

North Dakota

Annual Report

FFY 2010 Report to the Governor





Photo by M. Johnson

North Dakota is the Peace Garden State.

The columns at the International Peace Garden on the Canadian/U.S. border (two in Canada, two in the U.S.) represent immigrants arriving from the four corners of the world to Canada and the U.S. in the 1800s and 1900s. The 4,000 mile border of U.S. and Canada is the longest undefended border in the world.

The FFY 2010 Annual Report has been prepared by the



North Dakota

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

A NEW HORIZON FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

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To the Honorable Jack Dalrymple, Governor, and the citizens of North Dakota

On behalf of the members of the North Dakota State Rehabilitation Council, we are pleased to present the Council's annual report for fiscal year 2010.

The State Rehabilitation Council and the North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation are charged with the responsibility of helping people with disabilities develop the skills necessary to fully participate in North Dakota's expanding job opportunities. The division works closely with clients and employers to help solve challenges faced by people with disabilities. The State Rehabilitation Council partners with the division to support the division's efforts.

The results of the efforts are significant, but the Council and Division must do more to develop innovative programs that reach the underserved populations of North Dakota and explore additional methods to assist North Dakotans with disabilities to find employment that matches their skills. Roughly 19,300 working-age North Dakotans with disabilities are employed. The national average for employment of people with disabilities is 35 percent; in North Dakota, it is 60.2 percent.

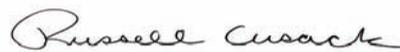
Last year, the average income for participants employed after completing the division's program rose 334 percent. This year, 861 individuals with disabilities were successfully employed following receipt of division services. The council and division encourage self-sufficiency for people who are facing immense challenges while successfully achieving their employment goals. Employment drastically improves the quality of life for people with disabilities.

The council has provided significant assistance to the division in the development of transition programs for school-age youth. More than 2,900 North Dakota high-school age youth have a disability. A youth with disabilities is twice as likely to drop out of high school as a youth without a disability. Thus the council and division have taken a number of steps to develop staff who visit high schools throughout North Dakota to counsel youth with disabilities and their families in the identification of career options, and to help these youth achieve their vocational goal. Youth are 36 percent of the division's total number of persons served, compared to the national average of 33 percent.

The council and division thank you for your review of the annual report. Please contact us if you have any questions or would like further information.



Jeff Davis, Chairperson
State Rehabilitation Council



Russell Cusack, Director
ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation



The International Peace Gardens Floral Clock

Photo by Roy Kurtenbach

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North Dakota State Flower

The Prairie Rose

Photo by Karolyn Walter



VISION

North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is the leader in disability-related solutions.

PURPOSE

We assist individuals with disabilities to be successfully employed.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Serving our consumers is the primary focus of everything we do.

Collaborative partnerships with employers are essential to our success.

All people have value, regardless of age, race, creed, color, gender, or disability.

Good communication is essential to delivering quality rehabilitation services.

Quality outcomes are a result of the commitment of consumers and qualified staff working together towards mutually agreed upon goals.

Change is inevitable and provides opportunities for innovation and creativity.

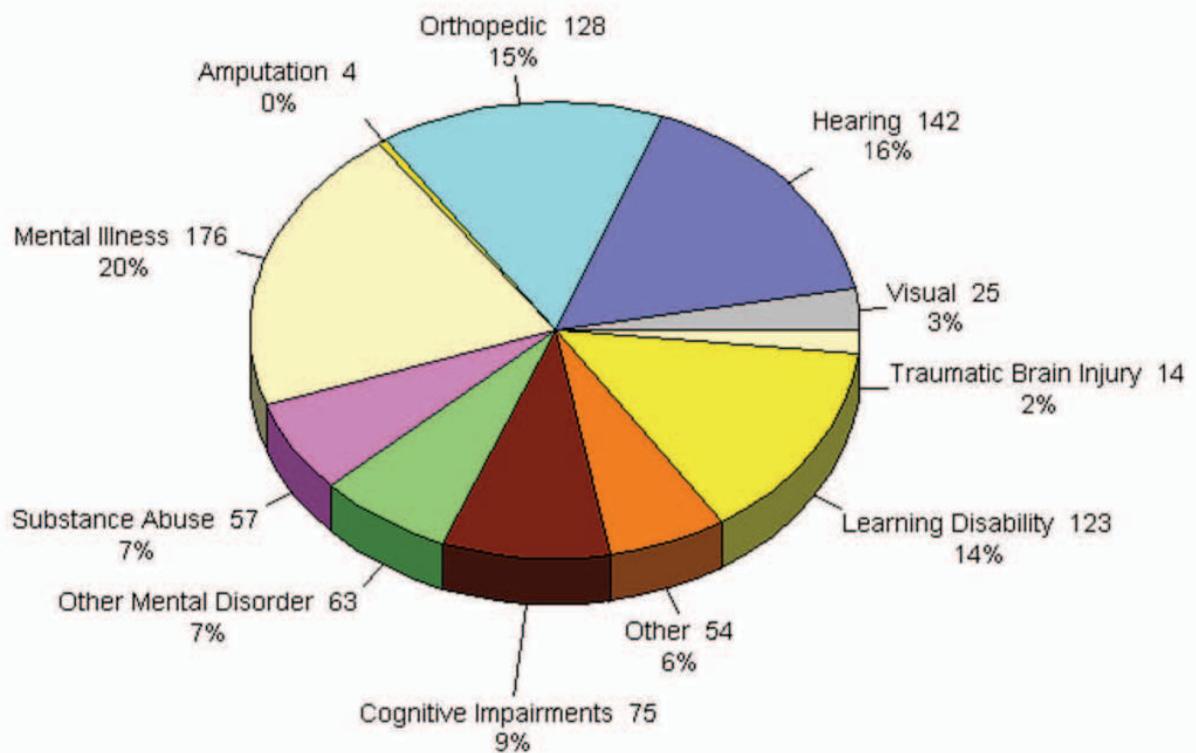
Effective partnerships are critical in achieving results for consumers.

