



2019

ANNUAL REPORT

STRONGER TOGETHER



 **Kentucky
Career Center**
Vocational Rehabilitation
FFY 10/01/2018 through 09/30/2019



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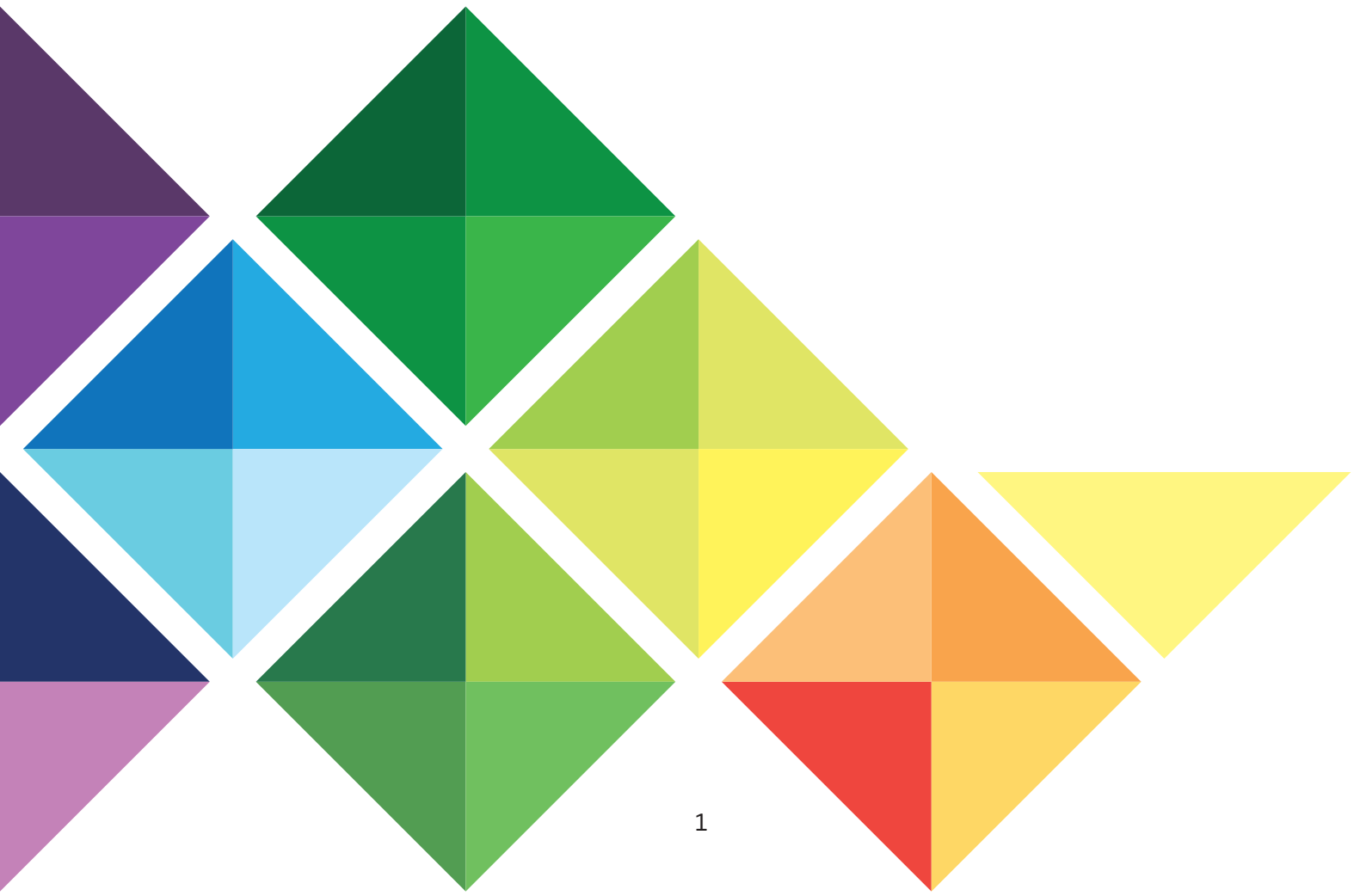
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Message from Statewide Council Chairperson

DAVID ALLGOOD

"The newly reconstituted Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR) is looking forward to working with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to increase and improve competitive employment opportunities for Kentuckians with disabilities. The new council is comprised of members from the Office for the Blind's former board and members of the previous SCVR council as well as new members from the disability and employment community. With such a diverse and knowledgeable composition of council members we intend to work diligently to increase OVR's presence throughout the Commonwealth and strive to lower the unemployment rate amongst the largest minority in Kentucky which is individuals with disabilities. Working together we can definitely make employment opportunities stronger for all Kentuckians."





Statewide Council for **VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION**



Back Row, from left, Ian Rosser, Phillip Donahue, Tyler Levy, Carla Ruschival, Chris White, Todd Stephens, Lyn Florence, and Necholyia Wright. Middle Row, from left, Matt Davis, Theresa Thomas and Cathy Jackson. Front Row, from left, Joe Cowan, Kelly Knoop and David Allgood.

