State of Oregon

Department of Human Services – Vocational Rehabilitation

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Report

2023-2024

Conducted by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Oregon Department of Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation (ODHS VR), and the Interwork Institute at San Diego District University jointly assessed the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing in Oregon. A triennial needs assessment is required by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and is intended to help inform the Combined State Plan developed by the core partners in Oregon's Workforce Development System. The data was gathered, analyzed, and grouped into the sections below. A summary of key findings is included in the executive summary. The full results of the CSNA are found in the body of the report.

Note: *The summary of findings here and throughout the report primarily identifies the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in Oregon. When a need is identified, it is not intended to imply that it is not being met by ODHS VR or other service providers unless explicitly stated*.

Section I: Overall performance of ODHS VR

In exploring the overall performance of ODHS VR regarding the needs of individuals with disabilities to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment (CIE), several themes emerged. There are needs related to:

- Improving the overall communication with clients regarding the ongoing services and the necessary steps needed by the client to continue moving toward employment is not always clear. Clients reported needing more frequent and regular communication in a way that meets their needs (i.e., text, email, phone, or meetings).
- Using paper documentation in instances where electronic documentation would streamline services was cited as a barrier to progress for some clients, specifically causing delays in access to services.
- Effectively recruiting and retaining VR staff. Counselor changes, canceled appointments, and caseload sizes resulting from insufficient staffing levels within ODHS VR have impacted the ability to meet client needs.
- Accessing targeted professional development. The presence of the internal training unit was acknowledged as a strength of ODHS VR.
- Using a quality assurance review of the IPEs. Several individuals shared that their IPEs were developed for them and contained information that had yet to be discussed or mutually agreed upon or goals not in alignment with their skills and abilities.
- Heightening a focus on career planning versus getting a job.
- Expanding access for clients to receive services virtually while maintaining for others the ability to meet counselors in person for additional rapport building. Concerns were raised about an office-centric service delivery model compared to one focused on community outreach and engagement in the spaces and places where individuals with disabilities reside.
- Broadening geographic access to VR intake and orientation services, particularly in rural areas.
- Providing clear and concise information on the process for eligibility, service delivery options, timelines, and expectations for all parties (i.e., ODHS VR, CRPs, clients, and other organizations). Individuals cited needing to familiarize themselves with all the processes and elements involved.
- Training for new VR counselors to better understand the entire job scope to reduce confusion and increase client resources. There is a need for the orientation of new VR staff to be

strengthened to include information relevant to the breadth and depth of services available, the processes involved with the services, and overall disability awareness.

- Accessing assistive technology to support individuals' successful transition into employment. In particular, the emphasis on technological tools to support equitable access to employment settings was highlighted.
- Providing access to medical/clinical supports to assist in the initial diagnosis and confirmation of functional limitations to gain eligibility for services.
- Accessing financial support for ongoing mental health support for many individuals to deal with the stressors of sustaining employment.
- Providing disability-specific accommodations like glasses and hearing aids.
- Offering access to clothing (i.e., interview attire, work scrubs, or uniforms).
- Gaining a clear understanding of navigating the process for grievances regarding service delivery and a strong connection with disability rights to mediate these concerns when they arise effectively

Recommendations for ODHS VR related to overall performance include:

1. ODHS VR should continue to explore options to locate counselors in satellite or co-located offices to reach participant needs in rural areas
2. ODHS VR should continue to explore options to locate CRPs in satellite or co-located offices with VR to reach participant needs in rural areas.
3. ODHS VR is encouraged to adopt a hybrid approach for meeting clients where feasible.
4. ODHS VR is encouraged to create a training and staff development advisory group to inform the development and subsequent revisions of the New Employee Orientation process to ensure that it is comprehensive and designed to build initial capacity.
5. ODHS VR is encouraged to review and revise the communication tools and processes to ensure clients (families) receive timely feedback about service timeframes and their roles/responsibilities.
6. ODHS VR is encouraged to review the process for distribution and review of the grievance procedure documents and process to ensure that the content is user-friendly and provided to clients at numerous points in the VR process.
7. ODHS VR is recommended to ensure the continued and broadened provision of supports like clothing, transportation, mental health services, and assistive technology.
8. ODHS VR is encouraged to develop hands-on professional development training for field staff to understand the broad and complex needs of the population of Oregon further.
9. ODHS VR needs to monitor the timeliness of eligibility determinations and identify why individuals continue to exceed the maximum timeframe for determinations of 60 days. It would be helpful for the agency to examine the cases exceeding 60 days and determine the issues that delayed the decisions. Training can be developed to address these issues.

Section II: The needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment

In discussions related to the specific needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, there were various emerging themes. There are needs related to:

- Understanding the eligibility and transition processes for individuals with I/DD being dually served by Oregon DHS – I/DD agency and VR are concerns. Specifically, the gaps and wait times during referral to and eligibility determination by ODHS VR are challenging and increase frustration when navigating between systems.

- Overcoming the high cost of living in the state. The prices make it difficult for individuals with the most significant disabilities to pursue part-time employment. Factors further introducing economic challenges to individuals with MSD are the fear of losing SSA benefits, Medicaid, and other public benefits (i.e., food assistance and housing).
- Accessing reliable, affordable, and physically accessible transportation for ODHS VR clients, especially in rural areas. There is a need to explore flexible options further to create access to modes of transportation (i.e., mileage reimbursement, bike purchase, etc.)
- Accessing to affordable housing. Homelessness has become an increased need since the pandemic. While these were issues in the past, there is a heightened concern about the impact of homelessness on people with significant disabilities.
- Partnering more with local centers for independent living (CILs) to broaden outreach and support to people with significant disabilities.
- Increasing the presence of Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) options for delivering supported employment (SE) in some communities. There is a need to expand the number of SE providers for ODHS VR clients living in areas with a low density of providers.
- Serving more individuals in category 3. CRPs reported categories 1 & 2 as the primary individuals being referred for services, which indicates some providers are not serving individuals with the most significant disabilities (category 3) or individuals with MSD are not being served in those communities.
- Identifying pockets of success in providing supported employment and the narrative of success needed to be more consistently heard in rural areas.

Recommendations for ODHS VR related to the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including supported employment, include:

1. ODHS VR is encouraged to continue to explore ways to increase and improve transportation options for individuals with disabilities in Oregon. ODHS VR can explore the creation of transportation task forces in rural counties/communities or use transportation network companies to identify options available and solutions for developing additional transportation resources.
2. ODHS VR may consider identifying opportunities for key state-level and local partners to convene to strategize the expansion of individualized placement (IPS) and support and fidelity-based customized employment (CE) programs within the state.
3. VR is encouraged to investigate the National Supported Employment Community of Practice facilitated by the Center for Innovative Training in VR at George Washington University. Representatives from VR systems nationwide learn together and benefit from shared problem-solving opportunities.
4. ODHS VR may consider providing SE training for all staff and CRPs to increase the use of this model where appropriate. This training should include the essential elements noted by nationally recognized groups like the Association for Persons Supporting Employment First (APSE) and the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE).
5. ODHS VR may consider exploring new SE providers in rural areas through pilots on unique reimbursement models to build a network of qualified ODHS VR providers for these services.
6. ODHS VR can explore options to ensure that all staff have access to and knowledge of affordable housing resources for their clients, including the 211 searchable database, affordable housing lists published by OHCS, supportive housing under section 811 for people with disabilities, and community action agencies. ODHS VR should collaborate with other state agencies to develop a cross-agency task force to formulate targeted plans to address these gaps.

Section III: The needs of individuals with disabilities from different racial and ethnic groups, including the needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

Recurring themes around unserved and underserved populations were varied. There are needs related to:

- Understanding across regions the specific of the diverse disability types and how services may look different based on a person-centered process.
- Understanding and respecting cultural variances, including family norms, racial/ethnic values and considerations, socioeconomic factors, and rural, suburban, and urban factors. These practices needed to be more consistently present across state regions.
- Accessing services and available employment opportunities to individuals living in rural (i.e., eastern Oregon and coastal regions) compared to those living in the I5 corridor of Oregon.
- Exploring further the overall vocational needs of individuals from multiple marginalized minority groups. While not statistically vastly different from the majority population, there are potential service delivery gaps based on population data discrepancies. However, a statistical analysis comparing ACS population statistics to VR enrollment demonstrates ODHS VR is serving a higher proportion of Native/American Indian, Black/African American, and Pacific Islander and lower proportions of White, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino populations.
- Broadening the VR staff's proficiency in serving specific disability population groups and adequately serving or supporting referrals to appropriate resources. This was mentioned concerning new VR staff who may not have graduate-level expertise or industry experience.
- Increasing support to the population of individuals with disabilities experiencing homelessness. As noted above in section II, there is also a concern regarding follow-up on or follow-through with this population due to unstable addresses.
- Understanding the needs of the population of aging workers or aging individuals with acquired disabilities (mobility, vision, hearing loss) was mentioned by several participants. Participants cited that this appears to be an increasing need in their communities, but the resources must be more focused on employment-related support. Participants felt that this might be an emerging or underserved population for VR.
- Accessing transportation options (as noted in the general VR performance section), in rural and suburban communities has created a need for those from unserved and underserved communities.
- Navigating away from using the word "rehabilitation." Despite its connection to federal legislation (i.e., the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA), this was offered as a barrier by some who wanted to access the services.

Recommendations for ODHS VR related to the needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved include:

1. ODHS VR is encouraged to enhance the environment and culture of inclusion in the offices across the state.
2. ODHS VR is encouraged to review the feasibility of creating disability or process-specific VR counselors to focus on outreach and increased services for the unserved and underserved population groups identified in the needs assessment process.
3. ODHS VR may want to collaborate with state-level and local services and resources for aging Oregonians and potentially develop a working group to address this unique population.
4. ODHS VR may want to expand staff training in cultural brokering and disabilities and culture to identify gaps and design solutions to develop culturally inclusive and proficient practices within VR based on state and region-specific needs.

5. ODHS VR may consider the points under recommendation 2.5 related to individuals residing in rural areas as an unserved population and develop a specific working group, including rural residents, rural business leaders, tribal VR representatives, and CRPs, to establish an improvement plan.
6. ODHS VR may consider establishing new partnerships and building on current partnerships with community organizations not typically engaged with VR but embedded in communities (i.e., cultural centers, places of worship, foster care agencies, homeless shelters, food banks, and community centers). These efforts could increase awareness of their services and build trust within these underserved communities.
7. ODHS VR is encouraged to continue to recruit and hire additional bilingual staff to increase their ability to communicate with minority populations and to be representative of the demographics of the catchment area and clientele served
8. ODHS VR is encouraged to provide training on trauma-informed practices for all staff. Motivational interviewing, intersectionality, and cultural responsiveness, and how these elements impact individuals with disabilities.
9. ODHS VR may consider a name change to be more welcoming to a broader population of individuals with disabilities.

Section IV: The needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition

Recurring themes in this area were also diverse. Specifically, there are needs related to:
- Implementing a smooth transition between the "youth/student" and the "adult VR" services. This was cited as an area of concern for youth and young adults with disabilities, as well as the CRP network attempting to support individuals in this transition.
- Understanding by some families as to what VR is and how and when to access services. Families should be encouraged and mentored to participate in VR information meetings earlier in the transition process.
- Transforming the Youth Transition Program (YTP) has created confusion in some communities, and delays in accessing needed support were mentioned as a growing concern. In some instances, there is a reluctance to enroll in YTP.
- Underutilizing Pre-Employment Transition Services is apparent. A complete understanding of how students can access these services is only sometimes applied across the state.
- Using the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) effectively. It was noted that many students need enhanced coaching and other support to make the SYEP experience successful. In addition, a need was highlighted to ensure the dissemination and exchange of information between schools and the SYEP programs to understand students' progress and alignment of IEP/transition goals.
- Expanding career pathways. While the Individualized Career Advancement Program (ICAP) and STEP programs were highlighted as strengths in the transition process, there is a need to connect youth to STEM, Career Technical Education/Perkins V programs, and other credentialing programs to offer options for career pathways.
- Increasing partnership between VR and school programs. It was suggested to increase invitations to Individualized Education Program (IEP) or pre-IEP/general transition meetings for planning purposes.
- Conducting more consistent outreach to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities(I/DD) to better understand what "door" they need to access for transition services and when they need to open that door. There is a need for I/DD Care Coordinators and other system Case Workers to have a broader working knowledge of VR's services, supports, and processes.

- Recognizing the rehabilitation needs of students and youth is consistent with adults served by ODHS VR. Transportation, lack of work experience, lack of training, the need to develop soft skills, and assistive technology were commonly cited needs for youth and students with disabilities.
- Ensuring all five required pre-employment transition services are available to support the needs of students with disabilities in Oregon. There is a need to provide these fully available services outside school hours.

Recommendations for ODHS VR related to this section include:

1. ODHS VR is encouraged to engage in significant outreach to youth and students with disabilities throughout the State to effectively mitigate the challenges cited related to accessing YTP, SYEP, and the transition to "adult VR" services.
2. ODHS VR would benefit from re-establishing and nurturing relationships with the local school districts across the State.
3. ODHS VR is encouraged to explore the opportunity to contract with additional providers to provide pre-employment transition services.
4. ODHS VR is encouraged to create marketing tools and make resources accessible and easy to navigate for families.
5. ODHS VR is encouraged to formulate an outreach plan to transition staff and families to ensure all students with disabilities have access to information about VR services.
6. ODHS VR is encouraged to identify "mentor families" who could provide peer support to new families.
7. In partnership with the Department of Education, ODHS VR is encouraged to establish Model Transition Program sites where transition and Pre-ETS thrive. These MTPs could serve as a demonstration or mentor school for lower-performing schools. Schools in rural locations should receive technical assistance to demonstrate the same practices adapted to their setting.
8. ODHS VR is encouraged to promote postsecondary education training for youth in transition. There is room for growth in the number of individuals supported by the agency in higher education programs, and youth in transition are an important focus in this area. The existence of the Individual Career Advancement Program (ICAP) funded by RSA can be further leveraged to advance this work and expand beyond the state's community college system.
9. ODHS VR is encouraged to continue to provide self-advocacy skills instruction for students with disabilities. This area of strength for the agency can be augmented by developing and implementing a peer mentoring program across the State. One possibility is an online peer mentoring program available through Policy Works at https://disabilitypolicyworks.org/peer-mentoringworks-2/. A vital component of this mentoring program is the development of self-advocacy skills in youth and students with disabilities.

Section V: The needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System

Recurring themes in this area emerged and specifically highlighted the needs related to:
- Increasing the understanding of clients and partners about the services available at Oregon WorkSource. Some reported they were told they could not access services at ODHS VR and WorkSource.
- Building upon instances where current VR clients report that Oregon WorkSource has provided excellent services and referrals and exploring spaces where the services were lacking from Oregon WorkSource. Some cited the services had no value to them as job seekers with a disability.

- Addressing the concern that Oregon WorkSource may not have the knowledge base to work with job seekers with disabilities. Many clients reported feeling "passed off" by ODHS VR.
- Strengthening partnerships between ODHS VR and WorkSource staff to advance cross-systems service delivery and increase equitable access to workforce services in response to section 811.
- Improving programmatic accessibility in the Oregon WorkSource. Advancement in access to assistive technology and tools to service a broad range of individuals will eliminate frustration for individuals. The project team could not identify any cases of braided funding between ODHS VR and Oregon WorkSource.

Recommendations for ODHS VR related to this section include:

1. ODHS VR is encouraged to actively reach out to the Oregon WorkSource across the state and identify opportunities for training center staff to work effectively with individuals with disabilities.
2. ODHS VR is encouraged to develop a plan for creating and facilitating Disability Awareness training for Oregon WorkSource staff. ODHS VR and WorkSource should explore cross-training opportunities where staff in both systems can learn from each other. Mutually attended events will contribute to networking, rapport-building, and resource sharing.
3. ODHS VR is encouraged to explore co-located or designated staff at each WorkSource office (and vice-versa) whenever possible.
4. ODHS VR should seek to broaden the use of effective collaborative practices highlighted by the Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth and other national centers. An essential resource on advancing partnerships with WIOA Title I programs includes Unlocking the Potential of Title I.
5. ODHS VR is encouraged to co-create a resource guide (and training) for WS and VR to collaboratively provide to businesses about hiring, training, accommodating, and retaining employees with disabilities.
6. In partnership with the Oregon WorkSource, ODHS VR should seek to implement Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) for clients served by the more extensive Workforce Development system. This team approach has proven to assist with leveraging resources and increasing positive outcomes through shared planning and service delivery. More information can be found   at https://disability.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/Integrated_Resource_Team_Information_and_Resources.

Section IV: The need to establish, develop, or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) in Oregon

Recurring themes emerged related to CRPs, and the specific needs related to:
- Exploring rate structures. The high cost of living makes it difficult to pay and retain staff based on rates offered by ODHS VR. Providers can't pay competitive wages to maintain a qualified workforce.
- Addressing the quality and inconsistency of CRP services. The apparent lack of urgency related to the "need" for a job was consistently raised by clients across the state.
- Enhancing the initial training and ongoing professional development of CRP staff to include topics on effectively serving people from diverse backgrounds, career planning, outreach strategies, and implementing best- and promising practices (i.e., customized employment, individualized placement, and support, supported employment, integrated resource teams, etc.)
- Increasing the development of fidelity-based supported and customized employment providers in rural and less densely populated areas where providers are rich, but the quality is diminishing.

- Broadening an understanding of creating and carrying out Person-Centered Plans and Individualized Services by CRPs and VR staff.

Recommendations for ODHS VR related to the development and improvement of CRPs include:

1. ODHS VR is encouraged to partner with Oregon APSE and other CRP Groups to assess gaps and needs in the field and co-develop a strategic plan for attracting professionals to the state's CRP and VR positions.
2. ODHS VR is encouraged to engage in cross-training opportunities with CRPs using Person-Centered models, motivational interviewing, trauma-informed practices, and culturally responsive approaches.
3. ODHS VR may consider expanding the J-DOT training and developing a training series in alignment with APSE, ACRE, or other national standards related to providing high-quality employment services.
4. ODHS VR is encouraged to develop SE and CE providers for their clients who need these services in areas with limited access to these services or a selection of CRPs.

Section VII: The needs of businesses in Oregon

This category captures the needs of businesses in Oregon as it relates to recruiting, hiring, retaining, and accommodating individuals with disabilities. It includes an analysis of how ODHS VR serves businesses and tries to meet their needs in each area. Recurring themes in this area include the following:

- Addressing the stigma associated with job seekers with disabilities and the bias that businesses have shown in hiring practices.
- Acknowledging the positive development of the Business Outreach team while increasing business relationships at the corporate level. There is a need for this team to assess employer training needs in topics relevant to hiring, training, accommodating, and retaining employees with disabilities.
- Expanding businesses' knowledge of the ADA and the processes for accommodating employees with disabilities. Additionally, there is a need for businesses to have technical assistance with identifying and supporting assistive technology in the workplace.

Recommendations for ODHS VR related to this section include:

1. Educating employers will help increase awareness of ODHS VR in the business community. Partnerships with the Titles I and III program and their business services
2. ODHS VR should explore conducting employer awareness and sensitivity training to help businesses understand the abilities and capabilities of individuals with blindness and visual impairments throughout the State. This will also help increase awareness of ODHS VR and the services they offer to employers.
3. ODHS VR is encouraged to partner with assistive technology resources within the state to identify and explore business-specific training/resources available regarding accommodations in the workplace.
4. ODHS VR is encouraged to identify an assistive technology or ADA liaison staff member in each office to provide resources and troubleshoot on worksites.
5. ODHS VR should expand its work with the regional ADA center and national centers like EARN to provide more significant resources to businesses in the state.
6. ODHS VR is encouraged to explore other VR systems, implementing Business Outreach teams to get technical assistance, and mentoring in the best practices and strategies.

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IMPETUS FOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) contains the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. It requires all state vocational rehabilitation agencies (SVRA) to assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities within their State to ensure the planning and establishment of goals and priorities for programs and services to address the needs. According to Section 102 of WIOA and Section 412 of the Rehabilitation Act, each participating State shall submit a Unified or Combined State Plan every four years, with a biannual modification as needed. In addition, Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 361.29 indicates the State Plan must include the results of a jointly conducted comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) every three years describing the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State.

In response to these mandates and to ensure adequate efforts are made to serve the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities in Oregon, the ODHS VR executed a contract with the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University to jointly develop and implement a CSNA of the vocational rehabilitation needs of Oregon's residents with disabilities.

PURPOSE OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND UTILIZATION OF RESULTS

The CSNA aims to identify and describe the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within Oregon. In particular, the CSNA seeks to provide information on the following:

- The overall performance of ODHS VR relates to meeting the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the State.
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the need for supported employment services.
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities and those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.
- The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition, including their need for pre-employment transition services.
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities are served through other components of the statewide workforce development system.
- The need to establish, develop, and/or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and
- The needs of businesses in recruiting, hiring, accommodating, and retaining individuals with disabilities.

The data from the needs assessment process is expected to provide ODHS VR information to inform the creation of the VR portion of the Unified State Plan and support planning for future program development, outreach, and resource allocation. This CSNA covers quantitative data for Program Years (PY) 2020 through 2022 and qualitative data through November 2023.

METHODOLOGY

The comprehensive statewide needs assessment was conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry. The specific techniques for gathering the data used in this assessment are detailed below.

Analysis of Existing Data Sources

The project team at SDSU reviewed various existing data sources to identify and describe demographic data within Oregon, including the total target population and sub-populations potentially served by ODHS VR. Data relevant to the population of Oregon, the population of persons with blindness or visual impairments in Oregon, ethnicity of individuals, income level, educational levels, and other relevant population characteristics were utilized in this analysis. Sources analyzed include the following:

- The 2021 American Community Survey, 1- and 5-Year Estimates
- U.S. Census Annual Estimates of Resident Population, 2021
- Office of Rural Health Policy and the Office of Management and Budget, 2022
- 2022 Social Security Administration SSI/SSDI Data
- The Oregon Department of Education
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- University of New Hampshire's Disability Compendium
- ODHS VR case service data was compiled at the request of the project team, and
- The Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration's RSA-911 data for ODHS VR and data submitted and entered RSA's Management Information System (MIS).

Individual and Focus Group Interviews

Instrument: The instruments used for the individual and focus group interviews (Appendix A) were developed by a research team at SDSU and reviewed and revised by the ODHS VR team before utilization in the assessment process.

Interview population: The individual and focus group population consisted of ODHS VR staff, partner organizations, individuals with disabilities, and businesses. Sixty-nine people indicated they wanted to be interviewed as part of the assessment, but only forty-three attended the interview/focus group sessions. The interviews occurred in person and virtually across the State in October and November 2023. In-person interviews and focus groups were held in Portland, Salem, Eugene, Medford, Bend, Burns, and Ontario. In addition, targeted virtual offerings were provided to reach the state's north and south coastal, north central, and northeast regions based on feedback from the SRC and other constituents in the kickoff presentation of the CSNA efforts in Seaside, Oregon.

Data collection: The general format of the interviews was consistent between participants regardless of their group and followed a pre-determined question protocol. First, participants were asked questions to ascertain their personal and professional experience with or knowledge of ODHS VR. Participants were then asked open-ended questions about their perceptions of the needs of individuals with disabilities in Oregon, including the needs of youth and students, those in need of supported employment, and those from underserved and underrepresented populations. Finally, participants were asked to share their perceptions of how ODHS VR could improve their ability to help meet these needs, especially in assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain and retain employment.

Efforts to ensure respondent anonymity: The interviewers did not share names and other identifying characteristics with anyone. Participants were provided information on their rights and were

informed of the anonymous reporting of all results. All collected data was consolidated with other respondents' information before the results were reported.

Data analysis: The interviewers took notes and sometimes used Otter.ai to record communications to obtain a complete transcription of the discussions. The notes were analyzed by the researchers at SDSU using a thematic analysis construct. As themes or concerns were identified, the SDSU team compiled these responses to highlight common themes in the report narrative. To be recognized as a recurring theme, it had to occur at least three different times and across groups if it applied to the diverse populations participating in the study.

Surveys

Instruments: The instruments used for the electronic surveys of individuals with disabilities, community partners, ODHS VR staff, and businesses were developed by the project team and reviewed and revised by ODHS VR. These surveys are contained in Appendices A-E.

Survey population: Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as individuals with disabilities who are potential, current, or former clients of ODHS VR. Community partners include representatives of organizations who provide services, coordinate services, or serve an advocacy role for individuals with disabilities in Oregon. ODHS VR staff members include those working for the organization from September 1, 2023, through November 30, 2023, and businesses include employers for which ODHS VR had a valid email address during the survey period.

Data collection: Data was gathered from the different populations using an online survey using Qualtrics. ODHS VR and community programs serving individuals with disabilities broadly dispersed the electronic survey via an e-mail invitation. ODHS VR identified individuals with disabilities, partners, staff, and businesses and invited them to participate in the electronic survey effort via e-mail, flyers (with QR codes), and social media blasts. These communications and surveys were provided in both English and Spanish. Once the survey was active, ODHS VR sent an invitation and link to the study by e-mail. Approximately two weeks after the distribution of the initial invitation, another electronic notice was sent as a "thank you" to those who had completed the survey and a reminder to those who had not. Survey responses collected through the electronic survey approach were then analyzed using Qualtrics.

Efforts to ensure respondent anonymity: Respondents to the individual survey were not asked to identify themselves when completing the survey. In addition, responses to the electronic surveys were aggregated by the project team at SDSU before reporting results, further obscuring the identities of individual survey respondents.

Accessibility: The electronic survey was designed using an accessible, internet-based survey application. Respondents were provided with the name and contact information of the Project Director at SDSU to place requests for alternate survey formats. In addition, the surveys were provided in both English and Spanish to include responses from a more comprehensive array of individuals.

Data analysis comprised computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. Open-ended survey questions, which yielded narrative responses from individuals, were analyzed by the researchers for themes or concepts expressed consistently by respondents.

Number of completed surveys: 1241 valid surveys were submitted by the different groups. A survey was considered valid if an individual completed it, even if they did not answer all the questions. If an

individual started a survey and did not complete it, it was considered invalid. It isn't easy to gauge the return rate of the surveys as many of the e-mail notices and invitations to take the survey could have come from forwarded email invitations.

A total of 1282 individuals participated in this CSNA process. The project team is confident that the information gathered accurately and thoroughly captures the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in Oregon. It should be noted that the findings in Section VII on the needs of businesses in recruiting, hiring, accommodating, and retaining employees with disabilities and impairments should not be generalized to the population of companies and employers in Oregon, as the sample size is inadequate, despite significant efforts to increase business engagement in the process.

Analysis and Triangulation of Data
The researchers on the project team analyzed the data gathered from the national and agency-specific data sets, key informant interviews, surveys, and focus groups. The common themes regarding the needs of individuals with disabilities from each data source were identified and compared to each other to validate the existence of needs, especially as they pertained to the target populations of this assessment.

Dissemination Plans
The CSNA report is delivered to ODHS VR and the State Rehabilitation Council. We recommend that ODHS VR publish the report on its website for public access.

Study Limitations
Inherent in any research effort are limitations constraining the data's utility. Therefore, it is essential to highlight some of the most significant issues potentially limiting the ability to generalize the needs assessment findings to larger populations. The potential for bias in selecting participants is inherent in the methods used to collect data. The reported findings only reflect the responses of those who could be reached and willing to participate. The information gathered from respondents may need to accurately represent the broader opinions or concerns of all potential constituents and stakeholders. Data collected from consumers, for example, may reflect only the needs of individuals already receiving services, excluding those not presently served. Although efforts were made to gather information from a variety of stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process, it would be imprudent to conclude with certainty that those who contributed to the focus groups and the key informant interviews constitute a fully representative sample of all the potential stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process in Oregon.

FINDINGS

SECTION I: **Overall agency performance**

SECTION II: **Needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment**

SECTION III: **Needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program**

SECTION IV: **Needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition**

SECTION V: **Needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System**

SECTION VI: **Need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs in Oregon**

SECTION VII: **Needs of businesses and effectiveness in serving employers**

SECTION I: OVERALL AGENCY PERFORMANCE

The first section of the CSNA reports on areas of general performance by ODHS VR. General performance refers to how well ODHS VR fulfills its mission of assisting people with disabilities to increase their independence and employment. The area of general performance also refers to how effectively ODHS VR performs the processes to facilitate movement through the stages of the rehabilitation process, how well ODHS VR adheres to the timelines for this case movement identified in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV of WIOA, and ODHS VR policies and procedures. Finally, the overall performance also refers to how successfully ODHS VR achieves its standard performance measures and the quantity and quality of employment outcomes its consumers achieve.

The structure of this section, as well as the following paragraphs, will include the following:
1. Data about the section in question, including observations based on the data
2. Electronic and hard copy survey results of the section
3. Recurring/consensual themes emerging during the individual interviews and focus groups
4. Recommendations to address the findings in each area of the assessment.

The comprehensive statewide needs assessment data covers the three years from July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2023. The data on agency performance included in this section comes from the case management system used by ODHS VR and is compared to the available RSA-911 data submitted by ODHS VR.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following recurring themes emerged in Overall Agency Performance:

- Improving the overall communication with clients regarding the ongoing services and the necessary steps needed by the client to continue moving toward employment is not always clear. Clients reported needing more frequent and regular communication in a way that meets their needs (i.e., text, email, phone, or meetings).
- Using paper documentation in instances where electronic documentation would streamline services was cited as a barrier to progress for some clients, specifically causing delays in access to services.
- Effectively recruiting and retaining VR staff. Counselor changes, canceled appointments, and caseload sizes resulting from insufficient staffing levels within ODHS VR have impacted the ability to meet client needs.
- Accessing targeted professional development. The presence of the internal training unit was acknowledged as a strength of ODHS VR.
- Using a quality assurance review of the IPEs. Several individuals shared that their IPEs were developed for them and contained information that had yet to be discussed or mutually agreed upon or goals not in alignment with their skills and abilities.
- Heightening a focus on career planning versus getting a job.
- Expanding access for clients to receive services virtually while maintaining for others the ability to meet counselors in person for additional rapport building. Concerns were raised about an office-centric service delivery model compared to one focused on community outreach and engagement in the spaces and places where individuals with disabilities reside.
- Broadening geographic access to VR intake and orientation services, particularly in rural areas.

- Providing clear and concise information on the process for eligibility, service delivery options, timelines, and expectations for all parties (i.e., ODHS VR, CRPs, clients, and other organizations). Individuals cited needing to familiarize themselves with all the processes and elements involved.
- Training for new VR counselors to better understand the entire job scope to reduce confusion and increase client resources. There is a need for the orientation of new VR staff to be strengthened to include information relevant to the breadth and depth of services available, the processes involved with the services, and overall disability awareness.
- Accessing assistive technology to support individuals' successful transition into employment. In particular, the emphasis on technological tools to support equitable access to employment settings was highlighted.
- Providing access to medical/clinical supports to assist in the initial diagnosis and confirmation of functional limitations to gain eligibility for services.
- Accessing financial support for ongoing mental health support for many individuals to deal with the stressors of sustaining employment.
- Providing disability-specific accommodations like glasses and hearing aids.
- Offering access to clothing (i.e., interview attire, work scrubs, or uniforms).
- Gaining a clear understanding of navigating the process for grievances regarding service delivery and a strong connection with disability rights to mediate these concerns when they arise effectively

National, State, Local, and Agency-Specific Data Related to Overall Agency Performance

General Trends of the VR with State and National Comparisons

Understanding the state's geographic composition and knowledge of the state's population structure is beneficial to serve the VR client better. This section compares geographic information and demographic data regarding the State's population, age, income, home value, poverty, and education to the Nation and local regions.

Geographic Composition

Oregon is comprised of 36 counties, divided into three vocational rehabilitation service regions. The map (Map 1) indicates the ODHS VR service region distribution. Below the map is a table of codes for the VR regions detailing the counties served.

Map 1
ODHS Districts and VR Regions Map

Oregon Department of Human Services Districts & VR Regions Map

VR Region 1 = DHS Districts 1, 2, 15, 16
VR Region 2 = DHS Districts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
VR Region 3 = DHS Districts 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14   July 2019
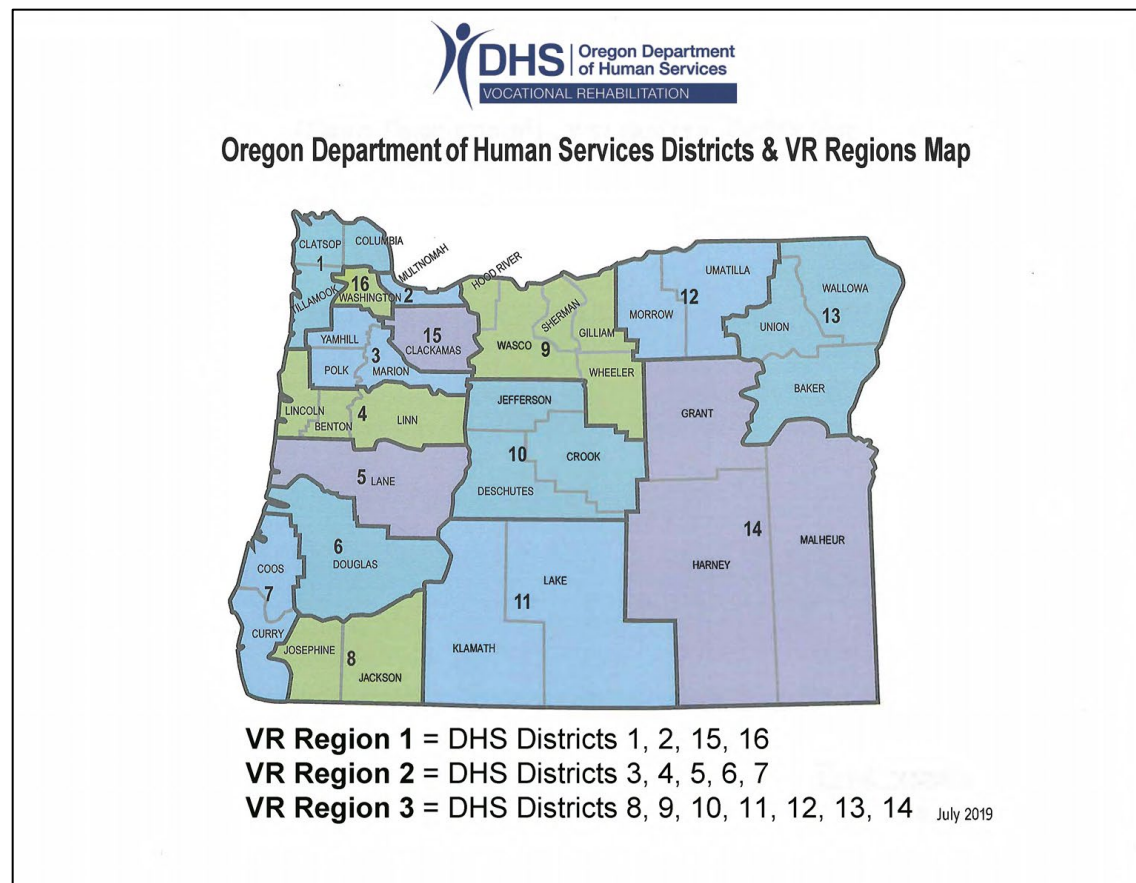
Table 1: Region Codes and Counties Served

Region	Code	Counties Served
Region 1	R1	Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia, Multnomah, Washington, Yamhill
Region 2	R2	Benton, Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, Klamath, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Polk, Tillamook
Region 3	R3	Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wasco, Wallowa, Wheeler

Population

Population (raw number of people in the area) and population density (number of people per square mile of land) provide a picture of where customers may be in the State and assist with developing service delivery strategies (i.e., VR office locations, number of staff members) in a region.

Table 2 contains the total population data for the State of Oregon. The table cites the United States Census Bureau's July 1, 2023, Annual Population Estimates of the Resident Population for the Nation and State. Population estimates for the 36 counties in Oregon are taken from Vintage 2022 Annual

Estimates of Resident Population for Counties. Rural and urban data is taken from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 1-year estimates.

Table 2: Local Region Population for Oregon

Geographic Area Name	Total population	Percent of OR Pop. CSNA 2024
United States	333,914,895	-----
United States - Urban	266,018,160	-----
United States -- Rural	67,269,402	-----
Oregon	4,233,358	OR = 1.3% of U.S. Pop
Oregon -- Urban	3,424,241	1.3%
Oregon -- Rural	815,896	1.2%
R1	2,021,945	47.7%
R2	1,705,625	40.2%
R3	512,567	12.1%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for the United States, Regions, States, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico: April 1, 2020, to July 1, 2023 (NST-EST2023-POP); Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties in Oregon: April 1, 2020, to July 1, 2022 (CO-EST2022-POP-41); Table DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing 2022 1-year Estimates

The U.S. Census Bureau Annual Estimates of Resident Population Change State Rankings ending July 2022 indicated that Oregon decreased in numeric population size (-6,021) and ranked in the 46th position for numeric growth compared to the 49 other states in the U.S. during the period from July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023. Oregon's overall numeric population growth from April 20, 2020, to July 1, 2023, was negative one percent, or thirty-ninth overall.

U.S. Census Bureau collaborated with the U.S. Department of Commerce to determine population density rates for 2010 to 2020. Excluding Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, Oregon ranked 39 out of 50 States in 2020 with a population density average of 44.1 people per square mile.

Land and Urbanization

Oregon shares borders with the Pacific Ocean and the states of California, Nevada, Idaho, and Washington. The total area of Oregon is 98,379 square miles (95,988 square miles of land; 2,391 square miles of water). Oregon is the 10th largest state in the Nation regarding land area, 20th in the Nation for water area, and 9th in the U.S. for total area.

The criteria and definitions for rural and urban areas based on the 2020 Census are defined as follows:
- Rural: Territory not defined as urban.
- Urban: Generally, a densely developed territory encompassing residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses within which social and economic interactions occur.
- Urban Area: A statistical geographic entity consisting of a densely settled core created from census blocks and contiguous qualifying territories with at least 2,000 housing units or 5,000 persons.

The U.S. Census Bureau published a list of all 2020 Census Urban Areas for the U.S., Puerto Rico, and Island Areas. Oregon has 62 urban areas within the State and six urban areas that are partially in

the State. In 2020, the Census identified two new urban areas in Oregon: Bayside Gardens—Manzanita urban area and Rockaway Beach urban area. Both newly designated urban areas are in Tillamook County, Oregon. The Bayside Gardens – Manzanita urban area had a population of 2,849 people in 2020 and a population density of about 956 people per square mile. The data collected in 2020 also indicated that the Rockway Beach urban area had a population of 1,761 people and a population density of 857 people per square mile.

Based on the 2020 Census, 80.5% of Oregon's population is considered urban, and 19.5% of the population resides in territories that are defined as rural. The Portland, OR-WA urban area is the most densely populated urban area in Oregon, with a population density of roughly 4,245 people per square mile.

The Census Bureau published a list of areas classified as urban in the 2010 Census that changed to be designated as rural based on the 2020 Census's new urban and rural criteria. Table 3 contains a list of the areas designated rural in 2020, along with the county and VR service region in which the rural area is located.

Table 3: 2010 Urban Areas that Changed to Rural in 2020

VR REGION	2010 URBAN AREAS CHANGED TO RURAL IN 2020	COUNTY
R1	Carlton, OR	Yamhill
	Mount Hood Village, OR	Clackamas
R2	Gold Beach, OR	Curry
	Harrisburg, OR	Linn
	Mount Angel, OR	Marion
	Oakridge, OR	Lane
	Shady Cove, OR	Jackson
	Toledo, OR	Lincoln
R3	Boardman, OR	Morrow
	Arrigoni, OR	Morrow
	Lakeview, OR	Lake
	La Pine Northwest, OR	Deschutes
	Nyssa, OR	Malheur

Source: List of 2010 Census Urban Areas that are Classified as Rural in 2020; https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html

The U.S. Census Bureau published county-level urban and rural information for the 2020 census. Multnomah County had the highest population density of 1,891 people per square mile and Harney County had a population density of less than one person per square mile. Table 4 details the 2020

county population density, percentage rates of the county population residing within urban and rural blocks, and each county's 2020 urban and rural population density.

