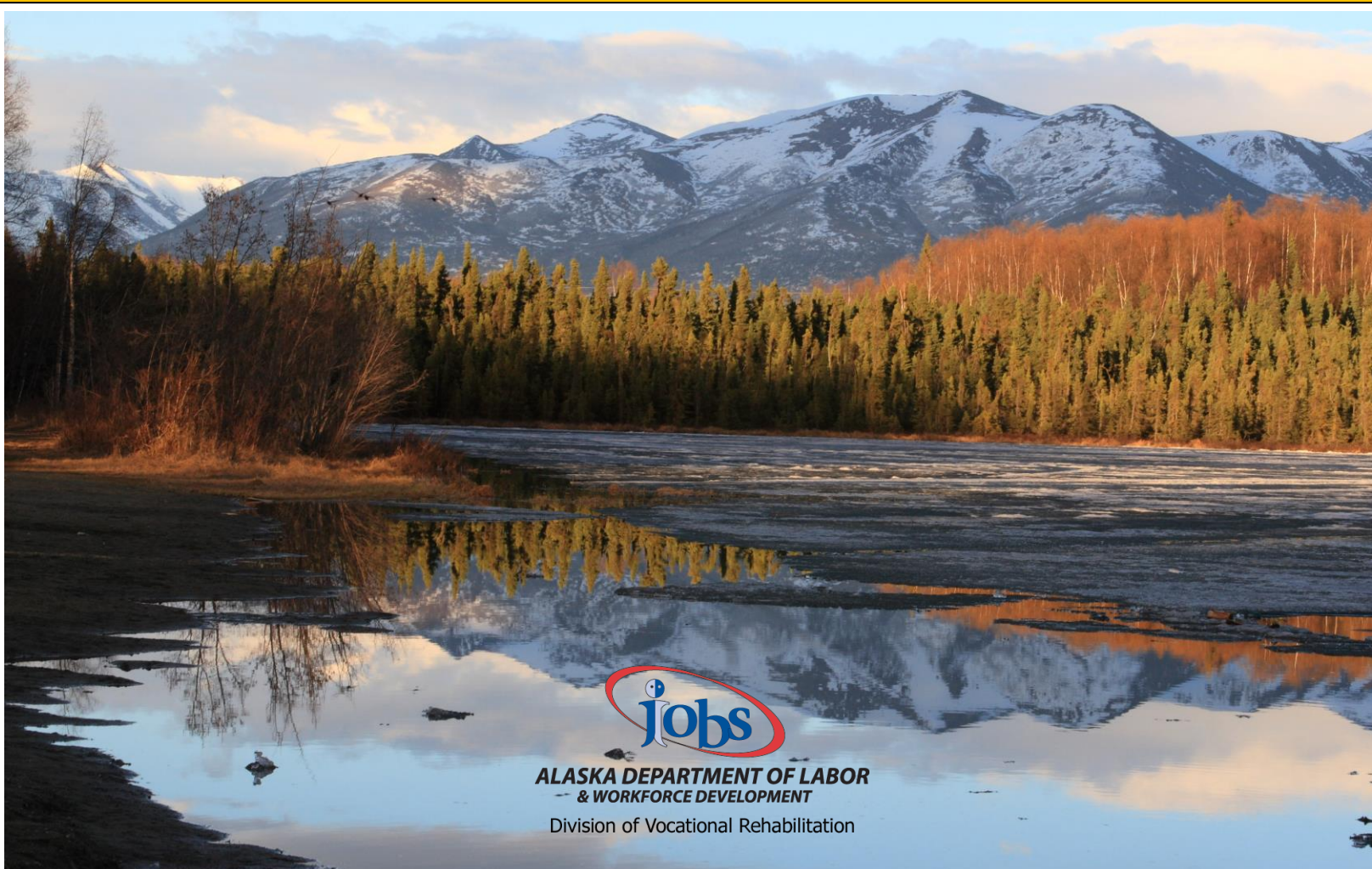


Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment 2013



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

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Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

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Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

1.0 - Introduction

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), as part of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, is responsible for the administration and operation of Alaska's public vocational rehabilitation program. While DVR continually assesses its performance and the needs of Alaskans with disabilities, the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, Public Law 99-506, Section 101(a) requires each state vocational rehabilitation agency to conduct a comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) jointly with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) triennially. The results of the CSNA are used to develop goals, priorities, strategies and actions for both DVR's Strategic and State Plans.

In order to meet the requirements of 34 CFR §361.29, the CSNA addresses the following:

- What are the vocational rehabilitation (VR) needs of individuals with disabilities:
 - Who are individuals with the most significant disabilities?
 - Who are minorities or who are in unserved or underserved populations?
 - Who are served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system?
- What is the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) within the state?

Multiple data sources were used to inform the CSNA, including surveys; a review of local and statewide studies focusing on services and barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities; U.S. Census Bureau data; and the DVR management information system.

To answer the above questions, the data collection and analysis portion of the CSNA focused on disability types, barriers to employment, rural Alaska, transition-age youth, minorities, employers, gender, age, Job Centers as part of the workforce investment system and community rehabilitation programs.

2.0 - Methodology

2.1 - Required Areas of Analysis

In accordance with federal regulation 34 CFR § 361.29, the focus of the analysis of the CSNA was on:

- What are the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services?
- What are the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities or in unserved or underserved populations?
- What are the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with disabilities who are served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system?
- What is the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) within the state?

2.2 - Data Collection Methods

Multiple data sources were used to inform the CSNA, including online and direct mailed surveys; studies conducted by a variety of providers and advocacy groups focusing on services and barriers to employment; U.S. Census Bureau data; DVR participant data; and the SRC's community forums and public testimony. In an attempt to identify trends, five year's worth of DVR participant information from FFY2007 - FFY2011 was used in the analysis.

Six separate survey instruments were used in the CSNA. When combined, the individuals surveyed collectively serve as an invaluable source of information and insight regarding the needs and challenges of Alaskans with disabilities.

The individuals surveyed included:

- DVR consumers with open cases (mailed June 2012);
- DVR consumers with closed cases who received services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) (surveyed monthly during FFY2011);
- Stakeholders (online Survey Monkey June 2012);
- DVR counselors and managers (online Survey Monkey August 2012);
- CRPs (online Survey Monkey August 2012); and
- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) partners - Alaska DOLWD Job Center staff (online Survey Monkey August 2012).

3.0 - Data

The data collection portion of the CSNA began with the identification of the specific informational topics required to answer the research questions. The topics identified are disability types, barriers to employment, rural Alaska, transition-age youth, minorities, employers, gender, age, Job Centers as part of the workforce investment system, CRPs and state population.

Primary data sources used to inform the topics include:

- U.S. Census Bureau 2011 American Community Survey (2011 ACS);
- Social Security and Ticket to Work web sites;
- Stakeholder input: surveys, forums and public testimony;
- DVR agency data for FFY2007 – 2011; and
- Resources from other related agencies and organizations.

DVR participant information spans a five-year period in order to assess any trends. Synthesis of the data and the resulting goals and strategies for each research question are presented in Section 4.0 – Conclusions and Recommendations.

3.1 - Surveys

DVR surveyed partners in both the public and private sectors including behavioral health providers, disability advocacy organizations, CRPs, program directors of the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) and DVR participants. Collectively, these organizations and individuals provide a comprehensive overview of the disability service delivery systems within the State.

DVR Consumers Currently Receiving VR Services

In June 2012, surveys were mailed to all 2,183 individuals who were receiving VR services from DVR. The response rate was 12 percent, with 246 surveys returned completed. Seven percent of the surveys were returned as undeliverable, which seemed high for open cases but reinforces the transient life style of many of those who receive VR services.

Sixty-seven percent of respondents were receiving services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) compared to 24 percent in eligible status and 10 percent applicant status. The return rate mirrors the length of time the groups of individuals have been involved in the VR process. For example, individuals with an IPE have been involved with DVR longer than individuals who are applicants for VR services. The respondents by disability type were proportional to DVR participants as a whole.

Summary Results Include:

- 90% of respondents said they were treated with courtesy and respect and were involved in choosing their vocational goal.
- 79% felt they received enough information to make good choices and that available services were explained and their phone calls were returned.
- 80% indicated services were provided in a reasonable amount of time.

However, it is interesting that some of the most frequent comments for improving VR services are in regard to the length of the VR process and the lack of availability of their counselor.

DVR Consumer Closed from an IPE

The SRC sponsors an ongoing consumer satisfaction survey of 100 percent of DVR participants closed from an IPE. The survey offers individuals an opportunity to convey their impression of their VR experience and services received.

In FY2011 DVR surveyed 968 participants with a return rate of 15.1 percent. The survey results are slightly skewed towards those participants who exited employed who are males and with a physical/orthopedic disability, as these groups returned a higher proportion of surveys. The urban areas of the state are slightly overrepresented due to the concentration of population in these areas. The percentages of returned surveys based on the latter criteria are urban 70 percent; road system 21 percent; and rural 10 percent.

The key findings of the survey are included below, and a full copy of the report is available at <http://labor.alaska.gov/svrc/reports/consumer-satisfaction-survey-fy2011.pdf>.

Results:

- 83% of the respondents expressed an overall satisfaction with DVR's services. Satisfaction with DVR's services was 93 percent for those exiting the program employed compared to 63 percent for those exiting the program unemployed.
- 86% said they would refer either friends or family to DVR.
- 91% felt they were treated with courtesy and respect.
- 87% reported having a good relationship with their counselor.
- 88% indicated their phone calls were returned and 90 percent indicated staff was available when needed.
- The participants reported their greatest satisfaction with DVR was the interaction and relationship with DVR staff.
- The participants reported they were least satisfied with the length of time it took to begin receiving VR services.

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS)

The Rehabilitation Services Administration awards competitive grants to tribal governments in order to develop or to increase its capacity to provide a program of vocational rehabilitation services, in a culturally relevant manner, to Alaskan Natives with disabilities. DVR partners with the AIVRS programs statewide with many of the AIVRS offices located in areas where DVR counselors provide services on an itinerant basis. Seven of the 11 AIVRS grant programs in Alaska responded to the survey.

Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs)

Fifty-one CRPs provide services to DVR participants statewide. A CRP is defined as a private program that provides rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities to enable those individuals to maximize their opportunities for employment.

In order to provide high quality services throughout the state, DVR often purchases services such as assessments, job search assistance and on-the-job supports from CRPs. DVR records show that 42 percent of the CRPs have been in business for 10 years or more, indicating a small, but very stable, group of CRPs. Fifty percent of the CRPs are single person operations. CRP respondents stated that 77 percent of them work with DVR consumers who live 50 miles or more from a DVR office. Twenty-two of the 51 approved CRPs responded to the survey.

WIA Partners – Job Center Staff

Alaska Job Centers are part of the statewide workforce investment system. Job Center staff who work directly with individuals with disabilities, either as vocational counselors or by providing core services in a Job Center resource room, were surveyed. DVR received 14 responses from Job Center staff.

DVR Field Staff

DVR surveyed DVR counselors and regional managers who are responsible for providing direct services to VR participants. There was a 95 percent response rate with 42 out of 44 staff responding.

