

III. Employment

A. Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation and Other Employment Services

According to the US Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), in 2012 the employment rate for people with a disability who are ages 16 through 64 was 27.7 percent, compared to 70.9 percent for those without a disability. These employment rates, also known as the "proportion of the population employed" or the "employment population ratio," have declined for both groups since 2009 when 29.7 percent of people with a disability were working and 77.8 percent of those without a disability were employed.

In 2012, the unemployment rate for people with disabilities was 14.8 percent, compared to 7.4 percent for people without disabilities. These numbers are lower than they were in 2009 when 15.6 percent of people with disabilities were unemployed as were 9.2 percent of those without disabilities. Unemployment rates are determined based on the number of individuals who are jobless, looking for work, and available for work. The 2009 rates represented the first annual statistics available on the **employment status of persons with a disability**.

The BLS obtained data to calculate these statistics using the monthly *Current Population Survey (CPS)*. The survey collects employment and unemployment information from a sample of approximately 60,000 households in the United States. Questions in the *CPS* identify persons with a disability in the civilian, non-institutionalized population who are age 16 and over. The *CPS* considers individuals to have a disability if they have a **physical, mental, or emotional condition that causes serious difficulty with daily activities**. The following insights are highlights from the BLS' June 12, 2013 news release on *Persons with a Disability Labor Force Characteristics—2012*:

- For all age groups, the employment rate was much lower for persons with a disability than for those with no disability.
- The unemployment rate for persons with a disability declined from 2011 to 2012, as did the rate for persons without a disability.
- In 2012, 33 percent of workers with a disability were employed part time, compared with 19 percent of those with no disability.
- Employed persons with a disability were more likely to be self-employed than those with no disability.

The **American Community Survey**, a large continuous demographic survey by the US Census Bureau that profiles communities each year, also collects employment data on people with and without disabilities. In this survey, like the *CPS*, people are determined to have disabilities if

they have long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional conditions or limitations that affect their ability to perform major life activities. Nationally, the survey for 2011 reported that 6.5 million or 32.6 percent of the 19.9 million individuals with disabilities who were between the ages of 18 and 65 and living in their communities were employed. For the comparable population of individuals without disabilities, 72.8 percent (127.4 million) of 174.9 million individuals were employed. The employment rate for people with disabilities was highest in North Dakota (49.8 percent) and lowest in West Virginia (24.3 percent).

According to the *2012 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium*, in 2011 only 33.4 percent (150,089) of the 458,657 individuals with disabilities in Virginia were employed while 76 percent (3.5 million) of the 4.6 million Virginians without disabilities were working. The gap between the employment rates for Virginians with and without disabilities was 42.6 percentage points. The national average **employment gap for people with disabilities** was 40.2 percent in 2011.

Employees with disabilities are a rich talent pool that is often overlooked. When employers hire individuals with disabilities, they discover untapped skills, talents, and abilities. Employers gain workers who are qualified, have a strong work ethic, are dependable, and are likely to stay on a long-term basis. These workers contribute to the economy, are self-sufficient, and are committed to their jobs. Furthermore, they are subject to the same performance standards as all other employees.

The Virginians with Disabilities Act (Code of Virginia § 51.5-1) states that,

It is the policy of this Commonwealth to encourage and enable persons with disabilities to participate fully and equally in the social and economic life of the Commonwealth and to engage in remunerative employment.

Under this statute, the General Assembly directs state agencies to provide the services necessary to ensure equal employment opportunities to Virginians with disabilities. Currently, there are some exciting employment initiatives in Virginia.

In August 2008, the **US Department of Justice (DOJ)** initiated an investigation of the Central Virginia Training Center (CVTC) pursuant to the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act (CRIPA). In April 2010, the DOJ notified the Commonwealth that it was expanding its investigation to focus on Virginia's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the US Supreme Court's 2009 *Olmstead* ruling. The *Olmstead* decision requires that individuals be served in the **most integrated settings appropriate** to meet their needs consistent with their choice. In February of 2011, the DOJ submitted a summary of findings to Virginia, concluding that the Commonwealth failed to provide services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the most integrated settings appropriate to their needs. In addition, the findings stated that

the State appears to be overly reliant on segregated, sheltered workshops and day programs that offer little opportunity for real community integration, even though the State also offers more integrated supported employment opportunities.

The resulting **Settlement Agreement** entered into by the DOJ and the Commonwealth includes a strong focus on employment. (Other aspects of the Agreement are covered in the relevant chapters of this *Assessment*.) The Agreement requires that the Commonwealth, to the greatest extent possible, provide individuals in the target population who receive services under the Agreement with integrated day opportunities, including supported employment. The Settlement also requires the Commonwealth to maintain its membership in the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) and to establish a state policy on **Employment First** for the target population.

An Employment First policy includes individual supported employment in integrated work settings as the first and highest priority service option for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. This includes individuals currently receiving day program or non-competitive employment services from or funded by the Commonwealth. It also sets forth an important expectation that service providers working with students who are transitioning from secondary school must focus on supporting employment in integrated work settings where individuals are paid minimum or competitive wages.

In 2009, the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services' (DBHDS) Office of Developmental Services joined the **State Employment Leadership Network (SELN)**, a cross-state cooperative of agencies serving individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) and other developmental disabilities (DD). This network helps those agencies enhance their states' capacity to develop, implement, and support effective, integrated employment initiatives that improve employment outcomes for individuals with ID/DD.

In 2010, DBHDS issued a strategic plan entitled *Creating Opportunities: A Plan for Advancing Community-Focused Services in Virginia* that identified a number of targeted initiatives that DBHDS would address. This strategic plan was the groundwork for implementation of the DOJ Settlement plan and can be found at <http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/CreatingOpportunities/Backgrounder.pdf>.

Under this plan, DBHDS spearheads a statewide Employment First initiative that promotes integrated, competitive employment as an option before day support or other services for individuals with developmental and other disabilities are considered. From 2011 to 2013, DBHDS and DARS conducted a statewide awareness and education campaign to implement an Employment First policy statewide. Through multiple regional trainings and statewide summits, technical assistance was provided to organizations, including Community Service Boards (CSBs) and Employment Support Organizations (ESOs). These trainings will continue in 2014.

Executive Order No. 55 (EO 55) was signed in November 2012 by then Governor McDonnell. EO 55 directs the relevant agencies to work together to better promote the benefit of employing individuals with disabilities. The order called upon the Virginia Workforce Council to work in conjunction with the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), the Workforce Development Services Division of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), the Departments for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), Veterans Services, Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and other experts in the employment of persons with disabilities. The goal is to identify and develop strategies for expanding the employment of individuals with disabilities in the Commonwealth's private sector.

A kick-off summit was held in June of 2013 to introduce EO 55 to key stakeholders: state agencies and the Virginia Workforce Council. Between September and December of 2013, eight regional workshops were held to educate private and public sector employers on the benefits of hiring and accommodating people with disabilities in the workplace and connecting employers to the regional points of contact for information and service coordination.

The most recent report of the Court appointed Independent Reviewer acknowledged the Commonwealth's efforts in the area of employment and found it to be in compliance with requirements to participate in the SELN and with respect to the provision of regional trainings (28 trainings were provided to more than 500 individuals). The Reviewer also found the Commonwealth to be in compliance with the provision of employment-related baseline information and the setting of employment-related targets. The Commonwealth did not provide supported employment earnings information and was out of compliance in that area. A Reviewer finding on whether targets were appropriate or being met as determined by Regional Quality Councils was deferred, as it was not able to take place within the quarter addressed by the June 6 report.

There are many employment initiatives within the State to address multiple populations beyond the Settlement Agreement population. There are a number of new transition services and employment initiatives in the Commonwealth that support the Employment First policy. **Project SEARCH** is an innovative high school transition program that meshes workforce and career development for Virginia youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Through a partnership between Virginia Commonwealth University's Research Rehabilitation Training Center, the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), and several public school divisions, nearly 90 students participated in Project SEARCH in 2012–2013 school year in 11 locations throughout Virginia, including multiple hospitals.

The goal for student participants, who are typically in the last year of their special education programs, is full-time employment earning at least minimum wage and benefits. The program provides up to three, 10-week long, real-world work internships that are based on the students' interests and combined with training in employability and independent living skills. Project SEARCH is conducted in a classroom at a host business to help youth with significant disabilities

make successful transitions from school to living productive adult lives. In many cases, students are offered full-time jobs with their host hospital, the Project SEARCH site, or in local businesses nearby. In state fiscal year (SFY) 2013, five Project SEARCH sites placed more than 60 percent of their Project SEARCH interns in competitive jobs. DARS expended \$425,627 on Project Search from vocational rehabilitation (VR) grant funds in SFY 2013.

In SFY 2014, Project SEARCH involves approximately 15 local field offices from DARS, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), 17 local school divisions, and is hosted by 13 hospitals—all of which came together in a partnership to implement this unique team approach to transition services. Each site has enrolled approximately 8 to 12 student interns and is staffed by an instructor from the local school system and at least one full-time job coach from a local Employment Service Organization (ESO) to meet the education and on-the-job training needs of the students.

Virginia Commonwealth University's (VCU's) Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, in collaboration with DARS, has implemented a study to determine the efficacy of a nine-month hospital-based internship intervention for transitioning young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). The internship program, **School 2 Work**, is based on the Project SEARCH model and is currently being tested and evaluated in a randomized clinical trial at two Bon Secours Hospitals in Richmond, Virginia. VCU is replicating this intervention in two new Virginia hospitals: Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center in Portsmouth and Bon Secours Memorial Regional Medical Center in Hanover. The intervention consists of two components: (1) 900 hours of onsite training over 9 consecutive months at the host hospital site; and (2) training and support provided by employment specialists with expertise in autism, applied behavior analysis, supported employment, and business networking.

The current Bon Secours, St. Mary's Hospital site in Richmond, will serve as the study's hub program for expanded data collection, training, and support of the two replication sites. DARS will partner with the project by assisting with enrollment and placement of the participants.

In an effort to support the Commonwealth's implementation of the DOJ Settlement Agreement and the Employment First policy, in June of 2013, the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) awarded a two-year grant to VCU Rehabilitation Research & Training Center for **Employment for All Citizens of The Arc of Southside**. The grant is being used to convert the Hatcher Employment Program, a sheltered workshop administered by The Arc of Southside, to a community-integrated employment program focused on competitive employment outcomes.

The initiatives above are just a small sample of the publicly funded employment services available in Virginia to assist individuals with disabilities in acquiring the knowledge and skills required to obtain, maintain, and advance in employment. Some innovative and successful projects are improving employment outcomes for Virginians with disabilities. However, a broader and more comprehensive employment policy that benefits all individuals with disabilities is needed.

The employment rate for individuals with disabilities in Virginia has been flat at approximately 33 percent for many years. This is slightly higher than the national average of 27.9 percent. As stated in the **Education** chapter, the Virginia Department of Education's data show that 38 percent of students with disabilities are not in higher education or competitive employment one year post high school. It also shows that 28 percent of students with disabilities are not in higher education, other post-secondary education, a training program, competitive employment, or some other type of employment one year after high school. As too many people remain unemployed, the Order of Selection imposed by DARS, due to insufficient funds, limits access to employment services for individuals with disabilities.

The remainder of this chapter presents specific employment services for individuals with disabilities, as well as services that educate employers about the valuable pool of workers with disabilities and help them make reasonable accommodations for employees who need them. Employment services, most of which are time limited, encompass a wide range of activities such as vocational counseling and guidance, education, vocational training, work skills development, assistive technology, and job development and placement. These services are designed to focus on abilities and skills, rather than disabilities, and to promote choice and self-determination with respect to job training and employment options.

The employment programs and services described in this chapter are organized according to four primary programs that assist individuals with disabilities:

1. Virginia's vocational rehabilitation programs,
2. the Virginia Workforce Network,
3. federal Work Incentive Programs, and
4. Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waivers.

