

2011 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY: **Analysis, Findings, Recommendations**



Prepared by:

Washington State Rehabilitation Council,
Mike Hudson Chair

For:

Senior Leadership Team of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation;
Supervisors and staff of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation;
partners, stakeholders, and the public

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Executive Summary

This report explores the findings and recommendations made by the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) following a telephone survey of 455 current or former customers (reasonable accommodation was provided for Deaf respondents and those speaking languages other than English) between September and November of 2011. The survey project was led by the Customer Satisfaction and Program Evaluation Committee of the WSRC in collaboration with DVR. The research was conducted by the Research and Data Analysis Unit (RDA) of the Department of Social and Health Services and paid for by DVR. The survey yielded a response rate of 88.4%. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 1.67%. Here is what we found:

Survey Respondents Confirm that DVR Does Many Things Well

- More than ninety percent of all survey respondents strongly agree or agree that DVR services were provided in a respectful manner.
- Between 87.9% and 90% of survey respondents currently implementing an Individual Plan for Employment strongly agree or agree that their counselors want them to succeed.
- Of those respondents who became employed after receiving services from DVR, 74.6% are working as many hours as they want to work.

- 80.6% of respondents with closed cases affirmed that they are better off financially than before receiving DVR services.

Findings that Merit Further Study and/or Action

- The primary purpose of DVR is to assist jobseekers with disabilities to address barriers to employment. Given that, it is both curious and concerning that regardless of whether a survey respondent is currently implementing an Individual Plan for Employment, or has a closed case (with or without employment), 33-39% strongly disagree or disagree that DVR has helped them work with disability issues that have prevented them from getting a job.
- We note that of survey respondents currently implementing an Individual Plan for Employment, those with a plan open for 961-1400 days are less certain of their next step than those in plan for 61-420 days.
- Although we do not know how the survey respondents define the term "skill," it is notable that between 29.3% and 46.4% of survey respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that by working with DVR they were learning skills to get and keep a job.
- Close to 29% of those who became employed after receiving DVR services responded that they had not retained work.

Recommendations from the Washington State Rehabilitation Council to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Based on Survey Findings

Further Study

1. We recommend that DVR undertake additional research and analysis to identify the root causes of the survey findings regarding: barriers to employment, skill acquisition, and employment retention after closure.

Addressing Barriers

2. We recommend that DVR assures that vocational rehabilitation counselors are supported by their supervisors and by administration to take the time to identify and understand the barriers to employment the customer faces.
3. We recommend that DVR encourage vocational rehabilitation counselors to provide ongoing assessment (particularly for those with plans open for extended periods) to identify the disability-specific services and supports available to address barriers that emerge following plan development.
4. We recommend that DVR identify strategies and implement practices to improve and enhance the continuity of communication between vocational rehabilitation counselors and customers, particularly during instances of delay or transitions between vendors or case transfers.

Informed Choice

5. We recommend that DVR place greater emphasis on the customer's role in the vocational rehabilitation process during intake and orientation. We encourage DVR to reinforce that emphasis over the life of the case.
6. We recommend that DVR supports their staff providing direct service to strengthen community resource information and referral activities during the life of a plan by developing and updating their knowledge of the resources other than DVR available to customers in local communities.
7. We recommend that DVR encourage staff providing direct service to clearly delineate sequential steps in the achievement of the Individual Plan for Employment. Then, celebrate or acknowledge movement from one step to the next.

Courtesy and Respect

8. We recommend that DVR develop and implement strategies for increasing extrinsic demonstrations of the vocational rehabilitation counselor's desire for customer success.

Equity

9. We recommend that DVR research and analyze case notes and authorizations for payment for formal education and training across each of the three areas to determine if there are variances in

interpretations of policies, procedures, and practices. Use what is learned from the analysis to provide guidance and reinforcement of policy. We realize that every customer has individual interests, abilities, and job goals; however, all customers deserve equal access to skill development.

Customers of DVR confirm that the services they receive make a meaningful difference in their lives. No matter what is going well

in a system, there is always room for improvement. The WSRC extends our appreciation to RDA for its excellent contribution to our understanding; DVR for its open, collaborative approach to the project; and, every one of the 402 current or former customers of DVR who took the time to respond to our survey.

This concludes the Executive Summary. See next page.

The Washington State Rehabilitation Council and its Statutory Authority

The Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) is a 15-member board of Governor-appointed volunteers. State Rehabilitation Councils were established at a federal level by the 1993 reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act under Title 1, Section 105. To comply with federal requirements the Governor issued Executive Order 04-04 authorizing the establishment of our Council. In 1994 we began to collaborate with Washington State's General Vocational Rehabilitation program, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), to achieve two common goals:

1. Increasing the number of jobseekers with disabilities who enter or advance in the workforce after being served by DVR, and
2. Assuring that DVR provides effective, equitable services in a timely manner.

The Rehabilitation Act defines different roles and responsibilities for the WSRC and DVR in our partnership. DVR is responsible for providing eligible jobseekers with the individualized direct services and supports they need to become employed. The WSRC is responsible for analyzing factors which affect DVR's ability to provide what their customers need to go to work. The Council advocates for changes and makes recommendations to improve the likelihood

that DVR and the people it serves will succeed.

Learning from People Who Have Been Served by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Title 1, Section 105(4) (B) of the Rehabilitation Act gives the WSRC responsibility for gathering information from jobseekers served by DVR about their levels of satisfaction with the services they received. The Council analyzes the data we collect and makes recommendations based on what we learn. The purpose of this exercise is to draw data-driven conclusions about the strengths of the vocational rehabilitation service system, consider areas where improvement is called for, suggest actions to support improvement, and track progress on taking those actions. The WSRC undertakes that responsibility by:

1. Sponsoring customer forums each quarter to garner public comment;
2. Reviewing secondary data collected from a survey that DVR sends to a sample of its customers (those who became employed and those who did not); and,
3. In collaboration with DVR, conducting our own survey of DVR customers every three years.

This report examines the customer satisfaction survey project conducted by the WSRC in 2011. The following pages explore the survey project goals; planning process

and collaboration with DVR; research methodology and data collection; findings and recommendations.