Table 4: *Oregon County-level Urban and Rural Information: 2020 Census*

County	2020 Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 total blocks within the County	Percent of the 2020 Census Pop. of the County within Urban blocks	2020 Urban Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Urban within County	Percent of the 2020 Census Pop. in the County within Rural blocks	2020 Rural Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Rural within County
Region 1								
Clackamas	225.27	7,650	82.89%	2,689.4	5,300	17.11%	41.42	2,350
Clatsop	49.60	2,173	60.89%	1,705.1	678	39.11%	19.75	1,495
Columbia	79.84	1,824	58.78%	1,802.6	663	41.22%	33.79	1,161
Multnomah	1,891.7	14,563	98.72%	5,018.5	13,883	1.28%	38.60	680
Washington	828.94	7,431	94.50%	4,801.5	6,178	5.50%	54.43	1,253
Yamhill	150.46	2,910	73.51%	3,142.3	1,457	26.49%	41.31	1,453
Total Blocks		36,551			28,159			8,392
Region 2								
Benton	140.98	2,066	80.59%	3,370.49	1,081	19.41%	28.31	985
Coos	40.68	3,425	61.86%	1,751.76	1,141	38.14%	15.74	2,284
Curry	14.40	1,923	48.17%	1,579.65	279	51.83%	7.50	1,644
Douglas	22.08	7,508	59.62%	2,017.95	1,559	40.38%	8.98	5,949
Jackson	80.22	6,690	79.40%	2,623.67	3,144	20.60%	16.93	3,546
Josephine	53.76	2,477	56.86%	1,936.22	1,068	43.14%	23.56	1,409
Klamath	11.67	6,610	62.25%	1,823.95	1,111	37.75%	4.42	5,499
Lane	84.09	10,299	81.97%	3,248.57	5,625	18.03%	15.49	4,674
Lincoln	51.37	2,498	62.00%	1,273.41	1,047	38.00%	20.02	1,451
Linn	56.18	4,543	65.75%	2,683.17	1,658	34.25%	19.51	2,885
Marion	292.88	5,975	84.65%	3,482.44	3,855	15.35%	48.41	2,120
Polk	118.01	2,058	79.59%	4,011.46	941	20.41%	24.66	1,117
Tillamook	24.85	2,312	39.34%	1,402.01	568	60.66%	15.18	1,744
Total Blocks		58,384			23,077			35,307
Region 3								
Baker	5.43	2,442	58.60%	2,180.67	463	41.40%	2.25	1,979
Crook	8.30	1,687	50.15%	1,515.22	336	49.85%	4.15	1,351
Deschutes	65.70	5,557	70.76%	2,473.00	2,527	29.24%	19.58	3,030
Gilliam	1.66	496	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	1.66	496

County								
Grant	1.60	2,607	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	1.60	2,607
Harney	0.74	2,422	55.62%	1,380.78	279	44.38%	0.33	2,143
Hood River	45.93	809	48.20%	2,075.89	280	51.80%	24.04	529
Jefferson	13.75	1,791	33.01%	1,728.82	298	66.99%	9.24	1,493
Lake	1.00	2,824	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	1.00	2,824
Malheur	3.19	3,211	41.13%	1,854.82	441	58.87%	1.88	2,770
Morrow	6.00	1,112	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	6.00	1,112
Sherman	2.27	354	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	2.27	354
Umatilla	24.90	3,894	68.26%	1,870.89	1,174	31.74%	7.98	2,720
Union	12.86	2,470	57.09%	2,417.35	527	42.91%	5.54	1,943
Wallowa	2.35	1,498	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	2.35	1,498
Wasco	11.20	2,002	65.23%	2,268.98	544	34.77%	3.91	1,458
Wheeler	0.85	696	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	0.85	696
Total Blocks		35,872			6,869			29,003

Source: County-level Urban and Rural information for the 2020 Census (Updated September 2023); https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html

The Office of Rural Health Policy and Management and Budget (OMB) determines geographic eligibility for grant funding and local programming. Table 5 lists the counties in Oregon that are considered rural. Urban counties containing rural census tracts and the number of rural census tracts located within the urban counties are included. Note that Multnomah County is the only county considered 100 percent urban, even though Washington County has over 94 percent of the population residing in urban blocks, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's urban and rural information. The information for the following table is taken from the 2021 update of the Office of Rural Health Policy's "List of Rural Counties and Designated Eligible Census Tracts in Metropolitan Counties."

Table 5: *Oregon's Rural Counties from the OMB and Office of Rural Health Policy*

Region	Rural Counties	Urban Counties and Number of Rural Census Tracts	100 Percent Urban Counties
R1	Clatsop; Yamhill	Clackamas; Columbia; Washington	Multnomah
R2	Coos; Curry; Douglas; Klamath; Lincoln; Tillamook	Benton; Jackson; Josephine; Lane; Linn; Marion; Polk	None
R3	Baker; Crook; Gilliam; Grant; Harney; Hood River; Jefferson; Lake; Malheur; Morrow; Sherman;	Deschutes	None

	Umatilla; Union; Wallowa; Wasco; Wheeler

https://data.hrsa.gov/Content/Documents/tools/rural-health/forhpeligibleareas.pdf#search=rural-health%20eligible%20areas

Report Note: Several tables throughout this report contain data from the United States Census Bureau. Unless otherwise noted, data for the Nation and State are taken from the Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 1-Year estimates. U.S. Census Bureau data referenced throughout the report for the VR service regions are the county averages available in the 2022 ACS 5-Year estimates unless otherwise noted.

Age, Income, and Home Value

Understanding a population's age composition provides insight into an area's changing phenomena and current and future social and economic challenges. Income is the gauge often used to determine well-being. Home value provides a picture of the housing situation in the area and insight into the local economic status.

Median Age and Median Working Age

The median age of residents in the U.S. is 39, and Oregon's median age is 1.5 years higher (40.5). The median age for R3 exceeds the National average by 5.3 years. The median working age for individuals ages 16 to 64 in the United States is 39.5 years, and Oregon's median working age is 39.2 years. Two regions have a median working age that exceeds the National average by less than 1 percent. R3's median working age exceeds the National average by 1.2%. Table 6 provides statistics for the median age and median working age.

Table 6: *Median Age/Median Working Age*

Geographic Area	Median Age	Median Working Age 16 to 64
U.S.	39	39.5
U.S. - Urban	37.9	38.9
U.S. - Rural	43.4	42.3
OR	40.5	39.2
OR - Urban	39	38.4
OR - Rural	48	43.3
R1	40.8	40.4
R2	44.2	39.9
R3	44.3	40.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Median Household Income and Median Home Value

The median household incomes for the Nation and the State are $74,755 and $75,657 respectively. Oregon's median household income ranked 18th in the Nation in 2022, as New Jersey had the highest average ($96,346) and Mississippi had the lowest average ($52,719). Although rural Oregon's median household income exceeds the national rural average by $4,368, median household incomes for Regions 2 and 3 are below the national rural median average by up to a high of $25,638.

The median home value for the United States ($320,900) is lower than Oregon's average ($475,600) by $154,700. The urban median home value for the Nation falls below Oregon's urban average by

$122,700, and the Nation's rural median home value is lower than the State rural average by $249,500. Compared to other states, Oregon's statewide median home value ranks 7th (ranking is from the highest to lowest), with Hawaii's average securing the top position at $820,100. Oregon's rural median home value ranks in the 5th position, and the urban average ranks 8th compared to the averages of the 50 states.

Gilliam County (R3), considered rural due to 100 percent of its population residing in rural areas, has a median household income of $58,409 and the lowest median home value ($151,500) in the State when examining available data. Gilliam County's home value average is significantly lower than the National and State averages. Gilliam County's average median home value is also considerably lower than the National rural average by $90,700 and the State's rural median home value average by $340,200.

Clackamas County's median household income ($95,740) and home value ($532,200) are significantly higher than all the National and State averages. Clackamas County is considered urban with one rural census tract by the Office of Rural Health Policy and the OMB. The Census Bureau classified 82.89% of Clackamas County's population as residing in urban blocks, and the population density within the urban blocks is 2,689.43 people per square mile. Table 7 details the averages for median household income and median home value.

Table 7: *Median Household Income and Median Home Value: Nation and State*

Geographic Area	Median Household Income	Household Income Ranges	Home Value 2022	Home Value Ranges	Census Bureau Estimate Type
U.S.	$74,755	$52,719 (MS) - $96,346 (NJ)	$320,900	$155,100 (WV) - $820,100 (HI)	1-Year Supplemental
U.S. - Urban	$75,706	$52,840 (MS) - $94,871 (HI)	$349,800	$163,100 (WV) - $854,700 (HI)	1-Year Supplemental
U.S. - Rural	$71,100	$52,621 (MS) - $119,993 (RI)	$242,200	$146,300 (MS) - $609,300 (HI)	1-Year Supplemental
OR	$75,657	$45,462 - $100,121	$475,600	$151,500 - $532,200	1-Year Supplemental; Ranges = 5 year
OR - Urban	$75,703	-----	$472,500	-----	1-Year Supplemental
OR - Rural	$75,468	-----	$491,700	-----	1-Year Supplemental
R1	$85,157	$68,025 - $100,121	$451,650	$365,100 - $532,200	5-year
R2	$64,309	$56,068 - $77,353	$339,877	$234,200 - $442,300	5-year

R3	$61,762	$45,462 - $82,042	$264,894	$151,500 - $526,200	5-year

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Poverty

Poverty is defined as not having enough money to meet basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. Examining poverty in an area, in addition to income, provides further insight into determining the well-being of an area's population.

Poverty in Oregon for the Working Age 18 to 64 Years

Benton County has a significantly higher poverty rate than the National average by 12 percent, and the rate is over double the National rural average. Benton County was noted as the 11th largest county in Oregon for population size (97,630) in 2022. Note that 80.59 percent of the population resides in urban blocks. The county is considered urban with one rural census tract by the Office of Rural Health Policy and the OMB. Conversely, Clackamas County's poverty rate is roughly 3.5 to 4.3 percent less than the National geographical averages. As noted in the income section of this report, Clackamas County has significantly higher median household income and home value averages than the National and State averages.

Table 8 presents the average poverty rate and the range of poverty rates for the civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 18 to 64 years. National and State poverty rates are taken from the 2022 U.S. Census 1-year estimates. Poverty rates for the Regions are calculated by averaging data from 2022 U.S. 5-year estimates for Oregon's counties.

Table 8: *Poverty Rates: Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population Ages 18 to 64 Years*

Region	Average Poverty Rate	Lowest Level		Highest Level	
U.S.	11.7%	New Hampshire	7.1%	West Virginia	17.7%
U.S.- Urban	11.9%	Rhode Island	3.2%	New Mexico	17.8%
U.S. - Rural	11.0%	New Hampshire	7.9%	West Virginia	19.3%
OR	12.3%	Hood River	7.0%	Benton	23.7%
OR - Urban	12.5%		------		------
OR - Rural	11.4%		------		------
R1	9.9%	Clackamas	7.6%	Multnomah	12.1%
R2	16.1%	Polk	11.2%	Benton	23.7%
R3	13.6%	Hood River	7.0%	Lake	19.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Internet Accessibility

Access to fast and reliable high-speed internet service offers the opportunity to participate equally in society and engage in the global community. Internet access has become as important a measure of capacity and function as reliable transportation. The pandemic made high-speed, reliable internet service essential for many jobs and integral to assessing individuals' ability to participate in rehabilitation services. A study of internet access is critical in a State with a largely rural area, as previous studies have shown that many rural communities lack infrastructure and access to internet and satellite networks.

Internet Accessibility in Oregon

Over 94% of households in Oregon's local VR service regions have one or more computing devices, and over 87.5% have an internet subscription. Oregon has a higher percentage rate of desktop-/laptop-only ownership when compared to the National rural area rate. About 12.3% of R3's households need internet access. Roughly 92% of Oregon households have a smartphone, and 6.9% of Oregon households have a smartphone and no other computing device. Broadband subscription (cable, fiber optic, DSL) rates are roughly 6 to 10 percentage points lower than cellular data plan subscription rates in all of Oregon's VR service regions. Table 9 provides a picture of the availability of virtual accessibility in the U.S. and Oregon, including urban and rural areas. Table 10 provides an overview of internet access by region in Oregon.

Table 9: *Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions: U.S. and OR, including Urban and Rural Areas*

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions	United States	U.S.: Urban	U.S.: Rural	Oregon	OR: Urban	OR: Rural
Total households	129,870,928	103,990,597	25,880,331	1,726,340	1,406,427	319,913
TYPES OF COMPUTERS						
Has one or more types of computing devices:	95.7%	96.2%	93.8%	96.8%	97.0%	96.1%
Desktop or laptop	80.5%	81.8%	75.3%	84.8%	85.5%	82.0%
Desktop or laptop with no other type of computing device	2.5%	2.4%	3.2%	2.8%	2.6%	3.7%
Smartphone	91.3%	92.0%	88.3%	92.2%	92.6%	90.2%
Smartphone with no other type of computing device	9.5%	8.9%	11.9%	6.9%	6.5%	8.6%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer	63.9%	65.1%	59.3%	65.7%	66.5%	62.4%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer with	0.7%	0.7%	0.9%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%

no other type of computing device					
Other computer	2.5%	2.7%	2.0%	2.3%	2.3%	2.7%
Other computer with no other type of computing device	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
No computer	4.3%	3.8%	6.2%	3.2%	3.0%	3.9%
TYPE OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS						
With an Internet subscription:	91.2%	92.0%	87.7%	92.5%	93.0%	90.4%
Dial-up with no other type of Internet subscription	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
Broadband of any type	91.0%	91.9%	87.4%	92.4%	92.9%	90.2%
Cellular data plan	85.3%	86.6%	80.2%	86.7%	87.8%	81.6%
Cellular data plan with no other type of Internet subscription	11.2%	10.4%	14.5%	9.0%	8.4%	11.8%
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL	75.9%	79.0%	63.6%	79.0%	82.2%	65.1%
Satellite Internet service	6.7%	5.5%	11.3%	6.6%	4.6%	15.6%
Without an Internet subscription	8.8%	8.0%	12.3%	7.5%	7.0%	9.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 10: *Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions: Regions*

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions	R1	R2	R3
Total households	810,428	675,842	194,530
TYPES OF COMPUTERS			
Has one or more types of computing devices:	96.6%	95.1%	94.4%
Desktop or laptop	87.3%	81.4%	80.6%
Desktop or laptop with no other type of computing device	2.7%	4.7%	4.1%
Smartphone	91.8%	87.3%	87.5%
Smartphone with no other type of computing device	5.1%	8.2%	8.5%

Tablet or other portable wireless computer	69.0%	62.3%	62.9%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer with no other type of computing device	0.6%	0.9%	0.8%
Other computer	2.4%	2.2%	2.3%
Other computer with no other type of computing device	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
No computer	3.4%	4.9%	5.6%
TYPE OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS			
With an Internet subscription:	92.7%	89.4%	87.7%
Dial-up with no other type of Internet subscription	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Broadband of any type	92.5%	89.1%	87.4%
Cellular data plan	86.9%	80.5%	77.6%
Cellular data plan with no other type of Internet subscription	8.8%	10.6%	11.0%
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL	80.9%	72.7%	67.7%
Satellite Internet service	4.6%	7.7%	10.9%
Without an Internet subscription	7.3%	10.6%	12.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education completed in terms of the highest degree or level of schooling completed. Education levels influence the job market, both in the public and private sectors. Table 11 provides rates for both High School Graduation and Education at or above a bachelor's degree for the State's population ages 25 years and over. Rates for the Regions are calculated by adding the total population data for each area and dividing by population data for each category.

High School Graduation Rates

The National average for the population over the age of 25, whose highest educational attainment is a high school diploma or its equivalent, is 26.1%, and the State's average is 22.7%. Regions 2 and 3 have similar percentage rates for those whose highest educational attainment level is a high school graduate or equivalency over the age of 25, and the rates are less than one percentage point lower than the National average.

Education Level at or Above Bachelor's Degree

The National and State averages for the population over the age of 25 whose highest educational attainment is a bachelor's degree are 21.6% and 22.2%, respectively. R1's rate for achieving a bachelor's degree is the highest in the State, exceeding the National rate by almost 5%. R2's rate is the lowest in the state (17%), lower than the state's average by 5.2%, and slightly higher than the national rural average by less than one percentage point.

Disabilities Under the Age of 65

In addition to understanding the general trends of a geographic area, it is also vital to gain knowledge of the prevalence of disability in the State when engaging in strategic planning and allocating resources. In this section, demographic data regarding the state's disability population regarding age, disability type, income, poverty, and education are detailed with comparisons to the national and local regions.

Disability Status

The estimated average for the number of people with disabilities residing in the nation in 2022 is 13.4 percent. The State's percentage is above the national average by 2.4 percent, averaging 15.8 percent. Of the civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 18 to 64 years in Oregon, 14.9 percent of the residents in R2 report a disability, which is significantly higher than the National average of 11 percent and higher than the Nation's rural average of 12.8 percent for the same age group. The average percentage rate for individuals 18 to 64 years reporting a disability in R1 is 10.5 percent, lower than the State average by 2.6 percent and lower than the U.S. average by about .5 percent.

Table 11: *Educational Attainment: Population 25 Years and Over*

Geographic Area	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college, no degree	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree	High school graduate or higher	Bachelor's degree or higher
U.S.	26.1%	19.1%	8.8%	21.6%	14.0%	89.6%	35.7%
U.S. -- Urban	24.1%	18.8%	8.4%	23.0%	15.3%	89.6%	38.3%
U.S. -- Rural	33.6%	20.4%	10.2%	16.3%	9.4%	89.9%	25.8%
Oregon	22.7%	23.7%	8.9%	22.2%	14.1%	91.6%	36.3%
OR -- Urban	21.4%	23.2%	8.5%	23.4%	15.2%	91.7%	38.6%
OR -- Rural	27.6%	25.7%	10.5%	17.6%	9.9%	91.3%	27.5%
R1	18.9%	22.1%	8.4%	26.5%	16.7%	92.7%	43.3%
R2	25.9%	27.3%	9.6%	17.0%	10.8%	90.6%	27.8%
R3	25.6%	24.8%	10.1%	18.4%	10.9%	89.8%	29.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disability Types

Knowledge of the types of disabilities reported by area residents helps Oregon VR anticipate and prepare for meeting service needs and assisting the consumer in obtaining necessary accommodations to maximize function and employability.

The data indicates the State rates are like the National rates for the disability category of vision disabilities as the State's rates are either equal to, higher than or lower by less than one percentage point. Conversely, Oregon's rates for hearing disability exceed the National averages by at least one percentage point in all geographic areas. All disability type averages in R2 for the ages 18 to 64 rank the highest compared to the other regions, with one exception. R3's rate for hearing disability is slightly higher than R2's rate.

Cognitive disabilities are the most frequently reported disability type among individuals ages 18 to 64 found in the 2022 5-year estimate data for Oregon. (It is important to note that mental health impairments are not included in the ACS data.) R2's rate for cognitive disabilities among ages 18 to 64 exceeds the National average by 2.5 percent. Note that R2's rate for ambulatory disabilities is 1.6 percentage points higher than the national average.

Disability types are classified into six categories and detailed by age in the U.S. Census data. Tables 13 and 14 provide specific data for the civilian noninstitutionalized population. Table categories include those under 18 years and those aged 18-64. Disability type percentages are calculated by dividing the total number of individuals reporting the disability type within the region by the number of noninstitutionalized civilians residing there.

Table 13: *Disability Types: U.S. and OR*

Disability Types and Age	Percent with a disability					
	U.S.	U.S. - Urban	U.S. - Rural	Oregon	OR - Urban	OR - Rural
With a hearing difficulty	3.7%	3.3%	5.1%	4.9%	4.5%	6.6%
Population under 18 years	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%	0.9%
Population 18 to 64 years	2.0%	1.8%	2.9%	2.7%	2.6%	3.3%
With a vision difficulty	2.5%	2.4%	2.8%	2.5%	2.5%	2.7%
Population under 18 years	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%
Population 18 to 64 years	2.1%	2.0%	2.5%	2.2%	2.1%	2.2%
With a cognitive difficulty	5.7%	5.6%	5.9%	7.2%	7.4%	6.7%
Population under 18 years	4.8%	4.8%	4.9%	5.5%	5.7%	4.9%
Population 18 to 64 years	5.2%	5.1%	5.5%	7.1%	7.2%	6.4%
With an ambulatory difficulty	6.7%	6.5%	7.9%	7.5%	7.2%	8.3%
Population under 18 years	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%
Population 18 to 64 years	4.4%	4.2%	5.6%	4.9%	4.8%	5.8%
With a self-care difficulty	2.6%	2.5%	2.8%	3.0%	3.0%	3.1%

Population under 18 years	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	1.7%	1.6%	2.0%	2.3%	2.2%	2.4%
With an independent living difficulty	6.0%	5.9%	6.5%	7.0%	7.0%	6.9%
Population 18 to 64 years	3.9%	3.8%	4.5%	5.1%	5.1%	5.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 14: *Disability Types: VR Service Regions*

Disability Types and Age	Percent with a disability		
	R1	R2	R3
With a hearing difficulty	3.7%	5.4%	5.8%
Population under 18 years	0.5%	0.8%	0.7%
Population 18 to 64 years	2.1%	3.0%	3.1%
With a vision difficulty	2.1%	2.8%	2.6%
Population under 18 years	0.7%	1.0%	0.6%
Population 18 to 64 years	1.8%	2.3%	2.0%
With a cognitive difficulty	5.6%	7.3%	5.9%
Population under 18 years	4.6%	6.1%	4.5%
Population 18 to 64 years	5.5%	7.7%	5.9%
With an ambulatory difficulty	5.4%	8.1%	7.4%
Population under 18 years	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%
Population 18 to 64 years	3.6%	6.0%	5.4%
With a self-care difficulty	2.3%	3.1%	2.8%
Population under 18 years	1.1%	1.4%	1.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	1.6%	2.3%	2.2%
With an independent living difficulty	4.5%	6.2%	5.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	3.7%	5.9%	4.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disabling Environments Index

The environment contributes to an individual's ability to engage in meaningful tasks by enabling participation (enablement) or creating barriers to participation (disablement). For example, blindness or having serious vision difficulty even when wearing glasses (= vision disability) may be more disabling in areas without a mass transit system. Researchers at the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) created the "Disabling Environments Index," which is designed to take a snapshot of the disabling nature of one's local environment and be used as an indicator of local area accessibility.

The index examines the reporting of an independent living disability among the focus population ages 18-64 living in community settings who also reported a hearing, vision, ambulatory, and/or cognitive disability. In the 2023 Annual Disability Compendium, the Disabling Environments Index for civilians in the United States with hearing, vision, ambulatory, and/or cognitive disabilities who also reported an independent living disability in the year 2021 was 32.7 percent. Researchers at the NIDILRR graciously calculated State data by request. Table 15 contains the Disablement Index for the 50 States in ranking order from lowest index rate to the highest.

Table 15: *Disabling Environments Index: Ranking Order – Lowest to Highest*

Disabling Environments Index - United States					
United States Index = 32.4					
State Ranking Low to High					
Rank	**State**	**Index**	**Rank**	**State**	**Index**
1	North Dakota	17.8	26	Minnesota	32.4
2	Nebraska	24.3	27	Massachusetts	32.5
3	South Dakota	25.3	28	Alabama	32.6
4	Wyoming	26.3	29	Oregon	32.7
5	Idaho	27.1	30	Indiana	32.9
6	Maryland	27.7	31	Mississippi	33.0
7	Nevada	28.4	32	North Carolina	33.0
8	Alaska	29.7	33	Kentucky	33.2
9	Colorado	29.7	34	Tennessee	33.2
10	Texas	29.9	35	Delaware	33.4
11	Arizona	30.1	36	Illinois	33.5
12	Vermont	30.3	37	Connecticut	33.6
13	Montana	30.8	38	Pennsylvania	33.6
14	Ohio	30.9	39	Wisconsin	33.7
15	South Carolina	30.9	40	Rhode Island	33.9
16	Virginia	30.9	41	California	34.1
17	Iowa	31.2	42	Kansas	34.1
18	Oklahoma	31.2	43	Hawaii	34.2
19	Utah	31.5	44	West Virginia	34.2
20	Louisiana	31.8	45	New Jersey	34.3
21	Washington	32.0	46	Michigan	34.8
22	Florida	32.1	47	New York	35.1
23	Missouri	32.1	48	New Mexico	35.2

| 24 | New Hampshire | 32.2 | 49 | Arkansas | 35.8 |
| 25 | Georgia | 32.3 | 50 | Maine | 40.1 |

Source for US rate is from: Houtenville, A., Bach, S., and Paul, S. (2023). Annual Report on People with Disabilities in America: 2023. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. A. Houtenville prepared State Data specifically for Interwork and is not published in the Annual Report.

Oregon ranks in the 29th position (lowest to highest rate scale) when examining how many individuals who reported a hearing, vision, ambulatory, or cognitive disability also reported an independent living disability (32.1%). North Dakota ranked first, with less than 18 percent of individuals who reported a specific disability and reported an independent living disability. Conversely, slightly more than 40 percent of individuals residing in the state of Maine who reported a specific physical disability also reported an independent living disability.

The following observation is noted when examining the Disabling Environments Index: The top four states with the lowest ranking disabling environments scores have urban populations ranging between 57.2 and 73 percent. In comparison, the four states with the highest disabling environments scores have urban populations ranging between 38.6 to 87.4 percent. In previous years, the top four states with the lowest ranking index scores had urban populations of less than 66%, while the four states with the highest index scores had urban populations of over 70 percent. More in-depth analysis of the Disabling Environments Index and State urban/rural population rates is needed to determine if there is a correlation between local environmental accessibility and urban/rural population rates.

Disability and Income

Tables 16 and 17 provide median earnings (income) statistics for the civilian noninstitutionalized population (CNP) with earnings and disabilities aged 16 and over. Data is taken from the 2022 one-year and five-year estimates. The numbers are rounded to the nearest dollar amount.

People with disabilities earn approximately $12,998 per year less than individuals without a disability. In the State of Oregon, people with disabilities earn roughly $15,630 less than people without disabilities. People with disabilities residing in Rural Oregon earn $1,915 more than individuals with disabilities living in urban areas of Oregon. Females with disabilities in R1 have the highest earnings in the State, with an average that is higher than the National average for females with a disability by $230 and higher than the State average for females by $2,764. Females with disabilities in R3 earn $20,038 per year, which is $7 more than the State's rural averages for females with disabilities.

When comparing the median earnings for males with and without disabilities, males with disabilities in R1 earn $34,587, $19,382 lower than males without disabilities in R1. Compared to all national and state geographical averages, R1's earnings for males with disabilities are up to $2,494 lower than the national averages and between $1,534 and $2,159 higher than the state averages for males with disabilities.

Table 16: *Median Earnings for People with Disabilities 16 Years and Older: U.S. and Oregon*

Median Earnings: People with Disabilities	United States	U.S. - Urban	U.S. - Rural	Oregon	OR - Urban	OR - Rural
Total CNP 16+ with earnings	$42,609	$43,072	$41,492	$42,113	$42,262	$41,347

With a disability:	$30,885	$30,897	$30,840	$28,073	$27,904	$29,819
Male	$35,985	$35,687	$37,081	$32,527	$32,428	$33,053
Female	$26,383	$26,746	$24,650	$23,849	$24,596	$20,031
No disability:	$43,883	$44,376	$42,186	$43,703	$43,905	$42,617
Male	$51,257	$51,392	$50,776	$50,620	$50,278	$52,173
Female	$37,470	$38,354	$34,966	$37,618	$38,571	$33,444

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 17: *Median Earnings for People with Disabilities 16 Years and Older: Region*

Median Earnings: People with Disabilities	R1	R2	R3
Total CNP 16+ with earnings	$44,497	$35,271	$35,464
With a disability:	$30,097	$25,165	$25,162
Male	$34,587	$30,521	$29,523
Female	$26,613	$20,214	$20,038
No disability:	$45,926	$36,406	$36,583
Male	$53,969	$42,857	$43,188
Female	$38,715	$30,317	$30,486

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disability and Poverty

The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability and the United States Census Bureau publish statistics on disability and poverty. This section contains the most recent information published by both organizations.

University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability

According to the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability, in the year 2021, an estimated 26.7% of the noninstitutionalized civilians with disabilities ages 18 to 64 years living in Oregon were living below the poverty line. The difference between the most prominent and most minor poverty rates for people with disabilities across Oregon counties was 25.3 percent. Wallowa County had the lowest poverty rate (12.7%) for people with disabilities ages 18 to 64, and Lake County had the highest rate (38.0%). Table 18 summarizes the 2021 poverty rates for ages 18 to 64 in all 36 Oregon counties.

Table 18: *Disability and Poverty Rates: Civilians Ages 18 to 64 - Oregon Counties*

	Disability			No Disability		
County	Total	Count	% [1]	Total	Count	% [2]
Oregon	304,970	81,493	26.7	2,232,708	235,023	10.5
Region 1						
Clackamas	23,391	4,913	21	228,377	14,312	6.3
Clatsop	3,659	963	26.3	19,660	1,644	8.4
Columbia	4,547	1,202	26.4	26,773	1,920	7.2

Multnomah	57,249	16,782	29.3	483,206	50,953	10.5
Washington	31,747	5,712	18	345,532	23,731	6.9
Yamhill	7,891	2,004	25.4	52,362	4,974	9.5
Region 2						
Benton	5,562	1,635	29.4	52,997	11,665	22
Curry	2,258	624	27.6	9,668	1,555	16.1
Douglas	10,523	2,805	26.7	49,855	5,836	11.7
Jackson	15,677	4,856	31	110,351	12,982	11.8
Josephine	8,084	2,506	31	39,437	5,829	14.8
Klamath	6,384	2,009	31.5	31,787	5,727	18
Lane	34,163	11,164	32.7	197,390	31,466	15.9
Lincoln	4,890	1,221	25	21,559	2,904	13.5
Linn	11,447	2,882	25.2	63,150	6,483	10.3
Marion	26,309	6,808	25.9	172,687	19,156	11.1
Polk	6,125	1,469	24	44,009	4,498	10.2
Tillamook	2,848	748	26.3	11,709	1,214	10.4
Region 3						
Baker	1,520	526	34.6	6,836	831	12.2
Crook	1,932	465	24.1	11,374	872	7.7
Deschutes	11,351	2,551	22.5	105,530	9,345	8.9
Douglas	10,523	2,805	26.7	49,855	5,836	11.7
Gilliam	91	24	26.4	942	117	12.4
Grant	628	238	37.9	3,121	345	11.1
Harney	752	169	22.5	3,320	368	11.1
Hood River	933	139	14.9	13,539	836	6.2
Jefferson	2,192	577	26.3	10,589	1,498	14.1
Lake	668	254	38	3,328	528	15.9
Malheur	2,208	655	29.7	12,727	2,107	16.6
Morrow	875	233	26.6	5,907	761	12.9
Sherman	186	47	25.3	799	93	11.6
Umatilla	6,728	1,514	22.5	36,818	3,798	10.3
Union	2,120	767	36.2	12,475	1,637	13.1
Wallowa	558	71	12.7	3,244	299	9.2
Wasco	2,446	522	21.3	12,685	851	6.7
Wheeler	102	20	19.6	612	47	7.7

[1] The percentage of people with disabilities in poverty.

[2] The percentage of people without disabilities in poverty.

United States Census Bureau

The official poverty measure compares thresholds of family size and age of the family members to an individual's or family's pre-tax cash income. The Census Bureau uses the thresholds to determine who is living in poverty. Poverty levels specified in this section of the CSNA report are calculated using the 2022 one-year estimate table "Age by Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months by Disability Status and Type" published by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau provided the following definition regarding income-to-poverty ratios:

> *"Income-to-poverty ratios represent the ratio of family or unrelated individual income to their appropriate poverty threshold. Ratios below 1.00 indicate that the income for the respective family or unrelated individual is below the official definition of poverty. In contrast, a ratio of 1.00 or greater indicates income above the poverty level. A ratio of 1.25, for example, indicates that income was 125 percent above the appropriate poverty threshold" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).*

In this section, poverty and disability statistics are presented. Two different questions regarding poverty and disability are addressed:

1) What is the proportion of the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP) ages 18 and over who have a specific disability type and live in poverty? and
2) Of the total number of the civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 18 and over that live in poverty and have a disability, what proportion have a specific disability type?

Before reviewing disability and poverty statistics, note that the State of Oregon has a high percentage of residents that are 18 years and older (80%+), exceeding the National average by two percentage points. When answering question #1 regarding hearing, vision, and self-care disabilities, note that in each county represented in Oregon, roughly one percent or less of the TCNPs ages 18 and older that live in poverty reported either a hearing, vision, or self-care disability. Table 19 contains National, State, and three-county averages in response to question #1. The Regions are represented by the county with the most extensive total civilian population ages 18 years and older from the available U.S. Census Bureau 2022 one-year estimates.

Table 19: *Poverty, Disability Type, and Population: Ages 18 and Over – 2022: U.S., OR, and Regions*

Poverty, Disability Type, and Population: Ages 18 and Over	U.S.	Oregon	Multnomah (R1)	Lane (R2)	Deschutes (R3)
TCNP:	324,481,864	4,158,515	780,931	372,380	205,004
18 years and over:	253,240,885	3,342,855	645,254	309,695	167,207
Percent of population 18 and over	78.0%	80.4%	82.6%	83.2%	81.6%
Number of 18 years and over population	29,341,173	391,435	77,436	47,581	14,526

classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio					
Percent of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio	11.6%	11.7%	12.0%	15.4%	8.7%
With a disability:	3.2%	3.9%	3.9%	4.4%	2.6%
With a hearing difficulty	0.7%	0.9%	0.9%	1.2%	0.6%
With a vision difficulty	0.7%	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%	0.3%
With a cognitive difficulty	1.5%	2.2%	2.3%	2.4%	1.3%
With an ambulatory difficulty	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%	1.8%	1.3%
With a self-care difficulty	0.7%	1.0%	1.1%	0.9%	0.7%
With an independent living difficulty	1.5%	1.9%	2.0%	2.1%	0.1%
No disability	8.3%	7.8%	8.1%	11.0%	6.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

In Oregon, among individuals ages 18 and over who live in poverty and have a disability, cognitive disability is the most frequently reported disability type. Vision disability was reported less frequently and ranked in the lowest position for each county represented in Oregon. Table 20 identifies disability types for the population that lives in poverty and is age 18 and over (answering question #2).

Table 20: *Disability Types Among the 18+ Population Living in Poverty: Nation, State, and Regions*

Disability Types Among the 18+ Population Living in Poverty	U.S.	Oregon	Multnomah (R1)	Lane (R2)	Deschutes (R3)
Number of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio	29,341,173	391,435	77,436	47,581	14,526
Number of 18 years and over in Poverty with a Disability:	8,230,762	129,778	25,360	13,611	4,330
With a disability:	28.1%	33.2%	32.7%	28.6%	29.8%
With a hearing difficulty	20.5%	24.3%	23.3%	26.6%	22.2%
With a vision difficulty	20.6%	17.3%	13.4%	15.9%	13.3%
With a cognitive difficulty	45.7%	56.1%	58.0%	54.9%	51.7%
With an ambulatory difficulty	55.0%	49.5%	49.3%	40.0%	48.6%
With a self-care difficulty	22.0%	25.1%	28.9%	20.1%	26.5%
With an independent living difficulty	45.4%	47.9%	51.9%	47.9%	43.2%

No disability	71.9%	66.8%	67.3%	71.4%	70.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment for Individual with Disabilities

Table 21 and 22 contain educational attainment rates for individuals with disabilities for the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP) ages 25 and older. In lieu of a region average, counties with the lowest and highest disability populations for age 25 and over within the 2022 five-year available data represent the VR regions.

Table 21: *Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: U.S. and Oregon*

Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: U.S. and Oregon	United States		Oregon	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	225,493,657		3,006,438	
Population Age 25 and Over	38,005,098	187,488,559	571,165	2,435,273
Less than high school graduate	17.0%	8.8%	12.4%	7.4%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	33.0%	24.4%	28.8%	20.9%
Some college or associate degree	29.0%	27.7%	36.7%	31.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	21.0%	39.1%	22.1%	40.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 22: *Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: Regions*

Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: Region 1	Clatsop (Low)		Multnomah (High)	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	30,206		593,152	
Population Age 25 and Over	7,167	23,039	91,603	501,549
Less than high school graduate	12.2%	6.4%	13.5%	6.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	31.3%	25.6%	25.1%	15.1%
Some college or associate degree	39.5%	39.5%	34.4%	26.6%
Bachelor's degree or higher	16.9%	28.4%	27.1%	51.8%
Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: Region 2	**Benton (Low)**		**Lane (High)**	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	58,182		263,151	
Population Age 25 and Over	9,326	48,856	55,121	208,030

Less than high school graduate	6.7%	3.4%	11.9%	5.9%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	25.4%	12.4%	29.8%	20.8%
Some college or associate degree	32.4%	26.8%	37.1%	37.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	35.4%	57.4%	21.3%	36.2%
Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: **Region 3**	**Umatilla (Low)**		**Deschutes (High)**	
	With a Disability	**No Disability**	**With a Disability**	**No Disability**
TCNP Age 25 and Over	49,369		146,350	
Population Age 25 and Over	11,149	38,220	21,034	125,316
Less than high school graduate	20.3%	14.3%	8.6%	5.2%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	34.5%	28.6%	28.1%	17.7%
Some college or associate degree	33.6%	35.8%	37.6%	33.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	11.7%	21.3%	25.7%	43.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

In educational attainment at the college graduate level, individuals with disabilities have lower educational attainment rates than their peers without disabilities. In a review of the available data, Multnomah County has the lowest high school graduation attainment level for individuals with disabilities, and Umatilla County has the highest rate. Multnomah County is noted to have the highest population in the State. Multnomah County ranks 3rd in the State for median household income, 5th for median home value, 13th (from lowest to highest) for poverty rate for ages 18 to 64, and 3rd in the State for internet access. Umatilla County ranks 12th in the State for median household income, 26th for median home value, 12th (from lowest to highest) for poverty rate for ages 18 to 64, and 30th for internet access. Achievement of higher levels of education is an essential consideration for individuals with disabilities served by VR if they are to achieve self-sufficiency through employment.

General Trends of Employment, Occupations, Industries, and Labor Force Participation For the Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population

Local economies thrive based on employment, occupations, and industries available to area residents and the individual's participation in the labor force. Knowledge of the local area labor force, internet accessibility, employment rates, occupations, industries, and labor force participation facilitates helping customers find local job opportunities and securing appropriate job placement.

The labor force includes all people classified in the civilian labor force, plus members of the U.S. Armed Forces (people on active duty with the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard). The civilian labor force consists of people classified as employed or unemployed and actively looking for work. The labor force participation rate represents the proportion of the population in the labor force.

Internet Accessibility of Individuals in the Labor Force
The U.S. Census Bureau gathers data regarding the availability of the Internet to the working-age population based on employment status. Some areas of the 50 states with the lowest population may lack the infrastructure to support internet accessibility. The data for working-age individuals (ages 18

to 64) in the State's VR regions indicates that over 90 percent of the working-age population has access to broadband Internet subscriptions. The averages range between 92.1 to 95.8 percent.

The employment status data includes civilians ages 16 and over, with no cut-off age. The data cites that those not in the labor force have lower access rates to broadband Internet subscriptions when compared to the labor force participants who are employed and unemployed. Access to broadband Internet for those who do not participate in the labor force ranges from 84 to 89.2 percentage points, which reflects the National averages for all geographic areas. Tables 23 and 24 provide statistics collected by the Bureau regarding working age and employment status.

Unemployment Rates
At the end of August 2023, the National non-adjusted unemployment rate was 3.9%, and the State non-adjusted unemployment rate was 3.8%. R1 and R3 had identical unemployment rates from September through October 2023, while R2 had the highest unemployment rates throughout the August through November period of the year. Note that R2 has seven counties considered urban and contain rural census tracts as designated by the Office of Rural Health Policy. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, roughly 39 to 80.6 percent of the 13 county populations in R2 reside in urban blocks. Table 25 contains the National, State, and VR region averages of the non-seasonally adjusted unemployment rates for August through 2023.

Table 25: *Local Area Unemployment Rates*

Area	23-Aug	23-Sept	23-Oct	23-Nov	23-Dec	Annual 2023
U.S.	3.9	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.6
Oregon	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.4		
R1	3.7	3.4	3.3	3.4		
R2	4.3	3.9	3.7	3.9		
R3	3.8	3.4	3.3	3.6		

Source: https://data.bls.gov

Occupations: *Occupation describes a person's work on the job.* The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provides data for the most significant occupations within the various States and the Nation. The ten occupations in Oregon reflect the top ten occupations in the U.S. but are in a different rank order. Tables 26 and 27 contain the largest occupations in the U.S. and Oregon.

