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

2005
Annual Report

Donald L. Carcieri
Governor

Ronald A. Lebel
Director

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."

Values

We value the worth, dignity, rights, responsibilities, and empowerment of all person with disabilities in achieving their individualized goals.

We value staff who reflect pride and commitment to excellence in achieving our mission.

We value a management style that fosters responsibility and accountability while encouraging creativity, initiative, and leadership throughout the organization.

We value community support in achieving the agency's mission.

We value leadership which promotes clarity of purpose.

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Message from the Director

It is my pleasure to provide you with the Annual Report for Federal Fiscal Year 2005 for the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS). ORS is charged with empowering Rhode Islanders with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence and full integration into society. Vocational Rehabilitation Services, 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 Rhode Islanders with disabilities.

Youths with disabilities and their families work with vocational rehabilitation counselors in order to make that important transition from school to post-secondary education and careers. The business and labor community depend on ORS for trained and job-ready applicants. Rhode Islanders applying for social security disability benefits get accurate and timely decisions. From Vision Screening for young children to independent living services for older individuals who are blind, Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired provides a comprehensive array of personalized services.

In FFY 2005 6,907 persons with disabilities were provided vocational rehabilitation, training and employment services. The Disability Determination Services adjudicated 13,090 claims for social security disability benefits.

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

Ronald A. Lebel, Director

Message from the Administrator

On behalf of the Office of Rehabilitation Services, I am pleased to present to you the 2005 Annual Report.

We have included success stories that reflect the diversity of our customers and their needs. We want to describe the partnership between our staff and our customers that makes rehabilitation work.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program increases revenue at all levels of government and decreases the burden of income maintenance programs. As persons with disabilities achieve an employment outcome, they become tax-paying citizens and more than pay back the cost of the program.

In 2005, ORS assisted 700 individuals with disabilities to obtain competitive employment. With an emphasis on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities, ORS is making a real difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families.The accomplishments outlined in this annual report reflect favorably on the efforts of the staff who, by hard work and commitment, have continued a long tradition of serving Rhode Islanders with disabilities.

We are also indebted to the Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council, Statewide Independent Living Council, Governor's Advisory Council for the Blind & Visually Impaired, State Committee of Blind Vendors, and Rhode Island Council on Assistive Technology, for their partnership and help in maximizing the potential of persons with disabilities. I also extend my appreciation to our hard-working and capable staff along with our many public and private partners.

Raymond A. Carroll, Administrator

Message from the State Rehabilitation Council Chairperson

As a Council, working in partnership with the staff of the Office of Rehabilitation Services, we have fulfilled many tasks this year.

Our most critical responsibility was rebuilding the Council membership. Under the strong governance of Janice Belasco and Domenic Di Orio, the Membership/Leadership Committee brought the following individuals to our august group; Edward Costa, Judith L. Drew, Linda L. Deschenes, Jeanne M. Giroux, Lucille Massemino, and Rev. Robert A. Shaldon. The need for new ideas, additional voices and willing hands to assist us in our mission can not be understated. Janice and Domenic are always on the search for individuals of superior quality and character to take on the roles of advocates for the clients of ORS, the agency serving them.

Again this year members of the Council participated in the roundtables held around the state sponsored by The Governor's Commission on Disabilities. These meetings afford us with an excellent opportunity to inform others of our responsibility in the myriad and interconnected web of agencies serving people with disabilities as well as providing the members with the opportunity to hear the needs of the clientele we serve.

2005 was a particularly busy one for the State Plan and Policy Committee. Joe Ferreira, as Chair, was continually involved with coordinating the review of new policies with Deputy Director Steve Brunero, Counsel from the Disability Law Center, Catherine Sansonetti and ORS staff member, Michaela Stannard, in order to prepare documents for the Council to review.

The Consumer Satisfaction Survey directs the Council and ORS to target critical areas for review or additional support. The survey also reinforces and recognizes the staff for the important work they do with clients. Robin Dolan and the Quality Assurance Committee spend many hours on this project

The Employment Committee was involved with a number of issues. The Chair, Annette Bourbonniere, and David Sienko, staff representative from the Department of Education, were very busy this year. David's expertise in the area of transition planning through IDEA was instrumental in the opportunity to coordinate and collaborate on services required under D of Ed and ORS. David and Steve Brunero share an excellent working relationship, which will assure very positive results to clients served in their respective agencies in the future.

Liz Graves continued as liaison to the Statewide Independent Living Council as well as The Governor's Advisory Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Without her dedication, the Council would be without the vital connection to these two parallel ombudsmen.

2005 was a fairly quiet one for Craig Enos and the By-Laws sub-committee. Many thanks to Craig for not complicating the By-Laws more than necessary!

