

Rehabilitation Council of Texas 2020 Annual Report



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In partnership with the
Texas Workforce Commission

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Messages

Message from Council Chair Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr.



It is with great Texas pride that I, Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr., the chairman of the Rehabilitation Council of Texas (Council), present to you the Council Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY'20).

While the pages that follow may resemble Annual Reports of the past, on closer inspection you will see how operating amid a global pandemic resulting in a nationwide lockdown has forced us to become innovative and electronically creative to make some attempt to carry on business as usual. To date—and I do expect the same moving forward—I can say with full confidence that despite all the struggles this year, our coordinator, Lisa Godwin, and every volunteer member of the Council, including our dedicated vice chair, Ms. Maciejewski-West (who, with full disclosure granted, tested positive a few months ago, suffered moderate symptoms, and is recovering) continued to perform their important work without missing a beat. I am pleased to report that various associates and partners of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) have met the challenge with a grace and vigor that would make our vocational rehabilitation (VR) customers, our distinguished governor, Greg Abbott, state rehabilitation councils across the country, and the citizens of our great state of Texas very proud.

I have been an active member of the Council for the past three years. Having been appointed by our governor to serve, little did I know that halfway through my first term of chairmanship we would be thrown such a dramatic curveball as the COVID-19 pandemic. I won't go into details about that because if you are reading this right now, you too may be forced to make many of the same logistical adjustments of working remotely that we as a Council have made.

Nevertheless, when reading, please keep in mind that some of the statistical numbers may not look correct or relate in any way to reports of years preceding. What I can assure you is that I have witnessed and can report with confidence that all parties of the VR system in Texas are making every effort to think outside the box and develop new ways of serving the needs of our VR customers. In the report to follow we look forward to giving a few eye-opening examples of this and of how we intend to continue to evolve until we all settle into the “new normal” that just may be more efficient and more productive than ever before.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Ebbeler, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr.
Chairman, Rehabilitation Council of Texas

Message from the Commissioners



Bryan Daniel
Commissioner
Representing
the Public

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryan Daniel".



Julian Alvarez III
Commissioner
Representing Labor

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julian Alvarez III".



Aaron Demerson
Commissioner
Representing
Employers

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aaron Demerson".

As we mark the fourth year since the transfer of Vocational Rehabilitation programs to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), we remain committed to expanding employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Our commitment is even stronger today as we continue to face and overcome challenges presented by this pandemic and take lessons learned to provide better services to our customers.

Our partnership with the Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT) strengthens TWC's ability to provide Texans with disabilities access to effective vocational rehabilitation services designed to support acquisition of workplace skills in preparation for meaningful careers, gain or regain independence and connect them to competitive integrated employment.

In Fiscal Year 2020, TWC served more than 66,000 Texans with disabilities, and over 10,700 of those individuals met their employment goals. TWC continues to implement strategies focused on improving opportunities for Texans with disabilities and connecting employers to this talented workforce.

This report showcases the contributions made by the hardworking members of RCT and highlights the agency's customer satisfaction survey, statistics describing vocational rehabilitation services for persons with general disabilities and a few of our favorite success stories.

About the Council



Mission, Values, and Responsibilities

The Rehabilitation Council of Texas (Council) advises the state’s designated Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program on policy, scope, and effectiveness of services. The Council is federally mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA.

The Council helps ensure that Texans with disabilities have access to effective VR services that result in competitive and integrated employment, greater independence, and community participation. Bylaws that are designed to support this goal govern the Council.

The Texas governor appoints Council members for three-year terms to represent a diverse range of individuals with disabilities and community perspectives. They are charged with being the voice of VR service recipients.

The Council participates in National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils to promote a nationally consistent vision for VR priorities, goals, and outcomes.

Learn more by visiting texasworkforce.org/agency/rehabilitation-council-texas.

Mission

The Council's mission is to partner with the state vocational rehabilitation program to advocate for Texans with disabilities in the vocational rehabilitation process.

Values

- The worth and dignity of each individual
- The right to choice, which is realized by access to full information
- Work opportunities, which open doors to individual independence and participation in community life
- Person-centered goals, service plans, and delivery systems leading to individual success
- Shared roles and responsibilities to improve customer satisfaction with the rehabilitation process and outcomes
- Collaboration and partnership with federal, state, and private agencies for system improvement

Responsibilities

- Review, analyze, and advise the state vocational rehabilitation programs on performance, effectiveness, customer satisfaction, responsibilities, functions, and eligibility, including the need for order of selection.
- Submit reports of progress of the vocational rehabilitation program to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) commissioner.
- Help prepare the State Plan for the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and develop a description of the Council's input and recommendations as a part of the plan.
- Review and analyze the vocational rehabilitation program effectiveness, including an assessment of the customer satisfaction and the vocational rehabilitation needs of Texans with disabilities.
- Submit an annual report that highlights vocational rehabilitation services' goals, achievements, and statistics to the Texas governor and RSA commissioner.
- Coordinate working relationships between the state vocational rehabilitation program, State Independent Living Council (SILC), and Centers for Independent Living in Texas.
- Coordinate activities with other councils to avoid duplication of efforts and increase the number of individuals served.



TWC Commissioner Julian Alvarez speaks to the council during the February 2020 meeting.

Committees

The following committees are responsible for upholding the mission, values, and responsibilities of the Council in partnership with representatives from the state vocational rehabilitation programs.

Executive Committee

Committee Chair: Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr.

Composed of chair, vice chair, and all committee chairs Coordinates with state vocational rehabilitation programs' leadership; develops quarterly meeting agendas; develops public outreach materials; and reviews the Council's budget, bylaws, and amendments.