3.2 - Disability Type and Significance

Data on disability types was collected to ensure a disability group is not underserved or unserved and to address the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Table 1: Disability Characteristics of Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population					
<i>Source: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Geographic Area: Alaska (\$1810)</i>					
	Population	< 5 Years	5 to 17 years	18 to 64 years	> 64 years
Statewide	699,272	8% (54,031)	19% (133,677)	65% (454,580)	8% (56,984)
With a disability	11% (73,731)	<1% (374)	4% (5,135)	10% (44,003)	43% (24,219)
Disability type as compared to the Statewide Population					
Ambulatory	5% (35,814)	--	<1%(537)	5% (22,473)	26% (15,005)
Cognitive	4% (26,204)	--	3%(3,776)	3% (14,420)	11% (6,195)
Hearing	4% (27,499)	<1% (166)	<1% (561)	3% (13,544)	22% (12,774)
Independent Living	3% (18,873)	--	--	3% (12,076)	15% (8,496)
Self-care	2% (12,971)	--	1% (698)	2% (7,344)	10% (5,562)
Vision	2% (15,038)	< 1% (219)	<1% (529)	1% (5,545)	9% (5,044)

Table 1 provides an estimate of individuals with disabilities in the state of Alaska based on the latest U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). The individuals have self-identified as a person with a disability as well as the type of disability. Individuals can report experiencing more than one disability type.

The definition of a disability used by the ACS is "A long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition. This condition can make it difficult for a person to do activities such as walking, climbing stairs, dressing, bathing, learning, or remembering. This condition can also impede a person from being able to go outside the home alone or to work at a job or business." Per 34 CFR §361.5(28), DVR defines an individual with a disability as someone with a substantial impediment to employment as a result of a physical, mental or sensory impairment and who can benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome.

While the definitions between the ACS and DVR are not exactly the same, they are similar enough for DVR to ascertain the level of VR services provided to various disability groups as compared to the relative proportion of the population with a similar disability.

Table 2: DVR Participants by Primary Disability Type					
<i>Source: DVR Management Information System</i>					
Disability Type	FFY2011	FFY2010	FFY2009	FFY2008	FFY2007
Behavioral Health	39% (1,655)	38% (1,557)	36% (1,394)	33% (1,245)	33% (1,176)
Cognitive	18% (751)	16% (656)	17% (665)	19% (678)	18% (657)
Deafness or Hard of Hearing (HOH)	6% (246)	6% (249)	5% (195)	5% (201)	6% (203)
Orthopedic/Physical Conditions	34% (1,418)	36% (1,483)	38% (1,478)	38% (1,406)	40% (1,462)
Blindness or Visual Impairments	3% (139)	4% (145)	4% (152)	3% (127)	3% (113)
Closed Rehabilitated					
Behavioral Health	39% (247)	40% (210)	34% (176)	32% (181)	30% (160)
Cognitive	19% (120)	18% (94)	22% (117)	20% (112)	20% (103)
Deafness or HOH	8% (50)	7% (38)	7% (35)	10% (58)	9% (46)
Orthopedic/Physical Conditions	31% (199)	32% (170)	33% (173)	35% (197)	39% (204)
Blindness or Visual Impairments	3% (18)	3% (18)	4% (23)	3% (18)	3% (14)
Closed Other					
Behavioral Health	42% (513)	42% (487)	39% (410)	37% (328)	37% (345)
Cognitive	14% (175)	14% (164)	17% (180)	19% (170)	16% (148)
Deafness or HOH	3% (38)	3% (38)	4% (39)	4% (34)	4% (37)
Orthopedic/Physical Conditions	38% (456)	39% (456)	36% (380)	39% (351)	41% (386)
Blindness or Visual Impairments	3% (36)	2% (28)	3% (36)	1% (12)	3% (28)

Table 2 shows the distribution of DVR participants by their primary disability from FFY 2007 – 2011. The primary disability is the physical or mental impairment causing the substantial impediment to employment. Most DVR participants also have secondary disabilities that contribute to the impediment to employment.

Behavioral health related disabilities include interpersonal and behavioral impairments as well as difficulty coping. Cognitive disabilities involve learning, thinking, processing information and concentration.

During the five-year period, the percentages of those with a cognitive disability, as well as deafness and blindness, remained relatively constant while the percentages for behavioral health disabilities increased over all while orthopedic disabilities steadily decreased. The trends of those closed, both rehabilitated and other than rehabilitated, follow similar patterns indicating DVR is providing equal access to VR services across disability groups.

Significance of Disability

DVR is also concerned about the significance of an individual's disability as federal regulations require that if a state VR agency does not have either the staff or financial resources to serve all eligible individuals, priority for services must be given to the most significantly disabled. The requirements of the CSNA include specifically addressing the VR needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities. DVR was not on an order of selection in FFY2011 and was able to offer the full range of VR services to all eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities.

DVR defines an individual with a disability as someone who:

- has a physical, mental or sensory impairment;
- has a substantial impediment to employment as a result of the impairment; and
- requires VR services to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment.

DVR defines an individual with a significant disability (SD) as someone who:

- receives Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA) or
- has a severe physical, mental or sensory impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities such as mobility, work skills, self-care, interpersonal skills, communication, self-direction or work tolerance in terms of an employment outcome and requires multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

DVR defines an individual with a most significant disability (MSD) as someone who:

- has a severe physical, mental or sensory impairment that seriously limits three or more functional capacities such as mobility, work skills, self-care, interpersonal skills, communication, self-direction or work tolerance in terms of an employment outcome; and
- has a significant disability.

Table 3: DVR Participants by Significance of Disability					
<i>Source: DVR Management Information System</i>					
Significance of Disability	FFY2011	FFY2010	FFY2009	FFY2008	FFY2007
Most Significantly Disabled	37%(1,485)	37%(1,412)	38%(1,409)	39%(1,350)	36%(1,243)
Significantly Disabled	57%(2,291)	58%(2,225)	56%(2,046)	53%(1,832)	54%(1,824)
Disabled	6%(226)	6%(230)	6%(208)	8%(271)	10%(349)
Total	4,002	3,867	3,663	3,453	3,416

Table 3 shows a 19.5 percent increase of DVR participants coded as MSD compared to a 17.2 percent increase of the total DVR participants for the five year period.

Table 4 : DVR Participants by Significance of Disability – FFY2011			
<i>Source: DVR Management Information System</i>			
By Disability Type	MSD	SD	Disabled
Behavioral Health	36% (563)	60% (929)	4% (66)
Cognitive	55% (399)	39% (281)	6% (42)
Deafness or Hard of Hearing (HOH)	28% (57)	65% (134)	7% (15)
Orthopedic/Physical Conditions	28% (371)	66% (914)	7% (96)
Blindness or Visual Impairments	71% (95)	24% (33)	5% (7)

Table 4 shows a breakdown of DVR participants by disability type and the significance of their disability.

Table 5: DVR Participants by Significance of Disability – FFY2011 <i>Source: DVR Management Information System</i>			
	MSD	SD	Disabled
Number Served	37% (1485)	57% (2291)	6%(226)
Closed Rehabilitated	31% (198)	60% (382)	9% (54)
Mean Hourly Wage	\$11.43	\$14.98	\$17.70
Average Hours Worked per Week	26.9	34.7	37.2
Closed Other	36% (376)	59% (610)	5% (49)

Table 5 shows at case closure for those coded as MSD and/or SD the average hourly wage far exceeds the minimum wage of \$7.75. Also worth noting is the number of hours worked for those who are MSD. The 26.9 hours worked per week is an 8.5 percent increase from FFY2009.

Social Security Administration (SSA) Programs

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provide cash benefits to individuals who are unable to work because of disabilities. Per 34 CFR §361.42, any individual who is receiving SSDI/SSI is considered to have a significant disability.

SSA estimated as of December 2011, 2.9 percent of Alaskans aged 18-64 were receiving SSDI benefits. This is lower than the national average of 4.6 percent. A total of 18,040 Alaskans received either SSDI/SSI benefits. In FFY2011, 28 percent of DVR participants were receiving SSI/SSDI. This is an increase of 3 percent as reported in the 2010 CSNA.

Ticket to Work (TTW)

TTW is a work incentive program implemented by SSA to provide beneficiaries greater flexibility and expanded choice in obtaining the rehabilitation, employment and other support services that they need to go to work and attain their employment goals. Only individuals who are receiving SSI/SSDI disability benefits and who are between the ages of 18 and 64 are eligible to receive a ticket.

Table 6: Ticket Distribution in Alaska by Disability Group <i>Source: http://www.yourtickettowork.com/</i>		
	2011	2009
Tickets Currently Distributed	21,299	18,491
Blind/Visually Impaired	2% (395)	2% (383)
Deaf and/or Loss of Voice	1% (264)	1% (222)
Developmental Disabilities	9% (1,998)	10% (1,886)
Psychiatric Disorders (Behavioral Health)	32% (6,754)	33% (6,058)
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)/Stroke	< 1% (89)	< 1% (68)
All Other Physical Conditions	55% (11,799)	53% (9,700)

Table 6 indicates more tickets have been distributed to individuals with physical conditions than behavioral health, developmental disabilities and TBI/stroke. This is in contrast to DVR participant disability distribution. Ticket information is available by the diagnosis as well as the

location of the ticker holder. This information assists DVR in estimating the number of Alaskans by disability type who are significantly disabled.

Individuals who are Blind or Visually Impaired

DVR is a combined agency with a responsibility to provide services to individuals with all disabilities including those who experience blindness or a visual impairment. This is different from some states with a separate blind services agency. The ACS 2011 data reports Alaskans with a vision-related disability at 1 percent for those ages 18-64 and at 9 percent for those over age 64. Over the past five years, individuals with blindness or a visual impairment constitute 3-4 percent of those receiving VR services from DVR. In FFY2012, 89 percent of those with blindness were determined to have a most significant disability.

To ensure DVR is meeting its responsibility to provide the same level of service to the blind and visually impaired as would a blind agency, DVR has:

- Forged a strong relationship with the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (the Center), which is the only vision rehabilitation agency in Alaska;
- Provided the Center with an Innovation and Expansion Grant to develop a vocational program;
- Supported the Center in obtaining on-going funding for outreach to rural Alaska;
- Developed a strong Business Enterprise Program (BEP), which provides opportunities to qualifying individuals to operate vending and food service facilities on various state and federal sites;
- Developed a team of VR counselors who receive training on assistive technology and medical issues specific to blind consumers; and
- Ensured funds are available to help meet the needs of DVR participants who experience blindness or visual impairments.

Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD)

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (H&SS) is required by law to maintain a list denoting individuals who experience a developmental disability, and to track those individuals for whom there is not adequate funding to meet their needs. As of June 30, 2011, there were 420 Alaskans ages 18-64 on the IDD registry, which is 46 percent of the total number of individuals on the registry. Individuals in the 18-64 age group are working age and are more likely served by DVR.

