



WISCONSIN REHABILITATION COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

Federal Fiscal Year
2024

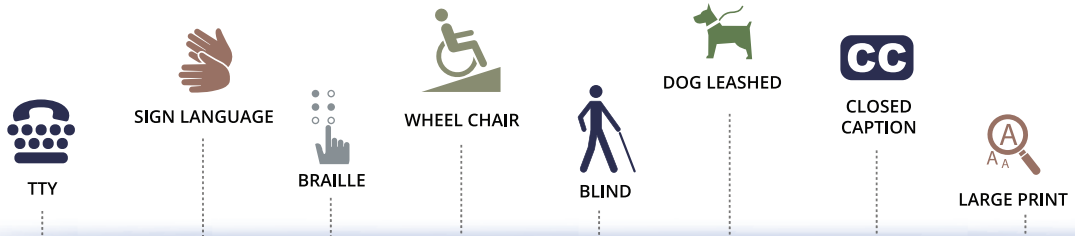


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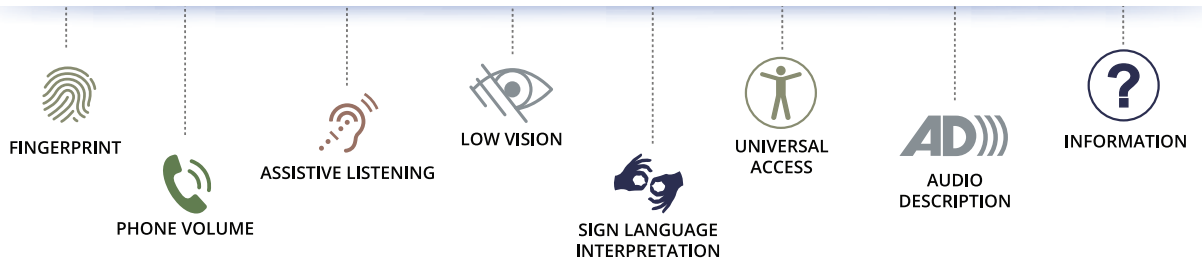
The State Rehabilitation Council, commonly known as the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council (WRC), was re-created by Gov. Tony Evers in 2023 under Executive Order #182. The WRC is required under federal law 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §361.16 with advising and assisting the Department of Workforce Development's (DWD) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). WRC is composed of appointed members with disabilities, as well as those who represent individuals with a broad range of disabilities - such as family members and advocates representing groups and associations.

WRC is required to deliver an annual report to the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and the governor of Wisconsin that compiles findings regarding the operations of DVR and its services to consumers throughout the state. The data, graphics, and stories in this annual report reflect work conducted by DVR staff, WRC committees, and the full council during federal fiscal year 2024, which took place between Oct. 1, 2023, and Sept. 30, 2024.

Data in this report was compiled through daily activities of DVR staff located around the state. DVR records are confidential by law, and DVR staff are trained and required to maintain detailed documentation for each Wisconsin consumer who applies for DVR services. Data is entered and maintained in Wisconsin's Integrated Rehabilitation Information System (IRIS), DVR's official case management system.



ACCESSIBILITY





Vocational Rehabilitation

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MESSAGE FROM THE WRC CHAIR

RICHARD STRAUB

As we conclude the 2023-2024 program year, we can look back at a year of continued change, challenges and more importantly – successes, thanks to the work of the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council (WRC) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). It has been a privilege to be able to work with DVR to help improve the access and services to consumers needing the vital support that DVR provides. The number of consumers served in this program year has reached historic levels, totaling 30,943 compared to 27,571 last year. Much credit must be given to the dedicated staff at DVR whose work was critical to this accomplishment.



We have seen a change in leadership at DVR from last year and we look forward to collaborating with the new division administrator, Meredith Dressel, following the retirement of the division's previous administrator, Delora Newton. Meredith brings a strong background in vocational rehabilitation work and knowledge to her leadership position. She has identified policy review as a top priority. As a result of this transition, several other leadership positions within DVR also experienced changes.

During the past program year, the WRC has been busy with the following activities and accomplishments that helped serve Wisconsin's DVR consumers:

- Reviewed committee leadership needs and revised committee responsibilities.
- Identified new leaders for select WRC committees and trained three new council members.
- Aligned the council's new member selection with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to replace outgoing members with individuals who identify as having a disability.
- Requested and received an update from DVR on business services and new policy revisions.
- Identified and revised questions for the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.
- Determined topics for future reports, including changes to the provider groups and how to build provider capacity in Wisconsin, CSNA survey results and facilitating small business startups.

Additionally, DVR staff provided updates on several initiatives and ongoing activities within DWD. Examples included an update on competitive integrated employment activity, review of fiscal year 2023 outcomes, and an overview of DWD's budget. Other topics reviewed by the WRC included an update on the DVR self-employment toolkit, an overview of DVR-supported employment and customized employment services, and updates on DVR's grant-related activity. In addition, the WRC was presented with an overview of the function and services of Independent Living Centers, and reports from the Wisconsin AgrAbility program and the Disability Service Network, as well as a presentation on Wisconsin's WisTech (assistive technology) program.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of all our volunteer WRC members. Collectively, these council members contribute to the common goal of supporting and improving services to people with disabilities in our community and they provide guidance to DVR for achieving that goal. I would especially like to thank those outgoing WRC members for their commitment and service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Straub". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Richard Straub
Chair, Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council

MESSAGE FROM THE DVR ADMINISTRATOR

MEREDITH DRESSEL

In April 2024, I was appointed administrator of DVR following the retirement of our former administrator, Delora Newton. As the new leader for this division, I have witnessed firsthand how the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council offers meaningful input to DVR. Our team collaborates with various committees on the council about policies and processes that help serve individuals with disabilities across the state of Wisconsin. In 2024 alone, DVR served over 30,000 individuals and partnered with more than 3,000 employers to meet labor force needs. Notably, nearly 50% of those served were under the age of 25. In addition, for the second consecutive year, Wisconsin achieved a [record high](#) of 189,194 working-age individuals with disabilities employed in 2023. Our work with the WRC effectively connects those we serve with opportunities to obtain a job, retain a job, or seek promotional opportunities.



During federal fiscal year 2024 (Oct. 1, 2023, to Sept. 30, 2024), DVR collaborated with the WRC on several important issues:

- The Policy Review and Administration Committee provided input for updating the "Existing Business" and "Start Your Own Business" policy toolkits.
- The Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee assisted in the development of survey questions for service providers, consumers, and businesses for the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.
- DVR updated the council on 2017 Wisconsin Act 178 and summarized the SFY 2024-25 Joint Competitive Integrated Employment Plan. The act requires DWD, Department of Public Instruction, and Department of Health Services to track employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities served by their respective agencies, and to promote seamless transitions based on employment support needs as individuals progress in their desired careers.

DVR also provided the council with updates on the activities within the Wisconsin WIOA Combined State Plan that included:

- Improvement of quality employment outcomes for DVR consumers by increasing the average wage earned per hour.
- A focus on equitable experiences for underrepresented consumers by increasing the number of underrepresented consumers with new IPEs, access to education/training services, Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), and successful employment outcomes.
- An increase in the number of consumers achieving Measurable Skills Gains (MSG) through participation in training programs that lead to quality employment outcomes. Examples of training programs include Project SEARCH, on-the-job training programs, vocational training programs, and technical diploma training programs.
- Career counseling, including Career Pathways, and ways DVR promotes the opportunity to pursue technical employment opportunities.
- Work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities, including youth apprenticeship, co-ops, temporary work experiences, and Project SEARCH.
- Joint training efforts to educate interagency partners and stakeholders to increase knowledge of CIE.

