2005 Needs Assessment Report:

Vocational Rehabilitation Needs of Rhode Islanders with Disabilities

**State of Rhode Island
Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services
in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council**

The Mission of the Rhode Island
Office of Rehabilitation Services is:
"To empower individuals with disabilities to
choose, prepare for, obtain and maintain
employment, economic self-sufficiency,
independence, and integration into society."

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Introduction

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, mandates the Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS), in partnership with the Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to periodically complete a statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of Rhode Islanders with disabilities. Six separate surveys which document the needs of Rhode Islanders with disabilities completed from 2003 to present were included in the creation of this report entitled the "Needs Assessment Report: Vocational Rehabilitation Needs of Rhode Islanders with Disabilities".

The surveys that make up the body of this report include:

- 2005 ORS/SRC Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey
- 2004 New England Vocational Rehabilitation Customer Quality Assurance Survey
- 2004 Rhode Island Governor's Commission on Disabilities Public Forum Employment Work Group Report
- 2003 Rhodes to Independence Focus Groups Report Summary
- 2003 Division of Developmental Disabilities Quality Consortium Employment Survey
- 2003 ORS/SRC Customer Satisfaction Survey

The 2005 ORS/SRC Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey was designed and prepared by a committee consisting of staff from the State Rehabilitation Council, Office of Rehabilitation Services, and from the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island College. Sherlock Center staff Vicki Ferrara and Mary Ann Pallack conducted implementation of the instrument.

This report describes an overview of the surveys, with a description of design, implementation, and findings of the 2005 ORS/SRC Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey, which was conducted in June of 2005. The administration of the Office of Rehabilitation

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Services is grateful to all of the staff from the State Rehabilitation Council, the Office of Rehabilitation Services and the Sherlock Center on Disabilities for their enthusiastic support and participation in the development of the Needs Assessment Report. We would also like to thank Jerry Lindsley from the Center for Research and Public Policy, Trumbull, Connecticut and Dr. Brian Robertson of Market Decisions, South Portland, Maine for their assistance in compiling their respective reports. Additionally, we gratefully acknowledge the work of the Rhodes to Independence; the Governor's Commission on Disabilities, and the Division of Developmental Disabilities Quality Consortium Employment Sub-Committee, for their dedicated efforts in assessing the needs of our mutual consumer groups.

2005 ORS/SRC Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey – June 2005

130 distributed – 61 returned – Rate of return: 46.9%

1. Please check the affiliation that best represents you.	N° cit.	Percent
ORS Counselor	29	47.5%
Community Rehabilitation Provider	21	34.4%
netWORKri/DLT staff	11	18.0%
TOTAL OBS.	61	100%

2. Which geographic area most reflects the area in which you provide services? (Check only one)	N° cit.	Percent
Aquidneck Island	3	4.9%
East Bay	10	16.4%
Metro/Providence	16	26.2%
Northern RI	13	21.3%
Southern RI	8	13.1%
Statewide	9	14.8%
West Bay	10	16.4%

3. What do people with disabilities need most to achieve their employment goal as stated in their Employment Plan? (Check top 5) 4. Are the following services readily available?	Q 3. N° cit.	Q 3. Percent	Q 4. Services readily available	Q 4. Services Not readily available
Skills training/education	51	83.6%	77%	16%
Support of a job developer	45	73.8%	63%	26%
Transportation	45	73.8%	28%	60%
Career counseling	37	60.7%	83%	11%
Job retention services	37	60.7%	60%	28%
Help to refine interviewing skills	20	32.8%	79%	12%
Benefits counseling	18	29.5%	67%	12%
Resume services	14	23.0%	83%	11%
Assistive Technology	11	18.0%	72%	16%

5. What do you believe prevents the people you support from becoming employed? (Check top 3)	N° cit.	Percent
Individuals lack of skills	34	55.7%
Individual's expectations	33	54.1%
Transportation	32	52.5%
Fear of losing SSI or SSDI	30	49.2%
Jobs not available	22	36.1%
Fear of losing medical benefits	19	31.1%
Fear of losing subsidies	12	19.7%
Availability of job development	9	14.8%
Job search preparation	9	14.8%

6. How often do the following prevent people you serve from maintaining employment?	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Transportation	2%	28%	56%	9%
Impact of earnings on SSI and/or SSDI	12%	30%	46%	7%
Medical/disability related issues	7%	42%	39%	5%
Lack of on-site job coaching	9%	37%	37%	9%
Impact on medical insurance, housing, food stamps	12%	42%	33%	7%
Inappropriate job placement/match	2%	63%	28%	0
Inadequate supervision	12%	46%	28%	5%
Lack of job accommodation	12%	53%	23%	5%
Lack of job retention counseling	12%	51%	21%	5%
Employer education/mediation	11%	56%	21%	4%