Planning and Review Committee

Committee Chair: Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr.

Helps set and evaluate progress toward goals and priorities for the Combined State Plan for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, recommends ways to improve vocational rehabilitation services, and receives public comment.

Customer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee

Committee Chair: Lisa Cowart

Reviews customer satisfaction survey results and other program data, addresses service concerns, and helps steer a statewide needs assessment every three years.

Membership and Education Committee

Committee Chair: Bobbie Hodges

Educates Council members about federal and state legislation and how to best represent the interests of Texans with disabilities, recruits new members, and plans and oversees new member orientation activities.

Policy, Procedure, and Personnel Development Committee

Committee Chair: Karen Stanfill

Comments on changes to vocational rehabilitation policy; reviews appeals decisions; and monitors procedural changes, staffing, training and impartial hearing officer selection.

Our Work in Fiscal Year 2020

Year in Review

Full Council, provided by Council Chairman Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr.

Council Achievements of Note in FY'20

Were achievements possible during this unusual year? We think so! Check out all the great things the Council accomplished amid the COVID-19 pandemic!

Our Mandate

This may seem inconsequential under normal circumstances, but given the challenges faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council fulfilled its mandate to meet. The first two of the Council's quarterly meetings of FY'20 were conducted on-site at the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center. We were honored to have all the TWC Commissioners and the Executive Director present at our second meeting, in February. Due to the spread of COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown, the next two meetings were conducted virtually. No one missed a beat! No fewer than two of the three sitting Commissioners and Executive Director were present at each of these meetings as well. Why is this significant? Attendance by the TWC Commissioners ensures that they get to see on a firsthand level how the Council operates and the hard work that our advisory council puts into making recommendations to TWC on how to best serve the customers of the Texas VR system. It also shows a strong spirit of cooperation between the Council and TWC and a commitment to measurable improvements in the VR delivery systems.

Commissioner Engagement

The Council is very appreciative of the TWC leaders and staff members who participate and collaborate with us. I am especially grateful to Commissioner Demerson (Commissioner Representing Employers) for his latest engagement with the Council. He helped us with suggestions of new members to help fill our Council and meet the federal mandate. He also solicited specific feedback from the Council on suggestions to increase hiring and inclusion of individuals with disabilities as well as help to recognize those Texas companies that do indeed hire individuals with disabilities. In September, Commissioner Demerson exercised his commitment to this initiative by hosting a Zoom video call to discuss and explore ways to improve business engagement in hiring individuals with disabilities. As a disabled individual myself, I can tell you that Commissioner Demerson's initiative in opening the lines of communication to bring about a positive change shows the character of a true Texan and a good man turning words into action.

RCT Member Contributions

Joe Powell, one of our newest members and appointees, provided the Council with a valuable presentation and introduction to mental illness and addiction as a disability. Mr. Powell came to us from the Dallas area and from day one has been a highly engaged member. His eye-opening message of nontraditional and socially destructive disabilities in the form of mental illness and addiction gave much food for thought to the Council members. As an accomplished businessman and a veteran with PTSD and 32 years of sobriety, Mr. Powell was very informative in taking the initiative to assemble a quality presentation for the Council. His input was interesting and much appreciated.

Council Town Hall Meetings Amid a Pandemic

In 2019 council member and Parent Training and Information Center representative Lisa Cowart of Beaumont, Texas, took over the helm as chair of the Customer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee. Every three years, as part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), the Council is mandated to host town hall meetings to receive in-person input on VR services from customers, advocates, and interested parties from all over our large state. In 2020, eight town hall meetings were scheduled in various cities throughout Texas, along with one virtual town hall meeting. Because of the pandemic, Ms. Cowart was able to hold one town hall meeting before the state shutdown. Through her efforts and the ingenuity of the CSNA Committee, four additional virtual town hall meetings took place, with more than 500 attendees. The valuable feedback from the town hall attendees was eye-opening and beneficial for all parties.

VR Operations and Metrics Reports

At each Council meeting, TWC representatives Adam Leonard, Director of Operational Insight, and Cheryl Fuller, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, provide reports and statistics on VR services and VR performance. These reports are concise, complete, and always rich in valuable information, providing material that the Council uses to give feedback and recommendations to TWC. It was obvious as the pandemic continued that performance metrics were significantly different than before the state and federal shutdown. Given these unprecedented times of dealing with a worldwide pandemic and the massive adjustments that the entire TWC system was forced into, I'm certain that the statistics and trends will continue to expose the fallout of such a shock to all programs. Nevertheless, Ms. Fuller and Mr. Leonard continue to press forward and adjust until we all settle back into the new normal.

Council Membership

Upon appointment to the Council in 2018, I was privileged to participate as a member of the Council's Membership and Education Committee. I was interested in helping keep our council at a full membership status, as I'd understood that this was a challenge in years prior. To solve the appointment hurdles, it was my opinion that developing a good collaborative relationship with the governor's appointments office would serve us well in terms of obtaining and maintaining a full membership. This has proven fruitful, and while as chair I am now not able to sit on this committee, our new Membership and Education Committee chair, Bobbie Hodges, our coordinator, Lisa Godwin, and the Membership and Education Committee team have taken the ball and continue to make great strides in keeping up with expirations and deadlines for new members. I am happy to report that as of publication, the Council is at full membership, thereby meeting all federal and state mandates. We continue to foster solid relations with the governor's appointments office in order to maintain that full membership status.