Informed choice is central to sound decision-making and allows decisions to be based on all relevant information, options and consequences.

When all things are equal, legal and based on good rehabilitation counseling, decisions will be made in favor of the consumer.



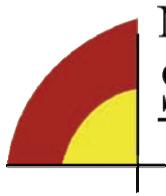
Primary Disabilities of Persons Achieving Employment North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation FFY 2010



"I want to thank the staff at VR for their professionalism and genuine concern they showed. They were very knowledgeable, friendly, and took their job very seriously."

Comment from 2010 DVR
Satisfaction Survey.

Overview and FFY 2010 Recommendations



North Dakota

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

A NEW HORIZON FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The purpose of the State Rehabilitation Council is to advise Vocational Rehabilitation regarding services to individuals with disabilities.

The North Dakota State Rehabilitation Council (ND SRC) works to assist North Dakotans with disabilities. The purpose of the ND SRC is to work in partnership with the Director of North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) on issues concerning policy and program, delivery of services, and methods for reaching potential consumers.

The ND SRC:

- Informs and advises DVR on the effects its programs have on North Dakota consumers and businesses.
- Facilitates public input for the DVR state plan.
- Advocates for consumer rights and services.
- Communicates to public and community leaders the purposes and need for Vocational Rehabilitation.

The 22 Council members are selected to serve on the ND SRC by the Governor of North Dakota on the basis of their interest, knowledge, and understanding of the needs of individuals with disabilities. Members are advocates for individuals with disabilities through their work on the following committees:

Evaluation Committee:

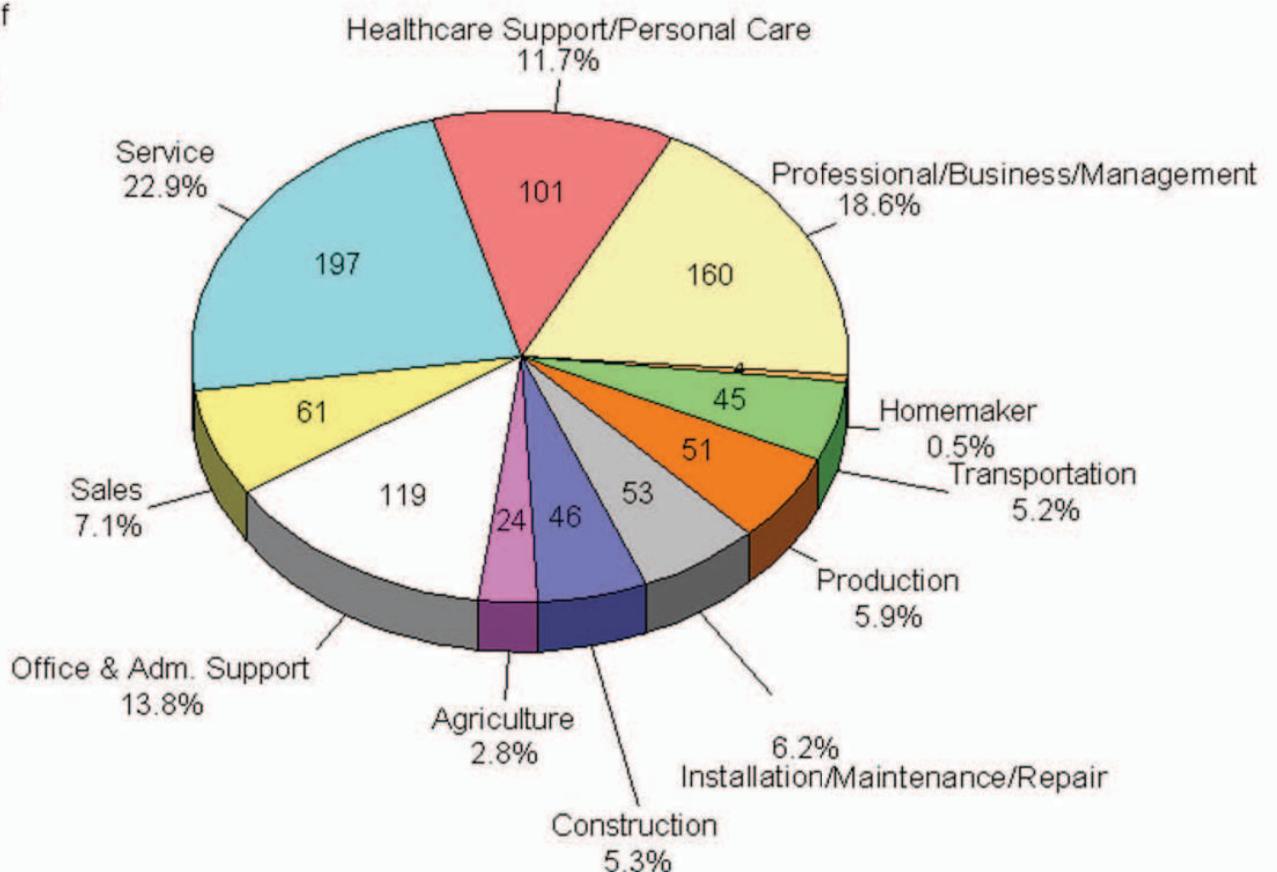
- Reviewed the results of the DVR consumer satisfaction surveys each quarter, and made recommendations to the full Council.
- Reviewed, analyzed, and advised DVR regarding program performance and policy issues.
- Assisted in the development of this Annual Report to the Governor.