7. What <u>disability groups</u>, if any, are underserved? Identify disability group and applicable location.

Underserved Disability Groups – By Location

Underserved Disability Groups – East Bay	N° cit.
Learning Disabled	1

Underserved Disability Groups– Northern RI	N° cit.
Other Disability Group	2*
Physically Disabled	2
Developmentally Disabled`	1
Behavioral Health	1

*Other: Non "CSP" clients with SA issues; ORS

Underserved Disability Groups – Providence	N° cit.
Behavioral Health	3

Underserved Disability Groups – Southern RI	N° cit.
Other Disability Group	2*
Behavioral Health	2
Traumatic Brain Injured	1
Blind & Visually Impaired	1

*Other: All; Asperger's Syndrome

Underserved Disability Groups – West Bay	N° cit.
Behavioral Health	2
Developmentally Disabled	1
Physically Disabled	1

Underserved Disability Groups – Statewide	N° cit.
Behavioral Health	4
Traumatic Brain Injured	3
Developmentally Disabled	3
Physically Disabled	3
Blind and Visually Impaired	2
Other Disability Group	2*
Learning Disabled	1

*Other: People without medical coverage who need meds to continue; MD/CP

Underserved Disability Groups – No Location	N° cit.
Other Disability Group	3*
Physically Disabled	2
Developmentally Disabled	2
Learning Disabled	1
Traumatic Brain Injury	1

*People who are deaf and have other disability; those that aren't fragile enough to receive services but need the service; Convicted felons

Cumulative Summary– Underserved disability Group- across state	N° cit.	Percent
Behavioral Health	12	20%
Other Disability Group	9	15%
Developmentally Disabled	7	12%
Physically Disabled	7	12%
Traumatic Brain Injured	5	8%
Blind & Visually Impaired	4	7%
Learning Disabled	3	5%

8. What <u>services needs</u>, if any, are Community Rehabilitation Providers not able to sufficiently meet? Indicate service need and applicable location.

Unmet Service Needs – By Location

Unmet Service Needs – Aquidneck Island	N° cit.
Assessment/Evaluation	1

Unmet Service Needs – East Bay	N° cit.
On the Job Support	3
Job Development	1

Unmet Service Needs – Northern RI	N° cit.
Transportation	4
Other Service	2*
On the Job Support	1

*Other service need: Job ready; Job preparation

Unmet Service Needs – Providence	N° cit.
On the Job Support	2
Other Service	2*
Job Development	1
Job retention	1
Transportation	1

*Other service need: Social/emotional difficulties; Psychiatric treatment and medication

Unmet Service Needs – Southern RI	N° cit.
On the Job Support	1
Skills training/education	1
Job Development	1
Transportation	1
Other Service	1*

*Other service need: All employment services

Unmet Service Needs – West Bay	N° cit.
Job Development	3
On the Job Support	2
Transportation	2
Other Service	1*

*Other service need: Transition programs – Transition Academy

Continued on next page

(Question 8 continued)

Unmet Service Needs –Statewide	N° cit.
On the Job Support	7
Other Service	6*
Job Development	4
Transportation	3
Career Counseling	2

*Other service need: Mental health; job accommodation & assistive technology;
BCI; Long-term support; State government initiatives; more individual attention

Unmet Service Needs – No location	N° cit.
Skills training/education	3
Other Service	5*
On the Job Support	1
Transportation	1

*Other service need: Waiting period for services; Counseling   Job development for deaf
workers; SE sites for non-DD/MHRH clients; State supported employer incentives.

Cumulative Summary- Unmet Service Need - across state	N° cit.	Percent
On the job support	17	28%
Other Service	17	28%
Transportation	12	20%
Job Development	10	16%
Skills training/education	4	7%
Career counseling	2	3%
Assessment/evaluation	1	2%
Job Retention	1	2%

9. In the last 6 months, which of the following netWORKri/DLT employment and/or training services have you used to help a person with a disability? (Check all that apply)	N° cit.	Percent
Information/referral	46	75.4%
DLT/LMI/RI Red website	30	49.2%
Job readiness workshop	29	47.5%
Job lead from DLT/ESR	26	42.6%
Placement assistance	23	37.7%
OSESN regional meeting	17	27.9%
Training grant	11	18.0%
OSESN yahoo group	11	18.0%
Other	5	8%
Career Scope	3	5%

Other usage noted, as follows:
a. Recruiting
b. TABE Testing
c. Work Opportunities Unlimited
d. Assistive technology
e. Disability counselor at Providence netWORKri

10. Regarding your organization are enough resources and time devoted to job development for people with disabilities? If no, suggest a strategy for improvement:

ORS Affiliated Respondents

Regarding your organization, are enough resources and time devoted to job development for people with disabilities?	N° cit.	Percent
No	14	48.3%
Yes	13	44.8%

ORS Counselors - Strategies for Improvement	N° cit.	Percent
Increase job development resources	10	34.5%
Reduce caseload	7	24.1%
Increase staffing/funding	3	10.3%
Reduce paperwork	2	6.9%
Other	1	3.4%

Actual Comments
a. Reduce caseload size
b. Identify and work with vendors to develop more services related to job development and supported employment.
c. Unfortunately, I find that I lack the time to do job development due to the number of cases in my caseload. I'm often looking to outside agencies for this service. I'm not sure how to fix this.

