

The background of the entire page is a photograph of the Arkansas State Capitol building. The building is a large, white, neoclassical structure with a prominent central dome topped by a golden finial. The dome is surrounded by a series of white columns. In the foreground, two flags are visible: the United States flag on the left and the Arkansas state flag on the right. The sky is blue with some white clouds.

Arkansas State Rehabilitation Council

2019 Annual Report

**In partnership with
Arkansas Rehabilitation Services,
Division of Workforce Services,
Department of Commerce.**

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A Message from the Chair

November 8, 2019

I appreciate the opportunity to be selected by my peers to serve as the Chair of the Arkansas Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for 2019-2020. SRC members are committed to serving individuals with disabilities to become successfully employed by creating a model advisory council that all Arkansans will look to as an example of cooperation, collaboration and effective practices. We stand ready to build on these traditions to serve you and we will strive to create and model the best practices and ideals of our Council to accomplish our mission and vision. Arkansas's workforce needs you and we need you! We will continue to engage all stakeholders to work with us nationally and on the state levels to achieve our shared goals. Through becoming involved and sharing your ideas, thoughts and recommendations, together, we can help make Vocational Rehabilitation the recognized leader to help people with disabilities find and maintain employment and enhance their independence. We are proud to share our Annual Report as an overview of the activities undertaken by the SRC and VR during the past year. On behalf of the members of the SRC, we proudly present you with this Annual Report.

Respectfully,



Chris Paslay, MRC
Chairman State Rehabilitation Council

Greetings from Commissioner



November 1, 2019

Greetings,

Along with Chairman Chris Paslay, it is my pleasure to provide the 2019 Annual Report of the State of Arkansas Rehabilitation Council. While it is federally required to obtain the input of the SRC, I can't imagine trying to lead Arkansas Rehabilitation Services without the valuable and insightful guidance that is provided by the council. The SRC helps ensure the work of ARS remains strategically focused on successful vocational outcomes for individuals served by this agency. I want to thank all of our SRC members for their valuable input and assistance with the recently completed Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the development of our new state plan goals and priorities.

This year has been very exciting and challenging, with many changes affecting Arkansas Rehabilitation Services. First and foremost, on July 1, 2019, Governor Hutchinson's Transformation plan took effect, which dissolved the Department of Career Education and moved ARS to the Division of Workforce Services, which is under the newly-formed Department of Commerce. This move will only help strengthen our efforts to work more closely with our State of Arkansas Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) Combined State Plan partners. We have spent much time implementing the changes required under WIOA and are proud of our efforts to align our Strategic Plan with those changes, which will ultimately result in increased opportunities for employment outcomes with competitive wages in community-based, integrated settings.

Another significant change for ARS this year was the decision to change the Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) in Hot Springs from a 24-hour residential school model to a non-residential model. As a result of this decision, we move operations from the large, residential campus to a more traditional 'school day model' where students attend classes, but do not live on-campus. This conversion to a non-residential model will allow ARS to use taxpayer dollars more efficiently to serve this crucial population across the state by providing vocational training right in their hometown communities.

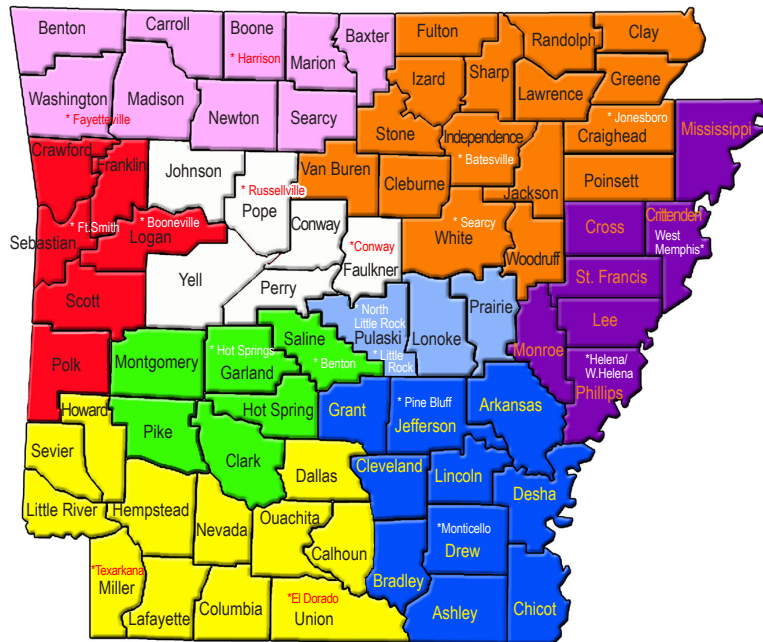
We have had a busy, but very productive year as this report will show. We look forward to this next year and the new opportunities of helping Arkansans with disabilities excel and succeed. As always, please reach out to my office or the membership of the SRC anytime we can be of service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan McClain".

Alan McClain

ARS Field Services



Region 1

Amy Jones, Rehabilitation Area Manager

Fayetteville: 479-582-1286

Harrison: 870-741-7153



Region 2

Kimberly Clayborn, Rehabilitation Area Manager

Jonesboro: 870-972-0025

Batesville: 870-793-4153

Searcy: 501-268-4542



Region 3

Everett Adamson, Rehabilitation Area Manager

West Memphis: 870-735-4725

Helena: 870-338-2753



Region 4

Dana Byrum, Rehabilitation Area Manager

Fort Smith: 479-755-3300

Booneville: 479-675-3835



Region 5

Andrea Gilliam, Rehabilitation Area Manager

Russellville: 479-890-5751

Conway: 501-730-9725



Region 6

Kimberley Baker, Rehabilitation Area Manager

Hot Springs: 501-623-4479

Benton: 501-317-1390



Region 7

Robin Hunt, Rehabilitation Area Manager

Little Rock: 501-686-2800

North Little Rock: 501-833-1490



Region 8

Kensel Green, Rehabilitation Area Manager

Texarkana: 870-773-2807

El Dorado: 870-862-5451



Region 9

Sterling Hughes, Rehabilitation Area Manager

Pine Bluff: 870-534-2404

Monticello: 870-367-9669

Field Services Leadership

Carl Daughtery, Chief of Field Services

Dr. Deandrea Bass-Carrigan, Deputy Chief of Field Services

Gaye Jones-Washington, Deputy of Field Operations

Christy Lamas, Deputy of Field Operations

Kristen Sutterfield, Rehabilitation Program Manager

Field Offices: Counties Served

Batesville: Independence, Cleburne, Van Buren, Stone, Izard, Jackson, Sharp, White, Fulton

Benton: Saline

Booneville: Logan, Franklin, Polk, Scott

Conway: Conway, Faulkner, Perry

El Dorado: Ouachita, Calhoun, Dallas, Union, Columbia

Fayetteville: Benton, Washington, Madison

Fort Smith: Crawford, Sebastian

Harrison: Baxter, Boone, Marion, Newton, Searcy, Carroll

Helena: Lee, Phillips, Monroe

Hot Springs: Clark, Hot Spring, Montgomery, Garland, Pike

Jonesboro: Woodruff, Clay, Craighead, Greene, Lawrence, Poinsett, Randolph

Little Rock: Pulaski [south]

Monticello: Ashley, Desha, Bradley, Lincoln, Chicot, Drew

North Little Rock: Pulaski [north], Lonoke, Prairie

Pine Bluff: Jefferson, Cleveland, Grant, Arkansas

Russellville: Johnson, Yell, Pope

Searcy: White, Woodruff

Texarkana: Howard, Lafayette, Nevada, Hempstead, Miller, Sevier, Little River

West Memphis: St. Francis, Crittenden, Cross, Mississippi

State Rehabilitation Council Membership

Christopher Paslay
Chair
Brookland

David Maples
Co-Chair
Bauxite

Addie Edwards
Camden

Kesha Pilot
Little Rock

Tom Masseau
Maumelle

Kimberly Clayborn
Jonesboro

Jonathan Taylor
Vilonia

Robert Fagan
Little Rock

Craig Reinhardt
Little Rock

Kelly Sharp
Farmington

Wesley Eddington
Jonesboro

Frances Johnson
Bryant

Keith Vire
Fayetteville

Albert Glen Glover
El Dorado

Matt Sewell
Vilonia

Alan McClain
ARS Commissioner
(Ex-Officio)

The Arkansas State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a citizens' advisory council, appointed by the Governor, to provide guidance to the state's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program. Its members help shape policy, engage in strategic planning, and provide guidance to promote increased employment for individuals with disabilities. Members report annually to the Governor and the U.S. Department of Education on the status of the VR program. The SRC spearheads customer satisfaction surveys, participates in the preparation and review of the comprehensive needs assessment, and co-hosts public hearings and forums. The council includes individuals with disabilities, community rehabilitation program employees, vocational rehabilitation counselors, advocates, and representatives of the business community.