DVR also provided an overview of Pre-ETS to the council and in a joint committee meeting, division leaders provided an in-depth analysis of the provision of Pre-ETS to high school students with disabilities.

I believe these accomplishments truly demonstrate an effective collaboration, and the contents of this report showcases our collective efforts. Working with this council over the last several months has been a great privilege, with exciting opportunities for shared success in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meredith Dressel". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Meredith Dressel
DVR Administrator

WISCONSIN REHABILITATION COUNCIL



VISION

People with disabilities will enjoy full equality of opportunity, complete integration in the life of our communities, and appropriate employment which fulfills each individual's needs and aspirations.

MISSION

To work on behalf of Wisconsin residents with disabilities to review, analyze, and advise DVR regarding the performance of its responsibilities in providing quality services to people with disabilities.



OBJECTIVES

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS among people with disabilities, providers of employment services, advocacy organizations, and other groups that can and should participate in the accomplishment of the council's mission and vision.

REACH OUT TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES throughout the state to create a true spirit of inclusion for every Wisconsinite, including an opportunity to contribute to the work of WRC.

HEAR AND RESPOND to the concerns and issues raised by people with disabilities, their advocates, and other concerned individuals so that the work of the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council is as effective as possible and serves as a true catalyst for positive change.

FORGE A SPIRIT OF TRUST AND COOPERATION with the administration and DVR staff and advocacy organizations for people with disabilities to optimize the use of scarce resources for accomplishing the mission and vision and create conditions for acquiring additional resources.

The WRC performs several functions as outlined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, amendments under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, and the WRC bylaws.

1. Review and analyze state-level data to advise DVR regarding performance in areas that impact the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve employment outcomes using services under this title.
2. Advise and assist DVR in the preparation of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (State Plan).
3. Conduct a review of Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) hearing decisions and available data on consumer satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services.
4. Work with DVR to prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Commissioner on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs.
5. Coordinate the work of the WRC with the activities of other disability-related councils, including the State Rehabilitation Advisory Council, through dual memberships and information sharing.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

WRC is composed of 24 members total who are appointed by the governor, and each serve staggered three-year terms. As of Dec. 5, 2024, there are currently 23 members. The WRC bylaws dictate a set number of seats for specific groups or demographics to ensure proper representation that can provide unique perspectives. Members of WRC include:

- Current or former recipients of vocational rehabilitation services.
- Disability advocacy group representatives.
- Parents, family members, guardians, or authorized representatives of people with disabilities.
- Business, industry, and labor representatives.
- Department of Public Instruction representative.
- Statewide Independent Living Council representative.
- DVR Administrator, serving as an Ex-Officio member.

List of members:

- **Dr. Alice Belcher** – Brown Deer, Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
- **Megan Bisonette** – Hayward, Native American Rehabilitation Program
- **Jacci Borchardt** – Shorewood, Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
- **Jennifer Espinoza Forlenza** – Fitchburg, Client Assistance Program
- **Rachael Fellers** – Mequon, Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
- **Jenny Felty** – La Crosse, Community Rehabilitation Service Provider
- **Ann Franz** – Kaukauna, Council on Workforce Investment
- **Natalia Graf** – Arbor Vitae, Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
- **Michael Jackson** – Milwaukee, Business, Industry, and Labor
- **Alan Kaltenberg** – Arlington, Business, Industry, and Labor
- **Lori Karcher** – Milwaukee, Parent Training and Information Center
- **Liz Kennedy** – Prairie du Sac, Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
- **Kyle Kleist** – Menomonie, State Independent Living Council
- **Lindsey Kreitzman** – Waunakee, Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
- **Dr. Debbie Lee** – Middleton, Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
- **Kathy Meisner** – Oconomowoc, Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
- **Meredith Dressel** – Milwaukee, Director of Designated State Unit
- **Alicia Reinhard** – Madison, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
- **Alexis Riggs** – Madison, Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
- **Richard Straub** – Brooklyn, Business, Industry, and Labor
- **Gadeen Taylor-Duke** – Hayward, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- **Jolene Wanek** – Green Bay, Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
- **Kevin Fortune** – Milwaukee, Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

WRC is thankful for the individuals who commit their time and talents to serving Wisconsin. The following members served on the council and their terms ended during federal fiscal year 2023:

- **Norene Lueck** – Eau Claire, Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
- **Delora Newton** – Madison, Former Director of Designated State Unit



COMMITTEES

WRC has five committees that meet regularly to support the council's efforts.



EXECUTIVE

CHAIR: Richard Straub

MEMBERS: Jacci Borchardt, Liz Kennedy, Kyle Kleist, Kathy Meisner, Jolene Wanek

PURPOSE: Coordinate activities of the full council, including identifying and prioritizing areas in which the council review may improve DVR program delivery, maintaining open communication and transparency to ensure the council is an effective resource for stakeholder oversight of DVR, and identifying and implementing methods to improve council operations.



POLICY REVIEW AND ADMINISTRATION

CHAIR: Kathy Meisner

MEMBERS: Jennifer Espinoza-Forlenza, Rachel Fellers, Jenny Felty, Gadeen Taylor-Duke, Jolene Wanek

PURPOSE: Devise methods for ensuring DVR's delivery of services and data collection are compliant with WIOA and federal reporting standards. The committee also reviews, analyzes, and provides input on the effectiveness of VR services and stakeholder satisfaction with VR services.



COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT

CHAIR: Jacci Borchardt

MEMBERS: Lori Karcher, Liz Kennedy, Deborah Lee, Richard Straub

PURPOSE: Encourage WRC member engagement, solicit executive committee nominees, and recruit new members.



SERVICES TO BUSINESS

CHAIR: Jolene Wanek

MEMBERS: Jacci Borchardt, Julie Burish, Jennifer Espinoza-Forlenza, Lindsey Krietzman, Kathy Meisner, Alicia Reinhard, Alexis Riggs, Richard Straub, Jolene Wanek

PURPOSE: Ensure that DVR's services to businesses are delivered in a way that assists job seekers with disabilities to connect to employment.

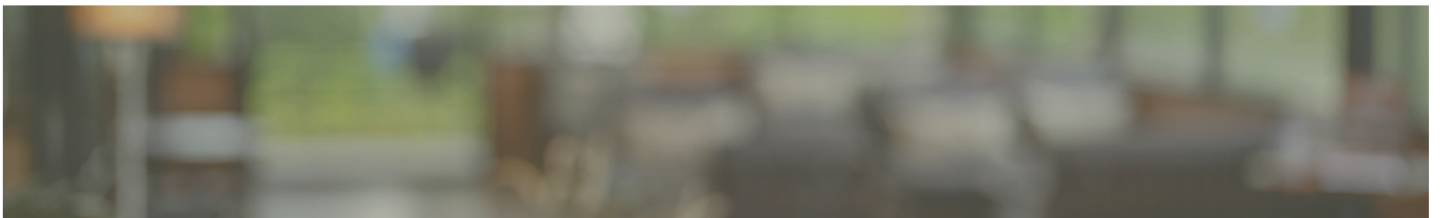


PERFORMANCE MEASURES & QUALITY ASSURANCE

CHAIR: Kyle Kleist

MEMBERS: Alexis Riggs, Alicia Reinhard, Richard Straub, Jacci Borchardt, Jolene Wanek, Kathy Meisner, Lindsey Krietzman, Jennifer Espinoza Forlenza, Julie Burish

PURPOSE: Devise methods for ensuring DVR's delivery of services and data collection are compliant with WIOA and federal reporting standards. The committee also reviews, analyzes, and provides input on the effectiveness of VR services and stakeholder satisfaction with VR services.



DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

More than 10 years ago, the U.S. Congress passed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This legislation was designed to strengthen and improve the nation's public workforce system and help get Americans – including youth and those with significant barriers to employment – into high-quality jobs and careers, and help employers hire and retain skilled workers. Title IV of WIOA amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. DVR provides the consumer services required under Title IV.