This year the Council will recognize the retirement of Gary Weir, the Director of The Services of the Blind and Visually Impaired. I offer my heartfelt thanks for Gary's devotion to the Council and the clients he served.

The Council recognized Roberta Greene, a former member and current employee of ORS, for her many years of advocacy for individuals with disabilities. The Council was very pleased to publicly award Ms. Greene for her dedication.

After six years on the Council, I am most pleased to make the transition to David Sienko as Chair. David has made great progress in his role in the Department of Education, Office of Special Needs, always focusing on the opportunities for growth and engagement with sister agencies. It is my hope David and Steve Brunero will continue this strong commitment to students with special needs and a smooth transition into the adult services realm, as we should endeavor to support everyone, regardless of ability, social standing or economic background to live and work independently. How appropriate; David's expertise in the area of transition will be utilized in his new position as Chair.

To the staff of ORS, thank you for every day you come in, recognize your mission and the importance you will have on the lives of others. Too often, we neglect to emphasize how the interaction you have may create significant, lifelong changes in someone's life.

To the returning members of the Council, my best wishes follow you. You have volunteered for a unique group of individuals representing many aspects of the culture of our country. My hope for the Council is to prepare and recognize the prevailing conditions in order to weather the storms of individual needs for the greater good of the clientele you serve. Too often, parties represent the interest of their respective agencies, when the Council is a body collective. The importance of recognizing the requirement to leave the interest of your employer, your child or yourself at the door can not be understated. As I leave the Council I am pleased to note the purpose of the Council, and the reason for volunteering the time and energy, has seldom wavered.

I reserve my final thanks to two very special individuals; Ray Carroll for his many years of service to people in need, and Nancy Baker, our staff assistant, remaining professional in her approach to the many issues arising within the Council. The Chair's position would be untenable without the support of the aforementioned professionals.

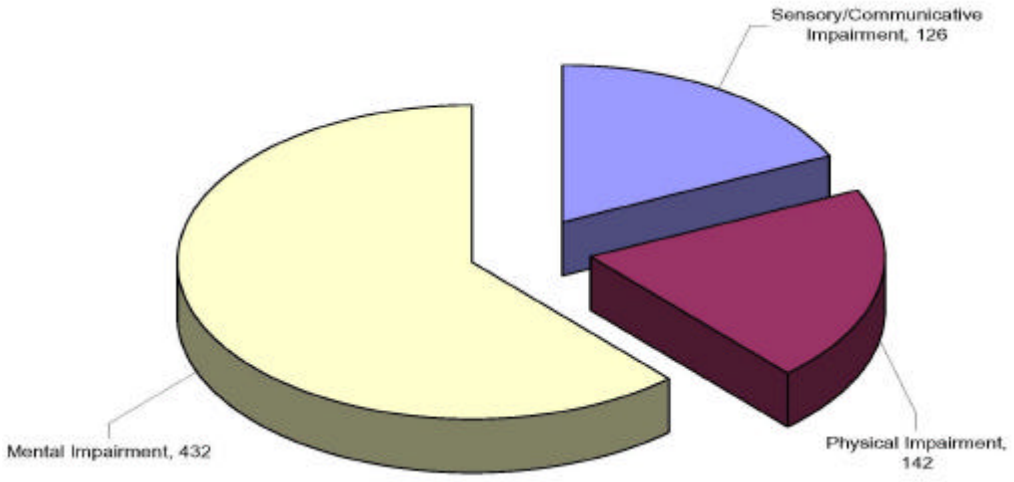
Very truly yours,

William T. Anderson

During 2005 the State Rehabilitation Council assisted the Office of Rehabilitation Services to achieve its mission. Some of the accomplishments and activities were:

- Participated in the development of a comprehensive needs assessment and strategic plan
- Chaired the Annual Employer Honor Roll event which celebrates Rhode Island employers for excellence in hiring and supporting employees with disabilities
- Participated in regional training for SRC members
- Advices ORS on policies and procedures
- Policy and State Plan Committee contributed in revising 19 ORS policies
- Reviewed the Agency's 2005 accomplishments on the RSA Standards and Indicators
- SRC Employment Subcommittee participated in 2005 ORS Strategic Planning Session

Primary Disability of 700 Persons Successfully Employed



Program Highlights

Federal Fiscal Year 2005
October 1, 2004 - September 30, 2005

700 individuals were successfully employed

2,039 individuals applied for vocational rehabilitation services.

6,907 individuals with disabilities were provided vocational rehabilitation services.

1,197 individuals worked with a vocational rehabilitation counselor to develop a new Individualized Plan for Employment [IPE].

4,209 individuals received Counseling and Guidance Services from vocational rehabilitation counselors.

