Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council
Full Council Meeting Agenda
February 20, 2025
9:00 A.M. – 2:15 P.M.

Microsoft Teams Meeting
Meeting Link
Meeting ID: 286 148 059 579   **Passcode:** Lo3jk2D4
To join by phone only, call (608) 571-2209   **Phone Conference ID:** 963 003 34#

9:00 – 9:15	**Roll Call and Introductions** **Announcements** **Quorum Check** **Approval of Minutes – November 2024**
9:15 – 9:45	**Committee Updates and Committee Member Approvals:** • Council Engagement Committee • Performance Measures and Quality Assurance Committee • Policy Review and Administration Committee • Services to Business Committee • Executive Committee o By-law update review
9:45 – 10:15	**CAP Report** Jen Espinoza Forlenza, Advocacy Specialist for Disability Rights Wisconsin
10:15 – 10:30	**Break**
10:30 – 11:30	**CSNA Presentation** Public Consulting Group (PCG)
11:30 – 12:00	**Lunch Break**
12:00 – 12:15	**Public Comment**
12:15 – 1:15	**DVR Administrative Update** Meredith Dressel, DVR Administrator
1:15 – 2:00	**Blind or Visually Impaired Wisconsin Citizens Presentation** Rob Buettner, President & CEO of Beyond Vision

Denise Jess, Executive Director of WI Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired

2:00 – 2:15   **Review Action Items and Identify Future Agenda Topics**

2:15   **Adjourn**

*Public comment is limited to the time listed on the agenda. Comments can be sent at any time to: DVRWIRehabCouncil@dwd.wisconsin.gov.

 *Comments sent to that e-mail box will be read to the full council at the next meeting unless a specific subcommittee is listed. If a specific subcommittee is listed, comments will be sent directly to them and reviewed at their next committee meeting.

A Statement of Mission
The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council, working on behalf of Wisconsin residents with disabilities, will review, analyze, and advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) regarding the performance of its responsibilities in providing quality services to persons with disabilities.

The Client Assistance Program

Update to Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council

Service Requests for 1st Quarter FY 25
October 1st, 2024 - December 31st, 2024

February 20th, 2025

Request for Assistance *October 1st, 2024 - December 31st, 2024*	26
Information and Referrals	4
PACAP grant PABSS* grant	3 1
Open Service Requests	22
PACAP grant PABSS* grant	12 10

*Protection and Advocacy grant for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS)

QUESTIONS?

Thank you!

jenniferf@drwi.org

disabilityrights | WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD)

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

CSNA Recommendations

February 20, 2025

PUBLIC
CONSULTING GROUP

Solutions that Matter

Agenda

Introduction to Public Consulting Group (PCG)

Founded in 1986, PCG is headquartered in Boston, MA and employs more than 2,000 professionals in 35 offices

Public Sector Focus:
Management consulting to assist public sector agencies better serve their targeted population, specifically:

- Human Services
- Health
- Education
- Technology Consulting

Current contracts in all
50 States

More than
3,000
open contracts globally at any point in time

Over
2,000+
employees throughout the US

Introduction to PCG – National VR Work

Supporting sustainable changes to VR agencies through:

- Evaluation
- Systems change
- Rate setting
- Training and technical assistance
- Billing and registration solutions
- Pre-ETS