Table 23: *Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status for the U.S. and Oregon*

| | United States | | | | United States - Urban | | | | United States - Rural | | | |
| | Total | With a computer | | Percent no computer in household | Total | With a computer | | Percent no computer in household | Total | With a computer | | Percent no computer in household |
		Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet			Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet			Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet	
18 to 64 years	196,865,344	94.3%	4.0%	1.6%	159,285,095	94.9%	3.7%	1.4%	37,580,249	91.9%	5.4%	2.6%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS												
Civilian population 16 years and over	260,431,565	92.3%	4.6%	3.0%	207,618,828	93.1%	4.2%	2.6%	52,812,737	89.2%	6.0%	4.5%
In labor force	168,284,498	95.1%	3.6%	1.3%	136,882,560	95.5%	3.3%	1.1%	31,401,938	93.0%	4.8%	2.1%
Employed	161,195,196	95.2%	3.5%	1.3%	130,909,444	95.7%	3.2%	1.1%	30,285,752	93.1%	4.8%	2.0%
Unemployed	7,089,302	92.5%	5.3%	2.1%	5,973,116	92.9%	5.1%	2.0%	1,116,186	90.7%	6.2%	3.0%
Not in labor force	92,147,067	87.2%	6.4%	6.2%	70,736,268	88.3%	6.0%	5.5%	21,410,799	83.7%	7.8%	8.2%
	Oregon				Oregon -- Urban				Oregon -- Rural			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household
		Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet			Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet			Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet	
18 to 64 years	2,520,216	95.5%	3.5%	1.0%	2,081,750	95.9%	3.2%	0.9%	438,466	93.8%	4.6%	1.5%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS												
Civilian population 16 years and over	3,409,604	93.8%	4.0%	2.1%	2,743,377	94.2%	3.7%	2.0%	666,227	92.2%	5.0%	2.6%
In labor force	2,169,343	96.2%	3.0%	0.7%	1,807,407	96.5%	2.8%	0.7%	361,936	94.6%	4.2%	0.9%
Employed	2,080,988	96.2%	3.0%	0.7%	1,733,504	96.6%	2.7%	0.7%	347,484	94.6%	4.3%	0.9%
Unemployed	88,355	94.5%	4.4%	1.2%	73,903	94.1%	4.8%	1.1%	14,452	96.0%	2.4%	1.6%
Not in labor force	1,240,261	89.7%	5.6%	4.5%	935,970	89.8%	5.6%	4.5%	304,291	89.3%	5.8%	4.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 24: *Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status for the VR Regions*

Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status	R1			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer
		Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	
18 to 64 years	1,276,906	95.8%	3.0%	1.1%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	1,628,423	94.1%	3.5%	2.2%
In labor force	1,111,797	96.3%	2.7%	0.9%
Employed	1,056,742	96.4%	2.7%	0.8%
Unemployed	55,055	94.4%	4.3%	1.4%
Not in labor force	516,626	89.2%	5.2%	5.2%
Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status	R2			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer
		Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	
18 to 64 years	970,859	93.6%	4.7%	1.6%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	1,353,490	91.1%	5.3%	3.4%
In labor force	795,232	94.4%	4.2%	1.2%
Employed	747,427	94.6%	4.1%	1.2%
Unemployed	47,805	92.2%	5.9%	1.8%
Not in labor force	558,258	86.4%	6.7%	6.4%
Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status	R3			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer
		Percent Broadband Internet	Percent without Internet	
18 to 64 years	280,989	92.1%	6.0%	1.7%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	391,084	89.5%	6.5%	3.8%
In labor force	239,271	93.0%	5.5%	1.3%
Employed	225,996	93.1%	5.5%	1.3%
Unemployed	13,275	92.1%	5.6%	2.0%
Not in labor force	151,813	84.0%	8.0%	7.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 26: *Occupational Employment Statistics for the U.S.*

Largest occupations in the United States, May 2022

Occupation	Employment
Retail Salespersons	3,640,040
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	3,504,230
General and Operations Managers	3,376,680
Fast Food and Counter Workers	3,325,050
Cashiers	3,296,040
Registered Nurses	3,072,700
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,934,050
Customer Service Representatives	2,879,840
Stockers and Order Fillers	2,842,060
Office Clerks, General	2,517,350

https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/area_emp_chart/area_emp_chart_data.htm#United_States

Table 27: *Occupational Employment Statistics for Oregon*

Largest occupations in Oregon, May 2022

Occupation	Employment
Fast Food and Counter Workers	52,490
General and Operations Managers	51,710
Retail Salespersons	48,590
Stockers and Order Fillers	46,430
Cashiers	40,530
Registered Nurses	37,400
Office Clerks, General	35,420
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	32,170
Customer Service Representatives	30,050
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	26,140

https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/area_emp_chart/area_emp_chart_data.htm#United_States

Top Ten Occupations with the Highest Number of New Help Wanted Online Ads in Oregon

In November 2023, State of Oregon Employment Department economists Luke Coury and Molly Hendrickson published a report at QualityInfo.org regarding help-wanted online ads. The report included data for the top 10 Occupations with the highest number of new help-wanted ads in Oregon and data for help-wanted online ads by county. Tables 28 and 29 contain data published in the report.

Table 28: *Top 10 Occupations with the Newest Help Wanted Online Ads – Oregon 4ᵗʰ Qtr. 2022*

Top 10 Occupations with the Most New Help Wanted OnLine Ads

Oregon, Fourth Quarter 2022

Occupation	New Help Wanted Ads	Difference from Previous Year	Rank in Fourth Quarter 2021
Registered Nurses	4,714	714	1
Retail Salespersons	3,351	-539	2
Managers, All Other	3,246	638	6
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	2,791	-19	4
Customer Service Representatives	2,763	-20	5
Software Developers, Applications	2,380	294	9
Computer Occupations, All Other	2,328	306	10
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	2,317	-175	7
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,982	370	13
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	1,830	-346	8

Source: The Conference Board Help Wanted OnLine (HWOL)

Source: State of Oregon Employment Department. Quality Info. Org;
https://www.qualityinfo.org/documents/20126/110743/Help+Wanted+Online+Index/7479c8cd-8323-8e2d-5211-85344a8d68ed?version=1.104

Table 29: *Help Wanted Ads by County - Oregon*

Help Wanted Online Ads by County

November 2023, Not Seasonally Adjusted

County	Ads	County	Ads	County	Ads
Multnomah	26,345	Polk	885	Wasco	284
Washington	14,879	Klamath	833	Union	214
Clackamas	9,997	Douglas	804	Baker	194
Lane	8,204	Umatilla	716	Curry	138
Marion	7,331	Josephine	670	Morrow	138
Deschutes	4,134	Clatsop	627	Lake	69
Jackson	2,804	Malheur	579	Sherman	41
Benton	2,475	Columbia	486	Grant	37
Linn	2,136	Hood River	462	Wallowa	37
Yamhill	1,945	Jefferson	424	Harney	29
Coos	1,072	Crook	412	Gilliam	25
Lincoln	931	Tillamook	296	Wheeler	5

Source: The Conference Board Help Wanted OnLine (HWOL)

Source: State of Oregon Employment Department. Quality Info. Org;
https://www.qualityinfo.org/documents/20126/110743/Help+Wanted+Online+Index/7479c8cd-8323-8e2d-5211-85344a8d68ed?version=1.104

Regional Industries

The term industry in this section of the report refers to the business conducted by a person's employing organization. The US Census Bureau publishes data from the American Community Survey detailing information on the top industries by employment for the Nation, State, and County in the state. Table 30 displays the top six industries with the most employees in the Nation and Oregon.

The state's list of leading industries by employment reflects the national list, except for finance and insurance and real estate, rental, and leasing listed as leading industries in the urban United States. In contrast, finance and insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing rank in the seventh position in Oregon, and Construction has a slightly higher rate (less than one percentage point) in urban Oregon.

Table 30: *Local Area Top Industries by Employment: U.S. and OR, Including Urban and Rural Averages*

Geographic Area	Industries	Percent
U.S.	1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1) 23.1%
	2) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	2) 12.6%
	3) Retail trade	3) 11.1%
	4) Manufacturing	4) 9.9%
	5) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	5) 8.7%
	6) Construction	6) 6.9%
U.S. Urban	1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1) 23.2%
	2) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	2) 13.4%
	3) Retail trade	3) 11.2%
	4) Manufacturing	4) 9.2%
	5) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	5) 9.1%
	6) Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	6) 7.1%
U.S. Rural	1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1) 22.3%
	2) Manufacturing	2) 12.9%
	3) Retail trade	3) 11.0%
	4) Construction	4) 9.2%
	5) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	5) 8.9%
	6) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	6) 6.8%
Oregon	1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1) 22.8%
	2) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	2) 12.4%
	3) Retail trade	3) 12.2%
	4) Manufacturing	4) 10.4%
	5) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	5) 9.3%
	6) Construction	6) 6.8%

OR Urban	1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1)	23.1%
	2) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	2)	12.8%
	3) Retail trade	3)	12.4%
	4) Manufacturing	4)	10.5%
	5) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	5)	9.6%
	6) Construction	6)	6.2%
OR Rural	1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1)	21.1%
	2) Retail trade	2)	10.8%
	3) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	3)	10.2%
	4) Construction	4)	10.0%
	5) Manufacturing	5)	9.9%
	6) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	6)	7.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Employment, Occupations, Industries, and Labor Force Participation for People with Disabilities

Data on employment, occupations, industries, and labor force participation for people with disabilities is collected and analyzed by various government bureaus and research institutes. This section presents statistics from multiple agencies regarding people with disabilities and their participation in the labor force.

Occupations and Employees with Disabilities

The U.S. Census Bureau collects and analyzes data for the most significant occupations within the various States and the Nation for people with disabilities who are part of the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP). The following tables summarize the percentage rates of the occupations in which people with disabilities are employed.

Table 31: *Distribution of Employed Individuals by Disability Status and Occupation: U.S. and OR*

	United States			Oregon		
	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	42.5%	34.2%	43.2%	43.3%	31.5%	44.4%
Service occupations	16.1%	20.1%	15.8%	17.2%	21.7%	16.8%
Sales and office occupations	19.8%	21.7%	19.7%	19.0%	22.4%	18.6%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	8.5%	8.4%	8.5%	8.7%	9.0%	8.7%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	13.0%	15.5%	12.9%	11.8%	15.3%	11.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Regional Industries and Employees with Disabilities

The U.S. Census Bureau publishes data that provides information on the top industries by employment for people with disabilities. The data represents the total civilian employed population ages 16 and over. The table is designed to identify the sectors that have the highest rates of employees with disabilities and compare the percentage rates of employees with disabilities with the rates of employees without disabilities. Table 32 displays the top 6 industries by employment for people with disabilities in the United States and Oregon. Instead of a region average, counties with the lowest and highest disability populations for ages 16 and over represent the VR regions, as data is unavailable for all Oregon counties. The county population rankings and the disability population count for ages 16 and above are documented in the table for reference.

Table 32: *Local Area Top Industries by Employment: People With & Without Disabilities Ages 16 and Over*

Geographic Area	Industries	With a Disability	No Disability
United States	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.3%	23.1%
	Retail trade	13.7%	10.9%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11.7%	12.7%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.6%	8.6%
	Manufacturing	9.3%	9.9%
	Construction	6.1%	7.0%
Oregon	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	23.2%	22.7%
	Retail trade	15.5%	11.8%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11.1%	12.5%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	11.0%	9.1%
	Manufacturing	9.3%	10.5%
	Construction	5.7%	6.9%
R1 **Clatsop** Disability Pop 16+ = 7,649 Pop Rank = 19	Retail trade	24.8%	14.4%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	14.8%	21.9%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	13.0%	15.0%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	10.0%	8.3%
	Construction	7.4%	8.0%
	Manufacturing	6.0%	9.8%
R1 **Multnomah** Disability Pop 16+ = 99,385 Pop Rank = 1	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	23.3%	23.9%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	13.0%	9.5%
	Retail trade	12.5%	10.5%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	12.2%	16.0%
	Manufacturing	7.6%	9.2%

	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	6.9%	5.3%
R2 **Lincoln** Disability Pop 16+ = 10,948 Pop Rank = 18	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	20.7%	21.8%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	20.3%	19.9%
	Retail trade	14.7%	12.3%
	Construction	12.3%	7.5%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	7.0%	8.1%
	Public administration	5.9%	5.5%
R2 **Lane** Disability Pop 16+ = 61,825 Pop Rank = 4	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	24.5%	26.9%
	Retail trade	16.2%	12.0%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	10.8%	10.2%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.7%	9.8%
	Manufacturing	9.4%	9.9%
	Construction	6.6%	6.8%
R3 **Umatilla** Disability Pop 16+ = 12,188 Pop Rank = 14	Retail trade	22.2%	12.6%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	16.4%	24.2%
	Public administration	11.8%	7.3%
	Manufacturing	9.8%	9.1%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	8.2%	8.4%
	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	6.1%	7.1%
R3 **Deschutes** Disability Pop 16+ = 22,764 Pop Rank = 7	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	26.1%	23.8%
	Retail trade	18.8%	13.1%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	12.0%	11.3%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	9.2%	13.4%
	Construction	8.3%	8.7%
	Manufacturing	7.0%	7.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

United States Department of Labor Disability Employment Statistics

The U.S. Department of Labor provides monthly Disability Employment Statistics. The Labor Force Participation Rate refers to the percentage of non-institutionalized U.S. citizens in the labor force. The unemployment rate measures the percentage of the labor force currently unemployed. The data indicates that labor force participation rates for individuals with disabilities are consistently over 43 points higher than the rate for individuals without disabilities. In addition, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is consistently at least between three and four percentage points higher compared to individuals without disabilities. Table 33 contains the August through December 2023 statistics and the Annual 2023 averages for individuals without and with a disability in the U.S. ages 16 and over.

Table 33: *Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates for PWD in the US.*

Group	Labor Force Participation Rates					
	23-Aug	**23-Sep**	**23-Oct**	**23-Nov**	**23-Dec**	**Annual 2023**
People with Disabilities	24.9%	24.2%	24.4%	24.8%	24.5%	24.2%
People without Disabilities	68.4%	68.3%	68.2%	68.2%	67.6%	68.1%
Unemployment Rate						
People with Disabilities	7.4%	7.3%	7.4%	7.3%	6.7%	7.2%
People without Disabilities	3.8%	3.4%	3.4%	3.3%	3.4%	3.5%

https://www.bls.gov

National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research: Disability Employment Statistics

The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) released the 2022 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium in February 2022, which contains data on employment for people with disabilities ages 18 to 64 years based on the 2021 Public Use Microdata Sample. According to the report, the national employment percentage for individuals aged 18 to 64 living in the community was significantly higher for people without disabilities (76.6%) versus people with disabilities (40.7%). The employment gap, which is the difference between the employment percentage for people with and without disabilities, is 35.9% for the Nation. In 2021, Oregon's employment rate for individuals with disabilities aged 18 to 64 was 42.5%, and the employment rate was 76.6% for individuals without disabilities. The employment gap for Oregon was 34.1%. Compared to the 50 states, Oregon's employment gap ranked 17th in the Nation (lowest rate to highest rate rank order).

County employment rates for people with and without disabilities are also published in the Annual Compendium. The statistics are calculated from 2017-2021 five-year estimates, different from the Public Use Microdata Sample information provided in the previous paragraph. In 2021, the county with the highest employment rate for people with disabilities was Sherman County (55.49%), and the county with the lowest employment rate for people with disabilities was Wheeler County (20.6%). Sherman County and Wheeler County are in VR Service Region #3. Table 34 details the employment rates for people with and without disabilities for each county in Oregon and includes Oregon statewide averages using the five-year estimates.

Table 34: *Employment of Civilians with and without Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community: Oregon and Counties – 2021*

County	Disability: Percent Employed	No Disability: Percent Employed	Employment Gap
Oregon	**41.1**	**77.8**	36.7
Baker	27.6	75.9	48.3
Benton	43.5	69.8	26.3
Clackamas	45.1	78.8	33.7
Clatsop	42.3	77.3	35
Columbia	29.4	77.5	48.1
Coos	31.8	72.8	41
Crook	39.5	75.5	36
Curry	32.4	69.8	37.4
Deschutes	42.2	78.7	36.5
Douglas	37.1	71.9	34.8

Gilliam	26.4	77.4	51
Grant	47.9	76.2	28.3
Harney	21.9	73.4	51.5
Hood River	50.9	82.2	31.3
Jackson	32.4	76.3	43.9
Jefferson	36.1	72.3	36.2
Josephine	34.8	70	35.2
Lake	33.4	73.6	40.2
Lane	40.5	74.9	34.4
Lincoln	36.6	70.5	33.9
Linn	39.1	75.9	36.8
Malheur	40.6	73.3	32.7
Marion	43.3	77.3	34
Morrow	36	73.2	37.2
Multnomah	44.7	81	36.3
Polk	37.1	78.3	41.2
Sherman	55.4	72.6	17.2
Tillamook	30.7	75.4	44.7
Umatilla	38.2	76.9	38.7
Union	39.2	73.5	34.3
Wallowa	54.3	80.1	25.8
Wasco	32.4	78.8	46.4
Washington	49.2	80.8	31.6
Wheeler	20.6	70	49.4
Yamhill	42.5	78.4	35.9

Source: Paul, S., Rogers, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A. (2023). 2023 State Report for Oregon County-Level Data: Employment. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. Take from U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. https://data.census.gov. Based on a sample and subject to sampling variability.
[1] The percentage of people with disabilities who are employed.
[2] The percentage of people without disabilities who are employed.

The NIDILRR also publishes statistics regarding employment based on disability type for individuals aged 18 to 64 with disabilities. The following data in Table 35 contains the National and State employment rates by disability type from 2021 published in the 2022 Annual Compendium. The categories are for non-institutionalized civilians ages 18 to 64, male and female, from all ethnic backgrounds, and include all education levels.

Table 35: *2021 Employment by Disability Type for Civilians Ages 18 to 64*

Disability Type	U.S. Percent Employed	OR Percent Employed
Any Disability	40.7%	42.5%
Hearing Disability	55.1%	59.5%

Visual Disability	47.9%	47.3%
Cognitive Disability	33.6%	33.4%
Ambulatory Disability	26.4%	27.8%
Self-Care Disability	15.7%	17.4%
Independent Living Disability	20.2%	24.0%

Source: Paul, S., Rogers, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A. (2023). Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2023 (Table 3.7). Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability.

U.S. Census Bureau Labor Force Participation (LPF) Statistics

The United States Census Bureau publishes various statistics regarding people with disabilities and their participation in the labor force. The following three statistics contain data regarding labor force participation and employment of people with disabilities.

Labor Force Participation Rates (LPF)

The labor force participation rate represents the proportion of the population in the labor force. Of the total population aged 16 years and older residing in the United States who report having a disability, 28.1% are employed and participating in the Labor Force, while approximately 69.2% are not in the Labor Force. The State of Oregon's average for those who report a disability and are employed is 29%, while 67.8% of those who report a disability are not engaged in the Labor Force. Table 36 provides data based on disability status and employment for ages 16 and over from the U.S. Census Bureau for 2022 for the Nation and the State.

Table 36: *LFP - Total Civilian Non-institutionalized Population (TCNP) Age 16 and Over: U.S. and OR*

	United States			Oregon		
	TCNP	**With a Disability**	**No Disability**	**TCNP**	**With a Disability**	**No Disability**
Population Age 16 and Over	264,618,455	41,295,440	223,323,015	3,469,012	624,943	2,844,069
Employed	61.4%	28.1%	67.6%	60.4%	29.0%	67.3%
Not in Labor Force	35.8%	69.2%	29.7%	36.9%	67.8%	30.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Employment-to-Population Ratio – People with Disabilities

The employment-to-population ratio is derived by dividing the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 64 years who are employed by the total civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 64 years and multiplying by 100. The employment-to-population ratio indicates the ratio of the civilian labor force currently employed to the total working-age population of the designated geographic area, which is different from the labor force participation rate because the labor force participation rate includes currently employed and those who are unemployed but actively looking for work.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau collect and analyze the employment-population ratio for people with disabilities by State, County, and urban and rural geography. The State's employment-to-population ratio for people with disabilities is 1.1 percent higher than the Nation's ratio. Oregon ranked 24th highest for employment-to-population ratio for people with disabilities in 2022 when compared to other states in the Nation. Table 37 contains the 2022 employment-to-population ratios for people with a disability aged 18 to 64 years in the nation, state, fifteen counties, eight cities, and six urban areas.

Table 37: *Employment-to-Population Ratio for People with Disabilities Ages 18-64: U.S. and OR*

State/ Urban – Rural/County/City/Urban Areas	
Geographic Area	**Percent**
United States	44.5
United States – Urban	45.9
United States – Rural	39.6
Oregon	45.6
Oregon – Urban	47.6
Oregon – Rural	36.4
Counties	
Benton County	48.3
Clackamas County	49.8
Deschutes County	51.5
Douglas County	31.4
Jackson County	40.8
Josephine County	31.1
Klamath County	34.2
Lane County	41.7
Linn County	52.8
Marion County	43.9
Multnomah County	51.5
Polk County	50
Umatilla County	48.2
Washington County	53.7
Yamhill County	38.3
Cities	
Beaverton city	48.9
Bend city	68.8
Eugene city	42.9
Gresham city	46.7
Hillsboro city	68.4
Medford city	48.8
Portland city	51.9
Salem city	46.2
Urban Areas	
Bend, OR Urban Area (2020)	69.5
Corvallis, OR Urban Area (2020)	45.7
Eugene, OR Urban Area (2020)	43
Longview, WA--OR Urban Area (2020)	37.1
Portland, OR--WA Urban Area (2020)	51.6
Salem, OR Urban Area (2020)	42.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Employment Status by Disability Status and Type

Employment status by disability type is estimated for the population ages 18 years to 64 years by the U.S. Census Bureau. The U.S. average for individuals with cognitive disabilities (41.1%) ranks the highest for labor force participation when compared to other disabilities. The State average for individuals with cognitive disabilities also ranks the highest for labor force participation and is 6.3 percent higher than the National

average. The lowest labor force participation rates among those reporting a disability in the Nation and the State are individuals reporting a self-care difficulty, with rates identical at 6.1 percentage points.

Klamath County has a significantly higher labor force participation rate (12.8%) for people with disabilities ages 18 to 64 years. The rate is higher than the National rate by 6.3 percent and higher than the State average by almost 5 percent. Cognitive disability is the most frequently reported disability type among those who are employed and have a disability in Klamath County. Klamath County's labor force participation rate for individuals with independent living disabilities is lower than the U.S. average by 7.5 percent. Umatilla County's labor force participation rate for those with ambulatory disabilities exceeds the National and State rates by over 12 percent. This information is presented to help inform VR as it engages in strategic planning for the future.

Table 38 contains labor force participation rates from 2022 for the Nation and the State. Region averages are from counties with the highest and lowest population counts for ages 18 to 64 years obtained from available 2022 one-year estimates.

Table 38: *Employment Status by Disability Status and Type: U.S., OR, and Regions*

Employment Status by Disability Status and Type: U.S., OR, and Regions	United States	Oregon
Total 18 - 64 years:	199,645,753	2,564,602
In labor force:	78.5%	78.8%
Employed:	95.8%	95.8%
With a disability	6.5%	7.9%
Hearing	23.6%	25.4%
Vision	22.1%	18.5%
Cognitive	41.1%	47.4%
Ambulatory	26.6%	23.8%
Self-care	6.1%	6.1%
Independent Living	18.9%	21.5%
No disability	93.5%	92.1%
Unemployed:	4.2%	4.2%
With a disability	15.1%	20.3%
No disability	84.9%	79.7%
Not in labor force:	21.5%	21.2%
With a disability	26.1%	30.5%
No disability	73.9%	69.5%
LFP employed & unemployed w/ disability	6.9%	8.5%
LFP employed & unemployed w/o disability	93.1%	91.5%
Total Pop w/ disability	11.0%	13.1%
Total Pop w/o disability	89.0%	86.9%
Region 1	**Yamhill**	**Multnomah**
Total 18 - 64 years:	63,582	534,656
In labor force:	76.2%	83.1%
Employed:	96.7%	95.8%
With a disability	7.8%	7.9%
Hearing	35.1%	21.7%
Vision	19.0%	21.3%
Cognitive	30.2%	54.2%
Ambulatory	28.5%	22.9%
Self-care	2.8%	7.2%

Independent Living	21.3%	24.1%
No disability	92.2%	92.1%
Unemployed:	3.3%	4.2%
With a disability	8.6%	18.8%
No disability	91.4%	81.2%
Not in labor force:	23.8%	16.9%
With a disability	37.9%	31.5%
No disability	62.1%	68.5%
LFP employed & unemployed w/ disability	7.8%	8.4%
LFP employed & unemployed w/o disability	92.2%	91.6%
Total Pop w/ disability	15.0%	12.3%
Total Pop w/o disability	85.0%	87.7%
Region 2	**Klamath**	**Lane**
Total 18 - 64 years:	39,478	234,126
In labor force:	62.7%	77.5%
Employed:	94.6%	94.8%
With a disability	12.8%	8.9%
Hearing	23.3%	30.6%
Vision	20.6%	22.8%
Cognitive	58.3%	49.9%
Ambulatory	30.5%	25.0%
Self-care	12.5%	8.0%
Independent Living	11.4%	23.6%
No disability	87.2%	91.1%
Unemployed:	5.4%	5.2%
With a disability	23.3%	19.4%
No disability	76.7%	80.6%
Not in labor force:	37.3%	22.5%
With a disability	37.2%	37.1%
No disability	62.8%	62.9%
LFP employed & unemployed w/ disability	13.4%	9.4%
LFP employed & unemployed w/o disability	86.6%	90.6%
Total Pop w/ disability	22.3%	15.6%
Total Pop w/o disability	77.7%	84.4%
Region 3	**Umatilla**	**Deschutes**
Total 18 - 64 years:	43,541	123,068
In labor force:	81.5%	81.1%
Employed:	97.2%	96.9%
With a disability	7.6%	5.8%
Hearing	34.6%	32.0%
Vision	21.8%	14.8%
Cognitive	22.2%	40.1%
Ambulatory	38.9%	24.0%
Self-care	8.1%	3.6%
Independent Living	23.0%	15.3%
No disability	92.4%	94.2%
Unemployed:	2.8%	3.1%

With a disability	5.0%	23.7%
No disability	95.0%	76.3%
Not in labor force:	18.5%	18.9%
With a disability	34.4%	19.7%
No disability	65.6%	80.3%
LFP employed & unemployed w/ disability	7.6%	6.4%
LFP employed & unemployed w/o disability	92.4%	93.6%
Total Pop w/ disability	12.5%	8.9%
Total Pop w/o disability	87.5%	91.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Agency-Specific Data Related to Overall Performance

General Information for All Individuals Served

The SDSU project team requested data from ODHS VR on overall agency performance and case movement. The data provided by ODHS VR is presented throughout the report in the applicable areas. Table 39 contains general information for all ODHS VR consumers for Program Years 2020-2022.

Table 39: General Data for all ODHS VR clients PYs 2010-2022

Item	All Participants		
	PY 2020	**PY 2021**	**PY 2022**
Applications	4194	4583	5560
Percent of all applications	100	100	100
Percent of apps found eligible	79.66	76.48	81.49
Percent of apps that had a determination made within 60 days	68.38	66.46	70.76
Significance of Disability			
Disabled	365	399	486
% of total	8.7	8.71	8.74
Significant	272	301	360
% of total	6.49	6.57	6.47
Most significant	3408	3716	4523
% of total	81.26	81.08	81.35
Percent closed prior to IPE development	18.76	24.48	26.03
Plans developed	3407	3461	4113
Percent of plans developed within 90 days	57.65	61.49	61.95
Number of consumers in training by type			
Vocational	181	185	184
Undergraduate	84	87	112
Graduate	18	19	15
Number of cases closed rehabilitated	1922	2257	2090
Employment rate at exit	46.57	58.34	56.81
Employment rate in 2nd quarter after exit	57.7	49.7	50.7
Employment rate in 4th quarter after exit	52.81	48.19	48.7

Median wages of all exited participants	2750.71	2567.98	2543.8
Total number of cases served	12240	11695	12657
Avg. cost of all cases	3363.98	2854.94	1522.94
Avg. cost of cases closed rehabilitated	5596.47	6638.95	7422.31
Avg. cost per case closed unsuccessful	2750.02	3392.45	3117.55
Avg. cost per case closed prior to plan	968.96	954.21	935.14

The data indicates the number of individuals who applied for services from ODHS VR increased from 4194 in PY 2020, amid the pandemic, to 5560 in 2022. The reduced number of applications in PY 202 is congruent with other national data, indicating a significant decrease in applications during this period. It is promising that the agency has sustained a steady rate of applications to the program coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as an increased percentage of those found eligible, moving from 79.66% to 81.49% during the same time. Also, during these three years, ODHS VR saw a fluctuation in the percentage of applicants made eligible within 60 days, moving from 79.66 (PY20) to 76.48 (PY21) to 81.49 (PY22). While the PY 22 numbers are improved, this is an area of concern for the agency as RSA requires a minimum threshold of 90% of applicants found eligible for two consecutive quarters when they conduct monitoring reviews. ODHS VR will need to determine why staff are having difficulty completing eligibility determinations within 60 days as required by 34 CFR 361.42. The number of IPEs developed by ODHS VR increased from PY 2020 to 2022 by 706 individuals, which may be due to the pandemic, but also during this time, the percentage of those closed before IPE development increased by 7.3%. However, the percentage of plans written within 90 days of eligibility increased by 4.3% over the period of review.

The number of individuals receiving training support has increased slightly over the period, with 13.2% of the total participants in plan pursuing vocational, undergraduate, or graduate education. ODHS VR needs to continue to expand its efforts under the Inclusive Career Advancement Program with community colleges to other training and institutions of higher education to ensure the agency improves credential attainment rates and measurable skill gains. In fact, according to the RSA 911 Case Service Data, the Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) rate for ODHS VR for PY 2022 was 25.5% compared to the national average of 43.3%. Further, participants of ODHS VR experienced a seven percent decrease in employment rate in the second quarter after exit over the three years, moving from 57.7% to 50.7%, but still above the national average of 48.6%. The employment rate in the fourth quarter after exit also decreased by four percent from PY 2020-2022, but it remains above the national average of 44%. This decline should be monitored closely and better understood by ODHS VR to ensure this downward trend does not continue in future years. The median quarterly earnings of all exited participants decreased from $2750 (PY20) to $2543 (PY22). Again, this trend should be explored more deeply, particularly considering an increased minimum wage over time. Finally, the average cost for all cases decreased dramatically by $1840.41, while the average cost for individuals closed successfully increased by $1825.41 during this period. This indicates resources are being potentially devoted to positive outcomes.

General Information by Gender and Age

The SDSU project team requested data from ODHS VR by gender to explore potential differences in services for any group. Table 40 contains the results of this analysis.

Table 40: *General Data by Gender and Age*

Item	Year		
	2020	**2021**	**2022**
Percent of female consumers	43.85	43.57	44.03
Percent of male consumers	54.96	54.77	53.85

Percent Not Disclosed	1.19	1.66	2.12
Employment rate at exit for females	45.67	58.02	55.93
Employment rate at exit for males	47.35	58.77	57.37
Employment rate of those not disclosed	36.84	46.67	61.11
Median earnings of those closed as successfully rehabilitated – female	2707.18	2711.6	2504.49
Median earnings of those closed as successfully rehabilitated – male	2794.91	2436.06	2577.77
Median earnings of those closed as successfully rehabilitated - Undisclosed	2260.66	2921.25	2628
Avg. cost of cases closed rehabilitated - females	5035.19	6509.72	6896.41
Avg. cost of cases closed rehabilitated - males	6008.98	6800.57	7874.5
Avg. cost of cases closed rehabilitated – Undisclosed	8070.98	4667.53	5301.18
Percent of all served - Ages 14-24	27.44	31.36	29.91
Percent of all served - 25-64	67.41	64.13	64.78
Percent of all served - 65 and over	5.15	4.52	5.31

The data from the period indicates that those identified as male applied for services at a rate 9% percent higher than females, with 2.2% identifying as not disclosed. However, over time, the differences in employment rate at exit for females and males were less than two percent across the three years and almost no difference in PY 2021. In addition, the difference in median earnings favored males by $73.00 in PY22 but leaned toward females by $275 in PY21. There is also a trend of significantly increased costs to support males ($7874.50) to females ($6896.41) to close successfully. 24 and younger now constitute more than half of the VR population nationally; ODHS VR's statistics do not bear true to this reality. Given the emphasis on serving youth, particularly students, ODHS VR should explore this in greater detail, considering the changes made to the Youth Transition Program (YTP) over the past year.

The data demonstrates a fluctuation in ODHS's services to youth over the period of review. While the percentage increased by four percent in PY21, the numbers fell by two percent in PY22. While youth ages

Case Service Expenditures

The SDSU project team examined the case service expenditures by category for ODHS VR for the three years under study. The examination explored the primary service categories outlined in Table 42 but is not a specific case service code analysis. Only service categories with expenditures are listed, except for spending on specific categories that increase or decrease.

Table 42: *Case Service Expenditures*

Expenditure by Service Category			
Service Category	**Amount spent per program year**		
	2020	**2021**	**2022**
Childcare	$3,200.00	$0.00	$7,800.00
Clothing	$189,380.71	$193,740.66	$53,318.27
Employment Services	$2,609,276.27	$3,216,328.97	$1,785,926.78
Group Services	$183,690.64	$220,659.67	$103,989.63
Interpreter Service	$0.00	$0.00	$93,529.74
Job Placement Services - CONTRACT	$5,200,255.00	$6,403,689.10	$7,707,535.01
Maintenance - increased cost	$6,927.12	$21,288.36	$88,505.57

Medical/psychological	$1,289,249.57	$1,214,129.61	$1,590,084.98
Other Goods and Services	$338,637.85	$250,963.69	$287,746.54
Personal Assistance Services	$66,969.08	$166,224.63	$22,488.45
Rehabilitation technology	$1,779,154.07	$1,978,568.33	$2,679,837.60
Self-Employment Preparation	$0.00	$0.00	$32,367.50
Training	$1,592,655.14	$1,514,184.40	$1,578,906.16
Transportation	$175,340.62	$237,420.54	$601,827.11
Vocational Exploration	$771,595.71	$904,062.77	$712,909.78

The expenditure data provided by ODHS VR indicates Job Placement Services and Employment Services make up the most significant percentage of case service dollars spent from 2020 to 2022. These primary services are then supported by expenditures in training, medical and psychological services, and rehabilitation technology. This demonstrates a balanced approach toward funding services to help the agency's focus on employment. Further, the increased expenditure on transportation indicates positive momentum towards meeting a need identified throughout the focus group and survey responses.

Survey Results by Type
INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

In the Overall Performance section of the report, general information about the respondents to the individual survey is presented, as well as responses to questions that address consumer perspectives about the overall performance of ODHS VR. Results consistent with the other report portions will be reported in those sections.

Surveys were distributed electronically via Qualtrics, a web-based survey application. There were 1281 valid surveys completed. In some cases, individual respondents chose not to answer select questions on the survey but did complete the entire survey and submit it. This accounts for the variance in survey responses to some questions.

Individual Survey: Respondent Demographics

Individual survey respondents were asked to identify their age. A total of 485 respondents indicated their age. The most significant percentage of respondents were between 25 and 64 (75.1 percent), followed by individuals under 25 (15.3 percent). Table 43 summarizes the age of the respondents.

Table 43: *Individual Survey: Age of Respondents*

Age Range of Respondents	Number	Percent
25-64	364	75.1%
under 25	74	15.3%
65 and over	47	9.7%
Total	485	100.0%

Respondents were asked to identify the county where they live to determine the VR service region where the respondent receives VR assistance. The results of this question reflect the state's total population, as 47.7 percent of the population resides in Region 1, about 40 percent lives in R2, and 12.1 percent resides in R3. Table 44 details the survey results.

Table 44: *Individual Survey: County of Residence*

County of Residence	Number	Percent
Region 1 (Counties: Clatsop, Columbia, Washington, Clackamas, Multnomah, Yamhill)	237	49.5%
Region 2 (Counties: Tillamook, Polk, Marion, Lincoln, Benton, Linn, Coos, Douglas, Lane, Curry, Josephine, Jackson, Klamath)	199	41.5%
Region 3 (Counties: Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Jefferson, Wheeler, Grant, Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Lake, Harney, Malheur)	43	9.0%
Total	479	100.0%

Individual Survey: Disability Types

Individual survey respondents were asked two questions regarding their disability.

Primary Disability

Respondents were presented with a checklist and asked to identify their primary disability. A total of 462 individuals identified their primary disability. The margin of difference between the most frequently cited disability by individual survey respondents (Mental Health) and Autism Spectrum Disorder, the second most cited disability in response to the question, is less than one percent. Items listed in the narrative comments in response to the item "other" included various physical and learning disabilities: ADD; Autism; ADHD; anxiety; arthritis; brain injury; Crohn's Disease; Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome; epilepsy; bilateral leg edema; Graves' Disease; genetic disorder; memory loss; degenerative disc disease; neurological; physical; auditory processing disorder; sleeping disorder; and learning disabilities. Table 45 details the survey results in response to the question.

Table 45: *Individual Survey: Primary Disability*

Primary Disability	Number	Percent
Mental Health	88	19.1%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	85	18.4%
Physical	70	15.2%
Other (please describe)	42	9.1%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	35	7.6%
Mobility	33	7.1%
Developmental Disability (DD)	31	6.7%
Intellectual Disability (ID)	30	6.5%
Traumatic Brain Injury	23	5.0%
No impairment	16	3.5%
Blindness or visually impaired	5	1.1%
Communication	3	0.7%
Deaf-Blind	1	0.2%
Total	462	

Secondary Disability

Respondents were also asked to identify their secondary disabling condition if they had one. Four hundred-eight individuals answered the question. Once again, a narrow margin of difference exists between the most frequently cited item, Mental Health, and the item, no impairment. The 44 respondents who cited "other" reported items like the narrative comments recorded in the previous question regarding primary disability

along with the following: autoimmune disorder, cancer, neuro-divergent, slow processing speed, fibromyalgia, and PTSD. Table 46 details the results.

Table 46: *Individual Survey: Secondary Disability*

Secondary Disability	Number	Percent
Mental Health	87	21.3%
No impairment	82	20.1%
Physical	57	14.0%
Other (please describe)	44	10.8%
Mobility	29	7.1%
Intellectual disability (ID)	27	6.6%
Developmental Disability (DD)	22	5.4%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	20	4.9%
Communication	16	3.9%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	10	2.5%
Traumatic Brain Injury	9	2.2%
Blindness or visually impaired	5	1.2%
Deaf-Blind	0	0.0%
Total	408	100.0%

Individual Survey: Association with VR

Individuals who responded to the survey were presented with two questions asking them to identify the statement that best described their association with VR by identifying their client status, referral source, and reasons for seeking VR assistance.

Client Status

A narrow majority of respondents (38.1%) indicated they were previous clients of VR, and their cases were closed. Fifty-two individuals out of the 55 respondents who selected "other" and provided a narrative response indicated that they were either past clients, special education teachers, parents, family members of current or former clients, county case managers, AFH providers; job coaches; employment service providers; guardians; caregivers; and current and previous clients who are frustrated with counselors and expressed various difficulties trying to obtain VR services. The responses to this question appear in Table 47.

Table 47: *Individual Survey: Client Status*

Client Association with OR VR	Number	Percent
I am a previous client of Oregon VR; my case has been closed	194	38.1%
I am a current client of Oregon VR	191	37.5%
Other (please describe)	55	10.8%
I have never used the services of Oregon VR	51	10.0%
I am not familiar with Oregon VR	18	3.5%
Total	509	

Length of Association with VR

Individuals who responded to the survey were presented with a question that asked them to identify the statement that best described their length of association with VR.

Although about one-fourth of the respondents reported that they had been associated with VR for one year, almost 30% of the 416 respondents indicated that they had been associated with VR for less than one year. The responses to this question appear in Table 48.

Table 48: *Individual Survey: Length of Association with VR*

Length of Association with VR	Number	Percent
Less than 1 year	124	29.8%
1 year	103	24.8%
2-5 years	132	31.7%
6-9 years	28	6.7%
10 years or greater	29	7.0%
Total	416	100.0%

Individual Survey: Relationship with Counselor

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their relationship with their VR counselor.

Meeting Location

When asked where they usually met with their counselor, over 38% of the respondents indicated they met at an Oregon VR office. One-quarter of the respondents indicated that they do not have a case facilitator. Less than 4% met with their counselor in the community or school. Table 49 summarizes the meeting locations reported by respondents.

Table 49: *Individual Survey: Meeting Location*

Meeting Location	Number	Percent
I go to an Oregon VR office	158	38.3%
I don't have an Oregon VR case facilitator	100	24.2%
We meet remotely by video conference	88	21.3%
We meet remotely by phone	53	12.8%
In my community/school	14	3.4%
Total	413	100.0%

Number of VR Counselors

A separate question asked respondents to indicate how many counselors they have had. Almost 41.5% of the 416 respondents who answered the question reported having one counselor. Respondents with four or more counselors make up nearly 10% of the respondents (n=40). Table 50 includes the results from the survey.

Table 50: *Individual Survey: Number of VR Counselors*

Number of VR Counselors	Number	Percent
1	172	41.4%
2	102	24.5%
I have never had an Oregon VR counselor	60	14.4%
3	42	10.1%
More than 4	24	5.8%
4	16	3.9%
Total	416	100.0%

Ability to Reach a Counselor

Individual survey respondents were presented with a five-point response scale (with responses ranging from "always" to "never") and asked to indicate how often they were able to reach their counselor when needed.

Almost an equal number of the respondents indicated that they were either "usually" or "always" able to reach their counselor when needed. The responses to this question are found in Table 51.

Table 51: *Individual Survey: Ability to Reach a Counselor*

Ability to Reach a Counselor	Number	Percent
Usually	103	26.2%
Always	102	26.0%
Sometimes	93	23.7%
Rarely	50	12.7%
Never	45	11.5%
Total	393	100.0%

Ability to Get Along with Counselor

Respondents were presented with another five-point response scale (with responses ranging from "excellent" to "terrible") and asked to rate their ability to get along with their counselor. Over one-third of the 377 respondents selected "excellent" when asked how well they get along with their counselor. The response results are identified in Table 52.

Table 52: *Individual Survey: Getting Along with Counselor*

Getting Along with Counselor	Number	Percent
Excellent	145	38.5%
Good	105	27.9%
So-so	74	19.6%
Poor	29	7.7%
Terrible	24	6.4%
Total	377	100.0%

Individual Survey: VR Services Delivered Remotely Since COVID

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, VR offices modified service delivery for clients to include remote services. Individual survey respondents were asked two questions regarding the remote services.

Services Delivered Remotely Since COVID

Individual respondents were provided a list of services and asked to identify the services delivered to them remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Roughly one-quarter of the individual survey respondents (n=159 out of 401) who answered the question indicated that they did not receive remote VR services during the COVID pandemic. Less than 21% of respondents indicated receiving job development and/or job placement services. Fifteen of the 62 narrative responses cited check-ins, benefits/career/personal counseling, and/or IPE goals. Sixteen narrative responses indicated phrases such as "none" or "I didn't receive help," along with various frustrations about why help was not received. Two narrative responses indicated that assistive devices were received, and six comments noted assistance with education/tuition/obtaining certificates.

