Investing in Futures

West Virginia
Division of Rehabilitation Services

2020 Annual Report
# Table of Contents

Welcome ......................................................... 2  
Mission .......................................................... 3  
2020 Highlights .................................................. 4  
Customer Service Delivery ................................. 5  
Vocational Rehabilitation Process ......................... 6  
Available Services ............................................. 7  
Fiscal Year 2020 Program Data ............................. 8  
Performance Standards and Evaluation Indicators ... 11  
Programs and Services ....................................... 12  
Disability Determination Section ......................... 18  
Partnerships ...................................................... 19  
Unsung Heroes of 2020 ....................................... 22  
Financial Report ................................................ 29  
Contact Information .......................................... 30
Dear Colleagues and Friends:

As we present the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services’ (DRS) 2020 Annual Report, Investing in Futures, we must reflect on the unprecedented challenges that resulted from the global COVID-19 pandemic. The widespread effects of this deadly virus brought about a statewide stay-at-home order for nonessential state government personnel. And while you might anticipate that such a drastic change from regular operations would cause chaos and apathy, DRS and its employees proved to be resilient and resourceful in order to continue serving West Virginia’s citizens with disabilities.

DRS quickly implemented COVID-19 safety protocols and a telework policy, and the agency pulled together technology resources to empower employees to remotely perform their job functions.

The pandemic created opportunities for DRS and its employees to focus on out-of-the-box concepts and creative solutions to provide services to DRS consumers. Collaboration with both in-state partners and vocational rehabilitation agencies throughout the nation helped to garner ideas and develop many virtual opportunities to replace face-to-face services.

DRS successfully modified summer activities to provide pre-employment transition services to West Virginia’s youth with disabilities that were being planned to virtual platforms, and participating consumers gained valuable knowledge and resources that will help guide them on their path from school to the world of work.

The implementation of the Virtual Job Club and the Virtual Employer Spotlight were also two very successful initiatives during 2020. Job Club activities provided opportunities for DRS consumers to learn work-related skills, and the virtual platform allowed many consumers to attend who previously could not because of transportation limitations. During the Employer Spotlight, DRS hosted a virtual meeting with a West Virginia employer to allow them to discuss job opportunities and hiring practices within their organization. DRS’ efforts to build relationships with West Virginia employers increases job options for DRS consumers.

This report also showcases the hard work and contributions of 19 DRS consumers who worked in a frontline capacity during the pandemic. The efforts of these individuals directly benefited the safety and welfare of others. These stories represent the ongoing accomplishments and positive influence DRS and the vocational rehabilitation program have on West Virginians with disabilities who want to work.

The initiatives highlighted in this report demonstrate the resiliency and determination of DRS employees, partners and consumers to continue achieving employment-related success.

Thank you for sharing in our mission to enable and empower individuals with disabilities to work and to live independently!
Together, we enable and empower individuals with disabilities to work and to live independently by providing individualized services to consumers and employers.
• DRS served 6,326 West Virginians with disabilities through the vocational rehabilitation program, with 3,635 being transition-aged youth.

• DRS helped 824 vocational rehabilitation consumers obtain or retain employment.

• The estimated annual earnings of vocational rehabilitation consumers at application were $14,229,904. After receiving vocational rehabilitation services, their total estimated earnings rose to $23,421,008, which amounts to a 65% increase in the total estimated earned income of these hard-working West Virginians, which demonstrates a significant return on investment.

• DRS spent more than $9 million to purchase necessary vocational rehabilitation services for its consumers, which dramatically contributes to West Virginia's economy.

• 90% of vocational rehabilitation consumers had significant disabilities.

• Through strong collaboration and cooperation, the WIOA core partners – DRS, WorkForce West Virginia and WV Adult Education – successfully submitted West Virginia’s Unified State Plan for July 1, 2020-June 30, 2024.

• Data recently compiled by the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration measures the percentage of vocational rehabilitation program consumers who remained employed a year after successfully exiting the program. The national average for program year 2018, which is the most current data available, is 58.8% and DRS’ average for that year is 78.3%, making DRS #2 in the nation of all reporting agencies during that timeframe.

• DRS’ Disability Determination Section processed 27,205 Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income claims.
Through our statewide field services program, clients receive effective one-on-one, personal service from DRS. Throughout the state, DRS rehabilitation counselors carefully evaluate clients’ skills, abilities and interests. Vocational success is achieved by providing the services and comprehensive support each client needs to meet his or her employment goal.

DRS employs approximately 79 extensively trained vocational rehabilitation counselors who work directly with individuals with disabilities throughout the vocational rehabilitation process. Vocational rehabilitation counselors are required to meet a stringent certification criterion.

Each of the field offices has a supervisor who, in addition to providing leadership and guidance to employees, takes the lead in developing partnerships with area employers, workforce centers, schools and other public and private service agencies within the community.

Through our statewide quality assurance program, DRS strives to ensure that the same level of high-quality services is delivered to individuals with disabilities throughout West Virginia. Quality assurance specialists work in each DRS district, and as a team, to develop client services policy, review casework practices, assure consistent interpretation of policy throughout the state and provide training on policy and casework.
Vocational Rehabilitation Process

The vocational rehabilitation process begins when an individual applies for DRS services. An application is completed, and an intake interview is held to explore the individual’s medical, social, financial, educational and vocational experiences. This is an opportunity to explore the applicant’s skills, abilities and interests and to understand his or her specific vocational rehabilitation needs. Further assessment of the individual’s employment barriers is conducted, when necessary, to establish eligibility for services.

Once eligibility is established, the consumer and his or her vocational rehabilitation counselor work together to develop an individualized plan for employment (IPE). This plan describes the services that will be needed for the consumer to reach his or her employment goal.

The anticipated outcome of the individual’s vocational rehabilitation program is competitive, integrated employment in a career of the consumer’s choice.

Depending on the services needed, the consumer’s involvement with DRS can last anywhere from a few months to several years.

Follow-up services are provided by the rehabilitation counselor to assure that the consumer’s employment is stable and satisfactory. Advocacy and support services are available through the Client Assistance Program throughout the term of an individual’s involvement with DRS.

Steps to Success

Application  Intake  Assessment  Eligibility  Provision of Services  Individualized Plan for Employment  Employment Secured  Follow-up  Success!  Case Closed
Available Services

To help people with disabilities achieve their employment goals, DRS is able to provide a variety of services to eligible individuals. The client and the vocational rehabilitation counselor work together to determine the necessary and appropriate services to enable the client to meet his or her identified employment goal. The services provided to any eligible person are determined by his or her unique employment barriers, chosen employment goal and individual circumstances.

DRS services include:

- **Evaluation and diagnostic services** may be provided to determine eligibility and the services needed for the individual to become employed.

- **Vocational counseling and guidance** are provided directly by a vocational rehabilitation counselor during the client's plan of services to accomplish a variety of objectives leading to successful employment.

- **Pre-employment transition services** may be provided to students with disabilities and can include job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling for postsecondary education, workplace readiness training and instruction in self-advocacy.

- **Training services** may be provided to meet the employment goal and may include vocational training, college or other academic training, personal and vocational adjustment training, job coaching, on-the-job training, job-seeking skills training, as well as books, tools and other training materials.

- **Rehabilitation technology services** may include assistive technology devices, driver evaluation and education services, assistive technology services and rehabilitation engineering services to address barriers encountered by an individual in obtaining or retaining employment.

