

San Diego State University
Interwork Institute

Commonwealth of Virginia
Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
and
the State Rehabilitation Council

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Commonwealth of Virginia, Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University jointly conducted an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) needs of individuals with disabilities residing in Virginia. A triennial needs assessment is required by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and is intended to help inform the Unified State Plan developed by the core partners in Virginia's Workforce Development System. The data was gathered, analyzed, and grouped into the sections listed below. A summary of key findings in each section is contained here. The full results are found in the body of the report.

Section One: Overall Performance of DARS

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods (data, surveys, and interviews) related to this topic area:

1. DARS staff were characterized as motivated and dedicated to serving DARS customers. The agency hires staff that are caring and compassionate and committed to the mission of the agency.
2. The primary challenge facing DARS related to the ability to meet the needs of their consumers has been staff recruitment and retention. The attrition rate has been particularly high in Northern Virginia. While DARS has been able to obtain salary increases that have helped, the vacancy rate remains a challenge to effectively meeting the needs of consumers in affected areas.
3. DARS has been focusing on rapid engagement of consumers, and this has helped to reduce wait times and speed up eligibility determinations and individualized plan for employment (IPE) development time frames.
4. DARS is serving an increasing number of consumers annually and the number of individuals exiting in employment is increasing year to year. The agency is exceeding its negotiated target rates in all of the WIOA common performance measures, with the exception of the measurable skill gains (MSG) rate. It is important to note that the agency's MSG rate is one of the highest in the nation.
5. The quality of placements provided by employment services organizations (ESOs) need to improve. Recurring concerns included:
 - a. Placement in low paying, entry-level positions only. This leads to high turnover and low retention rates.
 - b. Placement in jobs that are available right away rather than in jobs that are consistent with what the consumer wants or what is indicated on the IPE.
 - c. Lack of focus on jobs that include career pathways or opportunities for advancement.

6. Postsecondary education is not a common pathway for many consumers. While there are more individuals in vocational or career/technical training programs, academic training is not frequently used.
7. The administrative burden on counseling staff related to gathering and reporting data adversely affects the ability of staff to provide meaningful counseling and guidance to consumers.

The following recommendations are made to DARS based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. The agency is encouraged to continue to focus on rapid engagement of consumers to minimize the number of applicants and consumers that exit the system for lack of engagement reasons. This requires an ongoing examination of policies and procedures that unnecessarily slow down the application, eligibility, and IPE development process. In addition, the agency is encouraged to examine the structure of service delivery to determine if there are alternate structures that can be implemented on a pilot basis to reduce administrative burden on staff and increase the speed and ease with which individuals progress through the VR process.
2. DARS is encouraged to increase outreach and public awareness of DARS services. If there are ways to brand VR services separate from the “aging” component of the DARS name, this would help decrease confusion about who the agency serves.
3. The agency should examine IT infrastructure and upgrade/modernize interfaces as resources allow.
4. DARS is encouraged to continue to emphasize long-term quality career placements as a priority for the agency and ESO placement agencies. The agency is encouraged to scale-up the Pathways to Careers using Partnerships and Apprenticeships project to help consumers obtain jobs that offer living wages in high demand occupations.
5. Although the agency has indicated that many individuals come to them desperate for income and work so that they can survive, the agency is encouraged to explore postsecondary education training as an option for participants. Staff should be encouraged to support the pursuit of part-time “survival” employment and training concurrently so that consumers can get their immediate needs met through work while pursuing training that will result in a self-sustaining wage in the future. The discussion about the possibility of postsecondary education should occur as a matter of course when planning with students, youth, and adults for their future employment goals.
6. DARS is encouraged, as allowable within the parameters required by the Virginia Department of Human Resource Management, to pursue additional salary adjustments to aid with staff retention and recruitment and to consider establishing a range of salary steps within existing positions where those may not exist currently.
7. DARS is encouraged to conduct a staff training needs assessment biannually to identify where staff training is needed and to consider providing more in-person training opportunities as one method to strengthen organizational culture, values, and institutional knowledge.

8. DARS is encouraged to monitor differences in the rates of males served to females in the VR program and identify strategies to increase outreach to females.

Section Two: The needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. Lack of transportation is a major barrier to employment for individuals with disabilities, especially in rural areas. Transportation was described as a struggle all over, even though Virginia has some large urban areas where public transportation is more prevalent. There are many rural areas of the state where public transportation is nonexistent. Once consumers find employment, sustainable transportation becomes a challenge due to the cost.
2. Common VR needs identified across all research methods for individuals with the most significant disabilities include:
 - a. Need for job skills/work experience.
 - b. Need for education or training.
 - c. Need to address employer perceptions about employing people with disabilities.
 - d. Mental health concerns.
 - e. Lack of soft skills.
 - f. Concern over benefit loss from working.
3. DARS operates the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC), which provides independent living and vocational training services to individuals with the most significant disabilities in a residential setting. WWRC is an important and essential program for individuals who need intensive workplace readiness training to reenter the workforce.
4. DARS serves a large number of individuals with substance use disorders and mental health impairments. The common VR needs of these individuals include:
 - a. Rapid engagement.
 - b. Training to improve their skills for employment.
 - c. Resources or training to pursue self-employment.
 - d. Connections to resources for housing and other services.
 - e. Job placement assistance, often to address criminal history.
 - f. Transportation.
 - g. Medication maintenance.
 - h. Placement assistance.
5. Homelessness has become a major barrier for individuals with disabilities in Virginia. The issue became magnified with the onset of the pandemic and has not improved since, especially related to the increase in housing costs. Many individuals cannot afford housing, which affects their ability to engage in employment.

6. There is a need to expand customized employment (CE) in Virginia as a service option for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The agency is working to scale-up this service as part of Real Pay for Real Jobs Education and Outreach, Partnership Development, Provisions of Individualized Services, and Capacity Building (RPRJ EPIC) project, but it has been a challenge to expand and sustain the service.
7. DARS provides extensive supported employment (SE) services to individuals with severe mental illness (SMI). DARS is able to use long-term employment support services (LTESS) funds for extended services for SE. There is a long wait list for Medicaid waiver services in the state, so the availability of LTESS funds is critical for the SE program and timely services to individuals with the most significant disabilities that have a dual diagnosis of a significant mental illness and an intellectual or other developmental disability.
8. There is a need for basic computer skills training for many DARS consumers. The lack of broadband internet service in some rural areas, and the lack of exposure to computer training can be a significant barrier to being qualified for even entry-level employment.

The following recommendations are made to Virginia DARS based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. DARS is encouraged to continue their efforts to provide rapid, meaningful, and sustained engagement of applicants and consumers to increase the likelihood that these individuals will successfully prepare for and obtain employment. Regular and ongoing training in this area will be essential, as is the regular review of policies and procedures that either contribute to, or detract from, rapid and meaningful engagement.
2. As resources and staffing allow, DARS should consider having substance use and behavioral health counselors in each office within the state to meet the ever-increasing demand for services by this population.
3. DARS is encouraged to expand CE as an option for their consumers with the most significant disabilities. If ESOs are unable to develop and sustain the service, DARS should consider if it is possible to provide the service in-house.
4. If it is not possible to develop CE to fidelity, DARS is encouraged to work with ESOs to develop Discovery as a service. This will help to ensure that employment services are developed and provided consistent with the interests, abilities, and capabilities of consumers.
5. DARS should conduct computer-competency assessments for all consumers and provide training through adult education or other training entities to bring consumers up to at least a basic level of computer literacy prior to formal vocational or academic training, job development, and placement for those who need this training.
6. Since there are still areas in Virginia where broadband internet access is not available, DARS is encouraged to consider supporting high-speed internet access through satellite-based services. This will ensure that individuals with disabilities in rural areas can access the internet for training, job development, and placement.
7. All DARS staff should have affordable housing resources readily available for their consumers in need of assistance in this area. Resources include:

- Virginia Housing: <https://www.virginiahousing.com/en/individuals-families>
 - NVRC Affordable Housing Lists: <https://www.novaregion.org/168/Affordable-Housing-Lists>
 - Partnership for Housing Affordability: <https://pharva.com/the-housing-resource-line/>
 - Virginia Navigator: <https://virgininavigator.org/article/12430/subsidized-housing>
8. As program evaluation data becomes available for the agency's RPRJ EPIC project, DARS is encouraged to examine the elements that support the provision of CE as an essential element for successful employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities and to replicate those elements throughout the state as resources allow.

Section Three: The needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the DARS program

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. The VR needs of minority individuals with disabilities were identified to be consistent with general consumers cited in section two, with the exception of language barriers, the need for language interpreters, and materials available in other languages.
2. Hispanic individuals were the group most frequently identified as potentially underserved by the agency for a variety of reasons that included:
 - a. Lack of trust of government agencies;
 - b. Resident status;
 - c. Language barriers;
 - d. Lack of bilingual staff; and
 - e. Lack of targeted outreach resulting in a lack of awareness of DARS and available services.
3. The rural areas of Virginia such as Southwestern VA were cited as potentially underserved due to a lack of broadband internet access and the long travel distances to reach areas by car.

The following recommendations are made to Virginia DARS based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. The agency is encouraged to create a recruitment plan to increase the number of bilingual staff to address the barriers of providing services for Spanish speaking clients/potential clients.
2. The agency is encouraged to review, create, and enhance multi-language outreach materials to the community as needed.
3. The agency is encouraged to partner with community organizations serving Hispanic individuals to help establish awareness and trust within the communities.
4. As indicated in the section two recommendations, DARS is encouraged to identify satellite-based internet providers to ensure individuals living in rural areas are able to access services and employment opportunities that require high speed internet access.

Section Four: The needs of youth and students with individuals with disabilities in transition

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities were cited as similar to adults, with an emphasis on the need for workplace readiness training, on the job training, and social and soft skills training.
2. DARS provides pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) using a combination of direct staff and service providers, with providers delivering the majority of the services. All five of the required Pre-ETS services were repeatedly cited as needed for students with disabilities throughout Virginia. Work-based learning experiences (WBLE) were identified as the most needed Pre-ETS service.
3. Reliable transportation is a major need for transition-age youth. The lack of transportation in rural areas especially was a primary reason for the inability of youth to participate in a VR plan or Pre-ETS.
4. There is a need to increase student and family awareness of DARS services, including the possibility of supporting youth in postsecondary education after graduation, if needed to support their employment goal
5. Students and youth with disabilities have a greater need for mental health services since the onset of the pandemic.

The following recommendations are made to Virginia DARS based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. DARS is encouraged to continue to try and expand the number of providers that provide Pre-ETS throughout the state, especially in rural areas. Where possible, DARS should pay for transportation costs for providers delivering Pre-ETS in rural areas.
2. DARS is encouraged to review the fee schedule for Pre-ETS and revise as resources allow to help motivate providers to deliver these services.
3. Because of the recurring concern expressed by providers that the documentation requirements for delivering services is burdensome, DARS is encouraged to review these requirements for Pre-ETS services and streamline as much as possible.
4. DARS should increase outreach efforts to foster care youth prior to graduation from secondary school to increase the likelihood that they will stay engaged with DARS after they leave the foster care system.
5. DARS should continue to work closely with the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C) to develop a youth advisory board made up of students and youth on how to improve services.
6. DARS is encouraged to identify opportunities to educate students and families on the realistic expectations of Pre-ETS and appropriate family interaction with employers.
7. DARS student counselors are encouraged to work directly with students and parents in order to assist students/youth to make informed choices about their future.

8. Although providers are providing many WBLEs, DARS should encourage the development of further opportunities for innovative WBLEs in technology industries.
9. DARS staff should ensure that counseling on postsecondary education opportunities is provided for all students with disabilities interested in pursuing this path after graduation.

Section Five: The needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. There is variable quality and integration with the Virginia Works program across the state. Co-location does contribute to improved and increased instances of braided funding. However, the relationship between DARS and VA Works remains primarily one of referral in many areas, especially related to individuals who immediately self-identify as having a disability when participating with VA Works. There is room for considerable growth related to braided funding of cases.
2. The partnership with VA Works is especially strong among substance use and behavioral health counselors and VA Works staff. One example is the Re-entry Optimization Taskforce which focuses on helping individuals released from prison to reenter the workforce.
3. VA Works staff need regular and consistent training on how to effectively work with individuals with disabilities.

The following recommendations are made to Virginia DARS based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. Since there appear to be many instances of productive and meaningful partnership among DARS and VA Works staff, the agency is encouraged to highlight these partnerships, especially when braided funding of cases is occurring and share these examples for replication across the state.
2. DARS is encouraged to regularly attend business solutions meetings with the VA Works staff and continue to educate/collaborate regarding DARS and VA Works roles and available services. DARS staff should continue to help educate VA Works staff on how to assist consumers with disabilities within the VA Works system, how to work with different disability types, and how to minimize the duplication of services. Training provided in concert with the Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) is encouraged.
3. DARS is encouraged to partner with VA Works to develop customized training opportunities with employers in Virginia and to ensure that individuals with disabilities are included in these training programs.

Section Six: The need to establish, develop or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in Virginia

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. DARS relies heavily on ESOs to provide a wide range of employment services to their consumers. There are areas of the state, like Fairfax, where there is a proliferation of ESOs. There are other more rural areas where there are few service providers and some services, like SE, are lacking.
2. There is a need to improve the quality of job placements by ESOs. Employment needs to be consistent with the abilities and capabilities of consumers.
3. DARS is embarking on a value-based purchasing (VBP) model geared towards rewarding ESOs for high quality placements.
4. Many ESOs have experienced high turnover, which affects their ability to serve DARS consumers in a timely manner.
5. There is a lack of bilingual staff to provide services at ESOs, which contributes to the low number of Hispanic individuals receiving services.
6. There are very few ESOs currently providing CE. It has been a real challenge to implement CE in Virginia. Once staff are trained, they leave and there is nobody left to provide the service.
7. There is a need for more Vocational Evaluators in the northern Virginia area. Clients can wait six to eight weeks to see an evaluator after being referred by a counselor. This can delay services for individuals desperate to go to work and is not congruent with rapid engagement.
8. There is a need for more workplace readiness services and work adjustment services for consumers, especially those with behavioral health disabilities.
9. There is a need to expand financial literacy and empowerment services, which are valuable services for consumers, especially related to benefits planning.

The following recommendations are made to Virginia DARS based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. DARS is encouraged to continue to work closely with the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM) to develop and implement the VBP model to incentivize high quality placements for ESOs.
2. DARS is encouraged to support ESOs with ongoing training opportunities that can be provided inclusive of DARS staff.
3. DARS is encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of CE services provided in the RPRJ EPIC project and replicate the service as indicated.
4. DARS should encourage ESOs to hire bilingual/multilingual job coaches and case managers to improve access for underserved populations.
5. DARS is encouraged to use a vendor performance evaluation system designed to not only evaluate vendor effectiveness but identify opportunities for growth and development for them.

Section Seven: The needs of businesses and effectiveness in serving employers

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. DARS has invested heavily in business development and relations. They do joint presentations with employers and consult with employers for the development of training programs at WWRC. The agency understands the necessity for the dual customer approach and has established some important and meaningful partnerships with employers.
2. Even with the efforts of the agency targeted at business relations, there remains a strong need for disability awareness training, education on available assistive technology, and accommodations to reduce employer concerns and fear related to hiring individuals with disabilities.
3. DARS staff provide Windmills training for employers, and this is an important and helpful educational opportunity for employers.
4. There is a need to increase the overall employer awareness of DARS and their available services for employers.

The following recommendations are offered based on the information gathered in the Needs of Business and Effectiveness in Serving Employers section:

1. The agency is encouraged to continue to provide Windmills training for employers and to conduct other educational and informational events targeted at employers as staffing and resources allow. These educational, information and hiring events are good opportunities to partner with VA Works staff that are dedicated to these activities.
2. DARS is encouraged to try and increase the number of apprenticeships available for consumers and to develop more customized training opportunities with employers. These represent another opportunity to partner with the VA Works programs to further develop these job-driven training opportunities.

The project team provides recommendations associated with some of the needs identified in each of the categories. It is understood that many of the recommendations require the collaboration and partnership of multiple agencies over an extended period of time. Some of the recommendations may be much easier to adopt and implement than others. The project team offers the recommendations with this awareness and hopes that DARS, the SRC, and other stakeholders will find these recommendations helpful.

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IMPETUS FOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) contains the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. Section 101(15)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act and Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 361.29 requires all state vocational rehabilitation agencies to assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities within their respective state and relate the planning of programs and services and the establishment of goals and priorities to their needs. According to Section 102 of WIOA and Section 101 of the Rehabilitation Act, each participating state shall submit a Unified or Combined State Plan every four years, with a biannual modification, as needed. In addition, Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 361.29 indicates that the State Plan must include the “results of a comprehensive, Statewide assessment, jointly conducted by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council every three years describing the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State.” In response to this mandate, and to ensure that adequate efforts are being made to serve the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities in Virginia, the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), entered into a contract with the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University (SDSU) for the purpose of jointly developing and conducting the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) needs of individuals with disabilities residing in Virginia.

PURPOSE OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND UTILIZATION OF RESULTS

The purpose of the CSNA is to identify and describe the VR needs of individuals with disabilities residing within Virginia. In particular, the CSNA seeks to provide information on:

- The overall performance of DARS as it relates to meeting the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the Commonwealth;
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment (SE) services;
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities, and those who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program;
- The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition, including their need for pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS);
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system;
- The need to establish, develop and/or improve community rehabilitation programs within the Commonwealth; and

- The needs of businesses in recruiting, hiring, accommodating, and retaining individuals with disabilities.

It is expected that data from the needs assessment effort will provide DARS and the SRC with direction when creating the VR portion of the Unified State Plan and when planning for future program development, outreach and resource allocation. This CSNA covers quantitative data for Program Years (PY) 2021 through 2023, and qualitative data through January 2025. Program Year 2021 began on July 1, 2021 and ended on June 30, 2022. Program Year 2023 ended on June 30, 2024.

METHODOLOGY

The CSNA was conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry. The specific methods for gathering the data used in this assessment are detailed below.

Analysis of Existing Data Sources

The project team at SDSU reviewed a variety of existing data sources for the purposes of identifying and describing demographic data within Virginia including the total possible target population and sub-populations potentially served by DARS. Data relevant to the population of Virginia, the population of persons with disabilities in Virginia, ethnicity of individuals, the number of Veterans, income level, educational levels and other relevant population characteristics were utilized in this analysis. Sources analyzed include the following:

- The 2022 and 2023 American Community Survey: One- and Five-Year Estimates;
- U.S. Census Annual Estimates of Resident Population, 2022;
- 2023 Social Security Administration SSI/DI Data;
- The Virginia Department of Education;
- U.S. and Virginia Bureau of Labor Statistics;
- Annual Disability Statistics Compendium 2024, University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability;
- Cornell University's disabilitystatistics.org;
- DARS case service data compiled at the request of the project team;
- DOL's Employment and Training Administration's 969 Report for Program Years 2021-2023; and
- The Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration's RSA-911 data for DARS and data submitted and entered into Federal RSA's data dashboards.

Key Informant and Focus Group Interviews

Instrument. The instruments used for the individual and focus group interviews (Appendix A) were developed by the researchers at SDSU and reviewed and revised by DARS.

Interview population. The individual and focus group population consisted of DARS staff, community partners, and individuals with disabilities. A total of 67 people were interviewed individually for this assessment and 29 were interviewed as part of a focus group. The interviews were held in-person and virtually. Interviews were held during the period of November 2024 through January 2025.

Data collection. The general format of the interviews was consistent between participants regardless of their group. First, participants were asked questions to ascertain their personal and professional experience with or knowledge of DARS. Participants were then asked open-ended questions about their perceptions of the needs of individuals with disabilities in Virginia. Finally, participants were asked to share their perceptions of how DARS could improve their ability to help meet these needs, especially as it relates to helping consumers obtain and retain employment.

Efforts to ensure respondent anonymity. Names and other identifying characteristics were not shared with anyone by the interviewers. Participants were informed that their responses would be treated as confidential information, would not be reported with information that could be used to identify them, and would be consolidated with information from other respondents before results were reported.

Data analysis. The interviewers took notes on the discussions as they occurred. The notes were transcribed and analyzed by the researchers at SDSU. Themes or concerns that surfaced with consistency across interviews were identified and are reported as common themes in the report narrative.

Surveys

Instruments. The instruments used for the electronic surveys of individuals with disabilities, community partners, DARS staff, and businesses were developed by the project team and reviewed and revised by DARS and the SRC. These surveys are contained in Appendices B through E.

Survey population. Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as individuals with disabilities who are potential, current, or former clients of DARS. Community partners include representatives of organizations that provide services, coordinate services, or serve in an advocacy role for persons with disabilities in Virginia. DARS staff members include those working for the organization between July and November 2024.

Data collection. Data was gathered from the different populations through the use of an internet-based survey. DARS and community programs serving individuals with disabilities broadly dispersed the electronic survey via an e-mail invitation. DARS identified individuals with disabilities, partners, staff, and businesses and invited them to participate in the electronic survey effort via e-mail. Once the survey was active, DARS sent an invitation and link to the survey by e-mail. Approximately two weeks after the distribution of the initial invitation, another electronic notice was sent as both a “thank you” to those who had completed the survey and as a reminder

to those who had not. There were two additional reminder notes that were sent to the different groups. Approximately six to eight weeks after the surveys were distributed, they were closed. Survey responses were then analyzed using Qualtrics.

Efforts to ensure respondent anonymity. Respondents to the individual survey were not asked to identify themselves when completing the survey. In addition, responses to the electronic surveys were aggregated by the project team at SDSU prior to reporting results, which served to further obscure the identities of individual survey respondents.

Accessibility. The electronic survey was designed using an accessible, internet-based survey application. Respondents were provided with the name and contact information of the Project Director at SDSU in order to place requests for other alternate survey formats.

Data analysis. Data analysis consisted of computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. Open-ended survey questions, which yielded narrative responses from individuals, were analyzed by the researchers for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents.

Number of completed surveys. A total of 369 valid surveys were submitted by the different groups. A survey was considered valid if an individual completed the survey, even if they did not answer all of the questions. If an individual started a survey and did not complete it, it was considered invalid. It is difficult to gauge the return rate of the surveys as many of the e-mail notices and invitations to take the survey could have come from forwarded email invitations.

Table 1 summarizes the totals for all research types by group for this CSNA.

Table 1

Data Collection Totals by Type for Virginia DARS

Research Totals by Type and Group for Virginia DARS 2025 CSNA					
Research Method	Research Group and Count				
	Consumer	Partner	Staff	Business	Total
Electronic Survey	77	127	156	9	369
Individual Interview	4	5	58	0	67
Focus Group	2	11	16	0	29
Total participants	83	143	230	9	465

Analysis and Triangulation of Data

The data gathered from the national and agency-specific data sets, individual interviews, surveys, and focus groups were analyzed by the researchers on the project team. The common themes that emerged regarding needs of persons with disabilities from each data source were identified and compared to each other to validate the existence of needs, especially as they pertained to the

target populations of this assessment. These common themes are identified and discussed in the Findings section.

Dissemination Plans

The CSNA report is delivered to DARS and the SRC. We recommend that DARS publish the report on their website for public access.

Study Limitations

Inherent in any type of research effort are limitations that may constrain the utility of the data that is generated. Therefore, it is important to highlight some of the most significant issues that may limit the ability to generalize the needs assessment findings to larger populations. Inherent in the methods used to collect data is the potential for bias in the selection of participants. The findings that are reported reflect only the responses of those who could be reached and who were willing to participate. Individuals who were disenfranchised, dissatisfied, or who did not wish to be involved with DARS may have declined to participate in the focus group and individual interview research. A second significant concern is that the information gathered from respondents may not accurately represent the broader concerns of all potential constituents and stakeholders. Although efforts were made to gather information from a variety of stakeholders in the VR process, it would be imprudent to conclude with certainty that those who contributed to the focus groups and the individual interviews constitute a fully representative sample of all of the potential stakeholders in the VR process in Virginia.

FINDINGS

- Section 1: Overall agency performance**
- Section 2: Needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment**
- Section 3: Needs of individuals with disabilities that are minorities, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the DARS program**
- Section 4: Needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition**
- Section 5: Needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system**
- Section 6: Need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs in Virginia**
- Section 7: Needs of businesses and effectiveness in serving employers**

SECTION ONE

OVERALL AGENCY PERFORMANCE

The first section of the CSNA reports on areas of general performance by DARS. General performance refers to how well DARS is fulfilling its mission of assisting individuals with disabilities to increase their independence and employment. The area of general performance also refers to how effectively DARS performs the processes that facilitate case movement through the stages of the VR process, how well DARS adheres to the timelines for this case movement identified in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA, and DARS' policies and procedures. Finally, overall performance also refers to how successfully DARS achieves their common performance measures and the quantity and quality of employment outcomes achieved by their consumers.

The structure of this section, as well as the following sections, will include the following:

1. Data that pertains to the section in question, including observations based on the data;
2. Electronic survey results pertaining to the section;
3. Recurring/consensual themes that emerged during the individual interviews and focus groups; and
4. Recommendations to address the findings in each area of the assessment.

The time-period covered by the data in this Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment is the three-year period from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2024. The data on agency performance included in this section comes from the RSA data dashboards and the case management system used by DARS.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following recurring themes emerged in the area of Overall Agency Performance:

1. DARS staff were characterized as motivated and dedicated to serving DARS customers. The agency hires staff that are caring and compassionate and committed to the mission of the agency.
2. The primary challenge facing DARS related to the ability to meet the needs of their consumers has been recruitment and retention of staff. The attrition rate has been particularly high in Northern Virginia. While DARS has been able to obtain salary increases that have helped, the vacancy rate remains a challenge to effectively meeting the needs of consumers in affected areas.

3. DARS has been focusing on rapid engagement of consumers, and this has helped to reduce wait times and speed up eligibility determinations and IPE development time frames.
4. DARS is serving an increasing number of consumers annually and the number of individuals exiting in employment is increasing year to year. The agency is exceeding its negotiated target rates in all of the WIOA common performance measures, with the exception of the MSG rate. It is important to note that the agency's MSG rate is one of the highest in the nation.
5. The quality of placements provided by ESOs needs to improve. Recurring concerns included:
 - a. Placement in low paying, entry-level positions only. This leads to high turnover and low retention rates.
 - b. Placement in jobs that are available right away rather than in jobs that are consistent with what the consumer wants or what is indicated on the IPE.
 - c. Lack of focus on jobs that include career pathways or opportunities for advancement.
6. Postsecondary education is not a common pathway for many consumers. While there are more individuals in vocational or career/technical training programs, academic training is not frequently used.
7. The administrative burden on counseling staff related to gathering and reporting data adversely affects the ability of staff to provide meaningful counseling and guidance to consumers.

***NATIONAL, STATE, LOCAL AND AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA
RELATED TO OVERALL AGENCY PERFORMANCE***

The project team gathered data from national and state data sets to provide information to DARS and to interested parties related to population, disability prevalence, income, poverty, educational attainment, unemployment, and labor force participation in Virginia. Where available, we have included information specific to the six DARS service areas. The project team is hopeful that this information will provide DARS and their partners with data that can guide resource allocation and future planning.

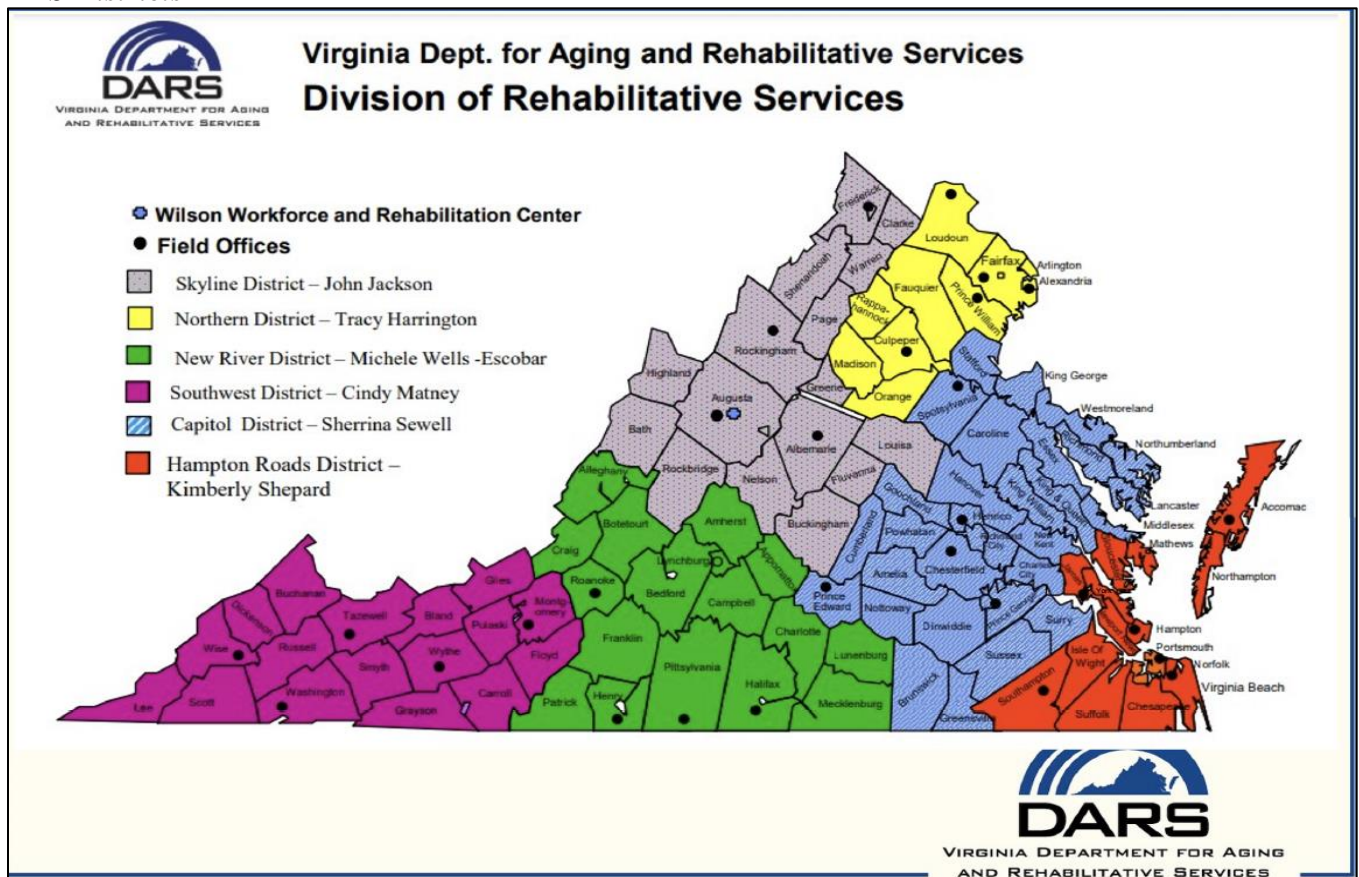
General Trends of DARS with State and National Comparisons

An understanding of the geographic composition of the state, and knowledge of the state’s structure of populations is beneficial in order to better serve the VR consumer. In this section, geographic information and demographic data regarding the state’s population, age, income, home value, poverty, and education level are presented with comparisons to the nation and local regions.

Geographic Composition and DRS Locations

DARS provides rehabilitative services to people with disabilities via the Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS). The agency divides the state into six service districts using the Commonwealth of Virginia’s 95 county boundaries. It is important to note that Virginia’s 38 independent cities are not legally part of the county where the city is located and are treated as independent equivalents to counties. The data calculated for this report is based on the 133 counties and county equivalents (independent cities) as determined by state and local government agencies.

Map 1
DRS Districts



An alpha-numeric code has been applied to each regional office for ease of reference in reading this report.

*Table 2
District Office Codes*

Code	District Office
DO1	Skyline
DO2	Northern
DO3	Southwest
DO4	New River
DO5	Capitol
DO6	Hampton Roads

Thirty-two offices exist within the state that are designated as district offices and field offices which include two fabrication shops, a technology lab, and two evaluation centers. Table 3 details the office types and locations.

*Table 3
DARS Office Locations*

District	Office Name and Address
DO1: Skyline	DRS Charlottesville Office 1490 Pantops Mountain Place, Suite 100, Charlottesville, VA 22911
	DRS Fishersville Office 50 Andrew Russell Lane, Suite A, Fishersville, VA 22939
	DRS Harrisonburg Office 351 N. Mason Street, Suite 109, Harrisonburg, VA 22802
	DRS Skyline District Office 351 N. Mason Street, Suite 109 Harrisonburg, VA 22802
	DRS Winchester Office 20 Ricketts Drive, Winchester, VA 22601
DO2: Northern	DRS Alexandria Office 5904 Old Richmond Highway, Suite 410, Alexandria, VA 22303
	DRS Culpeper Office 19006 Crossroad Parkway, Culpeper VA 22701

District	Office Name and Address
	DRS Fairfax Office (including AT Lab) 11150 Fairfax Blvd. #300, Fairfax, VA 22030
	DRS Leesburg Office Leesburg Square Professional Building, 722 E. Market Street Ste 202, Leesburg, VA 20176
	DRS Manassas Office and Evaluation Center 7900 Sudley Road Suite 309, Manassas VA 20109
	Northern District 9300 W Courthouse Road, Suite 302, Manassas, VA 20110
DO3: Southwest	DRS Abingdon Office 207 Abingdon Place, Abingdon, VA 24211
	DRS Christiansburg Office 207 W. Main Street Suite #1, Christiansburg, VA 24073
	DRS Norton Office 949 Park Avenue SW, Norton, VA 24273
	DRS Pounding Mill Office 113 Short Street, Suite #22 Pounding Mill, VA 24637
	DRS Wytheville Office Carroll Hall, Suite 233, 1000 East Main Street, Wytheville, VA 24382
	Southwest District Office 207 Abingdon Place, Abingdon, VA 24211
DO4: New River	Office Name and Address
	DRS Danville Office 3280 Riverside Drive, Suite 280, Danville, VA 24541
	DRS Lynchburg Office 2250 Murrell Road, Suite F, Lynchburg, VA 24501
DRS Martinsville Office Virginia Workforce Center, 233 W. Commonwealth Boulevard, Martinsville, VA 24112	

District	Office Name and Address
	DRS Roanoke Office and Evaluation Center 111 Franklin Road SE, Suite 302, Roanoke, VA 24011
	DRS South Boston Office 2506 Houghton Avenue, South Boston, VA 24592
	Fabrication Shop 3764 Peters Creek Road, SW, Suite B, Roanoke, VA 24018
	New River District 111 Franklin Road, Suite 302, Roanoke, VA 24011
DO5: Capitol	DRS Capitol District Office 8004 Franklin Farms Drive, Richmond, VA 23230
	DRS Chesterfield Office 720 Moorefield Park Dr. Ste 200, N. Chesterfield, VA 23236
	DRS Farmville Office The Shoppes at Sunchase, 223 Sunchase Boulevard, Farmville, VA 23901
	DRS Fredericksburg Office 10300 Spotsylvania Ave, Suite 220, Fredericksburg, VA 22408
	DRS Greater Richmond Office 2001 Maywill Street, Suite 202, Richmond, VA 23230
	DRS Petersburg Office 2795 S. Crater Road, Suite 1, Petersburg, VA 23805
	Richmond Fabrication Shop 2002 Westmoreland Street, Richmond, VA 232320
DO6: Hampton Roads	DRS Eastern Shore Office VA Employment Commission Bldg. 25036 Lankford Highway, Onley, VA 23418
	DRS Franklin Office 100 N College Dr. Suite 216B, Franklin, VA 23851
	DRS Hampton Roads District Office 2101 Executive Drive, Suite 230 Hampton, VA 23666
	DRS Hampton/Newport News 2101 Executive Drive, Suite 230 Hampton, VA 23666

District	Office Name and Address
	DRS Portsmouth Office 601 Port Centre Parkway, Suite 100 Portsmouth, VA 23704
	DRS South Hampton Roads Office Bldg. 7, Suite 101 6340 Center Drive, Norfolk, VA 23502
	DRS Williamsburg Office 304 Bulifants Blvd, Suite 103 Williamsburg, VA 23188

Population

Population (raw number of people in area) and population density (number of people per square mile of land) identify where customers may be located in the state and assists with developing service delivery strategies (i.e., DARS office locations, number of staff members) in a region.

Table 4 contains the total population data for the Commonwealth of Virginia calculated by districts. The table cites the United States Census Bureau July 1, 2023 Annual Population Estimates of the Resident Population for the nation and state. County data is taken from the Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties in Virginia: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2023. Rural and urban data is taken from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 1-Year estimates.

*Table 4
Local District Population for Virginia*

Geographic Area	Total Population CSNA 2024	Percent of VA Pop. CSNA 2024
United States	334,914,895	NA
United States -- Urban	266,018,160	NA
United States -- Rural	67,269,402	NA
Virginia	8,715,698	VA = 2.6% of U.S. Pop.
Virginia -- Urban	6,558,583	VA = 2.5% of U.S. Urban Pop.
Virginia -- Rural	2,125,036	VA = 3.2% of U.S. Rural Pop.
DO1: Skyline	840,867	9.6%
DO2: Northern	2,746,397	31.5%
DO3: Southwest	546,193	6.3%
DO4: New River	868,880	10.0%
DO5: Capitol	1,914,284	22.0%

Geographic Area	Total Population CSNA 2024	Percent of VA Pop. CSNA 2024
DO6: Hampton Roads	1,799,077	20.6%

Sources: United States Census Bureau, Annual Population Estimates of the Resident Population for the Nation and State; Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties in Virginia: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2023; American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 1-Year estimates.

In 2023, Virginia ranked as the 12th most populous state in the nation and makes up 2.6 percent of the United States population. The U.S. Census Bureau Annual Estimates of Resident Population Change State Rankings ending July 2023 indicated that Virginia increased in numeric population size by 36,599 people and ranked in the 8th position for numeric growth compared to the 49 other states in the U.S. during the period from July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023. Virginia's overall numeric population increased by over 84,325 during the period of April 20, 2020 to July 1, 2023, resulting in a population change of 1 percent and Virginia ranking in position fourteen compared to the other 49 states.

The U.S. Census Bureau collaborated with the U.S. Department of Commerce to determine population density rates for 2010 to 2020. Excluding Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, Virginia ranked 14th out of 50 States in 2020 with a population density average of 218.6 people per square mile.

Land and Urbanization

Virginia, located in the eastern United States, is bordered by West Virginia, the District of Columbia, Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. The total area of Virginia is 42,775 square miles (39,490 square miles of land; 3,285 square miles of water). Virginia is the 36th largest state in the nation in terms of land area, 15th in the nation for water area, and 35th in the U.S. for total area.

The criteria and definitions for rural and urban areas based on the 2020 Census are defined as follows:

- *Rural: Territory not defined as urban.*
- *Urban: Generally, densely developed territory, encompassing residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses within which social and economic interactions occur.*
- *Urban Area: A statistical geographic entity consisting of a densely settled core created from census blocks and contiguous qualifying territory that together have at least 2,000 housing units or 5,000 persons.*

The U.S. Census Bureau published a list of all 2020 Census Urban Areas for the U.S., Puerto Rico, and Island Areas. Virginia has 51 urban areas within the state and six urban areas that are located partially in the state. In 2020, the Census Bureau identified one new urban area in Virginia. The data collected in 2020 also indicated that 75.6 percent of Virginia's population is

considered urban, and 24.4 percent of the population resides in territories that are considered rural. The Washington-Arlington urban area is located partially in the state (shared with the District of Columbia and Maryland) and is the 8th most populous urban area in the nation. The Virginia Beach urban area is the most densely populated urban area in Virginia that is fully in the state and has a population density of roughly 3,014 people per square mile. Table 5 contains details of the new urban area, including population density and the DARS district the area is located in.

Table 5
2020 Census: New Urban Areas in Virginia

Urban Area	District and County	Population	Population Density	Land Area (square miles)
Chincoteague	DO6: Accomack	3,223	793.99	4.06

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural/2020-ua-facts.html>

The Census Bureau published a list of areas that were classified as urban in the 2010 Census that changed to be designated as rural based on the 2020 Census new urban and rural criteria. Table 6 contains a list of the areas that were designated rural in 2020 along with the county and district office area region.

Table 6
2010 Urban Areas that Changed to Rural in 2020

Urban Area Changed to Rural Area	DARS District	County
Berryville, VA	DO1	Clarke
Blackstone, VA	DO5	Nottoway
Chase City, VA	DO4	Mecklenburg
Coeburn, VA	DO3	Wise
Crewe, VA	DO5	Nottoway
Dahlgren, VA--MD	DO5	King George
Gloucester Courthouse, VA	DO6	Gloucester
Grottoes, VA	DO1	Augusta and Rockingham
King George, VA	DO5	King George
Lake Land'Or, VA	DO5	Caroline
Lawrenceville, VA	DO5	Brunswick
Lebanon, VA	DO3	Russell
Narrows, VA--WV	DO3	Giles
Pearisburg, VA	DO3	Giles
Ruckersville, VA	DO1	Greene

Urban Area Changed to Rural Area	DARS District	County
Stuarts Draft, VA	DO1	Augusta
Tappahannock, VA	DO5	Essex
Twin Lakes, VA	DO2	Fairfax
West Point, VA	DO5	King William
Weyers Cave, VA	DO1	Augusta

Source: List of 2010 Census Urban Areas that are Classified as Rural in 2020; <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>

The U.S. Census Bureau published county-level urban and rural information for the 2020 census. Alexandria city had the highest county-level population density with roughly 10,677.22 people per square mile. The urban population density of Arlington County is second highest in the state compared to Alexandria’s urban population density (same as the county-level rate). Thirty-eight counties/equivalents have 100 percent of their population residing in rural blocks. Highland County has the lowest population density (5.38 people per square mile), and Bath County has the second lowest population density of 7.95 people per square mile. Table 7 details the 2020 county-level, urban, and rural population density averages for each county in Virginia along with percentage rates of the county population that reside within urban and rural blocks.