Establishing Our Focus and Project Goals

The WSRC's Customer Satisfaction and Program Evaluation Committee took the lead on designing the survey project plan and completing it. Martin McCallum, the committee chair, proposed the following project goals:

1. Illuminating customers' perspectives on particular matters that both the Council and DVR care to know;
2. Including clear questions that are understandable (plain language) and are individually relevant to DVR customers;
3. Selecting a mode for surveying which is most likely to yield a high rate of response; and
4. Using resources smartly to complete the project in a timely manner.

Mr. McCallum also proposed that the project should focus on learning two things:

1. Whether customers believe that DVR services were provided in a respectful manner; and,
2. Whether DVR customers believe that the services included in their Individual Plans for Employment

are likely to assist them in becoming employed.

Committee members endorsed the proposed project goals and focus.

Deciding What to Ask and of Whom to Ask It

Members of the Customer Satisfaction & Program Evaluation Committee proposed to survey three groups of DVR customers including: those implementing an Individual Plan for Employment; those who became employed after receiving services from DVR; and those who did not become employed after receiving services from DVR. Two factors contributed to our rationale for including these three groups in the survey sample. First, we sought to provide DVR the option to compare responses from their survey and ours. DVR's survey goes out to customers upon case closure. Second, by surveying those currently receiving services from DVR, the WSRC sought to provide DVR with data from customers that their own survey does not reach.

After determining which customers to survey, we set about deciding which questions to ask. The committee had four goals in mind while crafting questions:

1. Including some questions in the survey instrument from previous WSRC and DVR surveys for the purpose of creating a means of comparison;
2. Asking a limited number of questions;

3. Creating clear questions; and,
4. Assuring that questions aligned with the project focus endorsed by the committee.

To achieve these goals the committee began by reviewing questions from previous DVR and WSRC surveys to identify which to carry over to the current survey. Next, each committee member was tasked with proposing the top five questions he or she would like to include. Council staff collected the questions from each committee member and compiled a complete list which was sorted by topic. The full committee then reviewed the list, eliminated some proposed questions, and selected those which addressed their core concerns. Once these tasks were complete the Customer Satisfaction Committee Chair and the WSRC Executive Director took the project proposal to the Senior Leadership Team of DVR for review, discussion, and planning for next steps.

Collaborating with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to Complete the Project

In July 2011 we held a series of meetings with the Senior Leadership Team to achieve a number of goals to move the project forward, including:

1. Seeking buy-in on the survey project goals and focus;

2. Coming to an agreement about which customer groups would be included in the survey sample;
3. Reviewing, discussing, and revising survey questions;
4. Deciding who to engage with the capacity and technical skill to collect data; and,
5. Addressing concerns about preserving the confidentiality of DVR customers, and pulling the data sample for the researchers.

The Senior Leadership Team of DVR was receptive to the vision for the project proposed by the Council. They concurred that it made sense to provide people with open and closed cases in the survey sample.

With the assistance of IT staff, Don Kay, Special Assistant to the Interim Director of DVR, shared a graph depicting the number of Individual Plans for Employment open within DVR statewide as of July 2011. The graph also showed how long the cases had been open. Multiple factors determine the pace at which a DVR customer achieves his or her employment goal. Some make rapid progress; others take time. The Senior Leadership Team of DVR was interested in comparing and contrasting the perspectives of customers who had been in plan for varying ranges of time. After reviewing the data we agreed to include two groups of people with open cases in the survey sample: some of those with cases open for

61-420 days; and, some of those with cases open for 961-1400 days.

The Senior Leadership Team reviewed and discussed the draft questions proposed by the WSRC. While minor edits were suggested, no major revisions were requested.

After reviewing the project DVR agreed to allocate up to \$44,000 to pay for the research to be conducted. The total cost of the project came in under budget at \$26,858.57.

Engaging Researchers with the Capacity and Technical Expertise to Conduct the Survey

Neither the WSRC nor DVR possessed the in-house capacity to conduct the survey. We sought to contract with a partner that possesses the technical expertise to conduct the research. At the time we undertook the project the State Legislature had placed a moratorium on the establishment of personal services contracts. This limited the pool of potential partners we could engage in the project. Fortunately, our colleagues at the Research and Data Analysis Unit (RDA) of the Department of Social and Health Services were available to help. Our work together did not require a personal services contract.

We sought input from RDA staff about our proposed draft questions. They helped us edit for still more clarity. We also discussed the research mode for the project and weighed the benefits and drawbacks of conducting the survey on paper, online, or by telephone. We concluded that a

telephone survey (with accommodations for Deaf customers or those who spoke languages other than English) would likely yield a high response rate. The drawback of the decision to survey by telephone was that a smaller sample of customers would be invited to participate in the survey. Given the smaller survey sample, garnering a high rate of response was essential to assuring the credibility of the findings. DVR decided that yielding statistically significant results was important enough that they included money in the project budget for each survey respondent to receive a \$20 gift card to a grocery store (included in the final cost of the project).

Customer Confidentiality, Survey Sample, Methodology, Rate of Response

DVR is required to maintain the confidentiality of all customers. The WSRC had no access to any customer information during the survey project. DVR staff furnished a randomly selected stratified data sample for RDA. In addition to meeting parameters mentioned earlier in this report, the data sample was reflective of the variation of experiences of disability in the customer base. We also included customers in the sample served by every DVR office in the state. The total number of DVR customers included in the survey sample was 463. Of the 463, eight customers were deemed ineligible to respond. The reasons why these eight were ineligible to participate were: two were deceased; two were incarcerated in jail or prison; two were no longer in the country; and two experienced a physical or cognitive barrier to completing the survey. This narrowed the

