

CONNECTICUT STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL



Annual Report 2019

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS)

A Division of

The Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability
Services (ADS)



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Message from the SRC Chairperson

Dear Friends:

The State Rehabilitation Council of CT has had another productive year. As always, we value our relationship with the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and their staff and recognize that it is our open dialogue with leadership that allows us to have a clear picture of the current state agency.

We are thankful for the collaborative working relationship that the CT State Rehabilitation Council enjoys with Director Dave Doukas. BRS clearly values the input and recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council, as we act as the voice of the individuals being served by BRS. Our Council, made up of a diverse group of stakeholders, is committed to our task. We continue to seek out new Council members who also recognize the important role that the SRC plays.

Although fiscal challenges continue to be faced in CT and by BRS, great work continues to be done. Individuals with disabilities are not only finding employment – they are finding true career paths. Level Up (Pre-ETS) services continue to support high school aged youth, and CT VR should be proud that they have turned an unclear, federally mandated requirement into a program that is a role model for other states. BRS also continues to deal with the unintended consequences of the Level Up program, which is having a reduction of 15% of their budget for their remaining services and was one of the key factors in CT entering into Order of Selection in October 2018. The SRC has continued to monitor the status and number of those on the waiting lists over the past year.

The SRC looks forward to another productive year, as we support individuals with disabilities in moving forward with their employment goals.

Kate Travis

Kate Travis
Chairperson, SRC
Assistant Services Director, Ability Beyond



Mission, Goals, Functions

MISSION

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

GOALS

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

FUNCTIONS

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

SRC Committees

THE PROGRAM REVIEW & EVALUTATION COMMITTEE

Purpose:

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

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

Members: Linda Rammler and Kate Travis

Review of 2019 Accomplishments:

- Recruited 3 new members to the committee.
- Monitored policy changes that meet new goals defined in WIOA and seek consumer feedback.
- Created on-line survey questions and created post cards for consumer feedback.
- Created CT SRC logo.
- Set up BRS program staff to represent at SRC meetings.

Goals for 2020:

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

THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Purpose:

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

Chairperson: Bruce Stovall

Members: Patrick Melfi, Vicki Kowaleski, and Jennifer Jenkins

Review of 2019 Accomplishments:

- Continued efforts to recruit potential candidates in accordance with Title I, Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act 1973, as amended for appointment to the SRC from the Governor.
- Conducted interviews and recommended three (3) new members.

Goals for 2020:

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

LEGISLATIVE, POLICY, & PLANNING COMMITTEE

Purpose:

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

Chairperson: Thomas Boudreau

Members: Gary Prushko, Patrick Melfi, Melissa Taylor, and Linda Rammler

Review of 2019 Accomplishments:

- Reviewed SRC full committee meeting notes and forwarded relevant information.
- Reviewed the RSA report and found that:
 - Although it is positive to be connected to activities that one has an interest in, the research supports that too often volunteering doesn't lead to employment.
 - Having multiple support networks and encouraging community involvement helps individuals gain confidence in public settings.
- Reviewed the state's Order of Selection pertaining to BRS, as well as the WIOA and school age transition activities related to Level Up (Pre-ETS).
- Discussed a bill calling for the formation of a taskforce (SA 19-12, effective upon passing) to study disability employment programs and establish financial incentives for businesses to participate in vocational rehabilitation programs.
- Attended the annual meeting for BRS.

Goals for 2020:

- Continue to reach out to other committees and discuss joint efforts to remain active in relevant legislative efforts.
- Monitor relevant aspects of Order of Selection, WIOA, and Level Up (Pre-ETS).
- Monitor the lifting of Order of Selection and support BRS throughout the process.
- Oversee the required triennial needs assessment review process (scheduled to occur in 2020).

State Rehabilitation Council Scholarship



BRS Director David Doukas, YLF Scholarship Recipient Jacqueline Navickas, and SRC member Thomas Boudreau

Jacqueline Navickas is the SRC's 2019 Scholarship Recipient from the Connecticut Youth Leadership Forum (YLF).

Jacqueline Navickas, from Colchester, CT, is now pursuing a dual degree in Special Education and Music from Eastern CT State University after graduating from Bacon Academy in 2019.

The SRC wishes Jacqueline continued success with her future plans and congratulates the Navickas family on her achievements.

The YLF is sponsored by the Connecticut Youth Leadership Project (CTYLP). It empowers young people with disabilities to identify and develop their leadership potential. Through self-awareness and team building activities, these students explore leadership styles and develop and implement team and personal leadership plans.

The goal is to help youth with disabilities meet the challenges of the future, overcome obstacles and become leaders so that they can make a positive difference in their communities and for others with disabilities.

The YLF is a week-long training program for high school sophomores and juniors. The SRC has helped to fund this training and provided a \$2,500 scholarship for former delegates pursuing their education beyond high school.

National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils, INC.

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

OUR MISSION:

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

OUR VISION:

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

The NCSRC currently consists of 53 SRCs of states and territories that provide public VR services. In addition to conference calls bi-monthly, the NCSRC hosts two training conferences each year that coincide with the national meetings of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), SRC Chair Kate Travis and SRC Liaison Kerri Fradette attended the Spring conference in Bethesda, MD and attended the Fall conference in Jacksonville, FL. Kate and Kerri were recently Appointed NCSRC board members.