Committee Membership Information

David Allgood, Chair
Joe Cowan, Vice Chair
Todd Stephens, Member at Large

Member Name	Location	Representing
Matt Davis	Bowling Green	Individual with a Disability
Theresa Thomas	Lexington	Bluegrass Council of the Blind
Cathy Jackson	Louisville	National Federation of the Blind
Kelly Knoop	Louisville	Individual with a Disability
Necholyia Wright	Louisville	Business, Industry and Labor
Lynn Florence	Louisville	Committee of Blind Vendors
Chris White	LaGrange	Community Rehabilitation Programs
Carla Ruschival	Louisville	Kentucky Council of the Blind
Tyler Levy	Louisville	Vocational Rehabilitation Consumer
Phillip Donahue	Elizabethtown	Business, Industry and Labor
Ian Rosser	Lexington	KY SPIN
Amy Luttrell	Louisville	Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
Cynthia Elliott	Frankfort	Client Assistance Program
Susan Farra	Georgetown	Kentucky Department of Education
Dana Elbert	Lexington	Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
Cora McNabb	Frankfort	Ex-Officio



STRONGER TOGETHER

On Oct. 1, 2018, Kentucky integrated services previously offered by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Office for the Blind into the newly created Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, marking a significant operational change that affects the individuals we serve and our staff. Throughout the year I reminded myself, staff and others that while the structure of the agency changed, our purpose, goals and services did not. As a result, we are "Stronger Together" in providing individuals with disabilities opportunities for employment and independence.

Combining the two agencies was challenging and required a lot of hard work and collaboration. Malcom Gladwell once said, "You cannot be a connector if you are in an environment where people do not want to come together." With this venture this statement became a reality. The state rehabilitation councils of the two agencies and the advocacy organizations were actively involved in the decision-making process. The newly established State Rehabilitation Council is coming together as one team in providing oversight and consultation to the combined agency.

The new organization created a unique opportunity for us to look closely at each agency and make key improvements creating a "Stronger Together" Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. We have strengthened the agency by removing duplicative administrative and management structures that created inefficiencies and unnecessary overhead costs. In addition, our ability to monitor performance across programs is strengthened. There has been increased coordination within the workforce system with employers to increase job opportunities for individuals. As a state agency, we have become more efficient stewards of the resources provided to us.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to every individual who has been a part of the reorganization process this past year. Thank you for being resilient, open and patient as we worked together on the redesign of systems and processes in order to be more efficient. Thank you for staying positive, being open to change and learning. Together we have the opportunity to participate in building something great.





OVR

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART (AS OF OCTOBER 1, 2019)

Executive Director

- Program Policy & Support Branch
 - o Support Section

Division of Field Services

- OVR West Central Region
 - o Central Kentucky Blind Services
 - o Louisville District
 - o East Jefferson District
 - o Elizabethtown District
- OVR East Region
 - o East Kentucky Blind Services
 - o Ashland District
 - o Prestonsburg District
 - o Hazard District
- OVR South Region
 - o Bowling Green District
 - o Somerset District
- OVR West Region
 - o West Kentucky Blind Services
 - o Paducah District
 - o Owensboro District
- OVR East Central Region
 - o Covington District
 - o Florence District
 - o Lexington District
 - o Bluegrass District
 - o Danville District
- Assistant Director
 - o Deaf Services Branch
 - o Assistive Technology Branch
 - o Community Rehab Programs Branch
 - o Employer Services Branch

Division of Blind Services

- Independent Living/Older Blind Branch
- Charles McDowell Rehab Center
 - o Consumer Services Section
 - o Vocational Preparation Section

Division of Kentucky Business Enterprise

Division of Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center

- o Building and Grounds Section
- Student Services Branch
 - o Customer Support Section
 - o Security and Dormitory Section
 - o Counseling and Recreation Section
- Assisted Living Branch
- Vocational Services Branch



2019

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

The University of Kentucky Survey Research Center contacted customers by telephone between Feb. 20 - April 12, 2019 to participate in the survey. A total of 1,001 people completed the telephone survey. The response rate for eligible participants was 68.9%.

- 87% of customers were satisfied with services provided by Kentucky's OVR program
- 89% of customers stated they would return to OVR for services in the future if needed
- 93% of customers exiting OVR services with successful employment were satisfied
- 98% of customers felt they were treated courteously by all staff
- 92% of customers agreed that the OVR counselor helped them understand their rights
- 90% of customers felt their OVR counselor understood their disability
- 83% of customers exiting with successful employment were still employed during follow-up (up to one year after exiting OVR services)
- 85% of customers receiving Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) services were satisfied with those services
- 89% of customers receiving CRP services would recommend CRP to others
- 88% of customers receiving CRP services were satisfied with Kentucky's OVR program



Positive Employment

OUTCOME DATA

In FFY 2018, 3,017 individuals with disabilities obtained or maintained employment after receiving services from the OVR.