Table 53: *Individual Survey: VR Services Delivered Remotely Since COVID*

VR Services Delivered Remotely Since COVID	Number	Percent
I have not received any services from Oregon VR remotely during the pandemic	159	27.9%
Job development and/or job placement	119	20.8%
Career Counseling	104	18.2%
Other (please describe)	62	10.9%
Job support to keep a job	57	10.0%
Benefits counseling	43	7.5%
Assistive technology	27	4.7%
Total	571	100.0%

Effectiveness of VR Remote Services

The respondents who utilized remote services were asked to rate the effectiveness of the services. Two hundred thirty-four respondents answered the subsequent question. A gap of 4.3% and a difference of ten respondents separates the options of "extremely effective" and "effective" when rating the effectiveness of VR's remote services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Roughly 31% of respondents (n=73) indicated that remote services during the pandemic were either "less effective" or "not effective at all." Table 54 details the effectiveness ratings for remote services as cited by respondents

Table 54: *Individual Survey: Effectiveness of Remote Services*

Effectiveness of Remote Services	Number	Percent
Effective	64	27.4%
Extremely effective	54	23.1%
Somewhat effective	43	18.4%
Not effective at all	41	17.5%
Less effective	32	13.7%
Total	234	100.0%

Individual Survey: Comments Regarding Oregon VR and the Services

An open-ended survey question relating to the overall performance of Oregon VR asked individual respondents if there were anything else they would like to add to the survey regarding VR or its services. A total of 203 narrative responses were received. Forty-five of the comments were positive and included citing gratitude to specific individuals and VR services. Twenty-seven respondents wrote they did not have anything additional to add or wrote phrases such as "N/A," "No," or "None." Ninety-seven comments cited frustration with VR counselors, staff, and service delivery issues, with remarks referencing not receiving help or containing specific details on why the program is poor. Four comments were supportive of VR staff and detailed frustration with service providers. Quotes from the comments are:

- *"I very much appreciate being able to be accepted into the program. I don't know if I was expecting too much, but I thought it would be a little bit more co-involved... more personally helping us step-by-step instead of just checking in occasionally."*
- *"I appreciate my VR counselor helping to get a scooter. I'm used to going to the office every day!"*
- *"Make the VR workers get hands-on experience in the real world instead of hiring them right out of college with no experience of how the real world works."*
- *"I've been with VR since 2018; this is my 5th worker and my second unfulfilled employment plan. I've been homeless a few times, and I'm about to be homeless again because I'm not earning any money. The workers don't do anything and don't experience any consequences for that, so there's no motivation for them to do their jobs. It anyone knows of any organization that will get me working, or one that will house me and my daughter, please contact me."*
- *"Thank you so much for your services. It literally has helped save my life from major depression with suicidal thoughts. People need a career not only for financial freedom but also for a sense of contributing to society and increased self-esteem. Thank you so much for your services. You have made a positive impact in my life which I needed so very much."*
- *"I've been in this for one year and have not had one interview or any kind of benefit from being enrolled. This service has not helped me at all, no exaggerations."*
- *"The staff at Oregon VR exceeded expectations every time. I cannot express enough my gratitude for them guiding me and believing in me until I learned how to believe in myself. I have been successfully employed for over a year due to VR funding my Bachelor's degree in engineering."*

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Survey: Respondent Characteristics

The first survey question asked partners to classify their organization. All organization categories were represented in the survey. Most respondents (40.9%) cited their organization as a "developmental disability organization." Categories expressed in the narrative comments included VR, VRC, transition programs, tribal government, job coaches, in-home care, parents, foster care, supported education services, residential care providers, and retired advocates. Table 55 identifies the classifications indicated by partner respondents.

Table 55: *Partner Survey: Organization Type*

Organization Type	Number	Percent
Developmental Disability Organization	217	40.9%
Community Rehabilitation Program/Provider of VR Services	93	17.6%
Other (please describe)	60	11.3%
Other Federal, State, or Local Government Entity	43	8.1%
Individual Service Provider	39	7.4%
Other Public or Private Organization	26	4.9%
Secondary School	25	4.7%
Mental Health Provider	11	2.1%
Postsecondary school	7	1.3%
Client Advocacy Organization	7	1.3%
Medical Provider	1	0.2%
Veteran's Agency	1	0.2%
Total	530	100.0%

Partners were provided a list and asked to identify the part of the State their organization served. There was no limit to the number of regions a partner could choose. A total of 528 respondents answered the question. The area of the state cited the fewest times by partners was Region 3. Note that almost an equal number and percentage of the respondents serve in VR Region 1 and VR Region 2. Table 56 includes this information.

Table 56: *Partner Survey: Region Served by Community Partner Organizations*

Region Work in	Number	Percent
Region 1 (Counties: Clatsop, Columbia, Washington, Clackamas, Multnomah, Yamhill)	246	40.8%
Region 2 (Counties: Tillamook, Polk, Marion, Lincoln, Benton, Linn, Coos, Douglas, Lane, Curry, Josephine, Jackson, Klamath)	243	40.3%
Region 3 (Counties: Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Jefferson, Wheeler, Grant, Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Lake, Harney, Malheur)	114	18.9%
Total	603	100.0%

Partners were given a list and asked to identify the client populations they worked with regularly. There were no limitations to the number of client populations a partner respondent could choose. Less than one percentage point difference exists between the client population of "individuals that need supported employment" (80.7%, n=417 partners) and "individuals with autism spectrum disorder" (80.1%, n=414 partners) in response to the question regarding client populations partners serve. The client population of "veterans" was identified least frequently by partners. Respondents who selected the "other" category

reported a wide range of disability populations, including intellectual disabilities, mental health, TBI, criminal backgrounds, elderly, minor disabilities, and substance abuse.

Table 57: *Partner Survey: Client Populations Served Regularly*

Client Populations Served	Number of times chosen	Percent of total number of respondents
Individuals that need supported employment	417	80.7%
Individuals with autism spectrum disorder	414	80.1%
Individuals with the most significant disabilities	340	65.8%
Individuals from unserved or underserved populations	284	54.9%
Transition-age youth (14-24)	275	53.2%
Individuals that are racial or ethnic minorities	263	50.9%
Individuals that are deaf	149	28.8%
Individuals that are blind	119	23.0%
Individuals served by WorkSource Oregon (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers)	96	18.6%
Veterans	66	12.8%
Other (please describe)	48	9.3%
Total	2,471	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: Respondent Characteristics

The first survey question asked staff to identify their job classification. Fifty percent of the staff respondents identified as a vocational rehabilitation counselor. Table 58 details the job titles and the selections of the staff respondents.

Table 58: *Staff Survey: Staff Job Classification*

Job Classification	Number	Percent
Rehabilitation Counselor	14	50.0%
Support Staff	7	25.0%
Operations or Fiscal Staff	3	10.7%
Administrator/Executive	2	7.1%
Supervisor/Manager	1	3.6%
Business Services Representative	1	3.6%
Total	28	100.0%

The second survey question asked staff to indicate the number of years they have held their current position. The results in Table 59 indicate most staff are relatively new to the job, serving in their current roles for less than one year and up to five years (57.2%).

Table 59: *Years in Current Position: Staff Respondents*

Years in Current Role	Number	Percent
1-5 years	12	42.9%
11-20 years	5	17.9%

Less than one year	4	14.3%
6-10 years	4	14.3%
21+ years	3	10.7%
Total	28	100.0%

The third survey question asked staff respondents to identify the region(s) where they work. There was no limit to the number of response options a respondent could choose. A total of 28 staff responded to this survey item. Region 1 was selected the fewest times by staff in response to the question. Table 60 details the information.

Table 60: *Staff Survey: Regions Served*

Region Served	Number	Percent
Region 2	15	53.6%
Region 3	7	25.0%
Central Office	5	17.9%
Region 1	1	3.6%
Total	28	100.0%

Staff Survey: Services that VR is Most Effective in Providing

Respondents were provided a list of 18 items related to the organization's overall performance and asked to identify the services that VR is most effective in delivering to VR clients, directly or through community partners. There was no limit to the number of items a staff respondent could choose. A total of 17 staff responded to the question.

Staff cited "job development," "assistive technology services," and "job training" as the services Oregon VR is the most effective in providing to clients. The open-ended category "other" was not selected by respondents. Table 61 lists the services, the number of times each item was selected, and the percent of the total number of respondents that answered the question.

Table 61: *Staff Survey: Services VR is Most Effective in Providing Clients Directly or Through Partners*

Services VR Staff Most Effective in Providing (Directly or Through Partners)	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Job development services	13	76.5%
Assistive technology	12	70.6%
Job training services (TWE, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)	10	58.8%
Other transportation assistance	8	47.1%
Other education services	7	41.2%
Vehicle modification assistance	7	41.2%
Benefit planning assistance	7	41.2%
Career Ladder/Pathways counseling	6	35.3%
STEM skills training	2	11.8%
Income assistance	1	5.9%
Mental health treatment	1	5.9%
Substance abuse treatment	1	5.9%
Personal care attendants	1	5.9%

Medical treatment	0	0.0%
Health insurance	0	0.0%
Housing	0	0.0%
Other (please describe)	0	0.0%
Financial literacy training	0	0.0%
Total	76	

Staff Survey: Top Three Changes that Enable Staff to Better Serve Clients

Staff were presented with a list of sixteen options and asked to identify the top three changes that would enable them to assist their VR clients better. A total of fifteen staff responded to this question. The top three changes identified by staff were more streamlined processes, a smaller caseload, and increased collaboration with other workforce partners, including job centers. The three narrative responses received indicated hiring more counselors, hiring counselor assistants/support staff, and reducing telework options by having staff work in the office. Table 62 details the staff responses identifying the top three changes that would enable them to serve Oregon VR clients better.

Table 62: *Staff Survey: Top Three Changes that Enable Staff to Better Serve Clients*

Top Three Changes to Better Serve VR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
More streamlined processes	10	66.7%
Smaller caseload	7	46.7%
Increased collaboration with other workforce partners including Job Centers	4	26.7%
Better assessment tools	3	20.0%
Other (please describe)	3	20.0%
More community-based service providers for specific services	3	20.0%
Accountability for poor performance by service providers	3	20.0%
More effective community-based service providers	2	13.3%
Better data management tools	2	13.3%
More administrative support	2	13.3%
More supervisor support	2	13.3%
Increased outreach to consumers	2	13.3%
Additional training	1	6.7%
Improved business partnerships	1	6.7%
Incentives for high performing service providers	1	6.7%
Increased options for technology use to communicate with consumers	0	0.0%
Total	46	

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

In exploring the overall performance of ODHS VR about the needs of individuals with disabilities to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment (CIE), several themes emerged. There are needs related to:

- Improving the overall communication with clients regarding the ongoing services and the necessary steps needed by the client to continue moving toward employment is not always clear. Clients reported needing more frequent and regular communication in a way that meets their needs (i.e., text, email, phone, or meetings).
- Using paper documentation in instances where electronic documentation would streamline services was cited as a barrier to progress for some clients, specifically causing delays in access to services.
- Effectively recruiting and retaining VR staff. Counselor changes, canceled appointments, and caseload sizes resulting from insufficient staffing levels within ODHS VR have impacted the ability to meet client needs.
- Accessing needed professional development. The presence of the internal training unit was acknowledged as a strength of ODHS VR. There is a need for the orientation of new VR staff to be strengthened to include information relevant to the breadth and depth of services available, the processes involved with the services, and overall disability awareness.
- Using a quality assurance review of the IPEs. Several individuals shared that their IPEs were developed for them and contained information that had yet to be previously discussed or mutually agreed upon or goals not in alignment with their skills and abilities.
- Heightening a focus on career planning versus getting a job.
- Expanding access for clients to receive services virtually while maintaining for others the ability to meet counselors in person for additional rapport building. Concerns were raised about an office-centric service delivery model compared to one focused on community outreach and engagement in the spaces and places where individuals with disabilities reside.
- Broadening geographic access to VR intake and orientation services, particularly in rural areas.
- Providing clear and concise information on the process for eligibility, service delivery options, timelines, and expectations for all parties (i.e., ODHS VR, CRPs, clients, and other organizations). Individuals cited needing to familiarize themselves with all the processes and elements involved.
- Training for new VR counselors to better understand the entire job scope to reduce confusion and increase client resources.
- Accessing assistive technology to support individuals' successful transition into employment. In particular, the emphasis on technological tools to support equitable access to employment settings was highlighted.
- Providing access to medical/clinical supports to assist in the initial diagnosis and confirmation of functional limitations to gain eligibility for services.
- Accessing financial support for ongoing mental health support for many individuals to deal with the stressors of sustaining employment.
- Providing disability-specific accommodations like glasses and hearing aids.
- Offering access to clothing (i.e., interview attire, work scrubs, or uniforms).
- Gaining a clear understanding of navigating the process for grievances regarding service delivery and a strong connection with disability rights to mediate these concerns when they arise effectively

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to ODHS VR based on the results of the research in the Overall Agency Performance area:

1. ODHS VR should continue to explore options to locate counselors in satellite or co-located offices to reach participant needs in rural areas

2. ODHS VR should continue to explore options to locate CRPs in satellite or co-located offices with VR to reach participant needs in rural areas.

3. ODHS VR is encouraged to adopt a hybrid approach for meeting clients where feasible.

4. ODHS VR is encouraged to create a training and staff development advisory group to inform the development and subsequent revisions of the New Employee Orientation process to ensure that it is comprehensive and designed to build initial capacity.

5. ODHS VR is encouraged to review and revise the communication tool and processes to ensure clients (families) receive timely feedback about service timeframes and their roles/responsibilities.

6. ODHS VR is encouraged to review the process for distribution and review of the grievance procedure documents and process to ensure that the content is user-friendly and provided to clients at numerous points in the VR process.

7. ODHS VR is recommended to ensure the continued and broadened provision of supports like clothing, transportation, mental health services, and assistive technology.

8. ODHS VR is encouraged to develop hands-on professional development training for field staff to understand the broad and complex needs of the population of Oregon further.

9. ODHS VR needs to monitor the timeliness of eligibility determinations and identify why individuals continue to exceed the maximum timeframe for determinations of 60 days. It would be helpful for the agency to examine the cases exceeding 60 days and determine the issues that delayed the decisions. Training can be developed to address these issues.

SECTION II: NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Section two assesses the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment. This section includes the rehabilitation needs of ODHS VR consumers as expressed by the different groups interviewed and surveyed. All the general needs of ODHS VR consumers were included here, with specific needs identified relating to supported and customized employment.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following themes emerged around the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services.

- The need for increased attention to facilitate smooth eligibility and transition processes for individuals with I/DD being dually served by the I/DD agency and VR is present across Oregon.
- The high cost of living in Oregon creates a significant economic challenge for individuals with the most significant disabilities, including those with I/DD.
- The fear of losing SSA benefits, Medicaid, and other public benefits (i.e., food assistance and housing) was demonstrated in the data, and with nearly 40% of ODHS VR applications coming from SSA beneficiaries, the concerns regarding the myths and reality of these benefits are real.
- Access to reliable, affordable, and physically accessible transportation for ODHS VR customers, especially in rural areas, is needed.
- Access to affordable housing remains a need in Oregon.
- The availability of CRP options for delivering supported employment (SE) in some communities was highlighted as a need.
- A concern related to serving more individuals outside of categories 1 & 2 (i.e., people classified with the most significant disabilities).

National and/or Agency-Specific Data Related to the Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities, Including Their Need for Supported Employment

The project team examined the number and rate of applicants by disability type for ODHS VR to determine the demographic makeup of individuals served by the agency. Table 63 contains the results of this analysis.

Table 63: *ODHS VR Applicants by Disability Type*

Disability	Number of Applications by Year		
	2020	**2021**	**2022**
Visual Impairment	15	21	37
Percent of all applications	0.36%	0.46%	0.67%
Physical Impairments	743	802	996
Percent of all applications	17.99%	17.72%	18.14%
Communicative Impairments	573	589	698
Percent of all applications	13.87%	13.02%	12.71%
ID/DD or other Cognitive	1903	2056	2515
Percent of all applications	46.1%	45.44%	45.79%
Mental Health Impairments	896	1057	1246
Percent of all applications	21.69%	23.36%	22.69%

The data indicates that individuals with ID/DD or cognitive disabilities make up the highest percentage of applicants for ODHS VR services, followed by individuals with mental health impairments. Over the three years, when applicants with mental health impairments are combined with applicants that have ID/DD, they compose 68.3% of the individuals' seeking services from ODHS VR.

Table 64: *ODHS VR Applicants Receiving Supported Employment and SSA Benefits*

	Supported Employment			SSA Beneficiaries		
	2020	**2021**	**2022**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Applications	1349	1482	1770	1607	1767	2044
Percent of all applications	32.16%	32.34%	31.83%	38.32%	38.56%	36.76%

The project team further examined the needs of those with the most significant disabilities and observed individuals classified as supported employment (see Table 64). Those receiving benefits from SSA constitute 31.8% to 38.6% of the population ODHS VR serves. Given the presumed eligibility for VR services for individuals receiving SSA benefits and the unity between these percentages, most SSA beneficiaries will likely receive a higher intensity of support. These two populations are individuals that are classified as the most significantly disabled.

Survey Results by Type
INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Receipt of Social Security Benefits

Individual survey respondents were presented with a checklist and asked to indicate whether they received Social Security disability benefits. The total number of respondents who answered this question is 460. Based on the table data, the inference can be made that over one-half of the individual survey respondents do not receive Social Security benefits. Table 65 summarizes the responses to this question. Note that individuals were allowed to select multiple options in the series of items (e.g., in the case of an individual who received both SSI and SSDI).

Table 65: *Individual Survey: Social Security Benefit Status*

Social Security Benefits Status	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
I do not receive Social Security disability benefits	247	53.7%
I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance. SSDI is provided to individuals who have worked in the past and is based on the amount of money the individual paid into the system through payroll deductions)	93	20.2%
I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a means-tested benefit generally provided to individuals with little or no work history)	80	17.4%
I have received benefits in the past, but no longer receive them	28	6.1%
I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits	20	4.3%
I receive a check from the Social Security Administration every month, but I do not know which benefit I get	20	4.3%
Total	488	

Individual Survey: Finances and Money Management

The survey team included questions to identify respondents' financial management competency and how fiscal issues impact their ability to function independently. Respondents to the individual survey were asked four questions regarding finances and money management.

Financial Situation

Respondents were given a list of statements and asked to rate how well each statement describes their financial situation. A total of 381 to 384 respondents participated in answering this survey item. The possible answers included "completely," "very well," "somewhat," "very little," or "not at all." For each statement, the item "completely" was selected by over 30% of the respondents. Note that an equal percentage of respondents cited either "completely" or "somewhat" in response to the second and third statements in the table. Table 66 details the ratings for each of the statements.

Table 66: *Individual Survey: Financial Situation*

Financial Situation	Completely Percent of Total	Very Well Percent of Total	Somewhat Percent of Total	Very Little Percent of Total	Not at All Percent of Total	Number of Times Selected

I am concerned the money I have, or will have, won't last	46.5%	14.4%	24.3%	7.6%	7.3%	383
Because of my money situation, I feel like I will never have the things I want in life	31.8%	16.4%	31.8%	7.8%	12.2%	384
I am just getting by financially	30.2%	12.6%	30.2%	11.0%	16.0%	381

Managing Money

Individual survey respondents were presented with a checklist of statements regarding money management and asked to indicate whether the item represents how they manage money. Although most respondents indicated they have monthly budgets in addition to savings and checking accounts, most indicated they do not invest money. Over 42% of the respondents want to learn more about managing money. Table 67 details the results.

Table 67: *Individual Survey: Managing Money*

Managing Money	Yes		No		Number of Times Selected
	Number	**Percent of Total**	**Number**	**Percent of Total**	
I have a checking account	339	89.0%	42	11.0%	381
I have a monthly budget	260	70.7%	108	29.4%	368
I have a savings account	245	66.6%	123	33.4%	368
I would like to learn more about managing my money	151	42.2%	207	57.8%	358
I invest my money	87	24.4%	269	75.6%	356

Money Left by the End of the Month

Respondents were asked: "How often do you have money left over at the end of each month?" Of the 391 individuals who answered the question, the rating of "sometimes" was selected by almost one-quarter of respondents and slightly more than one-half of the respondents selected either "never" or "rarely." Table 68 summarizes the details reported by respondents.

Table 68: *Individual Survey: Money Left by the End of the Month*

Money Left at the End of the Month	Number	Percent
Never	114	29.2%
Sometimes	96	24.6%
Rarely	86	22.0%
Often	49	12.5%
Always	46	11.8%
Total	391	100.0%

Finances Control Life

In the final survey question in the series regarding finances and money management, individual survey respondents were presented with a five-point response scale (with responses ranging from "always" to "never") and asked to indicate how often they feel like finances control their lives. About 65.9% of the respondents selected either "always" or "often," while about 14.6% selected "rarely" or "never." Table 69 includes this information.

Table 69: *Individual Survey: Finances Control Life*

Finances Control Life	Number	Percent
Always	158	40.5%
Often	99	25.4%
Sometimes	76	19.5%
Never	30	7.7%
Rarely	27	6.9%
Total	390	100.0%

Individual Survey: Barriers to Employment

Individual survey respondents were asked questions to identify barriers to employment.

Primary Mode of Transportation

Respondents were asked to indicate their primary mode of transportation. Results showed that over one-half of the respondents own a car, and less than 3% utilize a ride-sharing service. Respondents who selected the category of "other" indicated responses including parents, family members, spouses, friends, caregivers, no reliable transportation, being chauffeured, shuttle services, borrowing a car, walking, and bicycling. Table 70 contains the data identifying the respondents' primary modes of transportation.

Table 70: *Individual Survey: Primary Mode of Transportation*

Respondents were asked: "How often do you have money left over at the end of each month?" Of the 391 individuals who answered the question, the rating of "sometimes" was selected by almost one-quarter of respondents and slightly more than one-half of the respondents selected either "never" or "rarely." Table 68 summarizes the details reported by respondents.

Primary Mode of Transportation	Number	Percent
I own a car	247	53.7%
Other (please identify)	101	22.0%
I use the bus or other form of public transportation	100	21.7%
I use ride-sharing services (i.e. Uber or Lyft)	12	2.6%
Total	460	100.0%

Identifying Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

Respondents were presented with a series of 19 yes/no questions about potential barriers to getting a job and asked to indicate whether the item had been a barrier that impacted their ability to obtain a job. Five items on the list (lack of training; employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability; employers hesitant to hire people with disabilities; lack of available employment; mental health concerns) were cited by over 50% of respondents, and the rates range between 50.5 to 53.6 percent of the total number of respondents who answered the question. The two lowest-ranking barriers were limited English skills and substance abuse. Table 71 summarizes the barriers and the impact on getting a job.

Table 71: *Individual Survey: Identifying Barriers to Getting a Job*

Barriers to Employment	Yes, it has been a barrier		No, it has not been a barrier		Total
Barrier	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Lack of training	222	53.6%	192	46.4%	414

Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability	221	53.9%	189	46.1%	410
Employers hesitant to hire people with disabilities	221	54.8%	182	45.2%	403
Lack of available jobs	206	51.5%	194	48.5%	400
Mental health concerns	205	50.5%	201	49.5%	406
Lack of job skills	192	46.5%	221	53.5%	413
Lack of job search skills	172	42.7%	231	57.3%	403
Lack of education	145	35.3%	266	64.7%	411
Age	140	35.0%	260	65.0%	400
Lack of reliable transportation	125	31.1%	277	68.9%	402
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	104	25.9%	297	74.1%	401
Lack of assistive technology	99	24.7%	302	75.3%	401
Lack of housing	78	19.7%	319	80.4%	397
Lack of attendant care	61	15.4%	335	84.6%	396
Lack of reliable Internet access	60	15.2%	336	84.9%	396
Criminal Record	39	9.8%	361	90.3%	400
Lack of childcare	26	6.6%	371	93.5%	397
Substance abuse	19	4.8%	378	95.2%	397
Limited English skills	18	4.6%	376	95.4%	394

Top Three Barriers to Obtaining or Keeping a Job

Individual survey respondents were presented with a subsequent question asking them to identify their top three barriers to obtaining or keeping a job. Four hundred-three individuals answered the question.

Two of the top three barriers to obtaining or keeping a job selected by individuals are listed in the top two positions cited most frequently in the question related to identifying barriers (employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability, lack of training).

The two items that ranked lowest and received a two percent response rate or less in response to the question were also ranked in the last two positions in the previous Table 71 (substance abuse; limited English skills). "Lack of broadband internet access" ranked 14th out of 18 on the "top barrier" list, suggesting that broadband internet access is available for most respondents. Table 72 details the summary of the responses to the question.

Table 72: *Individual Survey: Top Three Barriers to Obtaining or Keeping a Job*

Top Three Barriers to Getting a Job	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability	141	35.0%
Mental health concerns	129	32.0%
Lack of training	129	32.0%
Employers hesitant to hire people with disabilities	125	31.0%
Lack of job skills	115	28.5%
Lack of available jobs	92	22.8%
Lack of education	79	19.6%
Lack of job search skills	60	14.9%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	54	13.4%

Lack of reliable transportation	53	13.2%
Criminal Record	31	7.7%
Lack of assistive technology	27	6.7%
Lack of housing	23	5.7%
Lack of reliable Internet access	15	3.7%
Lack of childcare	14	3.5%
Lack of attendant care	13	3.2%
Substance abuse	8	2.0%
Limited English skills	7	1.7%
Total	1,115	

Individuals were presented with an open-ended question asking them to identify other barriers they may have experienced that prevented them from getting a job. One hundred fifty-eight individuals provided a narrative response to the question. Content analysis of the responses indicated the following are "other barriers" preventing respondents from obtaining or keeping a job: ageism; employer bias and decisions; lack of accommodations for the job; mental health conditions and lack of behavioral support on the job; sex offender; the gap between employment/unemployed more than one year; VRC blocking the process, not understanding, not responding, or refusing to assist; physical limitations; health conditions; not able to find remote work; lack of training; work ethics not aligning with employer; transportation; being white; being a black male; LGBTQ status; proper clothing; and working conditions not compatible with disability/allergic reactions to scents in workplace.

Individual Survey: Barriers to Accessing VR Services

Barriers to Accessing VR
Respondents were presented with a list of 11 questions describing potential barriers to accessing VR services and asked to indicate whether the barrier had made it difficult for the respondent to access Oregon VR services. Between three-hundred eighty and three-hundred ninety-three respondents answered this multi-response question.

Lack of information about available services, difficulty reaching Oregon VR staff, other challenges with DVR staff, difficulties scheduling meetings with the counselor, and lack of disability-related accommodations were each cited "yes" by 115 respondents or more. The least common barrier respondents chose, receiving a 5.2 percent rate, was language barriers.

Table 73: *Individual Survey: Barriers to Accessing VR Services*

Barriers to Accessing VR Services	Yes, has been a Barrier		Not a Barrier		Number of Times Selected
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total	
Lack of information about available services	181	46.2%	211	53.8%	392
Difficulty reaching Oregon VR staff	143	36.8%	246	63.2%	389
Other difficulties with Oregon VR staff	140	35.9%	250	64.1%	390
Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor	134	34.5%	254	65.5%	388
Lack of disability-related accommodations	115	29.3%	278	70.7%	393
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	97	25.3%	287	74.7%	384
Reliable Internet access	59	15.3%	328	84.8%	387

Oregon VR's hours of operation	53	13.7%	335	86.3%	388
Difficulties completing the Oregon VR application	41	10.8%	339	89.2%	380
The Oregon VR office is not on a public bus route	26	6.7%	361	93.3%	387
Language barriers	20	5.2%	366	94.8%	386

Top Three Barriers to Accessing VR Services

Individual survey respondents were presented with a list and were asked to identify the three top barriers to accessing VR services. The most frequently selected item on the list, chosen by 32.4% of the 380 who answered the question, was the phrase, "I have not had any barriers to accessing Oregon VR services." The barriers that rank in the second and third positions of Table 74 match the top two items in Table 73 above. "Other difficulties with VR staff" ranked as the third most frequently cited barrier to accessing VR. Table 74 lists the barriers along with the number of times each of the barriers was cited.

Table 74: *Individual Survey: Top Three Barriers to Accessing VR Services*

Top Three Barriers to Accessing VR Services	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
I have not had any barriers to accessing Oregon VR services	123	32.4%
Difficulty reaching Oregon VR staff	108	28.4%
Lack of information about available services	107	28.2%
Other difficulties with Oregon VR staff	107	28.2%
Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor	91	23.9%
Lack of disability-related accommodations	53	13.9%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	44	11.6%
Oregon VR's hours of operation	25	6.6%
Reliable Internet access	24	6.3%
Difficulties completing the Oregon VR application	21	5.5%
Language barriers	11	2.9%
The Oregon VR office is not on a public bus route	10	2.6%
Total	724	

Other Challenges to Accessing VR Services

Respondents were presented with a yes/no question asking if there were any additional challenges or barriers not previously mentioned that made it difficult to access VR services. Of the 379 responses received, 135 indicated "yes," and 133 provided a narrative response. Content analysis of the narrative responses revealed that 85 of the respondents detailed specific difficulties with VR counselors that made it difficult to access or receive services. Eleven responses cited a lack of knowledge regarding VR's services and what VR does. Three comments cited problems with service providers and job coaches. The remaining comments included not being disabled enough, VR not working with people with a work history of being an attorney or medical doctor, family circumstances, not being disabled enough to qualify for services, inability to access the self-employment services of VR, location closed, transportation, and communication barriers.

Individual Survey: Employment Goals

Individual survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their employment goals and their future.

Current Employment Goal

Individual survey respondents were asked an open-ended question asking them to identify their current employment goal. A total of 339 survey participants responded to the question. Fifty-eight comments contain specific industries or career positions from various occupations, from items requiring four-year college or university-level education, such as obtaining a Ph.D. and teaching, obtaining a CRCC license, working as a chemist, and becoming a landscape architect. Non-university level careers also appeared in the narrative responses, such as working as a certified nursing aide, janitorial worker, and at McDonald's. Content analysis of the remaining 281 narrative responses included describing the number of hours the client wants to work, finding a job, remote work, any job, a job with accommodations, currently employed, improving the personal financial situation, self-employment, work at a disability-friendly business; and retaining the present job.

Oregon VR Assistance with Employment Goal

Respondents answered a follow-up yes-no question: "Has Oregon VR helped you progress toward your employment goal?" One-half of the respondents indicated that Oregon VR helped them progress toward their employment goals. Table 75 details the number of times a response choice was selected and the percentage rate based on the number of respondents who answered the question.

Table 75: *Individual Survey: Oregon VR Helped Progress to Employment Goal*

VR Helped Progress to Employment Goal	Number	Percent
Yes	206	50.7%
No	144	35.5%
I have not worked with Oregon VR	56	13.8%
Total	406	100.0%

Thought Towards Next Job

Individual survey respondents were asked whether they had thought about their next job once their employment goal was achieved. Respondents were provided with three response options. Less than half of the respondents indicated "yes." Table 76 contains the number of times and the percentage rate that either yes, no, or the phrase "I don't know" was identified.

Table 76: *Individual Survey: Thought Towards Next Job*

Thought Towards Next Job	Number	Percent
Yes	159	40.9%
No	143	36.8%
I don't know	87	22.4%
Total	389	100.0%

Need Additional Training for Next Job

Respondents were also asked whether they would need more training or help to get their next job. Almost 64.5% of the 163 respondents who answered the question indicated "yes." Table 77 details the results.

Table 77: *Individual Survey: Need More Training or Help to Get Next Job*

Need More Training or Help to Get Next Job	Number	Percent
Yes	105	64.4%
I don't know	37	22.7%
No	21	12.9%
Total	163	100.0%

How Can Oregon VR Change to Help Get, Keep, or Obtain a Better Job

Individual respondents were asked an open-ended question asking them for suggestions on how Oregon VR could change their services to help clients get a job, keep their current job, or get a better job. A total of 251 survey participants responded to the question.

Twenty comments did not have any suggestion as comments cited phrases "none/don't know." Keywords found in the narrative comments were "better communication," "move faster," "do something," "listen," and "follow-up."   Sixteen comments appreciated VR and its services, while other comments cited specific frustration with VR staff and counselor while containing specific suggestions for improvement. Quotes from the comments are:

- "*Better contact. VR counselors are very bad at replying. I just think they are doing less than me and do not make an effort...they don't care… they only help because they are getting paid. I think the effort should be higher. Once I am lucky enough to get employed, I will put in more effort in my job than I think VR counselors do.*"
- "*By understanding my limitations and not just trying to shove me into a retail convenience job as a profoundly hard-of-hearing individual.*"
- "*Better planning and notifying me of any changes.*"
- "*Get a few more counselors in the office to cover a wider range of disability support needs. Trauma-informed Care training.*"
- "*Help me narrow down what kinds of jobs are good fits and afford me the opportunity to job shadow.*"
- "*Help with additional training and schooling instead of just the basic schooling. Jobs required advanced training. Help with grants if VR won't help pay for additional training.*"
- "*I find it frustrating when the counselor works from home. I'd like to be able to drop by the office to ask a quick question. Example of a counselor working from home: The counselor scheduled me for an hour appointment but only spent 10 minutes on the phone with me. I wonder what she did at home for the other 50 minutes??*"
- "*I know how to look for work; I don't need someone who tells me about jobs I have already looked at and researched, nor someone who wants to put me in work I have already explained to the person more than once I cannot do due to health and mobility reasons. I need help getting the job and getting the experience I need to get and keep the job. I also need help with transportation...*"

COMMUNITY PARTNER RESULTS

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

Partners were asked two questions regarding the barriers clients face to achieving their employment goals.

Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - General VR Clients
Partner survey respondents were given a list of 20 barriers and asked to identify the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for VR clients. There was no limit to the number of barriers a respondent could choose.

Partner and individual survey respondents were asked a similar question regarding common barriers and had slightly different lists from which to choose. Partners and individual respondents differed in choosing the three most common/top three barriers.

Three primary themes emerged from the comments received in the category "other," the themes are VR as the barrier, problems with job coaches and job developers, and clients as the barrier. Table 78 lists the barriers presented to partner respondents along with the number of times each of the barriers was cited and the percentage of the number of respondents who selected the item.

Table 78: *Partner Survey: Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - General VR Clients*

Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - General VR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Little or no work experience	259	71.2%
Poor social skills	254	69.8%
Not having job skills	236	64.8%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	215	59.1%
Mental health issues	213	58.5%
Not having job search skills	205	56.3%
Not having education or training	192	52.7%
Disability-related transportation issues	186	51.1%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	184	50.5%
Other transportation issues	156	42.9%
Not having disability-related accommodations	131	36.0%
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	130	35.7%
Convictions for criminal offenses	121	33.2%
Not enough jobs available	116	31.9%
Housing issues	112	30.8%
Language barriers	107	29.4%
Substance abuse issues	82	22.5%
Childcare issues	67	18.4%
Other health issues	66	18.1%
Other (please describe)	41	11.3%
Total	3,073	

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Most Significant Disabilities

Partner survey respondents were given a list of 20 barriers, including an option for "other." They were asked to identify the five biggest barriers that prevent Oregon VR clients with the most significant disabilities from achieving their employment goals. The sample size was 347 respondents.

The four items' partners most frequently selected as barriers to achieving employment goals for clients with the most significant disabilities are the same top four barriers cited in the previous table. However, items are in a different rank order. Partners cited "other health issues" 103 times for clients with significant disabilities and 66 times for the general population of clients.

The narrative comments received in response to the category "other" include ableism, the need for one-to-one staffing, challenges of funding self-employment, employers lacking understanding, family perceptions, lack of job developers, medical supports, no paid internships, and VR barriers. Table 79 summarizes the partners' responses to the question.

Table 79: *Partner Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Most Significant Disabilities*

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Most Significant Disabilities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Little or no work experience	241	69.5%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	237	68.3%

Not having job skills	222	64.0%
Poor social skills	210	60.5%
Disability-related transportation issues	197	56.8%
Not having job search skills	186	53.6%
Not having disability-related accommodations	180	51.9%
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	167	48.1%
Not having education or training	158	45.5%
Mental health issues	139	40.1%
Not enough jobs available	122	35.2%
Language barriers	121	34.9%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	119	34.3%
Other transportation issues	109	31.4%
Other health issues	103	29.7%
Housing issues	59	17.0%
Other (please describe)	53	15.3%
Convictions for criminal offenses	48	13.8%
Substance abuse issues	39	11.2%
Childcare issues	25	7.2%
Total	2,735	

Partner Survey: Top Three Reasons for Difficulty Accessing VR Services

Respondents were presented with a question prompting them to indicate the top three reasons people with disabilities might find it difficult to access Oregon VR services. Twelve response options were provided.

"Slow service delivery" was identified by slightly less than three-quarters of partners and ranked as the top reason people with disabilities have difficulty accessing Oregon VR services. The second top reason, selected by slightly less than one-third of the partners, relates to difficulties completing the application. Roughly one-quarter of partners identified "VR not meeting clients in the community where the client lives" as the third top reason people with disabilities find it difficult to access services.

Seventy-four comments were received in the category "other." The quotes related to the lack of knowledge about VR services, various problems with VR staff and speed of service delivery, clients not knowledgeable about the VR process, being screened out of VR, jobs not available in the local area, and transportation. Four quotes sum up what most comments contain:

- *"1. They have had a bad/traumatizing experience with VR in the past. 2. Lack of communication with VRCs and waiting months and even years for access to services because of lack of response from VRCs."*
- *"...the most common theme I see with my clientele is that they would like to work but will choose not to if their only avenue to employment support starts with VR. VR is an unbearably slow process. VRCs are not well trained in how to work with people with disabilities; many VRCs won't even speak directly to the clients if, because they have a disability, they cannot voice their own opinions or discuss their work experience. I can't tell you the number of VR meetings I have attended where the VRC will ask the client what they want to do for work, even though they have asked them MANY times already. I am sure VRC caseloads are too high. Regardless, it is not working for ANYONE."*
- *"Inconsistent use of technology (variation by VRC, HSA, office to office) to improve access - inconsistent purchase of tech for clients, inconsistent willingness to learn and use technology.*

> These barriers are because decisions made to meet needs/comfort level of VRCs, HSA, branch managers, administration, not client need"

- "Not enough provider agencies"
- "VR has no job developers or coaches"

Table 80: *Partner Survey: Top Three Reasons for Difficulty Accessing VR Services*

Top Three Reasons Difficulty Accessing VR Services	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Slow service delivery	253	74.0%
Difficulties completing the application	108	31.6%
VR staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	85	24.9%
Other (please describe)	74	21.6%
Limited accessibility of VR via public transportation	63	18.4%
Inadequate assessment services	63	18.4%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	58	17.0%
Difficulties accessing training or education programs	55	16.1%
Other challenges related to the physical location of the VR office	39	11.4%
Language barriers	39	11.4%
Lack of options for the use of technology to communicate with VR staff such as Skype, text, etc.	33	9.6%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	30	8.8%
Total	900	

Partner Survey: Most Important Change Oregon VR Could Make to Better Serve Individuals with Disabilities

Partner survey respondents were presented with an open-ended question and asked to identify the most important change Oregon VR could make to serve individuals with disabilities better. One hundred seventy-eight respondents provided a narrative response. The topics of "hiring more VR counselors and staff" and "faster services" were each mentioned more than ten times in the narrative comments. Other comments included: follow-through with clients; increased communication and follow-through with clients and partners; approaching individuals in a more person-centered way, positivity; expanding services to rural areas; greater understanding of various types of disabilities; more assistance with education; more outreach to employers; improve consistency of service delivery between counselors; and greater transparency of services available.

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

Staff were asked questions regarding the barriers clients face when attempting to achieve their employment goals.

Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - General VR Clients

Staff survey respondents were given a list of 26 barriers and asked to identify the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for Oregon VR clients. There was no limit to the number of barriers a respondent could choose. Note the list presented to staff contains more items than the options presented to partners. Fifteen staff respondents responded to the question.

Staff identified mental health issues more frequently than partners. Note that roughly 50% of individual survey respondents identified mental health issues as a common barrier to employment. The item ranked in a tie for the second position on the individual survey results table in response to the question asking individuals to indicate the three top barriers to employment.

Table 81 lists the barriers presented to staff respondents, the number of times each barrier was cited, and the percentage of the respondents who selected the item.

Table 81: *Staff Survey: Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - General VR Clients*

Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - General VR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Mental health issues	15	100.0%
Not having job skills	14	93.3%
Housing issues	14	93.3%
Poor social skills	14	93.3%
Little or no work experience	14	93.3%
Not having education or training	12	80.0%
Not having job search skills	12	80.0%
Substance abuse issues	12	80.0%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	10	66.7%
Convictions for criminal offenses	9	60.0%
Language barriers	8	53.3%
Childcare issues	8	53.3%
Lack of access to technology	8	53.3%
Disability-related transportation issues	7	46.7%
Other transportation issues	7	46.7%
Other health issues	7	46.7%
Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways	7	46.7%
Not having disability-related accommodations	6	40.0%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	6	40.0%
Lack of reliable Internet access	6	40.0%
Community or systemic racism	6	40.0%
Lack of financial literacy	5	33.3%
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	4	26.7%
Not having STEM skills	4	26.7%
Not enough jobs available	2	13.3%
Other (please describe)	2	13.3%
Total	219	

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - General VR Clients

Staff survey respondents were given a list of 26 barriers, including an option for "other." They were asked to identify the five biggest barriers that prevent Oregon VR clients from achieving their employment goals. There was no limit to the number of barriers a respondent could choose. A total of 15 staff respondents answered the question.

The staff list of options was larger than the list presented to the partner respondents. The five most significant barriers cannot be determined within the staff results. The items "mental health issues," "poor social skills," and "not having job skills" ranked in the top three positions as barriers to achieving employment goals for the general population of clients as selected by staff in response to the question.