Two agencies located within the Health and Human Resources Secretariat have the lead responsibility for **vocational rehabilitation (VR) services** in Virginia under the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (PL 93-112). This statute authorizes grants to states for employment-related services for eligible individuals with disabilities and gives priority to those categorized as having the most significant disabilities. The **Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Division of Rehabilitative Services** is responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities unless the individual has a primary disability of blindness, vision impairment or deafblindness. In that case, the **Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)** provides vocational rehabilitation services. The Code of Virginia (§ 51.5-60 et seq.) prescribes the responsibilities and duties of the DBVI. The responsibilities of DARS are prescribed in Code of Virginia (§ 55.5-117 et seq.).

B. Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services Vocational Rehabilitation

The mission of the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) is to work in partnership with people with disabilities and their families and to collaborate with the public and private sectors to provide and advocate for the highest quality services, including vocational rehabilitation services that empower individuals with disabilities to **maximize their employment, independence, and full inclusion** into society. DARS has numerous public and private partners. These include, but are not limited to, state agencies such as the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), and the Department of Social Services (DSS). They also include Employment Service Organizations (ESOs) [also referred to as Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs)], Community Services Boards (CSBs), Centers for Independent Living (CILs), local school divisions, and institutions of higher education.

The federally mandated State Rehabilitation Council provides advice and guidance to DARS on its vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs. The Employment Service Organization Advisory Council provides advice on supported employment services, and the Long-Term Employment Support Services Steering Committee provides advice and guidance on long-term support programs.

1. Screening and Eligibility for DARS VR Services

The *VR Policy & Procedure Manual* on the DARS website identifies the steps in its vocational rehabilitation process, including but not limited to: referral procedures, the application process, eligibility, assessment, vocational evaluation, and job placement. The policy manual can be found at <http://www.vadars.org/frsmanual.asp>.

To be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services from DARS, an individual must:

1. have a physical, mental, or emotional disability that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment;
2. require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, or regain employment;
3. be able to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services; and
4. be legally eligible to work in the United States and be present in the state.

Individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits are presumed to be eligible for rehabilitation services if they intend to work.

2. Access to and Use of DARS VR Services

Vocational rehabilitation (VR) services are delivered to eligible individuals by DARS through 35 local field offices across Virginia. Vocational rehabilitation counselors at these offices determine an applicant's eligibility for services. Counselors work with eligible recipients to

develop an agreed upon **Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)** that includes services necessary for achieving and/or maintaining employment. Vocational services may be provided directly by the counselors or by public and private service providers.

The IPE is reviewed at least annually and is amended as needed. Service recipients may be required to contribute to the cost of certain services based on DARS' financial participation policy. Diagnostic, evaluation, counseling, and similar services are available at no cost to applicants and eligible individuals. Consideration of comparable benefits and alternate sources of funding may be required for certain services. Other services, such as assistive technology, are exempt from the comparable benefit requirement.

When DARS is unable to serve all eligible customers because of insufficient resources, an **Order of Selection**, based on relative need for services, must be implemented. When an Order of Selection is in effect, DARS must give the highest priority for service to individuals categorized as having the most significant disabilities. The individual's placement in a priority category is determined after eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services is established. Individuals in closed categories are provided referral services to the One-Stop Workforce Centers or other appropriate resources and are placed on a waiting list until resources allow the category to be opened.

Since 2011, DARS has only had sufficient funds to serve those in Category 1: Most Significantly Disabled. Effective February 14, 2014, DARS announced that it had sufficient funds available to serve all eligible individuals in Category 2: Significant Disabilities. At the time of this assessment, DARS was continuing to serve people in both Categories 1 and 2, but Categories 3 and 4 remained closed with all those individuals on a waiting list.

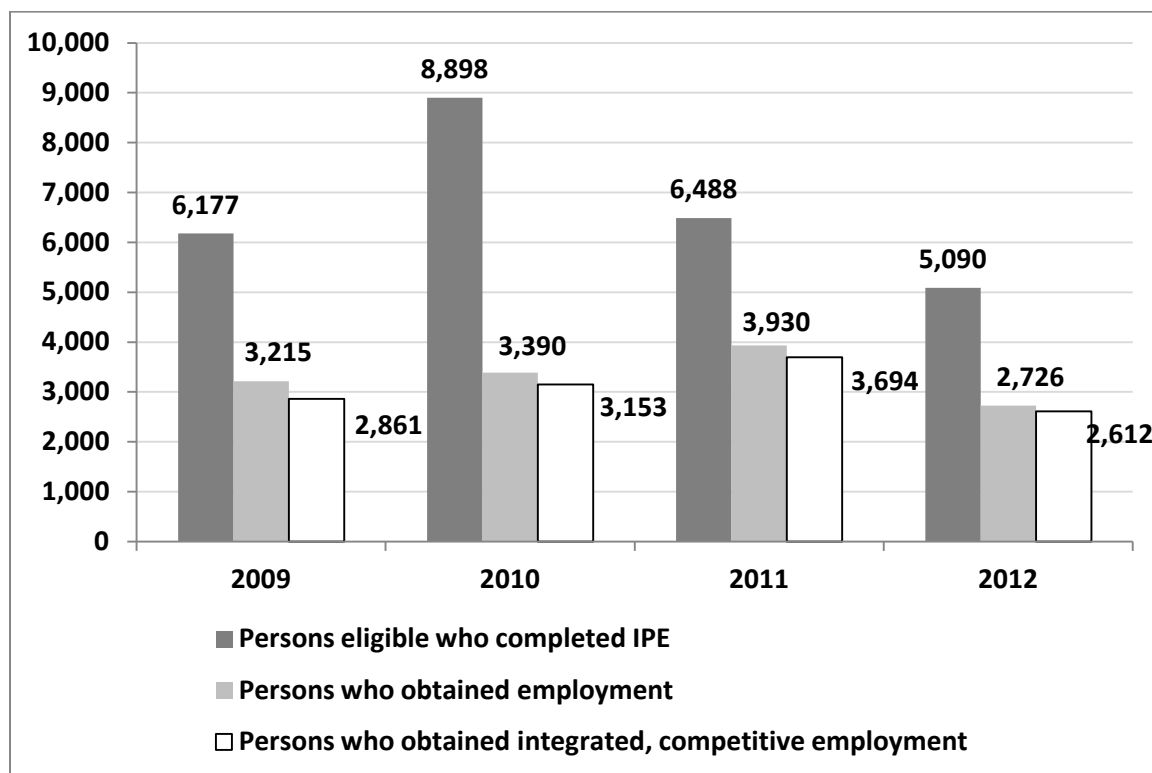
The DARS state rehabilitation annual reports provide information on the number of individuals served in the VR system and those who obtain employment. The number served reached a high of 32,143 people in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2010. In FFY 2012, the most recent year for which data were available, the total number served stood at 28,889. The total number of individuals served refers to those who received some level of service (intake, assessment, developed a plan, participated in vocational rehabilitation services, etc.). According to DARS information, an average of 75 percent of its VR service recipients are in Category 1: Most Significantly Disabled.

Figure 13 shows the number of eligible individuals who completed an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE), the number who achieved employment, and the number placed in **competitive employment** (in an integrated setting in the community and being paid at least minimum wage). The total number of individuals who completed an Individualized Employment Plan (IPE) has decreased steadily since FFY 2010, due in large part to implementation of the Order of Selection and funding issues.

The total number of those who obtained integrated, competitive employment dropped 8.7 percent between FFYs 2009 and 2012 and 29 percent from FFY 2011 to 2012. This was not

unexpected based on the economic problems facing Virginia and the nation. In a positive trend, in FFY 2009, 89 percent of those employed obtained integrated, competitive employment. In FFY 2012, that figure increased to 96 percent. Although the overall number of people who obtained employment was lower between FFY 2009 and 2012, the percentage of those who achieved competitive employment has increased from 89 percent to 96 percent.

Figure 13. Individuals receiving Vocational Rehabilitation Services and those who Obtained Employment



Source: Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, *State Rehabilitation Council Annual Report* (2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012).

3. Available DARS VR Services

Services identified in the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) may include the following:

- Vocational and career guidance and counseling;
- Evaluations to determine vocational rehabilitation needs;
- Job and behavioral skills training and postsecondary education;
- Job search and placement assistance;
- Communication accommodations, when they are not available from another legally obligated source;

- Assistive telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices;
- Rehabilitation technology services, including assistive technology devices as well as home, vehicle, and workstation modifications;
- Tools, equipment, and occupational licenses not typically provided by an employer;
- Transportation and personal assistance services needed to participate in DARS services;
- Medical services not otherwise covered by insurance that are needed to be employed;
- Unpaid work experience; and
- Postemployment services.

The list above is not all inclusive. Additional services may be provided as required by an individual’s IPE, and services vary between programs.

4. Cost and Payment for DARS VR Services

DARS and the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) receive state and federal funds to support vocational rehabilitation activities. Federal funds are provided by the **Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA)** within the US Department of Education. The RSA provides grant funds both on a formula and on a discretionary basis. The federal Rehabilitation Act Title I and Title VI grant programs, which provide funds for employment-related services for individuals with disabilities, require state matching funds. State General Funds supply this match, underwrite administrative costs, and pay for various DARS state-funded programs, such as Personal Assistance Services, Long-Term Rehabilitation Case Management Services, Long-Term Employment Support Services, and others. DARS also receives federal Title VI funds for its Supported Employment Services. Funding for Long-Term Employment Support (follow along) Services is distributed among approved Employment Service Organizations (ESOs).

Approximately \$67 million was expended in state fiscal year (SFY) 2013 on vocational rehabilitative services. This includes the federal VR grant and state funds. The figures in **Table 20** provide the number of participants in the basic VR program for SFY 2013. Funding includes personal, non-personal, and case service expenditures. (See **Table 21** for specialized VR programs that are also funded by the federal VR grant and state funds.) Figures for the VR program and specialized programs may overlap because people who apply for vocational rehabilitation services may also be eligible for other DARS services.

Table 20. DARS Vocational Rehabilitation Program			
State Fiscal Year	Number Served	Waiting List	Total Funds
2013	28,113	1,144	\$17,379,27

Source: Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Outcomes of DARS VR Services

The commissioner of DARS is responsible for oversight of the agency's vocational rehabilitation program and ensuring compliance with both federal (34 CFR § 361.1, et seq.) and state (22 VAC § 30-20-10 to 200) regulations. Specific federal performance Standards and Indicators (34 CFR § 361.80-89) have been established by the national **Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)**, US Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

DARS is required to submit a number of monitoring and evaluation reports to the RSA. Quarterly RSA 113 Reports include the number of applicants, the number of people determined eligible for services, the number on waiting lists under the Order of Selection, the number and types of case closures, and other data. The annual RSA 911 Report contains raw, detailed demographic data on the number and type of vocational rehabilitation case closures, and the RSA A2 Report describes budget expenditures for different services.

The RSA conducts Section 107 Monitoring and Technical Assistance Reviews to ascertain whether the DARS vocational rehabilitation program meets its federal goals and objectives. If DARS is found to be noncompliant with RSA performance Standards and Indicators, its vocational rehabilitation program must develop and implement a performance improvement plan consistent with the RSA's recommendations for improvement.

In April, 2011, DARS submitted a **corrective action plan** to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to address noncompliance findings from the March 2011 RSA report on their 2010 review of DARS' vocational and supported employment programs. On October 3, 2012, the RSA determined that DARS had met the criteria for affirming that the corrective actions resolved all of the FFY 2010 findings of noncompliance that were identified in the 2011 report and covered in the corrective action plan.

DARS is currently under a **performance improvement plan** for not meeting RSA standards and performance indicators for FFY 2012. DARS will be relieved of the obligation to submit a performance improvement plan once it meets all RSA Standards and Indicators for two successive years. Preliminary figures show that DARS met these requirements for FFY 2013.

