



Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment June 2019

The Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), requires Vocational Rehabilitation state agencies to conduct a comprehensive statewide needs assessment every three years. The needs assessment includes review of data on the general populations in Indiana as well as data on individuals being served in the Indiana VR program. A survey is also conducted to gather input from individuals with disabilities and their families, stakeholders, employers, VR staff and others regarding the needs of individuals with disabilities in Indiana, particularly as they pertain to employment and transition services. Feedback is also obtained on an ongoing basis through the Commission on Rehabilitation Services, regular VR staff meetings, and a variety of workgroups with stakeholders. The comprehensive statewide needs assessment establishes VR program priorities for the next three years, fiscal years 2020-2022.

Data Collection

While Indiana's formal comprehensive statewide needs assessment is conducted every three years, data is gathered continuously. The triennial comprehensive statewide needs assessment is a joint effort of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Commission on Rehabilitative Services. The Commission provides ongoing input, especially in the acquisition of satisfaction data. For this needs assessment, the Commission provided input into the development and content of the survey used for the assessment and feedback on the final report. Commission members had an opportunity to review and offer comments prior to the release of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment report. Indiana's 2020 comprehensive statewide needs assessment reflects a synthesis of quantitative and qualitative data addressing the state's overall vocational rehabilitation needs.

The data collection techniques used in the development of this report included (a) a review of demographic data for Indiana, (b) a review of data on individuals receiving VR services, (c) feedback from the Commission on Rehabilitation Services, and (d) input from VR applicants and participants, individuals with disabilities and their families, service providers, employers, educators, VR staff, Workforce Development staff, WIOA partners, and advocates.

Demographic/Economic Data

Prevalence

According to the National Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities, known as the LEAD Center, in 2017 Indiana's population was 6,666,818 (LEAD, n.d.). The Center reports 477,660 are people with disabilities between the ages of 18-64 (7%). This a decrease of 1.71% from 2016.

In Indiana, among the civilian noninstitutionalized population from 2012-2016, 14% reported a disability. "The likelihood of having a disability varied by age—from 5% of people under 18 years old, to 12% of people 18 to 64 years." (The American Community Survey, 2012-2016 five-year estimates can be found at the U.S. [U.S. Census website.](#))

Employment

Indiana's Department of Workforce Development (DWD) (2019) reported that the state's unemployment rate was 3.6% in December 2018 and has remained below the national rate of 3.9% for more than five years. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) provides the monthly unemployment rate, which is an indicator that reflects the number of unemployed people who have been seeking employment within the prior four weeks as the percentage of individuals engaged in the labor force. Indiana's total labor force is 3.40 million, and "the state's 65.1% labor force participation rate remains above the national rate of 63.1%" ([para. 1-2](#)).

LEAD data for Indiana for 2017 (n.d.) indicates that:

- 184,343 people with disabilities (all disabilities), ages 18-64, were employed in 2017
- percentage of working-age people (all disabilities) who were employed was 38.59%
- percentage of working-age people without disabilities who were employed was 78.65%

The Department of Labor (DOL) January 2019 disability employment statistics reports the following for individuals ages 16 and over:

Labor Force Participation

- People with disabilities: 20.5%

- People without disabilities: 68.3%

Unemployment Rate

- People with disabilities: 9.0%
- People without disabilities: 4.2%

[\(For current labor force and unemployment statistics click here.\)](#)

Note: "Labor Force participation" refers to the percentage of the population who are working or looking for work, while "unemployment rate" is the number of unemployed people as a percentage of the labor force.

January 2019 data from the U.S. Department of Labor shows the following labor force participation and unemployment rate for youth:

Labor Force Participation for Youth

- Age 16-19 with Disability: 22.3%
- Age 16-19 with No Disability: 33.3%
- Age 20-24 with Disability: 47.7%
- Age 20-24 with No Disability: 71.5%

Unemployment Rate for Youth

- Age 16-19 with Disability: 33.2%
- Age 16-19 with No Disability: 12.1%
- Age 20-24 with Disability: 12.1%
- Age 20-24 with No Disability: 8.5%

(Recent statistics can be found at [Department of Labor.](#))

The Wagner-Peyser National Quarterly report of FY 2018 (DOL, n.d.) showed that 190,781 individuals with disabilities received services from Wagner-Peyser, providing 87,721 individuals with basic career services; 95,486 with individualized career services; and 7,574 with training services. Services to individuals with disabilities is 4% of the total served.

Among the six types of disabilities identified in the American Community Survey (Erickson, Lee, & von Schrader, 2019), the highest employment rate was for people with a "Hearing Disability," 52.5%. The lowest employment rate was for people with a "Self-Care Disability," 17.5%. (Note: Self-care Disability is based on the question, asked of persons ages 5 or older: 17c. Does this person have difficulty dressing or bathing?)

Employment Demand in Indiana

Indiana uses short-term and long-term job projection data to obtain information about occupations that will be in demand from 2014 to 2024. The top 10 occupations expected to be in demand are: accountants, auditors, critical and acute care nurses, allergists, construction managers, dental hygienists, dermatologists, electricians, supervisors of construction trades, operations managers and management analysts. (See [Indiana Career Ready](#)).

According to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (Jan. 23, 2019), the biggest job gains in 2018 were in:

- Construction, +13,900 jobs
- Trade, Transportation & Utilities, +10,900 jobs
- Professional & Business Services, +8,800 jobs
- Private Education & Health Services, +6,300 jobs
- Financial Activities, +4,500 jobs
- Manufacturing, +3,100 jobs

Transportation

The Arc (n.d.) describes transportation issues as follows: “Despite these two landmark federal laws [Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act], transportation services are often not accessible to individuals with disabilities as policies are not implemented and adequate funding is not provided” (para. 2).

The American Public Transportation Association (December 7, 2017) reports that 45% of Americans have no access to public transportation.

The Indiana Department of Transportation (June 2018) provides the following statistics concerning the status of transportation in Indiana as of 2017.

- Indiana maintains a public transit network of 64 urban and rural systems that receive formula funding, a number which remained the same from 2016 to 2017. Formula funding provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to states to support public transportation in urban and rural areas.
 - Urban systems – 21 receive 5307 formula funding
 - Rural systems – 43 receive 5311 formula funding
 - 83 of 92 counties in Indiana have public transit service available
- Public Transit Fleet for 2017
 - Total public transit fleet for Indiana – 1,995 vehicles
 - Urban vehicles – 1,173, with 98.81% wheelchair accessible

- Rural vehicles – 822, with 86% wheelchair accessible
- Total vehicles – 1,995 with 93.53% wheelchair accessible
- Specialized Transportation Program Vehicles for 2017
 - Total number of active vehicles – 729
 - Number of vehicles funded in 2017 – 79
 - Specialized Transportation vehicle fleet wheelchair accessible – 80%

INDOT (June 2018) also reported the following in relation to how individuals transport to work:

- Public transportation – 1% used public transportation to get to work in Indiana compared to national average of 5%
- Drive Alone to Work – 83.6% of workers aged 16 years and over, national average 77%
- Car Pooled to Work – 9% of workers aged 16 years and over, national average 9.5%
- Zero Car Households – 174,764 (7%), of the total 2.5 million households

INDOT has “rural demand” response systems that are transit systems in urban areas with populations less than 50,000 and rural countywide and multi-county systems with varying population sizes (INDOT, June 2018). These systems operate 50% or more of their total vehicle miles in demand response – flexible routing and scheduling according to passenger needs.

The 42 systems in the “rural demand” serve more than 2.7 million people (INDOT, June 2018). This represents 42% of the state’s population. The average service area population is 66,101. The sizes of the individual service areas are between 4,350 and 274,569 people.

The Section 5310 Program through INDOT is designed to serve areas where accessible public transit for seniors and persons with disabilities is unavailable, inadequate or inappropriate in rural and small urban areas (INDOT, June 2018). The program provides vehicles and related accessibility equipment to private non-profit organizations and eligible public bodies. Indiana annually distributes about \$1.6 million to rural areas and \$1.4 million for small urban areas on an 80% federal and 20% local matching basis. INDOT typically funds about 30 to 40 applicants (these might be towns, not-for-profit groups, etc.) per year at amounts ranging from \$36,000 to \$100,000.

Poverty

The Census Bureau (USC, Quickfacts, n.d.) indicates that the poverty rate in Indiana in 2017 was 13.5%.

LEAD data (n.d.) on poverty indicates that the 2017 poverty rate in Indiana for individuals with no disability is 12%, while it is 20% for those with disabilities.

Supplemental Security Income

According to Social Security data (n.d.), 128,575 Indiana residents received SSI benefits in 2017. Of those, 122,814 received SSI benefits due to being blind or disabled, with 90,235 of those being of working age (18-64 years).

LEAD data (StateData, n.d.) indicates the number of SSI recipients in Indiana with disabilities who work is 6,841, which is 5.5% of all individuals receiving SSI in 2017.

According to the December 2018 Ticket to Work Summary and Assignment report (SSA/TTW, n.d.), Indiana has 297,747 beneficiaries eligible for the Ticket to Work program. There are 86 Employment Networks (EN) available in the state. There were 10,469 tickets identified as being in-use by VR and ENs. This same report identifies 4,228 tickets in use by VR, 4,955 assigned to VR, and 1,286 assigned to ENs.

Indiana has a Benefits Information Network (BIN) of certified liaisons that assists individuals in assessing the impact of employment on benefits. Indiana VR purchases this assessment of benefits through the trained liaisons. The BIN liaisons completed 1,348 benefits analysis plans in 2016; 1,287 in 2017; and 1,193 during 2018 (K. A. Land, personal communication, November 12, 2018). The Indiana Institute on Disability and Community at Indiana University conducted eight trainings on benefits in 2018, with 193 Certified BIN liaisons and 16 certified Community Work Incentive Counselors participating in the training.

Health Insurance Coverage

U.S. Census Bureau data showed that Indiana had 373,000 fewer people without health insurance last year than three years earlier (“Number of People,” 2017). About 8% of Indiana residents, or about 530,000 people, lacked medical insurance in 2016. That is down from 14%, or 903,000 residents in 2013.

The national uninsured rates were 14.5% in 2013 and 8.6% in 2016 (“Number of People,” 2017). Employer-based insurance covered 55.7% of the U.S. population in 2016. Medicaid covered 19.4%, Medicare 16.7%, direct-purchase 16.2% and military coverage 4.6%. Information from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS, n.d.) indicated that in 2017, Indiana had 1,204,903 individuals receiving Part A and/or Part B Medicare benefits. Of this number, 186,665 were receiving the benefits due to having a disability.

October 2018 data (Medicaid.gov, n.d.) indicates that 1,339,346 individuals in Indiana were receiving Medicaid health insurance coverage.

Educational Attainment

According to the Indiana Department of Education (DOE) “Memorandum to State Board of Education Regarding Child Counts” for December 1, 2018, which will be added to the IDOE website soon (n.d.), there was a non-duplicated child count of 165,912 students in special education. This is up from last year by 2,226 students (1.36%). The breakdown according to disability is shown in the table below.

Table 1 - Child Count Comparisons (December 1, 2017 and November 30, 2018)

Source: DOE-Special Education and DOE-Special Education for Voucher Students
 Ages: 5B (kindergarten eligible)-22
 Unduplicated State Totals by Disability

Primary Exceptionality Category	12-1-17 Count	11-30-18 Count	Increase/Decrease
Multiple Disability	2,055	2,020	-35
Orthopedic Impairment	1,431	1,404	-27
Blind or Low Vision	927	938	11
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	2,277	2,268	-9
Emotional Disability- Full Time	6,595	6,804	209
Emotional Disability - All Other	6,334	6,107	-227
Specific Learning Disability	55,068	54,739	-329
Developmental Delay (Ages 5B-8}	N/A	2,171	2,171
Language/Speech Impairment	34,225	33,443	-782
Mild Cognitive Disability	10,102	9,773	-329
Moderate Cognitive Disability	3,560	3,435	-125
Severe Cognitive Disability	381	342	-39
Deaf Blind	26	31	5
Autism Spectrum Disorder	15,721	16,057	336
Traumatic Brain Injury	458	459	1
Other Health Impairment	24,526	25,921	1,395
Total Unduplicated Count	163,686	165,912	2,226 {+1.36%}

According to the American Community Survey (USC, ACS Narrative Profiles, n.d.), 88.3% of Indiana adults have achieved high school graduation or higher level of education. An estimated 12% did not complete high school.

The National Center for Education Statistics released *Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2018* (McFarland, Cui, Rathbun, & Holmes, 2018) on December 12, 2018. Key findings include:

- High school status completion rates nationally increased from 83.5% in 1976 to 92.9% in 2016 among 18- to 24-year-olds.
- The gap in high school status completion rates between White and Black students narrowed from 13.2% points in 1976 to 3.1% points in 2016. The gap in completion rate for White and Hispanic students also narrowed, going from 26.1% points in 1976 to 5.4% points in 2016.

The following is information as to Indiana's progress in meeting the Federal Indicators for IDEA in 2016, (LEAD, n.d.):

- 31.1% of youth who are no longer in secondary school had IEPs in effect at the time they left school and were enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school (Indicator 14a).
- 70.4% of youth who are no longer in secondary school had IEPs in effect at the time they left school and were enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school (Indicator 14b).
- 86% of youth who are no longer in secondary school had IEPs in effect at the time they left school and were enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or they were competitively employed or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school (Indicator 14c).
- 39% of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school and were competitively employed within one year of leaving high school (Subset of Indicator 14).

Veterans with a Service-Connected Disability

According to the DOL Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018):

- In 2017, 20.4 million men and women were veterans, accounting for about 8% of the civilian non-institutional population age 18 and over. About 10% of all veterans were women (para. 5).

- Veterans with a service-connected disability had an unemployment rate of 4.3% in August 2017, indicating only a slight difference from veterans with no disability (4.5%). The unemployment rate for Indiana veterans, August 2017, was 4.7% (para. 8).

[Census Bureau](#) population estimates as of July 2018, show that an estimated 397,715 veterans reside in Indiana.

Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

StateData of the Institute for Community Inclusion provides online data regarding day and employment services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Their data for 2016 (StateData, n.d.) indicate that the number of Indiana individuals in day and employment services was 16,337 with funding of \$90,410,344 (see Table 1). The total number in integrated employment in Indiana was 10%, while nationwide it was 19%. Indiana’s funding for integrated employment was 2.9% of the spending, while nationwide it was 13%.