- **Physical and mental therapeutic services** may be provided to correct or substantially modify an individual's physical or mental condition.

- **Specialized services** for individuals who are blind, deaf and deaf-blind may include orientation and mobility training, interpreter services, note-taking services and reader services.

- **Placement services** may be provided to assist an individual with a disability to find adequate and suitable employment in his or her chosen field.

- **Support services** such as maintenance, transportation assistance, personal care assistance and services to family members may be provided, if necessary.

- **Post-employment services** may be provided to previously rehabilitated individuals when needed to maintain or regain suitable employment.
Fiscal Year 2020 Program Data

Economic Impact of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

$14,229,904 At referral

$23,421,008 After rehabilitation

65% increase in total estimated annual earnings

West Virginians Served by District
Total served 6,326

Wheeling District 867

Clarksburg District 914

Charleston District 1,158

Martinsburg District 664

Huntington District 1,520

Beckley District 1,203
Referral Sources of Individuals Vocationally Rehabilitated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referral Source</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education and Literacy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Rehabilitation Programs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Institutions (Elementary/Secondary)</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Institutions (Postsecondary)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Friends</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Health Providers</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Providers</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Stop Partner</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sources</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Referral</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Occupations of Individuals Vocationally Rehabilitated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Occupation</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architecture and Engineering</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports and Media</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and Grounds, Cleaning and Maintenance</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Financial Operations</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and Social Services</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer and Mathematical</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction and Extraction</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Training and Library</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming, Fishing and Forestry</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Preparation and Serving Related</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Practitioners and Technical</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Support</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation, Maintenance and Repair</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life, Physical and Social Science</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office and Administrative Support</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Care and Service</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective Service</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Related</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Material Moving</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total rehabilitated into competitive, integrated employment</strong></td>
<td><strong>824</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Education at Time of Individualized Plan for Employment of Individuals Vocationally Rehabilitated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>At IPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate, GED or special education certificate</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in high school</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more years of postsecondary education</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attained postsecondary certification, license or educational certificate</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree beyond a bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school diploma, not attending at time of IPE</td>
<td>590</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Primary Disability of Individuals Vocationally Rehabilitated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Disability</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Impairments</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing/Communicative Impairments</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Impairments</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Impairments</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Impairments</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Age, Gender and Race of Individuals Vocationally Rehabilitated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at application</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 34</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 44</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 64</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>783</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DRS has chosen to continue measuring performance based on program evaluation standards and performance indicators previously established by the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration. Fiscal year 2020 data show that DRS exceeded the federal benchmarks on four out of the seven measures.

During program year 2020 (July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021), DRS began to transition to the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act Common Performance Measures. These measures include:

- Employment 2nd quarter, after exit
- Employment 4th quarter, after exit
- Median earnings 2nd quarter, after exit
- Credential attainment rate
- Measurable skills gain rate
- Effectiveness in serving employers

During program year 2020, DRS has a measurable skills gain rate benchmark of 41.0%, and baseline data will continue to be collected for the remaining performance measures during the year.

**Evaluation Standard 1 – Employment Outcomes.**

**DRS assists eligible individuals to obtain, maintain or regain high-quality employment.**

**Performance Indicator 1.1 — Change in Employment Outcomes**

The number of individuals who achieved an employment outcome in the current year must equal or exceed the number from the previous year. (Federal Requirement – equal to or greater than prior year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2020</th>
<th>FY 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>824</td>
<td>868</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Performance Indicator 1.2 — Percent of Employment Outcomes**

The percentage of individuals exiting the program during the current year who have achieved an employment outcome after receiving services. (Federal Requirement – 55.8%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2020</th>
<th>FY 2018</th>
<th>FY 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Performance Indicator 1.3 — Competitive Employment Outcomes**

The percentage of individuals who achieved an employment outcome and are earning at least minimum wage. (Federal Requirement – 72.6%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2020</th>
<th>FY 2018</th>
<th>FY 2019</th>
<th>FY 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>99.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Performance Indicator 1.4 — Significance of Disability**

Of those earning at least the minimum wage, the percentage who have significant disabilities. (Federal Requirement – 62.4%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2020</th>
<th>FY 2018</th>
<th>FY 2019</th>
<th>FY 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>98.9%</td>
<td>99.4%</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Performance Indicator 1.5 — Earnings Ratio**

The ratio of the average hourly earnings of all individuals earning at least minimum wage to the average hourly earnings of all employed individuals in the state. (Federal Requirement – Ratio of .52)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2020</th>
<th>FY 2018</th>
<th>FY 2019</th>
<th>FY 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Performance Indicator 1.6 — Self-Support**

Of those earning at least minimum wage, the difference in the percentage of individuals who at program entry reported their income as the largest single source of support, and the percentage that reported their personal income as the largest single source of support at program exit. (Federal Requirement – 53% mathematical differences)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2020</th>
<th>FY 2018</th>
<th>FY 2019</th>
<th>FY 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>63.1%</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation Standard 2 – Equal Access to Services.**

**DRS must ensure that individuals from minority backgrounds have equal access to services.**

**Performance Indicator 2.1 — Minority Background Service Rate**

The service rate for individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all non-minorities with disabilities. (Federal Requirement – Ratio of .80)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2020</th>
<th>FY 2018</th>
<th>FY 2019</th>
<th>FY 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.915</td>
<td>.957</td>
<td>.981</td>
<td>.922</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A successful and seamless transition from high school into appropriate vocational training, postsecondary education or employment is the goal of the transition program.

DRS maintains cooperative agreements with the West Virginia Department of Education, each of the 55 county school systems and the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind to ensure effective collaboration for school-aged youth with disabilities.

**Pre-Employment Transition Services**

Since the enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), DRS has focused on expanding its transition program by providing pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities from ages 14 to 21. There are 58 counselors assigned to work with students with disabilities throughout the state.

Pre-ETS are mandated under WIOA and include the following five required activities:

- **Job exploration counseling**
- **Work-based learning experiences**, which may include in-school or after-school opportunities or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that are provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible
- **Counseling on opportunities for enrollment** in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education
- **Workplace readiness training** to develop social skills and independent living
- **Instruction in self-advocacy**, which may include peer mentoring

Because of the COVID-19 shutdown of schools and many businesses, delivering Pre-ETS services to students with disabilities took on a new appearance. DRS, as well as many other vocational rehabilitation agencies across the nation, offered these vital services using virtual platforms.

Events such as Career Exploration Opportunity (CEO) 2.0 and Instruction in Self-Advocacy, which have traditionally been held during weeklong, in-person instructional settings, were offered through virtual platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams this year. DRS partnered with community rehabilitation providers, centers for independent living and other vendors to provide virtual Pre-ETS services to students across West Virginia throughout the summer. A total of 288 students with disabilities participated in 415 Pre-ETS activities that took place from May to September 2020.

Additionally, staff from the DRS Rehabilitation Programs Unit also proved instrumental in the provision of virtual Pre-ETS services, specifically in the areas of orientation and mobility, transportation training and more. A menu of available virtual Pre-ETS services through DRS was shared with all county special education directors in West Virginia as a resource for teachers of students with disabilities.