*“VR helped make it possible
for me to make it through
school & to achieve my
dream of becoming a RN. I
can’t thank you enough!”*

Comment from 2010 DVR
Satisfaction Survey.

Occupational Categories of Persons Achieving Employment ND Vocational Rehabilitation FFY 2010 Statewide

Total Number of
Individuals
Employed: **861**



Overview and *FFY 2010 Recommendations*

Planning Committee:

- Assisted in the preparation of the State Plan, Strategic Plan, and amendments to the plans.
- Assisted with public hearings to solicit input from consumers, family members, and the public regarding the effectiveness of DVR services.
- Reviewed public comments and made recommendations to the full Council for their review and action.

Resource Committee:

- Monitors the progress of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development to ensure compliance with the Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration mandate.
- Reviews progress toward meeting Qualified Rehabilitation Professional Standards for all counselors within the Strategic Plan timeframe.
- At the request of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, works to ensure that both the State Rehabilitation Committee and the Statewide Independent Living Council are kept informed of funding issues and other legislative issues that impact individuals with disabilities.
- Coordinates with the Public Relations Committee to monitor legislative activity on the state level, and reports to the full Council for potential action.
- Provides technical assistance on materials and activities being provided by the Council regarding legislative action.

Ad Hoc Public Relations Committee:

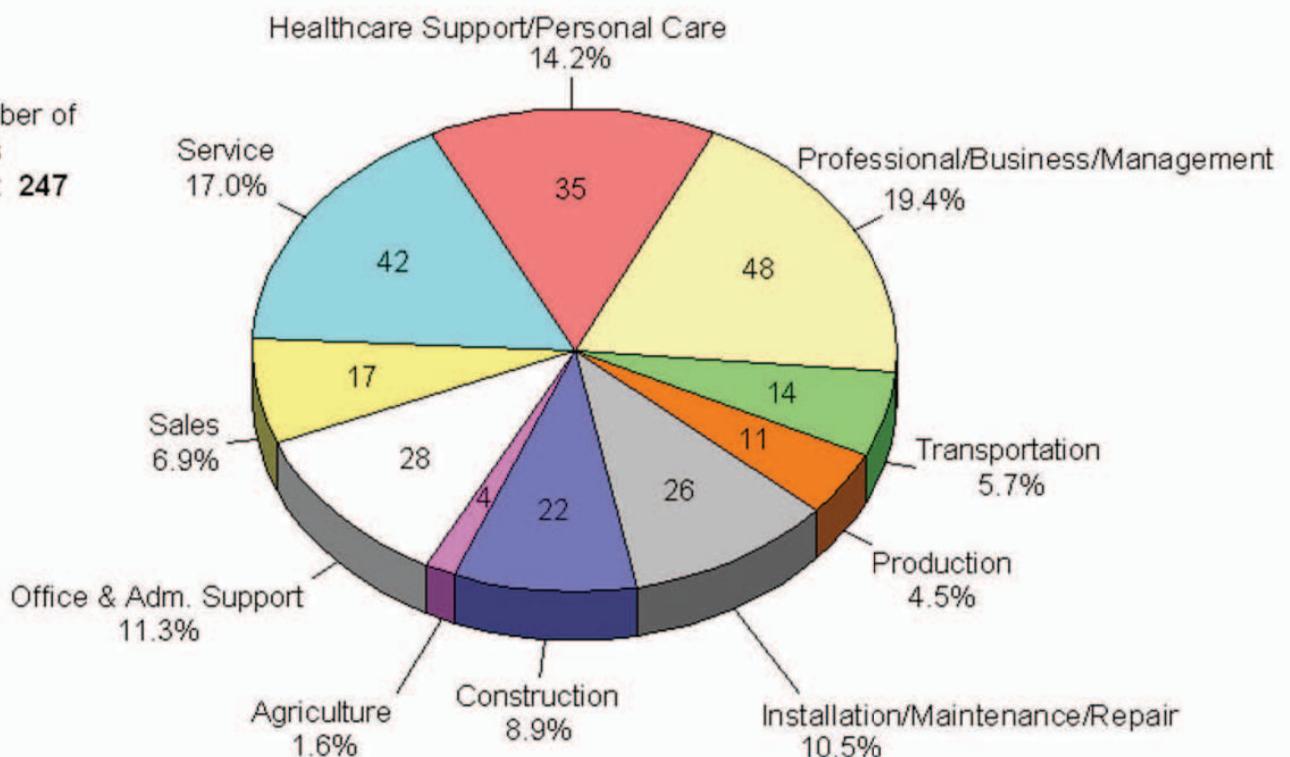
- Enhances awareness of the SRC mission and its ongoing support for the DVR program.
- Provides consultation and support to DVR on its public awareness initiatives. These initiatives are the result of public input and subsequent recommendations from the SRC.
- Coordinates with the Resource Committee to identify and develop material that may be used for legislator education and awareness of disability-related issues related to the DVR program.

“My counselor went beyond what was expected. She never gave up on me and was always supportive.”

Comment from 2010 DVR Satisfaction Survey.