■ VR Experience
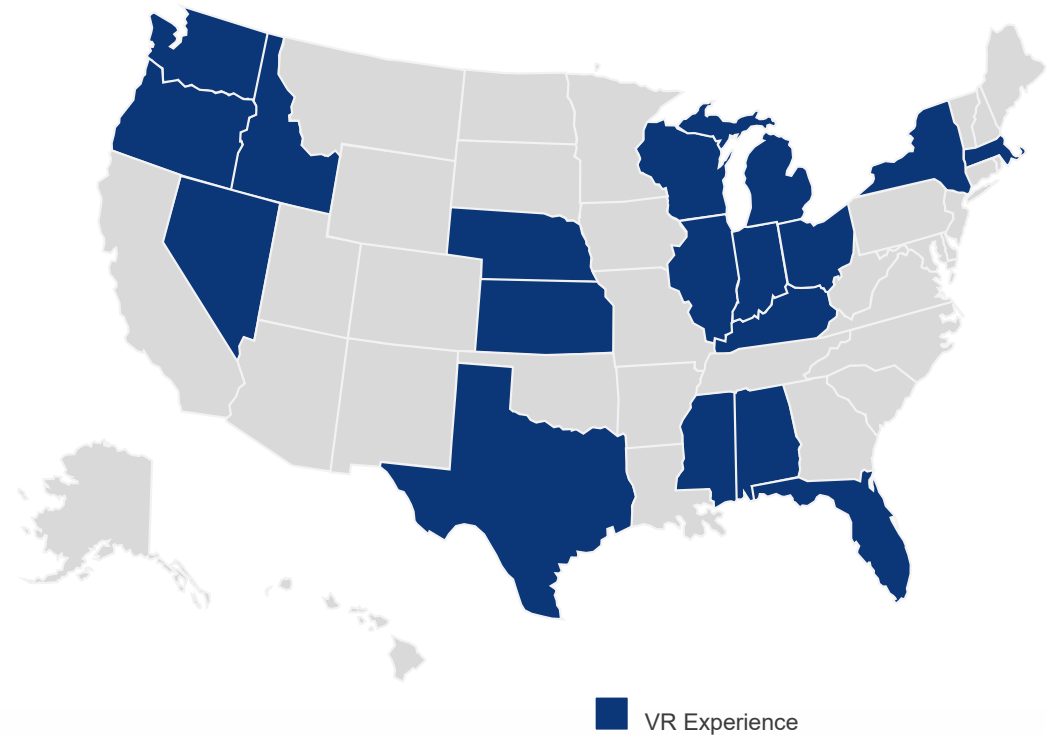
CSNA Overview

PCG completed data collection and analysis for the RSA-required Wisconsin Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA).

- Conducted significant research using various methods, including reviewing demographics and conducting statistical review of many other topics such as spending, case outcomes, etc.

- Conducted stakeholder engagement using:

  - Surveys

  - Focus groups

  - In-depth key informant interviews

- Analyzed research and formed statement of conclusions.

- Identified potential priorities and strategies, including underserved populations.

- Created the final CSNA document.

CSNA Overview – Goals

1. Evaluate Wisconsin individuals with disabilities, particularly identifying the VR service needs of individuals who:

    • Have the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

    • Who are minorities and others who have been unserved or underserved;

    • Are served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and

    • Are youth with disabilities, and students with disabilities.*

2. Evaluate the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs.

3. Strengthening relationships with stakeholders and improve network.

4. Provide insight into previously unknown concerns.

5. Make services known to underserved populations.

*including their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services and needs of individuals with disabilities for transition services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services provided under this part are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Quantitative Methodology

- PCG collected case management data (demographics, service usage, service expenditures, etc.) from DVR's case management system:
    - All cases that were open at any point between July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023
- Analyzed case management data to identify potentially underserved populations:
    - Collapsed case data to create summary categories (race, disability, and total cost of services)
    - Aligned reporting with American Community Survey definitions
    - Retained case records with the most recent application date to ensure one unique record per consumer
- Conducted surveys:

Survey	Qualifying Populations
Consumers / Participants	Individuals with a disability who currently, or in the past, had an open DVR case.
Service Provider & Community Partners	Providers and community partners who contract with DVR to provide services to support employment outcomes.
DVR Staff	DVR employees who support consumers.
Employer	Community businesses who employ individuals with disabilities.
Non-Participant	Individuals with disabilities who reported no open case with DVR in the recent past.

Qualitative Methodology

- PCG collected qualitative data to:

    - Understand in more detail the views and needs of different stakeholders

    - Explore previously undetected concerns

    - Ensure individuals felt heard

- PCG gathered qualitative data using:

    - Focus groups

    - Interviews

    - Surveys

- PCG performed grounded analysis – review of data without preconceived ideas of what may be present:

    - Created summary documents that distilled qualitative data into findings

    - Identified qualitative themes that were used to inform findings and recommendations

PCG spoke with more than 130 individuals as part of our qualitative data gathering efforts.

Qualitative Methodology

Audience	Type	Total Attendance
Provider	Focus Group	26
DVR Staff	Focus Group	31
DVR Directors and Supervisors	Focus Group	8
DVR Staff	Interview	4
National Alliance on Mental Illness Wisconsin	Interview	1
WI Employment First Conference	Focus Group	10
Centers for Independent Living	Focus Group	5
DVR Tribal Liaisons	Focus Group	4
Tribal VR Directors	Focus Group	2
WI DOT Specialized Transportation	Focus Group	3
DVR Consumers	Focus Group	4
WI DWD Criminal Justice (Title I partner)	Interview	1
WI DWD Workforce (Title I partner)	Interview	2
Virtual Consumer Community Meeting	Focus Group	5
Targeted Virtual Consumer Community Meeting	Focus Group	10
WI DWD Criminal Justice (Title I partner)	Interview	1
Businesses	Interview	2
K-12 Education	Interview	2
Post-Secondary Disability Services – DVR staff	Focus Group	6
Post-Secondary Disability Services – College Staff	Focus Group	4
Post-Secondary Disability Services-UW-Madison	Focus Group	3

Recommendations Overview

Recommendations Overview

Our CSNA highlights **DVR's strengths and successful practices** along with opportunities for growth and improvement.