**Pathways to the Future**

DRS maintains the Pathways to the Future website (pathwayswv.org), which is a self-guided resource center that provides direct information and services to students with disabilities, parents, educators and vocational rehabilitation counselors regarding all five required Pre-ETS in order to help students transition from school and prepare for employment. Outreach activities promote this self-guided resource in high schools throughout the state.

The online resource center focuses on transition planning:

- **Career Planning**
- **Education Planning**
- **Independent Living**
- **Work-Based Learning Experiences**
- **Self-Determination/Self-Advocacy**
**Fiscal Year 2020 Results**

Comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services and careful planning that involved students, their families and school personnel garnered the following results:

- **3,635** students (ages 16 to 21) with disabilities were served, which is **57%** of the total number of individuals served by DRS.
- **2,310** transition students were referred directly from schools to DRS.
- **499** students with disabilities developed individualized plans for employment.
- **338** transition clients gained employment, which is **41%** of the total number of rehabilitation closures.

**College Education Services**

A college education provides increased opportunities for vocational success and independent living. DRS counselors are assigned liaison responsibilities with public and private colleges and universities throughout West Virginia.

- Assisted **1,434** students with college education services they needed to meet their work-related educational goals.

**Summer 2020 Work-Based Learning Successes**

A high school junior from East Fairmont High School took the opportunity to fill his summer with skill building, fun and hard work. The DRS consumer paired with the Disability Action Center in Marion County to participate in a work-based learning experience, assisting with local parks and recreation. He, along with two other consumers, painted and worked on upkeep of benches, swings, monkey bars and other areas of local parks to help keep them safe, clean and beautiful. The experience taught the consumer teamwork and how to work in an outdoor, and often hot, environment. The consumers worked so well together that they were praised in their local newspaper for the great work they provided for the community.

A junior at Midland Trail High School works daily to overcome his disability of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. In his spare time, he enjoys contributing to his family’s new business, and this DRS consumer participated in a work-based learning experience at Hawks Nest State Park. This experience and his participation in a CEO 2.0 virtual workshop helped to build his self-confidence, which was depleted due to bullying and low self-esteem.

A high school student from Fairmont Senior High School participated in a work-based learning experience with the Disability Action Center at Hickman Run Animal Hospital in Fairmont. During the experience, the DRS consumer observed several surgeries, maintained the kennels/appointment rooms, worked on the business financial budget, gave injections and learned how to run different tests and lab work on the animals. The consumer hopes to enroll in a veterinarian technician (vet tech) program after he graduates high school. Through his work-based learning experience at a veterinarian’s office, the DRS consumer was able to have a hands-on experience and gain knowledge to help him succeed in a vet tech program.
DRS’ team of employment specialists work closely with WV employers to help them to determine their workforce needs and then relay current and future job openings to our vocational rehabilitation counselors and consumers (job seekers). During 2020, COVID-19 affected normal operating procedures for the Employment Services Unit and DRS employment specialists were tasked with figuring out creative ways to meet employer and job seeker needs.

DRS employment specialists routinely communicate with employers throughout the state. As a result, our job seekers have real-time labor market information to assist them in planning their careers and reaching their vocational goals. Employers share information about current and future job openings, which allows DRS counselors to better inform job seekers about occupations that are currently in demand and the necessary skills to obtain jobs in those fields.

In fiscal year 2020, DRS employment specialists made over 500 employer visits (either in person or virtually), where they provided employers with solutions in the areas of staffing, job retention of employees who have developed a disability, education, technical consultation on the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, and tax credit information for hiring individuals with disabilities.

Continuing education and training for DRS employment specialists ensures that they are providing quality services to job seekers. By staying up to date on national recruiting and hiring trends, DRS is able to assist job seekers with remaining competitive in the job market, which improves their chances of finding a job, boosts their visibility to maximize their career opportunities and increases their competitive advantage.

Employment specialists help prepare youth and students with disabilities for the workplace in several ways:

- understanding the importance of and how to make a good first impression,
- concepts relating to interpersonal skills and
- awareness of qualities employers look for when they hire and promote employees.

DRS employment specialists also work to recruit local employers to provide job shadowing experiences for students with disabilities.

2020 Accomplishments

In fiscal year 2020, the Employment Services Unit completed the following activities to increase opportunity for DRS job seekers:

- provided virtual services including the Employer Spotlight program, which promotes face-to-face interaction between employers and job seekers. This networking opportunity allows the employer to reach potential applicants and allows job seekers to find out specifics about available jobs offered through an employer and the traits that make a good candidate for those positions. Participating employers include Asplundh, Sodexo, GC Services, G4S, Amazon/PCSI, WVU Medicine, CVS Health, Williams Lea and WorkForce West Virginia.

- partnered with Amazon and PCSI, a nonprofit that is providing staffing support services to the company. PCSI staffs its teams with disabled veterans and other people with disabilities by recruiting, training and managing teams of workers to deliver service to its customers. The partners are working diligently to assist individuals with disabilities to overcome barriers to employment to work at Amazon in Huntington. DRS is referring appropriate job seekers and PCSI is providing the job coaching and support to make DRS referrals successful candidates for employment.

- provided disability inclusion training from WINDMILLS to the National Conservation Science Training Center, which focused on reducing stigma surrounding disability and barriers in the workplace.

- provided virtual Job Club training to DRS job seekers, in collaboration with the DRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit. Job Club provides training on 12 work readiness topics to help prepare a job seeker in learning skills to be ready to enter the workforce.
Rehabilitation Technology Services

The Rehabilitation Technology Unit travels statewide to provide services to improve DRS consumers’ independence in the workplace, home and community. This unit consists of a group of experienced engineers, computer specialists, driving instructors and technicians who specialize in job accommodations, custom-designed assistive technology, product fabrication and driver education.

- Served 98 people, providing 116 services, which included 33 rehabilitation engineering services, 47 assistive technology services, 26 driver rehabilitation services and 10 environmental modification services.
- Created and followed COVID protocols to protect staff and clients.
- Helped purchase and distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) to DRS offices throughout the state in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Developed virtual trainings in the areas of job exploration, self-advocacy, workplace readiness, job shadowing, money management and transportation training (learner’s permit, biking, ride sharing, all-terrain vehicles, public transportation and pre-driving readiness).

Community Rehabilitation Programs

The state network of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) is critical to the effective and efficient delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with significant disabilities.

DRS maintains strong working relationships with CRPs in West Virginia that provide supported and direct employment, community-based assessment, work skills assessment, job coach training, work adjustment and/or life skills training. These services are commonly purchased by DRS to assist individuals with significant disabilities to achieve successful employment outcomes.

There are 68 DRS-acknowledged CRPs with 83 total service locations throughout West Virginia.

To better meet the needs of DRS and its clients, DRS works closely with the CRPs and other local community providers to expand programs, such as pre-vocational training, employment-readiness services and job coaching.

DRS has ongoing collaboration with the CRPs and other local community providers to identify needs, available resources, training opportunities and best practices to enable positive changes to assist West Virginians with disabilities to achieve successful, competitive, integrated employment outcomes.

Two specially trained employees, one in northern West Virginia and the other in the southern region, generate ongoing communication between DRS and CRPs. They also address training needs for new CRPs and existing CRP staff.