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d. Better vendor preparation and education.
e. There are too many files with too many demands. Therefore, it's difficult to devote enough time for job development.
f. Hire job developer for each region
g. Per region designate a person who has, as part of their job, the practice of job development.
h. Need multiple people doing job development
i. Need more agencies that provide job development. Recently lost availability of disability netWORKri counselor. We, as counselors, have too much paperwork and large caseloads, and therefore are unable to complete intensive job development.
j. Our grant is for evaluations only. More staff, more money.
k. Smaller caseloads and less paperwork
l. Counselors have too many cases (most caseloads over 100) to devote time to job development. More counselors and less cases, or more appropriate vendors to use.
m. Counselors do no have enough time to devote to job development. Caseloads too high, develop/create a specialist in each region and give them time.
n. It's difficult for one job developer to keep up with searches, ORS, placements, keeping experienced job coaches on staff.

NetWORKri/DLT Staff

Regarding your organization, are enough resources and time devoted to job development for people with disabilities?	N° cit.	Percent
Yes	7	63.6%
No	3	27.3%

NetWORKri responses - strategies for improvement	N° cit.	Percent
Reduce caseload	1	9.1%
Increase staffing/funding	1	9.1%
More staff training	1	9.1%

Actual Comments
a. Disability specialist
b. More training for our staff
c. Referral process inadequate, follow through weak, complaints of heavy caseloads

Community Rehabilitation Providers

Regarding your organization, are enough resources and time devoted to job development for people with disabilities?	N° cit.	Percent
No	11	52.4%
Yes	9	42.9%

Community Rehabilitation Provider Strategies for improvement	N° cit.	Percent

Increase staffing/funding	7	33.3%
Increase job development resources	3	14.3%
Other	3	14.3%

Actual Comments

a. My agency needs support and connections to job develop.
b. Hire more staff
c. More time and energy spent on job development. Only one person to do it now and everyone else is used for transportation.
d. Source based rather than time limited funding
e. More hours freed up for job development
f. We are establishing a supported employment committee.
g. Increased funding to increase staff
h. Not enough staff; limited computer/internet access
i. Need more resources to hire staff to work in this area. Chronically understaffed and overworked.
j. The resources are available to folks. The motivation and follow thru on the part of the individuals looking for work is very difficult to maintain.
k. Not enough funds

11. As a professional, what do you need to more effectively help people with disabilities to obtain and/or maintain employment? (Check top 3.)	**N° cit.**	**Percent**
Time for job development	30	49.2%
Job coaching services	25	41.0%
Access to employers	21	34.4%
Smaller caseload size	19	31.1%
Less paperwork	17	27.9%
Better assessment tools	16	26.2%
Enhanced job development skills	14	23.0%
Secretarial support	10	16.4%
Training	8*	13.1%
Confidence to approach employers	8	13.1%
Other	8**	13.1%
Supervisor support	3	4.9%
Internet access	3	4.9%

*Training topics cited:

a. Accommodations
b. None identified
c. Job development, accommodations
d. Assessment
e. Life skills first - then work skills
f. Computer/office technologies
g. How to effectively support an individual in the workforce when you are a residential provider.

**Other

    a. Rehabilitation engineer for the blind
    b. Job tryouts
    c. Our members need training for skills that will produce a job.
    d. Increased on-site assessment opportunities
    e. Realistic expectations from ORS
    f. Better working relationship with ORS
    g. More good vendors to refer clients to.
    h. Increase motivation and benefits counseling.

12 A. Make one suggestion for ORS that could improve their ability to increase employment of people with disabilities.	N° cit.	Percent
Increase job development resources	13	21.3%
Increase staffing/funding	13	21.3%
Reduce caseload	8	13.1%
Increase employer access/networking/marketing	6	9.8%
Better communication/relationships (ORS, netWORKri/CPR)	6	9.8%
Other	5	8.2%
More job seeker training	4	6.6%
Quicker response to referrals	3	4.9%
Reduce paperwork	2	3.3%
More staff training	1	1.6%