- Most who participated in our CSNA data collection expressed unreservedly positive sentiments about DVR (consumers, staff, service providers, businesses).

- DVR does a great job serving Wisconsinites with disabilities seeking employment (below). The unserved population is small, but includes some individuals who are:

  - Minorities

  - Most significantly disabled

  - Youth / students with disabilities

- DVR's consumers largely mirror the existing population of working age individuals with disabilities, serving a larger than expected portion of that population.

Recommendations Overview

- Our recommendations slides in this presentation:
    - Begin with a summary of our notable CSNA findings on which we have based our recommendations
    - Include detailed, immediate next steps DVR can take to begin implementing our recommendations
- The four high-level recommendations we present today are:
    1. **Equitability support unserved / underserved individuals**
    2. **Maximize capacity of service provider and VR staff**
    3. **Review administrative processes to maximize efficacy**
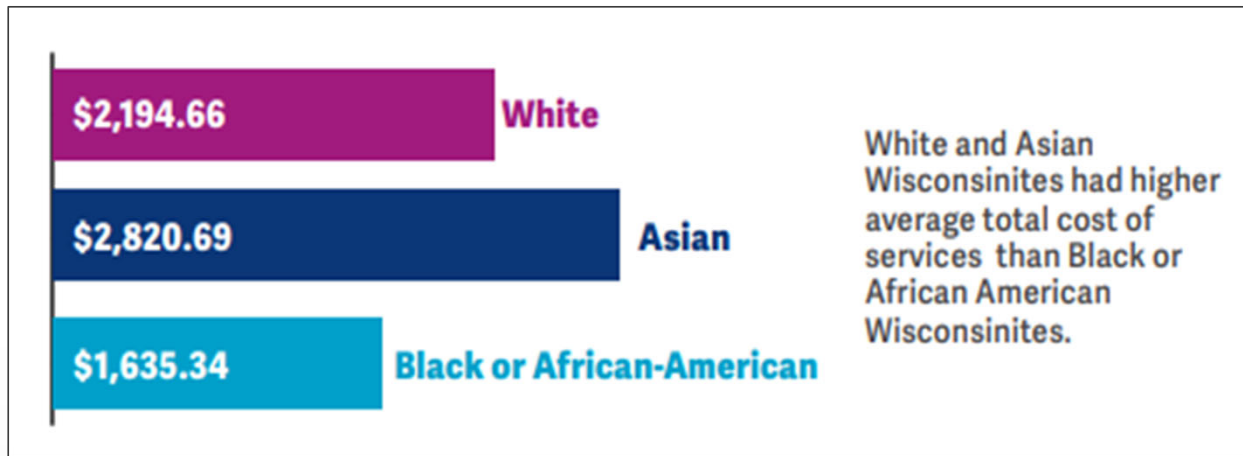   4. **Enhance partnerships**

**Recommendation 1:
Equitably Support Unserved /
Underserved Individuals**

Recommendation 1: Equitably Support Unserved / Underserved Individuals

Summary of Notable CSNA Findings:

- Non-White, non-Asian individuals served by WI DVR do not receive the same levels of service as White individuals.

- Staff and service providers routinely cited concerns about DVR's ability to address the needs of individuals with mental health related disabilities and Wisconsin's unhoused population.

- Many of these issues are being addressed by work DVR is currently engaged in.

$2,194.66	**White**
$2,820.69	**Asian**
$1,635.34	**Black or African-American**

White and Asian Wisconsinites had higher average total cost of services than Black or African American Wisconsinites.

9-in-10
Staff reported that at least some of the consumers they work with required counseling or mental health services.

Recommendation 1: Equitably Support Unserved / Underserved Individuals

Below are **three recommendations** DVR can take to equitably support unserved and underserved individuals, along with the **immediate action steps** necessary to implement these recommendations.

1. **Further understand barriers and needs –** *PCG recommends further exploration and analysis to clarify and confirm unserved and underserved populations, building on the goals and actions currently underway related to a 2022 needs assessment that was conducted.*

    a. Determine when individuals from minority groups stop receiving services.

    b. Schedule qualitative interviews with service providers, advocates, and minority consumers.

    c. Perform linear regression of service spending by race.

    d. Perform a more comprehensive analysis to understand how much of the difference in case outcome is attributable solely to different labor market conditions.