2020 Accomplishments

- A total of 994 clients and potentially eligible students received one or more CRP services in fiscal year 2020, with payments to CRPs totaling $2,154,771.
- DRS continues to cultivate and expand the Student Transition to Employment Program (STEP) to directly assist transitioning youth with obtaining needed employment services. STEP is designed to train special education teachers, school transition teachers, and/or teacher’s aides to provide job placement skills to participating high school students. A DRS employee exclusively recruits and trains school system employees to become new STEP vendors throughout the state. There are currently 63 approved vendors of service under this program.
- As required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, DRS continued a training program for individuals with disabilities who work in programs covered under the U.S. Department of Labor’s Sub-Minimum Wage Certificate program. The training focuses on ensuring that these individuals are aware of the employment-related services and supports that are available to enable individuals with disabilities to explore, discover, experience and attain competitive, integrated employment. In 2020, CRP staff coordinated and delivered the training to 210 employees with disabilities at eight different programs throughout the state. Given the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, these sessions were conducted virtually.
- A new Pre-ETS service that was previously piloted as a summer program in 2019, work-based learning experience, was added to our regular CRP service menu, with 45 CRPs agreeing to provide the service. The COVID-19 pandemic slowed referrals for this service for much of the program year, but a total of 158 individuals were served.

Rehabilitation Technology Services

The Rehabilitation Technology Unit travels statewide to provide services to improve DRS consumers’ independence in the workplace, home and community. This unit consists of a group of experienced engineers, computer specialists, driving instructors and technicians who specialize in job accommodations, custom-designed assistive technology, product fabrication and driver education.

- Served 98 people, providing 116 services, which included 33 rehabilitation engineering services, 47 assistive technology services, 26 driver rehabilitation services and 10 environmental modification services.
- Created and followed COVID protocols to protect staff and clients.
- Helped purchase and distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) to DRS offices throughout the state in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Developed virtual trainings in the areas of job exploration, self-advocacy, workplace readiness, job shadowing, money management and transportation training (learner’s permit, biking, ride sharing, all-terrain vehicles, public transportation and pre-driving readiness).

Community Rehabilitation Programs

The state network of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) is critical to the effective and efficient delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with significant disabilities.

DRS maintains strong working relationships with CRPs in West Virginia that provide supported and direct employment, community-based assessment, work skills assessment, job coach training, work adjustment and/or life skills training. These services are commonly purchased by DRS to assist individuals with significant disabilities to achieve successful employment outcomes.

There are 68 DRS-acknowledged CRPs with 83 total service locations throughout West Virginia.

To better meet the needs of DRS and its clients, DRS works closely with the CRPs and other local community providers to expand programs, such as pre-vocational training, employment-readiness services and job coaching.

DRS has ongoing collaboration with the CRPs and other local community providers to identify needs, available resources, training opportunities and best practices to enable positive changes to assist West Virginians with disabilities to achieve successful, competitive, integrated employment outcomes.

Two specially trained employees, one in northern West Virginia and the other in the southern region, generate ongoing communication between DRS and CRPs. They also address training needs for new CRPs and existing CRP staff.

2020 Accomplishments

- A total of 994 clients and potentially eligible students received one or more CRP services in fiscal year 2020, with payments to CRPs totaling $2,154,771.
- DRS continues to cultivate and expand the Student Transition to Employment Program (STEP) to directly assist transitioning youth with obtaining needed employment services. STEP is designed to train special education teachers, school transition teachers, and/or teacher’s aides to provide job placement skills to participating high school students. A DRS employee exclusively recruits and trains school system employees to become new STEP vendors throughout the state. There are currently 63 approved vendors of service under this program.
- As required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, DRS continued a training program for individuals with disabilities who work in programs covered under the U.S. Department of Labor’s Sub-Minimum Wage Certificate program. The training focuses on ensuring that these individuals are aware of the employment-related services and supports that are available to enable individuals with disabilities to explore, discover, experience and attain competitive, integrated employment. In 2020, CRP staff coordinated and delivered the training to 210 employees with disabilities at eight different programs throughout the state. Given the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, these sessions were conducted virtually.
- A new Pre-ETS service that was previously piloted as a summer program in 2019, work-based learning experience, was added to our regular CRP service menu, with 45 CRPs agreeing to provide the service. The COVID-19 pandemic slowed referrals for this service for much of the program year, but a total of 158 individuals were served.

Rehabilitation Technology Services

The Rehabilitation Technology Unit travels statewide to provide services to improve DRS consumers’ independence in the workplace, home and community. This unit consists of a group of experienced engineers, computer specialists, driving instructors and technicians who specialize in job accommodations, custom-designed assistive technology, product fabrication and driver education.

- Served 98 people, providing 116 services, which included 33 rehabilitation engineering services, 47 assistive technology services, 26 driver rehabilitation services and 10 environmental modification services.
- Created and followed COVID protocols to protect staff and clients.
- Helped purchase and distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) to DRS offices throughout the state in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Developed virtual trainings in the areas of job exploration, self-advocacy, workplace readiness, job shadowing, money management and transportation training (learner’s permit, biking, ride sharing, all-terrain vehicles, public transportation and pre-driving readiness).
Blind and Visually Impaired Services

DRS has specially trained rehabilitation counselors to meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of people with blindness and significant vision impairments.

- Served 259 people with blindness or significant vision impairments.
- 15 individuals obtained or retained employment after completing their vocational rehabilitation programs.

DRS offers individualized and intensive training to those clients who need to learn skills to effectively compensate and live independently with blindness or limited vision. This training may include orientation and mobility, computer literacy, assistive technology, Braille, individual counseling and career development.

In addition to compensatory skills training, blind and visually impaired clients may receive job training, job placement or access technology to assist in training or to help them function on the job.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

DRS has specially trained rehabilitation counselors to meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

- Served 891 clients who listed hearing impairments as their primary or secondary disability, which included people who are deaf or deaf-blind.
- 338 clients with hearing impairments achieved their employment goals.

2020 Accomplishments

- DRS hosted Camp Can-Do: Gone Virtual for West Virginia students (ages 14-21) who are deaf and hard of hearing, which provided fun and interactive Pre-ETS services. Learning areas included exploring trade occupations, obtaining accommodations in college, communications needs of individuals who are deaf, self-advocacy, building bridges with robotics, creating spreadsheets, learning beginning computer coding, completing career interest inventories, filling out job applications and developing résumés. Students also had the opportunity to participate in constructive games and enrichment activities, as well as to create videos highlighting their virtual experiences.
- DRS hosted the Mid-Atlantic State Coordinators for the Deaf Learning Community, which is comprised of representatives from Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington DC, Ohio and West Virginia. This unique collaboration focuses on topics and issues affecting the deaf and hard of hearing community and was held virtually in August 2020.
- DRS collaborated with the Children’s Vision Rehabilitation Project for a fourth straight year on two summer Pre-ETS camps for West Virginia high school students who are blind or visually impaired.
- DRS sponsored one vocational rehabilitation counselor, who was specifically hired to work with consumers who are blind, to complete the Mississippi State Vision Specialist program. The training program helps to prepare DRS’ specialty counselors to meet the vocational needs of consumers with specific disabilities. Courses included in this training are Rehabilitation of Persons who are Visually Impaired, Sensory Aid Technology: Assistive Technology for those with Vision Loss, Resources for Persons who are Visually Impaired and Special Project in Rehabilitation of Persons Who are Visually Impaired.