Facts about these individuals

- As a group, federal income tax payments increased by an estimated \$4.16 million, state income tax payments rose by about \$1.73 million, and Social Security/Medicare tax payments increased by approximately \$5.3 million (including employer contributions) for a total of about \$11.19 million.
- At application, 1,114 (37 percent) reported that their primary source of support was their personal income with the rest depending upon family or government benefits. At closure, 2,649 (88 percent) listed personal income as their primary source of support for an increase of 1,535 (51 percent).
- Average weekly income grew from \$283.89 a week at application to \$504.73 a week at closure for an increase of 78 percent. This represents an average increase of \$220.84 in weekly income or \$11,483.68 per year.
- At case closure, 1,591 consumers (53 percent) were receiving private health insurance benefits.
- They work an average of 32.2 hours per week with an average hourly wage of \$14.83.

Community Engagement

For FFY 2019, OVR purchased \$27,793,703 of services for its consumers. These expenditures went to 17,316 individuals, businesses, agencies and organizations in communities all across the commonwealth.

Agency Statistics

Purchased Services Federal Fiscal Year 2019

<u>Purchased Service</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Self-Employment	\$1,650.00
Assistive Services	\$122,584.60
Transportation	\$154,066.71
Maintenance	\$289,367.66
Other Services	\$628,023.95
Diagnosis & Treatment	\$1,607,260.03
Assessment	\$2,661,944.41
Training	\$4,812,260.86
Rehabilitation Technology	\$4,886,473.28
Job Placement	\$5,614,580.94
Pre-ETS	\$7,015,490.61
Total	\$27,793,703.04

Demographics of Individuals Served

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Female	50.0%
Male	49.90%
Unspecified	0.10%

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Caucasian	85.8%
African-American	12.3%
All other ethnicities/unspecified	1.9%

<u>Disability</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Mental Health Impairments	34.8%
Cognitive Impairments	24.9%
Sensory	20.5%
Neuro/Orthopedic Impairments	10.9%
Other Health Impairments	8.8%

<u>Age</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Under 21	18.2%
21-24	17.1%
25-34	18.5%
35-44	14.0%
45-54	13.5%
55-64	12.0%
65 & older	6.6%

Positive Employment Outcomes (PEOs) by County

Consumer County	Number of PEO's
ADAIR	43
ALLEN	14
ANDERSON	17
BALLARD	2
BARREN	69
BATH	15
BELL	12
BOONE	40
BOURBON	5
BOYD	58
BOYLE	53
BRACKEN	13
BREATHITT	10
BRECKINRIDGE	19
BULLITT	29
BUTLER	5
CALDWELL	3
CALLOWAY	10
CAMPBELL	31
CARROLL	14
CARTER	53
CASEY	7
CHRISTIAN	26
CLARK	25
CLAY	6
CLINTON	5
CRITTENDEN	2
CUMBERLAND	4
DAVIESS	74
EDMONSON	4
ELLIOTT	3
ESTILL	6
FAYETTE	216
FLEMING	14
FLOYD	101
FRANKLIN	65
GALLATIN	3
GARRARD	20
GRANT	5
GRAVES	14
GRAYSON	23
GREEN	34
GREENUP	49

Consumer County	Number of PEO's
HANCOCK	11
HARDIN	69
HARLAN	48
HARRISON	10
HART	12
HENDERSON	28
HENRY	7
HICKMAN	2
HOPKINS	32
JACKSON	2
JEFFERSON	340
JESSAMINE	41
JOHNSON	29
KENTON	65
KNOTT	21
KNOX	21
LARUE	8
LAUREL	23
LAWRENCE	14
LEE	1
LESLIE	1
LETCHER	6
LEWIS	7
LINCOLN	20
LIVINGSTON	2
LOGAN	17
LYON	1
MADISON	70
MAGOFFIN	2
MARION	33
MARSHALL	4
MARTIN	9
MASON	29
MCCRACKEN	44
MCCREARY	6
MCLEAN	4
MEADE	9
MENIFEE	1
MERCER	17
METCALFE	21
MONROE	4
MONTGOMERY	7
MORGAN	2

Consumer County	Number of PEO's
MUHLENBERG	19
NELSON	25
NICHOLAS	4
OHIO	20
OLDHAM	15
OWEN	8
PENDLETON	1
PERRY	11
PIKE	116
POWELL	13
PULASKI	50
ROCKCASTLE	9
ROWAN	15
RUSSELL	31
SCOTT	28
SHELBY	14
SIMPSON	13
SPENCER	8
TAYLOR	93
TODD	2
TRIGG	3
TRIMBLE	1
UNION	7
WARREN	103
WASHINGTON	7
WAYNE	6
WEBSTER	3
WHITLEY	20
WOLFE	6
WOODFORD	22
Out of State	23
TOTAL	3017

Social Security **UPDATE**

For FFY 2019, 615 Social Security recipients obtained employment after receiving services from

OVR. Social Security reimbursed OVR for 156 claims totaling \$1,920,656.

Training **CENTERS**

Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center:

Job Placement Month Activities and Graduation

CDPVTTC hosted a multi-day 2018 Job Placement Month conference that brought local employers and consumers together. During the conference in October 2018, students participated job preparation and mock interview workshops presented by the Big Sandy Community Action Program and Kentucky

Career Center. In addition, staff and students participated in a fashion show to demonstrate proper interviewing and workplace attire. CDPVTTC also recognized local employers that provided work-based learning experiences for students. In June 2019 there were 155 graduates honored for the successful completion of their programs.