Council Member Education and Development

It is an ongoing priority of our Council members to learn as much as possible about VR programs at both the state and federal levels. This gives us the ability to provide educated and essential feedback and recommendations to our TWC-VR partners and to help improve the TWC-VR programs. Some of the highlights of these educational initiatives of FY'20 included Council member attendance at the following conferences:

- Oct 2019—NCSRC/CSAVR/NCSAB Fall Conference in Jacksonville, Florida, attended by Chairman Michael Ebbeler and Vice Chair Lisa Maciejewski-West
- October 2019—governor's appointee seminar for new members, attended by Lisa Cowart and Joe Powell
- December 2019—23rd Annual Texas Workforce Conference in Grapevine, Texas, attended by Vice Chair Lisa Maciejewski-West

The COVID-19 pandemic restricted other in-person attendance at educational seminars. While we are trying to return to a new normal, many of these conferences have adapted and are being conducted in a virtual world, and, when offered, we try to attend. The good part about the virtual format is that many more members are able to participate because of the ready availability of opportunity. In a strange way, more of our members have been able to participate and expand their VR-related knowledge virtually rather than in an in-person meeting that would require extensive travel and expense beyond the budget of the Council. Some might say that virtual attendance may leave a few crucial personal interaction elements out, and I would agree, but the good news is that all parties are embracing the virtual format and continuing to move forward.

I certainly hope that some of the above highlights of FY'20 have been informative. I'm sure there are some worthy points that have been overlooked. As a first-term chair having to make my own adjustments on the fly in my personal life to remain safe and healthy amid a worldwide pandemic, coupled with making similar adjustments in the Council, keeping our responsibility to the TWC and the VR customers whom we serve has been a challenging yet immensely satisfying exercise. In my tenure this FY'20 it has been a pleasure to watch the Texas and human spirit rise to the challenges faced in this unprecedented time.

Membership and Education Committee, provided by Chair Bobbie Hodges

The year 2020 has been an active and successful year for the Membership and Education Committee. Our meetings were held both in person and virtually, via telephone and videoconference calls. To enhance our recruitment efforts, we worked with the entire Council and its networks to recruit potential members. Through collaboration with the Texas governor's appointments office, we were successful in reappointing several eligible members for a second term and securing four appointments to the Council. I'm proud to report that this action brought the Council to full membership and into compliance with the federal mandate. In addition to the new-member recruitment initiatives, our committee worked on the following projects:

- Reviewed and updated the new-member orientation binder and the new-member orientation training plan and schedule
- Conducted new-member orientation training virtually via Zoom, due to COVID-19
- Recommended and worked with TWC-VR as a means of setting a platform for VR and community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) to communicate issues and concerns across the state with providers that provide training and employment services for VR customers
- Through these efforts, TWC-VR conducted two virtual quarterly conference meetings with more than 300 providers in attendance.

Customer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee, provided by Chair Lisa Cowart

The Customer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee was extra busy in 2020, as it marked the year for the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). The CSNA takes place every three years and helps shape the future of VR services in Texas. Initially the committee had planned to hold eight in-person and one virtual town hall meetings to allow public input for the CSNA. 2020 was to be the first time the committee would attempt to host a virtual town hall. However, due to COVID-19, only one in-person meeting was held, on March 5 in Austin, Texas. And to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 lockdown and the mandate of the Council to conduct the town hall meetings, four additional town hall meetings were held virtually via the Zoom

platform. The move to virtual meetings resulted in record participation and input. CSNA town hall meetings statistics include:

- 523 virtual attendees (This number does not include the Council/TWC-VR panelists.)
- 542 virtual comments (including verbal, Q&A box, and relevant chat messages)
- 108 Survey Monkey responses (answered a total of 930 individual town hall survey questions)
- Three phone responses
- Five email responses (There were also dozens of email inquiries concerning the town halls prior to the webinars.)
- More than 100 cities and towns across the state were represented. Holding the town halls virtually allowed for truly statewide participation and also gave individuals living in smaller towns and rural areas the opportunity to have their voices heard.

Because of the significant increase in participation, the committee is considering the virtual option for future town hall meetings during the next CSNA cycle.

The committee also reviewed the quarterly customer satisfaction needs assessment surveys conducted by Westat. The surveys are designed to address and monitor the VR program and issues within the VR process. Most of the responses to the survey questions were within acceptable ranges. However, the survey revealed a few areas of concern to the Council. As an example, one of the questions dealt with informed choice of the VR customers' service providers. A higher-than-acceptable number of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their input in choosing a provider for their services. This resulted in the committee suggesting that this question be reworded for clarity and that VR staff receive additional guidance in communicating this information to the VR customers.

Policy, Procedures, and Personnel Development Committee, provided by Chair Karen Stanfill

The Policy, Procedures, and Personnel Development Committee has a number of responsibilities. These include reviewing proposed policies and procedure changes in the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual and the Standards for Providers manual; providing input in the hiring, training, and retention of VR staff; and reviewing the results of independent hearings and the hearing officers' decisions.

The committee reviewed and provided input on a large number of policies during this year, including informed choice, financial needs test or the basic living requirement, assistive technology, interpreter services, maintenance and transportation, room and board policies, post-employment policies, rights and appeals, and changes in several policies as a result COVID-19 that would allow staff and providers to provide services electronically and remotely.

The Council has been aware for some time of the low scores on the customer satisfaction survey relating to informed choice in service providers. The committee noticed that the policy on informed choice had been removed from the policy manual. The committee recommended restoring informed choice policies in the policy manual. TWC-VR agreed to the request and not only added a section on informed choice but required all VR staff to receive the training. The response from the training was positive and enlightening.

Additionally, the committee has been in discussions with the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and TWC-VR regarding the application of the financial needs test with customers. We are in ongoing discussions on how this

policy is being applied and how the customers and the agency would benefit from making modifications to the policy.