Under WIOA, WRC is required to meet quarterly and participate in the following activities related to DVR's provision of vocational rehabilitation services:

- Consult with DVR on the development, implementation, and revision of DVR policies and procedures.
- Collaborate with DVR staff and administration to annually develop, agree to, and review DVR goals and priorities.
- Work jointly with DVR to prepare and submit an annual progress report.



MISSION: To obtain, maintain, and improve employment for people with disabilities by working with vocational rehabilitation consumers, employers, and other partners.

PURPOSE: To provide individualized services to Wisconsin residents with disabilities experiencing significant barriers to employment. Primary DVR services include vocational guidance and counseling, job training, assistive technology, and job placement services.

CORE VALUES:

- Enabling the individual with a disability to increase self-sufficiency through education and employment.
- Working with community partners and collaborators who share the expectation to increase individual self-sufficiency through education and employment.
- Maintaining a team of employees and colleagues who are knowledgeable in rehabilitation and committed to serving individuals with disabilities to increase their self-sufficiency and employment.
- Elevating DVR leaders who demonstrate the commitment, knowledge, and experience to lead the program and employees to increase education and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- Ensuring sound fiscal and administrative practices that support all DVR personnel, community partners, and individuals with disabilities.

How does DVR provide services?

- Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) identify employment goals and necessary rehabilitative services.
- IPEs are developed and co-signed by a licensed Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and the DVR consumer.
- DVR staff work in teams to assist consumers in achieving their employment goals.

What does DVR do?

- Provides employment services and counseling to people with disabilities.
- Administers or arranges for services to enable an individual to go to work.
- Offers training and technical assistance to employers regarding disability employment issues.

Who does DVR serve?

- Individuals with disabilities in Wisconsin who face a significant barrier to employment.
- Wisconsin employers seeking qualified talent.

Where is DVR located?

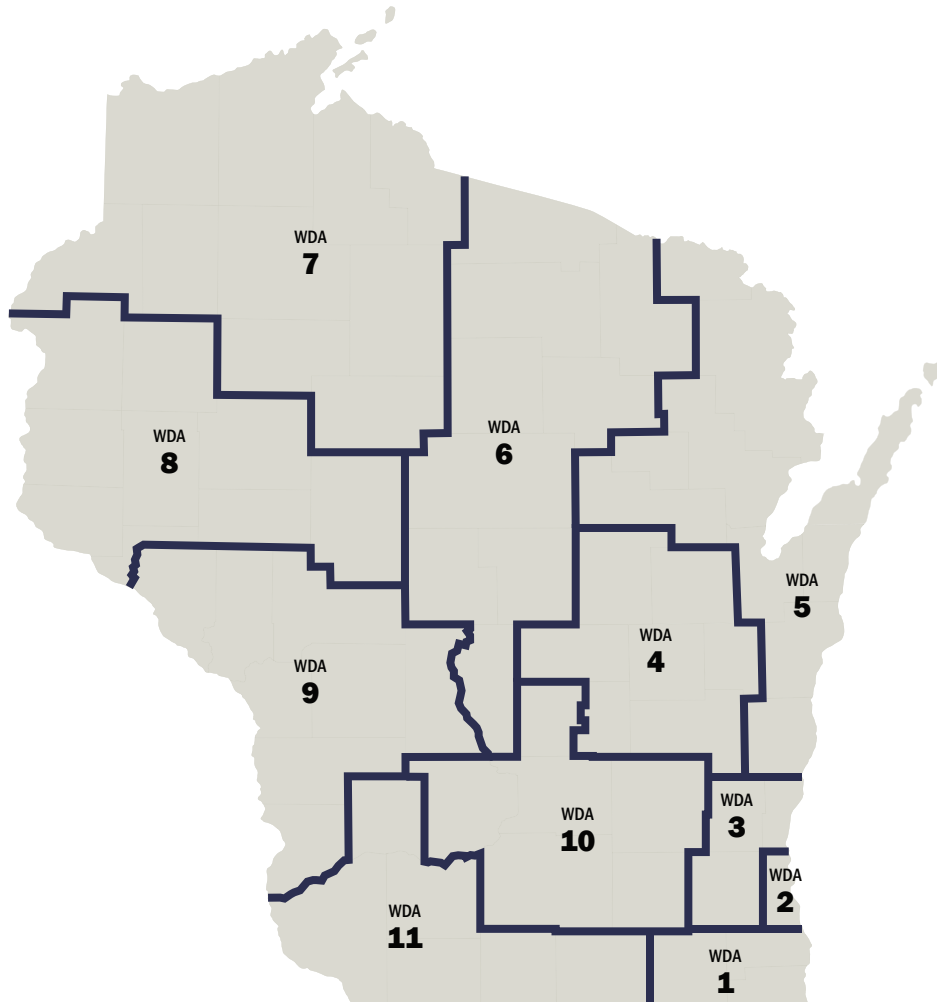
- DVR has offices in 16 comprehensive job centers and 23 additional service locations throughout Wisconsin.
- DVR staff are able to provide services in most locations within the state using remote access technology.

OFFICES ACROSS WISCONSIN

DVR is organized into 11 Workforce Development Areas (WDAs), each overseen by an area director. In total, DVR operates out of 39 offices located throughout the WDAs based on area population. Below are the cities with DVR office locations, the WDA directors, and main WDA phone numbers.

WDA 1	Elkhorn, Kenosha, Racine	Susan Chandek 262-956-6935
WDA 2	Milwaukee (2), West Allis	Jennifer Fogarty 414-250-6551
WDA 3	Waukesha, Pewaukee, West Bend	Amy May 262-956-6830
WDA 4	Fond Du Lac, Menasha, Oshkosh	Craig Wehner 920-930-6734
WDA 5	Green Bay, Marinette, Shawano, Sheboygan, Sturgeon Bay	Jennifer Bscherer 920-930-6733
WDA 6	Rhineland, Stevens Point, Wausau, Wisconsin Rapids	Patricia Noland 715-261-8760
WDA 7	Ashland, Hayward, Ladysmith, Medford, Superior	Thomas Draghi 715-392-7896
WDA 8	Eau Claire, Menomonie, Rice Lake	Thomas Draghi 715-836-4001
WDA 9	La Crosse, Viroqua	Amy Grotzke 608-405-4120
WDA 10	Baraboo, Beaver Dam, Jefferson, Madison (2), Portage	Jennifer Klein 608-242-4800
WDA 11	Dodgeville, Janesville, Richland Center	Andrea Simon 800-228-2648

