

CONNECTICUT STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL



Annual Report 2021

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS)

A Division of

The Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability
Services (ADS)



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Table of Contents

Message from the SRC Chairperson_____	pg. 2
SRC Mission, Goals, Functions_____	pg. 3
SRC Committee Reports_____	pg. 4 - 6
State Rehabilitation Council Scholarship_____	pg. 7
National Coalition of SRCs_____	pg. 8
Message from the BRS Director_____	pg. 9
BRS Organizational Chart _____	pg. 10
BRS Statistics_____	pg. 11 - 19
BRS Office Telephone Numbers_____	pg. 20
SRC Members_____	pg. 21
SRC Meeting Dates_____	pg. 22
How to Become an SRC Member_____	pg. 23
SRC Liaison_____	pg. 23
SRC Application_____	pg. 24 - 25
Report Credits_____	pg. 26

Message from the SRC Chairperson

Dear Friends:

This was my second year as the role of chairperson to the State Rehabilitation Council. I would like to thank my fellow council members for this opportunity. The terms remained “Unprecedented” since March 2019 and the challenges we faced we did so as a team. Our council continues to seek out business partnerships and diverse individuals to consider a culturally competent viewpoint to evaluate the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services. BRS was excited to enter into Work Based Learning Employment (WBLE) contracts with Workforce Boards around the state over the summer with BRS Level (Pre-Ets) students. This was a great opportunity for high school students to work during the summer months and throughout the school year. BRS has continued the virtual and in person intake and counseling sessions for consumers as needed to fit consumers requests this has continued to eliminate the barrier of transportation for all consumers. The SRC was involved with providing information for the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) is the research team that is conducting the CSNA. The SRC has been involved in the focus groups and surveys. The final report of the CSNA will be ready in early 2022.



The SRC looks forward to another productive year, using all its members' experience to aid BRS in delivering services to individuals with disabilities in Connecticut.

Melissa Taylor

Melissa Taylor
Chairperson, SRC

Mission, Goals, Functions

MISSION

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides assessment, advice, and recommendations to the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) and others regarding coordination and effectiveness of programs and strategies which promote community-based competitive employment for persons with disabilities.

GOALS

- To assess the effectiveness and delivery of vocational services provided by BRS to individuals with disabilities.
- To improve the coordination of vocational services among BRS, state agencies, and public and private entities for the benefit of BRS job seekers.
- To make recommendations to BRS, the Governor, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and others for developing and improving strategies for the employment of, and vocational services for, individuals with disabilities.

FUNCTIONS

- To review, analyze, and advise BRS regarding its performance in carrying out its responsibilities as the state agency designated to administer the public Vocational Rehabilitation Program.
- To provide input to BRS regarding the Bureau's coordination of activities with Connecticut's workforce investment system.
- To review the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with, the performance of the Bureau and other public and private agencies in providing vocational rehabilitation services to Connecticut residents with disabilities.
- To prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor of Connecticut and the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).
- To coordinate with other advisory councils in the state which oversee services to individuals with disabilities.
- To perform other functions as appropriate to the mission of the Council.

SRC Committees

THE PROGRAM REVIEW & EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Purpose:

The purpose of the Program Review and Evaluation Committee is to review and evaluate programs within BRS and provide recommendations for future presentations to the group. This committee will also be responsible for obtaining consumer viewpoints of their satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services and the effectiveness of BRS in assisting consumers to obtain and maintain competitive employment.

Co-Chairperson(s): Sean Kennedy and Shannon McCann

Members: Linda Rammler and Kate Travis

Review of 2021 Accomplishments:

- Continued monitoring policy changes that meet new goals defined in WIOA and consumer feedback.
- Distributed survey postcards to BRS offices and to Community Rehabilitation Providers for consumer feedback.
- Continued setting up BRS program staff to present at SRC meetings.

Goals for 2022:

- Continue to monitor policy changes that meet new goals defined in WIOA and gather consumer feedback.
- Implement surveys for consumers exiting BRS services and explore other avenues of understanding regarding levels of satisfaction from employers, (Industry Specific Training Program), and families.
- Continue to set schedule for BRS staff members to present on programs that are going on through BRS to the SRC.

THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Purpose:

The purpose of the Membership Committee is to recruit, interview, and nominate potential members to the SRC. They may assist in training SRC members to foster effective council teamwork.

Chairperson: vacant

Members: Bruce Stovall

Review of 2021 Accomplishments:

Continued efforts to recruit potential candidates in accordance with Title I, Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act 1973, as amended for appointment to the SRC from the Governor.

- Conduct New member Orientation.
- Recommend new appointments to the Governors office.

Goals for 2022:

- Recruit potential candidates to fill historically vacant categories of membership on the SRC, specifically employers, individuals with disabilities, and individuals from parent and advocacy groups.
- Develop a pamphlet to leave in agency offices and send to prospective members; generate other ideas to increase council membership.
- Identify prospective members to invite to SRC meetings.
- Conduct SRC applicant interviews, facilitate new member orientation, and provide mentorship to foster the ongoing learning process of becoming an active and involved SRC member.
- Continue recruiting new SRC members including diverse members as recommended from the Governor's office.

LEGISLATIVE, POLICY, & PLANNING COMMITTEE

Purpose:

The purpose of the Legislative, Policy & Planning Committee is to assist in developing the State Plan and strategic plans for vocational rehabilitation services and stay updated on federal and state regulations related to employment of persons with disabilities.