Goals

As required by the **Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act** (WIOA), Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) successfully submitted its portion of Arkansas's combined State Plan in FY2016 and its update during FY2018.

Within that State Plan are specific goals for ARS that were developed in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council to address both WIOA requirements and ARS's ability to better serve its customers.

Our goals are as follows:

- ▶ Establish baselines and meet negotiated rates for the state with respect to the performance measures under Section 116 of WIOA;
- ▶ Increase the percentage of clients that utilized supported employment services and attained competitive and integrated employment;
- ▶ Improve public relations, information, outreach, and referrals;
- ▶ Increase collaboration with businesses that lead to increased employment outcomes;
- ▶ Expand and improve the Transition Services program;
- ▶ Develop and improve Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), including the Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI);
- ▶ Improve training, resources, and continuing education;
- ▶ Improve ARS's ability to act as a resource when assisting individuals with disabilities and employers in addressing accommodation needs; and
- ▶ Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

Responsibilities of the Arkansas State Rehabilitation Council

- Reviews, analyzes, and advises Arkansas Rehabilitation Services regarding the performance of its responsibilities under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act as it relates to program eligibility (including order of selection) and the extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided;
- In partnership with the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services helps develop the Arkansas State Plan for the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program;
- Submits an annual report to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) commissioner and Governor that highlights vocational rehabilitation services goals and achievements and make the report available to the public;
- Helps coordinate working relationships between Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, the State Independent Living Council (SILC) and centers for independent living;
- Coordinates activities with other councils to avoid duplication of effort and help increase the number of individuals served;
- Performs other functions consistent with the Title I of the Rehabilitation Act as the Arkansas State Rehabilitation Council determines to be appropriate; and
- To the extent feasible, reviews and analyzes Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' vocational rehabilitation program effectiveness including an assessment of consumer satisfaction with rehabilitation services provided. An example of the current form used to gauge consumer satisfaction, and the mean results for FY 2018 follow.

Meeting Dates

FY 2019 Meeting Dates

December 13, 2018
March 21, 2019
June 20, 2019
September 19, 2019

Proposed FY 2020 Meeting Dates

December 19, 2019
March 19, 2020
June 18, 2020
September 17, 2020

Consumer Satisfaction Survey Sample

Consumer Satisfaction

We are always trying to improve our services by listening to our consumers and getting their opinions on how well we are doing. To protect the respondents' identity, an **external evaluator** will log the responses. Your ratings and those of other consumers will be grouped together so that the sources of the ratings remain strictly confidential.

Given your experiences with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services delivery system, would you please rate them on the following: Please circle **only one number** for each aspect.

Aspects		Low High				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Counselor's efforts to involve you in making decisions about your rehabilitation program.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Counselor's efforts to listen to your ideas and suggestions about the job you would like to have.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Counselor's efforts to involve you in making decisions about the services you need.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Counselor's efforts to involve you in choosing service providers.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Your satisfaction with the services you received.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	The speed with which the services got started.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Your satisfaction with your interaction with the counselor.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Your satisfaction with your interaction with service providers other than VR.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Your satisfaction as to how sufficient these services were in helping you get or keep a job.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Counselor's / VR efforts to help you find a job.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Counselor's efforts to keep in touch with you after your case was closed to make sure you did not need more services.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Counselor's / VR ability to help you in general.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Are you using accommodations or equipment? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, rate the counselor's efforts in helping you get these.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Are you currently working? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If you are working, rate your satisfaction with your job.	1	2	3	4	5

FY 2019 Survey Results

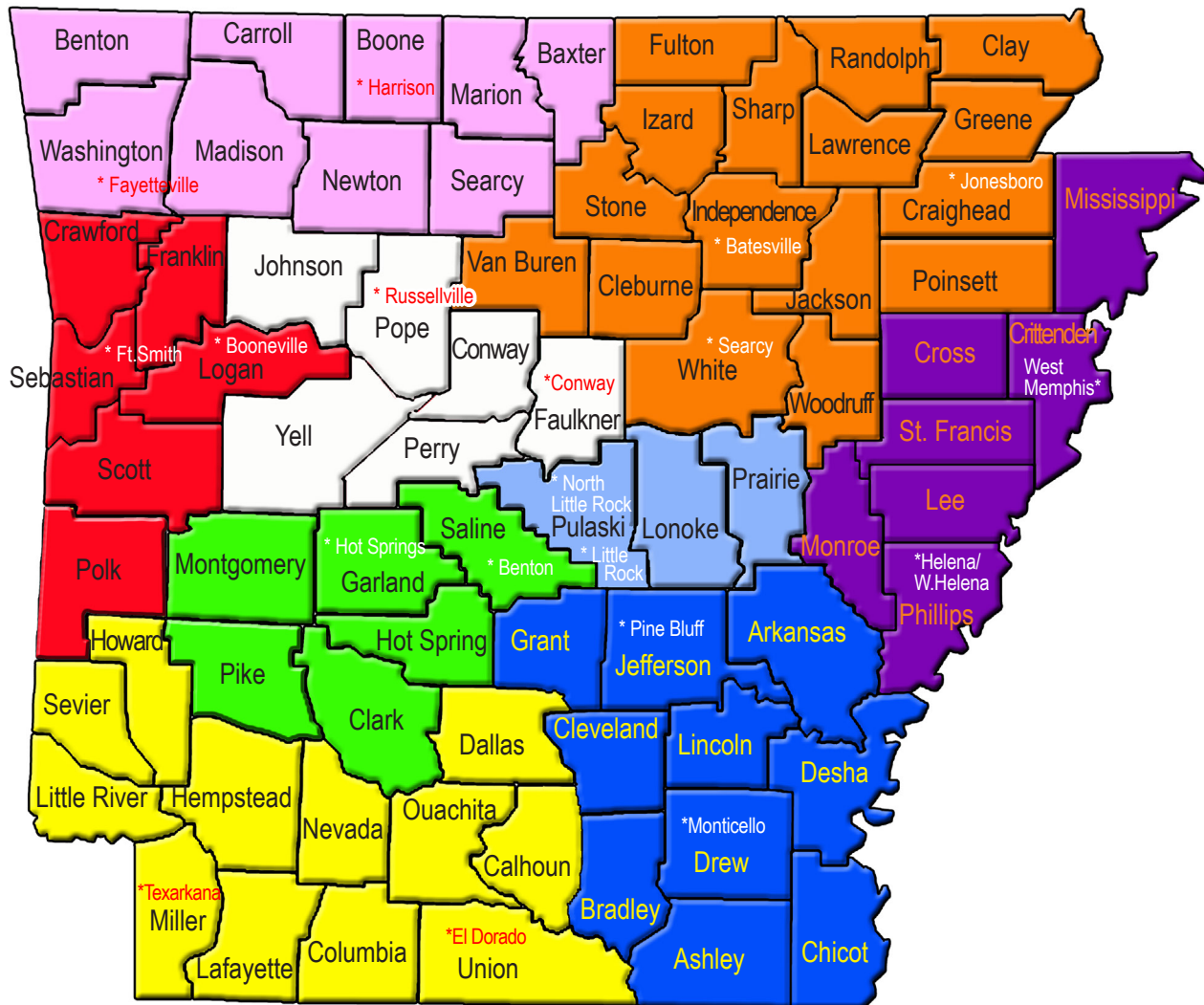
Consumer Satisfaction

We are always trying to improve our services by listening to our consumers and getting their opinions on how well we are doing. To protect the respondents' identity, an **external evaluator** will log the responses. Your ratings and those of other consumers will be grouped together so that the sources of the ratings remain strictly confidential.