2,698 individuals received services purchased from vendors. Services ranged from evaluations, medical and psychological therapies, training, personal assistant services, job placement and training.

405 individuals received rehabilitation technology services to assist them to prepare for and to enter employment.

26,565 individuals received information from Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP) Resource Centers about assistive technology and funding options.

9,952 individuals attended ATAP conferences.

21 vending facilities were supported by the Business Enterprises Program (BEP) at Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

17,000 children were screened by the Vision Screening Program resulting in **576** children receiving necessary follow up care, reducing or eliminating the early impact of poor visual function.

664 elderly individuals who are blind or visually impaired received services from the Independent Living for Older Blind Program: with **366** receiving low vision aids, **189** received rehabilitation teaching, **120** received mobility services and **481** 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.

242 children, including **52** 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.

13,090 claims were successfully processed by the Disability Determination Services.

2,014 continuing disabilities review cases, including 178 face-to-face hearings.

Production Per Work Year (PPWY) efficiency rate was **276.9** with the national rate being **260.1.** Combined accuracy rate for RI was **94.9%** with the regulatory standard being **90.6%.**

Vocational Rehabilitation

What We Do...

The Vocational Rehabilitation process consists of assisting an individual with a disability to assess his/her vocational abilities and to identify, coordinate and provide services needed to realize employment.

The partnership between each individual with a disability and their vocational rehabilitation counselor is a key component in the vocational rehabilitation process. The individual and his/her vocational rehabilitation counselor work together to develop an Employment Plan which will assist them to reach employment. Vocational rehabilitation services that may be included in an Employment Plan are:

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

Deaf Services...

The Office of Rehabilitation Services helps individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing obtain services to meet their needs, provides counseling and guidance to help plan vocational goals and services, and assists the individual to obtain employment. They serve as a resource to professionals, state agencies, community organizations, and the public providing information related to employment, training and accommodations for persons who have a hearing loss.

Independent Living Services...

The Office of Rehabilitation Services purchases assessments and independent living services from the two Independent Living Centers, PARI and OSCIL, as part of preparing individuals with significant disabilities for employment.

The Rhode Island Learning Disabilities Project ...

The LD Project is a unique Department of Human Services intra-agency initiative between the Office of Rehabilitation Services and the Family Independence Program (FIP). This collaborative relationship was created to help identify parents on cash assistance with learning disabilities, and to provide the necessary accommodations and vocational training programs in order for individuals to become independent and economically self-sufficient. During 2005, the nationally-recognized LD Project served **232** individuals and assisted **14** individuals with learning disabilities to reach their employment goals.

Supported Employment...

Supported employment assists individuals with the most significant disabilities, who need ongoing supports, to choose, find and keep competitive employment in community integrated settings. After initial services by ORS, long term funding is provided through other funding sources.

Transition...

The Office of Rehabilitation Services has a strong commitment to assist students with disabilities with transition planning to adult life. ORS counselors visit all school districts and work with families and students to plan services to help students reach career goals. ORS counselors provide technical assistance and information to school systems and work in partnership with the 5 Regional Educational Collaboratives and 2 Transition Academies to improve transition planning.

Other Programs

Adaptive Telephone Equipment Loan (ATEL) Program...

The ATEL Program loans telephone equipment to residents of the State of Rhode Island who have hearing, speech, or neuromuscular (unable to dial or hold a receiver) impairments. A certificate of disability must be completed and signed by a doctor, a qualified staff member of the Office of Rehabilitation Services, a speech pathologist, an audiologist, or a qualified staff member of the RI School for the Deaf (if the applicant attends or has attended the school). Equipment is issued on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP) ...

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

Benefits Planning & Outreach Project (BPAO) - "On the Rhode to Independence"...

Benefits planning is designed to help people who receive disability benefits (SSI or SSDI) make informed decisions regarding employment, based on a complete understanding of their benefits and available work incentives. Information about these work incentives allows an individual to determine if they can improve their quality of life without irrevocably sacrificing all of their benefits.

Home Modification Program...

The Office of Rehabilitation Services administers federal and state independent living funds which provide home accessibility and adaptive equipment for individuals who are significantly disabled, to enable them to meet independent living goals in their homes and communities.

State PCA Program...

The Office of Rehabilitation Services contracts with PARI Independent Living Center to be the fiscal agent for the State Personal Care Assistance program for individuals who are not eligible for Medicaid-funded waivers. Through this program twenty individuals are able to continue living in the community rather than a nursing home.

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

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

Vocational Rehabilitation Program...