The committee provided feedback to proposed changes to post-employment services, which resulted in the decision not to move forward with those policy changes.

As a result of the effects of COVID-19, the agency needed to change how business was conducted, from policies that focused on in-person activities to a virtual environment. Several policy changes were reviewed and implemented with the full support of the Policy, Procedures, and Personnel Development Committee.

The committee also provided input and recommendations for hiring new VR personnel. This included feedback on the application process for VR counselors new to the agency and sharing job openings to Council members' networks and other resources. As a result of this collaboration between the Council and TWC-VR, the agency also made major efforts for successful recruitment of VR counselors and specialists. By the end of FY'20, the number of openings for VR counselors was the lowest it had been all year.

Finally, the committee reviewed hearing officer decisions for any trends or concerns in interpretation of policies and services to customers.

Measures of Success

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The following survey results describe satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services provided by the Texas Workforce Commission in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2020. Surveys were completed by customers with an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) whose cases were closed as either successful (employed) or unsuccessful (not employed) the month prior to the survey. Percentages indicate customers who responded “yes” or those who answered “satisfied” or “very satisfied” and do not include data for survey responders who chose not to answer the question.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Result: All Disabilities (including both General and Visual Disabilities)

General disabilities include behavioral and mental health conditions; hearing impairments, including deafness; alcohol or drug addiction; intellectual, learning and developmental disabilities; and physical disabilities, including traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, back injury, paralysis and impaired movement. Visual disabilities include blindness, significant visual impairments and deafblindness.

1. I was treated in a friendly, caring and respectful manner when I dealt with VR staff	93.5%
2. TWC VR staff demonstrated a can-do attitude when working with me	88.9%
3. When contacting my local VR office, someone responded to me no later than the next business day.....	78.1%
4. TWC VR staff explained when and why appointments were scheduled with them	89.4%
5. My counselor and I maintained contact as often as agreed to in my IPE	82.8%
6. I was satisfied with the explanation of services to help me reach my goal	85.8%
7. I had input (take part) in setting my employment goals	89.6%
8. I had input in planning the services I received	87.0%
9. My counselor and I discussed when services would begin and end.....	84.4%
10. I was involved in choosing who provided services (such as Job Placement, Supported Employment, Training, Orientation & Mobility, Diabetes Education, or other services) included on my IPE.....	66.5%
11. VR staff provided me the guidance I needed.....	83.7%
12. My services were not interrupted because my counselor changed or my counselor was absent	79.6%
13. My services were not interrupted due to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic	79.4%
14. I was satisfied with the services I received from service providers that my counselor sent me to.....	87.0%
15. I was satisfied with my counselor.....	87.0%
16. I was satisfied with my overall experience with VR	85.5%
17. I am currently working	66.8%
18. I lost my job due to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic	32.9%
19. My job loss was permanent 16.6%, Temporary 30.4%, Unknown Duration	53.0%
20. I am satisfied with my wages	84.6%
21. I have employee benefits such as vacation, sick leave and health insurance	59.0%

22. I am satisfied not having benefits such as vacation, sick leave and health insurance	50.0%
23. I am satisfied with my employee benefits such as vacation, sick leave, health insurance	90.5%
24. I am satisfied with my chance for advancement.....	78.3%
25. I am satisfied with my job overall	89.8%

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results: Visual Disabilities

Visual disabilities include blindness, significant visual impairments and deafblindness.

1. I was treated in a friendly, caring and respectful manner when I dealt with VR staff	91.3%
2. TWC VR staff demonstrated a can-do attitude when working with me	84.2%
3. When contacting my local VR office, someone responded to me no later than the next business day.....	68.3%
4. TWC VR staff explained when and why appointments were scheduled with them	87.8%
5. My counselor and I maintained contact as often as agreed to in my IPE	80.4%
6. I was satisfied with the explanation of services to help me reach my goal	82.8%
7. I had input (take part) in setting my employment goals	89.8%
8. I had input in planning the services I received	87.9%
9. My counselor and I discussed when services would begin and end.....	81.0%
10. I was involved in choosing who provided services (such as Job Placement, Supported Employment, Training, Orientation & Mobility, Diabetes Education, or other services) included on my IPE	63.4%
11. VR staff provided me the guidance I needed.....	80.1%
12. My services were not interrupted because my counselor changed or my counselor was absent	76.9%
13. My services were not interrupted due to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic	74.4%
14. I was satisfied with the services I received from service providers that my counselor sent me to.....	88.0%
15. I was satisfied with my counselor.....	84.9%
16. I was satisfied with my overall experience with VR.....	84.9%
17. I am currently working	58.1%
18. I lost my job due to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic.....	23.3%
19. My job loss was permanent 26.3%, Temporary 26.3%, Unknown Duration	47.4%
20. I am satisfied with my wages	83.2%
21. I have employee benefits such as vacation, sick leave and health insurance	55.2%
22. I am satisfied not having benefits such as vacation, sick leave and health insurance	44.3%
23. I am satisfied with my employee benefits such as vacation, sick leave, health insurance	91.5%
24. I am satisfied with my chance for advancement.....	77.2%
25. I am satisfied with my job overall	89.4%

Statistics: General Disabilities

The following statistics describe vocational rehabilitation services for persons with general disabilities (other than visual disabilities) provided in SFY 2020 by the Texas Workforce Commission. For age-related data, age reported at the start of the fiscal year was used. General disabilities include behavioral and mental health conditions; hearing impairments, including deafness; alcohol or drug addiction; intellectual, learning and developmental disabilities; and neurological and physical disabilities, including traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, back injury, paralysis and impaired movement.