2. **Align resources to support priorities –** *PCG recommends that DVR explore payment structures that support the programmatic priorities of the agency*

    a. Create unique category for mileage expenses reported by service providers with a statewide agreement.

    b. Consider expanding successful rate schedule improvements to reward providers for serving priority populations.

Recommendation 1: Equitably Support Unserved / Underserved Individuals

3. **Examine and adjust policies and procedures –** *PCG recommends that DVR review policy and in-the-field practice with the goal of improving services for underserved populations.*

   a. Explore additional communication methods and work with providers to implement them across DVR's stakeholder networks.

   b. Examine and evaluate efficiencies (common criteria) between DVR and Tribal VR eligibility determinations.

   c. Develop a standardized correctional institution approach.

   d. Provide additional VR assistance for incarcerated population.

   e. Identify additional sources of mental health services.

   f. Align job pipelines with Wisconsin "50 Hot Jobs" and in-demand occupations
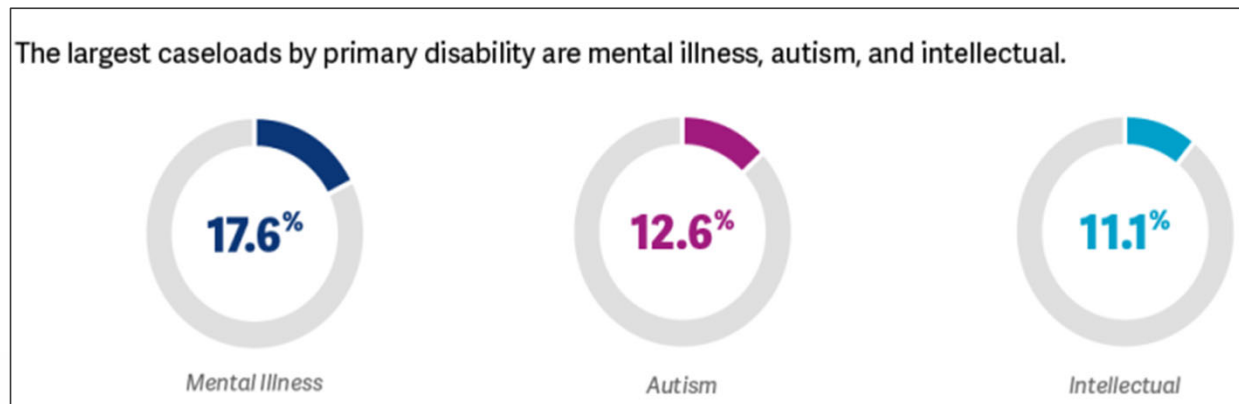
Recommendation 2: Maximize Capacity of Service Provider and VR Staff

Recommendation 2: Maximize Capacity of Service Provider and VR Staff

Summary of Notable CSNA Findings:

- DVR staff and service provider staff qualitative findings (focus groups, community meetings, interviews), and quantitative surveys results indicate DVR and its service partners' capacity to provide quality services is being hampered by:
  - DVR and service provider staff shortages and turnover
  - A need for more mental health expertise

The largest caseloads by primary disability are mental illness, autism, and intellectual.

Mental Illness	Autism	Intellectual
17.6%	12.6%	11.1%

Recommendation 2: Maximize Capacity of Service Provider and VR Staff

Summary of Notable CSNA Findings:

- DVR or service provider staff turnover can slow consumer progress:
    - Both DVR counselors and service provider staff need time to learn about the consumer, their employment plan, and plan progress
    - Both staff would benefit from cultivating their working relationship.

"I do think that there is a huge turnover in staff, and it complicates the process of getting needs and services met on time." – DVR Consumer

Recommendation 2: Maximize Capacity of Service Provider and VR Staff

Below are **three recommendations** DVR can take to maximize capacity of service provider and VR staff, along with the **immediate action steps** necessary to implement these recommendations.

1. **Train and retain existing VR and service provider staff –** *PCG recommends that DVR explore training opportunities for VR and service provider staff that target identified areas of need.*

   Training needs for existing and future DVR staff:

   a. Improve communication and understanding about service provider operations.

   b. Explore the provision of mental health training for DVR staff to more effectively serve individuals with mental health needs.

   c. Support the development and delivery of training on cultural competency.

   Training needs for existing and future service and provider DVR staff:

   a. Create opportunities for provider understanding of DVR operations.

   b. Support the development and delivery of cultural competency training for provider staff.

