

# Pre-Employment Transition Services @WORK



**VIRGINIA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL  
ANNUAL REPORT 2018**



**DARS** | VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR AGING  
AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

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## MESSAGE FROM SRC CHAIRPERSON

It is my honor to share with you the 2018 annual report of the State Rehabilitation Council. I offer an overview in this [video](#).

The SRC provides advice and guidance on the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program of the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), including the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC). Its members, who are appointed by the Governor, are committed to fulfilling their responsibilities and to the employment of Virginians with significant disabilities: employment with good wages and that lead to advancement in their chosen field of work. They also are passionate about improving the lives of Virginians with disabilities through their work and individual efforts.



I hope that you will take the time to review this report on the successes of the VR program at DARS and the goal and evolution of the Pre-Employment Transition Services, or Pre-ETS, for students with disabilities in our Commonwealth. Learn more about Pre-ETS from this DARS [video](#).

Linda Garris-Bright, Chair

## MESSAGE FROM DARS COMMISSIONER

The leadership of DARS and I so appreciate the partnership, advice and guidance provided by the committed members of our State Rehabilitation Council. It has been a challenging year for our VR program with budget issues and staff changes. Throughout, council members have performed their responsibilities with enthusiasm for the great work of our program, which served more than 26,000 individuals with disabilities. As a result of DARS' services, 3,302 persons became successfully employed. Assistance to program participants was not limited to obtaining gainful employment, though. Students, youth and adults were supported with developing skills and confidence that enabled greater independence and inclusion in their communities and an enhanced quality of life.



This year's SRC annual report focuses on our innovative Pre-Employment Transition Services program. Pre-ETS collaborate with students, their families, schools, community organizations and employers to promote successful transitions from school to work and adult life. Young people with disabilities represent a vital part of our society and we are committed to ensuring they have every opportunity to achieve high-quality employment and enjoy successful and healthy life starts.

By believing in all students' abilities and effectively delivering these transition services, Virginia's youth are better prepared to enter adulthood, make informed decisions, participate in and complete postsecondary education and training, and embark on career paths. We see Pre-ETS not only as an investment in Virginia students with disabilities, but in the Commonwealth's bright future.

We are still in the early stages of delivering Pre-ETS, expanding partnerships with our Employment Services Organizations and Centers for Independent Living to assist. These services and collaborations will be impactful.

I am tremendously appreciative of our VR employees at DARS and WWRC who provide such excellence and dedication in their service. I hope that you will read this report or watch this [video](#) to learn of the successes of our VR program and of the consumers we serve.

Kathryn A. Hayfield, Commissioner, Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

# CONSUMER SUCCESS STORIES

Daquan Brown and Yasmine Harrison describe their Pre-ETS participation in this [video](#).

## DAQUAN BROWN

Daquan Brown began Pre-ETS in February 2018 as a 10th grader, home-schooled through an online educational program. He and his mother met with VR counselor Talisha McAuley-Davis at the DARS Petersburg office. A vocational evaluator focused on job exploration counseling, one of Pre-ETS' five tenets, with Daquan to determine his career interests and gain insight into his work values.



Daquan attended the Petersburg office's Academy EXP! camp in July designed for high school students receiving Pre-ETS or transition services. Academy participants toured three businesses to see the types of jobs available; visited community resources including a bank and workforce center; and shopped for interview-appropriate clothing.

He completed two work-based learning experiences at IHG Army Hotels at Fort Lee and Virginia State University's Multi-Purpose Center, exploring various career fields, learning more about the workplace environment, enhancing his job seeking skills and practicing appropriate work behaviors.

"Daquan is a well-spoken, polite and respectful young man and has been actively involved with Pre-ETS," McAuley-Davis said. The Pre-ETS activities culminated in Daquan landing his first part-time job, with IHG Army Hotels, making \$10.50 an hour. "It's going to give me work experience for later on in life," Brown said. "My plan is to finish school and go to college, major in counseling or music and have a career."

## YASMINE HARRISON

Yasmine Harrison, a junior at Bethel High School in Hampton, began working with VR Counselor Stacy Clark in the DARS Hampton office last spring. She and her mother, Greta Harrison, met with Stacy to talk about life after high school and transitioning into the workforce.



During their visit, Yasmine agreed to participate in Pre-ETS with the plan to strengthen her soft skills and work skills through work-based learning experiences.

Yasmine, her mother and her counselor discussed possible options based on her interests and skills. In July, she began a summer internship with the City of Hampton. "I worked in Human Resources and I loved it," she said.

After her internship ended in August, she sought more work-based experience by interning in the DARS Hampton office where she helps staff one afternoon a week by organizing and scanning documents. "I'm helping with scanning and whatever else they need me to do," said Yasmine. "It's fun."