Occupational Categories of Persons Achieving Employment ND Vocational Rehabilitation FFY 2010 Age 21 and Under at Application

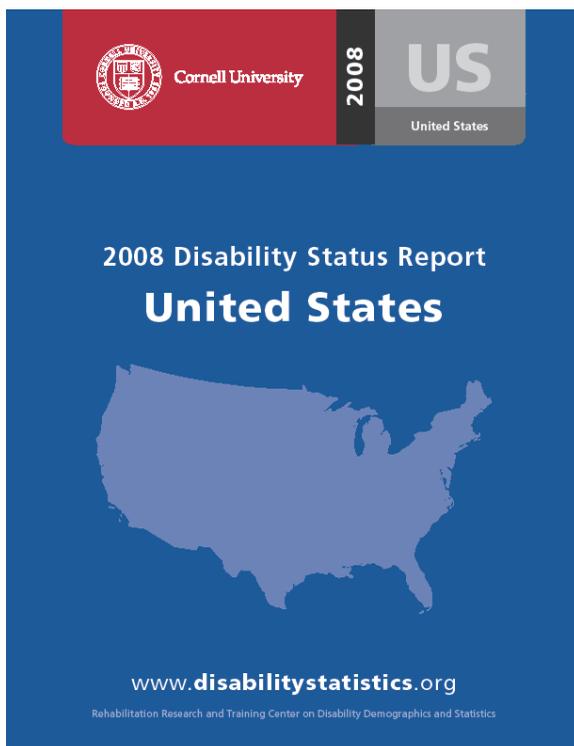
Total Number of
Individuals
Employed: **247**



Overview and FFY 2010 Recommendations

In FFY 2010, the ND SRC made recommendations to DVR, including the following:

- Recommended Career Fairs should be promoted and available to any student, including those in small schools. DVR should actively participate in Career Fairs and help with funding.
- Recommended DVR evaluate staffing resources and the need for more counselors and/or counselor aides across the state, and then consider alternatives for additional staff.
- Recommended DVR work with whatever modes of public transportation are available to provide adequate training for clients who are seeking employment on how to access and use that transportation system.

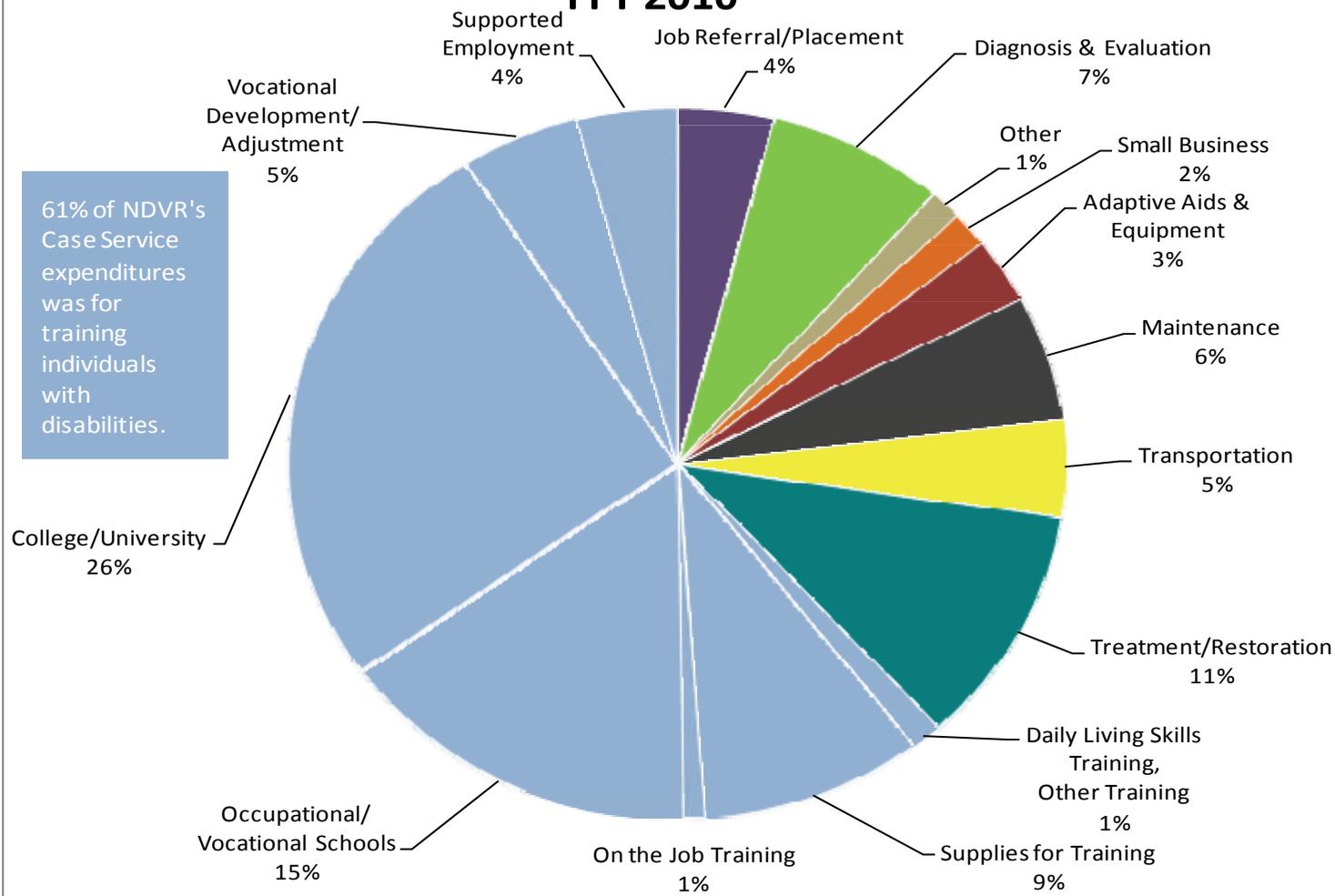


According to the most recent Cornell University Disability Statistics Report, North Dakota ranks #1 in the nation for the employment rate of individuals with disabilities, ages 21-64, with a rate of 60.2%