Recommendation 2: Maximize Capacity of Service Providers and VR Staff

2. **Improve recruitment pipelines and collaboration for a qualified staffing source –** *PCG recommends that DVR explore opportunities for collaboration within WI and at the national level to adopt cutting edge practices in recruitment and retention.*

    a. Establish a WI-based workgroup.

    b. Continue to connect at a national level.

3. **Examine and adjust policies and procedures –** *PCG recommends that DVR examine and revise policies and procedures to increase the capacity of VR and service provider services.*

    a. Continue DVR's ongoing VRC and VRS job restructuring efforts.

    b. Explore expansion of virtual services.

    c. Collaborate with existing service providers to determine if they can offer under-provided services.

Recommendation 3: Review Administrative Processes to Maximize Efficacy

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Summary of Notable CSNA Findings:

- CSNA analysis identified several key administrative issues:
  - Need to continue streamlining provider reporting
  - Need for consistent interpretation of technical specifications between offices and within DVR staff
  - Current case markers do not capture VR successes beyond competitive integrated employment

Consumer Age	Closed Successful	Closed Unsuccessful	Other Closures
5 to 17	10.6%	89.4%	0.0%
18 to 34	46.3%	51.3%	2.4%
35 to 64	47.3%	46.8%	5.9%
65 to 74	43.3%	49.4%	7.3%
75 and older	33.3%	60.6%	6.1%

Service providers said interpretation of statewide specifications can vary across WDAs and offices.

This has discouraged some providers from working with certain offices or individual counselors

Recommendation 3: Review Administrative Processes to Maximize Efficacy

Summary of Notable CSNA Findings:

- Reducing administrative burdens can help staff maximize the time they spend delivering consumer services and supports.

- DVR has an opportunity to streamline processes and leverage technology to **reduce time spent on administrative tasks and maximize the impact** of available resources and services.

Recommendation 3: Review Administrative Processes to Maximize Efficacy

Below are **three recommendations** DVR can take to review administrative processes to maximize efficacy, along with the **immediate action steps** necessary to implement these recommendations.

1. **Continue service provider collaboration to streamline processes and documentation –** *PCG recommends continuing to collaborate with service providers to streamline processes and documentation.*

   a. Continue Use of Service Provider Advisory Group.

2. **Increase consistent interpretation and application of technical specifications across offices and within DVR staff –** *PCG recommends improving consistent interpretation of technical specifications between offices and within DVR staff and making consistent clarifications available to service providers and other stakeholders as necessary.*

   a. Identify specific technical specifications for improved consistency.

   b. Develop training content and schedule for statewide delivery.

Recommendation 3: Review Administrative Processes to Maximize Efficacy

3. **Add revised case markers to capture more VR successes –** *PCG recommends adding revised case markers to capture more VR successes as well as tracking signed Individual Plans for Employment, progress in measurable skills gains, and progress in credential attainment.*

   a. Determine a list of additional case markers.

   b. Amend the current case management system to reflect new markers or write these markers into requirement for new case management system.

   c. Train appropriate staff on definitions and processes.

Recommendation 4: Enhance Partnerships

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Summary of Notable CSNA Findings:

- DVR works with multiple partner agencies to fulfil consumers' needs. Partnerships and collaborations help DVR and partners successfully deliver effective services.

- As the VR agency, DVR is not necessarily the funding stream for all possible consumer needs.

- Data indicates that additional education and outreach activities could increase awareness / use of Pre-ETS and post-secondary services.

  - Parents seem to know little about DVR – how to access and effectively use services in sequence with other transition services available.

  - Qualitative data showed that DVR services are often not sought out until students are ready to transition to the workforce.

"Strengthen communication frequency with regularly scheduled meetings, workshops, or online communication platforms to ensure timely sharing of information and avoid work repetition or omission caused by poor communication" – Non-Participant

Recommendation 4: Enhance Partnerships

Summary of Notable CSNA Findings:

- Transportation is the most in demand support service across all methods of data collection and populations.

  - Consumers, non-consumers, VR staff, and service providers all agreed transportation services are lacking, and a barrier to finding or enhancing employment.

- Housing is a major barrier across populations served by DVR. It was reported as a need by all respondents of the DVR staff survey.

Consumer Barriers to Career Advancement Transportation

Survey Population	Count	Percent
DVR Staff	95	93.1%
Service Provider	93	84.5%
Participant	552	18.4%
Non-Participant	13	31.7%

Consumer Barriers to Career Advancement Housing

Survey Population	Count	Percent
DVR Staff	74	72.5%
Service Provider	51	46.4%
Participant	198	6.6%
Non-Participant	11	26.8%

Recommendation 4: Enhance Partnerships

Below are **three recommendations** DVR can take to enhance partnerships, along with the **immediate action steps** necessary to implement these recommendations.