Three phrases were received in the narrative comments in response to the category "other." The quotes are:
- *"Lack of motivation"*
- *"Lack of tech literacy"*
- *"Not enough time for actual counseling."*

Table 82 lists the barriers presented to staff and the number of times staff survey respondents cited a barrier.

Table 82: *Staff Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - General VR Clients*

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - General VR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Mental health issues	12	80.0%
Poor social skills	8	53.3%
Not having job skills	7	46.7%
Little or no work experience	5	33.3%
Not having education or training	4	26.7%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	4	26.7%
Substance abuse issues	4	26.7%
Housing issues	4	26.7%
Community or systemic racism	4	26.7%
Not having job search skills	3	20.0%
Language barriers	3	20.0%
Other transportation issues	3	20.0%
Other (please describe)	3	20.0%
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	2	13.3%
Other health issues	2	13.3%
Convictions for criminal offenses	2	13.3%
Not enough jobs available	1	6.7%
Not having disability-related accommodations	1	6.7%
Not having STEM skills	1	6.7%
Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways	1	6.7%
Lack of financial literacy	1	6.7%
Disability-related transportation issues	0	0.0%
Childcare issues	0	0.0%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	0	0.0%
Lack of access to technology	0	0.0%
Lack of reliable Internet access	0	0.0%
Total	75	

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Most Significant Disabilities

Staff respondents were also asked to identify the five biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for clients with the most significant disabilities. The list contained six additional options for staff to choose from compared to the partner survey. A total of 14 respondents answered the question.

Even though the five biggest barriers cannot be determined from the staff results, staff and partners agreed on the three biggest barriers to employment for clients with the most significant disabilities. Staff ranked the barriers in a different order than the partner respondents. The statement received in the category "other" is quoted:

- *"Lack of providers for job contract services and inability to effectively coordinate with ODDS."*

Table 83 summarizes the staff respondents' ranking of the barriers for those with significant disabilities.

Table 83: *Staff Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Most Significant Disabilities*

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Most Significant Disabilities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Poor social skills	7	50.0%
Little or no work experience	7	50.0%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	6	42.9%
Mental health issues	6	42.9%
Not having education or training	5	35.7%
Not having disability-related accommodations	5	35.7%
Not having job skills	4	28.6%
Not having job search skills	4	28.6%
Not enough jobs available	4	28.6%
Housing issues	4	28.6%
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	3	21.4%
Disability-related transportation issues	3	21.4%
Other transportation issues	2	14.3%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	2	14.3%
Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways	2	14.3%
Community or systemic racism	2	14.3%
Language barriers	1	7.1%
Substance abuse issues	1	7.1%
Other health issues	1	7.1%
Other (please describe)	1	7.1%
Childcare issues	0	0.0%
Convictions for criminal offenses	0	0.0%
Not having STEM skills	0	0.0%
Lack of access to technology	0	0.0%
Lack of reliable Internet access	0	0.0%
Lack of financial literacy	0	0.0%
Total	70	

Staff Survey: Top Three Reasons Difficulty Accessing VR Services

Staff respondents were presented with a question that prompted them to indicate the top three reasons people with disabilities might find it difficult to access Oregon VR services. Fourteen response options were provided. Fifteen respondents answered the question.

Staff and partners were presented with slightly different lists and agreed that "slow service delivery" and "other" are two of the top three reasons clients have difficulty accessing VR services.

The narrative comments staff provided in response to the category "other" difficulties accessing services are like the partners' comments. Three comments identified the lack of knowledge about VR and its services. The remaining two quotes are:

- *"Not enough VRCs to cover the increased numbers of clients wishing to access services. Wait times for intake appointments is ridiculous!"*
- *"Outdated program to create IPE, outdated payment system, time-consuming processes"*

Table 84 details the staff results in response to the question.

Table 84: *Staff Survey: Top Three Reasons Difficulty Accessing VR Services*

Top Three Reasons Difficulty Accessing VR Services	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Slow service delivery	8	53.3%
Other (please describe)	5	33.3%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	4	26.7%
Limited accessibility of Oregon VR via public transportation	3	20.0%
Language barriers	3	20.0%
Difficulties completing the application	3	20.0%
Inadequate assessment services	3	20.0%
Community or systemic racism	3	20.0%
Other challenges related to the physical location of the Oregon VR office	2	13.3%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	2	13.3%
Difficulties accessing training or education programs	2	13.3%
Oregon VR staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	2	13.3%
Lack of options for the use of technology to communicate with Oregon VR staff such as text, videoconferencing applications (Zoom, Skype, etc.)	1	6.7%
Lack of options for the use of technology to access remote services such as text, videoconferencing applications (Zoom, Skype, etc.)	1	6.7%
Total	42	

Staff Survey: Oregon VR Remote Services

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, modified service delivery for clients included remote services. Staff respondents were asked three questions regarding remote service delivery.

Clients Received Remote VR Services During COVID

Staff were first asked, "Have any of the clients you serve received services delivered remotely since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic?" Seventeen respondents (100%) indicated "yes" out of a total of 17

responses that were received. In contrast, 27.9% of individual survey respondents reported not receiving any Oregon VR services remotely (159 out of 401 individual respondents). Table 85 details the responses from the staff.

Table 85: *Staff Survey: Clients Received Remote VR Services During COVID*

Clients Received Remote VR Services During Covid	Number	Percent
Yes	17	100.0%
No	0	0.0%
Total	17	100.0%

Effectiveness of Remote Services Delivered by VR During Pandemic

The second question regarding remote services presented to staff asked respondents to rate the effectiveness of remote services. More than 47% of the staff respondents indicated that the remote services were "somewhat effective." The staff percentage rate for effectiveness (combined rates of items extremely effective and effective) is 15.2% lower than the individual respondents' ratings for remote service effectiveness. Table 86 summarizes the staff responses to the question.

Table 86: *Staff Survey: Effectiveness of Remote Services Delivered by VR During Pandemic*

Effectiveness of Remote Services Delivered by VR During Pandemic	Number	Percent
Somewhat effective	8	47.1%
Effective	5	29.4%
Minimally effective	3	17.7%
Extremely effective	1	5.9%
Not effective at all	0	0.0%
Total	17	100.0%

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

In discussions with individuals with disabilities, partners, and staff related to the specific needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, there were various emerging themes. Needs in this area relate to:

- Understanding the eligibility and transition processes for individuals with I/DD being dually served by ODHS – I/DD agency and VR are concerns. Specifically, the gaps and wait times during referral to and eligibility determination by ODHS VR are challenging and increase frustration when navigating between systems.
- Overcoming the high cost of living in the state. The prices make it difficult for individuals with the most significant disabilities to pursue part-time employment. Factors further introducing economic challenges to individuals with MSD are the fear of losing SSA benefits, Medicaid, and other public benefits (i.e., food assistance and housing).
- Accessing reliable, affordable, and physically accessible transportation for ODHS VR customers, especially in rural areas. There is a need to explore flexible options further to create access to modes of transportation (i.e., mileage reimbursement, bike purchase, etc.)
- Accessing to affordable housing. Homelessness has become an increased need since the pandemic. While these were issues in the past, there is a heightened concern about the impact of homelessness on people with significant disabilities.
- Partnering more with local centers for independent living to broaden outreach and support to people with significant disabilities.

- Increasing the presence of CRP options for delivering supported employment (SE) in some communities. There is a need to expand the number of SE providers for ODHS VR clients living in areas with a low density of providers.
- Serving more individuals outside of categories 1 & 2. CRPs reported these groups as the primary individuals being referred for services, which indicates some providers are not serving individuals with the most significant disabilities (category 3) or individuals with MSD are not being served in those communities.
- Identifying pockets of success in providing supported employment, but this narrative of success needed to be more consistently heard in rural areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to ODHS VR based on the results of the research in the Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities, including their need for Supported Employment:

1. ODHS VR is encouraged to continue to explore ways to increase and improve transportation options for individuals with disabilities in Oregon. ODHS VR can explore the creation of transportation task forces in rural counties/communities or use transportation network companies to identify options available and solutions for developing additional transportation resources.

2. ODHS VR may consider identifying opportunities for key state-level and local partners to convene to strategize the expansion of individualized placement and support and fidelity-based customized employment programs within the state.

3. VR is encouraged to investigate the National Supported Employment Community of Practice facilitated by the Center for Innovative Training in VR at George Washington University. Representatives from VR systems nationwide learn together and benefit from shared problem-solving opportunities.

4. ODHS VR may consider providing SE training for all staff and CRPs to increase the use of this model where appropriate. This training should include the essential elements noted by nationally recognized groups like APSE and ACRE.

5. ODHS VR may consider exploring new SE vendors in rural areas through pilots on unique reimbursement models to build a network of qualified ODHS VR providers for these services.

6. ODHS VR can explore options to ensure that all staff have access to and knowledge of affordable housing resources for their clients, including the 211 searchable database, affordable housing lists published by OHCS, supportive housing under section 811 for people with disabilities, and community action agencies. ODHS VR should collaborate with other state agencies to develop a cross-agency task force to formulate targeted plans to address these gaps.

SECTION III: NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, INCLUDING NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM

Section III includes an identification of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different racial and ethnic groups, including the needs of individuals who may have been unserved or underserved by ODHS VR.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following themes emerged around the needs of individuals with disabilities from different racial/ethnic groups, including individuals who may have been unserved or underserved by ODHS VR:

- Understanding across regions the specific of the diverse disability types and how services may look different based on a person-centered process.

- Understanding and respecting cultural variances, including family norms, racial/ethnic values and considerations, socioeconomic factors, and rural, suburban, and urban factors. These practices needed to be more consistently present across state regions.
- Accessing services and available employment opportunities to individuals living in rural (i.e., eastern Oregon and coastal regions) compared to those living in the I5 corridor of Oregon.
- Exploring further the overall vocational needs of individuals from multiple marginalized minority groups. While not statistically vastly different from the majority population, there are potential service delivery gaps based on population data discrepancies. However, a statistical analysis comparing ACS population statistics to VR enrollment demonstrates ODHS VR is serving a higher proportion of Native/American Indian, Black/African American, and Pacific Islander and lower proportions of White, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino populations.
- Broadening the VR staff's proficiency in serving specific disability population groups and adequately serving or supporting referrals to appropriate resources. This was mentioned concerning new VR staff who may not have graduate-level expertise or industry experience.
- Increasing support to the population of individuals with disabilities experiencing homelessness. As noted above in section II, there is also a concern regarding follow-up on or follow-through with this population due to unstable addresses.
- Understanding the needs of the population of aging workers or aging individuals with acquired disabilities (mobility, vision, hearing loss) was mentioned by several participants. Participants cited that this appears to be an increasing need in their communities, but the resources must be more focused on employment-related support. Participants felt that this might be an emerging or underserved population for VR.
- Accessing transportation options (as noted in the general VR performance section), in rural and suburban communities has created a need for those from unserved and underserved communities.
- Navigating away from using the word "rehabilitation." Despite its connection to federal legislation (i.e., the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA), this was offered as a barrier by some who wanted to access the services.

National and/or Agency-Specific Data Related to the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities from Different Ethnic Groups, Including Needs of Individuals That May Have Been Unserved or Underserved By VR

Race and Ethnicity

An understanding of the local population's ethnic diversity is needed to better serve the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups residing in the community.

> **Race:** "The U.S. Census Bureau collects race data per guidelines provided by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and these data are based on self-identification. The racial categories in the census questionnaire generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. In addition, it is recognized that the categories of the race question include race and national origin or sociocultural groups. OMB requires that race data be collected for a minimum of five groups: White, Black, African American, American Indian, or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. OMB permits the Census Bureau to use a sixth category – Some Other Race. Respondents may report more than one race."

> **Ethnicity:** "The U.S. Census Bureau adheres to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) definition of ethnicity. There are two minimum ethnic categories: Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. OMB considers race and Hispanic origin to be two separate and distinct concepts. Hispanics and Latinos may be of any race."   https://www.census.gov/glossary/

Race and Ethnicity for the Total Population

Statewide Oregon averages exceed the National averages for ethnic diversity in White (13.9% higher than the National average) and for Two or more races (2.3% higher than the National average). The statewide

Oregon average for Black or African Americans is 10.1 percentage points lower than the National average. The State's rate for Asians is 1.3 percent lower than the National rate. Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders make up less than one percent of Oregon's population, and the State's average is double the Nation's average. Hispanics and Latinos comprise roughly 14 percent of Oregon's population, and the rate is about five percent lower than the National average.

R1's rate for Asians (7.3%) is the highest in the State, and the rate exceeds the National average and reflects the National urban average. R1's rate for Two or more races exceeds the National average by roughly 1.5 percent. R's 2 and 3, considered primarily rural, have rates for Hispanics and Latinos that exceed the national rural average (8.4%), and the differences range between 5.5 and 7.4 percentage points. Regions 2 and 3 rates for Whites are below the National rural average by roughly two percentage points.

Table 87 contains information regarding the race and ethnic diversity of Oregon.

Table 87: *Race and Ethnicity: Total Population*

Area	Total population	Hispanic or Latino	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Two or More Races
U.S.	333,287,562	19.1%	57.7%	11.9%	0.5%	5.8%	0.2%	4.3%
U.S. - Urban	266,018,160	21.8%	52.2%	13.4%	0.3%	7.1%	0.2%	4.4%
U.S. - Rural	67,269,402	8.4%	79.0%	5.7%	1.3%	1.0%	0.1%	4.0%
OR	4,240,137	14.4%	71.6%	1.8%	0.7%	4.5%	0.4%	6.0%
OR - Urban	3,424,241	15.4%	69.5%	2.2%	0.6%	5.3%	0.4%	6.1%
OR - Rural	815,896	10.2%	80.7%	0.5%	1.3%	1.1%	0.2%	5.4%
R1	2,030,293	13.2%	69.6%	3.0%	0.5%	7.3%	0.4%	5.6%
R2	1,697,263	13.9%	76.8%	0.7%	0.8%	1.9%	0.4%	5.1%
R3	501,818	15.8%	76.7%	0.6%	1.6%	0.9%	0.2%	4.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Race/Ethnicity and Poverty for the General Population

The United States Census Bureau calculates poverty as related to race and ethnicity for the total population. Although the numeric count and percentage rate for the Black population residing in Oregon is significantly lower than the National average, the poverty rates for Black and African Americans living in Oregon's VR service R1 and 2 are higher than the U.S. statewide and urban averages. Oregon's statewide and urban poverty rates for Whites are higher than the National averages. R2's poverty rate for Whites is roughly four percentage points higher than all U.S. averages. R2 has the highest poverty rates in the State for each race and ethnic category except for American Indians and Alaskan Natives. The poverty rate for Hispanics and Latinos residing in R3 is lower than the U.S. average by four percent, and the poverty rate for the same ethnic category in R1 is also lower than the National average by roughly three percentage points. Although the poverty levels are calculated for the entire population based on race and ethnicity, the data is essential for understanding the impact of poverty, population size, race, and ethnicity when addressing the VR needs of consumers.

Tables 88 and 89 identify the percentage of individuals designated by race and ethnic categories living below poverty levels in the Nation and the entire state and regions in Oregon.

Table 88: *Race/Ethnicity and Poverty for the General Population: United States and Oregon*

Race/Ethnicity and Poverty for the General Population: United States and Oregon	Percent below poverty level					
	United States	U.S. - Urban	U.S. - Rural	Oregon	OR - Urban	OR - Rural
White alone	9.9%	9.8%	10.1%	11.4%	11.7%	10.1%
Black or African American alone	21.3%	21.1%	22.9%	21.8%	22.4%	N
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	21.7%	19.6%	26.2%	19.0%	16.2%	25.9%
Asian alone	10.1%	10.1%	8.8%	10.7%	10.5%	13.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	17.6%	17.4%	19.6%	24.4%	25.6%	N
Two or more races	14.8%	14.7%	15.4%	13.1%	13.7%	9.8%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	16.8%	16.7%	17.3%	14.8%	15.1%	12.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 89: *Race/Ethnicity and Poverty for the General Population: VR Region*

Race/Ethnicity and Poverty for the General Population: VR Regions	Percent below poverty level		
	R1	R2	R3
White alone	8.9%	13.7%	10.8%
Black or African American alone	23.5%	29.0%	20.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	15.7%	20.6%	24.5%
Asian alone	9.1%	21.9%	12.1%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	19.1%	26.3%	10.6%
Two or more races	10.9%	16.5%	11.4%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	14.0%	17.6%	12.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Race and Ethnicity and Educational Attainment for the General Population

The VR consumer's educational attainment impacts the vocational choices available to the consumer. Understanding the educational attainment rates in a local area is crucial to identifying available workforce members for meeting local business workforce needs. The U.S. Census Bureau collects data on educational attainment and ethnicity.

The high school graduation attainment rates and the bachelor's degree attainment rates for the Black race in Oregon are higher than the National rates for Blacks in all the State's geographic areas. In rural Oregon, the rates of high school graduation attainment for the Black race are higher than the National rural rates for Blacks by 14.6 percent. Bachelor's degree attainment rates for Blacks in Oregon exceed the National rate by 11.6%. Bachelor's degree attainment rates for Blacks in rural Oregon are 4% higher than in urban Oregon and almost 24.6 percent higher than the National rural rates for Blacks' bachelor's degree attainment.

American Indians and Alaskan Natives in Oregon have slightly higher rates of high school graduation attainment in Statewide and urban Oregon when compared to the National rates. The highest difference is found in the rural areas where the difference between the U.S. and State rates is 2.7 percent. American Indian and Alaskan Native bachelor's degree attainment rates range from 8.9 to 13.8 percent in all the State's areas. Compared to National rates, American Indian and Alaskan Natives in urban Oregon attain a Bachelor's degree at lower rates with a difference of 4.8 percentage points.

High school attainment rates for Hispanic and Latino ethnicities in all geographic areas are roughly 73 percent. They are lower than all other race and ethnic categories within the State. Bachelor's degree attainment for those of Hispanic Latino ethnicity is approximately 18% in rural Oregon, and the rate is about 2 percent higher than the National rural average.

Asians have high school graduation attainment rates that reflect the National rates in the Statewide and urban areas. The rural high school graduation attainment rate for Asians exceeds the National average by about 6 percent. Asians have the highest bachelor's degree attainment rates in the state, as the rates are more than 56 percent and exceed those of the other ethnic categories. Note that Asians comprise about 5 percent of the state's population. Table 90 contains averages for educational attainment at the high school and bachelor's degree level in each ethnic category for the population 25 years and over.

Table 90: *Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity: National and State Rates for the Total Population Age 25 and over, including Urban and Rural Averages*

Race/Ethnicity	Degree level and higher	U.S.	U.S. - Urban	U.S. - Rural	OR	OR - Urban	OR - Rural
White alone	High school graduate or higher	93.7%	94.4%	91.7%	94.2%	94.6%	92.8%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	39.0%	43.4%	27.0%	37.7%	40.4%	28.4%
Black alone	High school graduate or higher	88.3%	89.0%	82.8%	93.4%	93.2%	97.4%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	25.4%	26.5%	16.2%	37.0%	36.8%	40.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	High school graduate or higher	78.1%	76.2%	82.1%	79.0%	76.8%	84.8%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	16.8%	18.6%	13.1%	12.4%	13.8%	8.9%
Asian alone	High school graduate or higher	88.2%	88.2%	88.8%	87.7%	87.3%	94.9%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	57.4%	57.7%	49.9%	57.1%	57.1%	56.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	High school graduate or higher	87.6%	87.8%	86.4%	85.5%	84.5%	N
	Bachelor's degree or higher	19.8%	20.1%	17.3%	14.1%	14.9%	N
Two or more races	High school graduate or higher	81.3%	81.2%	82.2%	85.0%	85.0%	85.2%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	27.9%	28.8%	21.4%	28.9%	30.3%	22.9%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	High school graduate or higher	73.1%	73.3%	71.9%	73.0%	73.0%	72.9%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	20.4%	20.8%	16.0%	18.8%	18.9%	18.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Region averages citing educational attainment for ages over 25 years with respect to race and ethnicity in Oregon's workforce regions are detailed in table 91.

Table 91: *Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity: VR Service Region Rates for the Total Population Age 25 and over*

Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity: VR Service Region Rates for the Total Population Age 25 and over				
Race/Ethnicity	Degree level and higher	R1	R2	R3

White alone	High school graduate or higher	94.9%	92.4%	91.9%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	44.4%	28.6%	30.7%
Black alone	High school graduate or higher	90.5%	94.4%	83.6%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	32.2%	34.7%	29.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	High school graduate or higher	83.0%	82.1%	84.5%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	19.5%	14.9%	11.4%
Asian alone	High school graduate or higher	87.8%	88.8%	92.6%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	56.1%	47.8%	45.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	High school graduate or higher	88.5%	86.8%	94.2%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	21.5%	13.3%	30.1%
Two or more races	High school graduate or higher	88.5%	83.9%	78.9%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	37.8%	22.5%	21.2%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	High school graduate or higher	73.5%	69.6%	63.8%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	23.5%	15.1%	13.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disability, Race and Ethnicity

The following data sets contain information on disability, including race and ethnicity.

Disability Among Race and Ethnic Categories: Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population (TCNP)

The U.S. Census collects data on disability among race and ethnic categories for the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP). Consider the race and ethnic category's population size concerning the percentage of individuals reporting a disability. Table 92 identifies the estimated average disability rates among categories for the Nation and the State. Table 93 contains data for the VR service regions.

Table 92: *Disability, Race and Ethnicity: U.S. and Oregon*

Disability, Race and Ethnicity	Percent with a disability					
Categories	**U.S.**	**U.S. Urban**	**U.S. Rural**	**Oregon**	**OR Urban**	**OR Rural**
White alone	14.4%	14.0%	15.6%	17.1%	17.0%	17.6%
Black or African American alone	14.9%	14.6%	18.2%	12.1%	12.4%	4.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	15.7%	14.8%	17.6%	24.1%	24.7%	22.5%
Asian alone	8.3%	8.2%	9.0%	8.8%	8.3%	18.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	12.5%	12.4%	12.6%	9.0%	9.9%	N
Two or more races	11.6%	11.2%	14.4%	12.7%	12.2%	15.4%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	10.5%	10.4%	10.8%	10.2%	10.0%	11.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 93: *Disability, Race and Ethnicity: Regions*

Disability, Race and Ethnicity	Percent with a disability		
Categories	**R1**	**R2**	**R3**

White alone	13.5%	18.2%	15.9%
Black or African American alone	14.6%	14.6%	17.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	18.5%	24.1%	19.9%
Asian alone	7.9%	7.6%	13.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	7.4%	11.6%	6.8%
Two or more races	10.9%	15.8%	13.0%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	8.6%	9.9%	9.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Race/Ethnicity, Disability, and Poverty Rates

The 2023 Annual Disability Statistics Supplement published data on poverty, disability, and race/ethnicity for the total population. The trends were produced using data from the Current Population Survey-Annual Social and Economic Supplement (distributed annually in March) and the 2021 American Community Survey. Table 94 presents raw numbers for the population, percentage rates, and the differences (gaps) between the poverty rates for individuals with and without disabilities for five race and ethnic categories in the U.S. and Oregon. The population numbers accurately represent the percentage rate differences in this table. The top two most significant poverty rates and gaps of difference between individuals with and without disabilities are noted in the Hispanic and White populations of Oregon.

Table 94: *Race and Ethnicity, Disability, and Poverty Rates: U.S. and Oregon*

United States							
	With Disabilities in Poverty			**Without Disabilities in Poverty**			
Race	**Total w/ Disability**	**Poverty**		**Total w/o Disability**	**Poverty**		**GAP**
		Count	**Percent**		**Count**	**Percent**	
White, Non-Hispanic	27,016,547	4,756,567	17.6	163,082,331	15,476,795	9.5	8.1
Black, Non-Hispanic	5,522,115	1,692,472	30.6	32,530,825	7,053,309	21.7	8.9
Asian, Non-Hispanic	1,454,941	254,780	17.5	17,360,003	1,876,824	10.8	6.7
Other Race, Non-Hispanic	2,439,380	633,005	25.9	15,742,813	2,392,273	15.2	10.7
Hispanic	6,169,016	1,544,545	25	55,624,807	9,908,632	17.8	7.2
Oregon							
	With Disabilities in Poverty			**Without Disabilities in Poverty**			
Race	**Total w/ Disability**	**Poverty**		**Total w/o Disability**	**Poverty**		**GAP**
		Count	**Percent**		**Count**	**Percent**	
White, Non-Hispanic	497,436	101,913	20.5	2,532,087	271,760	10.7	9.8
Black, Non-Hispanic	11,974	2,618	21.9	65,488	13,703	20.9	1
Asian, Non-Hispanic	16,250	2,805	17.3	171,146	20,104	11.7	5.6
Other Race, Non-Hispanic	50,938	11,510	22.6	269,743	40,326	14.9	7.7
Hispanic	61,081	17,179	28.1	530,050	85,423	16.1	12

Citation: Paul, S., Rogers, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A. (2023). Annual Disability Statistics Supplement: 2023 (Table 6.15). Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. Note: Authors' calculations using the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2021, subject to sampling variation.

United States Department of Labor Annual Labor Force Statistics by Disability Status and Race/Ethnicity

The U.S. Department of Labor, in collaboration with (ODEP), published the 2022 Annual Labor Force Statistics by disability status, race, and ethnicity. Statistics provided include the labor force participation rate, employment-to-population ratio, and unemployment rate by disability status and race/ethnicity for ages 16 to 64. Table 95 contains the annual 2022 data.

Table 95: *2022 Annual Labor Force Statistics By Disability Status and Race/Ethnicity*

Persons with a Disability, Aged 16-64, 2022						
	Hispanic	**White**	**Black**	**Asian**	**Other**	**Total**
Labor Force Participation Rate	38.3%	39.7%	29.7%	40.6%	35.4%	37.8%
Employment-Population Ratio	34.4%	37.0%	26.0%	37.9%	30.7%	34.7%
Unemployment Rate	10.1%	6.7%	12.4%	6.7%	13.2%	8.2%
Persons without a Disability, Aged 16-64, 2022						
	Hispanic	**White**	**Black**	**Asian**	**Other**	**Total**
Labor Force Participation Rate	74.5%	79.0%	75.2%	74.5%	73.4%	77.1%
Employment-Population Ratio	71.5%	76.8%	70.7%	72.4%	69.4%	74.4%
Unemployment Rate	4.1%	2.8%	5.9%	2.8%	5.4%	3.5%
Source: Current Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics **Notes: The category labelled "Other" combines the three categories of American Indian and Alaska Native, Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and multiple races; all categories after Hispanic are limited to non-Hispanics**						

Source: Borbely, James @bls.gov

Disability, Race, Ethnicity and Employment

The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability published statistics for state-level employment by disability, race, and ethnicity. The categories include non-institutionalized civilians ages 18 to 64, male and female, from all education levels. Data consists of the percentage employed (employment gap) difference between people with and without disabilities in each race and ethnic population. Data suggests that access to employment is available to all races and ethnic groups for people with disabilities in Oregon.

Table 96: *Disability, Race, Ethnicity, and Employment: U.S. and Oregon*

United States						
	With Disabilities Employed			**Without Disabilities Employed**		
Race	**Total w/ Disability**	**Employed**		**Total w/o Disability**	**Employed**		**GAP**
		Count	**Percent**		**Count**	**Percent**	
White, Non-Hispanic	12,597,488	5,226,854	41.5	101,761,594	80,042,441	78.7	37.2
Black, Non-Hispanic	3,207,068	1,083,079	33.8	20,641,596	14,956,626	72.5	38.7
Asian, Non-Hispanic	616,124	277,345	45	11,944,740	8,896,570	74.5	29.5
Other Race, Non-Hispanic	1,460,996	590,095	40.4	8,681,331	6,440,182	74.2	33.8
Hispanic	3,493,488	1,528,140	43.7	34,497,980	25,637,772	74.3	30.6

Oregon							
	With Disabilities Employed			Without Disabilities Employed			
Race	Total w/ Disability	Employed		Total w/o Disability	Employed		GAP
		Count	Percent		Count	Percent	
White, Non-Hispanic	249,985	101,964	40.8	1,584,700	1,218,968	76.9	36.1
Black, Non-Hispanic	7,158	2,595	36.3	44,262	31,169	70.4	34.1
Asian, Non-Hispanic	8,924	4,276	47.9	123,585	91,627	74.1	26.2
Other Race, Non-Hispanic	32,687	12,964	39.7	156,342	118,100	75.5	35.8
Hispanic	38,968	21,869	56.1	323,793	249,626	77.1	21

Source: Paul, S., Rogers, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A. (2023). Annual Disability Statistics Supplement: 2023 (Table 3.24). Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. Note: Authors' calculations using the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2021, subject to sampling variation.

University of New Hampshire Disability Statistics – Employment by Disability Type and Race/Ethnicity

The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability prepared statistics for State-level employment by disability type and ethnicity. The categories include non-institutionalized civilians ages 16 to 64, male and female, from all education levels. Limited data was available for Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders due to the limited count available from the small population size in Oregon. Data suggests that access to employment is open to all ethnic groups in Oregon.

Table 97: *2022 Oregon Employment by Ethnicity and Disability Type for Non-institutionalized Population Ages 16-64*

Oregon: Employment by Disability Type and Ethnicity Ages 16 to 64	Percent Employed by Disability Type						
	Any	*Visual*	*Hearing*	*Ambulatory*	*Cognitive*	*Self-care*	*Independent Living*
White, non-Hispanic	42.8%	46.6%	52.8%	27.3%	36.5%	14.0%	21.6%
Black/African American, non-Hispanic	43.7%	36.2%	49.6%	26.6%	40.3%	--	34.6%
American Indian and Alaskan Native, non-Hispanic	39.0%	22.5%	37.2%	20.6%	39.9%	12.8%	20.5%
Asian, non-Hispanic	49.8%	59.6%	52.6%	37.6%	49.2%	15.7%	31.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	44.7%	--	--	17.1%	41.0%	25.6%	--
Some Other Race, non-Hispanic	45.6%	50.1%	53.5%	33.0%	36.2%	28.5%	27.7%
Hispanic/Latino	50.3%	66.7%	57.2%	36.0%	51.1%	22.1%	34.4%

Source: 2022 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates. Prepared 01/19/2024 by S. Bach, UNH

General Information by Race/Ethnicity

The SDSU project team requested data from ODHS VR by race/ethnicity to explore potential differences in services for any group. Charts 1-6 contain the results of this analysis. An overall analysis of ODHS VR's engagement of individuals by race/ethnicity introduces some interesting trends. Throughout the review, the percentage of individuals served by minority populations in the state has increased. In addition, Chart 7

demonstrates that ODHS VR is serving a higher percentage of each racial/ethnic group, except for those identified as white and those identified as Hispanic/Latino. VR serves a higher percentage (11% higher) of those from the multi-race category than the Oregon general population. However, there is a potential need to focus outreach to the Hispanic/Latino population, as there is a 12% gap in the number of applications received by those identified from this group.
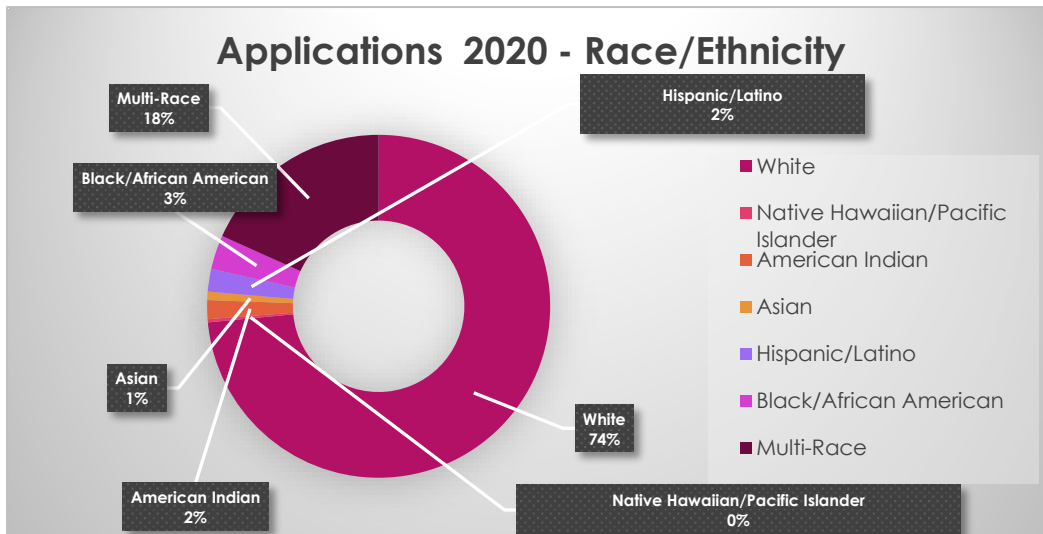
Chart 1: Application – Race/Ethnicity (2020)

Chart 2: Application – Race/Ethnicity (2021)
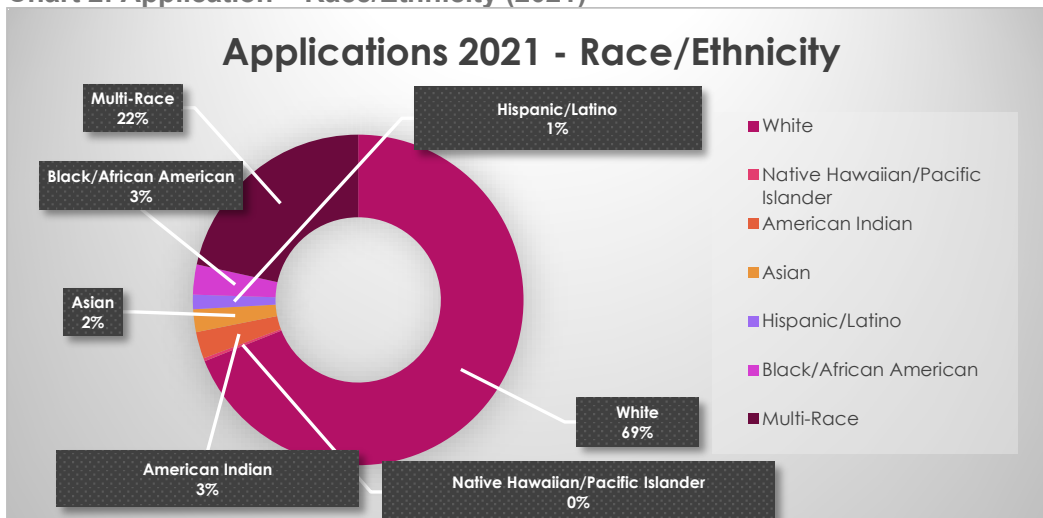
Chart 3: Application – Race/Ethnicity (2022)

Applications 2022 - Race/Ethnicity

Multi-Race
23%

Black/African American
4%

Asian
2%

American Indian
3%

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
0%

Hispanic/Latino
1%

White
67%

Legend:
- White
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black/African American
- Multi-Race
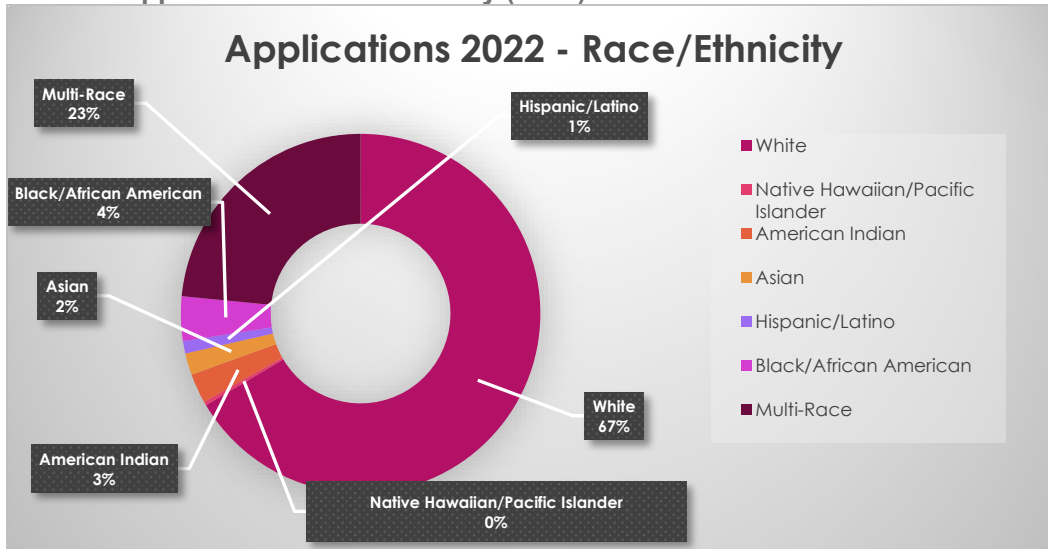
Chart 4: Employment 4th Qtr. Exit – 2020 – Race/Ethnicity

Employment 4th Qtr. Exit - 2020

Multi-Race
15%

Black/African American
11%

Hispanic/Latino
16%

Asian
14%

American Indian
14%

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
16%

White
14%

Legend:
- White
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black/African American
- Multi-Race
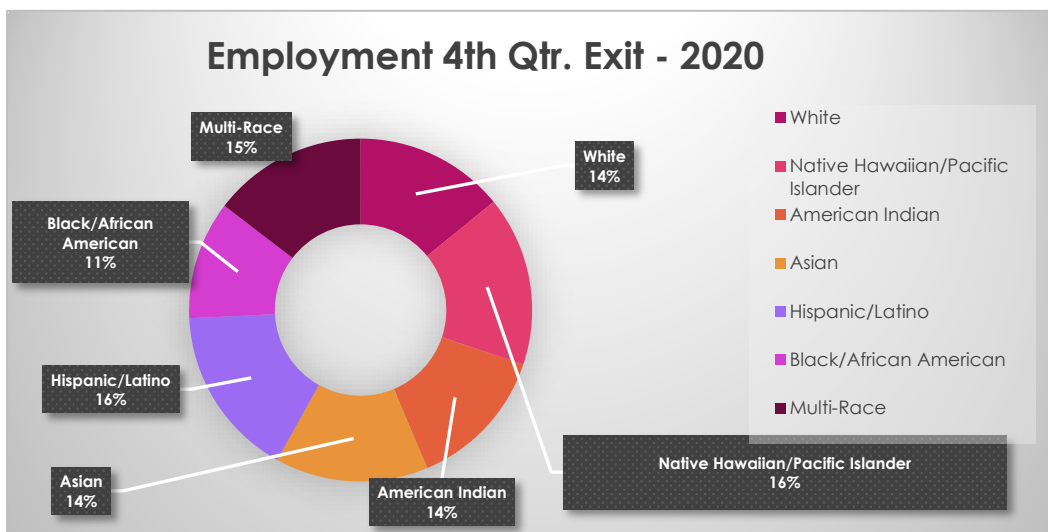
Chart 5: Employment 4th Qtr. Exit – 2021 – Race/Ethnicity

Employment 4th Qrt Exit -2021

Multi-Race
15%

Black/African American
15%

Hispanic/Latino
15%

Asian
15%

American Indian
12%

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
14%

White
14%

Legend:
- White
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black/African American
- Multi-Race
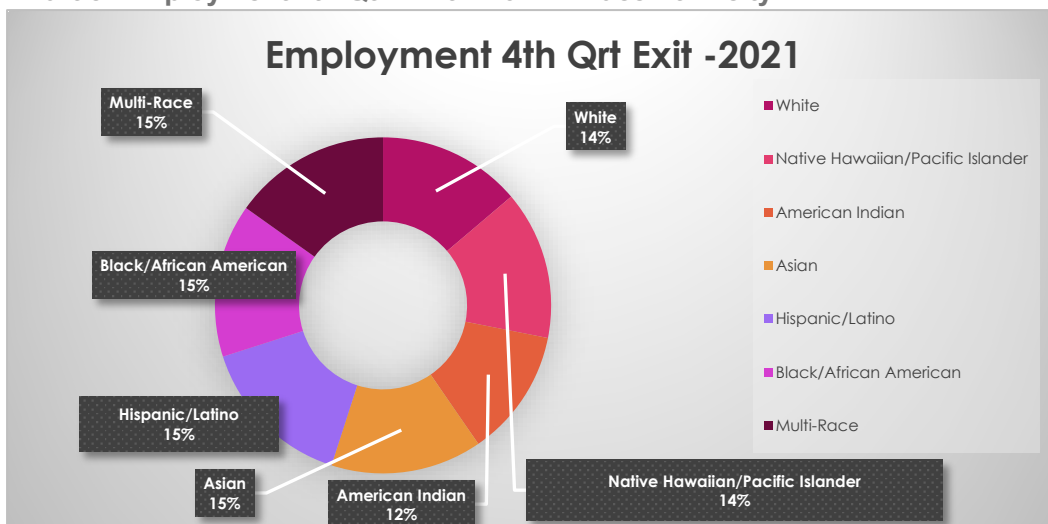
Chart 6: Employment 4th Qtr. Exit – 2022 – Race/Ethnicity

Employment 4th Qrt Exit -2022

- Multi-Race 15%
- White 14%
- Black/African American 13%
- Hispanic/Latino 15%
- Asian 14%
- American Indian 14%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 15%

Legend:
- White
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black/African American
- Multi-Race
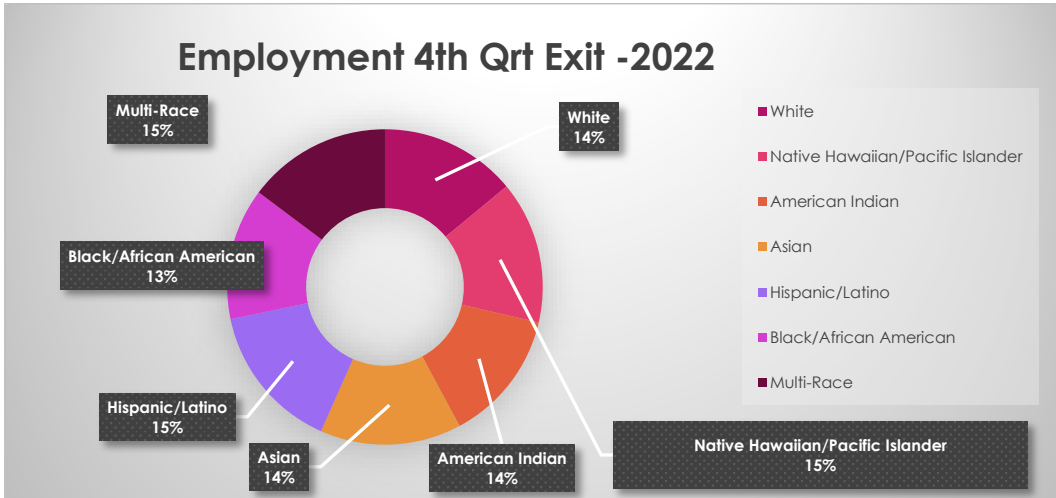
Chart 7: Comparison of Race/Ethnicity in General Population vs. Applications

	White	Black/African…	American Indian/…	Asian	Native Hawaiian/…	Multi-Race	Hispanic/Latino
Total Population	72%	2%	1%	5%	0%	6%	14%
Applications	62%	4%	3%	2%	0%	22%	1%
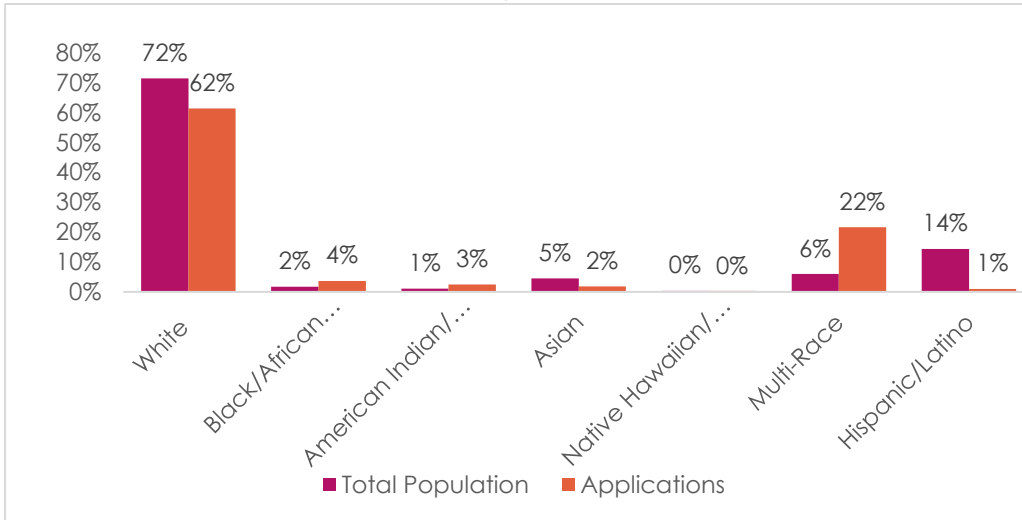
Survey Results by Type
INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individual Survey: Race, Ethnicity, and Preferred Language

Individuals were asked to report their primary race or ethnic group and identify their preferred communication language.