Actual comments:

a. More time and resources devoted to job development with employers and education of employers as to disability.
b. I spend much time on paperwork and meetings - students caseload - not much time for job development
c. More access to employers
d. Use of the AOSOS
e. Do more in-house job development, resume writing with clients.
f. Do job development on their own
g. Decrease caseloads so more time can be spent doing job development, placement services.
h. Move quicker to capture motivation and momentum
i. Job development
j. Less paperwork - quicker response

k. Better support staff to help the counselors move their cases quicker and it would also help production.
l. Regional placement specialist
m. Smaller caseloads; hire more counselors
n. Increased availability of time to job develop.
o. Smaller caseloads; more time to job develop
p. Specific intake counselors and placement counselors
q. More staff
r. More connections to employers in the community
s. More funding for job coaches on-site
t. More money and contact with deaf community.
u. Offer services for longer periods of time
v. Decrease caseloads
w. Open-ended funding
x. More money

y. Develop more "disability friendly" business relationships

z. More understanding of personal issues that prevent people obtaining employment (vast improvement over years)

aa. Smaller caseload so that employment counselors can work collaboratively with ORS counselors, not just refer someone who has a disability to someone at ORS and that ORS counselor works with that consumer

bb. Increased flexibility - focus on career development

cc. Realistic goals and timelines

dd. More staff

ee. Solid, constant connections with ORS and CTVS

ff. More employer education; better counselor access

gg. Be accessible every day - not by appointment only

hh. As counselors, we need a smaller caseload in order to have the time to job develop for our clients or better/more vendors to utilize.

ii. Increase funding for evaluation and other services to allow more staff time with individuals.

jj. Decrease caseloads – less quantity more quality work

kk. Individualized job development

ll. Education on job's affect on benefit

mm. I have been extremely happy with ORS and their involvement. They have been great. Smaller caseloads and more counselors is needed.

nn. Very informative, helpful and available.

oo. Perhaps increase funding available for assessments and job development for the individual who chooses NOT to go into a sheltered workshop.

pp. Send consumers for proper skill training.

qq. Networking more with each other and EDC, RIPTA

rr. Better training for all ORS workers, regarding how their funding works and equal funding for all providers.

ss. Consistent information from the ORS worker.

12 B. Make one suggestion for netWORKri that could improve their ability to increase employment of people with disabilities	N° cit.	Percent
More staff training-disability issues	8	13.1%
Better communication/relationships (ORS, netWORKri/CPR)	8	13.1%
More job seeker training	6	9.8%
Increase job development resources	2	3.3%
Increase staffing/funding	2	3.3%
Other	2	3.3%
Reduce caseload	1	1.6%
More staff training-general	1	1.6%
Better job lead sharing	1	1.6%

Actual comments:
  a. More flexibility around training programs and employment services to accommodate the disability.
  b. Co-teach/lead interviewing resume classes with ORS counselors.
  c. Many workers and netWORKri do not do anything.
  d. Cooperate with ORS on training Cooperate with ORS on training
  e. I have a great relationship with the Wakefield netWORKri. They are a great resource and are always willing to help!
  f. More in tune or knowledgeable working with individuals with disabilities
  g. Have groups such as interview skills or resume development for people with specific disabilities.
  h. Be less selective - work with everyone
  i. Staff train to work with disabilities
  j. More teamwork - better communication among staff
  k. Promote services
  l. Faster turn-around to counselor, but with decrease in counselor numbers???
  m. Better understanding of disabilities.
  n. Designate as ORS liaison per site
  o. Work with partners to utilize all services available for individuals
  p. Education regarding job placement and customer needs
  q. More funding
  r. Need a counselor there to work directly with people with disabilities
  s. East Bay location has one day a month for deaf employment.
  t. Focus more on people with disabilities, only a few offices have people devoted to them
  u. Counseling and support services availability
  v. Accommodations for SPMI
  w. Specialized disability counselors
  x. Additional staff to work with youth
  y. More receptive to clients also directly working with CSP providers and ORS
  z. Faster turn-around of meeting employer's job openings - then close when filled, instead of leaving it as if it's available.
  aa. More interaction with ORS
  bb. More ORS free time to meet with unscheduled customers
  cc. Must have abilities to meet the needs of the employer
  dd. Don't expect to start a job right away @ $14 an hour. They need to work up to that.
  ee. More job developers
  ff. Computer training/classes on a more regular basis for staff and clients
  gg. On a bus line-accessible
  hh. staff training on disabilities
  ii. More contact with vendor agencies.

12 C. Make one suggestion for Community Rehabilitation Providers that could improve their ability to increase employment of people with disabilities.	N° cit.	Percent
Increase on-the-job support/SE/retention support	9	14.8%
More staff training	6	9.8%
Increase job development resources	5	8.2%
Better communication/relationships (ORS, netWORKri/CPR)	5	8.2%
Increase staffing/funding	4	6.6%
Other	4	6.6%
Increase employer access/networking/marketing	1	1.6%

Actual comments:
a. Improve retention services.
b. Increase options, besides food service, child care, janitorial.
c. More supported employment and job development.