Total customers served, all ages*: 81,330

Total customers served under age 22:** 31,518

Total Pre-ETS Students Served: 26,915

*“Customers Served” = from Initial Contact with Case Assignment forward

**Under the age of 22 as of 9/1/2019

Percent Served by Gender

All Ages: 44.6% Female, 55.4% Male

Under Age 22: 39.1% Female, 60.9% Male

Race/Ethnicity of General Disabilities Served

Race/Ethnicity	Total General VR Customer Responses	Percent General VR Customers Served
Non-Hispanic Pacific Islander	303	0.4%
Non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaskan	503	0.6%
Non-Hispanic Asian	1,482	1.8%
Not Reported/Unavailable	3,416	4.2%
Non-Hispanic African American	19,851	24.4%
Hispanic	24,484	30.1%
Non-Hispanic White	32,495	40.0%
Total*	82,534	101.50%

*Customers self-report and may claim multiple categories. Thus, the total is greater than customer counts.

SSI/SSDI Information

SSI/SSDI Information	Total General VR Customers Served	Percent General VR Customers Served	Total General VR Successful Closures	Percent General VR Successful Closures
SSI/SSDI at Application	13,655	16.8%	1,272	12.8%
SSI/SSDI During Case (at app, current or close)	18,099	22.3%	1,733	17.4%
SSI/SSDI at Closure	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	1,627	16.3%

Percent Expenditure by Service Type

Expenditures by Service Category	All Ages	Under 22
Other Goods & Equipment	0.3%	0.2%
Maintenance & Transportation	0.9%	1.1%
Prosthetics & Orthotics	4.5%	0.3%
Pre-Employment Transition Services	4.9%	16.5%
Assistive Technology	5.9%	1.2%
Job Placement Services	6.7%	6.8%
Other Services	7.8%	15.6%
Medical Services	7.8%	0.9%
Supported Employment Services	8.5%	11.8%
Diagnostic & Evaluation	13.4%	7.5%
Academic and Vocational Training	18.2%	34.9%
Hearing Aids & Interpretive Services	21.0%	3.2%
Total	100%	100%

This information is based on expenditures recorded in RehabWorks; it does not include payment and adjustments made directly through the WRAPS System.

‘Other Services’ includes: Miscellaneous, Other Services for Family Members, Room and Board-Academic Training, Child Care, State License Fees, Uniform Items for Employment, Employment Goods and Equipment - Non Consumable, Self Employment Goods and Equipment - Non Consumable, Other Rehab Tech Services, Other Personal Attendant Services, Translator for Limited English Proficiency, Room and Board- Vocational Training, Self Employment Services, and Halfway House Services - CRP only.

Disabilities Served

Primary Disability	% of Customers, All Ages	% of Customers, Under Age 22
Other Impairments	0.24%	0.33%
Substance Abuse	1.56%	0.05%
Cardiac/Respiratory/Circulatory	1.97%	0.43%
Traumatic Brain Injury/Spinal Cord Injury	2.18%	0.73%
Other Physical Debilitation or Impairments	5.73%	1.24%
Deaf & Hard of Hearing	17.45%	6.48%
Mental /Emotional/Psychosocial	18.11%	10.45%
Neurological/Musculoskeletal/Orthopedic	19.47%	8.54%
Neurodevelopmental Disorders	33.27%	71.75%
Total	100%	100%

Successful Closures

Total successful closures: 9,962

Total successful closures under age 22: 1,484

Percent Successful Closures Served by Gender

All Ages: 45.5% Female, 54.5% Male

Under Age 22: 33.6% Female, 66.4% Male

Percent of Successful Closures by Occupation

Successful Closures by Occupation	Successful General VR Closures, All Ages	% of General VR Successful Closures, All Ages	Successful General VR Closures, Under Age 22	% of General VR Successful Closures, Under Age 22
All Other Occupations	29	0.3%	3	0.2%
Computer, Engineering, and Science	291	2.9%	11	0.7%
Construction and Extraction	300	3.0%	28	1.9%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	382	3.8%	63	4.2%
Production	441	4.4%	89	6.0%
Sales & Related Occupations	559	5.6%	93	6.3%
Management, Business, and Financial	637	6.4%	12	0.8%
Healthcare Practitioners, Technical, & Healthcare Support	769	7.7%	84	5.7%
Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, and Media	1,000	10.0%	23	1.5%
Transportation & Material Moving	1,141	11.5%	176	11.9%
Office & Administrative Support	2,203	22.1%	431	29.0%
Service	2,210	22.2%	471	31.7%
Total	9,962	100%	1,484	100%

Customers who achieved an employment outcome as described in their Individualized Plan for Employment, have maintained employment for 90 days after substantial services are completed, and are employed at closure. 'All Other Occupations' includes Farming, Fishing, Forestry, Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Operators, Clerks, Military Specific Occupations, Homemakers, and Unpaid Family Workers.

Statistics: Visual Disabilities

The following statistics describe vocational rehabilitation services for persons with visual disabilities provided in state fiscal year 2020. For age-related data, age reported at the start of the fiscal year was used. Visual disabilities include blindness, significant visual impairments and deafblindness.