**Area
Director**

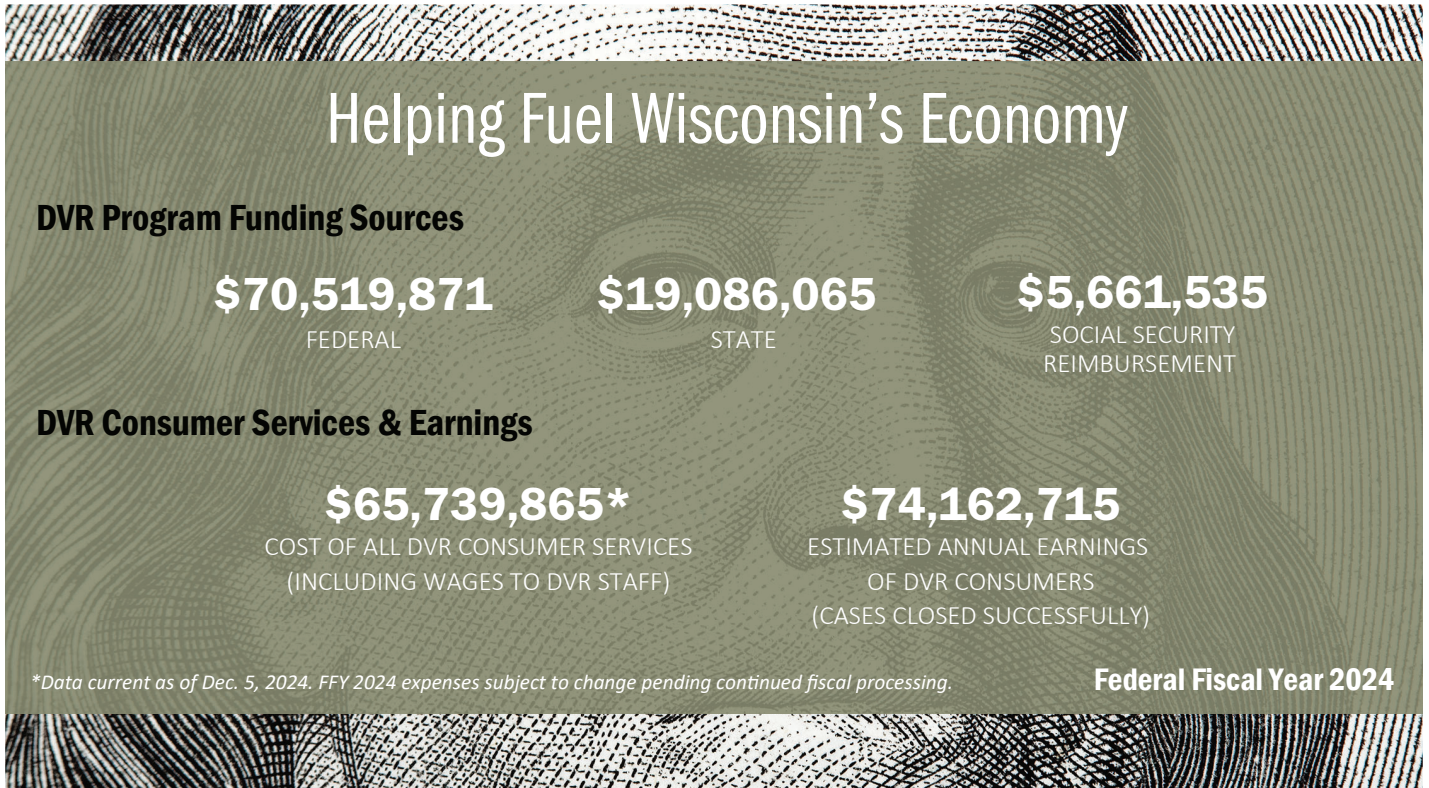


IMPACT

DVR receives 78.7% of its funding from the U.S. Department of Education and a required 21.3% match from State of Wisconsin General Purpose Revenues.

In addition, Wisconsin has the ability to apply for Social Security reimbursement dollars. These dollars are earned when DVR services help to place a consumer in a job that pays a high enough wage that the consumer no longer receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI). When this occurs, the Social Security Administration (SSA) reimburses DVR for the cost of case services provided to the consumer.

In federal fiscal year 2024, DVR received \$70,519,871 in federal funding and a \$19,086,065 state match. In addition to these primary funding sources, in FFY 2024 DVR received \$5,661,535 million in Social Security reimbursement dollars.



Why is this important?

DVR plays a key role in supporting and strengthening Wisconsin's economy. In federal fiscal year 2024, DVR consumers whose cases were successfully closed earned an estimated \$74.2 million through work, enriching the state's communities, economy, and workforce. This amount exceeded the total cost of all DVR consumer services – including staff wages – during the same period, at \$65.7 million. This outcome demonstrates a strong return on Wisconsin's continued investment in DVR programs.



DVR successfully transitions Wisconsin residents with disabilities off federal programs such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI).



In federal fiscal year 2024, **592 DVR consumers successfully maintained employment and transitioned off federal benefits.** This figure demonstrates the profound economic impact that DVR has not only on individual consumers, but on the State of Wisconsin as a whole.

MISSION IN ACTION

A SUCCESS STORY

Paying it Forward: How DVR Helped Sustain a Family Farm After a Tragic Accident

In a rural area nestled west of the Fox Valley, Wisconsin, lies Mitchell Brothers Farm – sprawling with 500 acres of corn, wheat, bean fields, and nearly 200 head of cattle.

"About two years ago, my brother and I decided we needed to start chopping corn silage," recalled John Mitchell. "It was dark – like 7:30 or 8 at night. I headed out to the thrasher first. Next thing I know, I was in it."

Fortunately, John wasn't alone for long; his brother Hank had planned to join him but found his brother in the corn chopper just minutes after the incident. Hank immediately shut off the machine and called 911.

Being trapped in the corn chopper ultimately caused John to lose his right arm and limited the use of his left leg. Following the incident and after his right arm was amputated from below the shoulder, John was fitted with a prosthetic.

Finding a partner with DVR

Following the incident, John and his brother slowly made several improvements to the farm, but many aspects of the labor became more challenging for him.

"When he reached out to us in the spring of 2023, John wanted to know what kind of support, accommodations, and equipment would help him better perform his required farm duties to keep it running," said Emily Butzen, DVR counselor. "Ultimately, DVR assisted him with purchasing and adapting specific farm equipment to help him sustain his farming work. And we had the amazing assistance of Easter Seals Wisconsin."

Enter Easter Seals Wisconsin

Easter Seals is a service provider of DVR and offers direct client assistance to the AgrAbility Project. DVR makes a referral to Easter Seals for an Assistive Technology assessment; they find solutions to the individual farmer limitations and make recommendations to accommodate specific problem areas. If approved, DVR funds all the equipment and services.

In summer 2023, Jeff Kratochwill, Program Director-FARM & Vocational Services from Easter Seals Wisconsin, came to visit John at the farm to complete an assessment.

The two looked at John's current skid steer, assessed the farm machinery, and determined that modifications were needed for the skid steer, among other adaptive machinery.

The assessment from Easter Seals was ultimately approved by DVR, and John received a New Holland skid steer in January 2024 that was modified to include a left side joystick and foot controls. To effectively operate the skid steer, John requires a single, left-handed pilot control that moves the machine forward, backward, and to turn. He also uses a modified right foot pedal for the bucket control, and a left foot pedal for boom control.

"I use the skid steer for everything," said John. "Cleaning barn, all feeding out of bags, brush mower. I also use it to cut a lot of trees, move tires around and move seed."

Upon receiving the skid steer earlier this year, John conveyed to Emily that the skid steer is working out great and has "brought the 'fun' back to farming."

What's next for John? A modified corn planter that eliminates all drive chains, separating the drive transmission and eliminating the need to remove the chains from the wheels on the planter.

"This program for people is amazing," said John. "It's a game changer...all the time you put into it; you think nothing can come of it. If it wasn't for this program, I wouldn't be able to do all the normal stuff and keep the farm going."



John Mitchell, who lost most of his right arm in a farm accident in September 2023, steps out of his family farm tractor.



"John's case is an excellent example of partnership between Easter Seals and DVR. I want to thank Emily for her work on behalf of DVR to coordinate all the services for John and make such a positive difference for him."

Jeff Kratochwill, Director, [Easter Seals FARM & Vocational Services](#)

MISSION IN ACTION A SUCCESS STORY

Project SEARCH Graduate Sustains Employment at Marshfield Clinic, Admired by Colleagues

"This job is awesome sauce!" It's a remark frequently heard by co-workers of Tad Larson, a part-time employee at Marshfield Clinic and graduate of the Project SEARCH program. After completing his internship and graduating from the Project SEARCH program in March 2024, Tad continues to work within the Emergency Room and Urgent Care Unit at Marshfield Clinic in Marshfield, Wisconsin.