Co-Chairperson(s): Thomas Boudreau and Kate Travis

Members: Gary Prushko, Melissa Taylor, and Linda Rammler

Review of 2021 Accomplishments:

- Reviewed SRC full committee meeting notes and forwarded relevant information.
- Several of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) communications were reviewed with no comment. Discussed the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) recommendations of communication with the State of Connecticut related to COVID19 challenges and waivers.
- Reviewed federal proposed legislation with no comment.
- Examined customized employment in the State of Connecticut (some new cross-agency trainings and considerations) and the unique challenges of trying to make a comprehensive state-wide program due to the differences between all the agencies involved. The committee wanted to recognize and celebrate the continued progress of customized employed working with three state agencies (DDS, BRS, CSDE) are working together and making progress developing memorandums of understanding (MOUs) related to VR work.
- Level up transition services has made progress with the Workforce Boards with Summer Work Based Learning Opportunities and year-round work-based learning opportunities.

Goals for 2022:

- Continue to reach out to other committees and discuss joint efforts to remain active in relevant legislative efforts.
- Continue to monitor relevant aspects in WIOA, and Level Up (Pre-Ets)

State Rehabilitation Council Scholarship

The Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is sponsored by the Connecticut Youth Leadership Project (CTYLP). It empowers young people with disabilities to identify and develop their leadership potential. Through self-awareness and team building activities, these students explore leadership styles and develop and implement team and personal leadership plans. Although the summer CTYLP activities were canceled due to COVID-19, the SRC was able to sponsor the scholarship fund for a previous YLF delegate.

The goal of the YLF is to help youth with disabilities meet the challenges of the future, overcome obstacles and become leaders so that they can make a positive difference in their communities and for others with disabilities. The YLF is a week-long training program for high school sophomores and juniors. The SRC has helped to fund this training and provide a \$2,500 scholarship for former delegates pursuing their education beyond high school.



National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils, INC.

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) is a member of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). The NCSRC strives to cultivate the strengths and necessary expertise of local SRCs so they become effective, viable partners in the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program. While SRCs in each state collaborate with their local VR program to address common issues, members of the NCSRC share best practices and strategies to address common concerns. The NCSRC gives a national voice to jobseekers with disabilities as it works on issues that impact the VR program on the national level.

OUR MISSION:

On behalf of people with disabilities, our national membership coalition will advocate for and work in partnership with the national public vocational rehabilitation system's continual quest for excellence.

OUR VISION:

The NCSRC will be the premiere national organization of the consumer voice to enhance the employment opportunities of persons with disabilities through the public vocational rehabilitation program.

The NCSRC currently consists of 53 SRCs of states and territories that provide public VR services. In addition to conference calls bi-monthly, the NCSRC hosts two training conferences each year that coincide with the national meetings of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). SRC member **Kate Travis** and SRC Liaison **Kerri Fradette** are NCSRC board members.

For more information about NCSRC, please visit <https://ncsrc.net>



Message from the BRS Director

Dear Friends,

As another year comes to an end, it is with great pleasure that I share the 2021 Annual Report of Connecticut's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) with you. This report is a great way to learn about the accomplishments of our Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program within the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS).

2021 saw numerous challenges and daily exercises in problem solving as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to disrupt our traditional programming methods and caused us to continuously assess our accessibility and mobility needs. Our counselors and staff have done an outstanding job continuing to rise to the occasion, still serving the needs of as many consumers as possible. BRS' relationship with the SRC has been integral to maintaining services and keeping us apprised of the pulse of our community, even as our services evolved to hybrid models of virtual and in-person services.

The SRC's continued guidance has seen us through another difficult year, and we know that their support and instruction will help us continue to ford through challenges in this time of uncertainty. We applaud the SRC's efforts and look forward to a continued collaboration as we continue to adapt to our ever-changing situation. Your unwavering commitment to the VR program and the SRC is invaluable, ensuring all voices are heard and diverse perspectives are examined.

I look forward to seeing our alliance continue to advance and enhance BRS in the coming year, no matter the challenges we find in our paths. I am confident we will rise to the occasion with your dedicated assistance and boundless knowledge.