Total Customers Served, All Ages*: 8,965

Total Customers Served, Under Age 22:** 2,210

Total Pre-ETS Students Served: 1,990

*"Customers Served" = from Initial Contact with Case Assignment forward

**Under the age of 22 as of 9/1/2019

Percent Served by Gender

All Ages: 48.6% Female, 51.4% Male

Under Age 22: 46.4% Female, 53.6% Male

Race/Ethnicity of Blind VR Customers Served

Race/Ethnicity	Total Blind VR Customer Responses	Percent Blind VR Customers Served
Non-Hispanic Pacific Islander	34	0.4%
Non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaskan	41	0.5%
Non-Hispanic Asian	198	2.2%
Not Reported/Unavailable	334	3.7%
Non-Hispanic African American	2,026	22.6%
Hispanic	3,510	39.2%
Non-Hispanic White	2,905	32.4%
Total*	9,048	101%

*Customers self-report and may claim multiple categories. Thus the total is greater than customer counts.

SSI/SSDI Information Blind

SSI/SSDI Information	Total Blind VR Customers Served	Percent Blind VR Customers Served	Total Blind VR Successful Closures	Percent Blind VR Successful Closures
SSI/SSDI at Application	2,319	25.9%	152	18.6%
SSI/SSDI During Case (at app, current or at close)	3,006	33.5%	204	24.9%
SSI/SSDI at Closure	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	188	23.0%

Percent Expenditure by Service Type

Expenditures by Service Category	All Ages	Under 22
Job Placement	0.9%	0.9%
Supported Employment	1.5%	1.8%
Pre-Employment Transition Services	1.9%	8.5%
Maintenance & Transportation	2.3%	2.2%
Orientation & Mobility Training	4.0%	2.6%
Eyeglasses, Lenses, Low Vision Devices, Orthotics/Prosthetics	6.6%	5.1%
Other Training	9.0%	23.8%
All Other Goods and Services	11.2%	24.2%
Diagnostic & Evaluation	12.8%	5.6%
Assistive Technology, includes related evaluation & training	23.1%	21.6%
Restoration Services	26.7%	3.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

This information is based on expenditures recorded in RehabWorks; it does not include payment and adjustments made directly through the WRAPS System. All Other Goods & Services includes Diabetes Education, Other Goods & Equipment, and Other Goods & Equipment-Youth.

Successful Closures

Total Successful Closures: 819

Total Successful Closures, Under Age 22: 67

Percent Successful Closures by Gender

All Ages: 49.0% Female, 51.0% Male

Under Age 22: 40.3% Female, 59.7% Male

Percent of Successful Closures by Occupation

Successful Closures by Occupation	Successful Blind VR Closures, All Ages	% of Blind VR Successful Closures, All Ages	Successful Blind VR Closures, Under Age 22	% of Blind VR Successful Closures, Under Age 22
All Other Occupations	12	1.5%	2	3.0%
Production	25	3.1%	4	6.0%
Computer, Engineering, and Science	28	3.4%	1	1.5%
Construction and Extraction	29	3.5%	0	0.0%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	34	4.2%	2	3.0%
Sales & Related Occupations	54	6.6%	9	13.4%
Transportation & Material Moving	59	7.2%	3	4.5%
Management, Business, and Financial	77	9.4%	4	6.0%
Healthcare Practitioners, Technical & Healthcare Support	95	11.6%	0	0.0%
Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts and Media	110	13.4%	5	7.5%
Office & Administrative Support	137	16.7%	20	29.9%
Service	159	19.4%	17	25.4%
Total	819	100%	67	100%

