tool (eCAT). This is a systematic, template approach to claim adjudication. eCAT provides intelligent pathing to reach the adjudicative decision in accordance with the SSA sequential evaluation process. The result is supportable determinations, which have greater accuracy and consistency. SSA is constantly improving the software and tools that the examiners use in their daily functions. In the coming years, there will be additional advances as the office becomes more “connected” with the medical community and healthcare vendors. The RI DDS is constantly expanding the network of the outside offices with which communication is completed in a fully paperless format (i.e. requests for documents are electronically faxed to providers and their replies

Disability Determination Services (DDS) *(cont.)*

are directly and seamlessly downloaded into an electronic folder). SSA is currently working on a new Disability Case Processing System (DCPS). There have been some delays in getting this system rolled out. In the next few years, all of the country is expected to be using this program.

Despite all the changes in the method that claims are processed, the RI DDS has been able to maintain excellent accuracy ratings of 96.8% while processing 18,459 claims. We have faced some challenges keeping pace with this workload. We had to seek assistance from other states to complete our medical reviews due to a shortage of in house medical consults. This is a cumbersome process to transfer and track all of the claims being worked on throughout the country. We also have had to work with diminished staff throughout the year. A by-product of this is a longer wait time for Rhode Islanders to receive information as to the outcome of their disability applications. We continue to maximize all available resources to provide quality, timely, and accurate service to the citizens of RI.

Rhode Island opened a CDI Unit (Cooperative Disability Investigations) in January of this year to help combat fraud in the program. This unit investigates fraud in initial and reconsideration applications prior to claimants being put in pay status. In FFY2015, the CDI Unit had 78 referrals which resulted in investigations. The referrals come from the field offices, DDS, and the public. The CDI unit consists of a DDS examiner, a field office representative, two investigators from the Attorney General's office, and a Special Agent. SSA continues to put a high emphasis on combatting fraud in the program.

Local Social Security Field Offices

One Empire Street
6th Floor
Providence, RI 02903
1-877-402-0808

30 Quaker Lane, 1st Fl.
Warwick, RI 02886-0111
1-866-964-2038

4 Pleasant Street
Pawtucket, RI 02860
1-866-931-7079

Pavilion Plaza
2168 Diamond Hill Road
Woonsocket, RI 02895
1-877-229-3542

130 Bellevue Avenue
Newport, RI 02840
1-866-253-5607



Success Stories

CLIENT: Kelbil Tavaréz
OCCUPATION: Kitchen Worker

COUNSELOR: Teresa DiMattia
EMPLOYER: Miriam Hospital

Kelbil is a 20-year old young man, who returned to Rhode Island from New York City. He was a former Mount Pleasant High School student prior to moving to New York. Upon his return to Providence he attended Juanita Sanchez High School. He has barriers to employment secondary to a learning disability and developmental delay. He began working with ORS in January of 2015. During his school years, Kelbil did not have any vocational experiences in the community. He also was very nervous about taking public transportation. Upon meeting his ORS counselor, Kelbil was very shy but had an outgoing personality and was very motivated to work. At his initial meeting with his counselor, he had long hair and a beard. His counselor explained to him that in preparing for work, he may have to cut his hair and be clean shaven. Kelbil was hesitant, but agreed to give it some thought.

At his first Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) meeting, his ORS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor explained to Kelbil and his family the Project Search Program which would be a transition year allowing him to explore and experience his employment interests. This program would provide him with an opportunity to acquire more work skills and independence leading to successful employment. Kelbil expressed interest in the area of food service. Everyone, which included, family, student, and his Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team felt this would be a good match. Kelbil applied to the Project Search Program, was interviewed, and accepted.

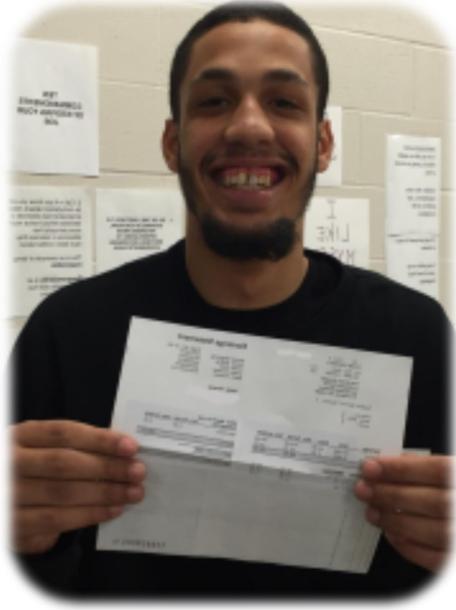
During the summer he had to learn how to take public transportation, which was a significant concern for his family. The family was not confident that he would be able to complete this task successfully. ORS, with the help of Perspectives Corporation, provided travel training to Kelbil. He very ably completed and succeeded in taking public transportation. He used the bus independently from his home to get to the Miriam Hospital, the Project Search site. He is quite adept at taking the bus and can now navigate his way around the bus routes successfully.

CLIENT: Kelbil Tavaréz (cont.)

OCCUPATION: Kitchen Worker

COUNSELOR: Teresa DiMattia

EMPLOYER: Miriam Hospital



Kelbil began Project Search in September of 2015. As part of him starting the program, he cut his hair, shaved, and was ready to participate fully in the program. Miriam Hospital, with the help of ORS, provided Kelbil with a uniform so he would fit right in with the staff at the hospital. Prior to starting the program with the help of ORS, Kelbil and his family were also provided benefits counseling as his family was concerned about Kelbil losing his benefits received through SSI. Kelbil and his family met with a benefits counselor and were educated about the potential benefits of employment and the impact on benefits.

Kelbil's first rotation at The Miriam Hospital was in the cafeteria. He did a great job learning how to prepare and serve food during lunch time. He always had a smile for staff and customers when they came to the cafeteria for lunch. He enjoyed working and socializing with all the people that came in to the cafeteria. Initially he struggled a bit with the cash register, but with a bit of support, he was able to successfully work at the cash register. His second rotation was in the kitchen, which involves preparing food that goes upstairs to the hospital cafeteria. He really excelled in this department, and his supervisor indicated that he was doing a great job. Kelbil developed a good working relationship with the department manager. His hard work, solid job performance, and pride in his work resulted in Miriam Hospital offering him a position in the kitchen.

Kelbil has been working in the kitchen at Miriam Hospital for almost a year. He has also successfully moved out of his family home and is living independently in his own apartment.

As you can see from the picture above, he is very, very happy to be employed and receiving his a paycheck.

January 2017						
◀ Dec 2016						Feb 2017 ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 	2 New Years Day celebrated - State offices closed	3 SRC Executive Leadership Mtg. 4pm	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 Martin Luther King Day - State offices closed	17 SRC Meeting @ NE Institute of Technology, 2500 Post Rd Warwick 4-6 pm	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	Notes: National Mentoring Month			

CLIENT: Troy Colafrancesco

COUNSELOR: Teresa O'Brien

OCCUPATION: Warehouse Worker

EMPLOYER: Alex and Ani

In September 2013, Troy was referred to ORS for assistance in getting a job. Troy was residing in a homeless shelter, had no income, and was receiving food stamps. At his first meeting with his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, he declared the need to “get an apartment and his license”. Troy participated in a vocational evaluation to determine what type of job might be a good match to his interests and abilities. Through this assessment, he was found to excel at working in fast-paced environments and enjoyed working with others. Based on these findings, his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor introduced him to a training opportunity on-site at the Alex and Ani warehouse in East Greenwich, RI.



Through this training program, Troy’s life began to change. He learned how to fill orders and pack items at the warehouse. He demonstrated good work habits, reliability, and a tenacity about being punctual for work that involved the use of RIPTA or UBER in order to get to work on time. Troy now has his own apartment. As a result of his consistency and his dedication, Steve Linn, VP of Alex and Ani, asked him to speak at a conference about his experiences. In front of hundreds of people, he talked about his life, training, and accomplishments. He received a standing ovation. Troy has demonstrated the benefits of a fulfilling job that has made all the difference in the world for him. He feels he is now able to pursue any goal! Within two years, Troy went from being homeless and wearing all his possessions to successfully working full time with benefits.