Table 2 - Day and Employment Services

	Indiana 2016		Nation 2016	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total in day and employment services	16,337		638,568	
Total in integrated employment services	1,714	10%	120,244	19%
Total funding for day and employment services	\$90,410,344		\$6,655,503,290	
Total funding for integrated employment services	\$2,658,834	2.9%	\$864,859,934	13%

The 2016 data (StateData, n.d.) also showed the mean wages and hours worked for two weeks in Indiana and compared this to the nationwide average (see Table 2).

Indiana had 17% of the individuals working in integrated settings compared to the nation’s 19% in integrated employment of all types. Of these, 16% in Indiana were in individual jobs with 14% nationwide. The mean wage in Indiana was \$208.11 for 28.9 hours worked, while nationwide was \$230.33 for 25.9 hours worked.

Table 3 – Day and Employment Services Wages and Hours for Employment

Indiana 2015/2016				Nation 2015/2016		
	Percent	Mean wages earned in 2 weeks	Mean hours worked in 2 weeks	Percent	Mean wages earned in 2 weeks	Mean hours worked in 2 weeks
In an integrated job <i>individual supported job + group-supported employment + competitive job</i>	17%	*	*	19%	*	*
In an individual job <i>individual job without or with publicly-funded supports</i>	16%	\$208.11	28.9	14%	\$230.33	25.9
In an individual job without publicly-funded supports	9%	\$236.66	31.8	5%	\$237.05	26.8
In an individual job with publicly-funded supports	7%	\$174.41	25.7	7%	\$221.96	25.1
In a group-supported job	1%	\$256.00	43.3	6%	\$167.34	25.8
Employment support unknown	1%	*	*	4%	*	*

* = Data not available

The 2018 Day and Employment Services Outcome Systems Report (Grossi, 2018) provides the following data, gathered from 57 VR Employment Service Providers, regarding 10,843 individuals receiving services in Indiana.

- 20% (2197) were served in competitive, integrated employment.
- 27% (2891) were served in sheltered/facility-based work.
- 22% (2341) were in an alternative to work (e.g., seeking employment, volunteer work).
- 31% (3341) were in non-employment day services.
- Average wage of those employed in individual jobs was \$9.05 an hour, working an average of 20 hours per week.
- Average wage in sheltered work was \$2.25 an hour, working on average 26 hours per week.
- Of individuals working in sheltered employment, 51% had a mild intellectual disability, 27% had a moderate intellectual disability, and 8% had an autism diagnosis.

- Of those in individual jobs, 59% relied on family and friends for transportation, and 45% used public transportation.
- Individuals were employed primarily in food service, grocery/retail, custodial/housekeeping, and packaging/assembly jobs.
- Individuals placed into individual jobs under supported employment may require extended services to help them maintain their job.
 - 33% did not receive any extended services.
 - 38% received 1-4 hours of extended services per month.
 - 25% received 5-10 hours of extended services per month.
 - 1% received 11-15 hours of extended services per month.
 - 2% received over 16 hours of extended services per month.
 - 13% had no extended services funding available.

Employment First

In 2017, legislation regarding Employment First was passed in Indiana, identifying competitive, integrated employment as the first and preferred option for working age individuals with disabilities. Below is an excerpt from the Employment First Act.

Sec. 7. (a) It is the policy of the state to advance competitive integrated employment, including self-employment, as the first and preferred option when providing services to an individual with disabilities who is of working age, regardless of the nature or the severity of the individual's disability. The policy applies to programs and agencies that provide services and support to help obtain employment for individuals with disabilities.

(b) State agencies shall follow the policy described in subsection (a) and ensure that the policy is implemented effectively in the state agencies' programs and services. State agencies shall implement the policy in a manner that is consistent with an individual's right to make an informed choice about employment options that meet an individual's needs and preferences.

With the implementation of Employment First legislation in 2017, the responsibilities of the Indiana Commission on Rehabilitation Services were expanded. A new responsibility of the commission is to provide recommendations concerning the implementation and progress toward advancing competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities as described in IC 22-9-11.(5).

In 2018, the Commission on Rehabilitation Services established an Employment First committee and identified several stakeholders, including both appointed commission members and non-

members, to serve on this committee. Participants included representatives from the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities (GCPD), Community Rehabilitation Programs, Community Mental Health Centers, INARF, businesses, BDDS, IIDC, and VR. The committee formed three sub groups to focus on barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities, review of data regarding employment of individuals with disabilities, and employer engagement. Each subgroup submitted initial draft recommendations to the commission for consideration in the development of a statewide plan to support the advancement of competitive integrated employment, including self-employment, as the first and preferred option for individuals with disabilities. The Employment First committee presented to the commission at the March 2019 meeting to obtain feedback and discuss additional action steps necessary to work toward development of the statewide Employment First plan. Efforts will continue throughout 2019 toward identification of key strategies to work toward the Employment First philosophy.

Indiana VR Updates

Several new initiatives, program improvements, and notable program changes have occurred over the last few years. The following section highlights these key updates.

Staffing

As of spring 2019, the Indiana VR program carried out services across all four regions, each with a Region Manager. There are 24 area offices in 19 separate locations with each of the area offices having a supervisor, and each location having a secretary. Numerous changes regarding the distribution of both staff and coverage areas have occurred over the past few years to appropriately shift resources where needed.

Indiana VR has 46 VR Intake Counselors. The intake counselors have the responsibility of working with a VR referral through application, obtaining needed diagnostics, and determining eligibility and disability service priority category. A VR Caseload Counselor then assumes responsibility for leading the Discovery process, IPE development, service provision and goal attainment to the point of case closure. There are 124 VR Caseload Counselors. Seven working lead Itinerant VR Counselors perform a variety of functions including covering vacant caseloads and mentoring new staff.

Additionally, 64 VR Case Coordinators provide fiscal and paraprofessional support throughout the entire VR services process and facilitate the movement of participants from application to case closure.

As of spring 2019, Indiana is also in the process of hiring 10 VR Youth Counselors who will have a primary focus on providing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) activities to students with disabilities as well as coordinating activities with local education agencies.

Additionally, a staff of approximately 30 work in Central Office in various capacities including policy development, training, finance, federal reporting, information technology, ticket to work, transition services including Pre-ETS, Randolph-Sheppard blind vending, Deaf and hard of hearing services, independent living, community and business engagement, and other administrative and support functions.

VR Employment Service Revisions

In July 2015, the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), which houses the VR program, implemented substantial revisions to how employment services are carried out by VR Employment Service Providers, often referred to as Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs). Both the CRPs and Community Mental Health Centers provide employment services to VR participants. Revisions were made based on feedback and input from VR staff, Employment Service Providers and stakeholders on best practices and needed improvements. The new employment services approach was designed to address the unintended consequences of the prior results based funding (RBF) model by increasing flexibility and individualization, increasing access to discovery activities and supported employment, and to shift employment services from a system-centric approach to a more consumer-centric approach. Specific goals BRS hopes to accomplish with these changes include:

- Being responsive to all VR eligible individuals, including individuals with high support needs as well as those with minimal support needs;
- Refocusing on Discovery, especially for individuals with minimal or no prior work experience;
- Ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities have access to adequate supported employment services;
- Ensuring that individuals consistently reach stabilization, or their highest level of independence, prior to VR case closure;
- Retaining a system that focuses on outcomes, but also recognizes quality and individualization;
- Retaining a system that is not difficult to administer;
- Encouraging a team approach to employment services, with the participant, VR Counselor and employment specialist as the core team; and
- Improving the participant's experience.

BRS continues to evaluate the impact of these revisions, identify emerging best practices and addressing areas of improvement. The workgroup that was heavily involved in the development of the revisions continues to meet to share successes and challenges.

After consideration of ongoing feedback from the workgroup, VR staff, VR Employment Service Providers and other stakeholders, as well as from a review of early data and outcomes, several additional enhancements have been implemented over the last three years. Additional enhancements include:

- Additional rate changes to milestone payments;
- Streamlining and simplifying billing codes for supported employment and discovery;
- Revising the rate structure for work experience services, thus eliminating separate tiers in favor of a simplified hourly fee for service;
- Streamlining and simplifying documentation and reporting requirements, including a condensed discovery profile and employment support and retention plan;
- Standardizing billing processes including implementation of an authorization request form;
- Ensuring ongoing communication between the employment services staff and VR Counselor through implementation of a monthly progress summary and issuing best practices regarding the frequency of team meetings; and
- Providing refresher trainings at regional locations as well as through webinars.

Improving the Quality and Quantity of Competitive, Integrated Employment Outcomes

The Indiana VR Employment Services Model (ESM) was evaluated (Public Consulting Group, 2018) with the following observations:

- The use of Supported Employment (SE) is showing clear and steady increases each month. This is indicative of a strong trend of vendors providing support services to VR participants....This increase is not just in the number of hours being utilized, but also in the number of cases receiving the services. Vendors are providing more SE services to participants, across disability populations, intended to improve employment outcomes.
- Participant outcomes amongst vendors in different geographic areas of Indiana display some similarities, including mostly serving participants with significant and most significant disabilities.

- ESM outcomes continue to steadily improve. Past reports have identified that:

Outcomes for ESM participants have improved, with the highest current ESM wages over one dollar higher than the average overall Results Based Funding (RBF) [prior employment services model used in Indiana] hourly wages. Participants are receiving better employment outcomes and spending more time between their first authorization and employment placement. This trend could be tied to the increase in SE utilization, as well as the steady increase in Discovery hours, which was one of the goals ESM had hoped to achieve.

Utilization of SE and Discovery hours has continued to increase. The February 2017 quarterly report (Public Consulting Group, February 2017) showed an average of 21.1 Discovery hours being utilized. Each subsequent report has shown an increase in the average number of Discovery hours, with the November 2018 report showing that the average has risen to 25.1 hours. This represents an increase of 19%.
- The job family categories with the largest percentage of participant placements in ESM are as follows:
 - Production 24.7%
 - Office and Administrative Support 15.8%
 - Food Preparation and Serving Related 15.7%

Table 4 – Employment Services Model changes (data is cumulative)

Characteristics and Outcomes Measured	Nov 2018 (data through 9/30/18)	May 2018 (data through 3/31/18)	Nov 2017 (data through 9/30/17)
% MSD	67%	62%	57%
Average hourly wages	\$9.37	\$9.33	\$9.26
Average weekly work hours	25.6	25.5	25.4
Time from first authorization to placement (weeks)	42	38.6	35.1
Average hours spent in Discovery	25.1	23.1	22.3
Total # unique SE cases	1589 <i>(increase of 498 from last report)</i>	1091 <i>(increase of 309 from last report)</i>	782 <i>(increase of 309 from last report (473))</i>

Indiana Family and Social Services Administration Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
 Employment Services Model Evaluation - Findings Report, November 2018

System Modernization

BRS began development of a new case management system in 2017 to replace the current “home grown” system that has been in place for the past 20 years. The new case management system is called AWARE, which is a case management system used by more than 30 state VR agencies nationwide. BRS also began development of a VR Claims Payment System (VR-CPS) Vendor Portal in 2017 to streamline and modernize VR claims payment processing. Both new systems were implemented in May 2019 and are expected to help BRS realize improved efficiency, data collection and reporting, customer service and quality assurance.

Implementation of Order of Selection

BRS implemented an order of selection on August 1, 2017, due to a lack of sufficient staffing and fiscal resources to adequately serve all eligible individuals in the VR program (Ind. Comm. on Rehab Svcs., 2017). In preparation for implementation of the order of selection, DWD and BRS co-hosted a roundtable summit in July 2017, to bring together key representatives from state and federal organizations who may be in a position to expand services to individuals with disabilities. Following the summit, statewide training on available resources and information was provided to WorkOne staff to help them effectively assist with the anticipated increase in Hoosiers with disabilities accessing WorkOne centers following implementation of the order of selection.

Under the order of selection, two of three priority categories are closed with only those eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities (priority category 1) being served. All individuals implementing an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) as of August 1, 2017, continued to receive VR services regardless of their priority category.

Between August 1, 2017 and September 30, 2018, 1,899 eligible VR individuals were deferred for services, which represented approximately 5% of eligible individuals during the last two months of FFY2017, and 23% of eligible individuals in FFY2018.

Additionally, BRS developed community resources guides for each VR geographic service area, and this information is maintained on the VR website, order of selection [resource page](#). Other resources posted at this site include a Frequently Asked Questions document, order of selection myths, and a podcast recording about how order of selection impacts VR applicants and eligible individuals.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

One significant new requirement under the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), is that VR agencies must earmark 15% of federal VR

funds for the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities. Students with disabilities is defined as students in secondary or postsecondary school between the ages of 14 through the school year in which the student becomes 22, who are eligible for, and are receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or who are individuals with a disability as specified by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Students may be eligible for and receiving VR services, or they may be “potentially eligible.” VR considers a potentially eligible student to be a student with a disability as defined above who is not currently receiving VR services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Indiana started providing Pre-ETS to students with disabilities in 71 counties in 2017 through both contracted community rehabilitation programs and internal VR staff. Both students who were eligible for VR services as well as those potentially eligible for VR services received Pre-ETS. BRS implemented a Pre-ETS portal in 2017 for collection of required data on students receiving Pre-ETS. Expansion of Pre-ETS occurred in 2018 with activities being widely available in all of Indiana’s 92 counties through 10 contractors as well as internal VR staff. The number of students served through Pre-ETS and type of Pre-ETS activities received is outlined in Tables 12 and 13.

VR Youth Services staff, along with assistance from the VR Director of Business and Community Engagement, coordinated VR Mentoring Days in 2017 and 2018 for students with disabilities. These days consisted of tours of local businesses, along with discussion of workplace readiness skills. VR partnered with DOE and local education agencies to identify students and collect required data for each student who participated. Speakers from Self-Advocates of Indiana as well as the local WorkOne centers also attended and spoke to the students about the importance of self-advocacy and how to explore job options and other postsecondary opportunities at the local WorkOne. Mentoring programs have occurred at Subaru of Indiana in Lafayette, at Primex Plastics in Richmond, at the U.S. Census Bureau in Indianapolis, and at Hoosier Patterns, Inc. in Decatur.