Given your experiences with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services delivery system, would you please rate them on the following: **Please circle only one number for each aspect.**

Aspects	Results Average
1. Counselor's efforts to involve you in making decisions about your rehabilitation program.	4.51
2. Counselor's efforts to listen to your ideas and suggestions about the job you would like to have.	4.62
3. Counselor's efforts to involve you in making decisions about the services you need.	4.68
4. Counselor's efforts to involve you in choosing service providers.	4.66
5. Your satisfaction with the services you received.	4.44
6. The speed with which the services got started.	4.56
7. Your satisfaction with your interaction with the counselor.	4.60
8. Your satisfaction with your interaction with service providers other than VR.	4.49
9. Your satisfaction as to how sufficient these services were in helping you get or keep a job.	4.33
10. Counselor's / VR efforts to help you find a job.	4.19
11. Counselor's efforts to keep in touch with you after your case was closed to make sure you did not need more services.	4.65
12. Counselor's / VR ability to help you in general.	4.70
13. Are you using accommodations or equipment?	Yes=23
If yes, rate the counselor's efforts in helping you get these.	4.63
14. Are you currently working?	Yes=38
If you are working, rate your satisfaction with your job.	4.31

Successful Closures by Region



Region 1
538

Region 4
258

Region 7
317

Region 2
271

Region 5
114

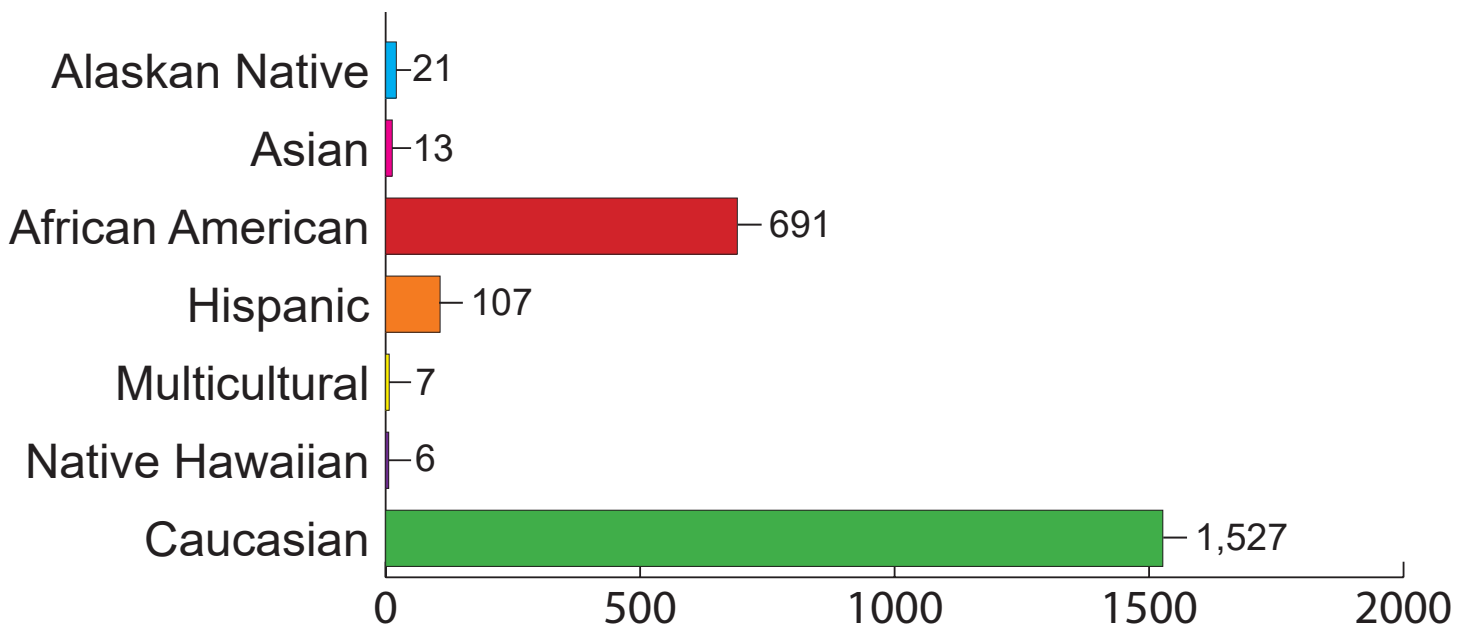
Region 8
348

Region 3
85

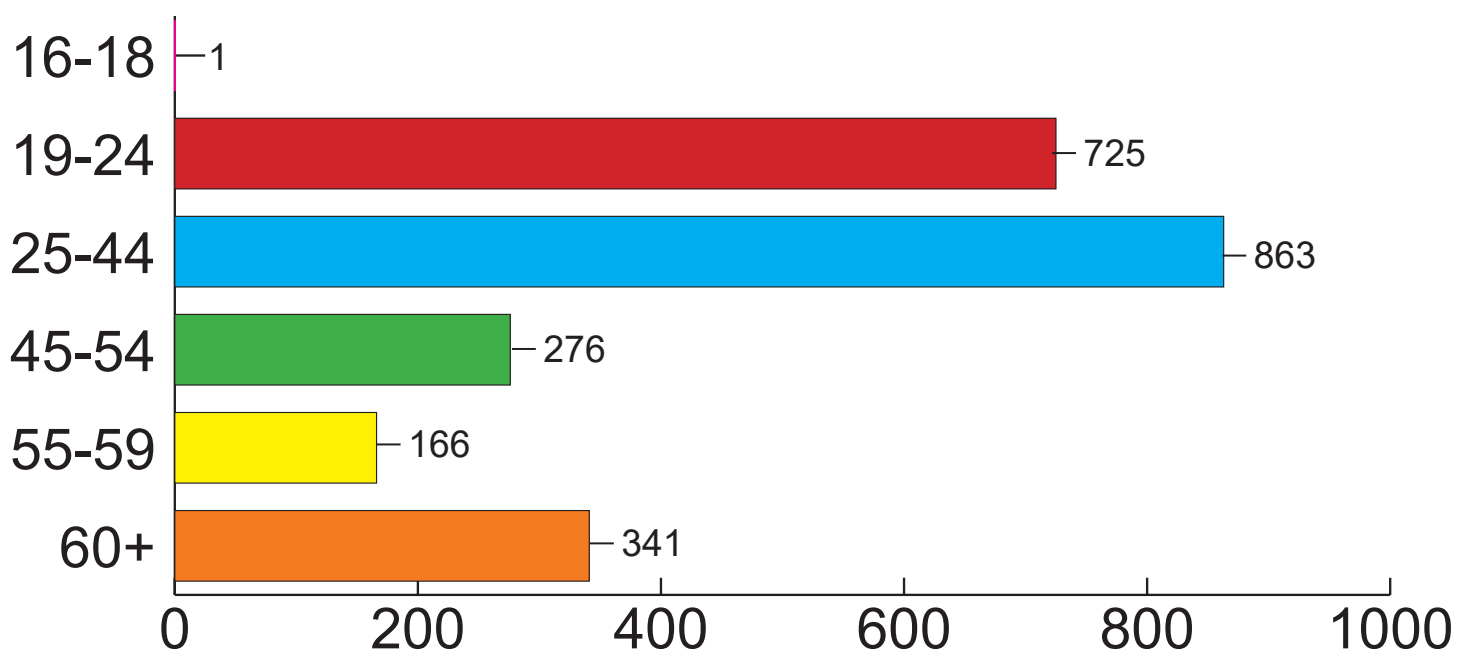
Region 6
196

Region 9
245

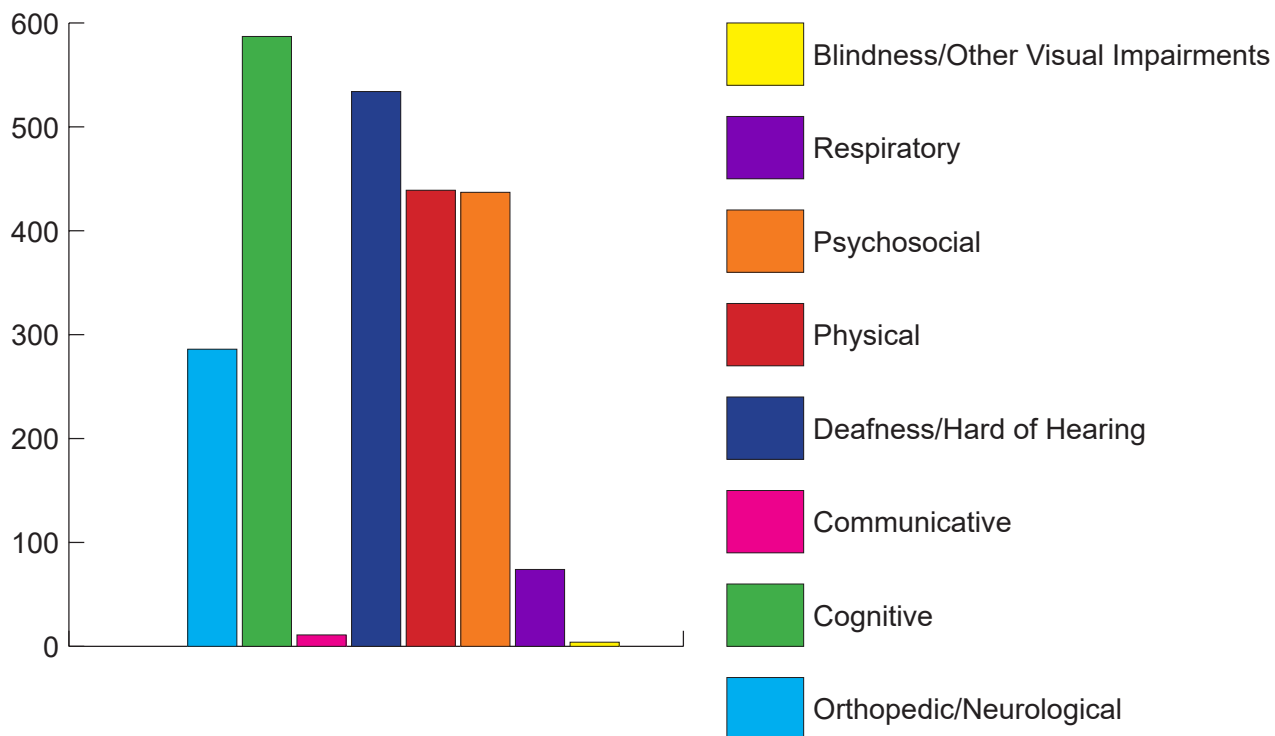
Race and Ethnicity



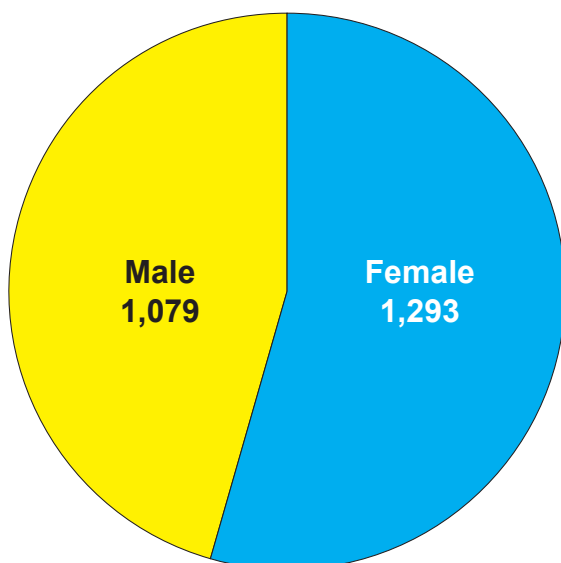
Age Range of Successful Closures



Primary Disability



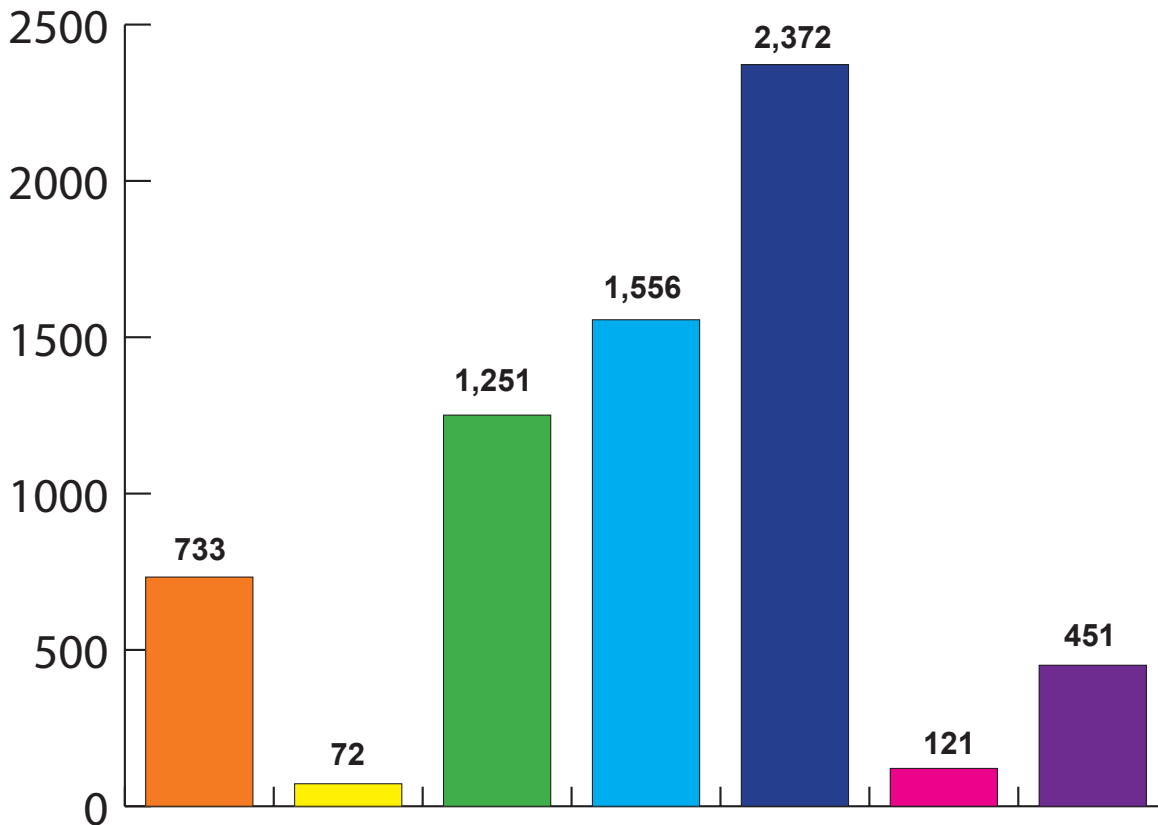
Successful Closures by Gender



Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Groups of Successful Closures