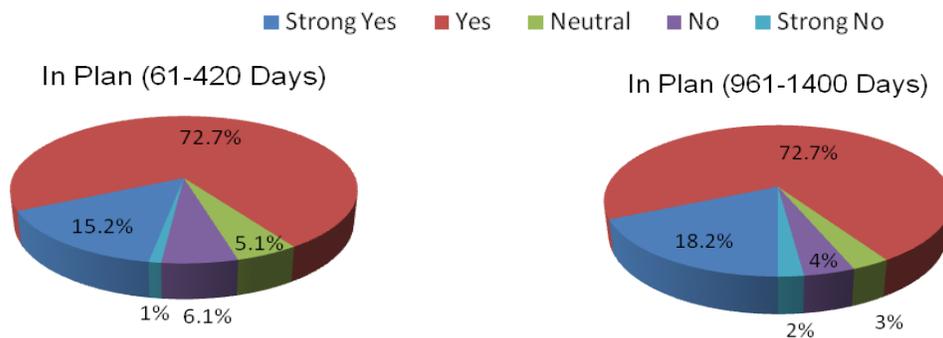
sample of customers surveyed to 455. Of the 455, 402 responded. The response rate was 88.4 percent. This is an extraordinarily high response rate. We do not know how many, if any, survey respondents utilized accommodations for non-English speakers or for people who are Deaf. We did not ask demographic questions about age, gender, race, or disability characteristics. For that reason we are not able to provide an analysis that compares and contrasts responses of respondents by these characteristics. The greatest number of survey responses came from Clark, King,

Pierce, Snohomish, and Spokane Counties. For administrative purposes DVR divides the state into three geographic service areas. Based on the limited size of the data sample we were not able to compare and contrast survey responses based on area or county.

The margin of error for our data is +/- 1.67 percent. With regard to the graphs depicting our data, there are some cases where the sum of the graphs totals one tenth of one percent above or below 100 percent. We attribute this to a rounding function in the computer program that tabulated the data.

The Survey Data

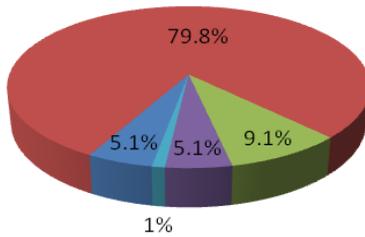
Did the DVR orientation (or intake meeting) clearly explain the services DVR can provide?



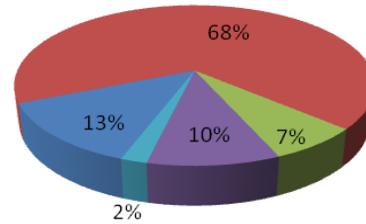
Did your counselor tell you what your role would be in your DVR process?

■ Strong Yes ■ Yes ■ Neutral ■ No ■ Strong No

In Plan (61-420 Days)



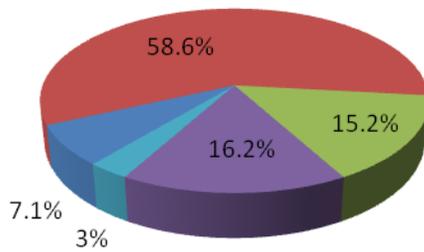
In Plan (961-1400 Days)



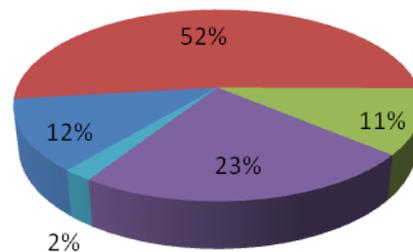
Are you and your counselor clear about the next step you want to take in your employment plan?

■ Strong Yes ■ Yes ■ Neutral ■ No ■ Strong No

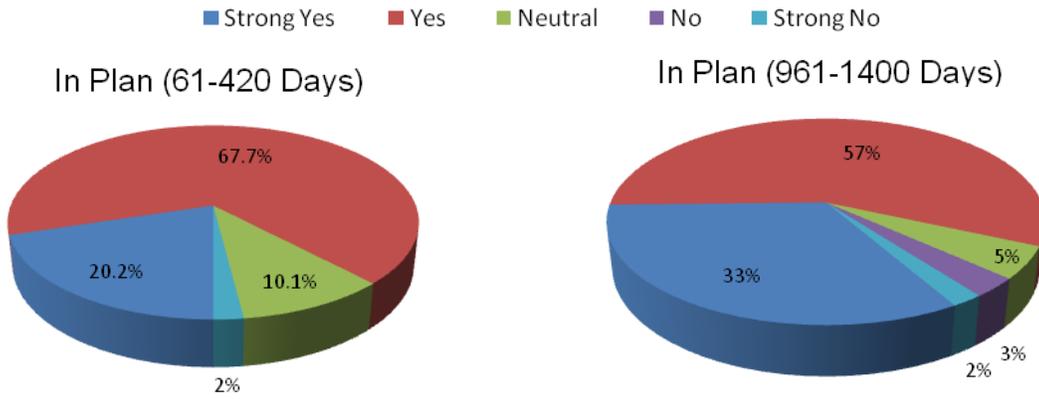
In Plan (61-420 Days)



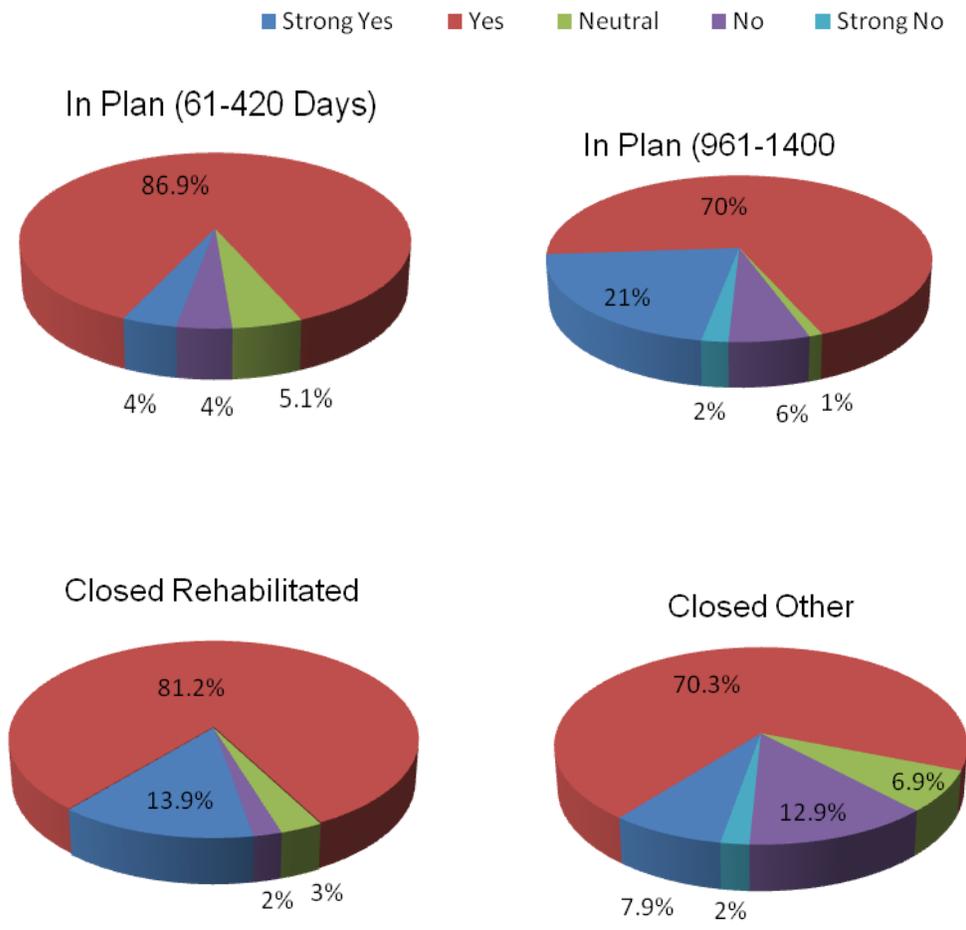
In Plan (961-1400 Days)



