

Expect.

Employ.

Empower.



**Alabama
State Rehabilitation Council
2019 Annual Report**

*Vocational Rehabilitation Service
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services*





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Expect. **Employ. Empower.**

The State Rehabilitation Council strives to represent persons with disabilities and inform them of the services they need to become productive and self-sufficient by securing gainful employment. A continued partnership with the Vocational Rehabilitation Service division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services allows the SRC to support individuals with disabilities so they can reach their maximum potential and achieve their goals of employment and independence.

This report outlines the SRC's accomplishments in FY2019 and its strong efforts to positively impact the lives of Alabamians with disabilities.



Karl Wade, chairperson
State Rehabilitation Council



The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services takes great pride in ensuring that people with disabilities have a chance to achieve their maximum potential. Strong partnerships are an important part of the department's success. In FY 2019, the Vocational Rehabilitation Service division of ADRS partnered with the State Rehabilitation Council to provide education and employment-related services to Alabamians with disabilities, with 4,228 of those finding employment.

As a new year begins, I would like to commend SRC members for their commitment to quality service and excellence. I believe the SRC and ADRS will continue to work even more diligently in 2020 to ensure that all Alabamians with disabilities have an opportunity to achieve their maximum potential.

Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, commissioner
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services



A unique partnership:

Vocational Rehabilitation Service and the State Rehabilitation Council

In January 1995, as mandated by the Alabama Legislature, Vocational Rehabilitation Service was moved from the State Department of Education to the newly created Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS). This milestone event created a unique partnership between the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the newly named Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services. Working in partnership with ADRS, SRC provides valuable input in administrative codes and rules necessary to regulate Alabama's vocational rehabilitation services.

Working together, the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services and the State Rehabilitation Council strengthen the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services for all Alabamians with disabilities.

The mission of the council is ...

... to provide support and assistance to the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services through program planning, policy development, and delivery of services, thus preparing Alabama's citizens with disabilities for competitive employment.

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
Membership Composition

| Mandated Representation | Current Number of Representatives | Number of People with Disabilities | Number of Parents |
|---|--|---|--------------------------|
| Commissioner | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| State Independent Living Council (SILC) | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (State Department of Education) | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Client Assistance Program | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Community Rehabilitation Programs | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Business, Industry, and Labor | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Physical Disabilities | 8 | 8 ** | 1 |
| Cognitive / Learning Disabilities | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Sensory Disabilities | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Mental Illness | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Intellectual Disability | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Advocacy Organization | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| American Indian Program Representative | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| WIA Representative | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Former or Current Recipient of VRS Services | 12 | 12 | 0 |
| Parent Training Center Representative | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 46* | 33 | 3 |

SRC membership consists of persons with disabilities, parents of persons with disabilities, advocates, service providers, and representatives of business, industry, and labor.

Members are appointed by the governor, and most have a personal interest in ensuring that Alabama's citizens with disabilities receive the services and supports they need to become productive and self-sufficient through gainful employment. Membership is geographically and culturally diverse to assure a broad view into decisions that impact vocational rehabilitation services.

* Actual membership is 29, with some individuals representing more than one category, but includes those who resigned or had their terms expire in 2019. Persons with disabilities comprise a majority (15) of members.

**Does not include sensory disabilities



SRC Functions

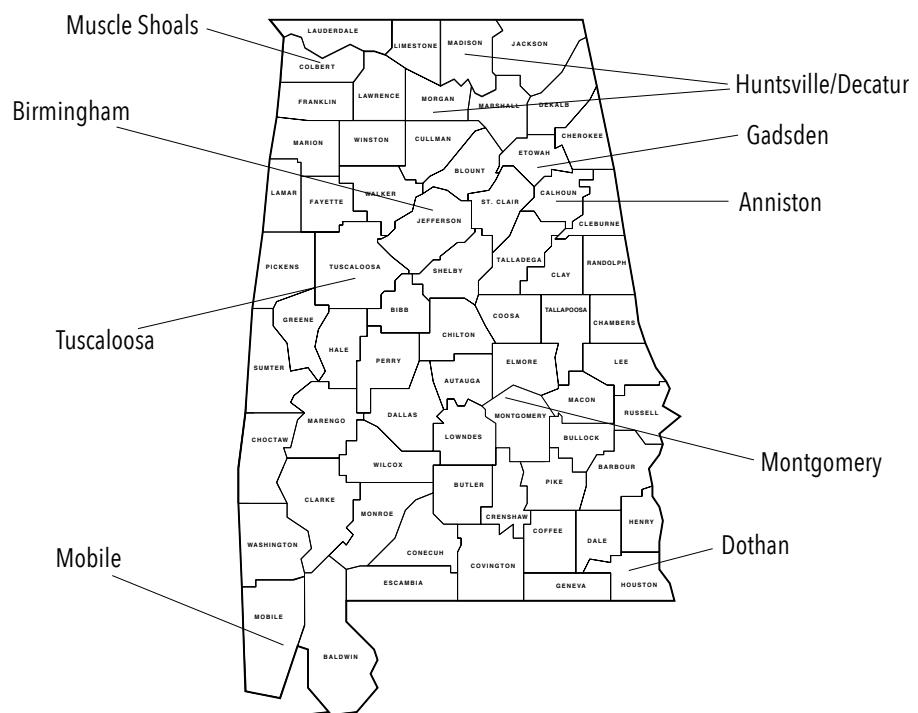
- to review and analyze the State Plan and advise ADRS regarding its related responsibilities within the plan
- in partnership with ADRS, to develop and review goals and priorities, evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program, and submit reports of progress to the Rehabilitation Services Administration commissioner
- to advise ADRS regarding authorized activities under the Rehabilitation Act and to assist in preparation of the State Plan and its amendments and in carrying out other requirements of the Rehabilitation Act
- to review and analyze the effectiveness of consumer and other surveys
- to provide for coordination and establishment of working relationships among ADRS, the State Independent Living Council, and independent living centers
- to coordinate council activities with activities of other councils
- to perform other functions consistent with the purpose of the Rehabilitation Act
- to prepare and submit an annual report of council activities to the governor and the ADRS commissioner