SOC Group	Number	Median Hourly Earnings
Management	113	\$14.00
Business & Financial	65	\$12.24
Computer & Mathematical	18	\$13.76
Architecture & Engineering	22	\$13.12
Life, Physical & Social Science	17	\$13.76
Legal	8	\$11.25
Community & Social Service	77	\$14.33
Education, Training & Library	125	\$11.50
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	37	\$13.97
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Support	204	\$17.50
Healthcare Support	159	\$10.45
Protective Service Occupations	37	\$12.50
Food Preparation, Serving & Related	229	\$9.00
Building & Grounds Cleaning/Maintenance	107	\$9.29
Personal Care Service	204	\$10.00
Sales & Related	167	\$9.95
Office & Administrative Support	290	\$10.98
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	10	\$12.00
Construction & Extraction	44	\$12.00
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	97	\$13.00
Production	172	\$10.50
Transportation & Material Moving	168	\$11.00
Military	2	\$13.13

Outcomes for Individuals Exiting the Program



- Individual exited as an applicant, prior to eligibility determination or trial work experience
- Individual exited during or after a trial work experience
- Individual exited after eligibility, but prior to a signed IPE
- Individual exited after an IPE without an employment outcome
- Individual exited after an IPE in competitive and integrated employment or supported employment
- Individual exited as an applicant after being determined ineligible for VR services
- Individual exited after receiving pre-employment transition services and has not applied for VR services

VR Affiliated Programs

The **Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI)** was a comprehensive rehabilitation center. In late May 2019, ACTI began transitioning to a new model to provide training and services to people with disabilities.

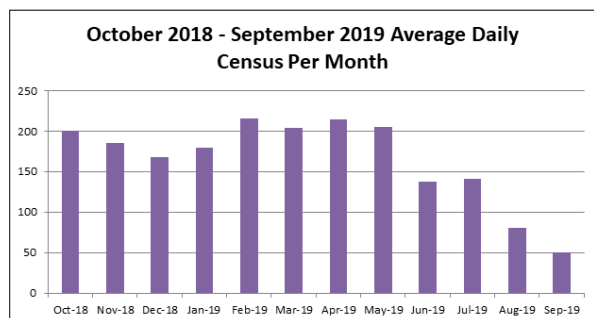
This training is focused on the following areas:

- Career and Technical Education
- Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship
- Pre-Employment Career Development and Transition Services
- Vocational Rehabilitation Support Services

ACTI is currently working closely with ARS communications and stakeholders across the state to brand the new model and market to internal and external customers.

Average Daily Census (On Campus):

165



Council of Occupational Education (COE) Accredited Programming: [259](#) Students receiving training

ACTI Clients Served 10/01/2018 to 09/30/2019						
Training Area	Enrolled 10/1/2018	Enrolled 9/30/2019	New students (10/1/18 -9/30/19)	Number of successful completers	Number of incompleters	Total Clients Served
Auto Collision Repair	22	1	8	16	13	29
Auto Service Tech	25	0	7	26	6	32
Business/Marketing Tech & Sales/Marketing Tech	24	0	5	22	7	29
Certified Nursing Assistant	7	0	16	23	0	23
Construction Tech	18	4	12	21	5	26
Cosmo/Cosmo Instructor	19	0	7	13	13	26
Culinary Arts	22	0	14	25	11	36
Medical Administrative Assistant	10	0	4	12	2	14
Pharmacy Tech	3	0	4	4	3	7
Welding	20	3	20	18	19	37

Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI)

Pre-Employment Transition Services:	72 students with disabilities served
Job exploration and OSHA 10 on high school campuses:	146
Transition Employment Program:	77 began and 70 completed
Work Experience Programs:	72 clients received these services
Internships:	44
Paid Work Experiences:	10
Paid Work Experience as Mentors during TEP:	18
Talent Development:	732 credentials attained by students at ACTI
Material Handling	36
Forklift Training	22
SerSafe	186
CPR	54
Customer Service/CVS	1
Certified Logistics (CLA and CLT)	6
OSHA-Gen. Ind.	320
Prof. Guest Serv.	86
Retail Ind. Fund.	186
Customer Serv. & Sales	1
Advanced CS & Sales	1
CAT Simulator	2
Off Campus Vocational Rehabilitation Assessments/Evaluations Performed:	7,500
RIDAC Psychological:	2,784
RIDAC Physician Evaluations:	4,565
LEC Evaluations	151
On Campus Vocational Rehabilitation Evaluations:	
10 day assessments:	5
Standard Vocational Evaluation Services:	279
Mental Health Surveys:	79
Driver's Education:	29 clients received this service
Driver's Permit:	14
Driver's License:	9
Enrolled and Not Tested:	6

Tours

ACTI conducted 127 tours to provide direct information to potential students, family members, and colleagues that serve people with disabilities.

High Schools

79 schools took tours of ACTI for consideration as a post-secondary training and service option. 1416 individuals participated in these tours (students with disabilities, school staff, and parents).

Individuals

There were 48 tours for individuals with disabilities that were considering ACTI as a post-secondary training and service option.

Business Engagement

The ARS **Business Engagement** team is vital workforce partner that is focused on preparing a job-ready career-bound workforce to meet the needs of Arkansas employers throughout the state. Through our ongoing partnerships that are built on a foundation of trust and attention to delivering customized business solutions, we expanded serving offerings to the needs of our customers. In the fiscal year 2019, 13 ARS Business Engagement Representatives worked with 940 business either in long-term partnerships or “real-time” interactions, providing over 887 no-cost services to these businesses.

Leading the list for products and services sought after by business in partnership with ARS were:

- Employer outreach, hiring, employee retention, staff training and accommodations
- A wide variety of training services on diversity inclusion
- Work Experience and training opportunities provided by Arkansas Employers for ARS applicants



Project Search representatives (right) accept a ‘Distinguished Partnership’ award for providing internship programs and placing young adults with disabilities in competitive employment.

Highlights

- ARS’ VR counselors and district managers are making customer visits to businesses with Business Engagement Representatives. This practice has increased understanding and cooperation regarding employer needs, as well as enhanced solidarity within our agency.
- Hosted the Arkansas Business Summit which included 87 business attendees from across the state who participated in a half-day education and information seminar on emerging practices along with recognizing model employers.



Eric Munson (left) accepts the ‘Distinguished Community Service’ Award on behalf of the GCDD.

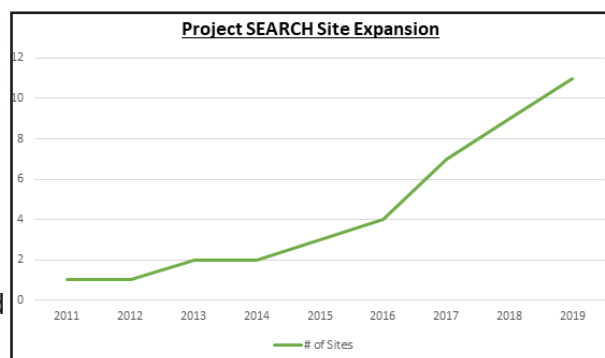
Project SEARCH®

Project SEARCH® is a nine-month internship program for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Interns in the program complete three 10-week rotations at different jobs within the host business partner site. An effort is made to totally immerse interns into the business with training provided by department supervisors and permanent employees with the support of a job coach.

Project SEARCH® Sites

Project SEARCH® Arkansas sites are developed under a partnership between ACCESS Group, Inc., and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS).