The DARS state agency strategic plan includes agency goals, objectives, and performance measures. Annual evaluations of vocational rehabilitation counselors are based, in part, on individual objectives tied to these performance measures. If individual objectives are not met, appropriate corrective actions occur. In addition, case audit reviews of sample cases are conducted to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are being followed and that high quality services are being provided.

DARS also conducts an annual survey of its clients to determine their level of satisfaction with the services they received. According to the Virginia State Rehabilitation Council's *Annual Report of 2012*, in FFY 2011, the overall satisfaction rate for rehabilitated and non-rehabilitated vocational service recipients was 77 percent. Of those employed, 83 percent expressed

satisfaction with their jobs. Ninety percent of service recipients continue to have a fairly strong belief that DARS staff treats them well. Additionally, 83 percent agreed that they would tell a friend to go to DARS for services, and 81 percent indicated that they would definitely come back to DARS if they needed additional help.

C. DARS Specialized Vocational Programs

Descriptions of some specialized programs operated within the overall DARS vocational rehabilitation program follow. Additional information on them, and all DARS services, is available at <http://www.vaDARS.org>, the DARS central office, or any of its local field offices.

1. Screening and Eligibility for DARS Specialized Programs

Specialized programs use the same screening and eligibility process as the basic vocational rehabilitation program administered by DARS. An individual must have a physical, mental, or emotional disability that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment; require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, or regain employment; and be able to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services. In addition, the individual must be legally eligible to work in the United States and be present in the State. Individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits are presumed to be eligible for VR services if they intend to work.

2. Access to and Use of DARS Specialized Programs

Individuals with a serious mental illness may receive services from the **DARS Serious Mental Illness Program** staff. Individuals with developmental disabilities and substance abuse disorders are excluded from these services unless they have been diagnosed with a co-occurring serious mental illness. DARS counselors with special training in this area are assigned to 11 local Community Services Boards (CSBs) and provide vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals from those localities.

Similarly, DARS counselors with special training in substance abuse provide vocational rehabilitation services as a part of treatment programs operated by 18 CSBs. The **DARS Substance Abuse Program** is operated jointly with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and local CSBs. It provides VR services for individuals who are actively involved in alcohol or substance abuse treatment or who have completed treatment.

In other areas of the State, services are provided to persons with serious mental illness and substance abuse problems by vocational rehabilitation counselors at local DARS field offices as part of their general caseloads. Participants in these specialized services may be referred to DARS by CSBs or directly by family members, physicians, and others. The DARS specialty counselors do not provide different services for their respective populations; rather, they have specialized technical expertise based on their experience, knowledge, and training in their specialty area.

The **DARS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program** works in partnership with the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH), the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services' (DBHDS) Program for Individuals Who Are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened, and Deafblind. These agencies collaborate to provide vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with these specific disabilities. The four agencies have established both a Statewide Interagency Team and regional teams to address gaps in services and to strengthen agency programs. Information on related services provided by the VDDHH, including assistive technology, outreach, and sign language interpreters, can be found in the **Community Living Supports** and **Health Care** chapters of this *Assessment*.

The DARS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program provides VR services for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened, or deafblind. Ten regional vocational rehabilitation counselors and staff at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center's (WWRC) Special Population Services Unit who are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) ensure communications access for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. In all other respects, access to and delivery of services through this program are the same as for other DARS vocational rehabilitation services.

DARS has vocational rehabilitation clients who are recipients of **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)**. The General Assembly appropriates funds to DARS for specialized employment services for TANF recipients with disabilities, and DARS works in close partnerships and financial agreements with state and local social services agencies. Currently, DARS has grant funding from the Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS) to support three vocational rehabilitation counselors with dedicated TANF caseloads. These counselors serve Fairfax County, the city of Alexandria, the city of Charlottesville and its surrounding counties, the city of Richmond, Henrico County, and Chesterfield County. All of these areas have a high volume of TANF cases.

Clients are referred to statewide DARS field offices by their respective local DSS offices, and services are provided by first utilizing any available grants that include funds for case services. TANF clients are required to be gainfully employed or face the possibility of losing their TANF benefits, so DARS services are valued. General caseload counselors are strongly encouraged to work closely with the TANF recipient's case manager to gain additional insight into the individual's needs, to share the cost of service provision, and to coordinate services more effectively.

DARS Supported Employment Services are provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities (federal Category 1) who require ongoing workplace supports. Ongoing support services are generally provided by employment specialists who are associated with DARS-approved vendors. These specialists typically provide initial job skills training on an intensive, one-to-one basis and gradually decrease supports as individuals become more proficient. Supported Employment Services are usually limited in duration to 18 months or less. After that period, if needed, the individual may transition to **Extended Employment Services (EES)** or **Long-Term Employment Support Services (LTESS)** provided through **Employment Service**

Organizations (ESOs). Individuals may also transition to Medicaid **Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver supports**, if applicable. (Information on the HCBS supports begins on page 151 of this *Assessment*.)

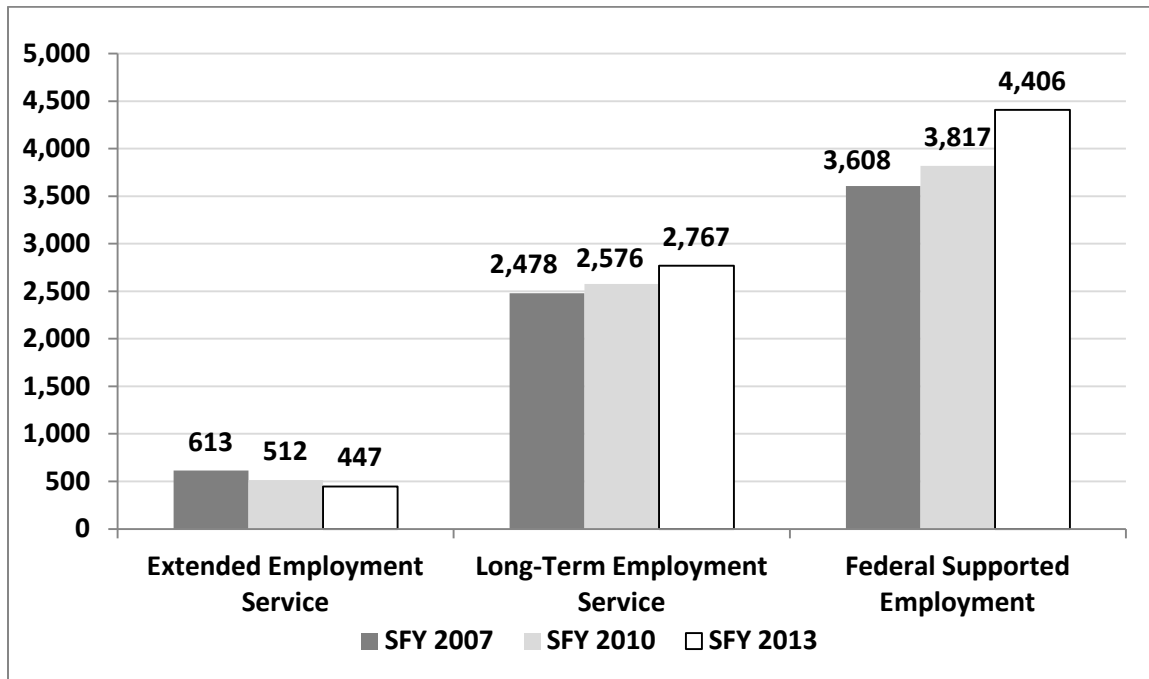
Neither EES nor LTESS are time-limited, and both enable individuals with disabilities to maintain employment. Through EES, Employment Service Organizations (ESOs) provide structure, supervision, and supports in the following settings:

- an individual, supported employment job;
- an enclave or mobile crew; or
- a facility-based (sheltered) workshop.

LTESS, usually referred to as long-term “**follow-along services**,” are provided after time-limited Supported Employment Services sponsored by DARS are completed. LTESS services can only be provided to individuals employed in an integrated, competitive work setting. Through LTESS, ESOs provide a full array of employment services, including the individually supported, facility based, enclave, and mobile crew models. Of the more than 2,700 people served through LTESS funds, 80 percent earn at or above minimum wages in their jobs.

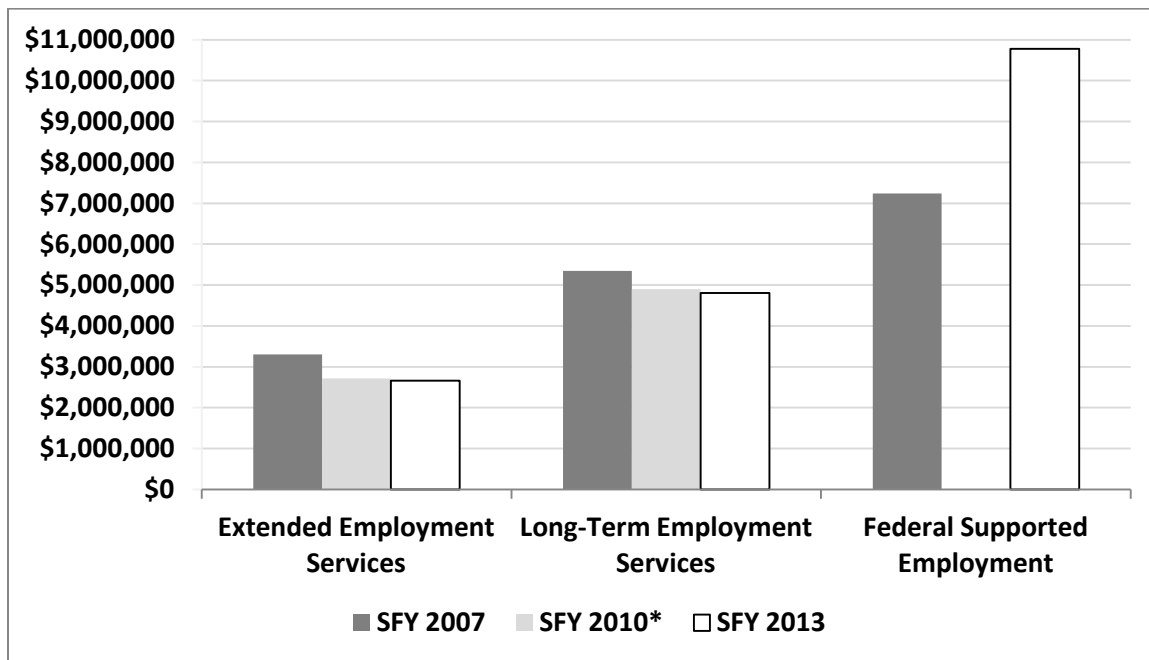
Figure 14 provides the number of individuals served in selected years by the federal grant for supported employment and by the state-funded Extended Employment Services (EES) and Long-Term Employment Services (LTESS) sponsored by DARS. It shows that 27 percent fewer people received services through state-funded EES services in SFY 2013 as compared with 2007. EES program funding decreased 19.6 percent over those years. (See **Figure 15**.) The number of people working in integrated, competitive jobs who were served through state-funded LTESS increased 11.6 percent, comparing SFY 2007 to SFY 2013, although there was a 10-percent decrease in funding. The number of people served in the federal supported employment program increased 22 percent from 3,608 in SFY 2007 to 4,406 in 2013; however, there was a near 50-percent increase in federal funding over those same years.

Figure 14. Number Served by State and Federal Employment Support over Time



Source: Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. Note that figures for 2007 and 2010 came from the 2008 and 2011 editions of this Assessment but were originally provided by DARS.

Figure 15. Total Employment Support Funds by SFY



* In 2010, the data provided did not disaggregate the federally supported employment program from the vocational rehabilitation program as a whole.

Source: Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. Note that figures for SFY 2007 and SFY 2010 came from the SFY 2008 and 2011 editions of this *Assessment* but were originally provided by DARS.