Race or Ethnic Group

The number of respondents who answered the ethnicity question was 477. Most respondents identified as Caucasian/White. Hispanic/Latino respondents accounted for roughly 9.4% of the 477 respondents. Note the ranking order of the results in Table 98, which represents the ethnicity of the respondents compared to the ranking order and percentage rates of the state's ethnic demographic category ranking based on the U.S. Census Bureau data from 2022.

Of the twenty-two narrative responses received in the category "other," eight comments cited phrases including: "prefer not to answer," "human/people," "refused," or "why." The remaining comments cited: American, American/Asian; Ashkenazi; Ashkenazi and Hispanic; Ashkenazi Jewish; Celtic; Eurasian; Middle Eastern; Middle Eastern Ashkenazi; mixed; Native American; and White.

Table 98: *Individual Survey: Race or Ethnic Group*

Primary Race or Ethnic Group	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Caucasian/White	397	83.2%
Hispanic/Latino	45	9.4%
Other (please describe)	26	5.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	25	5.2%
African American/Black	16	3.4%
Asian	15	3.1%
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	5	1.0%
Total	529	

Preferred Language for Communication

Individuals were asked a question regarding their preferred language for communication. Slightly more than 97% of the 484 respondents who answered the question cited English as their preferred language. The language types submitted in narrative format by respondents are Autism = meaning the respondent does not speak English and ASL, and English/Spanish/ Japanese. Individual survey results in response to the question regarding language preference are contained in Table 99.

Table 99: *Individual Survey: Preferred Language for Communication*

Language Preference	Number	Percent
English	470	97.1%
American Sign Language	6	1.2%
Spanish	5	1.0%
Other (Please identify)	3	0.6%
Hmong	0	0.0%
Chinese	0	0.0%
Japanese	0	0.0%
Total	484	100.0%

Individual Survey: Cultural Identity

Individuals were asked a series of questions regarding cultural identity.

Honor and Respect Cultural Identity

Individuals were asked a question about whether Oregon VR honors and respects their cultural identity. Slightly less than 5 percent of respondents reported that VR does not honor nor respect their cultural identity. The results are found in Table 100.

Table 100: *Individual Survey: Honor and Respect Cultural Identity*

Honor Respect Cultural ID	Number	Percent
Yes	309	63.8%
No	23	4.8%
I don't know	152	31.4%
Total	484	100.0%

Situation When Oregon VR Did Not Honor nor Respect Cultural Identity

Individuals were asked a subsequent yes-no question: "Have you ever been in a situation when you felt that Oregon VR did not honor your cultural identity?" A total of 475 respondents answered the question. The number of respondents who answered this question is nine less than the previous Table 101.

Inconsistency is noted when comparing the results of this question to those indicated in the previous Table 102. As noted in the previous table, three additional respondents indicated that Oregon VR did not respect their cultural identity in response to this question. Of the 21 narrative responses received, one cited "unsure," and one cited "afraid of retaliation." Content analysis of the remaining quotes from the item "yes, please describe" that contained specific incidents of cultural disrespect are classified into two categories and are detailed in Table 101. Detailed information on the yes-no results is found in Table 102.

Table 102: *Individual Survey: Situation When Oregon VR Did Not Honor nor Respect Culture ID*

Situation When VR Not Honor Nor Respect Cultural ID	Number	Percent
No	449	94.5%
Yes	26	5.5%
Total	475	100.0%

Table 103: *Individual Survey: Incidents of Cultural Disrespect*

	Incidents of Cultural Disrespect
Comments Noting Oregon VR Staff	*"...There were times I felt tokenized and other times I felt invalid due to micro aggressions."*
	"As a whole they didn't recognize my education"
	"Hard to explain. It's the looks"
	"I can't know why, but they're dismissive and they've practically abandoned me. They've produced nothing and I'm powerless to do anything about it."
	"I felt I was unsafe in my current living situation physically and mentally. So I left into another living situation and VR put my case on HOLD which has affected me and have not been able to progress."
	"I would like to highlight an individual who previously had some exposure to general services before receiving intellectual disability support. They believed that incorporating integrative tools into their educational journey would have been instrumental in their success, surpassing the limitations typically associated with intellectual disability. Expressing such ideas can be challenging due to the multifaceted nature of identity."
	"I'm a Quaker and I didn't feel they understood my values."
	"...During the intake the first worker was asking me questions as though they were a test: repeated the question even though I answered the question. She returned to the question even though we were in a different section of the test and wanted to know what my disability is. She left me IN the conference room for 15 minutes without reason given except said she's going to be right back."
	"If you include age as part of cultural identity"
	"My main attempt to get assistance came through blindness services. The people there would talk to me but would never get far enough to make services happen. I had been in Oregon since 2007...I have worked professionally."
	"Suggested at times that I could fake being able to hear to get a job."
	"The worker was very ignorant towards the barriers that I as an African American woman face and was not willing to help me to find a new job where I could feel safe in a predominantly white work environment!"
	"They don't honor anything; they are liars and thieves"

	"They have made statements about me being transgender and working in education in my community"
	"They refuse to follow through and they wanted me to work for a lower wage."
	"They wanted me to work with a self-described Nazi for over a year."
Other	*"...The system is not accessible to people with ID/DD and the language used on forms is in many ways offensive and inaccurate. Materials and explanations are not accessible to people with ID/DD to be able to access independently, and the processes are not respectful of the identity of individuals with ID/DD. More generally, the language used on VR forms suggests that disability is a negative attribute rather than a positive and natural part of the human experience. This is disappointing in an organization designed to serve people with disabilities."*
	"...was the worst job interview I ever had."
	"We are a biracial couple"

Helping Oregon VR Staff Understand Culture

The final question related to cultural identity presented to individual survey respondents was an open-ended question that asked, "What can Oregon VR do to help its staff understand your culture?" Twenty-six narrative responses were received. Seven items contained phrases like "nothing," "unknown," and "I don't know." Remaining quotes are provided in Table 104 as the content analysis revealed three key topics.

Table 104: *Individual Survey: Helping Oregon VR Staff Understand Culture*

Helping Oregon VR Staff Understand Culture	
Caring and Compassion	*"Ask even one question about it, such as "What is your culture?" Show any kind of interest"*
	"Learn more, make sure to ask if they understand it."
	"Listen and take seriously when a person shares their detail stories of racial hostility, and a white predominant male work environment!"
	"Oregon VR does not understand the feelings of older applicants nor make any attempt to help. I was discouraged entirely by the counselor I saw who made little to no effort to be helpful."
	"Show respect to previous achievements"
	"Turn up hearing aids"
	"Understand that we all have a culture"
	"VR simply do not care. My suggestion is to hire staff that cares."
Supports for Respecting Culture	*Contact #Deaffriendly - they educated hearing staff how to best work with Deaf/Hard of Hearing people. I am serious - don't put the burden of learning a culture on the oppressed person/people*
	"Don't force people to work with a job consultant who describes themself as a Nazi."
	"Follow through with the program that each person is in regardless how they choose or where they reside. If I started the VR program and VR accepted my medical history, and we signed papers, had appts, started the process, then me choosing to be SAFE/SAFER in my car should not affect how I proceed with VR. My case should not have been put on HOLD..."

	"Hire more people of color"
	"Hire more staff that actually comes from different cultures"
	"Regular staff training and seminars. Trauma informed care practices"
	"They need us hands on education in the field of construction workers as well as construction equipment mechanic. Book knowledge doesn't get it done in construction especially when the VR workers have no clue what a service writer or service estimators' job is in the heavy construction equipment field."
	"Training on ableism, accessibility training regarding use of accessible formats and language for people with ID/DD, improving forms to be disability positive and asking people with ID/DD to consult on forms, document, consents and language."
	"Unlike natural abilities that I have not to disclose that during the 90s and 2000s, I had to identify as an individual with an intellectual disability. This specific category underwent legal proceedings and changes, making it challenging for me to fully identify with this community while still receiving the necessary support and services...We must ensure that these individuals are not limited to less recognized roles even while not identifying in this category (TBI might be something to compare ODDS services or not)."
Culture ID Irrelevant	*"Nothing to really have to understand. Seemed to be uncomfortable with us being a biracial couple"*
	"Why is everything about culture? How about just treating people on a job interview like you were a human being"

COMMUNITY PARTNER RESULTS

Partner Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Minorities

Partners were provided a list of 20 barriers and asked to identify the five biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for consumers who were racial or ethnic minorities. The first ranking item, "language barriers" was selected by 61.3% of the partners as the biggest barrier to achieving employment goals for minorities. "Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities," ranked in the second position. "Not having education or training," "little or no work experience," and "not having job skills" round up the five biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for minorities as selected by community partner respondents.

Forty-two written responses were received for the category "other." Nine comments cited "unknown/not sure/no comment." Four responses cited phrases including "same as other populations." One comment cited "all of the above." The remaining narrative comments included: mistrust of the system; cultural barriers; lack of bilingual VR counselors and service providers; discrimination by employers; long onboarding process with VR conflicts with immediate need to work; limited availability to work; safety at work; motivation; and not having proper documentation.

Table 105: *Partner Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Minorities*

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Minorities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Language barriers	176	61.3%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	152	53.0%
Not having education or training	141	49.1%

Little or no work experience	139	48.4%
Not having job skills	137	47.7%
Not having job search skills	123	42.9%
Other transportation issues	118	41.1%
Mental health issues	105	36.6%
Poor social skills	103	35.9%
Not having disability-related accommodations	97	33.8%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	88	30.7%
Disability-related transportation issues	86	30.0%
Housing issues	85	29.6%
Not enough jobs available	80	27.9%
Convictions for criminal offenses	69	24.0%
Other health issues	64	22.3%
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	63	22.0%
Substance abuse issues	57	19.9%
Childcare issues	54	18.8%
Other (please describe)	46	16.0%
Total	1,983	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Minorities

Staff were presented a list of 26 items and asked to identify the five biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for clients who were racial or ethnic minorities. There was no limit to the number of items staff could choose.

Important to note that the staff sample size is small. Staff and partners agreed that "language barriers" is the biggest barrier that prevents clients who are racial or ethnic minorities from achieving their employment goals. Staff and partners also indicated that "not having education or training' and little or no work experience" are part of the top five biggest barriers to employment for minorities. Staff cited "mental health issues" more frequently than partners. Community or systemic racism was not an item for partners to choose yet partners citied racism/discrimination/minority status/ignorance six times in the narrative comments.

Table 106: *Staff Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Minorities*

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Minorities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Language barriers	9	69.2%
Not having education or training	8	61.5%
Little or no work experience	6	46.2%
Community or systemic racism	6	46.2%
Mental health issues	5	38.5%
Not having job skills	4	30.8%
Other transportation issues	4	30.8%
Not having job search skills	3	23.1%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	3	23.1%
Housing issues	3	23.1%
Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways	2	15.4%

Not enough jobs available	1	7.7%
Not having disability-related accommodations	1	7.7%
Substance abuse issues	1	7.7%
Other health issues	1	7.7%
Other (please describe)	1	7.7%
Not having STEM skills	1	7.7%
Lack of access to technology	1	7.7%
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	0	0.0%
Disability-related transportation issues	0	0.0%
Childcare issues	0	0.0%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	0	0.0%
Poor social skills	0	0.0%
Convictions for criminal offenses	0	0.0%
Lack of reliable Internet access	0	0.0%
Lack of financial literacy	0	0.0%
Total	60	

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Recurring themes around unserved and underserved populations, including those from various racial and ethnic categories, were varied. Careful analysis and data triangulation provide some critical insights for ODHS VR to consider. Specifically, these areas include:

- Understanding across regions the specific of the diverse disability types and how services may look different based on a person-centered process.
- Understanding and respecting cultural variances, including family norms, racial/ethnic values and considerations, socioeconomic factors, and rural, suburban, and urban factors. These practices needed to be more consistently present across state regions.
- Accessing services and available employment opportunities to individuals living in rural (i.e., eastern Oregon and coastal regions) compared to those living in the I5 corridor of Oregon.
- Further exploration of the overall vocational needs of individuals from multiple marginalized minority groups. While not statistically vastly different from the majority population (apart from the Hispanic/Latino and multiple race categories), there are potential service delivery gaps based on population data discrepancies. However, a statistical analysis comparing ACS population statistics to VR enrollment demonstrates ODHS VR is serving a higher proportion of Native/American Indian, Black/African American, and Pacific Islander and lower proportions of White, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino populations.
- Broadening the VR staff's proficiency in serving specific disability population groups and adequately serving or supporting referrals to appropriate resources. This concerns new VR staff who may need to gain graduate-level expertise or industry experience.
- Increasing support to the population of individuals with disabilities experiencing homelessness. As noted above, there is also a concern regarding follow-up on or follow-through with this population due to unstable addresses.
- Understanding the needs of the population of aging workers or aging individuals with acquired disabilities (mobility, vision, hearing loss) was mentioned by several participants. Participants cited that this appears to be an increasing need in their communities, but the resources must be more focused on employment-related support. Participants felt that this might be an emerging or underserved population for VR.
- Accessing transportation options (as noted in the general VR performance section) in rural and suburban communities has created a need for those from unserved and underserved communities.

- Navigating away from using the word "rehabilitation." Despite its connection to federal legislation (i.e., the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA), this was offered as a barrier by some who wanted to access the services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ODHS VR is encouraged to enhance the environment and culture of inclusion in the offices across the state. This may require in-depth planning, leading to more training, awareness, and other methods to increase inclusion.
2. ODHS VR is encouraged to review the feasibility of creating disability or process-specific VR counselors to focus on outreach and increased services for the unserved and underserved population groups identified in the needs assessment process.
3. ODHS VR may want to collaborate with state- and local-level services and resources for aging Oregonians and potentially develop a working group to address this unique population.
4. ODHS VR may want to expand staff training in cultural brokering and disabilities and culture to identify gaps and design solutions to develop culturally inclusive and proficient practices within VR based on the state- and region-specific needs.
5. ODHS may consider the points under recommendation 2.5 related to individuals residing in rural areas as an unserved population and develop a specific working group, including rural residents, rural business leaders, tribal VR representatives, and CRPs, to establish an improvement plan.
6. ODHS may consider establishing new partnerships and building on current partnerships with community organizations not typically engaged with VR but embedded in communities (i.e., cultural centers, places of worship, foster care agencies, homeless shelters, food banks, and community centers). These efforts could increase awareness of their services and build trust within these underserved communities.
7. ODHS VR is encouraged to continue to recruit and hire additional bilingual staff to increase their ability to communicate with minority populations.
8. ODHS VR is encouraged to provide training on trauma-informed care for all staff. Motivational interviewing, intersectionality, and cultural responsiveness, and how these elements impact individuals with disabilities.

SECTION IV: NEEDS OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN TRANSITION

The reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act under WIOA places a greater emphasis on providing transition services to youth and students with disabilities, especially their need for pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS). Title 34, Section 361.29 of the Code of Federal Regulations indicates that the CSNA must include an assessment of the needs of youth and students with disabilities in the State, including their need for Pre-ETS. This section contains information about the rehabilitation needs of transition-aged youth with disabilities (14 to 24) and the needs of students with disabilities (14 to 21) for Pre-ETS.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

- Implementing a smooth transition between the "youth/student" and the "adult VR" services. This was cited as an area of concern for youth and young adults with disabilities, as well as the CRP network attempting to support individuals in this transition.
- Understanding by some families as to what VR is and how and when to access services. Families should be encouraged and mentored to participate in VR information meetings earlier in the transition process.
- Recognizing the transformation of the Youth Transition Program (YTP) has created confusion in some communities, and delays in accessing needed support were mentioned as a growing concern. In some instances, there is a reluctance to enroll in YTP.
- Increasing the use of Pre-Employment Transition Services. A complete understanding of how students can access these services is only sometimes applied across the state.

- Using the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) effectively. It was noted that many students need enhanced coaching and other support to make the SYEP experience successful. In addition, a need was highlighted to ensure the dissemination and exchange of information between schools and the SYEP programs to understand students' progress and alignment of IEP/transition goals.
- Expanding career pathways. While the Individualized Career Advancement Program (ICAP) and STEP programs were highlighted as strengths in the transition process, there is a need to connect youth to STEM, Career Technical Education/Perkins V programs, and other credentialing programs to offer options for career pathways.
- Increasing partnership between VR and school programs. It was suggested to increase invitations to Individualized Education Program (IEP) or pre-IEP/general transition meetings for planning purposes.
- Conducting more consistent outreach to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to better understand what "door" they need to access for transition services and when they need to open that door. There is a need for I/DD Care Coordinators and other system Case Workers to have a broader working knowledge of VR's services, supports, and processes.
- Recognizing the rehabilitation needs of students and youth is consistent with adults served by ODHS VR. Transportation, lack of work experience, lack of training, the need to develop soft skills, and assistive technology were commonly cited needs for youth and students with disabilities.
- Ensuring all five required pre-employment transition services are available to support the needs of students with disabilities in Oregon. There is a need to provide these fully available services outside school hours.

National and Agency-Specific Data Related to the Needs of Individuals in Transition

YOUTH DATA

Vocational Rehabilitation services for youth with disabilities enable individuals to pursue meaningful employment that corresponds with their abilities and interests. This section contains various statistics regarding the general trends of youth and youth with disabilities in the Nation and Oregon.

Educational Attainment: Ages 18 to 24 Years

The rates for individuals (ages 18 to 64) whose highest educational attainment is a high school graduate or equivalent in Oregon (including urban and rural areas) are like the National averages, and the differences are less than one percentage point. The bachelor's degree attainment rates for the same age group in Oregon (including urban and rural Oregon) are roughly two percentage points lower than the National average. R3 in Oregon has the highest rate of youth for whom high school graduation was their highest educational attainment (35.8%), and R2 has the lowest percentage of youth who attained at least a bachelor's degree (8.1%).

Table 107 contains Educational Attainment rates for ages 18 to 24, including high school graduation rates and bachelor's degree achievement.

Table 107: *Educational Attainment: Ages 18 to 2*

Geographic Area	Less than high school graduate	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college or associate degree	Bachelor's degree or higher
U.S.	11.8%	33.7%	41.9%	12.5%
U.S. - Urban	11.0%	32.5%	43.0%	13.4%
U.S. - Rural	16.0%	40.2%	36.0%	7.8%
Oregon	12.8%	33.5%	43.2%	10.4%
OR - Urban	12.1%	32.6%	44.2%	11.2%
OR - Rural	17.3%	39.6%	37.4%	5.7%

R1	12.1%	33.5%	40.9%	13.4%
R2	12.3%	33.0%	46.5%	8.1%
R3	17.8%	35.8%	38.1%	8.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

School Enrollment, Educational Attainment and Employment Status: Ages 16 to 19 Years

Data in Tables 108 and 109 represents school enrollment and educational attainment by employment status for individuals ages 16 to 19. In Oregon, rates for youth in the labor force categorized as "high school graduates (including equivalency) employed" are higher than the U.S. statewide and urban averages by 6.4% to 9.5%. Rural Oregon's rate is 7.5 percent lower than the National rate. The total youth labor force participation rates in Oregon are 40.2 to 44.9 percent, while roughly 40 to 43.5% of the youth in the U.S. areas ages 16 to 19 are participating in the labor force. R3's rate of 46.3% of youth ages 16 to 19 participating in the labor force is higher than the national and national rural averages. The margin of difference between the total youth labor force participation rate and the rate of youth not participating in the labor force in R1 and 2 ranges between 16.6 and 19.6 percentage points. Table 108 represents school enrollment and educational attainment by employment status for individuals ages 16 to 19 in the U.S., Oregon, and Oregon's VR service regions.

Table 108: *Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19 Years: United States, Oregon, and Regions*

Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19 Years: United States, Oregon, and Regions				
	U. S.		**Oregon**	
Statewide	**Total Population**	**Percent of Enrolled Not Enrolled**	**Total Population**	**Percent of Enrolled Not Enrolled**
Total	17,402,141	-----	206,077	-----
Enrolled in school:	14,605,120	83.9%	169,864	82.5%
Employed	4,583,966	31.4%	55,403	32.6%
Unemployed	583,897	4.0%	7,792	4.6%
Not in labor force	9,437,257	64.6%	106,669	62.8%
Not enrolled in school:	2,797,021	16.1%	36,213	17.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	2,115,074	75.6%	27,538	76.0%
Employed	1,370,664	64.8%	19,594	71.2%
Unemployed	206,956	9.8%	2,692	9.8%
Not in labor force	537,454	25.4%	5,252	19.1%
Not high school graduate:	681,947	24.4%	8,675	24.0%
Employed	276,946	40.6%	4,908	56.6%
Unemployed	66,340	9.7%	586	6.8%
Not in labor force	338,661	49.7%	3,181	36.7%
Total Labor Force Participation	7,088,769	40.7%	90,975	44.2%
Total Not in labor force	10,313,372	59.3%	115,102	55.9%
	U. S.		**Oregon**	
Urban	**Total Population**	**Percent of Enrolled Not Enrolled**	**Total Population**	**Percent of Enrolled Not Enrolled**

	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled / Not Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled / Not Enrolled
Total	14,119,497	-----	171,829	-----
Enrolled in school:	11,973,010	84.8%	142,910	83.2%
Employed	3,693,430	30.8%	47,020	32.9%
Unemployed	493,463	4.1%	7,230	5.1%
Not in labor force	7,786,117	65.0%	88,660	62.0%
Not enrolled in school:	2,146,487	15.2%	28,919	16.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	1,645,258	76.6%	22,555	78.0%
Employed	1,065,126	64.7%	16,731	74.2%
Unemployed	162,667	9.9%	2,109	9.4%
Not in labor force	417,465	25.4%	3,715	16.5%
Not high school graduate:	501,229	23.4%	6,364	22.0%
Employed	200,739	40.0%	3,683	57.9%
Unemployed	53,063	10.6%	421	6.6%
Not in labor force	247,427	49.4%	2,260	35.5%
Total Labor Force Participation	5,668,488	40.1%	77,194	44.9%
Total Not in labor force	8,451,009	59.9%	94,635	55.1%

	U. S.		Oregon	
Rural	**Total Population**	**Percent of Enrolled / Not Enrolled**	**Total Population**	**Percent of Enrolled / Not Enrolled**
Total	3,282,644	-----	34,248	-----
Enrolled in school:	2,632,110	80.2%	26,954	78.7%
Employed	890,536	33.8%	8,383	31.1%
Unemployed	90,434	3.4%	562	2.1%
Not in labor force	1,651,140	62.7%	18,009	66.8%
Not enrolled in school:	650,534	19.8%	7,294	21.3%
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	469,816	72.2%	4,983	68.3%
Employed	305,538	65.0%	2,863	57.5%
Unemployed	44,289	9.4%	583	11.7%
Not in labor force	119,989	25.5%	1,537	30.8%
Not high school graduate:	180,718	27.8%	2,311	31.7%
Employed	76,207	42.2%	1,225	53.0%
Unemployed	13,277	7.3%	165	7.1%
Not in labor force	91,234	50.5%	921	39.9%
Total Labor Force Participation	1,420,281	43.3%	13,781	40.2%
Total Not in labor force	1,862,363	56.7%	20,467	59.8%

Regions	R1		R2	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled Not Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled Not Enrolled
Total	91,417	-----	88,931	-----
Enrolled in school:	77,440	84.7%	71,789	80.7%
Employed	24,051	31.1%	21,421	29.8%
Unemployed	3,461	4.5%	4,332	6.0%
Not in labor force	49,928	64.5%	46,036	64.1%
Not enrolled in school:	13,977	15.3%	17,142	19.3%
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	10,487	75.0%	12,743	74.3%
Employed	6,324	60.3%	7,408	58.1%
Unemployed	1,314	12.5%	1,794	14.1%
Not in labor force	2,849	27.2%	3,541	27.8%
Not high school graduate:	3,490	25.0%	4,399	25.7%
Employed	1,234	35.4%	1,619	36.8%
Unemployed	409	11.7%	532	12.1%
Not in labor force	1,847	52.9%	2,248	51.1%
Total Labor Force Participation	36,793	40.2%	37,106	41.7%
Total Not in labor force	54,624	59.8%	51,825	58.3%

Regions	R3			
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled Not Enrolled		
Total	22,150	-----		
Enrolled in school:	18,145	81.9%		
Employed	6,309	34.8%		
Unemployed	1,181	6.5%		
Not in labor force	10,655	58.7%		
Not enrolled in school:	4,005	18.1%		
High school graduate (includes equivalency):	2,998	74.9%		
Employed	1,867	62.3%		
Unemployed	406	13.5%		
Not in labor force	725	24.2%		
Not high school graduate:	1,007	25.1%		
Employed	508	50.4%		
Unemployed	28	2.8%		
Not in labor force	471	46.8%		

Total Labor Force Participation	10,299	46.5%		
Total Not in labor force	11,851	53.5%		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Bureau of Labor Statistics Youth Labor Force and Unemployment Rates Including Youth with Disabilities

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics collects information on the Nation's youth labor force participation and unemployment by age. The data indicates that the labor force participation rates for youth with disabilities are lower compared to individuals without disabilities when youth are ages 16 to 19, and the difference ranges between 1.7 to 8.7 percentage points. The margin of difference in the Annual 2023 rate is 10.5 percent. When the group ages 20 to 24, the disparity ranges between 21 and 25.7 percentage points, and the annual difference for 2023 is 20.7.

From October through December of 2023, the unemployment rate difference between those with and without disabilities ages 20 to 24 ranged between 0.4 to 6.5%, significantly lower than the first four months of 2023, where the range was 6.3 to 10%. Table 110 details the National labor force participation and unemployment data for youth ages 16 to 19 and 20 to 24 with and without disabilities.

Table 110: *Youth Labor Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate: October - December 2023 and Annual 2023 Averages*

Group	Youth Labor Force Participation Rate							
	Oct-23		**Nov-23**		**Dec-23**		**Annual 2023**	
	Disability	**No Disability**	**Disability**	**No Disability**	**Disability**	**No Disability**	**Disability**	**No Disability**
Age 16 to 19	28.5%	37.2%	34.3%	36.0%	29.9%	35.1%	27.0%	37.5%
Age 20 to 24	50.2%	71.9%	51.3%	72.3%	45.9%	71.6%	51.8%	72.5%
	Youth Unemployment Rate							
	Disability	**No Disability**	**Disability**	**No Disability**	**Disability**	**No Disability**	**Disability**	**No Disability**
Age 16 to 19	20.5%	12.8%	23.7%	10.4%	15.8%	10.0%	18.0%	11.0%
Age 20 to 24	7.0%	6.6%	9.5%	5.9%	12.0%	5.5%	11.8%	6.4%

Source: Borbely, James @bls.gov

University of New Hampshire Disability Statistics – Employment by Disability Type and Race/Ethnicity

The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability prepared statistics for State-level employment by disability type and ethnicity for non-institutionalized civilians ages 16 to 20, male and female, from all education levels. Limited data was available due to the small population size and age range. Although the data is limited, data suggests that access to employment is available to youth who report minority ethnicities and races in Oregon.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

The project team analyzed the agency data for PY 2021 and 2022 to determine how ODHS VR was performing related to the delivery of pre-employment transition services. Table 111 contains the results of this analysis.

Table 111: *Pre-employment transition services for ODHS VR PY 2021-2022*

Item	2021	2022
Number of students with disabilities reported	11,821	13,069
Number receiving Pre-ETS	4,631	4,533
Number receiving Pre-ETS who are potentially eligible	3838	4623
Number receiving pre-ETS who applied	8	13
Number receiving job exploration counseling	2,798	2,740
Number receiving work-based learning experiences	1,461	1,692
Number receiving counseling and enrollment opportunities	2,219	2,219
Number receiving work readiness training	2,372	2,397
Number receiving instruction in self-advocacy	2,182	2,412

The data indicates the number of students with disabilities served by ODHS VR increased PY 2021-2022, but the number of those receiving Pre-ETS decreased. However, the number of potentially eligible students served increased significantly during this time. The number of work-based learning experiences has increased, but this Pre-ETS is the service least utilized by students. Job exploration is the primary service being delivered, and these efforts should provide a ramp for students into WBLE.

Table XX: *2022 Oregon Employment by Ethnicity and Disability Type for Non-institutionalized Population Ages 16-20*

Employment by Disability Type and Ethnicity Ages 16 to 20	*Percent Employed by Disability Type*						
	Any	*Visual*	*Hearing*	*Ambulatory*	*Cognitive*	*Self-care*	*Independent Living*
White, non-Hispanic	30.9%	38.2%	13.0%	13.9%	30.7%	1.8%	10.8%
Black/African American, non-Hispanic	46.8%	--	--	--	60.7%	--	--
American Indian and Alaskan Native, non-Hispanic	45.9%	--	--	15.8%	48.1%	50.9%	12.7%
Asian, non-Hispanic	39.2%	--	72.9%	--	27.1%	--	--
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Some Other Race, non-Hispanic	26.7%	43.0%	--	--	22.7%	--	16.8%
Hispanic/Latino	18.8%	39.9%	78.0%	78.0%	22.9%	26.9%	20.5%

Source: 2022 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates. Prepared 01/19/2024 by S. Bach,

Survey Results by Type

PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner survey respondents were asked to indicate the five biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition from a list of 20 barriers. There was no limit to the number of barriers a partner respondent could choose. A total of 310 respondents answered the question.

Three of the five biggest barriers to employment that partners selected for youth in transition are among the five most common barriers identified for the general VR client population and among the five biggest barriers partners cited for clients with the most significant disabilities. The biggest barrier for youth in transition selected by the partners is "little or no work experience."

Comments received in the category "other" include unrealistic expectations, poor work ethic, not enough VRCs nor providers, lack of knowledge that services exist; challenges with school staff and barriers from IDEA; family preferences, VR barriers and timelines, and lack of job coaches/one to one training.

Table 112 lists the barriers for youth in transition identified by partner respondents.

Table 112: *Partner Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Youth in Transition*

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Youth in Transition	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Little or no work experience	225	72.6%
Not having job skills	187	60.3%
Not having job search skills	176	56.8%
Poor social skills	174	56.1%
Not having education or training	160	51.6%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	140	45.2%
Other transportation issues	134	43.2%
Mental health issues	117	37.7%
Disability-related transportation issues	112	36.1%
Not having disability-related accommodations	93	30.0%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	83	26.8%
Not enough jobs available	80	25.8%
Lack of help with disability-related personal care	79	25.5%
Other (please describe)	64	20.6%
Language barriers	56	18.1%
Housing issues	48	15.5%
Other health issues	47	15.2%
Substance abuse issues	41	13.2%

Convictions for criminal offenses	30	9.7%
Childcare issues	11	3.5%
Total	2,057	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Youth in Transition

Staff survey respondents were asked to indicate the five biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition from a list of 26 barriers. There was no limit to the number of barriers a staff respondent could choose.

Staff and partner respondents agreed on the four biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition, with "little or no work experience" as the number one barrier on the staff list. The open-ended category "other" was selected one time by staff. The comments matched the comments cited by partners, and the phrase "lack of motivation."

Table 113 lists the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition chosen by staff.

Table 113: *Staff Survey: Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Youth in Transition*

Five Biggest Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Youth In Transition	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Little or no work experience	10	71.4%
Not having job skills	9	64.3%
Poor social skills	8	57.1%
Not having job search skills	6	42.9%
Other transportation issues	5	35.7%
Mental health issues	5	35.7%
Not having education or training	4	28.6%
Not having disability-related accommodations	4	28.6%
Lack of financial literacy	4	28.6%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	3	21.4%
Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways	3	21.4%
Language barriers	2	14.3%
Housing issues	2	14.3%
Substance abuse issues	1	7.1%
Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits	1	7.1%
Other (please describe)	1	7.1%
Not having STEM skills	1	7.1%
Community or systemic racism	1	7.1%
Not enough jobs available	0	0.0%

Lack of help with disability-related personal care	0	0.0%
Disability-related transportation issues	0	0.0%
Other health issues	0	0.0%
Childcare issues	0	0.0%
Convictions for criminal offenses	0	0.0%
Lack of access to technology	0	0.0%
Lack of reliable Internet access	0	0.0%
Total	70	

INDIVIDUAL FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The heightened focus to effectively serve youth and students, nearly ten years after the passage of WIOA, remains evident in Oregon. Recurring themes in this area were also varied and specifically related to a need for:

- Implementing a smooth transition between the "youth/student" and the "adult VR" services. This was cited as an area of concern for youth and young adults with disabilities, as well as the CRP network attempting to support individuals in this transition.
- Understanding by some families as to what VR is and how and when to access services. Families should be encouraged and mentored to participate in VR information meetings earlier in the transition process.
- Recognizing the transformation of the Youth Transition Program (YTP) has created confusion in some communities, and delays in accessing needed support were mentioned as a growing concern. In some instances, there is a reluctance to enroll in YTP.
- Increasing the use of Pre-Employment Transition Services. A complete understanding of how students can access these services is only sometimes applied across the state.
- Using the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) effectively. It was noted that many students need enhanced coaching and other support to make the SYEP experience successful. In addition, a need was highlighted to ensure the dissemination and exchange of information between schools and the SYEP programs to understand students' progress and alignment of IEP/transition goals.
- Expanding career pathways. While the Individualized Career Advancement Program (ICAP) and STEP programs were highlighted as strengths in the transition process, there is a need to connect youth to STEM, Career Technical Education/Perkins V programs, and other credentialing programs to offer options for career pathways.
- Increasing partnership between VR and school programs. It was suggested to increase invitations to Individualized Education Program (IEP) or pre-IEP/general transition meetings for planning purposes.
- Conducting more consistent outreach to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to better understand what "door" they need to access for transition services and when they need to open that door. There is a need for I/DD Care Coordinators and other system Case Workers to have a broader working knowledge of VR's services, supports, and processes.
- Recognizing the rehabilitation needs of students and youth is consistent with adults served by ODHS VR. Transportation, lack of work experience, lack of training, the need to develop soft skills, and assistive technology were commonly cited needs for youth and students with disabilities.

- Ensuring all five required pre-employment transition services are available to support the needs of students with disabilities in Oregon. There is a need to provide these fully available services outside school hours.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided to ODHS VR related to the needs of youth with disabilities in transition:

1. ODHS VR is encouraged to engage in significant outreach to youth and students with disabilities throughout the State to effectively mitigate the challenges cited related to accessing YTP, SYEP, and the transition to "adult VR" services.
2. ODHS VR would benefit from re-establishing and nurturing relationships with the local school districts across the State.
3. ODHS VR is encouraged to explore the opportunity to contract with additional vendors to provide pre-employment transition services.
4. ODHS VR is encouraged to create marketing tools and make resources accessible to navigate for families.
5. ODHS VR is encouraged to formulate an outreach plan to transition staff and families to ensure all students with disabilities have access to information about VR services.
6. ODHS VR is encouraged to identify "mentor families" who could provide peer support to new families.
7. In partnership with Education, ODHS VR is encouraged to establish Model Transition Program sites where transition and Pre-ETS thrive. These MTPs could serve as a demonstration or mentor school for lower-performing schools. Schools in rural locations should receive technical assistance to demonstrate the same practices adapted to their setting.
8. ODHS VR is encouraged to promote postsecondary education training for youth in transition. There is room for growth in the number of individuals supported by the agency in higher education programs, and youth in transition are an important focus in this area. The existence of the Individual Career Advancement Program (ICAP) funded by RSA can be further leveraged to advance this work and expand beyond the state's community college system.
9. ODHS VR is encouraged to continue to provide self-advocacy skills instruction for students with disabilities. This area of strength for the agency can be augmented by developing and implementing a peer mentoring program across the State. One possibility is an online peer mentoring program available through PolicyWorks at https://disabilitypolicyworks.org/peer-mentoringworks-2/. A vital component of this mentoring program is the development of self-advocacy skills in youth and students with disabilities.

SECTION V: THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The following information was gathered during this assessment regarding the needs of individuals with visual impairments served through other Statewide Workforce Development System components. Throughout this section, WorkSource Oregon will refer to services provided by the American Job

Centers (AJCs). The information and comments noted in this Section only refer to ODHS VR's partners, not ODHS VR, unless explicitly stated.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following themes emerged around the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System:

- Increasing the understanding of the services available at Oregon WorkSource.
- Building upon instances where current VR clients report that Oregon WorkSource has provided excellent services and referrals and exploring spaces where the services were lacking from Oregon WorkSource.
- Addressing the concern that Oregon WorkSource may not have the knowledge base to work with job seekers with disabilities.
- Strengthening partnerships between ODHS VR and WorkSource staff.
- Improving programmatic accessibility in the Oregon WorkSource.

Survey Result by Type
INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individuals with disabilities in Oregon were asked about their use and opinion of the Oregon WorkSource.

WorkSource Oregon Centers - Use and Accessibility

More than two-fifths of the respondents cited "yes" when asked if they had used the WorkSource Oregon Centers beyond an online account. Of the respondents who utilized WorkSource Oregon Centers beyond creating an online account, physical accessibility of the building was difficult for about 9% (n=15), and access to programs was challenging for 21.3% (n=36). The narrative responses regarding physical concerns indicated the following:

- *"Fluorescent lighting is too bright, and the environment is too loud"*
- *"Lack of parking"*
- *"There are too many stairs"*
- *"Hard to find"*
- *"To congested and inside the city limits"*
- *"Transportation part of it"*
- *"The building is difficult to get to on public transportation"*
- *"It was difficult to get to appts. Your location in Benton county creates a lot of barriers."*
- *"The one in Benton County was not open much. They even lock it off and not let us in there several times."*
- *"They no longer have someone who comes to Madras"*
- *"Understaffed. Never open."*
- *"Shut down due to covid"*

Table 114 summarizes the responses to questions of use and accessibility.