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) – Little Rock (an adult model developed in 2013): Competitive integrated employment outcomes have been 100% the past three years; strong business support exists as 21 businesses serve on the Business Advisory Council. Highest wages earned is \$15.62 per hour with benefits. Fifty percent of graduates working full-time with benefits, including retirement.



Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) – Little Rock (an adult model developed in 2015): Competitive integrated employment 100% in 2016.

CHI St. Vincent – Hot Springs (a high school model developed Fall 2016)

Ouachita County Medical Center (OCMC) – Camden (an adult model developed Fall 2017)

St. Bernards Regional Medical Center (SMRC) – Jonesboro (an adult model developed Fall 2017)

University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) – Pine Bluff (an adult model development initiated for Fall 2018)

Mercy Hospital Fort Smith (an adult model development initiated for Fall 2018)

Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center – Russellville (an adult model developed Fall 2017)

Washington Regional Medical Center – Fayetteville (a high school model developed Fall 2011)

Embassy Suites – Rogers (Project SEARCH® Autism Enhancement (PSAE) site scheduled to start winter 2019)

Forrest City Medical Center (FCMC) (an adult model scheduled to start Fall 2019)

Access and Accommodations

Access and Accommodations (A&A) consists of assistive technology (AT) and work-related programs that provide direct support to vocational rehabilitation clients, counselors, and employers to improve and facilitate competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities or act as a resource with regards to assistive technology or accommodations. It also houses the Community Service Programs (CSP's) that provide varying services regarding assistive technology to Arkansans across the state.

Assistive Technology at Work

The **Assistive Technology at Work (AT@Work)** provides direct support to vocational rehabilitation clients by providing AT assessments and consultation services. During the last federal fiscal year, AT@Work staff provided these services to 241 individuals. These individuals required services in the areas of students requiring accommodations for school, clients actively seeking employment, and those seeking workplace accommodations to remain at work through the Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work (SAW/RTW) program. A&A and VR staff also regularly utilize the services of our Community Services Programs (CSP).

Stay at Work/Return to Work

The **Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work (SAW/RTW)** program is designed to assist the employee and employer to either keep an existing employee on the job or successfully return an employee to work as quickly and effectively as possible. Last fiscal year, SAW/RTW evaluators assisted 65 individuals in these efforts, 16 of those being located within state government, and the rest coming from private sector business. The SAW/RTW program assisted 42 different employers with SAW/RTW efforts for employees with disabilities, with most of these referrals concerning job retention and the provision of workplace accommodations. Access and Accommodations has most recently initiated the client coordination piece of the SAW/RTW program where a case coordinator will work with the employer, employee, and other stakeholders to coordinate the SAW/RTW process with the goal of getting the individual to remain at work or return to work as quickly as it is medically feasible. This program has been initiated in July 2019, and we will have numbers to report to these efforts in the next reporting period. We are working with several employers and agencies on generating memorandums of understanding (MOU's) to assist in the definition of roles and responsibilities and determine workflow.

Access and Accommodations

Community Service Programs (CSP)

Community Service Programs (CSP) are non-VR funded programs that often benefit and support clients and their families when VR is unable to provide services or direct financial assistance. Increasing Capabilities Access Network (ICAN) allows a client to try out a piece of assistive technology prior to purchase, and its equipment reutilization program can be a no-cost solution for needed equipment. ICAN has saved Arkansans \$1,615,207.89 this year through their services where this money would have been charged to Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance, or the individual themselves. This past year ICAN has served 25 ARS clients in various aspects of providing assistive technology services such as AT loans and donations. ICAN also supports VR through their relationship with the AT@Work and SAW/RTW programs, where they allow ARS evaluators to utilize ICAN equipment during their client evaluations prior to making their recommendations. The Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) is utilized to address a client's telecommunication needs at home or work. This past year TAP served 107 ARS clients providing these individuals with the technology they need to increase their independence with distance communications. The Alternative Financing Program (AFP) can be another funding source for assistive technology not purchased by ARS. The AFP has worked hard over the past year to get a new board in place and engaged and will be able to report on outgoing loan numbers during the next reporting period.

Transition Services

Transition Employment Program (TEP)

Transition Employment Program (TEP) is a comprehensive pre-employment training service designed to prepare 11th-grade students with disabilities for future employment. TEP meets all mandated cores of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): Job Exploration, Work-Based Learning, Workplace Readiness, Post-Secondary Counseling, and Instruction on Self-Advocacy.

TEP was created in 2010 and developed, in partnership with ACTI in 2013. Fourteen high school students with disabilities participated in the TEP pilot in 2014. TEP has grown from 14 students from 7 high schools to 70 students from 57 high schools in 2019. TEP 2020 will be held at the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts (ASMSA) in Hot Springs.

Transition Services

In 2018 Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) expanded service provisions to students in school and youth leaving the secondary school setting. ARS offers work readiness, self-advocacy, career exploration, counseling on post-secondary opportunities, and the hallmark of ARS transition programs, paid work-based learning experiences. From 10/1/2018 to 9/30/2019, ARS served 2113 students in Pre-Employment Transition. Of that number, 521 students moved beyond receiving the five core services of Pre-Employment Transition and have made a decision and commitment to their futures by moving into the traditional VR program.

There currently are 29 counselors at ARS that work in the [Pre-Employment Transition Program](#); additional staff includes a counselor that is dedicated to monitoring and compliance, one who manages the program statewide, and one who handles contracts and the various agreements ARS has with the school districts and vendors around the State. ARS contracts with 19 community rehabilitation programs in 115 high schools in Arkansas for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Students are provided soft skills training, as well as real work experience during the school day and outside of the school setting. Students take tours of colleges and businesses, and present information on the types of careers that interest them. Summer programs concentrate on work experiences in the community. Baptist Hospital, retailers like Dollar General, and the Kroger Supermarkets have been supporters of student work experiences. Additionally, ARS manages and implements several summer camps to reinforce what is learned throughout the school year. These programs include the Youth Leadership Forum, the Inclusion Film Camp, and the Transition Employment Program.

Arkansas School for the Deaf

ARS contracts with the [Arkansas School for the Deaf \(ASD\)](#) to provide employment skills and on and off-campus work experiences. In the 2018-2019 school year, 53 students have received 33 weeks of work readiness training and 137 work experiences with interpreter supports. Students are instructed in workplace ethics, customer service skills, how to ask for and receive job accommodations, the job interview process, and managing their online footprints. Additionally, the students receive this training in hands-on learning environments and work in a variety of settings in central Arkansas to include Farrier Arkansas Horseshoeing School, the Apple Store, West Fraser Lumber, Arkansas State Capitol Police, The Copper Peacock, and Bushwhacker Welding.

Creating Opportunities for Youth

In 2018 ARS continued to strengthen its partnership with the Division of Youth Services by expanding the program into the Dermott Youth Facility and continuing at the Juvenile Detention Center at the Alexander Assessment and Treatment Center. These programs provide career-based training to juveniles with documented disabilities. The goal is to facilitate work behaviors, habits, and skills that will promote competitive integrated employment for students once they exit the secondary school setting. The program includes instruction in conflict resolution, work behaviors, accepting authority, and communication skills.

ARS is promoting long-term employment of individuals with disabilities that are in DYS custody. Upon exiting the facility, each student enrolled is transferred to an Arkansas Rehabilitation Services counselor to continue the path of career planning, which includes training, supports, and services that lead to long-term.

Transition Services

Youth Leadership Forum

In July 2019, the **Youth Leadership Forum** had 50 participants complete the program on the campus of Hendrix College, which included leadership values, plans, visiting the State Capitol, networking with legislators and businesses, and interactive sessions designed to bring out the leader in the students. This year the program added an interviewing session, where students graded one another on their interview skills and techniques. The students acted as

hiring supervisors as well, conducting interviews, scoring, and hiring candidates. YLF also continued to partner with Boys State, working with the participants to develop their platforms and speak and vote. Students led the Mentor's Luncheon, introducing speakers like the Keynote Speaker, Mr. George Dennehy, whose triumphant story which took him from being near death in a Romanian orphanage to playing with orchestras without arms, gave hope to our students that every individual has a purpose and absolutely anything is possible.