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

Business Enterprises Program...

is a Federal/State Program which establishes vending facilities in state, federal or private buildings for operation by persons who are legally blind. Licensed blind vendors operate vending facilities at 21 locations throughout the state and are assigned to these locations on the basis of their seniority within the program. Types of facilities range from small snack bars serving light snacks and beverages to larger food-service sites serving hot and cold entrees prepared on-site. All operate under the name of "Coffee Plus".

Social Services Program...

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

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

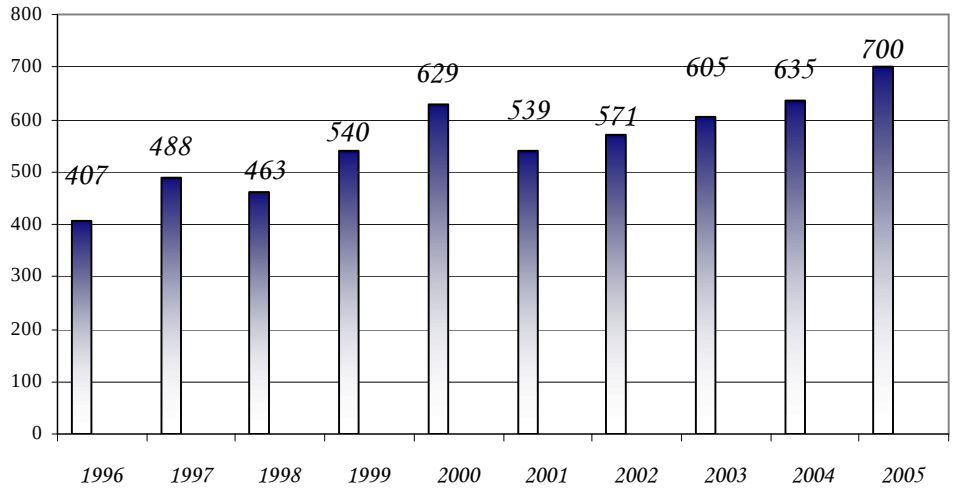
- **Vision Screening Program** through Saving Sight RI which utilizes an MTI photoscreening device to take pictures of the child's eye without the child having to read an eye chart. Screenings are done in day care centers, nursery schools, public schools and other community locations.

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

Newsline...

This is a comprehensive newspaper reading service available to individuals who are blind, visually impaired, or print handicapped, that is accessible through the use of any touch-tone telephone. Individuals can access more than 200 newspapers and magazines, including The Providence Journal, The New York Times, USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, and the AARP Monthly Newsletter.

Successful Employment Outcomes
A Ten-Year Trend



Disability Determination Services

ORS administers the Disability Determination Services (DDS) for the Social Security Administration (SSA). This unit determines the medical eligibility of children and adults with disabilities applying for cash benefits who are Rhode Island residents who apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/ or the Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Although the DDS is fully funded by the Federal government, the state agency is responsible for developing medical evidence and determining whether the claimant is or is not disabled or blind under the law.

In 2005, the Rhode Island Disability Determination Services went to a fully electronic processing system. This means that SSA and DDS records will be maintained in an electronic folder that is entirely paperless.

SSA Field Offices

380 Westminster Mall, Room 318
Providence, RI 02903

30 Quaker Lane, 1st Floor
Warwick, RI 02886

55 Broad Street
Pawtucket, RI 02860

Post Office Building
127 Social Street
Woonsocket, RI 02895

130 Bellevue Avenue
Newport, RI 02840

2 Shaws Cove, Room 203
New London, CT 06320

Recognizing Success

Name: *Michele Robbins*
Occupation: *Taxpayer Service Representative*
Employer: *Internal Revenue Service*
Counselor: *Margaret Koch*

During Michele's association with the Rhode Island Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired, she earned her Associates Degree from Community College of Rhode Island, and her Bachelors Degree from University of Rhode Island in Business Management. SBVI supported Michele through her educational endeavors and encouraged her to pursue work with the Federal Government. Michele, with the assistance of SBVI, applied to and was accepted into the IRS Taxpayer Service Representative Training Program through the Lions World Services. During this five-month training, Michele mastered volumes of US tax law as well as becoming proficient in the use of Zoomtext, a CCTV and a talking calculator. She currently uses this assistive technology in her job with the IRS.

"My manager informed me that on a rating scale of one to five (with five being "outstanding", I am currently at a four.. He further stated that while it is rare, it is also very possible, even probable, that I could complete my first year with an outstanding evaluation. Very cool!"
Michele Robbins

Michele attended and graduated at the top of her class from the IRS Taxpayer Service Representative training. Though a loss to Rhode Island, she is currently employed in Jacksonville, Florida with the IRS. In May of 2005, the Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service presented Michele with the Manager's Award in Recognition and Appreciation of Noteworthy Effort, Dedication and Personal Contribution to Accomplishing the Goals of the Internal Revenue Service resulting in a cash bonus.