Charles W. McDowell Center

The Summer Path Program at the Charles W. McDowell Center in Louisville gave high school students with visual impairments the opportunity to develop relationships while they learned skills and explored career opportunities. Activities during the three-week

camp included learning about jobs in healthcare, cookouts, day trips to local activities and a tour at the American Printing House. The group learned about self-advocacy, working with a vocational rehabilitation counselor and dressing for success.



Deaf-Blind Services

For the last five summers, the Kentucky Division of Blind Services has partnered with the Kentucky Deaf-Blind Project at the University of Kentucky to prepare students who are deaf-blind to make a successful transition into postsecondary life. In addition to academic subjects, students in the program work on Expanded Core Curriculum

(ECC) that students who are visually impaired, deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind need to learn before leaving high school. ECC skills include orientation and mobility training, social interaction and independent living. This year students from Anderson, Grayson, Hardin and Jefferson counties attended the event.



Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR) Employer Awards

The following businesses were given Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR) Employer Awards for their efforts to hire, promote and retain employees with disabilities.

Florence District: Employer Award Amazon CVG 5



Cari Ledwig with Amazon's Human Resources department, from left, and Greg Harewig, the Amazon site manager from Amazon CVG 5 in Northern Kentucky, received the award from Michelle Cobb, OVR branch manager, Cheryl Martinez, OVR job placement specialist, and Ryan Henson, OVR regional manager.

Florence District: Employer Award Kroger Company



Store managers Becky Brown, left, Emrah Kinetas, and Lisa Schutte of the Kroger Company of Florence were honored with a SCVR Employer Award from OVR job placement specialist Cheryl Martinez for their efforts in hiring people with disabilities.

Florence District: Employer Award Viaquest



Viaquest has recruited people with disabilities to work at area employers including Amazon, Cummins and Cintas. Viaquest Account Manager Jana McLeid, third from left, received the SCVR Employer Award from OVR job placement specialist Cheryl Martinez, from left, OVR branch manager Michelle Cobb, and OVR regional manager Ryan Henson.

Ashland District: Employer Award Cato



Cato of Mount Sterling was presented with the SCVR Employer Award by OVR Manager Brent Sturgill, second row.

Ashland District: Employer Award Rural King



VR Regional Manager Brent Sturgill presented Rural King with a SCVR Employer Award.

Elizabethtown District: Employer Award Elizabethtown Swim and Fitness



OVR Job Placement Specialist Kelly Mooney, right, and Communicare Job Coach Sue Hines, center, gave the SCVR Employer Award to Brandon Burd of Elizabethtown Swim and Fitness.

Elizabethtown District: Employer Award Fazoli's



Terresa Harrod of Great American Cookies, center, was presented with the Lexington District SCVR Employer Award by OVR Job Placement Specialist Craig Smith, left, and OVR Job Placement Specialist Tyler Williams.

Elizabethtown District: Employer Award Red Lion Hotel and Suites



Red Lion Hotel and Suites General Manager Casandra Turner, center, was presented with a SCVR Employer Award by OVR Job Placement Specialist Kelly Mooney, right. Amanda Gray, left, participated in OVR's Placing Adults in Competitive Employment (PACE) training program and was hired by the hotel as a front desk clerk.

Danville/Somerset District: Employer Award EOS-USA



OVR Branch Manager Roxana Robinson, left, and OVR Job Placement Specialist Deana Wilson-Kimbler presented EOS-USA Director of Operations Conner Smahay, center, and EOS-USA Recruiter Leslie Caudill the SCVR Employer Award.

Lexington District: Employer Award Great American Cookies



Terresa Harrod of Great American Cookies, center, was presented with the Lexington District SCVR Employer Award by OVR Job Placement Specialist Craig Smith, left, and OVR Job Placement Specialist Tyler Williams.



District Job Placement **ACTIVITIES & OUTREACH**

Danville/Somerset District: Interview Forum



Job Placement Specialist Deana Wilson-Kimbler hosted an interview forum for consumers, employers and the local One Stop Operator in October 2018. Four consumers were informed of current job openings and encouraged to apply.

Central Office: Cintas Tour



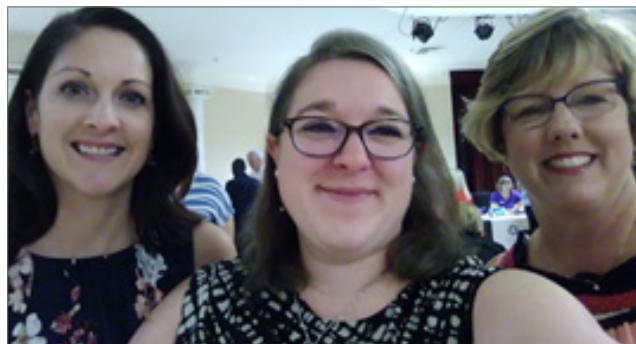
Central Office employees Chris Sheeting, from left to right, Jimmy Brown, Elizabeth Thompson, Nanci Soard and Jennifer Wright toured Cintas in Louisville in September 2018 to learn about the company's daily operation, and talk about the services OVR offers employers.