VISIONS

DRS administers and operates the Visually Impaired Seniors In-home Outreach and Networking Services (VISIONS) program, through an independent living grant from the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration.

The VISIONS program serves individuals age 55 and older with permanent vision loss. The program uses skills trainers to provide services that enable individuals to live as independently as possible within their home and community.

Training focuses on activities of daily living such as identifying money, using large print, utilizing community resources, and using low-vision adaptive aids, including magnifiers, writing equipment, talking watches and large-button telephones. Services are provided both in person and virtually. Referrals to the Talking Book library for audio books and to other sources may also be made to maximize self-sufficiency and independence.

In fiscal year 2020, 764 consumers were served statewide through the VISIONS program.
The Behavioral Health and Corrections program facilitates a coordinated approach to serving individuals with behavioral health conditions, as well as people with criminal histories who have disabilities. The Community Assets initiative involves working with various partners such as the State Rehabilitation Council, the Statewide Independent Living Council and the Center for Independent Living Corporations in the state. Each of these valuable partners help support the vocational rehabilitation mission.

The program focuses on collaborating with other agencies in order to:

- provide information about DRS services to those who may make new client referrals to DRS and to those who may be eligible for services through DRS,
- obtain information and resources that DRS counselors can use to assist individuals with mental health conditions and substance related disorders, as well as people with disabilities who are involved in the criminal justice system, to achieve their employment goals and
- promote self-sufficiency for West Virginians with disabilities.

DRS continues its relationship with the Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation and this year, worked to facilitate corrections representation on the State Rehabilitation Council. In fiscal year 2020, DRS served approximately 88 individuals with disabilities and criminal histories.

DRS maintains active participation on the state Behavioral Health Planning Council, the West Virginia Olmsted Council and the West Virginia Achieving a Better Life Experience (WVABLE) Advisory Committee, as well as the TBI Advisory Board and the Fair Shake Network. Each of these programs work to promote wellness, recovery, resiliency and financial security for West Virginians with disabilities.

DRS continues active participation in reentry councils across the state. These councils focus on solving barriers to reentry, connecting with employers and improving outcomes through collaboration. This year, the number of reentry councils increased substantially.

DRS is an active partner in the Jobs and Hope West Virginia program and collaborates to provide West Virginians in recovery the opportunity to obtain career training to secure meaningful employment.

In fiscal year 2019, in cooperation with the Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, DRS released a 15-module online training for vocational rehabilitation counselors and community partner staff on effective strategies for helping people with serious mental illnesses obtain and maintain employment. Fiscal year 2020 saw a significant increase in the usage of the training modules.

Additionally, DRS continued its work with the Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation to develop a pilot project for Enhancing Employment Services for People with Mental Illness. The project involves working collaboratively with Comprehensive Behavioral Health Centers to improve employment services to mutual consumers who have serious mental illnesses. A “Virtual Kickoff Event” was held in September 2020.

The Behavioral Health, Corrections and Community Assets Program

DRS serves as the State Licensing Agency for the Randolph-Sheppard program in West Virginia. The purpose of the federal Randolph-Sheppard Act and West Virginia state law (WVC §18-10G) is to provide gainful employment for individuals who are legally blind. In carrying out the intent of Congress and the West Virginia Legislature, the Randolph-Sheppard program promotes economic opportunity and profitability through self-employment for people who are legally blind.

The Randolph-Sheppard program provides training in food service management to DRS clients who are blind and who meet eligibility requirements under the Randolph-Sheppard Act. These individuals are referred to the Randolph-Sheppard training program by DRS rehabilitation counselors. Other services include upward mobility training, in-service training, food service training, maintenance of equipment and inventory management.

Randolph-Sheppard vendors are self-employed and must possess the aptitude and abilities required to function as a business owner and manager.

The program provides services to 10 licensed, self-employed blind vendors, providing concession services to 233 governmental facilities throughout the state. Average income for vendors in West Virginia for fiscal year 2019 was $37,198 with gross sales of $807,405.
Under contract with the Social Security Administration (SSA), Disability Determination Section (DDS) makes eligibility determinations on disability claims filed by West Virginians for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). SSA fully funds DDS.

DDS processed **27,205** claims in fiscal year 2020.

During fiscal year 2020, DDS transitioned at least 75% of its staff from on-site work to telework due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent shutdowns.

DDS had hiring authority from SSA during fiscal year 2020, and the entity hired 15 additional employees with plans to continue this hiring initiative in fiscal year 2021.

DDS has begun to transition to an entirely new computer operating system, called Disability Case Processing System (DCPS), which is being implemented in all 50 states and will impact every DDS employee. This has required numerous changes fiscal processes, day-to-day operations, ordering exams, assigning claims, dispatching claims, and more. This transition should be completed in fiscal year 2021.

SSDI and SSI disability benefits have a significant economic impact for West Virginians with disabilities and their families. In 2018, an estimated 155,588 disabled West Virginians and 24,626 spouses and 37,649 dependent children of disabled workers received over $1.7 billion in Social Security and/or Supplemental Security Income payments based on disability or blindness.

Individuals eligible for SSI disability payments also receive Medicaid, and those eligible for Social Security disability payments for more than 24 months receive Medicare. The $1.7 billion in cash payments and the health insurance entitlement significantly affect the state’s economy and the quality of life for recipients.
In 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law and established the formation of a coordinated workforce development system, which consists of three core partners: WorkForce West Virginia, West Virginia Adult Education and DRS. The workforce development system is responsible for the integration of employment services to West Virginians, particularly those with barriers to employment, to increase their access to and opportunities for the employment, education, training and support services they need to succeed in the labor market.

In 2020, DRS, along with its core partners, WorkForce West Virginia and West Virginia Adult Education, submitted the two-year modification to the Unified State Plan. The Unified State Plan delineates the road ahead for West Virginia’s workforce development system under WIOA, and how the partnering agencies will navigate that road to ensure that West Virginians, particularly those with barriers to employment, are ready and able to enter and remain in gainful employment.

As part of the Unified State Plan, six statewide goals were established:

- Maximize efficiency of the workforce development system
- Strengthen relationships with employers
- Overcome employment barriers of individuals
- Promote career pathways
- Identify and maximize postsecondary and employment opportunities for youth
- Align West Virginia’s Labor Force Participation Rate with the National Labor Force Participation Rate

DRS also continues to work towards five auxiliary goals in the Unified State Plan designed specifically to improve the employability of individuals with disabilities:

- Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities to promote attainment of a high school education or greater, in order to increase their ability to move through meaningful career pathways
- Provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities
- Provide integrated vocational rehabilitation services to West Virginians with disabilities, committing to the use of the Employment First framework, to enable them to obtain competitive, integrated employment, especially in occupations and careers within emerging industries statewide
- Improve access and availability of transportation options for DRS consumers who need transportation assistance to achieve or maintain competitive, integrated employment
- Continue to build collaborative relationships with community providers (including CRPs, Independent Living, and other community providers) to enhance the availability of services to DRS consumers

DRS is also one of eight state agencies represented on the Interagency Collaborative Team (ICT). As the ICT identifies ways to more effectively serve citizens seeking employment and employers who need trained and qualified workers, DRS involvement ensures that people with disabilities are given due consideration.