Additionally, VR leads a Transition Advisory Group that meets quarterly for resource sharing, discussion and review of transition related projects, and oversight of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between VR and DOE. Pre-ETS is a frequent topic among members, which include representatives from DWD, DOE, Department of Corrections, IN*SOURCE, Indiana Disability Rights, Arc of Indiana, IIDC, local education agencies, community rehabilitation providers, and many other organizations.

Career Counseling and Information and Referral Services

Indiana VR has partnered with the Arc of Indiana and Self-Advocates of Indiana to provide Career Counseling and Information and Referral (CCIR) Services to individuals working at subminimum wages, to provide information about resources and opportunities to work toward competitive, integrated employment.

Jill Smith, director of the Arc Advocacy Network, (personal communication, February 1, 2019) reported that 4,595 individuals across Indiana received CCIR in the form of presentations led by self-advocates from July 1, 2017, through December 31, 2018. These presentations included information regarding local community organizations and resources that provide employment-related services and supports. Attendees received a certificate of participation upon completion of the required activities.

Enhanced Collaboration, Including Collaboration with WIOA Core Partners

VR collaborated with several entities throughout the year, including the Indiana Department of Education (DOE), the Bureau of Developmental Disability Services (BDDS), the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and local WorkOne centers, Indiana University (IU) Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC), IU Hands in Autism, Arc of Indiana, Self-Advocates of Indiana, local education agencies, INARF, INData, and others. Examples of collaboration activities included developing and updating written agreements with DWD, local WorkOne centers, and DOE; conducting Pre-ETS mentoring days in local businesses in partnership with WorkOne, DOE, local education agencies and Self-Advocates of Indiana; information sharing through numerous workgroups and councils including the Employment Advisory Group with representatives from VR staff and Employment Service Providers, INARF, and IIDC; and training to VR staff and Employment Service Providers, in partnership with IU.

BRS and DWD engaged in collaborative efforts which are further detailed below:

- negotiating infrastructure funding agreements statewide;
- developing updated memorandums of understanding to outline partner responsibilities and also facilitate sharing of data;
- jointly conducting a Roundtable Summit with core WIOA partners and other stakeholders in preparation for implementation of a VR order of selection to educate about and discuss potential impact on WIOA partners;
- Teaming on a Department of Labor (DOL) customer service cohort to improve access to WorkOne services for Hoosiers with disabilities;

- VR representation on the State Workforce Innovation Council and representation of DWD on the Commission on Rehabilitation Services;
- Training to WorkOne center staff on disability etiquette and VR services;
- Cross participation in federal monitoring visits conducted by U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration, and U.S. DOL; and
- Ongoing and growing collaboration with DWD's Business Services team that has resulted in multiple cross referrals of businesses for resource sharing, and also joint utilization of a tracking system for business engagement efforts.

Establishment Projects

BRS conducted a Request for Funding (RFF) in 2016 to identify community rehabilitation programs experiencing challenges with staffing capacity and training, in light of implementing substantial revisions to the VR employment service model in 2015. With the implementation of those revisions, BRS and VR Employment Service Providers recognized a need to revisit the staffing structure and caseload sizes of employment services staff, and to provide staff training to meet VR expectations in carrying out employment services. BRS entered into contracts with 47 VR Employment Service Providers for Establishment projects in April 2017 to improve capacity for the provision of quality employment services, including supported employment. The objective of the project is to enhance Employment Service Provider staffing resources and training, with an emphasis on foundational, hands-on skills training. Establishment projects are anticipated to continue for a four-year period, ending March 2021. Data from the first two years of the project has been reviewed and indicates very positive trends in the provision of supported employment, employment outcomes and retention, average wages and weekly work hours, and foundational skills training for employment services staff. Further information is outlined in Table 22 and Charts 2 through 8 below.

Community Rehabilitation Program Training

Staff from the Center on Community Living and Careers (CCLC) at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC) provide technical assistance to VR employment service providers. This technical assistance is provider-driven, allowing each provider to develop a plan to meet the training needs of their respective agency. Over the last year, topics have included, but are not limited to, providing services to people with most significant disabilities, completing Discovery, customizing employment, providing supports on and off the job site, and enhancing leadership development. Frequently, technical assistance is funded through the VR Establishment Projects.

In addition to the individualized technical assistance employment service providers can access through CCLC, a number of trainings have also been developed and implemented in response to

provider training needs, many in partnership with CCLC through a contract with VR. These needs were identified through several means, including a needs assessment, review of service and outcome data, ongoing evaluation of the VR employment services model, thorough conversation with VR and provider staff at the field level, and service gaps identified by VR.

VR also completed the following activities that positively impacted employment services.

- Revision of the training curriculum for employment specialists;
- Further enhancement of the VR employment services changes implemented in 2015, including additional rate revisions and simplified documentation requirements;
- Ongoing evaluation of the employment services revisions and publication of semi-annual reports on the VR webpage; and
- Continued participation in the statewide Employment Advisory Group to address best practices and identify areas of further improvement.

VR Business and Community Engagement

In 2018, the VR Business and Community Engagement team continued to identify and connect resources around disability hiring and disseminated those resources to businesses (Ind. Comm. on Rehab Svcs., 2018). These resources are shared via email, in presentations and on the BRS social media platforms of Twitter and Facebook. Information shared typically contains identification of employers who are innovative in their disability inclusion efforts, best practices and resources around the hiring of individuals with disabilities, and other information that can assist both businesses who are hiring individuals with disabilities and organizations who support individuals with disabilities. These simple modes of communication reach hundreds of employers and individuals on a daily basis.

For the past several years, the VR Business and Community Engagement team collaborated with several organizations for an event called the Career Expo. This is an event that gives employers an opportunity to meet hundreds of applicants with disabilities who are seeking employment and for applicants to meet between 20-25 employers over the period of several hours. Every year this event is well received.

During the National Disability Employment Awareness Month in March of 2018, the VR Business and Community Engagement team created a custom program at Enterprise Holdings for their Indianapolis area hiring managers. This first-of-its-kind collaboration between area stakeholders featured presentations around awareness and etiquette and a demonstration from Easter Seals Crossroads Assistive Technology (AT) Team of new AT tools that can be used in an office setting. A presentation from a special education subject matter expert shared the presenter's experiences teaching individuals with disabilities at the Erskine Green Training

Institute. The innovative program concluded with a presentation on why managers should hire individuals with disabilities by Dr. Chuck Dietzen, the founder of the non-profit Timmy Global Health. BRS is planning a similar program in 2019 with another business partner.

In April of 2019, an announcement came from the national organization CSAVR (Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation) and Disability:IN (formerly known as the Business Leadership Network) regarding their official partnership and plans for future collaboration. Around the same time, the Indiana Business Engagement team coordinated a presentation with the local Indianapolis Area Disability:IN chapter that featured the BRS Director of Operations speaking on the topic of Disability Inclusion and practices of Indiana BRS as an inclusive employer. This presentation resulted in an invitation from the local Diversity Roundtable of Central Indiana for the Operations Director to present on best practices in diversity/disability hiring and retention to a wider audience of local employers.

BRS has begun sharing employer data through DWD's new customer relationship management (CRM) system for business relationship tracking called INGage. This system tracks which businesses are actively working with the two state agencies. In addition, regular in-person meetings with state and local partners around business engagement has increased opportunities for collaboration. As a result, an increase of employer referrals to DWD and individual and business referrals to BRS have resulted. On one occasion, BRS was referred to a business that had an individual returning to work years after sustaining an on-the-job injury. It is believed that this occurred as a result of the solid relationship between our teams. The business referred had no knowledge of the VR program and how VR can assist individuals as they return to work after an accident, injury or health issue. Additionally, the BRS Business and Community Engagement team has referred employers to DWD for potential grant funding opportunities through DWD's Next Level Jobs initiative.

Growing the number of employers who are aware of Indiana VR and resources available to them continues to be the top priority of the Business and Community Engagement Team. A constant presence at stakeholder meetings, as members on the local workforce development boards, trainings and networking events at the local level, are all strategies that are helping to expand the effort.

VR Participant Input Through Ongoing Satisfaction Surveys

Immediately upon case closure, all individuals who received VR services under an IPE and whose cases were closed either with or without employment, receive a customer satisfaction survey. Two different versions are released for different case closure types (with or without employment). A business reply envelope is also included. If no response is received within 30

days of mailing, a second request is released. If the participant is blind or visually impaired, this survey is often completed by phone with a designated staff member in central office.

From January 1, 2018, to December 31, 2018, participants completed and returned 1,533 surveys to BRS (946 from cases closed with employment, and 587 from cases closed without employment). The 2017 total responses were 2,752 (2,001 from cases closed with employment, and 751 from cases closed without employment). The decrease is attributed to having fewer case closures in 2018 following implementation of an order of selection. Fewer closures are also indicative of providing services for a longer duration prior to closing a case as a result of modifications to the VR employment service model to better meet the needs of participants with the most significant disabilities. The percentage of survey responses received for both successful and unsuccessful cases for 2018 remains high at 29% of closures.

Those participants whose cases were closed with employment had many more positive comments than negative comments, and this has remained true since 2012. In the same vein, those whose cases were closed without employment provided more negative comments than positive comments.

The following table contains results of the responses to the closed-ended questions for calendar years 2016 -2018, separated by closure type. Scores were calculated using a five-point scale, with five representing strongly agree and one representing strongly disagree.

Table 5 - Survey Outcomes

Questions	Closed with Employment			Closed without Employment		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
1) I was satisfied with the services I received from VR.	4.63	4.61	4.50	3.77	3.70	3.65
2) I like the way I was treated.	4.68	4.67	4.57	4.06	3.97	3.94
3) I would recommend VR to others.	4.69	4.67	4.54	3.95	3.86	3.84
4) I received the services I needed.	4.62	4.62	4.59	3.68	3.58	3.52
5) I received my services in a timely manner.	4.30	3.70	4.24	3.69	3.57	3.59
6) I was able to meet my counselor at a convenient location.	4.63	4.63	4.55	4.16	4.09	4.12
7) I am satisfied with my job.	4.54	4.54	4.47	N/A	N/A	N/A
8) I am satisfied with my fringe benefits (medical, dental, etc.).	4.02	4.09	4.02	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total surveys returned	1551	2001	946	574	751	587

Indiana continues to experience high VR customer satisfaction ratings even among unsuccessful case closures. This indicates a high confidence level in overall VR customer service. While there were slight decreases in satisfaction in several areas, of note is an increased satisfaction in service timeliness for all closed cases and an increase in satisfaction with convenience of location as well as timeliness for unsuccessful closures. Increased satisfaction is expected in the coming years with implementation of several new initiatives including system modernization, as well as planned improvements in staffing capacity and enhanced training for both VR and Employment Service Provider staff.

VR Services Trends 2016-2018

The data tables provided below pertain to individuals receiving VR services during federal fiscal years 2016-2018, that is, between October 1, 2015 and September 30, 2018. Due to insufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals, VR implemented an order of selection August 1, 2017, after receiving approval from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), which falls in between the period of review for the data tables below. BRS anticipated seeing some shifts in the population served by VR as well as services and outcomes provided, as a result of the implementation of the order of selection.

As mentioned previously, under the order of selection, two of three priority categories are closed with those eligible individuals in priority category 1 (those with the most significant disabilities) prioritized for VR services, and those eligible individuals in Priority Categories 2 and 3 deferred for VR services.

Priority Category	Level of Severity
Priority Category 1	Eligible individual with a most significant disability
Priority Category 2	Eligible individual with a significant disability
Priority Category 3	All other eligible individuals

Upon implementation of the order of selection, all individuals who were already receiving VR services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) continued to receive services, regardless of priority category. Therefore, at the end of FFY2018, many of those individuals remained in the system. As of August 1, 2017, only those eligible individuals meeting criteria for Priority Category 1 receive services under an IPE, while those eligible individuals in Priority Categories 2 and 3 are deferred for services. Therefore, the percent of VR eligible individuals receiving services who are in Priority Category 1 continues to increase as the order of selection remains in effect. The overall number of individuals served under an IPE continues to decrease due to individuals in two priority categories being deferred for services.

Another factor that has resulted in a shift in the population served by VR is the implementation of Pre-ETS during the period of review. As described above, Pre-ETS activities are provided to students with disabilities, ages 14-22 and VR must earmark 15% of federal VR dollars for this purpose. While Pre-ETS has only been in place a short time, the percentage of individuals who are students who receive VR services has already begun to increase, as outlined in the data tables below.

Due to a variety of factors, including both the implementation of an order of selection and Pre-ETS, the population served in VR has shifted significantly from 2016 to 2018, as outlined in the tables below. When considering both VR eligible participants and potentially eligible Pre-ETS students, VR provided services to an increased number of individuals with disabilities in 2018 compared to 2016; however, when considering only VR eligible individuals receiving services under a VR IPE, fewer individuals were served in 2018 compared to 2016.