Elizabethtown District: Re-Entry Expo



Robert Shorter with the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, and Kelly Mooney, OVR job placement specialist, staffed a resource table at the Re-Entry Expo located in the Pritchard Community Center.

Elizabethtown, Louisville and Bluegrass Districts Career Fair



Louisville Coalition for Workforce Diversity sponsored the Diversity and Disability Career Fair. Job Placement Specialist from left to right, Gina Stephan, Christa Martin and Kelly Mooney, from three OVR district offices ran the information table.

Ashland District: 2018 Tri-State Conference on Diversity & Inclusion



OVR Assistant Linda Malone, left, and OVR Counselor Jason Gilliam represented OVR at the 2018 Tri-State Conference on Diversity and Inclusion held at Marshall University in West Virginia.

Paducah District: Fort Campbell Job Fair



Anthony Simning, OVR job placement specialist, attended the Fourth Annual Job and Resources Information Fair at Fort Campbell hosted by the Army Community Service (ASC). Participants were given information regarding OVR's services while employers met with job ready individuals with disabilities. Pictured from left to right, David Keesee, ASC director; Anthony Simning, OVR job placement specialist; Ann Brown, ASC coordinator; and Ashley Hadden, OVR counselor.



Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs)

The Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation collaborates with a network of community rehabilitation programs to provide a number of services to agency consumers.

These services include:

- Adjustment Services
- Employment and Retention
- Pre-Employment Transitions Services
- Supported Employment
 - Traditional Supported Employment
 - Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment
 - Customized Supported Employment
- Transportation Services
- Vocational Assessments
- Comprehensive Vocational Assessment

Individual Placement and Support

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is a model of supported employment that helps people living with behavior health conditions work at regular jobs of their choosing. IPS refers to the evidenced based practice of supported employment. Mainstream

education and technical training are included as ways to advance career paths. The model is based on eight principles: Competitive Employment, Systematic Job Development, Rapid Job Search, Integrated Services, Benefits Planning, Zero Exclusion, Time-Unlimited Supports and Worker Preferences. The benefits of employment are increased income, improved self-esteem, increased social and quality of life, better control of symptoms, reduced substance use and reduced hospitalization. Kentucky OVR, in conjunction with University of Kentucky Human Development Institute (HDI), partners with others in the International IPS Learning Community working together in serving people with serious mental illness who want to gain employment as part of their recovery. The success stories in the following section reflect the impact of those partnerships on the lives of three consumers. This information was provided by the IPS Employment Center website. For more information on IPS visit the IPS Employment Center or <https://ipsworks.org/index.php/ips-international-learning-community/>

Supported Employment Services

The Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation has played a vital role in the establishment and implementation of supported employment services in the Commonwealth. Through partnerships with agencies, organizations and funding services, OVR assists persons with severe disabilities achieve their employment goals. Supported employment includes Individual Placement and Support services that helps people with behavior health conditions work at regular jobs of their choosing.

Consumer Success Stories

Bradley Sawyer

Bradley Sawyer, 49, of Owensboro, was living in a group home and unemployed when he began working with Barry Donaldson and the assertive community treatment (ACT), a team-based treatment and support model for people with mental health needs.

The ACT team helped Sawyer get his own apartment and start volunteering in the kitchen at Partnership House in Owensboro. The team opened up new possibilities for Sawyer and he realized that he enjoyed being around people and wanted to work.

Donaldson referred him to IPS Employment Specialist Misty Sowders, who worked with Sawyer on accessing his skills, developing career goals, job placement and interviewing. Sowders found him a job opening as a dishwasher and busser at Cracker Barrel that was similar to the duties he enjoyed at Partnership House. She helped him buy interview clothes and accompanied him to two interviews, and he got the job. Sowders continued support services as he started his job by buying him work uniforms and accompanying him to the orientation training. Sawyer is working 20 hours per week, more independent and still able to maintain his Social Security Insurance Disability benefits.

"Bradley is a very good employee and doing a great job at Cracker Barrel," said Cracker Barrel Manager Russ Galloway.

Thomas Adams

My exit out of the workforce began several years ago as a result of severe chronic back pain. My ongoing decline in health contributed not only to my unemployment, but to my sense of hopelessness that led to a decrease in functioning mentally, emotionally and physically. To say the least I felt hopeless at times.



Due to my physical limitations I began a self-fulfilling cycle of becoming more socially isolated, withdrawn and depressed. I would stay in bed for days at a time with little to no social interaction. My mental health functioning declined and I noticed how anxious and depressed I became as my role as provider for my loved ones was stripped away. No doctors, hospitals, physical therapist or medication could provide anything that would help long-term and I was getting frustrated with the endless cycle.