Inclusion Film Camp

In April of 2019, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services continued to partner with Northwest Arkansas Community College and Arkansas Transition Services to bring the art of filmmaking to students. The camp is led by actor and director Joey Travolta, who is the brother of John Travolta. This camp offers students with developmental disabilities the opportunity to experience the world of film. There have been 3 Inclusion Film Camps to date, which has served 150 High school juniors and seniors from across the state. The camp provides students with transferable skills for employment, such as communication skills, teamwork, independence, and self-determination. The event concludes a red carpet premiere showcasing the final products from the student filmmakers.

In the 2018-2019 school year, student Garrett Nichols had a dream and a vision of continuing his education in film making beyond the camp and beyond high school. His school, Clinton High School, and his community rallied around him to raise \$12,000.00 in funds to send him to Joey Travolta's Film School in California. Additionally, Garrett participated in a contest to create a new design for socks for a company called John's Crazy Socks. Garrett designed and created a pair that they were "crazy" about, earning him \$2500.00 from John's Crazy Socks for winning the contest.



Transition Services

Opportunities for Work-Based Learning (OWL)

ARS contracts with 32 school districts from across the State to provide work opportunities both on and off-campus to students, the program is known as [Opportunities for Work-based Learning \(OWL\)](#). OWL provides the added element of paid work experiences for special education and 504 students. The school system provides work readiness training and professional teacher supports. OWL has grown to 32 schools participating in 2018-2019, having served 682 students.

Students work in the community with business leaders like Harper's Pure Country Taxidermy, who provide students opportunities to learn real job skills for working in the communities where they live.

For OWL students, the focus is on work. In the 2018-2019 school year, together students worked 8,585.69 hours on campus, and 4,797.34 hours were off-campus learning what it is like to earn a paycheck!

They also earned credentials that will increase their pay and employability thanks to the Arkansas Career Technical Institute, 283 certificates were earned, 85 in OSHA, 37 in customer service, and 151 in Serve Safe!

While students participate in a variety of work settings, one of the most popular types of work settings are student-led small business enterprises. Below is a picture of 55 enchiladas with all of the fixings prepared by Clinton High School students for an on-campus event.



Praises for OWL

- “My students have all really enjoyed the program, but again the biggest success has been seeing adults change their thinking regarding special education students.”
- “We believe that our OWL program has given our students the much needed confidence and ability to try for things that he might have otherwise just ignored.”
- “Already in the first month of this program and I already get such positive results of the wonderful opportunity this program has offered!”

Success Stories

ARS Kicks Off National Disability Employment Awareness Month with Capitol Event

Each October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) across the country, and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) helped kick off the month with a celebration of individuals with disabilities in the workplace in Arkansas at the Arkansas State Capitol. On October 1, ARS, a section of the Division of Workforce Services, the Department of Human Services, and the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, cosponsored an event that showcased employees with disabilities and the businesses that support them. Governor Asa Hutchinson proclaimed October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month in Arkansas and Lt. Governor Tim Griffin presented the proclamation. The standing-room-only crowd heard inspirational stories from both employees with disabilities and the business partners who hire them. The event wrapped up with a ribbon-cutting signifying that National Disability Employment Awareness Month was 'open for business' in Arkansas. This month emphasizes the importance of inclusive policies and practices to ensure that all Americans who want to work can work, and have access to services and supports to enable them to do so. With continued advances in such supports, including accessible technology, it is easier than ever before for America's employers to hire people with disabilities in high-demand jobs.



Andre Slay, First Officer with United Airlines and former ARS client, delivers the keynote address about his journey to his dream job.



Lt. Governor Tim Griffin cuts the ribbon to kick off NDEAM in Arkansas along with agency partners, business partners, and employees with disabilities.

Success Stories

Charnette Freeman, Project SEARCH® Graduate

Charnette Freeman said she loves going to work every day and the children she works with love having her there as well.

Freeman applied for Project SEARCH® Arkansas in the fall of 2015. Project SEARCH® Arkansas is implemented in partnership between ACCESS Group, Inc. and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) that is designed to prepare young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities for competitive integrated employment. After successfully participating in interviews and assessments, she was selected to participate in the Arkansas Children's Hospital Project SEARCH® site fall 2016, graduating May 2017.



The ACCESS staff worked with her family and other stakeholders to secure competitive integrated employment for Freeman in her home community. Forrest City School District hired her to work in their pre-school program in August of 2017.

"I love my job," Freeman said. "I always knew what I wanted to do; I wanted to work with kids."

Freeman who is a 2010 graduate of Forrest City High School loves being able to work with children in her home community, a fact not lost on the school district. "Programs like Project SEARCH® are amazing, and when Charnette applied for the job I thought it was an excellent opportunity for someone from our community to be able to come back and work in the school district," said Dr. Tiffany Hardrick, Superintendent of the Forrest City School District.

From teaching shapes and colors to fixing lunches to wiping tears, Charnette loves all aspects of her job, and her enthusiasm is evident to anyone who sees her.

"I had the benefit of serving on the interview team that interviewed Ms. Freeman and observed her during the nine-month Project SEARCH® training and witnessed her growth during those times," said Judy Smith, Transition Director of Special Projects at the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services. "Observing her at work, was an absolutely joyful experience, the holistic human growth, and development I witnessed on her job were so pronounced, it seemed unshakeable. She always presented herself as kind, graceful, mild-mannered young lady but achieving employment seems to have had a tremendous impact on her as a person."

Freeman has just signed her contract for her second year at the school and is looking forward to continuing to grow and learn and give back.

Success Stories

Carole Ellis, Region 6, Field Services

Carole Ellis came to the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' Benton Field Office in March of 2019, seeking assistance with her hearing loss. Ms. Ellis desperately wanted to return to work as she could not make ends meet financially. At 75 years old, she was concerned about re-entering employment at her age, but Ms. Ellis found out that a great work attitude is what matters most to employers. Thanks to the ARS staff, she now loves her job as a Fitting Room Attendant at TJ Maxx in Benton. Ms. Ellis enjoys interacting with the customers as she checks them in and out of the dressing rooms and returns garments to the floor. Ms. Ellis said she used to walk two miles daily for exercise, but since becoming employed, she allows her steps at work to take the place of her daily workout. Ms. Ellis was so appreciative of ARS for giving her an opportunity and assisting in a time of need. Ellis enjoys working with her coworkers and states her managers are awesome leaders. Ellis said, "You have to be determined to work, and your disability doesn't make you disabled."

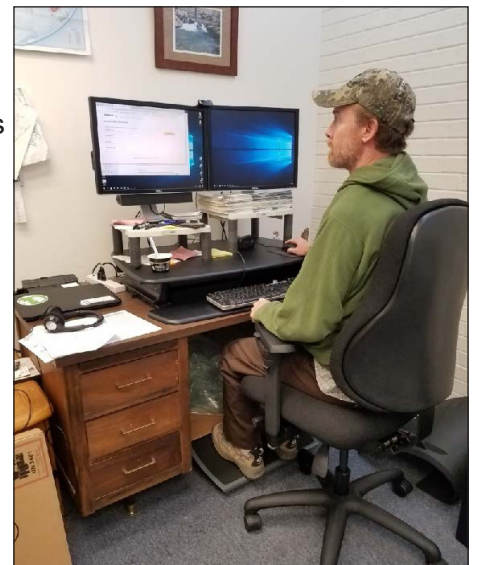


Cory Gallipeau, Access and Accommodations, ICAN

Cory Gallipeau is the IT Manager for The Nature Conservancy in Fayetteville. He was experiencing chronic back pain, stiffness, and shoulder/postural misalignments that impaired his ability to work at a computer and his computer repair station. Once he learned about Arkansas Rehabilitation Services(ARS) and the Access and Accommodations program that could provide a worksite assessment to see what accommodations were available to help him maintain employment, he started the process to apply for services.