The ICT continued its focus on expanding business services teams so that all seven workforce regions can better serve employers by coordinating visits and sharing resources. All DRS employment specialists are members of those teams, and they offer their unique abilities and expertise in helping individuals with disabilities to become employed and self-sufficient.

DRS actively supports and assists WorkForce West Virginia in honoring the commitment of seamless access to employment services for all citizens. Formal agreements among DRS and its WorkForce partners specify how DRS will contribute needed expertise, share costs and otherwise support the WorkForce West Virginia infrastructure.
State Rehabilitation Council

The West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a federally mandated partner with DRS and assists in the development of goals and priorities, programs and policies. The SRC also contributes toward the development of DRS' portion of the Unified State Plan.

The SRC is responsible for reviewing and analyzing the effectiveness and satisfaction of rehabilitation services provided by DRS from information gathered from DRS clients. The SRC conducts two consumer satisfaction surveys, one of which targets youth with disabilities who are transitioning from high school to postsecondary education or employment and another that targets the remaining client population, asking consumers to rate the effectiveness of services received through DRS. This information is evaluated by an independent consultant, who prepares a summary report that is disseminated to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), the SRC and DRS staff.

Keeping abreast of national trends, trainings, legislative agendas and innovative networking is vital to the success of the SRC. To assure this aspect is met, the SRC participates in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and is an active trainer for the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). The SRC executive director serves as the Region 3 liaison for the SRC and as vice chair of the NCSRC.

SRC members are appointed by the governor, according to the provisions of the federal Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 and are dedicated to helping ensure that people with disabilities identify and achieve their individual vocational rehabilitation goals.

Statewide Independent Living Council

In partnership with DRS, the Statewide Independent Living Council is responsible for jointly planning and submitting the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) every three years. The council also monitors and evaluates the implementation and effectiveness of the plan.

The council’s mission is to ensure that people with disabilities have access to community-based resources that promote personal choice and facilitate the fulfillment of their independent living goals.

The council, in cooperation with DRS and the centers for independent living, coordinates an annual survey of consumer satisfaction of all individuals who receive independent living services. Through collaboration and systems advocacy, the council works to ensure the development of appropriate services and public policies affecting people with disabilities.

DRS contracts with the council to administer the Ron Yost Personal Assistance Services Program, which reimburses West Virginians with various disabilities an hourly rate to hire personal assistants to help them with everyday tasks that they cannot perform on their own.

Consumer Affairs Committees

DRS has four Consumer Affairs Committees that support its mission by working to empower people with disabilities in making informed choices and achieving equality of opportunity, meaningful employment, independent living and economic and social self-sufficiency.

With local leadership, the Consumer Affairs Committees work independently as concerned citizens to plan and carry out a wide variety of activities in cooperation with community leaders in business, government, healthcare, education and others. Committee activities address a broad range of shared goals, including public awareness and support for the rights, individual dignity, personal responsibility, full inclusion, equal access, self-determination and community involvement for all people with disabilities.

DRS provides guidance, information and other resources to committees statewide through its consumer affairs liaison and district offices. Membership is open to anyone wishing to participate. All members are volunteers, and all meetings are open to the public.
Bryan Baker is a chaplain at Children’s National Hospital in Washington DC, where he works with nephrology and cardiac patients in the cardiac intensive care unit and the heart and kidney unit.

No two days are the same for him at work. His day usually starts the night before when he reviews the surgical schedule for the next day, so he knows what patients and families will need extra support the next day. The patients with whom he works are all children. He may spend time with a mother in one room, preparing her for the impending death of her child, and then in another room he may play video games with a kid to provide interaction and emotional support.

Another significant aspect of his job, especially during the pandemic, is providing support and counseling to hospital staff, whether they are trying to manage the day-to-day struggles of their work, deal with the loss of a particular patient, or endure the loss of a coworker due to COVID-19.

Tori Bell has worked as a nurse in the pediatrics clinic for Marietta Memorial Hospital for two years. On her job, she prepares patients, from newborns to those under age 18, to see the doctor. That involves taking vitals, getting them in a room, administering vaccinations, performing swab tests to check for COVID-19 and the flu, and much more. She sees approximately 30 patients a day.

With the pandemic, the clinic made changes in the way they see patients, restructuring the day, so they could do wellness checks during the first part of the day and then see patients who are actively sick toward the end of the day. Only one parent could accompany a child into the clinic, and everyone above age three must wear a mask, which is not always well received by those coming into the office.

In addition to many extra precautions to protect people from COVID-19, it is not uncommon for Tori and her coworkers to have to deal with parents who are angry about the clinic’s policies, which only adds to the stress of the situation.

Erica Brown works as a case manager for Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare in Roanoke, Virginia, where she assists people with disabilities, specifically those with developmental disabilities.

Her job is to provide one-on-one assistance to link her clients with community support services, which can consist of disability-related waiver programs, day support programs, group homes, dental and doctor appointments, medication, insurance and other needs.

When the pandemic hit, things changed dramatically for her and her clients. Erica’s office quickly transitioned to remote work, which meant new rules and guidelines to protect everyone from exposure to COVID-19.

The change has been a challenging adjustment for the nearly 30 individuals with disabilities for whom she coordinates services, many who didn’t understand why they could no longer interact with her in person.
Unsung Heroes of 2020

**Sean Cain** is a registered nurse for Jefferson Hospital near Pittsburgh, PA. He works in the hospital’s cardiac catheterization lab, where he assists with a variety of procedures. This can involve working side-by-side with the cardiologist or performing a level of sedation that requires him to maintain the patient’s airway, monitor vital signs and give necessary medications.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Sean has seen an increase in seriously ill COVID-19 patients with complications or side effects, such as blood clots that flow to the heart, that require procedures in the cardiac catheterization lab.

In his spare time, Sean has volunteered to help in the hospital’s intensive care unit (ICU) treating COVID-19 patients and others who are critically ill.

At his job, Sean must take many safety precautions. If he is dealing with a patient that has COVID-19 or could potentially have the virus, Sean prefers to wear an industrial N-100 mask, in addition to his other personal protective equipment (PPE) that literally covers him from head to toe.

**Kayla Conard** has been deaf since she was a baby, and she is a daycare worker for Nicholas County Starting Points in Richwood.

On the job, Kayla helps teachers in the classroom. She also takes care of toddlers and babies – changing diapers and pull-ups, getting snacks, putting children down for naps and so much more. They have overcome communication barriers by using pictures if Kayla is unable to recognize what a child needs or wants. A few of the kids are learning some of the basic sign language that Kayla uses throughout the day.

Prior to the pandemic, cleaning and sanitizing were part of Kayla’s responsibilities. However, since the beginning of COVID-19, she has to do more intensive, deep cleaning of toys and surface areas to try to protect the children from getting sick.

**Maggie DeBolt** works for Marshall Pediatrics as a resident physician. As a second-year resident, Maggie’s responsibilities are vast, and her schedule is rarely constant. She rotates between the Pediatrics Clinic, where she sees patients in a setting similar to a typical doctor’s office, and the pediatrics floor of Cabell Huntington Hospital, where she works with patients who are hospitalized, including those in the pediatric ICU.

In the hospital, she works 12-hour shifts, which alternate between days and nights every couple of weeks. Patients range in age from newborn to 18 years old.