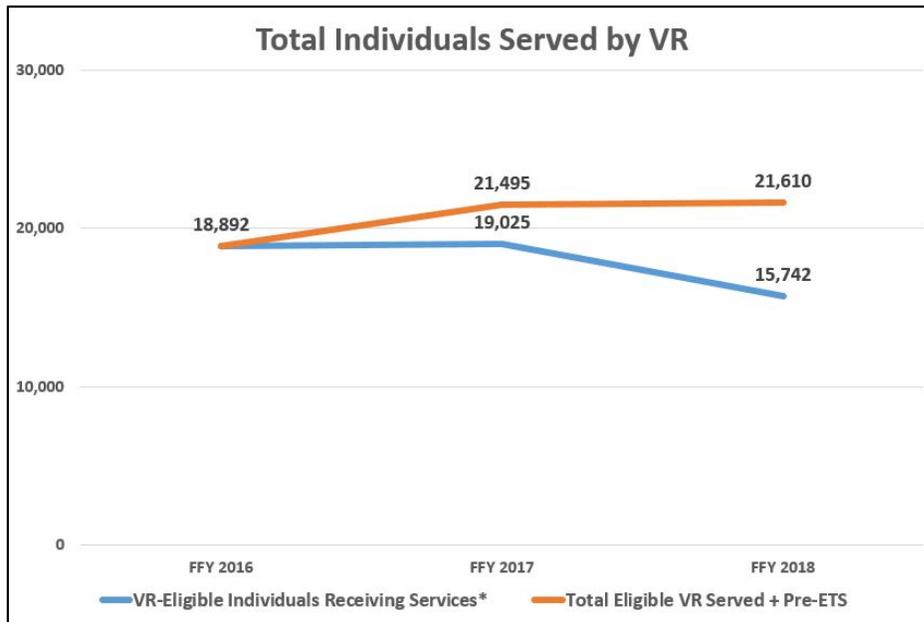
Table 6 – Total Individuals Served

Fiscal Year	*VR eligible individuals receiving services	**VR eligible individuals deferred under an order of selection	Pre-ETS potentially eligible students (no IPE)	Total VR eligible + Pre-ETS	Total eligible VR served + Pre-ETS
FFY2016	18,892	0	0	18,892	18,892
FFY2017	19,025	441	2,470	21,936	21,495
FFY2018	15,742	1,458	5,868	23,068	21,610

** Includes individuals in all service priority categories receiving services under IPE upon implementation of order of selection who continued to be served after implementation.*

***VR implemented an order of selection during the last 2 months of FFY2017, on August 1, 2017.*

Chart 1 – Total Individuals Served



While Indiana BRS saw a decrease in the number of individuals receiving services under a VR IPE in FFY2018 compared to the two prior years, the increase in potentially eligible students served through Pre-ETS more than fills that gap as outlined in Table 5. There were 3,283 fewer individuals receiving services under a VR IPE in FFY2018 compared to FFY2016; however, potentially eligible Pre-ETS students served increased by 3,398 from FFY2017 to FFY2018. This may indicate that individuals are receiving Pre-ETS prior to entering VR and either applying to VR later or determining that application to VR is unnecessary if their transition needs are being met through Pre-ETS.

Another factor that contributed to a decreased number of individuals served under a VR IPE is order of selection, with 1,458 eligible VR individuals deferred for services in FFY2018. Despite the implementation of order of selection and deferment of 1,458 VR eligible individuals in FFY2018, VR served more individuals in FFY2018 than in years prior when considering both eligible individuals served under a VR IPE and potentially eligible students receiving Pre-ETS.

Table 7 – Eligible VR Individuals Deferred under Order of Selection

Fiscal year	Percentage of eligible individuals deferred under order of selection
FFY2016	0%
FFY2017	5%
FFY2018	23%

As mentioned previously, VR implemented an order of selection August 1, 2017, with two of three service priority categories closed. FFY2018 was the first full fiscal year for Indiana VR to operate under an order of selection. Only 23% of eligible individuals were assigned to priority category two or three and were deferred for VR services in FFY2018, which means that the majority of eligible individuals were prioritized to receive VR services. Although most eligible individuals do meet criteria for Priority Category 1, and less than one-fourth of eligible individuals do not meet this criteria and are therefore deferred for VR services, the term “most significant disability” can be misleading. BRS has provided education and outreach, including sharing “myth-busters” to help better inform individuals with disabilities and their families, VR service providers, schools, other state agencies, and other stakeholders, including sharing data regarding the percentage of individuals who meet Priority Category 1 and the number of eligible individuals deferred.

Table 8 – Eligible VR Individuals Served by Disability Priority Category

Priority Category	FFY2016		FFY2017		FFY2018	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Priority Category 1: Most Significant Disability	8,052	42.6%	8,528	44.8%	9,695	61.6%
Priority Category 2: Significant Disability	9,185	48.6%	8,523	44.8%	5,233	33.2%
Priority Category 3: All Other VR Eligible Individuals	1,655	8.8%	1,974	10.4%	814	5.2%

Eligible individuals in priority category one, those with the most significant disabilities, were prioritized for services upon implementation of the order of selection in August 2017. Table 7 outlines the percentage of all eligible VR individuals served in each priority category during FFY2016-FFY2018. The percentage of individuals served in priority category one has increased significantly, representing 61.6% of total individuals served in FFY2018 compared to 42.6% in FFY2016. It is important to note that the data in Table 7 reflects both newly eligible individuals in each year, as well as individuals determined eligible in prior years who continued to receive services under an IPE in subsequent years.

Table 9 – Total Individuals Served: Primary Disability

Primary Disability	FFY2016		FFY2017		FFY2018	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Developmental disability	5,872	31.1%	6,000	31.5%	5,447	34.6%
Mental Illness	4,873	25.8%	4,870	25.6%	4,460	28.3%
Other	177	0.9%	221	1.2%	218	1.4%
Physical disability	3,906	20.7%	3,822	20.1%	3,167	20.1%
Sensory disability - hearing	2,629	13.9%	2,749	14.4%	1,434	9.1%
Sensory disability - vision	1,435	7.6%	1,363	7.2%	1,016	6.5%

Individuals with a primary impairment of developmental disability and mental illness represent the largest percentage of VR eligible individuals served, and both populations represent a larger percentage of total individuals served in FFY2018 compared to prior years. The percentage of individuals served with a sensory disability–hearing decreased to 9.1% in FFY2018 compared to 14.4% in FFY2017.

Table 10 – Total Individuals Served: Gender

Gender	FFY2016		FFY2017		FFY2018	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Female	8,530	45.2%	8,389	44.1%	6,810	43.3%
Male	10,359	54.8%	10,627	55.9%	8,923	56.7%
Does not wish to identify	3	0.0%	9	0.0%	9	0.1%

During FFY2016-FFY2018, the percentage of males receiving VR services is greater than the percentage of females receiving services. This trend has not shifted significantly during the three-year period evaluated.

Table 11 – *Total Individuals Served: Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	FFY2016		FFY2017		FFY2018	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
American Indian or Alaska Native	295	1.6%	286	1.5%	230	1.5%
Asian	177	0.9%	185	1.0%	179	1.1%
Black or African American	2,774	14.7%	2,736	14.4%	2,364	15.0%
Hispanic or Latino	553	2.9%	615	3.2%	538	3.4%
Middle Eastern	2	0.0%	3	0.0%	11	0.1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	51	0.3%	53	0.3%	48	0.3%
White	16,046	84.9%	16,232	85.3%	13,338	84.7%

**Numbers are duplicated, as individuals may be counted in more than one category, therefore the total for all percentages may equal more than 100%.*

The majority of individuals served in VR (79.8%) are white, with the second largest population at 14.1% being individuals who are black or African American. There were slight increases. For comparison, the below data compares total individuals served by race/ethnicity in VR compared to the Indiana population of individuals with disabilities by race/ethnicity.

Table 12 - Indiana Disability Population by Race and VR Participants Served by Race

Indiana	Number of people with a disability (all ages)	Percentage of population by race with disability	Served by VR FFY 2018 (ages over 14)	Percentage of VR participants served by race
Total for Indiana	915,092 (12.7% of total population)		21,610 (duplicated count)	
Race				
White	786,393	85.4%	13,338	84.7%
African American	87,124	9.7%	2,364	15%
American Indian/Alaska Native	3,233	0.4%	230	1.5%
Other race(s)	10,145	8.2%	238	1.5%
Ethnicity				
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	38,386	7%	538	3.4%

https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_17_1YR_S1810&prodType=table; <https://www.census.gov> and IRIS (Indiana Rehabilitation Information System)

Proportionally, VR serves a higher percentage of individuals who are African American and individuals who are American Indian/Alaska Native compared to the total Indiana disability population; conversely, a lower percentage of individuals who are white, individuals of “other races,” and individuals who are Hispanic or Latino are reported. The overall ratio of whites to minorities served in VR appears to be comparable to the ratio of the whites to minorities population in Indiana.

Table 13 – Total Individuals Served: Age

Age Range	FFY2016		FFY2017		FFY2018	
14-24 yrs	6,577	34.8%	6,854	36.0%	6,246	39.7%
25-35 yrs	3,299	17.5%	3,209	16.9%	2,849	18.1%
36-46 yrs	2,895	15.3%	2,792	14.7%	2,305	14.6%
47-57 yrs	3,570	18.9%	3,453	18.1%	2,636	16.7%
58-68 yrs	1,977	10.5%	2,097	11.0%	1,410	9.0%
69+ yrs	574	3.0%	620	3.3%	296	1.9%

The percentage of eligible individuals served in VR who were youth (age 14-24) increased from FFY2016-FFY2018, with youth representing 34.8% of the VR participants in FFY2016 and 39.7% in FFY2019. A slight increase in individuals age 25-35 was reported. The data in Table 11 reflects a slight decrease for all other age groups.

Table 14 – VR Eligible and Potentially Eligible Students Served Through Pre-ETS

Fiscal Year	VR eligible and received Pre-ETS	Potentially eligible Pre-ETS only (no VR IPE)	Total students received Pre-ETS
FFY2017	327	2,470	2,797
FFY2018	865	5,868	6,733

The number of students who received Pre-ETS increased substantially from FFY2017 to FFY2018, with 2,797 students with disabilities receiving Pre-ETS in FFY2017 and 6,733 receiving Pre-ETS in FFY2018. The majority of students who received Pre-ETS in both years were those potentially eligible students who were not yet receiving VR services under an IPE.

Table 15 – Pre-ETS Activities

Fiscal Year	Job exploration counseling	Work-based learning	Workplace readiness training	Instruction in self-advocacy	Counseling on postsecondary opportunities
FFY2017	7,746	4,139	13,769	4,969	2,005
FFY2018	23,306	13,609	34,675	10,904	6,570

Five required Pre-ETS activities are identified in Table 13. A significant increase in Pre-ETS activities provided in FFY2018 compared to FFY2017 was anticipated due to the expansion of Pre-ETS into all 92 Indiana counties in FFY2018 and to the increase in the number of students served. Workplace readiness training and job exploration counseling were the two Pre-ETS activities provided most frequently.

Table 16 – Eligible VR Individuals Who Exited by Type of Exit

Fiscal Year	Closed after eligibility and before services implemented		Closed after services with employment		Closed after services without employment		Total eligible individuals who exited
FFY2016	3,278	32.5%	3,754	37.2%	3,066	30.4%	10,098
FFY2017	3,019	29.0%	3,730	35.9%	3,649	35.1%	10,398
FFY2018	1,487	20.7%	2,863	39.9%	2,829	39.4%	7,179

Cases closed after services with employment, often referred to as a “successful rehabilitation,” increased; however, a similar increase occurred in cases closed without employment. A positive trend is that the number of eligible individuals with cases closed prior to receiving services dropped significantly, which may indicate a reduced “drop-out” rate of eligible individuals prior to initiating services. This may be a positive result of increased engagement and improved response time of VR Counselors over the last year, due to progress made toward achieving more manageable caseload sizes.

Table 17 – Ratio of Eligible Individuals Who Exit Prior to Receiving Services

Fiscal Year	Total eligible	Closures prior to services	Percentage of eligible individuals who exit prior to receiving services
FFY2016	10,282	3,278	31.9%
FFY2017	9,135	3,019	33.0%
FFY2018	6,432	1,487	23.1%

Table 15 offers another view of the potential “drop out” rate of individuals, specifically reviewing the number of newly eligible individuals in each FFY in comparison to the number of eligible individuals who exit VR prior to receiving any services (prior to IPE or implementation of the IPE). The percentage of eligible individuals who exited the VR program prior to receiving services in FFY2018 decreased significantly, compared to the two prior years with 23.1% exiting prior to receiving VR services in FFY2018, compared to 31.9% and 33% in FFY2016 and FFY2017 respectively. This may serve as an additional positive implication regarding improvements in the number of individuals who follow through, specifically those who continue with VR services after eligibility as outlined in Table 16.

Table 18 – Successful Closures by Primary Disability

Primary Disability	FFY2016		FFY2017		FFY2018	
Developmental disability	952	25.4%	919	24.6%	829	29.0%
Mental Illness	717	19.1%	632	16.9%	569	19.9%
Other disability	28	0.7%	31	0.8%	27	0.9%
Physical disability	579	15.4%	538	14.4%	468	16.3%
Sensory disability - hearing	1,249	33.3%	1,273	34.1%	831	29.0%
Sensory disability - vision	229	6.1%	337	9.0%	139	4.9%
Total	3,754		3,730		2,863	

Indiana VR anticipated a trend toward decreased successful case closures after the implementation of the order of selection in August 2017, largely due to serving a reduced number of eligible individuals compared to years prior. For FFY2018, the first full year operating under an order of selection, 2,863 eligible individuals exited the VR program with employment, compared to 3,754 in FFY2016 and 3,730 in FFY2017. Table 16 also reflects the percentage of successful case closures by primary impairment. An increased percentage of successfully closed cases were those with a primary impairment of developmental disability, mental illness, or physical disability, while individuals with sensory disabilities represented a decreased percentage.

Table 19 – Individuals Served by Disability Compared to Successful Closures by Disability

Disability	2016			2017			2018		
	Served	Success	Gap	Served	Success	Gap	Served	Success	Gap
Developmental disability	31.1%	25.4%	-5.7%	31.5%	24.6%	-6.9%	34.6%	29.0%	-5.6%
Mental illness	25.8%	19.1%	-6.9%	25.6%	16.9%	-8.7%	28.3%	19.9%	-8.4%
Other disability	0.9%	0.7%	-0.2%	1.2%	0.8%	-0.4%	1.4%	0.9%	-0.5%
Physical disability	20.7%	15.4%	-5.3%	20.1%	14.4%	-5.7%	20.1%	16.3%	-3.8%
Sensory disability hearing	13.9%	33.3%	19.4%	14.4%	34.1%	19.7%	9.1%	29.0%	19.9%
Sensory disability vision	7.6%	6.1%	-1.5%	7.2%	9.0%	1.8%	6.5%	4.9%	-1.6%

In comparing the percentage of individuals served by primary disability to the percentage of successful rehabilitations (exited VR with employment) by primary disability, individuals with mental illness have the largest “gap,” with 28.3% of the population served in 2018 having a primary impairment of mental illness while only 19.9% of individuals with a successful rehabilitation were individuals with a primary impairment of mental illness, reflecting a -8.4% gap. Individuals with a primary impairment of developmental disability represent the second largest gap, with a -5.6% gap in 2018. This may indicate a need to identify strategies to improve services to these two populations, such as increased utilization of supported employment, increased training, or other strategies.