"I think this Pre-ETS program is essential right now," said Greta Harrison. "Yassy met with them. They got her a great internship and supported that internship. There was a lot of great communication with me. It was just a wonderful experience."

# SRC MEMBERS, ACTIVITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 2017-2018 SRC MEMBERS

Shaquwanda Baker, Manassas  
Linda Garris-Bright, Chair, Virginia Beach  
Garrett Brumfield, Roanoke  
Pamela Cobler, Martinsville  
Nichole Drummond, Vice Chair,  
Springfield  
Brian Evans, Richmond  
Kathy Hayfield, Richmond  
David Head, Moseley  
Daniel Irwin, Mechanicsville  
Deloris Johnson, Harrisonburg  
Angela Leonard, Roanoke  
Madeline Nunnally, Richmond  
Bruce Phipps, Roanoke  
Justin Spurlock, Richmond  
Shawn Utt, Pulaski  
Jennifer Witteborg, Rixeyville



## ATTEND A MEETING

The quarterly SRC meetings are open to the public. Meeting locations, dates and times are posted at [www.va-src.org](http://www.va-src.org), [www.vadars.org/NewCalendarEvent.html](http://www.vadars.org/NewCalendarEvent.html) and <https://commonwealthcalendar.virginia.gov>.

## SRC ACTIVITIES FOR 2018

The State Rehabilitation Council held four meetings and an annual planning retreat to review the effectiveness of the VR program during 2017 and develop recommendations for the program. The Council met in June in Alexandria at the DARS office and in August at the Blue Ridge Autism and Achievement Center. It held two meetings in Richmond.

At the November planning retreat, Chair Linda Garris-Bright, Vice Chair Dack Axelle and former Chair Bruce Phipps presented an overview of the SRC to the DARS Skills for Leadership participants. The Council heard a presentation from Steve Wooderson, executive director of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, on that organization's strategic plans to enhance the employment of individuals with disabilities.

The Council reviewed and provided input on a proposal from the agency to change the hiring credentials for qualified VR counselors under the agency's comprehensive system of personnel development. Council members expressed concern that the proposed standard would no longer allow individuals with a bachelor's degree who meet the knowledge, skills and abilities of the position to be hired into a trainee

status as currently allowed by DARS policy. The Council recommended that the agency delay moving forward with the proposed modification to provide more time to explore and study the matter. The proposed standard was subsequently changed based on feedback from the SRC and other factors.

The SRC approved its annual memorandum of agreement with DARS to conduct the consumer satisfaction survey and approved the annual report on the satisfaction survey results. A subcommittee, chaired by Daniel Irwin, considered possible changes to the consumer satisfaction survey and how the survey is administered. The SRC continued to assist with the survey's design and the utilization of the results to improve the VR program.

Chair Linda Garris-Bright presented the 2018 Chairperson's Recognition Award to Daniel Irwin for his leadership in serving as chair of the Council's consumer satisfaction subcommittee.

The SRC contacted members of the Virginia General Assembly and other policymakers to provide information on the value of the VR program through the distribution of its 2017 annual report.

Linda Garris-Bright represented the SRC at the National Consortium of State Rehabilitation Councils Training Conference in Greenville, South Carolina.

Shaquwanda Baker represented the SRC on the Return on Investment (ROI) Advisory Committee and the SRC supported the agency in its ROI grant submission.

The Council recommended the hiring of new VR hearing officers and the contract renewal of others.

The Council created a subcommittee to provide advice and guidance to DARS in the development of the next comprehensive statewide needs assessment. The Council was briefed on the potential plans and schedule for the next needs assessment and the subcommittee reviewed the survey questions and methodology.

## SRC RECOMMENDATIONS ON VR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT FOR 2019

The SRC will continue to be advised on a quarterly basis about the status of Order of Selection and establish a more consultative role with DARS on its implementation, especially plans for the opening and closing of priority categories and addressing the waiting list.

DARS will continue to strive to improve wages earned by consumers, with a special focus on increasing the number of hours of work.

DARS should explore and perform data analysis to determine the cause in the increase in supported employment and job coach training services costs. Results of this analysis should be presented to the SRC and explained.

The SRC wants to be informed on the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) performance measures, including the goals established for these measures and DARS' achievement towards those goals.

The SRC wants the assistance of DARS staff to help the Council better fulfill its responsibility to coordinate activities with other councils in Virginia, in particular the Statewide Independent Living Council.

The SRC has been a partner with DARS in the development and implementation of the VR consumer satisfaction survey. The Council appreciates this partnership and receiving the results of the annual survey. DARS should continue to explore and perform data analysis on results and trends of the consumer satisfaction survey and share this information with the VR staff to explore means for improvement as needed. The SRC wants to be informed of the plan.

