

**REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR**

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 348-8(c),  
HAWAII REVISED STATUTES,  
THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL  
DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION  
December 2021**

Section 348-8(c), Hawaii Revised Statute (HRS), requires the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to submit an annual report to the Governor on the status of vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs within the State and make the report available to the public. The Annual Report highlights the council's past fiscal year activities and accomplishments.

### **Council Purpose**

Congress established SRCs in the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998, and the Hawaii State Legislature codified the SRC in section 348-8, HRS, to support individuals with disabilities statewide. The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) advises and works in partnership with the Hawaii Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). The SRC's duties and responsibilities are to:

- Review, analyze and advise DVR regarding its performance of responsibilities that affect the ability of consumers to achieve employment outcomes;
- Develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities of VR programs;
- Assist DVR in the preparation of the VR State Plan, amendments to the plan, and needs assessment;
- Review and analyze the effectiveness of VR Programs and consumer satisfaction;
- Prepare and submit the VR annual report to the Governor and Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration; and
- Coordinate SRC activities with the activities of other disability-related councils within the State.

### **Council Structure**

The council meets four times per year. The purposes of these meetings are to:

- Learn about programs, activities, and needs specific to each island and County of the State;
- Build and support collaborations with public and private partners involved in vocational rehabilitation and employment in Hawaii; and
- Conduct the business of the council in a public setting.

Section 348-8, HRS, mandates that SRC be comprised of at least one member from each of the four Counties and requires that a majority of the council members be persons who have

disabilities and are not employed by DVR. Council members serve without compensation (voluntary) and are reimbursed for reasonable expenses necessary to perform their duties, including travel expenses. The SRC consists of a diverse membership and includes advocates for individuals with disabilities.

Anyone interested in becoming a member of the State Rehabilitation Council may apply by completing an application at the State's Boards & Commissions Application website: <https://forms.ehawaii.gov/pages/board-survey/>.

The SRC members perform several functions to execute their duties, as outlined in the Rehabilitation Act, mainly monitoring the performance of DVR. DVR is the state agency with the purpose of assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain, maintain, and advance in employment. DVR uses a team approach so participants can achieve their hopes and aspirations for meaningful employment through timely and individualized services.

For upcoming SRC meeting dates for FFY2022 and agenda and minutes from previous meetings, go to the Hawaii SRC website: <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/vr/state-rehabilitation-council-src/>.

#### **State Rehabilitation Council Members October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021**

	<b>Composition</b>	<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Term Ends</b>
<b>1</b>	Statewide Independent Living Center Representative	Annette Tashiro	First	6/30/2022
<b>2</b>	At least one Representative of a Parent Training & Information Center (§348-8(a)(1))	Rosie Rowe	First	6/30/2022
<b>3</b>	At least one Representative of the Client Assist Program (§348-8(a)(2))	Howard Lesser	Exempt	6/30/2022
<b>4</b>	Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (§348-8(a)(3))	Joshua Graham	First	6/30/2022
<b>5</b>	Representative of Community Rehabilitation Program Service Providers (§348-8(a)(4))	Michele Ku	Second	6/30/2021
<b>6</b>	Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor (§348-8(a)(5))	Jodi Asato	Second	6/30/2022
<b>7</b>	Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor (§348-8(a)(5))	Evan Nakatsuka	First	6/30/2023
<b>8</b>	Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor (§348-8(a)(5))	Caroline Campbell	First	6/30/2023

<b>9</b>	Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor (§348-8(a)(5))	Rene Berthiaume	Second	6/30/2021
<b>10</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Arthur Cabanilla	Second	6/30/2023
<b>11</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Terry-Ann Moses	Second	6/30/2022
<b>12</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Christina Pascua-Galdiano	Second	6/30/2022
<b>13</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Stan Young	First	6/30/2022
<b>14</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Nani Watanabe	First	6/30/2022
<b>15</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Wally Soares	First	6/30/2022
<b>16</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Vacant		
<b>17</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Vacant		
<b>18</b>	Current or Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (§348-8(a)(7))	Dustin Park	First	6/30/2021
<b>19</b>	At least one Representative of the State Educational Agency Responsible for the Public Education of Students with Disabilities (§348-8(a)(8))	Vacant		
<b>20</b>	One Representative of the State Workforce Development Council (§348-8(a)(9))	Vacant		
<b>21</b>	Administrator of the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Department of Human Services (§348-8(a)(10) ex-officio/non-voting member.	Maureen Bates	Exempt	Exempt

### **SRC Accomplishments 2021 (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021)**

#### **1. Election of new officers and members**

The SRC welcomed one new member in May 2021 and three new members in July 2021 and nominated and elected members to serve as Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. The SRC is

currently comprised of 13 voting members and continues to maintain representation from each County.