February 2017						
◀ Jan 2017						Mar 2017 ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 World Cancer Day
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Lincoln's Birthday	13	14 Valentine's Day 	15 State Independent Living Council Mtg	16	17	18
19	20 President's Day/ Washington's Birthday	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 SRC Executive Leadership Mtg 4pm	Notes: Black History Month			

CLIENT: Louis DiDonato **COUNSELOR:** Dorian Havers
OCCUPATION: Administrative Assistant **EMPLOYER:** State of RI

As a Lincoln High School graduate, Class of 2008, I have utilized the services of ORS. Back then, I began a Transition Program which was allowing me training in many areas of employment as well as further strengthening my life skills. Besides my instructors, I was very lucky to have an ORS Counselor that perpetuated the word “commitment”. Through her diligence in obtaining work experience and training in the fields of interest I had at the time, I was able to learn, actually become a seasonal employee, and be confident as I ventured toward adulthood.

Over the next years, my best description of ORS and this counselor is, “They always had my back!” I am proud to say that I have permanent full-time employment with a competitive salary as well as benefits. To say “Thank You” seems not enough as I look back at all the supports given to me as I journeyed toward my goals. So I will conclude with one statement, **ORS** (Opportunity +Resources=SUCCESS)! I now move on toward my personal goals with confidence and hope. Thank you for every role you played in being a part of my success story.



*Written by: Lori DiDonato
For: Louis M. DiDonato III*

March 2017						
◀ Feb 2017						Apr 2017 ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
American Red Cross Month Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Reading Awareness Month			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 SRC Meeting @ NE Institute of Technology 2500 Post Rd Warwick 4-6 pm	8	9	10	11
12 Daylight Savings Begins	13	14	15	16 Brain Injury Awareness Day	17 St. Patrick's Day 	18
19	20 Spring Begins 	21	22	23	24	25
26 Purple Day for Epilepsy	27	28	29	30	31	Notes: March 15, 2011 - American Disabilities Act came into effect.

CLIENT: Kevin Nurse

COUNSELOR: Alicia Peters

OCCUPATION: Small Engine Repair

Mr. Kevin Nurse had essentially worked full time since completing high school. It was after returning home from a vacation in Florida with his family when Kevin developed flu-like symptoms that persisted. After several appointments with his doctor, he was eventually diagnosed with Viral Cardiomyopathy. Kevin's job at that time was extremely laborious and physical in nature. He was employed as a driver for a beverage company and could no longer perform the job. He was unable to pass the medical examination required to continue in his position. Fortunately, Kevin's wife was familiar with ORS and encouraged him to apply for services.



It was November of 2014 when Kevin submitted an application to ORS and first met with his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Kevin was very unsure of what he wanted to, and even more unsure of what he could do. However, he wanted to return to the world of work in some capacity. After all, he had essentially been working in some way almost his entire life, as his father owned a business, and Kevin spent a great deal of time assisting his father in his youth. Work had always been a part of his identity.

Kevin participated in a vocational appraisal to identify his interests and aptitudes so that he could navigate his options and develop a specific career goal. It was clear from the assessment that Kevin had both an interest and an aptitude for working with his hands on motors; and therefore, a goal of Outdoor Power Equipment and Other Small Engine Mechanic was decided upon. ORS assisted Kevin in obtaining a degree from MTTI, securing employment, as well as obtaining all the tools he needed to work as a Small Engine Repair/Maintenance Technician. Additionally, ORS provided benefits planning services for Kevin. Not only is Kevin working full-time, but he is working full-time in a job that he truly enjoys! In an email that Kevin wrote to his VR counselor, he wrote **“I am very thankful for everything you and your department has done to help me!!!”** We are thrilled to see Kevin happy, healthy, and thriving in his new career and honored to have worked with him.

April 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Alcohol Awareness Month		American Cancer Society Month		Autism Awareness Month		1 April Fool's Day
Child Abuse Prevention Month		Community Service Month		Earth Month		
Limb Loss Awareness Month		Oral Health Month		Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month		
Primary Immunodeficiency Awareness Month		Volunteer Appreciation Month				
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13 US D.A.R.E. Day	14 Good Friday	15
16 National Stress Awareness Day Easter	17 Tax Day 	18	19 State Independent Living Council Mtg	20	21	22
23	24	25 SRC Executive Leadership Mtg 4 pm	26 Administrative Professionals' Day	27	28	29
30	Notes:					

CLIENT: Donna Pariseau

COUNSELOR: Kathleen Neun

OCCUPATION: Customer Service/Account Representative EMPLOYER: Central Scale

Donna was referred to ORS services by her friend in the winter of 2015. She was looking for assistance with career exploration and determining the supports she would need to successfully return to work. Before coming to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, Donna had a great career in the finance/accounting field, but in April of 2012 she sustained a spinal cord injury. As a result she became paralyzed with limited use of her arms and hands.

Donna volunteered at Central Scale, a small metrology office in Warwick, three times a week where she performed administrative duties (customer service, data entry, and maintained paperwork between customers and business manager). Donna showed increased enthusiasm about working again and stated, *"I can still use my brain."* With the guidance and counseling services that she received from her ORS Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor, Donna decided that she wanted to go back into the administrative field but would need assistance in reaching her employment goal.

In September, 2015 Donna accepted a part-time position with Central Scale as a Customer Service/Account Representative. Her ORS VR Counselor visited Donna at her place of employment and found that the office was accessible but small, and she was unable to turn around safely. Donna's employer was able to raise her work station allowing her to complete work at eye level. However, she was still finding it difficult to perform the essential functions of her job, so her ORS VR Counselor enlisted a Rehabilitation Engineer to meet with Donna at her place of employment to perform a technology/ergonomic assessment. As a result of the work-site assessment, a tablet, desk lamp, telephone headset, paper mount, and a backup safety mirror were ordered and delivered to Donna's work site. As a result of the assistive technology that she received based on the assessment, she has been able to perform all aspects of her job. Donna reports that she feels like more of an asset to the



May 2017						
← Apr 2017						Jun 2017 →
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 SRC Annual Mtg @ Crowne Plaza, 601 Greenwich Ave, Warwick 9 am -12 noon	10	11	12	13
14 Mother's Day	15	16	17	18	19	20 Armed Forces Day
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 Memorial Day State Offices Closed 	30	31	Notes: Mental Health Month Mobility Awareness Month Guide Dog Month Military Appreciation Month		



company because she is able to work at a faster pace and has the ability to answer phones.

Donna's employer has been impressed with the quality of her work and assigned her additional responsibilities which have typically been performed by other staff. In addition to the technology/ergonomic assessment, Donna also received extensive guidance and counseling services, and benefits planning from the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

CLIENT: Natalie Washburn

COUNSELOR: Sharon Thistlewaite-Morra

OCCUPATION: Housekeeper

EMPLOYER: Marriot Hotels

Natalie was referred to ORS through the Rhode Island Works Program from the Department of Human Services (DHS). She supports her 2 children ages 11 & 13 and lives in Jamestown, RI. She was born and raised in Rhode Island and graduated from high school.

Natalie has been diagnosed with fibromyalgia and struggles with panic attacks, which has been a substantial barrier to employment for her. She deals with pain and each day is unsure of what her capacity would be for work. Another barrier to employment was being a single parent and looking for 'mother's hours' in her work position, as she wanted to be there for her children when they come home from school. Natalie also had a barrier of transportation as she lives in Jamestown and does not have a car. She relies on RIPTA for her transportation needs.

Natalie has held a variety of positions throughout her work history including cashier, housekeeping, and kitchen work. She had been unemployed for the past 8 years before coming to ORS for assistance with re-entering the work force. Natalie wanted ORS to help her investigate if she was capable of being a cleaner for hotel rooms or a food preparation cook. She seemed to like these jobs, but feared her pain from fibromyalgia would limit what she could accomplish on a job site. She stated her doctor said she could work 18 hours a week at the time of the assessment.