Table 7

Virginia County-level Urban and Rural Information: 2020 Census

County or County equivalent	2020 population density of the County (square miles)	2020 total blocks within the County	Percent of the 2020 Census population of the County within Urban blocks	2020 Urban population density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Urban within County	Percent of the 2020 Census population in the County within Rural blocks	2020 Rural population density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Rural within County
District 1								
Albemarle	156.00	2,046	59.63%	2,153.33	627	40.37%	65.83	1,419
Augusta	80.13	2,076	15.74%	929.74	179	84.26%	68.45	1,897
Bath	7.95	345	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	7.95	345
Buckingham	29.03	667	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	29.03	667
Clarke	84.03	529	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	84.03	529
Fluvanna	94.91	627	36.06%	1,553.30	130	63.94%	62.05	497
Frederick	221.28	1,650	60.59%	1,638.59	562	39.41%	94.98	1,088
Greene	131.79	348	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	131.79	348

County or County equivalent	2020 population density of the County (square miles)	2020 total blocks within the County	Percent of the 2020 Census population of the County within Urban blocks	2020 Urban population density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Urban within County	Percent of the 2020 Census population in the County within Rural blocks	2020 Rural population density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Rural within County
Highland	5.38	327	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	5.38	327
Louisa	75.94	984	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	75.94	984
Nelson	31.39	969	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	31.39	969
Page	76.48	934	20.00%	1,156.92	199	80.00%	62.00	735
Rockbridge	37.97	1,223	9.92%	792.83	62	90.08%	34.37	1,161
Rockingham	98.56	2,531	40.72%	1,439.53	711	59.28%	60.10	1,820
Shenandoah	86.97	1,519	30.38%	1,683.86	222	69.62%	61.51	1,297
Warren	189.78	1,047	39.76%	1,512.37	380	60.24%	120.33	667
Buena Vista city	1,031.51	285	97.82%	1,625.90	259	2.18%	59.36	26
Charlottesville city	4,543.97	648	100.00%	4,547.02	647	0.00%	0.00	1
Harrisonburg city	2,988.27	631	99.38%	3,255.83	621	0.62%	211.32	10
Lexington city	2,928.91	146	100.00%	2,929.37	145	0.00%	0.00	1
Staunton city	1,292.65	521	97.86%	1,800.40	497	2.14%	93.17	24
Waynesboro city	1,482.73	671	97.65%	1,800.90	658	2.35%	177.88	13
Winchester city	3,058.90	510	100.00%	3,058.90	510	0.00%	0.00	0
District 2								
Arlington	9,179.54	2,146	100.00%	9,179.54	2,146	0.00%	0.00	0
Culpeper	138.59	1,055	42.93%	2,407.88	339	57.07%	81.09	
Fairfax	2,941.83	8,930	98.46%	3,638.33	8,418	1.54%	222.44	512
Fauquier	112.61	1,600	42.54%	1,440.32	340	57.46%	66.93	1,260
Loudoun	816.23	5,882	88.05%	2,854.81	4,253	11.95%	130.32	1,629
Madison	43.15	528	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	43.15	528
Orange	106.29	1,092	43.32%	1,574.52	191	56.68%	62.07	901
Prince William	1,438.32	4,119	95.41%	2,965.89	3,514	4.59%	123.00	605
Rappahannock	27.59	444	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	27.59	444
Alexandria city	10,677.22	1,230	100.00%	10,677.22	1,230	0.00%	0.00	0

County or County equivalent	2020 population density of the County (square miles)	2020 total blocks within the County	Percent of the 2020 Census population of the County within Urban blocks	2020 Urban population density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Urban within County	Percent of the 2020 Census population in the County within Rural blocks	2020 Rural population density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Rural within County
Fairfax city	3,869.29	310	100.00%	3,869.29	310	0.00%	0.00	0
Falls Church city	7,162.71	164	100.00%	7,162.71	164	0.00%	0.00	0
Manassas city	4,345.45	409	100.00%	4,476.32	407	0.00%	0.00	2
Manassas Park city	5,675.72	103	100.00%	5,675.72	103	0.00%	0.00	0
District 3								
Bland	17.53	456	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	17.53	456
Buchanan	40.48	1,086	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	40.48	1,086
Carroll	61.41	1,224	2.37%	833.99	17	97.63%	60.06	1,207
Dickenson	42.74	736	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	42.74	736
Floyd	40.63	709	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	40.63	709
Giles	46.99	921	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	46.99	921
Grayson	34.71	971	0.11%	5,712.99	2	99.89%	34.67	969
Lee	50.93	1,237	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	50.93	1,237
Montgomery	257.78	1,832	73.92%	2,095.97	918	26.08%	73.97	914
Pulaski	105.68	1,155	57.41%	1,036.30	599	42.59%	47.81	556
Russell	54.45	1,389	0.61%	672.00	7	99.39%	54.14	1,382
Scott	40.27	1,399	1.69%	588.15	5	98.31%	39.63	1,394
Smyth	66.01	1,434	24.43%	1,015.74	336	75.57%	50.69	1,098
Tazewell	77.93	1,781	47.71%	854.60	682	52.29%	42.61	1,099
Washington	96.11	2,091	30.83%	795.47	439	69.17%	69.05	1,652
Wise	89.56	1,559	34.61%	906.89	464	65.39%	60.63	1,095
Wythe	61.24	1,293	25.29%	1,196.21	323	74.71%	46.35	970
Bristol city	1,337.80	611	98.98%	1,518.81	588	1.02%	106.68	23
Galax city	815.90	220	90.15%	1,046.66	198	9.85%	270.38	22
Norton city	493.10	171	90.10%	888.90	157	9.90%	97.59	14
Radford city	1,660.75	418	95.81%	2,350.18	405	4.19%	215.66	13

County or County equivalent	2020 population density of the County (square miles)	2020 total blocks within the County	Percent of the 2020 Census population of the County within Urban blocks	2020 Urban population density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Urban within County	Percent of the 2020 Census population in the County within Rural blocks	2020 Rural population density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Rural within County
District 4								
Alleghany	34.09	818	46.86%	1,081.07	313	53.14%	18.39	505
Amherst	66.05	1,008	37.63%	728.05	155	62.37%	42.65	853
Appomattox	48.23	527	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	48.23	527
Bedford	104.54	1,847	29.27%	924.24	359	70.73%	76.48	1,488
Botetourt	62.07	1,031	40.56%	698.63	218	59.44%	38.27	813
Campbell	110.68	1,217	43.14%	1,118.94	383	56.86%	65.73	834
Charlotte	24.26	793	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	24.26	793
Craig	14.91	351	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	14.91	351
Franklin	78.88	1,503	9.93%	800.88	122	90.07%	71.75	1,381
Halifax	41.61	1,622	21.79%	1,200.15	302	78.21%	32.79	1,320
Henry	133.25	1,344	34.94%	612.34	430	65.06%	93.83	914
Lunenburg	27.65	769	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	27.65	769
Mecklenburg	48.49	1,877	16.74%	815.70	207	83.26%	40.77	1,670
Patrick	36.46	939	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	36.46	939
Pittsylvania	62.44	2,113	10.94%	770.55	92	89.06%	56.10	2,021
Roanoke	386.87	1,418	80.59%	1,593.66	1,011	19.41%	93.36	407
Covington city	1,049.07	295	99.36%	1,122.13	290	0.64%	95.10	5
Danville city	995.16	1,040	96.77%	1,396.46	930	3.23%	103.45	110
Lynchburg city	1,613.21	1,464	98.38%	1,861.07	1,405	1.62%	177.14	59
Martinsville city	1,230.89	307	99.92%	1,256.82	304	0.08%	46.87	3
Roanoke city	2,352.04	2,665	99.99%	2,364.98	2,662	0.01%	17.07	3
Salem city	1,746.19	624	100.00%	1,746.19	624	0.00%	0.00	0
District 5								
Amelia	37.33	430	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	37.33	430
Brunswick	27.99	1,041	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	27.99	1,041

County or County equivalent	2020 population density of the County (square miles)	2020 total blocks within the County	Percent of the 2020 Census population of the County within Urban blocks	2020 Urban population density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Urban within County	Percent of the 2020 Census population in the County within Rural blocks	2020 Rural population density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Rural within County
Caroline	58.57	1,192	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	58.57	1,192
Charles City	37.03	230	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	37.03	230
Chesterfield	860.79	3,663	91.97%	1,665.45	3,260	8.03%	131.76	403
Cumberland	32.52	402	6.70%	1,024.82	19	93.30%	30.41	383
Dinwiddie	55.46	1,023	28.34%	957.39	118	71.66%	40.41	905
Essex	41.19	418	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	41.19	418
Goochland	87.68	780	7.27%	593.67	30	92.73%	82.18	750
Greensville	38.58	540	12.22%	672.07	42	87.78%	34.11	498
Hanover	235.19	1,766	62.99%	1,338.66	882	37.01%	97.87	884
Henrico	1,431.01	5,120	96.31%	2,307.07	4,660	3.69%	131.29	460
King and Queen	20.97	374	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	20.97	374
King George	148.77	458	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	148.77	458
King William	65.02	599	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	65.02	599
Lancaster	81.91	419	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	81.91	419
Middlesex	81.52	444	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	81.52	444
New Kent	109.24	570	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	109.24	570
Northumberland	61.84	558	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	61.84	558
Nottoway	49.75	978	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	49.75	978
Powhatan	116.58	560	1.91%	1,184.03	16	98.09%	114.57	544
Prince Edward	62.44	748	33.26%	1,225.51	177	66.74%	42.38	571
Prince George	162.09	826	50.94%	1,577.42	285	49.06%	83.91	541
Richmond	46.60	292	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	46.60	292
Spotsylvania	348.85	1,859	67.96%	1,880.28	863	32.04%	127.90	996
Stafford	582.93	1,601	81.35%	1,872.29	1,181	18.65%	145.57	420
Surry	23.52	387	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	23.52	387
Sussex	22.09	886	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	22.09	886

County or County equivalent	2020 population density of the County (square miles)	2020 total blocks within the County	Percent of the 2020 Census population of the County within Urban blocks	2020 Urban population density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Urban within County	Percent of the 2020 Census population in the County within Rural blocks	2020 Rural population density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Rural within County
Westmoreland	80.57	780	21.51%	2,298.57	187	78.49%	63.72	593
Colonial Heights city	2,416.40	394	100.00%	2,417.81	393	0.00%	0.00	1
Emporia city	835.18	192	95.02%	1,225.40	175	4.98%	117.98	17
Fredericksburg city	2,677.61	497	100.00%	2,677.61	497	0.00%	0.00	0
Hopewell city	2,224.49	778	99.97%	2,242.38	772	0.03%	92.81	6
Petersburg city	1,472.60	886	97.29%	1,880.46	849	2.71%	167.48	37
Richmond city	3,781.58	4,731	100.00%	3,846.00	4,727	0.00%	0.00	4
District 6								
Accomack	74.36	2,184	9.65%	794.00	124	90.35%	67.80	2,060
Gloucester	177.73	605	27.43%	1,333.62	142	72.57%	133.87	463
Isle of Wight	122.29	946	41.55%	1,271.59	189	58.45%	74.46	757
James City	549.93	913	85.84%	1,274.14	669	14.16%	123.71	244
Mathews	99.32	261	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	99.32	261
Northampton	58.01	968	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	58.01	968
Southampton	30.03	1,083	1.76%	1,385.58	16	98.24%	29.52	1,067
York	668.96	1,078	92.94%	1,537.88	749	7.06%	79.32	329
Chesapeake city	736.94	2,964	92.27%	2,455.18	2,642	7.73%	78.81	322
Franklin city	988.25	204	96.05%	1,563.66	182	3.95%	99.31	22
Hampton city	2,665.12	2,230	99.68%	2,849.78	2,186	0.32%	124.19	44
Newport News city	2,699.70	2,302	99.63%	3,404.98	2,220	0.37%	48.02	82
Norfolk city	4,467.51	4,371	100.00%	4,467.51	4,365	0.00%	0.00	6
Poquoson city	811.38	129	91.12%	1,558.98	61	8.88%	137.10	68
Portsmouth city	2,940.35	2,179	100.00%	2,940.35	2,179	0.00%	0.00	0
Suffolk city	236.31	1,735	72.94%	1,939.10	921	27.06%	70.17	814

County or County equivalent	2020 population density of the County (square miles)	2020 total blocks within the County	Percent of the 2020 Census population of the County within Urban blocks	2020 Urban population density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Urban within County	Percent of the 2020 Census population in the County within Rural blocks	2020 Rural population density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Rural within County
Virginia Beach city	1,877.52	5,173	98.19%	3,375.17	4,899	1.81%	75.08	274
Williamsburg city	1,725.75	233	99.88%	1,743.80	232	0.12%	175.09	1

Source: County-level Urban and Rural information for the 2020 Census (Updated September 2023); <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>

The Office of Rural Health Policy and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) determine geographic eligibility for grant funding and for various local programming. The following information is provided to assist DARS in its efforts to support customers who are in need of health services and may qualify for local rural programs. Table 8 lists the counties in Virginia that are considered rural. Urban counties that contain rural census tracts and the number of rural census tracts located within the urban counties are included. The information for the following table is taken from the 2021 update of the Office of Rural Health Policy’s “List of Rural Counties and Designated Eligible Census Tracts in Metropolitan Counties.”

*Table 8
Virginia’s Rural Counties from the OMB and the Office of Rural Health Policy*

District	Rural Counties	Urban Counties and Number of Rural Census Tracts	100 Percent Urban Counties
DO1	Bath; Buckingham; Clarke; Fluvanna; Greene; Highland; Louisa; Nelson; Page; Rockbridge; Shenandoah; Warren; Buena Vista city; Lexington city		Albemarle; Augusta; Fredrick; Rockingham; Charlottesville city; Harrisonburg city; Staunton city; Waynesboro city; Winchester city
DO2	Culpepper; Madison; Orange; Rappahannock		Arlington; Fairfax; Fauquier; Loudoun; Prince William; Alexandria city; Fairfax city; Falls Church city; Manassas city; Manassas Park city
DO3	Bland; Buchanan; Carroll; Dickenson; Floyd; Giles; Grayson; Lee; Russell; Symth; Tazewell; Wise; Wythe; Galax city; Norton city	Pulaski (8)	Montgomery; Scott; Washington; Bristol city; Radford city

DO4	Alleghany; Appomattox; Charlotte; Craig; Franklin; Halifax; Henry; Lunenburg; Mecklenburg; Patrick; Pittsylvania; Covington city; Danville city; Martinsville city	Amherst (1); Bedford (2); Campbell (1)	Botetourt; Roanoke County; Lynchburg city; Roanoke city; Salem city
DO5	Amelia; Brunswick; Caroline; Charles City; Cumberland; Essex; Greenville; King and Queen; King George; King William; Lancaster; Middlesex; New Kent; Northumberland; Nottoway; Prince Edward; Richmond; Surry; Sussex; Westmoreland; Emporia city	Dinwiddie (1); Goochland (1):	Chesterfield; Hanover; Henrico; Powhatan; Prince George; Spotsylvania; Stafford; Colonial Heights city; Fredericksburg city; Hopewell city; Petersburg city; Richmond city
DO6	Accomack; Mathews; Northampton; Southampton; Franklin city		Gloucester; Isle of Wight; James City; York; Chesapeake city; Hampton city; Newport News city; Norfolk city; Poquoson city; Portsmouth city; Suffolk city; Virginia Beach city; Williamsburg city

<https://data.hrsa.gov/Content/Documents/tools/rural-health/forhpeligibleareas.pdf#search=rural-health%20eligible%20areas>

Report Note: Several tables throughout this report contain data from the United States Census Bureau. The Census Bureau provides understanding of the features of the data for comparing and utilizing the data to answer real-world questions. One-year estimates from the American Community Survey are 12 months of the most current data collected from January 1 through December 31st of the sample year. One year data is collected for population areas of 65,000 or more and is the smallest sample size of the most current data available. Although considered less reliable than five-year estimates, one-year data is best used when current data is more important than precision and for analyzing large populations.

Five- year estimates are 60 months of collected data beginning with January 1st and through December 31 of the 5-year sample period. Five-year estimates contain data for all areas, is the largest sample size, and the most reliable data but the least current. Five-year estimates are used when precision is more important than currency and for analyzing small populations, examining smaller tracts and other smaller geographies because 1-year estimates are not available.

In an effort to compare the most current national and state data accurately and provide a picture of the county and county equivalents precisely, data for the nation and state are taken from the Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 1-Year estimates. U.S. Census Bureau data referenced for counties and county equivalents taken from the 2022 ACS 1-year and 5-Year estimates.

Age, Income, and Home Value

Understanding a population's age composition provides insight into an area's changing phenomena, and current and future social and economic challenges. Income is the gauge often used to determine well-being. Home value provides a picture of the housing situation in the area and insight into the local economic status.

Median Age and Median Working Age

The median age and median working age for the Commonwealth of Virginia reflect the national averages. The district office areas have median age and median working age averages higher than the national general and urban averages. Table 9 provides the statistics for median age and median working age in Virginia.

Table 9

Median Age and Median Working Age

Geographic Area	Median Age	Median Age Workers 16 to 64
<i>United States</i>	39	39.5
<i>United States -- Urban</i>	37.9	38.9
<i>United States -- Rural</i>	43.4	42.3
<i>Virginia</i>	39	39.8
<i>Virginia -- Urban</i>	37.2	39
<i>Virginia -- Rural</i>	45.5	42.9
<i>DO1</i>	41.7	39.7
<i>DO2</i>	39.4	40.8
<i>DO3</i>	44.1	40.7
<i>DO4</i>	44.2	41.9
<i>DO5</i>	42.8	41.3
<i>DO6</i>	40.7	39.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Median Household Income and Median Home Value

The median household incomes for the nation and the state are \$74,755 and \$85,873 respectively. Virginia's median household income ranked 12th in the nation in 2022 as New Jersey had the highest average (\$96,346) and Mississippi had the lowest average (\$52,719). Virginia's rural median household income is higher than the national rural average by \$1,523.

The median home value for the United States (\$320,900) is lower than Virginia's average (\$365,700) by \$44,800. The urban median home value for the nation is below Virginia's urban average by \$48,700 and the nation's rural median home value is lower than the state rural average by \$39,200. Compared to other states, Virginia's statewide median home value ranks 17th (ranking is from the highest to lowest), with Hawaii's average securing the top position at \$820,100. Virginia's rural median home value ranks in the 22nd position and the urban average ranks 13th compared to the averages of the 50 states.

DO3 has the lowest median household income average and ranges in the state, and the lowest median home values. The median household income average in DO3 is lower than the national and state general, urban and rural averages by more than \$20,000. DO3's average median home value is also significantly lower than the national general average by \$180,171 and lower than the state's general median home value average by \$224,971.

DO2's median household income average and median home value average exceed the national general, urban, and rural averages by more than \$30,000. Note that DO2 is home to slightly less than one-third of Virginia's total population (31.5%) and 6 of the 14 county/county equivalents in the district are considered 100 percent urban. Loudoun County's median household income (\$170,463) is significantly higher than all of the national and state averages. Falls Church City's median home value is \$938,500, which is over double the national and Commonwealth of Virginia's general and urban averages.

Table 10 details the averages for median household income and median home value.

*Table 10
Median Household Income and Median Home Value*

Geographic Area	Median Household Income	Household Income Ranges	Home Value 2022	Home Value Ranges	Census Bureau Estimate Type
United States	\$74,755	\$52,719 (MS) - \$96,346 (NJ)	\$320,900	\$155,100 (WV) - \$820,100 (HI)	1-Year Supplemental
United States -- Urban	\$75,706	\$52,840 (MS) - \$94,871 (HI)	\$349,800	\$163,100 (WV) - \$854,700 (HI)	1-Year Supplemental
United States -- Rural	\$71,100	\$52,621 (MS) - \$119,993 (RI)	\$242,200	\$146,300 (MS) - \$609,300 (HI)	1-Year Supplemental
Virginia	\$85,873	\$36,974 (Norton city) - \$170,463 (Loudoun)	\$365,700	\$80,100 (Covington city) - \$938,500 (Falls Church city)	1-Year Supplemental; Ranges = 5-year
VA -- Urban	\$91,137	-----	\$398,500	-----	1-Year Supplemental
VA -- Rural	\$72,623	-----	\$281,400	-----	1-Year Supplemental
DO1	\$70,996	\$48,783 (Buena Vista city) - \$107,475 (Clarke)	\$269,387	\$148,800 (Buena Vista city) - \$496,600 (Clarke)	5-year
DO2	\$118,612	\$74,586 (Madison) - \$170,463 (Loudon)	\$546,100	\$311,500 (Madison) - \$938,500 (Falls Church city)	5-year
DO3	\$49,357	\$36,974 (Norton city) - \$65,270 (Montgomery)	\$140,729	\$84,900 (Buchanan) - \$269,300 (Montgomery)	5-year
DO4	\$57,107	\$39,127 (Martinsville city) - \$80,872 (Roanoke Co.)	\$165,827	\$80,100 (Covington city) - \$264,200 (Botetourt)	5-year
DO5	\$74,198	\$41,442 (Emporia city) - \$128,036 (Stafford)	\$259,352	\$127,000 (Brunswick) - \$438,400 (Fredericksburg city)	5-year
DO6	\$77,130	\$52,694 (Accomack) - \$114,503 (Poquoson city)	\$293,389	\$184,500 (Accomack) - \$406,700 (Poquoson city)	5-year

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 1-Year Supplemental Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Poverty

Poverty is defined as not having enough money to meet basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. Examining poverty in an area, in addition to income, provides further insight into determining the well-being of an area's population.

Poverty in Virginia for the Working Age 18 to 64 Years

Radford City (in DO3) has a significantly higher poverty rate (39.5 percent) than the national average by 27.8 percent and the rate is over triple the national urban average. Radford City is noted as the 88th largest county in Virginia for population size (16,971) in 2022 and 95.81 percent of the population resides in urban blocks according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The county is considered completely urban by the Office of Rural Health Policy and the OMB.

Conversely, in DO2, Falls Church City’s poverty rate (2.6 percent) is less than half of the national geographical averages. Falls Church City’s median household income (\$164,536) is the second largest in the Commonwealth of Virginia and is significantly higher than the national and state general and urban averages. As previously noted, Falls Church City’s median home value is over double the national and Commonwealth of Virginia’s general and urban averages.

Table 11 presents the average poverty rate and the range of poverty rates for the civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 18 to 64. District office area averages are calculated by adding the numeric count for those living below poverty in the area and dividing the total into the numeric count of the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP) ages 18 to 64 residing in the DO area.

Table 11

Poverty Rates: Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population Ages 18 to 64 Years

Geographic Area	Average Poverty Rate 18 to 64 years	Lowest Level	Highest Level
United States	11.7%	New Hampshire 7.1%	West Virginia 17.7%
United States -- Urban	11.9%	Rhode Island 3.2%	New Mexico 17.8%
United States -- Rural	11.0%	New Hampshire 7.9%	West Virginia 19.3%
Virginia	10.3%	Falls Church city 2.6%	Radford city 39.5%
VA -- Urban	10.1%	-----	-----
VA -- Rural	10.8%	-----	-----
DO1	12.1%	Clarke 5.5%	Harrisonburg 32.2%
DO2	5.5%	Falls Church city 2.6%	Orange 11.9%
DO3	20.5%	Giles 9.1%	Radford city 39.5%
DO4	13.4%	Roanoke Co. 7.2%	Martinsville city 23.2%
DO5	9.2%	New Kent 3.6%	Petersburg city 20.7%
DO6	9.9%	Poquoson 3.9%	Williamsburg city 17.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Internet Accessibility

Access to fast and reliable high-speed internet service offers the opportunity to participate equally in society and engage in the global community. Internet access has become as important a measure of capacity and function as reliable transportation. The pandemic made high-speed reliable internet service essential for many jobs and an integral component of any assessment of the individual's ability to participate in VR services. A study of internet access is especially important in a state where there is a large rural area, as previous studies have shown that many rural communities lack infrastructure and access to internet and satellite networks.

Internet Accessibility in Virginia

Over 87 percent of households in Virginia’s districts have one or more computing devices. Although DO3 has the lowest rate (87.5 percent), the rates for the remaining individual counties range between 88.0 to 97.7 percent. When comparing the rates of internet subscription service in Virginia’s districts, the rates vary from a low of 79 percent in DO3 to 95.3 percent in DO2. Residents in Virginia have higher rates of cellular data plan use in their households than broadband such as cable, fiber optic, or DSL service. Key findings include: 1) internet subscription rates in five of the six DARS districts of VA are below the national averages; 2) over 14 percent of DO1, DO3, and DO4 households are without any internet access; and 3) rates for access to online services via cellular data only, in DO1 and DO4, are higher than 15 percent, and the rates are higher than the national average of 11.2 percent and the national rural average of 14.5 percent.

*Table 12
Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions: U.S. and VA, including Urban and Rural Areas*

	United States	U.S. -- Urban	U.S. -- Rural	Virginia	VA -- Urban	VA -- Rural
Total households	129,870,928	103,990,597	25,880,331	3,380,607	2,545,833	834,774
TYPES OF COMPUTERS						
Has one or more types of computing devices:	95.7%	96.2%	93.8%	95.5%	96.6%	92.2%
Desktop or laptop	80.5%	81.8%	75.3%	82.7%	85.5%	74.0%
Desktop or laptop with no other type of computing device	2.5%	2.4%	3.2%	2.5%	2.3%	3.2%
Smartphone	91.3%	92.0%	88.3%	91.2%	92.6%	86.9%
Smartphone with no other type of computing device	9.5%	8.9%	11.9%	8.1%	6.8%	12.1%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer	63.9%	65.1%	59.3%	65.9%	68.4%	58.0%

	United States	U.S. -- Urban	U.S. -- Rural	Virginia	VA -- Urban	VA -- Rural
Tablet or other portable wireless computer with no other type of computing device	0.7%	0.7%	0.9%	0.7%	0.6%	0.8%
Other computer	2.5%	2.7%	2.0%	2.2%	2.3%	1.8%
Other computer with no other type of computing device	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
No computer	4.3%	3.8%	6.2%	4.5%	3.4%	7.8%
TYPES OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS						
With an Internet subscription:	91.2%	92.0%	87.7%	91.0%	92.9%	85.2%
Dial-up with no other type of Internet subscription	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%
Broadband of any type	91.0%	91.9%	87.4%	90.9%	92.8%	85.0%
Cellular data plan	85.3%	86.6%	80.2%	85.7%	88.2%	77.9%
Cellular data plan with no other type of Internet subscription	11.2%	10.4%	14.5%	11.1%	9.4%	16.3%
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL	75.9%	79.0%	63.6%	76.1%	81.5%	59.5%
Satellite Internet service	6.7%	5.5%	11.3%	6.3%	4.9%	10.5%
Without an Internet subscription	8.8%	8.0%	12.3%	9.0%	7.1%	14.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 13

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions: VA District Office Areas

	DO1	DO2	DO3	DO4	DO5	DO6
Total households	316,805	988,299	219,101	353,268	710,320	798,618
TYPES OF COMPUTERS						
Has one or more types of computing devices:	92.0%	97.7%	87.5%	88.0%	93.9%	95.4%
Desktop or laptop	77.3%	91.4%	67.0%	69.3%	80.9%	83.1%
Desktop or laptop with no other type of computing device	4.2%	2.2%	4.4%	4.4%	3.1%	2.8%
Smartphone	84.9%	93.9%	79.1%	80.8%	88.4%	90.3%

	DO1	DO2	DO3	DO4	DO5	DO6
Smartphone with no other type of computing device	9.1%	3.5%	13.3%	12.6%	8.0%	7.6%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer	59.3%	76.1%	52.5%	52.6%	64.9%	66.9%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer with no other type of computing device	0.9%	0.4%	1.6%	0.9%	0.8%	0.7%
Other computer	3.3%	3.7%	1.4%	2.6%	1.9%	2.7%
Other computer with no other type of computing device	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
No computer	8.0%	2.3%	12.5%	12.0%	6.1%	4.6%
TYPES OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS						
With an Internet subscription:	85.3%	95.3%	79.0%	80.6%	88.3%	90.2%
Dial-up with no other type of Internet subscription	0.4%	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%
Broadband of any type	84.9%	95.2%	78.7%	80.3%	88.1%	90.0%
Cellular data plan	77.4%	89.7%	67.4%	72.0%	81.9%	84.7%
Cellular data plan with no other type of Internet subscription	15.3%	7.2%	11.5%	15.8%	11.5%	11.0%
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL	62.9%	85.7%	60.8%	58.0%	72.2%	76.9%
Satellite Internet service	7.6%	4.7%	9.2%	8.1%	6.2%	4.7%
Without an Internet subscription	14.7%	4.7%	21.0%	19.4%	11.7%	9.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Internet Accessibility and the Labor Force

The U.S. Census Bureau gathers data regarding the availability of the Internet to the working-age population and based on employment status. The data for working-age individuals (ages 18 to 64) in the DARS districts indicates that that over 86 percent of the working-age population has access to broadband internet subscriptions. The averages range between 86.6 to 96.9 percent.

The national and state rates for individuals aged 18 to 64 that do not have a computer in the household are similar. The rates for those aged 18 to 64 and do not have a computer in DO3 and DO4 are significantly higher than the national and state rates and are roughly 4 to 5.5 percentage points higher than the rate for DO2.

The employment status data included civilians ages 16 and over, with no cut-off age. The data cites that those who are unemployed in DO3 and DO6 have more than a 1 percent higher rate in the category “percent without broadband Internet” (8.7 to 11.8 percent) than those who are not in the labor force (7.1 to 10.3 percent).

Table 28 contains internet accessibility data for the nation and the state and for each DARS district.

Table 28

Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status for the U.S. and Virginia

<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	United States				Virginia			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household
		Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet			Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	
18 to 64 years	196,865,344	94.3%	4.0%	1.6%	5,162,714	94.3%	4.0%	1.7%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS								
Civilian population 16 years and over	260,431,565	92.3%	4.6%	3.0%	6,694,792	92.2%	4.5%	3.2%
In labor force	168,284,498	95.1%	3.6%	1.3%	4,420,259	94.9%	3.6%	1.4%
Employed	161,195,196	95.2%	3.5%	1.3%	4,262,813	95.1%	3.5%	1.3%
Unemployed	7,089,302	92.5%	5.3%	2.1%	157,446	91.2%	6.2%	2.3%
Not in labor force	92,147,067	87.2%	6.4%	6.2%	2,274,533	86.8%	6.3%	6.6%
<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	United States -- Urban				Virginia -- Urban			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household
		Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet			Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	
18 to 64 years	159,285,095	94.9%	3.7%	1.4%	3,979,301	95.2%	3.3%	1.4%

EMPLOYMENT STATUS								
Civilian population 16 years and over	207,618,828	93.1%	4.2%	2.6%	5,000,277	93.8%	3.7%	2.4%
In labor force	136,882,560	95.5%	3.3%	1.1%	3,425,207	95.7%	3.1%	1.1%
Employed	130,909,444	95.7%	3.2%	1.1%	3,297,082	95.9%	2.9%	1.1%
Unemployed	5,973,116	92.9%	5.1%	2.0%	128,125	91.5%	6.4%	1.8%
Not in labor force	70,736,268	88.3%	6.0%	5.5%	1,575,070	89.5%	5.2%	5.2%
<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	United States -- Rural				Virginia -- Rural			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household
		Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet			Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	
18 to 64 years	37,580,249	91.9%	5.4%	2.6%	1,183,413	91.0%	6.2%	2.7%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS								
Civilian population 16 years and over	52,812,737	89.2%	6.0%	4.5%	1,694,515	87.5%	6.8%	5.4%
In labor force	31,401,938	93.0%	4.8%	2.1%	995,052	92.2%	5.4%	2.3%
Employed	30,285,752	93.1%	4.8%	2.0%	965,731	92.3%	5.3%	2.2%
Unemployed	1,116,186	90.7%	6.2%	3.0%	29,321	89.7%	5.6%	4.3%
Not in labor force	21,410,799	83.7%	7.8%	8.2%	699,463	80.8%	8.9%	9.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

*Table 29
Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status for the VA DARS District Office Areas*

<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	DO1				DO2			
		With a computer		Percent no computer		With a computer		Percent no computer
	Total	Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	in household	Total	Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	in household
18 to 64 years	470,714	90.1%	7.0%	2.7%	1,714,651	96.9%	2.2%	0.9%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS								
Civilian population 16 years and over	640,618	87.0%	7.1%	5.5%	2,105,000	95.9%	2.5%	1.6%
In labor force	407,398	91.2%	6.3%	2.4%	1,530,976	96.9%	2.2%	0.8%
Employed	390,563	91.3%	6.2%	2.3%	1,472,917	97.0%	2.1%	0.8%
Unemployed	16,835	87.6%	8.1%	3.9%	58,059	95.2%	3.4%	1.2%
Not in labor force	233,220	79.8%	8.6%	11.0%	574,024	93.0%	3.2%	3.6%
<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	DO3				DO4			
		With a computer		Percent no computer		With a computer		Percent no computer
	Total	Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	in household	Total	Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	in household
18 to 64 years	315,408	86.6%	8.4%	4.8%	490,574	87.6%	6.9%	5.4%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS								
Civ. Pop. 16 years and over	437,619	81.7%	8.7%	9.3%	685,871	83.3%	7.3%	9.2%
In labor force	231,246	89.2%	7.3%	3.2%	403,234	89.2%	6.4%	4.2%
Employed	220,656	89.5%	7.1%	3.1%	386,288	89.4%	6.2%	4.2%
Unemployed	10,590	83.2%	11.8%	4.5%	16,946	85.6%	9.4%	4.9%
Not in labor force	206,373	73.2%	10.3%	16.2%	282,637	74.8%	8.7%	16.2%

<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	DO5				DO6			
		With a computer		Percent no computer		With a computer		Percent no computer
	Total	Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	in household	Total	Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	in household
18 to 64 years	1,110,047	92.9%	4.9%	2.2%	1,066,319	93.0%	5.1%	1.9%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS								
Civ. pop. 16 years and over	1,438,772	90.4%	5.3%	4.2%	1,319,861	90.6%	5.6%	3.7%
In labor force	963,376	93.4%	4.7%	1.9%	866,132	93.4%	4.8%	1.7%
Employed	917,632	93.5%	4.6%	1.9%	821,723	93.7%	4.6%	1.6%
Unemployed	45,744	91.2%	5.9%	2.7%	44,409	88.4%	8.7%	2.8%
Not in labor force	475,396	84.2%	6.7%	8.9%	453,729	85.2%	7.1%	7.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education completed in terms of the highest degree, or the highest level of schooling completed. Level of education influences the job market, both in public and private sectors.

High School Graduation Rates

The national average for the total population over the age of 25 whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school diploma, or its equivalent is 26.1 percent and the state average is 23.9 percent. DO2’s rates for those whose highest educational attainment level is a high school graduate or equivalency over the age of 25 are significantly lower than the general national rate by roughly 11.7 percent and lower than the national urban average by about 9.7 percentage points. Note that DO2: 1) is considered urban with four county/equivalents (Culpeper; Madison; Orange; Rappahannock) considered 100 percent rural by the OMB and Office of Rural Health Policy; and 2) the U.S. Census Bureau records that eight counties/equivalents in DO2 have over 95 percent of the population residing in urban blocks. DO1, DO3, and DO4’s high school graduation rates are higher than the general national average by over 4.5 percentage points.

Education Level at or Above a Bachelor's Degree

The national and state averages for the total population over the age of 25 whose highest level of educational attainment is a bachelor's degree are 21.6 percent and 23.6 percent, respectively. Four district office rates for achieving a bachelor's degree are lower than the general national and national urban rates. DO3's rate is the lowest in the state (12.8%), which is lower than the general national average by 8.8 percentage points and lower than the national urban average by 10.2 percent.

Table 14 provides rates for both high school graduation and education at or above a bachelor's degree for the state's total population ages 25 years and over. District rates are calculated by adding the total population data for each area and dividing by population data for each category.

Table 14
Educational Attainment: Population 25 years and over

Geographic Area	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college, no degree	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree	High school graduate or higher	Bachelor's degree or higher
U.S.	26.1%	19.1%	8.8%	21.6%	14.0%	89.6%	35.7%
U.S. - Urban	24.1%	18.8%	8.4%	23.0%	15.3%	89.6%	38.3%
U.S. - Rural	33.6%	20.4%	10.2%	16.3%	9.4%	89.9%	25.8%
Virginia	23.9%	17.9%	7.6%	23.6%	18.6%	91.5%	42.2%
VA -- Urban	20.7%	17.0%	7.2%	26.1%	21.4%	92.4%	47.5%
VA -- Rural	33.1%	20.3%	8.6%	16.5%	10.6%	89.2%	27.1%
DO1	30.8%	18.1%	7.0%	18.8%	14.6%	89.3%	33.4%
DO2	14.4%	13.4%	5.9%	30.6%	28.5%	92.8%	59.1%
DO3	34.8%	20.3%	9.5%	12.8%	9.4%	86.9%	22.3%
DO4	33.4%	20.3%	9.4%	16.1%	9.4%	88.6%	25.4%
DO5	25.7%	20.0%	7.6%	22.8%	14.8%	90.8%	37.5%
DO6	24.8%	23.3%	9.9%	20.8%	13.6%	92.3%	34.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disabilities Under the Age of 65

In addition to understanding the general trends of a geographic area, it is also important to gain knowledge of the prevalence of disability in the state when engaging in strategic planning and allocating resources. In this section, demographic data regarding the state's disability population with reference to age, disability type, income, poverty, and education are detailed with comparisons to the nation and to local regions.

Disability Status

The estimated average for the number of people with disabilities residing in the nation in 2022 is 13.4 percent. Virginia's average is less than one percentage point lower than the national average. The national average for people with disabilities in the age category 18 to 64 in 2022 is 11 percent. Of the civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 18 to 64 in Virginia, 17.6 percent of the residents in DO3 report a disability, which is significantly higher than the national average by 6.6 percent; higher than the national urban average by 7 percent; and is almost 5 percent higher than the nation's rural average of 12.8 percent for the same age group. The average percentage rate for individuals 18 to 64 years reporting a disability in DO2 is recorded at 5.7 percent, which is lower than the state average by 4.7 percent and is roughly 5 to 7 percentage points lower than the U.S. geographic averages.

National, state, and district disability status estimates are provided for the Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population (TCNP) by the U.S. Census in Table 15.

Table 15

Disability Status: Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population (TCNP)

Geographic Area	TCNP	Under 18 years	18 to 64 years
U.S.	13.4%	4.8%	11.0%
U.S. - Urban	12.9%	4.8%	10.6%
U.S. - Rural	15.4%	5.0%	12.8%
Virginia	12.7%	4.7%	10.4%
VA -- Urban	11.5%	4.3%	9.6%
VA -- Rural	16.3%	6.1%	13.1%
DO1	13.2%	4.6%	9.9%
DO2	7.8%	3.1%	5.7%
DO3	20.4%	6.9%	17.6%
DO4	15.5%	6.0%	12.8%
DO5	12.7%	5.0%	10.4%
DO6	13.5%	5.4%	11.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disability Types

Knowledge of the types of disabilities reported by area residents helps DARS anticipate and prepare for meeting service needs and assisting the consumer to obtain necessary accommodations to maximize function and employability.

Disability types are classified into six categories and detailed by age in the U.S. Census data. The data indicates that Virginia's rates for those reporting specific disability types are similar to the national rates as the state rates are either equal to, higher than or lower than the national rate by less than 1 percentage point in each category.

Cognitive disabilities is the most frequently reported disability type among individuals ages 18 to 64 in the Commonwealth of Virginia and in three districts (DO1, DO2 and DO5). DO3 has the highest rate of individuals 18 to 64 reporting a cognitive disability (7.0%) and the rate exceeds the national average by 1.8 percentage points and exceeds the state's average by 2.3 percent. (Important to note that mental health impairments are not included in the ACS data.)

The rates for individuals ages 18 to 64 reporting ambulatory and independent living disabilities in DO3 are double the national average for the respective disability category.

Tables 16 and 17 provide specific data for the civilian noninstitutionalized population. Table categories include the population under 18 years and the population ages 18 to 64. Disability type percentages are calculated by dividing the total number of individuals reporting the disability type within the designated geographic district by the number of noninstitutionalized civilians residing in the area.

*Table 16
Disability Types and Age: U.S. and VA*

Disability Types and Age	Percent with a disability					
	U.S.	U.S. - Urban	U.S. - Rural	Virginia	VA -- Urban	VA -- Rural
With a hearing difficulty	3.7%	3.3%	5.1%	3.4%	2.9%	5.1%
Population under 18 years	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%
Population 18 to 64 years	2.0%	1.8%	2.9%	2.0%	1.7%	2.8%
With a vision difficulty	2.5%	2.4%	2.8%	2.2%	2.0%	3.1%
Population under 18 years	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	1.1%
Population 18 to 64 years	2.1%	2.0%	2.5%	1.9%	1.7%	2.5%
With a cognitive difficulty	5.7%	5.6%	5.9%	5.3%	5.0%	6.0%
Population under 18 years	4.8%	4.8%	4.9%	4.9%	4.6%	5.7%
Population 18 to 64 years	5.2%	5.1%	5.5%	4.7%	4.6%	5.3%

Disability Types and Age	Percent with a disability					
	U.S.	U.S. - Urban	U.S. - Rural	Virginia	VA -- Urban	VA -- Rural
With an ambulatory difficulty	6.7%	6.5%	7.9%	6.5%	5.7%	8.8%
Population under 18 years	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	0.5%	1.1%
Population 18 to 64 years	4.4%	4.2%	5.6%	4.2%	3.7%	6.1%
With a self-care difficulty	2.6%	2.5%	2.8%	2.4%	2.2%	2.9%
Population under 18 years	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%
Population 18 to 64 years	1.7%	1.6%	2.0%	1.5%	1.4%	2.0%
With an independent living difficulty	6.0%	5.9%	6.5%	5.5%	5.1%	7.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	3.9%	3.8%	4.5%	3.6%	3.3%	4.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 17
Disability Types and Age: DARS Districts

Disability Types and Age	Percent with a disability					
	DO1	DO2	DO3	DO4	DO5	DO6
With a hearing difficulty	3.8%	2.2%	6.4%	4.3%	3.4%	3.4%
Population under 18 years	0.5%	0.3%	0.8%	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%
Population 18 to 64 years	1.9%	1.3%	3.9%	2.3%	1.9%	2.1%
With a vision difficulty	2.3%	1.3%	5.0%	2.8%	2.2%	2.5%
Population under 18 years	0.7%	0.5%	1.6%	0.7%	0.6%	1.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	1.7%	1.0%	4.1%	2.3%	1.9%	2.1%
With a cognitive difficulty	5.1%	2.9%	7.3%	5.6%	5.0%	5.1%
Population under 18 years	4.9%	3.1%	6.0%	4.9%	5.4%	5.6%
Population 18 to 64 years	4.6%	2.4%	7.0%	5.5%	4.6%	4.8%
With an ambulatory difficulty	6.5%	3.4%	10.9%	8.0%	6.1%	6.7%
Population under 18 years	0.6%	0.4%	1.2%	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%
Population 18 to 64 years	4.2%	2.0%	8.8%	6.1%	4.5%	5.1%
With a self-care difficulty	2.5%	1.5%	3.7%	3.0%	2.4%	2.5%
Population under 18 years	1.4%	1.0%	1.5%	1.2%	1.3%	1.4%
Population 18 to 64 years	1.5%	0.8%	2.9%	2.2%	1.7%	1.7%
With an independent living difficulty	4.6%	2.7%	7.6%	5.6%	4.4%	4.5%

Disability Types and Age	Percent with a disability					
	DO1	DO2	DO3	DO4	DO5	DO6
Population 18 to 64 years	3.5%	1.8%	7.1%	4.7%	3.7%	3.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Disabling Environments Index

The environment contributes to an individual’s ability to engage in meaningful tasks, by either enabling participation (enablement) or creating barriers to participation (disablement). An example, blindness or having serious vision difficulty even when wearing glasses (= vision disability) may be more disabling in areas without a mass transit system. Researchers at the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) created the “Disabling Environments Index” which is designed to take a snapshot of the disabling nature of one’s local environment and be used as an indicator of local area accessibility.

The index examines the reporting of an independent living disability among the focus population ages 18 to 64 living in community settings who also reported a hearing, vision, ambulatory, and/or cognitive disability. In the 2024 Annual Disability Compendium, the Disabling Environments Index for civilians in the United States with hearing, vision, ambulatory, and/or cognitive disabilities who also reported an independent living disability in the year 2022 was 32.6 percent. Researchers at the NIDILRR graciously calculate state data by request. Table 18 contains the Disablement Index for the 50 States in ranking order from lowest index rate to the highest rate.

*Table 18
Disabling Environments Index: Ranking Order – Lowest to Highest*

Disabling Environments Index - United States 2022					
United States Index = 32.6					
State Ranking Low to High					
Rank	State	Index	Rank	State	Index
1	South Dakota	28.0	26	Kentucky	32.1
2	Maine	28.5	26	South Carolina	32.1
3	Mississippi	28.8	28	Florida	32.3
3	Vermont	28.8	28	Ohio	32.3
5	Wyoming	29.0	30	Alabama	32.4
6	Alaska	29.2	31	Maryland	33.0
7	Colorado	29.4	32	Georgia	33.1
7	Utah	29.4	33	New Jersey	33.5
9	New Hampshire	29.8	33	North Dakota	33.5
10	Arizona	30.1	35	Washington	33.6
10	Texas	30.1	36	Idaho	33.7

Disabling Environments Index - United States 2022					
United States Index = 32.6					
State Ranking Low to High					
12	Kansas	30.3	36	Tennessee	33.7
13	New Mexico	30.4	36	Wisconsin	33.7
14	Iowa	30.5	39	Michigan	33.8
14	Nebraska	30.5	40	Illinois	33.9
16	Montana	30.9	41	California	34.0
17	Delaware	31.0	42	Missouri	34.3
17	Louisiana	31.0	43	Connecticut	34.4
17	Nevada	31.0	43	Hawaii	34.4
17	Virginia	31.0	45	Pennsylvania	34.8
21	Oklahoma	31.1	46	Massachusetts	34.9
22	Arkansas	31.5	47	New York	35.0
23	Rhode Island	31.6	48	Oregon	35.3
24	Indiana	31.9	49	Minnesota	35.4
24	North Carolina	31.9	50	West Virginia	36.7

Virginia ties with the states of Delaware, Louisiana, and Nevada for the 17th position when examining how many individuals reported a hearing, vision, ambulatory or cognitive disability and also reported an independent living disability (31 percent). South Dakota ranked in the first position, with 28 percent of individuals who reported a specific disability and also reported an independent living disability. Conversely, more than 36 percent of individuals residing in the state of West Virginia who reported a specific physical disability also reported an independent living disability.

When examining the Disabling Environments Index from 2022 Census data, the following observation is noted: The top four states with the lowest ranking disabling environments scores have urban populations ranging between 35.1 to 57.2 percent while the four states with the highest disabling environments scores have urban populations ranging between 44.6 to 87.4 percent. When examining the Disabling Environment Index calculated from 2021 Census data, the top four states with the lowest ranking disabling environments scores have urban populations ranging from 57.2 to 73 percent while the four states with the highest disabling environments scores have urban populations ranging between 38.6 to 87.4 percent. Prior to 2021, the top four states with the lowest ranking index scores had urban populations of less than 66 percent while the four states with the highest index scores had urban populations of over 70 percent. More in-depth analysis of the Disabling Environments Index and State urban/rural population rates is needed to determine if there is a correlation of the local environmental accessibility and urban/rural population rates.

Disability and Income

People with disabilities earn approximately \$12,998 less per year than individuals without a disability. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, people with disabilities earn roughly \$14,243 less than people without disabilities. People with disabilities residing in rural Virginia earn \$3,399 less than individuals with disabilities residing in urban areas of Virginia. Females with disabilities in DO2 have the highest earnings in the state for the category “females with a disability,” with an average that is higher than the general, urban, and rural national averages for females with a disability by more than \$13,000 and higher than the state averages by over \$9,755. Females with disabilities in DO3 earn \$21,428 per year, which is less than the national and state general, urban, and rural averages for females with disabilities by \$3,222 to \$8,585.

When comparing the median earnings for males with and without disabilities, males with disabilities in DO2 earn \$52,018, which is higher than males without disabilities in district office areas 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6. When compared to national geographical averages for males with disabilities, all district office areas, except for DO4, have median earnings for males with disabilities higher than the national averages.

Tables 19 and 20 provide statistics for median earnings (income) for the civilian noninstitutionalized population (CNP) with earnings and with disabilities age 16 and over. The numbers are rounded to the nearest dollar amount.

Table 19

Median Earnings for People with Disabilities 16 Years and Older: U.S. and Virginia

<i>Median Earnings: People with Disabilities</i>	U.S.	U.S. -- Urban	U.S. -- Rural	Virginia	VA -- Urban	VA -- Rural
Total CNP 16+ with earnings	\$42,609	\$43,072	\$41,492	\$47,927	\$50,043	\$42,957
With a disability:	\$30,885	\$30,897	\$30,840	\$34,980	\$35,522	\$32,123
Male	\$35,985	\$35,687	\$37,081	\$42,404	\$43,868	\$40,145
Female	\$26,383	\$26,746	\$24,650	\$29,597	\$30,013	\$28,208
No disability:	\$43,883	\$44,376	\$42,186	\$49,223	\$50,913	\$43,725
Male	\$51,257	\$51,392	\$50,776	\$56,565	\$59,074	\$51,826
Female	\$37,470	\$38,354	\$34,966	\$41,164	\$42,378	\$36,567

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 20

Median Earnings for People with Disabilities 16 Years and Older: DARS Districts

<i>Median Earnings: People with Disabilities</i>	DO1	DO2	DO3	DO4	DO5	DO6
Total CNP 16+ with earnings	\$37,167	\$59,242	\$34,845	\$36,799	\$41,725	\$41,148
With a disability:	\$30,878	\$42,565	\$28,880	\$27,966	\$33,789	\$31,786

<i>Median Earnings: People with Disabilities</i>	DO1	DO2	DO3	DO4	DO5	DO6
<i>Male</i>	\$38,570	\$52,018	\$37,605	\$30,894	\$42,787	\$43,859
<i>Female</i>	\$23,089	\$39,770	\$21,428	\$25,587	\$31,276	\$24,514
<i>No disability:</i>	\$37,981	\$60,009	\$35,472	\$37,525	\$42,324	\$41,846
<i>Male</i>	\$43,112	\$71,660	\$40,529	\$44,597	\$49,826	\$50,417
<i>Female</i>	\$32,863	\$49,069	\$30,220	\$31,075	\$35,779	\$35,804

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Disability and Poverty

The United States Census Bureau publishes statistics on disability and poverty. The official poverty measure compares thresholds of family size and age of the family members to an individual’s or family’s pre-tax cash income. The Census Bureau uses the thresholds to determine who is living in poverty.

Poverty levels determined in this section of the CSNA report are calculated using the 2022 one-year estimate table “Age by Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months by Disability Status and Type” published by the U.S. Census Bureau. One-year data is the only data available for examining disability type and poverty. As mentioned in the **Report Note**, one-year data is the most current data available of populations of 65,000 or more. Data available for Virginia is limited to 27 counties and county equivalents in the DARS districts, which include 27 of the top 28 most highly populated counties/county equivalents in the state. Table 21 details the counties and county equivalents that represent the districts in the disability and poverty section of the report.