1. **Continue DVR education and outreach to secondary and postsecondary education settings –** *PCG recommends that DVR continue training and providing resources to secondary and postsecondary educators to convey information about DVR and their resources to potentially eligible individuals sooner.*

    a. Review and revise informational approaches.

    b. Continue to educate and coordinate with secondary and postsecondary organizations.

    c. Review DVR policy about secondary and post-secondary services and amend if necessary to fit post-pandemic operations.

Recommendation 4: Enhance Partnerships

2. **Explore solutions to address transportation barriers –** *PCG recommends DVR explore systemic and individual solutions for circumventing transportation barriers*

   a. Work with transportation and community partners to support systematically improved access to services and systems.

   b. Identify successful transportation strategies or strategies changing the need for transportation in different Wisconsin localities and situations and post them on DVR's website.

   c. Educate staff on local strategies that meet or partially meet transportation needs for DVR consumers.

3. **Build stronger ties with community housing groups –** *PCG recommends that DVR collaborate with housing partners to increase knowledge of and access to available housing resources.*

   a. Build stronger ties with community housing groups and advocacy organizations.

   b. Provide community-specific housing resources to area offices.

Questions?

Solutions that Matter

Program Year (PY) 2024 Outcomes

For cases closed **7/1/2024 – 1/21/2025**:

PY 2024 Closures - YTD	All Cases	All SE Cases	All Non-SE Cases
Total Successful Closures	1,850	373	1,477
Average Wages Earned Per Week	$466	$172	$541
Average Wage Per Hour	$17.07	$12.53	$18.22
Average Hours Worked Per Week	25	13	27
Private Insurance	598	77	902

Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) DVR Budget

- FFY 2023 and FFY 2024 budgets reflect final federal award and applicable state match.

- FFY 2025 budget reflects current federal award level and applicable state match. Final award level has not yet been determined.

FFY	Total Budget	Total Spending
2023	$89,605,936	$89,605,936
2024 to date	$89,605,936	$89,283,243
2025 to date	$44,630,735	$16,593,407

Data current as of 1/18/2025. Budget for 2025 includes all applicable state matches. State GPR match funding has not changed during the reporting period.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Total Purchased Expenses FFY24: **$2,351,052**

WDA	Consumers	Expenses
1	81	$108,850
2	128	$186,178
3	215	$370,195
4	189	$363,148
5	144	$206,518
6	133	$280,391

WDA	Consumers	Expenses
7	35	$28,952
8	107	$151,535
9	57	$86,521
10	217	$451,805
11	63	$116,959

Data current as of 1/21/2025

DVR Vacancies

WDA	TOTAL	VRC	Vac.	Support	Vac.	VRS	Vac.	FSS	Vac.
1	23	14	0	0	0	6	0	3	0
2	46	28	0	0	0	14	1	6	0
3	28	20	0	1	0	3	0	4	0
4	27	18	0	0	0	5	0	4	0
5	26	15	0	0	0	7	0	4	0
6	19	11	0	0	0	5	1	3	0
7	9	5	0	0	0	3	0	1	0
8	19	11	1	0	0	5	1	3	0
9	14	8	0	0	0	4	0	2	0
10	38	25	2	0	0	6	0	7	0
11	14	9	0	0	0	3	0	2	0

NOTE: Total column does not include WDA Directors, WDA VR Supervisors, or BSCs. Support includes CCCs, OPAs, and OOAs.

Data current as of 01/16/2025 projected to 02/10/2025 with announced retirements, resignations, and accepted position offers.

DVR Staff Turnover

Year	Total Number of Staff Exits (Including Retirements and Terminations)	Number of Retirements	Staff Turnover Percentage
2020	23	3	6.9%
2021	26	7	7.8%
2022	31	9	9.8%
2023	32	7	9.8%
2024	43	12	12.9%
2025 (YTD)	1	0	0.29%

Data current as of 01/16/25 projected to 02/10/25 with announced retirements, resignations and accepted position offers.