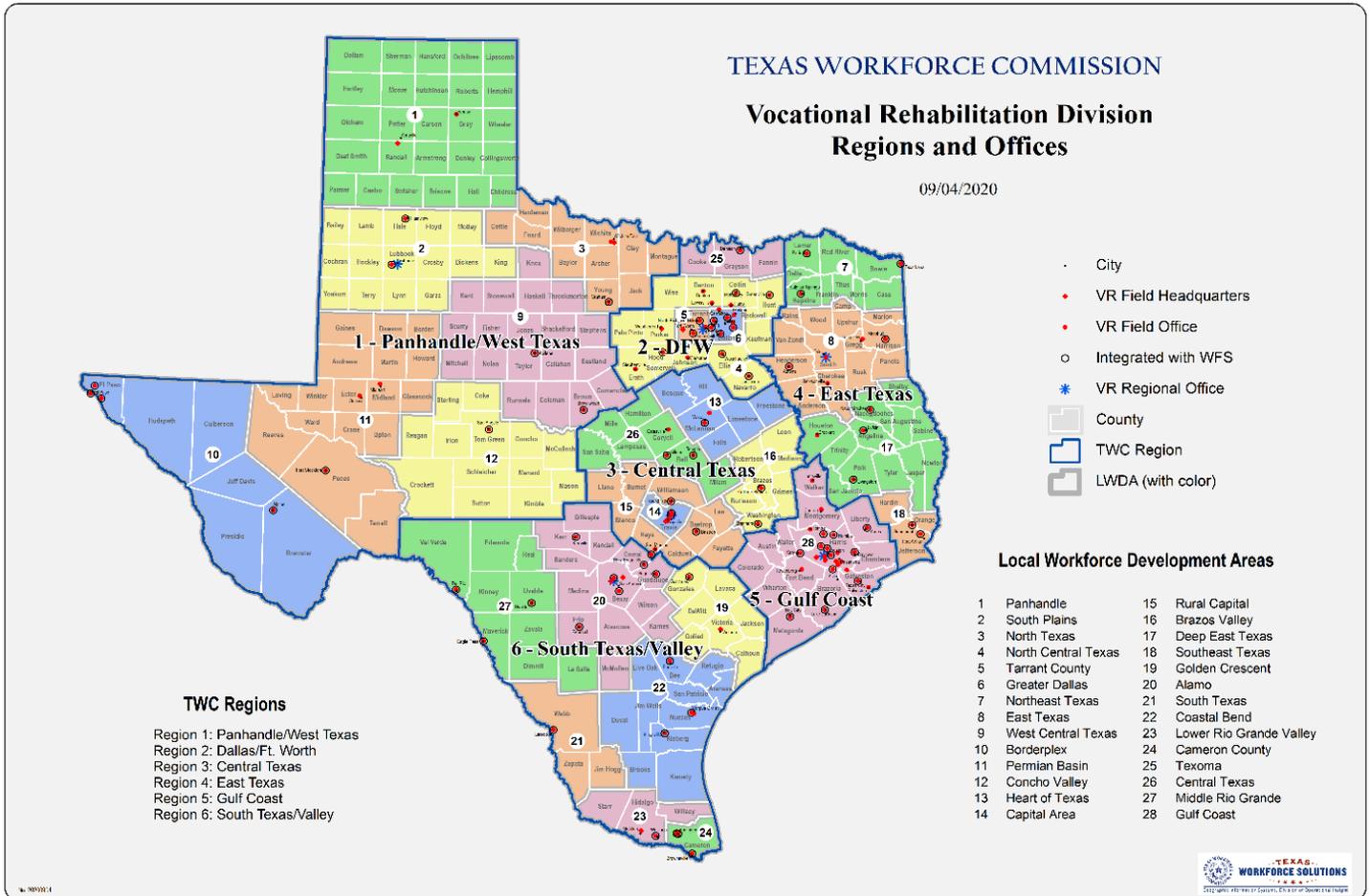
TWC-VR Division Regions and Offices Map

To locate your TWC VR office please contact:

(512) 936-6400

vr.office.locator@twc.state.tx.us

www.twc.texas.gov/VRNearMe



Success Stories

Kashmiere Culberson's Road to Success Began with Hard Work and Support From Vocational Rehabilitation Services



At just 23 years old, Kashmiere Culberson has already earned several titles in her life so far. She's a successful YouTube creator and vlogger, make-up artist, and a Texas Woman's University graduate. Her goal for the future is to become a motivational speaker. She says her message is "If I can do it, you can do it too."

Kashmiere was born without arms, a condition known as bilateral phocomelia. As the oldest of four siblings, she credits her family for encouraging her to be the strong and independent woman she is now. "My parents have always encouraged me to keep pushing myself," says Kashmiere. "They always told us that setting goals and getting an education is important." Kashmiere has spent her life adapting and has learned to do almost everything with her feet, including driving, cooking, writing and typing. As she graduated high school in 2015, she learned about support services she could access through Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services, a statewide program which provides individuals with disabilities with individualized services that will help them reach their employment goals. With the help from her Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Kashmiere had the support she needed to enroll at [Texas Woman's University](#) and be supported along the way until graduation.

Whenever she's had moments when she has doubted herself, Kashmiere reminds herself that it's her positive mindset that led to her achievements. Her YouTube channel, [Its Kashmiere](#) is approaching 200,000 subscribers. Kashmiere graduated with honors, earning bachelor's degree in psychology, and graduating last May with a 4.0 GPA.

"Everything is mental," she says. "if you have a positive mindset, everything is possible. And if I can do it, you can do it, too."

As an aspiring motivational speaker and a person with a disability, Kashmiere says her message to those without disabilities is "Don't take anything for granted and to appreciate everything you have to be thankful for." Her year-end goal: To reach 1 million subscribers on her YouTube channel. Visit Kashmiere's YouTube channel at [Its Kashmiere](#).

Meet Kashmiere Culberson

2020 Texas Woman's University Graduate, Bachelor's Degree in Psychology

YouTube creator with 193,000 subscribers

Makeup Artist

Aspiring Motivational Speaker



Explore STEM! Camps

Students in south Texas got hands-on robotics coaching in two virtually led summer camps hosted by South Texas College. The Explore STEM! Camps, funded by TWC's Vocational Rehabilitation program in collaboration with colleges and universities across the state, support students with disabilities, including mentoring and teamwork, as they gain new skills and explore careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Although normally held in person, five colleges and universities hosted more than 100 students this summer in virtual Explore STEM! Camps, including [Houston Community College](#), [South Texas College](#), [University of Houston-Clear Lake](#), [University of Texas at San Antonio](#) and [University of Texas at El Paso](#). To find out about Pre-employment Transition Services from TWC, find a local VR contact at www.twc.texas.gov/VRNearMe.

Link for social post: <https://news.southtexascollege.edu/stc-and-texas-workforce-organize-robotics-camps-for-special-needs-students/>

#summercamp #robotics #STEM #TXHireAbility



2020 Disability Employment Awareness Month

Increasing Access and Opportunity

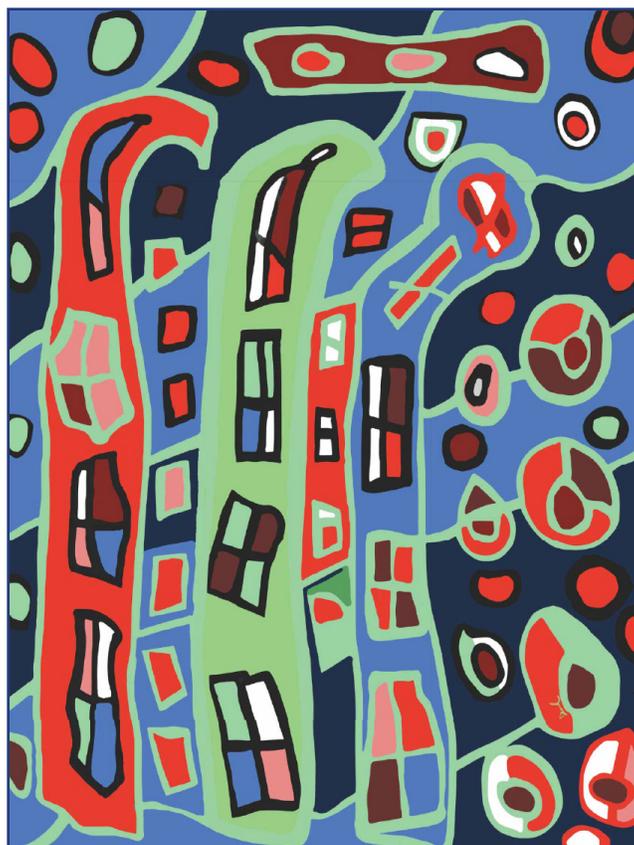
We See Things Differently by Dinah Rodriguez