Local advisory councils meet regularly to ensure a voice for consumers at the grassroots level.

In FY 2019, topics of discussion included:

- Updates on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act, including ADA employment provisions (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission settlements), and U.S. Department of Justice settlements.
- Review of legislative proposals, such as those related to volunteer transportation provider legislation.
- State laws that passed, such as accessible parking (towing and ticketing on access aisles) and lemon law for assistive devices.
- Unmet needs of persons with disabilities, with the information provided to the Governor's Office on Disability.
- Proposed federal legislation like the ADA Integration Act, the ADA Education Reform Act (HR 620), Empower Act, Disability Integration Act, and ABLE Act Information.
- Input for the VR program.

These advisory groups continue to increase opportunities to obtain consumer input at the local level and as recruiting grounds for the SRC.



SRC performance

The SRC held quarterly meetings on March 12, May 14, Aug. 13, and Oct. 22, 2019. During these meetings, the SRC performed the following functions:

| | |
|--|--|
| Reviewed and provided input on the consumer satisfaction surveys for blind and deaf individuals and their results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made no recommendations for changes to these surveys • Received information on the Blind Services satisfaction survey results • Received information on Deaf Services satisfaction survey results |
| Reviewed and provided input on the consumer satisfaction surveys for the general VR program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No survey in 2019 |
| Reviewed impartial hearing officer (IHO) List | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received information on hearings conducted during 2019 • Received update on IHO List • Approved addition of Laura Clemons to list to replace outgoing person who rotated off |
| Reviewed and updated SRC Resource Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No changes made in 2019 |
| Reviewed and provided input on Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended no significant changes when provided information on the agency's CSPD and offered the opportunity to provide input • Notified of current training programs for VR staff and made no significant comments when given the opportunity to provide input • Recommended no significant changes to training programs for VR counselors |
| Reviewed and provided input on State Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received no comments on the State Plan or attachments • Recommended no changes and recommended approval of VR portion of Combined State Plan • Approved goals and priorities with the following recommendations: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add to Goal 1 that the agency will work with nonprofit organizations to develop paid work experiences (work-based learning) with them for individuals with disabilities 2. Add job retention to Goal 1 |

Training and/or information on the following subjects:

- WIOA Indicator 6
- Pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) and spending update
- Alabama Parent Education Training Center (APEC)
- RSA prior approval
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Impartial hearing officer list and hearings
- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD)
- Blind Services consumer satisfaction survey results
- ADRS/VR budget
- VR production (number of VR clients successfully employed)
- VR client average wages (hourly and annually)
- State and federal legislation that may impact VR and its clients
- College Quest Program
- VR personnel updates
- Governor's Job Fair for People with Disabilities
- Informed choice
- Business Relations Program
- Deaf Services satisfaction survey results
- Full Life Ahead Foundation
- Medicaid waivers

Coordinated council activities with activities of other councils

- Provided annual reports and resource plans to other SRCs upon request
- Attended Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities meetings to share information
- The SRC liaison continued to participate in the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Council (NCSRC) conference calls and annual training conferences in April and October 2019

Established working relationships among the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), the State Independent Living Council (SILC), and independent living centers (ILCs)

- The SRC has made its meetings open to members of the public, including those of the ILCs or SILC
- Some SRC members attended SILC meetings and reported back to the SRC any significant information