3. Available DARS Specialized Programs

DARS counselors in the **Serious Mental Illness Program** and **Substance Abuse Program** provide services in ways that respond to the special needs of their respective target populations. Vocational rehabilitation counselors, drawing on their specialized training and expertise, partner with local Community Services Boards (CSBs) to focus services on vocational development, work habits, job readiness, and employment follow-along.

In addition to providing direct services for eligible individuals, vocational rehabilitation counselors in the DARS **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program** are involved in community outreach and education, providing technical assistance to organizations involved with job training, job placement, and employment of persons with hearing loss.

To help them sustain employment once their DARS cases are closed, participants in the **TANF** Program work with both DARS vocational rehabilitation counselors and local social services caseworkers. DARS counselors coordinate their vocational rehabilitation services while social services caseworkers assist them with other transportation, child care, food stamps, and other benefits and supports.

Specialists who work for DARS-approved vendors provide ongoing **Supported Employment Services** including job site training, transportation, family supports, and other services necessary to provide and maintain employment for persons with severe disabilities in integrated and competitive work settings. Initial supports must include at least twice monthly contacts between a specialist and supported employee and, to create a system of natural supports within the workplace and community, may also include services provided by skilled job trainers, co-workers, or other qualified individuals.

To ensure job retention in supported employment placements, DARS may use funds from LTESS to purchase ongoing support services. LTESS job coaches provide direct, face-to-face supports with supported employees and their employer, and follow up at least monthly with telephone calls and other communications to ensure job retention and compliance with supported employment program requirements.

4. Cost and Payment for DARS Specialized Programs

Table 21 provides an overview of the number of individuals served by program, the number on the waiting list, and the total funds for SFY 2013.

Table 21. DARS Specialized Employment Services by Program or Service for SFY 2013			
State Funded Specialized Programs:	Number Served	Waiting List	Total Funds
Extended Employment Services	447	0	\$2,658,198

Table 21. DARS Specialized Employment Services by Program or Service for SFY 2013			
State Funded Specialized Programs:	Number Served	Waiting List	Total Funds
Long-Term Employment Support Services	2,767	0	\$4,809,292
Federal Funded Specialized Programs:	Number Served	Waiting List	Total Funds
Services to Individuals with Serious Mental Illness^A	6,065	824	\$4,043,910
Substance Abuse Services^B	3,194	546	\$1,526,893
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program^C	1,572	217	\$2,226,035
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program^D	1,050	148	\$630,945
Supported Employment^E	4,406	0	\$10,779,919

- A. This is for client case services expenditures paid from the federal Rehabilitation Act, Title I, Section 110 grant funds.
- B. This funding is for client case services expenditures paid from federal Section 110 grant funds. The total funds also include a *Memorandum of Understanding* with the DBHDS totaling \$195,541.
- C. Funding for the DHH Program includes only case services dollars from federal Section 110 grant funds.
- D. Funding is for personal and case services, some of which also includes federal Section 110 grant funds.
- E. This includes federal Title I funding and Title VI (\$497,133) funding.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation of DARS Specialized Programs

The specialty vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors who provide services for clients through the **Serious Mental Illness Program** are directly supervised by the manager of their respective field offices and also receive indirect and programmatic supervision from the program specialist for serious mental illness. To monitor service quality and effectiveness, the program specialist makes regular site visits to the local Community Services Boards (CSBs) that participate in this program, and compiles statistical summaries of the employment outcomes and expenditures for case services. In addition, statewide meetings are convened several times a year to strengthen programming and enhance the consistency of services offered across the State. Similar quality control procedures apply to the **Substance Abuse Program**.

The program specialist for the DARS **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program** is responsible for the quality and effectiveness of its services, and in general, oversight practices are the same as for other DARS specialty programs. The program specialist also holds periodic community meetings to obtain direct feedback from service recipients, and program staff participates in quarterly meetings to receive ongoing training and to address service issues to enhance service delivery to this population.

Standard oversight practices apply to the TANF Program. Program specialists use site-monitoring visits to provide technical assistance, training, and other guidance to the staff of the

collaborating local social services departments. DSS conducts onsite audits of these local departments to monitor their fiscal management of TANF funds.

DARS maintains formal vendor agreements with ESOs that outline specific expectations and standards for Supported Employment Services. In addition, ESOs must be accredited by the national **Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)**. Program accreditation must be reviewed and renewed by CARF every three years. When applicable, ESO vendor agreements also include specific standards for the provision of EES and LTESS. These programs are further monitored through a quality assurance review developed by DARS in cooperation with the **DARS Employment Services Organizations Advisory Committee**.

The DARS **Office of Technology and Employment Support Services** is responsible for the Department's specialty programs and works within the Field Rehabilitation Services Division to ensure the overall quality and effectiveness of service delivery.

D. Additional DARS Employment Programs and Services

In 2007, DARS developed and implemented the **Work Incentive Specialist Advocates (WISA)** program. This program augments the **Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program** to increase the use of existing Social Security Administration (SSA) work incentives by Virginia's vocational rehabilitation services recipients. There are 47 WISAs providing assistance to Ticket to Work recipients who are eligible to use work incentive programs such as Medicaid While Working (1619b), the Student Earned Income Exclusion, the Impairment Related Work Program, and the Plan for Achieving Self-Support. (More information on Ticket to Work and other federal work incentives begins on page **144** of this chapter.) An additional 30 people are participating in the training process to become fully credentialed WISAs. From October 1, 2012, through February 21, 2014, DARS has paid for 924 WISA services to 28 different vendors for vocational rehabilitation service recipients. In addition, there are currently 383 WISA services that have been authorized and are in process for vocational rehabilitation service recipients. During this time period, a total of 1,483 clients have been referred for WISA services.

WISAs are trained and certified by DARS. Once qualified, WISAs apply to provide work incentives services for vocational rehabilitation (VR) customers as DARS vendors. WISAs must abide by DARS standards for such providers and must agree to accept the agency's fees for work incentives services. During this reporting period, two additional WISA services have been approved and are currently being used by VR service recipients. The new WISA services address overpayments and the process of obtaining a Benefits Planning Query (BPQY) from the Social Security Administration. From FFY 2013 through February 21, 2014, 1,483 individuals were served through the program, with a cost of \$387,550 from the vocational rehabilitation grant.

DARS also administers the web-based **WorkWORLD HELP/Information System** and **WorkWORLD for the Web**. The WorkWORLD HELP/Information System is a comprehensive compilation of topics related to federal and state work incentives and benefits. The software is

a useful resource for people with disabilities, advocates, work incentive and benefit counselors, and others seeking help to find employment-based paths that lead to higher net income through the best use of federal and state work incentives and benefits. Users can access information by clicking on items in the system's table of contents, index, or by using a search function to find information by a word or phrase. The Help/Information System's extensive hyperlinks allow users to jump back and forth between related topics. It is at <http://wwhelp.wwrc.net/>.

The HELP/Information System can be used alone or concurrently with WorkWORLD for the Web, a separate application that takes into account the complex interaction of earnings, benefit programs, and work incentives to provide individualized recommendations for safe options as well as alerts to possible problems. WorkWORLD for the Web calculates the effects on net income of trying different paths to independence, and provides text, numeric, and graphic results.

WorkWORLD was initially developed by the Employment Support Institute (ESI) at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) with funding from the federal Social Security Administration (SSA). The program has been continuously enhanced and updated over 13 years and now contains more than 4,400 topics with 26,000 hyperlinks and over 10,000 keywords (index topics).

The WorkWORLD HELP/Information System is currently maintained through a partnership of state agencies in Virginia: the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD), the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), and the Department of Social Services (DSS).

WorkWORLD for the Web (WW-Web): The current version of the software is designed for Virginians with disabilities who receive or are applying for any or all of the following benefits:

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Medicaid
- Medicare

WW-Web assists in determining what will happen to a recipient's benefits if he or she earns different amounts using the various "work incentives" that the benefit programs provide, so they can find a safe path toward more financial independence—a path in which the recipient keeps the benefits needed until the need for those benefits can be reduced or eliminated. The site is at <http://workworld.wwrc.net/pages/home>.

E. Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center Vocational Rehabilitation

The **Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC)** is a part of the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). Located in Fishersville, Virginia, its mission is to provide people with disabilities comprehensive, individualized services to realize personal independence through employment. This includes specialized vocational rehabilitation services in both residential and outpatient settings.

1. Screening and Eligibility for WWRC VR Services

To be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services from DARS' Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC), an individual must meet the specific criteria listed below, and primary consideration is given to DARS vocational rehabilitation clients working under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

- Applicants must be medically, physically, and psychologically stable and have a favorable prognosis for completing and benefiting from the services requested. Current documentation may be requested from physicians, mental health professionals, or other professionals providing treatment or diagnostic services.
- Applicants with a psychiatric diagnosis must show a minimum of six consecutive months of stability in the community. Exceptions to this requirement may be considered if the applicant is willing to participate in an outpatient evaluation at WWRC to determine feasibility for services and admission contingencies.
- Applicants with a history of substance abuse must have at least six consecutive months of documented abstinence or demonstrated completion of intense substance abuse treatment and active participation in a substance abuse aftercare program. Participation in only Twelve Step support groups does not meet this requirement. As above, exceptions may be considered if the applicant is willing to participate in an outpatient evaluation at WWRC to determine feasibility for services and admission contingencies.
- Applicants' current behavior will not jeopardize the health and safety of themselves or others at WWRC and must not disrupt the rehabilitation programs.

Applicants must be 18 years of age or older to be admitted for residential services. WWRC programs specifically targeted to youth, such as the transition programs discussed in the **Education** chapter of this *Assessment*, are exceptions to this rule.

- Applicants must be willing and able to comply with WWRC community living standards (rules and regulations).
- Applicants must have a viable discharge plan, developed in collaboration with their referral source, for community reintegration services that address residential options as well as support service needs.

- Applicants must have an identified funding source. All funding sources (Medicare, Medicaid, Anthem, and any other third-party insurers) must be identified, even if the applicant is being sponsored by DARS.
- Applicants who have any outstanding court charges must have them settled prior to seeking admission. Those with cases pending adjudication by the judicial system will not be considered. WWRC is not an alternative placement option.

2. Access to and Use of WWRC VR Services

WWRC provides vocational rehabilitation and employment services for individuals with disabilities in both residential and outpatient settings. Once enrolled in a WWRC program, a client is assigned a WWRC rehabilitation counselor who provides case management and guidance for the client, his or her sponsor, and family while the client remains in the WWRC program. The WWRC counselor coordinates implementation of the service plan (IPE) agreed upon by the individual with a disability and his or her DARS counselor prior to WWRC enrollment and approves expenditures of DARS funds for services during the client's training period.

The WWRC and local DARS counselors stay in close contact throughout the client's stay and discuss any needed changes to the program of services. Throughout the program, the WWRC counselor also works closely with the client and his or her rehabilitation team to develop plans for transition back into the community at the conclusion of training.

3. Available WWRC VR Services

The ultimate goal for each student at WWRC is the successful use of independent living and work skills in his or her home community. Following initial student and sponsor consultations, WWRC Vocational Evaluation Services offers a comprehensive and systematic process to identify and assess vocational interests, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, aptitudes, and functional limitations related to a student's preferred rehabilitation and employment goals. The evaluation report is used to develop a holistic service plan that will maximize the student's potential for successful, sustained employment.

While not strictly an employment program, the WWRC **Life Skills Transition Program's** pre-employment activities build the independent living skills needed to maintain successful employment. It is part of a comprehensive approach to teaching individuals the job of daily life and living with others within WWRC's living and learning residential environment. The program takes advantage of the social aspects of campus life and provides activities on and off campus to assess needs and provide instruction across five domains.