Do you feel that your counselor wants you to succeed?



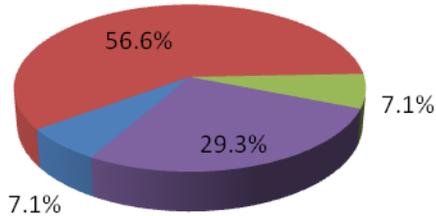
Did you help to choose your employment goal?



Is DVR helping you learn skills that increase your chance to get and keep a job?

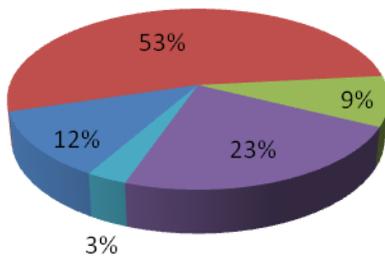
■ Strong Yes ■ Yes ■ Neutral ■ No ■ Strong No

In Plan (61-420 Days)



DVR customers possess varied skills when they apply for services. We do not know how survey respondents defined "skills." We also do not know why the skills were not acquired during the rehabilitation process, or whether the acquisition of a particular skill would have increased the chance of getting or keeping a job.

In Plan (961-1400 Days)

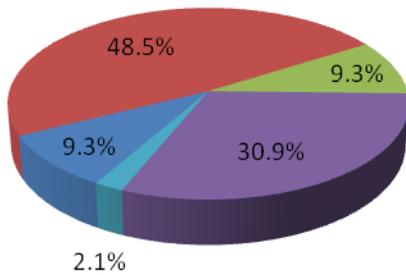


The WSRC encourages DVR to conduct further research to explore the basis of this customer perception.

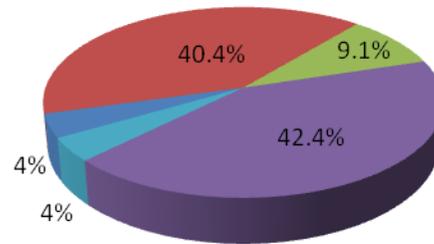
Did DVR help you learn skills that increased your chance to get and keep a job?

■ Strong Yes ■ Yes ■ Neutral ■ No ■ Strong No

Closed Rehabilitated



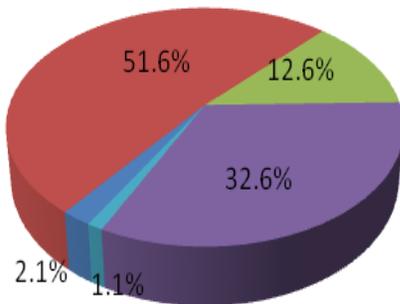
Closed Other



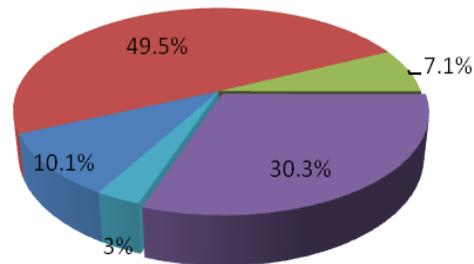
Because those "in plan" are people still being served by DVR, they may yet receive supports or services in the vocational rehabilitation process to address the barriers to employment they face.

■ Strong Yes ■ Yes ■ Neutral ■ No ■ Strong No

In Plan (61-420 Days)



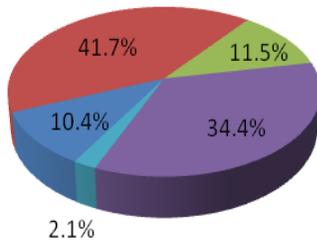
In Plan (961-1400 Days)



Did DVR help you work with disability issues that have prevented you from getting a job?

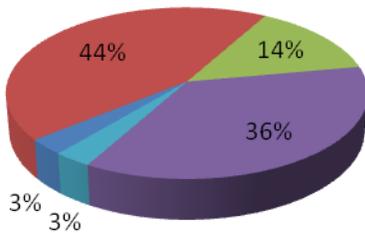
■ Strong Yes ■ Yes ■ Neutral ■ No ■ Strong No

Closed Rehabilitated



The barriers to employment that a DVR customer presents in his or her case are always individualized. Barriers may arise from more than one factor. The survey data we have does not provide enough information to understand why a high percentage of respondents do not think their barriers to employment were addressed.

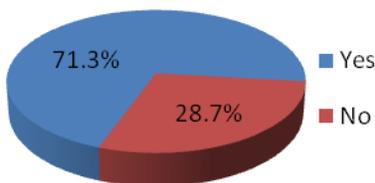
Closed Other



The data does not tell us whether there is a correlation between diminished availability of comparable benefits and unaddressed barriers.