Natalie participated in a 4-week work preparation program and work try-out as a housekeeper at a Marriot Hotel. She was anxious about returning to work and concerned about her capacity to do the job. However, the assessment proved that she was capable of working and could manage to work part-time. She was enthusiastic about her work assessment site, caught on quickly to assigned tasks, and met the industry standard.



June 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
National Hunger Awareness Month PTSD Awareness Month			1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Flag Day 	15	16	17
18 Father's Day	19	20	21 State Independent Living Council Mtg	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	Notes:



Natalie did so well at her assessment work try-out site that the employer offered her a job!

She uses RIPTA for transportation and utilizes a Day Care site for her children for an after-school program on the days that she needs to work later.

She is happy with her job and plans on staying there.

Congratulations!

CLIENT: Marybeth Caldarone
OCCUPATION: Speech & Language Pathologist

COUNSELOR: Graciela Pires
EMPLOYER: Chariho School System

Marybeth has been successfully employed as a Speech and Language Pathologist at a local middle school for many years despite living with a progressive disability. She was utilizing a wheel chair for ambulation and making necessary adjustments to maintain her employment. However, when she began experiencing vision loss, it prompted her to contact Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VR/SBVI) for services, because she loved her job, but had concerns about her ability to continue to perform her job tasks.

She was struggling with utilizing the computer, reading, and completing paperwork. ORS assisted Marybeth by providing guidance and counseling, information about blindness resources, and an assistive technology assessment to explore and identify appropriate technology that addressed both her physical and visual barriers. Some recommendations identified were updated dictation software for the MacBook, enabling accessibility features on the Mac, updated iPad, and training on dictation software.

Per Marybeth's request, her Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor attended a meeting with her employer to support Marybeth in explaining the necessary recommendations to address her visual and physical needs. The employer was supportive and provided Marybeth with the technology. Marybeth remains in her chosen profession and reports that she is pleased with her increased efficiency and productivity.



July 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4 State Offices closed 	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 Disability (ADA) Awareness Day	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	Notes: July 26 , 1990 - the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted July 22, 2014 - the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 was enacted				

CLIENT: María Matavite
OCCUPATION: Overnight Advocate

COUNSELOR: Rosemarie Aponte
EMPLOYER: Women's Center of Rhode Island

María applied for ORS services in September 2015. She was referred by the North American Family Institute. María has been living in the USA since 2007. She previously worked as a lawyer in her native country of Mexico, defending women who were victims of abuse. Despite María's credentials, she was not allowed to work as a lawyer in the USA. For a long time María tried to find and maintain a job, but it was very difficult for her, not just because of her disability, but also because of a language barrier. When María applied for ORS services she was referred to Goodwill Industries, an approved vendor of ORS, in order to start the Vocational Evaluation process. After completing the evaluation María was referred to the English as a Second Language training in order to improve her communication skills and get ready for the job search.



Once María obtained more confidence in her English skills, she was referred for the Job Development and Placement process with Pam Tonry, an approved vendor. After an extensive job search, María applied for an Overnight Advocate position at the Women's Center of RI. This job directly related to María's experience as a lawyer. After the job interview Maria was hired, and has been working at the Women's Center of RI since July 2016. Today she has a permanent job with a salary increase and all the benefits of a job. María is very grateful for the opportunity that was given to her, and as she expressed one day: **"Without work I was feeling like nobody in this country, but now I feel that I have an identity"**.

Maria, ORS is so pleased that you found a job that matches your skills!

August 2017						
◀ Jul 2017						Sep 2017 ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Never Leave a Child Unattended in a Car Month Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 Victory Day - State Offices Closed	15	16 State Independent Living Council Mtg	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	Notes: Children's Eye Health & Safety Month Children's Vision and Learning Month Purple Ribbon Month	

Raymond A. Carroll Award

The Raymond A. Carroll Award is given to an individual who exemplifies the same dedication in serving individuals with disabilities as Mr. Carroll had during his forty-two years of state service.

Raymond Carroll began his career at the Office of Rehabilitation Services in 1966 and retired in 2008. During that time, he demonstrated his awareness of the needs of individuals with disabilities and was a dedicated and effective advocate for improving the standards set for programs providing services for those individuals with disabilities.

On Wednesday, December 14, 2016 **Paula Stachelek** was extremely surprised when she was presented with the 6th Annual Raymond A. Carroll Award. Paula has worked as a Word Processing Typist for Services at the Blind and Visually Impaired since June 2010, where she provides a variety of support services for administration in the Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired unit.



Past Recipients include:

- Sharon DiPinto - Sr. HSPSS - 2011
- Kathy McCabe - Sr. Rehabilitation Counselor - 2012
- Sherry Olink - Jr. Resource Specialist - 2013
- Teresa Scaramuzzo-DiMattia - VRC II - 2014
- Rosemary Feeney - Sr. HSBO - 2015

September 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
National Deaf Awareness Month Sight Saving Month Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month					1	2
					National Guide Dog Month Suicide Prevention Month	
3	4 Labor Day - State Offices Closed	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 Patriot Day	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19 SRC Executive Leadership Committee Mtg. 4 pm	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 State Independent Living Council Mtg	28	29	30

Targeted Goals

Each year Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and regions are expected to achieve goals in three different areas - Number of Applications Received, Number of Individualized Plan's for Employment (IPE's) Developed, and Number of Successful Closures. For FFY2016, the following Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors achieved all three of these goals:

- Rosemary Aponte (Region # 1)
- Paula Berard (Region #1)
- Carolyn Blessing (Region #4)
- Manny Carbuccia (Region #3)
- Elizabeth Champagne (Region #3)
- Shayna Cogswell (Region #3)
- Nicole Crossett (Region #2)
- Teresa DiMattia (Region #1)
- Rebecca Dines-Nyeswa (Region #1)
- Karen Dougherty (Region #1)
- Kristen Livesey (Region #5)
- Sheridan Lomax (Region #1)
- Michael Lombardi (Region #3)
- Diana Marcotte (Region #1)
- Kathy McCabe (Region #5)

- Kayleigh McCarthy (Region #3)
- Jeffrey Milette (Region #3)
- Sheila Moffat (Region #2)
- Natalia Montoya (Region #2)
- Kathleen Neun (Region #4)
- Teresa O'Brien (Region #4)
- Sandra Perez (Region #3)
- Karen Russell (Region #4)
- Sharon Thistlewaite-Morra (Region #5)
- Valerie Williams (Region #1)

Regions I and III also met all three goals.

VR Counselors who met their goals for Number of Applications and Successful Closures included:

- Bonnie Flanagan
- Jeff Milette

VR Counselors who met their goals for Number of IPE's Developed and Successful Closures included:

- Avis Gunther-Rosenberg
- Grace Pires

VR Counselors who met their goals for IPE's Developed included:

- Kelley Conti

VR Counselors who met their goals for Number of Successful Closures included:

- Jane Cannata
- Cynthia Hebert
- Emilee O'Conner
- Michaela Stannard

October 2017						
◀ Sep 2017						Nov 2017 ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 SRC Full Council Mtg 4 - 6 pm	4	5	6	7
8	9 Columbus Day - State Offices Closed	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 State Independent Living Council Mtg	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 Halloween 	Notes: National Disability Employment Awareness Month Diversity Awareness Month Breast Cancer Awareness Month Depression Education and Awareness Month			

Individual Achievement Awards for Meeting All Goals (*Regions Meeting All Goals)



Region 1*



Region 3*



Region 2



Region 4



Region 5

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Alzheimer's Awareness Month Diabetes Awareness Month Epilepsy Awareness Month Hospice Awareness Month			1	2	3	4
5 Daylight Savings Begins	6	7 SRC Executive Leadership Committee Mtg - 4pm	8	9	10	11 Veterans Day
12	13 State Offices Closed in celebration of Veterans Day	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 SRC Full Council Mtg 4 - 6 pm	22	23 Thanksgiving 	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	Notes:	