1. **Pre-employment skills:** basic work behaviors, attitudes, and habits; job seeking skills; basic customer service and effective communication with others; and vocational exploration
2. **Basic workplace literacy:** reading, math, GED assessment, and skill development

3. **Interpersonal skills:** disability awareness, self-advocacy, interpersonal communication, initiative and dependability, anger management, conflict resolution, self-esteem, and self-confidence
4. **Independent living skills:** money management, clothing care, time management, route finding and information seeking, personal health care, and healthy relationships
5. **Leisure skills:** exploration of interests and community resources

WWRC **Vocational Skills Training Programs** prepare individuals with disabilities for competitive entry-level employment in more than 100 occupational career fields. Training is offered onsite at WWRC, through the community-based External Training Option Program in surrounding geographic locations, and through distance education courses for selected information technology careers. A student internship program provides opportunities to determine if trainees are job ready, and academic support services, such as GED preparation and trade-related academic instruction, are also available.

To promote positive work environments and change negative attitudes toward people with disabilities in the workplace, DARS staff at WWRC conducts **Corporate Disability Awareness Training** for employers. These free programs dispel misconceptions and teach best practices for working with people who have disabilities. Topics covered include individual attitudes and perceptions toward people with disabilities, historical and societal perspectives, research and statistics, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), resources for more information, and practical tips on interviewing, accommodating, and communicating with employees with disabilities.

4. Cost and Payment for WWRC VR Services

As shown in **Table 22**, the WWRC program for VR had an average cost of about \$8,422 per person served in SFY 2013, up 8.6 percent from SFY 2010 when the average cost per person was \$7,754.

State Fiscal Year	Number Served	Waiting List	Total Funds
2013	2,706	400	\$22,790,083
2010	3,074	400	\$23,838,295

Note: Capital expenditures to maintain the campus are funded in a separate budget and not shown.
Source: The Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation of WWRC VR Services

Vocational training programs at the WWRC are formally accredited by the **Accrediting Commission of the Council on Occupational Education**, which conducts Accreditation Team site visits every six years. In addition to the typical DARS oversight mechanisms described

above, WWRC distributes an annual report to the general public and provides annual outcome data to its accrediting organization, the state Department of Planning and Budget, and the state Workforce Investment Board.

WWRC also collects satisfaction information from sponsors who refer individuals for its employment services. A computer-based survey is sent out to each sponsor after case closures for clients receiving vocational rehabilitation, rehabilitation counseling, and life skills transition services. Questions cover the usefulness of vocational evaluation recommendations, overall case management satisfaction, and the timeliness of reports. Additional consumer satisfaction surveys and focus groups of service recipients provide WWRC with their comments and suggestions for improvements.

F. Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired Vocational Rehabilitation

Under the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended PL 93-112), the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) has the lead responsibility for vocational rehabilitation services in Virginia for individuals with a primary disability of blindness, vision impairment, or deafblindness. DBVI's mission is to empower these individuals to achieve their maximum level of education, employment, and personal independence.

1. Screening and Eligibility for DBVI VR Services

To be eligible for DBVI vocational rehabilitation services, an individual must be blind or have a visual impairment that interferes with finding or maintaining employment and must require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, or regain employment. DBVI defines blindness, visual impairment, and deafblindness under the Code of Virginia (§ 51.5-60), which is as follows.

Blindness

An individual having not better than 20/200 central visual acuity in the better eye measured at twenty feet with correcting lenses or having visual acuity greater than 20/200 but with the widest diameter of the visual field in the better eye subtending an angle of no greater than twenty degrees, measured at a distance of thirty-three centimeters using a three-millimeter white test object, or a Goldman III-4e target, or other equivalent equipment. Such blindness shall be certified by a duly licensed physician or optometrist.

Visual Impairment

An individual with (1) 20/100 to 20/200 distance vision in the better eye with correcting glasses or a field limitation to 30 degrees or less in the better eye, if the person has been unable to adjust satisfactorily to the loss of vision and needs

the specialized services available through DBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Program, or (2) night blindness or a rapidly progressive eye condition that, in the opinion of a qualified ophthalmologist, will reduce the distance vision to 20/200 or less.

Deafblind

An individual with a combination of blindness and a chronic hearing impairment so severe that most speech cannot be understood with optimum amplification or progressive hearing loss having a prognosis leading to this condition and for whom the combination of impairments cause extreme difficulty in attaining independence in daily life activities, achieving psychological adjustment, or obtaining a vocation.

VR services, including those provided by the **Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI)** in Richmond, are available to eligible individuals ages 14 or older. Services provided by other DBVI programs are available to individuals of all ages. Additional information regarding other DBVI programs and services may be found in the **Community Living Supports** and **Health Care** chapters of this *Assessment*.

As noted above for DARS VR services, individuals seeking VR services from the DBVI who are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits are presumed to be eligible for services if they intend to work. Individuals must also be legally eligible to work in the United States and be living or working in Virginia or moving to the State.

DBVI's partners in these efforts include individuals who are blind and vision impaired, their families, local school systems, Community Rehabilitation Providers (also called Employment Services Organizations), Community Services Boards (CSBs), the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS). The DBVI also partners with the DBVI State Rehabilitation Council, the Statewide Independent Living Council, Virginia Industries for the Blind, the DBVI Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired, and consumer advocacy groups.

2. Access to and Delivery of DBVI VR Services

Eligibility is determined and vocational rehabilitation (VR) services are delivered through six regional DBVI offices across the state. Additional prevocational and adjustment to blindness services are provided in a residential setting at the VRCBVI in Richmond. After VR services, individuals may be eligible to receive supported employment or long-term follow-along supported employment services once their VR cases are closed.

Procedures for access and delivery of DBVI VR services are similar to those described above for the DARS. VR counselors partner with individuals who are blind, deafblind and visually

impaired to develop and implement an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) based on the individual's abilities, needs, and choices. IPEs are reviewed by the individual and the VR Counselor at least once a year and are updated as appropriate.

Diagnostic and evaluation services, guidance and counseling, and similar services are free of charge for eligible applicants. Other services may be provided based on financial need and a service recipient's financial contribution may be based on his or her resources. Consideration of comparable benefits and alternate funding sources are required for most services. Vocational guidance and counseling, evaluation, reader services, and assistive technology services are among those that do not require comparable benefits consideration.

DBVI operates under an **Order of Selection**, meaning that if the agency has insufficient funds to serve all individuals, those with the most significant disabilities are served first. DBVI's Order of Selection has three categories based on the individual's disability, functional limitations, and duration of services. Since January of 2010, all three categories have been open, and DBVI has been serving all individuals who meet the basic VR eligibility criteria.

In addition to VR, DBVI provides comprehensive programs and services to eligible individuals, including orientation and mobility, low vision, deafblind services, education services, rehabilitation engineering (services to design, test, and adapt technology solutions for persons with disabilities), and rehabilitation teaching. Details on access to and delivery of services vary by program. Specific information may be obtained at <http://www.vdbvi.org> or by contacting the DBVI central office in Richmond or any of its six regional offices. Additional information on DBVI programs related to **Community Living Supports** and **Health Care** services can be found in those chapters of this *Assessment*.

DBVI also operates a **Library and Resource Center** adjacent to the VRCBVI in Richmond and has affiliated libraries at other locations statewide. Another component of the DBVI is its Enterprise Division, which includes the Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB) and entrepreneurial opportunities through the Business Enterprise Program (BEP), also known as the Randolph-Sheppard program.

Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB) operates two manufacturing facilities, one in Richmond and one in Charlottesville, in addition to service and supply operations across the state in federal government buildings and on military bases. VIB also provides key opportunities to eligible individuals, including transitional employment, situational assessment, summer work for transition-age students, and marketable skill development.

The **Business Enterprise Program (BEP)** program trains eligible individuals as food service managers who will manage vending facilities across the state. These opportunities may generate jobs for other blind individuals in areas where they rarely existed in the past, and it is anticipated that such opportunities will continue to increase.

3. Available DBVI VR Services

The basic list of vocational rehabilitation services and supports described in the **Available DARS VR Services** section of this chapter are also provided by the DBVI for those with visual impairments. Other services provided by the DBVI include independent living skills training specific to its target populations and access to specialized equipment to enhance personal responsibility and independence. The DBVI helps people with partial sight to learn how to fully utilize their remaining vision, creates employment for individuals with vision impairment, and provides special library materials in recorded and other accessible formats.

Services provided at the VRCBVI in Richmond include prevocational training in personal adjustment and independent living skills, use of adaptive computer equipment, and preparation for competitive employment. VRCBVI evaluates trainees' potential for employment as vending stand operators in the BEP program. Participants in residential programs typically remain at the Center for three to four months, but the training period is flexible and based on need.

In addition to the vocational rehabilitation services described above, DBVI provides transition services to eligible **students transitioning** from school to postsecondary activities, including higher education and employment. Transition consultation is provided through cooperative agreements between the DBVI and public school divisions, formally referred to as **local education agencies (LEAs)**. LEAs have primary responsibility for transition services under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). A student who is found eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services must be provided those services in accordance with an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Additional information on the role of the DBVI in planning for and providing transition services may be found in the **Education** chapter of this *Assessment*. Since the DBVI's role in coordinating education services for students with visual impairments begins well before the start of transition services, information on related vision services may also be found in the **Early Intervention** chapter of this *Assessment*.

4. Cost and Payment for DBVI VR Services

Table 23 shows the number of individuals served and the total cost of vocational rehabilitation services for the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired's VR program during federal fiscal year (FFY) 2013. This includes a portion of the services provided at the VRCBVI in Richmond, which also serves individuals participating in other DBVI programs. A comparison of previous fiscal years is not possible because the data provided in previous years were not consistent with the data provided in 2013 in terms of what was covered by the expenditures.

Table 23. Number Served and Expenditures by the DBVI for FFY 2013		
Number Served	Waiting List	Total Funds
1,449	0	\$3,027,957

Source: The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, AWARE case management system.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation of DBVI VR Services

Federal **Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)** reporting, monitoring, performance evaluation, and corrective processes for DBVI’s vocational rehabilitation programs are equivalent to those for DARS. The DBVI’s commissioner is responsible for oversight of the agency and its compliance with federal regulations (34 CFR § 361.1 et seq.) and the Code of Virginia (§ 51.5-60 et seq.). RSA performance Standards and Indicators (34 CFR § 361-80-89) also apply.

DBVI’s most recent RSA Section 107 Monitoring and Technical Assistance Review occurred in 2010. The RSA’s resulting report, available at <http://www.rsa.ed.gov>, identified compliance findings and corrective actions that DBVI was required to undertake. The DBVI state agency strategic plan includes its goals, objectives, and performance measures. The DBVI’s annual evaluations of its vocational rehabilitation counselors are based, in part, on individual objectives tied to these measures. The deputy commissioner, vocational rehabilitation director, agency analysts, and regional managers monitor case activities at the state and local level. At the state level, the DBVI vocational rehabilitation director is responsible for direct monitoring of the VR programs. DBVI’s headquarters staff reviews case work by regional offices annually and conducts telephone and mail surveys to determine recipients’ satisfaction with the services they received.

DBVI provides individuals receiving VR services with the opportunity to participate in a customer satisfaction survey. For the 2013 federal reporting year, 337 customers completed their DBVI VR program; 31 of those were unreachable due to relocation, incorrect contact information, or had recently been deceased. Of the 306 contactable customers, 68 (22 percent) responded either by phone (4 percent), by mail (90 percent) or by online survey (6 percent).

Among the responding customers, 79 percent rated their overall satisfaction with the VR services they received from the DBVI as either “satisfied” or “very satisfied”; 13 percent rated their overall satisfaction as “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied”; and 8 percent rated their overall satisfaction as “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.” For delivery of VR services and service items in a timely manner, 87 percent of customers were “satisfied” or “very satisfied”; 9 percent were “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied”; and 4 percent were neutral. In addition, survey results indicated 40 (59 percent) of the respondents reported that they were currently employed; 14 (21 percent) reported that they were seeking employment; 9 (13 percent) indicated they were unemployed but function better as a homemaker; and 5 (7 percent) described that they are not seeking employment or other circumstances exist.