d. Less employee turnover - more competent staff
e. Accept more referrals, have more TRAINED employees (job developers, coaches)
f. Training, training, institute
g. Observe and identify more programs for vocational evaluation or job development.
h. Increase effectiveness
i. Stick in for long haul
j. Job development
k. More supported employment
l. Job coaching
m. Decrease the number of charges within the organization which disrupts consumer service.
n. Work with funding source to achieve identified goal written in IEP or meet to amend goal
o. More skilled placement service providers and job coaches
p. More staff, more funding
q. More intensive job development and placement services
r. Corliss can improve its partnering with ORS and netWORKri.
s. More staff to provide services
t. Supported Employment services move venders.
u. Transportation supports
v. Ability to provide supported employment
w. Increased agency focus on rehabilitation/recovery
x. Solid Constant connection with ORS and Centers
y. Sharing of clients abilities and skills
z. Know expectations of employer and make sure the candidate can meet them.
aa. More agencies willing to work with the disabled and provide job development, placement and retention services.
bb. More training/education for providers to work with people with TBI, CP, mental illness.
cc. Better skills for staff
dd. unified expectations on services provided
ee. More staff.

13. What other suggestions do you have to improve employment outcomes of people with disabilities?	N° cit.	Percent
Other	8	13.1%
Increase employer access/networking/marketing	5	8.2%
More job seeker training	3	4.9%
Better transportation options	3	4.9%
Increase job support and ojt	2	3.3%
Disability awareness training for netWORKri	2	3.3%
Increase staffing/funding	1	1.6%
More staff training	1	1.6%
Quicker response to referrals	1	1.6%
Better communication/relationships (ORS/netWORKri/CPR)	1	1.6%

Actual comments:

a. More time spend with clients on goal setting so that clients are more motivated and satisfied with jobs.
b. Individuals with disabilities should have more realistic expectations of their employment potential. On the job training may be an incentive to hire and train Individuals with disabilities should have more realistic expectations of their employment potential. On the job training may be an incentive to hire and train individuals.
c. Increase 1-to-1 support or site visits per approval of employer and customer.
d. Improved work incentives by RI and federal government
e. Public awareness
f. Improve transportation and housing
g. More job tryouts and OJTs
h. Semi-annual meetings between netWORKri, ORS and Community providers to identify population and goals for successful outcomes to employment for individuals, as well as provider information-sharing and goal focus between agencies.
i. NetWORKri needs to develop programs and willingness to work with people who fall within below average ranges of abilities, e.g. people who are not computer literate, people below 7th grade math and reading levels, people who are multi- and/or severely handicapped.
j. Provide trainings/services for employers (teach about disabilities, incentives, etc.)
k. Make employment and training a priority for Corliss members.
l. More ways to make a company look favorably on hiring someone with a disability. Break down stereotypes, offer more tax breaks, etc.
m. I would like to be able to work with MI agencies, but they decline to work with TBI survivors. These agencies have long-term service delivery that we lack.
n. Members of netWORKri need to have increased understanding of methods, strategies, philosophy to assist people with disabilities with employment.
o. My customers need a job yesterday. There is a high demand for us to provide 3-6 months of at least these core services after writing a plan. Most of my caseload are not receiving any income and need a job ASAP. They are the most motivated until plan is written and frustrated that ORS counselor has not been able to get them work prior to writing plan. They cannot afford 3-6 months of services when they have no income. I don't know what the answer is.

p. A great deal of effort is focused on Employment Specialists - which is logical, but futile if employers are not on board. Concentration needs to be on RI businesses.
q. Customers need to be more prepared - research company - cold calling - more flexibility
r. More employer education!
s. Realistic expectations on the part of the job seeker
t. Be realistic about career and skills needed for the job offered.
u. Better organized and accessible transportation system.
v. Provide incentives to keep working.
w. More funding and more staff. The system really doesn't work very well it is present format.
x. Help with transportation needs; realistic goals and opportunities.
y. Training: re - micro-businesses, DBE, BID on State Contracts

ORS/SRC Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey
Summary of Findings

During the spring of 2005, the Rhode Island Department of Human Services/Office of Rehabilitation Services and the Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council conducted a needs assessment survey. The survey was distributed to the Office of Rehabilitation Services supervisors and counselors, Community Rehabilitation Program providers, and netWORKri/One Stop Center and Department of Labor & Training staff.

The survey was designed by a committee consisting of representatives from the Office of Rehabilitation Services, the State Rehabilitation Council, and the University Affiliated Programs of Rhode Island College Paul V. Sherlock Center. The intent of the survey was to identify the interventions that people with disabilities need in order to get and keep work, the availability of these services throughout the state, the obstacles that customers confront in attempting to work, the groups of people with disabilities who are underserved, and the resource/training needs of personnel. The purpose of the survey was to assist the Department of Human Services/Office of Rehabilitation Services and the State Rehabilitation Council in examining program design, delivery systems and gaps in services with so that the agency can more effectively help disabled people become and stay employed.

Several themes emerged from the 61 questionnaires returned. In determining what people with disabilities need most in order to achieve an employment outcome: skills training and education, support from a job developer, transportation, job retention services and career counseling were identified as major areas of need. When these areas were rated for availability, skills training and education, support from a job developer, and job retention services were rated highest in terms of availability. However, transportation, which was noted previously in the survey as a major need, was rated as readily available by only 28% of respondents. Again, transportation, in combination with the individuals' lack of skills and expectations, and fear of

losing SSI and SSDI were rated by respondents as some of the main reasons that people with disabilities are prevented from working.