*Table 21
Counties and County Equivalents Representing DARS Districts – Disability and Poverty*

DO1	DO2	DO3	DO4	DO5	DO6
Albemarle	Arlington	Montgomery	Bedford	Chesterfield	Chesapeake city
Augusta	Fairfax		Roanoke Co.	Hanover	Hampton city
Frederick	Loudoun		Lynchburg city	Henrico	Newport News city
Rockingham	Prince William		Roanoke city	Spotsylvania	Norfolk city
	Alexandria city			Stafford	Portsmouth city
				Richmond city	Suffolk city
					Virginia Beach city

The Census Bureau provided the following definition regarding income-to-poverty ratios:

“Income-to-poverty ratios represent the ratio of family or unrelated individual income to their appropriate poverty threshold. Ratios below 1.00 indicate that the income for the respective family or unrelated individual is below the official definition of poverty, while a ratio of 1.00 or greater indicates income above the poverty level. A ratio of 1.25, for example, indicates that income was 125 percent above the appropriate poverty threshold” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

In this section, poverty and disability statistics are presented. Two different questions regarding poverty and disability are addressed:

- 1) What is the proportion of the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP) ages 18 and over who have a specific disability type and live in poverty? and
- 2) Of the total number of the civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 18 and over that live in poverty, and have a disability, what proportion have a specific disability type?

Before reviewing disability and poverty statistics, note that the Commonwealth of Virginia’s percentage of residents that are 18 years and older (77.9 percent), reflects the national average.

When answering question #1 related to hearing, vision, and self-care disabilities, in each of the highly populated areas represented in the DARS districts, less than one percent of the TCNP ages 18-year and older that lives in poverty, reported either a hearing, vision, or self-care disability. Tables 22 and 23 contain national, state, and district averages in response to question #1.

*Table 22
Poverty, Disability Type, and Population: Ages 18 and Over – 2022: U.S., VA, DO1 and DO2*

Poverty, Disability Type, and Population: Ages 18 and Over	United States	Virginia	DO1	DO2
TCNP:	324,481,864	8,331,605	357,895	2,400,381
18 years and over:	253,240,885	6,493,927	283,770	1,836,748
Percent of population 18 and over	78.0%	77.9%	79.3%	76.5%
Number of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio	29,341,173	655,984	23,378	104,209
Percent of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio	11.6%	10.1%	8.2%	5.7%
With a disability:	3.3%	2.8%	2.0%	1.0%
With a hearing difficulty	0.7%	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%
With a vision difficulty	0.7%	0.6%	0.3%	0.2%
With a cognitive difficulty	1.5%	1.3%	0.8%	0.5%

Poverty, Disability Type, and Population: Ages 18 and Over	United States	Virginia	DO1	DO2
With an ambulatory difficulty	1.8%	1.6%	1.0%	0.6%
With a self-care difficulty	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.2%
With an independent living difficulty	1.5%	1.3%	1.1%	0.5%
No disability	8.3%	7.3%	6.3%	4.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 23

Poverty, Disability Type, and Population: Ages 18 and Over – 2022: DO3, DO4, DO5, and DO6

Poverty, Disability Type, and Population: Ages 18 and Over	DO3	DO4	DO5	DO6
TCNP:	86,922	338,750	1,330,231	1,349,973
18 years and over:	72,400	269,084	1,033,557	1,030,181
Percent of population 18 and over	83.3%	79.4%	77.7%	76.3%
Number of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio	17,748	34,480	92,646	124,326
Percent of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio	24.5%	12.8%	9.0%	12.1%
With a disability:	3.5%	3.4%	2.4%	3.3%
With a hearing difficulty	0.4%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%
With a vision difficulty	0.2%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%
With a cognitive difficulty	2.1%	1.2%	1.2%	1.5%
With an ambulatory difficulty	1.4%	1.8%	1.2%	1.9%
With a self-care difficulty	0.2%	0.5%	0.6%	0.7%
With an independent living difficulty	1.1%	1.3%	1.0%	1.6%
No disability	21.1%	9.4%	6.5%	8.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

In the highly populated areas of DO2, DO4, and DO6, among individuals ages 18 and over that live in poverty and have a disability, ambulatory disability is the most frequently reported disability type. In DO1, DO3, and DO5, independent living or cognitive disability are the most frequently reported disability types. Vision disability was the least reported disability type in DO1 and DO2. Tables 24 and 25 identify disability types for the population that lives in poverty and are age 18 and over (answering question #2).

Table 24

Disability Types Among the 18+ Population Living in Poverty: Nation and State, DO1 and DO2

Disability Types Among the 18+ Population Living in Poverty	U.S.	Virginia	DO1	DO2
<i>Number of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio</i>	29,341,173	655,984	23,378	104,209
<i>Number of 18 years and over in Poverty with a Disability:</i>	8,230,762	182,875	5,565	19,237
<i>With a disability:</i>	28.1%	27.9%	23.8%	18.5%
<i> With a hearing difficulty</i>	20.5%	20.3%	18.5%	21.9%
<i> With a vision difficulty</i>	20.6%	21.1%	15.0%	17.6%
<i> With a cognitive difficulty</i>	45.7%	45.3%	42.9%	48.9%
<i> With an ambulatory difficulty</i>	55.0%	55.8%	52.1%	54.4%
<i> With a self-care difficulty</i>	22.0%	21.8%	32.0%	23.8%
<i> With an independent living difficulty</i>	45.4%	44.7%	56.3%	44.8%
<i>No disability</i>	71.9%	72.1%	76.2%	81.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 25

Disability Types Among the 18+ Population Living in Poverty: DO3, DO4, DO5, and DO6

Disability Types Among the 18+ Population Living in Poverty	DO3	DO4	DO5	DO6
<i>Number of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio</i>	17,748	34,480	92,646	124,326
<i>Number of 18 years and over in Poverty with a Disability:</i>	2,507	9,151	25,060	34,176
<i>With a disability:</i>	14.1%	26.5%	27.0%	27.5%
<i> With a hearing difficulty</i>	10.7%	22.0%	19.0%	15.3%
<i> With a vision difficulty</i>	5.1%	17.9%	26.4%	19.9%
<i> With a cognitive difficulty</i>	61.4%	36.0%	50.9%	45.4%
<i> With an ambulatory difficulty</i>	40.3%	54.2%	47.7%	58.2%
<i> With a self-care difficulty</i>	5.0%	15.4%	23.8%	22.5%
<i> With an independent living difficulty</i>	33.1%	38.9%	42.1%	49.7%
<i>No disability</i>	85.9%	73.5%	73.0%	72.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities

Table 26 contains educational attainment rates for individuals with disabilities for the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP) ages 25 and older. Data is available for 38 of Virginia’s 133 counties. In lieu of district averages, the entities with the lowest and highest disability population within the district is provided. Note that all county and city data is taken from the U.S. Census 2022 five-year estimates.

Reviewing available data, Augusta County and Roanoke City have the highest level of high school graduation attainment for individuals with disabilities (43.4 percent and 40.3 percent respectively) and Fairfax County has the lowest rate. In educational attainment at the college graduate level, individuals with disabilities have lower educational attainment rates than their peers without disabilities. Achievement of higher levels of education are important considerations for individuals with disabilities served by VR if they are to achieve self-sufficiency through employment.

*Table 26
Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: United States and Virginia*

Nation and State	United States		Virginia	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	225,493,657		5,792,955	
Population Age 25 and Over	38,005,098	187,488,559	917,868	4,875,087
Less than high school graduate	17.0%	8.8%	16.1%	6.9%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	33.0%	24.4%	31.7%	22.3%
Some college or associate's degree	29.0%	27.7%	27.7%	24.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	21.0%	39.1%	24.5%	45.9%
DO1	Albemarle		Augusta	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	75,638		53,846	
Population Age 25 and Over	8,853	66,785	9,476	44,370
Less than high school graduate	12.0%	5.1%	19.4%	6.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	25.4%	12.8%	43.4%	38.7%
Some college or associate's degree	21.2%	18.7%	24.4%	27.6%
Bachelor's degree or higher	41.4%	63.4%	12.8%	26.9%

DO2	Alexandria city		Fairfax	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	115,932		768,460	
Population Age 25 and Over	10,054	105,878	72,729	695,731
Less than high school graduate	12.1%	5.7%	11.6%	6.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	21.1%	9.5%	20.5%	11.3%
Some college or associate's degree	24.2%	16.6%	22.2%	16.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	42.5%	68.2%	45.7%	65.9%
DO3	Tazewell		Washington	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	27,910		39,537	
Population Age 25 and Over	6,749	21,161	10,653	28,884
Less than high school graduate	23.5%	9.7%	18.7%	7.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	38.0%	38.4%	38.6%	34.4%
Some college or associate's degree	30.5%	32.8%	27.4%	29.6%
Bachelor's degree or higher	8.0%	19.0%	15.3%	28.5%
DO4	Danville city		Roanoke city	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	28,320		68,282	
Population Age 25 and Over	6,942	21,378	10,750	57,532
Less than high school graduate	26.3%	11.1%	16.2%	9.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	36.4%	38.5%	40.3%	33.3%
Some college or associate's degree	26.9%	28.4%	28.0%	26.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	10.4%	21.9%	15.5%	30.8%

DO5	Hanover		Chesterfield	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	76,279		244,537	
Population Age 25 and Over	10,837	65,442	37,092	207,445
Less than high school graduate	11.0%	4.6%	13.0%	6.3%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	38.3%	21.9%	33.6%	20.3%
Some college or associate's degree	27.1%	28.5%	27.5%	28.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	23.7%	45.0%	25.9%	45.3%
DO6	York		Virginia Beach city	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	44,481		298,242	
Population Age 25 and Over	6,587	37,894	43,773	254,469
Less than high school graduate	12.7%	3.4%	11.1%	4.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	27.1%	16.0%	29.1%	19.4%
Some college or associate's degree	25.6%	27.2%	34.7%	33.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher	34.6%	53.4%	25.1%	42.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

General Trends of Employment, Occupations, Industries, and Labor Force Participation for the Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population

Local economies thrive based on employment, occupations, and industries available to area residents and the individuals' participation in the labor force. Knowledge of the local area labor force, internet accessibility, employment rates, occupations, industries, and labor force participation facilitates helping consumers find local job opportunities and securing appropriate job placement.

The labor force includes all people classified in the civilian labor force, plus members of the U.S. Armed Forces (people on active duty with the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard). The civilian labor force consists of people classified as employed or unemployed and actively looking for work. The labor force participation rate represents the proportion of the population that is in the labor force.

Local Workforce Areas

Virginia’s Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (Virginia Works) Economic Information and Analytics Division publishes information on the Virginia’s labor market and trends. Virginia Works establishes the Virginia’s local workforce investment areas (LWIA). Virginia has fourteen workforce investment areas. Virginia Works provided the following map of the local workforce investment area structure for this CSNA report.

*Map 2
Local Workforce Investment Areas: State of Virginia*

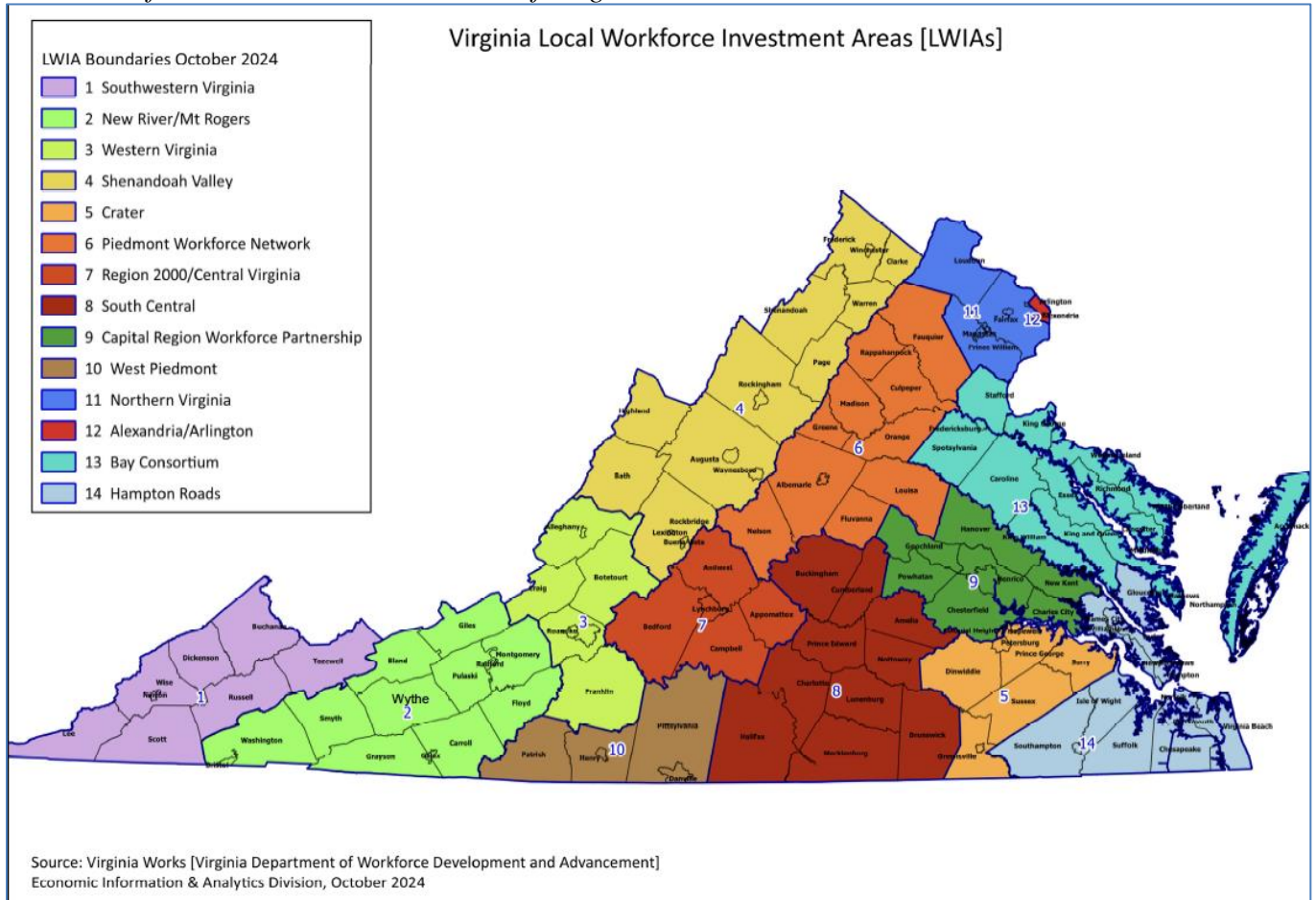


Table 27 contains detailed information comparing the LWIA and the DO service area structure. This information is presented to help inform DARS as it engages in strategic planning for the future.

Table 27
DO and LWIA Comparison

DO	LWIA	County/City
DO1	Shenandoah Valley (LWIA 4)	Augusta, Bath, Clarke, Frederick, Highland, Page, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Warren, Buena Vista city, Harrisonburg city, Lexington city, Staunton city, Waynesboro city, Winchester city
	South Central (LWIA 8)	Buckingham
	Piedmont Workforce Network (LWIA 6)	Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Nelson, Charlottesville city
DO2	Alexandria/Arlington (LWIA 12)	Arlington, Alexandria city
	Northern Virginia (LWIA 11)	Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Fairfax city, Falls Church city, Manassas city, Manassas Park city
DO3	Piedmont Workforce Network (LWIA 6)	Culpepper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, Rappahannock
	New River/Mt. Rogers (LWIA 2)	Bland, Carroll, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Smyth, Washington, Wythe, Bristol city, Galax city, Radford city
DO4	Southwestern Virginia (LWIA 1)	Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Tazewell, Wise, Norton city
	Region 2000/Central VA (LWIA 7)	Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Campbell, Lynchburg city
	South Central (LWIA 8)	Charlotte, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg
	West Piedmont (LWIA 10)	Henry, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Danville city, Martinsville city
DO5	Western Virginia (LWIA 3)	Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, Roanoke, Covington city, Roanoke city, Salem city
	Bay Consortium (LWIA 13)	Caroline, Essex, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Westmoreland, Fredericksburg city
	Capital Region Workforce Partnership (LWIA 9)	Charles City County, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Powhatan, Colonial Heights city, Hopewell city, Richmond city
	Crater Area (LWIA 5)	Dinwiddie, Greensville, Prince George, Surry, Sussex, Emporia city, Petersburg city
DO6	South Central (LWIA 8)	Amelia, Brunswick, Cumberland, Nottoway, Prince Edward
	Bay Consortium (LWIA 13)	Accomack, Mathews, Northampton
	Hampton Roads (LWIA 14)	Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City County, Southampton, York, Chesapeake city, Franklin city, Hampton city, Newport News city,

DO	LWIA	County/City
		Norfolk city, Poquoson city, Portsmouth city, Suffolk city, Virginia Beach city, Williamsburg city

Source: Table developed by Interwork Staff using lists from the Virginia Works and the Virginia DARS

Local Economic and Business Statistics

This section contains local area unemployment rates, local occupations, and local industries that are found in the Commonwealth of Virginia to provide DARS a glimpse of local job markets at the state and district level.

Unemployment Rates

The Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) publishes monthly non-seasonally adjusted local area unemployment data for the Commonwealth of Virginia. BLS also utilizes population counts based on metropolitan statistical area geography from the U.S. Census Bureau, which results in calculations of unemployment rates for specified metropolitan areas. Table 30 contains unemployment rates for the year 2024, beginning with May 2024 and ending in September, for the nation, state, districts, and areas designated by BLS.

*Table 30
Local Area Unemployment Rates*

Geographic Area	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24
U.S	3.7	4.3	4.5	4.4	3.9
Virginia	2.6	3	3.3	3.5	3.1
DO1	2.6	3.1	3.2	3.4	
DO2	2.4	2.7	2.9	3.1	
DO3	3.2	3.7	4	4.4	
DO4	3.2	3.6	4	4.1	
DO5	3.1	3.4	3.7	3.9	
DO6	2.9	3.2	3.5	3.7	
Virginia Metro Areas	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24
Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford, VA	2.8	3.4	3.5	3.9	
Charlottesville, VA	2.4	2.9	3.1	3.2	
Harrisonburg, VA	2.9	3.5	3.6	3.8	
Kingsport-Bristol-Bristol, TN-VA	3	3.8	3.7	3.7	
Lynchburg, VA	3.2	3.7	4	4.1	
Richmond, VA	2.8	3.1	3.4	3.6	

Virginia Metro Areas	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24
Roanoke, VA	2.7	3	3.3	3.5	
Staunton-Waynesboro, VA	2.5	2.9	3.1	3.2	
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	2.8	3.2	3.5	3.7	
Virginia Metro Areas	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	2.7	3.3	3.5	3.7	
Winchester, VA-WV	2.4	2.8	3	3.1	

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics

Occupations in Virginia

“Occupation” describes the kind of work the person does on the job.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provides data for the largest occupations within the various states and the nation. Eight of the top ten occupations in Virginia are also listed in the top ten occupations in the United States and six are in a different rank order than the national list. The largest occupation in Virginia is Fast Food Counter Workers, which ranks as the third largest occupation in the U.S.

Key differences between the national and state list occur. Software Developers, which is the fifth largest occupation in Virginia, and Management Analysts, the tenth largest occupation in Virginia, are not included in the top ten occupations in the U.S. overall. The top occupation in the U.S., Home Health and Personal Care Aides, is not listed among the top ten occupations in Virginia.

Tables 31 and 32 contain the largest occupations in the U.S. and Virginia.

Table 31

Occupational Employment Statistics for the U.S. - May 2023

Largest occupations in the United States, May 2023	
Occupation	Employment
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	3,689,350
Retail Salespersons	3,684,740
Fast Food and Counter Workers	3,676,580
General and Operations Managers	3,507,810
Cashiers	3,298,660

Largest occupations in the United States, May 2023	
Occupation	Employment
Registered Nurses	3,175,390
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	3,008,300
Stockers and Order Fillers	2,872,680
Customer Service Representatives	2,858,710
Office Clerks, General	2,496,370

https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/area_emp_chart/area_emp_chart_data.htm#

Table 32

Occupational Employment Statistics for Virginia - May 2023

Largest occupations in Virginia, May 2023	
Occupation	Employment
Fast Food and Counter Workers	96,390
Retail Salespersons	96,360
Cashiers	93,280
General and Operations Managers	92,650
Software Developers	86,680
Customer Service Representatives	71,720
Stockers and Order Fillers	71,170
Registered Nurses	70,650
Office Clerks, General	67,140
Management Analysts	66,840

https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/area_emp_chart/area_emp_chart.htm

Virginia Works Economic Information & Analytics Division

The Virginia Works Economic Information & Analytics Division publishes community profiles for various areas of the state that includes an economic profile. The economic profile includes growth occupations, declining occupations, and the 50 largest employers from the first quarter of 2024. The data is condensed and detailed in this section of the CSNA report.

Growth and Declining Occupations in Virginia

Table 33 details the growing and declining occupations in Virginia found in the Virginia Statewide Community Profile available online through Virginia Works. The data includes the Economic Information & Analytics Long Term Industry and Occupational Projections for the ten-year period of 2022-2032 and data from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey of 2023.

*Table 33****Growth and Declining Occupations in Virginia***

Growth Occupations	Declining Occupations
Gaming and Sports Book Writers and Runners	Continuous Mining Machine Operators
Gaming Dealers	Word Processors and Typists
Gaming Change Persons and Booth Cashiers	Telemarketers
Gaming Service Workers, All Other	Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service
Nurse Practitioners	Electronic Equipment Installers and Repairers, Motor Vehicles
Solar Photovoltaic Installers	Legal Secretaries
Statisticians	Data Entry Keyers
Physician Assistants	Door-to-Door Sales Workers, News and Street Vendors, and Related Workers
Epidemiologists	Grinding and Polishing Workers, Hand
Medical and Health Services Managers	Pressers, Textile, Garment, and Related Materials
Physical Therapist Assistants	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants
Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	Print Binding and Finishing Workers
Veterinarians	Prepress Technicians and Workers
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	Tailors, Dressmakers, and Custom Sewers
Marriage and Family Therapists	Cutters and Trimmers, Hand
Semiconductor Processors	Tellers
Occupational Therapy Assistants	Order Clerks
Hearing Aid Specialists	Tire Builders
Operations Research Analysts	Floral Designers
Ophthalmic Medical Technicians	Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks

Growth Occupations	Declining Occupations
Source: Virginia Works, Economic Information & Analytics, Long Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2022-2032 Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey, 2023	Source: Virginia Works, Economic Information & Analytics, Long Term Industry and Occupational Projections, 2022-2032

50 Largest Employers in Virginia

The Virginia Works Economic Information & Analytics Division website contains statewide regional labor force and economic data that identifies local industries and local employers in Virginia. Table 34 contains information on the top 50 employers in Virginia in Q1 of 2024.

Table 34
 50 Largest Employers in Virginia – 1st Quarter 2024

50 Largest Employers in Virginia	
1. U.S. Department of Defense	26. Riverside Regional Medical Center
2. Walmart	27. Navy Federal Credit Union
3. Fairfax County Public Schools	28. Henrico County School Board
4. Sentara Healthcare	29. Kroger
5. Amazon Fulfillment Services Inc.	30. Capital One, National Association
6. Huntington Ingalls Industries, Inc.	31. Administaff
7. University of Virginia / Blue Ridge Hospital	32. The Home Depot
8. Inova Health System	33. Virginia Commonwealth University
9. Food Lion	34. Anthem
10. U.S. Department of Homeland Defense	35. U.P.S.
11. Loudoun County Schools	36. Roanoke Memorial Community Hospital
12. Postal Service	37. Anteon Corporation
13. County of Fairfax	38. Science Applications International Corporation
14. Prince William County School Board	39. VDOT
15. HCA Virginia Health System	40. Security Forces, Inc.
16. Bon Secours Health System Inc	41. City of Virginia Beach
17. Booz, Allen and Hamilton	42. United Airlines Inc
18. Capital One Bank	43. Centra Health
19. City of Virginia Beach Schools	44. Chesapeake City Public School Board
20. MCV Hospital	45. George Mason University
21. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	46. Arlington County School Board
22. Target Corp	47. Caci

50 Largest Employers in Virginia	
23. Virginia Polytechnic and State University	48. Northrop Grumman Corporation
24. Lowe's Home Centers, Inc.	49. U.S. Department of Commerce
25. Chesterfield County School Board	50. Federal Home Loan Mortgage

Source: VA Works, Economic Information & Analytics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q1 (January, February, March) 2024

Regional Industries

The term industry in this section of the report refers to the kind of business conducted by a person's employing organization.

The U.S. Census Bureau publishes data from the American Community Survey detailing information on the top industries by employment for the nation, state, and each county in the state.

Virginia's lists of leading industries by employment are similar to the national lists, with ranking order differences and an industry difference in each geographic area. On the general lists of industries, construction ranks in the sixth position in the U.S. and is not on Virginia's list. Public administration is the fourth leading industry in statewide Virginia and urban Virginia, and is not on the general nor urban U.S. top six lists. Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing, is the sixth leading industry in the urban United States and urban Virginia. The top five industries listed on the rural national list matches the rural Virginia list with rank order differences. Rural Virginia's sixth leading industry, public administration ranks higher than the U.S. sixth leading industry, arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services.

Table 35 displays the top six industries with the most employees for the nation and Commonwealth of Virginia.

*Table 35
Local Area Top Industries by Employment: U.S. and VA, Including Urban and Rural Averages*

Geographic Area	Industries	Percent
U.S.	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	23.1%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	12.6%
	Retail trade	11.1%
	Manufacturing	9.9%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	8.7%
	Construction	6.9%

Geographic Area	Industries	Percent
U.S. -- Urban	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	23.2%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	13.4%
	Retail trade	11.2%
	Manufacturing	9.2%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.1%
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.1%
U.S. -- Rural	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.3%
	Manufacturing	12.9%
	Retail trade	11.0%
	Construction	9.2%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	8.9%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	6.8%
Virginia	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.2%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	16.7%
	Retail trade	10.2%
	Public administration	8.9%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7.6%
	Manufacturing	7.1%
VA -- Urban	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.2%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	18.3%
	Retail trade	10.0%
	Public administration	9.2%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7.8%
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.0%
VA -- Rural	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	21.9%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11.2%

Geographic Area	Industries	Percent
	Manufacturing	10.7%
	Retail trade	10.7%
	Construction	8.5%
	Public administration	7.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Employment, Occupations, Industries and Labor Force Participation for People with Disabilities

Data on employment, occupations, industries, and labor force participation for people with disabilities is collected and analyzed by various government bureaus and research institutes. This section presents statistics from the various agencies regarding people with disabilities and their participation in the labor force.

Occupations and Employees with Disabilities

The U.S. Census Bureau collects and analyzes data for the largest occupations within the various states and the nation for people with disabilities who are part of the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP). The following tables summarize percentage rates of the occupations that people with disabilities are employed in.

Table 36

Percent Distribution of Employed Individuals by Disability Status and Occupation: U.S. and VA

	United States			Virginia		
	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	42.5%	34.2%	43.2%	49.1%	39.6%	49.8%
Service occupations	16.1%	20.1%	15.8%	15.0%	17.3%	14.8%
Sales and office occupations	19.8%	21.7%	19.7%	18.4%	21.7%	18.2%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	8.5%	8.4%	8.5%	7.3%	7.8%	7.3%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	13.0%	15.5%	12.9%	10.2%	13.7%	9.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Regional Industries and Employees with Disabilities

The U.S. Census Bureau publishes data that provides information on the top industries by employment for people with disabilities. The data represents the total civilian employed population ages 16 and over.

The table identifies the industries that have the highest rates of employees with disabilities and compares the percentage rates of employees with disabilities with the rates for employees without disabilities. Table 37 displays the top six industries by employment for people with disabilities in the United States and Virginia. Data is available for 38 of Virginia's 133 counties/county equivalents and the data includes disability population counts for ages 16 and over. In lieu of district averages, entities selected to represent the district have the lowest and highest disability population for age 16 and over. The county population rankings and the disability population count for age 16 and over are documented in the table for reference.

Table 37

Local Area Top Industries by Employment: People With & Without Disabilities Ages 16 and Over

Geographic Area	Industries	Employees with Disabilities	Employees without Disabilities
U.S.	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.3%	23.1%
	Retail trade	13.7%	10.9%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11.7%	12.7%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.6%	8.6%
	Manufacturing	9.3%	9.9%
	Construction	6.1%	7.0%
Virginia	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	19.4%	22.3%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	15.6%	16.8%
	Retail trade	13.5%	9.9%
	Public administration	9.3%	8.9%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7.9%	7.6%
	Manufacturing	7.6%	7.0%

DO1	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	25.3%	35.1%
Albemarle Disability Pop 16+ = 9,929 Pop Rank = 16	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	13.6%	7.8%
	Retail trade	13.0%	7.6%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	12.4%	17.0%
	Other services (except public administration)	9.6%	5.3%
	Public administration	8.8%	4.4%
DO1 Frederick Disability Pop 16+ = 9,997 Pop Rank = 23	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	26.8%	21.6%
	Retail trade	15.6%	10.2%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	13.2%	12.7%
	Construction	9.6%	9.3%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.1%	7.2%
	Other services (except public administration)	8.9%	3.6%
DO2 Alexandria city Disability Pop 16+ = 10,490 Pop Rank = 13	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	25.4%	25.0%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	16.9%	16.8%
	Public administration	13.1%	16.0%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.3%	8.9%
	Retail trade	6.8%	5.0%
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	6.8%	6.3%
DO2 Fairfax Disability Pop 16+ = 79,548 Pop Rank = 1	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	24.5%	27.0%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	16.7%	18.0%
	Public administration	13.0%	12.0%
	Retail trade	9.8%	7.3%
	Other services (except public administration)	7.9%	6.0%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7.6%	7.7%

<p>DO3 Tazewell Disability Pop 16+ = 7,053 Pop Rank = 47</p>	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.9%	26.1%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	19.4%	7.1%
	Retail trade	14.0%	13.5%
	Manufacturing	9.4%	12.1%
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.7%	4.8%
	Information	7.3%	2.2%
<p>DO3 Washington Disability Pop 16+ = 11,294 Pop Rank = 35</p>	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.3%	26.3%
	Retail trade	17.3%	13.9%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	14.2%	8.4%
	Construction	12.7%	6.7%
	Manufacturing	8.9%	13.2%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	8.8%	6.4%
<p>DO4 Danville city Disability Pop 16+ = 7,426 Pop Rank = 43</p>	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	26.9%	28.2%
	Retail trade	24.2%	14.0%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	8.8%	8.1%
	Construction	8.0%	6.8%
	Manufacturing	6.8%	15.6%
	Public administration	6.5%	5.1%
<p>DO4 Roanoke city Disability Pop 16+ = 11,423 Pop Rank = 20</p>	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	23.8%	26.7%
	Retail trade	17.9%	11.3%
	Manufacturing	15.6%	10.8%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	10.2%	10.1%
	Other services (except public administration)	8.4%	4.2%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7.4%	9.3%

DO5 Hanover Disability Pop 16+ = 11,492 Pop Rank = 17	Retail trade	25.4%	10.5%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	21.6%	22.5%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	9.5%	12.0%
	Public administration	8.9%	7.0%
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	6.6%	9.8%
	Construction	6.5%	8.5%
DO5 Chesterfield Disability Pop 16+ = 41,470 Pop Rank = 5	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	21.7%	24.0%
	Retail trade	15.6%	10.2%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	12.6%	11.1%
	Public administration	9.9%	7.7%
	Construction	8.7%	7.9%
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.4%	9.9%
DO6 York Disability Pop 16+ 7,044 Pop Rank = 30	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	22.1%	15.4%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	20.8%	23.5%
	Public administration	10.3%	10.7%
	Construction	10.1%	4.5%
	Other services (except public administration)	8.2%	3.8%
	Retail trade	7.5%	9.7%
DO6 Virginia Beach city Disability Pop 16+ 47,311 Pop Rank = 3	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	16.8%	23.9%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	16.5%	14.3%
	Retail trade	12.9%	11.2%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	12.3%	10.4%
	Public administration	8.5%	7.9%
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.3%	8.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

United States Department of Labor Disability Employment Statistics

The U.S. Department of Labor provides monthly Disability Employment Statistics. The Labor Force Participation Rate refers to the percentage of non-institutionalized U.S. citizens who are in the labor force. The unemployment rate measures the percentage within the labor force who are currently without a job. The data indicates that labor force participation rates for individuals with disabilities is consistently over 38 points higher than the rate for individuals without disabilities. In addition, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is consistently at least between 3.5 and 4.1 percentage points higher compared to individuals without disabilities. Table 38 contains the U.S. labor force participation and unemployment statistics for the months of May through September 2024 for individuals with and without a disability age 16 and over.

Table 38

Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates for PWD in the U.S

Group	Labor Force Participation Rates				
	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24
People with Disabilities	25.0%	24.5%	24.2%	29.3%	24.5%
People without Disabilities	67.9%	68.5%	68.7%	68.3%	68.1%
	Unemployment Rate				
People with Disabilities	7.5%	8.0%	8.2%	8.3%	7.2%
People without Disabilities	3.5%	4.1%	4.3%	4.2%	3.7%

Source: <https://www.bls.gov>

National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research: Disability Employment Statistics

The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) released the 2024 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium in March 2024 which contains data on employment for people with disabilities ages 18 to 64 based on the 2022 Public Use Microdata (PUMA) sample. According to the report, the national employment percentage for individuals ages 18 to 64 living in the community was significantly higher for people without disabilities (76.6 percent) versus people with disabilities (40.7 percent). The employment gap, which is the difference between the employment percentage for people with disabilities and people without disabilities is 35.9 percent for the nation. In 2022, Virginia’s employment rate for individuals with disabilities ages 18 to 64 was 44.4 percent and the employment rate was 78.8 percent for individuals without disabilities. The employment gap for Virginia was 34.4 percent. Compared to the 50 states, Virginia’s employment gap ranked 18th in the nation (lowest rate to highest rate rank order).

NIDILRR publishes statistics regarding employment based on disability type for 18- to 64-year-old individuals living in the community with disabilities. The following data in table 39 contains the national and state employment rates by disability type from 2022 PUMA data that were

published in the 2024 Annual Compendium. Note that in Virginia, significantly higher rates of individuals with ambulatory and self-care disabilities are employed compared to the national employment rate for the same group.

Table 39

2022 Employment by Disability Type for Civilians Ages 18 to 64

Disability Type	U.S. Percent Employed	VA Percent Employed
Any Disability	44.5%	45.7%
Hearing Disability	57.5%	57.6%
Visual Disability	50.9%	52.9%
Cognitive Disability	39.0%	39.7%
Ambulatory Disability	29.5%	34.5%
Self-Care Disability	17.6%	21.1%
Independent Living Disability	23.5%	24.6%

Citation: Thomas, N., Paul, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A. (2024). Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2024 (Table 3.1 - Table 3.7). Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability.

U.S. Census Bureau Labor Force Participation (LPF) Statistics

The United States Census Bureau publishes a variety of statistics regarding people with disabilities and their participation in the labor force. The following four sets of statistics contain data regarding labor force participation and employment of people with disabilities.

Labor Force Participation Rates (LPF)

The labor force participation rate represents the proportion of the population that is in the labor force.

Of the total population age 16 years and older residing in the United States who report having a disability, 28.1 percent are employed and participating in the labor force, while approximately 69.2 percent are not in the labor force. The Commonwealth of Virginia’s average for those who report a disability and are employed is 29.1 percent while 68.6 percent of those who report a disability are not engaged in the labor force.

Table 40 provides data based on disability status and employment for ages 16 and over from the U.S. Census Bureau for the year 2022 for the nation and the state.

Table 40

LPF – Total Civilian Non-institutionalized Population (TCNP) Age 16 and Over: U.S. and VA

	United States			Virginia		
	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
Population Age 16 and Over	264,618,455	41,295,440	223,323,015	6,804,643	998,252	5,806,391
Employed	61.4%	28.1%	67.6%	63.2%	29.1%	69.0%
Not in Labor Force	35.8%	69.2%	29.7%	34.5%	68.6%	28.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Employment Rate Comparison: People with and without Disabilities

Noted in Table 40 above, the national employment percentage rate for people without disabilities ages 16 and over (67.6 percent) is significantly higher than the rate for people with disabilities (28.1 percent). Using the Census Bureau one-year data, the employment gap is 39.5 percent for the nation for the ages 16 and over. Virginia’s employment rate for individuals with disabilities aged 16 and over was 29.1 percent, and the employment rate was 69 percent for individuals without disabilities. The employment gap for Virginia was 39.9 percent.

The employment rates for people ages 16 and over with and without disabilities are published by the U.S. Census Bureau for 38 of Virginia’s counties/county equivalents. Table 41 compares the percentage rates and the employment gaps between the two groups from the available data.

Table 41

Employment of Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population with and without Disabilities Ages 16 and Over: Virginia’s Counties

Nation/State	Disability: Percent Employed	No Disability: Percent Employed	Employment Gap
United States	28.1%	67.6%	39.5
Virginia	29.1%	69.0%	39.9
DO1	Disability: Percent Employed	No Disability: Percent Employed	Employment Gap
Albemarle	23.6%	63.8%	40.2
Augusta	23.5%	69.1%	45.6
Frederick	26.2%	68.0%	41.8
Rockingham	28.3%	67.9%	39.6

DO2	Disability: Percent Employed	No Disability: Percent Employed	Employment Gap
Arlington	35.7%	79.5%	43.8%
Fairfax	33.8%	71.5%	37.7%
Loudoun	34.4%	75.2%	40.8%
Prince William	36.6%	72.3%	35.7%
Alexandria city	37.3%	79.0%	41.7%
DO3	Disability: Percent Employed	No Disability: Percent Employed	Employment Gap
Montgomery	29.3%	57.5%	28.2%
Russell	20.1%	53.8%	33.7%
Tazewell	15.0%	53.0%	38.0%
Washington	23.2%	62.9%	39.7%
Wise	14.6%	60.0%	45.4%
DO4	Disability: Percent Employed	No Disability: Percent Employed	Employment Gap
Bedford	20.5%	62.9%	42.4%
Campbell	20.3%	65.3%	45.0%
Franklin	16.1%	60.4%	44.3%
Henry	14.3%	61.0%	46.7%
Pittsylvania	15.3%	62.5%	47.2%
Roanoke	23.5%	66.5%	43.0%
Danville city	19.5%	59.5%	40.0%
Lynchburg city	26.4%	62.5%	36.1%
Roanoke city	22.4%	67.2%	44.8%
DO5	Disability: Percent Employed	No Disability: Percent Employed	Employment Gap
Chesterfield	31.6%	70.4%	38.8
Hanover	23.3%	71.0%	47.7
Henrico	30.9%	72.6%	41.7
Spotsylvania	32.1%	68.9%	36.8
Stafford	33.9%	69.9%	36

DO5	Disability: Percent Employed	No Disability: Percent Employed	Employment Gap
Richmond city	30.4%	70.7%	40.3
DO6	Disability: Percent Employed	No Disability: Percent Employed	Employment Gap
James City County	27.0%	60.1%	33.1
York	29.9%	66.8%	36.9
Chesapeake city	27.8%	69.5%	41.7
Hampton city	27.4%	67.7%	40.3
Newport News city	30.3%	68.7%	38.4
Norfolk city	30.2%	68.2%	38
Portsmouth city	23.4%	66.2%	42.8
Suffolk city	22.8%	68.4%	45.6
Virginia Beach city	33.6%	70.2%	36.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Employment to Population Ratio – People with Disabilities

The employment-to-population ratio is derived by dividing the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 64 years who are employed by the total civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 64 years and multiplying by 100. The employment-to-population ratio indicates the ratio of the civilian labor force currently employed to the total working-age population of the designated geographic area, which is different from the labor force participation rate because the labor force participation rate includes currently employed and those who are unemployed but actively looking for work.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau collect and analyze the employment-population ratio for people with disabilities by state, county, and urban and rural geography. The Bureau also publishes the ratio for metropolitan statistical areas, micropolitan statistical areas, 2020 designated urban areas and PUMAs. The boundaries for the designated areas and PUMA county boundaries are not equivalent to the VR service area boundaries. The definitions for the statistical areas and PUMA are:

Metropolitan Statistical Area: “A geographic entity delineated by the Office of Management and Budget for use by federal statistical agencies. Metropolitan statistical areas consist of the county or counties (or equivalent entities) associated with at least one urbanized area of at least 50,000 population, plus adjacent counties having a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured through commuting ties.”

Micropolitan Statistical Area: “A geographic entity delineated by the Office of Management and Budget for use by federal statistical agencies. Micropolitan statistical

areas consist of the county or counties (or equivalent entities) associated with at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 population, plus adjacent counties having a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured through commuting ties.”

PUMA: “A statistical area defined to contain a population of 100,000 or greater for which the Census Bureau tabulates public use microdata sample (PUMS) data. American Community Survey and decennial census population and housing microdata are disseminated using these defined areas. The American Community Survey also publishes one year estimate data for PUMAs.” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2024)

The Commonwealth of Virginia’s employment-to-population ratio for people with disabilities is roughly 1 percent higher than the nation’s ratio. Virginia ranked 25th highest for employment-to-population ratio for people with disabilities in 2022 when compared to other states in the nation. Virginia has a higher ratio of people with disabilities working in urban areas than in rural areas and the difference is 12.4 percent. When compared to the nation, Virginia’s ratio of rural workers with disabilities reflects the nation’s rural ratio.

Based on available data, Fauquier County has the lowest employment-to-population ratio for people with disabilities (36.3 percent) in the state. Note that Fauquier County has the 29th largest state population and has 42.5 percent of the population residing in urban blocks. Fauquier County’s: 1) median earnings for people with disabilities ranks the 17th highest amount in Virginia (\$45,745); 2) has the 11th lowest poverty rate (5.2 percent) for people ages 18 to 64; and 3) ranks 51st (high to low) in the state for the number of people ages 18 to 64 with disabilities residing in the county.

Table 42 contains the 2022 employment-to-population ratios for people with a disability aged 18 to 64 years in the nation, state, county/county equivalents, and urban areas.

*Table 42
Employment-to-Population Ratio for People with Disabilities Ages 18-64: U.S. and VA*

EMPLOYMENT TO POPULATION RATIO FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY	
State/ Urban – Rural/County/City/Reservation Trust Land	
Geographic Area	Percent
United States	44.5
United States -- Urban	45.9
United States -- Rural	39.6
Virginia	45.6
Virginia -- Urban	49.2
Virginia -- Rural	36.8
Counties	

EMPLOYMENT TO POPULATION RATIO FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY	
State/ Urban – Rural/County/City/Reservation Trust Land	
Geographic Area	Percent
Albemarle County	41.2
Arlington County	62.7
Augusta County	39.4
Bedford County	45.9
Chesterfield County	47.2
Fairfax County	63.3
Fauquier County	36.3
Frederick County	51.5
Hanover County	43.1
Henrico County	49.3
James City County	41.1
Loudoun County	59.7
Montgomery County	36.4
Prince William County	58.3
Roanoke County	51
Rockingham County	56.8
Spotsylvania County	53.3
Stafford County	50
York County	62.7
Cities	
Alexandria city	67
Chesapeake city	54.4
Hampton city	41.1
Lynchburg city	44.2
Newport News city	40.4
Norfolk city	42.9
Portsmouth city	45.3
Richmond city	49.1

EMPLOYMENT TO POPULATION RATIO FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY	
State/ Urban – Rural/County/City/Reservation Trust Land	
Geographic Area	Percent
Roanoke city	40.6
Suffolk city	42.1
Virginia Beach city	48
Urban Areas	
Blacksburg--Christiansburg, VA Urban Area (2020)	38.4
Bristol, TN--VA Urban Area (2020)	24.7
Charlottesville, VA Urban Area (2020)	40.1
Fredericksburg, VA Urban Area (2020)	53.3
Hagerstown, MD--WV--PA--VA Urban Area (2020)	48.7
Harrisonburg, VA Urban Area (2020)	48.7
Kingsport, TN--VA Urban Area (2020)	44.8
Lynchburg, VA Urban Area (2020)	42.7
Richmond, VA Urban Area (2020)	47.8
Roanoke, VA Urban Area (2020)	42.2
Virginia Beach--Norfolk, VA Urban Area (2020)	46.3
Washington--Arlington, DC--VA--MD Urban Area (2020)	55.6
Williamsburg, VA Urban Area (2020)	36.3
Winchester, VA Urban Area (2020)	52.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Employment Status by Disability Status and Type

Employment status by disability type is estimated for the population ages 18 to 64 by the U.S. Census Bureau. The U.S. average for individuals with cognitive disabilities (41.1 percent) ranks the highest for labor force participation when compared to other disabilities. The state average for individuals with cognitive disabilities also ranks the highest for labor force participation and is 1.7 percent lower than the national average. The lowest labor force participation rates among those reporting a disability in the nation and Virginia are individuals reporting a self-care difficulty, with a rate at 6.1 percent for the U.S. and at 6.5 percent for the state.

York County has a significantly higher labor force participation rate (10.5 percent) for people with disabilities ages 18 to 64. The rate is higher than the national rate by four percent and higher

than the state average by 4.3 percent. Hearing disability is the most frequently reported disability type among those that are employed and have a disability in York County. York County’s labor force participation rate for individuals with cognitive disabilities is higher than the U.S. average by 3.3 percent. York County’s labor force participation rate for those with hearing disabilities exceeds the national and state rates by over 25 percent. This information is presented to help inform VR as it engages in strategic planning for the future.

Table 43 contains labor force participation rates from 2022 for the nation, state and two counties as limited data is available. Counties selected are the counties/county equivalents that have the highest and lowest population counts for ages 18 to 64 obtained from available 2022 one-year estimates.

*Table 43
Employment Status by Disability Status and Type: U.S. and Virginia*

	U.S.	Virginia	York	Fairfax
Total 18 - 64 years:	199,645,753	5,156,888	38,562	693,881
In labor force:	78.5%	79.5%	78.7%	83.6%
Employed:	95.8%	96.4%	98.1%	97.0%
With a disability	6.5%	6.2%	10.5%	4.8%
Hearing	23.6%	24.4%	49.7%	23.7%
Vision	22.1%	20.3%	4.3%	17.6%
Cognitive	41.1%	39.4%	44.4%	47.9%
Ambulatory	26.6%	30.0%	24.6%	24.8%
Self-care	6.1%	6.5%	7.8%	8.1%
Independent Living	18.9%	18.3%	15.1%	16.9%
No disability	93.5%	93.8%	89.5%	95.2%
Unemployed:	4.2%	3.6%	1.9%	3.0%
With a disability	15.1%	13.8%	0.0%	7.5%
No disability	84.9%	86.2%	100.0%	92.5%
Not in labor force:	21.5%	20.5%	21.3%	16.4%
With a disability	26.1%	25.7%	22.7%	12.6%
No disability	73.9%	74.3%	77.3%	87.4%
LFP employed & unemployed w/ disability	6.9%	6.5%	10.3%	4.9%
LFP employed & unemployed w/o disability	93.1%	93.5%	89.7%	95.1%
Total Pop w/ disability	11.0%	10.4%	13.0%	6.1%
Total Pop w/o disability	89.0%	89.6%	87.0%	93.9%

***AGENCY-SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO OVERALL
PERFORMANCE***

The project team requested data related to overall performance and case movement from DARS and accessed data from the RSA data dashboard for this CSNA. Data from both sources is presented throughout the report in the applicable areas.