Table 20 – VR Services Expenditures by Category

Expenditure Category	FFY2016	FFY2017	FFY2018
Assessment	\$3,386,554	\$3,443,708	\$3,619,813
Restoration and Prosthetic or Orthotic Appliances	\$1,147,852	\$1,797,538	\$1,120,809
Training and School	\$8,864,109	\$8,696,165	\$7,175,757
Employment Services	\$13,863,286	\$15,680,994	\$16,353,666
Reader, Interpreter and Personal Assistance Services	\$1,432,902	\$1,157,690	\$1,209,009
Living Expenses	\$3,102,430	\$3,547,056	\$2,906,592
Rehabilitation Technology	\$8,783,790	\$11,053,366	\$7,480,248
Other	\$1,743,915	\$1,447,535	\$1,314,832
Total	\$42,324,837	\$46,824,052	\$41,180,725
Difference from prior year		\$4,499,215	(\$5,643,327)
		10.6%	-12.1%

In reviewing service expenditures to VR applicants, VR eligible individuals, and VR individuals receiving services under an IPE, total service expenditures increased from FFY2016 to FFY2017 by 10.6% and then decreased from FFY2017 to FFY2018 by 12.1%. A decrease was anticipated with the implementation of an order of selection just two months prior to the start of FFY2018, as fewer individuals received services under an IPE in FFY2018. The service categories with the most notable reductions in spending are Restoration and Prosthetic or Orthotic Appliances, Rehabilitation Technology, Living Expenses, Training and School, and Other. Reader, Interpreter and Personal Assistance Services increased in spending from FFY2017 to FFY2018 but decreased from FFY2016. There were two service categories with increased expenditures from FFY2016 to FFY2017 as well as from FFY2017 to FFY2018: Assessment and Employment Services.

Table 21 – Average Annual Cost per Eligible VR Individual Receiving Services Under an IPE

Fiscal year	Total served	Total case service spending	Average cost	Difference in average cost from prior year	
FFY2016	18,892	\$42,324,837	\$2,240.36		
FFY2017	19,025	\$46,824,052	\$2,461.19	\$220.83	9.9%
FFY2018	15,742	\$41,180,725	\$2,615.98	\$154.79	6.3%

The average annual cost per VR eligible individual served under an IPE increased by 9.9% from FFY2016 to FFY2017 and again by 6.3% from FFY2017 to FFY2018. Therefore, while fewer

individuals received services under an IPE in FFY2018 than in the two years prior, the average annual cost per participant was higher.

Establishment Project Outcomes

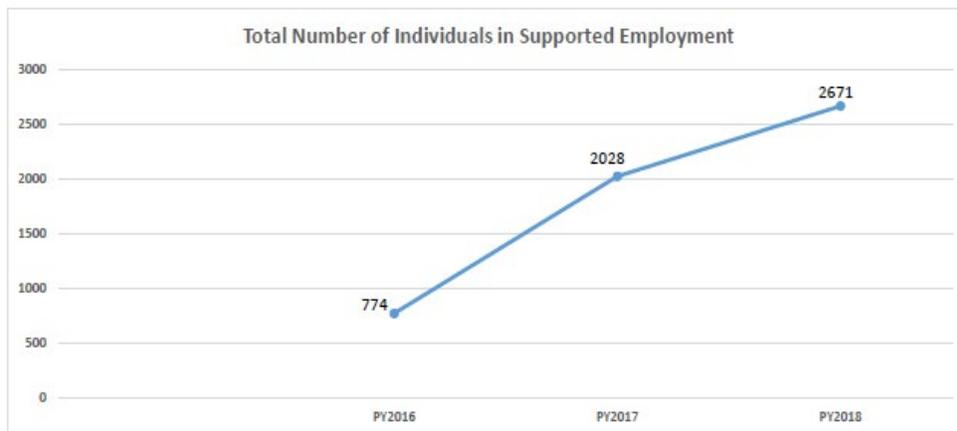
VR Employment Service Providers who received Establishment Project funding upon contract execution of April 1, 2017 were required to provide information regarding training, staffing, and progress toward achieving metrics each quarter. The data below provides an overview of some key outcomes from the first two years of the Establishment Projects, in Program Year 2017 (PY17) and Program Year 2018 (PY18).

Table 22 – Average Number of Days to Initiate VR Referrals

Program Year	Average Baseline	Average Annual Result
4/1/2016 – 3/31/2017 (PY16)	13	
4/1/2017 – 3/31/2018 (Year 1 – PY17)		11
4/1/2018 – 3/31/2019 (Year 2 – PY18)		9

Of the Employment Service Providers receiving establishment project funds, 40 reported data regarding average number of days to initiate new referrals. The average number of days to initiate new referrals from VR decreased by two (2) days in Year 1 of the project and by an additional two (2) days in Year 2 of the project, overall meeting the project metric of improving timeliness in initiating services with new VR referrals.

Chart 2 – Number of Individuals Receiving Supported Employment or On-the-Job Supports Short-Term



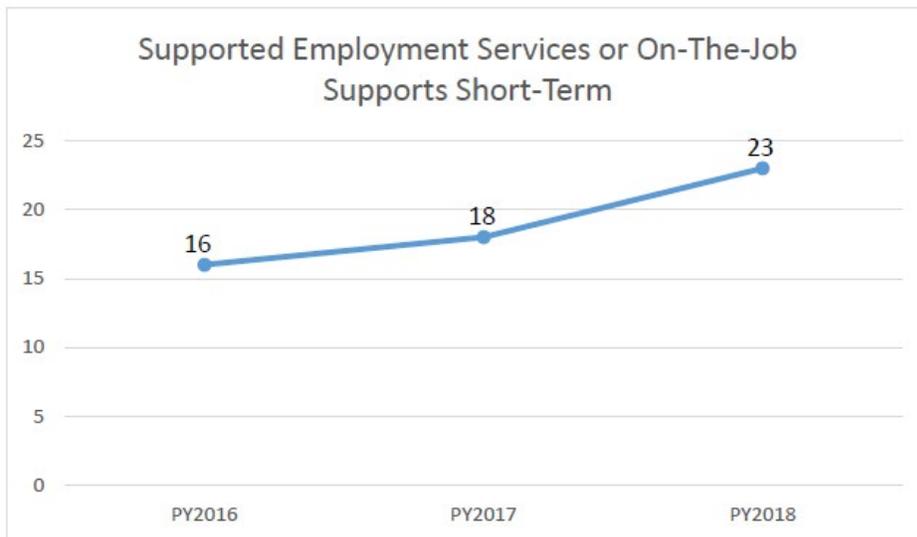
In PY16, the reported number of individuals receiving supported employment services or on-the-job support short-term was 774 for the 40 Employment Service Providers who reported

data, an average of 19 individuals per provider. This number significantly increased to 2,028 in PY17, resulting in an average of 51 individuals per provider, which is 162% increase. In PY18, the reported number of individuals receiving supported employment services was 2,671, an average of 67 per establishment project provider, which resulted in an additional 32% increase.

The overall metric for this goal was to achieve a 30% increase in the number of individuals receiving supported employment or on-the-job supports short-term by end of year 2, and therefore, the statewide average in both program years far surpassed the goal.

The results of both program years is a significant accomplishment as supported employment services were likely underutilized and not accessed as frequently as needed as the establishment projects were beginning. While other factors may have contributed to the increase in the number of participants receiving supported employment, such as simplification of the funding structure and increased training provided over the past few years, there is a clear implication that the establishment project funding has positively impacted the utilization of supported employment and on-the-job supports short-term. Through the establishment project, Employment Service Providers appear to be providing supported employment to more individuals in order to assist VR participants with achieving stabilization and successful job retention.

Chart 3 – Average Hours of Supported Employment or On-The-Job Supports Short-Term

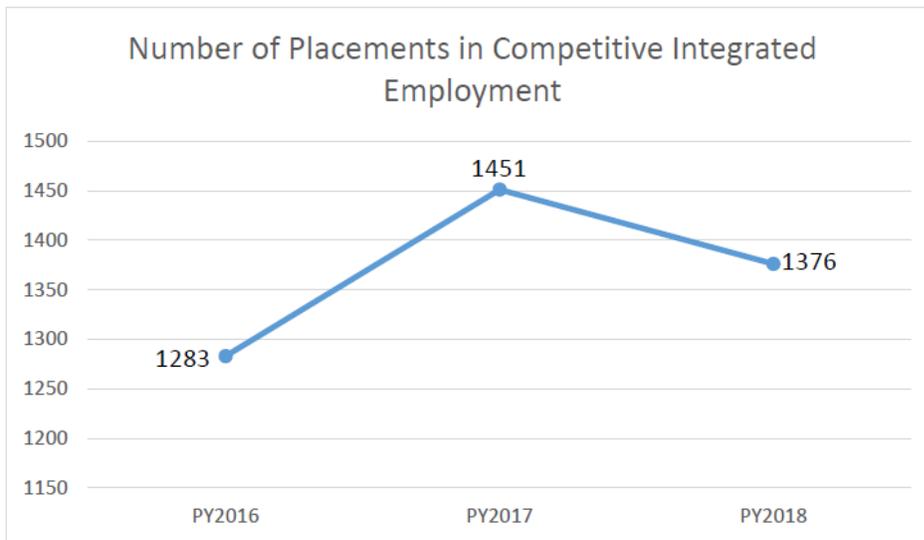


In PY16, the reported average hours spent on supported employment services or on-the-job supports short-term was 16 hours per VR participant for the 40 providers who reported data. In PY17, the average hours increased to 18 hours per provider, resulting in a 12.5% increase in average hours of supported employment or on-the-job supports short-term. In PY18, the

reported average hours spent on supported employment services or on-the-job supports short-term was 23 hours, resulting in another 27.8% increase, for a total of a 40.3% increase in average hours of supported employment or on-the-job supports short-term provided by end of year two of the establishment project.

The project metric was exceeded, as the goal was a 30% increase in the amount or duration of supported employment services or on-the-job supports short-term that VR participants received by end of year 2. While other factors may have contributed to increased utilization of supported employment, such as simplification of the funding structure and increased training provided over the past few years, there is a clear implication that the establishment project funding has positively impacted the utilization of supported employment and on-the-job supports short-term. As a result of the establishment project, Employment Service Providers appear to be devoting more time in the provision of supported employment services in order to assist VR participants with achieving stabilization and successful job retention.

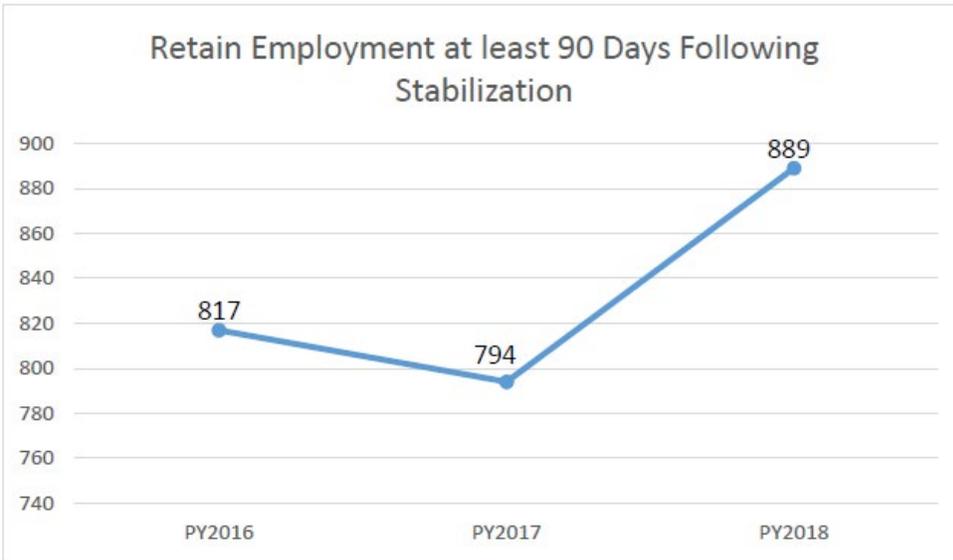
Chart 4 – Placements in Competitive Integrated Employment



In PY16, for the 40 establishment project providers reporting data, the reported number of placements in competitive integrated employment was 1,283, which is an average of 32 placements per provider. The number of placements increased to 1,451 in PY17, an average of 36 placements per provider, resulting in a 13% increase.

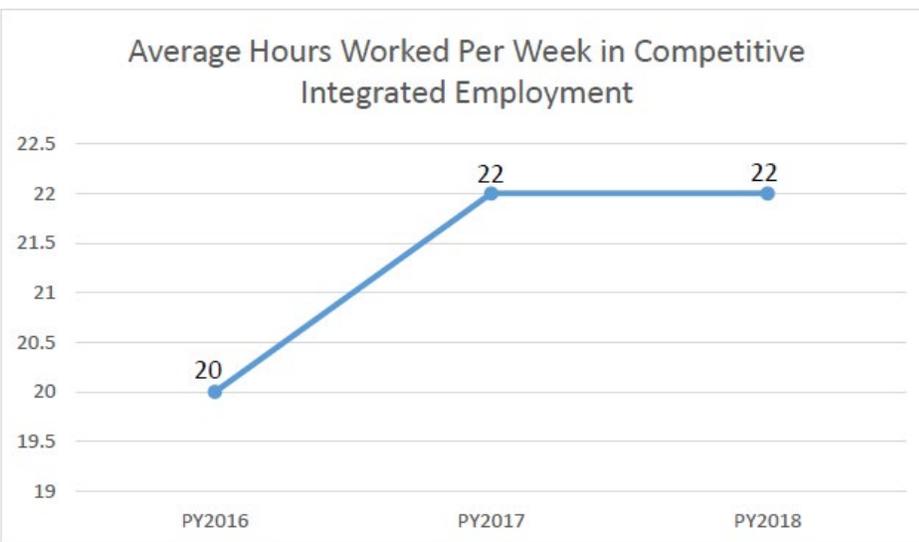
In PY18, the number of placements reported was 1,376, an average of 34 placements per provider, resulting in a decrease of 5% from PY17, but an increase in placements by 7% from the PY16 baseline. This is a positive trend considering that VR entered into an order of selection on August 1, 2017 and is primarily serving individuals with a most significant disability.