Respondents from ORS, Community Rehabilitation Program providers and netWORKri/One Stop staff, all provided suggestions on ways that each sector could more effectively facilitate employment for people with disabilities. Some of the suggestions included: hiring additional staff for job development, building capacity & resources in certain geographic regions, and increasing contact with ORS counselors. Other recommendations included: increasing job development resources, reducing caseload size, and increasing the number of staff.

The results of this survey are being utilized by a team of individuals from the State Rehabilitation Council and the Office of Rehabilitation Services to assist in the planning and development of a five-year strategic plan for the Office of Rehabilitation Services focusing on employment of individuals with disabilities residing in Rhode Island. The ORS/SRC Employment Sub-Committee consists of: Annette Bourbonniere, Chairperson, J. David Sienko, Susan Donovan, Domenic DiOrio, Vicki Ferrara, Monica Dzialo and Stephen Brunero.

Questions related to this survey may be directed to:

Stephen Brunero, Deputy Administrator

Office of Rehabilitation Services

40 Fountain Street, Providence, RI 02903

Telephone: (401) 421-7005 ext. 354 (v) ~ (401) 421-7016 (tty)

Email: steveb@ors.ri.gov

New England Vocational Rehabilitation Customer Quality Assurance Survey/Results
February, 2004

Goals

▪ **The New England Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies Quality Assurance Survey was designed to allow clients to provide feedback about the services they gave received**

▪ **The survey provides a tool to measure satisfaction with the agency and the services provided**

▪ **The survey is designed to gather information to allow quality improvements**

▪ **This administration was designed to assess whether a set of core questions could be used by agencies throughout New England to measure satisfaction**

Survey Response

▪ **A total of 802 clients of ORS completed the survey by telephone or mail**

▪ **93% of ORS clients surveyed indicated that they would recommend that friends go to the agency for help**

▪ **85% of ORS clients surveyed reported that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the choice of service providers.**

▪ **91% of respondents reported that the ORS staff was either very helpful or helpful in assisting them in achieving their goal.**

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- **88% of clients surveyed reported that it was very or somewhat easy for them to complete an application to ORS**

- **Responses to question: "Which activity or service provided by the VR program do you feel had the greatest impact toward assisting you in your vocational goal?**

  o **Job Training, shadowing, job coaches, job search**
  o **Education, funding for education**
  o **Counseling, counselor**
  o **Adaptive equipment**
  o **Testing, evaluations**
  o **Doctors, Therapists**
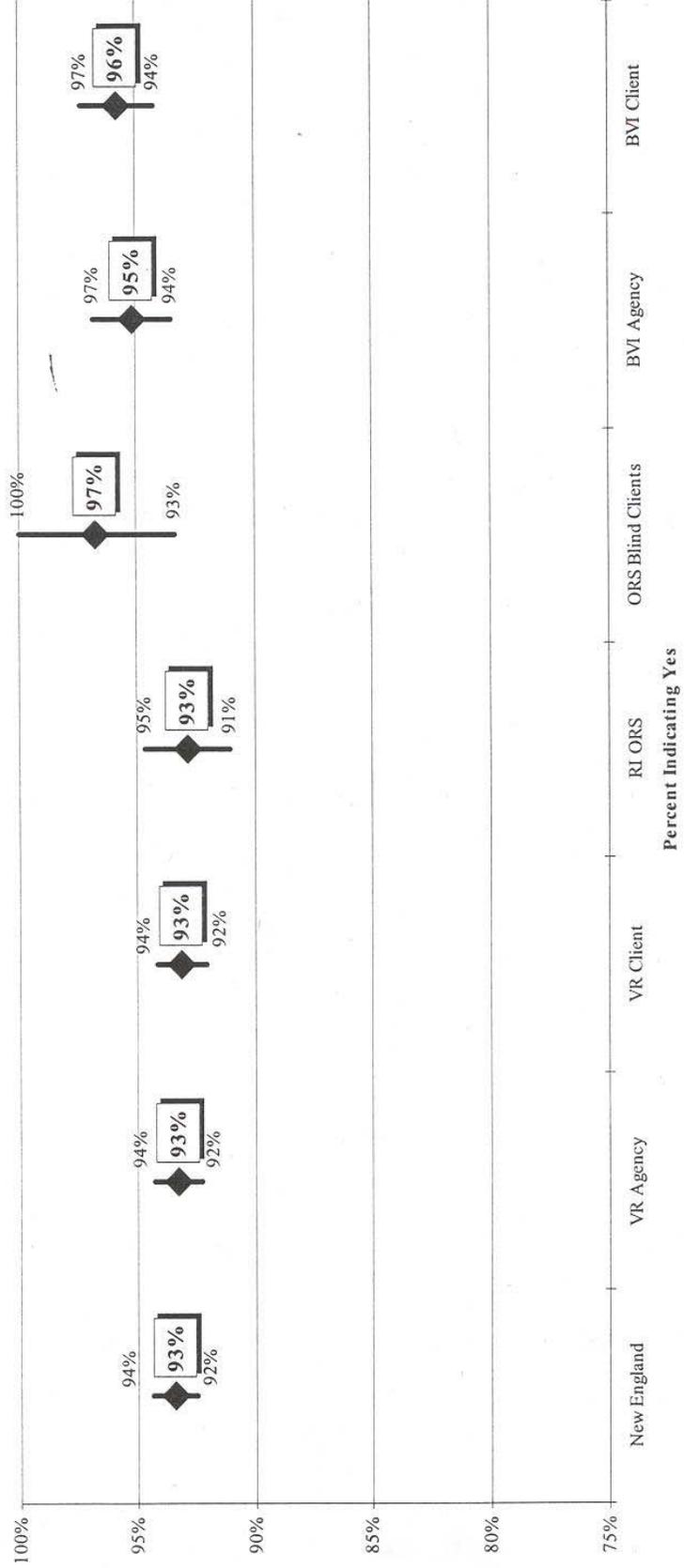 o **Computer, Use of, purchase of/training**