DVR Counselor Numbers by Race

WDA	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Two or More Races	White	Not Specified	Total
1	0	0	4	0	0	10	0	14
2	0	3	8	1	0	17	0	29
3	0	1	0	0	0	19	0	20
4	0	0	0	0	0	18	0	18
0	0	0	0	0	0	14	1	15
6	2	1	0	0	0	7	1	11
7	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
8	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	12
9	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	8
10	0	0	1	1	0	19	1	22
11	1	0	0	0	0	8	0	9

Data current as of 1/17/2025

DVR Caseload

WDA	Total Open Cases	Total Open Cases with IPE	VRCs/ VRSs	Total Average with IPE per Staff
01	1,545	1,186	20	59
02	3,540	2,775	42	66
03	1,836	1,567	23	68
04	1,946	1,527	23	66
05	1,776	1,420	22	65
06	1,250	965	14	69
07	813	508	7	73
08	1,410	1,030	16	64
09	1,102	877	12	73
10	2,586	2,048	28	73
11	922	729	11	66
Total	**18,726**	**14,632**	**218**	**67**

Data current as of 1/22/2025

RSA Negotiated Measures

Program Year 2024: **7/1/2024 – 6/30/2025**

Indicator	PY2024 Actual YTD*	PY2024 Negotiated Level	PY2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	37.6%	57.1%	57.4%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	37.6%	54.9%	55.1%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$3,333	$3,537	$3,645
Credential Attainment Rate	41.7%	41.0%	41.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	29.2%	61.5%	62.0%

Data current as of 2/13/2025.
*PY2024 Actual YTD reflects data collected since July 1, 2024. Data collection will continue through the end of the program year.

Existing Business Employment & Wage Assessments

10/1/25 – 12/31/25

	Referral for EWA*	EWA Met Min. Wage	EWA Did Not Meet Min. Wage	EWA in Process	Debt/Asset Ratio Requested**	Debt/Asset Ratio Passed	Debt/Asset Ratio in Process
Farm	8	2	0	5	6	5	1
Non-Farm	9	3	3	2	3	0	3
Total	17	5	3	7	9	5	4

Existing Business Case Closures

10/1/25 – 12/31/25

	26 Closed Rehabilitated	28 Closed Not Rehabilitated (After IPE Initiated)	Average Total Cost Per Case
Farm	6	0	$45,811.04
Non-Farm	1	1	$6,022.96
Total	7	1	$25,917.00

Assistive Technology Fee Schedule Exception Requests

10/1/25 – 12/31/25

	Exceptions Requested	Total Amount Requested	Exceptions Approved	Total Amount Approved
Farm	10	$169,752.16	10	$169,752.16
Non-Farm	3	$86,716.00	3	$76,716.00
Total	13	$256,468.16	13	$246,468.16

Top Things Happening in DVR

- Rebranding

- Time study

- Office moves

- Policy review

- New case management system

DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

Policy Academy

- Met 1/14/25

- Reviewed membership terms

- Closure tip sheet review – successful goal and closure amendment considerations

- Career Pathways Grant review – discussion around further staff training

- Training Grant exceptions for CPA

DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

Quality Assurance

- Last meeting: February 2025

- Completed "Repeat Consumer" case review – results/report being written

- New members joining team

- Next review: TBD

DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

START

- Met in November 2024

- Regional Career Pathway presentation

- Report out on the "Capacity Building" event

- Round robin discussion of how the school year started, including barriers and outreach

DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

AsTec

- Last met 12/12/24

- Consulted on Assistive Technology related cases and questions

- Reviewed new technology, apps, and products

- Ongoing discussion of AI interaction with DVR and services

DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

SenseAbility

- Last met 12/9/24

- Discussion of team rotation

- Case reviews for deaf/hard of hearing transition cases

- Presentation by Jolene Gruber, Director of WDBTAP (Wisconsin Deafblind Technical Assistance Program)

DVR Internal Workgroup Updates

Workplace Wellness

- Met remotely with team in October

- Planned activities for National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week

- Rethinking family traditions

- Coordinated coverage of wellness activities for "You, Me, and SLT" in 2025

- Focused on how best to utilize our team

DVR Staff Trainings Update

November 2024: WIOA Collaboration - Office of Veteran Employment; and Comprehensive New Staff Training

December 2024: No formal statewide training

January 2025: VR Practices: Working with Consumers with Depression (Dr. Kris Eiring)

February 2025: Assistive Technology, Employment and Ethics (Laura Plummer)

New Mediation Requests 10/01/24 – 12/31/24

DVR received **two** mediation requests:

- One was resolved.

- One moved to a hearing.

New Appeals Requests 10/01/24 – 12/31/24

DVR received **three** appeals requests:

- Two are from the same consumer with a closed case.

  o One was dismissed by DVR.

  o One is currently pending.

- The third appeal was resolved.

Appeal Hearing Outcomes FFY 2025

Three Total Appeals:

- **One –** DVR motion to dismiss granted

- **One –** Resolved by parties

- **One –** Pending

Questions?