I finally decided to seek help and went to ADANTA (an IPS partner of OVR) to work on my crippling anxiety and depression. Upon my willingness to accept help, I was lucky enough to be seen by Erick Sandstead a wonderful therapist. Erick helped me learn to deal with my physical pain through the use of guided meditation, hypnotherapy and positive coping skills. I also utilized physical therapy, not at the pace of medical providers but at my own pace at home and learned to listen to my body's needs and push it a little more without overextended it daily. I learned how close physical pain and mental anguish co-exist. Slowly, I began to regain my sense of self-dignity, decrease my pain and as a result decrease my symptoms of anxiety and depression.

My therapist referred me to Supported Employment services at ADANTA and I felt my last step in recovery was to prove to myself I could work again. We brainstormed several areas of interest and they helped me navigate the new world of computerized resumes, online applications and phone interviews. At first it was overwhelming, as I am not great on computers but every single day I came prepared and

eager to learn. I soon got a job at the Lincoln County landfill. I soon realized how work helped me become more independent, increased my self-esteem and made friends with my co-workers and supervisor. I walked a lot, yes I walked miles a day picking up loose debris/trash and yet felt like I physically and mentally finally saw the light at the end of a dark tunnel. The job was seasonal and when it did end after 90-days my supervisor tried to make it a permanent position. I was never disappointed as it ended because as I told my supported employment specialist, "If anything I proved to myself I could do it!" This was a victory after being bedridden and in daily pain for almost a half a decade. My self-esteem was restored and I had a new sense of purpose and freedom.

I soon realized when God closes one door he opens another, this was a stepping stone and I worked with my supported employment specialist to update my resume with my most recent work experience. We brainstormed the things I loved about the landfill position; being outdoors, working alone and hands on. We decided that a custodial position would be a good fit. I am proud to say I am the new full-time custodian within the Pulaski County school district at South Western High School (SWHS)! I now look forward to what the future holds and embrace each day. I no longer lay in bed in chronic pain and still utilize the tools my therapist taught me to control the pain. But, that is still not where my story ends. The Lincoln County Landfill called me back the beginning of August and requested me specifically. So currently, I am working there part-time every morning and at SWHS every evening full time. I do not have a lot of spare time, but I am a devoted employee and proud I can now have two employers. I am excited now to see what the future holds and embrace both jobs whole-heartedly!

Kenneth Cassidy

I was referred to Supported Employment (SE) services by my OVR counselor Devon Bussel after relocating to the Somerset area with my dad. I had just been released from an inpatient hospital and was suffering from major depression and



anxiety. I received outpatient therapy and medication management at ADANTA after my release. I also had some major life stressors, such as going through a divorce and dealing with issues such as abandonment fears I hadn't dealt with fully from being adopted. To sum it up; I just never felt like I fit in.

My parents were successful; my mother was a realtor, dad was going to college for aircraft mechanic school and my brother was also an engineering type. I seemed to struggle finding my own career path and my self-esteem was a big factor. I was overweight and suffered with poor self-esteem as a result. I also had club feet as a child and was required to wear special braces and shoes to help with my podiatry issues. Meeting with the SE specialist, I began to discuss and narrow down my passions. I also began to eat healthy and take care of myself, including getting treated for sleep apnea and sticking to a routine in order to not feel overwhelmed. We discussed my concerns over losing my Medicaid benefits and I was referred to a benefits counselor who explained my income guidelines and reassured me that I could work and keep my insurance. The entire program was person centered and I felt like it gave me a voice and I could be heard. We researched previous job history, skills and concerns including any needs for accommodations possibly due to my podiatry issues.

I soon got a job landscaping at Somerset Community College and I felt my independence grow and self-confidence. I love being outdoors and enjoy helping mow, landscape and do in-house maintenance. I love my supervisor and co-workers. My supported employment specialist referred me to OVR who helped purchase a pair of work boots that were specially fitted to ensure I could perform the job duties. I put many miles on those first pair of work boots and in the process lost over 70 pounds. I quit drinking soda and began to go to the gym also on a regular basis after work. I developed a very consistent routine of wake, work, exercise, eat and sleep patterns that I felt helped contribute to my health and overall well-being.

I now have more confidence, more self-esteem and feel I can live independently and hope to remain in Somerset year round when my dad finishes college. I also have applied for a full-time custodian position at SCC and have had my first phone interview. I am

nervous as my upcoming interview will be a group interview, but at the same time I have the skills and confidence now to secure a full-time position. I have goals and dreams now of becoming a professional personal trainer. I have a very caring personality and know now that differences are good; that is what makes the world go round. We all have strengths and weaknesses but that makes them unique! I have learned to focus less on my weaknesses and more on my strengths. I wanted to share a before and after picture to show you how work not only changed me mentally, but physically as well! Over 70 pounds lost and no longer require leg braces to work, and feel better than I have in years!! Wish me luck as I enter the next chapter of my career and young adult life and thank you!

Consumer Spotlight

Kathryn Harder

Kathryn Harder applied for services with the OVR Division of Blind Services after having difficulty in the nursing program at the University of Kentucky (UK) and being referred by the school's Disability Resource Center. Born prematurely, Harder had several eye conditions including retinopathy of prematurity, glaucoma, retinal scarring and a cataract. In 2000, Harder became blind in her left eye due to a retinal detachment, making her goal of becoming a nurse even more difficult to achieve.