Working with kids poses additional challenges. Most do not or cannot wear a mask, depending on the circumstances, and examinations require close proximity between the doctor and the patient. “This morning we had to wrestle a kid to look in the back of his throat, so dad’s holding him down, I’m squeezing his cheeks and then they cough right in your face,” explained Maggie.
Unsung Heroes of 2020

Christina DeMoss is a medical assistant for Mountain State ENT & Facial Plastic Surgery, Inc. in Beckley.

Christina works one on one with patients every day. She handles triage, where she takes vitals, including temperature, blood pressure and pulse, and she asks the necessary intake questions for patients to be seen by the doctor. Other responsibilities include drawing blood, giving allergy injections, doing COVID-19 tests and much more. While she does not assist with surgical procedures, Christina handles post-surgery requirements like removing stitches and wound care.

The pandemic made an already hectic situation even more frenzied, including more paperwork and extra cleaning between patients which extended her workday. Her and her coworkers must wear a mask every day. When performing COVID-19 tests or if a patient is experiencing symptoms, they have to dress in full personal protective equipment.

Jodi Griffith is a registered nurse in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Charleston Area Medical Center (CAMC) Women’s and Children’s Hospital.

Working in the NICU at CAMC, Jodi takes care of premature babies or those that have respiratory distress, other anomalies or genetic birth defects, or have been born addicted to drugs. She works a 12-hour shift at a time, where she has her own patient assignment of specific babies that she cares for, including feeding and bathing them, taking vital signs, administering medicine and more. Friends assume that she gets to hold the babies to comfort them, but many are on ventilators or life support, and it’s rare that she gets to do that.

With the pandemic, Jodi has to wear a mask the entire time she is at work. Certain invasive procedures, like suctioning a patient, or if a patient is suspected to be positive for COVID-19, then she is required to wear an N-95 mask, a face shield, boot covers, a gown, gloves and a bonnet.

If a mother is positive for COVID-19 or is suspected to be positive, the baby has to be quarantined as soon as it’s born until test results confirm or negate the diagnosis. If a baby is sick, then it immediately goes to the NICU. Jodi also volunteered to work on the NICU COVID Team.

Kimberly Harding-Dudding is a registered nurse for Glenwood Park Skilled Nursing & Assisted Living Center in Princeton. Since October 2020, she has served as unit manager, where she oversees day-to-day patient care, as well as supervises the licensed practical nurses and the certified nursing assistants. Another primary function during the pandemic has been to keep COVID out of their facility.

Kimberly worked as an oncology nurse and in the emergency room and the critical care unit at Princeton Community Hospital (PCH) during the outbreak of COVID-19. While at PCH, Kimberly actively treated COVID patients and from that experience, she determined that it was the scariest disease she had seen, and she was used to treating cancer patients.

One of the most difficult parts of her current job was seeing the patients decline from the isolation and sadness created by the pandemic. For the longest time, the facility was closed to the outside world, and the residents’ only interaction with family and loved ones was through glass windows. Family members frequently became angry and upset with staff, but Kimberly understood their frustration. She described the whole situation as “heartbreaking.”
Neil Hasen is a truck driver for Hidden Creek Transportation out of Somerset, KY. He drives a truck with a 53-foot box trailer, hauling groceries, clothes, mail, beer, whiskey, medical supplies and more to destinations across the lower 48 states. He is gone for two to three weeks at a time, driving at least 11 hours every day, and there’s no such thing as a sick day.

As states locked down, Neil’s biggest issues revolved around finding food, a place to shower and a safe place to sleep at night.

His tractor-trailer is about 80 feet long. Going through a McDonald’s drive-through window is not an option. He has literally gone for days eating only the food he can carry in his truck which is very limited. While he has a small refrigerator, it only holds six cans of soda and the weight requirements for his truck and lack of space further restrict the food supplies he can carry with him.

Neil indicated that his access to food improved as lockdowns lifted. Now, he can usually find places that have a phone number to order a hot meal and he can pick it up outside the establishment. Prior to that, he was existing on bags of potato chips and peanut butter crackers.

Stacey Hose works as a home health aide for West Virginia’s Choice in Keyser. Stacey’s work is essential and could not stop because of the pandemic.

As a home health aide, Stacey takes care of others by providing in-home care services to clients who need help with day-to-day tasks to remain independent. Those tasks include assistance with bathing, dressing, grooming, meal preparation and light housekeeping.

The pandemic requires Stacey to take extra precautions while working. She has to wear a mask while she is in her client’s home and wash or sanitize her hands frequently.

Zach Meadows is a fifth-grade teacher at Lashmeet/Matoaka School in Mercer County. Zach started his career in the middle of a global pandemic. And the only thing constant has been the need to be adaptable.

The educational day has been shortened but that just means that Zach must cram more information into less time. He spends the majority of his day in his classroom, teaching his kids everything including math, science, handwriting, English and social studies. Physical education and band are the only two resources for which the students leave the classroom.

In anticipation of an inconsistent schedule for the school year, Zach started out using the online learning platform. Students must submit all assignments electronically even when they are in the classroom, which helped them to learn and adjust to the remote learning system before they got into a situation where they were forced to utilize it.

He tries to keep the anxiety level in his classroom very low because school is a safe haven for many kids. Not knowing if they will be in school from one day to another has been stressful for the kids, and he tries to keep the atmosphere light.
Unsung Heroes of 2020

Alexis Paxson is a pharmacist for CVS in Inwood. Her top job responsibility is to ensure patient safety. She reviews prescriptions issued by doctors and checks them for accuracy after they are filled by her pharmacy technicians. She also gives flu shots and other vaccinations, works with insurance companies on billing prescriptions and fields numerous questions from concerned customers.

The onset of the pandemic caused significant changes at her job. Their drive-through window swiftly became busier than their in-store pharmacy counter. Alexis also had to stay abreast of changes that were being made, due to the pandemic, by the Board of Pharmacy relating to dispensing certain medications, as well as policy and benefit changes from insurance companies.

Alexis works and lives in the eastern panhandle, which quickly became one of the big hotspot areas in the state. The pandemic really started hitting home for her when customers began coming in and telling her they were picking up prescriptions for a family member or friend that was sick with COVID.

Shania Russell is an emergency medical technician (EMT) for Harrison County Emergency Squad. As a first responder, Shania’s EMT responsibilities put her on the front line for dealing with many volatile situations. The job is very unpredictable, and she never knows exactly what she is walking into when responding to an emergency. She works 24-hour shifts, usually three times within a week, but her schedule varies from week to week.

A call to 911 that grandma fell and needs assistance can quickly turn into treating a cardiac arrest once she and her partner arrive at the scene and assess the situation. Administering Narcan to an overdose patient may put Shania at risk if the individual wakes up fighting, which can occur frequently in these circumstances.

As an EMT, she was used to wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) when responding to emergencies. In situations where Shania is aware that she is working with a COVID-19 patient, she has to wear an N-95 mask, a gown, eye protection, and double gloves in order to protect herself from the virus.

Karen Smith is a case manager for Southern Highlands Community Mental Health Center in Princeton. Karen does assessments on new clients and manages their casework files. When she first started, she was primarily working with children, but with the onset of the pandemic, her responsibilities grew to include adult referrals as well.

As an entity that provides mental health services, they have seen an increase in clients due to COVID-19. Instances of depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts and substance use have risen during the pandemic.