Recognizing Success

Name: Judith Kraus
Occupation: Respiratory Therapist
Employer: Kent County Hospital
Counselor: Karen Davis

Judith is a woman in her 40's who was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, major depression and alcohol abuse. She applied for vocational rehabilitation services in January 2005 after being clean and sober for almost two years. Judy was working on a part-time basis as a cashier at Sears, and resided in an apartment program with another individual who also had substance abuse problems. Judy was previously employed as a Respiratory Therapist prior to the development of her psychological issues, and was very unsure of what she wanted to do in the future Both Judy and Karen, her ORS vocational rehabilitation counselor, worked together to explore various vocational options. After testing what the effects of Judy's alcohol use had on her memory and ability to learn, it was determined that she should have no problem engaging in any type of a training program. Even though there was a nervousness, Judy began to explore the possibility of returning to Respiratory Therapy as a goal. She explored what would need to be done to obtain her license, since she had voluntarily surrendered it during her period of alcohol abuse. Once these needs were determined, Judy and Karen sat down and developed an Employment Plan. The goal of her Plan was for Respiratory Therapist. She needed to attend a refresher class, and ORS paid for this four-day training program. Once this was completed, Judy applied for a license and was granted a provisional license. ORS then paid for the CPR class so that Judy could obtain this updated certification. ORS also supplied money for some uniforms and shoes since Judy was on a limited income and there was an economic need. During this time, Judy's resume was developed and provided to her. Judy began seeking employment on her own. She contacted various hospitals and submitted applications and her resume. She was hired by Kent County Hospital and is currently employed there for 32 hours a week. She earns over $20 an hour and has now moved into her own apartment. Judy recognizes the gains that she has made in the past year and credits this success to the support that she has received during this past year.

Recognizing Success

Name: *Christopher Viera*
Occupation: *Bus Monitor*
Employer: *Laidlaw*
Counselor: *Melanie Sbardella*

Christopher is a 19 year old, single, high school graduate that continues to work at Laidlaw as a bus monitor. Charles began his vocational process through a Southern Rhode Island Collaborative vocational evaluation. He had stated that he wanted to become a police officer upon graduation. His parents and counselor were concerned that he might not be able to meet the educational requirements and complete the coursework to become employed as a police officer.

Christopher had utilized an Individualized Education Plan and a self-contained classroom. He then began at the Transition Academy at the beginning of his senior year. Christopher again stated he would like to become employed as a police officer. Through career development and support from the West Bay Collaborative, Christopher was able to be placed at a hospital in the emergency room setting to see hands on security and difficulties that may arise. He chose to follow a different path and look at other careers.

Melanie and the Transition Academy team explored Christopher's transferable skills, and he was placed at Laidlaw as a career exploration. This led to part-time employment for Christopher. With the assistance of a job coach that is funded by the Department of Developmental Disabilities, Christopher continues to maintain his position as a bus monitor.

Recognizing Success

Name: Charles Kenyon
Occupation: Customer Service Representative
Employer: Cox Communications
Counselor: Melanie Sbardella

Charles is 37 year old, University of Rhode Island graduate. At the first meeting with Charles you are instantly drawn to his relaxed and comfortable demeanor. He had worked with ORS in the past and was closed successfully. However, Charles was having a difficult time with his productivity at Cox Communications as a customer service representative. His supervisor and human resource team were questioning if he was going to be able to increase his productivity which included taking customer calls, troubleshooting, and entering information into the computer at a mass rate.

Melanie, Charle's ORS counselor, discussed contacting the HR person as well as evaluating his work station for potential ergonomic assistance. She received an ergonomic mouse from Bionexus for Charles to use to explore if he felt it made a difference.

Through working with Bionexus, his supervisory staff at Cox Communications, and his counselor, Charles was able to obtain ergonomic equipment he needed which included a wireless head set, ergonomic key board, and an ergonomic mouse.

Charles contacted his counselor a month after utilizing the ergonomic equipment and stated that his productivity had increased and that he had had a wage increase due to his productivity. Also his three-month probationary period had ended, and he received an excellent review.

Charles continues to work at Cox Communications and states that he enjoys the position. He contacts Melanie by e-mail and telephone every couple of months to keep in touch.

"Melanie was really great and helped strategize what could be done to improve my job performance. She helped me think outside the box and try to learn new ways to do my job better."