Table 114: *Individual Survey: WorkSource Oregon Centers – Use and Accessibility*

Accessibility Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Have you ever tried to use the services of the WorkSource Oregon beyond creating an online account? (this may include testing, preparing for or finding employment, job coaching, training assistive technology or other services)	170	44.2%	215	55.8%	385
Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?	15	8.9%	153	91.1%	168
Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the WorkSource Oregon (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?	36	21.3%	133	78.7%	169

WorkSource Oregon Centers – Training and Employment

Individuals indicated the services they sought at the WorkSource Oregon Centers did not result in the desired outcomes for most respondents. Fifty survey respondents (29.6% of 169) went to the Center for training. Twenty-one individuals (42%) indicated that they received the training they sought, and 8 individuals (15.4%) found work because of the training. One-hundred thirty-one (77.5%) out of 169 individuals went to the Center to seek assistance to find a job. One-hundred thirty-two respondents answered the question regarding receiving help that resulted in employment, with 81.1% indicating that they did not receive assistance in finding employment. Table 115 details the results of using the WorkSource Oregon Centers for seeking training and employment.

Table 115: *Individual Survey: WorkSource Oregon Centers – Training and Employment*

Training and Employment Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Did you go to the WorkSource Oregon to get training?	50	29.6%	119	70.4%	169
Did you get the training that you were seeking?	21	42.0%	29	58.0%	50
Did the WorkSource Oregon training result in employment?	8	15.4%	44	84.6%	52
Did you go to the WorkSource Oregon to find a job?	131	77.5%	38	22.5%	169
Did the WorkSource Oregon staff help you find employment?	25	18.9%	107	81.1%	132

WorkSource Oregon Centers – Helpfulness and Effectiveness

The concepts of helpfulness and effectiveness are evaluated in this study with respect to the WorkSource Oregon Centers services. Overall, the ratings of WorkSource Oregon Centers indicate that there are mixed reviews on the helpfulness and effectiveness of the services.

WorkSource Oregon Centers – Helpfulness

One-hundred sixty-three respondents answered the question regarding staff helpfulness in the 2023 individual survey. The results to this question are almost equally divided into thirds. Many of the respondents found the Centers' staff to be somewhat helpful. Note the margin of difference between "very helpful" and "not helpful" is 5 respondents Table 116 summarizes the results.

Table 116: *Individual Survey: Helpfulness of WorkSource Oregon Centers' Staff*

WorkSource OR Center Staff Helpful	Number	Percent
They were somewhat helpful	64	39.3%
Yes, they were very helpful	52	31.9%
No, they were not helpful	47	28.8%
Total	163	100.0%

WorkSource Oregon Centers – Effectiveness

Regarding the effectiveness of the WorkSource Oregon Centers, most respondents found the Centers' services to be "not effective" in serving individuals with disabilities. In terms of overall effectiveness rating, one-fourth of the respondents selected "very ineffective." A three percent margin of difference (n=5) exists between the rate of respondents that selected the response option "very ineffective" and the rate of respondents that cited "no opinion." Table 117 identifies the effectiveness of the WorkSource Centers' services cited by the individuals.

Table 117: *Individual Survey: Effectiveness of WorkSource Oregon Center Services*

WorkSource OR Center Services Effective	Number	Percent
No, the services were not effective	72	44.4%
The services were somewhat effective	56	34.6%
Yes, the services were very effective	34	21.0%
Total	162	100.0%
Effectiveness Rating	**Number**	**Percent**
Very ineffective	42	25.6%
No opinion	37	22.6%
Somewhat ineffective	29	17.7%
Very effective	28	17.1%
Somewhat effective	28	17.1%
Total	164	100.0%

Recommendations for WorkSource Oregon

Individual survey respondents were presented with a final question: "What recommendations do you have for WorkSource Oregon to improve their services to individuals with disabilities in Oregon?"

Respondents were allowed to provide a narrative response. Four comments were positive toward the WorkSource Oregon Centers, and no improvement recommendations were provided. Two responses contained details regarding staff instructing the respondent to go to VR for assistance, and two comments cited VR needed to be involved sooner. Twenty-six narrative comments offered suggestions on improving staff attitude, hiring caring staff, increasing knowledge about people with disabilities, communication, responsiveness, and helpfulness. Seven comments cited improving the job postings, and five suggested improving the WorkSource website.

COMMUNITY PARTNER RESULTS

Partner Survey: WorkSource Oregon Centers

Partner survey respondents were asked questions regarding their opinion and use of the WorkSource Oregon Centers.

WorkSource Oregon Centers - Use and Accessibility
The project team asked respondents to identify their frequency of interaction with the WorkSource Oregon Centers. Roughly four-fifths (82.1%) of the partner respondents either do not interact with the WorkSource Oregon Centers or infrequently interact with the Centers. Less than 5% of the partner respondents frequently interact with the WorkSource Oregon Centers.

The survey asked about the physical and programmatic accessibility of the WorkSource Oregon Centers. Most partner respondents (about 41%) indicated that the WorkSource Oregon Centers were somewhat physically accessible. Note the narrow margin of difference (n=2) between the number of partners (n=55) who cited that the WorkSource Oregon Centers are fully accessible and the number of partners who indicated that they did not know if WorkSource Oregon Centers are physically accessible (n=53).

Almost one-third of partners are not knowledgeable regarding the WorkSource Oregon Centers' program accessibility while 47.5% of partner respondents indicated that the WorkSource Oregon Centers were somewhat programmatically accessible. Individual respondents differed in their report as the majority (78.7%) indicated that they did not have difficulty accessing the programs at the WorkSource Oregon Centers.

Tables 118-120 summarize the responses from Oregon VR's community partners regarding interaction and accessibility of the WorkSource Oregon Centers.

Table 118: *Partner Survey: Frequency of Interaction with WorkSource Oregon Centers*

Frequency of Interaction with WorkSource Oregon Centers	Number	Percent
Not at all	142	41.6%
Infrequently	138	40.5%
Somewhat frequently	45	13.2%
Very frequently	16	4.7%
Total	341	100.0%

Table 119: *Partner Survey: Physical Accessibility of the WorkSource Oregon Centers*

Physical Accessibility of the WorkSource Oregon Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat accessible	81	41.1%
Fully accessible	55	27.9%
I do not know	53	26.9%
Not accessible	8	4.1%
Total	197	100.0%

Table 120: *Partner Survey: Programmatic Accessibility of the WorkSource Oregon Centers*

Programmatic Accessibility of the WorkSource Oregon Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat accessible	93	47.5%
I do not know	59	30.1%
Fully accessible	31	15.8%
Not accessible	13	6.6%
Total	196	100.0%

WorkSource Oregon Centers – Effectiveness Rating

Partners and individual survey respondents were somewhat similar in their viewpoints when asked about the overall effectiveness of the WorkSource Centers in serving people with disabilities. Over one-half of the partners and most individuals indicated that the Centers do not effectively serve people with disabilities.

Table 121: *Partner Survey: WorkSource Oregon Centers – Effectiveness Rating*

Effectiveness of WorkSource Oregon Centers	Number	Percent
Not effectively	100	54.4%
Effectively	68	37.0%
Very effectively	12	6.5%
They do not serve individuals with disabilities	4	2.2%
Total	184	100.0%

WorkSource Oregon Centers – Improving Services

In the final survey question related to the WorkSource Oregon Centers, the respondents were asked what the Centers could do to improve services for individuals with disabilities. Partners were presented with six items and asked to select all that apply.

Roughly 68% of respondents indicated that the WorkSource Centers should partner more effectively with Oregon VR, and slightly more than 68% of partner respondents indicated that the Centers should train their staff to work effectively with individuals with disabilities. The third most common choice was to "include individuals with disabilities when purchasing training for their clients."

About 40 percent of partners would like the WorkSource Centers to improve their programmatic accessibility, even though about 30 percent of partners do not know if the Centers are programmatically accessible, and about 82 percent of partners do not or rarely interact with the Centers.

Twenty-five narrative comments were received in response to the item "other; please describe." Three narrative responses cited the phrase "don't know." Seven comments suggested broadening their partnerships with providers, employers, and VR to include VR having access to the Match system. Other suggestions from the narrative comments include providing services in different languages and ASL; training on how to work with people with disabilities; mental health training; training on how to refer to VR; less testing as clients hate tests; bring back in-person trainings for life skills and job skills; and advertise more. Table XX summarizes the partner results.

Table 122: *Partner Survey: Improving Service of Oregon WorkSource Centers for Individuals with Disabilities*

Improving Service of the WorkSource Oregon Centers to Effectively Serve Individuals	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Partner more effectively with VR	126	69.2%
Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities	124	68.1%
Include individuals with disabilities when purchasing training for their clients	97	53.3%
Improve programmatic accessibility	72	39.6%
Improve physical accessibility	33	18.1%
Other (please describe)	26	14.3%
Total	478	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: WorkSource Oregon Centers

Staff survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their opinion and use of the WorkSource Oregon Centers.

WorkSource Oregon Centers - Use and Accessibility

Many staff (35.7%) indicated "infrequently" as their level of interaction with the WorkSource Centers while 28.6 percent of staff selected "not at all." The staff and partner results are similar in response to this question.

The survey asked about the physical and programmatic accessibility of the WorkSource Oregon Centers. Many staff respondents (about 43%) indicated that they did not know if the WorkSource Oregon Centers were physically accessible, and 35.7 percent of staff indicated that the Centers are somewhat physically accessible. Note that the numeric difference between the two item options is one respondent.

Like partners, about one-third of staff are not knowledgeable regarding the WorkSource Oregon Centers' program accessibility while 42.9% of staff indicated that the WorkSource Oregon Centers were somewhat programmatically accessible. Note again, most individual survey respondents indicated that they did not have difficulty accessing the programs at the WorkSource Oregon Centers.

Tables 123-126 summarize the responses from VR staff regarding interaction and accessibility of the WorkSource Oregon Centers.

Table 123: *Staff Survey: Frequency of Interaction with WorkSource Oregon Centers*

Frequency of Interaction with WorkSource Oregon Centers	Number	Percent
Infrequently	5	35.7%
Not at all	4	28.6%
Very frequently	3	21.4%
Somewhat frequently	2	14.3%
Total	14	100.0%

Table 124: *Staff Survey: Physical Accessibility of the WorkSource Oregon Centers*

Physical Accessibility of the WorkSource Oregon Centers	Number	Percent
I do not know	6	42.9%
Somewhat accessible	5	35.7%
Fully accessible	3	21.4%
Not accessible	0	0.0%
Total	14	100.0%

Table 125: *Staff Survey: Programmatic Accessibility of the WorkSource Oregon Centers*

Programmatic Accessibility of the WorkSource Oregon Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat accessible	6	42.9%
I do not know	5	35.7%
Not accessible	2	14.3%
Fully accessible	1	7.1%
Total	14	100.0%

WorkSource Oregon Centers – Effectiveness Rating

Over 75 percent of staff indicated that the WorkSource Oregon Centers are not effectively serving people with disabilities, which reflects the partner and individual survey results.

Table 126: S*taff Survey: WorkSource Oregon Centers – Effectiveness Rating*

Effectiveness of WorkSource Oregon Centers	Number	Percent
Not effectively	11	78.6%
Effectively	3	21.4%
Very effectively	0	0.0%
They do not serve individuals with disabilities	0	0.0%
Total	14	100.0%

WorkSource Oregon Centers – Improving Services

Staff respondents were presented with a list of 6 items and asked what the Centers could do to improve services for individuals with disabilities. There was no limit to the number of suggestions a respondent could choose. A total of 12 respondents answered the question.

The two most frequently selected items chosen by staff match the partner choices in response to the question. Roughly 92% of respondents indicated that the WorkSource Centers should partner more effectively with Oregon VR and that the Centers should train their staff on working effectively with individuals with disabilities. Staff ranked the item "include individuals with disabilities when purchasing training for their clients" lower than partners.

Also similar to partner results, staff would like the WorkSource Centers to improve their programmatic accessibility even though: 1) 35.7 percent of staff do not know if the Center is programmatically accessible; 2) about 64.3 percent of partners do not or rarely interact with the Centers; and 3) the majority of individual respondents (78.7%, n=133 out of 169) indicated that they did not have difficulty accessing the programs at the WorkSource Oregon Centers.

Two comments were received in the category "other, please describe." The quotes are:
- *"From my understanding, if WorkSource believes someone has a disability, they routinely send them to VR with little coordination once that referral to VR is made."*
- *"They need training & resources related to using ASL Interpreters, etc."*

Table 127 summarizes the staff responses to the survey question regarding improving WorkSource Center services for individuals with disabilities.

Table 127: *Staff Survey: Improving Service of Oregon WorkSource Centers for Individuals with Disabilities*

Improving Service of the WorkSource Oregon Centers to Effectively Serve Individuals with Disabilities	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities	11	91.7%
Partner more effectively with Oregon VR	11	91.7%
Improve programmatic accessibility	9	75.0%
Improve physical accessibility	5	41.7%
Include individuals with disabilities when purchasing training for their clients	5	41.7%
Other (please describe)	2	16.7%
Total	43	

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following information was gathered from the individuals interviewed for this assessment regarding the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System (i.e., Oregon WorkSource). Needs raised included:

- Increasing the understanding of clients and partners about the services available at Oregon WorkSource. Some reported they were told they could not access services at ODHS VR and WorkSource.
- Building upon instances where current VR clients report that Oregon WorkSource has provided excellent services and referrals and exploring spaces where the services were lacking from

Oregon WorkSource. Some cited the services had no value to them as job seekers with a disability.

- Addressing the concern that Oregon WorkSource may not have the knowledge base to work with job seekers with disabilities. Many clients reported feeling "passed off" to ODHS VR.
- Strengthening partnerships between ODHS VR and WorkSource staff to advance cross-systems service delivery and increase equitable access to workforce services in response to section 811.
- Improving programmatic accessibility in the Oregon WorkSource. Advancement in access to assistive technology and tools to service a broad range of individuals will eliminate frustration for individuals. The project team could not identify any cases of braided funding between ODHS VR and Oregon WorkSource.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to ODHS VR based on the results of the research in the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities served through other Components of the Statewide Workforce Development System area:

1. ODHS VR is encouraged to reach out to the Oregon WorkSource across the state actively and to identify opportunities for training center staff on effectively working with individuals with disabilities.
2. ODHS VR is encouraged to develop a plan for creating and facilitating Disability Awareness training for Oregon WorkSource staff. ODHS VR and WorkSource should explore cross-training opportunities where staff in both systems can learn from each other. Mutually attended events will contribute to networking, rapport-building, and resource sharing.
3. ODHS VR is encouraged to explore co-located or designated staff at each WorkSource office (and vice-versa) whenever possible.
4. ODHS VR should seek to broaden the use of effective collaborative practices highlighted by the Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth and other national centers. An essential resource on advancing partnerships with WIOA Title I programs includes Unlocking the Potential of Title I.
5. ODHS VR is encouraged to co-create a resource guide (and training) for SW/VR to collaboratively provide to businesses about hiring, training, accommodating, and retaining employees with disabilities.
6. In partnership with the Oregon WorkSource, ODHS VR should seek to implement Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) for consumers served by the more extensive Workforce Development system. This team approach has proven to assist with leveraging resources and increasing positive outcomes through shared planning and service delivery. More information can be found at https://disability.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/Integrated_Resource_Team_Information_and_Resources.

SECTION VI: NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN OREGON

Section Six identifies the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs in Oregon that serve individuals with disabilities. ODHS VR provides many services to their consumers through a network of qualified vendors/community rehabilitation programs.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following themes emerged around the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with disabilities in Oregon:

- Rate structures and funding models make recruiting and retaining a qualified workforce difficult.
- Improving the quality and consistency of CRP services.
- Enhancing the initial training and ongoing professional development of CRP staff to include topics on effectively serving people from diverse backgrounds, career planning, outreach strategies, and implementing best- and promising practices.
- Increasing the development of fidelity-based supported and customized employment providers in rural and less densely populated areas where providers are rich, but the quality is diminishing.
- Broadening an understanding of creating and carrying out Person-Centered Plans and Individualized Services by CRPs and VR staff.

Survey Results by Type

Individual Survey: Service Providers

Individual survey respondents were asked questions identifying their use of VR referrals, their service provider's quality, effectiveness, and responsiveness, and whether they would recommend their service provider to others.

Use of a VR Referral
The first question asked individual survey respondents to indicate whether they received services from a service provider that Oregon VR referred to them. A total of 160 respondents answered the question. Almost 52 percent of respondents indicated receiving service provider services from a VR referral. Table 128 summarizes the results.

Table 128 *Individual Survey: Use of a VR Referral*

Use of VR Referral	Number	Percent
Yes	83	51.9%
No	58	36.3%
I am not sure	19	11.9%
Total	160	100.0%

Quality of Service from Service Provider

Individuals were asked to rate the quality of service from the service provider. 85 responses were received, and 45.9 percent indicated that the service provider's service quality was "excellent." Table 129 details the results.

Table 129: *Individual Survey: Quality of Service from Service Provider*

Effectiveness of Services: Service Provider	Number	Percent
Excellent	39	45.9%
Good	23	27.1%
Fair	16	18.8%
Poor	7	8.2%
Total	85	100.0%

Effectiveness of Service Provider Services

Individuals were asked to rate the effectiveness of the services from the service provider. Almost an equal number of individuals rated the services from the service provider as "very effective" and "effective." Slightly less than one-third of the respondents indicated that the services were either ineffective or somewhat ineffective (30.6%). The results are detailed in Table 130.

Table 130: *Individual Survey: Effectiveness of Service from Service Provider*

Effectiveness of Services: Service Provider	Number	Percent
Very effective	30	35.3%
Effective	29	34.1%
Somewhat ineffective	15	17.7%
Ineffective	11	12.9%
Total	85	100.0%

Responsiveness of Service Provider

Respondents were also asked to rate the responsiveness of the service provider. The margin of difference between "good" and "excellent" in response to the question is large (n=16). Many respondents rated the service provider's responsiveness as "excellent." Table 131 summarizes the results.

Table 131: *Individual Survey: Responsiveness of Service Provider*

Responsiveness of Service Provider	Number	Percent
Excellent	40	48.2%
Good	24	28.9%
Fair	13	15.7%
Poor	6	7.2%
Total	83	100.0%

Recommend Service Provider

The final question asked of individuals regarding service providers was, "Would you recommend your service provider to others served by Oregon VR?" Slightly more than 67 percent of the respondents

indicated that they would recommend their service provider to others. The response ratings are contained in Table 132.

Table 132: *Individual Survey: Recommend Service Provider*

Recommend Service Provider	Number	Percent
Yes	57	67.1%
Not sure	18	21.2%
No	10	11.8%
Total	85	100.0%

PARTNER SURVEY RESPONSE

Partner Survey: Service Providers

Partner survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding rehabilitation service provider services to identify the availability of services to clients and whether the services meet the client's needs.

Services Readily Available to VR Clients

Partners were given a list of 18 items and asked to select the services readily available to VR Clients. Employment services were identified as the most readily available service for VR clients, with 87% of partner survey respondents indicating it was readily available. Supported employment and pre-employment transition services were identified as the next two most readily available services. More than 77 percent of the partner respondents indicated that on-the-job training and occupational or vocational training services were readily available to VR clients. Literacy training, reader services and registered apprenticeship training were cited the fewest times as readily available. The narrative comments cited job coaches, mental health services, and behavioral supports in response to the item "other; please describe."

Table 133: *Partner Survey: Services Readily Available*

Services Readily Available	Yes, the service is readily available		No, the service is readily available		Total
Service	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Employment services (job search, job development and placement)	347	87.0%	52	13.0%	399
Supported employment services	345	85.8%	57	14.2%	402
Pre-employment transition services	321	81.9%	71	18.1%	392
On-the-job training	301	77.0%	90	23.0%	391
Occupational or vocational training	300	77.1%	89	22.9%	389
Community college or four-year college or university training	266	72.9%	99	27.1%	365
Assistive technology services	266	74.1%	93	25.9%	359
Customized employment services	265	71.6%	105	28.4%	370
Benefits counseling	256	67.7%	122	32.3%	378

Transportation	254	66.8%	126	33.2%	380
Interpreter and translator services	238	67.6%	114	32.4%	352
Personal assistance services	204	59.7%	138	40.4%	342
Disability-related skills training (orientation and mobility, Braille, etc.)	202	58.9%	141	41.1%	343
Maintenance or other income assistance	159	49.5%	162	50.5%	321
Registered apprenticeship training	132	40.0%	198	60.0%	330
Reader services	131	44.9%	161	55.1%	292
Literacy training	128	41.3%	182	58.7%	310
Other (please describe)	4	10.3%	35	89.7%	39

Service Providers Meeting Client Needs

Partner survey respondents were asked to identify how frequently service providers in Oregon could meet VR clients' rehabilitation service needs. Almost 54% of the partner survey respondents indicated that service providers can sometimes meet the needs of VR consumers. Most of the time, the next most frequent choice was followed by all the time. Table 134 summarizes the results of this question.

Table 134: *Partner Survey: Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Needs*

Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Needs	Number	Percent
Some of the time	228	53.7%
Most of the time	164	38.6%
All the time	19	4.5%
None of the time	14	3.3%
Total	425	100.0%

Services Most Effectively Delivered by Service Providers

Partners were provided a list of 15 items and asked to identify the services service providers most effectively provided to VR clients. There was no limit to the number of services a partner could choose.

Partners indicated that the most effective services providers provide are job development and job training services. These two services were chosen more than 60% of the time, while the third choice of assistive technology was chosen less than 30%. Twenty-four comments were received in the category "other." Eleven comments cited phrases "none/all lacking/want to help but unable to deliver," and five cited "unsure/unknown." Quotes include:

- *"Applying for standard jobs in the community"*
- *"Integrated services throughout the community"*
- *"IADLS and ADLS"*
- *"Small group OJT"*

Table 135 lists the services and the number of times each item was selected.

Services Most Effectively Delivered by Service Providers	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Job development services	258	72.5%
Job training services (trial work experiences, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)	228	64.0%
Assistive technology services	102	28.7%
Benefit planning assistance	91	25.6%
Other transportation assistance	87	24.4%
Other education services	65	18.3%
Mental health treatment	56	15.7%
Personal care attendants	56	15.7%
Vehicle modification assistance	37	10.4%
Medical treatment	35	9.8%
Substance abuse treatment	29	8.1%
Housing	26	7.3%
Other (please describe)	25	7.0%
Income assistance	24	6.7%
Health insurance	23	6.5%
Total	1,142	

Rehabilitation Needs Service Providers are Unable to Meet

Partners were asked an open-ended question to identify the rehabilitation needs service providers could not meet in their area. There were 257 narrative responses to this question. Transportation, job coaching, long-term job coaching, customized employment, lack of service providers, and finding employment as limited job opportunities were identified most frequently. Other needs identified as not being met included housing, the Discovery process, benefits counseling, and bilingual services.

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs

Partners were given a list of six reasons and asked to identify why community service providers could not meet clients' service needs.

The most common response was "not enough service providers available in the area," followed by "low levels of accountability for poor performance by service providers" and "low quality of service provider services." Six quotes from the sixty-nine narrative responses cited transportation. Other quotes from the item "other" are as follows:

- *"Lack of VRCs, SCs, PAs. Caseloads may be too large to provide adequate case management services."*
- *"It is not a provider or VR failure; it is job market and customer participation and/or customer barriers that are difficult to "sell" to some employers, regardless of the positives presented when job developing. A job developer nor VR counselor can overcome the*

prejudices of some employers. There needs to be a solid employer education process in place because a single job developer cannot accomplish that in a limited timeframe...”

- *“Residential homes are not used to having to provide separate services to each person in their home and constantly state that they do not have enough staff to provide one-on-one services.”*
- *“Lack of service provider employees”*
- *“Lack of training”*

Table 136 details the partner's responses to this question.

Table 136: *Partner Survey: Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs*

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Not enough service providers available in area	273	74.0%
Low levels of accountability for poor performance by service providers	138	37.4%
Low quality of service provider services	134	36.3%
Customer barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers	124	33.6%
Low rates paid for services	115	31.2%
Other (please describe)	72	19.5%
Total	856	

Top Three Changes to Help Better Serve VR Clients

Partner survey respondents were presented with a list and asked to identify the top three changes that would help them better serve Oregon VR Clients. More streamlined processes, improved communication with referring VR counselors, and reduced documentation requirements ranked as the top three changes that would help partners better serve clients. Increased collaboration with WorkSource Oregon was chosen by 12% of respondents even though 1) about 82% of the partner respondents interacted rarely or not at all with the WorkSource Centers, and over 54% of partners believe the Centers' services are ineffective.

Table 137 lists the changes and the number of times each change was identified as one of the top three changes that would help better serve VR clients.

Table 137: *Partner Survey: Top Three Changes to Help Better Serve Oregon VR Clients*

Top Three Changes to Better Serve VR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
More streamlined processes	186	55.9%
Smaller caseload	149	44.7%
Improved communication with referring VR counselor	124	37.2%
Reduced documentation requirements	123	36.9%
Improved business partnerships	83	24.9%

Higher rates paid by VR for services	72	21.6%
Referral of appropriate individuals	49	14.7%
Additional training	45	13.5%
Increased collaboration with WorkSource Oregon	40	12.0%
Other (please describe)	30	9.0%
Increased options for technology use to communicate with customers	30	9.0%
Incentives for high performance paid by VR	17	5.1%
Total	948	

Most Important Change Service Providers Could Make to Support Client Efforts to Achieve Employment Goals

Partners were asked to identify the most important change that service providers in Oregon could make to support clients' efforts to achieve their employment goals. Three hundred nineteen narrative responses were received. Topics cited in the comments include hiring more staff and increasing pay; improving the quality of partner staff; hiring more quality job coaches; transportation; returning calls; understanding client disabilities; being attentive to client needs/being client-oriented; spending more time developing and finding employment for clients; providing more choices and a better understanding of available options; increase availability; have accountability; more collaboration with schools and local employers; reduce caseloads; and more funding.

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: Service Providers

Staff survey respondents were asked six questions regarding rehabilitation service provider services. The questions aimed to identify the availability of services that VR refers to or recommends to clients and to understand whether the services are meeting the client's needs.

Services Readily Available to Oregon VR Clients

Staff were given a list of 19 items and asked to select the services readily available to VR clients. Staff and partner results in response to the question are different. Five items were cited by over 76 percent of staff as services that are readily available to VR clients (assistive technology, other transportation services, job training services, job development services, and other education services). Table 138 details the staff choices of readily available services.

Table 138: *Staff Survey: Services Readily Available to VR Clients*

Services Immediately Available	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Assistive technology	17	81.0%
Other transportation assistance	17	81.0%
Job training services (TWE, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)	16	76.2%
Job development services	16	76.2%

Other education services	16	76.2%
Career Ladder/Pathways counseling	15	71.4%
Vehicle modification assistance	14	66.7%
Benefit planning assistance	11	52.4%
Remote service delivery (tele counseling, remote job supports, etc.)	11	52.4%
Medical treatment	9	42.9%
Mental health treatment	9	42.9%
Personal care attendants	9	42.9%
Substance abuse treatment	8	38.1%
Health insurance	7	33.3%
STEM skills training	6	28.6%
Financial literacy training	6	28.6%
Income assistance	4	19.0%
Housing	2	9.5%
Other (please describe)	1	4.8%
Total	194	

Services Not Readily Available or Do Not Exist

Staff were asked to indicate what services were not readily available or do not exist around Oregon where they work. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen. A total of 20 staff respondents answered the question.

Staff displayed some consistency in their choices for available and not available services. The items selected as services not readily available or do not exist listed at the top of Table 139 below are found at the bottom the list of services that staff indicated as readily available. Two out of the four comments received in the category "other" cited "I don't know/unsure". Two comments are quoted:

- *"Equal access to services for Deaf people and those who have cultural and ethnic language access needs. Easter Seals is ok for Spanish mono- and primary language folks, but bilingual and bicultural services for folks who use other language including ASL are not equally served."*
- *"No transportation for people living in rural places"*

Table 139 details the staff choices of services not readily available or do not exist for VR clients to access in Oregon.

Table 139: *Staff Survey: Services Not Readily Available or Do Not Exist*

Services Not Readily Available or Do Not Exist	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Housing	13	65.0%
Income assistance	11	55.0%
Financial literacy training	11	55.0%

Mental health treatment	10	50.0%
Personal care attendants	10	50.0%
STEM skills training	10	50.0%
Medical treatment	9	45.0%
Health insurance	9	45.0%
Substance abuse treatment	8	40.0%
Job training services (TWE, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)	6	30.0%
Vehicle modification assistance	6	30.0%
Benefit planning assistance	5	25.0%
Job development services	5	25.0%
Assistive technology	4	20.0%
Other (please describe)	4	20.0%
Other transportation assistance	3	15.0%
Career Ladder/Pathways counseling	3	15.0%
Remote service delivery (tele counseling, remote job supports, etc.)	3	15.0%
Other education services	2	10.0%
Total	132	

Service Providers Meeting Clients' Needs

Staff survey respondents were asked to identify how frequently service providers in the State of Oregon were able to meet VR clients' rehabilitation service needs.

Many respondents (52.4%) indicated that service providers sometimes met the needs of VR clients. A significantly lower rate of respondents (n=1, 4.8%) indicated that service providers are always meeting clients' needs. Note that roughly 67 percent of the individual respondents indicated that they would recommend their service provider to others which supports the majority of staff respondents' viewpoint that providers are meeting client needs.

Table 140: *Staff Survey: Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Clients' Needs*

Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Needs	Number	Percent
Some of the time	11	52.4%
Most of the time	9	42.9%
All the time	1	4.8%
None of the time	0	0.0%
Total	21	100.0%

Rehabilitation Needs Service Providers are Unable to Meet

Staff survey respondents were given an open-ended question and asked to identify the rehabilitation needs that service providers were unable to meet in their area. Fourteen respondents provided a narrative response indicating various service gaps.

Nine narrative comments detailed the lack of job coaches/ job development services/lack of service providers that impede the client's needs to be met. Two narrative comments detailed the lack of mental health services, and one comment cited a lack of language access for various groups. Two quotes from the narrative comments are:

- *"Housing rehabilitation for those who have lost housing due to unemployment, especially related to the disability; technology rehabilitation related to the impact of new equipment; mental health access is extremely limited."*
- *"Transportation to employment; Housing assistance; Computer skills classes; Career Pathways Coaching; Retention supports; Adequate disability accommodations"*

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs

Staff survey respondents were given a list of seven reasons and asked to identify the primary reasons vocational rehabilitation service providers could not meet clients' service needs. Respondents were able to select more than one item if desired. A total of 16 staff respondents answered the question.

Staff agreed with partners that the primary reason why the clients' rehabilitation service needs are not being met is that not enough service providers are available in the area. Over one-half of the staff respondents also indicated that service provider turnover and the low quality of provider services impact the clients' rehabilitation needs and prevent them from being met. The quote received in response to the item "other, please describe" is:

"Pay structure and lack of incentive to provide quality services". Table 141 summarizes the staff responses to this question.

Table 141: *Staff Survey: Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs*

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Not enough service providers available in area	15	93.8%
Service provider staff turnover	15	93.8%
Low quality of service provider services	9	56.3%
Consumer barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers	6	37.5%
Low levels of accountability for poor performance by service providers	6	37.5%
Low rates paid for services	3	18.8%
Other (please describe)	1	6.3%
Total	55	

Most Important Change Service Providers Could Make to Support Client's Efforts to Achieve Employment Goals

Staff respondents were asked an open-ended question to identify the most important change that service providers could make to support client's efforts to achieve their employment goals. A total of 11 responses were received. Content analysis indicated consistent themes regarding service provider

staffing and staff development, types of service providers, service provider salary, language barriers, and VR policy and procedures. Quotes are provided in table 142.

Table 142: *Staff Survey: Most Important Change Service Providers Could Make to Support Client's Efforts to Achieve Employment Goals*

Quotes: Most Important Change Service Providers Could Make to Support Client's Efforts to Achieve Employment Goals
Service Provider Staffing and Staff Development
"Have more staff"
"More staff"
"Maintain staffing. Increase staff training and skill"
"Increase their staff and how they function. Improve their staff training regarding how to work with disabilities, trends on Job development and job coaching"
"Attend mandatory training and enhanced accountability on follow up for changing the culture of VR, eligibility barriers, client service gaps based on stigma/bias"
Types of Service Providers
"Need more qualified mental health professionals; expanded OHP covered MH services"
"We need more experienced providers that stick around"
Service Provider Salary
"A living wage"
Language Barriers
"Look at language as a benefit or skill, not a problem or liability"
VR Policy and Procedures
"Caseloads need to be realistic so that clients can have more actual rehabilitation counseling and not just case management"
"Expand VR's policy to make it easier to reason a cost for the counselor. "Pre-approved costs/vendors" that don't require hoops to jump through"

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following themes were recurring from the individuals interviewed for this assessment around the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with disabilities in ODHS VR:

Recurring themes emerged related to CRPs, and the specific needs related to:

- Exploring rate structures. The high cost of living makes it difficult to pay and retain staff based on rates offered by ODHS VR. Providers can't pay competitive wages to maintain a qualified workforce.
- Addressing the quality and inconsistency of CRP services. The apparent lack of urgency related to the "need" for a job was consistently raised by clients across the state.
- Enhancing the initial training and ongoing professional development of CRP staff to include topics on effectively serving people from diverse backgrounds, career planning, outreach strategies, and implementing best- and promising practices (i.e., customized employment, individualized placement, and support, supported employment, integrated resource teams, etc.)
- Increasing the development of fidelity-based supported and customized employment providers in rural and less densely populated areas where providers are rich, but the quality is reportedly diminishing.
- Broadening an understanding of creating and carrying out Person-Centered Plans and Individualized Services by CRPs and VR staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendation is offered to ODHS VR based on the results of the research in the Need to Establish, Develop or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in ODHS VR:

1. ODHS VR is encouraged to partner with Oregon APSE and other CRP Groups to assess gaps and needs in the field and co-develop a strategic plan for attracting professionals to the state's CRP and VR positions.
2. ODHS VR is encouraged to engage in cross-training opportunities with CRPs using Person-Centered models, motivational interviewing, trauma-informed practices, and culturally responsive approaches.
3. ODHS VR may consider expanding the J-DOT training and developing a training series in alignment with APSE, ACRE, or other national standards related to providing high-quality employment services.
4. ODHS VR is encouraged to develop SE and CE providers for their consumers who need these services in areas with limited access to these services or a selection of CRPs.

SECTION VII: NEEDS OF BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

The need for the VR program to engage with the business community and effectively provide services to employers is one of the common performance measures for the core partners in WIOA. Every VR program needs to do a self-assessment of how well they are meeting the needs of employers related to recruiting, hiring, retaining, and accommodating employees with disabilities. The project team hopes this report section will be useful to ODHS VR as they seek to identify employer needs and develop strategies to increase business engagement. However, please note that only ten businesses participated in some way in the CSNA, with ten completing a survey. The reader is cautioned to interpret any findings with the low participation rates in mind.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following themes emerged around the needs of business and effectiveness in serving employers:

- Addressing the stigma associated with job seekers with disabilities and the bias that businesses have shown in hiring practices.

- Acknowledging the positive development of the Business Outreach team while increasing business relationships at the corporate level. There is a need for this team to assess employer training needs in topics relevant to hiring, training, accommodating, and retaining employees with disabilities.

- Expanding businesses' knowledge of the ADA and the processes for accommodating employees with disabilities. Additionally, there is a need for businesses to have technical assistance with identifying and supporting assistive technology in the workplace.

Survey Results by Type

Disability in the Workplace: Employer Needs

Concerning the "Disability in the Workplace" section, business survey respondents were presented with eight questions regarding whether their business needed help with various concerns related to disability and employment. The questions were structured in a yes-no format. The sample size is (n=8) in response to employer needs regarding disability in the workplace.

Fifty percent of business respondents indicated that they need assistance regarding disability in the workplace, which includes recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities, obtaining training on disability types, and obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities.

Table 143: *Disability in the Workplace: Employer Needs*

Does your business need help…	Number of times Yes was chosen	Percent of time Yes was chosen	Number of times No was chosen	Percent of time No was chosen	Total
Recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities?	4	50.0%	4	50.0%	8
Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities?	4	50.0%	4	50.0%	8
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities?	4	50.0%	4	50.0%	8
Understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Rehabilitation Act as amended?	3	37.5%	5	62.5%	8

	Number of times Yes was chosen	Percent of time Yes was chosen	Number of times No was chosen	Percent of time No was chosen	Total
Identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?	3	37.5%	5	62.5%	8
Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment?	3	37.5%	5	62.5%	8
Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities?	2	25.0%	6	75.0%	8
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?	2	25.0%	6	75.0%	8

Business respondents were asked, in a supplemental open-ended question, if they would like to further comment on needs regarding disabilities in the workplace. One response to the question was received and is quoted:

- *"It would be great for a training that shows communication teams how folks with disabilities consume important/state information. Knowing how a screen reader works or why closed captioning is important would be great!"*

Applicants with Disabilities: Recruitment Process

Business respondents were asked six questions regarding the need for recruitment assistance for applicants with disabilities. Respondents were asked to provide responses to the questions in a yes-no response format.

Over 62 percent of the business respondents indicated that they need help recruiting applicants with disabilities that meet the job qualifications, have good work habits, and would like assistance discussing reasonable accommodations with the applicants. Fifty percent of businesses would like assistance with identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants.

Table 144 summarizes the results of the responses to the six questions according to the percentage of respondents who indicated a need for help with respect to the item indicated in each question.

Table 144: *Applicants with Disabilities: Recruitment Process*

Does your business need help…	Number of times Yes was chosen	Percent of time Yes was chosen	Number of times No was chosen	Percent of time No was chosen	Total
Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?	6	75.0%	2	25.0%	8
Recruiting applicants with good work habits?	5	62.5%	3	37.5%	8
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?	5	62.5%	3	37.5%	8
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?	4	50.0%	4	50.0%	8

Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?	3	37.5%	5	62.5%	8
Assessing applicants' skills?	2	25.0%	6	75.0%	8

Business respondents were asked if they would like to further comment on their answers in the previous question or if they had additional comments or needs regarding recruiting applicants with disabilities. One response was received. The comment stated the respondent was not part of the HR department and was unable to answer the question on behalf of the agency.

Employees with Disabilities: Positive Employee Traits Related to Job Retention

Business survey respondents were presented with a list of 11 positive employee traits and asked the question, "With respect to employees with disabilities you have now or have had in the past, what are the positive employee traits you have experienced with them regarding job retention?"

Six responses were received regarding this question. Reliability, honesty/integrity, positive attitude, and determined/dedicated were identified by 5 out of the 6 of the respondents. Skills related to the ability to attend to detail and being organized were not cited in response to the questions.

Table 145 summarizes the percentage of business survey respondents who identified each trait as a part of job retention.

Table 145: *Employees with Disabilities: Positive Employee Traits Related to Job Retention*

Positive Employee Trait	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Reliability	5	83.3%
Honesty/Integrity	5	83.3%
Positive attitude	5	83.3%
Determined/dedicated	5	83.3%
Works well with their team	3	50.0%
Independent	2	33.3%
Flexibility	1	16.7%
Initiative/Ambition	1	16.7%
Punctual	1	16.7%
Organized	0	0.0%
Attention to detail	0	0.0%
Total	28	

Employees with Disabilities: Challenges to Job Retention

Business survey respondents were presented with a list of 13 job-related challenges and asked to identify the challenges they have now or have experienced in the past concerning individuals with disabilities. A total of 5 respondents answered the question. Table 146 presents the percentage of business survey respondents who identified each item as challenging job retention.

Table 146: *Challenge Related to Job Retention: Employees with Disabilities*

Challenges to Job Retention	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Poor social skills	2	40.0%
Lack of transportation	2	40.0%
Poor attendance	1	20.0%
Difficulty learning job skills	1	20.0%
Slow work speed	1	20.0%
Poor work stamina	1	20.0%
Physical health problems	1	20.0%
Identifying effective accommodations	1	20.0%
I have no knowledge of any challenges we have had retaining employees with disabilities	1	20.0%
Mental health concerns	0	0.0%
Language barriers	0	0.0%
Other (please describe)	0	0.0%
Lack of ongoing support due to case closure	0	0.0%
Total	11	

Business survey respondents were asked an open-ended question if they would like to further comment on their answers to the previous question or if they had additional comments or needs regarding challenges experienced by employees with disabilities. Respondents were allowed to provide a narrative response. One narrative response was received and is quoted:

- *"As a member of talent acquisition, I don't work directly with current employees from HR position, so I can't speak to the above. In TA, our main hurdle is that we don't have part-time positions available."*

Services Provided to Employers by Oregon VR: Knowledge and Use

Business survey respondents were asked three questions regarding their knowledge of Oregon VR business services and their utilization of services provided by the agency.

Most business respondents (85.7%) cited being somewhat knowledgeable regarding Oregon VR services for businesses. One business respondent reported using Oregon services for their business. The three services identified as being used by the business respondent who answered the question are recruiting job applicants who people with disabilities are, recruiting applicants who meet the job

qualifications, and discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants. Tables 147-149 include the results of three questions.

Table 147: *Knowledge of Oregon VR Services to Businesses*

Knowledge of VR Services for Businesses	Number	Percent
Somewhat knowledgeable	6	85.7%
Very knowledgeable	1	14.3%
Little or no knowledge	0	0.0%
Total	7	100.0%

Table 148: *Employer Usage of Oregon VR Services*

Employer Usage of VR Services for Businesses	Number	Percent
I don't know	4	57.1%
No	2	28.6%
Yes	1	14.3%
Total	7	100.0%

Table 149: *Identify VR Services Used by Employers*

Services Provided to Employers by DVR	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities?	1	100.0%
Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?	1	100.0%
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?	1	100.0%
Training in understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Rehabilitation Act as amended?	0	0.0%
Assistance identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?	0	0.0%
Other (please describe)	0	0.0%
Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment?	0	0.0%
Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities?	0	0.0%
Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities?	0	0.0%
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?	0	0.0%
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities?	0	0.0%
Recruiting applicants with good work habits?	0	0.0%
Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?	0	0.0%
Assessing applicants' skills?	0	0.0%
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?	0	0.0%
Total	3	

Employer Satisfaction with Services Provided by Oregon VR

Business survey representatives who utilized Oregon VR services were presented with a five-point response scale (with responses ranging from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied") and asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the services they received from VR. One representative provided an answer to the question. Table 150 contains the results.