According to US census data:

- ***North Dakota has an estimated 642,000 residents.***
- ***97,817 individuals age 5 and over have a disability.***
- ***Of these, 58,630 are of working age, between 16-64.***
- ***An estimated 1 in 6 North Dakotans has a disability.***

NDVR Case Service Expenditures FFY 2010



I would never be able to do my job had I not received VR assistance. I cannot thank you enough for making this possible. I truly appreciate it!

Comment from 2010 DVR Satisfaction Survey.

Overview and FFY 2010 Recommendations



The purpose of ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to provide training and employment services to individuals with disabilities so they can become and remain employed.

DVR is the state's primary resource on employment for individuals with disabilities and for assisting businesses with disability-related issues.

FYI

- At any given time, approximately 4,700 people are receiving VR services.
- This year, 6,992 people with various disabilities received training and rehabilitation services.
- On average, individuals who become employed will receive VR services for 27 months.

DVR counselors provide specialized disability services for their clients and purchase a variety of medical, training, and other services through partnerships established with both public and private sectors.



Cost Benefit
***For every \$1.00
spent by DVR,
clients will pay
back \$1.58
in taxes.***

Employment Highlights for FFY 2010

- 861 Vocational Rehabilitation clients became employed.
- Their average hourly wage rose from \$3.96 to \$11.40.
- 93% were still employed 9 months after they began working.
- 89% of the individuals receiving services had a significant disability.
- There was 90% satisfaction with VR services.
- For every \$1 VR spent in FFY 2010, VR clients will earn \$7.90.

“John” is very active and an avid reader, but he was struggling to read and do everyday bookwork. After trying several pieces of adaptive equipment, John chose a 7X magnifier. With this, he is able to read the newspaper and anything else he needs to stay active on the various boards on which he serves. He also enjoys Talking Books because of its great selection of history books.

DVR Proudly Announces

Cusack named ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Director

The Department of Human Services has hired Russell Cusack as director of the Vocational Rehabilitation Division, which provides training and employment-related services to individuals with disabilities and assists employers to find solutions to disability-related issues.

He will be responsible for the overall planning, budgeting, and coordination of policies and services associated with the administration of the state's vocational rehabilitation program.

In addition, Cusack will also oversee the department's Disability Determination Services, which provides disability determination services under a contract with the federal government for Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance.

Cusack has over 28 years of experience in administration and rehabilitation counseling. Prior to joining the department, Cusack served as the chief of field services for the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation where he managed client service budgets and the recruitment and training of over 80 staff members. He also served as the Alaska State Liaison to 11 tribal programs, which provided rehabilitation counseling services to tribal members.

Cusack has a master's degree in social work from the University of Washington and is a certified rehabilitation counselor.



*Russ Cusack, DVR Director, with
Crystal Asleson,
2010 DVR Director's Award recipient*

"I was very happy with the kind and respectful way I was welcomed and treated. The best was done to help me with my hearing loss. I am very satisfied with VR services."

Comment from 2010 DVR
Satisfaction Survey.

The process of placing “Mike” was very simple and only took a short time. Incentives were easy and straightforward, without a significant investment of time. “Mike” began his work doing daily cleaning and maintenance; then he started to help with production. He has proven to be an asset to the company after a year of employment. He has a positive attitude and is always on top of his work. I would recommend the VR program, and I plan to use it again in the future.

Business Services

The purpose of ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Business Services is to provide consultation, technical assistance and information to businesses so they can have an available source of qualified employees and receive solutions to disability-related issues.

The DVR business services initiative is a proactive approach to assisting the state's business community with their disability-related issues. During FFY 2010, DVR conducted 192 presentations with 2,269 individuals in attendance.

DVR develops and builds business relationships by offering the following featured service areas:

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Financial incentives
- Accessibility and accommodation options
- Education/awareness training



DVR counselors and business specialists build strong business relationships through civic involvement and assume active roles in:

- Community and state service organizations
- Business and professional associations
- Charitable, non-profit groups

As a result, DVR counselors strengthen their own abilities, form collaborative working relationships with community and business leaders, and enhance the awareness of DVR as a community partner.

~~-DISABILITY-~~
dependability.

Saluting some of our
Business Champions

Orendate
KMM
Shyrock Tooling & Mfg.

RECRUITMENT • RETENTION ~ RESULTS
DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

▫ Recruitment & Retention ▫ ADA Resources ▫ Assistive Technology ▫ Rural Services

A DIVISION OF
North Dakota
Department of
Human Services

for more information visit
nd.gov/dhs/dvr/

or call us at
1(800)755-2745

a partner
in the
NET

*DVR placed qualified individuals with disabilities
with over 700 businesses throughout the nation.*

Comment from 2010 DVR
Satisfaction Survey.