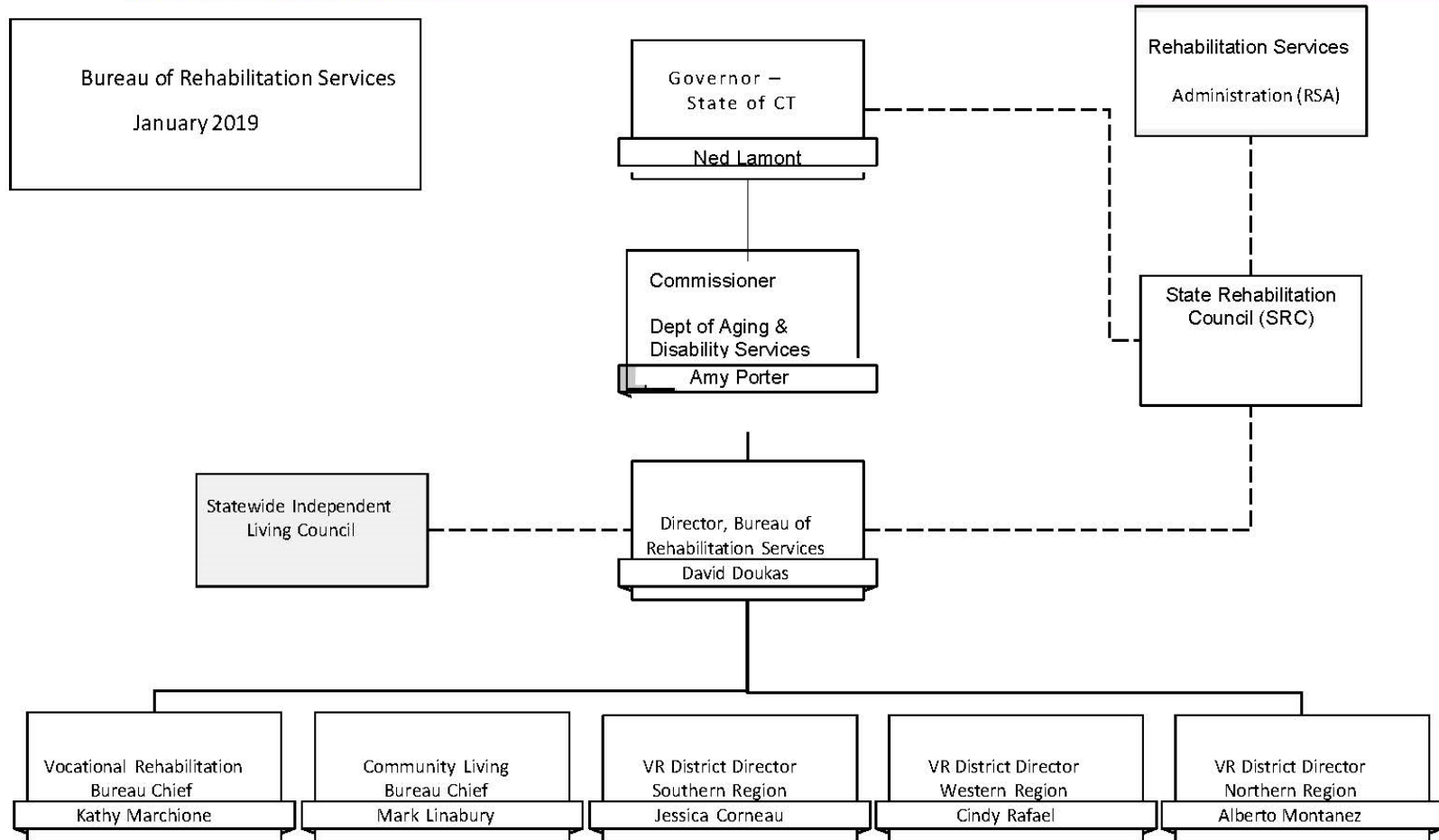


Sincerely,

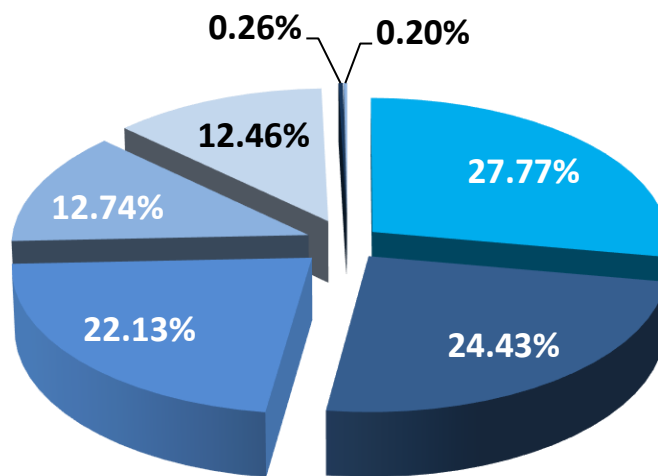
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David F. Doukas", written in a cursive style.

David F. Doukas, Director
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

BRS Organizational Chart



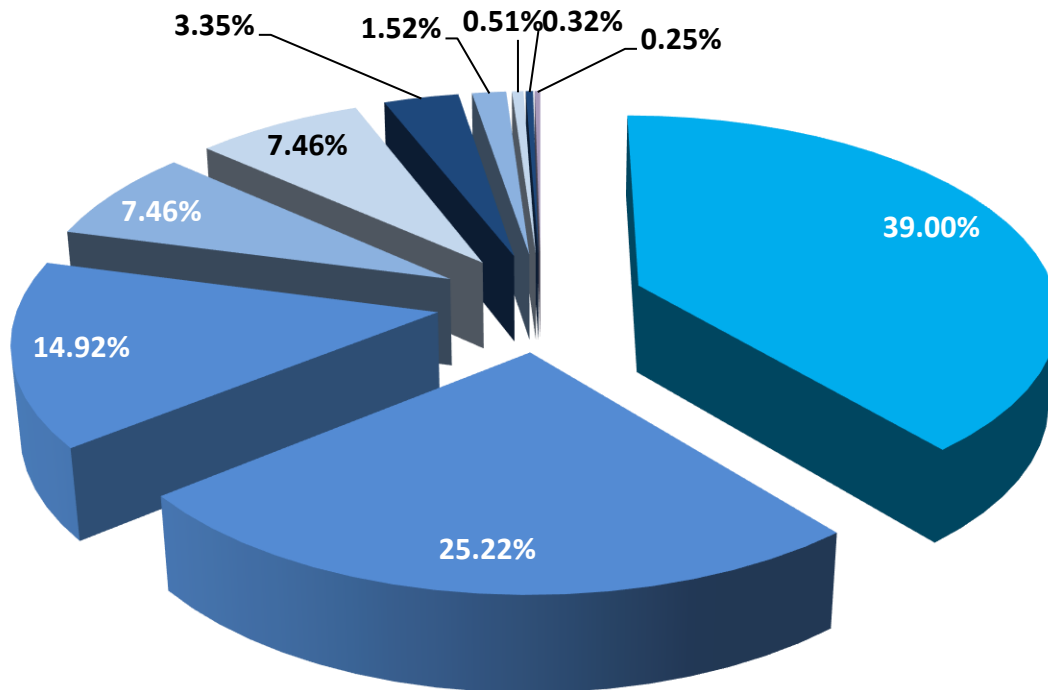
Primary Disability Type of Job Seekers
BRS Assisted 5,063 Job Seekers with Various disabilities in Federal Fiscal Year FFY 2021



- 27.77% Mental and Emotional Disabilities
- 24.43% Hearing Disabilities
- 22.13% Cognitive Disabilities
- 12.74% Unknown
- 12.46% Physical Disabilities
- 0.26% Communicative Disabilities
- 0.20% Visual Disabilities