Karen had not worked at her job for long before the start of the pandemic, but she still had to learn new processes. She went from doing face-to-face assessments to doing virtual appointments with clients using Zoom or the telephone. That has made her job more challenging because if someone doesn’t answer her call, then she cannot move forward to help them.
Michael Stasny works for Bright Horizons in Craigsville. He does janitorial work with a crew from Bright Horizons at Laurel Creek Hardwoods in Richwood. Bright Horizons is a community rehabilitation program in Nicholas County that has several janitorial contracts in the area and Michael works through one of those contracts.

Michael has autism and routine is very important to him. He had just started working in February 2020 and was getting used to the work and the routine when the pandemic hit. With that came different safety protocols, including taking his temperature every day, wearing masks and sanitizing his hands more frequently, as well as altered work schedules and tasks that involved increased disinfecting of items at his jobsite.

Michael is a hard worker, and he adapted very quickly to the changes that came along with the pandemic. He maintains a positive attitude and a willingness to help others.

Samantha Stutler works on the mobile janitorial crew at SW Resources in Parkersburg. Samantha travels with her supervisor and other crew members to different office buildings in the Parkersburg area. She starts her day at 2 p.m. and works until they finish, which can be as late as midnight. They clean up to seven different buildings a day, depending on the contracts and their schedule.

At her job, Samantha and the other crew members must wear masks during their entire shift to protect themselves from COVID-19.

With the pandemic, Samantha continued working the whole time, but her hours were significantly reduced because many of the office buildings SW Resources cleans were closed because of the stay-at-home order. The pay cut she incurred due to the reduced hours has probably been one of the most stressful aspects of the pandemic for her.

Taylor Wilson does janitorial work in the Clarksburg State Office Building and is employed by WorkAble Industries, Inc.

Consistency and routine are extremely important to Taylor due to the nature of his disabilities, including autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. But the pandemic quickly disrupted his everyday work habits.

Taylor spends his eight-hour workday deep cleaning at least 14 restrooms in the building. He cannot enter the building without wearing a mask, and he must obtain approval from his supervisor to leave the building. Another significant change related to the elevators, and only two people could be on one at any time, which made it more difficult for him to move from floor to floor to do his work.

Taylor gets up at 4 a.m. to start his job. He works from 5 a.m. to 1 p.m. five days a week, and he chooses to not let COVID-19 worry him. He just does what is asked of him.
Cole Zulauf works for Cherry River Construction in Red House. He helps to prepare a construction site for a future building, which can involve excavating and grading land, laying exterior piping, and digging ditches for footers. The work is very physically demanding, but Cole enjoys doing it.

Unfortunately, construction work can be sporadic and last March, Cole was just getting ready to return to work after being laid off for a few months. When the pandemic hit, he was laid off again until mid-June.

When he returned to work, the primary safety precaution implemented to protect Cole and his coworkers from COVID-19 was “social distancing” at the jobsite. Workers were encouraged to stay as far away from each other as possible. By working out in the open air, they have an advantage against people who interact in closed-in spaces.

For Cole, the pandemic has created additional stress. Coworkers have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. Those individuals quarantined as needed but the positive test results would leave him wondering how close he might’ve been to an individual with the virus and questioning whether he needed to go get tested. Financially, he also has not made the money that he originally anticipated for the year, but he knows that could not be helped.
## Source of Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Appropriations</td>
<td>14,871,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Grants</td>
<td>38,192,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Income</td>
<td>764,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Revenue</td>
<td>899,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Funds</strong></td>
<td><strong>$54,727,820</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Expenditures by Program Category

**Administration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Rehabilitation Program:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Services</td>
<td>7,304,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling, Guidance and Placement</td>
<td>10,663,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Determination Services</td>
<td>16,765,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Attendant Care Program</td>
<td>131,575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Living</td>
<td>696,306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Blind (VISIONS)</td>
<td>320,339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Employment Transition Services</td>
<td>7,316,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randolph-Sheppard Program</td>
<td>932,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Yost Personal Assistance Services Fund</td>
<td>333,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported Employment</td>
<td>358,806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported Employment Extended Care</td>
<td>72,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop Development</td>
<td>1,817,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditures</strong></td>
<td><strong>$54,727,820</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Classification of Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Services</td>
<td>25,021,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Expense</td>
<td>8,828,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs and Alterations</td>
<td>3,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>3,371,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchased Case Services</td>
<td>17,503,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$54,727,820</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statement of Funds and Expenses for the year ended June 30, 2020
Contact Information

DRS Administrative Offices
State Capitol
P.O. Box 50890
Charleston, WV 25305
304-356-2060

Beckley
800 New River Town Center
Beckley, WV 25801
304-256-6900

Charleston
4701 MacCorkle Avenue, SE
Charleston, WV 25304
304-356-2371

Clarksburg
153 West Main Street, Suite F
Clarksburg, WV 26301
304-625-6044

Elkins
1025 North Randolph Avenue
Elkins, WV 26241
304-637-0205

Fairmont
WV State Office Building
416 Adams Street, Suite 240
Fairmont, WV 26554
304-367-2714

Huntington
2699 Park Avenue, Suite 200
Huntington, WV 25704
304-528-5585

Keyser
67 North Tornado Way
Keyser, WV 26726
304-788-2313

Lewisburg
3293 Jefferson Street North, Suite 105
Lewisburg, WV 24901
304-647-7515

Logan
P.O. Box 896
Logan, WV 25601
304-792-7060

Martinsburg
489 Mid-Atlantic Parkway, Suite 2
Martinsburg, WV 25404
304-267-0005

Moorefield
151 Robert C. Byrd Industrial Park Road
Suite 3
Moorefield, WV 26836
304-538-2701

Morgantown
1415 Earl Core Road
Morgantown, WV 26505
304-285-3155

Mullens
316 Howard Avenue
Mullens, WV 25882
304-294-5653

New Martinsville
Workforce Career Center
257 N, State Route 2
New Martinsville, WV 26155
304-455-0912

Parkersburg
State Office Building
400 5th Street
Parkersburg, WV 26101
304-420-4580

Point Pleasant
2807 Jackson Avenue
Suite 200
Point Pleasant, WV 25550
304-675-0867

Princeton
195 Davis Street
Princeton, WV 24739
304-425-1256

Rehabilitation Programs
10 McJunkin Road
Nitro, WV 25143
304-760-7166

Ripley
206 Stone Drive
Ripley, WV 25271
304-373-0313

Romney
WVSDB – IRC Building
301 East Main Street
Romney, WV 26757
304-822-4806

Spencer
321 Market Street
Spencer, WV 25276
304-927-0954

Summersville
830 Northside Drive
Suite 113
Summersville, WV 26651
304-872-0813

Teays Valley
115 Liberty Square
Hurricane, WV 25526
304-760-7082

Weirton
100 Municipal Plaza
Suite 200
Weirton, WV 26062
304-723-5311

Welch
110 Park Avenue
Suite 200
Welch, WV 24801
304-436-3175

Weston
306 Market Place Mall
Weston, WV 26452
304-269-0547

Wheeling
1324 Chapline Street
Suite 200
Wheeling, WV 26003
304-238-1092

Disability Determination Section
Charleston
500 Quarrier Street
Suite 500
Charleston, WV 25301
304-343-5055

Clarksburg Federal Center
320 West Pike Street
Suite 120
Clarksburg, WV 26301
304-624-0200