Number of Surveys Completed by Service Region

	n
Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services	802
Region 1	109
Region 2	112
Region 3	111
Region 4	109
Region 5	106
Region 6	40
Region 7	90
Blind or Visually Impaired Clients	125

Data Analysis

- The survey data has been weighted to reflect the actual population of clients based on:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Case status (open or closed)
  - Disability/Impairment Category
  - Service region

- The results from analysis using the weighted data can be generalized to the population of all RI ORS clients and service regions.

Would you recommend that friends go to agency for help
(95% Confidence Interval)

	New England	VR Agency	VR Client	RI ORS	ORS Blind Clients	BVI Agency	BVI Client
Upper	94%	94%	94%	95%	100%	97%	97%
Value	93%	93%	93%	93%	97%	95%	96%
Lower	92%	92%	92%	91%	93%	94%	94%

Percent Indicating Yes

If there was anything you could have changed in your relationship or interaction with the VR program, what would that be?

- Wouldn't change anything, nothing needs to change
- More contact
- More help finding a job, job service, better jobs
- Better communication
- Better trained staff
- More/better information on services provided
- More funding for education
- Return calls sooner
- Listen to clients' needs, interests, be more understanding

RI Governor's Commission on Disabilities

2004 Public Forum Employment Work Group

Themes and Recommendations

1. <u>Theme</u>: Not knowing what's available or where to find out about what's available e.g. tax credits.

    <u>Recommendations</u>:

    a. Use the Able Too...program

    b. Expand RI.gov website

    c. Provide training - hands-on, website (but not printed materials – goes out of date to quickly)

2. <u>Theme</u>: Need for education of employers on abilities of the individuals with disabilities.

    <u>Recommendations</u>:

    a. Provide training to employers

    b. Partnership to employers

    c. Success stories in local newspapers

3. <u>Themes</u>: Need for service provider skills/knowledge in job/person matching.   Need for improved listening skills in service providers.

    <u>Recommendations</u>:

    a. Individual skill inventory compared to available LMI

    b. Identify agency resources, needs, and funding requirement.

    c. (DLT – Labor Market Training)

4. <u>Theme</u>:   Need for a case management system to assist the Traumatic Brain Injured become and maintain employment.

    <u>Recommendation</u>:

    a. Legislative advocacy for funding

5.   <u>Theme</u>: Communication barriers exist for people with disabilities securing interviews and successfully completing interviews.

      <u>Recommendations</u>:

         a. Speech to Speech relay technology

         b. Educating employers on abilities

6.   <u>Theme</u>: Need for equal access for the disabled including accommodations while in training and on the job.

      <u>Recommendations</u>:

         a. Spread knowledge of JAN

         b. Develop/provide education effort focused on high school personnel to fade out reliance on others

         c. Use technology

         d. Focus on independent living to foster self-sufficiency

7.   <u>Theme</u>: Need for Employers on the Governor's Commission on Disabilities

      <u>Recommendation</u>:

         a. Employer representation on GCD

2003 Rhodes to Independence Focus Groups

Report Summary

In 2003, the Rhodes to Independence Steering Committee contracted with Cote & D'Ambrosio to develop a marketing plan. Cote & D'Ambrosio then conducted some focus group research to gather information and opinions about employment of people with disabilities. They conducted three focus groups: one for people with disabilities, one for families of people with disabilities, and one for employers. There is a considerable amount of overlap between the three groups, but the needs highlighted are:

- Need for volunteering and internship opportunities to gain experience for employment;
- Need for networking techniques to let people know that they are looking for jobs;
- A need for good job leads;
- A need for adequate transportation;
- A need for employer understanding of assistive technology and related accommodations;
- A need for employer education on disability issues;
- A need for more readily accessible resources for employment, including for employers;
- A need for training of coworkers to offset negative attitudes towards people with disabilities in the workplace;
- A need for better preparation for work, including benefits counseling;
- A need to align the expectations of the employer and the person with the disability;
- A need for better coordination and communication between the various agencies and support staff;
- A need for better understanding regarding ADA laws.