Alaska Statute AS 47.80.900 (7) defines I/DD as a severe, chronic disability that results in substantial functional limitations in three or more major life activities. Most of the individuals on the I/DD registry would be coded by DVR as most significantly disabled and would probably require supported employment services utilizing long-term supports. The average length of time on the registry is 50 months, which has not changed since 2009.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

The Alaska Brain Injury Network (ABIN) “*10 Year TBI Plan*” reported that in Alaska 800 TBIs occur every year result in hospitalization or death. The national rate of occurrence is 82 per 100,000 individuals. The Alaska rate is 105, which is 28 percent higher than the national rate. In rural areas of the state, the incidence rate is more than twice the statewide rate. In addition to those identified with TBI, there are many more who are not identified as having a brain injury at the time of their accident but who appear later, often years later, with symptoms of a brain injury. TBI-related disabilities may be physical and/or cognitive and may impact an individual’s ability to work or live independently.

In FFY11, 80 individuals receiving services from DVR had TBI as the cause of their disability. Sixty-three percent were coded as individuals with a most significant disability, 36 percent as individuals with a significant disability, and 1 percent as individuals with a disability.

In 2012 AS 47.80.500 established a statewide traumatic or acquired brain injury (TABI) program in the Department of Health and Social Services for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness and availability of information and services for the prevention and treatment of traumatic or acquired brain injury. Part of the legislation includes establishing a registry of TABI individuals for longitudinal data collection and evaluation of services.

3.3 - Barriers to Employment

Identification of barriers to employment crosses all the research questions of the CSNA, affecting those with the most significant disabilities, as well as minorities, underserved and those served by the statewide workforce investment system. In SFY10, the Alaska Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program reported 149 of its participants had a disability that they considered to be a barrier to employment.

Forty-seven percent of individuals who had an open case with DVR and responded to the survey indicated the possible loss of some type of benefit would likely make it hard for them to accept a job and would be a barrier for employment.

As shown in Table 7, Social Security and Medicaid were the benefits individuals were most concerned about losing. Food stamps and housing assistance were also significant concerns.

Table 7 also shows that the leading barrier, as defined by service/issue, was the individual's own health or physical limitations.

Table 7: Participant's Perceived Barriers to Employment	
<i>Source: 2012 DVR Survey of Individuals with Open Cases</i>	
Loss of Benefits	
Social Security Benefits	58% (86)
Medicaid	52% (77)
Food Stamps	48% (72)
Housing Assistance	30% (44)
Temporary Assistance for Needy Family Benefits	14% (21)
Child Care Assistance	4% (6)
Services/Issues	
Health or Physical Limitations	47% (126)
Lack of Training	45% (120)
Work Experience	40% (106)
Lack of Education	42% (112)
Transportation	36% (97)
Assistive Technology	18% (49)
Housing	14% (36)
Child care	4% (10)

Table 8: Availability of Services and Supports to meet Employment Needs			
<i>Source: 2012 DVR Surveys - DVR Staff, Stakeholders and CRPs</i>			
	Barriers	Not Accessible	Not Available
Services	DVR Staff/ CRPs/ Stake Holders	DVR Staff/ CRPs	DVR Staff/ CRPs
Housing	77%	14%	25%
Behavioral health	65%	11%	0%
Transportation	62%	10%	10%
Medical services	58%	10%	1%
Assistive technology	54%	9%	7%
Long term supported employment funding	38%	16%	16%
Youth to employment	38%	4%	10%
CRPs	35%	3%	9%
Youth to adult services	31%	6%	13%
Job retention services	27%	3%	4%
Job Search Assistance	27%	0%	4%
Benefits analysis	23%	0%	1%
IL Skills Training	23%	9%	3%
ASL interpreter	19%	6%	9%
Occupational training	19%	4%	4%
Basic education	15%	3%	6%
Lack of career or employment opportunities	15%	0%	0%
Business development	12%	3%	6%
Language interpreter	12%	10%	22%
On-the-job supports	12%	1%	4%
Career counseling	8%	1%	4%
Child care	8%	6%	9%
ESL	8%	3%	6%
Legal services	8%	10%	7%
Culturally relevant	4%	1%	13%
Self-employment other than DVR	4%	7%	17%
Personal care attendants	0%	4%	1%

Table 8 aggregates the responses from the three surveys with barriers to employment questions. The results are sorted by the barriers, with the top three services identified by each category highlighted. Housing was the only service that was identified as a primary issue in all categories, making it not only the greatest barrier to employment but also not accessible nor available. Behavioral health services came in second after housing as being a barrier and not accessible.

For these surveys, “not accessible” was defined as the service is available, but the person does not have access to the service as opposed to accessibility as defined by the Americans with Disability Act.

3.4 – Transition-Age Youth

The Rehabilitation Act, Section 7(37) focuses on transition students and defines transition services as a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities. Alaska DVR has been and remains committed to serving youth with disabilities as they transition from high school to the adult world of employment. Recent research conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, and as reported in its National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 recognizes post-adolescents have unique struggles distinct from those who have reached full adulthood. DVR considers individuals ages 16-24 to fall into this category and to be a potentially underserved segment of the population. In view of the importance of this age group, DVR has chosen to also analyze this group as part of the CSNA.

Table 9: Information on Youth in Alaska					
<i>Sources: 2010 American Community Survey, Population Estimates(S1810); DEED Annual performance Report FFY2011; Division of Business Partnerships;2011 WIA Program; and DVR Management Information System</i>					
Population Estimates Alaskans Age 15 -24	Alaskans Ages 5-17 with a Disability	Alaskans Ages 18-64 with a Disability	Alaska Special Education Students (with an IEP, ages 16 and above)	Youth at Application (Served by DVR)	WIA Youth Programs (whose disability is a barrier to employment)
16% (107,145)	5% (6,413)	11% (48,691)	22% (3,444)	23% (346)	51% (92)

Table 9 presents a variety of data sources with the purpose of comparing the estimated overall population of youth with a disability to the number of youth served by DVR. The data shows the percentage of youth coming into DVR as participants is greater than the percent of the statewide population of the same age group, as well as the estimates for Alaskans with a disability and the number of special education students. The WIA data demonstrates the need for the continued working of joint cases between WIA and DVR.

The table also demonstrates the difficulty of breaking down census data into distinct population groups by disability. Census data can be used to determine the percent of the population that is youth but cannot be used as accurately to estimate the number of 15-24 year-olds with a disability. This information can be extrapolated from overall census data, but as the number of people with a disability increases with age, the number of youth with a disability would more than likely be inflated. Therefore, based upon the census data, 5-11 percent of the population in Alaska ages 15-24 would have a disability.

Table 10: Youth Served by DVR <i>Source: DVR Management Information System</i>					
	FFY11	FFY10	FFY09	FFY08	FFY07
Youth served as a % of all DVR participants	23% (1,027)	23% (978)	22% (842)	22% (825)	23% (848)
Closed employed as a % of all closed employed	19% (123)	19% (104)	20% (99)	22% (118)	21% (113)
Rehab rate (closed rehab/all youth closed from an IPE)	64.2%	59.5%	54.1%	64.0%	56.4%
Average length of time case is open	2.1 yrs	2.1 yrs	2.1 yrs	2.5 yrs	2.4 yrs
Wages at closure	\$10.98	\$10.73	\$10.71	\$11.67	\$11.19
Occupation					
Managerial	2% (2)	2% (2)	1% (1)	3% (3)	2% (2)
Forestry, Fishing and Related	1% (1)	1% (1)	2% (2)	NA	1% (1)
Construction	14% (19)	13% (15)	10% (10)	25% (30)	19% (21)
Clerical	10% (13)	10% (12)	12% (12)	9% (11)	9% (10)
Professional & Paraprofessional	8% (11)	8% (10)	12% (12)	11% (13)	8% (9)
Sales	11% (14)	12% (14)	15% (15)	14% (17)	15% (17)
Service Occupations	55% (72)	55% (66)	47% (47)	37% (44)	45% (51)
Primary Disability at Application					
Cognitive	38% (142)	37% (130)	44% (141)	49% (151)	49% (153)
Behavioral Health	34% (128)	37% (131)	31% (101)	25% (77)	27% (84)
Orthopedic/Other Physical	18% (69)	19 (68)	14% (46)	16% (49)	15% (46)
Deafness and HOH	7% (25)	4% (14)	7% (21)	7% (23)	6% (19)
Blindness and Visual Impairments	3% (10)	2% (7)	4% (13)	2% (7)	3% (9)

Table 10 provides information about youth served by DVR. The percent of youth of the total number served by DVR has remained constant over the five year period while the actual number of youth receiving VR increased by 21 percent during the same time. Per the FFY2011 RSA 113-Caseload Report, the number of individuals receiving services from DVR increased by 15 percent from FFY2007 to FFY2011. Thus, the youth receiving services increased at a higher rate than the overall number of DVR participants.

The average wages for transition-age youth closed rehabilitated have remained well above the minimum wage of \$7.75 which was raised from \$7.25 in 2010.

Youth with cognitive disabilities constitute the largest number of youth served by DVR. The largest single referral source for youth to the DVR program are educational institutions and 51 percent of the school referrals are youth from special education programs who experience a cognitive disability. A disparity exists between the number of youth with orthopedic/physical disabilities and the whole of DVR's participants, with rates of 18 percent and 35 percent, respectively. This is probably attributed to orthopedic disabilities most often are due to work related injuries, and most youth are not yet in the work force.

Since the last CSNA, DVR has been actively involved in Project Search High School Transition Program. This is a unique, business-led, one year school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of

classroom instruction, career exploration, and on-the-job training and support through internships or work site rotations. The goal for each student participant is competitive employment. In FFY2011, 27 students from Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Valley and Fairbanks participated in Project Search.

As shown in Table 10, the rehab rate for youth in FFY2011 was 64.2 percent. This compares favorably with the agency's overall FFY2011 rehab rate of 65.3 percent. Also in FFY2011, the number of youth reporting that their primary source of support was their own income increased from 17 at application to 88 at closure.

The data in Tables 9 and 10 indicate an appropriate number of youth are entering the VR program and exiting successfully. Even so, DVR's 23 percent of youth served in FFY2011 lags behind the national average of 35 percent of transition-age youth served by combined agencies. On a very positive note, in FFY2011 DVR's rehab rate of 64.2 percent for youth was the second highest of all combined VR agencies.

Youth Exiting the VR Program

Table 11 provides detailed information regarding the reason of those cases closed other than rehabilitated. The purpose in examining this information is to provide more insight as to why DVR participants who are youth are closed other than rehabilitated and to mitigate these case closures.

The table also compares youth to all other DVR participants to determine if the youth population has unique characteristics. The two primary reasons given for the unsuccessful closure of VR cases are the same for youth and adults. This speaks to the often transient circumstances of DVR participants and may reinforce the employment barrier of housing identified in Table 8.

Table 11: Reasons for Closed Other Than Rehabilitated – Youth FFY2011 <i>Source: DVR Management Information System</i>		
	Youth	All Other
Unable to locate	41% (105)	30%(292)
Declined to participate	37% (96)	44%(436)
Failure to cooperate	9% (22)	6%(60)
All other reason	4% (10)	7%(72)
Institutionalized	4% (11)	6%(61)
No disabling condition	2% (6)	1%(8)
No impediment to employment	1% (3)	4%(38)
Does not require VR services	1% (2)	1%(5)
Death	1%(2)	2%(15)
Transferred to another agency		<1%(1)
Total by Status	257	988

Table 12 shows at what point in the VR process that both youth and adults leave the program other than employment. The fewer youth lost as applicants could be related to the high number of youth who are referred by the schools and the early involvement of the school personnel with the VR process.

Table 12: Reasons for Closed Other Than Rehabilitated – Youth FFY2011 <i>Source: DVR Management Information System</i>			
	Applicant Including Trial Work	Eligible	Plan
Youth	16%(42)	58%(148)	26%(67)
All Other DVR Participants	26%(254)	47%(464)	27%(270)

Special Education Students

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) tracks information on students who have had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The 2010-2011 DEED Report Card to the Public reports students with disabilities had a 40 percent graduation rate compared to the overall statewide graduation rate of 68 percent. A primary service available to DVR participants is academic training. In FFY2011, DVR provided training to 35 percent of transition-age youth who came to DVR without a high diploma to leave DVR with a high school diploma, GED, certificate of completion or some type of post secondary education.

Table 13: Counts of Alaska Special Education Students by Disability Group				
<i>Data Source: Alaska Department of Education and Early Development</i>				
	FFY2010	FFY2009	FFY2008	FFY2007
Specific Learning Disabilities	41% (7,448)	41.9% (7,492)	42.2% (7452)	42.6% (7,411)
Speech/Language Impaired	18% (3,258)	18.5% (3,312)	18.7% (3,295)	19.7% (3,305)
Developmentally Delayed	12% (2,199)	11.9% (2,122)	12.9% (2,282)	13.1% (2,338)
Other Health Impairments	12% (2,172)	11.6% (2,073)	10.7% (1,890)	9.4% (1,754)
Emotional Disturbance	4% (723)	4.1% (725)	4.3% (754)	4.1% (733)
Cognitive Impairment	4% (630)	3.6% (639)	3.6% (640)	4.0% (691)
Multiple Disabilities	2.3% (419)	2.4% (435)	2.3% (402)	2.3% (410)
Autism Spectrum Disorder	4.6% (828)	4.1% (726)	3.4% (607)	2.7% (538)
Hearing Impaired	1.0% (179)	1.0% (177)	0.9% (163)	0.9% (159)
Orthopedic Impairments	0.5% (86)	0.5% (83)	0.4% (74)	0.4% (80)
Traumatic Brain Injury	0.3% (48)	0.3% (49)	0.3% (48)	0.4% (66)
Visual Impairments	0.3% (49)	0.3% (51)	0.3% (49)	0.2% (42)
Deaf-Blindness	0.0% (9)	0.1% (9)	0.0% (6)	0.1% (9)

The special education count of students, shown in Table 13, includes all students with disabilities, rather than only transition-age students. This information is useful to DVR so that it can better understand the type and number of students experiencing a particular disability, and allow for development of plans for future clientele.

The SRC developed an interest as to how services are being provided by DVR to transition-age youth. As a result, the SRC organized several public forums as part of their community meetings in 2011. These meetings were held in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Dillingham and Juneau. The purpose of the forums was to collect information on secondary transition services being provided by DVR in order to better understand the success of the delivery of services to transition youth. A survey was developed and administered to a wide range of DVR stakeholders, and the results used to provide valuable information that was incorporated into DVR's strategic plan for transition-age youth.

Section 504 Students

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education reports limited data by state on students who are covered under Section 504 but are not receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These students have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major activities but do not have learning issues that make them eligible for IDEA; they are not included in the IDEA data described above (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2005; 2007). Unfortunately, data on the total number of "Section 504 only" students are not disaggregated by age, transition status, or by

specific disability; nevertheless, these data can help to give a rough indication of the size of the Section 504 population, a group that is potentially eligible for VR services during transition.

The most recent OCR data is for 2009 and reports Alaska had 1,060 Section 504 students. From FFY2007-FFY2011, DVR had 103 applicants who were Section 504 students compared to 459 students who were referred to DVR from other secondary school programs. DVR assumes these programs to be special education.

3.6 – Minorities

DVR is providing individuals with minority backgrounds equal access to VR services as indicated by the Federal Performance Indicator 2.1 results shown in Table 14. A VR agency must meet or exceed the performance standard of 0.80 (ratio). DVR has exceeded this standard for the past five years.

Indicator 2.1 measures the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all non-minority individuals with disabilities. The service rate is the percentage of cases closed from an IPE to all cases closed including those from applicant and eligible statuses. The development of an IPE is an important milestone in the VR process as the employment goal and related services are delineated in the IPE. This measure assures that minority individuals are not only brought into the VR system in appropriate numbers but that they also receive intensive employment related services.

Table 14: Federal Performance Indicator 2.1 – Ratio of Minority Service Rate to Non-Minority Service Rate						
<i>Source: DVR Case Management System</i>						
	FFY2011	FFY2010	FFY09	FFY08	FFY07	Federal Performance Indicator 2.1 Standard
Ratio	0.946	1.010	0.876	0.987	0.815	0.80

Table 14 shows DVR's performance for Indicator 2.1 for the past five years. In FFY2010, DVR closed more minority participants from an IPE than non-minority participants, thus the ratio of 1.010.

U.S. Census Bureau ACS data in Table 15 shows the estimated number of Alaskans with a disability age 18-64 by race/ethnicity. This age group is most similar to the age group served by DVR.

Minorities in Alaska comprise about one-third of the entire population. This is proportionally greater than the U.S as a whole with the estimated minority population being one-fourth of the entire population (U.S. Census, American Fact Finder report S1810).

Table 15: Estimated number of Alaskans Age 18-64 with a Disability by Race/Ethnicity	
<i>Source: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (S1810; B01001)</i>	
	2011
Alaska Native/American Indian	13% (6,143)
Asian	5% (2,498)
Black/African American	3% (1,557)
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1% (426)
White	66% (32,289)
Other/Two or More Races	7% (3,268)
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	5% (2,262)

Table 15: Ethnic Characteristics of Alaska DVR Participants and Statewide Estimates					
<i>Source: DVR Management Information System</i>					
	FY2011	FY2010	FY2009	FY2008	FY2007
Applicants					
AK Native/American Indian	15% (281)	16% (289)	18% (307)	18% (282)	21% (320)
Asian	2% (38)	1% (25)	1% (23)	2% (33)	2% (26)
Black	7% (126)	7% (124)	8% (130)	8% (126)	7% (101)
Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	2% (28)	1% (23)	1% (23)	1% (21)	1% (21)
White	67% (1,240)	69% (1,224)	65% (1,114)	64% (986)	63% (962)
Two or More Races	7%(134)	6% (100)	6% (100)	5% (78)	4% (65)
Hispanic/ Latino (of any race)	5% (90)	6% (100)	6% (100)	5% (78)	4% (65)
Closed Rehabilitated					
AK Native/American Indian	14% (87)	17% (88)	16% (86)	16% (90)	13% (65)
Asian	3% (17)	3% (17)	3% (14)	3% (15)	2% (12)
Black	8% (54)	7% (39)	6% (34)	8% (43)	6% (32)
Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	1% (8)	1% (5)	2% (9)	1% (7)	1% (4)
White	69% (440)	66% (350)	68% (354)	68% (387)	75% (394)
Two or More Races	5% (32)	6% (31)	5% (27)	5% (26)	4% (20)
Hispanic/ Latino (of any race)	4% (28)	6% (32)	5% (28)	5% (29)	4% (22)
Closed Other					
AK Native/American Indian	18% (59)	20% (67)	19% (61)	23% (67)	18% (66)
Asian	1% (3)	1% (3)	2% (8)	2% (2)	1% (5)
Black	7% (23)	9% (31)	7% (23)	6% (18)	9% (34)
Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	3% (11)	2% (6)	1% (2)	1% (4)	1% (2)
White	68% (228)	63% (212)	64% (206)	63% (186)	64% (234)
Two or More Races	4% (13)	6% (20)	7% (23)	6% (18)	7% (26)
Hispanic/ Latino (of any race)	5% (18)	6% (19)	3% (11)	4% (13)	5% (18)

Table 15 breaks down DVR participants by the same ethnic/race groups used by the U.S. Census data reported in Table 14. Table 15 reports applicants to the VR program and those exiting the program both employed and not employed after receiving intensive VR services. In FFY2011, minorities represented 33 percent of DVR applicants, 31 percent of those closed employed and 32 percent of those exiting not employed. This is consistent with the census data from Table 14 estimating 34 percent of the population having a minority background.

Table 15 shows a fairly consistent level of individuals receiving VR services across population groups for the past five years. A comparison of the racial/ethnic breakdown by percentage of FY2011 data in Table 15 against that of Table 14 would suggest that Asians are potentially underserved, with Alaska Natives, blacks, Hawaiian Islanders and whites being overserved. Since the number of individuals in many of the ethnic/race groups is small, broad generalizations based on the data should be avoided.

Ethnic Trends for DVR Applicants

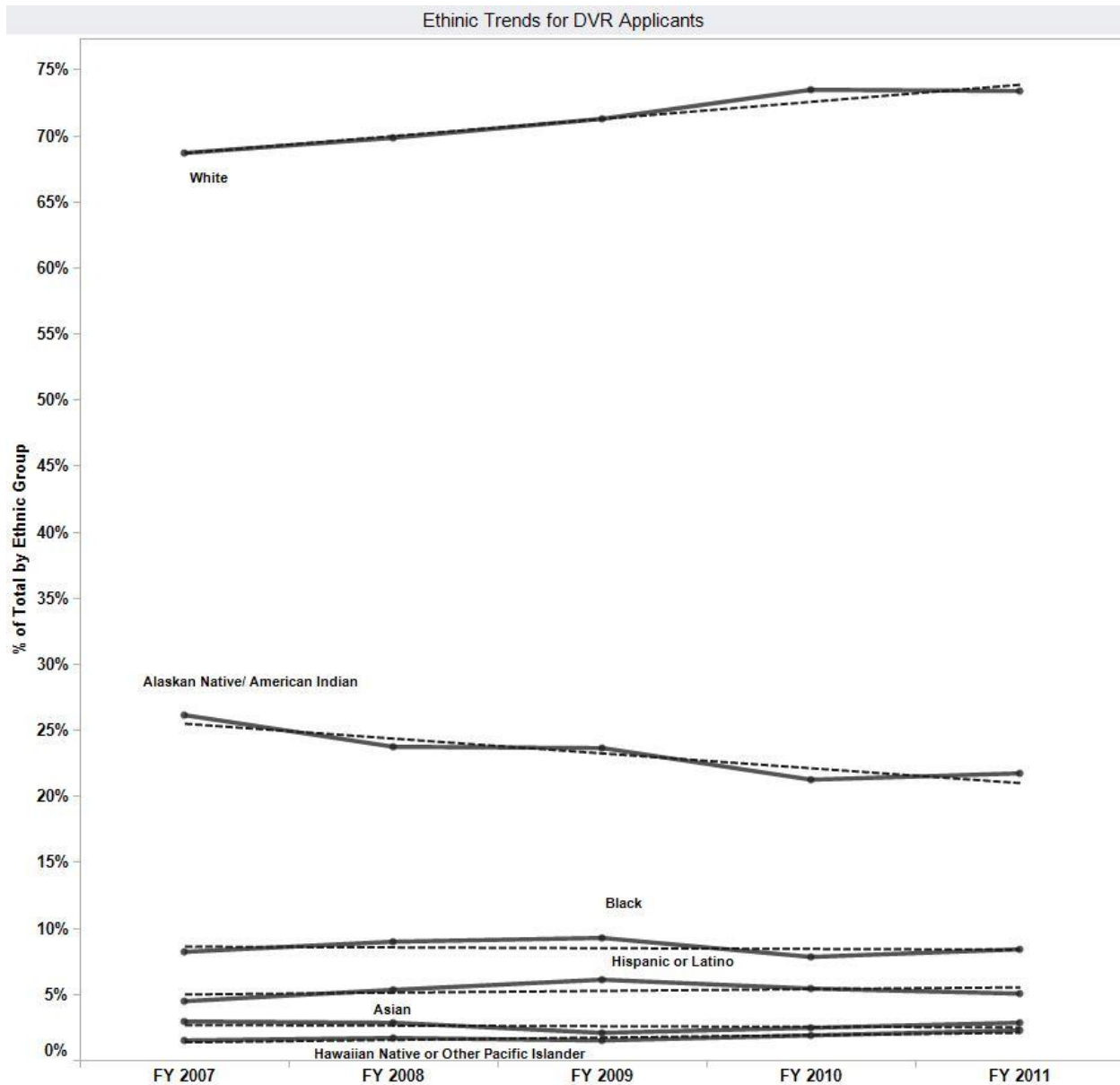


Exhibit 1: Ethnic Trends for DVR Applicants; Source: DVR Management Information System (Dashes are trend lines compared to solid lines are actual number of participants)

Exhibit 1 shows the trends by ethnicity of applicants to the VR program over a five year period. In FFY2011, the Alaska Native and Asian groups increased at a higher rate than projected while the white and Hispanic populations show a decline. Black and Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders continued to maintain their established trends.

3.6 - Gender

Table 17: Disability Characteristics of Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population 16 to 64 Years <i>Source: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (c23023)</i>					
	Population			Did Not Work in the Past 12 Months	
	Statewide	As a % of the Total of All Gender Groups with a Disability	Percentage of Gender Group with a Disability	As a % of Those with a Disability	As a % of Those with No Disability
Male	52%(258,566)	58%(27,228)	11%(27,228)	43%(11,621)	12%(26,625)
Female	48%(237,745)	42% (19,580)	8%(19,580)	54%((10,483)	20%(44,209)

In Table 17 the higher percentage of males reporting a disability corresponds to population estimates. The table also shows that males experience a higher disability percentage rate. This is not unreasonable as males are often more likely to be employed in physically demanding jobs such as logging, fishing or construction.

The large difference between those with and without a disability who reported not working within the past 12 months reinforces the difficulty individuals with a disability often have in obtaining and maintaining employment.

Table 18: DVR Participants by Gender <i>Source: DVR Management Information System</i>					
	FFY2011	FFY2010	FFY2009	FFY2008	FFY2007
Received Services					
Male	58% (2,447)	58% (2,370)	57% (2,191)	57% (2,083)	55% (2,005)
Female	42% (1,792)	42% (1,731)	43% (1,683)	43% (1,592)	45% (1,662)
Closed Rehabilitated					
Male	65% (410)	57%(300)	54% (285)	60% (337)	54% (284)
Female	35% (224)	43%(230)	46% (239)	40% (229)	46% (243)
Closed Other					
Male	59% (739)	59% (698)	58% (614)	58% (540)	54% (543)
Female	41% (506)	41% (483)	42% (452)	42% (384)	46% (457)

Table 18 demonstrates the percentage of males served by DVR has increased steadily over the past five years. The ACS data from 2008 to 2011 also show a total increase in males statewide from 51 percent to 52 percent. The percentage of males and females served by DVR mirrors the statewide population estimates of individuals with a disability as reported in Table 17.

3.7 - Age

Table 19: Disability Characteristics of Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population <i>Source: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Geographic Area: Alaska (S1810)</i>					
	Population	< 5 Years	5 to 17 years	18 to 64 years	> 64 years
Statewide	699,272	8% (54,031)	19% (133,677)	65% (454,580)	8% (56,984)
With a disability	11% (73,731)	<1% (374)	4% (5,135)	10% (44,003)	43% (24,219)

Table 20: DVR Participants by Age Group <i>Source: DVR Management Information System</i>					
Age Groups	FFY2011	FFY2010	FFY2009	FFY2008	FFY2007
Youth <18	5% (195)	4% (172)	4% (165)	5% (169)	5% (168)
Ages 18 – 64	94% (4,003)	95% (3,890)	95% (3,700)	95% (3,491)	95% (3,481)
Ages > 64	1% (41)	1% (39)	1% (45)	1% (31)	1% (28)

Table 20 shows a breakdown of DVR participants by age group. In order to assess if an age group is underserved or unserved, the information in Tables 19 and 20 is compared. The actual numbers for all age groups increased over the five-year period while the relative percentage of the groups remained unchanged.

3.8 – Rural

DVR has long recognized, as do most other state agencies, the challenges to providing equitable services to all areas of Alaska, given the sheer size of the state. In prior state plans, DVR has identified rural Alaska as an underserved area. There are no unserved areas of the state as all areas of the state are assigned to a DVR regional office.

Alaska does not have counties, but instead has incorporated boroughs in much of the state, with a large portion of the state remaining unincorporated. For the purpose of estimating the rural and non-rural populations of the state for CSNA comparisons, DVR used both borough and census designated place (CDP) boundaries as identified by the U.S. Census data and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section (R&A).

DVR's definition of non-rural/rural is based on the access of individuals to VR counseling services. Residents of communities with VR counseling offices have access to VR counselors and the best service DVR can offer, even though some of these offices are in small communities with limited community rehabilitation programs and other support services.

DVR has therefore defined rural as a community or CDP that is not connected by road to a community with a DVR office or is connected by road to a community with a DVR office but is at least 50 miles outside of the community. Connected by road does not include the Alaska Marine Highway System.

Communities served by VR counselors on an itinerant basis are also considered rural for the purpose of the CSNA. VR counselors travel consistently to the hub communities of Barrow, Kotzebue, Nome, Bethel and Dillingham, which draw individuals from surrounding villages. Counselors may also travel to smaller communities. DVR, working through the SRC, maintains a public presence throughout the state as the SRC conducts at least one of its quarterly meetings in a rural community. Public testimony is an integral part of the meeting. DVR uses this testimony to further evaluate its services and program related processes.

Based upon data collected by R&A, the state has seen an influx of people moving to Alaska from other areas of the United States in FFY2010-11, reversing a trend in which the state generally lost people over the previous decade. R&A points to the Alaskan economy being relatively stable compared to some states in the remainder of the country.

The data also suggest that migration from the Southwest and Northern regions of Alaska to the Anchorage-MatSu and Gulf Coast regions has occurred. The move from rural to urban is due to availability of employment opportunities, services and amenities in urban areas.

Table 21: Alaska Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population <i>Source: 2008 and 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates, Geographic Area: Alaska (S1810)</i>			
	Population	With a Disability	Served by DVR
2008	659,084	78,893(12%)	3,691
2011	699,272	73,731(11%)	4,101
Percent Change	+6%	-7%	+11%

Table 21 compares the changes from 2008 ACS data to 2011 ACS data for statewide population and individuals reporting a disability and the number of DVR participants served. It is interesting that during the same period, the reported number of individuals with a disability decreased while the population increased, as did the number of individuals receiving services from DVR.

Table 22: - DVR Participants by Rural/Non-Rural Locations <i>Source: DVR Management Information System; http://www.yourtickettowork.com/; and the Department of Labor, Research and Analysis Section</i>			
	DVR Participants	Ticket to Work (TTW)	Population Distribution
FFY2008			
Rural	8% (308)	16% (2,852)	26% (184,058)
Non-Rural	92% (3,602)	84% (15,465)	74% (495,662)
FFY2011			
Rural	7% (287)	10% (2,021)	27% (193,261)
Non-Rural	93% (3,951)	90% (18,608)	73% (525,402)

Table 22 uses the rural/non-rural definition to compare changes from FFY2008 to FFY2011.

The TTW data (see the Disability Types section for more information on the TTW program) gives additional information as to the location within the state of individuals with a disability. The data show a significant shift of Ticket holders from rural to non-rural. This shift may be a result of the availability of services in the non-rural areas.

Table 23: - DVR Participants by Rural/Non-Rural Locations <i>Source: DVR Management Information System</i>					
	FFY2011	FFY2010	FFY2009	FFY2008	FFY2007
Number Served					
Rural	7% (287)	7% (271)	8% (308)	10% (352)	10% (381)
Non-Rural	93% (3,951)	93% (3,830)	92% (3,602)	90% (3,339)	90% (3,296)
Closed Rehab					
Rural	7% (42)	5% (29)	8% (44)	9% (50)	8% (42)
Non-Rural	93% (592)	95% (501)	92% (480)	91% (518)	92% (486)
Closed Other					
Rural	7% (89)	5% (61)	9% (96)	10% (89)	10% (95)
Non-Rural	93% (1156)	95% (1120)	91% (970)	90% (835)	90% (905)

Table 23 shows a very gradual decline in the number of rural individuals receiving VR services over the past five years. Even so, this decline is less than the change in the percentage of Ticket holders in rural areas as seen in Table 22. This fact does not negate DVR's responsibility to continue to work to improve VR service delivery in rural areas.

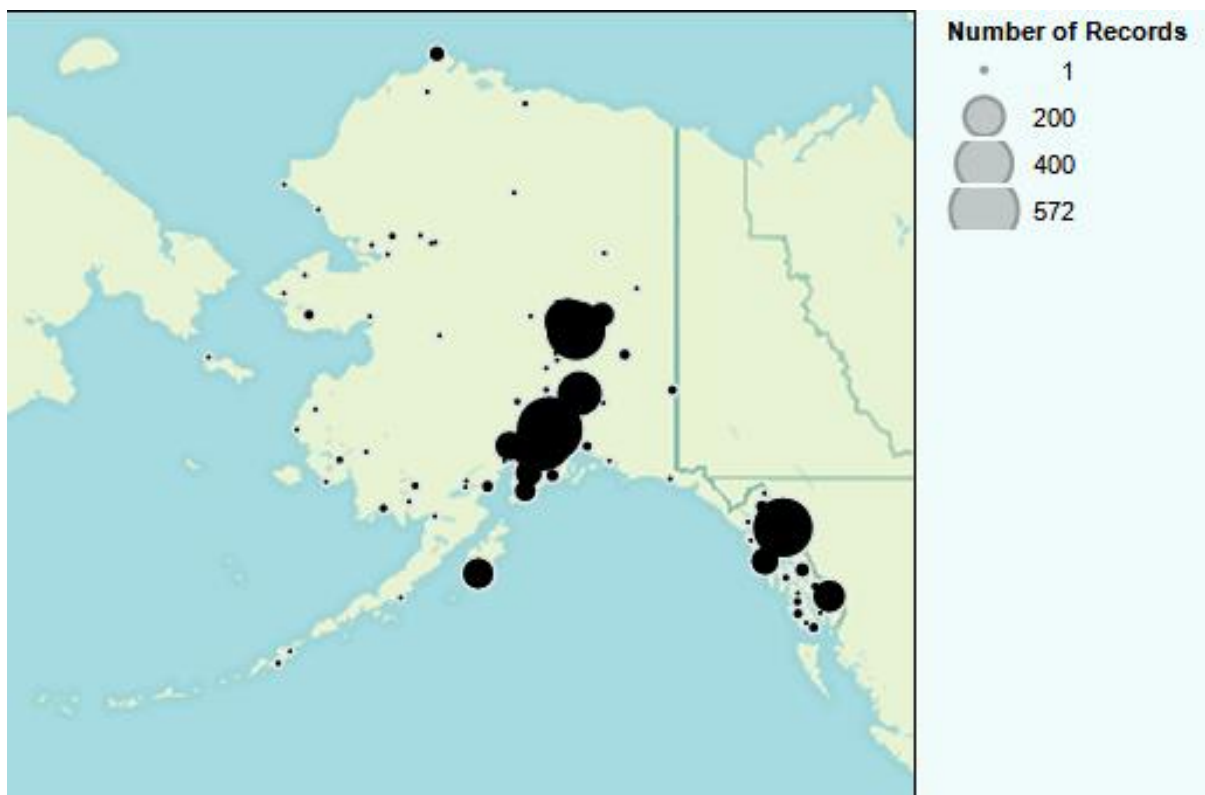


Exhibit 2: Distribution of all individuals served by DVR in FFY2011 by zip code
Source: DVR Management Information System

Exhibit 2 shows that DVR has a strong client base along the primary road corridors from South Central Alaska (Anchorage/Wasilla/Palmer) to the Interior (Fairbanks). Southeast Alaska is

represented with 3 offices in Juneau, Sitka and Ketchikan. It also shows the widespread, albeit smaller client base throughout the Western part of the state which is all categorized as rural.

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) Grant Program

In Alaska the 11 AIVRS grant programs are known as Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) programs. The map below shows the TVR and DVR offices. While DVR is a statewide program with the corresponding responsibilities, the TVR programs play an essential role in providing VR services that are culturally sensitive in areas where DVR counselors provide services on an itinerant basis or through collaboration with the TVR programs.

DVR and TVR Office Locations

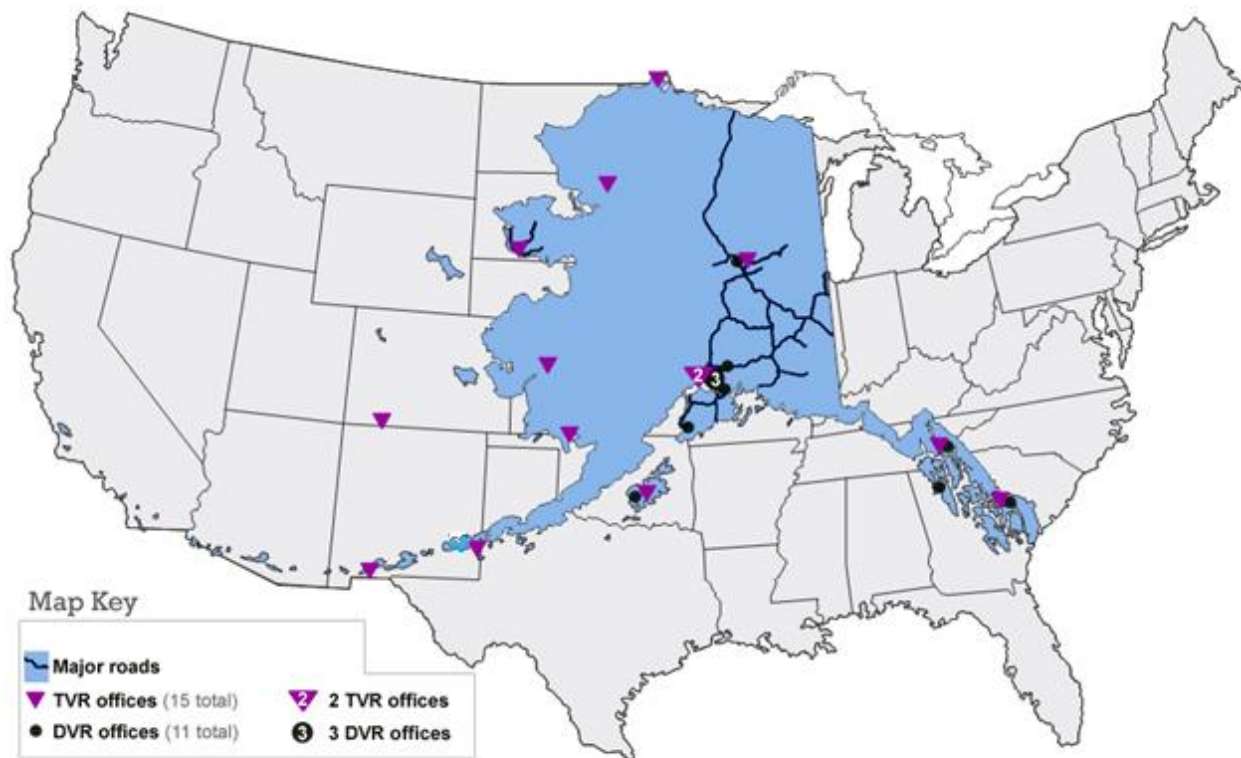


Exhibit 3: DVR and TVR Office Locations

Source: Alaska DVR and Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Exhibit 3 also helps to demonstrate the challenge of providing services to the rural areas of the state given its vastness. The problem is further exacerbated as Alaska has a very limited road system.

Table 24: Summary of 121 Grant Programs (Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation) Reporting Period: Federal Fiscal Year 2011 <i>Source: Annual Reporting Form for American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) Grant Program</i>	
Funding	\$4,971,777
Received services under an IPE	499
Total enrolled in a two-year post-secondary education program	29
Total enrolled in a four-year post-secondary education program	11
Exited employed	173
Exited self-employment	12
Received supported employment services	2
Employed with earnings	153
Weekly income (average)	\$551
Weekly earnings at entry to program (average)	\$396
Services Provided	# Programs Providing the Service
Assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs	10
Counseling and guidance	11
Referral and other services to secure needed services	11
Job-related services	11
Vocational and other training services	11
Book, tools and other training materials	11
Diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments	11
Maintenance	11
Transportation	10
Post-employment services	10
On-the-job or other related personal assistance services	10
Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, and initial stocks and supplies	9
Rehabilitation technology	9
Transition services for students with disabilities	9
Technical assistance for services to support self-employment.	9
Supported employment services	7
Services to the family of an individual with a disability	7
Services traditionally used by Indian tribes, including native healing	7
Interpreter and reader services	6
Rehabilitation teaching and orientation and mobility services	5
Other service(s) determined necessary for achievement of an employment outcome	4
Funding	4

Table 24 summarizes the work of the TVR programs. From the 2010 CSNA, the number receiving services under an IPE increased by 3 percent while the number exiting the TVR programs employed increased by 24 percent demonstrating the increasing success of the TVR programs.

3.9 – Employers

Alaska DVR is committed to working with individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment in jobs that fit the interests, strengths and abilities of the individual, and provide maximum wages and benefits. Developing relationships with employers, understanding what employers need from DVR and the types of employment that is available are critical aspects of assisting individuals find employment.

Table 25: Employment Information			
<i>Source: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (S1811); Geographic Area: Alaska</i>			
	Total Population	With a Disability	No Disability
Population Age 16 and Over	531,471	69,099	462,372
EMPLOYMENT STATUS			
Employed	65%	31%	70%
Not in Labor Force	29%	64%	24%
Employed Population Age 16 and Over	344,052	21,183	322,869
Employer			
Private	56%	48%	57%
Self-employed	3%	4%	3%
Local government	10%	9%	10%
State government	9%	13%	9%
Federal government	8%	9%	8%
Unpaid family workers	<1%	0%	<1%
OCCUPATION			
Management and professional	36%	34%	36%
Service	17%	19%	17%
Sales and office	24%	26%	24%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	12%	12%	12%
Production, transportation	11%	10%	11%
INDUSTRY			
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining	5%	6%	5%
Construction	8%	7%	8%
Manufacturing	53	2%	3%
Wholesale trade	2%	1%	2%
Retail trade	11%	18%	11%
Transportation and utilities	7%	7%	7%
Information	2%	<1%	2%
Finance and insurance, and real estate	4%	4%	4%
Professional, scientific, and management	8%	10%	8%
Educational, health care and social assistance	24%	21%	24%
Arts, entertainment and food services	9%	8%	9%
Other services	4%	3%	4%

Table 25: Employment Information			
<i>Source: 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (S1811); Geographic Area: Alaska</i>			
	Total Population	With a Disability	No Disability
Public administration	12%	13%	12%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
Population Age 25 and Over	441,530	64,248	377,282
Less than high school graduate	8%	17%	7%
High school graduate, GED, or alternative	28%	31%	28%
Some college or associate's degree	37%	38%	37%
Bachelor's degree or higher	27%	14%	29%
EARNINGS IN PAST 12 MONTHS			
Population Age 16 and over with earnings	399,838	27,268	372,570
Median Earnings	\$34,599	\$28,237	\$34,986

Table 25 provides statewide employment information for both individuals with and without a disability. All types of government (local, state and federal) account for 27 percent of the total employment in Alaska; these are stable jobs, with benefits. It is interesting to note that in 2011 a higher percentage of people with disabilities, as compared to those with no disability, were employed by state government. In FFY2011, 31 percent of DVR participants were employed by local, state or federal government.

DVR job placement specialists regularly make use of Alaska Statute AS 39.25.150(21), which provides for the provisional hiring of individuals with severe disabilities into state employment. Schedule A hiring authority, which is found in 5 CFR 213.3102(u), is also utilized and provides for non-competitive hiring authority by federal agencies to hire and/or promote individuals with disabilities.

Based upon data from the 2011 ACS, areas in which numbers for individuals with disabilities differ greatly from those with no disability are in employment, educational attainment and earnings. Significant statistics are:

- 31 percent of people with a disability are employed compared to 70 percent with no disability;
- 17 percent of people with a disability did not graduate from high school compared to 7 percent with no disability;
- 14 percent of people with a disability have a bachelor's degree compared to 29 percent with no disability;
- 7 percent of people with a disability reported earnings in the past 12 months compared to 93 percent with no disability; and
- The median earnings of a person without a disability were 1.2 times that of a person with a disability.

Table 26: Employers and Occupations for FFY2007 – 2011 <i>Source: DVR Management Information System</i>					
Employer Type	FFY 2011	FFY 2010	FFY 2009	FFY 2008	FFY 2007
Private	76% (479)	79% (421)	78% (413)	78% (442)	78% (411)
Local Government (includes school districts)	6% (41)	4% (21)	4% (23)	5% (31)	6% (32)
State of Alaska	5% (33)	4% (21)	3% (17)	5% (30)	4% (21)
University of Alaska System	1% (8)	1% (5)	1% (6)	1% (4)	1% (6)
Federal Government Agencies	2% (13)	2% (9)	1% (6)	1% (3)	1% (7)
Civilian Military Personnel	2% (10)	3% (15)	5% (24)	4% (21)	2% (10)
Self-employed (Includes the Business Enterprise Program)	6% (39)	6% (33)	6% (30)	6% (33)	8% (41)
Occupations					
Managerial	2% (15)	3% (16)	4% (19)	2% (12)	2% (11)
Forestry, Fishing and Related	1% (5)	1% (3)	2% (9)	--	2% (9)
Construction	21% (133)	18% (97)	17% (91)	19% (110)	18% (94)
Clerical	16% (114)	19% (103)	18% (92)	17% (99)	17% (88)
Professional & Paraprofessional	17% (106)	18% (100)	19% (98)	19% (107)	22% (116)
Sales	8% (51)	10% (52)	8% (40)	10% (57)	11% (58)
Service Occupations	33% (211)	29% (153)	32% (169)	31% (178)	28% (145)

Table 26 breaks down the employment settings and occupations for those closed rehabilitated in FFY2007 – FFY2011. In SFY2011, the 478 individuals exiting the VR program employed were hired by 362 different employers. Of these employers, 310 hired only one individual. The three private employers hiring the greatest number of VR participants were Assets Inc., Carr's/Safeway and Wal-Mart, while the majority of those in the public sector were hired by the State of Alaska.

The mean hourly wage for individuals who exited DVR employed was \$14.39, which is well above the national average of \$11.22 for combined VR agencies and one of the highest wages in the nation.

3.10 - Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP)

DVR continually assesses the need to develop and improve CRPs within the state. It is an on-going challenge that is compounded by the unique issues of population, distance separation of rural communities and other factors specific to Alaska. DVR approves CRPs to deliver vocational rehabilitation related services when there is no other agency available to license the service. The success of DVR participants is often due to the partnerships developed with CRPs.

Traditionally, most of the CRPs are small businesses. Currently, 50 percent of the approved CRPs are single person operations. The previous CSNA reported 69 CRPs were active in the state; currently there are 51 CRPs. This drop is partially due to an increase in the education requirements for CRPs by DVR. Based on the recommendations from DVR's Federal 107 monitoring review, DVR has also put into place additional quality assurance tools to ensure that CRP-purchased services are fiscally accountable and meet the needs of DVR participants.

In the past year, more than 30 CRP staff completed the DVR required training which lead to a national certificate in employment services. DVR also provides training to CRPs on the DVR process either through workshops or on the internet. Seventy-two percent of the CRPs answering the survey attended a DVR-sponsored training within the last year.

In August 2012, 22 of the 51 active CRPs responded to an e-mail survey. Thirty three percent of the CRPs answering the survey have been in business for 10 years or more, indicating a small but very stable group of CRPs. Fifty percent work with DVR consumers who live in rural areas, although 77 percent indicated they are willing to travel to rural Alaska.

CRP Survey Results:

- 64% of the CRPs were able to initiate services with the DVR consumer either at referral or within a week of the referral
- 79% were provided adequate information at referral to effectively initiate services
- 71% rated the frequency of communication with DVR staff as good or excellent
- 92% rated the quality of communication with DVR staff as good or excellent

Seventy-seven percent of the CRPs reported that the items that most impacted the CRPs ability to provide services are lack of financial resources, lack of resources for supported employment, and lack of referrals.

Table 27: FFY2011 – Services Provided by CRPs <i>Source: DVR Management Information System</i>				
Service	Unique Count of Individuals	% of All Individuals Served	% of CRP Expenditures	% Total Case Service Expenditures
Benefits Counseling	292	7%	9%	2%
Job Search Assistance	264	6%	25%	7%
Assistive Technology Services	106	3%	7%	2%
Preliminary Assessment	103	2%	21%	6%
Job Supports	98	2%	13%	3%
Situational Assessment	79	2%	8%	2%
On-the-Job Evaluation	36	< 1%	5%	1%
Business Development Services	32	< 1%	4%	1%
Discovery	30	< 1%	3%	< 1%
Vocational Evaluation	25	< 1%	2%	< 1%
Job Readiness Training	20	< 1%	1%	< 1%
Disability related training	14	< 1%	3%	< 1%

Table 28: DVR In-House Provided Services <i>Source: DVR Management Information System</i>	
Service	VR Participants
Testing (Interest, Aptitude, Achievement)	51% (788)
Job Search Assistance (Job Club, Workshop & Placement)	24% (363)
Vocational Exploration Workshop	15% (233)
Vocational Evaluation – Comprehensive	8% (131)
On-the-Job Evaluation	2% (25)
Job Supports	<1% (6)
Situational Assessment	<1% (1)

DVR has in-house evaluation and assessment services that complement services available from CRPs. When comparing Tables 27 and 28, job search assistance is the only service provided by both DVR and CRPs to a large number of individuals. This item encompasses a broad spectrum of services required by most VR participants and it is appropriate that this service be both purchased from CRPs and provided directly by DVR.

Table 29: DVR Counselor – Adequacy of CRPs <i>Source: 2012 DVR Staff Survey</i>		
Statement	Agree	Disagree
There are enough CRPs to meet the service needs of my consumers.	46% (16)	54% (19)
The range of services provided by available CRPs meet the needs of my consumers.	63% (22)	37% (13)
The quality of services provided by available CRPs meet the needs of my consumers.	51% (18)	49% (17)
CRP staff has adequate education and professional training.	46% (16)	54% (19)

Table 30: Why DVR Counselors use CRPs <i>Source: 2012 DVR Staff Survey</i>	
Immediacy of need	70% (23)
Services must be delivered outside of regular work hours	52% (17)
Consumer choice	36% (12)
Other	30% (10)
Employer networks	24% (8)
Transportation difficulties	24% (8)
CRP marketing strategies	21% (7)
Preference for a particular assessment tool	9% (4)

Tables 29 and 30 provide information from VR counselors about availability and adequacy of CRPs and their services.

3.11 – Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Partners/Job Centers

As a result of WIA, various federal job training and employment programs were brought together to create one comprehensive employment service system. Jobs seekers, including those with disabilities, can access these services throughout Alaska through One-Stop Job Centers. DVR is a mandated partner in this service delivery system and is the only agency that focuses on disabilities.

DVR counseling offices are co-located in six Job Centers throughout the state. DVR counselors, who travel on an itinerant basis to outlying areas, rely on Job Centers to identify potential referrals and to coordinate services.

Both DVR counselors and Job Center staff were surveyed. The surveys focused on the relationship between VR counselors and Job Center staff, use of Job Centers by individuals who experience a disability, and the training needs of Job Center staff.

DVR Staff Surveys Results

- 97% indicated there was a Job Center in the area they serve.
- 67% rated their experience with the Job Center as excellent or good.

Primary items rated as satisfactory:

- 92% were satisfied with the access to core services.
- 89% accessibility of the facilities.
- 75% work space available to DVR staff.

Primary items needing improvement:

- 83% funding for WIA services.
- 67% effective referral process.
- 58% knowledge of DVR.

Job Center Staff Survey Results

Fifty-eight percent responded that the number of people with disabilities in the Job Centers had increased as compared to previous years, while 42 percent reported that it remained the same over the past three years. No one responded that they had seen a decrease in Job Center use by individuals with a disability.

The top 3 resources Job Center staff used when accommodating a job seeker with a disability:

- 100% use the VR staff;
- 58% ask the job seeker or an employer; and
- 50% utilize internet services, Assistive Technologies of Alaska or a supervisor

Fifty-eight percent said there were gaps in services for individuals with disabilities in Job Centers. The primary gaps identified were:

- Lack of experience working with individuals with disabilities.
- Less one-on-one due to decrease in staff.
- More training on dealing with individuals who have a mental health issue.

Relationship with DVR staff:

- 84% rated it as excellent or good due to communication between staff fostered by co-enrolled program participants.
- 16% rated their relationship as fair or poor which was due to a lack of presence in the Job Centers.
- Equal numbers reported their knowledge of VR services and information regarding services available to individuals with a disability was either excellent or fair, indicating as many Job Center staff knew about DVR and did not know about DVR.

Table 31: Disability Types Served by WIA Partners and Perceived Competency				
<i>Source: 2010/2012 WIA Partner Surveys</i>				
	WIA Partner Survey 2012		WIA Partner Survey 2010	
Disability Type	Served	Training Needed	Served	Training Needed
Blind or Visual Impairment	75%	17%	68%	41%
Deafness or Hearing Loss	83%	17%	82%	36%
Orthopedic/Physical Conditions	83%	9%	70%	35%
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	42%	17%	17%	87%
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)	67%	8%	58%	58%
Brain Injury	83%	25%	66%	53%
Substance Use Disorder	83%	17%	83%	43%
Learning Disabilities	75%	33%	83%	39%
Developmental Disabilities	83%	25%	70%	38%
Behavioral Health Disorders	83%	33%	72%	49%

Table 31 compares data from the 2010 and 2012 WIA partner/Job Center staff surveys. An interesting change is the general perceived increase of individuals with a disability served in the Job Centers. The data suggest that Job Center staff is generally satisfied with the level of training received for most disabilities. However one-third of those surveyed would like more training related individuals with learning disabilities and behavioral health issues while 25 percent desire training to work successfully with individuals with brain injuries or those with developmental disabilities.

During the past year:

- Job Center staff has received training on assistive technology (AT) in order to provide information to customers who may require the use of this type of equipment.
- The Customer Support and Training staff received training on various programs available to individuals with a disability.
- Job Centers have placed an emphasis on coordinating with DVR when serving customers with mental health issues in an attempt to reduce recidivism.

In 2010 Alaska was awarded a Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Training Administration to improve education, training and employment opportunities and outcomes of youth and adults who are unemployed and/or receiving SSI/SSDI benefits.

Components of this grant include:

- Training One-Stop staff to achieve proficiency as a Disability Resource Coordinator.
- Reviewing the accessibility of both the physical site and programs of the Alaska One-Stops.
- Equipping Alaska's One-Stops with a variety of assistive technologies.
- Providing job seekers receiving SSI/SSDI benefits with employment services to assist them in finding employment that meets their individual conditions and interests through the Employment Security Division (ESD) functioning as an Employment Network.
- Training One-Stop staff and local disability service providers and partners in the Discovery process and other aspects of Customized Employment and Self Employment.

Administration

VR program regulations at [34 CFR 361.23](#) and Section 121(c) of WIA, along with WIA implementing regulations at [20 CFR 662.300](#), require that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) governing operations of the One-Stop service delivery system in a local area be developed and executed between the One-Stop service delivery system partners.

Alaska has established the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) as required under Section 111(b) of WIA. The AWIB is charged with overseeing the statewide workforce investment system. Because the AWIB sets policies and makes decisions affecting cost-sharing among all partners in the One-Stop service delivery system, it is important to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) how DVR is represented on the AWIB and what impact the AWIB has on the state VR program.

4.0 – Identified Needs and Recommendations

This 2013 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment informs DVR's strategic and state plans; meets the Federal regulatory requirements of 34 CFR §361.29; and provides vital information on the State VR program which is used by both public and private disability advocacy agencies.

1. What are the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment (SE) services?

Summary/Discussion of Data Findings

DVR was able to provide the full range of VR services to all eligible individuals including those experiencing the most significant disabilities as DVR was not on an order of selection at any time during the CSNA study timeframe.

Ninety-four percent of the FFY2011 DVR participants were identified as having either a most significant disability (MSD) or a significant disability (SD). Also, 91 percent (or 570) of those individuals exiting the VR program were MSD or SD and were employed earning minimum wage or greater. This far exceeds the federal standard of 62.4 percent.

Individuals with cognitive and behavioral health disabilities were the most frequent disability groups identified as MSD at 55 percent and 36 percent respectively. Behavioral health and cognitive related disabilities were also the most frequently identified disabilities for youth.

Thirty-two percent of the individuals who have been sent a Ticket to Work certificate by Social Security have a behavioral health disability and 10 percent have a developmental disability.

At the end of June 2011, 420 individuals between the ages 18-64 were listed on the I/DD registry. Most of these individuals would require long-term support services in order to maintain employment. Alaska DVR has adequate SE funds to meet the needs of all individuals who currently qualify for SE services. The demand for SE services could increase as more individuals are moved off the I/DD register.

DVR participants identified the primary barriers to employment as a loss of benefits (Social Security and Medicaid), physical limitations and lack of training, work experience or education (Table 7). While the respondents to the survey were not broken down into groups by severity of disability, the results can be generally applied across all participants. DVR staff and CRPs (Table 8) identified the three primary barriers to employment as housing, behavioral health services and transportation.

DVR is a combined agency with an obligation to provide VR services to all Alaskans with a disability including those who experience blindness or a visual impairment. The vast majority of DVR participants who experience blindness are most significantly disabled. The data suggests DVR is providing VR services to this population adequately.

Needs/Concerns

- Ensure an adequate number of CRPs and/or DVR staff who are trained to provide benefit analysis (BA) in order for SSA beneficiaries to understand the impact of work on their benefits.
- Lack of long term supported employment services.
- Lack of behavioral health services in communities.
- Lack of adequate and affordable transportation service options.
- Lack of vocational programs/services in community behavioral health centers.
- Ensure on-going support for services to individuals who experience blindness or a visual impairment.

Recommendations/Strategies

- Partner with other service providers to maximize resources and coordinate services for individuals who are in need of long-term supported employment services.
- Support efforts to establish vocational services from community behavioral health providers.
- Represent the needs of individuals with disabilities to increase/improve housing and transportation services, such as serving on the statewide Community and Public Transportation Advisory Board.
- Ensure benefits analysis is available.
- Continue to support the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired and other efforts within DVR to ensure the obligation as a combined agency is met.
- Partner with the Division of Senior and Disability Services to improve the employment opportunities for youth with an intellectual disability and individuals with a traumatic brain injury.

2. What are the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities or who are in unserved or underserved populations?

The CSNA analyzed data pertaining to individuals with a minority background as well as data by disability type, by age with an emphasis on transition-age youth, by geographic areas (rural and non-rural), and by gender to determine if any group is unserved or underserved. In addition, a comparison of individuals exiting the program both employed and not employed after receiving services under an individualized plan for employment (IPE) were compared to determine any bias in the delivery of services.

Summary/Discussion of Data Findings

Individuals with a Minority Background

DVR is not underserving individuals from a minority background. DVR has consistently met the Federal Performance Indicator 2.1 that measures equal access to VR services.

The U.S. Census Bureau 2011 American Community Survey estimates one-third of Alaskans who self-identified as having a disability are from a minority background. In FFY2011, approximately one-third of DVR's applicants and those closed from an IPE self-identified as being from a minority background.

The population and DVR numbers by racial/ethnic group are very small for many of the groups, making broad generalizations about service levels inappropriate. Even so, the data suggests that outreach is appropriate.

Rural

Rural Alaska was identified as an underserved area of the state in the previous CSNA. Rural Alaska encompasses an area larger than many states with much of it inaccessible via roads. DVR defines rural as a community that is not connected by road to a community with a DVR office or is at least 50 miles outside of a community with a DVR office. Based on this definition and the data analyzed, rural Alaska was once again identified as an underserved area. Rural Alaska presents challenges for all state agencies to serve.

DVR has counseling offices in the more densely populated areas of the state while providing VR services to the remote/rural areas on an itinerant basis. The 11 TVR programs have offices in most of the itinerant locations.

DVR's data shows a 7 percent decline in the number of the above defined rural DVR participants from those reported in the 2010 CSNA. For the same period, the Social Security Administration reports a 29 percent decline in Ticket to Work (TTW) certificates issued to rural Alaskans. TTW data is a strong indicator of where Alaskans who experience a disability are living and there appears to be a movement of TTW participants from rural to non-rural communities. This coincides with the data reported by R&A, which suggests a migration to the more urban areas of the state due to more employment opportunities and the availability of more services. DVR also acknowledges that in general the needs of Alaska Natives are closely aligned with the needs of rural residents.

Transition-Age Youth

Youth transitioning from high school is a priority population as identified in the Rehabilitation Act, Section 7(37).

DVR has increased the actual number of youth served over a five year period by 21 percent while youth as a percentage of the entire number of DVR participants has remained constant at about 20 percent. The national average of youth served is 35 percent for combined VR agencies. DVR's rehab rate for youth is the second highest in the nation for combined agencies. Therefore, while the DVR percentage of transition-age youth served is below the national average, DVR's success rate with transition-age youth is very high.

Data is sparse for students with 504 plans. These students quite often have significant health issues, yet do not have IEPs and therefore do not always come in contact with special education staff that is more familiar with the DVR and its services.

Needs/Concerns

- Asian Alaskans appear to be slightly underserved.
- Rural Alaskans are underserved with many Alaskan Natives living in rural Alaska.
- Transition-age youth continue to be a priority population for DVR.

Recommendations/Strategies

- Minority Background
 - Outreach to the Asian population through the Anchorage Asian Alaskan Cultural center.
- Transition-Age Youth
 - Outreach to alternative schools and youth correctional facilities such as the McLaughlin Youth Center in Anchorage.
 - Expand the DVR transition work group to include Section 504 students.
 - Expand the DVR transition work group to include youth from the Juvenile Justice System.
 - Include guidance counselors and school nursing staff in DVR outreach activities.
 - Annually identify 504 coordinators and special education staff for each school.
 - Explore developing a transition planning guide for 504 students.
 - Maintain DVR presence at Special Education conferences and continue outreach to special education teachers.
 - Develop a strategic plan for transition services.
 - Research RSA's emerging practices for youth services.
- Rural Alaska
 - Continue DVR rural work group to identify realistic goals for rural services, to develop strategies for meeting these goals, and to convey this information to VR field staff.
 - Ensure funds are available for VR counselors to travel to rural areas.
 - Maintain strong relationships with TVR partners.
 - Train Job Center staff in rural areas on disability related issues.
 - Work with partners to ensure rural Job Centers have AT resources reasonable to the area.

3. What are the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with disabilities who are served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system?

Under WIA legislation, DVR is a partner in the statewide job training and employment service delivery system. DVR is the only agency in the system whose primary focus is individuals with a disability. Job seekers including those with a disability can access this system through the Job Centers.

Summary/Discussion of Data Findings

Direct Service Delivery

DVR counseling offices are currently co-located in six One-Stop Job Centers. DVR counselors rely on rural Job Center staff when traveling to the outlying areas to identify potential referrals, and coordinate service. DVR surveys indicate that employment staff and VR counselors are working together collaboratively and communicating effectively in the non-rural Job Centers or

where co-location occurs. The basis for positive relationships among Job Center and DVR staff is service to co-enrolled individuals.

Individuals with a variety of disabilities continue to access core services at the Job Centers such as job search, resume writing, internet access and workshops. Yet, as many Job Center staff know about DVR and our available services as those who do not.

Administration

VR program regulations at [34 CFR 361.23](#) and Section 121(c) of WIA, along with WIA implementing regulations at [20 CFR 662.300](#), require that a MOU governing operations of the One-Stop service delivery system in a local area be developed and executed between the One-Stop service delivery system partners.

Alaska has established the AWIB as required under Section 111(b) of WIA that is charged with overseeing the statewide workforce investment system. Because the AWIB sets policies and makes decisions affecting cost-sharing among all partners in the One-Stop service delivery system, it is important to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) how DVR is represented on the AWIB and what impact the Board has on the state VR program.

Needs/Concerns

Direct Service Delivery

- Job Center staff require on-going training on aspects of disabilities including AT and DVR's programs and the services we provide.

Administration

- Partner agencies in Job Centers must have MOUs in place in accordance with federal statutes.
- The director of DVR must be represented on the AWIB in accordance with federal statutes.

Recommendations

Direct Service Delivery

- Ensure Job Center staff are regularly trained or made aware of DVR and its services. This is especially true of Job Centers that are served by DVR on an itinerant basis.
- DVR leadership team and managers continue to identify functional Job Center issues that require on-going work at all levels of the division including the Job Center integration committee and the local Job Center management teams.
- Work with Job Centers to develop a means to provide information about DVR to individuals who self-identify as having a disability and who receive job training services through a Job Center.
- Develop a referral process to the Job Center employment networks.
- Train DVR staff to use Job Center services.

Administration

- DVR administration works with partner agencies to develop required MOUs for local Job Centers.
- DVR Director works with the AWIB Executive Director to ensure DVR has appropriate representation on the AWIB in alignment with federal regulation 20 CFR § 661.200(i)(3).

4. What is the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) within the state?

Summary/Discussion of Data Findings

DVR continually assess the need to develop and improve CRPs within the state. It is an on-going challenge. DVR approves CRPs to deliver vocational rehabilitation related services when there is no other agency available to license the service. Traditionally most of the CRPs are small businesses. DVR relies on CRPs to provide VR services to assist in the success of DVR program participants.

Needs/Concerns

- More CRPs are needed statewide, particularly in rural Alaska.
- CRPs require on-going training including services to individuals with multiple disabilities or multiple impediments to employment.

Recommendations/Strategies

- Market CRP as a career to current Direct Service Professionals through presentations at Full Lives Conferences and collaboration with the Alaska Alliance for Direct Service Careers.
- Maximize training opportunities for current CRPs such as expanding internet training.
- Provide staff training on CRP identified needs.
- Work with rural VR counselors to identify potential rural CRPs and continue to look for opportunities to recruit CRPs such teachers in rural areas.
- Continue to evaluate CRPs for quality services and areas to improve services to DVR participants.
- DVR staff facilitate discussion with CRPs on promising practices, issues, etc.

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