Chuck Kenyon

Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program
Standards and Performance Indicators
As of 9/30/05

Standard/Indicator	RSA Standard	FY2005 Data
Evaluation Standard 1 - Employment Outcomes. VR assists eligible individuals to obtain, maintain, or regain high quality employment.		
Performance Indicator 1.1: The number of individuals who achieved an employment outcome in the current year must equal or exceed the number from the previous year.	Equal to or greater than prior year	65 greater
Performance Indicator 1.2: The percentage of individuals who exited the VR Program after receiving services who achieved an employment outcome.	55.8%	64.28%
Performance Indicator 1.3: The percentage of individuals who achieved an employment outcome and are earning at least the minimum wage.	72.6%	90.57%
Performance Indicator 1.4: Of those earning at least the minimum wage, the percentage who are individuals with significant disabilities.	62.4%	100.00%
Performance Indicator 1.5: The average hourly earnings of individuals earning at least the minimum wage, as a ratio to the average hourly earnings for all individuals in Rhode Island who are employed.	52%	60%
Performance Indicator 1.6: Of those earning at least the minimum wage, the difference between the percentage whose own income is their largest source of support when they exited the VR Program, and the percentage whose own income was their largest source of support at the time they applied for VR services.	53%	58.83%
Evaluation Standard 2 - Equal Access to Services. VR must ensure that individuals from minority backgrounds have equal access to VR services.		
Performance Indicator 2.1: The services rate for individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all non-minorities with disabilities.	80%	93%

Councils

State Rehabilitation Council is the citizen advisory body appointed by the Governor and mandated by the Rehabilitation Act as amended. The Council reviews and advises the Office of Rehabilitation Services regarding the performance of the responsibilities of the Agency, State Plans, Strategic Plans, and policies

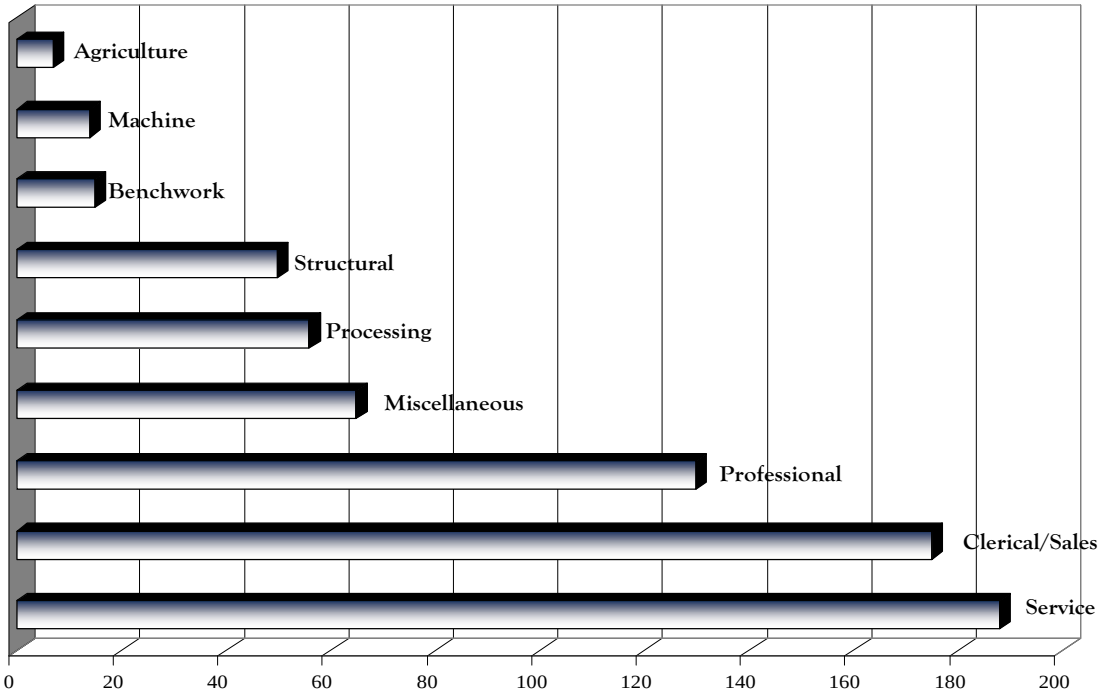
Governor's Advisory Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired is an advisory council appointed by the Governor that advises the SBVI regarding the programs provided by that agency; works collaboratively with the State Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council; and provides oversight responsibility to the Independent Living Program for the Elderly Blind.

RI Council on Assistive Technology (RICAT) is the advisory body to the RI Assistive Technology program ATAP - the Assistive Technology Access Partnership - funded through the AT Act. RICAT is actively involved in legislative and other initiatives that will increase the access to assistive technology for Rhode Islanders.

RI Statewide Independent Living Council (RISILC) jointly develops and submits, in conjunction with the ORS, the State Plan for Independent Living Services and Centers for Independent Living. They also monitor, review and evaluate the implementation of the State Plan.