Statistics

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	8	9
10	11	12	13 State Independent Living Council Meeting	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 Winter Begins	22	23
24 	25 Christmas Day State Offices Closed	26	27	28	29	30
31 New Year's Eve	Notes: 					

Standard I Employment Outcomes

Indicator	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Indicator 1.1 - Number of Employment Outcomes - Federal Standard Equal to or greater than prior year	159 greater	116 less	1 greater	5 greater	35 greater	8 Greater
Indicator 1.2 - The percentage of individuals who exited the VR Program after receiving services who achieved an employment outcome. (Federal Standard - 55.8%)	60.18%	28.80%	58.90%	59.60%	69.2%	61.6%
Indicator 1.3 - The percentage of individuals who achieved an employment outcome and are earning at least the minimum wage. (Federal Standard - 72.6%)	97.52%	99.20%	99.80%	99.3%	99.7%	99.8%
Indicator 1.4 -Competitively Employed (minimum wage or higher) who have a Significant Disability Federal Standard - 62.40%	98.31%	98.80%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Indicator 1.5 -Earnings Ratio of Minimum Wage or higher for ORS vs. State Average Federal Standard - Ratio of .52	.500	.500	.500	.500	.510	.500
Indicator 1.6 - Self-Support (report own income at closure vs. own income at application) Federal Standard 53% mathematical difference	67.28%	70.10%	64.10%	64.40%	64.30%	62.0%
Standard 2 Minority Ratio Equal Access to Services Federal Standard Ratio of .80 for n=100+	.910	.730	.840	.799	.840	.85

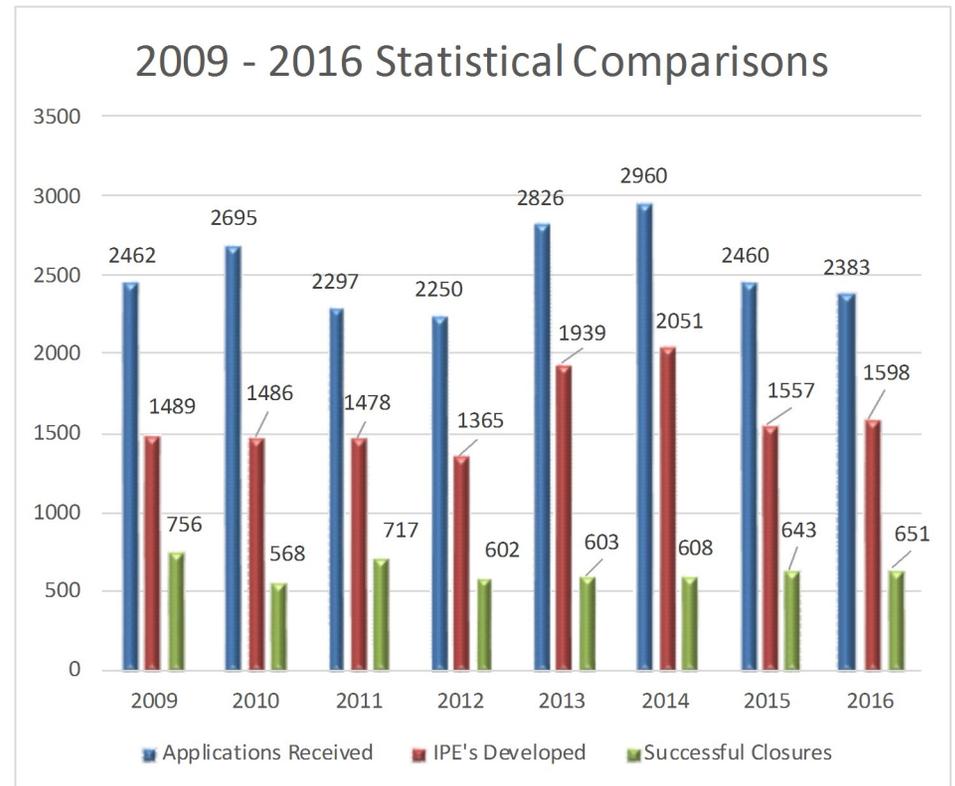
Program Highlights – Federal Fiscal Year 2016

October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

651 individuals were successfully employed

- 2,383 individuals applied for vocational rehabilitation services.
- 1,598 individuals worked with a vocational rehabilitation counselor to develop a new Individualized Plan for Employment [IPE].
- 4,519 individuals received services purchased from vendors. Services ranged from evaluations, medical and psychological therapies, personal assistant services, job placement and training.
- 138 individuals received rehabilitation technology services to assist them to prepare for and to enter employment.
- 1,003 youth with disabilities ages 14-24 received transition services of which 740 are currently in high school.



Statistics - 651 Successfully Employed Individuals with Disabilities

Hourly Wage

< \$9.00	1
\$9.01 - \$15.00	554
\$15.01 - \$20.00	55
\$20.01 - \$25.00	23
> \$25.00	18

Age at Application

< 25 yrs	210
25 - 35 yrs	160
36 - 45 yrs	128
46 - 60 yrs	142
61 yrs or >	11

Primary Occupation

Homemaker	1
Blind Vending Facility	1
Health Occupations	15
Production Occupations	15
Management, Business & Financial Occupations	18
Computer, Engineering & Science Occupations	19
Construction & Extraction Occupations	20
Education, Legal, Community Services, Arts and Media	30
Installation, Maintenance & Repair Occupations	30
Transportation Occupations	30
Sales Occupations	63
Office & Administrative Support Occupations	159
Service Occupations	250

Gender

Male	355
Female	296

Primary Disability

Respiratory	3
Communicative	10
Visual Impairments	22
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	31
Physical	38
Neurological	41
Cognitive	287
Emotional	286

Race

White	555
Black	104
Indian/Alaskan	14
Asian	11
Pacific Islander	2
Hispanic	118

Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired (SBVI)

- 14 Vending facilities were supported by the Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprises Program (BEP) at Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Though most locations are single operators, these 14 facilities collectively also provide employment for numerous individuals around the state.
 - 2 BEP vendors retired from the program this year, creating upward mobility for current vendors and a new recruitment opportunity for the program.
 - 1 New site is under construction with an anticipated to be operating in 2018.
- Collectively, the RI BEP sites gross sales totaled approximately \$ 1.47 million in FFY2016 with an average net vendor earnings of \$33,000.
- 492 individuals were registered for NEWSLINE, a newspaper reading service of which 12 recently signed up.
 - 479 elderly individuals who are blind or visually impaired received services from the Independent Living for Older Blind Program. Services included: .81 % assisted technology devices; 39 % assisted technology services; 55% communication and daily living skills services; 43 % mobility services
 - 81% of this group feel in greater control and are more confident in their ability after receiving services.
 - 1,800 individuals received information from Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP) Resource Centers about assistive technology (AT) and funding options.
 - 1,672 individuals received AT training, demonstration, loans or assistance with recycled AT devices.
 - 292 individuals were provided specialized equipment through the ATEL (Adaptive Telephone Equipment Loan) Program.
 - 10,879 Presentations were made on Assistive Technology devices and services.
 - 89,213 AT Newsletters were distributed via mail and email.

Disability Determination Services (DDS)

<u>19,092</u>	total cases were received by the Disability Determination Services (DDS).
<u>18,561</u>	claims were successfully processed by the DDS.
<u>9,474</u>	initial claims were filed.
<u>4,520</u>	Continuing Disabilities Review cases were completed.
<u>541</u>	Pre-Hearing Cases were processed, resulting in <u>363</u> Disability Hearing Unit decisions.
<u>5,819</u>	cases with Consultative Examinations were purchased.
<u>15,920</u>	cases with Medical Evidence of Record were purchased.
<u>\$21,739</u>	total Medical Costs with a Total Budget of <u>\$10,152,713</u>
<u>\$541.75</u>	cost per case.