Project SEARCH is a nationwide program facilitated by state vocational rehabilitation agencies, such as the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. DVR collaborates with schools and local employers across the state of Wisconsin to help qualified high school interns acquire marketable, competitive, and transfer-able skills that lead to employment.

Each day, students like Tad report to their host business to learn employability skills in the classroom and job skills through their internships. Interns complete multiple 10-week rotations to maximize exposure to different career paths. The goal upon program completion is for students to obtain competitive placements at the host business or in the community, based on the skills and experience learned during their participation in Project SEARCH.

During his time at Project SEARCH, Tad's first internship was in gastroenterology where he stocked blanket warmers, endoscopic rooms, and medical supplies in the pre-operation and recovery rooms. Tad also turned over patient beds after the patients were discharged and made-up new beds.

Tad's second internship was in the Emergency Room and Urgent Care Unit. For this role – which is the same as his current position – he stocks blanket warmers and precaution supplies (gloves, gowns, masks), keeps up with emptying the linen bags throughout the department, turns over patient beds, cleans toys that pediatric patients use, and sanitizes touchpoints.

"Tad's positive attitude and hard work ethic are admired by his colleagues," said Katie Allen, Tad's supervisor.

His favorite part of the job? Cleaning patient carts and seeing how many he can get deep cleaned by the end of the month.

Tad's success in the Project SEARCH program was the result of the combined efforts of Marshfield High School staff, DVR, his Project SEARCH instructor, and the Opportunity Development Center (ODC), which is the service provider for the Marshfield Clinic Project SEARCH site.

A national program, Project SEARCH has provided workforce training to over 1,800 Wisconsin residents its statewide launch in 2008. Information and a list of Project SEARCH sites is available on the [Wisconsin Project SEARCH website](#).



Project SEARCH graduate and Marshfield Clinic employee Tad Larson pauses for a quick photo op during a recent work shift.

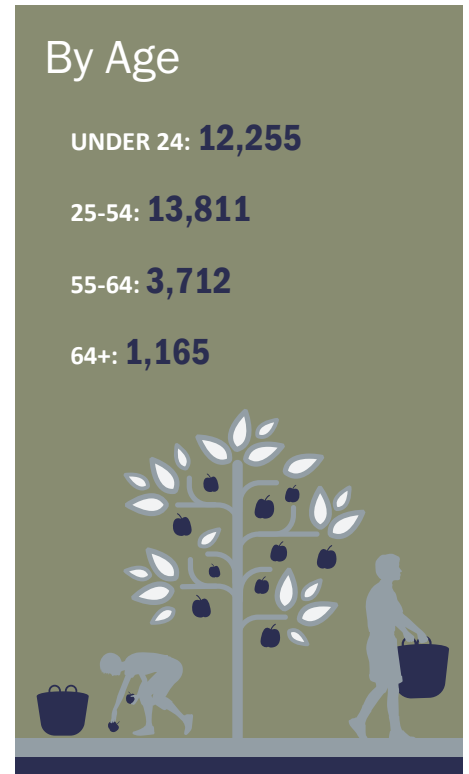
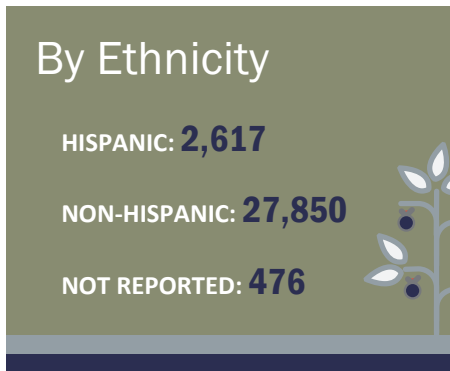
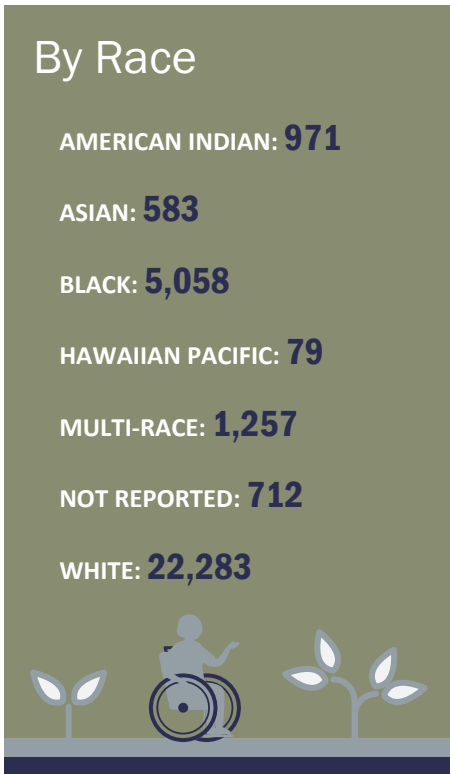


As an employee of Marshfield Clinic, sanitizing touch points within patient rooms is one of Tad Larson's primary responsibilities.

CONSUMER METRICS DEMOGRAPHICS

Total Served: 30,943

In federal fiscal year 2024, DVR provided services and support to 30,943 individuals. These individuals received a variety of support and services through DVR offices around the state with 3,172 successfully maintaining employment for at least 90 days while DVR tracked their progress. These individual cases were then successfully closed per DVR policy.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1 ADDRESS THE INEQUITIES THAT IMPACT CONSUMERS**
DVR will systematically identify and address inequities in service delivery. In doing so, DVR will build a system that fosters greater creativity, innovation, and speed in the process of addressing both equity and engagement.
- 2 BUILD A DIVERSE WORKFORCE**
DVR will build a more diverse workforce at all levels, one that is reflective of consumers and provides stronger language support to limited English proficiency consumers.
- 3 CREATE SAFE SPACES, COMMUNICATIONS, AND REPORTING FOR DVR STAFF**
DVR will build mechanisms to create a culture in which employees are comfortable sharing concerns with leadership and management.

In federal fiscal year 2024, DVR continued to implement a strategic plan established in 2023, focusing on three key goals: addressing consumer inequities, building a diverse workforce, and fostering a positive work culture. The five-year plan resulted from a DVR staff survey, a review of DVR’s consumer policies, and process and communication recommendations from Roadmap Research Global, which was contracted to assist in creating the plan.