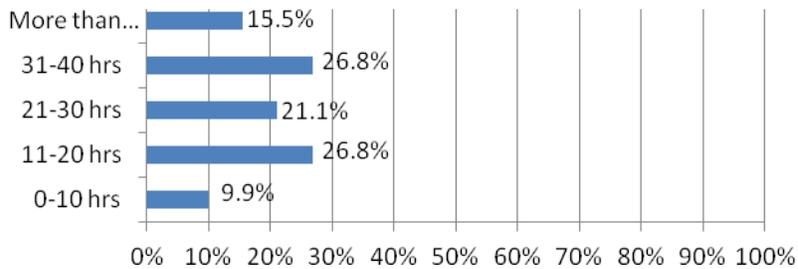
Because the purpose of vocational rehabilitation is to address barriers to employment, and because DVR's own internal statewide case review identified that progress could be made on addressing barriers to employment, the WSRC encourages DVR to conduct further research to understand this finding.

Are you employed now?



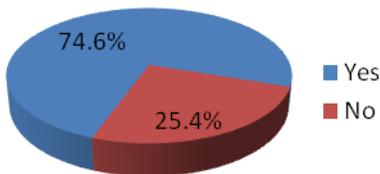
The WSRC does not know whether or not it is typical that 29 percent of customers who became employed after working with DVR would become unemployed. To meet the legal definition of achieving a successful rehabilitation, a DVR customer must get and keep a job for 90 days.

How many hours per week are you working?



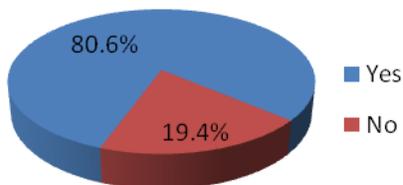
The WSRC did not include a question on the survey to determine whether or not respondents were receiving benefits from the Social Security Administration, therefore we cannot determine if there is a correlation between those working fewer hours, and those receiving Social Security benefits.

Are you working as many hours as you want to work?



We do not have data to help us understand what, if any, influence the economy is having on the number of hours these customers are working.

Are you better off financially than you were before receiving DVR services?

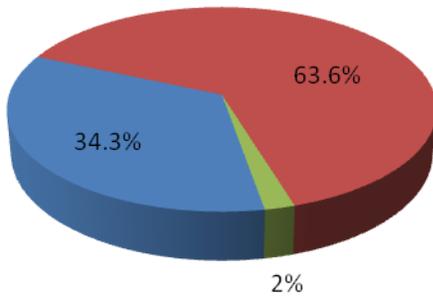


Customer wage at closure is one of the indicators RSA uses to evaluate Vocational Rehabilitation Programs. The Federal standard does not presume wage equality between workers with and without disabilities. It defines success as whether a person with a disability earns 52 cents on the dollar of the state average hourly wage. DVR has not met that standard for four consecutive Federal Fiscal Years. The WSRC wonders if there is a correlation between not passing the standard and the response of 19.4% of those surveyed.

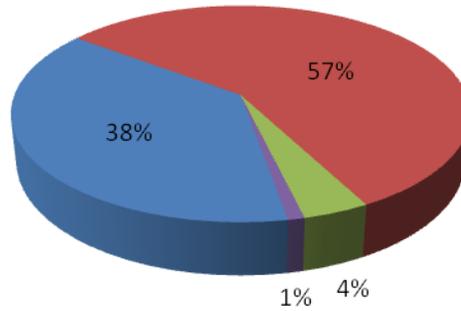
Do you think DVR Staff treated you with courtesy and respect?

■ Strong Yes ■ Yes ■ Neutral ■ No ■ Strong No

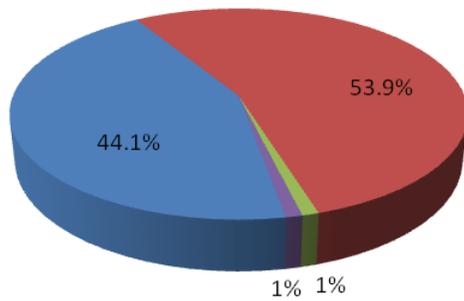
In Plan (61-420 Days)



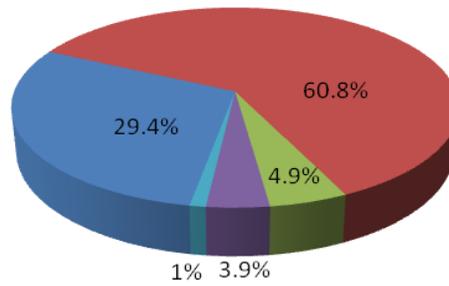
In Plan (961-1400 Days)



Closed Rehabilitated

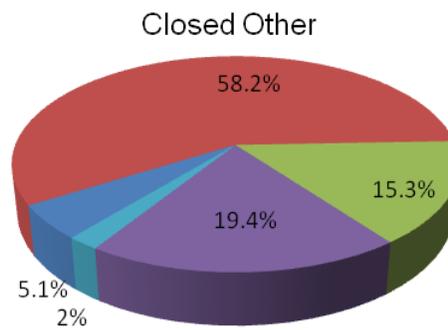
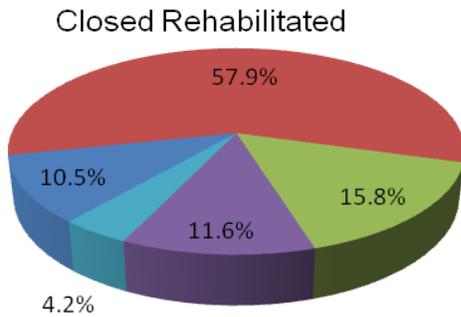
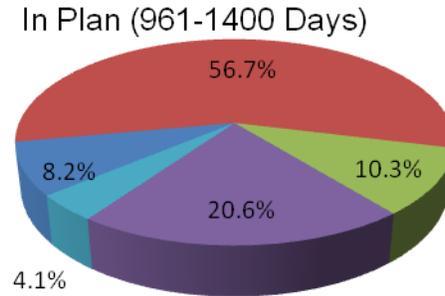
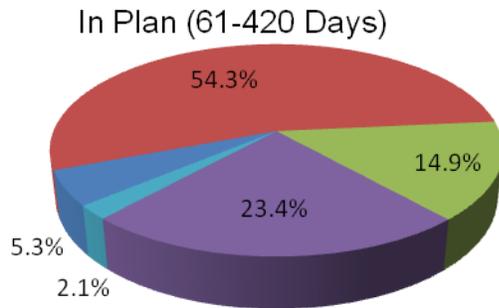


Closed Other



If you need services DVR doesn't offer, do/did staff tell you where you can get those services?

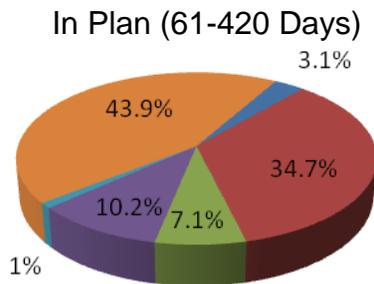
■ Strong Yes ■ Yes ■ Neutral ■ No ■ Strong No



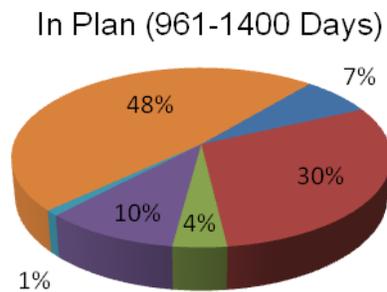
We do not know what services customers sought. We do not know if necessary services were available to accept referrals.

If you need services from a Community Rehabilitation Program provider (CRP), do/did you get to choose the CRP?

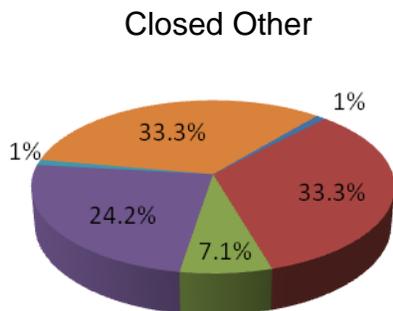
■ Strong Yes ■ Yes ■ Neutral ■ No ■ Strong No ■ I don't Know/What's CRP?



DVR currently contracts with 116 Community Rehabilitation Programs. A Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) is an organization (that can either be structured as a for-profit organization or a not-for-profit organization) which provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities to enable those individuals to maximize their opportunity for employment. The services that DVR contracts with CRPs to provide include:



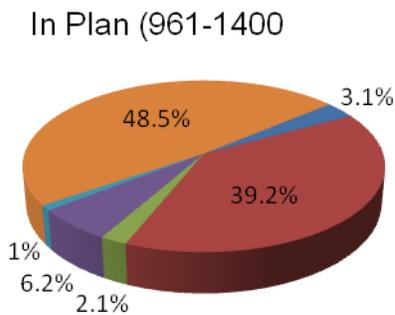
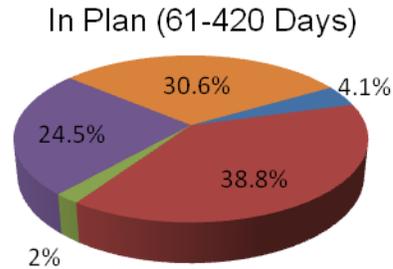
1. Vocational evaluation services
2. Trial work experience or community-based assessment services
3. Job placement
4. Intensive training services and
5. Job retention services



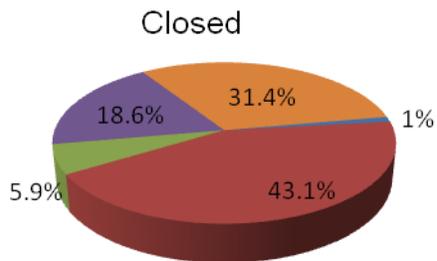
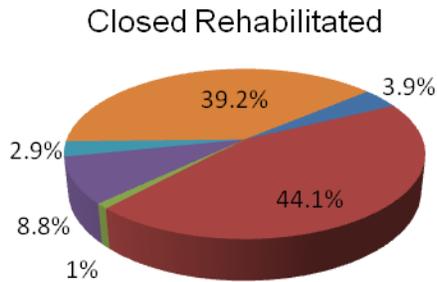
Typically the segment of DVR's customer base that is most likely to be served by CRPs are customers with developmental disabilities who are working to achieve supported employment. We notice that few survey respondents recognized what CRPs are, and the role they play in the rehabilitation process for some customers.

Did staff tell you the Client Assistance Program (CAP) can help solve issues in your case?

■ Strong Yes ■ Yes ■ Neutral ■ No ■ Strong No ■ I don't Know/What's CAP?



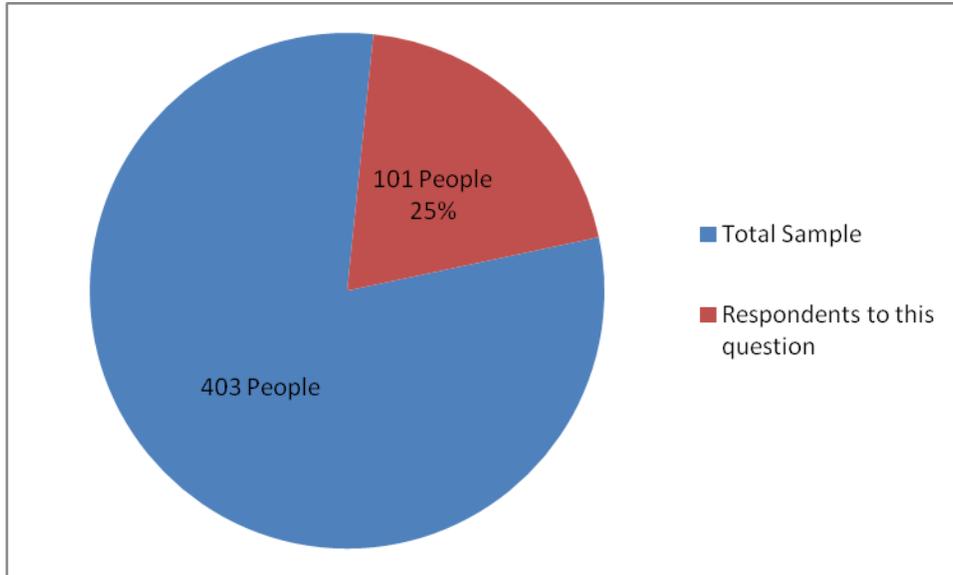
We notice that a high percentage of customers are unfamiliar with the Client Assistance Program. We do not know to what to attribute the unfamiliarity. There are at least three points in a vocational rehabilitation process where customers are to be alerted to the existence of the Client Assistance Program.