G. Virginia Workforce Centers

A variety of programs are funded under the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) (PL 105-220). The mission of Virginia's WIA program is to improve the quality of the State's workforce, reduce welfare dependency, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Commonwealth. It supports workforce investment activities, through statewide and local systems, that increase employment, retention, earnings, and occupational skills of participants. The **Virginia Workforce Network** is the "brand" name for Virginia's WIA-funded activities and its system of "one-stop" career centers known as **Virginia Workforce Centers**.

The Governor of Virginia, or a designee from the Governor's office, serves as the State's Chief Workforce Development Officer (Code of Virginia §§ 2.2-435.6 and 2.2-435.7). The Virginia Workforce Council advises the Governor on workforce training matters and serves as the State's Workforce Investment Board (Code of Virginia § 2.2-2669). The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) is the state agency with primary responsibility for coordinating workforce training at the postsecondary-to-associate-degree levels. It also provides staffing for the Virginia Workforce Council, and administers the WIA program in Virginia.

The Virginia Workforce Network is comprised of multiple state-administered workforce development programs and services, including vocational rehabilitation and services provided by the **Virginia Employment Commission (VEC)** among others. The VEC promotes economic growth and stability by delivering and coordinating workforce services and, as specified by the Code of Virginia (§ 60.2-113), its responsibilities encompass **Job Seeker and Employer Services** for all Virginians, including those with disabilities. These include policy development, job placement services, temporary income support, workforce information, and transition and training services for displaced workers.

The WIA requires programs administered by the federal Departments of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development to participate in One-Stop Workforce Centers. Participation by additional partners, such as the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), is encouraged. The Virginia Employment Commission's (VEC) Job Seeker and Employer Services are available universally to anyone eligible to work in the United States and are the same for people with and without disabilities. There are no income, geographic, or other restrictions to receiving these services.

1. Screening and Eligibility for Virginia Workforce Center Programs

To be eligible for Workforce Investment Act **Title I adult programs**, an individual must:

1. be at least 18 years of age;
2. have the right to work in the United States; and
3. be registered with military Selective Service, if male.

Participants in **youth programs** must:

1. be low-income; and
2. have at least one identified barrier to employment.

Dislocated workers are those who are unemployed through no fault of their own, such as plant closures, layoff events, and other related circumstances.

Employers, workers, and job seekers are all customers of the **One-Stop Workforce Centers**. This includes businesses, students, people with disabilities, veterans, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients, migrant and seasonal farm workers, unemployed, underemployed, and employed individuals. Eligibility for services, however, can vary. For example, a Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiary with a Ticket to Work may be able to use the ticket for services only if his or her Workforce Center is a participant in a Ticket to Work Employment Network as described beginning on page **144** of this chapter.

2. Access to and Use of Virginia Workforce Centers

There are also levels of services available through the One-Stop Workforce Centers and, depending on their needs, customers may move from one level to the next or receive services from more than one level. Core services, such as access to computers and other equipment, and assistance with job searches, are available for all customers and are self-directed. Intensive training and career education is contingent upon the provider's eligibility requirements and available funding. For additional information, local One-Stop Workforce Centers should be contacted directly. Contact information is available at <http://vwn.vccs.edu/job-seekers/one-stop-centers/>.

Multiple One-Stop Workforce Centers operate in 15 local Workforce Investment Board areas across the State. They simplify access by bringing employment services from multiple providers together under one roof. Each One-Stop provides a single point of access for a wide array of job training, education, and employment services designed to meet the unique needs of their local community. One-Stops also provide employers with a single point of contact where they can list job opportunities and provide information about current and future skills needed by their workers.

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) requires that One-Stop customers with disabilities have equal access to services and that One-Stops be physically and programmatically accessible. During SFY 2013, approximately 9 percent of new enrollees in WIA Title I programs (1,240 out of 14,076) identified themselves as having a disability. Self-reporting is the only manner in which disability information is captured, and this data represents only one of multiple programs operating within the One-Stop system.

3. Available Virginia Workforce Center Services

Multiple agencies partner to provide services through One-Stop Workforce Centers. Core services include public outreach; initial assessments of workers' skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs; job search and placement assistance; career counseling; various group workshops; and labor market information. More intensive services can include comprehensive and specialized assessments, development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), individual and group counseling and career planning, case management for participants seeking training services, and short-term prevocational services. For those still unable to find employment, direct occupational training services are available. Additional information is available at <http://vwn.vccs.edu/job-seekers/one-stop-centers/>.

4. Cost and Payment for Virginia Workforce Centers

Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is supported by federal funds received from the US Department of Labor. For state fiscal year (SFY) 2013, \$35,505,206 was expended to provide services for 14,673 Virginians, with and without disabilities. Costs were not tracked separately for participants with disabilities.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation of Virginia Workforce Centers

As required by the national Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the **Virginia Workforce Council (VWC)** assists the Governor in developing a five-year strategic plan detailing how Virginia will meet the requirements of this statute and how special populations will be served. VWC membership includes representatives from organized labor, the business community, the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), local governments, and the General Assembly, as well as the Secretaries of Commerce and Trade, Education, and Health and Human Resources (HHR). There is no requirement for VWC membership to include people with disabilities; however, the Secretary of HHR represents the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), and the Department of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH), which are members of that secretariat.

As the state's WIA administrative agency, the VCCS ensures that the Commonwealth complies with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Fifteen local **Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)**, each serving a designated area, work with the VWC and the VCCS to guide operations of the state's One-Stop Workforce Centers. Community representation varies between WIBs. It is based on local needs and services but typically includes area employers, educational institutions, labor unions, economic development agencies, One-Stop partners including the DARS and the DBVI, and other community-based organizations. The local WIBs provide a forum to ensure that workforce training and employment initiatives meet local economic development and business needs. The VCCS conducts annual reviews of WIB activities, the delivery of services by the One-Stops and youth programs, and the management of WIA funds.

To ensure that hard-to-serve populations, including people with disabilities, are served, the VWC's **One-Stop Committee** is responsible for:

- reviewing and proposing changes to the certification process for the One-Stops,
- developing a certification and credentialing course for their staffs,
- strengthening their overall accessibility survey process, and
- finding ways to increase the number of General Educational Development (GED) certificates acquired by One-Stop customers in the pursuit of their employment goals.

There are approximately 35 comprehensive One-Stops in Virginia. Some need to be certified for the first time, and others need to be recertified.

To become certified, the VWC requires One-Stops to be physically and programmatically accessible. The Council's **One-Stop Committee** has discussed changes to strengthen the certification process by increasing the frequency of accessibility surveys conducted by DARS and the other disability services agencies. In addition, the process will include participation by individuals with disabilities. DARS, in partnership with the **Disability Program Navigator** initiative and other interested agencies and organizations, will be instrumental in writing an up-to-date accessibility policy and protocol to be used as part of the One-Stop certification process. VCCS is in the process of hiring a One-Stop services coordinator whose responsibilities will include a lead role in certifying One-Stops, and DARS will collaborate closely with that coordinator on accessibility certification standards.

The WIA also requires that the Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) negotiate an annual agreement with the State on individual performance measures covering services for adults, minors, and dislocated workers. Two customer satisfaction measures are based on the results of surveys asking quarterly samples of employers and individuals who are exiting employment programs about the services they received. The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) reports this information to the US Department of Labor, but it could not be used for this *Assessment* because all programs are aggregated by WIB, not by service. In addition, the survey methodology generates a single score that does not translate into a typical customer satisfaction score, and the number of survey respondents is too small to accurately represent One-Stop customers.

H. Virginia Employment Commission Job Seeker and Employer Services

The **Virginia Employment Commission (VEC)** is one of multiple state-administered workforce development programs within the Virginia Workforce Network that include vocational rehabilitation services. The VEC promotes economic growth and stability by delivering and coordinating workforce services and, as specified by the Code of Virginia (§ 60.2-113), its responsibilities encompass **Job Seeker and Employer Services** for all Virginians, including those with disabilities. These include policy development, job placement services, temporary income support, workforce information, and transition and training services for displaced workers.

1. Screening and Eligibility for VEC Services

All Individuals, with and without disabilities, may access the Virginia Employment Commission’s (VEC) **Job Seeker Services**.

2. Access to and Use of VEC Services

Job Seeker Services may be accessed through the VEC website at <http://www.vec.virginia.gov> or by visiting VEC offices or a One-Stop Workforce Center. (Some VEC offices are also One-Stops.) Numerous local, state, and national databases of available jobs may be searched through the website, and it also allows users to access the application for State of Virginia positions and to post a resume online where it can be reviewed by potential employers.

State Fiscal Year	Number of Registered Participants with Disabilities	Number of Participants with Disabilities Receiving Staff Assistance	Number of Participants with Disabilities who Entered Employment
2012	15,196	8,011	6,246
2010	14,164	11,593	4,046

In state fiscal year (SFY) 2012, the VEC reported that a total of 15,196 participants with self-declared disabilities registered in its job services database. This is a 7.2-percent increase in participants from SFY 2010. In SFY 2012, the number of individuals with disabilities who received staff-assisted services decreased nearly 30 percent from SFY 2010. Also in SFY 2012, 1,106 individuals received career guidance, 3,777 participated in job search activities, and 1,319 were referred to *Workforce Investment Act (WIA)* services. These numbers are down sharply from SFY 2010 when 3,591 individuals received career guidance, 4,780 participated in job search activities, and 5,362 were referred to WIA services. Despite the decrease in the number of people served, the percentage of VEC participants who entered employment SFY 2012 increased by 54 percent when comparing SFYs 2010 and 2012. In another way of looking at these figures, 41.1 percent of total registered participants entered employment in SFY 2012 as compared to 28.6 percent in SFY 2010. This is likely due, in part, to the beginning of the economic recovery.

3. Available VEC Services

The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) provides a range of services to improve job search skills and bring workers and employers together. Job Seeker Services include registration for job fairs that build job search skills, referrals to job training, employment workshops, resource rooms and support materials, job referral and placement, labor market information, and tools that help job seekers assess their job skills. The **Virginia Workforce Connection** is a new, web-based One-Stop system containing a wealth of employment and labor market

information with access to thousands of available jobs. It may be accessed at <https://www.vawc.virginia.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>.

VEC staff also offers **Employer Services** to help employers find qualified workers by screening and referring applicants for job vacancies and by coordinating or providing interview facilities. They refer employers to customized training programs, provide information on labor markets, salaries, and other workforce issues, and offer guidance on starting or expanding businesses and improving employee retention. The Commission also provides information on workplace accommodations and tax credits for hiring new employees with disabilities. Additionally, it administers the Work Opportunities Tax Credit, Trade Act Assistance, Agricultural Labor Certification, the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program, and Veterans' Services.

4. Cost and Payment for VEC Services

The US Department of Labor provides funds under the federal Wagner-Peyser Act to support the Virginia Employment Commission's Unemployment Insurance program and Job Seeker and Employer Services. Information on the cost of services for persons with disabilities is not tracked separately.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation of VEC Services

Oversight of the Virginia Employment Commission's (VEC) federally funded programs is the responsibility of the US Department of Labor's **Employment Training Administration (ETA)**. Each program has its own negotiated and prescribed performance measures, and the VEC is required to provide quarterly reports on outcomes. As noted in previous sections of this chapter, VEC reporting does not segregate data on its Job Seeker and Employer Services programs for individuals with and without disabilities.

I. Disability Employment Initiative

In October 2013, the US Department of Labor awarded the Virginia Community College System–Workforce Development Services [as administrator of the Workforce Initiative Act (WIA) in Virginia] another grant for the **Disability Employment Initiative (DEI)**. This DEI builds on the strengths and lessons learned through Virginia's first grant under the DEI in 2010. The overall purpose of Virginia's DEI grant is to engage the workforce system to improve employment outcomes for adults (25 years and older) with disabilities. The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) serves as a strategic partner in the implementation of this initiative.