2. The SRC convened four meetings during Federal Fiscal Year 2021.  
The SRC continued to meet virtually throughout FFY2021 to adhere to COVID-19 health and safety precautions. The SRC established quorum during four virtual public meetings and continued to advise DVR on any issues regarding how to best serve individuals with disabilities. In addition, the SRC used the Zoom platform to hold meetings and provided captioning and American Sign Language interpreters through DVR's contract with Isle Interpret.
3. SRC Member Training  
Per Senate Resolution No. 131 (2021), DVR provided orientation and training on Zoom for the SRC on August 19, 2021. SRC members received information about VR, relevant legislation, the VR service process, the SRC's role, the Sunshine Law, and Robert's Rules of Order. SRC members also completed the State of Hawaii DHS mandatory civil rights training in February 2021.
4. Collaboration with the Workforce Development Council (WDC)  
SRC members participated in the WDC Employer Engagement Committee and Sector Strategies and Partnerships Committee meetings in FFY2021. SRC Chair Evan Nakatsuka served as the co-chair of the WDC Subgroup for Opportunity Populations.
5. Testimony in Support of SB 793 (2021)  
The SRC submitted testimony in favor of Senate Bill 793 regarding the subminimum wage certificate and competitive integrated employment.
6. Reviewed and discussed the 2020 DVR Consumer Satisfaction Survey  
The SRC invited the University of Hawaii's Pacific Disabilities Center to present the 2019 DVR Consumer Satisfaction Survey at the May 21, 2021 SRC quarterly meeting. The SRC reviewed highlights of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey and provided recommendations to assist DVR in improving consumer satisfaction.
7. Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) 2020 Conference  
Four members of the SRC attended the virtual CSAVR conference from November 9, 2020, to November 13, 2020.
8. Monitoring the Order of Selection  
The SRC established a DVR Quarterly Report format that highlighted the number of eligible individuals removed from the Order of Selection Deferred Services List.

## 9. Standing SRC Committees

The SRC maintained standing committees to convene on topics of concern requiring additional research and oversight. The committee members presented their efforts to the council for final approval at quarterly meetings. The SRC standing committees are as follows:

- Executive
- Legislative
- Membership
- Needs Assessment
- Policy & Procedures
- State Plan.

## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM (VR)

**DVR MISSION** – The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provides services to Hawai'i community members who experience barriers to employment due to a physical or cognitive disability. DVR assists job seekers with disabilities to prepare, secure, and retain competitive employment in integrated work settings. DVR staff works as a team so that participants can achieve their hopes and aspirations for meaningful employment through timely and individualized vocational rehabilitation services.

**DVR VISION** – To move forward to work: DVR provides vocational rehabilitation services to assist individuals with disabilities to prepare for, obtain and maintain or regain employment.

The economic benefits of VR are significant. They include increased earnings and purchasing power for VR customers, increased taxes paid, and a decreased dependency on public assistance.

DVR's annual budget consists of 78.8% federal funds, with a state fund match of 21.3%. In addition, supplemental federal funding, without a required state fund match, is obtained through the Social Security Administration Ticket To Work cost reimbursement program (over \$300,000 estimated for FFY22), with funding allocated to support Hawaii's independent living program services, as needed.

### **DVR FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2021 (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021)**

The VR program's primary measure of success is the number of job seekers with disabilities who have successfully achieved their employment goals and remain employed in the second quarter and fourth quarter after exiting the VR Program. In addition, a corresponding measure of success is the number of VR participants engaged in Hawaii's workforce while working towards fulfilling their career goals.

DVR implemented this year's federally negotiated rate of 20% in the Hawaii Unified State

Plan for 2020-2023. In addition, this rate for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) performance accountability measurement of VR participants engaged in training and educational services and attaining a measurable skills goal was fulfilled at a rate of 30%, exceeding the FFY21 goal.

#### HDVR PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

<b>Total Served</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) cases	3,495
Total Potentially Eligible (PE) SWD* cases	1,085
Total number served	4,580

\*SWD – Student with a disability

Total percentage of VR participants served per County statewide

<b>County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Oahu	2247	64%
Hawaii	511	15%
Maui	449	13%
Kauai	288	8%
Total	3495	100%

All 3,495 VR participants served during this period are Priority Categorized as Most Significantly Disabled.