2010 ND State DVR Employer of the Year



2010 ND Regional DVR Employers of the Year



Additionally, DVR is assigned the leadership role by North Dakota's Governor in support of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). DVR established the *DVR ADA Leadership Network* in its central office and eight regional offices to serve as the chief resource for ADA information and referrals in the state on subjects such as:

- Employment
- Reasonable accommodations
- Accessibility

DVR also works closely with the Rocky Mountain Disability Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC), the federally funded ADA technical assistance and resource center for our region. The DBTAC and DVR continue to jointly conduct educational programs, develop educational materials, and build awareness of ADA issues.

DVR Proudly Announces

Dickinson Business Named Employer of the Year

The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) announced that Dan's Supermarket of Dickinson has been named the *2010 North Dakota DVR Employer of the Year*.

This award honors one North Dakota business for noteworthy practices and community involvement in efforts supporting the employment of people with disabilities. The North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the ND State Rehabilitation Council selected Dan's Supermarket of Dickinson from among eight regional Employer of the Year honorees.

Other regional award recipients include: Budget Home Furnishings of Williston; Marketplace Foods of Minot; The Clothing Connection of Devils Lake; R.D.O. Equipment, Inc. of Grand Forks; Herberger's of Fargo; Walmart of Jamestown; and I. Keating, Inc. of Bismarck.

The awards were presented in Fargo on October 27, 2010.

"It is a pleasure to honor these companies. Their progressive attitudes and business practices have enabled individuals with disabilities who are living and working in their communities to put their abilities to work," said Russ Cusack, director of DVR. "These companies serve as models for other North Dakota businesses."



Joe Fridrich, Dan's Supermarket Dickinson Manager and DVR Dickinson Regional Office Administrator, Kari Shea

“The summer youth grant has been very beneficial for all students with disabilities to have the opportunity to work in the community no different than their peers. Without this grant, students with disabilities would not have the support they need to secure and maintain employment. This grant gives them the opportunity to learn basic work ethics/ habits as well as exposure to employment which may assist them in developing their career goal after graduation. Without the support, these opportunities would be eliminated for most students that are unable to complete this task on their own.”

Community Rehabilitation Provider

Transition Services

North Dakota's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation serves a large number of transition students. Currently, 35% of the individuals served through DVR are 21 or younger at the time they applied for services. Of the 861 successfully employed through the agency, 247 were transition aged youth at the time of application for services.

Summer Employment

DVR continued the Youth Summer Employment Program and awarded eight grants to North Dakota school districts and community rehabilitation agencies.

As a result of the Youth Summer Employment Program, 59 students were able to explore employment options with the aid of supports. Of the total who received services through the Youth Summer Employment Grants:

- 24 were eligible and receiving DVR services,
- 34 were referred for DVR services and,
- one student received consultation services from regional DVR office.

The Summer Employment Program is designed to assist students entering their final year of high school with the opportunity for employment and to explore future employment options. The grants run from April to September each year.

Transition Camp

In July 2010, DVR supported North Dakota's Transition Camp with a grant award. The camp is held each year at the Elks' Camp Grassick compound. The camp's focus this year was on Employment, Health and Nutrition, Independent Living Skills and Self Advocacy. Nineteen campers from across the state participated this year.

"I really enjoyed going to Transition Camp this summer. I learned so much at camp and in so little time I learned it all. I am so grateful for you and the Elks and North Dakota Department of Human Services' Vocational Rehabilitation..... I cannot say enough good things about Camp Grassick."

ND Transition Camp participant

“Youth with disabilities have many additional challenges they must face. Our combined efforts can provide a helping hand to each individual and truly make an investment in their future.

This conference will provide youth with new skills, knowledge and confidence to pursue their goals. I find it very important to get youth involved in such a cause.”

Youth Representative

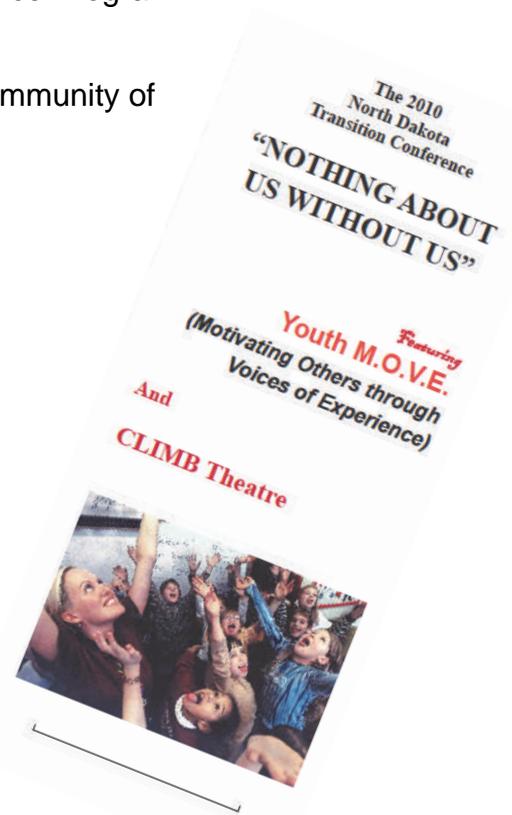
ND Youth Leadership Transition Conference

Youth Leadership Conference

DVR co-sponsored the first North Dakota Youth Leadership Transition Conference, "Nothing About Us Without Us."

Other collaborative partners included the Federation of Families, North Dakota Integrated Services Grant, Department of Human Services Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and the ND Client Assistance Program.

This event was a direct result of a goal established by the State Community of Practice on Transition to improve youth leadership.



Older Blind/Vision Services

The purpose of Older Blind Services is to provide training, accommodation and support in daily living activities to individuals with visual impairments so they can maintain independence in their home environment.