Table 44 contains general information from the RSA data dashboard for all Virginia DARS clients for program years 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Table 44

General Statistics for Virginia DARS Clients

<i>General Statistics</i>	Program Year Totals		
New Case Count	2021	2022	2023
Applicants	7,244	8,794	9,276
New Eligible Individuals	6,530	8,082	8,541
Number on OOS Waiting List (PY Q4 Data)	0	0	0
Attrition prior to IPE	22.3%	24.1%	25.4%
Initial IPEs Developed	5,506	6,784	7,330
Services to Participants	2021	2022	2023
Career Services	47,368	50,716	57,604
Training Services	8,872	9,758	5,474
Total Exiting in Employment	6,905	7,020	8,460
Employment Rate	34.7%	35.4%	31.3%

The data indicates that the number of applications to DARS increased steadily from PY 2021 through PY 2023, increasing significantly in PY 2022 and a smaller increase is noted in PY 2023. The number of individuals found eligible increased each year as did the number of initial IPEs developed.

The attrition rate prior to IPE development increased by almost 2 percent from PY 2021 to PY 2022 and the rate increased by 1.3 percent from PY 2022 to PY 2023. This rate is consistent with the average attrition rate for other VR programs nationally.

The agency provided an increasing number of career services from year to year but had a significant decrease in the number of training services provided from 2022 to 2023. The number of individuals exiting in employment increased steadily each year, though the overall employment rate at exit decreased by four percent from 2022 to 2023.

Gender and Age

The project team examined data by gender and age for DARS and the results are in Table 45. The data includes anyone that preferred not to provide gender information.

Table 45

Gender and Age of DARS Clients

Gender and Age of Individuals Served	ALL CLIENTS		
	2021	2022	2023
Male	59.4%	59.1%	58.4%
Female	40.1%	39.1%	38.4%
Prefer not to identify	0.5%	1.8%	3.2%
24 and younger	53.1%	51.4%	49.6%
25 - 59	42.0%	43.1%	44.3%
60 and over	5.0%	5.5%	6.1%

The data indicates that DARS served more males than females in PY 2021, PY 2022, and PY 2023, with a slightly higher rate of females served in PY 2021. The disparity between males and females served consistently ranges between 19 to 20 percentage points over the three year period. DARS may wish to conduct further study to determine if there is some reason that males are currently outnumbering females.

The rate of youth ages 24 and younger served by DARS decreased by almost two percent each year beginning in PY 2021 through PY 2023, while the rates of working age adults served increased. This pattern is different from national trends for the VR program as the national rates of youth ages 24 and younger being served are increasing and the work age adult rates are decreasing. DARS may wish to study this further to determine if there is an increased need to serve working age adults or determine the reason why the number of youth being served is lower.

Individuals in Training

The data details the number of individuals receiving various types of training services during the last quarter of the program year and the manner in which the service was provided.

Table 46
Individuals in Training

Type of Training	2021 - 4		2022 - 4		2023 - 4	
	Number	Percent of all in Training	Number	Percent of all in Training	Number	Percent of all in Training
Graduate College or University Training	2	0.6%	4	0.9%	5	1.0%
Four-Year College or University Training	42	12.1%	44	9.8%	34	6.9%
Junior or Community College Training	7	2.0%	11	2.5%	12	2.4%
Occupational or Vocational Training	62	17.9%	77	17.2%	120	24.4%
On-the-job Training	4	1.2%	8	1.8%	8	1.6%
Registered Apprenticeship Training	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.6%
Basic Academic or Remedial or Literacy Training	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Job Readiness Training	9	2.6%	10	2.2%	25	5.1%
Disability Related Skills Training	50	14.5%	69	15.4%	46	9.3%
Miscellaneous Training	170	49.1%	224	50.1%	239	48.6%
Randolph-Sheppard Training	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Customized Training	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Work-based learning Experience (non-Pre-ETS)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	346		447		492	
Total Participants Served	12,119		13,530		14,778	
Percent in any kind of training	2.9%		3.3%		3.3%	
Total in academic training	113		136		171	
Percent in any kind of academic training	0.9%		1.0%		1.2%	

The data indicates that the number of DARS clients in any kind of training remained stable year-by-year from 2021 to 2023. DARS serves more individuals at the four-year university level vs the junior college level each year. Occupational or vocational training services increased from

PY 2021 to PY 2023 with the most notable increase of roughly 7 percent from PY 2022 to PY 2023. DARS provided a large number of disability related skills training and miscellaneous training services each program year. The rate of individuals in academic training is very low and can adversely affect the credential attainment rate and MSG rate in the future, though both rates are high currently.

Case Service Expenditures: VR Agency Purchases

The project team analyzed all VR agency service purchases for DARS for the life of the study in order to determine where the case service dollars are being spent by the agency. Expenditure information is provided for the categories that rank as the top 10 highest rate of purchases made in each program year out of the 20 category choices. Table 47 presents this information in rank order for each program year.

*Table 47
Major Expenditures for Virginia DARS*

VR Agency Purchases - Major Expense Category					
Agency Purchases	2021	Agency Purchases	2022	Agency Purchases	2023
	Percent of Total		Percent of Total		Percent of Total
Supported Employment Services	28.3%	Supported Employment Services	28.2%	Supported Employment Services	30.1%
Assessment*	23.1%	Assessment*	24.4%	Assessment*	23.6%
Benefits Counseling*	11.4%	Benefits Counseling*	11.0%	Transportation*	10.9%
Transportation*	10.2%	Transportation*	10.6%	Benefits Counseling*	9.7%
Maintenance*	7.9%	Maintenance*	7.4%	Maintenance*	7.0%
Other Services	5.9%	Other Services	5.7%	Other Services	5.5%
Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments	4.5%	Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments	4.7%	Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments	4.7%
Short Term Job Supports	4.3%	Short Term Job Supports	4.1%	Short Term Job Supports	4.5%
Interpreter Services*	2.1%	Interpreter Services*	2.0%	Interpreter Services*	1.8%
Job Search Assistance	1.3%	Job Search Assistance	1.2%	Job Search Assistance	1.5%

The data indicates that DARS has spent roughly 28 to 30 percent of their case service dollars on SE services and spent roughly 24 percent of case service dollars on assessment services each year during the three-year period beginning PY 2021 to PY 2023. Expenditures were fairly consistent from year to year for the other categories.

Types of Employment Outcomes

An important measure of the performance of the organization is the type of employment outcomes obtained by the clients served. The project team utilized the RSA data dashboard to identify employment outcomes by Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code for individuals exiting employment for PY 2021, PY 2022, and PY 2023. The data is included in Table 48.

Table 48

Employment Outcomes by SOC Code Title for Virginia DARS: PY 2021 through PY 2023

SOC Title	PY 2021					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	PY Totals	PY Rate
Building Cleaning Workers, All Other				14	14	0.6%
Cashiers	16	13			29	1.2%
Childcare Workers						
Customer Service Representatives	67	55	68	64	254	10.6%
Dishwashers	12	12	13	18	55	2.3%
Fast Food and Counter Workers	32	23	25	22	102	4.3%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers, All Other		15	23	29	67	2.8%
Helpers--Production Workers	19	11	23	16	69	2.9%
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	67	62	43	52	224	9.4%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	44	25	40	37	146	6.1%
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners						
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	17	12	15		44	1.8%
Retail Salespersons	11		14	16	41	1.7%
Stockers and Order Fillers	86	81	66	76	309	12.9%
Total	371	309	330	344	1,354	
Total Outcomes in the Quarter	660	527	596	610	2,393	
Percent of all outcomes in the top 10	56.2%	58.6%	55.4%	56.4%	56.6%	

SOC Title	PY 2022					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	PY Totals	PY Rate
Building Cleaning Workers, All Other						
Cashiers			11		11	0.4%
Childcare Workers	15		12		27	1.1%
Customer Service Representatives	75	44	69	72	260	10.5%
Dishwashers	21	14			35	1.4%
Fast Food and Counter Workers	29	23	23	46	121	4.9%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers, All Other	18	15	22	29	84	3.4%
Helpers--Production Workers	16	17	32	28	93	3.7%
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	64	42	48	46	200	8.0%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	45	33	31	42	151	6.1%
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners		11		16	27	1.1%
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other			11	15	26	1.0%
Retail Salespersons	19	10		18	47	1.9%
Stockers and Order Fillers	87	57	82	84	310	12.5%
Total	389	266	341	396	1,392	
Total Outcomes in the Quarter	677	505	605	698	2,485	
Percent of all outcomes in the top 10	57.5%	52.7%	56.4%	56.7%	56.0%	
SOC Title	PY 2023					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	PY Totals	PY Rate
Building Cleaning Workers, All Other		12			12	0.5%
Cashiers		12	21		33	1.2%
Childcare Workers	16			14	30	1.1%
Customer Service Representatives	60	52	91	56	259	9.8%
Dishwashers	21	13	20	16	70	2.6%
Fast Food and Counter Workers	29	28	38	28	123	4.6%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers, All Other	31	25	39	16	111	4.2%

SOC Title	PY 2023					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	PY Totals	PY Rate
Helpers--Production Workers	22	19	21		62	2.3%
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	53	57	63	61	234	8.8%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	30	32	35	39	136	5.1%
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners						
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other			15	16	31	1.2%
Retail Salespersons	20			13	33	1.2%
Stockers and Order Fillers	76	82	78	93	329	12.4%
Total	358	332	421	352	1,463	
Total Outcomes in the Quarter	628	605	753	661	2,647	
Percent of all outcomes in the top 10	57.0%	54.9%	55.9%	53.3%	55.3%	

The occupations that comprise the top ten most frequently obtained employment outcomes secured by clients during the course of PW 2021, 2022, and 2023 are in relatively low skills positions. The SOC outcomes reflect the higher numbers of individuals receiving occupational or vocational training and the lower number of individuals enrolled in postsecondary training programs. It will be important for DARS to encourage career-level employment that utilizes career pathways in the future.

Wages

The project team examined the distribution of hourly wages at exit found on the RSA data dashboards and from data submitted by DARS. Table 49 contains the examined data.

Table 49
Distribution of Hourly Wages at Exit: PY 2021, PY 2022, and PY 2023

RSA Data Dashboard: Distribution of Hourly Wages at Exit						
Hourly Wage	PY 2021 TOTAL		PY 2022 TOTAL		PY 2023 TOTAL	
	Count	Percent of Total	Count	Percent of Total	Count	Percent of Total
\$10 and less	498	20.8%	46	1.9%	2	0.1%
over \$10 to \$15	1,434	59.9%	1,741	70.1%	1,698	64.1%
over \$15 to \$20	308	12.9%	512	20.6%	704	26.6%
over \$20 to \$25	85	3.6%	96	3.9%	142	5.4%
above \$25	68	2.8%	90	3.6%	101	3.8%
Totals	2,393	100.0%	2,485	100.0%	2,647	100.0%
DARS Agency Data						
	PY 2021		PY 2022		PY 2023	
Median Hourly Earnings	\$ 12.19		\$ 13.87		\$ 15.00	
Median Hours Worked	26		26		25	

The wages earned reflect the training data and the SOC data presented in previous sections of this report. Additionally, the data from RSA and the agency is consistent and indicates that there was a \$2.81 increase in the median hourly wage from PY 2021 to PY 2023, an increase of 23.1 percent. The median hours worked indicates that clients are possibly obtaining part-time positions at exit, a desire of some clients noted in client surveys.

Program Exit

The project team examined the type of exit and the reasons for exit from the program utilizing the RSA data dashboards for PY 2021, PY 2022, and PY 2023. An examination of closure types and reasons can help the agency identify where they may need to focus energy and resources in the VR process to maximize the likelihood of success for clients.

Type of Exit

Table 50 contains information on the type of exit for PY 2021 through PY 2023 for clients.

Table 50

Type of Exit for Virginia DARS Clients: PY 2021 through PY 2023

Type of Exit	2021		2022		2023	
	Total	% of all	Total	% of all	Total	% of all
Individual exited as an applicant, prior to eligibility determination or trial work	539	7.8%	513	7.3%	622	7.4%
Individual exited as an applicant after being determined ineligible for VR services.	31	0.4%	33	0.5%	44	0.5%
Individual exited during or after a trial work experience.	114	1.7%	143	2.0%	188	2.2%
Individual exited after eligibility, but from an order of selection waiting list.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Individual exited after eligibility, but prior to a signed IPE.	848	12.3%	1,000	14.2%	1,290	15.2%
Individual exited after an IPE without an employment outcome.	2,980	43.2%	2,846	40.5%	3,669	43.4%
Individual exited after an IPE in noncompetitive and/or nonintegrated employment.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Individual exited after an IPE in competitive integrated employment or SE.	2,393	34.7%	2,485	35.4%	2,647	31.3%

The data indicates that in PY 2023 slightly less than one-third of individuals exited after an IPE in competitive integrated employment or SE, which is less than the percentage rate of PY 2022 (35.4 percent) for the same exit category and 3.4 percent less than the PY 2021 rate. The data also indicates that roughly 12 to 15 percent of individuals exited after eligibility but prior to a signed IPE during the years 2021 through 2023 period. Conversely, roughly 40.5 to 43.5 percent of exits occurred after an IPE was developed but without an employment outcome during the same program years.

Reasons for Exit

Table 51 identifies the reason for exit for clients during PY 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Table 51
Reasons for Exit

Reason for Exit	2021		2022		2023	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Health/Medical	112	1.6%	118	1.7%	173	2.0%
Death of Individual	54	0.8%	42	0.6%	44	0.5%
Reserve Forces Called to Active Duty	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Ineligible After Determined Eligible	90	1.3%	119	1.7%	130	1.5%
Criminal Offender	25	0.4%	48	0.7%	61	0.7%
No Disabling Condition	89	1.3%	110	1.6%	117	1.4%
Transferred to Another Agency	12	0.2%	14	0.2%	18	0.2%
Achieved Competitive Integrated Employment Outcome	2,393	34.7%	2,485	35.4%	2,647	31.3%
Extended Employment	3	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.1%
Extended Services Not Available	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.0%
Unable to Locate or Contact	1,055	15.3%	992	14.1%	1,434	17.0%
No Longer Interested in Receiving Services or Further Services	2,592	37.5%	2,598	37.0%	3,250	38.4%
All Other Reasons	462	6.7%	474	6.8%	551	6.5%
Short Term Basis Period	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
Ineligible - Section 511	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Ineligible - Trial Work Experience	15	0.2%	19	0.3%	27	0.3%
Total Number Exiting	6,905	99.9%	7,020	99.9%	8,460	99.9%

The data indicates that more than one-third of all program exits in PY 2021, 2022, and 2023 occur because the individuals are no longer interested in receiving services or further services. This was the most frequent reason for exit in all three years, followed by unable to locate or contact. In combination, these two exit reasons account for more than 50 percent of all reasons for exit in each year. It will be important for DARS to determine why individuals lose interest in VR services and why it is difficult to locate individuals once they apply for the program and identify strategies to help facilitate more sustained engagement.

WIOA Performance Measures for DARS

The U.S. Department of Education Technical Assistance Circular (RSA-TAC-20-02) dated May 10, 2023 states:

- *“WIOA establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirement to assess the effectiveness of states and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development system’s core programs.”*

RSA dashboards provide agency specific WIOA performance measures. The results include Virginia General VR data (DARS) for PY 2021 through PY 2023. The information is contained in Tables 52 - 54.

Table 52-54

Virginia General VR Agency WIOA Performance Measures PY 2021, PY 2022, PY 2023

WIOA Performance Measures PY 2021					
Measure	National Actual Rate	Statewide Negotiated Rate	Agency Actual Rate	Comparison of State Negotiated to Actual	National Comparison
Employment Rate in 2nd Quarter after Exit	52.5%	NA	56.0%	NA	3.5%
Employment Rate in 4th Quarter after Exit	48.0%	NA	53.6%	NA	5.6%
Median Earnings in 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$4,776	NA	\$3,740	NA	-\$1,036
Credential Attainment Rate	30.8%	NA	56.0%	NA	25.2%
Measurable Skill Gains	43.0%	46.0%	93.3%	Target met	50.3%
WIOA Performance Measures PY 2022					
Measure	National Actual Rate	Statewide Negotiated Rate	Agency Actual Rate	Comparison of State Negotiated to Actual	National Comparison
Employment Rate in 2nd Quarter after Exit	56.2%	52.0%	58.0%	Target met	1.8%
Employment Rate in 4th Quarter after Exit	52.8%	50.0%	56.3%	Target met	3.5%
Median Earnings in 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$5,130	\$3,600	\$4,041	Target met	-\$1,089
Credential Attainment Rate	37.6%	43.5%	62.0%	Target met	24.4%
Measurable Skill Gains	48.7%	89.0%	86.3%	Target not met	37.6%

WIOA Performance Measures PY 2023					
Measure	National Actual Rate	Statewide Negotiated Rate	Agency Actual Rate	Comparison of State Negotiated to Actual	National Comparison
Employment Rate in 2nd Quarter after Exit	55.9%	53.0%	57.0%	Target met	1.1%
Employment Rate in 4th Quarter after Exit	52.6%	52.0%	54.1%	Target met	1.5%
Median Earnings in 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$5,513	\$3,800	\$4,200	Target met	-\$1,713
Credential Attainment Rate	40.7%	45.0%	62.0%	Target met	21.3%
Measurable Skill Gains	52.1%	89.1%	81.1%	Target not met	29.0%

The DARS agency WIOA actual rates surpass the national averages in four performance measures for the 2021 through 2023 program years. In the categories of “employment rate in second quarter after exit” and “employment rate in fourth quarter after exit,” DARS actual rates slightly exceed the national averages. In the categories of credential attainment and measurable skill gains, DARS rates exceed the national averages by over 20 points.

Statewide negotiated performance rates were not available for all performance categories during PY 2021. DARS exceeded the statewide negotiated rates in four of five WIOA performance measures for PY 2022 and PY 2023. The median earnings for individuals exiting to competitive employment increased each of the three years of the study from \$3,740 in 2021 to \$4,200 in 2023, resulting in an increase of 12.3 percent. DARS exceeded the statewide targeted rate for MSGs by 47.3 percent in PY 2021. The agency did not meet the negotiated target rate for the performance measure “measurable skill gains” for PY 2022 and PY 2023. Although the negotiated rate was not exceeded, the agency would have passed the MSG indicator if it was being counted for performance measures as they exceeded their negotiated rate by well above the required 50 percent. It should also be noted that the MSG rate for the agency is considerably higher than almost all other VR programs in the nation.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Respondent Demographics

Individual survey respondents were asked four demographic questions to understand the sample population of consumers participating in the survey.

Age

Individual survey respondents were asked to identify their age. A total of 77 respondents indicated their age. Slightly more than one-half (53.3 percent) of the respondents cited age of 25 to 64. A margin of difference of 10.4 percent exists between the age category of 25 to 64 and individuals under 25 (42.9 percent). Table 55 identifies the ages of the respondents.

Table 55

Individual Survey: Age of Respondents

Age Range of Respondents	Number	Percent
25-64	41	53.3%
under 25	33	42.9%
65 and over	3	3.9%
Total	77	100.0%

DARS District

Individual survey respondents were asked to identify the DARS service district they reside in. Slightly more than one-quarter of respondents cited they reside in the Hampton Roads District and one-quarter of respondents cited the Northern District. Results are detailed in Table 56.

Table 56

Individual Survey: DARS District of Residence

County of Residence	Number	Percent
Hampton Roads District (Counties include Gloucester, Mathews, James City, York, Accomack, Northampton, Isle of Wight, Southampton; Cities include Williamsburg, Franklin, Chesapeake, Hampton, Norfolk, Newport News, Portsmouth, Poquoson, Suffolk, Virginia Beach)	19	26.8%
Northern District (Counties include Madison, Orange, Rappahannock, Culpeper, Fauquier, Prince William, Loudon, Fairfax; Cities include Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, Manassas Park)	18	25.4%

County of Residence	Number	Percent
New River District (Counties include Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Roanoke, Bedford, Amherst, Appomattox, Campbell, Charlotte, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Halifax, Pittsylvania, Henry, Patrick, Franklin; Cities include Covington, Bedford, Lynchburg, Roanoke, Salem, Martinsville, Danville)	11	15.5%
Capitol District (Counties include Stafford, Spotsylvania, Caroline, King George, Westmoreland, Northumberland, Richmond, Lancaster, Essex, Middlesex, King and Queen, King William, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Charles City, Prince George, Sussex, Surrey, Greensville, Brunswick, Dinwiddie, Chesterfield, Powhatan, Goochland, Cumberland, Prince Edward, Amelia, Nottoway; Cities include Fredericksburg, Richmond, Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Petersburg, Emporia)	11	15.5%
Southwest District (Counties include Giles, Montgomery, Floyd, Pulaski, Carroll, Grayson, Wythe, Bland, Tazewell, Smyth, Washington, Russell, Buchanan, Dickenson, Wise, Scott, Lee; Cities include Bristol, Radford, Galax, Norton)	8	11.3%
Skyline District (Counties include Frederick, Clarke, Warren, Page, Shenandoah, Rockingham, Greene, Louisa, Fluvanna, Buckingham, Albemarle, Nelson, Augusta, Rockbridge, Bath, Highland; Cities include Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, Buena Vista, Staunton, Waynesboro, Winchester, Lexington)	4	5.6%
Total	71	100.0%

Primary Disability

Individual survey respondents were presented a list of 15 disability types, including a category for “other,” and asked to identify their primary disabling condition. A total of 72 respondents answered the question.

Although three respondents cited “no impairment”, 25 percent of respondents identified Autism Spectrum Disorder as their primary disability. Intellectual Disability was the third most frequently selected disability type (13.9 percent) by respondents. The 16.7 percent of respondents who selected the category of “other” reported specific disability or medical conditions including ADHD, depression, Down’s Syndrome, autoimmune disorder, substance abuse, epilepsy, and kidney failure. Table 57 summarizes the primary disabling conditions reported by respondents.

*Table 57**Individual Survey: Primary Disability of Respondents*

Primary Disability	Number	Percent
Autism Spectrum Disorder	18	25.0%
Other (please describe)	12	16.7%
Intellectual Disability (ID)	10	13.9%
Mental Health	9	12.5%
Physical	5	6.9%
Brain injury	5	6.9%
Developmental Disability (DD)	3	4.2%
No impairment	3	4.2%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	2	2.8%
Spinal Cord injury	2	2.8%
Vision impaired	1	1.4%
Communication	1	1.4%
I don't know	1	1.4%
Deaf-Blind	0	0.0%
Mobility	0	0.0%
Total	72	100.0%

Secondary Disability

Respondents were also asked to identify their secondary disabling condition, if applicable. Sixty-eight individuals answered the question. Slightly more than one-quarter (26.5 percent) of the respondents indicated no secondary disabling condition, while 14.7 percent of the individual survey respondents selected the category of “Developmental Disability.” Comments received in the category other included specific disabilities or medical conditions including ADD, anxiety, cerebral palsy, Down’s Syndrome, and multiple sclerosis. Table 58 details the secondary conditions reported by respondents.

Table 58
Individual Survey: Secondary Disability of Respondents

Secondary Disability	Number	Percent
No impairment	18	26.5%
Developmental Disability (DD)	10	14.7%
Mental Health	9	13.2%
Intellectual disability (ID)	7	10.3%
Mobility	6	8.8%
Other (please describe)	5	7.4%
Physical	3	4.4%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	3	4.4%
Communication	2	2.9%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	2	2.9%
I don't know	2	2.9%
Vision Impaired	1	1.5%
Deaf-Blind	0	0.0%
Brian injury	0	0.0%
Spinal Cord injury	0	0.0%
Total	68	100.0%

Individual Survey: Association with DARS

Individuals who responded to the survey were presented with two questions asking them to identify the statement that best described their association with DARS by identifying their client status, and their reason for seeking DARS services.

Client Status

Almost 64 percent of the individual respondents indicated that they were current clients of DARS. A gap of 32.5 percent is noted between current clients and previous clients. Table 59 summarizes the results from the survey.

Table 59

Individual Survey: Client Status

Association with DARS	Number	Percent
I am a current client of DARS	51	63.8%
I am a previous client of DARS, my case has been closed	25	31.3%
Other (please describe)	3	3.8%
I am not familiar with DARS	1	1.3%
I have never used the services of DARS	0	0.0%
Total	80	100.0%

Reasons for Seeking DARS Services

Respondents were presented with a checklist and asked to identify their reasons for seeking DARS services. There was no limit to the number of options a respondent could choose. Seventy-eight respondents answered the question.

Roughly 64 percent of the respondents indicated they were seeking assistance finding a job. Eleven narrative responses were received in the category “other,” and a diverse list of personal reasons were noted, including driving, finding a career path, and assistance following incarceration. Table 60 contains the individual survey results in response to the question.

Table 60

Individual Survey: Reasons for Seeking DARS

Reasons for Seeking DARS	Number	Percent of number of respondents
I needed help finding a job	50	64.1%
I wanted to go to college or some other kind of postsecondary education	21	26.9%
I wanted help because I was getting close to graduating from high school	16	20.5%
Other (please describe)	11	14.1%
I needed money	8	10.3%
I was told to by someone	7	9.0%
I wanted help with technology skills/equipment	7	9.0%
I needed help getting medical equipment/supplies	6	7.7%
I was in danger of losing my job	2	2.6%
I don't know	1	1.3%
Total	129	

Individual Survey: Service Delivery

Individual survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding service delivery.

Meeting Location

Individual survey respondents were asked to indicate where they usually met with their counselor. The majority of respondents (65.1 percent) meet with their counselor at the DARS office. Table 61 details the meeting locations reported by respondents.

Table 61

Individual Survey: Meeting Location

Meeting Location	Number	Percent
I go to a DARS office to meet with my counselor	41	65.1%
I usually meet with my counselor in my community/school	10	15.9%
I don't have a counselor	6	9.5%
I meet with my counselor virtually	6	9.5%
Total	63	100.0%

Preferred Service Delivery Modality

Respondents were asked to identify their preferred service delivery modality, with the choices of in-person, virtual, or no preference. Roughly 58 percent of the 62 individual survey respondents indicated that their preferred service delivery modality is in-person service. Table 62 contains the results to the question from the survey.

Table 62

Individual Survey: Preferred Service Delivery Modality

Preferred Service Modality	Number	Percent
In-person	36	58.1%
I have no preference	17	27.4%
Virtual	9	14.5%
Total	62	100.0%

Remote DARS Services

Individual respondents were provided a list of services and asked to identify the types of services that were delivered to them remotely. Although almost 39 percent of the 62 respondents that answered the question indicated that they received guidance and counseling remotely from their counselor, 40.3 percent of respondents indicated that they have not received remote services from DARS. A variety of responses were recorded in the written comments for the item response

option “other, please describe.” One comment cited frustration and not receiving clear guidance. One response cited receiving a job evaluation without follow-up or an explanation why. One comment cited “in-person,” one comment indicated “none,” and one comment cited occupational therapy when employed. Table 63 summarizes the results regarding remote services.

Table 63

Individual Survey: DARS Services Delivered Remotely

DARS Services Delivered Remotely	Number	Percent of number of respondents
I have not received any services from DARS remotely	25	40.3%
Guidance and counseling (provided by my DARS counselor)	24	38.7%
Help looking for work or applying for jobs	16	25.8%
Help understanding how work will impact my disability	7	11.3%
Other (please describe)	6	9.7%
Help keeping a job	5	8.1%
Assistive technology	2	3.2%
Total	85	137.1%

Effectiveness of Remote Services

The respondents who utilized remote services were asked to rate the effectiveness of the services that were delivered remotely. Thirty-eight respondents answered the subsequent question.

The majority of respondents (34.2 percent) indicated that remote services they were provided were somewhat effective and roughly 21 percent of respondents indicated that the remote services were less effective. An equal number of respondents cited either “extremely effective” or “not effective at all” (n=5, 13.2 percent). Table 64 details the effectiveness ratings for remote services as selected by individual respondents.

Table 64

Individual Survey: Effectiveness of Remote Services

Effectiveness of Remote Services	Number	Percent
Somewhat effective	13	34.2%
Less effective	8	21.1%
Effective	7	18.4%
Extremely effective	5	13.2%
Not effective at all	5	13.2%
Total	38	100.0%

Individual Survey: DARS and the Services

An open-ended survey question relating to the overall performance of DARS asked individual respondents if there was anything they would like to add to the survey regarding DARS. A total of 7 narrative responses were received. Six comments contained positive, negative, or a combination of feedback about DARS and service providers.

Individual Survey: Anything Else Would Like to Share

Individual survey respondents were presented with a second open-ended question asking them if they had anything that they would like to share. A total of 27 narrative comments were received. Eleven comments cited the phrases “no/NA/don’t know.” Four comments expressed gratitude for DARS and its services, including special thanks to specific employees. Six comments were negative towards DARS, citing frustration with DARS service, counselors, trainings, benefits counselors including contracted benefits counselors, and service providers. Five comments contained direct or indirect suggestions for improving DARS and are quoted:

- *“Communication is always the best way for no misunderstanding”*
- *“I feel that there is more need on the HS level for hands on opportunities for job placement or ability to attend post-secondary education”*
- *“No one told me about services at the One Stop Center”*
- *“Please figure out how to help people with multiple disabilities. The combination of me having learning disabilities, mental health disorders, and physical health disorders has had every person I have talked to stumped.*
- *“Would like talk to the DARS counselor more”*

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Respondent Characteristics

Partner survey respondents were asked three demographic questions to understand the sample population of partners that participated in the survey.

Classify Organization

The first demographic question asked partners to classify their organization. Over one-third of the 156 partner respondents who answered the question identified “employment service organization.” Roughly 15 percent of the respondents identified the narrative option “other” and identified adult education; advocacy; benefits planning; brain injury service provider and clubhouses for adults with brain injury; behavioral health providers; centers for independent living; non-profit organizations; educational service providers; legal service providers; public schools; and re-entry services. Two categories were not represented in the survey (Medical providers; Veterans agencies). Table 65 identifies the classifications indicated by partner respondents.

Table 65

Partner Survey: Organization Type

Organization Type	Number	Percent
Employment Service Organization	59	37.8%
Other (please describe)	23	14.7%
Other Federal, State, or Local Government Entity	20	12.8%
Other Public or Private Organization	11	7.1%
Individual Service Provider	11	7.1%
Secondary School	9	5.8%
Postsecondary school	7	4.5%
Developmental Disability Organization	7	4.5%
Client Advocacy Organization	5	3.2%
Mental Health Provider	4	2.6%
Medical Provider	0	0.0%
Veterans Agency	0	0.0%
Total	156	100.0%

DARS Districts

Partners were presented a detailed list of the six DARS service districts and asked to identify the districts where they provide services. There was no limit to the number of counties that a respondent could choose. One-hundred fifty-one partners answered the question.

Each district was represented in the survey by more than one-fourth of the partner respondents. Table 66 includes this information.

Table 66

Partner Survey: County Served

District Served	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Capitol District (Counties include Stafford, Spotsylvania, Caroline, King George, Westmoreland, Northumberland, Richmond, Lancaster, Essex, Middlesex, King and Queen, King William, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Charles City, Prince George, Sussex, Surrey, Greensville, Brunswick, Dinwiddie, Chesterfield, Powhatan, Goochland, Cumberland, Prince Edward, Amelia, Nottoway; Cities include Fredericksburg, Richmond, Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Petersburg, Emporia)	68	45.0%
New River District (Counties include Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Roanoke, Bedford, Amherst, Appomattox, Campbell, Charlotte, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Halifax, Pittsylvania, Henry, Patrick, Franklin; Cities include Covington, Bedford, Lynchburg, Roanoke, Salem, Martinsville, Danville)	58	38.4%
Skyline District (Counties include Frederick, Clarke, Warren, Page, Shenandoah, Rockingham, Greene, Louisa, Fluvanna, Buckingham, Albemarle, Nelson, Augusta, Rockbridge, Bath, Highland; Cities include Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, Buena Vista, Staunton, Waynesboro, Winchester, Lexington)	51	33.8%
Northern District (Counties include Madison, Orange, Rappahannock, Culpeper, Fauquier, Prince William, Loudon, Fairfax; Cities include Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, Manassas Park)	50	33.1%
Hampton Roads District (Counties include Gloucester, Mathews, James City, York, Accomack, Northampton, Isle of Wight, Southampton; Cities include Williamsburg, Franklin, Chesapeake, Hampton, Norfolk, Newport News, Portsmouth, Poquoson, Suffolk, Virginia Beach)	44	29.1%
Southwest District (Counties include Giles, Montgomery, Floyd, Pulaski, Carroll, Grayson, Wythe, Bland, Tazewell, Smyth, Washington, Russell, Buchanan, Dickenson, Wise, Scott, Lee; Cities include Bristol, Radford, Galax, Norton)	43	28.5%
Total	314	

Client Populations

The final demographic question for partners contained a list of client populations and asked partners to identify the client populations their organization worked with on a regular basis. There were no limitations on the number of client populations that a partner could choose. A total of 150 partners answered the question.

Each client population was identified by at least 39 of the 150 partners who answered the question. Respondents who selected the “other” category reported serving individuals with a variety of disabilities which include: AHP letter recipients looking for government jobs; families of children and young adults with disabilities; homeless adults; returning citizens/formerly incarcerated; acquired brain injury; unskilled workers over 50; teacher candidates; individuals with undiagnosed disabilities; individuals with behavioral and mental health diagnoses; and Pre-ETS. Table 67 details the client populations that partners serve.

Table 67

Partner Survey: Client Populations

Client Populations	Number of times chosen	Percent of total number of respondents
Individuals with mild to moderate disabilities	134	89.3%
Individuals with the most significant disabilities	99	66.0%
Transition-aged youth (14-24)	95	63.3%
Individuals that need long-term support to maintain employment	94	62.7%
Individuals that are racial or ethnic minorities	94	62.7%
Individuals that are Deaf or Hard of Hearing	70	46.7%
Individuals that are blind or low vision	69	46.0%
Veterans	43	28.7%
Individuals served by Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers)	39	26.0%
Other (please describe)	21	14.0%
Total	758	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Respondent Characteristics

Staff respondents were asked three demographic questions to understand the sample population of staff that participated in the survey.

Job Classification

The first survey question asked staff respondents to identify their job classification. All staff positions are represented in the survey. Table 68 elaborates on the types of staff positions that are represented in the survey.

Table 68

Staff Survey: Job Classification

Job Classification	Number	Present
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	67	43.2%
Support staff	31	20.0%
I prefer not to say	27	17.4%
Supervisor/Manager/Director	25	16.1%
Administration	5	3.2%
Total	155	100.0%

Years Worked for DARS

Staff were asked to indicate the number of years that they have worked for DARS. The results in table 69 indicates that the majority of staff survey respondents have worked for DARS between eleven to 20 years. An equal number of staff respondents (38, 24.4 percent) indicated that they have worked for DARS either one to five years or six to 10 years.

Table 69

Staff Survey: Years in Current Position

Years Worked for DARS	Number	Percent
11-20 years	51	32.7%
1-5 years	38	24.4%
6-10 years	38	24.4%
21+ years	19	12.2%
Less than one year	10	6.4%
Total	156	

District Served

Another survey question asked staff respondents to identify the district(s) where they work. There was no limit to the number of response options a respondent could choose. A total of one hundred fifty-five staff provided a response to this survey item.

Slightly less than one-quarter of staff respondents identified serving the Northern District. A narrow margin of difference exists between the items “Northern District” and “prefer not to say.” Although staff had two additional items to choose from in response to the question, the staff results for the districts served are different from individual and partner survey respondents’ results. Table 70 details the staff results in response to the question. Table 71 provides a rank

order comparison of individual, partner, and staff survey results for the question related to districts.

Table 70

Staff Survey: District Served

District Served	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Northern District	36	23.2%
I prefer not to say	33	21.3%
New River District	21	13.5%
Southwest District	20	12.9%
Hampton Roads District	20	12.9%
Skyline District	19	12.3%
Capitol District	18	11.6%
Central Office	15	9.7%
Total	182	

Table 71

Comparison of Individual, Partner and Staff Respondents' Survey Results: Districts

Individual Survey Results	Partner Survey Results	Staff Survey Results
1) Hampton Roads District	1) Capitol District	1) Northern District
2) Northern District	2) New River District	2) <i>I prefer not to say</i>
3) New River District	3) Skyline District	3) New River District
4) Capitol District	4) Northern District	4) Southwest District
5) Southwest District	5) Hampton Roads District	5) Hampton Roads District
6) Skyline District	6) Southwest District	6) Skyline District
		7) Capitol District
		8) <i>Central Office</i>

Staff Survey: Services that DARS is Most Effective in Providing

Related to the overall performance of the organization, respondents were provided a list of 19 items and asked to identify the services that DARS is most effective in providing to clients, directly or through community partners. There was no limitation to the number of items a staff respondent could choose.

Staff cited “supported employment,” and “disability benefits counseling” as the services DARS is the most effective in providing to clients as each item was identified by over 76 percent of staff respondents. Health insurance and housing services were the two least frequently cited items in response to the question.

The open-ended category “other” was selected by six staff respondents. The respondents were provided the opportunity to describe additional services that DARS is effective in providing that were not in the list. “Counseling and guidance,” “in-house placement,” and “evaluation services” were noted in the narrative responses. “

Table 72

Staff Survey: Services DARS Most Effective in Providing – Directly or Through Partners

Services DARS Staff Most Effective in Providing (Directly or Through Partners)	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Supported employment	98	79.0%
Disability benefits counseling	95	76.6%
Job search/placement/retention	92	74.2%
Pre-employment transition services	91	73.4%
Assistive technology	78	62.9%
Job training	68	54.8%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	58	46.8%
Vehicle modification	37	29.8%
Transportation assistance	35	28.2%
Home modification	26	21.0%
Mental health treatment	18	14.5%
Maintenance or Income assistance	14	11.3%
Substance abuse treatment	13	10.5%
Medical treatment	11	8.9%
Customized employment	11	8.9%
Personal care attendants	7	5.6%
Other (please describe)	6	4.8%
Health insurance	4	3.2%
Housing	1	0.8%
Total	763	

Staff Survey: Top Three Changes that Enable Staff to Better Serve DARS Clients

Staff were presented with a list of sixteen options and asked to identify the top three changes that would enable them to better assist their DARS clients.

A total of one-hundred seventeen staff provided a response to this question. “Smaller caseload” was the most frequently cited item (72.6 percent of staff respondents). “More streamlined processes” and “more administrative support” rounded up the top three changes that would enable staff to better serve DARS clients. Increased collaboration with other workforce partners including Virginia Workforce Connection Centers was the least frequently cited item by staff in response to the question.

Trainings identified by staff who selected the item “additional trainings” and comments from the category “other” are provided in the table following the detailed survey results.

Table 73 details the survey results. Table 74 lists the additional training suggestions and comments from the item “other, please describe.”

Table 73

Staff Survey: Top Three Changes to Better Serve DARS Clients

Top Three Changes to Better Serve DARS Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Smaller caseload	85	72.6%
More streamlined processes	48	41.0%
More administrative support	42	35.9%
More community-based service providers for specific services	29	24.8%
Better data management tools	28	23.9%
More effective community-based service providers	22	18.8%
Accountability for poor performance by service providers	20	17.1%
Improved business partnerships	13	11.1%
Incentives for high performing service providers	10	8.5%
Other (please describe)	9	7.7%
Better assessment tools	8	6.8%
Increased outreach to clients	7	6.0%
Additional training (please identify what training areas you have need of)	6	5.1%
More supervisor support	5	4.3%
Increased options for technology use to communicate with clients	5	4.3%

Top Three Changes to Better Serve DARS Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Increased collaboration with other workforce partners including Virginia Workforce Connection Centers	4	3.4%
Total	341	

Table 74
 Staff Survey: Training Suggestions and Comments

Additional Training Suggestions
<i>"Disability competence training"</i>
<i>"Driving; CNA program since WWRC closed their program"</i>
<i>"Incumbent VRC refresh Counselor Skills Training to encompass changes and evolutionary mandated requirements for those VRC's who have learned things differently than updated and current practices"</i>
<i>"Job development and disability"</i>
<i>"More efficiency with case management software (reduce steps needed to input information in AWARE cases)"</i>
Narrative Comments from the Survey Item "Other"
Staff - Related Needs
<i>"Reduce staff turnover"</i>
<i>"Turnover is killing us"</i>
<i>"More counselors to help spread the job around"</i>
Client - Related Needs
<i>"More family support and follow through by clients"</i>
<i>"Work adjustment/soft skills trainings"</i>
Improving Internal Process and Protocols
<i>"Automation within case management system"</i>
<i>"Clarification on rapid engagement and how to provide VR services (are staff still expected to interrupt failure, address mental health non-compliance, transportation issues, etc.)"</i>

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the individual interviews and focus groups conducted for this assessment as it relates to overall program performance for Virginia DARS:

1. DARS staff were characterized as motivated and dedicated to serving DARS customers. Consumers and partners commented that DARS staff are supportive and trying to meet the needs of consumers. DARS does well at hiring staff who are caring and compassionate towards people with disabilities and the mission of the agency. Participants noted that DARS staff work to connect consumers to essential and needed resources such as housing, TANF, and legal aid. Staff were characterized as often “going the extra mile” to help consumers. DARS staff and management were often characterized as patient and professional in serving difficult consumers or families.
2. DARS staff indicate that the primary challenge they are facing related to the ability to meet the needs of their consumers in the last couple of years has been recruitment and retention. Although the vacancy rate has been higher in some geographic areas of the state than others, most offices have had to deal with the challenge of covering vacant caseloads and staff shortages. The attrition rate was noted as especially high in Northern Virginia as it is close to Washington D.C. and there are better paying jobs readily available. The high cost of living in this area also contributes to high turnover. Some of the recurring themes related to the difficulty recruiting and retaining staff included:
 - a. Lower pay than many positions in the community
 - b. Limited opportunities for advancement
 - c. Lower numbers of applicants for available positions
 - d. Administrative burden of counselor positionsStaff expressed gratitude for agency leadership obtaining raises and the efforts the agency has made to create a positive work culture, and this has led to increased morale among staff.
3. DARS has been focusing on rapid engagement of consumers, and this has helped to reduce wait times and speed up eligibility determinations and IPE development time frames. Staff reported that sustained engagement can be an issue when caseloads are large.
4. There was a general consensus among interview participants that the quality of placements provided by ESOs needs to improve. Recurring concerns included
 - d. Placement in low paying, entry-level positions only. This leads to high turnover and low retention rates.
 - e. Placement in jobs that are available right away rather than in jobs that are consistent with what the consumer wants or what is indicated on the IPE.

- f. Lack of focus on jobs that include career pathways or opportunities for advancement
5. Staff indicated that postsecondary education was not a common pathway for many consumers. While there were more individuals in vocational or career/technical training programs, academic training is not frequently used. An examination of the data supports this conclusion. There were less than .5 percent of DARS participants reported in community college, four-year universities, or graduate programs combined in the last year.
6. The AWARE case management system (CMS) was often described as difficult, archaic, and time consuming, which impacts staff's ability to serve consumers. Documentation requirements seem redundant in the program and were often described as frustrating.
7. Staff indicate it would be helpful to have more consistent and timely guidance to the field from the Central Office regarding new initiatives. Staff seek more opportunities to collaborate with upper management before changes are implemented. Staff would like to see agency leadership visit their office more frequently to increase collaboration. Participants indicated that this would help implement initiatives more effectively and provide staff with an opportunity to help leadership understand the impact of changes on direct service staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to Virginia DARS based on the results of the research in the Overall Agency Performance area:

1. The agency is encouraged to continue to focus on rapid engagement of consumers to minimize the number of applicants and consumers that exit the system for lack of engagement reasons. This requires an ongoing examination of policies and procedures that unnecessarily slow down the application, eligibility, and IPE development process. In addition, the agency is encouraged to examine the structure of service delivery to determine if there are alternate structures that can be implemented on a pilot basis to reduce administrative burden on staff and increase the speed and ease with which individuals progress through the VR process.
2. DARS is encouraged to increase outreach and public awareness of DARS services. If there are ways to brand VR services separate from the “aging” component of the DARS name, this would help decrease confusion about who the agency serves.
3. The agency should examine IT infrastructure and upgrade/modernize interfaces as resources allow.
4. DARS is encouraged to continue to emphasize long-term quality career placements as a priority for the agency and ESO placement agencies. The agency is encouraged to scale up the Pathways to Careers using Partnerships and Apprenticeships project to help consumers obtain jobs that offer living wages in high demand occupations.
5. Although the agency has indicated that many individuals come to them desperate for income and work so that they can survive, the agency is encouraged to explore postsecondary education training as an option for participants. Staff should be encouraged to support the pursuit of part-time “survival” employment and training concurrently so that consumers can get their immediate needs met through work while pursuing training that will result in a self-sustaining wage in the future. The discussion about the possibility of postsecondary education should occur as a matter of course when planning with students, youth, and adults for their future employment goals.
6. DARS is encouraged, as allowable within the parameters required by the Virginia Department of Human Resource Management, to pursue additional salary adjustments to aid with staff retention and recruitment and to consider establishing a range of salary steps within existing positions where those may not exist currently.
7. DARS is encouraged to conduct a staff training needs assessment biannually to identify where staff training is needed and to consider providing more in-person training opportunities as one method to strengthen organizational culture, values, and institutional knowledge.
8. DARS is encouraged to monitor differences in the rates of males served to females in the VR program and identify strategies to increase outreach to females.

SECTION TWO

NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Section two includes an assessment of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for SE. This section includes the VR needs of DARS consumers as expressed by the different groups interviewed and surveyed. All of the general needs of DARS consumers were included here, with specific needs identified relating to SE and CE.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities including their need for SE:

1. Lack of transportation is a major barrier to employment for individuals with disabilities, especially in rural areas. Transportation was described as a struggle all over, even though Virginia has some large urban areas where public transportation is more prevalent. There are many rural areas of the state where public transportation is nonexistent. Once consumers find employment, sustainable transportation becomes a challenge due to the cost.
2. Common rehabilitation needs identified across all research methods for individuals with the most significant disabilities include:
 - a. Need for job skills/work experience.
 - b. Need for education or training.
 - c. Need to address employer perceptions about employing people with disabilities.
 - d. Mental health concerns.
 - e. Lack of soft skills.
 - f. Concern over benefit loss from working.
3. DARS operates the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC), which provides independent living and vocational training services to individuals with the most significant disabilities in a residential setting. WWRC is an important and essential program for individuals who need intensive workplace readiness training to reenter the workforce.
4. DARS serves a large number of individuals with substance use disorders and mental health impairments. The common VR needs of these individuals include:
 - a. Rapid engagement.
 - b. Training to improve their skills for employment.