Beginning in the 2016 fall semester, OVR provided services such as tuition and book assistance, guidance and counseling, assistive technology and job search assistance that helped her regain her confidence and continue with the nursing program. The collaborative efforts of OVR, UK and her doctors, along with Harder's determination, resulted in her graduating from UK with a bachelor's of science degree in nursing in May 2019 and landing her dream job at the Markey Cancer Center at UK. She passed the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) to become a licensed nurse and is now helping her patients during one of the most difficult times of their lives.



Jason French

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Larry McNabb says that consumer Jason French is the definition of an ideal consumer, and has inspired and encouraged him as a counselor. French has a passion for history, especially in the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky area. French was diagnosed with blue cone monochromatism in both eyes, which causes delays in reading and completing work. OVR services including assistive technology, tuition and book assistance, computer access training and job placement and retention, have helped him complete a master's degree in public history at Northern Kentucky University and become a part-time curator at the Behringer Crawford Museum at Devou Park in Covington. His goal is to work full-time.

"I have had the pleasure in observing Mr. French talking with guests of the museum and showing his great wealth of knowledge and insight," McNabb said. "He takes pride in the artistry of setting up and maintaining the displays in a way that they attract the attention of the customers that enter their doors each day. I know that he will continue to move forward and make a difference in his life, as well as others."

Ramesis Hernandez

Ramesis Hernandez, an OVR consumer with significant visual impairments, not only achieved his goal of working at Firehouse Subs in January 2019, but by March he had been awarded Employee of the Month. His work ethic was so strong that Firehouse Subs management hired another consumer with visual impairments.

To make his successful transition into the workforce, his OVR counselor referred him for job placement assistance Sue Hines, owner of Career Catering, a Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) in Hodgenville. Hines secured a position with Firehouse Subs contingent upon Hernandez's interview and his performance during the first two weeks of his employment.

Once Hernandez started working at the restaurant, OVR Assistive Technology Specialist Karen Perry evaluated his workplace and identified several assistive technologies (AT) that would help Hernandez with his duties, including a talking scale and a timer that buzzes.

With all of these services in place, OVR has helped Hernandez achieve his full potential in the competitive workplace environment. Hernandez serves as a reminder that, with the right assistance and counseling, OVR supported employment and its community partners can help individuals with disabilities achieve their goals.

Maressa Travis

Maressa Travis contacted the OVR for assistance in getting hearing aids so she could keep her office position at the Murray Police Department. In addition to receiving bilateral hearing aids, Travis' OVR counselor Megan Grubbs recommended a rehabilitation technology (RT) assessment of her work station because difficulties from Lupus and arthritis were negatively impacting her ability to work. As a result of the evaluation, OVR provided her with assistive technology such as an ergonomic desk, chair and keyboard, an alerting system and headphones to perform her job duties. Travis said that the OVR services have changed her life and she can now hear her co-workers and continue her job.

Mary Davis

Mary Davis came to the Ashland OVR office in 2017 requesting assistance with training as a state registered nurses aide (SRNA) so she could

discontinue Social Security Disability benefits and support herself. After qualifying for OVR services, she started on a plan to achieve her employment goals. With support from OVR, Davis began working toward certification and was hired at Trinity Station rehabilitation facility. OVR services helped Davis overcome challenges with her self-esteem, anxiety and mental health. She is now working full-time as a SRNA and was able to discontinue SSI benefits. Davis said she enjoys helping other people at the facility.

Tommy Tackett

Twenty-year-old Tommy Tackett of Grayson got his first job in September 2019 thanks to his determination and job placement and support services from OVR. Tackett was diagnosed with depression and anxiety, and he and his mother relied on public assistance. But Tackett said he wanted to work and have a better life. Through Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services from Pathways Inc. in Ashland and assistive technology, Tackett is working as a maintenance person at Genesis Recovery Center. OVR is continuing to help him by getting tools to do his job and a driver's license. The IPS program gave Tackett the support he needed to enter the workforce and continues to give him the help he needs to thrive at his new job.



Community Work Transition Program celebrates 35 years

Since 1984 the Community Work Transition Program (CWTP), a statewide fee-for-service program, has provided individualized vocational services to students with significant disabilities. Through the program, high school students gain the skills needed for employment in an integrated setting with competitive pay before they graduate. Available in 106 school districts, the program includes opportunities for paid work experiences, essential skills training, community experiences, career awareness, postsecondary counseling and self-advocacy instruction. In addition, the CWTP Employment Transition Program offers individualized training, job coaching and intensive employment services, as needed.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

Kentucky Community and Technical College System, Pre-Employment Transition Services Program (KCTCS Pre-ETS) and OVR is collaborating to give Kentucky students ages 14-21 with disabilities opportunities to enhance their skills and readiness for employment and postsecondary education and training. The program has 18 pre-employment transition specialists located at KCTCS locations to instruct students with disabilities who are in secondary public or private schools, home school, postsecondary institutions, adult education programs and alternative school settings. In its first year, KCTCS Pre-ETS has grown substantially to include 162 school programs and 1,478 students.