Chart 5 – Retained Employment at Least 90 Days Following Stabilization



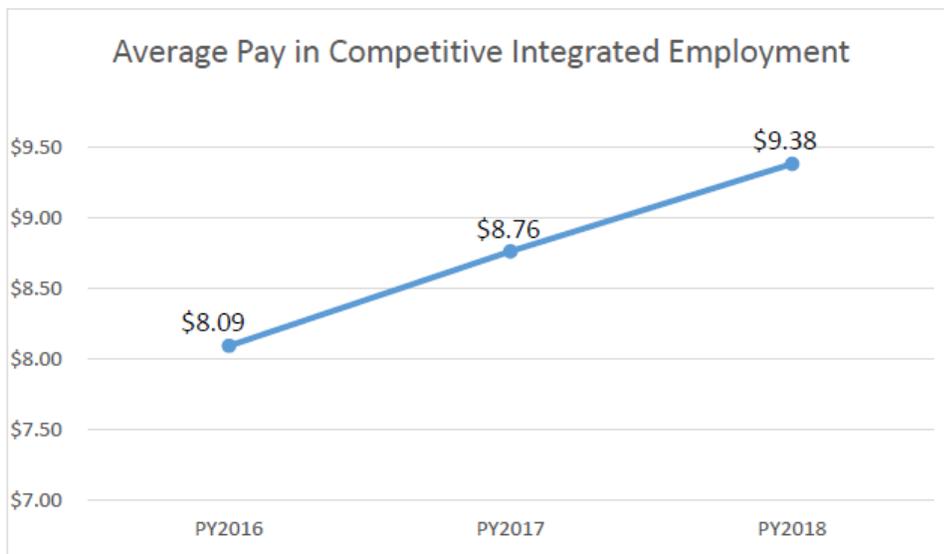
In PY16, for the 39 providers reporting data, the reported number of individuals who retained employment at least 90 days following stabilization was 817, an average of 21 VR participants retaining employment per establishment project provider. In PY17, this number slightly decreased by 3%, with a total of 794 participants retaining employment and an average of 20 per provider. In PY18, the reported total increased to 889, an average of 23, representing a 12% increase from the prior year.

Chart 6 – Average Weekly Hours Worked in Competitive Integrated Employment



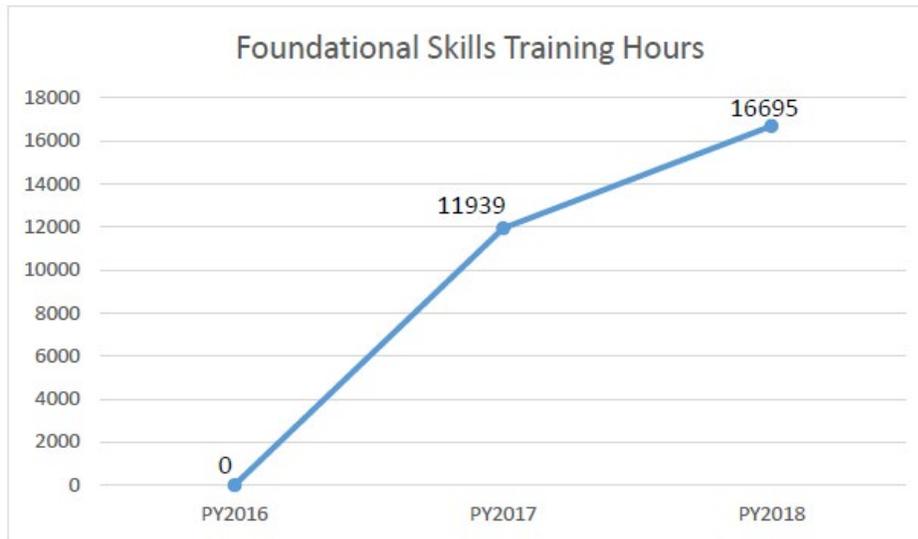
In PY16, for the 39 establishment project providers reporting data, the average reported number of weekly hours worked in competitive integrated employment was 20. In PY18, the average number reported increased to 22, representing an 11.6% increase. In PY18, the overall average weekly work hours remained steady at 22, again representing an 11.6% increase from the PY16 baseline year. This is a positive trend and it is noteworthy that this improvement in weekly work hours has remained steady when considering implementation of the order of selection in August, 2017 with the primary population served being individuals with a most significant disability.

Chart 7 – Average Pay for Individuals in Competitive Integrated Employment



In PY16, for the 39 establishment project providers reporting data, the reported average hourly pay for VR participants was \$8.09 per hour. In PY17, the average increased to \$8.76, representing an overall increase of 8.3%. In PY18, the reported average hourly wage increased further to \$9.38, representing an additional 7.7% increase in average hourly wages, or a 16% increase in average hourly wage from the PY16 baseline year. This again shows a very positive trend and is especially notable with the August, 2017 implementation of the order of selection, under which VR is primarily serving individuals with a most significant disability.

Chart 8 – Foundational Skills Training Hours



In PY16 and prior years, there was not a requirement for VR Employment Service Providers to provide nor track the number of foundational skills training hours achieved by employment services staff, and therefore the baseline has been set at 0 for this chart. For those providers involved in the establishment project, foundational skills training is a requirement of all new and seasoned employment services staff and consists of hands-on, applied training provided by seasoned or supervisory staff, or a qualified trainer. Hands-on, applied training could consist of a new employment specialist shadowing a seasoned employment specialist at a VR participant’s worksite to learn a supported employment technique, receiving coaching on how to complete a meaningful Discovery Profile, or similar mentoring and training activities.

Through the establishment project, providers were required to develop or enhance internal training and mentoring provided to employment services staff in order to provide more timely and quality employment services to individuals with disabilities, specifically individuals with the most significant disabilities. Through the project, the baseline for foundational skills training hours increased to 11,939 in PY17 for the 40 establishment project providers reporting data. In PY18, the reported number of foundational skills training significantly increased again to 16,696, representing a 40% increase from PY17.

Needs Assessment Survey

BRS conducted a needs assessment survey in January 2019, which was distributed to a wide range of stakeholders. The detailed survey was distributed through and to the following groups: VR staff, the Commission on Rehabilitation Services, community rehabilitation programs, the

Arc of Indiana, IN*SOURCE, Autism Society of Indiana, Down Syndrome Indiana, National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI), Indiana Association of Persons Supporting Employment First (INAPSE), Indiana Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (INARF), Bureau of Developmental Disability Services, Department of Workforce Development, WorkOne, employers, Indiana Council for Administrators in Special Education (ICASE), Cadres of Transition Leaders, DisabilityIN (formerly Business Leadership Network), Indiana Commission on Civil Rights, Indiana Disability Rights, the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, and 50 additional entities representing stakeholders with an interest in the work of VR. The survey link was distributed through various newsletters and on BRS, IIDC and other social media sites. Efforts were made to reach as many respondents as possible including providing the opportunity for individuals to make a toll-free call to the Bureau of Rehabilitation for answers to any questions or for assistance with completing the survey.

The survey, which was developed on Qualtrics, was designed so that respondents could complete the full range of survey questions or complete only the questions of interest. The survey allowed respondents to skip questions they did not wish to answer. Two reminders were sent throughout the survey period to encourage an increased response rate. The majority of responses were through online completion of the survey. The number of responses received exceeded the number of responses from the prior needs assessment survey, with 1,375 individuals responding in the winter of 2019 compared to 460 responses in the fall of 2015.

Commission on Rehabilitation Services Input

As the process of obtaining information for the needs assessment started, a presentation was made to the Commission on Rehabilitation Services. Commission members provided guidance into the development of the questions and distribution strategy for the survey. Additionally, a summary of findings from the survey was shared with the Commission in March and May 2019 with additional feedback obtained regarding VR priorities.

Needs Assessment Survey Results

Respondents: There were 1,375 individuals that responded to the survey. (See Table 23, p.40.) The respondents self-identified the following roles. (Note: Respondents were allowed to select more than one role.)

Table 23 – Survey Respondents

Respondent Roles	Percentage	Number of Respondents
Person with a disability	9.2%	152
Student with a disability (age 14-22 and in school)	3.5%	58
Youth with a disability (age 14-22 may be in school or not)	1.7%	29
Family member of an individual with a disability	19.2%	316
Employer/Human Resources staff	1.5%	26
Advocacy organization	4.5%	75
Bureau of Developmental Disability Services staff	0.7%	12
Case manager	6.3%	104
Community Rehabilitation Provider staff	14.7%	242
Mental Health Center staff	1.8%	31
School staff	21.5%	355
WorkOne staff	0.3%	6
Vocational Rehabilitation staff	8.5%	141
Other	5.9%	98
Total	100%	1,645

School personnel represented the group with the largest response rate at 21.5%, which was also true of the 2015 survey with 30% of responses coming from school personnel. Family members of an individual with a disability had the second highest response rate at 19.2% which was significantly increased representation from this group compared to 8% of respondents to the 2015 survey. Low response was received from employers, the Bureau of Development Disability Services, and WorkOne staff. Also notable is an increase in the number of individuals with disabilities responding to the survey. This population represented 9.2% of respondents compared to 4% from the prior survey.

Survey questions can be viewed in Attachments.

Summary of Survey Questions and Responses

What issues/barriers do people with disabilities face in finding jobs?

Respondents identified employers' willingness to hire individuals needing significant support (17.4%) as the number one issue/barrier for individuals in securing employment. This was closely followed by transportation (17.3%) and concerns of individuals or families about loss of benefits (15.5%). The remainder of the answers each received between 4 to 8%.

Are you aware of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) (services for students with disabilities to help prepare for employment)?

Two thirds of the respondents (76%) indicated awareness of Pre-ETS.

Do you know how to get Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)?

Respondents were required to answer yes to the being aware of Pre-ETS to be able to answer this question. A total of 77% of those aware of Pre-ETS indicated that they knew how to obtain these services.

What are the biggest barriers students with disabilities have when making the transition from school to work?

Transportation (12.8%) again was noted as a major barrier for transitioning students. This was closely followed by gaps in services (12.6%). Concerns of the individual or family about the loss of benefits (10.5%), the lack of information or confusion about available services (10.5%) and employers' willingness to hire individuals needing significant supports (10.4%) were the other significant barriers identified. The remainder of the responses ranked between 3% and 6%.

What are the needs of students with disabilities as they transition to employment and/or postsecondary education?

Respondents identified that students are in need of skills in order to get ready for work (27%), followed by a need for work experiences and/or internships (26%). They also indicated a need for self-advocacy skills (20%) and job exploration counseling (15%). The other two responses were below 7%.

What would improve VR services for students and youth with disabilities?

Increased knowledge of resources and opportunities to support employment (17%) was identified as the primary way to improve VR services for students and youth. This was followed by additional opportunities for work experiences (16.8%) and better coordination between

schools and VR (15.9%). Respondents noted that having Pre-ETS available in all schools (12.7%) and earlier access to these services (9.5%) is important. The other choices were below 7%.

How can employers be more involved with helping students and youth with disabilities transition to work and/or postsecondary education?

Respondents indicated that having employers providing more work experiences and/or internships (24%) would be the most helpful in assisting students and youth as they transition. They also responded that increased knowledge of support services in the hiring process (22%) and employers providing mentorship (17%) are other important strategies. Also helpful are job fairs where employers would offer mock interviews and application practice (12%) and for employers to have additional knowledge of Employment Service Providers (11%). Other responses ranged from 4% to 6%.

The survey presented a few questions about the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities and who might need supported employment to keep a job.

Do you know that VR can provide supported employment services for up to 24 months?

More than two-thirds, 68% of respondents, indicated that they are aware that supported employment services can be provided by VR for up to 24 months.

Do you know how to get supported employment services?

Of those responding that they are aware of supported employment services, 87% indicated they were aware of how to obtain those services.

What barriers exist in serving individuals through supported employment?

The most common response was the willingness of employers to hire individuals needing significant support (22%). Other high-ranking responses were transportation (14%), not enough employment specialists or job coaches (12%), expectations of employers about individuals with disabilities working (11%), and employment personnel being skilled to be able to address the employment needs (10%). Other responses were between 5% and 8%.

Those individuals who identified as employers and/or human resource personnel were asked about hiring individuals with disabilities.

There were 24 individuals who self-identified as an employer or human resource staff. The survey was distributed through SHRM and DisabilityIN, which is the name of Indiana's Business Leadership Network.

Have you hired individuals with disabilities in the past?

Nineteen respondents (79%) stated that they had hired individuals with disabilities in the past.

Have you been satisfied with the services you have received in the process of hiring individuals with disabilities?

As a follow up, 84% stated that they had been satisfied with the process of hiring. One stated that they had no services, and one reported that improved communication to learn of supports and accommodations would have been helpful.

Are you aware of services available to employers such as disability awareness training and resources for 503 compliance provided by Vocational Rehabilitation and their partners to support employers in hiring individuals with disabilities?

The same employers were split 52% as being aware of services available from VR while 48% indicated they were not aware.

What would help employers increase hiring of individuals with disabilities?

The largest number of employers reported that assistance with making necessary accommodations would be helpful (19.7%). Provision of tax incentives information (18%), assisting employers in providing on-the-job training/internship sites (16%), and disability awareness training (15%) were also ranked at the top. The remaining responses were below 11%. In response to the "Other" question, employers noted: "Provision of consistent supports to ensure the benefits of hiring, and solving transportation issues are all needed."

The survey addressed a few questions about partnerships with the statewide workforce development system (i.e. WorkOne Centers).

What would help improve the partnership between VR and workforce programs (example: WorkOne) to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities?

Responses to this question were very evenly distributed among all the respondents. Rated highest was the need for cross training of staff on services provided by the two programs (21%). Coordination of funding and staffing (16%), disability awareness training (14%), making the referral process easier (14%), increased VR presence in WorkOne Centers (14%) and better access to workforce programs (12%) were also frequently selected.

What are positive things that are happening between WorkOne and VR?

There were 275 responses to this question with 120 responding that they were either not aware of the relationship or that they could not identify a positive happening. Improved

communication, collaboration, and improved working relationships were noted by many respondents. Responses also referred to job fairs, Pre-ETS, and JAG as positive experiences.

The survey presented a few questions concerning needs and barriers for unserved or underserved groups.