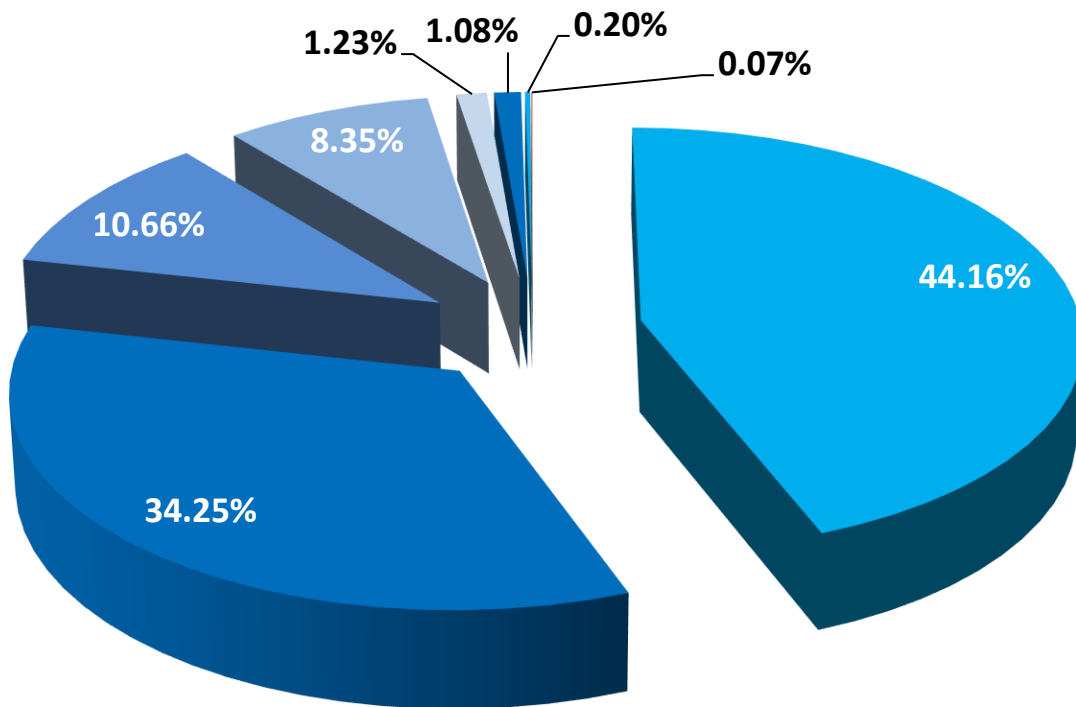
Referral Sources

**BRS Received 1,577 new applications for services
in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021**



- 39.00% Self-referral
- 25.22% Unknown
- 14.92% Physician or other Medical Personnel or Medical Institutions (public or private)
- 7.46% Other sources
- 7.46% Educational Institutions (elementary/secondary)
- 3.35% Community Rehabilitation Programs
- 1.52% Welfare Agency (State or local government)
- 0.51% Educational Institutions (post-secondary)
- 0.32% Social Security Administration (Disability Determination Service or District office)
- 0.25% One-stop Employment/Training Centers

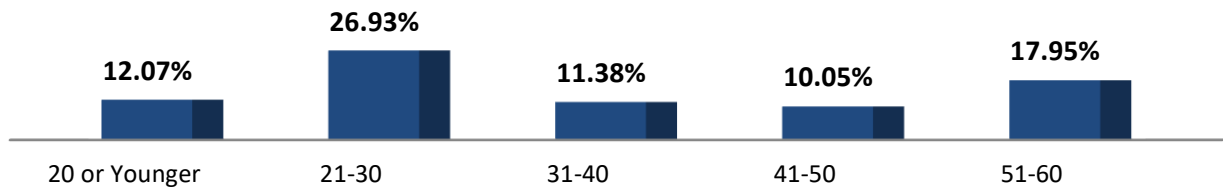
Race/Ethnicity of BRS Job Seekers Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021



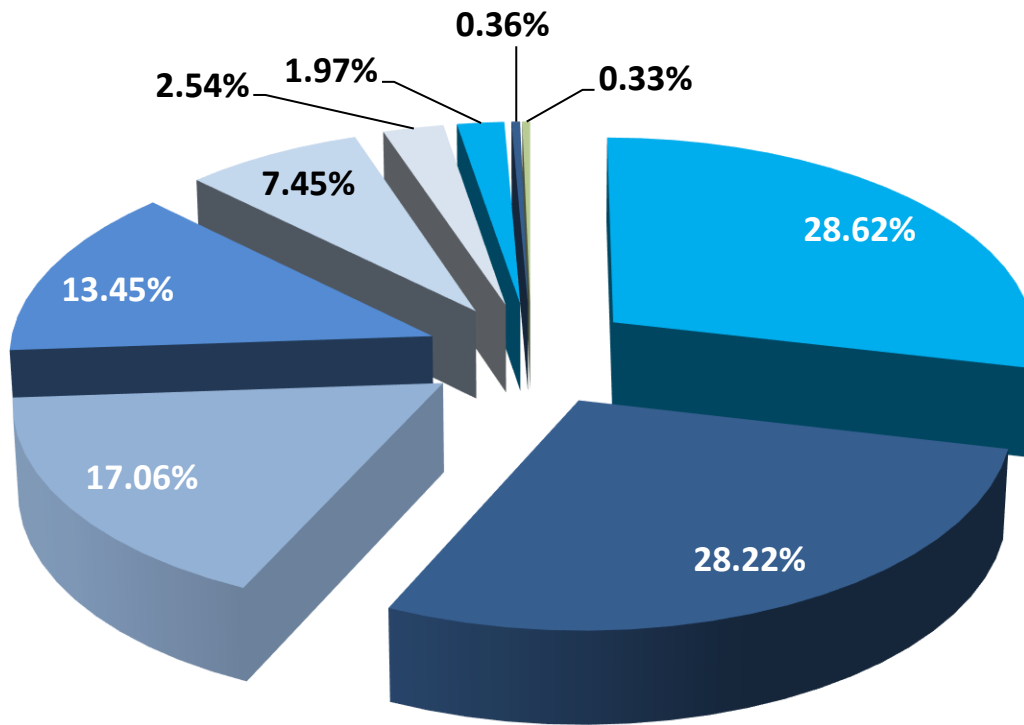
- 44.17% White
- 34.26% Unknown
- 10.66% Black or African American
- 8.35% Persons of Hispanic or Latino Origin
- 1.23% Multiracial
- 1.08% Asian
- 0.20% American Indian or Alaska Native
- 0.07% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

NOTE: Unknown has increased because this accounts for Level Up cases. Prior to July 1, 2017 we were not required to collect race/ethnicity.

Applicants by Age at Application - Federal Fiscal Year 2021

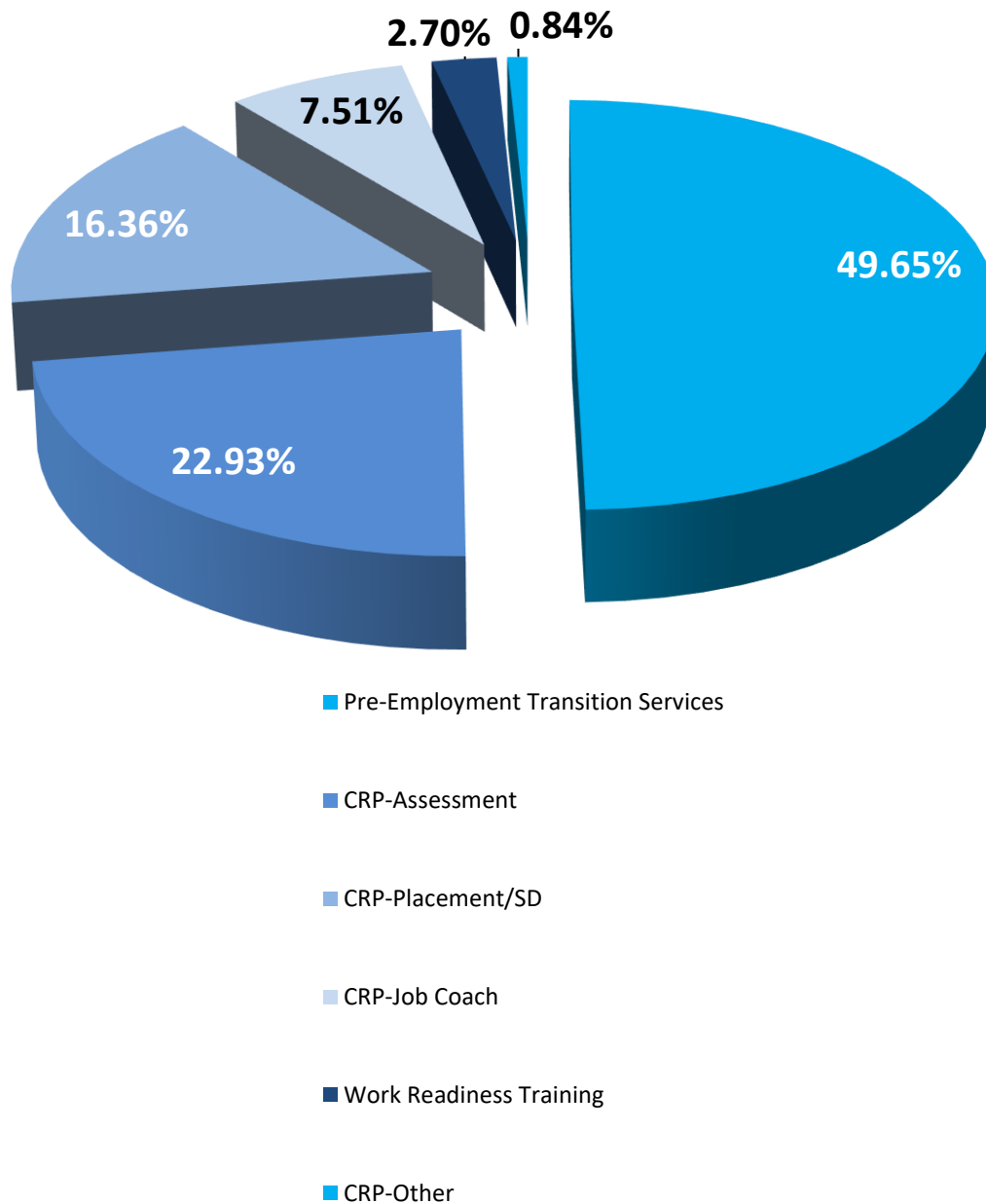


Purchased Traditional Goods and Services
Total Expenditures = \$7 Million
Federal Fiscal Year 2021

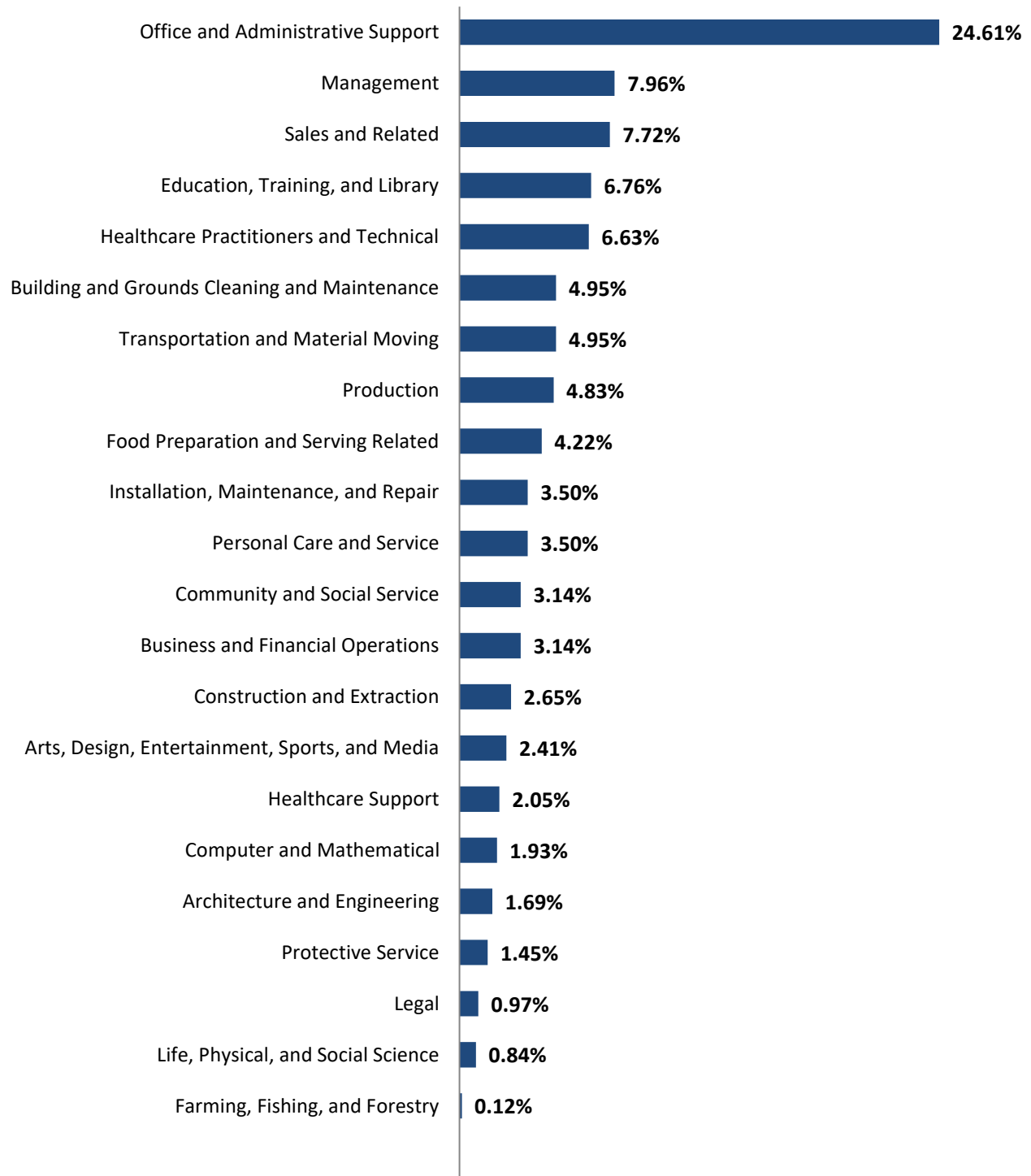


- 28.61% CRP Services
- 28.21% Level Up
- 17.05% Appliances
- 13.44% Training
- 7.45% Adaptive Tech and Services
- 2.54% Medical & Psych
- 1.97% Other
- 0.36% Supported Employment
- 0.33% Equipment and Supplies

**Services Purchased From
Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP)
Total Expenditures **\$4 Million**
in Federal Fiscal Year 2021**



Jobs Acquired or Maintained in Competitive Employment in Federal Fiscal Year 2021

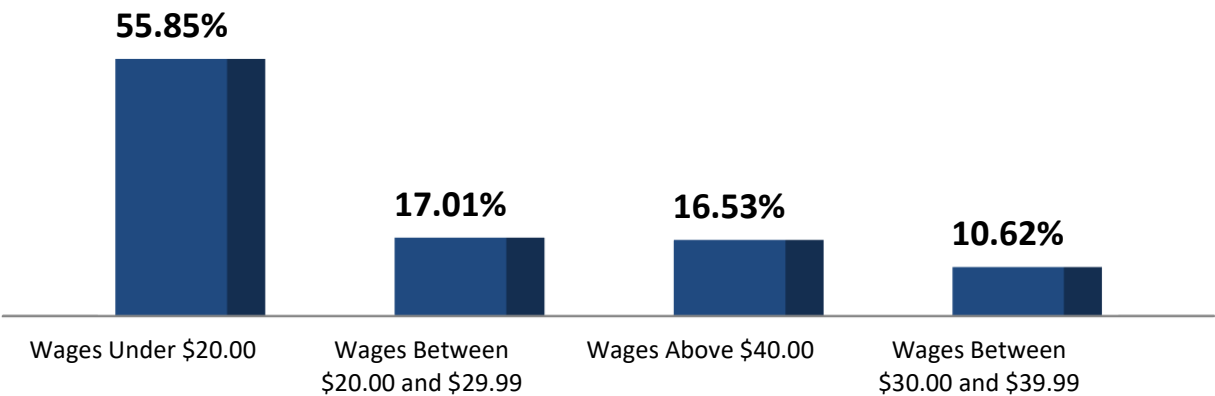


Competitive Employment Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021

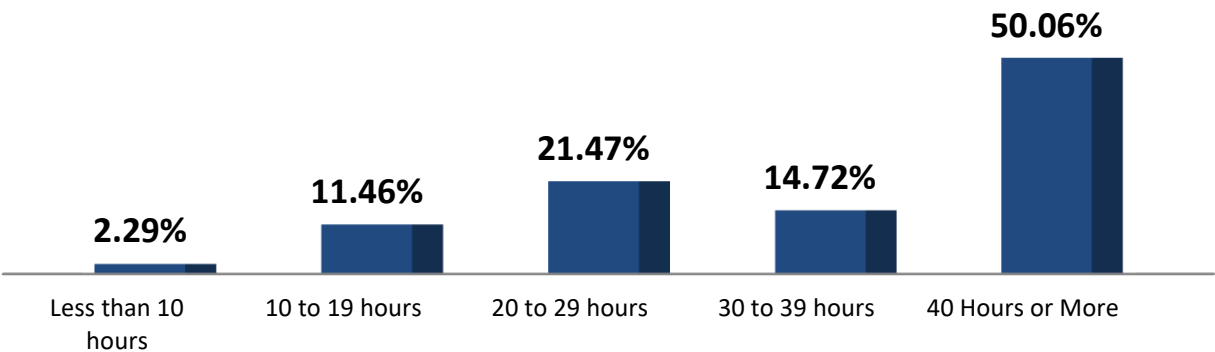
BRS assisted **829** job seekers to enter or maintain employment in FFY 2021

Average Hourly Wages **\$26. 20** Average Annual Salary **\$46, 526. 31**

Hourly Wages at Closure - FFY 2021

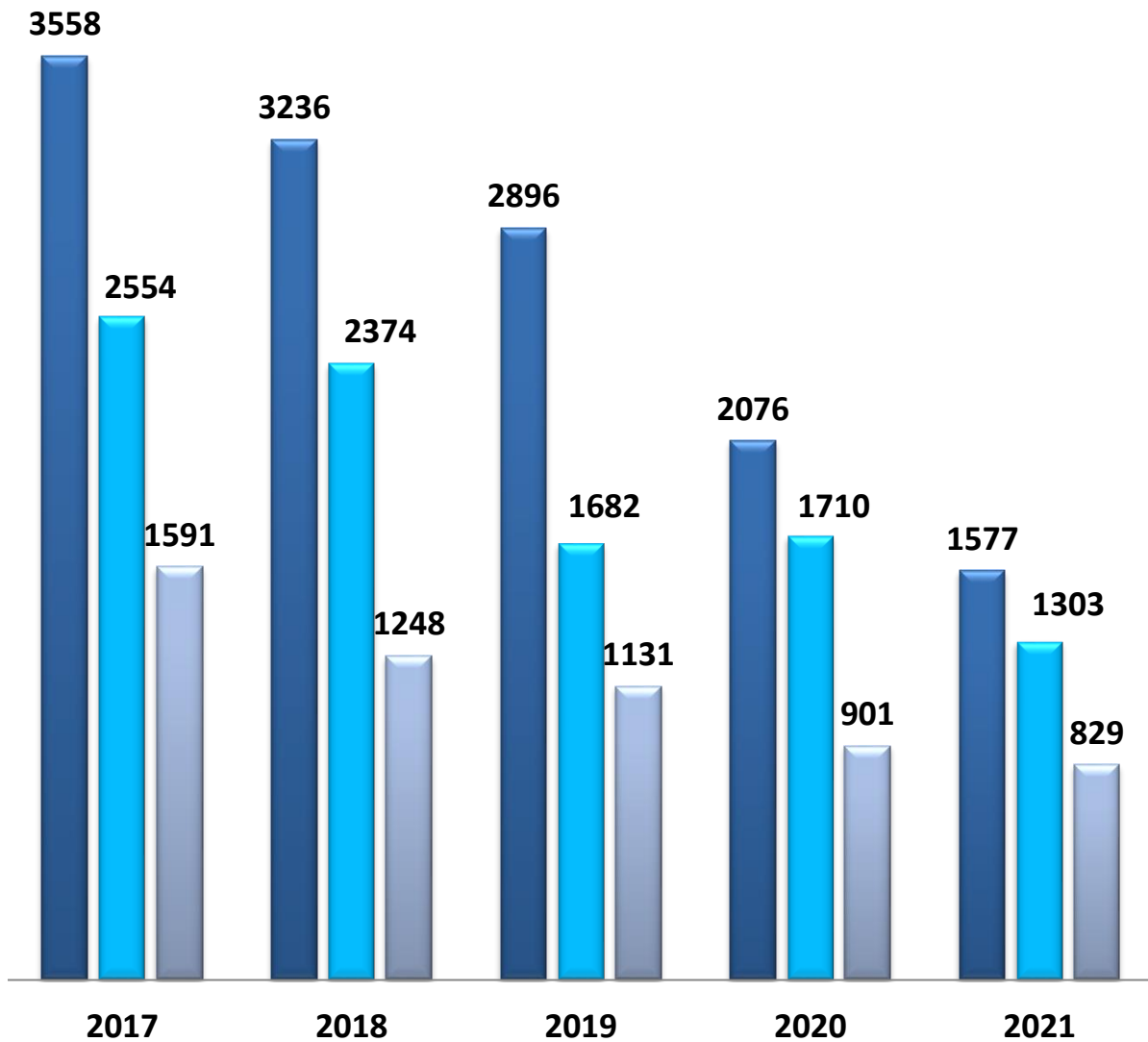


Hours Worked Per Week - FFY 2021



Comparison of Applicants, Plans, and Successful Closures Over Last 5 Years - 2017 to 2021

■ Applicants ■ Plans ■ Rehabs



BRS Office Telephone Numbers

Central Office

55 Farmington Avenue, 12th Floor, Hartford, CT 06105

Telephone: 860-424-4844 Fax: 860-424-4850

Toll-Free in Connecticut: 800-537-2549

Video Phone: 860-920-7163

Northern Region

184 Windsor Avenue, Windsor, CT 06095

Telephone: 860-697-3550 Fax: 860-730-8473

Video Phone: 860-920-7171

Local Offices

Danielson: 860-455-1617

East Hartford: 959-200-4400

Manchester: 860-647-5960

New Britain: 860-612-3569

Willimantic: 860-455-1606

Southern Region

370 James Street, Suite 306, New Haven, CT 06513

Telephone: 203-974-3000 Fax: 203-789-7850

Video Phone: 203-584-9840

Local Offices

Middletown: 860-740-1080

Uncasville/Montville: 860-848-5950

Western Region

1057 Broad Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604

Telephone: 203-578-4553 Fax: 203-579-6903

Video Phone: 203-416-6761

Local Offices

Danbury: 203-702-0152

Stamford: 203-653-1939

Torrington: 860-294-0013

Waterbury: 203-578-4550

Effective December 2021

SRC Members

Officers

Chairperson

Melissa Taylor

Vice Chairperson

Kate Travis

Treasurer

Tom Boudreau

Voting Members/*Pending Appointments

*Tom Boudreau

*Tom Cosker

*Jill Larmett

*Shannon McCann

*Nicole Rico-Serrano

Andrea Richardson

*Linda Rammler

*Beth Reel

*Bruce Stovall

*Melissa Taylor

Kate Travis

*Joe Wendover

Ex-Officio Members

David Doukas

*Sean Kennedy

SRC 2022 Meeting Dates

SRC Meeting Dates

- January 19, 2022
- March 16, 2022
- May 18, 2022
- June 15, 2022
- September 21, 2022
- November 16, 2022

All SRC meetings will be virtual until further notice. The SRC meetings will occur 1:00pm – 3:30pm and are **open to the public**. Please contact the SRC Liaison, kerri.fradette@ct.gov to register your attendance and to request accommodations.

Accommodations must be requested four (4) weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

How to Become a Member of the SRC

Members of the State Rehabilitation Council are appointed by the Governor of Connecticut for a term of three (3) years. They represent BRS jobseekers, business and industry, community-based providers of vocational rehabilitation services, advocacy organizations, and state agencies that serve persons with disabilities. A majority of the SRC members have physical and/or mental disabilities.

If you would like to be considered for appointment to the SRC or would like to recommend someone for appointment, please email or fax the completed SRC application, along with a current resume, to the SRC Liaison listed below.

SRC Liaison

Kerri Fradette, SRC Liaison

Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS)
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS)
55 Farmington Avenue, 12th Floor
Hartford, CT 06105

Work cell # 860-876-9596
Fax: 860-424-4850
Email: kerri.fradette@ct.gov
Website: www.ct.gov/brs



State Rehabilitation Council to the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services Application Form



Name of Nominee: _____ Home

Address/City/Zip: _____ Home

Telephone: _____ Home E-Mail: _____ Employer:

Address/City/Zip: _____ Work

Telephone: _____ Work E-Mail: _____ Name

of the Nominator (if different than nominee): _____ Address/City/Zip:

Day Telephone:

Day E-Mail:

Please identify your race/ethnicity (voluntary).

African American _____ *Asian* _____ *Caucasian* _____ *Other* _____

Multi-racial _____ *Hispanic/Spanish Speaking* _____ *Native American/Alaskan* _____

The SRC membership must include representatives of the following categories:

- ❖ At least one representative each of the **Statewide Independent Living Council, the Parent Training and Information Center, the Client Assistance Program – CAP (Section 112), Community Rehabilitation Program service providers, the State Education Department, the State Workforce Investment Board, and Section 121** (Vocational Rehabilitation [VR] for Native Americans);
- ❖ A **qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor**;
- ❖ Four representatives of **business, industry, and labor**;
- ❖ **Representatives of disability advocacy groups** representing physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities who have difficulty representing themselves; and
- ❖ **Current or former applicants or recipients** of VR services.

Which membership category is the most appropriate match for you? _____

Please feel free to add extra pages to answer the following questions.

Why are you interested in serving on the State Rehabilitation Council?

What is your interest in vocational rehabilitation and the employment of persons with disabilities?

Please list any organizations in which you have held leadership positions, and your accomplishments while holding such positions:

Have you ever done legislative advocacy? If so, please describe your activities.

Do you have a disability? If so, please describe.

Have you ever been enrolled in the Bureau's Vocational Rehabilitation Program?

If you are employed, does your supervisor support your application for appointment to the State Rehabilitation Council?

Statement of Commitment

"I, the undersigned, understand that the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a working council which meets at least six times per year for the full Council and at other times for the committees, as needed. I also understand that I must work on an SRC committee, support legislative and public awareness campaigns, participate in the process to complete the BRS State Plan and the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), and attend at least one public meeting, as scheduled. If appointed to the SRC, I will earnestly strive to meet these commitments."

Signed,

(your name)

(date)

IN ORDER FOR YOUR APPLICATION TO BE CONSIDERED, YOU MUST INCLUDE
A RESUME.

You may attach any other information you feel would be valuable in evaluating your application. Please mail, email or fax all information to **Kerri Fradette, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Department of Aging and Disability Services, 55 Farmington Avenue, 12th Floor, Hartford, CT 06105** kerri.fradette@ct.gov, fax: 860-424-4850.

SRC 2021 Annual Report Credits

Statistical Data:

David Johnson, *BRS Consultant*

Editing & Layout Design:

Kerri Fradette, *BRS Consultant and SRC Liaison*

Katlyn Williams, *BRS Office Assistant*

The Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) is an Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Employer and offers its programs regardless of race, color, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, sex, or marital status.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this report is available upon request in large print, Braille, or on audiocassette. If you need this report in an alternate format, please contact kerri.fradette@ct.gov.