- c. Self-employment.
 - d. Connections to resources for housing and other services.
 - e. Job placement assistance, often to address criminal history.
 - f. Transportation.
 - g. Medication maintenance.
 - h. Placement assistance.
5. Homelessness has become a major barrier for individuals with disabilities in Virginia. The issue became magnified with the onset of the pandemic and has not improved since, especially related to the increase in housing costs. Many individuals cannot afford housing, which affects their ability to engage in employment.
 6. There is a need to expand CE in Virginia as a service option for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The agency is working to scale-up this service as part of the RPRJ EPIC grant, but it has been a challenge to expand and sustain the service.
 7. DARS provides extensive supported employment services to individuals with severe mental illness (SMI). DARS is able to use long-term employment support services (LTESS) funds for extended services for SE. There is a long wait list for Medicaid waiver services in the state, so the availability of LTESS funds is critical for the SE program and timely services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.
 8. There is need for basic computer skills training for many DARS consumers. The lack of broadband internet service in some rural areas, and the lack of exposure to computer training can be a significant barrier to being qualified for even entry-level employment.

***NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED
TO THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST
SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED
FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT:***

Disability Types Served

Table 75 details data related to disability information and priority categories of the individuals being served by DARS. The Quarter 4 data was taken from the RSA data dashboards for program years 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Table 75

Disability Information for VR Agency: PY 2021, 2022, and 2023

Disability Information for VR Agency PY 2021, 2022 and 2023						
Significance of Disability	PY 2021 Q4		PY 2022 Q4		PY 2023 Q4	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Participant has a Significant Disability	1,181	9.7%	1,725	12.7%	2,139	14.5%
Participant has a Most Significant Disability	10,894	89.9%	11,734	86.7%	12,550	84.9%
Participant has No Significant Disability	44	0.4%	71	0.5%	89	0.6%
Total	12,119	100.0%	13,530	100.0%	14,778	100.0%
Supported Employment Goal on Current IPE	5,174	42.7%	5,624	41.6%	6,236	42.2%
Primary Disability Type by Group						
Visual	89	0.7%	123	0.9%	137	0.9%
Auditory or Communicative	851	7.0%	935	6.9%	1,029	7.0%
Physical	1,458	12.0%	1,579	11.7%	1,722	11.7%
Cognitive	5,698	47.0%	6,358	47.0%	6,927	46.9%
Psychological or Psychosocial	4,023	33.2%	4,535	33.5%	4,963	33.6%
Total	12,119	100.0%	13,530	100.0%	14,778	100.0%
Disability Type						
Blindness	47	0.4%	45	0.3%	53	0.4%
Other Visual Impairments	42	0.3%	47	0.3%	53	0.4%
Deafness, Primary Communication Visual	248	2.0%	251	1.9%	277	1.9%
Deafness, Primary Communication Auditory	95	0.8%	90	0.7%	88	0.6%
Hearing Loss, Primary Communication Visual	43	0.4%	42	0.3%	48	0.3%
Hearing Loss, Primary Communication Auditory	197	1.6%	235	1.7%	252	1.7%
Other Hearing Impairments	8	0.1%	12	0.1%	11	0.1%
Deaf-Blindness	20	0.2%	31	0.2%	31	0.2%

Disability Type						
Communicative Impairments (expressive/receptive)	240	2.0%	305	2.3%	353	2.4%
Mobility Orthopedic/Neurological Impairments	177	1.5%	198	1.5%	229	1.5%
Manipulation/Dexterity Orthopedic/Neurological Impairments	35	0.3%	37	0.3%	46	0.3%
Both Mobility and Manipulation/Dexterity Orthopedic/Neurological Impairments	241	2.0%	228	1.7%	236	1.6%
Other Orthopedic Impairments	150	1.2%	156	1.2%	158	1.1%
Respiratory Impairments	14	0.1%	17	0.1%	31	0.2%
General Physical Debilitation	210	1.7%	251	1.9%	285	1.9%
Other Physical Impairments (not listed above)	631	5.2%	692	5.1%	737	5.0%
Cognitive Impairments	5,698	47.0%	6,358	47.0%	6,927	46.9%
Psychosocial Impairments	3,116	25.7%	3,520	26.0%	3,822	25.9%
Other Mental Impairments	907	7.5%	1,015	7.5%	1,141	7.7%
Total	12,119	100.0%	13,530	100.0%	14,778	100.0%

Consistent patterns are observed during the three-year reporting period PY 2021 through PY 2023 with regard to the disability types DARS is serving. Roughly 47 percent of DARS clients are documented as having a cognitive disability as their primary disability and one-third of clients are diagnosed with a psychosocial/psychological disability as their primary disability. When combined, cognitive, psychosocial and mental impairments account for more than 80 percent of all individuals served by DARS during the three years of the study.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individual Survey: Receipt of Social Security Disability Benefits

Individual survey respondents were presented with a checklist and asked to indicate whether they received Social Security disability benefits. The total number of respondents who answered this question is 72.

Based on the table data, inferences can be made that one-half of the individual survey respondents do not receive Social Security disability benefits. About one-fifth of the respondents receive SSDI and slightly more than one-fifth of the respondents receive SSI. Table 76 summarizes the responses to this question. Note that individuals were allowed to select more than one option in the series of items (e.g., in the case of an individual who received both SSI and SSDI).

Table 76

Individual Survey: Social Security Benefit Status

Social Security Benefits Status	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
I do not receive Social Security disability benefits	36	50.0%
I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a means-tested benefit generally provided to individuals with little or no work history)	16	22.2%
I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance. SSDI is provided to individuals that have worked in the past and is based on the amount of money the individual paid into the system through payroll deductions)	15	20.8%
I receive a check from the Social Security Administration every month, but I do not know which benefit I get	5	6.9%
I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits	2	2.8%
Total	74	

Individual Survey: Finances and Money Management

The survey team included questions to identify respondents' financial management competency and how fiscal issues impact their ability to function independently. Respondents to the individual survey were asked three questions regarding finances and money management.

Financial Situation

Respondents were given a list of statements and asked to describe how they manage their financial situation. A total of 62 respondents participated in answering this survey item. Slightly more than 58 percent of respondents indicated they are doing OK financially and slightly less than one-fourth of the respondents are not doing well financially. Table 77 details the results.

Table 77

Individual Survey: Financial Situation

Current Financial Situation	Number	Percent
I am doing OK financially	36	58.1%
I am not doing well financially	15	24.2%
I am in desperate need for money	7	11.3%
I am doing well financially	4	6.5%
Total	62	100.0%

Managing Money

Individual survey respondents were presented a checklist of statements regarding money management and asked to indicate whether the item represents how they manage money. A total of 63 individual respondents answered the question. Although about 38 percent of respondents indicated they have a monthly budget and one-third of respondents have savings accounts, less than 8 percent of the respondents indicated they invest money. Slightly more than 30 percent of the respondents have another person managing their money. Table 78 details the results.

Table 78

Individual Survey: Managing Money

Managing Money	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
I have a checking account	35	55.6%
I have a monthly budget	24	38.1%
I have a savings account	21	33.3%
Someone else manages my money for me	19	30.2%
I have no specific way that I manage my money	9	14.3%
I have no money to manage	6	9.5%
I invest my money	5	7.9%
Total	119	

Interest in Financial Services

When asked the question, “If DARS offered financial education or skills training, would you be interested in receiving these services?”, one-quarter of respondents were unsure if they would be interested and roughly 57 percent of the respondents are interested in DARS sponsored financial services. Table 79 includes this information.

Table 79
Individual Survey: Interest in DARS Financial Services

Interest in DARS Financial Services	Number	Percent
Yes	36	57.1%
I am not sure	16	25.4%
No	11	17.5%
Total	63	100.0%

Individual Survey: Barriers to Employment

Individual survey respondents were asked a series of questions to identify barriers to employment

Identifying Barriers to Obtaining or Keeping a Job

Respondents were presented with a list of 21 potential barriers and asked to indicate whether or not the item had been a barrier that impacted their ability to obtain or keep a job. There was no limit to the number of barriers that an individual survey respondent could choose. A total of 66 survey respondents participated in answering the question.

Two items, “limited job skills/work experience” and “lack of education or training” were cited most frequently by respondents and the rates range between 36 to 46 percent of the total number of respondents. “Language barriers,” “lack of child care,” and “lack of broadband internet access” were the lowest ranking barriers.

Table 80 summarizes the barriers identified by respondents.

Table 80
Individual Survey: Identifying Barriers to Obtaining or Keeping a Job

Identify Barriers to Getting a Job	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	30	45.5%
Lack of education or training	24	36.4%
Lack of job search/interview skills	17	25.8%
Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability	17	25.8%
Mental health concerns	17	25.8%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	13	19.7%
Lack of available jobs	11	16.7%

Identify Barriers to Getting a Job	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of reliable transportation	11	16.7%
No resume	10	15.2%
Other health issues	7	10.6%
Criminal Record	6	9.1%
Lack of assistive technology	5	7.6%
Concern over loss of Social Security, or other benefits like Medicaid, due to working	5	7.6%
Inadequate school transition services	4	6.1%
Lack of attendant care	3	4.5%
Substance abuse	2	3.0%
Lack of housing	2	3.0%
Language barriers	1	1.5%
Lack of child care	1	1.5%
Lack of broadband Internet access	0	0.0%
Total	186	

Top Three Barriers to Obtaining or Keeping a Job

Individual survey respondents were presented with a subsequent question asking them to identify their top three barriers to obtaining or keeping a job. Sixty-six individuals answered the question.

Limited job skills/work experience was the most frequently selected barrier to getting a job. Lack of education or training was identified as the second top barrier to employment and employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability ranked as the third top barrier to getting a job. Note that the top barriers selected in this question are similar to the top barriers cited in the previous table. Lack of broadband internet service was not cited on the previous Table 80 but is cited one time in response to this question. Table 81 contains a summary of the responses.

Table 81
Individual Survey: Top Three Barriers to Getting a Job

Top Three Barriers to Getting a Job	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	38	57.6%
Lack of education or training	21	31.8%
Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability	18	27.3%
Lack of job search/interview skills	15	22.7%
Mental health concerns	15	22.7%
Lack of available jobs	13	19.7%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	10	15.2%
Lack of reliable transportation	7	10.6%
Other health issues	7	10.6%
Lack of assistive technology	6	9.1%
Criminal Record	5	7.6%
Concern over loss of Social Security, or other benefits like Medicaid, due to working	5	7.6%
Lack of housing	3	4.5%
Inadequate school transition services	3	4.5%
Language barriers	2	3.0%
Lack of attendant care	2	3.0%
Substance abuse	1	1.5%
Lack of broadband Internet access	1	1.5%
Lack of child care	0	0.0%
Total	172	

Other Barriers to Getting a Job

Individuals were presented with an open-ended question asking them to identify other barriers that they may have experienced that prevented them from getting a job that are not included in the previous questions. There were four individuals who provided a narrative response to this question. One of the respondents indicated that they recently graduated from high school. Two of the four comments cited specific disability complications that are barriers to obtaining

employment. The remaining response indicated that transportation was the other barrier preventing the respondent from obtaining or keeping a job.

Individual Survey: Barriers to Accessing DARS

Respondents were presented with two questions regarding barriers to accessing DARS services.

Barriers to Accessing DARS

Respondents were presented with a list describing potential barriers to accessing DARS services and asked to indicate whether the barriers had made it difficult to access DARS services. There was no limit to the number of barriers that an individual respondent could choose. A total of 52 respondents answered the question.

Slightly more than forty-two percent of respondents cited “other, please describe” which ranked the item as the most frequently cited barrier to accessing DARS service by respondents and 20 narrative comments were received. One comment cited gratitude for DARS services. Five comments cited phrases “no barriers/none, n/a.” Nine comments cited various frustrations with the lack of communication with DARS, including not receiving responses, inappropriate goals, and time spent on repeated tasks. The remaining narrative comments included comments including not knowing what services are available; lack of assistance with disability on the job; internship that was not desirable and did not have good hours; no assistance obtaining a seasonal job that could lead to a permanent job due to DARS policy; and counselor promoted leading to no longer having a counselor.

Table 82

Individual Survey: Barriers to Accessing DARS Services

Identify Barriers to Accessing DARS Services	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Other (please identify)	22	42.3%
Lack of information about available services	20	38.5%
Other difficulties with DARS staff	14	26.9%
Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor	13	25.0%
Lack of disability-related accommodations	9	17.3%
Lack of available transportation to the DARS office	5	9.6%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	5	9.6%
I have nobody that can help me access services	3	5.8%
Lack of broadband Internet access	3	5.8%
DARS's hours of operation	1	1.9%

Identify Barriers to Accessing DARS Services	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Language barriers	1	1.9%
Difficulties completing the DARS application	0	0.0%
Total	96	

Other Challenges to Accessing DARS Services

Respondents were presented with a yes/no question asking if there were any additional challenges or barriers not previously mentioned that made it difficult to access DARS services. Of the 50 responses received, six indicated “yes” and provided a narrative response. Content analysis of the narrative responses revealed two respondents had difficulties with communication with DARS. Two respondents identified that they were not supported by DARS staff. One respondent indicated that housing is a challenge in accessing DARS and one comment cited the relationship with the job coach resulted in losing DARS services.

Individual Survey: How Can DARS Change to Help Get A Job

Individual survey respondents were asked an open-ended question asking them for suggestions on how DARS could improve their services in order to assist them in getting a job. A total of 41 survey participants responded to the question.

Four comments did not have any suggestion as the comments contained the phrases “none/don’t know/I have a job/I am not with DARS.” Four of the write-in responses contained positive comments regarding DARS without including a recommendation for change. Content analysis of the remaining comments included topics addressing hiring more counselors and more staff; improving communication; providing specific written information to address client and student needs; following up with clients; allowing for more than one job goal; providing more one-on-one counseling; providing more opportunities for hands-on job training and job shadowing; advocating for disability with job managers; providing quality job coaching; speeding up the DARS process; and providing more information about employers.

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

Partners were asked two questions regarding the barriers clients face when attempting to achieve their employment goals.

Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – General DARS Clients

Partner survey respondents were given a list of 22 barriers and asked to identify the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for DARS clients. There was no limit to the number of barriers that a respondent could choose. A total of 110 responses were received.

Eighty percent of partner respondents cited the lack of reliable transportation as a common barrier for clients working towards achieving employment goals and almost seventy-one percent of the partner respondents cited “limited job skills/work experience.” The lack of soft skills rounded up the top three most frequently cited barriers to employment chosen by partners. Note the differences of the most common barriers cited by partners compared to the top three barriers to employment cited by individual survey respondents (limited job skills/work experience, the lack of education or training, and employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability).

Table 83 lists the barriers presented to partner respondents along with the number of times each of the barriers was cited and the percent of the number of respondents who selected the item.

Table 83

Partner Survey: Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – General DARS Clients

Most Common Barriers to Employment Goals – General DARS Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of reliable transportation	88	80.0%
Limited job skills/work experience	78	70.9%
Lack of soft skills	69	62.7%
Lack of job search/interview skills	65	59.1%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	63	57.3%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits, or other benefits such as Medicaid, due to working	63	57.3%
Lack of education or training	61	55.5%
Other transportation issues	50	45.5%
Criminal record	49	44.5%
Mental health concerns	46	41.8%
Lack of available jobs	38	34.5%
Lack of technology skills	37	33.6%
Lack of housing	30	27.3%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	28	25.5%

Most Common Barriers to Employment Goals – General DARS Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Language barriers	26	23.6%
Substance abuse	25	22.7%
Lack of childcare	23	20.9%
Lack of assistive technology	15	13.6%
Lack of attendant care	15	13.6%
Lack of Internet access	15	13.6%
Other health concerns	14	12.7%
Other (please describe)	8	7.3%
Total	906	

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities

Partner survey respondents were given a list of 22 barriers, including an option for “other”, and were asked to identify the barriers that prevent DARS clients with the most significant disabilities from achieving their employment goals. The sample size was 106 respondents.

The five top barriers to achieving employment goals for clients with the most significant disabilities selected by at least 48 percent of the partners match the top five barriers partners cited for the general population of clients. Lack of internet access was cited the least number of times by partners for clients with the most significant disabilities. Table 84 summarizes the partners’ results to the question.

Table 84

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of reliable transportation	75	70.8%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	70	66.0%
Limited job skills/work experience	68	64.2%
Lack of soft skills	56	52.8%
Lack of job search/interview skills	51	48.1%
Lack of education or training	49	46.2%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits, or other benefits such as Medicaid, due to working	49	46.2%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	47	44.3%
Lack of available jobs	46	43.4%
Other transportation issues	41	38.7%
Other health concerns	31	29.2%
Lack of technology skills	29	27.4%
Lack of attendant care	29	27.4%
Mental health concerns	25	23.6%
Lack of assistive technology	25	23.6%
Language barriers	21	19.8%
Criminal record	14	13.2%
Lack of housing	12	11.3%
Substance abuse	10	9.4%
Lack of childcare	10	9.4%
Other (please describe)	9	8.5%
Lack of Internet access	6	5.7%
Total	773	

Partner Survey: Top Three Reasons Difficulty Accessing DARS Services

Respondents were presented with a question that prompted them to indicate the top three reasons that people with disabilities might find it difficult to access DARS services. Twelve response options were provided. Ninety-nine partners answered the question.

Roughly 50 percent of partners identified “slow service delivery” as the top reason why people with disabilities have difficulty accessing DARS services. “Limited accessibility of DARS via public transportation” and “application/eligibility process is too cumbersome” were identified by slightly more than 42 percent of partners as barriers to accessing DARS services, comprising the second and third top barriers to accessing DARS services. Twenty comments were received in the category “other.” One comment cited that client cases are opened quickly, and no issues are noted with the local DARS office. Five quotes related to the lack of knowledge about DARS services. Four quotes related to staff vacancies and unavailable counselors. Five quotes related to the attitudes, communication, and skill level of the counselors. Waitlists were noted in two comments. Table 85 details the partners’ responses to the question.

Table 85

Partner Survey: Top Three Reasons Difficulty Accessing DARS Services

Top Three Reasons Difficult to Access DARS Services	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Slow service delivery	50	50.5%
Limited accessibility of DARS via public transportation	42	42.4%
Application/Eligibility process is too cumbersome	42	42.4%
DARS staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	23	23.2%
Other (please describe)	20	20.2%
Lack of technology needed to engage in virtual or remote services	16	16.2%
Inadequate assessment services	14	14.1%
Other challenges related to the physical location of the DARS office	13	13.1%
Language barriers	8	8.1%
Lack of assistance to develop the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	8	8.1%
Lack of options for the use of technology to communicate with DARS staff	7	7.1%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	4	4.0%
Total	247	

Partner Survey: Most Important Change DARS Could Make

Partner survey respondents were asked a narrative question regarding the most important change DARS could make to support clients’ efforts to achieve their employment goals. A total of 87

written responses were received. Topics identified in the narrative comments include: responding in a more timely manner; improving consistency in provision of services among all offices; reducing caseload size; improving the quality and competence of the counselors; improving staff retention and hiring more staff; communicating with clients, families, and service providers with accurate information and being aware of client needs; address transportation needs of the clients; provide long-term supports for clients; clarify to clients, students, and families what services are available and provide the services or supports in a timely manner; increase the visibility of DARS in the community; and increase partnerships with employers.

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

Staff were asked questions regarding the barriers clients face when attempting to achieve their employment goals.

Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – General DARS Clients

Staff survey respondents were given a list of 22 barriers to employment and asked to identify the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for the general population of DARS clients. There was no limit to the number of barriers a respondent could choose. A total of 123 staff respondents answered the question.

Staff, similar to partners, cited “lack of reliable transportation” the most frequently as a barrier to employment for clients. Staff identified mental health issues and criminal offences more frequently than partner respondents, and the items rank in the second and fifth positions on the staff results list. Lack of internet access was selected by 18.7 percent of staff (n=23) and by one individual respondent in response to the question regarding the top three barriers to getting a job. Table 86 details the results to the question from the survey.

Table 86

Staff Survey: Most Common Barriers to Employment Goals - General DARS Clients

Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - General DARS Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of reliable transportation	98	79.7%
Criminal record	96	78.0%
Limited job skills/work experience	92	74.8%
Lack of soft skills	88	71.5%
Mental health concerns	81	65.9%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits, or other benefits such as Medicaid, due to working	70	56.9%

Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - General DARS Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of education or training	69	56.1%
Lack of housing	66	53.7%
Other transportation issues	65	52.8%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	61	49.6%
Lack of job search/interview skills	57	46.3%
Lack of technology skills	48	39.0%
Substance abuse	44	35.8%
Lack of childcare	43	35.0%
Lack of available jobs	42	34.1%
Language barriers	35	28.5%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	27	22.0%
Other health issues	25	20.3%
Lack of internet access	23	18.7%
Lack of attendant care	19	15.4%
Other (please describe)	8	6.5%
Lack of assistive technology	5	4.1%
Total	1,162	

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities

Staff survey respondents were given a list of 22 barriers, including an option for “other”, and were asked to identify the barriers that prevent DARS clients with the most significant disabilities from achieving their employment goals. The sample size was 120 respondents.

Four of the top five barriers to achieving employment goals selected by at least 50 percent of the staff for clients with the most significant disabilities match four of the top five barriers staff cited for the general population of clients. Barriers staff selected least often in response to the question (lack of internet access, lack of assistive technology, “other”) are also among the items staff selected least frequently for the general population of consumers. Quotes from the narrative comments are:

- *“Employer demand for workers who can do a large variety of job duties”*
- *“Lack of service providers and lack of accessibility to current service providers”*
- *“Rural areas often do not have any transportation services”*

- “Lack of access to long term supports for 1-1 on site”
- “Disability acceptance”
- “Parental/Guardian control”

Table 87 summarizes the staff results to the question.

Table 87

Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Most Significant Disabilities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	92	76.7%
Lack of reliable transportation	82	68.3%
Lack of soft skills	81	67.5%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	71	59.2%
Mental health concerns	60	50.0%
Lack of education or training	59	49.2%
Lack of job search/interview skills	59	49.2%
Other transportation issues	58	48.3%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits, or other benefits such as Medicaid, due to working	58	48.3%
Lack of available jobs	52	43.3%
Criminal record	51	42.5%
Lack of technology skills	50	41.7%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	49	40.8%
Other health issues	47	39.2%
Lack of housing	44	36.7%
Substance abuse	30	25.0%
Lack of attendant care	26	21.7%
Language barriers	25	20.8%
Lack of childcare	21	17.5%
Lack of internet access	18	15.0%
Lack of assistive technology	11	9.2%
Other (please describe)	8	6.7%
Total	1,052	

Staff Survey: Top Three Reasons Difficulty Accessing DARS Services

Staff were presented with a question that prompted them to indicate the top three reasons that individuals with disabilities might find it difficult to access DARS services. Twelve response options were provided.

The top three reasons individuals with disabilities have difficulty accessing DARS services chosen by staff matched the partners' top reasons (slow service delivery; limited access to DARS office via public transportation; application/eligibility process too cumbersome). Staff respondents ranked "lack of technology needed to engage in virtual or remote services" as the fourth top reason individuals with disabilities have difficulty accessing DARS services while partners ranked the item in the sixth position.

Content analysis of the narrative comments indicated that the lack of understanding/knowledge of DARS services and process (x8); transportation (x4); screening for intake/eligibility process is not accurate (x4); lack of client responsibility (x3); VR staff turnover and vacancies (x2); not getting medical records in a timely manner (x1); counselors not accommodating after business hours meetings (x1); and lack of digital signature options (x1) are the difficulties that hinder client access to DARS services. Table 88 summarizes the staff choices in response to the question.

Table 88

Staff Survey: Top Three Reasons Difficulty Accessing DARS Services

Top Three Reasons Difficult to Access DARS Services	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Slow service delivery	58	51.8%
Limited access to DARS office via public transportation	44	39.3%
Application/eligibility process is too cumbersome	37	33.0%
Lack of technology needed to engage in virtual or remote services	27	24.1%
Other (please describe)	25	22.3%
Other challenges related to the physical location of the DARS office	17	15.2%
Language barriers	17	15.2%
Lack of options for the use of technology to communicate with DARS staff	13	11.6%
DARS staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	12	10.7%
Inadequate assessment services	11	9.8%
Lack of assistance to develop the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	7	6.3%

Top Three Reasons Difficult to Access DARS Services	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	3	2.7%
Total	271	

Staff Survey: Most Important Change DARS Could Make

Staff survey respondents were asked a narrative question regarding the most important change DARS could make to support clients' efforts to achieve their employment goals. A total of 52 written responses were received. Repeated topics among the narrative comments include reducing caseload size; streamlining data management processes; improving staff retention and hiring more staff; holding clients accountable and reducing the number of times a client can rotate through the program; improving business partnerships and employer relationships; milestone based incentives for vendors and job coaches; and more internal supports. Quotes from the narrative comments include:

- *“Smaller case load. Simplified process to close cases. More access to virtual/remote appointments for clients in rural areas.”*
- *“Smaller caseloads so counselors actually have time to provide guidance and counseling instead of meeting numbers”*
- *“Improve operational efficiency so that DARS staff can spend more time serving client and less time entering data”*
- *“More internal supports needed - vocational assessment, administrative support, help with teaching soft skills, interview preparation, resume development, etc. VRCs have too much on our plates, and not enough support to do it all.”*

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the individual interviews and focus groups conducted for this assessment regarding the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for SE:

1. DARS operates WWRC, which provides independent living and vocational training services to individuals with the most significant disabilities in a residential setting. WWRC was characterized as an important and essential program for individuals who need intensive workplace readiness training to reenter the workforce. WWRC received several compliments from the individuals interviewed for this CSNA, especially related to the passion and commitment of staff at the center and the job they do helping participants achieve their highest potential after a significant medical event. WWRC provides comprehensive and holistic rehabilitation services that address multiple areas of need for individuals wanting to reenter the workforce. These services include vocational evaluation, vocational training, postsecondary transition assistance, rehabilitation counseling and workplace readiness training, all supported by independent living training.
2. Transportation was described as a struggle all over, even though Virginia has some large urban areas where public transportation is more prevalent. There are many rural areas of the state where public transportation is nonexistent. Once consumers find employment, sustainable transportation becomes a challenge due to the cost. While DARS can pay for transportation for a while, the cost eventually becomes the responsibility of the consumer, which impacts job retention.
3. DARS serves a large number of individuals with substance use disorders and mental health impairments. The agency has 19 substance use counselors and 11 behavioral health counselors throughout the state. The common VR needs of these individuals include:
 - i. Rapid engagement.
 - j. Training to improve their skills for employment.
 - k. Self-employment.
 - l. Connections to resources for housing and other services.
 - m. Job placement assistance, often to address criminal history.
 - n. Transportation.
 - o. Medication maintenance.
 - p. Placement assistance.
4. DARS was awarded a Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (SWTCIE) grant called RPRJ EPIC targeted at individuals with the most significant disabilities and helping them achieve CIE. Virginia has moved almost completely away from subminimum wage employment in the last ten years, but integrated and coordinated services are essential to serve the population of individuals that have historically entered

- SMW employment. EPIC is an example of how to help disrupt the traditional pipeline from secondary school to SMW sheltered workshops and provide employment first.
5. The fear of benefit loss was repeatedly cited as a barrier to achieving the highest employment potential of SSA beneficiaries. DARS has tackled this need by having a Ticket to Work Coordinator position that provides a variety of services to the agency, consumers and Employment Networks. Financial literacy and empowerment training is a part of the array of services provided by this position and the agency.
 6. Homelessness has become a major barrier for individuals with disabilities in Virginia. The issue became magnified with the onset of the pandemic and has not improved since, especially related to the increase in housing costs. Many individuals cannot afford housing, which affects their ability to engage in employment.
 7. In addition, employer attitudes, fear of losing benefits, and the lack of standardized soft skill/work ethic skill trainings are also significant barriers to helping clients obtain employment.
 8. Social skill development was cited as a critical need for individuals with Autism and for youth.
 9. DARS provides extensive SE services to individuals with severe mental illness (SMI). The data supports this conclusion as DARS provides as much or more SE services than the largest VR programs in the nation. Extended services in SE are provided through ESOs, some of which are Community Service Boards (CSBs), and many of them do an excellent job according to those interviewed for this assessment. Some of the vendors are preferred over others due to the quality of their services. The good providers often have waiting lists. DARS is able to use long-term employment support services (LTISS) funds for extended services for SE. There is a long wait list for Medicaid waiver services in the state, so the availability of LTISS funds is critical for the SE program and timely services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.
 10. A significant number of DARS staff indicated a need for more training for SE agencies – especially regarding on-the-job support and appropriate fading to natural supports.
 11. There appears to be limited CE services available for clients, despite there being a need for this service. Many staff indicated the payment structure in terms of benchmarks may need to be reworked to provide incentives to agencies to provide these services. The agency has been awarded a SWTCIE grant that is intended to help establish CE as an option for individuals with the most significant disabilities and staff are hopeful that this will result in CE being available throughout the state.
 12. There is need for basic computer skills training for many DARS consumers. The lack of broadband internet service in some rural areas, and the lack of exposure to computer training can be a significant barrier to being qualified for even entry-level employment.
 13. Several DARS staff indicated that their consumers could benefit from an increase in the number of available career/technical programs that are customized to a particular type of job. Apprenticeships or formal customized training programs established with employers would be ideal for many of the individuals they serve.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to DARS based on the results of the research in the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for SE:

1. DARS is encouraged to continue their efforts to provide rapid, meaningful and sustained engagement of applicants and consumers to increase the likelihood that these individuals will successfully prepare for and obtain employment. Regular and ongoing training in this area will be essential, as is the regular review of policies and procedures that either contribute to, or detract from, rapid and meaningful engagement.
2. As resources and staffing allow, DARS should consider having substance use and behavioral health counselors in each office within the state to meet the ever-increasing demand for services by this population.
3. DARS is encouraged to expand CE as an option for their consumers with the most significant disabilities. If ESOs are unable to develop and sustain the service, DARS should consider if it is possible to provide the service in-house.
4. If it is not possible to develop CE to fidelity, DARS is encouraged to work with ESOs to develop Discovery as a service. This will help to ensure that employment services are developed and provided consistent with the interests, abilities, and capabilities of consumers.
5. DARS should conduct computer-competency assessments for all consumers and provide training through adult education or other training entities to bring consumers up to at least a basic level of computer literacy prior to formal vocational or academic training, job development, and placement for those who need this training.
6. Since there are still areas in Virginia where broadband internet access is not available, DARS is encouraged to consider supporting high-speed internet access through a satellite-based services. This will ensure that individuals with disabilities in rural areas can access the internet for training, job development, and placement.
7. All DARS staff should have affordable housing resources readily available for their consumers in need of assistance in this area. Resources include:
 - Virginia Housing: <https://www.virginiahousing.com/en/individuals-families>
 - NVRC Affordable Housing Lists: <https://www.novaregion.org/168/Affordable-Housing-Lists>
 - Partnership for Housing Affordability: <https://pharva.com/the-housing-resource-line/>
 - Virginia Navigator: <https://virginiannavigator.org/article/12430/subsidized-housing>
8. As program evaluation data becomes available for the agency's RPRJ EPIC project, DARS is encouraged to examine the elements that support the provision of CE as an essential element for successful employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities and to replicate those elements throughout the state as resources allow.

SECTION THREE
NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FROM
DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, INCLUDING NEEDS OF
INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR
UNDERSERVED BY THE DARS PROGRAM

Section three includes an identification of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who may have been unserved or underserved by DARS.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION
METHODS

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including individuals who may have been unserved or underserved by the DARS:

1. The rehabilitation needs of minority individuals with disabilities were identified to be consistent with general consumers cited in Section two, with the exception of language barriers, the need for language interpreters, and materials available in other languages.
2. Hispanic individuals were the group most frequently identified as potentially underserved by the agency for a variety of reasons that included:
 - a. Lack of trust of government agencies;
 - b. Resident status;
 - c. Language barriers;
 - d. Lack of bilingual staff, and
 - e. Lack of targeted outreach resulting in a lack of awareness of DARS and available services.
3. The rural areas of Virginia such as Southwestern VA were identified as potentially underserved due to a lack of broadband internet access and the long travel distances to reach areas by car.

***NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED
TO THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, INCLUDING NEEDS
OF INDIVIDUALS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR
UNDERSERVED BY DARS***

Race and Ethnicity

An understanding of the local population's ethnic diversity is needed in order to better serve the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups residing in the community.

For the purposes of this report, definitions for race and ethnicity are provided. The definitions are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau glossary.

Race: *“The U.S. Census Bureau collects race data in accordance with guidelines provided by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The data is collected from respondent self-identification. The racial categories included in the census questionnaire reflect a social definition of race and is not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. The categories of the race question include race and national origin or sociocultural groups. The OMB requires that race data be collected for a minimum of five groups: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. The OMB permits the Census Bureau to use a sixth category - Some Other Race. Respondents may report more than one race.”*

Ethnicity: *“The U.S. Census Bureau adheres to the OMB's definition of ethnicity. There are two minimum categories for ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. OMB considers race and Hispanic origin to be two separate and distinct concepts. Hispanics and Latinos may be of any race.”* (<https://www.census.gov/glossary>)

Race and Ethnicity for the Total Population

Race and ethnic diversity rates in Virginia are similar when compared to the national rates. Table 89 presents race/ethnicity category in a rank, descending order (highest rate to lowest rate). Note that:

- 1) Virginia has a significantly lower rate of Hispanic and Latino residents than the national rates, with the highest rates noted in urban Virginia (12.4 percent) and DO2 (17.5 percent);
- 2) Virginia's rates for Black or African Americans exceed the national rates in all of Virginia's geographic areas and the rates exceed 19 percent in DO4, DO5, and DO6;

3) White/Caucasians comprise over 90 percent of DO3’s population and roughly 50 percent of DO2’s population; and

4) Rates for American Indian and Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders in the state reflect the general and urban national averages and comprise less than 1 percent of Virginia’s population.

Table 88 contains the information regarding the race and ethnic diversity of Virginia.

Table 88

Race/Ethnicity Rates: United States and Virginia – Rank Order

Race/Ethnicity Rates: United States and Virginia – Rank Order			
United States		Virginia	
Total population	333,287,562	Total population	8,683,619
Not Hispanic or Latino	80.9%	Not Hispanic or Latino	89.6%
White alone	57.7%	White alone	58.7%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	19.1%	Black or African American alone	18.4%
Black or African American alone	11.9%	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	10.4%
Mexican	11.2%	Asian alone	6.9%
Asian alone	5.8%	Other Hispanic or Latino	6.5%
Other Hispanic or Latino	5.3%	Two or More Races	4.7%
Two or More Races	4.3%	Two races excluding Some Other Race, and three or more races	3.9%
Two races excluding Some Other Race, and three or more races	3.3%	Mexican	2.3%
Puerto Rican	1.8%	Puerto Rican	1.3%
Two races including Some Other Race	1.0%	Two races including Some Other Race	0.8%
Cuban	0.7%	Some Other Race alone	0.7%
Some Other Race alone	0.6%	Cuban	0.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.5%	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.2%	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%

United States -- Urban		Virginia -- Urban	
Total population	266,018,160	Total population	6,558,583
Not Hispanic or Latino	78.2%	Not Hispanic or Latino	87.6%
White alone	52.2%	White alone	52.2%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	21.8%	Black or African American alone	20.5%
Black or African American alone	13.4%	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	12.4%
Mexican	12.6%	Asian alone	8.9%
Asian alone	7.1%	Other Hispanic or Latino	8.0%
Other Hispanic or Latino	6.3%	Two or More Races	5.1%
Two or More Races	4.4%	Two races excluding Some Other Race, and three or more races	4.3%
Two races excluding Some Other Race, and three or more races	3.4%	Mexican	2.5%
Puerto Rican	2.1%	Puerto Rican	1.5%
Two races including Some Other Race	1.0%	Two races including Some Other Race	0.8%
Cuban	0.9%	Some Other Race alone	0.7%
Some Other Race alone	0.6%	Cuban	0.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.3%	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.2%	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%
United States -- Rural		Virginia -- Rural	
Total population	67,269,402	Total population	2,125,036
Not Hispanic or Latino	91.6%	Not Hispanic or Latino	95.7%
White alone	79.0%	White alone	78.6%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	8.4%	Black or African American alone	11.9%
Mexican	5.9%	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	4.3%
Black or African American alone	5.7%	Two or More Races	3.4%
Two or More Races	4.0%	Two races excluding Some Other Race, and three or more races	2.8%
Two races excluding Some Other Race, and three or more races	3.0%	Other Hispanic or Latino	2.0%
Other Hispanic or Latino	1.7%	Mexican	1.5%

United States -- Rural		Virginia -- Rural	
Total population	67,269,402	Total population	2,125,036
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	1.3%	Asian alone	1.0%
Asian alone	1.0%	Puerto Rican	0.7%
Two races including Some Other Race	1.0%	Some Other Race alone	0.6%
Puerto Rican	0.6%	Two races including Some Other Race	0.6%
Some Other Race alone	0.4%	Cuban	0.2%
Cuban	0.2%	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 89

Race/Ethnicity Rates: Virginia DARS Districts – Rank Order

Race/Ethnicity Rates: Virginia DARS Districts – Rank Order			
DO1		DO2	
Total population	824,631	Total population	2,723,196
Not Hispanic or Latino	92.7%	Not Hispanic or Latino	82.5%
White alone	79.1%	White alone	50.5%
Black or African American alone	7.4%	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	17.5%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	7.3%	Asian alone	15.1%
Other Hispanic or Latino	3.4%	Other Hispanic or Latino	13.4%
Two or More Races	3.3%	Black or African American alone	11.8%
Two races excluding Some Other Race, and three or more races	2.8%	Two or More Races	4.4%
Mexican	2.8%	Two races excluding Some Other Race, and three or more races	3.8%
Asian alone	2.2%	Mexican	2.4%
Puerto Rican	0.9%	Puerto Rican	1.4%
Two races including Some Other Race	0.5%	Two races including Some Other Race	0.6%
Some Other Race alone	0.4%	Some Other Race alone	0.5%
Cuban	0.3%	Cuban	0.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.1%	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.1%

Race/Ethnicity Rates: Virginia DARS Districts – Rank Order			
DO1		DO2	
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%
DO3		DO4	
Total population	552,427	Total population	870,651
Not Hispanic or Latino	97.6%	Not Hispanic or Latino	96.1%
White alone	90.7%	White alone	72.1%
Black or African American alone	3.2%	Black or African American alone	19.1%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	2.4%	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	3.9%
Two or More Races	1.7%	Two or More Races	2.8%
Asian alone	1.6%	Two races excluding Some Other Race, and three or more races	2.5%
Two races excluding Some Other Race, and three or more races	1.5%	Mexican	1.6%
Mexican	1.3%	Other Hispanic or Latino	1.5%
Other Hispanic or Latino	0.9%	Asian alone	1.5%
Puerto Rican	0.2%	Puerto Rican	0.7%
Two races including Some Other Race	0.2%	Some Other Race alone	0.4%
Some Other Race alone	0.2%	Two races including Some Other Race	0.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.1%	Cuban	0.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.1%
Cuban	0.0%	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%
DO5		DO6	
Total population	1,859,754	Total population	1,793,852
Not Hispanic or Latino	92.2%	Not Hispanic or Latino	92.5%
White alone	57.1%	White alone	53.1%
Black or African American alone	26.9%	Black or African American alone	29.9%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	7.8%	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	7.5%
Other Hispanic or Latino	4.2%	Two or More Races	4.8%

DO5		DO6	
Total population	1,859,754	Total population	1,793,852
Two or More Races	4.0%	Two races excluding Some Other Race, and three or more races	4.3%
Asian alone	3.6%	Asian alone	3.9%
Two races excluding Some Other Race, and three or more races	3.5%	Other Hispanic or Latino	2.7%
Mexican	2.0%	Mexican	2.5%
Puerto Rican	1.3%	Puerto Rican	2.0%
Two races including Some Other Race	0.6%	Some Other Race alone	0.5%
Some Other Race alone	0.4%	Two races including Some Other Race	0.5%
Cuban	0.2%	Cuban	0.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.2%	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Race/Ethnicity and Poverty for the General Population

Poverty as related to race and ethnicity is calculated by the United States Census Bureau and for the total population.

Poverty rates in Virginia are higher than the national averages for each race and ethnic category with the exception of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders. Note that Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders comprise less than one percent of the Virginia’s population and potentially providing VR services to these populations may be complex. The poverty rates for Asians in DO3 exceeds 30 percentage points and it is important to note that the percentage rates for the number of Asians residing in DO3 is low. The poverty levels are calculated for the entire population based on race and ethnicity and the data is important for understanding the impact of poverty, population size, race, and ethnicity when addressing the VR needs of consumers.

Table 90 identifies the percentage of individuals designated by race and ethnic categories living below poverty levels in the nation, state, and districts in Virginia.

*Table 90
Race/Ethnicity and Poverty for the General Population: U.S., Virginia, and DARS Districts*

Race/Ethnicity and Poverty	Percent below poverty level					
	United States	U.S. -- Urban	U.S. -- Rural	Virginia	VA -- Urban	VA -- Rural
White alone	9.9%	9.8%	10.1%	8.5%	7.9%	9.7%
Black or African American alone	21.3%	21.1%	22.9%	17.2%	16.7%	20.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	21.7%	19.6%	26.2%	16.3%	16.7%	14.6%
Asian alone	10.1%	10.1%	8.8%	6.9%	6.9%	5.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	17.6%	17.4%	19.6%	24.9%	N	N
Some other race alone	17.9%	17.8%	18.6%	16.0%	16.3%	13.7%
Two or more races	14.8%	14.7%	15.4%	10.6%	10.6%	10.7%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	16.8%	16.7%	17.3%	14.3%	14.5%	12.2%
	DO1	DO2	DO3	DO4	DO5	DO6
White alone	9.8%	4.4%	18.1%	11.4%	6.5%	6.8%
Black or African American alone	22.2%	9.2%	30.9%	22.8%	16.6%	18.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	17.3%	8.6%	39.7%	7.7%	13.6%	13.3%
Asian alone	19.4%	5.6%	31.1%	14.5%	8.2%	7.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	12.5%	10.0%	10.0%	0.0%	2.7%	16.8%
Some other race alone	25.1%	14.9%	25.8%	20.9%	17.5%	17.9%
Two or more races	14.5%	6.3%	28.9%	20.2%	11.3%	11.5%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	18.8%	10.7%	28.2%	21.7%	15.0%	14.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Race and Ethnicity and Educational Attainment for the General Population

The VR consumer’s educational attainment impacts the vocational choices available to the consumer. Understanding the educational attainment rates in a local area is crucial to identifying available workforce members for meeting local business workforce needs. The U.S. Census Bureau collects data on educational attainment and ethnicity.

The high school graduation attainment rates for the White race statewide and in urban and rural Virginia are within a 1.3 percent difference (higher and lower) when compared to the national rates for Whites in the same geographical areas. The bachelor’s degree attainment rates for Whites in statewide and in urban and rural areas exceed the national rates, noting that the

bachelor’s degree attainment rate in urban Virginia exceeds the national urban average for Whites by 10.3 percent.

Black and African Americans comprise roughly 18 percent of the state’s total population. The high school graduation attainment rates for the Black race statewide and in urban and rural Virginia are within a 1.5 percent difference (higher and lower) when compared to the national rates. The bachelor’s degree attainment rate for Blacks in Virginia exceed the national rate by 3.1 percent. The bachelor’s degree attainment rate for the Black race in urban Virginia is 5.2 percent higher than the urban U.S rate.

Asians in Virginia have high school graduation attainment rates that are roughly 3 percentage points higher than the national rates in all geographical areas. Asians have higher bachelor’s degree attainment rates compared to the national averages and the rates are higher by 4.7 to 6.2 percentage points. Note that Asians comprise 6.9 percent of the state’s population.

Individuals reporting Two or More Races have significantly higher rates of high school graduation attainment in all geographic areas of Virginia when compared to the national rates. Compared to national rates, individuals reporting Some Other Race in Virginia attain a bachelor’s degree at significantly higher rates than the U.S. rates and the differences range between 11.4 to 13.8 percentage points.

Hispanic and Latinos comprise roughly 10 percent of Virginia’s total population. High school attainment rates for the Hispanic and Latino ethnicity in Virginia’s geographic areas exceed the national averages by roughly 4 to 7 percent. Bachelor’s degree attainment for those of Hispanic and Latino ethnicity statewide and in urban Virginia is significantly higher than the national averages by up to 10.4 percent. The bachelor’s degree attainment rate for Hispanics is 25.5% in rural Virginia, which is 9.5 percent higher than the national rural average.

Table 91 contains averages for educational attainment at the high school and bachelor’s degree level in each race and ethnic category for the population 25 years and over.

Table 91

Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity: National and State Rates for the Total Population Age 25 and over, including Urban and Rural Averages

<i>Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity: National and State Rates for the Total Population Age 25 and over, including Urban and Rural Averages</i>							
Race/Ethnicity	Degree level and higher (+)	United States	U.S. -- Urban	U.S. -- Rural	Virginia	VA -- Urban	VA -- Rural
White alone	High school graduate+	93.7%	94.4%	91.7%	93.9%	95.7%	90.4%
	Bachelor's degree+	39.0%	43.4%	27.0%	45.0%	53.1%	28.6%
Black alone	High school graduate+	88.3%	89.0%	82.8%	89.4%	90.9%	82.4%
	Bachelor's degree+	25.4%	26.5%	16.2%	28.5%	31.7%	13.6%

<i>Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity: National and State Rates for the Total Population Age 25 and over, including Urban and Rural Averages</i>							
Race/Ethnicity	Degree level and higher (+)	United States	U.S. -- Urban	U.S. -- Rural	Virginia	VA -- Urban	VA -- Rural
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	High school graduate+	78.1%	76.2%	82.1%	80.2%	77.2%	90.1%
	Bachelor's degree+	16.8%	18.6%	13.1%	24.1%	25.9%	18.5%
Asian alone	High school graduate+	88.2%	88.2%	88.8%	90.9%	90.9%	91.7%
	Bachelor's degree+	57.4%	57.7%	49.9%	63.6%	63.9%	54.6%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	High school graduate+	87.6%	87.8%	86.4%	89.6%	89.4%	N
	Bachelor's degree+	19.8%	20.1%	17.3%	43.0%	43.5%	N
Two or more races	High school graduate+	81.3%	81.2%	82.2%	87.5%	87.3%	88.5%
	Bachelor's degree+	27.9%	28.8%	21.4%	41.1%	42.6%	32.8%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	High school graduate+	73.1%	73.3%	71.9%	77.3%	77.1%	78.8%
	Bachelor's degree+	20.4%	20.8%	16.0%	30.6%	31.2%	25.5%
Race/Ethnicity	Degree level and higher(+)	DO1	DO2	DO3	DO4	DO5	DO6
White alone	High school graduate+	90.5%	95.8%	87.0%	90.3%	94.0%	94.9%
	Bachelor's degree+	34.8%	64.3%	21.9%	28.2%	43.3%	39.2%
Black alone	High school graduate+	83.0%	93.6%	83.8%	82.7%	87.2%	88.8%
	Bachelor's degree+	16.9%	45.3%	13.9%	12.5%	23.4%	24.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	High school graduate+	74.9%	80.1%	74.1%	70.4%	82.0%	82.6%
	Bachelor's degree+	18.9%	35.2%	10.7%	15.9%	19.0%	22.0%
Asian alone	High school graduate+	88.5%	92.0%	91.6%	83.4%	88.7%	88.5%
	Bachelor's degree+	58.0%	66.5%	70.4%	53.6%	61.0%	46.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	High school graduate+	92.9%	87.3%	97.7%	100.0%	83.8%	88.7%
	Bachelor's degree+	31.1%	43.5%	41.1%	21.0%	31.0%	39.4%
Two or more races	High school graduate+	86.3%	87.2%	85.2%	86.6%	87.8%	91.1%
	Bachelor's degree+	28.0%	48.1%	24.8%	23.7%	36.9%	33.7%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	High school graduate+	68.9%	75.1%	75.8%	76.3%	71.5%	84.1%
	Bachelor's degree+	19.0%	31.4%	22.8%	21.1%	24.0%	28.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disability and Race/Ethnicity

The U.S. Census collects data on disability among ethnic categories for the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP). Consider the race/ethnic category's population size in relation to the percentage of individuals reporting a disability. Table 92 identifies the estimated average rates of disability among ethnic categories in the nation, state, and DARS districts.