What racial/ethnic groups are unserved or underserved?

Those responding indicated that the racial/ethnic groups being unserved or underserved are Hispanic or Latino (23.6%) and African American/Black (22.4%). The remaining options were below 11%.

What are the service needs for racial/ethnic groups?

The responses to this question were also very evenly distributed between the offered choices of addressing language barriers (33.5%), outreach on the availability of services (33.3%), and cultural awareness training for professionals (29.9%).

Who is not being served well enough?

Five groups received responses over 10%: individuals with the most significant disabilities (15.7%), individuals residing in rural areas (13.3%), individuals with mental illness (12.9%), individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (11.5%), and individuals with autism (10.5%). In the “Other” category, nine responses indicated that individuals who are not identified as having the most significant disabilities are being underserved. Several respondents noted that individuals with criminal/drug history and individuals who are non-verbal are being underserved.

What is needed to improve services for underserved populations in the previous question?

Three responses were identified as the most needed for improved services to underserved populations. Improved transportation, at 25.5%, ranked the highest, with increased outreach (23.1%) ranking second. Increased training for employment specialists and job coaches (19.1%) was the third response with all others falling below 10%. In responding to the “Other” option, elimination of order of selection (13 responses) and increased staff (15 responses) were identified.

The following questions were presented to explore the needs of Employment Service Providers.

What are gaps in services provided by Employment Service Providers?

Once again, the responses were evenly distributed among the offered options: Not enough employment services staff with needed skills to support varied and complex needs (21.8%), Not enough employment services staff (20.7%), Length of time it takes to get a job (19.1%), Coordinating services between VR and Employment Service Providers (16.2%), and Not enough providers to serve specific populations, (e.g., mental health, low vision, etc.) (16.1%). Only 1.5% responded that there are no service gaps. The 110 responses to the “Other” option again listed among other responses a need for more and better trained staff for both VR and Employment Service Providers.

Do Employment Service Providers need to expand services to meet the needs of job seekers for different populations?

Nearly two-third of respondents (63.9%) indicated the need to expand the services of Employment Service Providers, 30.8% were unsure of the need, and 5.1% said there was no need for expansion.

What services do Employment Service Providers need to expand to meet the needs of job seekers for different populations?

Only three responses ranked over 10% for this question. Respondents indicated that Employment Service Providers need to expand to meet the service needs of individuals with diverse support needs like job seekers with multiple disabilities (19.5%), transition-aged youth (13.7%), and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (11.3%). The remaining responses were all under 10%. In the “Other” option, eight responses indicated a need for service expansion for individuals with autism.

Do Employment Service Provider staff need more training?

While the majority of responses were in the affirmative that Employment Service Providers need more training (60.9%), 33.3% were unsure, and 5.7% said that additional training was not needed.

Employment Service Provider staff need more training in what areas?

Five areas ranked at or above 13%. Customizing services to meet the specific need of individuals was ranked highest at 17%, while identifying quality job matches and customizing job opportunities were both at 14%, and supported employment and working with employers were both at 13%.

Overall Themes

1. Staffing concerns for both VR and Employment Specialists were noted throughout the survey. Issues included high turnover, not enough staff, and low pay.
2. Training was also a common theme, particularly training for employment services staff. Training for VR staff was also identified as a need as well as cross training with VR and WorkOne.
3. Communication and coordination were referenced throughout the survey. Respondents identified the need for these to occur between VR and various agencies (e.g., school, WorkOne, Employment Service Providers), and between VR and participants. General overall coordination of services was noted.
4. Order of selection (OOS) was noted most often as a concern of the respondents. It was indicated that OOS was reducing the availability of needed services in the areas of transition services and obtainment of hearing aids.
5. Transportation was consistently noted as a barrier throughout the survey. Issues identified are the availability and reliability of transportation as well as transportation for individuals with mobility issues requiring use of a wheelchair. Rural areas were also specifically mentioned as having barriers with transportation.
6. Work-based learning experiences were identified as a need and an important strategy to improve services and the transition process from school to work.

Observations

1. While employers' willingness to hire individuals with disabilities was identified as one of the most significant barriers to employment, it was identified as a barrier to a lesser extent for respondents addressing barriers for students transitioning from school to work. Employers' willingness to hire individuals needing significant support was the top response at 17.4% for barriers to employment for people with disabilities, while only 10.4% identified this as a significant barrier for students transitioning from school to work. This may have positive implications that employers' perceptions of job seekers with disabilities may be improving. BRS has continued to see increased interest from businesses in hiring individuals with disabilities, which may be further evidence that this barrier has been reduced in recent years.
2. Fear of losing benefits continues to be identified as a significant barrier to employment; however, this was identified less often as a barrier for students transitioning from

school to work. A total of 15.5% identified concerns of individuals or families about loss of benefits as a barrier to employment, while only 10.5% identified this as a barrier for students transitioning from school to work.

3. While the majority of respondents indicated awareness of Pre-ETS and how to access these services, increased communication may assist in ensuring all schools, students and their families are aware of these services.
4. While the majority of respondents indicated awareness that supported employment services may be provided by VR for up to 24 months, as well as awareness of how to access these services, increased communication and training may further increase awareness and use of these services.
5. The responses from employers may not be representative of employers across the state due to the small response rate. Additionally, employers with experience hiring individuals with disabilities may have been more likely to complete the survey than those who have not hired, skewing results. Likely, increased communication and outreach to businesses remains a significant need in Indiana.

CONCLUSIONS

BRS has received considerable input from the statewide needs assessment survey and will identify VR priorities for 2020-2022 through review of the thoughtful comments and suggestions obtained through the survey, review of data and performance of the VR program, feedback from the Commission on Rehabilitation services, and additional feedback obtained from VR staff and stakeholders.

The vision for the VR program has also been reviewed to ensure alignment with identified needs and priorities. The vision is closely aligned and captures many of the common themes identified throughout the needs assessment.

Vision for VR

The image below highlights the current Vision for VR, which is to achieve a high quality program that is equitable, effective, and sustainable (Ind. Comm. on Rehab Svcs., 2018, p. 5). The following key factors are essential in achieving this vision:

- **Adequate staff capacity** – Finding efficiencies through strategies such as system modernization and shifting office coverage areas, ensuring VR Counselor to Case Coordinator ratio is no more than 1:3, ensuring caseload sizes are manageable while allowing for quality and compliance with federal timeliness standards, improving

retention, identifying new strategies for recruiting qualified candidates, increasing use of interns, and identifying staffing needs especially in high volume offices.

- **Adequate fiscal resources** – Continuing with streamlining initiatives as well as revisiting VR rules. Ensuring adequate fiscal resources is much broader than identifying added fiscal needs; it includes increasing opportunities for blending of resources, identifying strategies for improved efficiency, as well as educating stakeholders that VR is one of many pathways to employment. These factors are essential for sustainability of adequate fiscal resources long-term.
- **VR as just one pathway to employment for individuals with disabilities** – Increasing emphasis on inclusion of individuals into other workforce pathways, rather than a “silo” approach is necessary. There is a need for increased exploration of VR’s role in facilitating connections to other state agencies, community organizations and other resources as additional pathways to employment that may offer services that support achievement of employment. It is important that individuals with disabilities have the same access to federal, state, and local services as those without disabilities.
- **Blending of resources** – VR provides a wide range of services, some of which are unique and not readily available elsewhere (e.g., supported employment services, rehabilitation technology), while other services are more readily available through other organizations and resources (e.g., training, employment services). VR is an excellent “gap-filler” and works most effectively when targeting the unique needs of individuals with disabilities. Blending resources with other organizations is an important strategy for extending VR dollars further and ensuring that VR participants obtain services from the organization best suited to their individual needs.
- **Robust training** – Meaningful and relevant training positively impacts the quality of services and outcomes. VR continues to elevate the importance of training for both internal VR staff and for VR Employment Service Providers, including hands-on training.

Vision for Indiana VR



VR Priorities for 2020-2022

Quality of Services and Outcomes

Several strategies have been identified to improve the quality of services and outcomes for VR participants, including enhanced training, improved collaboration with a variety of state agencies and stakeholders, improved staffing capacity for both VR and Employment Service Providers, and continuation of Establishment Projects. These strategies have already been implemented; however, BRS will work with staff and stakeholders to revisit strategies and identify next steps for further implementation to continue working toward improving the quality of services and outcomes for VR participants. The needs assessment also sheds light on the need to improve the quality of services and outcomes to specific populations, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, individuals with mental illness, and individuals with developmental disabilities. Additional strategies to enhance the quality of services and outcomes will be explored, and BRS will work with staff and stakeholders to identify best practices and areas for further improvement. It is anticipated that increased focus on many of the additional priorities outlined below will also positively impact the quality of VR services and outcomes.

Staffing Capacity

BRS will continue to provide funding for Establishment Projects with numerous VR Employment Service Providers through March 2021. These projects began April 2017 and will continue for up to a four-year period. One key emphasis of these projects is improved VR Employment Service Provider staffing capacity regarding the provision of employment services, including supported employment services, to assist VR applicants or eligible individuals to achieve competitive, integrated employment outcomes, including those with the most significant disabilities. Providers are required to submit sustainability plans to BRS prior to the end of the four-year project to outline strategies for sustaining improved staffing capacity.

Additionally, BRS will obtain regular feedback from VR staff and Employment Service Provider staff to identify best practices and areas of further improvement. The VR Employment Advisory Group will continue to be a forum for this feedback, as well as quarterly meetings with INARF and quarterly meetings with Community Mental Health providers. VR participant feedback regarding employment services on VR participant satisfaction surveys will also be viewed and considered in the identification of best practices as well as areas for further improvement.

BRS also hopes to see increased efficiencies, leading to improved staffing capacity through system modernization efforts. Both a new VR case management system and a VR vendor claims payment system, implemented in 2019, are anticipated to result in improved efficiency and reduced administrative burden for both VR staff and VR vendors.

Additionally, BRS remains in close communication with state personnel to identify strategies for improved VR staff capacity, including strategies for increasing retention of VR Counselors and improving recruitment efforts to obtain qualified applicants. BRS has implemented numerous no cost and low cost strategies to improve retention of staff, such as providing spot bonuses, improving the lines of communication, shifting staff responsibilities to better align with skill sets, increased opportunities for staff recognition, and flexible work schedules. Retention has improved over the past two years; however, further improvement is desired to achieve adequate staffing capacity. Recruitment of qualified candidates for VR Counselor positions has become increasingly challenging, and BRS will identify and implement strategies to improve recruitment efforts in attracting qualified candidates. One strategy being piloted in 2019 is to expand opportunities for internships, which may lead to the accessibility of a pool of candidates who may have a reduced learning curve upon hire. BRS has also recently begun working with a state personnel recruiter and looks forward to exploring further strategies with the recruiter to broaden the pool of qualified applicants for VR Counselor positions.

Training

Training continues to be a top priority for VR, including training for both new VR staff as well as ongoing training for seasoned VR staff. Training on topics such as services to individuals with

severe mental illness, supported employment services, pre-employment transition services, and services provided through other workforce programs are identified needs. Ongoing training on the new VR case management systems and VR claims payment system will also continue to be prioritized to ensure staff can utilize these systems with efficiency and confidence.

Training to VR providers carrying out employment services is also an identified need, including topic areas such as supported employment, employer engagement, and working with individuals with high support needs. VR will continue to direct resources toward training to VR Employment Service Providers and will explore innovative strategies to ensure effectiveness of training, as well as increase emphasis on building skills of employment specialists and provision of services from a strengths-based approach. Additionally, through the Establishment Project, there will be continued focus on foundational skills training. For Establishment Project contractors, robust mentoring, counseling, one-on-one guidance, and training will continue to be required through the four-year term of the project, for newly-hired and seasoned employment specialists in order to increase VR Employment Service Providers' effectiveness in providing VR employment services, including supported employment to VR applicants or those eligible to receive VR services.

Continue Education and Outreach Regarding Order of Selection

BRS will continue to identify and implement strategies to improve fiscal and staffing capacity in order to begin the process of working toward serving all eligible individuals. Strategies that are being explored include seeking opportunities for blending resources, increasing awareness of other pathways to employment through other state and local organizations, and reviewing VR rules to add clarification regarding the provision for least cost services. Additionally, BRS will explore applying a financial participation requirement for VR services, and modernizing the system to improve efficiency.

BRS recognizes a need to further educate the community about order of selection and continue to encourage referrals to VR. As the order of selection has been implemented for just a short time (since August 1, 2017), it is likely that there are misconceptions and a lack of understanding about how VR applicants may, or may not, be impacted by the order of selection. BRS provided "myth busters" in 2018 to address some of the common myths and will continue to identify opportunities to provide further education and clarification on this topic. VR will identify targeted outreach strategies to improve education and awareness of VR services and the impact of the order of selection.

Enhance Strategies for Business Engagement

The priorities of the Business & Community Engagement team continue to be focused on the delivery of resources to businesses/employers with disability hiring initiatives. This includes:

- information on incentives available to employers for hiring individuals with disabilities (i.e., tax credits, grant funding);
- information regarding how to provide accommodations throughout recruiting, hiring and retaining of employees with disabilities;
- access to disability etiquette and awareness materials and training;
- information on how to begin work-based learning, internships and apprenticeships.

BRS has identified a need to provide clarification regarding the full menu of services the Business & Community Engagement team can provide to employers, likely through written communication and enhanced information on the VR website. This will provide a consistent message about the Business & Community Engagement team as well as the VR program. This material will be shared across the state through the DWD Business Services Team and the local workforce development boards, and will also be available on the Indiana BRS website. Each member of the Business & Community Engagement team is a member of a local workforce development board. There are plans to continue and expand the relationship and the sharing of information and resources.

As the new case management system AWARE goes live, the Business & Community engagement team will obtain guidance and suggestions from other experienced VR Business Engagement Teams to learn how to leverage the technology to assist employer partners with their recruiting efforts by identifying VR participants who are appropriate applicants. BRS is planning a disability awareness event with employers and a local university that will highlight graduates of a warehouse/logistics class.

Other strategies to increase business engagement may include sharing information on using labor market information with VR field offices, providing information to VR counselors around labor areas with greatest demand, continued visibility of VR services and initiatives shared on BRS social media platforms of Facebook and Twitter, and ongoing information sharing relevant to disability hiring and resources. Specific content will also be generated for Disability Awareness month in March and October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month each year.