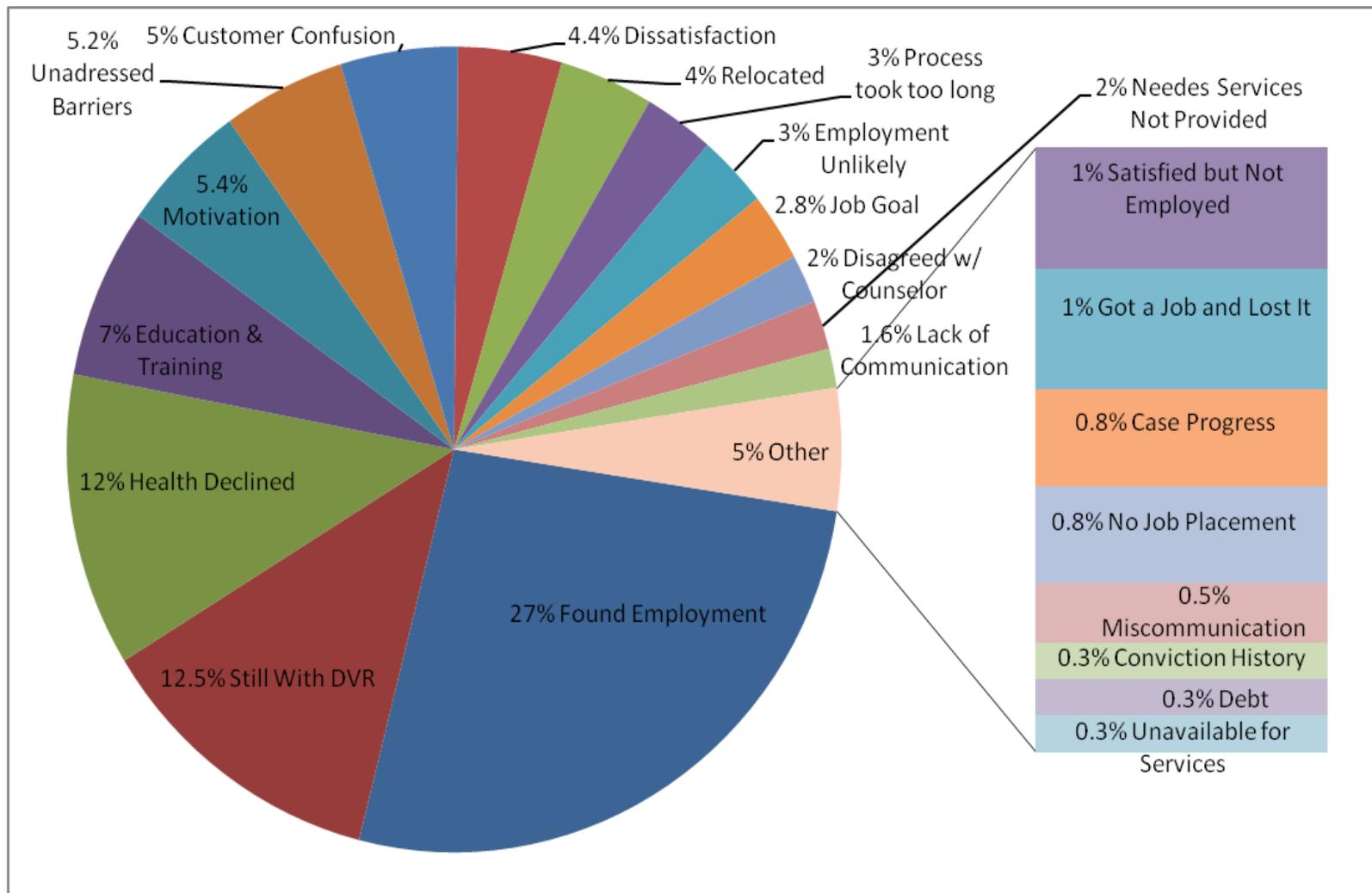
Customer Satisfaction Survey

For those with cases closed without rehabilitation, we asked: *“What is the main reason you aren’t receiving DVR services at this time?”*