## VR 2018 PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES, HIGHLIGHTS

The VR program empowers Virginians with significant disabilities to receive the training and skills that they need to enter the workforce or to retain employment. During the past year, 3,302 consumers with the most significant disabilities became employed after receiving VR services.

DARS instituted and began reporting on the WIOA new performance indicators. The data come from the Virginia Employment Commission and do not include federal employment, out-of-state employment or employers with five or fewer employees. The following data on six indicators are for Program Year 2017 (July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017):

- Percentage of program participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the VR program:
  - DARS Goal — 47 %
  - DARS Achievement — 48%
- Percentage of program participants in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the VR program:
  - DARS Goal — 45%
  - DARS Achievement — 22%
- Median earnings of program participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the VR program:
  - DARS Goal — \$3,200
  - DARS Achievement — \$2,926
- Median earnings of program participants in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the VR program:
  - DARS Goal — \$3,200
  - DARS Achievement — \$3,145
- Percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or secondary school diploma or its equivalent during participation or one year from exit:
  - DARS Goal — 32%
  - DARS Achievement — 22%
- Percentage of program participants, during a program year, in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and achieving measurable skills gains towards a credential or employment:
  - DARS Goal — 32%
  - DARS Achievement — 15.4%

WIOA has an additional indicator regarding the effectiveness of working with employers. DARS does not have data on this measure to report at this time. However, DARS is recognized by our partner agencies under the WIOA Combined State Plan and nationally as a leader in business development.

Other significant VR outcomes during the past year:

- Of the 3,302 consumers who became employed, 100 percent were employed in the community at minimum wage or above
- Consumers’ median hourly wage was \$10, an increase of 50 cents over 2017
- 26,318 consumers received services, a 9.8 percent decrease due to Order of Selection and staff changes resulting from Pre-ETS implementation
- 90 percent of consumers served were considered most significantly disabled
- Majority of clients served have cognitive or other mental impairments or psychosocial impairments
- Number of clients with autism increased by 2.1 percent to 3,965
- \$21.3 million was spent on client services, \$2.1 million less than the previous year, of that:
  - \$14.7 million (69 percent) was spent on supported employment and job coach training services
  - \$1.16 million was used for training, including tuition

## ORDER OF SELECTION

DARS remained in Order of Selection, endeavoring throughout the year to serve those on the waiting list. However, the agency was unable to consistently serve all individuals determined eligible for services. All newly eligible individuals are placed on the wait list, which numbered more than 2,700 as of Nov. 1, 2018.

## CONSUMER SATISFACTION

The SRC works in partnership with DARS to assess consumers’ perspective of their VR services. The survey captures feedback from consumers during service delivery (following development of the Individualized Plan for Employment, but prior to employment). This methodology has provided several opportunities:

- More real time assessment of services
- Issues may be addressed prior to case closure
- Encourage consumer engagement while allowing consumers to contact survey staff with updates or specific requests

Highlights from the FFY 2017 survey follow. Percentages are similar to the previous three-year average (FFY 2014-2016) and indicative of real time assessment (what was happening at the time of survey completion).

SURVEY ITEM	Percentage of “Yes” Responses
Have agreed with counselors on a plan for reaching their job goal	75%
Counselors were helpful in making connections	71%
Counselors kept in contact	70%
Counselors were meeting timetables	66%
Counselors were doing what they said they would do	72%
Consumers believed everyone was working together to help	71%



# WWRC 2018 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center, located in Fishersville, is a key resource for DARS, providing comprehensive medical and vocational rehabilitation services to assist VR consumers to become gainfully employed. During 2018, 187 consumers who participated in vocational training became successfully employed following their training with an average hourly wage of \$10.08.

The following are the number of consumers served by service area during 2018:

- Vocational evaluation - 1,094
- Vocational evaluation (non-PERT) - 560
- Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) - 488
- PERT Transition Academy - 46
- Vocational Training - 404
- Pre-Employment Readiness and Education Program (PREP) - 482
- Medical Rehabilitation Services - 1,152
- Primary Medical Rehabilitation Services - 565

WWRC is evolving its services to support WIOA and DARS performance measures, especially those involving workforce credentials, measurable skills gains and business engagement. WWRC has evolved a WIOA-recognized workforce credential in almost every training program.

By year's end, WWRC will offer a credential in every training program. This, combined with the focus on employment in WWRC's "Medical-to-Work Program," ensures close alignment with WIOA. WWRC continues to focus on helping consumers find a career pathway, through Pre-ETS, that leads to employment that is retained over time with advancement and good wages.