SRC subcommittee activities

Executive Subcommittee

Chair: Karl Wade

Vice chair: Jeff Cofield

Members: Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw

Staff liaison: Graham Sisson

Vision statement: To conduct planning for and administration of SRC meetings

Responsibilities

- Schedule and make arrangements for quarterly meetings
- Plan the SRC agenda
- Report accomplishments
- Nominate officers
- Facilitate appointment of subcommittee chairs and SRC members
- Update SRC Resource Plan
- Assist in preparation of SRC budget
- Plan SRC orientation

Activities

- Scheduled and made arrangements for quarterly meetings, planned the agendas, and reported SRC accomplishments
- Appointed new subcommittee chair for legislative subcommittee
- Appointed new subcommittee members

Business Relations and Employment Subcommittee

Chair: Jeff Cofield

Members: Scott Besong, Susan Crow, Guy Dewees*, Kennith Fine, Carl Flemons, Michelle Galipeau, Celena Grant, Heath Hendrix, Mickey Hutto, Kathy Lovell*, and Andrew Richards

Staff liaison: Leslie Dawson

Vision statement: To enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities and employer satisfaction with VR services

This subcommittee continued to maintain the following priorities:

1. OFCCP Section 503, 7 percent people with disabilities hiring quota for federal contractors
2. Business and labor market trends that parallel or do not parallel consumer goals
3. E-Verify for employers and agency
4. Federal employment issues under Schedule A
5. Department incentives to promote hiring and retention of people with disabilities

This subcommittee made the following recommendations:

1. The agency should work with the governor to make the state of Alabama the model employer of individuals with disabilities
2. The agency should support state legislation that would implement WOTC at the state level
3. The agency should create a communication document that shows state benefits/resources for employers and aligns language and services among the different WIOA partner programs

Activities

- The subcommittee discussed the WIOA regulations for businesses and employers, WIOA Indicator 6 for VR employer services, ABLE network (now known as "Disabled In"), and update on WIOA workforce programs

Legislative/Public Information Subcommittee

Chair: Michelle Martin

Members: Dennis Duncan, Linda Lamberth, and Michael Talley

Staff Liaison: Vacant

Vision statement: To inform SRC members of existing and new legislation which affects the VRS program and people with disabilities and to advocate for legislation, policies, and practices that will enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities

Responsibilities

Same as vision statement above

Activities

- Monitored state and federal legislation that affects individuals with disabilities and provided information on pending legislation
- Agreed to continue focus on state funding as a legislative priority

Consumer Services/Program Evaluation Subcommittee

Chair: Dr. Marie Kraska

Members: Jon Brock, Susan Goldthwaite, John Harris*, Rachel Hughes, Kim Mensi, Tom Schwarz, and Jeana Winter

Staff Liaison: Michael Quinn

Vision statement: To enhance consumer satisfaction with services, service providers, and employment and to assist VRS in developing and implementing strategies to ensure consumer satisfaction

Responsibilities

- Facilitate council review of the agency's consumer satisfaction survey and results
- Collaborate with the agency in conducting the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment every three years

Activities

- Reviewed Blind Services consumer satisfaction survey and its results
- Made no recommendations or changes to existing Blind Services survey
- Received additional information on proposal for peer support specialists for mental health consumers
- Announced and discussed current events for consumers
- Provided updates on member programs

SRC subcommittee activities

Membership/Nomination Subcommittee

Chair: Tom Schwarz

Members: Logan Davis*

Staff Liaison: Graham Sisson

Vision statement: To maintain SRC membership so that it meets federal law and enables the SRC to perform its duties

Responsibilities

- Maintain current membership list
- Recruit new members to fill vacancies
- Secure reappointments of existing members where eligible
- Assist in orientation of new members
- Assist in identifying training needs of SRC members

Activities

- Through the SRC liaison, updated the SRC list on the Alabama secretary of state's website
- Facilitated reappointment of eligible members
- Nominated members to fill vacancies and facilitated their appointments
- Provided update on SRC membership at most SRC meetings

Bylaws Revision Subcommittee

Chair: Logan Davis*

Members: Carl Flemons**

Staff Liaison: Graham Sisson

Vision statement: To maintain SRC bylaws so that they are consistent with federal law and allow for smooth operation of the SRC

Responsibilities

- Monitor effectiveness of bylaws
- Recommend any necessary changes on an annual basis

Activities

- Continued to monitor the effectiveness of the bylaws and recommend any necessary changes
- Made amendments to the bylaws to update them as to WIOA changes

Deaf Advisory Subcommittee

SRC Liaison: Marcus Washington***

Staff Liaison: Bedarius Bell

Vision statement: To inform the SRC and the VR agency of issues or input for the VR program for people who are deaf

Responsibilities

- Report on issues of individuals who are deaf and assist in the development of a strategic plan for people who are deaf