Production Per Work Year (PPWY) efficiency rate was 341. The national rate was 313.
The performance accuracy rate for RI was 95.6%. The net accuracy was 97.4%. The national rate was 95.8%.
The regulatory standard is 97%. The Failure threshold is 90.6%.

**Based on the Monthly Obligation Report for 9/2016.*



State Rehabilitation Council

Message from the SRC Chair

Dear Consumers, Families, Friends, Partners and Stakeholders:

Highlights

As the 2016 Chairperson of the Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), I am pleased to report to you that the SRC has had a very successful year meeting its goals and re-energizing the membership to fully meet its mandated responsibilities. In this report, you will be provided with an overview of our accomplishments of the past year, projects we are working on this program year, detailed reports from the subcommittees that do the work of the Council, and a list of SRC members with brief biographies of those members and the constituency each member represents.



It is my hope that this report will energize the SRC membership as we reflect on the work we have done in the past year and look forward to the new program year. I also hope that his report will energize others to join the SRC and help complete our important work in helping all Rhode Islanders find meaningful work.

Mission

To work with ORS assuring that all Rhode Islanders with disabilities are able to obtain and keep meaningful and satisfying employment.

Vision

The SRC is an independent body of diverse members that works together

- * to insure continuous improvement in ORS employment outcomes;
- * enhances communication among all people and groups committed to increase opportunity for people with disabilities;
- * increases employer awareness of people with disabilities as a productive human resource pool; and
- * has the respect of decision-makers in the allocation of resources.

Message from the SRC Chair (cont.)

Partners

- ◆ Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS)
- ◆ Rhode Island State Independent Living Council (RI SILC)
- ◆ Governor's Workforce Board
- ◆ Governor's Commission on Disabilities (GCD)
- ◆ National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC)

Goals of the Council

The State Rehabilitation is charged with meeting the following goals:

- ◆ Review, analyze, and advise the Office of Rehabilitation Services regarding the performance of the responsibilities of the Agency in planning, developing and implementing services to persons with disabilities in order to affect competitive employment outcomes.
- ◆ Advise and assist in the application of State Plans, Strategic plans, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required under the Rehabilitation Act as amended.
- ◆ Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of consumer satisfaction with the functions and activities of the State Agency as they relate to employment outcomes.
- ◆ Advise the State Agency and provide for working relationships between the State Agency and the Statewide Independent Living Council and centers for independent living within the State.
- ◆ Coordinate with other councils within the State to insure the effective and efficient delivery of services in order to attain employment outcomes.
- ◆ Perform such other functions as the Council deems appropriate and that are comparable to the other functions performed by the Council.
- ◆ Prepare and submit an Annual Report to the Governor and the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Message from the SRC Chair (cont.)

Our Accomplishments

During the 2016 program year, the SRC actively participated in the development of the ORS component of the Rhode Island Unified Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan. Several members of the SRC, ably led by Ms. Catherine Sansonetti, Chair of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee, spent many hours reviewing and commenting on the ORS proposals providing constructive feedback to our ORS colleagues. While not all of the SRC's suggested revisions were accepted by ORS, the SRC fulfilled its responsibility to "...advise and assist in the application of State Plans."

To acknowledge the work of outstanding individuals or organizations in providing services to those with disabilities within the state of Rhode Island, the SRC established an SRC Service Award. This award will first be given in the spring of 2017 and annually thereafter. We believe that an award such as this can increase the visibility of the very good work that many individuals do in providing services to those with disabilities. Moreover, an award such as this can validate the importance of that work as well. To solicit and select a winner of the SRC service award, an ad hoc subcommittee has been formed under the leadership of Jack Ringland.

Another significant responsibility of the SRC is to work collaboratively with ORS in the design and completion of a Consumer Needs Assessment (CNA). The most recent CNA completed by ORS had a limited survey scope in determining the needs of persons with disabilities. Given the new requirements of WIOA, it was felt that a more comprehensive CNA was needed. Several members of the SRC participated in five separate subcommittees surveying the various stakeholders in the CNA process. Once the data was collected, SRC members met collaboratively with ORS leadership to interpret and draw conclusions about existing needs.

Message from the SRC Chair (cont.)

Looking Ahead

As we approach our new program year, we look forward to continuing to provide advice to ORS as it strives to operationalize its State Plan, the very first State Plan responding to the mandates of WIOA. We look forward to hearing from ORS of the progress it is making in implementing that Plan on an ongoing basis. As of the writing of this report, the final report on the CNA has yet to be completed. The SRC looks forward to reviewing and providing comment on that report once it is issued.

We also will continue to keep abreast of the progress the State of Rhode Island and ORS is making in fulfilling its responsibilities under the Rhode Island Supported Employment and Integrated Day Service Consent Decree. We recognize that the Consent Decree is key to meeting the needs of some of Rhode Island's most vulnerable citizens with disabilities and our awareness of the State's efforts to meet the needs of these citizens is of importance to the Council.

During this program year, we will for the very first time develop a resource plan focused upon assisting the SRC in meeting its mandated goals. In order to make this happen an ad hoc subcommittee under the leadership of former Chairperson of the Council Jeff Machado will examine all aspects of the work of the SRC and identify the resources that are needed to carry out that work. That subcommittee will consider all aspects of the SRC including personnel costs (salaries and wages, fringe benefits, consultants), training, space, equipment purchase or rental, travel, copier, telephone, general office supplies, etc. This work will ultimately lead to the development of a program budget that will be presented to the Office of Rehabilitation Services.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gail M. Lawson, PhD

Chairperson of the State Rehabilitation Council

State Rehabilitation Council - Officers

Officers

Gail M. Lawson, PhD, is the Chairperson of the State Rehabilitation Council. Gail is Ex-Officio on the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance, and the Membership Training, as well as the newly formed Resource, and SRC Awards committees. She sits on the Council Representing a Community Rehabilitation Provider. Gail Lawson, PhD has served as the Chairperson of the Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council for the past two years. Prior to that she served as Co-chairperson for one year and Secretary for two years. Professionally Dr. Lawson has held a variety of positions in the mental health and education fields during her professional career.

Prior to her retirement in 2014, she served as the chief executive officer of a community mental health agency for nine years, and as director of Administrative services for public school districts for thirteen years. Prior to those positions she served as faculty at Rhode Island College, a program administrator at Community College of Rhode Island and adjunct faculty at the University of Rhode Island. Dr. Lawson is a certified school psychologist. Currently she is adjunct faculty at Salve Regina University in the Rehabilitation Counseling program.

Jeffrey D. Machado, is the Vice-Chairperson of the Council and sits on the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee and will Chair the newly formed Resource ad hoc Committee. He sits on the Council representing a Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider. Jeffrey D. Machado, President/CEO Goodwill Industries of Rhode Island. Jeff graduated from Bryant College in 1975 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, majoring in accounting. He joined the CPA firm of Goluses & Brown, CPA's in June 1975, where he rose from staff accountant to manager before leaving in 1986 to become the Controller for the Hudson Companies in Providence, one of his audit clients. He was promoted to Corporate Controller in 1990 and continued to work

State Rehabilitation Council - Officers (cont.)

at the Hudson Companies until June of 1996 when he joined Goodwill Industries of Rhode Island as the Chief Financial Officer. Due to job consolidation, he soon assumed the role of Human Resource Manager in addition to his financial responsibilities. In 2003, Jeff was promoted to Chief Operating Officer of Goodwill Industries of Rhode Island and in May of 2007 assumed the role of President and Chief Executive Officer. He obtained a Certificate in Human Resources from Bryant University in 2006.

He has served on the Board of Directors of Vocational Resources, Inc., the Board of Trustees of the Rhode Island Chapter of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, and the Board of Directors of the East Providence Little League (Treasurer 1995-2000), as well as the New England Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program Advisory Committee. He currently serves on the Providence/Cranston Workforce Investment Board, the Finance Committee of the Rhode Island Disability Law Center and is Vice-Chairperson of the Governor's Board of the Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council. Mr. Machado has been married to his wife Jeanne for forty years and they have two grown children and two granddaughters.