*Table 92
Disability and Race/Ethnicity: U.S., Virginia, and DARS Districts*

Disability and Race/Ethnicity	Percent with a disability					
	U.S.	U.S. - Urban	U.S. - Rural	Virginia	VA -- Urban	VA -- Rural
White alone	14.4%	14.0%	15.6%	13.6%	12.3%	16.2%
Black or African American alone	14.9%	14.6%	18.2%	14.6%	13.7%	19.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	15.7%	14.8%	17.6%	15.7%	12.8%	27.6%
Asian alone	8.3%	8.2%	9.0%	6.9%	6.8%	9.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	12.5%	12.4%	12.6%	16.5%	16.6%	N
Two or more races	11.6%	11.2%	14.4%	10.0%	9.4%	13.4%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	10.5%	10.4%	10.8%	8.1%	7.8%	10.6%
Disability and Race/Ethnicity	Percent with a disability					
	DO1	DO2	DO3	DO4	DO5	DO6
White alone	13.6%	8.4%	21.0%	15.5%	12.3%	13.5%
Black or African American alone	15.9%	8.5%	15.7%	17.6%	15.2%	14.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	17.1%	9.4%	29.7%	16.1%	18.0%	27.4%
Asian alone	6.8%	5.8%	8.4%	8.7%	7.0%	9.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	18.8%	11.7%	3.9%	39.1%	21.5%	21.7%
Two or more races	9.8%	7.5%	14.7%	11.3%	11.0%	10.1%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	6.7%	6.2%	9.2%	9.4%	8.8%	9.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disability, Race/Ethnicity, and Poverty

The 2023 Annual Disability Statistics Supplement published data on poverty, disability and race/ethnicity for the total population. The trends were produced using data from the Current Population Survey-Annual Social and Economic Supplement (which is distributed annually in March) and the 2022 American Community Survey. Table 93 presents population raw numbers, percentage rates, and the differences (gaps) between the poverty rates for individuals with disabilities and individuals without disabilities for five race and ethnic categories in the U.S. and

Virginia. The population numbers are provided in order to present a comprehensive picture of the data in relation to/combined with the percentage rate differences in this table. The most significant poverty rate and gap of difference between individuals with and without disabilities is noted in the Black Population. Whites and Other Race Populations have 9 to 9.9 gap of difference in poverty rates between individuals with and without disabilities in Virginia.

Table 93

Race and Ethnicity, Disability, and Poverty Rates: U.S. and Virginia

United States							
	Poverty With Disabilities			Poverty Without Disabilities			
Race	Total w/ Disability	Poverty		Total w/o Disability	Poverty		GAP
		Count	Percent		Count	Percent	
White, Non-Hispanic	27,678,000	4,848,000	17.5	161,833,000	13,083,000	8.1	9.4
Black, Non-Hispanic	5,762,000	1,834,000	31.8	32,699,000	6,362,000	19.5	12.3
Hispanic	6,584,000	1,619,000	24.6	56,235,000	8,897,000	15.8	8.8
Asian, Non-Hispanic	1,592,000	266,000	16.7	17,715,000	1,625,000	9.2	7.5
Other Race, Non-Hispanic	2,506,000	631,000	25.2	15,800,000	2,089,000	13.2	12
Virginia							
	Poverty With Disabilities			Poverty Without Disabilities			
Race	Total w/ Disability	Poverty		Total w/o Disability	Poverty		GAP
		Count	Percent		Count	Percent	
White, Non-Hispanic	686,000	110,000	16.1	4,285,000	305,000	7.1	9
Black, Non-Hispanic	224,000	59,000	26.4	1,315,000	208,000	15.8	10.6
Hispanic	72,000	16,000	22.4	807,000	110,000	13.6	8.8
Asian, Non-Hispanic	42,000	6,000	13.2	550,000	36,000	6.5	6.7
Other Race, Non-Hispanic	54,000	11,000	19.7	417,000	41,000	9.8	9.9

Source: Thomas, N., Paul, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A.(2024). Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2022 (Custom Table). Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability.

United States Department of Labor Annual Labor Force Statistics by Disability Status and Race/Ethnicity

The U.S. Department of Labor, in collaboration with (ODEP), published the 2023 Annual Labor Force Statistics by disability status, race, and ethnicity. Statistics provided include the labor force

participation rate, employment-to-population ratio, and unemployment rate by disability status and race/ethnicity for ages 16 to 64. Table 94 contains the annual 2023 data.

Table 94

2023 Annual Labor Force Statistics By Disability Status and Race/Ethnicity

2023 Annual Labor Force Statistics by Disability Status and Race/Ethnicity						
Persons with a Disability, Aged 16-64, 2023						
	Hispanic	White	Black	Asian	Other	Total
Labor Force Participation Rate	39.6%	42.7%	32.6%	37.1%	37.5%	40.3%
Employment-Population Ratio	35.9%	39.8%	29.2%	34.3%	34.4%	37.2%
Unemployment Rate	9.4%	6.8%	10.2%	7.5%	8.4%	7.7%
Persons without a Disability, Aged 16-64, 2023						
	Hispanic	White	Black	Asian	Other	Total
Labor Force Participation Rate	75.2%	79.4%	76.3%	75.6%	73.5%	77.7%
Employment-Population Ratio	71.9%	77.2%	72.1%	73.4%	69.3%	75.0%
Unemployment Rate	4.5%	2.7%	5.4%	2.9%	5.6%	3.5%

Source: Current Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics

University of New Hampshire Statistics - Disability, Race, Ethnicity and Employment

The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability provides an online resource and prepared statistics for state-level employment by disability, disability type, race/ethnicity, and employment for this CSNA. The following two tables are provided to help DARS understand the recent trends in Virginia’s workforce.

University of New Hampshire Disability Statistics - Disability, Race, Ethnicity and Employment

Table 95 contains employment statistics for the United States and Virginia incorporating disability, race, and ethnicity. The categories include non-institutionalized civilians ages 18 to 64, male and female, from all education levels. Data includes the difference in percentage employed (employment gap) between people with disabilities and people without disabilities in each race and ethnic population. Data suggests that access to employment is available to all races and ethnic groups for people with disabilities in Virginia.

Table 95
 UNH - Disability, Race, Ethnicity and Employment: U.S. and Virginia

United States							
	With Disabilities Employed			Without Disabilities Employed			
Race	Total w/ Disability	Employed		Total w/o Disability	Employed		GAP
		Count	Percent		Count	Percent	
White, Non-Hispanic	27,678,000	7,097,000	25.6	161,833,000	88,867,000	54.9	29.3
Black, Non-Hispanic	5,762,000	1,423,000	24.7	32,699,000	16,872,000	51.6	26.9
Asian, Non-Hispanic	1,592,000	405,000	25.4	17,715,000	9,970,000	56.3	30.9
Other Race, Non-Hispanic	2,506,000	737,000	29.4	15,800,000	7,167,000	45.4	16
Hispanic	6,584,000	1,976,000	30	56,235,000	28,298,000	50.3	20.3
Virginia							
	With Disabilities Employed			Without Disabilities Employed			
Race	Total w/ Disability	Employed		Total w/o Disability	Employed		GAP
		Count	Percent		Count	Percent	
White, Non-Hispanic	686,000	180,000	26.2	4,285,000	2,369,000	55.3	29.1
Black, Non-Hispanic	224,000	60,000	26.7	1,315,000	718,000	54.6	27.9
Asian, Non-Hispanic	42,000	15,000	35.7	550,000	322,000	58.6	22.9
Other Race, Non-Hispanic	54,000	17,000	31.2	417,000	175,000	41.9	10.7
Hispanic	72,000	25,000	34.3	807,000	423,000	52.4	18.1

Source: Thomas, N., Paul, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A.(2024). Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2022 (Custom Table). Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability.

University of New Hampshire Disability Statistics – Employment by Disability Type and Race/Ethnicity

The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability prepared statistics for state-level employment by disability type and ethnicity. The categories include non-institutionalized

civilians ages 16 to 64, male and female, from all education levels. Data suggests that access to employment is available to all race and ethnic groups and disability types in Virginia.

Table 96

UNH 2022 Virginia Employment by Ethnicity and Disability Type for Non-institutionalized Population Ages 16-64

Virginia Employment by Disability Type and Ethnicity Ages 16 to 64	Percent Employed by Disability Type						
	Any	Visual	Hearing	Ambulatory	Cognitive	Self-care	Independent Living
White, non-Hispanic	45.2%	50.1%	58.4%	32.1%	38.5%	20.4%	23.2%
Black/African American, non-Hispanic	37.9%	47.9%	45.4%	32.1%	30.9%	18.3%	18.5%
American Indian and Alaskan Native, non-Hispanic	28.2%	51.6%	25.8%	16.1%	5.1%	19.7%	10.3%
Asian, non-Hispanic	60.2%	75.0%	72.7%	40.8%	54.2%	25.7%	44.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	43.9%	65.6%	--	17.3%	53.6%	9.7%	28.6%
Some Other Race, non-Hispanic	43.0%	53.8%	63.6%	34.5%	37.7%	9.7%	22.2%
Hispanic/Latino	52.9%	52.3%	62.4%	51.2%	45.4%	41.9%	44.0%

Source: American Community Survey, 1-year estimates. Prepared by Stacia Bach ---- Disability Statistics at UNH

DARS Participants by Race/Ethnicity

The project team examined the race and ethnicity of DARS participants as reported in the RSA data dashboards for PY 2022. Rate information from Quarter 4 PY 2022 was extracted from the RSA data dashboard for each race and compared to the rates from the U.S. Census Bureau 2022 ACS 1-year estimates for the general population of Virginia to determine if any population was potentially being underserved. The results of the analysis are in Table 97.

Table 97

DARS Participants by Race/Ethnicity Compared to Virginia Overall

Race/Ethnicity	State Overall (2022 1-year Estimates)	All DARS Participants 2022 (2022 - Qtr. 4)	Difference
American Indian	0.1%	0.8%	0.7%
Asian	6.9%	4.0%	-2.9%
Black	18.4%	34.1%	15.7%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%
Hispanic	10.4%	6.3%	-4.1%
Multi-Race	4.7%	2.6%	-2.1%
White	58.7%	62.9%	4.2%

The data indicates that the participant population of DARS is different from the general population of Virginia in certain categories.

The difference rates for American Indians and Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders served by DARS compared to the state's population is less than 1 percentage point. The data comparison suggests that these groups are equally represented within DARS and are not underserved.

When comparing the categories of Asians, Multi-race, and Hispanic ethnicity served by DARS to the state's population, the difference rates are greater than 2 percent, indicating the groups may be underserved. DARS may need to conduct targeted outreach to the potentially underserved categories in order to increase the rates of individuals served to match the rates of the general population to DARS clients.

Conversely, the rate of Black clients being served by DARS is 15.7 percent higher than the rate for the population of Virginia. Whites are also overrepresented by slightly more than four percent. DARS may consider conducting regular reviews of the diversity composition of their clients and ensure that any disparities in representation are reflective of the need for VR services and not due to language, access, or outreach barriers.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individual Survey: Race and Ethnicity

Individuals were asked to report their primary race or ethnic group.

The number of respondents who answered the question regarding ethnicity was 76. The majority of respondents identified as Caucasian/White. African American/Black respondents accounted for almost one-third of the 76 respondents which is a numeric difference of 20 respondents (n=20). Note the ranking order of the results to this question when compared to the percentage rates of the state's race and ethnic demographic category ranking based on the U.S. Census Bureau DP05 Hispanic or Latino and Race State data from 2022 one-year estimates found in the race and ethnicity general trends section of this report.

Table 98

Individual Survey: Race or Ethnic Group

Primary Race or Ethnic Group	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Caucasian/White	45	59.2%
African American/Black	25	32.9%
Hispanic/Latino	3	3.9%
I prefer not to answer	3	3.9%
Asian	2	2.6%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0.0%
Other (please describe)	0	0.0%
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
Total	78	

Individual Survey: Preferred Language for Communication

Individuals were asked a question regarding their preferred language for communication.

Roughly 99 percent of the 76 respondents who answered the question cited English as their preferred language. The results are contained in table 99.

Table 99
 Individual Survey: Preferred Language for Communication

Language Preference	Number	Percent
English	75	98.7%
Spanish	0	0.0%
Hawaiian	0	0.0%
Chinese	0	0.0%
Japanese	0	0.0%
Other (Please identify)	0	0.0%
American Sign Language	1	1.3%
Native American (Please specify dialect)	0	0.0%
Amharic	0	0.0%
Arabic	0	0.0%
French	0	0.0%
Hindi	0	0.0%
Korean	0	0.0%
Persian	0	0.0%
Polish	0	0.0%
Russian	0	0.0%
Tagalog	0	0.0%
Urdu	0	0.0%
Vietnamese	0	0.0%
Total	76	100.0%

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Survey: Barriers to Employment Goals – Minorities

Partners were provided a list of 23 barriers and asked to identify the barriers to achieving employment goals for clients who were racial or ethnic minorities. There was no limit to the number of items a partner could choose. Ninety-five partner respondents answered the question.

The first ranking item, “lack of reliable transportation” was selected by about 64 percent of the partners as a barrier to achieving employment goals for minorities. “Limited job skills/work experience” and “lack of education or training” were the second and third ranking barriers on the

results list. The top two barriers partners chose for clients who identify as racial or ethnic minorities are the same top two barriers partners cited for the general population of clients.

The words “do not see/no experiences with ethnic/racial barriers” was written in three out of the 11 narrative comments cited in response to the item “other, please describe.” “Lack of services for undocumented/those that lack residency status” was noted twice in the narrative comments. Table 100 details the results to this question.

Table 100

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Minorities

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Minorities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of reliable transportation	61	64.2%
Limited job skills/work experience	58	61.1%
Lack of education or training	51	53.7%
Lack of job search/interview skills	48	50.5%
Language barriers	47	49.5%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	46	48.4%
Lack of soft skills	43	45.3%
Lack of cultural competence	43	45.3%
Other transportation issues	39	41.1%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits, or other benefits such as Medicaid, due to working	28	29.5%
Lack of available jobs	25	26.3%
Lack of technology skills	23	24.2%
Mental health concerns	22	23.2%
Lack of housing	19	20.0%
Lack of childcare	18	18.9%
Criminal record	17	17.9%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	16	16.8%
Lack of Internet access	15	15.8%
Substance abuse	14	14.7%
Other (please describe)	11	11.6%
Lack of assistive technology	10	10.5%

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Minorities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Other health concerns	8	8.4%
Lack of attendant care	5	5.3%
Total	667	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Minorities

Staff were presented a list of 23 items and asked to identify the barriers to achieving employment goals for clients who were racial or ethnic minorities. There was no limit to the number of items staff could choose.

Staff selection of barriers to achieving employment goals for minorities had a limited number of differences from the staff choices for the general population of DARS clients. Additionally, staff and partners differed slightly in their ranking order of barriers that prevent clients who are racial or ethnic minorities from achieving their employment goals.

One-hundred eleven staff survey respondents answered the question, and an equal number of staff (n=68, 61.3% percent) selected "language barriers" and "lack of reliable transportation" as a barrier to achieving employment goals for those who are minorities, creating a tie for the first position on the results list. "Limited job skills/work experience" and "lack of education or training" rounded out the top four most frequently cited responses by staff.

Eleven comments were received in the category "other" and four comments cited cultural/ethical concerns regarding disability acceptance and two comments cited "racism." The quotes from the remaining comments are:

- *"Limited providers with language capabilities"*
- *"I am unsure, I have not encountered this challenge."*

Table 101 ranks the barriers to achieving employment goals for clients who are racial or ethnic minorities as chosen by staff survey respondents.

Table 101

Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Minorities

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Minorities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Language barriers	68	61.3%
Lack of reliable transportation	68	61.3%
Limited job skills/work experience	60	54.1%
Lack of education or training	56	50.5%
Other transportation issues	52	46.8%
Lack of cultural competence	46	41.4%
Lack of job search/interview skills	45	40.5%
Lack of soft skills	45	40.5%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	43	38.7%
Lack of housing	41	36.9%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits, or other benefits such as Medicaid, due to working	37	33.3%
Mental health concerns	34	30.6%
Criminal record	32	28.8%
Lack of technology skills	30	27.0%
Lack of available jobs	28	25.2%
Lack of internet access	23	20.7%
Other health issues	22	19.8%
Lack of childcare	21	18.9%
Substance abuse	19	17.1%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	18	16.2%
Other (please describe)	11	9.9%
Lack of attendant care	7	6.3%
Lack of assistive technology	6	5.4%
Total	812	

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the individual interviews and focus groups conducted for this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who may have been unserved or underserved by DARS:

1. Hispanic individuals were the group most frequently identified as potentially underserved by the agency for a variety of reasons that included:
 - a. Lack of trust of government agencies;
 - b. Resident status;
 - c. Language barriers;
 - d. Lack of bilingual staff, and
 - e. Lack of targeted outreach resulting in a lack of awareness of DARS and available services.
2. The VR needs of minority individuals with disabilities were identified to be consistent with general consumers with the exception of the need for language interpreters and materials available in other languages.
3. Staff indicate that in-person language translators are used when available, as well as translation phone service. There are very few bilingual counselors on staff.
4. The rural areas of Virginia such as Southwestern VA were cited as potentially underserved due to lack of broadband internet access and the long travel distances to reach areas by car.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to Virginia DARS based on the results of the research in the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities from Different Ethnic Groups, including needs of Individuals who have been Unserved or Underserved by the DARS Program area:

1. The agency is encouraged to create a recruitment plan to increase the number of bilingual staff to address the barriers of providing services for Spanish speaking clients/potential clients.
2. The agency is encouraged to review, create, and enhance multi-language outreach materials to the community as needed.
3. The agency is encouraged to partner with community organizations serving Hispanic individuals to help establish awareness and trust within the communities.
4. As indicated in the section two recommendations, DARS is encouraged to identify satellite-based internet providers to ensure individuals living in rural areas are able to access services and employment opportunities that require high speed Internet access.

SECTION FOUR

NEEDS OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN TRANSITION

An assessment of the rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities is a required component of the CSNA as identified in 34 CFR 361.29. This section contains an assessment of the need for transition services and Pre-ETS services and the extent to which such services provided are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

1. The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities were cited as similar to adults, with an emphasis on the need for workplace readiness training, on the job training and social and soft skills training.
2. DARS provides Pre-ETS using a combination of direct staff and service providers, with providers delivering the majority of the services. All five of the required Pre-ETS services were repeatedly cited as needed for students with disabilities throughout Virginia. WBLEs were identified as the most needed Pre-ETS service.
3. Reliable transportation is a major need for transition-age youth. The lack of transportation in rural areas especially was a primary reason for the inability of youth to participate in a VR plan or Pre-ETS.
4. There is a need to increase student and family awareness of DARS services, including the possibility of supporting youth in postsecondary education after graduation, if needed to support their employment goal.
5. Students and youth with disabilities have a greater need for mental health services since the onset of the pandemic.

NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS IN TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL

Youth Data

VR services for youth with disabilities enable individuals to pursue meaningful employment that corresponds with their abilities and interests. This section contains various statistics regarding the general trends of youth and youth with disabilities in the nation and Virginia.

Educational Attainment: 18 to 24 Years

The data indicates that the rate of individuals ages 18 to 24 whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school graduate or the equivalent in Virginia reflect the national averages. Virginia’s rural average is 1.3 percentage points higher than the national rural average.

DO2 has the lowest rate of individuals ages 18 to 24 for whom high school graduation was their highest level of educational attainment (28.3 percent). Although DO3 had the lowest percentage of youth who attained at least a Bachelor’s degree (8.1 percent), the rates for individuals ages 18 to 24 who have attained some college, or an associate degree in DO3 exceeds the national rate by 15.3 percentage points, indicating that students start college in DO3 at rates similar to other counties/states in the nation but are not attaining bachelor’s degree educational goals.

Table 102 contains educational attainment rates for ages 18 to 24, which includes high school graduation rates and bachelor’s degree achievement.

*Table 102
Educational Attainment for Ages 18 to 24 Years: U.S. and Virginia*

Educational Attainment: Ages 18 to 24 Years	Less than high school graduate	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college or associate's degree	Bachelor's degree or higher
U.S.	11.6%	35.4%	39.6%	13.4%
U.S. - Urban	10.9%	34.0%	40.8%	14.3%
U.S. - Rural	15.8%	42.4%	33.2%	8.6%
Virginia	9.5%	36.2%	39.4%	14.9%
VA -- Urban	8.5%	34.6%	40.9%	16.0%
VA -- Rural	13.9%	43.7%	32.3%	10.1%
DO1	7.3%	37.3%	43.9%	11.5%
DO2	11.5%	28.3%	37.0%	23.1%
DO3	6.6%	30.4%	54.9%	8.1%
DO4	10.2%	34.9%	43.0%	12.0%
DO5	11.4%	37.4%	39.8%	11.4%
DO6	8.5%	39.0%	42.1%	10.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

School Enrollment, Educational Attainment and Employment Status: Ages 16 to 19 Years

The rate for youth who participate in the labor force that are categorized as "high school graduates (including equivalency) employed" in Virginia is less than 1 percentage point higher than in the U.S. The total youth labor force participation rates in Virginia’s DARS Districts

range between 37.3 to 45.8 percent while 40.7 percent of the youth in the U.S. ages 16 to 19 years are participating in the labor force.

The data indicates that slightly less than one-third of youth (31.6 percent) ages 16 to 19 are enrolled in school and employed in DO6. After high school graduation, the percentage rate of employed youth in DO6 increases dramatically (71.3 percent), which is about a 40 percent increase and is the highest rate increase when compared to the nation (33.4 percent), state (34.3 percent) and other districts (range of 27.8 to 34.6 percent).

Data found in Table 103 represents school enrollment, educational attainment, and employment status for individuals ages 16 to 19.

*Table 103
Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19: United States and Virginia*

Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19:	U. S.		Virginia	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled
<i>Total:</i>	17,402,141	-----	460,211	-----
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	14,605,120	83.9%	386,609	84.0%
<i>Employed</i>	4,583,966	31.4%	120,810	31.2%
<i>Unemployed</i>	583,897	4.0%	13,545	3.5%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	9,437,257	64.6%	252,254	65.2%
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	2,797,021	16.1%	73,602	16.0%
<i>High school graduate (includes equivalency):</i>	2,115,074	75.6%	60,901	82.7%
<i>Employed</i>	1,370,664	64.8%	39,891	65.5%
<i>Unemployed</i>	206,956	9.8%	7,088	11.6%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	537,454	25.4%	13,922	22.9%
<i>Not high school graduate:</i>	681,947	24.4%	12,701	17.3%
<i>Employed</i>	276,946	40.6%	3,691	29.1%
<i>Unemployed</i>	66,340	9.7%	857	6.7%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	338,661	49.7%	8,153	64.2%
<i>Total Labor Force Participation</i>	7,088,769	40.7%	185,882	40.4%
<i>Total Not in labor force</i>	10,313,372	59.3%	274,329	59.6%

Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19:	U. S. - Urban		VA - Urban	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled
United States and Virginia				
<i>Total:</i>	14,119,497	-----	357,173	-----
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	11,973,010	84.8%	306,543	85.8%
<i>Employed</i>	3,693,430	30.8%	93,676	30.6%
<i>Unemployed</i>	493,463	4.1%	10,800	3.5%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	7,786,117	65.0%	202,067	65.9%
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	2,146,487	15.2%	50,630	14.2%
<i>High school graduate (includes equivalency):</i>	1,645,258	76.6%	42,938	84.8%
<i>Employed</i>	1,065,126	64.7%	28,014	65.2%
<i>Unemployed</i>	162,667	9.9%	5,898	13.7%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	417,465	25.4%	9,026	21.0%
<i>Not high school graduate:</i>	501,229	23.4%	7,692	15.2%
<i>Employed</i>	200,739	40.0%	2,181	28.4%
<i>Unemployed</i>	53,063	10.6%	755	9.8%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	247,427	49.4%	4,756	61.8%
<i>Total Labor Force Participation</i>	5,668,488	40.1%	141,324	39.6%
<i>Total Not in labor force</i>	8,451,009	59.9%	215,849	60.4%
Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19:	U. S. - Rural		VA - Rural	
United States and Virginia	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled
<i>Total:</i>	3,282,644	-----	103,038	-----
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	2,632,110	80.2%	80,066	77.7%
<i>Employed</i>	890,536	33.8%	27,134	33.9%
<i>Unemployed</i>	90,434	3.4%	2,745	3.4%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	1,651,140	62.7%	50,187	62.7%
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	650,534	19.8%	22,972	22.3%

Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19: United States and Virginia	U. S. - Rural		VA - Rural	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled
<i>High school graduate (includes equivalency):</i>	469,816	72.2%	17,963	78.2%
<i>Employed</i>	305,538	65.0%	11,877	66.1%
<i>Unemployed</i>	44,289	9.4%	1,190	6.6%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	119,989	25.5%	4,896	27.3%
<i>Not high school graduate:</i>	180,718	27.8%	5,009	21.8%
<i>Employed</i>	76,207	42.2%	1,510	30.1%
<i>Unemployed</i>	13,277	7.3%	102	2.0%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	91,234	50.5%	3,397	67.8%
<i>Total Labor Force Participation</i>	1,420,281	43.3%	44,558	43.2%
<i>Total Not in labor force</i>	1,862,363	56.7%	58,480	56.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 104
Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19: DARS Districts

Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19: DARS Districts	DO1		DO2	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled
<i>Total:</i>	51,907		138,734	
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	44,409	85.6%	123,248	88.8%
<i>Employed</i>	13,809	31.1%	35,435	28.8%
<i>Unemployed</i>	1,134	2.6%	5,179	4.2%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	29,466	66.4%	82,634	67.0%
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	7,498	14.4%	15,486	11.2%
<i>High school graduate (includes equivalency):</i>	5,984	79.8%	11,925	77.0%
<i>Employed</i>	4,077	68.1%	7,563	63.4%
<i>Unemployed</i>	647	10.8%	1,353	11.3%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	1,260	21.1%	3,009	25.2%

Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19: DARS Districts	DO1		DO2	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled
<i>Not high school graduate:</i>	1,514	20.2%	3,561	23.0%
<i>Employed</i>	581	38.4%	1,871	52.5%
<i>Unemployed</i>	70	4.6%	356	10.0%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	863	57.0%	1,334	37.5%
<i>Total Labor Force Participation</i>	20,318	39.1%	51,757	37.3%
<i>Total Not in labor force</i>	31,589	60.9%	86,977	62.7%
Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19: DARS Districts	DO3		DO4	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled
<i>Total:</i>	34,207		44,587	
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	28,992	84.8%	37,508	84.1%
<i>Employed</i>	9,639	33.2%	11,336	30.2%
<i>Unemployed</i>	937	3.2%	1,208	3.2%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	18,416	63.5%	24,964	66.6%
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	5,215	15.2%	7,079	15.9%
<i>High school graduate (includes equivalency):</i>	3,704	71.0%	5,868	82.9%
<i>Employed</i>	2,259	61.0%	3,796	64.7%
<i>Unemployed</i>	268	7.2%	614	10.5%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	1,177	31.8%	1,458	24.8%
<i>Not high school graduate:</i>	1,511	29.0%	1,211	17.1%
<i>Employed</i>	272	18.0%	315	26.0%
<i>Unemployed</i>	36	2.4%	42	3.5%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	1,203	79.6%	854	70.5%
<i>Total Labor Force Participation</i>	13,411	39.2%	17,311	38.8%
<i>Total Not in labor force</i>	20,796	60.8%	27,276	61.2%

Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19: DARS Districts	DO5		DO6	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled/Not Enrolled
<i>Total:</i>	99,692		93,803	
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	83,902	84.2%	75,136	80.1%
<i>Employed</i>	28,087	33.5%	23,755	31.6%
<i>Unemployed</i>	5,880	7.0%	4,496	6.0%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	49,935	59.5%	46,885	62.4%
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	15,790	15.8%	18,667	19.9%
<i>High school graduate (includes equivalency):</i>	13,252	83.9%	16,708	89.5%
<i>Employed</i>	8,586	64.8%	11,910	71.3%
<i>Unemployed</i>	1,922	14.5%	1,726	10.3%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	2,744	20.7%	3,072	18.4%
<i>Not high school graduate:</i>	2,538	16.1%	1,959	10.5%
<i>Employed</i>	883	34.8%	538	27.5%
<i>Unemployed</i>	283	11.2%	311	15.9%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	1,372	54.1%	1,110	56.7%
<i>Total Labor Force Participation</i>	45,641	45.8%	42,736	45.6%
<i>Total Not in labor force</i>	54,051	54.2%	51,067	54.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Special Education Services: United States and Virginia

The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) published statistics on Special Education programs in the United States in the 2024 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium. The Compendium publication identifies the Office of Special Education Programs’ Data Accountability Center as the principal source of the statistics as the Center produces the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 618 Data Tables.

The data indicates that in the fall of 2021 in the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1,748,742 students ages six to 21 were enrolled in school and 162,044 students (9.3 percent) received special education services as provided under IDEA Part B. It was noted in the Compendium report that when compared to the 50 states and the District of Columbia, Hawaii had the smallest percentage

(6.8 percent) of students receiving IDEA Part B services and the State of Maine had the largest percentage (13.6 percent).

Four age categories are noted for students who received special education services under IDEA Part B in the fall of 2021. Note that the age categories begin with early intervention services (three to five years).

The numeric counts by diagnostic category/disability type for students ages six to 21 who received special education services under IDEA Part B were also published in the Compendium. The categories are specific learning disability; speech or language impairment; intellectual disabilities; emotional disturbance; multiple disabilities; hearing impairments; orthopedic impairments; other health impairments; visual impairments; autism; deaf-blindness; traumatic brain injury; and developmental delay.

Tables 105 and 106 detail the 2021 U.S. and Virginia statistics specifically for children served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B. The data identifies the number and percentage rate of children ages six to 21 with disabilities served, number of students receiving IDEA services by age, and numeric count of students ages six to 21 served by diagnostic category/disability type.

Table 105
Fall 2021 IDEA Part B Students Served and Numeric Age Counts

Students Ages 6 to 21 Served Under IDEA, Part B, Numeric Count and Percentage of the Student Population: Fall 2021				
State	Total number of students ages 6 to 21 enrolled	Number of IDEA Part B students served	Percent	
U.S.	67,949,830	6,871,121	10.10%	
Virginia	1,748,742	162,044	9.3	
Students Served Under IDEA, Part B, by Age: Fall 2021				
State	Ages			
	3 to 5	6 to 11	12 to 17	18 to 21
U.S.	471,167	3,347,361	3,183,915	339,845
Virginia	10,591	75,445	77,659	8,940
Notes: The data presented in this table are from the 2021-2022 academic year and can be found at https://data.ed.gov/dataset/idea-section-618-data-products . Sourced from the United States Department of Education, 2021, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act public data & resources; 2014 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B data.				
Source: Thomas, N., Paul, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A. (Eds.) (2024). Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2024 (Tables 13.1 and 13.2). Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability.				

Table 106
 Students Ages 6 to 21 Receiving IDEA Services - Diagnostic Category/Disability Type

Fall 2021 Students Ages 6 to 21 Receiving IDEA Services - Diagnostic Category/Disability Type					
State	Total	Specific Learning Disabilities	Speech Or Language Impairments	Intellectual Disabilities	
U.S.	6,871,121	2,346,150	1,229,529	413,498	
Virginia	162,044	53,033	20,964	8,561	
State	Total	Emotional Disturbance	Multiple Disabilities	Hearing Impairments	
U.S.	6,871,121	327,418	121,964	65,441	
Virginia	162,044	8,760	2,719	1,149	
State	Total	Orthopedic Impairments	Other Health Impairments	Visual Impairments	
U.S.	6,871,121	29,801	1,127,210	24,022	
Virginia	162,044	470	35,347	538	
State	Total	Autism	Deaf-Blindness	Traumatic Brain Injury	Developmental Delay
U.S.	6,871,121	827,791	1,647	24,058	266,610
Virginia	162,044	23,943	27	333	6,200
Notes: The data presented in this table are from the 2021-2022 academic year and can be found at https://data.ed.gov/dataset/idea-section-618-data-products . Sourced from the United States Department of Education, 2021, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act public data & resources; 2014 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B data.					
Source: Thomas, N., Paul, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A. (Eds.) (2024). Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2024 (Tables 13.3a - 13.3d). Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability.					

Bureau of Labor Statistics Youth Labor Force and Unemployment Rates Including Youth with Disabilities

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics collects information on the nation’s youth labor force participation and unemployment by age. The data indicates that the labor force participation rates for youth with disabilities are lower compared to individuals without disabilities when youth are ages 16 to 19 and the difference ranges between 7.4 to 15 percentage points. When the group

ages are 20 to 24, the disparity ranges between 25.7 to 32.8 percentage points. The annual difference for 2023 is 20.7 percentage points.

From June through September of 2024, the unemployment rate difference between those with and without disabilities ages 20 to 24 ranged between 6.4 to 12.4 percent, which is significantly higher than the annual difference for 2023 where the rate was 5.4 percent.

Table 107 details the national labor force participation and unemployment data for youth ages 16 to 19 and 20 to 24 with and without disabilities.

Table 107
Youth Labor Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate: June - September 2023 and Annual 2023 Averages

Group	Youth Labor Force Participation Rate									
	Annual 2023		Jun-24		Jul-24		Aug-24		Sep-24	
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability
Age 16 to 19	27.0%	37.5%	34.7%	44.1%	30.1%	44.3%	26.7%	41.7%	28.5%	35.9%
Age 20 to 24	51.8%	72.5%	46.6%	75.1%	43.2%	76.0%	48.1%	76.6%	45.9%	71.6%
	Youth Unemployment Rate									
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability
Age 16 to 19	18.0%	11.0%	31.9%	13.7%	21.6%	12.9%	28.8%	11.9%	19.0%	14.2%
Age 20 to 24	11.8%	6.4%	20.1%	7.7%	19.3%	7.8%	10.0%	6.5%	13.2%	6.8%

Source: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/research-evaluation/statistics>

University of New Hampshire Disability Statistics – Employment by Age, Disability Type, and Race/Ethnicity

The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability prepared statistics for state-level employment by disability type and ethnicity for non-institutionalized civilians ages 16 to 20, male and female, from all education levels. Limited data was available due to the age range which results in a smaller population size. Important to note that American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders comprise less than 1 percent of the total population of Virginia. The data suggests that access to employment is available to youth who report a minority status in Virginia.

Table 108
 2022 Virginia Employment: Age, Disability Type, and Race/Ethnicity for Non-institutionalized Population Ages 16 to 20

<i>Employment by Age, Disability Type, and Race/Ethnicity: Ages 16 to 20</i>	<i>Percent Employed by Disability Type</i>						
	<i>Any</i>	<i>Visual</i>	<i>Hearing</i>	<i>Ambulatory</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>Self-care</i>	<i>Independent Living</i>
<i>White, non-Hispanic</i>	25.1%	44.2%	41.7%	17.3%	23.9%	10.4%	19.7%
<i>Black/African American, non-Hispanic</i>	29.4%	43.8%	18.2%	16.2%	26.9%	12.7%	16.7%
<i>American Indian and Alaskan Native, non-Hispanic</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<i>Asian, non-Hispanic</i>	20.7%	34.6%	20.9%	--	29.6%	--	46.1%
<i>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<i>Some Other Race, non-Hispanic</i>	44.3%	55.8%	--	6.1%	39.0%	--	23.0%
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	20.4%	--	23.1%	--	19.5%	--	17.0%

Source: 2022 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates; Prepared 05/13/2024 by S. Bach, UNH

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

The Rehabilitation Act as amended and reauthorized in WIOA requires VR programs to expend at least 15 percent of their Federal allotment annually on Pre-ETS. These services must be made available to all eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities in the state who have need of such services. It is clear from the interviews and the survey results that students with disabilities in Virginia have a need to receive the five required Pre-ETS services. These services include the following:

1. Job exploration counseling;
2. Work-based learning experiences;
3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living (often referred to as soft skills); and
5. Self-advocacy instruction, which may include peer mentoring.

The project team examined the number of pre-employment transition services by type provided by DARS in PY 2021, PY 2022, and PY 2023. The results are in Table 109.

Table 109

Type and Number Receiving DARS Pre-ETS: PY 2021, PY 2022, and PY 2023

Type of Pre-Employment Transition Service in	PY 2021		PY 2022		PY 2023	
	Number	Percent of All	Number	Percent of All	Number	Percent of All
Number receiving job exploration counseling	10,100	29.1%	11,021	26.3%	10,559	23.7%
Number receiving work-based learning experiences	6,487	18.7%	9,004	21.5%	8,953	20.1%
Number receiving counseling on postsecondary enrollment opportunities	5,184	15.0%	5,651	13.5%	6,205	14.0%
Number receiving workplace readiness training	7,019	20.3%	8,972	21.5%	11,113	25.0%
Number receiving instruction in self-advocacy	5,860	16.9%	7,178	17.2%	7,641	17.2%
Total	34,650	100.0%	41,826	100.0%	44,471	100.0%

The data indicates that DARS, either directly or through a contracted service provider, delivered the five required Pre-ETS services in similar proportions over the course of the program years 2021, 2022, and 2023. Although a fluctuating number of students received job exploration counseling and work-based learning experiences during the three-year period, a significant increase in the number of students receiving workplace readiness training is noted over the same program years.

Counseling on postsecondary enrollment opportunities was the least provided service during each program year. The agency's low number of participants in academic training may be indicative of the lack of counseling on postsecondary education opportunities in the student years. If DARS wants to increase the level of individuals in academic training in the future, increasing the availability and proliferation of this service will be important.

Pre-ETS Case Service Expenditures: VR Agency Purchases

Pre-ETS provided through a contracted service provider are considered case service expenditures. The project team analyzed the DARS' Pre-ETS case service expenditures for the study in order to determine where service dollars are being spent by the agency. Expenditure information is provided for the five categories of purchases made each program year. Table 110 presents this information in rank order.

Table 110
Pre-ETS Case Service Expenditures: VR Agency Purchases

Agency Purchases by Service Category		
Service Category	2021	
	Number per year	Percent of all
PreETS: Work-Based Learning Experiences	2,060	36.7%
PreETS: Workplace Readiness Training	1,247	22.2%
PreETS: Instruction in Self-Advocacy	1,070	19.1%
PreETS: Job Exploration Counseling	832	14.8%
PreETS: Counseling on Post-Sec. Enrollment Opportunities	397	7.1%
Total VR Agency Purchases	5,606	100.0%
Service Category	2022	
	Number per year	Percent of all
PreETS: Work-Based Learning Experiences	3,585	37.0%
PreETS: Workplace Readiness Training	2,039	21.1%
PreETS: Instruction in Self-Advocacy	1,878	19.4%
PreETS: Job Exploration Counseling	1,636	16.9%
PreETS: Counseling on Post-Sec. Enrollment Opportunities	547	5.6%
Total VR Agency Purchases	9,685	100.0%
Service Category	2023	
	Number per year	Percent of all
PreETS: Work-Based Learning Experiences	6,135	29.9%
PreETS: Workplace Readiness Training	5,045	24.6%
PreETS: Instruction in Self-Advocacy	3,873	18.8%
PreETS: Job Exploration Counseling	3,551	17.3%
PreETS: Counseling on Post-Sec. Enrollment Opportunities	1,945	9.5%
Total VR Agency Purchases	20,549	100.0%

The data indicates that the agency's Pre-ETS case service expenditures were fairly consistent from year to year for the five categories. DARS spent about one-third of their case service dollars on work-based learning experiences (the most frequently purchased service) each year

during the three-year period beginning PY 2021 to PY 2023. The agency's case service expenditures on workplace readiness training increased 3.5 percent from PY 2022 to PY 2023.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Survey: Barriers to Employment Goals – Youth in Transition from School

Partner survey respondents were asked to indicate the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition from school from a list of 26 barriers. There was no limit to the number of barriers that a partner respondent could choose. A total of 103 respondents answered the question.

The top three most frequently cited barriers to employment that partners selected for youth in transition from school are listed in the top four of the most common barriers partners identified for the general population of clients. Four of the nine narrative comments received in the category “other” cited “unknown/I do not provide services to youth.” The remaining five comments cited lack of family support; uncertain of career path to choose; lack of desire to work; parents' unreasonable expectations; and poor DARS counselors. Table 111 details the partner responses to the question.

Table 111

Partner Survey: Barriers to Employment Goals – Youth in Transition from School

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Youth	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	70	68.0%
Lack of job search/interview skills	65	63.1%
Lack of reliable transportation	64	62.1%
Inadequate transition services in school	58	56.3%
Lack of pre-employment transition skills	58	56.3%
Lack of education or training	51	49.5%
Lack of soft skills	49	47.6%
Lack of coordination with school	48	46.6%
Parent, school division and counselor expectations	44	42.7%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	38	36.9%
Other transportation issues	34	33.0%

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Youth	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits, or other benefits such as Medicaid, due to working	29	28.2%
Lack of available jobs	24	23.3%
Lack of technology skills	16	15.5%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	16	15.5%
Mental health concerns	15	14.6%
Language barriers	10	9.7%
Other (please describe)	9	8.7%
Lack of assistive technology	9	8.7%
Other health concerns	8	7.8%
Criminal record	8	7.8%
Lack of Internet access	8	7.8%
Substance abuse	7	6.8%
Lack of housing	7	6.8%
Lack of attendant care	4	3.9%
Lack of childcare	2	1.9%
Total	751	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Youth in Transition from School

Staff were provided a list of 27 barriers and asked to identify the barriers to achieving employment goals for clients who are youth in transition from school. There was no limit to the number of items staff could choose.

Three of the top five most frequently cited barriers to employment staff selected for youth are listed in the top five barriers staff identified as common barriers to employment for the general population of DARS clients. Note that two of the top five barriers staff selected for youth are identified in the partners' top five barrier choices for youth and the items are in a different rank order.

Sixteen comments were received in the category “other.” Two comments indicated that the respondent did not work with youth. Five comments cited the youth’s difficulties transitioning into making adult decisions, lack of motivation, and unreasonable expectations regarding work.

Three comments cited the lack of parental support, and one comment cited parental expectations of a high salary for their child. Two comments indicated the lack of school involvement and referrals from schools starting at 12th grade instead of 9th grade. Table 112 summarizes the staff's choices as barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition from school

Table 112

Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Youth In Transition from School

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Youth	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Parental concerns	78	66.7%
Limited job skills/work experience	77	65.8%
Lack of reliable transportation	76	65.0%
Lack of soft skills	69	59.0%
Fear of the unknown	60	51.3%
Lack of job search/interview skills	53	45.3%
Other transportation issues	50	42.7%
Lack of transition supports available through schools	47	40.2%
Inadequate IEP transition plan	46	39.3%
Mental health concerns	40	34.2%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits, or other benefits such as Medicaid, due to working	39	33.3%
Lack of education or training	34	29.1%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	30	25.6%
Lack of available jobs	29	24.8%
Lack of access to pre-employment transition services	19	16.2%
Other (please describe)	16	13.7%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	14	12.0%
Language barriers	12	10.3%
Other health issues	12	10.3%
Lack of technology skills	12	10.3%
Lack of internet access	11	9.4%
Lack of attendant care	10	8.5%
Lack of housing	10	8.5%
Substance abuse	8	6.8%

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Youth	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Criminal record	6	5.1%
Lack of assistive technology	4	3.4%
Lack of childcare	2	1.7%
Total	864	

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following recurring themes emerged from the individual interviews and focus groups related to the needs of youth with disabilities in transition from school:

1. DARS provides Pre-ETS using a combination of direct staff and service providers, with providers delivering the majority of the services. The agency met the 15 percent Pre-ETS reserve expenditure requirement this year for the first time. The following themes were recurring when discussing Pre-ETS:
 - a. All five of the required Pre-ETS services were repeatedly cited as needed for students with disabilities throughout Virginia. WBLEs were identified as the most needed Pre-ETS service.
 - b. DARS is constantly trying to recruit more Pre-ETS providers, especially in areas of need which are rural areas. Transportation is a real challenge for students with disabilities and inhibits their ability to participate in Pre-ETS services that are provided in-person. This was noted as especially problematic in southwest VA.
 - c. ESO staff requested that rates for Pre-ETS be revised to help compensate providers for their time and to motivate new ESOs to deliver Pre-ETS.
 - d. Delivering services during the school year has been a challenge because schools are fearful of adversely affecting school attendance. Keeping students engaged during the summertime can be a challenge.
 - e. There are creative Pre-ETS offerings such as drone academies and Project Search. There are 17 Project Search sites in the state, and these sites provide an excellent opportunity for students with disabilities to acquire job skills that lead to employment.
 - f. The PERT program at WWRC was cited as an excellent program for students with disabilities.
2. The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities were cited as similar to adults, with an emphasis on the need for workplace readiness training, on the job training and social skills training. Students and youth served by DARS were consistently characterized as needing to understand what is acceptable behavior on a job, how to accept direction and constructive criticism, and how to stay on task.
3. Reliable transportation is a major need for transition-age youth. The lack of transportation in the rural areas especially was a primary reason for the inability of youth to participate in a VR plan or Pre-ETS.
4. Staff indicated the main ingredient for successful partnerships with schools is maintaining quality relationships with DARS counselors and school staff over the long term. High staff attrition rates on either side impact these relationships. The quality and depth of the partnerships between DARS and schools varies throughout the state. The impact of the pandemic on staffing has affected the continuity of these relationships, but

that is getting better as staff stabilize on both sides. Some schools are very involved with the agency and start services in the sophomore year of high school and effectively coordinate services. In other regions, the schools are resistant to DARS and do not properly educate parents and students with disabilities about their options, with students not receiving information about services until graduation.