Contact Us

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Wisconsin's Working-Age Big Data Report Findings and Implications

Denise Jess, Executive Director WCBVI

Rob Buettner, President & CEO, Beyond Vision, Inc.

Aim of the Big Data Project

Examination of the characteristics of people aged 18 to 64 years with and without vision impairment at the state population level.

- Education.
- Income.
- Health conditions.
- Disabling conditions.
- Self-perception of wellness.

Sources of Data

- **The American Community Survey**
  - Administered by the United States Census
  - Provides local and national leaders with information they need for programs, economic development, emergency management, and understanding local issues and conditions.
  - Estimates can be made at the county level

Sources of Data 2

- **The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System**
  - Administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - Collects state data about U.S. residents regarding their health-related risk behaviors, chronic health conditions, and use of preventive services
  - Estimates can be made at the state level

Data Gathering Question

"Are you blind or do you have difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?"

- Self-reporting.
- Binary answer (yes/no), no scale.
- No question about functionality or vision rehabilitation.

BRFSS also asks about health conditions.

Labor Force Participation

	With VI	Without VI
Employed for wages	**33.0%**	**64.0%**
Self Employed	**13.1%**	**9.1%**
Out of work less than a year	**4.4%**	**2.5%**
Out of work more than a year	**8.6%**	**2.5%**
Student	**1.9%**	**7.4%**
Retiree	**1.3%**	**4.9%**
Homemaker	**2.5%**	**4.6%**
Unable to work	**35.2%**	**5.6%**

Demographic Characteristics

	Blindness and Low Vision	No Vision Impairment
Education		
Less than HS	**26.6%**	**8.2%**
College Graduate	**6.8%**	**28.7%**
Income		
Less $35,000	**69.9%**	**26.2%**

Health Conditions

	Blindness and Low Vision	No Vision Impairment
Health Conditions		
Hearing Impairment	14.2%	2.8%
Diabetes	13.8%	5.7%
Kidney Disease	7.9%	1.5%
Depression	50.2%	22.0%
Stroke	3.8%	1.2%

Self-Reported Health and Wellness Factors

	Blindness and Low Vision	No Vision Impairment
Self-Reported Health		
Fair/Poor	**45.6%**	**13.0%**
Disability Measures		
Walking/Climbing	**45.6%**	**7.0%**
Cognition	**55.4%**	**9.6%**
Running Errands	**36.0%**	**4.3%**

Health Related Quality of Life

	Depression	Diabetes	Hearing
Employed for wages	34.9%	5.5%	9.5%
Self Employed	48.2%	1.8%	58.9%
Out of work less than a year	3.9%	16.5%	---
Out of work more than a year	72.8%	28.5%	10.9%
Student	---	---	---
Retiree	28.9%	---	9.9%
Homemaker	35.0%	15.2%	4.5%
Unable to work	70.3%	23.0%	6.2%

Comparison by State

	AL	MA	IN	WI
Employed for wages	**28.8%**	**41.1%**	**36.8%**	**30.0%**
Students	**4.1%**	**2.6%**	**3.4%**	**1.9%**
Unable	**45.5%**	**22.5%**	**35.6%**	**35.2%**
Poor Health	**55.6%**	**42.6%**	**50.6%**	**46.5%**
Depression	**51.6%**	**36.7%**	**48.8%**	**50.2%**
Diabetes	**21.0%**	**14.1%**	**22.1%**	**13.8%**
Hearing Impairment	**17.6%**	**12.8%**	**18.6%**	**14.2%**

Barriers & Opportunities

Financial Disincentives

Barriers
- Benefit Cash Cliffs.
- Impact on household incomes.
- Psychological safety net.

Opportunities
- National Public Policy Efforts
- Benefits Counseling
- Education & Upward Mobility

Transportation

Barriers
- Driving.
- Cost.
- Inconsistency of quality.
- Incompatibility of systems.

Opportunities
- Autonomous vehicle
- Ride share
- T targeted public policy.

Access to Vision Rehabilitation and Vocational Rehabilitation

Barriers
- Limited organizations and qualified service providers.
- Complexity of disability.
- Low incidence of blindness vision impairment.
- Gaps in state-wide coverage.
- Complexity of systems.

Opportunities
- Vision Forward Association and Wisconsin Council.
- People who are blind/visually impaired not working.
- Big Data results and potential impact on public policy.
- Collaboration and Creative Approaches.

Myths, Misconceptions, & other Disabilities

Barriers
- Long-standing myths and stereotypes specific to blindness.
- Self-image and perception of disability.
- Data presented above.

Opportunities
- Continue education and advocacy.
- Work with employers.
- Shift paradigms in healthcare.

Comments? Questions?

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