Two local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs 2 and 15) will participate in the DEI as pilot sites, employing disability resource coordinators (DRCs) and becoming Employment Networks (ENs) under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (PL 106-170). These WIBs will actively participate in the Ticket to Work program. DRCs will provide disability expertise to fulfill the goals and service delivery components of the DEI as listed below, and to

promote programmatic, physical, and communications access at the local Virginia Workforce Centers (VWCs). DRCs will provide assessment, case management, and employment services for Social Security Administration beneficiaries who are ready to work. Two additional WIBs (4 and 9) will participate as comparison sites. All four of the WIBs will participate in data collection and program evaluation activities that will focus on job seekers with disabilities receiving Virginia Workforce Center (One-Stop) services. The outcomes for job seekers with disabilities will be compared to those for people without disabilities as a function of this evaluation.

The goals for the pilot WIB sites are to:

- Enhance the capacity of Virginia Workforce Center services for job seekers with disabilities.
- Increase the number of job seekers with disabilities who access Virginia’s One-Stop system (e.g., core or intensive training services).
- Engage businesses to ensure One-Stop services meet their needs to promote employment of job seekers with disabilities and to increase employer knowledge and use of effective hiring practices and accommodations.
- Increase the use of asset-building strategies among job seekers with disabilities.
- Increase the use of the Employment Networks within the One-Stop system to increase access to and use of the Ticket to Work program to serve job seekers who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits.

The pilot WIB sites will focus on the following strategic service delivery components:

- Partnerships and collaboration (coordination across multiple state-level systems and local-level programs);
- Integrated Resource Teams (collaborative case management to bring partner resources and services together to promote successful employment outcomes for job seekers with disabilities); and
- Asset Development Strategies (e.g., financial literacy and asset management).

J. Social Security Ticket to Work Incentive Program

Special rules make it possible for people with disabilities who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to work and still receive monthly payments and Medicare or Medicaid. Social Security calls these rules “**work incentives.**” There are quite a few work incentives available to individuals with disabilities who receive Social Security benefits. Its Ticket to Work program is one of two key programs included in this *Assessment*. Information on the full list of incentives can be found at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/generalinfo.htm>.

Ticket to Work (TTW), authorized under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Improvement Act of 1999 (PL 106-179), is a program of the federal Social Security Administration (SSA). It serves individuals who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits and is designed to help individuals with significant disabilities who have been receiving these benefits to make the transition back into the workforce. It helps these individuals overcome barriers, such as concerns about the loss of cash payments or health care benefits, which may negatively influence their decisions about seeking employment. It also increases the opportunities and choices for SSI and SSDI beneficiaries to obtain employment, vocational rehabilitation, and other support services from public and private providers, employers, and other organizations. An advantage of this program is that the SSA does not conduct a medical review of a person receiving disability benefits if that person is using a Ticket to Work to pursue employment.

1. Screening and Eligibility for Ticket to Work

To be eligible for a Ticket to Work, an individual must:

1. be age 18 or over and not have reached age 65; and
2. be receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits.

Exceptions and other qualifications may apply and, as manager of the program, the Social Security Administration (SSA) determines which recipients of SSI or SSDI are eligible to participate.

2. Access to and Use of Ticket to Work

The SSA provides eligible recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits with a Ticket to Work that they can use to obtain services from **Employment Networks (ENs)**. ENs are awarded unlimited, noncompetitive contracts by the SSA to provide those services through an ongoing, open-ended Request for Proposal process. Any agency or political subdivision of a state or a private entity that takes responsibility for the referral, coordination, or delivery of services is eligible to apply to be an EN. Applicants may be a single entity, a partnership, an alliance of public or private entities, or a consortium of organizations that combine resources and collaborate to serve individuals within the Ticket to Work program. EN participants vary, but include state vocational rehabilitation agencies and other providers of rehabilitation services for people with disabilities, One-Stop Workforce Centers, employment agencies, state and local government human services providers, and other public and private entities. The specific services available from individual ENs vary widely.

3. Available Ticket to Work Services

Participation in the Ticket to Work (TTW) program is flexible and voluntary. The SSA does not mandate participation by SSI and SSDI beneficiaries and, in most cases, ENs can choose the

services they want to provide, where they will be provided, and to whom. “Ticket Holders” may contact more than one EN to discuss services, and once an agreement has been reached between a Ticket Holder and an EN, they work together to develop and implement a plan that will help the individual reach his or her employment goal. If a Ticket Holder becomes dissatisfied with the chosen EN, he or she can select another from which to obtain services. Ticket Holders also are eligible for extended Medicaid insurance coverage and benefits planning assistance, including how to utilize work incentive benefits most effectively.

The goal of employment service providers that participate in the TTW program is to assist disability beneficiaries to become financially independent through sustained work at or above the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level. SGA for 2014 is earnings of \$1,070 per month for Ticket Holders with disabilities other than blindness and \$1,800 per month for Ticket Holders who are blind or visually impaired.

4. Cost and Payment for Ticket to Work

The TTW program is an **outcome-based** employment program. Under the outcome/milestone payment system, the SSA pays an EN when a Ticket Holder attains certain milestones and outcomes that move the individual toward self-supporting employment. As of November 1, 2013, there were 307,802 eligible Ticket Holders in Virginia, and 77 ENs providing services in Virginia. Of the 77 ENs, 46 are based in the State, and the remaining 31 are located out-of-state across the nation. There are 1,117 Tickets assigned to ENs that serve Virginia, and another 5,484 Tickets that are considered in use with Virginia’s Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI). There are an additional 53 Tickets assigned to DARS that are considered assigned and in use for milestone or outcome.

Approved Employment Networks (ENs) submit for payments based on the earnings of Ticket Holders who have assigned their Tickets to the EN. Once the Social Security Administration (SSA) approves an EN’s application, the EN must choose between two options for receiving payments: the Outcome Payment System or the Milestone/Outcome Payment System. When earned, milestone and outcome payments are directly deposited into an EN’s bank account. These funds represent unrestricted revenue for the EN because the SSA does not place requirements or restrictions on how ENs use revenue generated under the Ticket to Work program. Specific information on TTW expenditures in Virginia is not available.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation of Ticket to Work

The SSA is responsible for oversight of the Ticket to Work Program. MAXIMUS is its program manager. The SSA expects that Employment Networks (ENs) will provide employment support services that afford Ticket Holders the opportunity and support to prepare for, obtain, and retain career-ladder jobs that will realistically enable them to leave and remain off federal cash benefits. In helping disability beneficiaries on the road to self-sufficiency, ENs must offer opportunities and supports that enable a Ticket Holder to achieve financial independence.

The SSA finds it unacceptable for an EN to limit its business model to assisting Ticket Holders in engaging in part-time employment only. ENs that purposefully engage in such practices are terminated. The SSA also requires ENs to provide actual services to Ticket Holders to help them reach their employment goals before any payment is made. ENs must certify to the SSA which services were provided before certain payments are made.

The SSA tracks Ticket Holders with **Timely Progress Reviews (TPR)** in which Ticket Holders are expected to make progress towards self-sufficiency while their tickets are assigned. The TPR is based on the Timely Progress Guidelines that the SSA established under federal regulations that went into effect in July of 2008 (CFR 411-100 et seq.). Operation support managers conduct reviews at the end of every 12-month period to determine if the Ticket Holders are making the expected progress towards self-sufficiency. ENs are responsible for explaining these reviews and providing counsel and advice while developing an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) for each participant.

K. Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program

The **Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program** was created through the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999. This Act authorized Social Security to award grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to provide technical assistance and support relating to community-based work incentives to beneficiaries of Social Security benefits that are based on disability.

The goal of the WIPA Program is to increase emphasis on work incentives, return-to-work supports, and jobs for SSI and SSDI beneficiaries. Local community organizations, known as **Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Projects**, help individuals who receive SSA disability benefits to learn how employment can affect those benefits and provide them with information and planning services about work and work incentives. The SSA currently contracts with **the Virginia Association of Community Rehabilitation Programs (vaACCSES)** to administer the WIPA Program.

Examples of work incentives include but are not limited to:

- **Section 1619** (a) and (b) of the Social Security Act allows a working Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipient to earn income at the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) level while receiving both a SSI payment and Medicaid at no cost with 1619 (b) status occurring when the income level eliminates a SSI cash benefit but Medicaid eligibility is retained at no cost to the recipient. The SGA for 2014 is earnings of \$1,070 per month for people with disabilities other than blindness, and \$1,800 per month for those who are blind or visually impaired.
- The **Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS)** is an earned income and resource exclusion that allows a person with a disability who receives SSI benefits to set aside income or resources to reach an occupational goal.

- The **Impairment Related Work Expense (IRWE)** incentive allows an individual to deduct certain work related items and services that are needed to enable the SSI beneficiary to work.

1. Screening and Eligibility for WIPA Services

To be eligible for **WIPA** services, an individual must be an SSI or SSDI beneficiary age 14 through 64. Individuals do not have to be working or even to have decided to pursue work. WIPA services are available for individuals who:

- plan to start working, plan to return to work or plan to start a business;
- plan to accept or seek a higher paying job;
- are concerned about stopping work;
- have questions about Ticket to Work or need a referral to an Employment Network; or
- have other questions about how work will impact disability benefits.

2. Access to and Delivery of WIPA Services

Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWICs) manage the WIPA Program. CWICs provide information on work incentives and related benefits planning assistance. The goal of the WIPA Program is to enable SSI and SSDI beneficiaries with disabilities, including transition-to-work youth, to make informed choices about work and to take advantage of the many work incentives available to them. WIPA services are available in every state and US territory.

Individuals may call vaACCSES at 1-877-822-2777 or go to <http://www.vaaccses.org/wipa> for information on contacting a local Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC). The website includes a list of CWICs, provides their contact information, and indicates the areas they serve.

A CWIC will consult with individuals initially by phone to determine if an in-person appointment is needed. CWICs are able to meet with individuals at any of the local DARS field offices throughout Virginia (listed at <http://www.vadars.org/offices.aspx>). They also will meet “virtually,” via Skype, for example, if needed. The WIPA project also has American Sign Language and bilingual staff available.

3. Available WIPA Services

CWICs will assess the array of services available for individuals and advise them, not only on what happens to their SS benefits if and when they work, but also on how all of their benefits are tied together. CWICs also assist individuals in obtaining benefits and making the best use of them by:

- Providing information on how part-time, full-time, or seasonal work would affect an individual’s disability benefits and other benefits received from federal, state, and local programs (such as TANF, SNAP, or Workmen’s Compensation);

- Providing information on how work affects health care benefits, such as being the primary contact for Virginia's MEDICAID WORKS buy-in program;
- Providing information on work incentives offered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and other sources;
- Discussing individual employment goals and helping identify resources and services to overcome possible barriers to reaching them;
- Helping individuals plan how to use work incentives or other benefits to successfully return to work and provide follow-along assistance once they are working to monitor work incentives and ensure compliance;
- Working with local Social Security offices to implement needed work incentives; and
- Helping individuals use the Ticket to Work program to find appropriate Employment Networks (ENs).

Once an individual is a client of the WIPA Program, services are available for an indeterminate amount of time. In other words, cases do not close; the CWIC maintains a full caseload.

4. Cost and Payment for WIPA Services

The Social Security Administration (SSA) makes grant awards for community **WIPA Projects** covering a five-year period; however, recipient organizations must submit annual requests for continuation of funding. In 2012, the WIPA Projects in Virginia were vaACCSES and the Independence Center. For calendar year 2012, approximately \$563,778 was expended in WIPA funds. In this period 3,857 new clients (with no waiting list) were served: 1,778 individuals were provided with information and referrals; and 2,079 individuals were provided advanced WIPA services. In addition, WIPA Projects maintained a full caseload.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation of WIPA Services

The SSA is responsible for oversight of the WIPA Program. WIPA Projects must apply for funds annually and submit quarterly program and semiannual financial reports to SSA, which also conducts periodic site visits and onsite audits. The details of these processes are too lengthy and complex to include in this *Assessment*, and the SSA should be contacted directly for additional monitoring and evaluation information.

L. Virginia's MEDICAID WORKS Program

MEDICAID WORKS is Virginia's Medicaid Buy-In Program for individuals with disabilities who are employed or who want to become employed. To remove barriers to employment, a Medicaid Buy-In Program allows working people with disabilities to participate in their state's Medicaid program by paying a premium, if required, while earning a higher income and retaining more in savings or other resources than is usually allowed by Medicaid. MEDICAID WORKS continues to be premium free for Virginia enrollees in 2014. Receiving continued Medicaid health care coverage as they work and save enables individuals with disabilities to

gain greater independence. Additional information on Virginia's Medicaid program can be found in the **Medicaid** chapter of this *Assessment*.

1. Screening and Eligibility for MEDICAID WORKS

Local Departments of Social Services determine who qualifies for MEDICAID WORKS. To qualify, applicants must meet income, asset, and eligibility requirements for the Aged, Blind, and Disabled Medicaid covered group (80 percent of the Federal Poverty Level). Current and new Medicaid enrollees who are blind or disabled, as defined by the Social Security Administration (SSA), may have a total income in 2014 of no more than \$778 per month for a single individual or \$1,049 for a couple and resources of no more than \$2,000 if single and \$3,000 if a couple. An applicant must also be:

1. at least 16 years of age and less than 65 years of age;
2. employed or have documentation from an employer establishing the date when employment will begin;
3. a resident of the Commonwealth; and
4. a US citizen, US national, or qualified non-citizen.

Individuals currently receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits from SSA satisfy the condition for disability. Any applicant without this SSA documentation must be evaluated by the State's Disability Determination Services program before eligibility is established.

2. Access to and Use of MEDICAID WORKS

To enroll in MEDICAID WORKS, applicants must first establish a Work Incentive (WIN) account at a bank or other financial institution where earned income will be deposited. Additional information is available in the *MEDICAID WORKS Handbook* at http://www.dmas.virginia.gov/Content_atchs/mbi/mbi-wmdi2.pdf.

To continue enrollment in MEDICAID WORKS, participants must continue to be disabled, employed, less than 65 years of age, and must meet earning and resource requirements. Eligibility is reviewed at least annually, and enrollees are required to inform their eligibility worker of changes that may affect their coverage, including but not limited to changes in employer or loss of employment. Enrollees must provide periodic documentation of their employment status, employer, earned income, and WIN accounts. In 2014, MEDICAID WORKS enrollees may have annual earnings as high as \$47,460 and may keep resources up to \$33,862.

The 2011 General Assembly passed House Bill 2384, raising the maximum allowable gross earnings for MEDICAID WORKS enrollees to be "equivalent with the maximum gross income amount allowed under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 that does not trigger collection of mandatory premiums." At the time of passage, this change equated to a maximum individual gross income of up to \$75,000. Currently, this change is

under review with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The bill did not change eligibility requirements for MEDICAID WORKS. As of November 16, 2013, there were 58 enrollees in Virginia's MEDICAID WORKS program. At the time of this assessment, local WIPA programs were able to provide information on the program. To apply for MEDICAID WORKS, individuals should contact the Department of Social Services in the city or county where they live. A list of local offices can be found at <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/localagency>.

3. Cost and Payment for MEDICAID WORKS

Costs for the **MEDICAID WORKS** program are covered along with other Medicaid expenditures in the **Medicaid** chapter of this *Assessment*.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation of MEDICAID WORKS

A member of the **Department of Medical Assistance Services' (DMAS) Program Operations Division** is responsible for monitoring MEDICAID WORKS enrollment and working with local Department of Social Services offices, when necessary, to assist with enrollment and eligibility issues. This staff member also serves as a resource for both the Work Incentive Specialist Advocates (WISA) authorized by the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and the Community Work Incentive Coordinators at the Social Security Administration's designated WIPA Projects in Virginia. DMAS monitors new enrollment and cancellation reports and contacts all new enrollees, soon after their enrollment and periodically thereafter, to welcome them to the program and request information about their employment. In applying for MEDICAID WORKS, enrollees agree to keep DMAS informed of where they are employed, what their jobs are, their hours worked, and their incomes. DMAS uses this information to report monthly on the total number of enrollees, how many are self-employed, their age and hourly wage ranges, the average number of hours worked per week, and the number of enrollees in each of the five geographic regions tracked by DMAS.

M. Home and Community Based Services Waivers Employment Support Services

Three of Virginia's six HCBS Waivers provide employment support services: the Individual and Family Developmental Disabilities Support Waiver (DD Waiver), the Intellectual Disability (ID) Waiver, and the Day Support Waiver. The DD, ID and Day Support Waivers are administered by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) under an agreement with the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), the Commonwealth's Medicaid agency.

1. Screening and Eligibility for HCBS Waiver Employment Services

Specific information on eligibility for HCBS Waivers appears in the **Medicaid** chapter of this *Assessment*. Individuals who are found eligible for the DD, ID and Day Support Waivers may receive employment supports, including prevocational training and individual or group models

of supported employment, if that service is included in their **Individual Services Plan (ISP)**. To qualify for supported employment services, the individual must:

1. have a demonstrated need for training, specialized supervision, or assistance in paid employment;
2. be someone for whom competitive employment at or above minimum wage is unlikely without this support; and
3. need ongoing support because of his or her disability.

The individual's need for special services is reassessed annually.

2. Access to and Delivery of HCBS Waiver Employment Services

Specific information on access and delivery of employment services appears in the **Medicaid** chapter of this *Assessment*.

3. Available HCBS Waiver Employment Services

Prevocational services, which are not job-task oriented, are available through the Intellectual Disability (ID) and Day Support Waivers. These services provide training and assistance to prepare an individual for paid or unpaid employment. They teach fundamental skills such as accepting supervision, getting along with co-workers, and using a time clock. To be covered, the individual's assessment and service plan must clearly reflect the individual's need for this training and support. Prevocational services are intended to be time limited to prepare an individual for employment. However, often that is not the case, and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services is examining this issue as it makes changes to Virginia's HCBS waivers. (More information is provided in the **Medicaid** chapter of this *Assessment*.)

Supported employment can be provided via a group or individual model. It includes training in specific skills related to paid employment and the provision of ongoing or intermittent assistance and specialized supervision to enable an individual with a disability to maintain paid employment. The group model provides continuous staff support for eight or fewer individuals with disabilities in an enclave, work crew, or bench work/entrepreneurial setting. The individual model involves intermittent, one-on-one support by a job coach for an individual with disabilities in integrated, community-based employment after an initial intensive period of on-the-job training. The individual supported employment model is considered best practice.

4. Cost and Payment for HCBS Waiver Employment Services

Table 25 provides the number of people served and funding sources and amounts for prevocational and supported employment services provided under HCBS Waivers during state fiscal year (SFY) 2013. Disaggregated data by type of service was not readily available for previous fiscal years.

Combined spending for prevocational and supported employment services under all three HCBS Waivers rose by 11.6 percent from \$18,903,763 in SFY 2010 to \$21,094,662 in SFY 2013. Likewise, the number of individuals receiving these services under HCBS Waivers rose by 10.2 percent from 1,738 to 1,915 during that same period.

Table 25. Prevocational and Employment Support Services Provided Under HCBS Waivers in SFY 2013		
Individual and Family Developmental Disabilities Support Waiver (DD Waiver)	Number Served	Total Funds
Prevocational Services	9	\$62,614
Supported Employment*	44	\$393,196
Intellectual Disabilities (ID) Waiver	Number Served	Total Funds
Prevocational Services	889	\$9,531,036
Supported Employment*	889	\$10,146,131
Day Support Waiver	Number Served	Total Funds
Prevocational Services	56	\$615,315
Supported Employment*	28	\$346,370

* Supported Employment services include individual and enclave models. While unusual, the Department of Medical Assistance Services verified that the number of individuals served in prevocational services and in supported employment were identical in SFY 2013.

Sources: Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and Department of Medical Assistance Services.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation of HCBS Waiver Employment Services

The **Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)** is required to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all individuals served by HCBS Waivers and to ensure that providers comply with all federal and state regulations. The **Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS)** directly administers and provides additional oversight for the **ID, DD and Day Support Waivers**. Information on monitoring and evaluation of these waivers is included in the **Medicaid** chapter of this *Assessment*.

As noted in the **Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation and Other Employment Services** section at the beginning of this chapter, the Independent Reviewer found in his June 6, 2014 *Quarterly Report* that the Commonwealth was substantially in compliance with the implementation actions related to integrated employment activities. For this compliance examination the Reviewer contracted with an expert consultant who made a variety of recommendations related to her findings. With respect to HCBS Waivers, the consultant stated:

DBHDS will need to concentrate its efforts on completing its waiver redesign plan to address employment service definitions and revise its rate structure, focus on building provider capacity, considering offering individuals the opportunity to self-direct their employment supports, and ensure case managers are trained in the Employment First policy and using the principles of person-centered planning to help individuals and their families identify and pursue their employment goals and aspirations.

The consultant also recommended that the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) review data on the growth of group-supported employment and pre-vocational services, so that it can determine strategies to incorporate in waiver redesign that

will start to turn the curve in Virginia away from other vocational options and towards greater individualized employment for the target population.

Additional recommendations related to the need for more case manager training; family education and outreach; tracking outcomes separately for individuals receiving individual supported-employment services in the ID and DD Waivers to determine if the Commonwealth has been successful with both groups. The full report is available at <http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/settlement/ODS-140606IRReport.pdf>.

N. Chapter References

Links to websites and online documents reflect their Internet addresses in June of 2014. Some documents retrieved and utilized do not have a date of publication.

1. Websites Referenced

Code of Virginia

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+coh+51.5-1+500809>

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+cod+51.5-60>

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+cod+51.5-117>

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+cod+2.2-2669>

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+cod+60.2-113>

US Department of Labor

Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey

<http://www.bls.gov/cps>

US Social Security Administration

Ticket To Work

<http://ssa.gov/work/overview.html>

<https://yourtickettowork.com/web/ttw/resource-documents>

<https://yourtickettowork.com/web/ttw/en-about-ticket-to-work>

<http://www.chooseworkttw.net/about/index.html>

<http://www.yourtickettowork.com/web/ttw/en-timely-progress-review>

<http://www.yourtickettowork.com/web/ttw/en-payments>

<http://www.maximus.com/services/workforce-solutions/ticket-work>

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Projects

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work/WIPA.html>

vaACCSES (Virginia Association of Community Rehabilitation Programs)

<http://www.vaaccses.org>

Endependence Center

<http://www.endependence.org>

Virginia Commonwealth University

Rehabilitation Research & Training Center on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

<http://www.worksupport.com/>

Project SEARCH

<http://www.worksupport.com/projects/projsearchmcv.cfm>

School 2 Work

<http://www.worksupport.com/school2work/>

Virginia Community College System

<http://www.vccs.edu>

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

<http://www.vaDARS.org>

Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center

<http://wwrc.virginia.gov>

WorkWORLD

<http://workworld.wwrc.net/pages/home>

Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

<http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov>

Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired

<http://www.vdbvi.org>

Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired

<http://www.vrcbvi.org>

Virginia Industries for the Blind

<http://www.vibonline.org>

Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services

<http://www.dmas.virginia.gov>

Virginia Department of Social Services

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov>

Local Department of Social Services offices

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/localagency>

Virginia Employment Commission

<http://www.vec.virginia.gov>

Virginia Workforce Network (One-Stop Workforce Centers)

<http://vwn.vccs.edu>

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