During the application process, Cory learned about the broad range of assistive technology available through the Arkansas ICAN (Increasing Capabilities Access Network) program. He also received assistance from Access and Accommodations staff with information, demonstration, and trial loans of work-related technology and equipment available to help him continue working despite the pain and discomfort he experienced. He received a demonstration of several fully adjustable, ergonomic office chairs, a sit-stand stool, a desk conversion sit-stand, and various seat and back cushions for chairs. A trial loan of an ergonomic office chair and a sit-stand stool provided necessary relief from back pain and led to recommendations for ARS funding for work accommodations.

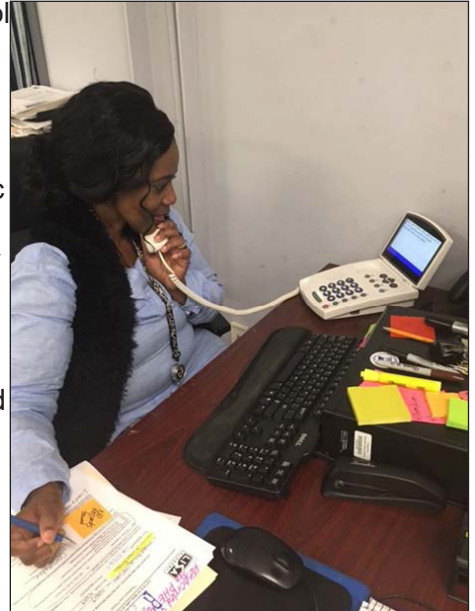
Cory received ARS funding assistance for a Neutral Posture ergonomic office chair for his computer work station, a 3M adjustable footrest, a height-adjustable UPLIFT Motion Stool for his computer repair station, and an anti-fatigue mat to use when standing to use the computer. Cory is grateful for the assessment services, equipment demonstrations and loans, and the assistive technology funding assistance that helped him maintain his employment.



Success Stories

Regina Johnson, Access and Accommodations, TAP

Regina Johnson works as a Records Specialist in the Little Rock School District (LRSD). She has a significant hearing loss bilaterally and does use hearing aids with limited success. Ms. Johnson shared that she has had difficulty for some time using the phone at her workplace, and had resorted to using the speaker option and turning it up quite loudly and this was only partially effective for her. After considering her environment and the specific symptoms associated with her hearing loss, she was provided with a CapTel phone that utilizes captioning for her when phone calls are made or received. The individual that provides support for the phones at the LRSD worked with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services to make sure everything was run correctly for her phone set up. He provided assistance to her once the phone was received and made sure it was functioning for her. We have had some difficulty in the past getting employers to take the necessary actions to make this type of phone work for our clients, but we had great success working with the LRSD to accommodate this employee. Ms. Johnson says, "The phones have always been a challenge for me, so it's been a joy to finally find a phone that helps me to achieve success on my job! I can actually hear and communicate without hesitation with the new phone."



Shawna Reaves, Region 5, Field Services

Shawna Reaves, from Ola, AR, has been a client of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services since March 2018. She was diagnosed with Chronic Venous Insufficiency several years ago. Due to this, Ms. Reaves has trouble standing for more than an hour and often has to elevate her legs to avoid blood clots. Ms. Reaves came to Arkansas Rehabilitation Services with a vision that would lead to her financial independence, as well as help her community grow. Ms. Reaves worked hard and put in many hours, creating her small business plan, which was approved by Jeff Jackson in October 2018. She proudly opened Barclay's Beginnings- a store that makes the old new again- in March 2019. Ms. Reaves sells recycled and upcycled items, but also allows residents from the town to rent space to sell their items.

Ms. Reaves's case with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services was successfully closed in August 2019 as she is still thriving with Barclay's Beginning and does not require any further assistance with gaining employment. Ms. Reaves is an excellent example of how, with the right support, attitude, and determination, goals can become a reality.



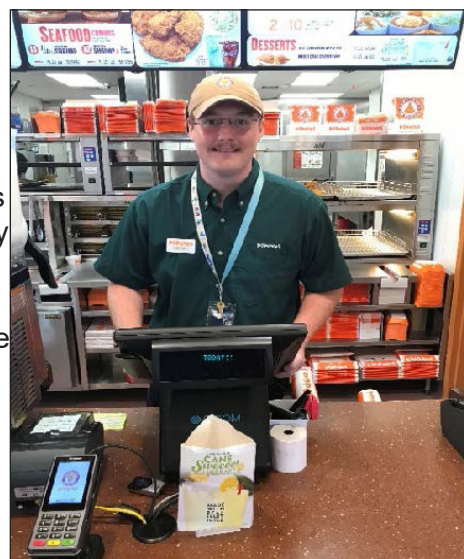
Success Stories

Taylor Nugent, Region 6, Field Services

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' former client Taylor Nugent successfully closed his case in August 2019 and is gainfully employed at Popeyes Chicken in Malvern. Taylor started as a customer service associate just months ago, but after his hard work and dedication, Taylor recently has been promoted to join the management team at Popeyes.

Taylor gives so much credit to ARS for their assistance. He said that his mother searched around to find help to support his disability, and she finally discovered ARS in 2015. Taylor has high praise for everyone at ARS, who helped him receive services and transition to successful employment.

Nugent recently asked for additional ARS business cards stating that he wanted to spread the word and he would tell his coworkers and customers the excellent services that ARS provides. Nugent stated he feels so blessed and honored to have been in the right place at the right time.

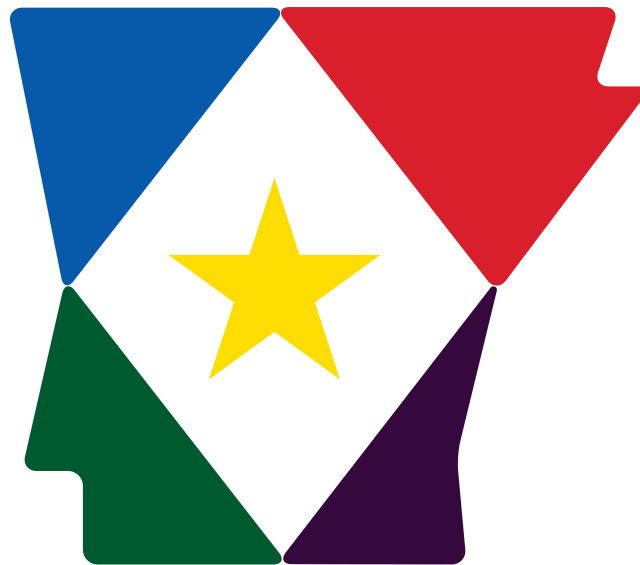


Robert Smith, Region 8, Field Services

Robert Smith sought assistance from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services after financial hardship due to being laid off from his previous job and inability to find a new position. After his struggles, Robert was ready for a career change for fear of being laid off again in the industrial field. ARS helped guide Robert to a new career field. After much discussion and research, Robert decided to pursue a career in Transportation and earn his Commercial Driver License (CDL). ARS assisted Robert in achieving his CDL with the Department of Transportation, and he is now employed with Ward Timber. Earning his license has allowed him to pay off debt, which lowered his stress level. He is also in the process of assisting his daughter to purchase a mobile home. Robert says that without the assistance of ARS, he would have never recognized his abilities to earn his license.



Arkansas Rehabilitation Services
is under the
Division of Workforce Services
within the
Department of Commerce



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