DISABILITY TYPES

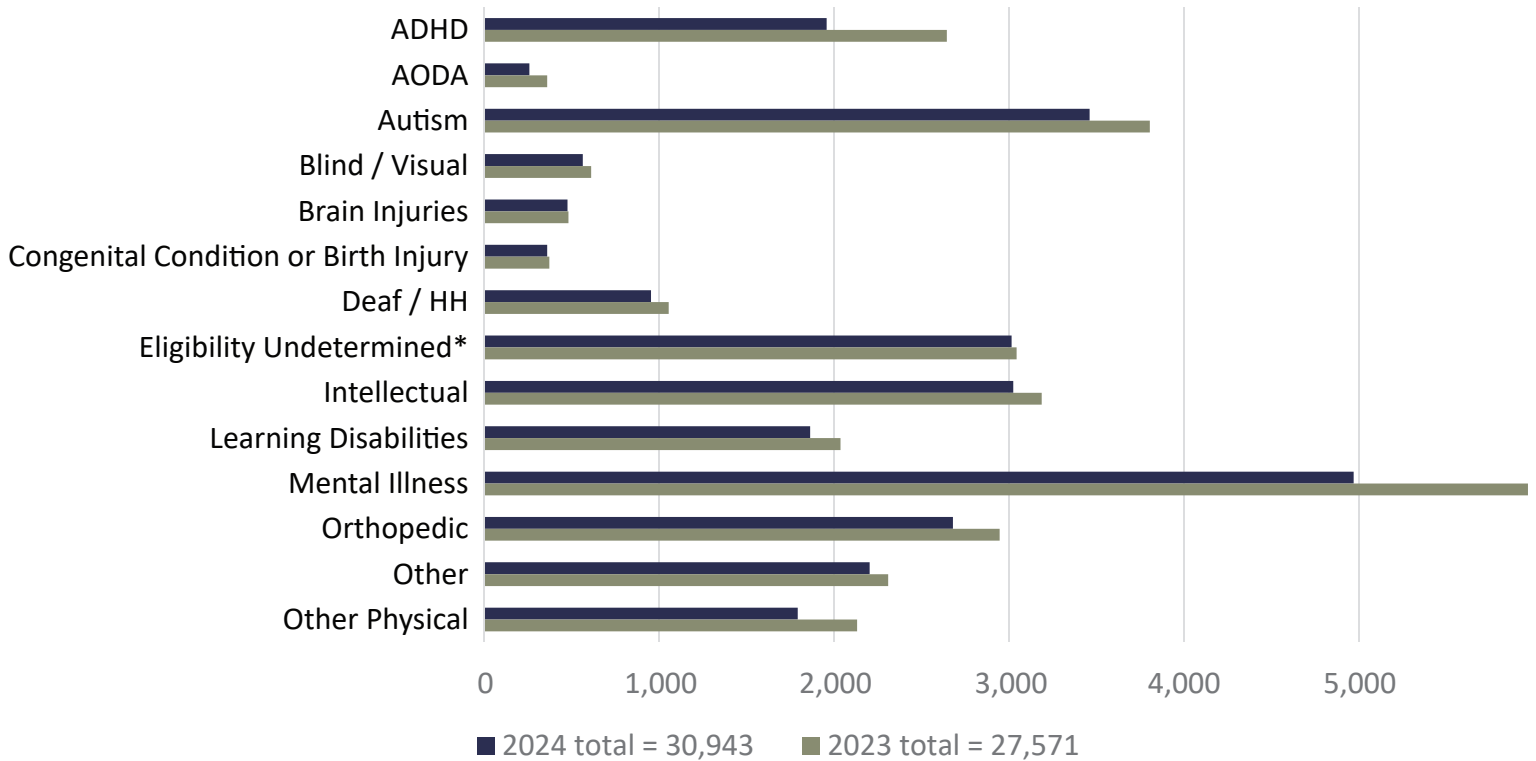
This page provides data on the primary disabilities of consumers who were determined eligible for DVR services in federal fiscal year 2024.

Data is tracked and maintained by DVR and provided to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration under the U.S. Department of Education. When individuals apply for DVR services, they report their primary disability. A primary disability is determined by a diagnosis from a medical professional and establishes the primary barriers to employment.

“Other” category includes disability types that may not fall into another category. “Other Physical” category includes individuals with a primary impairment that is not listed, is a general physical debilitation such as fatigue and pain, and a primary disability caused by a physical condition that is not listed elsewhere.

Wisconsin Consumers Served in FFY 2024		
Disability Type	Total	Percent
ADHD	2,644	9%
AODA	360	1%
Autism	3,804	12%
Blind / Visual	611	2%
Brain Injuries	481	2%
Congenital Condition or Birth Injury	372	1%
Deaf / HH	1,054	3%
Eligibility Undetermined*	3,043	10%
Intellectual	3,186	10%
Learning Disabilities	2,036	7%
Mental Illness	5,966	19%
Orthopedic	2,946	10%
Other	2,309	8%
Other Physical	2,131	7%
Total	30,943	100%

Consumers Served by Disability Type



*Includes: individuals potentially eligible, eligibility not yet determined, or a closed case (prior to having an eligibility determined).

OUTCOMES

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) defines Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) as either part- or full-time work (including self-employment) in which an individual with a disability is paid at or above minimum wage, located in an environment where the individual regularly interacts with people both with and without disabilities. In addition, the employee must have equal access to benefits and opportunities for advancement as peers without disabilities.

The chart below shows federal fiscal year 2024 statistics by employment status category, where DVR consumers on average saw a four percent increase in hourly wages compared to 2023.

Wisconsin Consumers Served in FFY 2024				
	Average Weekly Hours	Average Weekly Wage	FFY23 Average Hourly Wage	FFY24 Average Hourly Wage
Non-supported employment				
Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)	27.41	\$521.35	\$16.83	\$17.45
Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program (BEP)	65	\$1,004.25	\$22.50	\$15.45
Self-Employment (Except BEP)	33.93	\$775.59	\$32.40	\$22.34
Supported Employment*				
Competitive Integrated Employment	13.78	\$177.79	\$11.81	\$12.41
All consumers	24.55	\$449.62	\$15.76	\$16.40

**Supported employment – Competitive integrated employment, including customized employment, or employment in an integrated work setting in which an individual with a most significant disability, including a youth with a most significant disability, is working on a short-term basis toward competitive integrated employment that is individualized, and customized, consistent with the unique strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual, including with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. – Code of Federal Regulations § 361.5 Applicable definitions.*

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) was created by Congress with the enactment of the Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1936. The program was intended to enhance employment opportunities for trained, licensed blind persons. The law was subsequently amended in 1954 and again in 1974 to ultimately ensure blind individuals receive priority in the operation of vending facilities, which included cafeterias, snack bars, and automatic vending machines, that are on federal property.

DVR oversees the BEP program in Wisconsin, assisting visually impaired individuals who want to start and grow their own vending company.

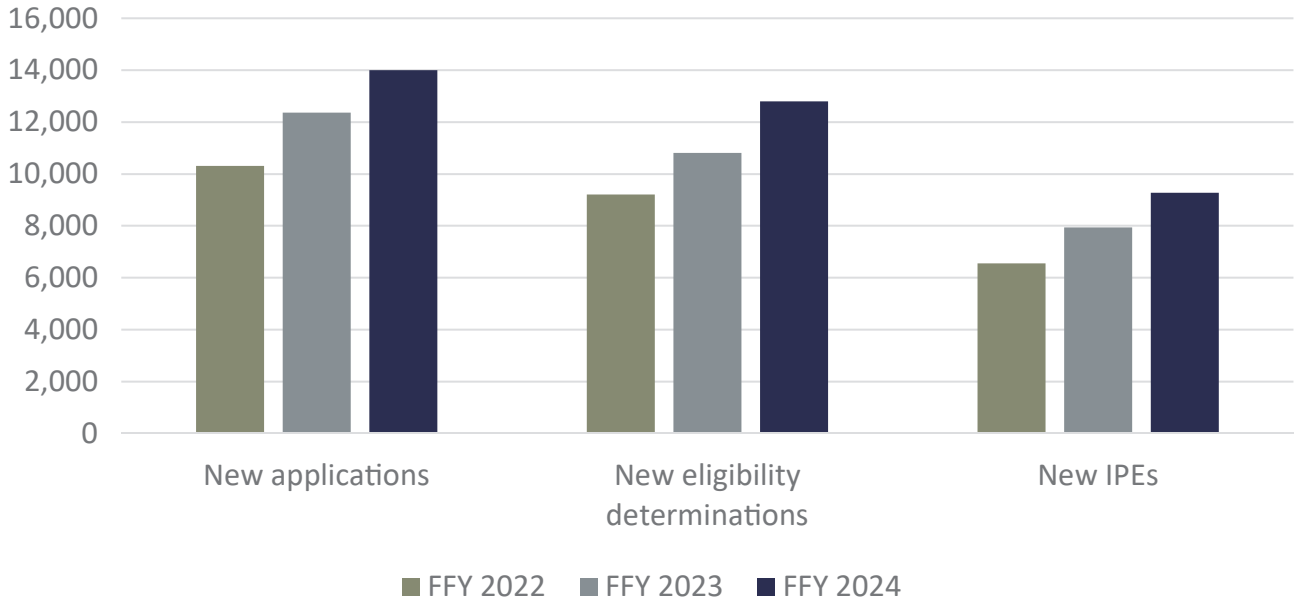


PERFORMANCE METRICS

Throughout federal fiscal year 2024, DVR engaged with a total of 30,943 Wisconsin residents. Individuals included in this figure participated in at least one activity with DVR over the course of the year, with 12,805 of these individuals found eligible for DVR services. Engagement activities with DVR include application for services, eligibility determination, Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) development, active DVR services, or case closure - either through successful community employment or informed choice.