Collaboration

BRS will continue to enhance collaboration with partners regarding services to youth, including Pre-ETS to students with disabilities through both the Transition Advisory Council and the Career and Technical Education workgroup, and local relationships between VR staff and local education agencies. BRS also plans to kick off a workgroup focused on improving services and outcomes to individuals with mental illness in 2019 with a variety of stakeholders, including community mental health centers, the Department of Mental Health and Addictions (DMHA), and VR staff who have expertise in serving individuals with mental illness. Additionally, BRS will

seek opportunities to improve collaboration with other state agencies, including DWD, Department of Education (DOE), the Bureau of Developmental Disability Services (BDDS), Department of Corrections (DOC), and others. Collaboration with other workforce pathways is critical to achieving the VR vision and bringing attention to multiple, inclusive pathways to employment for individuals with disabilities. Collaboration is also essential to securing successful opportunities for blended funding, another important strategy in reaching the vision.

Several initiatives have been implemented over the last two years as a result of improved collaboration, including cross-training with DWD and VR staff, the initiation of several workgroups and cohorts, and development or enhancement of written agreements including the agreement with DWD to carry out Pre-ETS through the JAG program under a blended funding approach. BRS will work to build these initial strategies to identify further collaborative efforts that enhance services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Enhance Access and Outreach Regarding Pre-ETS

Further outreach regarding Pre-ETS has been identified as a need to ensure that students, families, and schools understand how to access these important services. One identified strategy includes hiring 10 VR Youth Counselors statewide in 2019 to assist with outreach and understanding of Pre-ETS to school personnel, students and families. These staff will also work to improve relationships between local VR offices and schools, and to help better coordinate services between contracted Pre-ETS providers and local VR offices. Each VR Youth Counselor will conduct a local area needs assessment to include availability of and access to Pre-ETS as well as methods of expanding Pre-ETS to schools where these services may not yet be widely available. The BRS Youth Services executive team will continue to provide technical assistance to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Pre-ETS providers to ensure both understand the scope and reach of Pre-ETS in their local areas. Furthermore, BRS will identify emerging best practices in Pre-ETS service delivery and incorporate those practices into new contracts with entities carrying out Pre-ETS and will also explore enhanced training for those contractors.

Increase Utilization of Supported Employment Services

Through the Establishment Project, one key objective is for VR Employment Service Providers to increase the provision of supported employment services. Additionally, BRS has explored strategies for improved training on supported employment techniques and plans to begin rolling out additional training by 2020. BRS will continue to provide outreach and education to increase awareness on how to access supported employment services and will emphasize that supported employment services can be provided to VR eligible individuals with a most significant disability for up to twenty-four months after placement to ensure stabilization. BRS has also begun to analyze supported employment utilization on a regional level and will be identifying any areas where this service appears to be underutilized in order to provide the

necessary education and training to ensure individuals with the most significant disabilities have access to this important service.

BRS also provided guidance on the availability of VR-funded extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities to VR staff and Employment Service Providers in early 2019, which may be provided for up to four years. Additionally, VR and BDDS will work collaboratively to identify potential blended funding opportunities in carrying out extended services to individuals eligible for both BDDS and VR services.

Increase Work-Based Learning Experiences

Work-based learning experiences will continue to be provided through Pre-ETS. The 10 VR Youth Counselors BRS plans to hire in 2019 will have responsibilities for further expansion of the required Pre-ETS coordinating and authorizing activities. One potential focus area for these staff is to identify best practices in Pre-ETS, including best practices in the provision of work-based learning experiences.

Work-based learning experiences are also available to VR eligible individuals through work experiences. VR simplified the funding structure for work experiences in 2019, taking it from a tiered funding approach to an hourly approach, and streamlined expectations and requirements for this service. This may lead to increased utilization of work experience services by VR eligible individuals and improve VR Employment Service Providers' capacity to provide this important service.

Unserved or Underserved Populations

As stated above, individuals with mental illness and those with development disabilities are obtaining employment outcomes at a lower rate than other disability populations served in VR, when comparing the total individuals served by disability to the total employment outcomes achieved by disability. This was defined above as a "gap" and an area that requires some attention. In this regard, these populations may be viewed as underserved in terms of the effectiveness of services provided. Further exploration is needed to identify factors that contribute to a successful vs. unsuccessful outcome, and strategies must be identified to narrow this "gap." As mentioned, BRS will be forming a workgroup in 2019 to explore strategies and barriers to employment for individuals with mental illness, and this group will provide an excellent forum to begin to investigate this gap. VR will also continue to emphasize the importance of supported employment services and educate VR staff and providers that supported employment services may be provided for up to 24 months. The provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities may also positively contribute to an improvement in outcomes. It will also be important to continue focus on the quality of services and outcomes to individuals with disabilities and identify strategies for improving quality, which may also lead to improved outcomes for these populations.

As outlined previously, 4,595 individuals employed at sub-minimum wage received Career Counseling and Information and Referral (CCIR) services between July 2017 and December 2018. CCIR services focus on providing information about resources and opportunities for pursuing competitive, integrated employment. Historically, individuals in sub-minimum wage employment have likely been an underserved population in VR. With increased emphasis under WIOA on competitive, integrated employment, ongoing provision of CCIR, and the new Employment First legislation in Indiana, more individuals in sub-minimum wage employment may seek VR services, or may pursue VR services prior to entering into sub-minimum wage employment than has been seen in prior years.

ATTACHMENTS & RESOURCES

- Attachment A: Comprehensive Needs Assessment survey – Vocational Rehabilitation
- [American Fact Finder 2017](#)
- [Quick Facts Indiana 2018](#)

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Indiana Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment 2019

Attachment A: Survey



Vocational Rehabilitation wants to provide the best services possible and needs your ideas. Your answers to the survey questions are very important. They will help Vocational Rehabilitation improve services for individuals with disabilities. The survey will end on January 25, 2019. Thank you in advance for your help.

Check the boxes that best describe your role(s). Check all that apply.

- Person with a disability
- Student with a disability (age 14-22 and in school)
- Youth with a disability (14-24 and may be in school or not in school)
- Family member of an individual with a disability
- Employer/Human Resources staff
- Advocacy organization
- Bureau of Developmental Disability Services staff
- Case manager
- Community Rehabilitation Provider staff (e.g. Employment Service Provider staff)
- Mental Health Center staff
- School staff
- WorkOne staff
- Vocational Rehabilitation staff
- Other _____

What issues/barriers do people with disabilities face in finding jobs? Select top three.

- Concerns of individual or family about loss of benefits (examples: Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, housing assistance)
- Employers' willingness to hire individuals needing significant support
- Expectations about individuals with disabilities working
- How long it takes to get services (example: time from referral to job placement)
- Job seeker's lack of needed skills
- Lack of information or confusion about available services
- Need for extensive or ongoing supports at work
- Number of personnel skilled in providing employment services
- Poor collaboration between schools, professionals, employers, and families
- Transportation (example: can't drive, bus not reliable)
- Other _____
- Other _____

Students and Youth with Disabilities Needs: The next questions are about students (ages 14-22 in school) and youth (ages 14-24 in or out of school). Your answers will help VR improve services for students and youth.

Are you aware of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)? (Services for students with disabilities to help prepare for employment).

- Yes
- No

Do you know how to get Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)?

- Yes
- No

What are the biggest barriers students with disabilities have when making the transition from school to work? Select your top three choices.

- Concerns of individual or family about loss of benefits (example: Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, housing assistance)
- Employers' willingness to hire individuals needing significant supports
- Expectations from professional about individuals with disabilities working
- Expectations from families about individuals with disabilities working
- Gap in services from school to work (student leaves school without connections to services)
- How long it takes to get services (example: time from referral to job placement)
- Lack of information or confusion about available services
- Lack of opportunities for career or vocational training in high school
- Lack of opportunities for career or vocational training in post-secondary school
- Number of personnel skilled in providing employment services to individuals
- Poor collaboration between employers, schools, professionals, and families
- Students' lack of needed skills
- Transportation (example: can't drive, bus not reliable)
- Other _____
- Other _____

What are the needs of students with disabilities as they transition to employment and/or post-secondary education? Select your top three choices.

- Job exploration counseling
- Work experience, internships
- Counseling on post-secondary education programs
- Skills to get ready for work and independent living
- Self-advocacy and self-determination skills
- Other _____

What would improve VR services for students and youth with disabilities? Select your top three choices.

- Additional opportunities for work experiences
- Better coordination between schools and VR
- Earlier access to VR Services
- Earlier access to Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)
- Ensure Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are available in all schools
- Increased knowledge of resources and opportunities to support employment
- Increased expectations for competitive, integrated employment
- Increased involvement with families to address expectations and impact of work on benefits
- Other _____

How can employers be more involved with helping students and youth with disabilities transition to work and/or post-secondary education?" Select your top three choices.

- Employers as mentors
- Increased awareness of employment service providers
- Increased knowledge of support services for hiring individuals with disabilities
- Offer tours at the business site
- Provide more work experiences/internships
- Provide information on their business to students (at school or virtually)
- Provide job fairs at schools (mock interviews/application practice)
- Other _____
- Other _____

The next few questions are about the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities (needs help in three or more areas for an extended period of time to get a job) and supported employment (providing job coaching and additional supports to individuals as needed) to keep a job:

Do you know that VR can provide supported employment services for up to 24 months?

- Yes
- No

Do you know how to get supported employment services?

- Yes
- No

What barriers exist in serving individuals through supported employment? Select your top three choices.

- Employers willingness to hire individuals needing significant support
- Expectations of families about individuals with disabilities working
- Expectations of professionals about individuals with disabilities working
- Expectations of employers about individuals with disabilities working
- Flexibility of when employment specialists work (are they available during needed work hours)
- Not enough employment specialists or job coaches
- Number of personnel skilled in providing individualized employment services to address various employment needs of individuals with most significant disabilities
- Not enough VR counselors
- Transportation (example: can't drive, bus not reliable)
- Other _____

Have you hired individuals with disabilities in the past?

- Yes
- No

Have you been satisfied with the services you have received in the process of hiring individuals with disabilities?

- Yes
- No, tell us why _____

Are you aware of services available to employers such as disability awareness training, and resources for 503 compliance provided by Vocational Rehabilitation and their partners to support employers in hiring individuals with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

What would help employers increase hiring of individuals with disabilities? Select your top three choices.

- Assist employers in linking with other employers who have successfully hired individuals with disabilities, through linkages with entities like DisabilityIN
- Assist employers with making necessary accommodations
- Employers networking with other employers to provide on-the-job training and internship sites
- Employment services personnel being skilled in working with employers
- Knowledge of resources (example: Job Accommodation Network, EasterSeals Crossroads INData, AgrAbility)
- Provide employers with disability awareness training
- Provide employers with tax incentives information
- Other _____
- Other _____

The next few questions are about partnerships with the statewide workforce development system (i.e. WorkOnes):

What would help improve the partnership between VR and workforce programs (example: WorkOne) to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities? Select your top three choices.

- Accessible equipment in WorkOne centers
- Better access to other state workforce programs
- Coordinating funding and staffing
- Cross-training of staff on services provided by VR and WorkOne
- Disability awareness training
- Increased VR presence in WorkOne Centers
- Making the referral process easier
- Other _____
- Other _____

What are positive things that are happening between WorkOne and VR?

The next few questions are about unserved or underserved groups.

What racial/ethnic groups are unserved or underserved? Select your top three choices.

- African American/Black
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Burmese
- Caucasian
- Hispanic or Latino
- Middle Eastern
- Multi-racial
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Other _____

What are the service needs for racial/ethnic groups? Select all that apply.

- Ways to address language barriers
- Outreach to inform minority groups about available programs and services
- Cultural awareness training for professionals
- Other _____
- Other _____

Who is not being served well enough? Select your top three choices.

- Individuals with most significant disabilities (need more support to get and keep a job)
- Individuals with traumatic brain injuries
- Individuals with autism
- Individuals with mental illness
- Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing
- Individuals who are blind or have vision loss
- Individuals with disabilities pursuing career paths with advanced degrees
- Individuals residing in rural areas
- LGBTQ community
- Religious minorities (such as Amish)
- Students or youth with disabilities
- Veterans
- Other _____
- Other _____

What is needed to improve services for underserved populations in the previous question? Select your top three choices.

- Cultural awareness training for staff
- Improved transportation options in general, but especially in rural areas
- Increased outreach about available programs and services
- Increased training for VR staff
- Increased training for employment specialists or job coaches
- Ways to address language barriers
- Other _____
- Other _____

The next few questions are about Employment Service Providers (employment specialists, job coaches, etc.) and Service Needs

What are gaps in services provided by Employment Service Providers? Select your top three choices.

- Coordinating services between VR and Employment Service Providers
- How long it takes to get a job
- Not enough employment services staff (e.g. employment specialists, job coaches, etc.)
- Not enough providers to serve specific populations, (e.g. mental health, low vision, etc.)
- Not enough employment services staff with needed skills to support varied and complex needs
- There are no service gaps
- Other _____

Do Employment Service Providers need to expand services to meet the needs of job seekers for different populations?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

What services do Employment Service Providers need to expand to meet the needs of job seekers for different populations? Select your top three choices.

- Services for transition-aged youth
- Services for individuals with criminal history
- Services for individuals with substance abuse history
- Services for individuals who are homeless
- Services for individuals with diverse needs (e.g. job seekers with multiple disabilities)
- Services in a specific county, if so where?

-
- Services for individuals with mental illness
 - Services for individuals with a visual impairment
 - Services for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing
 - Services for individuals with physical or mobility impairments
 - Services for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities
 - Services for other disability population, if so what population?

-
- Services in rural areas
 - Services in urban areas
 - Other _____

Do Employment Service Provider staff need more training?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Employment Service Provider staff need more training in what areas? Select your top three choices.

- Getting to know job seekers
- Identifying quality job matches
- Customizing job opportunities
- Customizing services to meet the specific needs of individuals
- Identifying individual's strengths and talents
- Supported employment (Job training/coaching and supports)
- Understanding poverty and its impact on employment
- Understanding cultural implications on employment
- Working with employers
- Other _____

Overall comments or suggestions that have not been covered:
