

RHODE ISLAND

STATE
REHABILITATION
COUNCIL

2004
ANNUAL REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF
REHABILITATION
SERVICES

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Mission: Working with the Office of Rehabilitation Services to maximize the potential of people with disabilities through meaningful employment.

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Office of Rehabilitation Services
Vocational Rehabilitation Program*

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

In a word, our year was filled with **advocacy!!**

Writing to support our former chair, Annette Bourbonniere, as her work for the Medicaid Buy-In was realized. **Acting** as a strong undivided front while lobbying Governor Carcieri, the House and the Senate for the Medicaid Buy-In, as well as voicing our complaint with slashing funds for summer interns. **Reinforcing** a fellow council member's research project with the European apprenticeship model as the information will enhance the development of employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in Rhode Island.



Members of the council attended the roundtables held throughout the state to listen to the issues identified by individuals with disabilities as well as service providers. Many members actively participated in the discussions or presented at these forums.

The Council held a joint meeting with the Office of Rehabilitation Services through the presentation of the State Plan in June of 2004 in an attempt to offer the general public additional opportunity to address our membership.

The Office of Rehabilitation Services conducted an extensive Consumer Satisfaction Survey. The Council was most pleased with the overall result and the level of commitment from ORS staff to continue to improve outreach to individuals with disabilities.

The most important and critical work of the Council occurs in the sub-committees. During 2005, the sub-committee chairs will be holding scheduled meetings, with published agendas available for all council members and guests to plan attendance.

To the members of the Office of Rehabilitation Services, please accept our heartfelt best wishes for all your efforts.

To my colleagues of the Council, thank you for the many hours of time away from friends and family to participate with me in support of a lifelong mission to attain full integration of all avenues of employment. We must continue to open the doors for individuals with disabilities to be gainfully employed with their peers. The Office of Rehabilitation Services is the venue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William T. Anderson", written in a cursive style.

William T. Anderson,
SRC Chair

MEMBERS

William Anderson, Chair – Re-elected as Chair for his sixth and final year on the Council, parent of a profoundly disabled young man, special educator and retired Director of Student Services for the Town of Lincoln, Bill continues to serve individuals with special needs through his consulting and advocacy. Bill is committed to the ORS objective of employment for individuals with disabilities and the opportunities ORS can provide to students through shared transition planning with school district staff.

Janice Belasco is a consumer representative who is also completing her first term on the Council. She is the co-chair of the Nominating and Leadership Development subcommittee.

Annette Bourbonniere is in her second term on the Council. She is a consumer and a business representative. Annette is the chairperson for the Employment subcommittee and also serves on the Quality Assurance subcommittee.

Paul Choquette is a consumer and a representative of a service provider. He is completing his first term on the Council. He chaired the Legislation subcommittee.

Bob Cooper is a consumer and our representative from the Human Resource Investment Council. He is in his first term on the Council and is a member of the Nominations and Leadership subcommittee.

Domenic DiOrio is serving his first term on the Council. He is a Fellow in Vocational Education from Ohio State University and was recognized as Past Teacher of the Year in Rhode Island. He also appears in “Who’s Who in Education.” Domenic is co-chair of the Leadership subcommittee, a member of the Employment subcommittee, a consultant at Goodwill Industries of RI developing vocational training programs, and is a member of the Governor’s Adult Literacy Commission.

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Robin Dolan is a Physical Therapist, business owner, and a consumer with a physical disability. This past year Robin has served as chairperson of the Quality Assurance subcommittee. She is currently in her second term on the Council.

Susan Donovan is a new member on the Council and is our representative from the Parent Training and Information Center (PTIC). Sue is a parent of a child with special needs and works as a Special Education Transition Coordinator for the RI Parent Information Network. Sue is a member of the Employment subcommittee.

M. Kathleen Ellis works for one of the state universities as Director of the Adapted Physical Education Program, working with special needs children on healthy lifestyle factors. She is in her first term on the Council and is a member of the Nominations and Leadership subcommittee.

Craig Enos works for a local school department and is just completing his first year on the Council. He serves as the chairperson for the By-Laws subcommittee and is a member of the State Plan and Policy subcommittee.

Joseph Ferreira is a consumer and is in his first term on the Council. He is the chairperson of the State Plan and Policy subcommittee.

Steven Florio is a Deaf consumer and an advocate concerning Deaf and Hard of Hearing. He is in his first term on the Council and is a member of the Quality Assurance Subcommittee.

Elizabeth Graves is our liaison to the Statewide Independent Living Council and to the Governor's Advisory Council for the Blind & Visually Impaired. She was previously a special education teacher. Liz is on her first term on the Council and serves on the By-Laws subcommittee.

Scott Greco works for the Department of Labor & Training and is in his first term on the Council. He is on the Legislation subcommittee.

Roberta Greene was our representative from the Rhode Island Disability Law Center, Client Advocacy Program. She served on the State Plan and Policy subcommittee. She is now working at ORS as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

Margaret Hoye is a consumer of services and is in her first consecutive term. However, she has been a member and a guest of the Council for years, serving two terms, coming as a guest, and serving again. Margaret has been active on a number of subcommittees, this year serving on the Nominations and Leadership subcommittee and the By-Laws subcommittee.

Virginia Perelson was a representative from a service provider and is in her second term on the Council. She was our Secretary and also served on the Employment subcommittee.

Catherine Sansonetti is a Staff Attorney at the Rhode Island Disability Law Center and is the current representative from the Client Assistance Program. She serves on the State Plan and Policy subcommittee.

Rosemary Scribner works at Hasbro for the Human Resource Department. She is the Secretary of the Council. Rosemary is also a member of the Employment subcommittee.

J. David Sienko, is a representative from special education and just completed his first term on the Council. He is our Vice-Chairperson and has worked on the Employment subcommittee and the Nominations and Leadership subcommittee.

Michaela Stannard is our representative from the Office of Rehabilitation Services and is in her first term on the Council. She is a member of the State Plan and Policy subcommittee.

Raymond A. Carroll, Ex-Officio member of the State Rehabilitation Council. Ray is the Administrator of the Office of Rehabilitation Services.

**By-Laws Committee
Chairperson – Craig Enos**

- * The By-Laws sub-committee is the only body that reacts to the requests of the Council.
- * As we are not a pro-active group, we draft proposals for amendments to our By-Laws in response to issues raised by members of the Council.
- * One proposal was presented to the Council late in 2004 reflecting an alteration in the election process of officers.



SRC Members: Margaret Hoyer, Janice Belasco, Michaela Stannard,
Susan Donovan, Craig Enos, Joseph Ferreira, Raymond Carroll,
and Bob Cooper

Employment Committee Chairperson—Annette Bourbonniere

- * The Employment Committee met with and developed a working relationship with the new Employment Specialist of the Office of Rehabilitation Services.
- * Members of the employment committee participated in the Employer Honor Roll in October.
- * Members of the employment committee participated in the planning of the Partnerships to Employment Conference.
- * A Job Development Coordinator has been identified from each region. These Coordinators will become the point people for ORS in each region and will facilitate job development activities and coordinate with the Employment Service Coordinator.
- * David Hagner has trained the ORS staff in Job Development, as discussed with the Employment Sub-committee last year.
- * ORS has joined two additional Chambers of Commerce, which may be helpful in promoting the “Job Ready” list being discussed by the sub-committee.
- * The ORS Employment Services Coordinator is now an active participant with the Employment Sub-committee.

Goals for next year include:

- * ORS is conducting an “accounting” of job development activities provided by the rehabilitation counselors and vendors. Information from this investigation will be shared with the Employment sub-committee in 2005.
- * Developing an easily accessible registry of employment ready clients.
- * Developing a program for employment motivation.
- * Assisting ORS as it defines its role as the resource to both clients with disabilities and employers.

**Membership/Leadership Committee
Co-Chairpersons—Janice Belasco & Domenic DiOrio**

- * 2004 has proven to be a very challenging year for the Nominating and Leadership Committee. Two Co-Chairpersons were appointed by the SRC Council Chairperson to share the responsibilities of this vital sub-committee.
- * Several meetings have been held and the sub-committee has now expanded to a total of 6 members. The main agenda for these meetings was to recruit the most reputable, enthusiastic and compassionate individuals who would be forthcoming in their desire to assist all those individuals with disabilities by serving on various committees throughout the SRC. One interview was conducted to replace a vacancy on the Council and this individual is now serving on the Employment Committee. Another interview is scheduled in January 2005.
- * The sub-committee also met to present a slate of officers for the coming year. The Council unanimously approved of this slate and letters were forwarded to the Governor for final approval. A listing was also prepared for those Council members whose appointments were expiring and would require approvals by the Council and Governor also.
- * An aggressive 2005 agenda has been planned for this sub-committee and all members are looking forward to the upcoming challenges.

Quality Assurance Committee Chairperson: Robin Dolan

During 2004 we successfully completed Consumer Satisfaction Survey on a local level and we were able to interface our performance on a National Level as well. We were happy to see that our work within our state has continued to demonstrate our commitment to improve services to our clients. It was apparent that we succeeded in our sampling of individuals giving us a broad scope of the work that the Office of Rehabilitation Services has accomplished and lending all of us insight in areas of continued growth and improvement.

We were able to have Jerry Lindsley and other members of the outside Consulting Firm not only to speak to the Council but the entire Office of Rehabilitation Services giving us all valued objective data in which to benchmark the State's performance.



SRC Members: Elizabeth Graves, Raymond Carroll, Bob Cooper, Cathy Sansonetti, Annette Bourbonniere, Steve Florio, and Robin Dolan

State Plan and Policy Committee

Chairperson: Joseph Ferreira

* Committee has met over the course of the year to review and formulate comment on a number of policies developed at ORS.

* Committee Chair and Policy Review Committee was involved in decision to develop, review, and make recommendations on a “Policy Development Tracking Guide” to be used for tracking policies and assisting in the general review process.

* Seven ORS policies were reviewed and vetted through the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) process they included:

Confidentiality 105.4	Employment 115.10
Transportation 115.21	Motor Vehicle Modification 115.23
Adaptive Housing 115.26	Rehabilitation Technology 115.16
Occupational Tools, Equipment, Licenses, Initial Stock and Supplies 115.20	

* A number of other ORS policies which have been reviewed by SRC and are currently being vetted through to the APA process include :

Homemaker 115.4	Transition Services 115.38
Reversion to Donor Prohibition 115.37	
Post Secondary Education & Vocational Training 115.28	

* Committee members have met and communicated with Steve Brunero, Deputy Administrator, Vocational Rehabilitation to stay current with recent trends in policy revision, amending and updating.

* SRC Policy Committee is participating in an ORS Policy Review Team to explore updating numerous ORS policies for 2005.

MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR



It is my pleasure to provide you with the Annual Report for the Federal Fiscal Year 2004 for the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS).

Vocational Rehabilitation, Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and Disability Determination Services provide a myriad of resources and services which enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

The high quality services provided by ORS programs help ensure that Rhode Islanders with disabilities have the opportunity to be productive and contributing members of our community.

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

Ronald A. Lebel
Acting Director

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

On behalf of the Office of Rehabilitation Services, I am pleased to present to you the 2004 Annual Report.



The Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program was successful in assisting **635** individuals to become gainfully employed. We are proud of this increase in the number of individuals with disabilities who achieved their employment goal. The Disability Determination Services processed 13,349 Social Security claims for disability benefits. Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, through a variety of specialized programs and services, assisted individuals who are blind, visually impaired and multi-disabled to become independent and productive.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR) is fortunate to enjoy a positive and effective working relations with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). Recipients of VR services and the public should be very proud of the strong partnership between the SRC and VR.

The accomplishments outlined in this annual report reflect favorably the efforts of the staff who, by hard work and commitment, have continued a long tradition of serving Rhode Islanders with disabilities.

Raymond A. Carroll
Administrator

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

22 vending facilities were supported by the Business Enterprises Program (BEP) at Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Sales increased by 5% to \$1,778,128. The 22 Blind vendors purchased almost one million dollars worth of goods and services from a wide variety of suppliers across the state.

17,000 children were screened by the Vision Screening Program resulting in 1,008 children receiving necessary follow up care, reducing or eliminating the early impact of poor visual function of which 495 received eyeglasses.

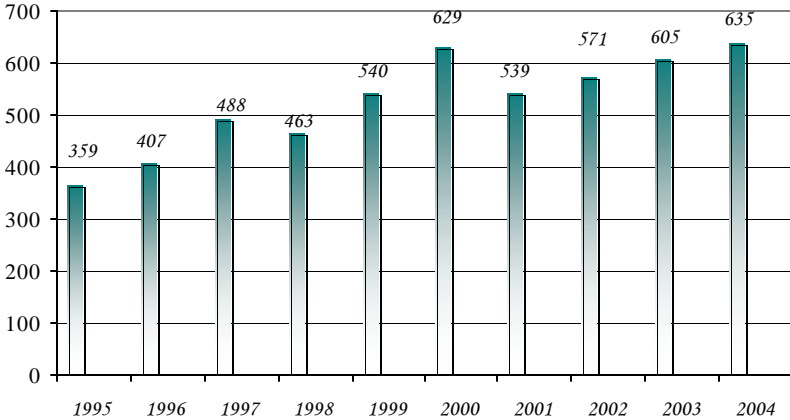
721 elderly individuals who are blind or visually impaired received services from the Independent Living for Older Blind Program: with 366 receiving low vision aids, 192 received rehabilitation teaching, 141 received mobility services and 506 received service coordination. 97% of this group reported that they feel more confident in their independent living, and 31% indicated they had considered nursing home placement prior to services, but were able to remain in their own homes.

330 children, including 45 children age birth through three years old, received services from the Social Service unit.

40 Children who are blind, visually impaired and multi-disabled attend Camp Mauchatea.

RHODE ISLAND

*Successful Employment Outcomes
A Ten-Year Trend*



Accomplishments (Continued)

265 qualified individuals who have hearing and/or speech impairment or neuromuscular disease were provided specialized equipment through the Adaptive Telephone Equipment Loan Program (ATEL) to enable them to use the telephone.

13,379 claims were successfully processed by the Disability Determination Services.

3,326 (25% of the total processed) were continuing disability review cases, including 112 face-to-face hearings that resulted from cessations.

The production per workyear (PPWY) efficiency rate (a key performance indicator) was 283.2, which was significantly above the national rate of 272.6. The overall combined accuracy rate for Rhode Island was 95.6%, which was well above the regulatory standard (90%) and equal to the national average for the year.

Who We Are

To accomplish its mission, the Office of Rehabilitation Services provides a comprehensive program of rehabilitation, social, and independent living services to eligible Rhode Island residents who have a disability and apply for services.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

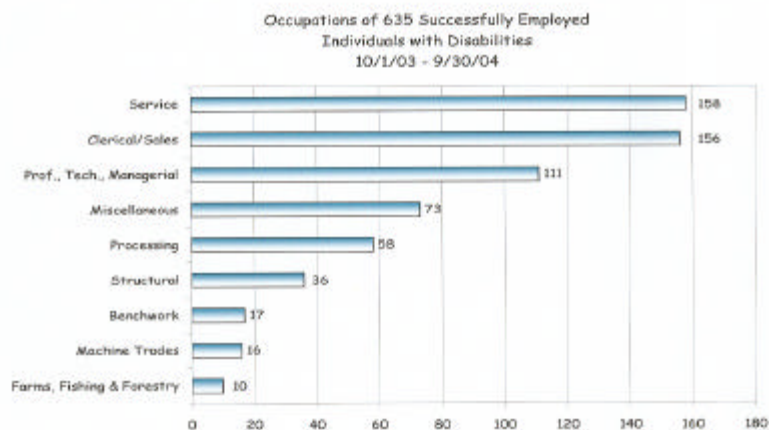
The VR Program assists individuals with a disability that is a substantial impediment to employment in achieving employment outcomes.

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI)

A variety of training and adjustment services for individuals who are blind or have significant visual impairments is offered through SBVI.

Disability Determination Services (DDS)

DDS is a state-administered federal program that develops, adjudicates, and processes disability claims of RI residents for Social Security disability benefits (SSDI, SSI).



*The Mission of the Rhode Island Office of
Rehabilitation Services is:*

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

635

**Successful Employment
Outcomes
during 2004**

Rhode Island Department of Human Services

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Donald L. Carcieri
Governor



Ronald A. Lebel
Acting Director