Table 150: *Satisfaction Rating*

Satisfaction Rating	Number	Percent
Very satisfied	1	100.0%
Satisfied	0	0.0%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0	0.0%
Dissatisfied	0	0.0%
Very dissatisfied	0	0.0%
Total	1	100.0%

Seek Again or Recommend Oregon VR Business Services

Business respondents who utilized Oregon VR services for their business were presented with a five-point response scale (with responses ranging from "very likely" to "very unlikely") and asked if they would seek out Oregon VR again or recommend Oregon VR services to other employers. One respondent responded to the question and cited "very likely."

Table 151: *Use Again or Recommend Oregon VR Business Services to Others*

Seek Services or Recommend VR	Number	Percent
Very likely	1	1
Likely	0	0
Neither likely nor unlikely	0	0
Unlikely	0	0
Very unlikely	0	0
Total	1	1

Employer Needs: Applicants or Employees with Disabilities

Business survey respondents were asked an open-ended question asking if their business has any needs related to applicants or workers with disabilities that are not currently being met and to describe them in a narrative format. One response was received. The respondent cited an inability to answer the question on behalf of their agency.

Business Demographics

Business survey respondents described their respective business types and the number of employees the business currently employs. In response to the question regarding business types, the business types reported in the category "other, please describe" are food production and utilities/solid waste. In response to the question regarding organization size, the most frequently cited size was 1000 or more employees. Tables 152-153 indicate the various business types and the size of the organization based on the number of employees.

Table 152: *Business Type*

Business Type	Number	Percent
Manufacturing	3	33.3%
Health care	2	22.2%
Other (please describe)	2	22.2%
Service	1	11.1%
Government	1	11.1%
Retail	0	0.0%
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	0	0.0%
Construction	0	0.0%
Education	0	0.0%
Banking/Finance	0	0.0%
Gambling/Casino	0	0.0%
Total	9	100.0%

Table 153: *Number of Employees*

Number of Employees	Number	Percent
1,000 or more	3	33.3%
51 - 250	2	22.2%
251 - 999	2	22.2%
1 - 15	1	11.1%
16 - 50	1	11.1%
Total	9	100.0%

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

This category captures the needs of businesses in Oregon as it relates to recruiting, hiring, retaining, and accommodating individuals with disabilities. It includes an analysis of how ODHS VR serves businesses and tries to meet their needs in each area. Recurring themes in this area include the following:

- Addressing the stigma associated with job seekers with disabilities and the bias that businesses have shown in hiring practices.
- Acknowledging the positive development of the Business Outreach team while increasing business relationships at the corporate level. There is a need for this team to assess employer training needs in topics relevant to hiring, training, accommodating, and retaining employees with disabilities.
- Expanding businesses' knowledge of the ADA and the processes for accommodating employees with disabilities. Additionally, there is a need for businesses to have technical assistance with identifying and supporting assistive technology in the workplace.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered based on the information gathered in the Needs of Business and Effectiveness in Serving Employers section:

1. Educating employers will help increase awareness of ODHS VR in the business community and will be a source for building strong relationships to understand the needs of businesses in the future

2. ODHS VR can expand partnerships with the Titles I and III program and their business services groups to create a unified outlet for businesses.

3. ODHS VR should explore conducting employer awareness and sensitivity training to help businesses understand the abilities and capabilities of individuals with blindness and visual impairments throughout the State. This will also help increase awareness of ODHS VR and the services they offer to employers.

4. ODHS VR is encouraged to partner with assistive technology resources within the state to identify and explore business-specific training/resources available regarding accommodations in the workplace.

5. ODHS VR is encouraged to identify an assistive technology or ADA liaison staff member in each office to provide resources and troubleshoot on worksites.

6. ODHS VR should expand its work with the regional ADA center and national centers like EARN to provide more significant resources to businesses in the state.

7. ODHS VR is encouraged to explore other VR systems, implementing Business Outreach teams to get technical assistance, and mentoring in the best practices and strategies.

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive statewide needs assessment for the ODHS VR utilized qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the State. The combination of surveys and interviews resulted in 1282 people participating in the assessment. The project team at San Diego State University's Interwork Institute is hopeful that the findings and recommendations will be useful in informing the VR portion of the Combined State plan and future planning and resource allocation for the agency.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Individual and Focus Group Interview Protocols
[Introductions/confidentiality/purpose statements]
Focus Group Protocol - Individuals with disabilities

Employment goals
- What barriers do people with disabilities in ODHS VR face in getting or keeping a job?
  Follow up: Transportation, education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

RSA Overall Performance
- What has your experience with ODHS VR been like? What have been the positives and negatives?
- What services were helpful to you in preparing for, obtaining, and retaining employment?
- What services did you need that were not available or provided, and why weren't you able to get these services?
- What can ODHS VR do differently to help people get and keep good jobs?

Barriers to accessing services
- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from ODHS VR.

VR Workforce Partners
- Has anyone used or tried to use the services of the Oregon WorkSource Job Centers?
  Follow-up: What was that experience like for you? What can they do differently to better serve individuals with disabilities?

Transition
- What needs do young people with disabilities in transition from high school have as far as preparing for, obtaining, or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in Oregon preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- What can ODHS VR do to improve services to youth in transition?

Needs of underserved groups with disabilities
- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?

Need for establishment of CRPs
- Have you received services from a CRP? If so, how was your service? How effective was it? What can be done to improve the future service delivery by CRPs?
- What programs or services should be created that focus on enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families, meeting basic needs and ensuring inclusion and participation? Of these services now in existence, which need to be improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations to meet people's needs?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes
- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive in Oregon.

Focus Group Protocol - Partner Agencies:

Employment Goals
- What barriers do people with disabilities in Oregon face in getting or keeping a job?
Follow up: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communication, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

Barriers to accessing services
- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from RSA?

Impressions of needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities
- What is the unmet rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant or most significant disabilities?
- What needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities are being met the best/most extensively?

Needs of underserved groups with disabilities
- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?

Need for supported employment.
- Please describe how effective the SE and CE programs are in Oregon. What populations are receiving SE and CE services?
- What is the SE or CE needs not being met?
- What do you recommend for meeting the needs of SE or CE?

Transition
- What needs do young people with disabilities in transition from high school have for preparing for, obtaining, or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in Oregon preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- How would you characterize a relationship/partnership with the secondary school system in Oregon?
- How well is ODHS VR serving youth in transition in terms of preparing them for postsecondary education or employment?
- What can ODHS VR do to improve services to youth in transition?

Needs of individuals served through the Oregon WorkSource Centers or WIOA system.
- How effectively does the Workforce Center system in Oregon serve individuals with disabilities?
- Are there any barriers to individuals with disabilities accessing services through the WorkSource Centers? If so, what are they, and what can be done to change this?

- How effectively is ODHS VR working in partnership with the WorkSource Centers? Do you have any recommendations about how to improve this partnership if needed?
- What would you recommend to improve the WorkSource Center's ability to serve individuals with disabilities in Oregon?

Need for establishment, development, or improvement of CRPs
- What community-based rehabilitation programs or services must be created, expanded, or improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations to meet people's needs?
- What community-based rehabilitation services are most successful? How are they most successful or what makes them so?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes
- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive?

Focus Group Protocol – VR staff:

Employment Goals
- What barriers do people with disabilities in Oregon face in getting or keeping a job?
  Follow up: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communication, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

Barriers to accessing services
- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from RSA?

Impressions of needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities
- What is the unmet rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant or most significant disabilities?
- What needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities are being met the best/most extensively?

Needs of underserved groups with disabilities
- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?
  (Prompt for different disability groups, minority status, geographic area, or other characteristics).
  (For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?

Need for supported employment.
- Please describe how effective the SE and CE programs are in Oregon. What populations are receiving SE and CE services?
- What SE or CE needs are not being met?

Transition
- What needs do young people with disabilities in transition from high school have for preparing for, obtaining, or retaining employment?

- How well are the high schools in ODHS VR preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- How would you characterize ODHS VR's relationship/partnership with the secondary school system in Oregon?
- How well is ODHS VR serving youth in transition in terms of preparing them for postsecondary education or employment?
- What can ODHS VR do to improve services to youth in transition?

Needs of individuals served through the WorkSource system in OREGON serve individuals with disabilities?
- Are there any barriers to individuals with disabilities accessing services through the WorkSource Centers? If so, what are they and what can be done to change this?
- How effectively is ODHS VR working in partnership with the WorkSource Centers? Do you have any recommendations about how to improve this partnership if needed?
- How would you recommend improving the WorkSource Centers' ability to serve individuals with disabilities in Oregon?

Need for establishment, development, or improvement of CRPs
- What community-based rehabilitation programs or services need to be created, expanded, or improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations to meet people's needs?
- What community-based rehabilitation services are most successful? How are they most successful or what makes them so?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes
- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive

Focus Group Protocol – Businesses

Please discuss your familiarity with ODHS VR and the services they provide to people with disabilities and to businesses.

What needs do you have regarding recruiting people with disabilities for employment?
- Do you do anything specific to attract candidates with disabilities? Please describe

Please discuss how qualified and prepared individuals with disabilities are when they apply for employment with your business.

What needs do you have regarding applicants with disabilities?
- Are you aware of the incentives for hiring people with disabilities? Would these incentives influence your decision to hire?

What qualities are you looking for in an applicant for a given job and an employee?

What needs do you have regarding employees with disabilities?
- Sensitivity training?
- Understanding and compliance with applicable laws?
- Reasonable accommodations?

What challenges do employees with disabilities face with job retention?

What services can ODHS VR provide you and other businesses to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Oregon?

APPENDIX B: INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

ODHS VR 2023-24 CSNA - Individual Survey

Q2 Which statement best describes your association with the Oregon VR? (select one response)

- o I have never used the services of Oregon VR
- o I am a current client of Oregon VR
- o I am a previous client of Oregon VR; my case has been closed
- o I am not familiar with Oregon VR
- o Other (please describe) _____

Q3 How long have you been working with Oregon VR?

- o Less than 1 year
- o 1 year
- o 2-5 years
- o 6-9 years
- o 10 years or greater

Q4 Demographic Information

Q5 What is your age?

- o under 25
- o 25-64
- o 65 and over

Q6 What is your primary race or ethnic group (check all that apply)?

- o African American/Black
- o American Indian or Alaska Native
- o Asian
- o Caucasian/White
- o Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- o Hispanic/Latino
- o Other (please describe) _____
- o I don't know

Q7 What is your language of preference for communication?

- o English
- o Spanish
- o Hmong
- o Chinese
- o Japanese

- o American Sign Language
- o Other (Please identify) _____

Q8, Do you feel that Oregon VR honors and respects your cultural identity?

- o Yes
- o No
- o I don't know

Q9 Have you ever been in a situation when you felt that Oregon VR did not honor your cultural identity?
- o Yes (please describe) _____
- o No

Q10 What can Oregon VR do to help its staff understand your culture?

Q11 Please identify below which region you live in based on the county you live

- o Region 3 (Counties: Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Jefferson, Wheeler, Grant, Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Lake, Harney, Malheur)

- o Region 2 (Counties: Tillamook, Polk, Marion, Lincoln, Benton, Linn, Coos, Douglas, Lane, Curry, Josephine, Jackson, Klamath)

- o Region 1 (Counties: Clatsop, Columbia, Washington, Clackamas, Multnomah, Yamhill)

Q12 Which of the following would you use to describe your primary disability? (select one)

- o Blindness or visually impaired
- o Intellectual Disability (ID)
- o Developmental Disability (DD)
- o Autism Spectrum Disorder
- o Traumatic Brain Injury
- o Communication
- o Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- o Deaf-Blind
- o Mental Health
- o Mobility
- o Physical
- o Other (please describe) _____
- o No impairment

Q13 If you have a secondary disabling condition, which of the following would you use to describe it? (select one) If you do not have a secondary disabling condition, please select "No impairment" below.

- o Blindness or visually impaired
- o Intellectual disability (ID)
- o Developmental Disability (DD)
- o Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Communication
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Deaf-Blind
- Mental Health
- Mobility
- Physical
- Other (please describe) _____
- No impairment

Q14 Please indicate whether you receive the following Social Security disability benefits (please check all that apply).

- I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a means-tested benefit generally provided to individuals with little or no work history)
- I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance. SSDI is provided to individuals that have
- worked in the past and is based on the amount of money the individual paid into the system through payroll deductions)
- I receive a check from the Social Security Administration every month, but I do not know which benefit I get
- I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits
- I do not receive Social Security disability benefits
- I have received benefits in the past, but no longer receive them

Q15 What is your primary mode of transportation?

- I own a car
- I use the bus or other form of public transportation
- I use ride-sharing services (i.e., Uber or Lyft)
- Other (please identify) _____

Q16 Employment-Related Needs

The next several questions ask you about employment-related needs that you may have.

Q17 Please identify which of the following have been barriers to you getting a job.

	Yes, it has been a barrier	No, it has not been a barrier
Lack of education	☐	☐
Lack of training	☐	☐
Lack of job skills	☐	☐
Lack of job search skills	☐	☐
Lack of reliable Internet access	☐	☐
Criminal Record	☐	☐
Limited English skills	☐	☐
Lack of available jobs	☐	☐
Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability	☐	☐

Age	☐	☐
Lack of assistive technology	☐	☐
Lack of attendant care	☐	☐
Lack of reliable transportation	☐	☐
Mental health concerns	☐	☐
Substance abuse	☐	☐
Lack of childcare	☐	☐
Lack of housing	☐	☐
Employers hesitant to hire people with disabilities	☐	☐
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	☐	☐

Q18 Please identify what the top three barriers have been to you getting a job. Please choose only three.

- o   Lack of education
- o   Lack of training
- o   Lack of job skills
- o   Lack of job search skills
- o   Lack of reliable Internet access
- o   Criminal Record
- o   Limited English skills
- o   Lack of available jobs
- o   Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- o   Lack of assistive technology
- o   Lack of attendant care
- o   Lack of reliable transportation
- o   Mental health concerns
- o   Substance abuse
- o   Lack of childcare

- Lack of housing
- Employers hesitant to hire people with disabilities
- Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

Q19 If you have experienced other barriers to getting a job not mentioned above, please list them here.

Q20 Barriers to Accessing Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services The next several questions ask you about barriers to access Oregon VR Services.

Q21 Please indicate which of the following have hindered you from accessing DVR services.

	Yes, it has been a barrier	No, it has not been a barrier
The Oregon VR office is not on a public bus route	☐	☐
Oregon VR's hours of operation	☐	☐
Lack of information about available services	☐	☐
Lack of disability-related accommodations	☐	☐
Language barriers	☐	☐

Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor	☐	☐
Difficulty reaching Oregon VR staff	☐	☐
Other difficulties with Oregon VR staff	☐	☐
Difficulties completing the Oregon VR application	☐	☐
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	☐	☐
Reliable Internet access	☐	☐

Q22 What have been the top three barriers to you accessing Oregon VR services? Please choose no more than three.

- ○ The Oregon VR office is not on a public bus route
- ○ Oregon VR's hours of operation
- ○ Lack of information about available services
- ○ Lack of disability-related accommodations
- ○ Language barriers
- ○ Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor
- ○ Difficulty reaching Oregon VR staff
- ○ Other difficulties with Oregon VR staff
- ○ Difficulties completing the Oregon VR application
- ○ Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
- ○ Reliable Internet access
- ○ I have not had any barriers to accessing Oregon VR services

Q23, Have you had any other challenges or barriers not already mentioned that have made it difficult for you to access Oregon VR services?

- ○ Yes (please describe) _____
- ○ No

Q24 Where do you usually meet with your case facilitator?

- o In my community/school
- o I go to an Oregon VR office
- o We meet remotely by phone
- o We meet remotely by video conference
- o I don't have an Oregon VR case facilitator

Q25 How many Oregon VR counselors have you had?

- o 1
- o 2
- o 3
- o 4
- o More than 4
- o I have never had an Oregon VR counselor

Q26 How often can you reach your counselor when you need to?

- o Always
- o Usually
- o Sometimes
- o Rarely
- o Never

Q27 How do you get along with your Oregon VR counselor?

- o Excellent
- o Good
- o So-so
- o Poor
- o Terrible

Q28 Has Oregon VR helped you to make progress toward your employment goal?

- o Yes
- o No
- o I have not worked with Oregon VR

Q29 Which of the following Oregon VR services have you received remotely (by phone, email or video conference) since the beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic? (select all that apply)

- o Career Counseling
- o Job development and/or job placement
- o Job support to keep a job
- o Benefits counseling
- o Assistive technology
- o Other (please describe) _____
- o I have not received any services from Oregon VR remotely during the pandemic

Q30 How would you rate the effectiveness of the services delivered remotely during the pandemic?

- o Extremely effective
- o Effective

- Somewhat effective
- Less effective
- Not effective at all

Q31 How can Oregon VR change their services to help you get a job, keep your job, or get a better job?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q32 Please tell us about how you manage money

	Yes	No
I have a monthly budget	☐	☐
I have a savings account	☐	☐
I have a checking account	☐	☐
I invest my money	☐	☐
I would like to learn more about managing my money	☐	☐

Q33 Please identify how well the following statements describe your financial situation.

	Completely	Very well	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
Because of my money situation, I feel like I will never have the things I want in life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am just getting by financially	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am concerned the money I have, or will have, won't last	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q34 How often do you have money left over at the end of each month?

- ○ Always
- ○ Often
- ○ Sometimes
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Never

Q35 How often do you feel your finances control your life?

- ○ Always
- ○ Often
- ○ Sometimes
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Never

Q36 What is your current employment goal?

Q37, Have you thought about what your next job might be employment goal?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I don't know

Q38 Will you need more training or help to get your next job?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q39 Have you received services from an organization or an individual that Oregon VR referred you to? (This may include an assessment, preparing for or finding employment, job coaching, training, assistive technology, or other services)

- Yes
- No
- I am not sure

Q40 How effective were the services you received from the service provider?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Somewhat ineffective
- Ineffective

Q41 How would you rate the quality of services you received from your service provider?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Q42 How would you rate the responsiveness of your service provider?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Q43 Would you recommend your service provider to others served by Oregon VR?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q44 WorkSource Oregon
The next several questions ask you about experiences you may have had with WorkSource Oregon, previously referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers. These questions refer only to your experience with the staff or services at the Job Center and not with Oregon VR staff who may be working at WorkSource Oregon.

Q45 Have you ever tried to use the services of WorkSource Oregon beyond creating an online account? (this may include testing, preparing for or finding employment, job coaching, training assistive technology or other services)

- Yes
- No

Q46 Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?

o   Yes (If yes, please describe the difficulties you experienced)
    _____
o   No

Q47 Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the WorkSource Oregon (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?

o   Yes
o   No

Q48 Did you go to the WorkSource Oregon to get training?

o   Yes
o   No

Q49 Did you get the training that you were seeking?

o   Yes
o   No

Q50 Did the WorkSource Oregon training result in employment?

o   Yes
o   No

Q51 Did you go to WorkSource Oregon to find a job?

o   Yes
o   No

Q52 Did the WorkSource Oregon staff help you find employment?

o   Yes
o   No

Q53 Was the WorkSource Oregon staff helpful?

o   Yes, they were very helpful
o   They were somewhat helpful
o   No, they were not helpful

Q54 Were the services at the WorkSource Oregon effective?

o   Yes, the services were very effective
o   The services were somewhat effective
o   No, the services were not effective

Q55 Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of WorkSource Oregon in serving individuals with disabilities?

o   Very effective
o   Somewhat effective
o   No opinion

- o Somewhat ineffective
- o Very ineffective

Q56 What recommendations do you have for WorkSource Oregon to improve their services to individuals with disabilities in Oregon?

_____

Q57 Is there anything else you would like to add about Oregon VR or its services?

_____

Appendix C: Partner Survey
ODHS VR 2022-23 CSNA - Partner Survey

Community Partner Survey: The ODHS VR is working with the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University to conduct a needs assessment of the state's residents with disabilities. The results of this need assessment will inform the development of the Oregon Unified State Plan for providing rehabilitation services. They will help planners decide about programs and services for persons with disabilities.

The following survey includes questions about the unmet employment-related needs of persons with disabilities. You will also be asked about your work and whether you work with specific disability populations. We anticipate that it will take about 10 minutes of your time to complete the survey. Your participation in this needs assessment is voluntary. If you decide to participate, your responses will be anonymous and recorded without any identifying information linked to you. You will not be asked for your name anywhere in this survey.

If you have any questions regarding this survey or would like to request the survey in an alternate format, please contact Andrew Karhan at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address: akarhan@sdsu.edu   Thank you for your time and input!

Q2 How would you classify your organization?

- o Community Rehabilitation Program/Provider of VR Services
- o Secondary School
- o Postsecondary school
- o Mental Health Provider
- o Medical Provider
- o Developmental Disability Organization
- o Veteran's Agency
- o Client Advocacy Organization
- o Other Federal, State, or Local Government Entity
- o Other Public or Private Organization
- o Individual Service Provider
- o Other (please describe) _____

Q3 What area(s) do you work in? (check all that apply)

- Region 1 (Counties: Clatsop, Columbia, Washington, Clackamas, Multnomah, Yamhill)
- Region 2 (Counties: Tillamook, Polk, Marion, Lincoln, Benton, Linn, Coos, Douglas, Lane, Curry, Josephine, Jackson, Klamath)
- Region 3 (Counties: Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Jefferson, Wheeler, Grant, Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Lake, Harney, Malheur)

Q4 What area(s) do you work in? (check all that apply)

- Region 1 (Counties: Clatsop, Columbia, Washington, Clackamas, Multnomah, Yamhill)
- Region 2 (Counties: Tillamook, Polk, Marion, Lincoln, Benton, Linn, Coos, Douglas, Lane, Curry, Josephine, Jackson, Klamath)
- Region 3 (Counties: Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Jefferson, Wheeler, Grant, Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Lake, Harney, Malheur)

Q5 Please indicate which VR customer populations you work with on a regular basis (please check all that apply)

- Individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Individuals who are blind
- Individuals who are deaf
- Individuals who need supported employment
- Individuals with autism spectrum disorder
- Individuals who are racial or ethnic minorities
- Individuals from unserved or underserved populations
- Transition-age youth (14-24)
- Individuals served by WorkSource Oregon (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers)
- Veterans
- Other (please describe) _____

Vocational Rehabilitation Services The following series of questions asks about services available to VR customers directly or by service providers.

Q6 Please indicate which services are available to Oregon VR customers in the geographic area where you provide services. By readily available, we mean that the service can be provided directly by Oregon VR or the network of service providers in the area. (check all that apply). Pre-employment transition services

Community college or four-year college or university training

Occupational or vocational training

On-the-job training

Registered apprenticeship training

Literacy training

Employment services (job search, job development and placement)

Disability-related skills training (orientation and mobility, Braille, etc)

Supported employment services

Customized employment services

Benefits counseling

Transportation

Maintenance or other income assistance

Assistive technology services

Personal assistance services

Interpreter and translator
services

Reader services

Other (please describe)

Q7 In your experience, how frequently can service providers meet the rehabilitation service needs of VR customers in your area?

- o   All the time
- o   Most of the time
- o   Some of the time
- o   None of the time

Q8 What rehabilitation needs are service providers unable to meet in your area?

_____

Q9 What are the primary reasons service providers cannot meet customers' service needs?

- o   Not enough service providers available in area
- o   Low quality of service provider services
- o   Low rates paid for services
- o   Low levels of accountability for poor performance by service providers
- o   Client barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers
- o   Other (please describe) _____

Q10 What is the most important change that service providers could make to support customers' efforts to achieve their employment goals?

Q11 What services do providers most effectively deliver to VR customers (check all that apply)?

- o   Job development services
- o   Job training services (trial work experiences, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)
- o   Other education services
- o   Assistive technology services
- o   Vehicle modification assistance
- o   Other transportation assistance
- o   Income assistance
- o   Medical treatment
- o   Mental health treatment
- o   Substance abuse treatment
- o   Personal care attendants
- o   Health insurance
- o   Housing
- o   Benefit planning assistance

o   Other (please describe) _____

Q12
Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals: The next series of questions asks about VR customers' barriers to achieving their employment goals.

Q13 What are the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for VR customers (check all that apply)?

- o   Not having education or training
- o   Not having job skills
- o   Little or no work experience
- o   Not having job search skills
- o   Convictions for criminal offenses
- o   Language barriers
- o   Poor social skills
- o   Not enough jobs available
- o   Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- o   Not having disability-related accommodations
- o   Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- o   Disability-related transportation issues
- o   Other transportation issues
- o   Mental health issues
- o   Substance abuse issues
- o   Other health issues
- o   Childcare issues
- o   Housing issues
- o   Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- o   Other (please describe) _____

Q14 What barriers prevent VR customers with the most significant disabilities from achieving their employment goals? (check all that apply)

- o   Not having education or training.
- o   Not having job skills
- o   Little or no work experience
- o   Not having job search skills
- o   Convictions for criminal offenses
- o   Language barriers
- o   Poor social skills
- o   Not enough jobs available
- o   Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- o   Not having disability-related accommodations
- o   Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- o   Disability-related transportation issues
- o   Other transportation issues
- o   Mental health issues
- o   Substance abuse issues
- o   Other health issues
- o   Childcare issues

- o Housing issues
- o Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- o Other (please describe) _____

Q15 What barriers prevent VR customers who are youth in transition from achieving their employment goals? (check all that apply)

- o Not having education or training
- o Not having job skills
- o Little or no work experience
- o Not having job search skills
- o Convictions for criminal offenses
- o Language barriers
- o Poor social skills
- o Not enough jobs available
- o Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- o Not having disability-related accommodations
- o Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- o Disability-related transportation issues
- o Other transportation issues
- o Mental health issues
- o Substance abuse issues
- o Other health issues
- o Childcare issues
- o Housing issues
- o Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- o Other (please describe) _____

Q16 What barriers prevent VR customers who are racial or ethnic minorities from achieving their employment goals? (check all that apply)

- o Not having education or training.
- o Not having job skills
- o Little or no work experience
- o Not having job search skills
- o Convictions for criminal offenses
- o Language barriers
- o Poor social skills
- o Not enough jobs available
- o Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- o Not having disability-related accommodations
- o Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- o Disability-related transportation issues
- o Other transportation issues
- o Mental health issues
- o Substance abuse issues
- o Other health issues
- o Childcare issues
- o Housing issues
- o Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits

o   Other (please describe) _____

Q17 What are the top three reasons people with disabilities find it difficult to access VR services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- o   Limited accessibility of VR via public transportation
- o   Other challenges related to the physical location of the VR office
- o   Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- o   Language barriers
- o   Difficulties completing the application
- o   Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
- o   Inadequate assessment services
- o   Slow service delivery
- o   Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- o   Lack of options for the use of technology to communicate with VR staff such as Skype, text, etc.
- o   VR staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- o   Other (please describe) _____

Q18 What changes can Oregon VR make to better serve individuals with disabilities in Oregon?

_____

Q19 What are the top three changes that would help you better serve VR customers (please select a maximum of three changes)?

- o   Smaller caseload
- o   More streamlined processes
- o   Reduced documentation requirements
- o   Improved communication with referring VR counselor
- o   Additional training
- o   Higher rates paid by VR for services
- o   Referral of appropriate individuals
- o   Improved business partnerships
- o   Incentives for high performance paid by VR
- o   Increased options for technology use to communicate with customers
- o   Increased collaboration with WorkSource Oregon
- o   Other (please describe) _____

Q20 WorkSource Oregon: The following questions ask you about the WorkSource Oregon Centers.

Q21 How frequently do you work with the WorkSource Oregon Centers (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers)?

- o   Very frequently
- o   Somewhat frequently
- o   Infrequently
- o   Not at all

Q22 How physically accessible are the WorkSource Oregon Centers for individuals with disabilities?

- o Fully accessible
- o Somewhat accessible
- o Not accessible
- o I do not know

Q23 How accessible are the programs and services at the WorkSource Oregon Centers?

- o Fully accessible
- o Somewhat accessible
- o Not accessible
- o I do not know

Q24 In your opinion, how effectively does WorkSource Oregon serve individuals with disabilities?

- o Very effectively
- o Effectively
- o Not effectively
- o They do not serve individuals with disabilities

Q25 What can WorkSource Oregon do to improve services to individuals with disabilities (Check all that apply)?

- o Improve physical accessibility
- o Improve programmatic accessibility
- o Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities
- o Include individuals with disabilities when purchasing training for their clients
- o Partner more effectively with VR
- o Other (please describe) _____

Appendix D: Staff Survey
ODHS VR 2022-23 CSNA - Staff Survey

Q1 Oregon VR 2023 CSNA Staff Survey: The ODHS VR is working with the State Rehabilitation Council and staff at the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University to conduct a needs assessment of the state's residents with disabilities. The results of this need assessment will inform the development of the Oregon Unified State Plan for providing rehabilitation services. They will help planners decide about programs and services for persons with disabilities.

Q2 What region of Oregon do you work in?

- o Region 1
- o Region 2
- o Region 3
- o Central Office

Q3 What is your job classification?

- o Rehabilitation Counselor
- o Supervisor/Manager
- o Support Staff
- o Business Services Representative

o   Operations or Fiscal Staff
o   Administrator/Executive

Q4 How long have you worked in the job that you have now?

o   Less than one year
o   1-5 years
o   6-10 years
o   11-20 years
o   21+ years

Q5 The following series of questions asks about services available to Oregon VR consumers either directly or by service providers.

Q6 Please indicate which of the following services are immediately available to Oregon VR consumers (check all that apply).

o   Job development services
o   Job training services (TWE, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)
o   STEM skills training
o   Career Ladder/Pathways counseling
o   Other education services
o   Remote service delivery (tele-counseling, remote job support, etc.)
o   Assistive technology
o   Vehicle modification assistance
o   Other transportation assistance
o   Income assistance
o   Medical treatment
o   Mental health treatment
o   Substance abuse treatment
o   Personal care attendants
o   Health insurance
o   Housing
o   Benefit planning assistance
o   Financial literacy training
o   Other (please describe) _____

Q7 Please indicate which of the following services are not immediately available or do not exist around the State where you work (check all that apply).

o   Job development services
o   Job training services (TWE, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)
o   STEM skills training
o   Career Ladder/Pathways counseling
o   Other education services
o   Remote service delivery (tele-counseling, remote job support, etc.)

- o Assistive technology
- o Vehicle modification assistance
- o Other transportation assistance
- o Income assistance
- o Medical treatment
- o Mental health treatment
- o Substance abuse treatment
- o Personal care attendants
- o Health insurance
- o Housing
- o Benefit planning assistance
- o Financial literacy training
- o Other (please describe) _____

Q8 In your experience, how frequently can service providers meet the rehabilitation service needs of Oregon VR consumers in your area?

- o All the time
- o Most of the time
- o Some of the time
- o None of the time

Q9 What rehabilitation needs are service providers unable to meet in your area?

_____

Q10 What are the primary reasons service providers cannot meet consumers' service needs?

- o Not enough service providers available in area
- o Low quality of service provider services
- o Low rates paid for services
- o Low levels of accountability for poor performance by service providers
- o client barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers
- o Service provider staff turnover
- o Other (please describe) _____

Q11 What is the most important change that service providers could make to support consumer's efforts to achieve their employment goals?

_____

Q12 What services do you feel Oregon VR most effectively provides to its consumers directly or through community partners (check all that apply)?

- o Job development services
- o Job training services (TWE, Job Coaching, OJT, etc.)
- o STEM skills training
- o Career Ladder/Pathways counseling

- o Other education services
- o Assistive technology
- o Vehicle modification assistance
- o Other transportation assistance
- o Income assistance
- o Medical treatment
- o Mental health treatment
- o Substance abuse treatment
- o Personal care attendants
- o Health insurance
- o Housing
- o Benefit planning assistance
- o Financial literacy training
- o Other (please describe) _____

Q13 Have any of the consumers you serve received services delivered remotely since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic?

- o Yes
- o No

Q14 How would you rate the effectiveness of these services?

- o Extremely effective
- o Effective
- o Somewhat effective
- o Minimally effective
- o Not effective at all

Q15 The next series of questions asked about barriers that Oregon VR consumers face in achieving their employment goals.

Q16 What are the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for Oregon VR consumers (check all that apply)?

- o Not having education or training
- o Not having job skills
- o Not having STEM skills
- o Little or no work experience
- o Not having job search skills
- o Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways
- o Convictions for criminal offenses
- o Language barriers
- o Community or systemic racism
- o Lack of access to technology
- o Lack of reliable Internet access
- o Poor social skills

- o   Not enough jobs available
- o   Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- o   Not having disability-related accommodations
- o   Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- o   Disability-related transportation issues
- o   Other transportation issues
- o   Mental health issues
- o   Substance abuse issues
- o   Other health issues
- o   Childcare issues
- o   Housing issues
- o   Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- o   Lack of financial literacy
- o   Other (please describe) _____

Q17 What are the five biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for Oregon VR consumers? (please pick only five)

- o   Not having education or training
- o   Not having job skills
- o   Not having STEM skills
- o   Little or no work experience
- o   Not having job search skills
- o   Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways
- o   Convictions for criminal offenses
- o   Language barriers
- o   Community or systemic racism
- o   Lack of access to technology
- o   Lack of reliable Internet access
- o   Poor social skills
- o   Not enough jobs available
- o   Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- o   Not having disability-related accommodations
- o   Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- o   Disability-related transportation issues
- o   Other transportation issues
- o   Mental health issues
- o   Substance abuse issues
- o   Other health issues
- o   Childcare issues
- o   Housing issues
- o   Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- o   Lack of financial literacy
- o   Other (please describe) _____

Q18 What are the five biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for Oregon VR consumers with the most significant disabilities? (please pick only five)

- o   Not having education or training
- o   Not having job skills
- o   Not having STEM skills
- o   Little or no work experience
- o   Not having job search skills
- o   Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways
- o   Convictions for criminal offenses
- o   Language barriers
- o   Community or systemic racism
- o   Lack of access to technology
- o   Lack of reliable Internet access
- o   Poor social skills
- o   Not enough jobs available
- o   Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- o   Not having disability-related accommodations
- o   Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- o   Disability-related transportation issues
- o   Other transportation issues
- o   Mental health issues
- o   Substance abuse issues
- o   Other health issues
- o   Childcare issues
- o   Housing issues
- o   Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- o   Lack of financial literacy
- o   Other (please describe) _____

Q19 What are the five biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for Oregon VR consumers who are youth in transition? (please pick only five)

- o   Not having education or training
- o   Not having job skills
- o   Not having STEM skills
- o   Little or no work experience
- o   Not having job search skills
- o   Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways
- o   Convictions for criminal offenses
- o   Language barriers
- o   Community or systemic racism
- o   Lack of access to technology
- o   Lack of reliable Internet access
- o   Poor social skills
- o   Not enough jobs available

- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Lack of financial literacy
- Other (please describe) _____

Q20 What are the five biggest barriers to achieving employment goals for Oregon VR consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities (please pick only five)

- Not having education or training
- Not having job skills
- Not having STEM skills
- Little or no work experience
- Not having job search skills
- Lack of knowledge about career ladders/pathways
- Convictions for criminal offenses
- Language barriers
- Community or systemic racism
- Lack of access to technology
- Lack of reliable Internet access
- Poor social skills
- Not enough jobs available
- Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Not having disability-related accommodations
- Lack of help with disability-related personal care
- Disability-related transportation issues
- Other transportation issues
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse issues
- Other health issues
- Childcare issues
- Housing issues
- Perceptions regarding the impact of income on Social Security benefits
- Lack of financial literacy
- Other (please describe) _____

Q21 What are the top three reasons that people with disabilities find it difficult to Oregon VR services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- o Limited accessibility of Oregon VR via public transportation
- o Other challenges related to the physical location of the Oregon VR office
- o Inadequate disability-related accommodations
- o Language barriers
- o Community or systemic racism
- o Difficulties completing the application
- o Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
- o Inadequate assessment services
- o Slow service delivery
- o Difficulties accessing training or education programs
- o Lack of options for using technology to communicate with Oregon VR staff such as text, videoconferencing applications (Zoom, Skype, etc.)
- o Lack of options for the use of technology to access remote services such as text and videoconferencing applications (Zoom, Skype, etc.)
- o Oregon VR staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
- o Other (please describe) _____

Q22 What are the top three changes that would help you better serve Oregon VR consumers (please select a maximum of three changes)?

- o Smaller caseload
- o More streamlined processes
- o Better data management tools
- o Better assessment tools
- o Additional training
- o More administrative support
- o More supervisors support
- o Improved business partnerships
- o More community-based service providers for specific services
- o More effective community-based service providers
- o Accountability for poor performance by service providers
- o Incentives for high-performing service providers
- o Increased outreach to consumers
- o Increased options for technology use to communicate with consumers
- o Increased collaboration with other workforce partners, including Job Centers
- o Other (please describe) _____

Q23 The following series of questions asks you about the Oregon WorkSource Centers

Q24 How frequently do you work with the Oregon WorkSource Centers (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers)?

- o Very frequently
- o Somewhat frequently

- o   Infrequently
- o   Not at all

Q25 How physically accessible are the Oregon WorkSource Centers for individuals with disabilities?

- o   Fully accessible
- o   Somewhat accessible
- o   Not accessible
- o   I do not know

Q26 How programmatically accessible are the Oregon WorkSource Centers?

- o   Fully accessible
- o   Somewhat accessible
- o   Not accessible
- o   I do not know

Q27 In your opinion, how effectively do the Oregon WorkSource Centers serve individuals with disabilities?

- o   Very effectively
- o   Effectively
- o   Not effectively
- o   They do not serve individuals with disabilities

Q28 What can the Oregon WorkSource Centers do to improve services to individuals with disabilities (Check all that apply)?

- o   Improve physical accessibility
- o   Improve programmatic accessibility
- o   Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities
- o   Include individuals with disabilities when purchasing training for their clients
- o   Partner more effectively with Oregon VR
- o   Other (please describe) _____

Appendix E: Business Survey
ODHS VR 2022-23 CSNA - Business Survey

Q2 Which of the following best describes your type of business? (select one response)
- o   Service
- o   Retail
- o   Manufacturing
- o   Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing
- o   Construction
- o   Government
- o   Education

- Health care
- Banking/Finance
- Gambling/Casino
- Other (please describe) _____

Q3 How many people are employed at your business? (select one response)
- 1 - 15
- 16 - 50
- 51 - 250
- 251 - 999
- 1,000 or more

Q4 Does your business need help... (select one response for each)

	Yes	No
Understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Rehabilitation Act as amended?	☐	☐
Identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?	☐	☐
Recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities?	☐	☐

	Yes	No
Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment?	☐	☐
Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities?	☐	☐
Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities?	☐	☐
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?	☐	☐
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities?	☐	☐

Q5 If you would like to comment further on any of your answers above or have additional comments or needs regarding disability in the workplace, please describe them in the space below._____

Q6 Applicants with disabilities: With respect to applicants with disabilities, does your business need help... (select one response for each)

	Yes	No
Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?	☐	☐
Recruiting applicants with good work habits?	☐	☐
Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?	☐	☐
Assessing applicants' skills?	☐	☐
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?	☐	☐
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?	☐	☐

Q7 If you would like to comment further on any of your answers above or have additional comments or needs regarding applicants with disabilities, please describe them in the space below._____

Q8 With respect to employees with disabilities you have now or have had in the past, what are the positive employee traits you have experienced with them regarding job retention? (check all that apply)
- o Flexibility
- o Reliability
- o Initiative/Ambition
- o Honesty/Integrity
- o Works well with their team
- o Positive attitude
- o Determined/Dedicated
- o Independent
- o Punctual
- o Organized
- o Attention to detail

Q9 Employees with disabilities: With respect to employees with disabilities you have now or have had in the past, what are the challenges you have experienced with them regarding job retention?
- o I do not know any challenges we have had retaining employees with disabilities.
- o Poor attendance
- o Difficulty learning job skills
- o Slow work speed
- o Poor work stamina
- o Poor social skills
- o Physical health problems
- o Mental health concerns
- o Language barriers
- o Identifying effective accommodations
- o Lack of transportation
- o Lack of ongoing support due to case closure
- o Other (please describe) _____

Q10 If you would like to comment further on any of your answers above, or if you have additional comments or needs regarding employees with disabilities, please describe them in the space below.

_____

Q11 How would you rate your knowledge of Oregon VR and the services they can provide to businesses?
- o Very knowledgeable
- o Somewhat knowledgeable
- o Little or no knowledge

Q12 Has your business utilized any of the services that Oregon VR provides?
- o Yes

- No
- I don't know

Q13 Which of the following services did Oregon VR provide to your business (please select all that apply)?
- Training in understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and the Rehabilitation Act as amended?
- Assistance identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?
- Recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities?
- Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment?
- Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities?
- Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities?
- Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?
- Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities?
- Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?
- Recruiting applicants with good work habits?
- Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?
- Assessing applicants' skills?
- Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?
- Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?
- Other (please describe) _____

Q14 How satisfied were you with the services you received from Oregon VR?
- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- I am neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Q15 How likely would you be to seek out services from Oregon VR again or recommend Oregon VR to another employer?
- Very likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely

Q16 If your business has any needs related to applicants or workers with disabilities that are not currently being met, please describe them here