The Manufacturing Specialist (MS) and Manufacturing Technician I (MT1) are examples of outstanding workforce credentials available to consumers. Recently, Laura Williams was hired by ComSonics and Rose Hilderbrand by Masco Cabinetry. Laura and Rose obtained their MS and MT1 Certifications at WWRC, and through their progress review meetings, skills gains were documented. View "[This is Where I Belong](#)" featuring Laura Williams.

Alex Haddad was WWRC's first student to meet Department of Education requirements for a "highly qualified" paraprofessional by passing the paraprofessional exam. Alex was enrolled in the Childcare/Teacher's Assistant External Training Option program. Throughout her program at WWRC and at her community training site, Wilson Elementary School, Alex demonstrated consistent growth with hard and essential skills. She attained the following certificates that are preferred in childcare employment settings: ServSafe Food Handler, Customer Service, CPR and First Aid, a bronze-level Career Readiness Certificate and Virginia Preservice Training for Child Care. Listen to the VR Workforce Studio [podcast](#) with Alex Haddad.

Learn more about WWRC at [www.wwrc.net](http://www.wwrc.net) and listen to the podcasts at <https://vrworkforcestudio.com>.

# WWRC 2018 PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

## WORKFORCE CREDENTIALS OBTAINED, FFY 2018

WIOA Recognized	
Manufacturing Specialist (MS)	14
Manufacturing Technician I (MT1)	14
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	13
Microsoft Technology Associate	9
CompTIA A+	5
CompTIA Security+	3
CompTIA Net+	1
<b>WIOA Recognized Subtotal</b>	<b>59</b>

Other Industry Recognized	
Career Readiness Certificate (CRC)	138
Customer Service Certificate (CSC)	99
OSHA-10	60
VDOT Flagger	50
ServSafe Food Handler	39
CPR and First Aid	20
NRF Customer Service and Sales	20
Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS)	11
<b>Other Industry Subtotal</b>	<b>437</b>

## PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

A new program for DARS is Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires VR agencies to set aside and spend at least 15 percent of their federal funds to provide these services to students with disabilities. In 2018, this amounted to \$10 million in federal funds.

Pre-ETS are designed to enrich transition planning and help empower students with disabilities, beginning at age 14, to maximize their future employment, economic self-sufficiency and independence. Students only need to be potentially eligible for VR services to receive Pre-ETS; they are not required to apply to the full VR program. There are no costs to a student or family for Pre-ETS.

Services include the following:

- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences
- Counseling on postsecondary education and training opportunities
- Workplace readiness training
- Instruction in self-advocacy

DARS has embraced an agency-wide approach to the delivery of Pre-ETS and the program has grown considerably this past year. Nearly 50 counselors are dedicated to this program and other DARS staff contribute to the variety of “in-house” Pre-ETS activities provided to students.

In addition, the Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID) team supports Pre-ETS academies to facilitate career exploration and WWRC offers Pre-ETS through its PERT and PREP programs and newly developed Pre-ETS Career Day. DARS also collaborates with Virginia's local school divisions, community providers and employers to identify Pre-ETS needs and deliver services.

During the past year, almost 4,000 students were served and 994 went on to apply for the VR program for continued services. More than 7,000 Pre-ETS services were provided during the year.

## STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

### CONTACT US

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### OUR MISSION

The mission of the Virginia State Rehabilitation Council, in partnership with the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, and in collaboration with advocacy groups, consumers and their families, is to ensure that Virginians with disabilities receive quality services while seeking to achieve meaningful employment, self-sufficiency and independence.

### OUR VISION

All Virginians with disabilities will have access to quality services leading to meaningful employment, self-sufficiency and independence.

Upon request, this report may be made available in Spanish or another language.

Please contact: [Jennifer.Woodward@dars.virginia.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Woodward@dars.virginia.gov) | (804) 662-7663 (fax)

Jennifer Woodward

DARS/State Rehabilitation Council

8004 Franklin Farms Drive

Henrico, VA 23229

# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

If you are interested in a gubernatorial appointment to the SRC, you may begin the application process with this form by indicating your:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please email, fax or mail this form to the SRC administrative assistant at:

[Jennifer.Woodward@dars.virginia.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Woodward@dars.virginia.gov) | (804) 662-7663 (fax)

Jennifer Woodward

DARS/State Rehabilitation Council

8004 Franklin Farms Drive

Henrico, VA 23229

Upon receipt, someone from the SRC will contact you to discuss your interest. However, to officially apply for this appointment, you must contact the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office. You may obtain information about the formal application process by calling the Secretary's office at (804) 786-2441 or applying [online](#).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THE SRC.