The following KCTCS Pre-ETS events gave students with disabilities an opportunity to learn about transitioning from school to work and college:

- Ashland Community and Technical College (ACTC) and Maysville Community and Technical College (MCTC) Pre-ETS specialist sponsored the Annual Life Skills Symposium for students with visual impairments, and an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Awareness Conference.
- Pre-ETS students from the Bowling Green Learning Center participated in Spring into Career Exploration hosted by Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College's (SKYCTC).
- The Somerset Community College (SCC) worked with several agencies on the Fostering Success Workshops.

- Jefferson Community and Technical College (JCTC) and Gateway Community and Technical College (GCTC) held Summer Bridge Week.
- Elizabethtown Community and Technical College (ECTC) held its first annual Bridge Day for students.

Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative (KVEC)

KVEC served more than 3,000 students from 25 high schools in 15 school districts with in-school workshops, business tours, transition conferences and summer experiences. Sixty percent of these students received in-school workplace readiness training using a multi-modal delivery format usually employing STEM manipulatives such as robots, 3D printing drones and virtual reality applications. Participating partners included OVR, Big Sandy Community and Technical College, Hazard Community and Technical College, the University of Pikeville, the Challenger Learning Center, Datascan, Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center, United Parcel Service (UPS), University of Kentucky Human Development Institute, Job Corp, Epling Illustrations, Larry Adams Martial Arts, Toyota Manufacturing of Georgetown, Knott County Sportsplex, Delta Academy (Area Technology Center), Project Creating Access to Successful Employment and the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (CASE-EKCEP) and KVEC. KVEC submitted a video that captures one of the transition conferences. Watch the full story <https://vimeo.com/371703114/dde91050b0>.



Kentucky **BUSINESS ENTERPRISES**

Kentucky Business Enterprises (KBE) gives persons who are blind or sight impaired the opportunity to own and run a vending facility program, including vending machines, cafeterias and snack bars, on federal, state and private property. The program, authorized in 1936, operates under the federal Randolph-Sheppard Act, and is self-supported. The law was amended in 1974 to ensure individuals who are blind a priority in operating vending facilities on federal property.

This has been a year of change and growth for Kentucky Business Enterprises. KBE implemented a new vendor training program in conjunction with Jefferson Community and Technical College that allows consumers to become licensed vendors, receive college credit, and earn a certificate in food and beverage service. Of the four students who graduated from the nine-week course, three have been placed in vendor locations and one is awaiting placement.

In addition, KBE began operating cafeterias in the Cabinet for Human Resources (CHR) and the Transportation Cabinet buildings in Frankfort that

were formerly run by the Kentucky Department of Parks. KBE oversaw and funded the 14-month renovation of the CHR cafeteria at no cost to the Commonwealth. Opened in August 2019, the CHR cafeteria is being run by a recent graduate of the new vendor training program.

In another exciting development, all vendors across the state are getting new completely accessible vending machines under an agreement with U Select It (USI), one of the leading vending machine producers.

In FFY2019, KBE had 31 active vendors statewide who employed about 1,000 people with payrolls of \$11 million. The program has grossed more than \$21.3 million in sales over that period.



A KBE trainee was interviewed by WLKY-TV in Louisville about the new vendor training program.



The newly renovated CHR cafeteria operated by a KBE vendor opened in August 2019.

Statewide Training Kicks Off Agency Reorganization

In preparation for the consolidation of the agencies, a statewide training was held Oct. 2 -3, 2018, in Lexington and Louisville. Opening remarks from Cora McNabb, executive director, kicked off the event. Holly Hendricks, division director of Field Services, provided the majority of the training including dual cases, order of selection and eligibility, individual plan for employment, approvals and service fee memorandums.

Counselor Mentor Team

As part of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Office for the Blind merger, the Certified Mentoring program was expanded to include all vocational rehabilitation counselors. In February 2019, Dana Elbert, a rehabilitation counselor for the blind, was officially certified as a mentor and became a member of the Mentor Team. In addition, all mentors will receive training that encompasses all disabilities and reinforces the changes in policies as a result of the reorganization. As of the 2019 mentor training, 16 have been certified in OVR. The goal is to provide certified mentors in every field branch that provides counselor services to consumers.

IPS Conference

The Kentucky IPS team consists of partners from UK Human Development Institute, ECU Training Resource Center, NAMI Kentucky, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. The team attended and presented on topics related to OVR and IPS collaboration at the annual Kentucky APSE conference on October 24, 2019. IPS is an evidenced-based practice and this team collaborates monthly to ensure high-quality IPS services are available to Kentuckians with mental illness and co-occurring disorders (mental health and substance use disorders).



Deandra Howard, Lori Norton, Sharon Darnell, Margaret Lopresto, Cathy Epperson, Teresa Brandenburg, Ron O'Hair and Jane Oliver attended IPS training.



Certified Mentoring training included, from left to right, Chris Sheeting, Beth McDaniel, Heather Pass, Waarithah Muhammad, Veronica Dale, Carol Leonhart, Julie Pattie, Dana Elbert, Kelly Colvin, Regina Bates, Julie Beth Hayden, Kristen Beach, Amanda Friend, Justin Sebastian and Jason Herron.