State Committee of Blind Vendors is composed of representatives elected from among all licensed blind vendors within the state. The Committee participates actively in carrying out all of the program management responsibilities.

Occupations of 700 Persons Successfully Employed



Number of Individuals Employed

Occupation	Number Employed
Service	188
Professional/Technical/Managerial	175
Clerical/Sales	130
Processing	56
Structural Work	50
Benchwork and Machine Trades	29
Agriculture	7
Miscellaneous	65
Total	**700**

State Rehabilitation Council
2005 Annual Report

Committee Reports

By-Laws Committee
Chairperson: Craig Enos

The By-Laws 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.

Employment Committee
Chairperson: Annette Bourbonniere

The Employment Committee participated in the development of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment that is periodically required of the Office of Rehabilitation Services in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council, along with the Sherlock Center at Rhode Island College. This mandate exists as part of the Rehabilitation Act.

This Committee also took part in a strategic planning retreat with members of ORS and made recommendations in the areas of program evaluation, marketing, outreach, and service provision. A sample of specific issues addressed includes; measure types of jobs, especially professional; increasing marketing and outreach with chambers of commerce and employers; and, increasing employer and employee retention support.

Members of the Committee also took part in the Employer Honor Roll, recognizing employers of persons with disabilities for their roles in hiring, integrating, promoting and supporting persons with disabilities in their organizations.

The past fiscal year was a record-breaking one for the Office of Rehabilitation Services, assisting 700 Consumers to become employed in this time frame. With the planning that was developed this year, we expect that this number will increase even more.

Nomination and Leadership
Co-Chairpersons: Janice Belasco & Domenic Di Orio

2005 has been a very successful year for the Nominating and Leadership Committee. To address the growing needs of individuals with disabilities, the Leadership Committee conducts an ongoing search for new members that will encourage new ideas and promote a broader-based vision for the Council.

Several meetings were held during the year and the Committee nominated five (5) new members. The Committee also presented a Slate of Officers for the coming year.

Quality Assurance
Chairperson: Robin Dolan

The Purpose of this Committee is to assist the Office of Rehabilitation Services in ensuring the best intervention possible for the Consumer. There are Independent surveys completed both on a local and regional basis to gather data from clients that have received services, currently involved in active intervention and successful closed case. These surveys further identify what is and is not working for the clientele.

State Plan and Policy Committee
Chairperson: Joseph Ferreira

The SRC State Plan and Policy Committee has experienced one of their busiest years in recent memory throughout 2005. The Committee assisted in the review, comment, and development, which resulted in changes and revisions to nineteen (19) ORS Policies.

The policies which have been vetted through the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) process, include: Agency Structure 11/05, Motor Voter Act 11/05, Eligibility and Ineligibility 11/05, Individualized Plan for Employment 11/05, Homemaker 3/05, Comparable Services and Benefits 11/05, Guidelines for Determination of Financial Need 11/05, Counseling Guidance and Referral 1/05, Post-employment Services 11/05, Guidelines for Serving the Learning Disabled (obsolete) 11/05, Workers Compensation 11/05, Post-Secondary Training and VR Services 3/05, Serving Individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing 11/05, Extended Employment Client Review 11/05, Physical and Mental Restoration Services 11/05, Maintenance 11/05, Reversion to Donor 3/05, and Transition 3/05, Dictation Format and Case Recording 11/05.

The Policy and State Plan Committee anticipates continued success and partnership with ORS in development of Policy and assisting with the development of the 2007 State Plan.

(Front) Margaret Hoye, Joseph Ferreira, Robin Dolan
(Rear) Nancy Baker, SRC Staff Assistant, Domenic DiOrio, David Sienko, Chair, and Raymond Carroll, ORS Administrator

SRC Members

William Anderson - is serving his final year on the Council and was re-elected as Chair for his second year. Bill is a parent of a profoundly disabled young man, special educator and retired administrator of special education. Recognizing he wasn't old and feeble, he returned to the classroom as a specialist in behavioral and learning disabilities in order to reconnect with students. Bill continues to focus on the mission of ORS and the interagency opportunities through transition planning with his students. Upon retirement from the Council, Bill will focus on international sailing with his family.

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

Annette Bourbonniere - Annette 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.

Raymond Carroll Ex-Officio member of SRC - Ray is the Administrator of the Office of Rehabilitation Services.

Edward Costa - Ed is a new member and serving in his first term. He is a member of the State Plan and Policy Committee. Formerly a School Rehabilitation Counselor, and Administrator at the State Department of Education, Ed is now retired.

Linda Deschenes - Linda is a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and a representative of the Office of Rehabilitation Services on the Council. She will be serving on the Employment subcommittee.