Average cost per VR participant - \$7,188.80

Average cost per PE SWD participant - \$2,269.40

#### HDVR CASE MANAGEMENT STATISTICS

<b>Process Performed</b>	<b>Total</b>
Applications	860
Determined Eligible	793
Participants removed from OOS Deferred List	193
Individualized Employment Plans Developed	634
Participants Employed	756
Participants Successful Rehabilitation	66

#### DVR PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, DVR staff sustained essential services for individuals with disabilities seeking VR services or independent living supports by creatively adapting to participants' capacity to meet remotely, and as necessary, meeting face-to-face with health and safety precautions in place. Along with our participants and community partners, the DVR staff continued to navigate the many

challenges of the pandemic, making steady progress in addressing employment disparities among Hawaii's residents with disabilities.

- DVR leadership worked with community partners, providers, participants, employers, and staff to develop our "re-opening" plans to ensure DVR remains inclusive and flexible in approach and integrates the best and latest recommendations for COVID-19 mitigation, social distancing, and addressing challenges of remote accessibility.
- DVR staff worked with community partners to strengthen employment pipelines. These pipelines include work-based learning experiences, internships, and job placements in competitive integrated employment settings so that VR participants leverage job retention and advancement opportunities to fulfill their career goals. Essential partners included the following: Hawaii's Employers, Society of Human Resource Managers Hawaii, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Division (Employment 1st - Cooperative Agreement with UH, DOH, DOE, DHS DVR), University of Hawaii Career Counselors, UH Center on Disability Studies, Hawaii Department of Education, Hawaii State Public Libraries, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations - Workforce Development Council and County American Job Centers, DHS Benefit, Employment & Support Services Division-First to Work Program, Hawaii Clubhouse Coalition, Department of Health - Adult and Child & Adolescent Mental Health Divisions, Pacific Islands Healthcare System Veterans Benefits and Mental Health Programs, Partnership Plus Employment Networks, Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Advocacy Networks: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Board, State Rehabilitation Council, Hawaii Disability Rights Center, Special Parent Information Network, Deaf and Blind Task Force, Hawaii State Council on Mental Health, Hawaii State Committee of Blind Vendors, Statewide Independent Living Council and Centers for Independent Living; Access to Independence Hawaii, and Aloha Independent Living Hawaii, Assistive Technology Resource Centers of Hawaii, Maui Economic Opportunity, Hawaii Department of Transportation, US Military Bases. These are the many partnerships DVR staff regularly engaged with to support our participants in fulfilling their career goals.
- DVR continued to collaborate with community providers contracted by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to form the Partnership Plus Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to reinforce job retention for SSA ticket holders (Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) recipients returning to work). The MOU is pending review by the Department of the Attorney General. Once completed, this MOU will support individuals with the most significant disabilities to return to work and retain



employment with long-term supports provided by the SSA Employer Network of providers statewide.

- DVR staff has served more than 16,000 Hawaii residents with disabilities statewide through various VR programs with federal, state, and private funding. DVR staff worked with over 290 employers to hire our clients throughout the pandemic. Together, DVR and community partners they supported more than 4,400 Hawaii residents in accessing resources to fulfill their independent living goals. All counties have completed DVR's American Job Center (AJC) Partnerships, Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), and Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFA). DVR's Oahu Branch staff are on sight at the AJC on Mondays and Wednesdays to support outreach, warm linkages with AJC staff for OOS deferred list individuals, and access for VR participants dually enrolled to use AJC resources. DVR staff also rotate through the AJC on a 6-month cycle to strengthen the core partnerships for DVR's participants statewide.
- DVR has cleared 193 individuals from the Most Significantly Disabled (MSD) Category 1, Order of Selection (OOS) Deferred Services List for FFY 2021 between October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021, bringing the total to 965 individuals removed from the deferred services list since July 1, 2019.
- DVR improved tracking and forecasting of DVR's compliance with the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Hawaii Unified State Plan (USP) 2020-2023. The performance accountability measure rate of 30.2% exceeded the negotiated measure of 20% for Measurable Skills Gain Rate (a measure of interim progress of participants enrolled in education or training services for a specified reporting period).
  - Career Services average costs per participant was \$380, and
  - Training Services average costs per participant was \$711.
- DVR engaged more than 756 VR participants in some form of employment. Of these, 618 participants engaged in transitional employment activities, and 138 participants were in Employment Status (participants involved in their Primary Occupational Goal working towards stability and Rehabilitated Closure Status), with an additional 66 cases Closed as Rehabilitated.
  - Job Retention Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit (6 months) was 20.3%, and
  - Job Retention Rate 4th Quarter after Exit (1 year) was 27%.
- DVR, as the Designated State Entity (DSE), advocated with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), Centers for Independent Living (CILs), and community providers for additional funding to address the state's high unemployment rates, cost of living, and rates of homelessness that were intensified by the pandemic. In addition, DVR provided

supplemental funding to the CILs to provide services identified in the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