5. During COVID, the rate of mental health impairments among youth and students with disabilities exploded in Virginia, with many indicating that young people felt isolated. There was a tremendous need for mental health services that continues today. These services are not readily available in rural areas.
6. DARS has addressed the need to provide services to young people by designating student (Pre-ETS) counselors, which was characterized as impacting the ability of the agency to provide traditional transition services. Participants indicated that one of the consequences of this is that there can be a drop-off from Pre-ETS to adult services.
7. Staff indicate it has been helpful to have the ability to use their work cell phones to communicate with youth via texting.
8. Staff and ESO partners report parents at times are overprotective and at times unrealistic in terms of potential career paths.
9. Staff indicated that parents and students often do not understand all the options available through DARS. Schools place students on pathways for certificates instead of diploma or GED. In some situations, the confusion inhibits a student from attending college right away when the student may have the capability to do so.
10. Participants indicated that the ability for DARS to help with attendance at college was not promoted and that this option should be highlighted.
11. Participants indicated that youth in the foster care system are in need of VR services but may not be targeted due to the focus on in-school youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided to Virginia DARS related to the needs of youth with disabilities in transition from school:

1. DARS is encouraged to continue to try and expand the number of providers that provide Pre-ETS throughout the state, especially in rural areas. Where possible, DARS should pay for transportation costs for providers delivering Pre-ETS in rural areas.
2. DARS is encouraged to review the fee schedule for Pre-ETS and revise as resources allow to help motivate providers to deliver these services.
3. Because of the recurring concern expressed by ESOs that the documentation requirements for delivering services is burdensome, DARS is encouraged to review these requirements for Pre-ETS services and streamline as much as possible.
4. DARS should increase outreach efforts to foster care youth prior to graduation from secondary school to increase the likelihood that they will stay engaged with DARS after they leave the foster care system.
5. DARS should continue to work closely with the NTACT:C to develop a youth advisory board made up of students and youth on how to improve services.
6. DARS is encouraged to identify opportunities to educate students and families on the realistic expectations of the program and appropriate family interaction with employers.
7. DARS student counselors are encouraged to work directly with students and parents in order to assist students/youth to make informed choices about their future.
8. Although providers are providing many WBLEs, DARS should encourage the development of further opportunities for innovative WBLEs in technology industries.
9. DARS staff should ensure that counseling on postsecondary education opportunities is provided for all students with disabilities interested in pursuing this path after graduation.

SECTION FIVE

NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The following information was gathered during this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System. Throughout this section, the term Virginia Works Center or VA Works will be used to refer to services provided by DARS's partners in what used to be termed the One-Stop Career Center and is now referred to nationally as the American Job Centers (AJCs). The information and comments noted in this section only refer to DARS's partners, not DARS unless explicitly stated.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system:

1. There is variable quality and integration with the Virginia Works program across the state. Co-location does contribute to improved and increased instances of braided funding. However, the relationship between DARS and VA Works remains primarily one of referral in many areas, especially related to individuals who immediately self-identify as having a disability when participating with VA Works. There is room for considerable growth related to braided funding of cases.
2. The partnership with VA Works is especially strong among substance use and behavioral health counselors and VA Works staff. One example is the Re-entry Optimization Taskforce which focuses on helping individuals released from prison to reenter the workforce.
3. VA Works staff need regular and consistent training on how to effectively work with individuals with disabilities.

SURVEY RESULT BY TYPE

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individual Survey: Virginia Workforce Connection Centers

Individuals with disabilities in Virginia were asked a series of questions about their use and opinion of Virginia Workforce Connection Centers.

Virginia Workforce Connection Centers - Use and Accessibility

Less than 12 percent of the respondents cited “yes” when asked if they had used the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers beyond an online account.

Of the respondents who utilized Virginia Workforce Connection Centers beyond creating an online account, physical accessibility of the building was difficult for one of the respondents (n=1) and access to programs was challenging for 14.3% percent (n=1). The narrative response regarding physical concerns cited “climbing stairs.” Table 113 details the individual survey results to the questions regarding the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers use and accessibility.

Table 113

Individual Survey: Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Use and Accessibility

Accessibility Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Have you ever tried to use the services of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) beyond an online account?	7	11.5%	54	88.5%	61
Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?	1	14.3%	6	85.7%	7
Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers, formerly known as the one-Stop Centers (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?	1	14.3%	6	85.7%	7

Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Training and Employment

A small number of individual survey respondents utilized the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers. Caution is recommended when analyzing the results and when making inferences regarding the results of this question.

Three survey respondents (42.9 percent of 7 respondents) went to the center to get training. Three individuals indicated that they received the training they were seeking, and one individual found work as a result of the training. Four (57.1 percent) out of seven individuals went to the center with the purpose of seeking assistance to find a job. Four respondents answered the question regarding receiving help that resulted in employment with 50 percent (n=2) indicating that they did not receive assistance in finding employment. Table 114 details the results from individual respondents using the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers for seeking training and employment.

Table 114

Individual Survey: Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Training and Employment

Training and Employment Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to get training?	3	42.9%	4	57.1%	7
Did you get the training that you were seeking?	3	100.0%	0	0.0%	3
Did the training result in employment?	1	33.3%	2	66.7%	3
Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to find a job?	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	7
Did they help you find employment?	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	4

Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Helpfulness and Value

The concepts of helpfulness and value are evaluated in this study with respect to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers. Note that a small sample of individuals (n=7) responded to the questions in this section of the survey. Caution is recommended when analyzing the results and when making inferences regarding the results of this question.

Seven respondents answered the question regarding helpfulness. An equal number of respondents (n=3) cited either “yes, they were helpful” or “they were somewhat helpful.” The results in response to the question regarding value are identical to the results in response to question regarding helpfulness.

Table 115 identifies the rating for helpfulness of the staff and the value of the services at the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers by the individuals that responded to the survey.

Table 115

Individual Survey: Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Helpfulness and Value

VA WF Connection Center Staff Helpful	Number	Percent
Yes, they were very helpful	3	42.9%
They were somewhat helpful	3	42.9%
No, they were not helpful	1	14.3%
Total	7	100.0%
VA WF Connection Center Services Valuable	Number	Percent
Yes, the services were very valuable	3	42.9%
The services were somewhat valuable	3	42.9%
No, the services were not valuable	1	14.3%
Total	7	100.0%

Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Effectiveness

Considering the results to the survey questions regarding training and employment is from a small sample size, caution is recommended when making inferences regarding the results of this question.

In terms of an overall effectiveness rating of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers, the “no opinion” choice option was not cited by respondents. The margin of difference between somewhat effective and very effective is two respondents.

Table 116 details the effectiveness of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers’ services.

Table 116

Individual Survey: Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Effectiveness

Effectiveness Rating	Number	Percent
Somewhat effective	4	57.1%
Very effective	2	28.6%
Very ineffective	1	14.3%
No opinion	0	0.0%
Somewhat ineffective	0	0.0%
Total	7	100.0%

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Survey: Virginia Workforce Connection Centers

Partner survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their opinion and use of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers.

Virginia Workforce Connection Centers - Use and Accessibility

The project team asked respondents to identify their frequency of interaction with the Workforce Connection Centers. More than one-third of the partner respondents never interacted with the Workforce Connection Centers and one-third of the partners rarely interacted with the Workforce Connection Centers.

The survey asked about the physical and programmatic accessibility of the Workforce Connection Centers. The majority of partner respondents (38.1 percent) indicated that centers were somewhat physically accessible. However, an equal percentage of partners (28.6 percent) indicated that the centers are fully accessible or that they did not know if the centers are physically accessible to clients.

Almost one-fourth of partners are not knowledgeable regarding the Workforce Connection Centers' program accessibility while 50.8 percent of partner respondents indicated that the centers were somewhat programmatically accessible. Note that six out of seven individual respondents indicated that they did not have difficulty accessing the programs at the centers.

Tables 117 to 119 summarize the responses from DARS' community partners regarding interaction and accessibility of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers.

Table 117

Partner Survey: Frequency of Interaction with Virginia Workforce Connection Centers

Frequency of Interaction with Virginia Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Not at all	40	38.8%
Infrequently	34	33.0%
Somewhat frequently	19	18.5%
Very frequently	10	9.7%
Total	103	100.0%

Table 118

Partner Survey: Physical Accessibility of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers

Physical Accessibility of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat accessible	24	38.1%
Fully accessible	18	28.6%
I do not know	18	28.6%
Not accessible	3	4.8%
Total	63	100.0%

Table 119

Partner Survey: Programmatic Accessibility of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers

Programmatic Accessibility of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat accessible	32	50.8%
I do not know	15	23.8%
Fully accessible	11	17.5%
Not accessible	5	7.9%
Total	63	100.0%

Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Effectiveness Rating

Partners and individual survey respondents differed in their viewpoint when asked about the overall effectiveness of the Workforce Connection Centers in serving people with disabilities. Fifty percent of the partners indicated that Workforce Connection Centers effectively serve people with disabilities.

Table 120

Partner Survey: Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Effectiveness Rating

Effectiveness of Virginia Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Effectively	29	50.0%
Not effectively	18	31.0%
Very effectively	10	17.2%
They do not serve individuals with disabilities	1	1.7%
Total	58	100.0%

Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Improving Service

In the final survey question related to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers, the respondents were asked what the centers could do to improve services for people with

disabilities. Partners were presented a list of five items, including the open-ended category “other,” and asked to select all that apply. Fifty-six respondents answered the question.

Nearly 70 percent of respondents indicated that the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers should partner more effectively with DARS. Seven narrative comments were received in the response for the item "other, please describe." Two of the comments indicated that the centers should increase the locations/provide services locally. Two comments that included suggestions for improving service are quoted:

- “Higher visibility”
- “Work with service providers other than DARS in addition to DARS.”

Table 121

Partner Survey: Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Improving Service

Improving Service of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers to Effectively Serve PWD	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Partner more effectively with DARS to serve dually enrolled clients	39	69.6%
Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities	32	57.1%
Improve programmatic accessibility	24	42.9%
Improve physical accessibility	12	21.4%
Other (please describe)	7	12.5%
Total	114	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: Virginia Workforce Connection Centers

Staff were asked a series of questions about their use and opinion of Virginia Workforce Connection Centers.

Virginia Workforce Connection Centers - Use and Accessibility

The majority of staff (35 percent) indicated "somewhat frequently" as their level of interaction with the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers while one-third of partners (33.3 percent) selected "infrequently." Eleven of the staff respondents did not interact with the Workforce Connection Centers at all, which is slightly more than half of the number of the staff respondents (n=26) who cited "very frequently" in response to the question.

The survey asked about the physical accessibility of the centers. The majority of staff respondents (39.3 percent) indicated the Workforce Connection Centers were somewhat

accessible, which reflects the individual survey results and partners' results. Almost 20 percent of staff indicated that they did not know if the buildings are accessible.

The majority of staff found the Workforce Connection Centers to be somewhat programmatically accessible and almost one-fourth of staff are not knowledgeable regarding the Workforce Connection Centers' program accessibility, which is similar to the partner survey results.

Tables 122 to 124 summarize the responses from DARS staff regarding the use and accessibility of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers.

Table 122

Staff Survey: Frequency of Interaction with Virginia Workforce Connection Centers

Frequency of Interaction with Virginia Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat frequently	41	35.0%
Infrequently	39	33.3%
Very frequently	26	22.2%
Not at all	11	9.4%
Total	117	100.0%

Table 123

Staff Survey: Physical Accessibility of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers

Physical Accessibility of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat accessible	42	39.3%
Fully accessible	39	36.5%
I do not know	21	19.6%
Not accessible	5	4.7%
Total	107	100.0%

Table 124

Staff Survey: Programmatic Accessibility of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers

Programmatic Accessibility of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat accessible	59	55.1%
I do not know	23	21.5%
Fully accessible	18	16.8%
Not accessible	7	6.5%
Total	107	100.0%

Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Effectiveness Rating

A narrow majority of staff found the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers to be effective. Note that the staff and partners rank order of items in response to this question match. Note also that the small sample of individual survey respondents selected “somewhat effective” when asked about the overall effectiveness of the Workforce Connection Centers.

*Table 125**Staff Survey: Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Effectiveness Rating*

Effectiveness of Virginia Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Effectively	48	47.5%
Not effectively	43	42.6%
Very effectively	8	7.9%
They do not serve individuals with disabilities	2	2.0%
Total	101	100.0%

Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Improving Service

Staff survey respondents were asked what the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers could do to improve service to clients. There was no limit to the number of suggestions that could be chosen. A total of one-hundred respondents answered the question.

Staff and partners agree on what the Virginia Workforce Centers could do to improve services to people with disabilities as staff and partner survey results are similar regarding this question. Although staff had one additional choice option to select, staff and partners ranked the items in the same order.

Thirteen narrative comments were received from staff in the category “other (please describe)” and five did not contain suggestions for improving the Workforce Center services. Four comments detailed improving collaboration between the centers and DARS.

*Table 126
Staff Survey: Virginia Workforce Connection Centers – Improving Service*

Improving Service of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers to Effectively Serve PWD	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Partner more effectively with DARS to serve dually enrolled clients	75	75.0%
Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities	55	55.0%
Improve programmatic accessibility	42	42.0%
Include individuals with disabilities when purchasing training for their clients	27	27.0%
Improve physical accessibility	18	18.0%
Other (please describe)	13	13.0%
Total	230	

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the individual interviews and focus groups conducted for this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System:

1. There appears to be variable quality and integration with the Virginia Works program across the state. DARS has MOUs with all of the boards and some offices are co-located, which does contribute to improved and increased instances of braided funding. However, interview participants indicated that the relationship between DARS and VA Works remains primarily one of referral in many areas, especially related to individuals who immediately self-identify as having a disability when participating with VA Works. Generally, once VA Works staff know there is a disability, they refer the individual to DARS and do not continue working with them generally. There is room for considerable growth related to braided funding of cases.
2. The partnership with VA Works was described as especially strong among substance use and behavioral health counselors and VA Works staff. One example is the Re-entry Optimization Taskforce which focuses on helping individuals released from prison to reenter the workforce.
3. Staff indicate that VA Works staff need regular and consistent training on how to effectively work with individuals with disabilities. Although DARS business relations staff does provide this periodically, the need is ongoing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to Virginia DARS based on the results of the research in the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities served through other Components of the Statewide Workforce Development System area:

1. Since there appear to be many instances of productive and meaningful partnership among DARS and VA Works staff, the agency is encouraged to highlight these partnerships, especially when braided funding of cases is occurring and share these examples for replication across the state.
2. DARS is encouraged to regularly attend business solutions meetings with the VA Works staff and continue to educate/collaborate regarding DARS and VA Works roles and available services. DARS staff should continue to help educate VA Works staff on how to assist consumers with disabilities within the VA Works system, how to work with different disability types, and how to minimize the duplication of services. Training provided in concert with DBVI is encouraged.
3. DARS is encouraged to partner with VA Works to develop customized training opportunities with employers in Virginia and to ensure that individuals with disabilities are included in these training programs.

SECTION SIX

NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN VIRGINIA

Section 6 identifies the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) in Virginia that serve individuals with disabilities. CRPs in Virginia are referred to as Employment Service Organizations, or ESOs. The ESO is used throughout this section.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following themes emerged in the area of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with disabilities in Virginia:

1. DARS relies heavily on ESOs to provide a wide range of employment services to their consumers. There are areas of the state like Fairfax where there is a proliferation of ESOs. There are other more rural areas where there are few service providers and some services, like SE, are lacking.
2. There is a need to improve the quality of job placements by ESOs. Employment needs to be consistent with the abilities and capabilities of consumers.
3. DARS is embarking on a VBP model geared towards rewarding ESOs for high quality placements.
4. Many ESOs have experienced high turnover, which affects their ability to serve DARS consumers in a timely manner.
5. There is a lack of bilingual staff to provide services at ESOs, which contributes to the low number of Hispanic individuals receiving services.
6. There are very few ESOs currently providing CE. It has been a real challenge to implement CE in Virginia. Once staff are trained, they leave and there is nobody left to provide the service.
7. There is a need for more Vocational Evaluators in the northern Virginia area. Clients can wait six to eight weeks to see an evaluator after being referred by a counselor. This can delay services for individuals desperate to go to work and is not congruent with rapid engagement.
8. There is a need for more workplace readiness services and work adjustment services for consumers, especially those with behavioral health disabilities.
9. There is a need to expand financial literacy and empowerment services, which are valuable services for consumers, especially related to benefits planning.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individual Survey: Service Providers and Vendors

Individual survey respondents were asked a series of questions identifying their use of DARS referrals; the quality, effectiveness, and responsiveness of their service provider or vendor; and whether or not they would recommend their service provider or vendor to others.

Use of a DARS Referral

The first question asked individual survey respondents to indicate whether or not they received services from a service provider or vendor that they were referred to by DARS. A total of 63 respondents answered the question. Fifty-four percent of respondents indicated that they received service provider or vendor services recommended/referred to by DARS. Table 127 summarizes the results.

Table 127

Individual Survey: Use of a DARS Referral

Use of DARS Referral	Number	Percent
Yes	34	54.0%
No	29	46.0%
Total	63	100.0%

Quality of Service from Service Provider or Vendor

Individuals were asked to rate the quality of service from the service provider or vendor. A total of 33 responses were received and 42.4 percent indicated that the quality of service from the service provider or vendor was “good.” Table 128 details the results.

Table 128

Individual Survey: Quality of Service from Service Provider or Vendor

Quality of Services: Service Provider or Vendor	Number	Percent
Good	14	42.4%
Excellent	9	27.3%
Fair	7	21.2%
Poor	3	9.1%
Total	33	100.0%

Effectiveness of Service Provider Services or Vendor

Individuals were asked to rate the effectiveness of the services from the service provider or vendor. The majority rated the services from the service provider as “effective.” One-third of the respondents indicated that the services were either somewhat ineffective or ineffective (33.3 percent). The results are detailed in Table 129.

Table 129

Individual Survey: Effectiveness of Service from Service Provider or Vendor

Effectiveness of Services: Service Provider or Vendor	Number	Percent
Effective	13	39.4%
Very effective	9	27.3%
Somewhat ineffective	8	24.2%
Ineffective	3	9.1%
Total	33	100.0%

Responsiveness of Service Provider or Vendor

Respondents were also asked to rate the responsiveness of the service provider or vendor. The margin of difference between “good” and “excellent” in response to the question is narrow (n=1). The majority of the respondents rated the responsiveness of the service provider as “good.” Note that an equal number of respondents (n=6) cited either fair or poor in response to the question. Table 130 summarizes the results.

Table 130

Individual Survey: Responsiveness of Service Provider or Vendor

Responsiveness of Service Provider or Vendor	Number	Percent
Good	11	33.3%
Excellent	10	30.3%
Fair	6	18.2%
Poor	6	18.2%
Total	33	100.0%

Recommend Service Provider or Vendor

The final question asked of individuals regarding service providers and vendors was “Would you recommend your service provider or vendor to others served by DARS?” Over 60 percent of the respondents indicated that they would recommend their service provider or vendor to others. The response ratings are contained in Table 131.

Table 131
Individual Survey: Recommend Service Provider or Vendor

Recommend Service Provider or Vendor	Number	Percent
Yes	20	60.6%
Not sure	7	21.2%
No	6	18.2%
Total	33	100.0%

COMMUNITY PARTNER RESULTS

Partner Survey: Service Providers and Vendors

Partner survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding VR service provider services in order to identify the availability of services to clients and whether or not the services are meeting the clients' needs.

Services Readily Available to DARS Clients

Partners were provided with a list of 18 items and asked to select the services that are readily available to DARS clients. One-hundred twenty-seven partners responded to the question.

Four items were cited by over 82 percent of partners as services that are readily available to DARS clients (job search/placement/retention, pre-employment transition services, supported employment, job training). Maintenance or income assistance was cited the least number of times by partners in response to the question. Table 132 details the results.

Table 132
Partner Survey: Services Readily Available

Services Readily Available	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Job search/placement/retention	113	89.0%
Pre-employment transition services	109	85.8%
Supported employment	109	85.8%
Job training	105	82.7%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	83	65.4%
Disability benefits counseling	82	64.6%
Assistive technology	79	62.2%
Transportation assistance	70	55.1%
Customized employment	51	40.2%

Services Readily Available	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Mental health treatment	48	37.8%
Substance abuse treatment	38	29.9%
Vehicle modification	31	24.4%
Medical treatment	31	24.4%
Personal care attendants	25	19.7%
Health insurance	22	17.3%
Housing	22	17.3%
Maintenance or income assistance	18	14.2%
Other (please describe)	3	2.4%
Total	1,039	

Services Not Readily Available to DARS Clients

Partner survey respondents were also asked to indicate which services are not readily available in the area of the state where the respondent works. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen. A total of 101 partners responded to the question.

Partners displayed consistency in their choices for available and not available services as the tables are nearly in reverse rank order.

The four items found at the bottom of the list of partner choices for services readily available are cited at the top of the list of services not readily available to clients. Housing was cited most frequently by partners as a service not readily available to DARS clients. Conversely, the top four services listed in Table 132 (above) are found at the bottom of the list of services partners cited as not readily available.

Table 133 contains the partner results to the question regarding services not readily available to DARS clients.

Table 133
Partner Survey: Services Not Readily Available

Services Not Readily Available	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Housing	62	61.4%
Maintenance or income assistance	48	47.5%
Health insurance	46	45.5%
Personal care attendants	45	44.6%
Vehicle modification	43	42.6%
Medical treatment	40	39.6%
Mental health treatment	36	35.6%
Transportation assistance	33	32.7%
Substance abuse treatment	32	31.7%
Customized employment	32	31.7%
Disability benefits counseling	19	18.8%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	13	12.9%
Assistive technology	13	12.9%
Pre-employment transition services	10	9.9%
Supported employment	10	9.9%
Job training	9	8.9%
Job search/placement/retention	8	7.9%
Other (please describe)	6	5.9%
Total	505	

Service Providers Meeting Client Needs

Partner survey respondents were asked to identify how frequently service providers in the Commonwealth of Virginia were able to meet DARS clients' VR needs.

Roughly 47 percent of the partner respondents indicated that service providers are able to meet the needs of DARS clients most of the time. The next most frequently selected choice of the partners was "some of the time." Table 134 summarizes the results to this question.

*Table 134**Partner Survey: Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Needs*

Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Needs	Number	Percent
Most of the time	60	47.2%
Some of the time	55	43.3%
All of the time	11	8.7%
None of the time	1	0.8%
Total	127	100.0%

Services that Providers Are Most Effective in Providing to DARS Clients

Partners were provided a list of 18 items and asked to identify the services that service providers were most effective in providing to DARS clients. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen. One-hundred eight partners responded to the question.

Table 135 contains the partners' choices of services that service providers are most effective in providing. The table reflects Table 135, which contains the partners' list of services readily available.

Five comments were received in response to the category of “other” and three cited “I don’t know/none/unsure”. The remaining comments cited the following as services that service providers are most effective in providing: simple placement and TBS.

*Table 135**Partner Survey: Services that Service Providers Are Most Effective in Providing*

Services that Service Providers are Most Effective in Providing to DARS Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Supported employment	79	73.1%
Job search/placement/retention	69	63.9%
Pre-employment transition services	65	60.2%
Job training	59	54.6%
Disability benefits counseling	38	35.2%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	26	24.1%
Assistive technology	25	23.1%
Transportation assistance	23	21.3%
Customized employment	18	16.7%
Substance abuse treatment	7	6.5%

Services that Service Providers are Most Effective in Providing to DARS Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Mental health treatment	6	5.6%
Maintenance or income assistance	5	4.6%
Other (please describe)	5	4.6%
Vehicle modification	4	3.7%
Health insurance	4	3.7%
Housing	4	3.7%
Medical treatment	3	2.8%
Personal care attendants	3	2.8%
Total	443	

Client Needs Service Providers are Unable to Meet

Partner survey respondents were given an open-ended question and asked to identify the VR needs that service providers were unable to meet in their area. Fifty-eight respondents provided a narrative response indicating various service gaps.

Seven narrative comments did not provide service needs, citing phrases including “none/NA”. Various services were mentioned in the remaining partner comments and several comments cited diverse problems when attempting to deliver services rather than a particular service need. Table 136 details specific services that were noted three or more times in the comments received and a collection of quotes from partners in response to the question.

Table 136

Partner Survey: Needs Service Providers are Unable to Meet

Service Needs Not Met
Transportation
Customized Employment
Long Term Supports
In-school programming for Students and Families
Benefits Counseling
Services for individuals with significant Disabilities
Pre-ETS
Mental Health

Quotes from Narrative Comments
<i>"Those with the most significant disabilities, especially mental illness and brain injury. Customized employment doesn't seem to be something employment providers understand."</i>
<i>"DARS states they are under-staffed so referral process and workup is taking 6 months or longer for fairly simple referrals"</i>
<i>"Assistance in a timely manner for educational testing/results for post-secondary students"</i>
<i>"Links to immediate employment...they will meet and talk about goals, but those goals sometimes take time for individuals to develop or to be assessed for being realistic. Employment opportunities for jobs while they are working towards jobs within the goals would be helpful. Such as partnership with employers to give people opportunities immediately...individuals with disabilities are often in-crisis and cannot wait to get the "goal job."</i>

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients’ Needs

Partners were provided with a list of five reasons and asked to identify the primary reasons why VR service providers were unable to meet clients’ service needs. Partners were able to select more than one item if desired. Ninety-four partner respondents answered the question.

In response to the question, fifty-seven out of 94 partners (60.6 percent) agreed there are not enough service providers available in area. Twenty-seven comments were received in the category other and items cited include lack of communication by DARS counselors with clients and service providers; lack of individualized services, person-centered plans, and vocational counseling; staff turnover at DARS; transportation; lack of partnerships with employers; and employer budget and willingness to work with DARS.

Table 137 contains the number of times the reason was chosen and the percentage of the number of respondents who answered the question.

*Table 137
Partner Survey: Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients’ Needs*

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Not enough service providers available in area	57	60.6%
Client barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers	52	55.3%
Other (please describe)	27	28.7%
Low rates paid for services	17	18.1%
Low quality of service provider services	15	16.0%
Total	168	

Partner Survey: Top Three Changes that Enable Partners to Better Serve DARS Clients

Partner survey respondents were presented with a list of thirteen options and asked to identify the top three changes that would enable them to better assist their DARS clients.

A total of one-hundred two partners provided a response to this question. “More streamlined processes” was the most frequently cited item (36 percent of staff respondents). “Improved communication with referring DARS counselor” and “smaller caseload” rounded up the top three changes that would enable partners to better serve DARS clients. Increased options for technology use to communicate with clients was the least frequently cited item by staff in response to the question.

Table 138 details the survey results. Comments from the category “other, please describe” are provided in the table following the detailed survey results.

Table 138

Partner Survey: Top Three Changes to Better Serve DARS Clients

Top Three Changes to Better Serve DARS Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
More streamlined processes	37	36.3%
Improved communication with referring DARS counselor	34	33.3%
Smaller caseload	31	30.4%
Improved business partnerships	31	30.4%
Higher rates paid by DARS for services	29	28.4%
Reduced documentation requirements	28	27.5%
Increased collaboration with schools	28	27.5%
Referral of appropriate individuals	20	19.6%
Increased collaboration with Virginia Workforce Connection Centers	18	17.6%
Additional training	11	10.8%
Incentives for high performance paid by DARS	9	8.8%
Other (please describe)	8	7.8%
Increased options for technology use to communicate with clients	2	2.0%
Total	286	

Table 139
 Partner Survey: Narrative Comments from the Survey Item "Other"

Narrative Comments from the Survey Item "Other"
Client - Related Needs
<i>"The ability to work on more than just employment with individuals. Many of them need the soft skills and social training to thrive in the workplace... When practicing communication and utilization of the Natural Supports within the workplace, the individuals feel more accepted and feel like they fit in better. Not everything is job skill related."</i>
<i>Understanding that every consumer who receives benefits should be receiving WISA services. Use of Partnership Plus"</i>
<i>"Transportation options in rural areas"</i>
Improving Internal Process and Protocols
<i>"DARS employees are too focused on the end goal of placement and closing the file. It should be a process that takes the participant's goals into consideration."</i>
<i>"Ensuring referrals are med complaint, stable and job ready"</i>
<i>"Prompt payment of interpreting invoices"</i>
DARS Caseloads
<i>"Incentives for DARS employees for caseloads"</i>
<i>"Replace the counselor whose caseload is extremely small yet does not produce the results of the other counselor whose caseload is 3x the size"</i>

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: Service Providers and Vendors

Staff survey respondents were asked a series of six questions regarding rehabilitation service provider and vendor services. The purpose of the questions was to identify the availability of services that DARS refers or recommends to clients and to understand whether or not the services are meeting the clients' needs.

Services Readily Available to DARS Clients

Staff were provided with a list of 19 items and asked to select the services that are readily available to DARS clients. A total of 146 staff responded to the question.

Staff and partner results in response to the question are similar, with a slightly different rank order. Seven items were cited by over 83 percent of staff as services that are readily available to DARS clients (supported employment, pre-employment transition services, job search/placement/retention, vocational/postsecondary education, disability benefits counseling, job training, assistive technology). Content analysis of the narrative comments revealed one

service that did not appear on the list of services readily available yet appeared twice in the comments, and the service is rehab engineering. Table 140 details the staff choices of readily available services.

Table 140

Staff Survey: Services Readily Available to DARS Clients

Services Readily Available	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Supported employment	139	95.2%
Pre-employment transition services	133	91.1%
Job search/placement/retention	129	88.4%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	127	87.0%
Disability benefits counseling	127	87.0%
Job training	125	85.6%
Assistive technology	122	83.6%
Vehicle modification	99	67.8%
Mental health treatment	97	66.4%
Transportation assistance	93	63.7%
Substance abuse treatment	86	58.9%
Home modification	85	58.2%
Medical treatment	75	51.4%
Health insurance	55	37.7%
Personal care attendants	50	34.2%
Customized employment	49	33.6%
Maintenance or income assistance	41	28.1%
Housing	29	19.9%
Other (please describe)	9	6.2%
Total	1,670	

Services Not Readily Available to DARS Clients

Staff were asked to indicate what services were not readily available in the area of Virginia where they work. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen. A total of 66 staff respondents answered the question.

Similar to partners, staff displayed consistency in their choices for available and not available services as the items selected as services not readily available listed at the top of Table 141

below are found at the bottom the list of services that staff indicated as readily available. Housing was cited most frequently by staff as a service not readily available and the item was also the most frequently cited service by partners. Overall, staff and partners results were different in rank order.

Seven comments were received in the category “other.” Three comments identified transportation as a service that is not available, and two comments cited that all services are limited in availability.

Table 141 details the staff choices of services not readily available to clients.

Table 141

Staff Survey: Services Not Readily Available to DARS Clients

Services Not Readily Available	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Housing	97	79.5%
Maintenance or Income assistance	68	55.7%
Customized employment	64	52.5%
Personal care attendants	55	45.1%
Transportation assistance	50	41.0%
Health insurance	39	32.0%
Mental health treatment	34	27.9%
Medical treatment	31	25.4%
Home modification	26	21.3%
Substance abuse treatment	25	20.5%
Vehicle modification	16	13.1%
Assistive technology	12	9.8%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	9	7.4%
Disability benefits counseling	9	7.4%
Job training	8	6.6%
Job search/placement/retention	8	6.6%
Other (please describe)	7	5.7%
Pre-employment transition services	5	4.1%
Supported employment	4	3.3%
Total	567	

Service Providers Meeting Clients' Needs

Staff survey respondents were asked to identify how frequently service providers in the Commonwealth of Virginia were able to meet DARS clients' rehabilitation service needs.

The majority of respondents (67.4 percent) indicated that service providers were meeting the needs of DARS clients most of the time. A significantly lower rate of respondents indicated that service providers are meeting the needs of clients some of the time. Note that slightly less than two-thirds of individual survey respondents (60.6 percent) would recommend their service provider.

Table 142

Staff Survey: Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Clients' Needs

Frequency of DARS Service Providers Meeting Needs	Number	Percent
Most of the time	93	67.4%
Some of the time	39	28.3%
All of the time	6	4.4%
None of the time	0	0.0%
Total	138	100.0%

Service Needs that Service Providers are Unable to Meet

Staff respondents were provided a list of 19 items and asked to identify the service needs that VR service providers were unable to meet. There was no limit to the number of services staff could choose. One-hundred fourteen respondents participated in answering this survey question.

Staff cited "housing" as the top service need that VR service providers are unable to meet. CE ranked in the second position by a difference of 14.1 percent (n=16) from the top item "housing." Although roughly two-thirds of staff (66.4 percent) identified "mental health treatment" as a readily available service to DARS clients in the previous Table 142, almost 30 percent of staff identified the service as one of the service needs that rehabilitation service providers are unable to meet.

Four comments were received in the category "other" and one comment contained the phrase "I don't know." The phrase "helping clients actually apply for jobs" and "work adjustment training" were cited one time. An appeal for DARS to examine services for the deaf and hard of hearing was identified in the remaining comment. Table 143 contains the staff choices of service needs that VR service providers are unable to meet.

Table 143

Staff Survey: Service Needs that Service Providers are Unable to Meet

Client Needs Service Providers are Unable to Meet	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Housing	81	71.1%
Customized employment	65	57.0%
Maintenance or Income assistance	53	46.5%
Transportation assistance	43	37.7%
Personal care attendants	39	34.2%
Health insurance	39	34.2%
Mental health treatment	34	29.8%
Medical treatment	29	25.4%
Substance abuse treatment	22	19.3%
Home modification	22	19.3%
Vehicle modification	17	14.9%
Supported employment	12	10.5%
Job search/placement/retention	11	9.6%
Pre-employment transition services	11	9.6%
Assistive technology	9	7.9%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	8	7.0%
Job training	7	6.1%
Disability benefits counseling	6	5.3%
Other (please describe)	4	3.5%
Total	512	

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs

Staff were provided with a list of six reasons and asked to identify the primary reasons why VR service providers were unable to meet clients' service needs. Respondents were able to select more than one item if desired. A total of one-hundred eighteen staff answered the question.

Staff and partners selected "not enough service providers are available" as their first choice of primary reasons why service providers are unable to meet clients' VR needs and matched in their choices for the second primary reason. Slightly more than one-fourth of staff cited the item "burden caused by administrative processes" as a primary reason why service providers are unable to meet clients' needs. Comments received in the category "other, please describe" cited

items such as transportation, staffing turnover at DARS and with ESOs, agency policies, housing and long waitlists as primary reasons why the service needs of clients are not met by providers.

Table 144 summarizes the staff responses to this question.

Table 144

Staff Survey: Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Not enough service providers available in area	92	78.0%
Client barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers	50	42.4%
Low quality of service provider services	40	33.9%
Other (please describe)	34	28.8%
Burden caused by administrative processes	34	28.8%
Low rates paid for services	33	28.0%
Total	283	

Most Important Change Service Providers Could Make to Support Client Efforts to Achieve Employment Goals

Staff respondents were asked an open-ended question to identify the most important change that service providers could make to support customer's efforts to achieve their employment goals. A total of 94 responses were received. Content analysis indicated consistent themes regarding improving communication with DARS; address transportation needs; hiring more job coaches and improving the quality of the job coaches; DARS to create and provide in-house job coaches; hiring more counselors at DARS; increasing the number of service providers; developing employer relationships and increasing connections with in-demand industries; and DARS to hire staff with ASL fluency and deafness KSAs instead of paying for a service provider (job coach), interpreter, and their travel times.

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following themes were recurring from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the need to establish, develop or improve ESOs serving individuals with disabilities in Virginia:

1. DARS relies heavily on ESOs to provide a wide range of employment services to their consumers. There are areas of the state like Fairfax where there is a proliferation of ESOs. There are other more rural areas where there are few service providers and some services, like SE, are lacking.
2. There was a pervasive perception among DARS staff that the quality of placements by ESOs are low, based on available jobs at the time of referral, and not consistent with the abilities and capabilities of many consumers. This concern was one of the reasons why DARS is embarking on a VBP model geared towards rewarding ESOs for high quality placements.
3. Many ESOs have experienced high turnover, which affects their ability to serve DARS consumers in a timely manner. Interview participants indicated that there are waiting lists at many service providers.
4. There is a lack of bilingual staff to provide services at ESOs, which contributes to the low number of Hispanic individuals receiving services.
5. There are very few ESOs currently providing CE. It has been a real challenge to implement CE in Virginia. Once staff are trained, they leave and there is nobody left to provide the service.
6. Staff indicate that there is a need for more Vocational Evaluators in the northern Virginia area. Clients can wait six to eight weeks to see an evaluator after being referred by a counselor. This can delay services for individuals desperate to go to work and is not congruent with rapid engagement.
7. Differences in the skill level of the job coaches was a common theme. DARS relies heavily on the ESOs to provide this service. Some ESOs experience staffing shortages or do not have qualified/experienced job coaches available for the consumers with significant disabilities or mental health impairments.
8. Staff indicated that there is a need for more workplace readiness services and work adjustment services for all consumers to prepare them for employment. This was a need repeated by all VRC participants working with behavioral health populations, in addition to a few other counselor participants with mixed caseloads.
9. A need for providers that can do vehicle modification was noted by several interviewees.
10. Staff articulated a need to expand financial literacy services. The agency has some very helpful resources and training available related to financial empowerment and literacy and staff would like to see these expanded where possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to Virginia DARS based on the results of the research in the Need to Establish, Develop or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in Virginia:

1. DARS is encouraged to continue to work closely with VRTAC-QM to develop and implement the VBP model to incentivize high quality placements for ESOs.
2. DARS is encouraged to support ESOs with ongoing training opportunities that can be provided inclusive of DARS staff.
3. DARS is encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of CE services provided in the RPRJ EPIC project and replicate the service as indicated.
4. DARS should encourage ESOs to hire bilingual/multilingual job coaches and case managers to improve access for underserved populations.
5. DARS is encouraged to use a vendor performance evaluation system designed to not only evaluate vendor effectiveness but identify opportunities for growth and development for them.

SECTION SEVEN

NEEDS OF BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

The need for the DARS program to engage with the business community and effectively provide services to employers is one of the common performance measures for the core partners in WIOA. Consequently, it is important for every DARS program to do a self-assessment of how well they are serving employers. The project team is hopeful that this section of the report will be useful to DARS as they engage in the evaluation of how effectively they are providing services to employers and develop strategies to increase business engagement.

A total of nine businesses completed a survey for this CSNA. The reader is cautioned to interpret any findings with the low participation rates in mind.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of business and effectiveness in serving employers:

1. DARS has invested heavily in business development and relations. They do joint presentations with employers and consult with employers for the development of training programs at WWRC. The agency understands the necessity for the dual customer approach and has established some important and meaningful partnerships with employers.
2. Even with the efforts of the agency targeted at business relations, there remains a strong need for disability awareness training, education on available assistive technology, and accommodations to reduce employer concerns and fear related to hiring individuals with disabilities.
3. DARS staff provide Windmills training for employers, and this is an important and helpful educational opportunity for employers.
4. There is a need to increase the overall employer awareness of DARS and their available services for employers.

SURVEY RESULTS

BUSINESS SURVEY RESPONSES

Disability in the Workplace: Employer Needs

With respect to the "Disability in the Workplace" section of the survey, business survey respondents were presented with eight questions regarding whether or not their business needed help with a variety of concerns related to disability and employment. The questions were structured in a yes-no format.

In response to employer needs regarding disability in the workplace, the total number of survey respondents who answered specific questions is 10 respondents.

Roughly 50 to 80 percent of business respondents indicated that they need assistance in regard to disability in the workplace which includes recruitment and retaining workers with disabilities, training and advancement, accommodations, incentives, and disability etiquette and sensitivity training for staff to understand workers with disabilities.

Table 145

Disability in the Workplace: Employer Needs

Does your business need help...	Number of times Yes was chosen	Percent of time Yes was chosen	Number of times No was chosen	Percent of time No was chosen	Total
Recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities?	8	80.0%	2	20.0%	10
Helping workers with disabilities to retain and advance in employment?	7	70.0%	3	30.0%	10
Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities?	7	70.0%	3	30.0%	10
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?	7	70.0%	3	30.0%	10
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities?	6	60.0%	4	40.0%	10
Understanding and identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?	5	50.0%	5	50.0%	10
Obtaining training on disability etiquette and sensitivity to workers with disabilities?	5	50.0%	5	50.0%	10
Understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended, the	4	40.0%	6	60.0%	10

Does your business need help...	Number of times Yes was chosen	Percent of time Yes was chosen	Number of times No was chosen	Percent of time No was chosen	Total
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Rehabilitation Act as amended?					

Applicants with Disabilities: Recruitment Process

Business respondents were asked eight questions regarding the need for recruitment assistance for applicants with disabilities. Respondents were asked to provide responses to the questions in a yes-no response format.

The total number of respondents who answered questions in this section is five. Three business respondents indicated needing assistance with recruitment and that they needed help recruiting applicants with disabilities that meet the job qualifications, have good work habits, good interpersonal skills, and assistance with assessing applicant skills and identifying reasonable accommodations.

Business respondents were asked if they would like to further comment on their answers in the previous question or if they had additional comments or needs regarding recruiting applicants with disabilities. No responses were received that contained additional comments.

Table 146 summarizes the results of the responses to the eight questions according to the percentage of respondents who indicated a need for help with respect to the item indicated in each question.

*Table 146
Applicants with Disabilities: Recruitment Process*

Does your business need help...	Number of times Yes was chosen	Percent of time Yes was chosen	Number of times No was chosen	Percent of time No was chosen	Total
Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?	3	60.0%	2	40.0%	5
Recruiting applicants with good work habits?	3	60.0%	2	40.0%	5
Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal and/or soft skills?	3	60.0%	2	40.0%	5
Assessing applicants' skills?	3	60.0%	2	40.0%	5
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?	3	60.0%	2	40.0%	5

Does your business need help...	Number of times Yes was chosen	Percent of time Yes was chosen	Number of times No was chosen	Percent of time No was chosen	Total
Developing appropriate interview questions (e.g., what can and cannot be asked)?	1	20.0%	4	80.0%	5
Providing accommodations for interviews?	1	20.0%	4	80.0%	5
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?	1	20.0%	4	80.0%	5

Employees with Disabilities: Positive Employee Traits Related to Job Retention

Business survey respondents were presented with a list of 13 positive employee traits and asked the question, "With respect to employees with disabilities you have now or have had in the past, what are the positive employee traits you have experienced with them regarding job retention?"

Eight responses were received regarding this question. Six of the respondents identified determination/dedication as a positive employee trait that they have experienced with workers with disabilities regarding job retention. Reliability and positive attitude were cited by five respondents. Skills related to the ability to be independent and be organized were cited by 25 percent (n=2) business respondents. Table 147 summarizes the percentage of business survey respondents who identified each trait as a part of job retention.

*Table 147
Employees with Disabilities: Positive Employee Traits Related to Job Retention*

Positive Employee Traits	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Determined/dedicated	6	75.0%
Reliability	5	62.5%
Positive Attitude	5	62.5%
Works well with their team	4	50.0%
Attention to detail	4	50.0%
Flexibility	4	50.0%
Initiative/Ambition	3	37.5%
Honesty/Integrity	3	37.5%
Punctual	3	37.5%
Good work ethic	3	37.5%
Independent	2	25.0%

Positive Employee Traits	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Organized	2	25.0%
Other (please describe)	1	12.5%
Total	45	

Employees with Disabilities: Challenges to Job Retention

Business survey respondents were presented with a list of 12 job-related challenges and asked to identify the challenges they have now or have experienced in the past with respect to employees with disabilities. A total of nine respondents answered the question.

Over one-half of the respondents (n=5) cited “lack of transportation” as a challenge to job retention. The remaining specific challenges on the list were cited less than four times.

Business survey respondents were asked an open-ended question if they would like to further comment on their answers in the previous question or if they had additional comments or needs regarding challenges experienced with employees with disabilities. Respondents were given the opportunity to provide a narrative response. No narrative responses were received.

Table 148 contains the list of challenges to job retention and the number of times chosen by business survey respondents.

*Table 148
Employees with Disabilities – Challenges to Job Retention*

Challenges to Job Retention	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of transportation	5	55.6%
Difficulty learning job skills	3	33.3%
Physical health problems	3	33.3%
Identifying effective accommodations	3	33.3%
Poor attendance	2	22.2%
Slow work speed	2	22.2%
Poor work stamina	1	11.1%
Poor social skills	1	11.1%
Mental health concerns	1	11.1%
Language barriers	0	0.0%
Other (please describe)	0	0.0%

Challenges to Job Retention	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
I have no knowledge of any challenges we have had retaining employees with disabilities	0	0.0%
Total	21	

Services Provided to Employers by DARS: Knowledge and Use

Business survey representatives were asked three questions regarding their knowledge and utilization of services provided by the DARS agency. The representatives were asked to do the following:

- 1) Indicate their knowledge level of DARS Outreach Coordinators and Services;
- 2) Cite whether or not their business had utilized DARS Employment Specialist services; and
- 3) Identify what services the DARS Employment Specialists provided their business.

Roughly 56 percent of business survey respondents indicated that they were very knowledgeable regarding DARS Outreach Coordinators and Services. Slightly more than half of business respondents cited that they have used DARS Employment Specialist Services. Two respondents did not know if their business has used DARS Employment Specialist services.

The most frequently cited DARS services used by employers that were listed as response options were identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants and for workers with disabilities. Two comments received in the category “other, please describe” contained the word “none.”

Tables 149-151 include the results of the questions related to employers’ knowledge and use of DARS services for employers.

*Table 149
Employers’ Knowledge of DARS Outreach Coordinators and Services*

Awareness of DARS and Services	Number	Percent
Very knowledgeable	5	55.6%
Somewhat knowledgeable	2	22.2%
Little or no knowledge	2	22.2%
Total	9	100.0%

Table 150
Employer Usage of DARS Employment Specialist Services

Employer Usage of DARS Employment Specialist Services	Number	Percent
Yes	5	55.6%
No	2	22.2%
I don't know	2	22.2%
Total	9	100.0%

Table 151
Services Provided to Employers by DARS

Services Provided to Employers by DARS	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Assistance identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities	4	50.0%
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants	4	50.0%
Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment	3	37.5%
Recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities	3	37.5%
Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications	3	37.5%
Assessing applicants' skills	3	37.5%
Training in understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Rehabilitation Act as amended	2	25.0%
Other (please describe)	2	25.0%
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants	2	25.0%
Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities	1	12.5%
Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities	1	12.5%
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities	1	12.5%
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities	1	12.5%
Recruiting applicants with good work habits	1	12.5%
Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills	1	12.5%
Total	32	

Employer Satisfaction with Services Provided by DARS

Business survey representatives who utilized DARS services were presented with a five-point response scale (with responses ranging from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied") and asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the services they received from DARS.

An equal number of respondents indicated that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the services they received from DARS. Table 152 details the results.

Table 152

Employer Satisfaction with DARS Services

Satisfaction Rating	Number	Percent
Very satisfied	3	37.5%
Satisfied	3	37.5%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	25.0%
Dissatisfied	0	0.0%
Very dissatisfied	0	0.0%
Total	8	

Employer Needs: Applicants or Employees with Disabilities

Business survey respondents were asked an open-ended question asking if their business has any needs related to applicants or workers with disabilities that are not currently being met and to describe them in a narrative format. No responses were received in regard to the question.