Domenic Di Orio - Domenic is serving his first term on the Council. He is Fellow in Vocational Education from Ohio State University and 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 Nominating & Leadership subcommittee and a member of the Employment subcommittee, a Professor of History and Sociology at the Community College of RI, and member of the Governor's Adult Literacy commission.

Robin Dolan - Robin 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 - Sue 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 sub-committee.

Judith Drew - Dr. Drew has a Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Services, and is a member of the International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals (IARP). She is the Vice-Chair of the RI Governor's Commission on Disabilities Employment Committee. Dr. Drew is also a member of Salve Regina University's Adjunct Faculty, and is the owner of "VocWorks", a private vocational and consulting firm.

M. Kathleen Ellis - Kathleen 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 - Craig was a member of the Council for the last six years. He was previously the Chair of the State Plan and Policy Committee and most recently the Chair of the By-Laws Committee. He is now working as the business manager for the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative .

Joseph Ferreira - Joe is a consumer advocate and is in his second term on the Council. He is the chairperson of the State Plan and Policy subcommittee. In November, he was elected as the new Vice-chairperson for the Council. Joe is employed as a Fiscal Auditor for the RI General Treasurer's Office.

Steven A. Florio - Steve 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.

Jeanne Giroux - Jeanne is a financial analyst and former client of ORS. Serving in her first term, Jeanne is a member of the Employment subcommittee.

Elizabeth Graves—Liz is our liaison to the Statewide Independent Living Council 0and to the Governor's Advisory Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired. She was previously a special education teacher. Liz is in her second term on the Council and serves on the By-Laws subcommittee.

Margaret Hoye - Margaret is a consumer of services and has been active on a number of subcommittees, this year serving on the Nominations and Leadership subcommittee and the By-Laws committee. Margaret is an advocate for independent living and elderly Americans. In November, she was appointed the Council's Secretary.

Lucille Massemino - Lucille is a RN and nursing home administrator. She is president of Davenport Associates LTD., manager of the continuum of care, Charlesgate Apartments, assisted living and nursing home. She is in her first term on the Council and is a member of the Nominations and Leadership subcommittee.

Catherine Sansonetti - Catherine 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 - Rosemary works at Hasbro Corporation for the Human Resource Department. She was the Secretary of the Council. Rosemary is also a member of the Employment subcommittee.

Reverend Robert A. Shaldone SOLT - is a new member on the Council. He is a member of the Quality Assurance Committee. He has been assisting Rev. Gerald Sabourin in the Providence Diocesan ministering to persons with special needs within the State of RI. He also serves as Assistant Pastor in two Catholic parishes in Warwick - Ss. Francis of Assisi and William the Confessor. He looks forward to serving his fellow citizens within the State of RI.

J. David Sienko - David is a representative from special education and just completed his first term on the Council. He was the Vice-Chairperson and has worked on the Employment subcommittee and the Nominations and Leadership subcommittee. David took over as Chair as of November 2005.

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

9th Annual Employer Honor Roll

The 2005 Rhode Island Employer Honor Roll
celebrates Rhode Island employers for excellence in
hiring and supporting employees with disabilities.

Congratulations to…

Big Sisters Donation Center, Cranston - Citizens Bank Operations Center, Riverside
Dunkin Donuts, Metacom Ave., Warren - Goodwill Industries of RI, Providence
Homonoff, Levine & Pulner, Providence - Kohl's, Smithfield
Memorial Hospital of RI, Pawtucket - Procaccianti Group, Cranston
Showcase Cinemas 1-10, Seekonk, MA - Sodexho School Services, Providence
South Shore Mental Health Center, Charlestown
Spirit International Visual Creations, Providence
St. Elizabeth Manor, Bristol - Super Stop & Shop #0714, Cranston
Wal-Mart Supercenter #1964, Westerly

Outstanding Achievement Awards

Accommodation: **Sodexho School Services** was recognized as an employer whose exceptional job accommodation demonstrates creative and flexible ways to help the employee successfully carry out the responsibilities of the position.

Integration: **Homonoff, Levine & Pulner** was recognized for its efforts to involve the employee in all aspects of the daily work environment, including training, communication and social opportunities.

Advancement: **Wal-Mart Supercenter #1964** was recognized as an employer who offers the same opportunities for advancement to employees with disabilities as he does to those who are not disabled.

Longevity: **Spirit International Visual Creations and Super Stop & Shop #0714** were recognized as employers who strengthened the employee's roots in the work community.

DHS does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, age, religion or sex in acceptance for or provision of services, employment or treatment in its educational and other programs and activities.
For further information about this policy, contact: the Community Relations Liaison Officer, (401) 462-2130 or TDD (hearing impaired) 462-6239.

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