Vision rehabilitation specialists provide services throughout the state. Services may include: orientation and mobility training, communication skills training, activities of daily living training, low vision screening, assistive technology devices, counseling, community integration, management of secondary disabilities, transportation, readers and guides, support groups and referral.

- 1,074 individuals aged 55 and older received one or more services during FFY 2010.
- 80% of consumers' identified goals were achieved.

I was making my way through the grocery store when I heard my name being called. I turned, and there was “Bert” with a big smile on his face. He couldn’t wait to tell me that this month is his 5-year anniversary with the company.

Bert was referred to DVR for assistance in securing employment. He had not worked for several years due to a mental disorder. DVR assisted Bert with counseling and guidance, along with soft skills and interview training. After some discussion, Bert decided he would like to work with people. Then his counselor researched several employment options.

With Bert’s permission, the counselor approached an employer where Bert had applied, and explained that Bert would interview poorly but would have no problem doing the job if given the chance.

Within months, Bert was training the company’s new employees and completing the schedule for everyone in his department.

His employer says, “Bert is a good employee. He is dependable, pleasant and always willing to help.”

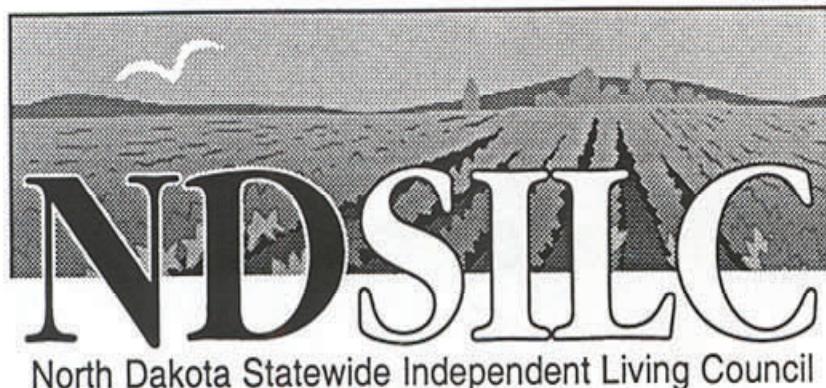
Statewide Independent Living

North Dakota has a Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), whose members are appointed by the Governor. The mission of the SILC is to guide the development of the independent living system in North Dakota through the active involvement of people with disabilities.

The SILC's responsibilities are separate and distinct from those of the SRC. It has a three-year Independent Living State Plan, jointly signed by the President of the SILC and the Director of Vocational Rehabilitation. In addition, the SILC, with VR, determines how independent living funds are allocated in the state.

Each Center for Independent Living and its branch office(s) provide many services including core services: *information and referral, peer counseling, independent living skills training, and self and systems advocacy.*

- Federal and ND legislatively appropriated state funds had a combined impact of reaching 10,662 people with various types of independent living services.
- Of these, 2,500 people received information and referral service; and 521 people received goal-directed one-on-one services. The remaining participated in trainings, were involved with systems advocacy efforts, or requested technical assistance as it related to any of the many hindrances affecting people with disabilities' ability to live within the community of their choosing.



“It was a very helpful experience. All my needs were met in a very prompt and professional manner. I’ll definitely recommend VR to anyone in need. I thank VR many times over through my tough times.”

Comment from 2010 DVR Satisfaction Survey.

Beverly applied for Vocational Rehabilitation services in March 2007. At that time, she was 54 years old. She had significant arthritis affecting her hips, knees and elbows. She also experienced a high degree of anxiety. She was working at Walmart, but the cold meat lockers severely affected her arthritis, and she was not able to transfer to another position.

Her VR counselor provided substantial counseling and guidance, pushing Beverly, but not too much. She was able to identify a job goal, but faced a substantial amount of anxiety with the prospect of retraining, especially since it involved moving to a city far away to obtain needed certification. The counselor worked with her, and coordinated with the Adult Learning Center to identify areas she needed to improve before participating in college. Both consumer and counselor worked hard, not giving up. When she was ready, Beverly began her studies and successfully completed her education in May 2010.

Beverly's job search was frustrating, so her counselor referred her to Pride Industries, where she worked to improve job-seeking skills and her professional presentation. The VR Business Specialist identified job openings in the area, and Beverly obtained a full-time Pharmacy Tech position at a local hospital where she continues to work. She is extremely pleased with her job and the services provided to her by VR.

This case is an example of effective and timely coordination of VR and community resources.



FFY 2010 At a Glance

Vocational Rehabilitation At a Glance

FFY 2010

Sources of Program Funding

Federal Funds	\$12.6 Million
State & Other Funds	\$2.8 Million
Total	\$15.4 Million

VR Employment Services for Individuals with a Disability

People Completing Training and Becoming Employed	861
Average Weekly Earnings <u>Before</u> Rehabilitation	\$ 118.30
Average Weekly Earnings <u>After</u> Rehabilitation	\$395.04
People Receiving Training and Other Services	6,992
Percent of Individuals with a Significant Disability	89%

Additional Vocational Rehabilitation

Business Services

Contacts initiated by VR with North Dakota Businesses 2,656

Contacts initiated by North Dakota Businesses with VR 540

Independent Living Services

People Receiving Services 10,662

Older Blind Services

People Receiving Services 1,074

Client Assistance Program

Information and Referral Calls 141

Cases Managed 38

Supporting Private Sector Organizations in North Dakota

Private Community Rehabilitation Programs **\$173,306**

(Non-profit & for profit organizations located throughout the State that provide services such as supported employment and vocational development)