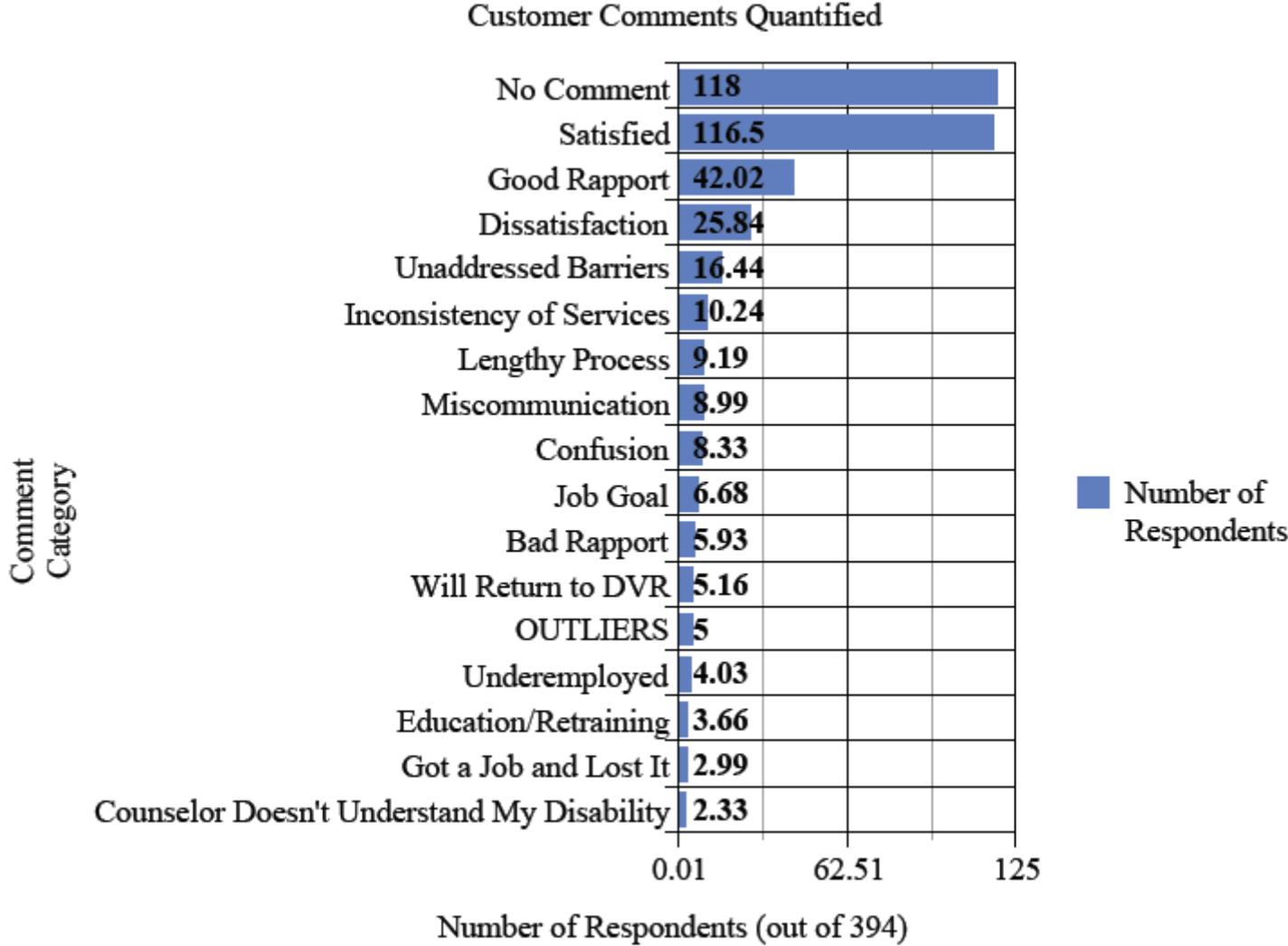
101 people answered this question.



Reasons Respondents Perceive No Longer Receiving Services



We asked all survey respondents if they had other comments. The bar graph reflects the topics on the comments received



Customer Satisfaction Survey

Our Findings

Survey Respondents Confirm that DVR Does Many Things Well

- More than 90% of all survey respondents strongly agree or agree that DVR services were provided in a respectful manner.
- Between 87.9% and 90% of survey respondents currently implementing an Individual Plan for Employment strongly agree or agree that their counselors want them to succeed.
- Of those respondents who became employed after receiving services from DVR, 74.6% are working as many hours as they want to work.
- 80.6% of respondents with closed cases affirmed that they are better off financially than before receiving DVR services.

Findings that Merit Further Study and or Action

- The primary purpose of DVR is to assist jobseekers with disabilities to address barriers to employment. Given that, it is both curious and concerning that regardless of whether a survey respondent is currently implementing an Individual Plan for Employment, or has a closed case (with or without employment), 33-39% strongly disagree or disagree that DVR has helped them work with disability issues that have prevented them from getting a job.

- We note that of survey respondents currently implementing an Individual Plan for Employment, those with a plan open for 961-1400 days are less certain of their next step than those in plan for 61-420 days.
- Although we do not know how the survey respondents define the term "skill," it is notable that between 29.3% and 46.4% of survey respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that they by working with DVR they were learning skills to get and keep a job.
- Close to 29% of those who became employed after receiving DVR services responded that they had not retained work.

Recommendations from the Washington State Rehabilitation Council to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Based on Survey Findings

Further Study

1. We recommend that DVR undertake additional research and analysis to identify the root causes of the survey findings regarding: barriers to employment, skill acquisition, and employment retention after closure.

Addressing Barriers

2. We recommend that DVR assures that vocational rehabilitation counselors are supported by their supervisors and by administration to take the time to identify and

understand the barriers to employment the customer faces.

3. We recommend that DVR encourage vocational rehabilitation counselors to provide ongoing assessment (particularly for those with plans open for extended periods) to identify the disability-specific services and supports available to address barriers that emerge following plan development.
4. We recommend that DVR identify strategies and implement practices to improve and enhance the continuity of communication between vocational rehabilitation counselors and customers, particularly during instances of delay or transitions between vendors or case transfers.

Informed Choice

5. We recommend that DVR place greater emphasis on the customer's role in the vocational rehabilitation process during intake and orientation. We encourage DVR to reinforce that emphasis over the life of the case.
6. We recommend that DVR supports their staff providing direct service to strengthen community resource information and referral activities during the life of a plan by developing and updating their knowledge of the resources other than DVR available to customers in local communities.
7. We recommend that DVR encourage staff providing direct service to

clearly delineate sequential steps in the achievement of the Individual Plan for Employment.
Celebrate/acknowledge movement from one step to the next.

Courtesy and Respect

8. We recommend that DVR develop and implement strategies for increasing extrinsic demonstrations of the vocational rehabilitation counselor's desire for customer success.

Equity

9. We recommend that DVR research and analyze case notes and authorizations for payment for formal education and training across each of the three areas to determine if there are variances in interpretations of policies, procedures, and practices. Based on DVR's research and analysis, they should issue clarifications as needed. We realize that every customer has individual interests, abilities, and job goals; however, all customers deserve equal access to skill development.

Conclusion

Peter Marshall said, "Small deeds done are better than great deeds planned." The WSRC offers this information and analysis to inspire DVR to reflect and then to act. We have appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with DVR, RDA and some of the current and former customers of DVR to complete this project.

WSRC Members

Jeffry Abe-Gunter
Spokane

Andres Aguirre
Interim DVR Director
Ex-Officio
Olympia

Valerie Arnold
Elma

Don Brandon
Mountlake Terrace

Charity Drummond
Seattle

Vickie Foster
Seattle

Jana Finkbonner
Bellingham

Rudy Hernandez
Burien

Michael Hudson
Bellingham

Jerry Johnsen
Seattle

Susan Kautzman
Grandview

Jim Larson
Olympia

Vanessa Lewis
Tacoma

Martin McCallum
Olympia

Leandro Razo
Grandview

Council Staff

Joelle Brouner, Executive Director
JoAnne Lang, Executive Assistant