DVR Engagement by Activity – FFY 2022-2024

Number of new DVR applications, eligibility determinations, and IPEs during each federal fiscal year since 2022:



JOB TYPES OBTAINED BY DVR CONSUMERS

The tables below show the types of jobs obtained by the 3,172 DVR consumers who successfully achieved their employment goal in federal fiscal year 2024.

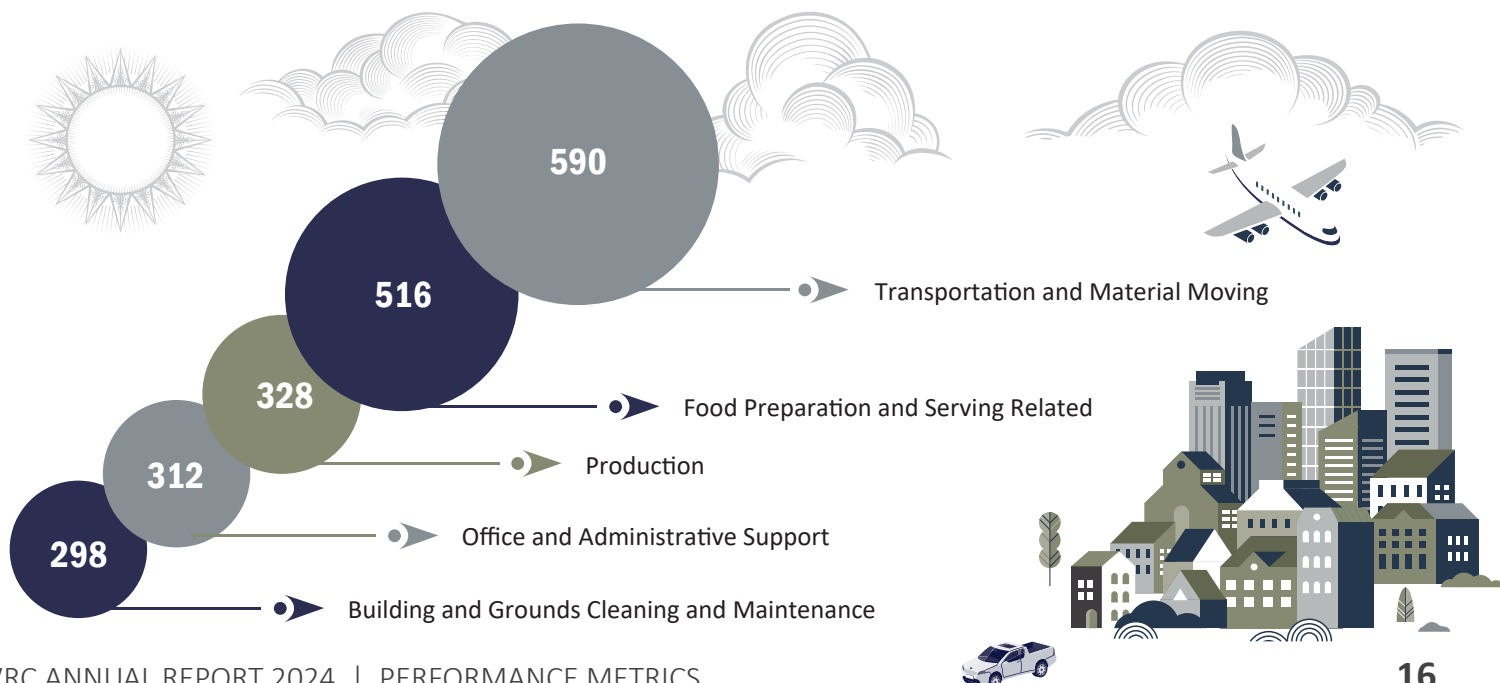
Job types

Architecture and Engineering	23
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	41
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	298
Business and Financial Operations	38
Community and Social Service	80
Computer and Mathematical	30
Construction and Extraction	32
Education, Training, and Library	103
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	13
Food Preparation and Serving Related	516
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	84
Healthcare Support	125
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	48
Legal	1
Life, Physical, and Social Science	12
Management	54
Military	1
Office and Administrative Support	312
Personal Care and Service	133
Production	328
Protective Service	33
Sales and Related	277
Transportation and Material Moving	590
Total	3,172



Top 5 Consumer Job Types

Number successfully employed in the five most common industries for DVR consumers, FFY2024



CONSUMER CASE SERVICE EXPENDITURES

The table below shows the total cost of DVR services for federal fiscal years 2023 and 2024. These expenditures reflect the services required to assist DVR consumers based on their individual needs and employment goals.

	FFY 2023	FFY 2024**
Assessment	\$2,702,031	\$3,699,195
Benefits Analysis	\$2,070,324	\$2,545,600
College/University Training	\$2,847,675	\$4,728,673***
Disability Skills Training	\$337,739	\$412,101
Eligibility/OOS Assessment	\$2,093,044	\$3,370,910
Interpreter/Note-Taker for the Deaf	\$207,116	\$243,014
Job Development	\$9,892,316	\$11,878,481
Low Vision Aid/Adjustment Services	\$261,843	\$299,114
Maintenance	\$481,316	\$945,334
Occupational/Vocational Training	\$356,878	\$483,817
On-the-Job Supports	\$5,960,814	\$6,708,620
Other Services*	\$493,247	\$775,117
Personal Assistance	\$97,391	\$93,866
Rehabilitation Technology	\$2,892,432	\$4,366,164
Restoration	\$58,892	\$278,080
Services/Family Members	\$8,389	\$35,494
Small Business Services	\$134,095	\$66,770
State LTE	\$0	\$4,375
Supported Employment	\$9,599,697	\$10,201,088
Temporary Work	\$5,246,810	\$6,659,994
Training	\$3,823,551	\$4,940,799
Transportation	\$1,899,814	\$2,661,016
Work-Related Materials/Tools	\$189,865	\$317,078
Youth On-the-Job Training	\$18,635	\$25,164
Total	\$51,673,914	\$65,739,865

*Other services include all other vocational rehabilitation services that cannot be recorded elsewhere such as background checks (following IPEs), BEP initial stocks and supplies, occupational license fees (e.g., CDL, RN, LPC) and occupational license testing fees that are excluded in the cost of training, computers for job development training, etc.

**Data current as of Dec. 5, 2024. FFY 2024 expenses subject to change pending continued fiscal processing.

***DVR provided training grants to 1,337 consumers in FFY 2024 to further their education at a four-year university or college, technical or junior college, or obtain a graduate or doctorate-level credential.



PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

In federal fiscal year 2024, DVR spent nearly \$13.7 million on Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) statewide for students ages 14 to 21.