Other Private Vendors **\$ 7.2 Million**

(Hospitals, private physicians, psychologists, retail stores, transit companies and others)

Cost Benefit

**For every \$1.00 spent by VR,
clients will pay back \$1.58 in taxes.**

ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation At a Glance FFY 2010

Types of Disability of Individuals Employed

Mental Illness	27%
Hearing Impairments/Deafness	16%
Orthopedic	15%
Learning Disabilities	14%
Cognitive Impairment	9%
Substance Abuse	7%
Other (Nervous System, Respiratory, Cardiac, Amputation)	6%
Visual Impairments/Blindness	3%
Traumatic Brain Injury	2%

Employment Placements

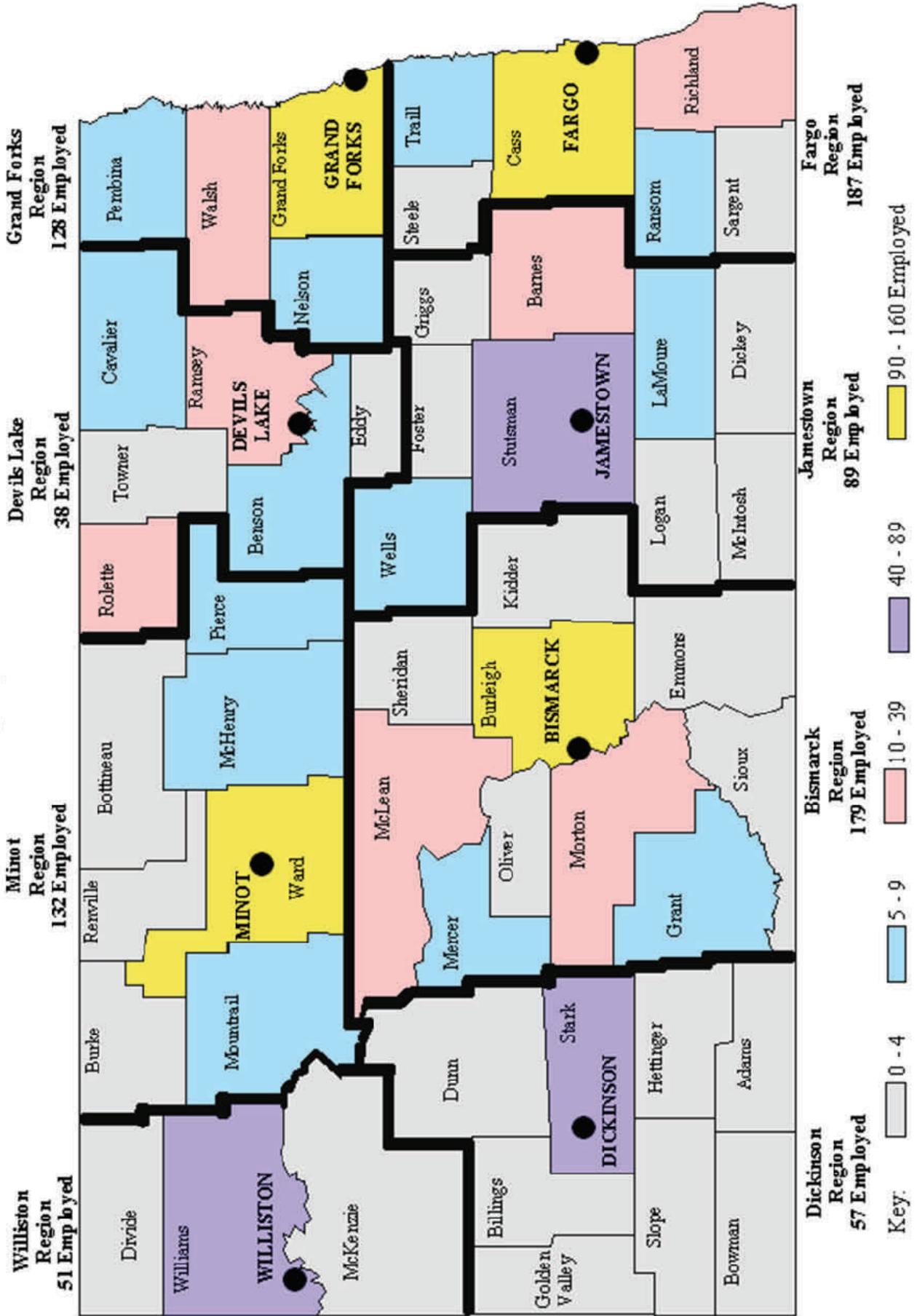
Service	23%
Professional/Business Management	19%
Office & Administrative Support	14%
Healthcare Support, Personal Care	12%
Sales	7%
Production	6%
Installation, Maintenance, Repair	6%
Transportation & Material Moving	5%
Construction	5%
Agricultural	3%
Homemaker	1%

Types of Service Expenditures

Training & Supplies	61%
Treatment & Restoration	11%
Diagnosis & Evaluation	7%
Maintenance	6%
Transportation	5%
Job Referral/Placement	4%
Aids & Equipment	3%
Small Business	2%
Other	1%

ND VR Regional Human Service Centers and Counties

Total Clients Employed: 861 FFY 2010



STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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The International Peace Gardens

Photo by Ren Davis, ND Tourism



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*To learn more about the ND State Rehabilitation Council
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www.nd.gov/dhs/dvr*

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