Business Demographics

Business survey respondents described their respective business types and the number of employees the business currently employs. The tables below indicate the various business types and the size of the organization based on the number of employees.

In response to the question regarding business types, the three business types reported in the category "other" were: free advocacy and assistance; ship repair/industrial fabrication; and non-profit. In response to the question regarding organization size, an equal number of respondents (n=4) cited size one to 15 or 251 to 999 employees.

Table 153
Type of Business

Business Type	Number	Percent
Other (please describe)	5	38.5%
Service	3	23.1%
Government	2	15.4%
Retail	1	7.7%
Education	1	7.7%
Health care	1	7.7%
Total	13	100.0%

Table 154
Number of Employees

Number of Employees	Number	Percent
One - 15	4	36.4%
251 - 999	4	36.4%
16 - 50	1	9.1%
51 - 250	1	9.1%
1,000 or more	1	9.1%
Total	11	100.0%

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following information was gathered from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of Needs of Business and Effectiveness in Serving Employers:

1. DARS has invested heavily in business development and relations. They have six Business Development Managers and at least one job placement person in each office. They do joint presentations with employers and consult with employers for the development of training programs at WWRC. The agency understands the necessity for the dual customer approach and has established some important and meaningful partnerships with employers.
2. Even with the efforts of the agency targeted at business relations, the interview participants indicated that there is a strong need for disability awareness training, education on available assistive technology and accommodations to reduce employer concerns and fear related to hiring individuals with disabilities. Employer bias was often mentioned as a key barrier to DARS customers obtaining employment.
3. DARS staff provide Windmills training for employers, and this was identified as an important and helpful educational opportunity for employers.
4. There is a need to increase the overall employer awareness of DARS and their available services for employers.
5. Staff indicated that if there is to be significant change in the perception of employers related to recruiting, hiring and accommodating individuals with disabilities, it will be important to tackle the employer education component in partnership with their Title I counterparts at the VA Works Centers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered based on the information gathered in the Needs of Business and Effectiveness in Serving Employers section:

1. The agency is encouraged to continue to provide Windmills training for employers and to conduct other educational and informational events targeted at employers as staffing and resources allow. These educational, information and hiring events are good opportunities to partner with VA Works staff that are dedicated to these activities.
2. DARS is encouraged to try and increase the number of apprenticeships available for consumers and to develop more customized training opportunities with employers. These represent another opportunity to partner with the VA Works programs to further develop these job-driven training opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive statewide needs assessment for Virginia DARS utilized qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the state. The combination of surveys and interviews resulted in more than 465 people participating in the assessment. The project team at San Diego State University's Interwork Institute is confident that data saturation occurred across the multiple areas of investigation in the CSNA (aside from section seven) and is hopeful that the findings and recommendations will be utilized by DARS to inform future planning and resource allocation for the agency.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Virginia DARS, CSNA 2025 Individual and Focus Group Protocols

[Introductions/confidentiality/purpose statements]

Individual and Focus Group Protocol - Individuals with Disabilities:

Employment goals

- What barriers do people with disabilities in Virginia face in getting or keeping a job?
Follow up: Transportation, education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

DARS Overall Performance

- What has your experience with DARS been like? What have been the positives and negatives?
- What services were helpful to you in preparing for, obtaining and retaining employment?
- What services did you need that were not available or provided and why weren't you able to get these services?
- What can DARS do differently to help consumers get and keep good jobs?

Barriers to accessing services

- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from DARS? (prompts if necessary -- mobility, communication, structural)

Virginia Workforce Partners

- Has anyone had used or tried to use the services of The Virginia One-Stop Centers?
Follow-up: What was that experience like for you? What can they do differently to better serve individuals with disabilities?

Transition

- What needs do young people with disabilities in transition from high school have as far as preparing for, obtaining or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in Virginia preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- What can DARS do to improve services to youth in transition?

Needs of underserved groups with disabilities

- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?
(Prompt if needed for different disability groups, minority status, geographic area and any other characteristics)

(For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?

Need for establishment of CRPs

- Have you received services from a CRP? If so, how was your service? How effective was it? What can be done to improve the future service delivery by CRPs?
- What programs or services should be created that focus on enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families, meeting basic needs and ensuring inclusion and participation? Of these services now in existence, which need to be improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations in order to meet people's needs?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive in Virginia?

Focus Group Protocol - Partner Agencies:

Employment Goals

- What barriers do people with disabilities in Virginia face in getting or keeping a job? Follow up: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

Barriers to accessing services

- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from DARS?

Impressions of needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities

- What are the unmet rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant or most significant disabilities?
- What needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities are being met the best/most extensively?

Needs of underserved groups with disabilities

- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?
(Prompt for different disability groups, minority status, geographic area or other characteristics)
(For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?

Need for supported employment

- Please describe how effective the SE and CE programs are in Virginia. What populations are receiving SE and CE services?
- What SE or CE needs are not being met?
- What do you recommend to meet the needs for SE or CE?

Transition

- What needs do young people with disabilities in transition from high school have as far as preparing for, obtaining or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in Virginia preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- How would you characterize DARS's relationship/partnership with the secondary school system in Virginia?
- How well is DARS serving youth in transition in terms of preparing them for postsecondary education or employment?
- What can DARS do to improve services to youth in transition?

Needs of individuals served through the VA Works Centers

- How effectively does the VA Works Centers in Virginia serve individuals with disabilities?
- Are there any barriers to individuals with disabilities accessing services through the VA Works Centers? If so, what are they and what can be done to change this?
- How effectively is DARS working in partnership with the VA Works Centers? Do you have any recommendations about how to improve this partnership if needed?
- What would you recommend to improve the VA Works Centers ability to serve individuals with disabilities in Virginia?

Need for establishment, development or improvement of CRPs

- What community-based rehabilitation programs or services need to be created, expanded or improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations in order to meet people's needs?
- What community-based rehabilitation services are most successful? How are they most successful or what makes them so?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive?

Focus Group Protocol – Virginia DARS staff:

Employment Goals

- What barriers do people with disabilities in Virginia face in getting or keeping a job?
Follow up: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

Barriers to accessing services

- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from DARS?

Impressions of needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities

- What are the unmet rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant or most significant disabilities?
- What needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities are being met the best/most extensively?

Needs of underserved groups with disabilities

- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?
(Prompt for different disability groups, minority status, geographic area or any other characteristics).
(For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?

Need for supported employment

- Please describe how effective the SE and CE programs are in Virginia. What populations are receiving SE and CE services?
- What SE or CE needs are not being met?
- What do you recommend to meet the needs for SE or CE?

Transition

- What needs do young people with disabilities in transition from high school have as far as preparing for, obtaining or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in Virginia preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- How would you characterize DARS's relationship/partnership with the secondary school system in Virginia?
- How well is DARS serving youth in transition in terms of preparing them for postsecondary education or employment?
- What can DARS do to improve services to youth in transition?

Needs of individuals served through the Virginia One-Stops or WIOA system

- How effectively does the One-Stop system in Virginia serve individuals with disabilities?
- Are there any barriers to individuals with disabilities accessing services through the One-Stops? If so, what are they and what can be done to change this?
- How effectively is DARS working in partnership with the One-Stops? Do you have any recommendations about how to improve this partnership if needed?
- What would you recommend to improve the One-Stops' ability to serve individuals with disabilities in Virginia?

Need for establishment, development or improvement of CRPs

- What community-based rehabilitation programs or services need to be created, expanded or improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations in order to meet people's needs?
- What community-based rehabilitation services are most successful? How are they most successful or what makes them so?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive?

Focus Group Protocol – Businesses

Please discuss your familiarity with DARS and the services they provide to people with disabilities and to businesses

What needs do you have regarding recruiting people with disabilities for employment?

- Do you do anything specific to attract candidates with disabilities? Please describe

Please discuss how qualified and prepared individuals with disabilities are when they apply for employment with your business

What needs do you have regarding applicants with disabilities?

- Are you aware of the incentives for hiring people with disabilities? Would these incentives influence your decision to hire?

What are the qualities you are looking for in an applicant for a given job and an employee?

What needs do you have regarding employees with disabilities?

- Sensitivity training?
- Understanding and compliance with applicable laws?
- Reasonable accommodations?

What challenges do employees with disabilities face with job retention?

What services can DARS provide to you and to other businesses to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Virginia?

Virginia DARS 2025 - Individual Survey

Q1

**Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
Division of Rehabilitative Services
Individual Survey**

The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) is conducting an assessment of the employment-related needs of individuals in Virginia. You are receiving this survey because you are a current or former DARS customer, or you are an individual with a disability who may have never been served by DARS, and we need your help to better understand the employment needs of individuals with disabilities in Virginia. The results of this survey will be used to help improve programs and services for persons with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth.

The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. You may ask a family member, personal attendant, or caregiver to complete the survey with or for you. If you are a family member, personal attendant or caregiver and are responding on behalf of an individual with a disability, please answer the survey questions based upon your knowledge of the needs of the person with the disability.

This survey is anonymous, and your participation is voluntary. If you have any questions regarding this survey, or if you would prefer to complete this survey in an alternate format, please contact Dr. Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address

ccompton@sdsu.edu

Thank you very much for your time and input!

Q2 Which statement best describes your association with DARS? (select one response)

- I am a current client of DARS
- I am a previous client of DARS, my case has been closed
- I have never used the services of DARS
- I am not familiar with DARS
- Other (please describe) _____

Skip To: Q4 If Which statement best describes your association with DARS? (select one response) = I have never used the services of DARS

Skip To: Q4 If Which statement best describes your association with DARS? (select one response) = I am not familiar with DARS

Q3 Why did you go to DARS for services (check all that apply)?

- I needed help finding a job
 - I was in danger of losing my job
 - I wanted to go to college or some other kind of postsecondary education
 - I needed help getting medical equipment/supplies
 - I wanted help with technology skills/equipment
 - I wanted help because I was getting close to graduating from high school
 - I needed money
 - I was told to by someone
 - I don't know
 - Other (please describe)
-

Q4

Demographic Information

Q5 What is your age?

- under 25
 - 25-64
 - 65 and over
-

Q6 What is your primary race or ethnic group (check all that apply)?

- African American/Black
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Caucasian/White
 - Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - Hispanic/Latino
 - Other (please describe)
-
- I prefer not to answer
-

Q7 What is language do you prefer to communicate in?

- English
- Spanish
- Hawaiian
- Chinese
- Japanese
- American Sign Language
- Amharic
- Arabic
- French
- Hindi
- Korean
- Persian
- Polich
- Russian
- Tagalog
- Urdu
- Vietnamese
- Native American (Please specify dialect)

- Other (Please identify) _____

Q8 Please identify which DARS service district you live in. The Counties in each district are included next to the district name.

- Skyline District** (Counties include Frederick, Clarke, Warren, Page, Shenandoah, Rockingham, Greene, Louisa, Fluvanna, Buckingham, Albemarle, Nelson, Augusta, Rockbridge, Bath, Highland; Cities include Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, Buena Vista, Staunton, Waynesboro, Winchester, Lexington)

 - Northern District** (Counties include Madison, Orange, Rappahannock, Culpeper, Fauquier, Prince William, Loudon, Fairfax; Cities include Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, Manassas Park)

 - New River District** (Counties include Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Roanoke, Bedford, Amherst, Appomattox, Campbell, Charlotte, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Halifax, Pittsylvania, Henry, Patrick, Franklin; Cities include Covington, Bedford, Lynchburg, Roanoke, Salem, Martinsville, Danville)

 - Southwest District** (Counties include Giles, Montgomery, Floyd, Pulaski, Carroll, Grayson, Wythe, Bland, Tazewell, Smyth, Washington, Russell, Buchanan, Dickenson, Wise, Scott, Lee; Cities include Bristol, Radford, Galax, Norton)

 - Capitol District** (Counties include Stafford, Spotsylvania, Caroline, King George, Westmoreland, Northumberland, Richmond, Lancaster, Essex, Middlesex, King and Queen, King William, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Charles City, Prince George, Sussex, Surrey, Greensville, Brunswick, Dinwiddie, Chesterfield, Powhatan, Goochland, Cumberland, Prince Edward, Amelia, Nottoway; Cities include Fredericksburg, Richmond, Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Petersburg, Emporia)

 - Hampton Roads District** (Counties include Gloucester, Mathews, James City, York, Accomack, Northampton, Isle of Wight, Southampton; Cities include Williamsburg, Franklin, Chesapeake, Hampton, Norfolk, Newport News, Portsmouth, Poquoson, Suffolk, Virginia Beach)
-

Q9 Which of the following would you use to describe your primary disabling condition? (select one)

- Intellectual Disability (ID)
 - Developmental Disability (DD)
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Brain injury
 - Spinal Cord injury
 - Communication
 - Deaf or Hard of Hearing
 - Deaf-Blind
 - Mental Health
 - Mobility
 - Physical
 - Vision impaired
 - Other (please describe) _____
 - I don't know
 - No impairment
-

Q10 If you have a secondary disabling condition, which of the following would you use to describe it? (select one) If you do not have a secondary disabling condition, please select "No impairment" below.

- Intellectual disability (ID)
 - Developmental Disability (DD)
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Brian injury
 - Spinal Cord injury
 - Communication
 - Deaf or Hard of Hearing
 - Deaf-Blind
 - Mental Health
 - Mobility
 - Physical
 - Vision Impaired
 - Other (please describe) _____
 - I don't know
 - No impairment
-

Q11 Please indicate whether you receive the following Social Security disability benefits (please check all that apply).

- I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a means-tested benefit generally provided to individuals with little or no work history)
 - I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance. SSDI is provided to individuals that have worked in the past and is based on the amount of money the individual paid into the system through payroll deductions)
 - I receive a check from the Social Security Administration every month, but I do not know which benefit I get
 - I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits
 - I do not receive Social Security disability benefits
-

Q12

Employment-Related Needs

The next several questions ask you about employment-related needs that you may have.

Q13 Please identify which of the following have been barriers to you getting or keeping a job?
(select all that apply)

- Lack of education or training
- Inadequate school transition services
- Limited job skills/work experience
- Lack of job search/interview skills
- Criminal Record
- Language barriers
- Lack of available jobs
- Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- Lack of assistive technology
- Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- Lack of attendant care
- Lack of reliable transportation
- No resume
- Lack of broadband Internet access
- Mental health concerns
- Substance abuse

Other health issues

Lack of child care

Lack of housing

Concern over loss of Social Security, or other benefits like Medicaid, due to working

Q14 What have been the **top three** barriers to you getting or keeping a job? (select three)

- Lack of education or training
- Inadequate school transition services
- Limited job skills/work experience
- Lack of job search/interview skills
- Criminal Record
- Language barriers
- Lack of available jobs
- Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- Lack of assistive technology
- Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- Lack of attendant care
- Lack of reliable transportation
- Lack of broadband Internet access
- Mental health concerns
- Substance abuse
- Other health issues
- Lack of child care

Lack of housing

Concern over loss of Social Security, or other benefits like Medicaid, due to working

Q15 If you have experienced other barriers to getting a job not mentioned above, please list them here.

Q16

Barriers to Accessing Virginia DARS

The next several questions ask you about barriers to accessing DARS services.

Q17 Please indicate which of the following have been a barrier to you accessing DARS services.
(select all that apply)

- Lack of available transportation to the DARS office
 - Lack of broadband Internet access
 - DARS's hours of operation
 - Lack of information about available services
 - Lack of disability-related accommodations
 - I have nobody that can help me access services
 - Language barriers
 - Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor
 - Other difficulties with DARS staff
 - Difficulties completing the DARS application
 - Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
 - Other (please identify)
-

Q18 Have you had any other challenges or barriers not already mentioned that have made it difficult for you to access DARS services?

- Yes (please describe) _____
 - No
-

Q19 Where do you usually meet with your counselor?

- I usually meet with my counselor in my community/school
 - I go to a DARS office to meet with my counselor
 - I meet with my counselor virtually
 - I don't have a counselor
-

Q20 How do you like to receive services?

- Virtual
 - In-person
 - I have no preference
-

Q21 Which of the following DARS services have you received remotely (by phone or video conference)? (select all that apply)

- Guidance and counseling (provided by my DARS counselor)
 - Help looking for work or applying for jobs
 - Help keeping a job
 - Help understanding how work will impact my disability
 - Assistive technology
 - Other (please describe)
-

I have not received any services from DARS remotely

Skip To: Q23 If Which of the following DARS services have you received remotely (by phone or video conference)? (... = I have not received any services from DARS remotely)

Q22 How would you rate the effectiveness of the services you have received remotely (compared to in-person)?

- Extremely effective
 - Effective
 - Somewhat effective
 - Less effective
 - Not effective at all
-

Q23 Please tell us how you manage your money by choosing which of the following statements are true for you (select all that apply).

- I have a monthly budget
 - I have a savings account
 - I have a checking account
 - I invest my money
 - I have no specific way that I manage my money
 - I have no money to manage
 - Someone else manages my money for me
-

Q24 How do you feel about your current financial situation?

- I am doing well financially
 - I am doing OK financially
 - I am not doing well financially
 - I am in desperate need for money
-

Q25 If DARS offered financial education or skills training, would you be interested in receiving these services?

- Yes
 - No
 - I am not sure
-

Q26 How can DARS change their services to help you get a job?

Q27 Have you received services from a service provider or vendor that DARS referred you to? (This may include an assessment, preparing for or finding a job, job coaching, training, assistive technology or other services)

- Yes
- No

Skip To: Q33 If Have you received services from a service provider or vendor that DARS referred you to? (This may... = No

Q28 How effective were the services you received from the service provider or vendor?

- Very effective
 - Effective
 - Somewhat ineffective
 - Ineffective
-

Q29 How would you rate the quality of services you received from your service provider or vendor?

- Excellent
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor
-

Q30 How would you rate the responsiveness of your service provider or vendor?

- Excellent
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor
-

Q31 Would you recommend your service provider or vendor to others served by DARS?

- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
-

Q32 If there is anything else you would like to add about DARS, please write that in the space below.

Q33

Virginia Workforce Connection Centers The next several questions ask you about experiences you may have had with the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers).

Q34 Have you ever tried to use the services of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) beyond an online account?

Yes

No

Skip To: Q45 If Have you ever tried to use the services of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly kn... = No

Q35 Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?

Yes (If yes, please describe the difficulties you experienced)

No

Q36 Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers, formerly known as the one-Stop Centers (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?

Yes

No

Q37 Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to get training?

Yes

No

Skip To: Q40 If Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to g... = No

Q38 Did you get the training that you were seeking?

Yes

No

Q39 Did the training result in employment?

Yes

No

Q40 Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to find a job?

Yes

No

Skip To: Q42 If Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to f... = No

Q41 Did they help you find employment?

Yes

No

Q42 Were the Virginia Workforce Connection Center (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) staff helpful?

- Yes, they were very helpful
 - They were somewhat helpful
 - No, they were not helpful
-

Q43 Were the services at the New Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) valuable?

- Yes, the services were very valuable
 - The services were somewhat valuable
 - No, the services were not valuable
-

Q44 Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) in serving individuals with disabilities?

- Very effective
 - Somewhat effective
 - No opinion
 - Somewhat ineffective
 - Very ineffective
-

Q45 Is there anything else you would like to add?

Q46 This is the end of the survey! Your information and feedback is valuable to DARS, thank you for completing the survey.

Please select the "NEXT" button below to submit your responses.

Virginia DARS 2025 - Individual Survey

Q1

**Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
Division of Rehabilitative Services
Individual Survey**

The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) is conducting an assessment of the employment-related needs of individuals in Virginia. You are receiving this survey because you are a current or former DARS customer, or you are an individual with a disability who may have never been served by DARS, and we need your help to better understand the employment needs of individuals with disabilities in Virginia. The results of this survey will be used to help improve programs and services for persons with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth.

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This survey is anonymous, and your participation is voluntary. If you have any questions regarding this survey, or if you would prefer to complete this survey in an alternate format, please contact Dr. Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address

ccompton@sdsu.edu

Thank you very much for your time and input!

Q2 Which statement best describes your association with DARS? (select one response)

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- I am a previous client of DARS, my case has been closed
- I have never used the services of DARS
- I am not familiar with DARS
- Other (please describe) _____

Skip To: Q4 If Which statement best describes your association with DARS? (select one response) = I have never used the services of DARS

Skip To: Q4 If Which statement best describes your association with DARS? (select one response) = I am not familiar with DARS

Q3 Why did you go to DARS for services (check all that apply)?

- I needed help finding a job
 - I was in danger of losing my job
 - I wanted to go to college or some other kind of postsecondary education
 - I needed help getting medical equipment/supplies
 - I wanted help with technology skills/equipment
 - I wanted help because I was getting close to graduating from high school
 - I needed money
 - I was told to by someone
 - I don't know
 - Other (please describe)
-

Q4

Demographic Information

Q5 What is your age?

- under 25
 - 25-64
 - 65 and over
-

Q6 What is your primary race or ethnic group (check all that apply)?

- African American/Black
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Caucasian/White
 - Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - Hispanic/Latino
 - Other (please describe)
-
- I prefer not to answer
-

Q7 What is language do you prefer to communicate in?

- English
- Spanish
- Hawaiian
- Chinese
- Japanese
- American Sign Language
- Amharic
- Arabic
- French
- Hindi
- Korean
- Persian
- Polich
- Russian
- Tagalog
- Urdu
- Vietnamese
- Native American (Please specify dialect)

- Other (Please identify) _____

Q8 Please identify which DARS service district you live in. The Counties in each district are included next to the district name.

- Skyline District** (Counties include Frederick, Clarke, Warren, Page, Shenandoah, Rockingham, Greene, Louisa, Fluvanna, Buckingham, Albemarle, Nelson, Augusta, Rockbridge, Bath, Highland; Cities include Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, Buena Vista, Staunton, Waynesboro, Winchester, Lexington)

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 - New River District** (Counties include Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Roanoke, Bedford, Amherst, Appomattox, Campbell, Charlotte, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Halifax, Pittsylvania, Henry, Patrick, Franklin; Cities include Covington, Bedford, Lynchburg, Roanoke, Salem, Martinsville, Danville)

 - Southwest District** (Counties include Giles, Montgomery, Floyd, Pulaski, Carroll, Grayson, Wythe, Bland, Tazewell, Smyth, Washington, Russell, Buchanan, Dickenson, Wise, Scott, Lee; Cities include Bristol, Radford, Galax, Norton)

 - Capitol District** (Counties include Stafford, Spotsylvania, Caroline, King George, Westmoreland, Northumberland, Richmond, Lancaster, Essex, Middlesex, King and Queen, King William, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Charles City, Prince George, Sussex, Surrey, Greensville, Brunswick, Dinwiddie, Chesterfield, Powhatan, Goochland, Cumberland, Prince Edward, Amelia, Nottoway; Cities include Fredericksburg, Richmond, Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Petersburg, Emporia)

 - Hampton Roads District** (Counties include Gloucester, Mathews, James City, York, Accomack, Northampton, Isle of Wight, Southampton; Cities include Williamsburg, Franklin, Chesapeake, Hampton, Norfolk, Newport News, Portsmouth, Poquoson, Suffolk, Virginia Beach)
-

Q9 Which of the following would you use to describe your primary disabling condition? (select one)

- Intellectual Disability (ID)
 - Developmental Disability (DD)
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Brain injury
 - Spinal Cord injury
 - Communication
 - Deaf or Hard of Hearing
 - Deaf-Blind
 - Mental Health
 - Mobility
 - Physical
 - Vision impaired
 - Other (please describe) _____
 - I don't know
 - No impairment
-

Q10 If you have a secondary disabling condition, which of the following would you use to describe it? (select one) If you do not have a secondary disabling condition, please select "No impairment" below.

- Intellectual disability (ID)
 - Developmental Disability (DD)
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Brian injury
 - Spinal Cord injury
 - Communication
 - Deaf or Hard of Hearing
 - Deaf-Blind
 - Mental Health
 - Mobility
 - Physical
 - Vision Impaired
 - Other (please describe) _____
 - I don't know
 - No impairment
-

Q11 Please indicate whether you receive the following Social Security disability benefits (please check all that apply).

- I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a means-tested benefit generally provided to individuals with little or no work history)
 - I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance. SSDI is provided to individuals that have worked in the past and is based on the amount of money the individual paid into the system through payroll deductions)
 - I receive a check from the Social Security Administration every month, but I do not know which benefit I get
 - I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits
 - I do not receive Social Security disability benefits
-

Q12

Employment-Related Needs

The next several questions ask you about employment-related needs that you may have.

Q13 Please identify which of the following have been barriers to you getting or keeping a job?
(select all that apply)

- Lack of education or training
- Inadequate school transition services
- Limited job skills/work experience
- Lack of job search/interview skills
- Criminal Record
- Language barriers
- Lack of available jobs
- Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- Lack of assistive technology
- Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- Lack of attendant care
- Lack of reliable transportation
- No resume
- Lack of broadband Internet access
- Mental health concerns
- Substance abuse

Other health issues

Lack of child care

Lack of housing

Concern over loss of Social Security, or other benefits like Medicaid, due to working



Q14 What have been the **top three** barriers to you getting or keeping a job? (select three)

- Lack of education or training
- Inadequate school transition services
- Limited job skills/work experience
- Lack of job search/interview skills
- Criminal Record
- Language barriers
- Lack of available jobs
- Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- Lack of assistive technology
- Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- Lack of attendant care
- Lack of reliable transportation
- Lack of broadband Internet access
- Mental health concerns
- Substance abuse
- Other health issues
- Lack of child care

Lack of housing

Concern over loss of Social Security, or other benefits like Medicaid, due to working

Q15 If you have experienced other barriers to getting a job not mentioned above, please list them here.

Q16

Barriers to Accessing Virginia DARS

The next several questions ask you about barriers to accessing DARS services.

Q17 Please indicate which of the following have been a barrier to you accessing DARS services.
(select all that apply)

- Lack of available transportation to the DARS office
 - Lack of broadband Internet access
 - DARS's hours of operation
 - Lack of information about available services
 - Lack of disability-related accommodations
 - I have nobody that can help me access services
 - Language barriers
 - Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor
 - Other difficulties with DARS staff
 - Difficulties completing the DARS application
 - Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
 - Other (please identify)
-

Q18 Have you had any other challenges or barriers not already mentioned that have made it difficult for you to access DARS services?

- Yes (please describe) _____
 - No
-

Q19 Where do you usually meet with your counselor?

- I usually meet with my counselor in my community/school
 - I go to a DARS office to meet with my counselor
 - I meet with my counselor virtually
 - I don't have a counselor
-

Q20 How do you like to receive services?

- Virtual
 - In-person
 - I have no preference
-

Q21 Which of the following DARS services have you received remotely (by phone or video conference)? (select all that apply)

- Guidance and counseling (provided by my DARS counselor)
 - Help looking for work or applying for jobs
 - Help keeping a job
 - Help understanding how work will impact my disability
 - Assistive technology
 - Other (please describe)
-

I have not received any services from DARS remotely

Skip To: Q23 If Which of the following DARS services have you received remotely (by phone or video conference)? (... = I have not received any services from DARS remotely)

Q22 How would you rate the effectiveness of the services you have received remotely (compared to in-person)?

- Extremely effective
 - Effective
 - Somewhat effective
 - Less effective
 - Not effective at all
-

Q23 Please tell us how you manage your money by choosing which of the following statements are true for you (select all that apply).

- I have a monthly budget
 - I have a savings account
 - I have a checking account
 - I invest my money
 - I have no specific way that I manage my money
 - I have no money to manage
 - Someone else manages my money for me
-

Q24 How do you feel about your current financial situation?

- I am doing well financially
 - I am doing OK financially
 - I am not doing well financially
 - I am in desperate need for money
-

Q25 If DARS offered financial education or skills training, would you be interested in receiving these services?

- Yes
- No
- I am not sure

Q26 How can DARS change their services to help you get a job?

Q27 Have you received services from a service provider or vendor that DARS referred you to? (This may include an assessment, preparing for or finding a job, job coaching, training, assistive technology or other services)

- Yes
- No

Skip To: Q33 If Have you received services from a service provider or vendor that DARS referred you to? (This may... = No

Q28 How effective were the services you received from the service provider or vendor?

- Very effective
 - Effective
 - Somewhat ineffective
 - Ineffective
-

Q29 How would you rate the quality of services you received from your service provider or vendor?

- Excellent
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor
-

Q30 How would you rate the responsiveness of your service provider or vendor?

- Excellent
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor
-

Q31 Would you recommend your service provider or vendor to others served by DARS?

- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
-

Q32 If there is anything else you would like to add about DARS, please write that in the space below.

Q33

Virginia Workforce Connection Centers The next several questions ask you about experiences you may have had with the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers).

Q34 Have you ever tried to use the services of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) beyond an online account?

Yes

No

Skip To: Q45 If Have you ever tried to use the services of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly kn... = No

Q35 Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?

Yes (If yes, please describe the difficulties you experienced)

No

Q36 Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers, formerly known as the one-Stop Centers (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?

Yes

No

Q37 Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to get training?

Yes

No

Skip To: Q40 If Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to g... = No

Q38 Did you get the training that you were seeking?

Yes

No

Q39 Did the training result in employment?

Yes

No

Q40 Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to find a job?

Yes

No

Skip To: Q42 If Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to f... = No

Q41 Did they help you find employment?

Yes

No

Q42 Were the Virginia Workforce Connection Center (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) staff helpful?

- Yes, they were very helpful
 - They were somewhat helpful
 - No, they were not helpful
-

Q43 Were the services at the New Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) valuable?

- Yes, the services were very valuable
 - The services were somewhat valuable
 - No, the services were not valuable
-

Q44 Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) in serving individuals with disabilities?

- Very effective
 - Somewhat effective
 - No opinion
 - Somewhat ineffective
 - Very ineffective
-

Q45 Is there anything else you would like to add?

Q46 This is the end of the survey! Your information and feedback is valuable to DARS, thank you for completing the survey.

Please select the "NEXT" button below to submit your responses.

Virginia DARS 2025 - Individual Survey

Q1

**Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
Division of Rehabilitative Services
Individual Survey**

The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) is conducting an assessment of the employment-related needs of individuals in Virginia. You are receiving this survey because you are a current or former DARS customer, or you are an individual with a disability who may have never been served by DARS, and we need your help to better understand the employment needs of individuals with disabilities in Virginia. The results of this survey will be used to help improve programs and services for persons with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth.

The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. You may ask a family member, personal attendant, or caregiver to complete the survey with or for you. If you are a family member, personal attendant or caregiver and are responding on behalf of an individual with a disability, please answer the survey questions based upon your knowledge of the needs of the person with the disability.

This survey is anonymous, and your participation is voluntary. If you have any questions regarding this survey, or if you would prefer to complete this survey in an alternate format, please contact Dr. Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address

ccompton@sdsu.edu

Thank you very much for your time and input!

Q2 Which statement best describes your association with DARS? (select one response)

- I am a current client of DARS
- I am a previous client of DARS, my case has been closed
- I have never used the services of DARS
- I am not familiar with DARS
- Other (please describe) _____

Skip To: Q4 If Which statement best describes your association with DARS? (select one response) = I have never used the services of DARS

Skip To: Q4 If Which statement best describes your association with DARS? (select one response) = I am not familiar with DARS

Q3 Why did you go to DARS for services (check all that apply)?

- I needed help finding a job
 - I was in danger of losing my job
 - I wanted to go to college or some other kind of postsecondary education
 - I needed help getting medical equipment/supplies
 - I wanted help with technology skills/equipment
 - I wanted help because I was getting close to graduating from high school
 - I needed money
 - I was told to by someone
 - I don't know
 - Other (please describe)
-

Q4

Demographic Information

Q5 What is your age?

- under 25
 - 25-64
 - 65 and over
-

Q6 What is your primary race or ethnic group (check all that apply)?

- African American/Black
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Caucasian/White
 - Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - Hispanic/Latino
 - Other (please describe)
-
- I prefer not to answer
-

Q7 What is language do you prefer to communicate in?

- English
- Spanish
- Hawaiian
- Chinese
- Japanese
- American Sign Language
- Amharic
- Arabic
- French
- Hindi
- Korean
- Persian
- Polich
- Russian
- Tagalog
- Urdu
- Vietnamese
- Native American (Please specify dialect)

- Other (Please identify) _____

Q8 Please identify which DARS service district you live in. The Counties in each district are included next to the district name.

- Skyline District** (Counties include Frederick, Clarke, Warren, Page, Shenandoah, Rockingham, Greene, Louisa, Fluvanna, Buckingham, Albemarle, Nelson, Augusta, Rockbridge, Bath, Highland; Cities include Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, Buena Vista, Staunton, Waynesboro, Winchester, Lexington)

 - Northern District** (Counties include Madison, Orange, Rappahannock, Culpeper, Fauquier, Prince William, Loudon, Fairfax; Cities include Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, Manassas Park)

 - New River District** (Counties include Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Roanoke, Bedford, Amherst, Appomattox, Campbell, Charlotte, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Halifax, Pittsylvania, Henry, Patrick, Franklin; Cities include Covington, Bedford, Lynchburg, Roanoke, Salem, Martinsville, Danville)

 - Southwest District** (Counties include Giles, Montgomery, Floyd, Pulaski, Carroll, Grayson, Wythe, Bland, Tazewell, Smyth, Washington, Russell, Buchanan, Dickenson, Wise, Scott, Lee; Cities include Bristol, Radford, Galax, Norton)

 - Capitol District** (Counties include Stafford, Spotsylvania, Caroline, King George, Westmoreland, Northumberland, Richmond, Lancaster, Essex, Middlesex, King and Queen, King William, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Charles City, Prince George, Sussex, Surrey, Greensville, Brunswick, Dinwiddie, Chesterfield, Powhatan, Goochland, Cumberland, Prince Edward, Amelia, Nottoway; Cities include Fredericksburg, Richmond, Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Petersburg, Emporia)

 - Hampton Roads District** (Counties include Gloucester, Mathews, James City, York, Accomack, Northampton, Isle of Wight, Southampton; Cities include Williamsburg, Franklin, Chesapeake, Hampton, Norfolk, Newport News, Portsmouth, Poquoson, Suffolk, Virginia Beach)
-

Q9 Which of the following would you use to describe your primary disabling condition? (select one)

- Intellectual Disability (ID)
 - Developmental Disability (DD)
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Brain injury
 - Spinal Cord injury
 - Communication
 - Deaf or Hard of Hearing
 - Deaf-Blind
 - Mental Health
 - Mobility
 - Physical
 - Vision impaired
 - Other (please describe) _____
 - I don't know
 - No impairment
-

Q10 If you have a secondary disabling condition, which of the following would you use to describe it? (select one) If you do not have a secondary disabling condition, please select "No impairment" below.

- Intellectual disability (ID)
 - Developmental Disability (DD)
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Brian injury
 - Spinal Cord injury
 - Communication
 - Deaf or Hard of Hearing
 - Deaf-Blind
 - Mental Health
 - Mobility
 - Physical
 - Vision Impaired
 - Other (please describe) _____
 - I don't know
 - No impairment
-

Q11 Please indicate whether you receive the following Social Security disability benefits (please check all that apply).

- I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a means-tested benefit generally provided to individuals with little or no work history)
 - I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance. SSDI is provided to individuals that have worked in the past and is based on the amount of money the individual paid into the system through payroll deductions)
 - I receive a check from the Social Security Administration every month, but I do not know which benefit I get
 - I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits
 - I do not receive Social Security disability benefits
-

Q12

Employment-Related Needs

The next several questions ask you about employment-related needs that you may have.

Q13 Please identify which of the following have been barriers to you getting or keeping a job?
(select all that apply)

- Lack of education or training
- Inadequate school transition services
- Limited job skills/work experience
- Lack of job search/interview skills
- Criminal Record
- Language barriers
- Lack of available jobs
- Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- Lack of assistive technology
- Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- Lack of attendant care
- Lack of reliable transportation
- No resume
- Lack of broadband Internet access
- Mental health concerns
- Substance abuse

Other health issues

Lack of child care

Lack of housing

Concern over loss of Social Security, or other benefits like Medicaid, due to working

Q14 What have been the **top three** barriers to you getting or keeping a job? (select three)

- Lack of education or training
- Inadequate school transition services
- Limited job skills/work experience
- Lack of job search/interview skills
- Criminal Record
- Language barriers
- Lack of available jobs
- Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
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- Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- Lack of attendant care
- Lack of reliable transportation
- Lack of broadband Internet access
- Mental health concerns
- Substance abuse
- Other health issues
- Lack of child care

Lack of housing

Concern over loss of Social Security, or other benefits like Medicaid, due to working

Q15 If you have experienced other barriers to getting a job not mentioned above, please list them here.

Q16

Barriers to Accessing Virginia DARS

The next several questions ask you about barriers to accessing DARS services.

Q17 Please indicate which of the following have been a barrier to you accessing DARS services.
(select all that apply)

- Lack of available transportation to the DARS office
 - Lack of broadband Internet access
 - DARS's hours of operation
 - Lack of information about available services
 - Lack of disability-related accommodations
 - I have nobody that can help me access services
 - Language barriers
 - Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor
 - Other difficulties with DARS staff
 - Difficulties completing the DARS application
 - Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
 - Other (please identify)
-

Q18 Have you had any other challenges or barriers not already mentioned that have made it difficult for you to access DARS services?

- Yes (please describe) _____
 - No
-

Q19 Where do you usually meet with your counselor?

- I usually meet with my counselor in my community/school
 - I go to a DARS office to meet with my counselor
 - I meet with my counselor virtually
 - I don't have a counselor
-

Q20 How do you like to receive services?

- Virtual
 - In-person
 - I have no preference
-

Q21 Which of the following DARS services have you received remotely (by phone or video conference)? (select all that apply)

- Guidance and counseling (provided by my DARS counselor)
 - Help looking for work or applying for jobs
 - Help keeping a job
 - Help understanding how work will impact my disability
 - Assistive technology
 - Other (please describe)
-

I have not received any services from DARS remotely

Skip To: Q23 If Which of the following DARS services have you received remotely (by phone or video conference)? (... = I have not received any services from DARS remotely)

Q22 How would you rate the effectiveness of the services you have received remotely (compared to in-person)?

- Extremely effective
 - Effective
 - Somewhat effective
 - Less effective
 - Not effective at all
-

Q23 Please tell us how you manage your money by choosing which of the following statements are true for you (select all that apply).

- I have a monthly budget
 - I have a savings account
 - I have a checking account
 - I invest my money
 - I have no specific way that I manage my money
 - I have no money to manage
 - Someone else manages my money for me
-

Q24 How do you feel about your current financial situation?

- I am doing well financially
 - I am doing OK financially
 - I am not doing well financially
 - I am in desperate need for money
-

Q25 If DARS offered financial education or skills training, would you be interested in receiving these services?

- Yes
- No
- I am not sure

Q26 How can DARS change their services to help you get a job?

Q27 Have you received services from a service provider or vendor that DARS referred you to? (This may include an assessment, preparing for or finding a job, job coaching, training, assistive technology or other services)

- Yes
- No

Skip To: Q33 If Have you received services from a service provider or vendor that DARS referred you to? (This may... = No

Q28 How effective were the services you received from the service provider or vendor?

- Very effective
 - Effective
 - Somewhat ineffective
 - Ineffective
-

Q29 How would you rate the quality of services you received from your service provider or vendor?

- Excellent
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor
-

Q30 How would you rate the responsiveness of your service provider or vendor?

- Excellent
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor
-

Q31 Would you recommend your service provider or vendor to others served by DARS?

- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
-

Q32 If there is anything else you would like to add about DARS, please write that in the space below.

Q33

Virginia Workforce Connection Centers The next several questions ask you about experiences you may have had with the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers).

Q34 Have you ever tried to use the services of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) beyond an online account?

Yes

No

Skip To: Q45 If Have you ever tried to use the services of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly kn... = No

Q35 Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?

Yes (If yes, please describe the difficulties you experienced)

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Q36 Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers, formerly known as the one-Stop Centers (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?

Yes

No

Q37 Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to get training?

Yes

No

Skip To: Q40 If Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to g... = No

Q38 Did you get the training that you were seeking?

Yes

No

Q39 Did the training result in employment?

Yes

No

Q40 Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to find a job?

Yes

No

Skip To: Q42 If Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to f... = No

Q41 Did they help you find employment?

Yes

No

Q42 Were the Virginia Workforce Connection Center (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) staff helpful?

- Yes, they were very helpful
 - They were somewhat helpful
 - No, they were not helpful
-

Q43 Were the services at the New Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) valuable?

- Yes, the services were very valuable
 - The services were somewhat valuable
 - No, the services were not valuable
-

Q44 Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) in serving individuals with disabilities?

- Very effective
 - Somewhat effective
 - No opinion
 - Somewhat ineffective
 - Very ineffective
-

Q45 Is there anything else you would like to add?



Q46 This is the end of the survey! Your information and feedback is valuable to DARS, thank you for completing the survey.

Please select the "NEXT" button below to submit your responses.



Virginia DARS 2025 - Individual Survey

Q1

**Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
Division of Rehabilitative Services
Individual Survey**

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Q2 Which statement best describes your association with DARS? (select one response)

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- I have never used the services of DARS
- I am not familiar with DARS
- Other (please describe) _____

Skip To: Q4 If Which statement best describes your association with DARS? (select one response) = I have never used the services of DARS

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Q3 Why did you go to DARS for services (check all that apply)?

- I needed help finding a job
 - I was in danger of losing my job
 - I wanted to go to college or some other kind of postsecondary education
 - I needed help getting medical equipment/supplies
 - I wanted help with technology skills/equipment
 - I wanted help because I was getting close to graduating from high school
 - I needed money
 - I was told to by someone
 - I don't know
 - Other (please describe)
-

Q4

Demographic Information

Q5 What is your age?

- under 25
 - 25-64
 - 65 and over
-

Q6 What is your primary race or ethnic group (check all that apply)?

- African American/Black
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Caucasian/White
 - Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - Hispanic/Latino
 - Other (please describe)
-
- I prefer not to answer
-

Q7 What is language do you prefer to communicate in?

- English
- Spanish
- Hawaiian
- Chinese
- Japanese
- American Sign Language
- Amharic
- Arabic
- French
- Hindi
- Korean
- Persian
- Polich
- Russian
- Tagalog
- Urdu
- Vietnamese
- Native American (Please specify dialect)

- Other (Please identify) _____

Q8 Please identify which DARS service district you live in. The Counties in each district are included next to the district name.

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 - Capitol District** (Counties include Stafford, Spotsylvania, Caroline, King George, Westmoreland, Northumberland, Richmond, Lancaster, Essex, Middlesex, King and Queen, King William, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Charles City, Prince George, Sussex, Surrey, Greensville, Brunswick, Dinwiddie, Chesterfield, Powhatan, Goochland, Cumberland, Prince Edward, Amelia, Nottoway; Cities include Fredericksburg, Richmond, Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Petersburg, Emporia)

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-

Q9 Which of the following would you use to describe your primary disabling condition? (select one)

- Intellectual Disability (ID)
 - Developmental Disability (DD)
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Brain injury
 - Spinal Cord injury
 - Communication
 - Deaf or Hard of Hearing
 - Deaf-Blind
 - Mental Health
 - Mobility
 - Physical
 - Vision impaired
 - Other (please describe) _____
 - I don't know
 - No impairment
-

Q10 If you have a secondary disabling condition, which of the following would you use to describe it? (select one) If you do not have a secondary disabling condition, please select "No impairment" below.

- Intellectual disability (ID)
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Q12

Employment-Related Needs

The next several questions ask you about employment-related needs that you may have.

Q13 Please identify which of the following have been barriers to you getting or keeping a job?
(select all that apply)

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- Lack of available jobs
- Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- Lack of assistive technology
- Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- Lack of attendant care
- Lack of reliable transportation
- No resume
- Lack of broadband Internet access
- Mental health concerns
- Substance abuse

Other health issues

Lack of child care

Lack of housing

Concern over loss of Social Security, or other benefits like Medicaid, due to working

Q14 What have been the **top three** barriers to you getting or keeping a job? (select three)

- Lack of education or training
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Lack of housing

Concern over loss of Social Security, or other benefits like Medicaid, due to working

Q15 If you have experienced other barriers to getting a job not mentioned above, please list them here.

Q16

Barriers to Accessing Virginia DARS

The next several questions ask you about barriers to accessing DARS services.

Q17 Please indicate which of the following have been a barrier to you accessing DARS services.
(select all that apply)

- Lack of available transportation to the DARS office
 - Lack of broadband Internet access
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 - Lack of disability-related accommodations
 - I have nobody that can help me access services
 - Language barriers
 - Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor
 - Other difficulties with DARS staff
 - Difficulties completing the DARS application
 - Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
 - Other (please identify)
-

Q18 Have you had any other challenges or barriers not already mentioned that have made it difficult for you to access DARS services?

- Yes (please describe) _____
 - No
-

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- I usually meet with my counselor in my community/school
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Q20 How do you like to receive services?

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 - In-person
 - I have no preference
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Q21 Which of the following DARS services have you received remotely (by phone or video conference)? (select all that apply)

- Guidance and counseling (provided by my DARS counselor)
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 - Help understanding how work will impact my disability
 - Assistive technology
 - Other (please describe)
-

- I have not received any services from DARS remotely

Skip To: Q23 If Which of the following DARS services have you received remotely (by phone or video conference)? (... = I have not received any services from DARS remotely)

Q22 How would you rate the effectiveness of the services you have received remotely (compared to in-person)?

- Extremely effective
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-

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- Yes
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Q27 Have you received services from a service provider or vendor that DARS referred you to? (This may include an assessment, preparing for or finding a job, job coaching, training, assistive technology or other services)

- Yes
- No

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- Very effective
 - Effective
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- Excellent
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor
-

Q30 How would you rate the responsiveness of your service provider or vendor?

- Excellent
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor
-

Q31 Would you recommend your service provider or vendor to others served by DARS?

- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
-

Q32 If there is anything else you would like to add about DARS, please write that in the space below.

Q33

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Q34 Have you ever tried to use the services of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) beyond an online account?

Yes

No

Skip To: Q45 If Have you ever tried to use the services of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly kn... = No

Q35 Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?

Yes (If yes, please describe the difficulties you experienced)

No

Q36 Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers, formerly known as the one-Stop Centers (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?

Yes

No

Q37 Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to get training?

Yes

No

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Q38 Did you get the training that you were seeking?

Yes

No

Q39 Did the training result in employment?

Yes

No

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No

Skip To: Q42 If Did you go to the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) to f... = No

Q41 Did they help you find employment?

Yes

No

Q42 Were the Virginia Workforce Connection Center (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) staff helpful?

- Yes, they were very helpful
 - They were somewhat helpful
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Q43 Were the services at the New Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) valuable?

- Yes, the services were very valuable
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Q44 Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the Virginia Workforce Connection Centers (formerly known as One-Stop Centers) in serving individuals with disabilities?

- Very effective
 - Somewhat effective
 - No opinion
 - Somewhat ineffective
 - Very ineffective
-

Q45 Is there anything else you would like to add?

Q46 This is the end of the survey! Your information and feedback is valuable to DARS, thank you for completing the survey.

Please select the "NEXT" button below to submit your responses.