- Additional funding for services for unserved or underserved individuals. These services included assisting individuals with moving back to the community from skilled nursing facilities, providing vehicle modifications to maintain independent travel, especially on neighbor islands without access to public transportation. DVR provided orientation and mobility instruction for blind/low vision individuals or neighbor island participants who cannot attend training on O'ahu at DVR's Ho'oponono Services for the Blind (Ho'oponono) and provided low-tech devices to support independence to safely and accomplish tasks around the home.
- Ho'oponono's Visually Impaired Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) program serves individuals aged 55 and older with blindness or severe vision loss throughout the State and supports their access to community resources and strengthening their skills for self-sufficiency. DVR's OIB program partnered with Lanakila Pacific and several other community organizations on O'ahu and received a generous grant from the Hawaii Public Health Institute. The grant funded project, entitled Expanded Meal Service Plus for Seniors & Persons with Disabilities (EMSP-SPD), was conducted from mid-summer 2020 through November 2020, providing meals and wraparound services for up to 254 vulnerable seniors or persons with disabilities.
- Ho'oponono staff collaborated with the American Job Center on hiring a new City/County of Honolulu Residential Counselor to support Ho'oponono's New Visions Program.
- Ho'oponono staff also conducted the first-ever virtual annual White Cane Walk in October 2020 to highlight its significance of independence for individuals who are blind/visually impaired residents statewide, see the event:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zqoiuyBuG4&t=47s>.
- House Resolution No. 25 (2021) identified the opportunity for Hawaii's Department of Education to develop and implement a program to recruit and employ qualified blind persons to serve as Orientation & Mobility Instructors and as Teachers of Visually Impaired students.
- DVR's contracted provider, the University of Hawaii's Comprehensive Services Center (CSC), supports individuals statewide who are hard of hearing, deaf, or deaf-blind. Participants attend workshops, classes, events, tutoring, and a camp that include VR clients. The CSC program provides one-on-one appointments with VR clients and assists clients with various tasks such as understanding the mail they receive and the follow-up

that may be required, calling and making appointments, providing tech support, and helping with job searches. In addition, the CSC staff integrated COVID-19 safety protocols to continue one-on-one Support Service Provider (SSP) services to maintain Deaf-Blind recipients' independent living goals.

- DVR's contracted provider, Assistive Technology Resource Center of Hawaii (ATRC), serves individuals statewide with assistive technology education, device demonstrations, loans, and public training during the pandemic using technology to reinforce and strengthen independent living skills.
- DVR collaborates annually with community partners to run a Summer Youth Employment Program as one of five Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Together they created alternative virtual learning opportunities for participants to continue to explore their Pre-ETS career exploration activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- DVR is currently working on a Statewide Community Needs Assessment contract with San Diego State University. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), calls for a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). The CSNA identifies, reports, and addresses the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with disabilities, conducted jointly by each state's vocational rehabilitation agency and the State Rehabilitation Council to inform the State's Plan. Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) requires DVR to perform this process once every three years.
- In July 2021, Governor David Ige ended the executive branch hiring freeze that was imposed in 2020 following the pandemic's severe impact on state revenues. Since then, DVR has been creating outreach recruiting strategies to fill vacancies, including building more "internship" opportunities with accredited universities to fill vacant positions.
- DVR continues to strengthen its foundations for compliance and performance required by federal and state funding, developing, and implementing approved corrective action plans.

## **DVR BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT**

- DVR continues to work on strategies and activities with our workforce partners to provide solutions to business needs in our community. For example, job fairs for adult and youth students with disabilities were held remotely with community workforce partners based on employer demand. In addition, other initiatives are taking place to fill workforce shortages in both the public and government sectors.

- DVR Employment Support Specialists (ESS) were involved in numerous employer engagement activities, including job development, job placement, onboarding support, and job coaching statewide.
- October 2020 was National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). DVR worked with the Employment Committee of the Hawai'i State Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC), and other agencies to create a theme for Hawaii National Disability Employment Awareness Month (HIDREAM) 2020. Activities included a Zoom event to solicit a HIDREAM proclamation from Governor Ige, inviting policymakers, business leaders, disability employment advocates, private agencies, self-advocates, and parents to support workforce parity and opportunities for Hawaii's residents with disabilities.
- DVR collaborated with employers on accessing information about disability employment resources available, including the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) and the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN).
- VR participants engaged in mock interviews with Disability In employers during November/December 2020.
- DVR hosted "Business Highlights," where employers and DVR staff learn about job skills and employment opportunities and explore work-based learning experiences for VR participants and students with a disability. The following employers presented their recruitment and hiring needs, with more employers scheduled for FFY 2022:
  - i. Enterprise Holdings
  - ii. Securitas Security Services USA
  - iii. DLIR – Apprenticeship coordination
  - iv. Walmart
  - v. DOE
  - vi. CVS Health