2003 DDD-Statewide Quality Consortium

Employment Survey

In 2004, the Developmental Disability's Statewide Quality Consortium surveyed 35 DD agencies about the number of people employed in community jobs. Thirty agencies provided the following information for each individual employed during 2003: Consumer ID, Employer Name, Job title, Hours worked, monthly income and employment type, i.e. Individual Supported Employment,* Group Supported Employment,** and Competitive Employment.*** (Types of employment were defined by the National Core Indicators/HSRI/CMS).

According to DDD/MHRH, 3,915 adults received services from them in 2003, of which approximately 3,365 received services from DD agencies.

The results of the employment survey show that 21% (699) of people receiving services from a DD agency held at least one job in 2003. 112 of those individuals reported having more than one job, for a total of 811 jobs. Ten individuals report as self-employed.

Individuals are reported as working in the following support categories:
- Individual Supported Employment - 252
- Group Supported Employment - 428
- Competitive Employment -131

Additionally, 80% or 648 jobs are less than 20 hours per week. 20% or 131 jobs are more than 20 hours per week, of which 4% or 30 jobs are full-time, 35 hours or more per week.

Throughout the state, employed individuals worked for 199 companies, in 35 job titles****with an average hourly wage of $7.14.

Core Indicator Definitions

*ISE [Called "Vocational-Supported Employment" in BI-28.] Individuals have a job with a community employer and receive periodic publicly funded assistance, training and support aimed at securing and/or maintaining employment and /or improving job skills.

**Group SE [Called vocational-group employment" in BI-28] Two or more individuals are employed by a community provider agency and perform work as employees of the provider agency at sites in the community (e.g., mobile work crews). Group SE also includes persons who ate employed in an affirmative industry or as part of an enclave.

***CE [this is not a service or support, therefore in not listed in BI-28] Individuals have a job of their own in the community but are not receiving "Supported Employment"- that is, they do to routinely receive community job supports or job coaching. They may have access to supports as needed or may receive follow--along" but is basically working on their own.

**** 180 companies are identified as for-profit, non-profit, or state and city governments and 19 are DD organizations. Job titles with similar tasks were grouped together. For example, one grouping included housekeeper & cleaning worker; another included busboy, cafeteria aide, food service, and mess attendant. A total of six grouped job classifications are listed.

2003 ORS/SRC Consumer Satisfaction
Survey Overview

In 2003, "closed" (600) and "active" (201) ORS customers were surveyed to assess their satisfaction with ORS services and the outcomes they achieved. The telephone survey investigated 11 areas of satisfaction related to the following: general awareness and expectations of ORS services, overall program and staff rating, satisfaction of community providers, and outcomes achieved. Participants also assessed program participation, barriers they experienced and perceptions of met and unmet needs.

People come to ORS with many expectations, the most frequent being to obtain employment. 57 % of closed respondents said that all or most of their expectations were met and reported being very satisfied with the quality of ORS personnel, i.e. counselors were knowledgeable, courteous, and kept promises, etc.

Overall, satisfaction with initial contact, awareness of services and development of active employment plans increased in 2003, along with customers' understanding of services and the employment plan's purpose. Additionally, most customers were *very* or *somewhat clear* about their roles and responsibilities as participants in VR services and thought their employment plans reflected their goals.

Regarding overall satisfaction with services, 84% of all customers were satisfied with access to ORS counselors and the quality of their employment plans. The top five services utilized most were also services that customers considered important. They were: help in identifying interests, strengths and abilities; help identifying appropriate vocational goals; help finding a job; help understanding how employment affects benefits; and help practicing for job interviews. Customers reported an average of 85% satisfaction rating for these services.

A little over half of all surveyed customers reported currently receiving public benefits. Almost 66% of this group had access to benefits planning and were informed about the impact of employment on benefits.

In 2003, almost half of all respondents reported they are working full or part-time, with 74 % indicating a high job satisfaction rating. 36% reported promotions and 39% receive medical benefits. Only 29% reported that their current job is one that ORS and/or a Community Rehabilitation Partner helped secure - a decrease from 38% in 2002.

Overall, respondents reported an 80% satisfaction rating with the outcome of their participation in Vocational Rehabilitation.

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Rhode Island Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services
40 Fountain Street - Providence, RI 02903
401.421.7005 (V) - 401.421.7016 (TDD)
401.272.8090 (Spanish)
www.ors.ri.gov