Lea Colardo, is Co-Secretary of the Council and Co-Chairperson of the Membership Training Committee. She sits on the Council as a representative of a Disability Advocacy Group representing individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, or mental disabilities who have difficulty in representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves.

Lea has been a member of the State Rehabilitation Council for four years and Co-chairperson for the Transition Committee and the Training Committee. She has been an Educational Advocate for ten years at The Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island College where she is also a member of the Leadership Team and the Transition to Life ad hoc Team Leader. She is appointed by the Rhode Island Department of Education to make educational decisions on behalf of students that are in the care of

State Rehabilitation Council - Officers (cont.)

the Rhode Island Department of Youth, Children and Families. In the past, she was employed as a Transition Coordinator and Employment Specialist at The Providence Center.

Jack Ringland, is Co-Secretary of the Council and a member of the Membership Training Committee and he will Chair the newly formed SRC Awards ad-hoc Committee. He sits on the Council representing individuals with physical disabilities, and representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) established under Section 796(d) of this Title, which representative may be Chairperson or other designee of the Council.

Jack has been disabled since 2008. He became a member of the (SILC) and just completed his first three year term and has been a member of the Council since November 2013. He assists in coordinating the Cross Disability Coalition meetings as part of the Developmental Disabilities Council. Jack is also a Commissioner on the Governor's Commission on Disabilities and Chairperson of the Accessibility Committee and Co-Chairperson of the Legislative Committee.

Maryellen T. Hagerty, is Co-Chairperson of the Membership Training Committee. She sits on the Council representing Education and Disability Advocacy Groups representing a cross section of: parents, family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives, of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty in representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to represent themselves.

Maryellen is an Educational Advocate at The Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island College. She has held the position of Educational Advocate for the past twenty two years, first at the Office of the Child Advocate and for the past twelve years

State Rehabilitation Council - Officers (cont.)

at the Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island College. As an Educational Advocate, she is appointed by the Rhode Island Department of Education to make educational decisions for students with disabilities who are in the care and custody of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families and whose parents are not available to act on their behalf. Maryellen is a member of the Leadership team at the Sherlock Center. She has been a member of the State Rehabilitation Council for four years and is part of the Leadership of the Council.

Catherine Sansonetti, is the Chairperson of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee. She sits on the Council as the current designee for Raymond Bandusky representing, the Client Assistance Program established under section 732 of this title under 43 CFR part 370.

Catherine is a Staff Attorney at the Rhode Island Disability Law Center and has been a member of the Council for four terms. During her tenor she served as Secretary of the Council, and on the Transportation ad hoc Committee. She has been the driving force behind the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee for all the years of her service on the Council. Catherine actively works on the Consumer Satisfaction Surveys and the Comprehensive Needs Assessments, always mindful of the Council's Mission.

State Rehabilitation Council—Members

Christina Battista, is a member of the Membership Training Committee. She sits on the Council, representing current or former applicants for, or recipients of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Christina is currently a student at Salve Regina University in the Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling program. She served on the Rhode Island Statewide Independent Living Council for several years. She is entering her second term on the Council.

Margaret 'Peggy' Benz, is a member of the Membership Training Committee. She sits on the Council, representing Business, Industry and Labor, and current or former applicants for Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Peggy currently is employed with the Workplace/Platform to Employment which addresses the needs of the long-term unemployed to return to work and the employer needs to recruit skilled workers in Rhode Island. Previously, Peggy was the Executive Director of a regional adult literacy and workforce training program nonprofit and also worked at the Rhode Island Educational Opportunity Center at the Community College of Rhode Island. While pursuing her Master of Science Degree in Community Development from Illinois State University, Peggy worked for People First of Illinois, a member-driven self-advocacy organization. People First is committed to empowering and improving the lives of people with disabilities to make their own decisions and choices and to speak for themselves so that all people with disabilities are treated equally, as active members of their communities.

Christine Botts, is a member of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee. She sits on the Council representing a Community Rehabilitation Service Provider and individuals who have difficulty representing themselves. Christine has over ten years' experience as an Administrator for the State of Rhode Island, specializing in employment programs for individuals with developmental disabilities and behavioral health issues. Most recently she has served on the State Committee for the Consent Decree. This committee is responsible for developing employment policies and procedures for individuals with developmental disabilities and ensuring they are employed in the most integrated setting making at least minimum wage.

State Rehabilitation Council—Members (cont.)

Christine helped write the Employment First Policy, as well as the Career Development Plan for the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals. Currently she is on the State team for the Home and Community Based services. She was one of the winning grant writers for the Lean Government Initiative. She has led several projects for the Department including a Transportation pilot project, the Coordinated Transportation Exchange.

Rocco Bruno, is a member of the Membership Training Committee. He sits on the Council representing Business, Industry, and Labor. Rocco was the Manager of the Provider Audit and Reimbursement Department for the Medicare Program in the states of Mississippi and Louisiana. In his tenor on the Council, he was an active member of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee and instrumental in bringing new members to the Council. He is responsible for updating the Council on the NCSRC events and meetings as well as to help mentor new members and plan for the training events.

Cynthia M. Cote, is a member of the Membership Training Committee. She sits on the Council representing Business, Industry, and Labor. Cynthia is currently employed at Lifespan; on Rhode Island Hospital Campus. She is a Registered Nurse with experiences in Coronary Care, Intensive Care, and Medical -Surgical Nursing. Cynthia is a Certified Senior Clinical Documentation Specialist with the Department of Clinical Documentation Integrity. Her other experience has come in the Department of Internal Audit/Corporate Compliance. She has experiences include: over nine years' employment regarding the Federal Medicare Program in the areas of Medical Review and Provider Education Membership Training.

Dr. Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, is a member of the Membership Training Committee. She sits on the Council representing a Community Rehabilitation Service Provider. Mona is a physician by training, and a public health specialist. She has expertise as an international cross cultural/diversity consultant, a university lecturer, a vocational rehabilitation school administration. Mona is a musician who is also fluent in French, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and English.

State Rehabilitation Council—Members (cont.)

Judith L. Drew, Ph.D., CRC, is a member of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee. She sits on the Council representing a Community Rehabilitation Service Provider. Judi was just elected to fill the Vice-Chairperson seat, starting in November 2016. Dr. Drew is the president of VocWorks in Cumberland, Rhode Island. She has been in private practice for over twenty five years and focuses on career and rehabilitation counseling, school to work transition assessments, vocational expert testimony, and vocational assessment. She also conducts staff development and training for-profit and non-profit organizations on disability awareness, employment of people with disabilities and vocational assessment and job coaching. Dr. Drew obtained her Ph.D. from The Ohio State University in Rehabilitation Services. She has been teaching Rehabilitation Counseling courses in higher education institutions for over twenty five years. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor at Salve Regina University where she is the Program Director for the MA degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. In addition, she frequently has been a guest lecturer and speaker for regional, national and international conferences on vocational assessment and transition issues for youth with disabilities. Dr. Drew's research and writing interests include evidence-based practice models for vocational assessment, career counseling with underserved populations, and the intersection between governmental disability employment policies and the real world implementation and application of those policies.

Joan Fino, is a member of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee. She sits on the Council representing a Parent Training and Information Center established pursuant to Section 1431(e)(1) of Title 20). Ms. Fino has been a family leader for twenty years advocating for her own children's needs and navigating many systems, which include: Special Education, Mental Health, Child Welfare, Office of Rehabilitation and social service systems. Joan is a parent of two children ranging in ages from 21-24, who have struggled with ADHD, anxiety, depression, and OCD. Her vast experience with navigating through these systems has given her the knowledge and resources to help others. Professionally, Joan has been working one on one with families for over ten years, helping them navigate systems of care and meet their needs. In addition to her role on the Council since 2008, Joan is a

State Rehabilitation Council - Members (cont.)

committee member on “Christmas Is”, helping disadvantaged children in West Warwick. She has facilitated workshops on ADHD and education. She has worked for many years with Youth in Transition and adults to help them get accommodations and advocate for themselves to get them ready for life after high school and work training. Her present position at Parent Support Network is SOC Family Evaluator. She helps to engage, empower and interview those involved in the Child Welfare System and give them a voice. She works one on one with educational families in schools, courts and hospitals to help parents learn how to advocate for themselves. Joan has completed the Wrightslaw special education workshop, Safety and Restraint certification, and is in the process of being certification as a Peer Recovery Specialist. Joan’s additional trainings include; Train the Trainer and Grant Writing workshops, National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services, Ability Training Response, and Crisis Management as well as Non-Violent Physical Restraint Using the Behavior Management System. She actively works on the Strategic Planning on the Office of Rehabilitation Services State Plan, and the Comprehensive Needs Assessments.

Elizabeth Graves, is a member of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee. She sits on the Council representing a Disability Advocacy Group representing individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, or mental disabilities. “Liz” is a retired Special Education Teacher. She is a member of the Governor’s Advisory Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and a former member of the Statewide Independence Living Council. She has been an advocate for the elderly and blind for many years, focusing on independent living and ADA rights.

Dr. Yohan Greaves, in a member of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee. He sits on the Council as a representative of Disability Advocacy Group representing parents, family, guardians, advocates or authorized, representatives of Individuals with disabilities who have difficulty in representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to representing themselves.

State Rehabilitation Council - Members (cont.)

Paul Harden, is a member of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee. He sits on the Council as a representative of Business, Industry, and Labor. Paul is the Director of Transportation Technology at the New England Institute of Technology. He oversees Transportation related degreed programs which include, Advanced Automotive Technology, Auto Body Repair and Marine Technology Programs.

Barbara Henry, is a member of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee. She sits on the Council representing individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory disabilities.

Diana Kriner, is a member of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee. She sits on the Council representing a Parent Training and Information Center established pursuant to Section 1431(e)(1) of Title 20). Diana joined the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN) team in 2004 and serves as the Transition Manager, specifically in the area of students with disabilities transitioning from school to adulthood. She brings twenty two years of personal experience to this position navigating special education and medical services for her daughter with autism. She is currently working in the area of transition with youth ages 14-26 and provides general oversight of all aspects of the education program transition services including staff supervision and support and data collection and reporting. Her role requires the development and fostering of effective working relationships with schools, state and community-based agencies who support children and youth with disabilities, particularly groups focusing on transition from school to adult life. Her monthly committee work includes representing (RIPIN) at Rhode Island's Regional Transition Coordinators meetings, State Transition Council, and the State Rehabilitation Council.

Lori Norris, M.Ed., is a member of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee. She sits on the Council representing a Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider and individuals with cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities.

State Rehabilitation Council - Members (cont.)

Lori is the Director of the National Center for Innovation and System Improvement (NCISI). She brings over twenty one years' experience in the areas of workforce development for people with and without disabilities, PK-16 education, alternative education, adult education and educational vocational and transition services for youth with disabilities. Prior to joining the (NCISI), an entity that provides technical assistance and training to federal, state and community based agencies that serve individuals with I/DD, Lori was the Administrator for Workforce Development for the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) and is the former CEO of Goodwill Industries of Rhode Island. Lori is a graduate of the University of Rhode Island and holds a Master's in Education from the University of Massachusetts.

Daniel C. Pieroni, is a member of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee. He sits on the Council representing a Current or former applicants for, or recipients of, Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Dan works as a substitute teacher in the Scituate School Department, and is very active in serving youth in transition as a member of the Southern Rhode Island Transition Center's traveling student panel. In the past he has lent his time and talent to worthy causes like the Rhode Island Youth Leadership Forum, and the Rhode Island Committee for Assistive Technology (RICAT).

Vincent Rossi, is a member of the Membership Training Committee. He sits on the Council as a representative of Disability Advocacy Group representing parents, family, guardians, advocates or authorized representatives of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty in representing themselves or are unable due to their disabilities to representing themselves. Vincent is a Statewide Coordinator of Employment and Training Programs at the Department of Labor and Training. Vincent graduated from Bryant University with a Master of Business Administration in Management and Rhode Island College with a Master of Arts in Agency Counseling. Motivated by a passion for human rights, Vincent is dedicated to educating, advocating and raising awareness of the abilities and challenges of the disability population on a local and State level. Vincent participates in several local organizations helping to spread disability awareness and create change within the community.

State Rehabilitation Council - Members (cont.)

Jane Slade, MA, CRC, is a member of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee. She sits on the Council as a representative the State Educational Agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities who are eligible to receive services under this subchapter and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. [20 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.]

Jane has been employed as the State Transition Coordinator with the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), Office of Student, Community and Academic Supports (OSCAS) since June 2011. Core functions of this office include Special Education policy/program development & oversight; IDEA State Performance Plan Indicators; Liaison to School Support System visits; State Councils and RIDE- wide developmental work. Ms. Slade's additional focus area of responsibilities include Secondary Transition; Secondary Reform/PBGR; Post-secondary Outcomes; Interagency/Adult Services and she is the Chair of the Rhode Island Transition Council. Prior to coming to the State Department of Education, she served as the Northern Rhode Island Regional Transition Coordinator, serving youth, parents and professionals in secondary Transition. Jane holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Rhode Island and a Master's degree from Assumption College. She is also a Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. She has been a member of the State Rehabilitation Council for five years.

Willa Truelove, is a member of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee. She sits on the Council as a representative of individuals with disabilities who have difficulty in representing themselves or are unable, due to their disabilities, to represent themselves.

Willa is a dedicated advocate for the most underserved populations in Rhode Island. She is a culturally diverse activist and tireless in her efforts of outreach to those in the most need. She is very competent in networking especially to outreach those in need. In addition to her compassion and charitable approach, she also brings a street knowledge and practical nature to everything she does. Willa is an artist and very active in promoting an inclusive artist community in Rhode Island.

State Rehabilitation Council - Members (cont.)

Marilyn Walaska, is a member of the Membership Training Committee. She sits on the Council representing Business, Industry, and Labor.

Mr. Kim Wennermark, is a member of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee and the By-Laws ad-hoc Committee. He sits on the Council representing the Veterans Administration, Office of Rehabilitation Services consumers, current or former applicants for, or recipients of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Diana Siravo-Marcotte, MA, is a member of the Membership Training Committee. She sits on the Council as Liaison for the Office of Rehabilitation Services as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor with Knowledge of and Experience with Vocational Programs.

Diana is a VRC II and has been working for the Office of Rehabilitation Services for fourteen years serving the mental health population. In addition to her work with the Council, she is also the liaison to The Providence Center.

Ronald Racine, Associate Director

Kathleen Grygiel, Administrator, Vocational Rehabilitation

Laurie DiOrio, Administrator of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Linda Deschenes, Assistant Administrator of Operations

John Valentine, Strategic Planning Supervisor

Nancy Baker, SRC Facilitator/Contact

State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee Report

Highlights

The State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is responsible for communication with the Agency about its plans and policies in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act. The committee also participates in reviewing the quality of services delivery to ORS customers and continuous quality improvement. Members on the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee are: Christine Botts, Judith Drew, Joan Fino, Liz Graves, Yohann Greaves, Paul Harden, Barbara Henry, Diana Kriner, Gail Lawson, Jeffrey Machado, Lori Norris, Daniel Pieroni, Catherine Sansonetti, Jane Slade, Willa Truelove, and Mr. Kim Wennermark.

Our Accomplishments

This year, ORS was required to develop a Combined State Plan. The committee provided input to the State Plan via meetings with ORS, via letters, and by providing testimony at its public hearing. There were some difficulties this year with the new format, however, the SRC and ORS were able to work together to ensure that many of the SRC concerns were addressed. We are looking forward to continuous improvement in our communications with ORS regarding the State Plan.