Dinah describes herself as an observant child who loved to draw, color, and paint. She struggled with different health challenges throughout her life, including vision and hearing loss. It wasn't until much later—in her 40s—that she was diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder and General Anxiety. Dinah experienced a major turn of events in 2018 after visiting a family doctor and mentioning her blurry vision. She was referred to an eye doctor and diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, which in turn lead to a diagnosis of Usher syndrome—a rare genetic disease that causes hearing and vision loss. According to Dinah, art has helped her find peace and happiness since a very young age.

Dinah says, “Even though we may have a disability and see things differently, we are still useful and capable of producing work. We just need to have faith that we are valuable- being different doesn't mean we can't provide for ourselves! We love what we are gifted to do, and there is no stopping us from succeeding. We appreciate everyone who has looked at us in this way.” She goes on to add, “With the knowledge of professional people around me during these years—from my fourth grade teacher to my family doctor to my therapist—I have begun to flourish.”

Today Dinah is a successful artist with legal blindness who continues to grow her knowledge and creativity as she produces work in digital and fine art. She publishes her artwork to different sites where she adds them to products like mugs, t-shirts, journals, and much more! She created a children's book and three coloring books, all of which can be found online and in book stores in McAllen. Dinah notes that Texas Workforce Commission—Vocational Rehabilitation Services were instrumental in helping her develop independence, both as an artist and as a legally blind person. With their encouragement, she entered the 2020 DEAM poster competition and says she is delighted to have been selected as the winner. She hopes that others with a disability see that “. . .being different doesn't mean we can't provide for ourselves! We love what we are gifted to do, and there is no stopping us from succeeding.”



Membership and Meetings

Members



**Michael A. Ebbeler Jr.,
RCT Chairman**
Disability Representative
Austin, TX



**Lisa Maciejewski-West,
RCT Vice Chairman**
Business, Industry and Labor
Representative
Horseshoe Bay, TX



Matt Berend
State VR Counselor
Representative
Wichita Falls, TX



Amanda Bowdoin
Disability Representative
Forney, TX



Jennifer Clouse
Business, Industry and
Labor Representative
Temple, TX



Lisa Cowart
Parent Training &
Information Representative
Beaumont, TX



JoAnne Fluke
VR Services Recipient
Representative
Abilene, TX



Cheryl Fuller
State VR Director
Representative
Austin, TX



Lindsey R. Geeslin
Texas Workforce Investment
Council Representative
Lorena, TX



Crystal George
Disability Representative
Argyle, TX



Gennadiy Goldenshteyn
Business, Industry and
Labor Representative
Dallas, TX



Bobbie Hodges
Community Rehabilitation
Program Representative
Fort Worth, TX



Paul Hunt
Disability Representative
Austin, TX



Elizabeth Kendell
Business, Industry and
Labor Representative
San Antonio, TX



Susan May
State Educational Agency
Representative
Austin, TX



Joe Powell
Disability Representative
Irving, TX



Colton J. Read
Statewide Independent
Living Council
Representative
New Braunfels, TX



Karen Stanfill
Client Assistance Program
Representative
Houston, TX



Crystal Stark
State VR Counselor
Representative
College Station, TX



Rodrick Robinson
Business, Industry and
Labor Representative
McKinney, TX



Abdi Warsame
Business, Industry and
Labor Representative
Irving, TX



Lisa Godwin
RCT Coordinator
Surfside Beach, TX

Become a Member

If you are an individual with a disability or someone interested in providing input on vocational rehabilitation services for Texans with disabilities, the Council may be for you. Interested individuals must submit an application to the governor of Texas. Council members are appointed by the governor for three-year terms and represent a diverse range of disabilities and community perspectives. The Council must include representatives of the State Rehabilitation Program, State Independent Living Council, and the Community Rehabilitation Programs and other disability organizations and programs, as well as individuals with disabilities, and their families or authorized representatives. Business, industry, and labor representatives, as well as those from the State Workforce Investment Board and Texas Education Agency, are also required.

Learn more by visiting texasworkforce.org/agency/rehabilitation-council-texas

2021 Rehabilitation Council of Texas Quarterly Meeting Schedule

Council members convene for quarterly meetings to participate in discussion panels, presentations, and committee meetings in support of the Council's mission, values, and responsibilities

Meeting Times:

1st day 9:00 am – 4:30 pm

2nd day 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Meeting Location:

To be determined

2021 Quarterly Meeting Schedule:

February 4-5, 2021

May 6-7, 2021

August 5-6, 2021

Additional meeting information and materials will be posted as they become finalized at

<http://texasworkforce.org/agency/rehabilitation-council-texas#meetingScheduleAgendasMinutes>



TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION

**101 East 15th Street
Austin, Texas 78778
512-463-2222**

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

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