Pre-ETS category	2023 Spending	2024 Spending*
Work-based learning	\$8,387,447	\$9,316,239
Job-exploration counseling	\$893,679	\$922,847
Workplace readiness training	\$2,501,125	\$3,430,183
Self-advocacy training	\$147,689	\$248,687
Post-secondary counseling	\$81,279	\$91,139
In-house Pre-ETS services	\$1,352,306	\$1,554,093
Statewide Total	\$13,363,525	\$15,563,189

**Data current as of Dec. 5, 2024. FFY 2024 expenses subject to change pending continued fiscal processing.*

HIGHLIGHT ON BUSINESS SERVICES

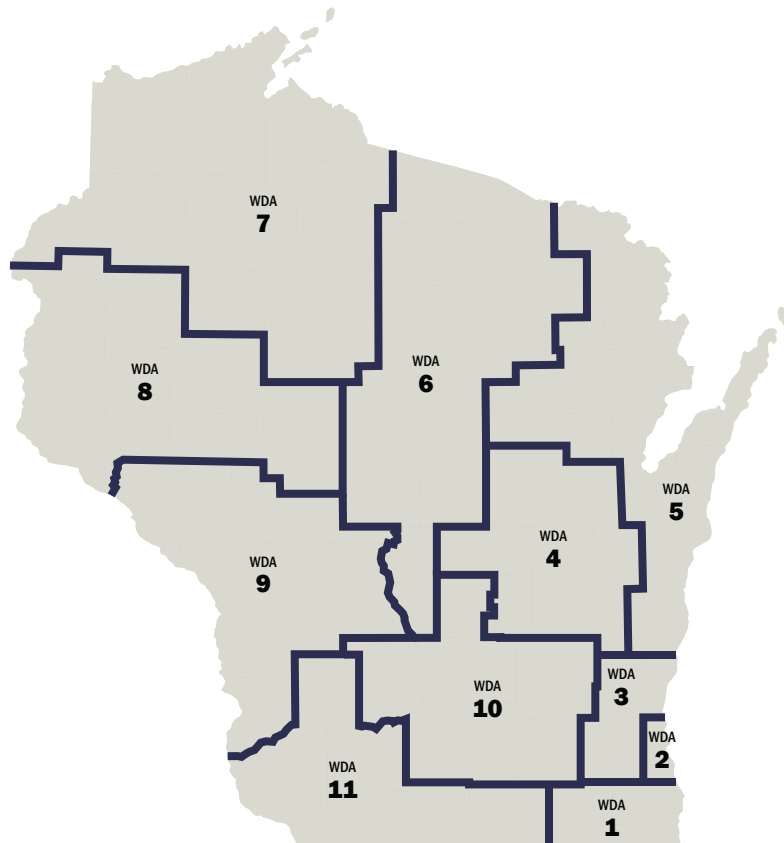
DVR is committed to helping people with disabilities find a job, keep a job, and get a better job. DVR Business Services Consultants (BSCs) are located in each Workforce Development Area (WDA) around the state, ready to work with employers seeking to hire new employees and create a workplace that is supportive of people of all abilities. BSCs can assist businesses in many ways:

- Recruit qualified workers with disabilities.
- Build staff diversity through DVR’s broad pool of skilled job candidates.
- Retain well-trained and productive employees.
- Access workforce planning resources and labor market information.

Every year, DVR BSCs provide over 11,000 services to more than 3,000 Wisconsin employers. Employers who would like help recruiting and retaining employees can contact their local BSC using the information below, sorted by WDA, to set up a no-cost meeting and begin discussing how DVR can help attract and retain talented employees.

WDA 1	Shaun Lukas	shaun.lukas@dwd.wisconsin.gov	262-270-8518
WDA 2	Sameer Bhajji	sameer.bhajji@dwd.wisconsin.gov	414-458-8072
WDA 3	Brandi Hernandez	brandi.hernandez@dwd.wisconsin.gov	414-250-6506
WDA 4	Nicole Greetan	nicole.greetan@dwd.wisconsin.gov	920-312-6037
WDA 5	Lynn Hardginski	lynn.hardginski@dwd.wisconsin.gov	262-977-1021
WDA 6	Mallory Bryan	mallory.bryan@dwd.wisconsin.gov	715-907-2580
WDA 7	Dawn Stocks	dawn.stocks@dwd.wisconsin.gov	715-415-2712
WDA 8	Tara Burns	taram.burns@dwd.wisconsin.gov	715-931-7394
WDA 9	Amy Studden	amy.studden@dwd.wisconsin.gov	608-799-6308
WDA 10	Nathan Clemons	nathan.clemons@dwd.wisconsin.gov	608-228-0227
WDA 11	Milo Luna	ismael.luna@dwd.wisconsin.gov	608-931-0765

DVR Business Services Consultants



CAREER PATHWAYS ADVANCEMENT GRANT

With a continued focus on helping individuals obtain 21st century skills to increase self-sufficiency and independence, DVR applied for a U.S. Department of Education (ED) Career Pathways Advancement (CPA) Initiative grant* in Spring 2021 and was awarded \$14 million in September 2021. The CPA Initiative has allowed DVR to create resources and opportunities to support consumers to advance in a career in one of four fields: healthcare, digital/information technology, construction, and manufacturing.

Under the initiative, DVR is focused on using apprenticeships, career pathways, and other programs and services to increase wages, hours worked, and job opportunities and to improve self-sufficiency and reduce the use of public benefits. By 2023, DVR had already met its goal of enrolling 500 individuals into the grant. To avoid creating a waitlist for services, ED awarded DVR an additional \$6.1 million in September 2023 to support more individuals through the CPA Grant.

Federal officials from ED and the Rehabilitation Services Administration joined DWD Secretary Amy Pechacek, DVR representatives, and partners at Madison College in October to acknowledge and celebrate years of investments in the CPA Initiative. The initiative has received more than \$20 million in Disability Innovation Fund grants since 2021. With over 1,000 grant recipients statewide, five Madison College student participants also attended, representing their chosen career pathways.

** The Career Pathways Advancement Initiative is supported by a grant (H421C210018) from the U.S. Department of Education. A total of 100% of the Career Pathways Advancement Initiative is financed with federal funds.*



Left to right: Danté Allen, commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration; Cindy Marten, deputy secretary, U.S. Department of Education; and Glenna Wright-Gallo, assistant secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, listened to a student and DIF grant recipient during a roundtable in October at Madison College.

BECOME A WRC MEMBER

How Do I Join?

Members of the council are appointed by the Governor. The council may forward recommendations to the Governor after soliciting recommendations from organizations representing a broad range of individuals with disabilities. In selecting members, the Governor shall consider, to the greatest extent practicable, representation of minority populations on the council.

What Qualifications Do I Need?

A majority of council members shall be persons who are:

1. Individuals with disabilities; and
2. Not employed by DWD.

How Long Can I Serve?

1. Each member of the council shall be appointed for a term of no more than three years and may serve no more than two consecutive terms.
2. A member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the end of the term for which a predecessor was appointed shall be appointed for the remainder of the predecessor's term.
3. The terms of service of the members initially appointed must be for varied numbers of years to ensure terms expire on a staggered basis.

Where Do I Begin?

To learn more about WRC, and see which seats to apply for, visit the [WRC website](#). Send a resume and cover letter expressing your interest in joining the council to: dvrwirehabcouncil@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

CONTACT WRC

The WRC welcomes and appreciates input from the public, using feedback to advise DVR and direct the council's focus. If you have any questions or comments about this report or WRC's work, email WRC at: dvrwirehabcouncil@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- DVR Services For Job Seekers With Disabilities - <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/job-seekers>
- DVR Services For Business - <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/business>
- Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council - <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/partners/wrc>
- Workforce Innovation And Opportunities Act - <https://doleta.gov/wioa>
- Rehabilitation Services Administration - <https://rsa.ed.gov>
- National Coalition Of State Rehabilitation Councils - <https://ncsrc.net>