Activities

- Continued to inform SRC members of issues in the Deaf community, including interpreter licensing issues and shortage and legislation that aids individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Continued to recommend that ADRS make strong efforts to encourage interpreting as a vocation due to the shortage of interpreters

Blind Advisory Subcommittee

SRC Liaison: Michael Talley

Staff Liaison: Dana Barber

Vision statement: To inform the SRC and the VR agency of issues or input for the VR program for people who are blind or low vision

Responsibilities

- Report on issues of individuals who are blind and low vision and assist in the development of a strategic plan for people who are blind or low vision

Activities

- Informed SRC members of the results of the Blind Services surveys
- Shared minutes and information from the Blind Advisory Committee meeting
- Shared information on the Blind Services Strategic Plan

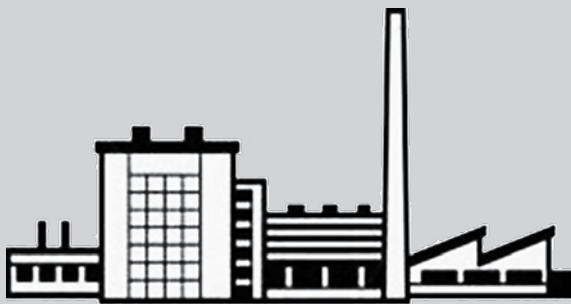
* Rotated off or resigned Aug. 31, 2019

** New chair

*** New SRC liaison



2019 highlights



1,129

businesses receiving no-cost services

(including recruitment assistance and disability management, training, and employee retention services, with a special emphasis on federal contractor businesses)

20

*community VRS offices
strategically located
throughout the state*



1,606

*Consumers receiving one-
on-one services from ADRS
business relations consultants*

(to ensure their "job readiness" and to facilitate their employment in the public and private sector)

4,228

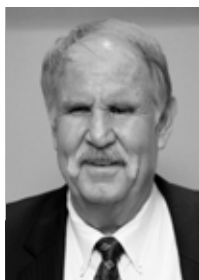
consumers placed in employment



29,045

VR consumers served

SRC membership



Karl Wade
Chair, consumer
Prattville



Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw
Commissioner
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
Montgomery



Consumer
Jon Brock
Birmingham



Employer
Jeff Cofield
Alabama Power
Birmingham



Employer/CRP Representative
Susan Crow
Workshops Inc.
Birmingham



Parent
Scott Besong
Auburn



Consumer
Logan Davis
Heflin
Resigned



Employer
Guy Dewees
Jefferson County Personnel Board
Birmingham
Rotated off Aug. 31, 2019



Consumer/SILC Representative
Dennis Duncan
Russellville



Employer
Celena Grant
Buffalo Rock
Courtland



Labor
Kenneth Fine
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Birmingham



Employer
Michelle Galipeau
Children's Hospital
Hoover

SRC membership



Employer
Heath Hendrix
Onin
Tuscaloosa



Consumer
Carl Flemons
Somerville



Special Education
Susan Goldthwaite
State Department of Education
Montgomery



Program Evaluation Representative
Dr. Maria Kraska
Auburn



Consumer
Karin Korb
Birmingham



SACAP Representative
Rachel Hughes
State of Alabama
Client Assistance Program
Montgomery



WIA Board Representative
Mickey Hutto
Montgomery



Consumer
Linda Lambreth
Anniston



Family Member
Dr. Michele Martin
Auburn



Consumer
Kim Mensi
Montgomery



VRS Counselor
Andrew Richards
Montgomery



Consumer/Veteran
Tom Schwarz
Semmes



Employer
Glenda Statum
Netek Inc.
Brownsboro

SRC membership demographics



Consumer
Michael Talley
Bessemer



Consumer
Karen Willis
Millbrook
Resigned



Parent Training Center Representative
Jeana Winter
Alabama Parent Education Center
Wetumpka



Consumer
Marcus Washington
Pelham



SRC Conflict of Interest Policy

Statement of Policy

No member of the council shall cast a vote on any matter that would provide direct financial benefit to the member or the member's organization or otherwise give the appearance of a conflict of interest under state law. 34 CFR Part 361.17 (g). When conflicts of interest are identified, the council member to whom the conflict applies must abstain from voting on the issue causing the conflict.

Required Disclosure

Each council member shall disclose orally or in writing all conflicts of interest, including those which are unclear or potential. Such disclosure shall be made to the chairperson of the council.

Effective Date

This Conflict of Interest Policy shall become effective immediately upon approval by a majority of the council. Upon such approval, this policy is incorporated by reference into the council bylaws.

Approved: Nov. 29, 2000

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AND THANKS FOR A JOB WELL DONE TO FORMER MEMBERS:

*Guy Dewees, Karen Willis,
and Logan Davis*



Prepared by:



Alabama Department of
REHABILITATION SERVICES

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw

Commissioner

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