The committee routinely provides comment to ORS on its proposed policy changes. In 2016, the SRC committee provided comment to ORS on proposed changes to its Supported Employment Policy. The Agency made changes to the legal framework of the policy in order to comply with WIOA. In addition, the SRC provided written comments to ORS on its Order of Selection Policy, and we suggested that the Agency open its waitlist for some waiting list members in order to provide services to maintain employment pursuant. We also commented on the ORS Post-Secondary Education and Vocational Rehabilitation policy and

State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee (cont.)

encouraged the Agency to retain client rights information within the policy. The SRC received timely responses from ORS regarding our concerns.

This year, the Agency conducted its Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA), which is required under the Rehabilitation Act to assess the vocational rehabilitation needs of the disability community. The committee jointly developed a Time Line for the CNA. The SRC and ORS worked together to identify five ad hoc committees to gather data and develop tools for the CNA.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Catherine Sansonetti

**Catherine Sansonetti,
Chairperson of the State Plan, Policy and Quality Assurance Committee**

Training Committee Report

Highlights

This Committee is charged with the interviewing, orientation, and the training of new members, including disseminating materials and planning an annual training event and establishing and maintaining a mentoring program for new members for their first year on the Council. The Training Committee is comprised of members who bring different perspectives to the training process. Members on the Training Committee are: Christina Battista, Cynthia Cote, Gail Lawson, Jack Ringland, Lea Colardo, Maryellen T. Hagerty, Margret Benz, Marilyn Walaska, Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Rocco Bruno, Vincent Rossi, and Diana Marcotte.

Our Accomplishments

The Training Committee met several times throughout the spring of 2016 and will continue to meet. We gathered information from various sources from the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils website to include in a binder and power point presentation for current members and new members to review so they have a comprehensive understanding of the history, laws, and role of the State Rehabilitation Council in relation to our local VR Agency, the Office of Rehabilitation Services. In addition, we will include a short documentary about people with disabilities in the workplace titled, "Employment can WORK for you." It features Christina Battista, one of our Training Committee members. The documentary was produced for Rhodes to

Training Committee Report (cont.)

Independence and the Rhode Island Developmental Disability Council. It educates employers that people with disabilities are able to work like anyone else and should motivate others to seek employment. The Office of Rehabilitation Services will provide an overview of how to best access their service and the variety of supports they can offer to people with disabilities who want to work.

Lea Colardo, Training Committee Co-chairperson, has attended two of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils conference in the past two years representing Rhode Island's SRC. This year's conference was held in San Diego on November 5 and 6, 2016. Lea learned the latest information related to the future role of the SRC under WIOA, the importance of consumer satisfaction surveys, and maximizing the potential of the SRC. The information and materials Lea gathered will be reviewed and incorporated into the training. The Training Committee will continue to meet to determine which materials are most valuable for new and current members. The NCSRC will be posting updated training modules to their website which the Training Committee plans to review and include in the first annual Training Day, scheduled for the summer of 2017.

On September 6, 2016, the Training Committee completed a trial review of the training presentation and materials. The Training Committee will continue to meet to integrate the feedback from our trial presentation and the new materials Lea has gathered so we can improve and be ready for a wonderful training day.

Training Committee Report (cont.)

Looking Ahead

Nancy Baker has been collecting all training materials, including biographies from all State Rehabilitation Council members, to include in the training binder so new and current members will have the most updated resources for their needs.

This Committee is dedicated to keep members up-to-date on all things SRC! We look forward to our first training event and the establishment of protocols for future training events as well as the establishment of a mentoring process.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Lea Colardo & Maryellen Hagerty

Lea Colardo & Maryellen T. Hagerty

Co-Chairpersons, Membership Training Committee

2016 Annual Meeting... May 10, 2016 ... Crowne Plaza Hotel, Warwick



3rd Row: Vin Rossi, Ron Racine, Christine Botts, Maryellen Hagarty, Lea Colardo, Christine Phaneuf (guest), Rocco Bruno, Linda Deschenes, Willa Truelove, Paul Harden, Nancy Baker

2nd Row: Catherine Sansonetti, Dan Pieroni, Jane Slade, Marilyn Walaska, Cindy Cote, Mona Dorsinville-Phanor, Diana Marcotte, John Valentine, Mike Montanaro

1st Row: Christine Battista, Jack Ringland, Gail Lawson (Chair), Jeff Machado



National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils, Inc.

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for the Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) is an active long-time member of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). The NCSRC strives to cultivate the strengths and necessary expertise of local SRCs, increase the capacity of SRCs through education & training to become effective partners in the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program. As each SRC maintains their respective individuality, the NCSRC provides a national resource to those Councils who may need to connect with a peer state on issues along with providing a mechanism for training with subject matter experts.

NCSRC MISSION:

On behalf of people with disabilities, our national membership coalition will advocate for and work in partnership with the national public vocational rehabilitation system's continual quest for excellence.

NCSRC VISION:

NCSRC will be the premiere national organization of the consumer voice to enhance the employment opportunities of persons with disabilities through the public vocational rehabilitation system.

NCSRC CORE VALUES:

INTEGRITY - We are honest and straightforward in all that we do. We treat everyone with dignity and respect. We act responsibly with resources entrusted to us. We are accountable and act in accordance with these values.

COMMITMENT – We support the full implementation and enforcement of disability non – discrimination laws, particularly the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990.

EXCELLENCE – We trust that customers of public vocational rehabilitation will be empowered to make choices which lead to ultimate independence.

ADVOCACY – We will work to educate and inform the public and government policy makers regarding issues affecting people with disabilities

National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils, Inc. (cont.)

DIVERSITY – We will uphold a broad definition of diversity that honors and appreciates disability alongside race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, and religion as an integral part of the human experience.

LEADERSHIP – We will foster leadership among people with disabilities that upholds excellence, quality and inclusive opportunities.

PARTNERSHIP – We will promote a positive collaboration with state and non-governmental agencies to enhance meaningful and sustainable employment for people with disabilities.

TEAMWORK – We are committed to a partnership based on a spirit of trust and cooperation with Vocational Rehabilitation Administrators and staff so that collaborative efforts will benefit from the NCSRC customer voice.

CULTURE – We support a public vocational rehabilitation service system that is structured in a manner that reflects the social, political, historic, and economic experience of disability.

COMMUNICATION – We value effective communication through appropriate formats.

The NCSRC currently consists of 53 SRCs of states and territories that provide public VR services. In addition to conference calls every two months, the NCSRC hosts two training conferences each year that coincide with the national meetings of the Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) in collaboration with the Rehabilitation Services

The SRC Chair, Gail Lawson attended the April 16-17, 2016 leadership and training session in Bethesda, MD.

The Co-Chair of the Membership Training Committee, Lea Colardo, attended the November 5-6, 2016 training conference in San Diego, CA.

For more information about the NCSRC, please go to <http://www.ncsrc.net>.



Cover picture was painted by:
Michelle Peloquin

Michelle Peloquin began drawing when she was three years old. As a child she enjoyed viewing art, especially the work of Grandma Moses and Monet. Today, she makes art at Flying Shuttles Studio. Michelle says, "I use geometric shapes and colors in my art – I like working with patterns, colors, and shapes". Over the course of her career, Michelle's work has been shown and/or sold in Washington D.C., New York City, and throughout Rhode Island, including: Central Gallery, Pawtucket Arts Collaborative, Jamestown Arts Center, Providence City Hall, Pawtucket City Hall, and the Atrium Gallery. In 2006, she received a certificate from Governor Carcieri in recognition of her "artistic contributions" to the State of Rhode Island.

Since 1984, Flying Shuttles Studio, an award-winning art program of the Arc of Blackstone Valley, has supported the creative endeavors of artists and weavers with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Studio strives to integrate our artists into their community, the greater Providence area.

*“To empower individuals with disabilities to choose, prepare for,
obtain and maintain employment, economic self-sufficiency,
independence and integration into society”*

Department of Human Services / Office of Rehabilitation Services

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Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

Melba Depeña Affigne
Director