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



State Rehabilitation Council Photos



Kate Travis and Melissa Taylor



David Doukas, Kate Travis, and Kerri Fradette



Linda Rammler and Vicki Kowaleski



Shannon McCann and Sean Kennedy



Kate Travis at the NCSRC conference in Jacksonville, FL

Message from the BRS Director

Dear Friends,

With the closing of another year, I am elated to share the 2019 Annual Report of Connecticut's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) with you. This report is a wonderful way to explore the accomplishments of our Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program within the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS).

BRS' ever evolving relationship with the SRC continues to adapt to the changing times; despite budgetary and personnel shortages our partnership is flourishing. Throughout 2019 we have worked hard to navigate new federal regulations, financial constraints, resource reductions, and staff deficits, among other challenges prohibiting BRS from realizing its true potential. BRS entered into an Order of Selection, a process that ultimately creates a waiting list for potential VR consumers, in October of this year. The SRC continued to provide support during this difficult process.



The SRC has been instrumental in its continued guidance, throughout this particularly difficult year, to ensure our programs continue to grow and best serve individuals with disabilities within our communities.

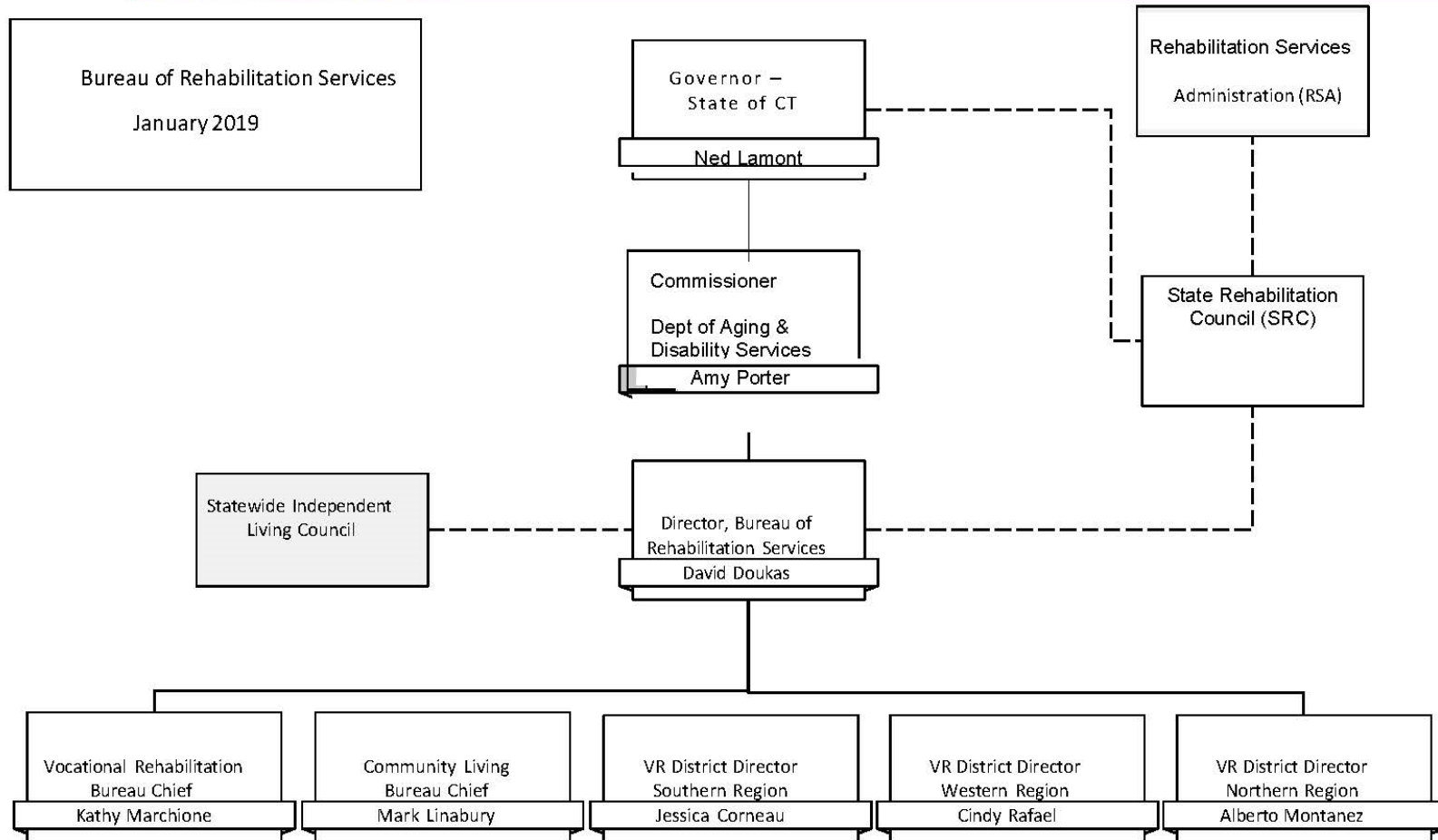
I am grateful for the SRC's unwavering assistance over the past year, and for their dedication to future endeavors. The time and energy spent by the individual members of the SRC is phenomenal, and we have the utmost respect for all that you do. Your commitment and support to the VR program aids the SRC in its mission, allowing for all voices to be heard and keeping your eyes on our collective goals, and for that we are overwhelmingly thankful.

I look forward to seeing where our partnership, and the VR program, is headed in the coming year. Thank you again for your continued guidance and ability to enrich, not only the VR program, but also BRS as a whole.

Sincerely,

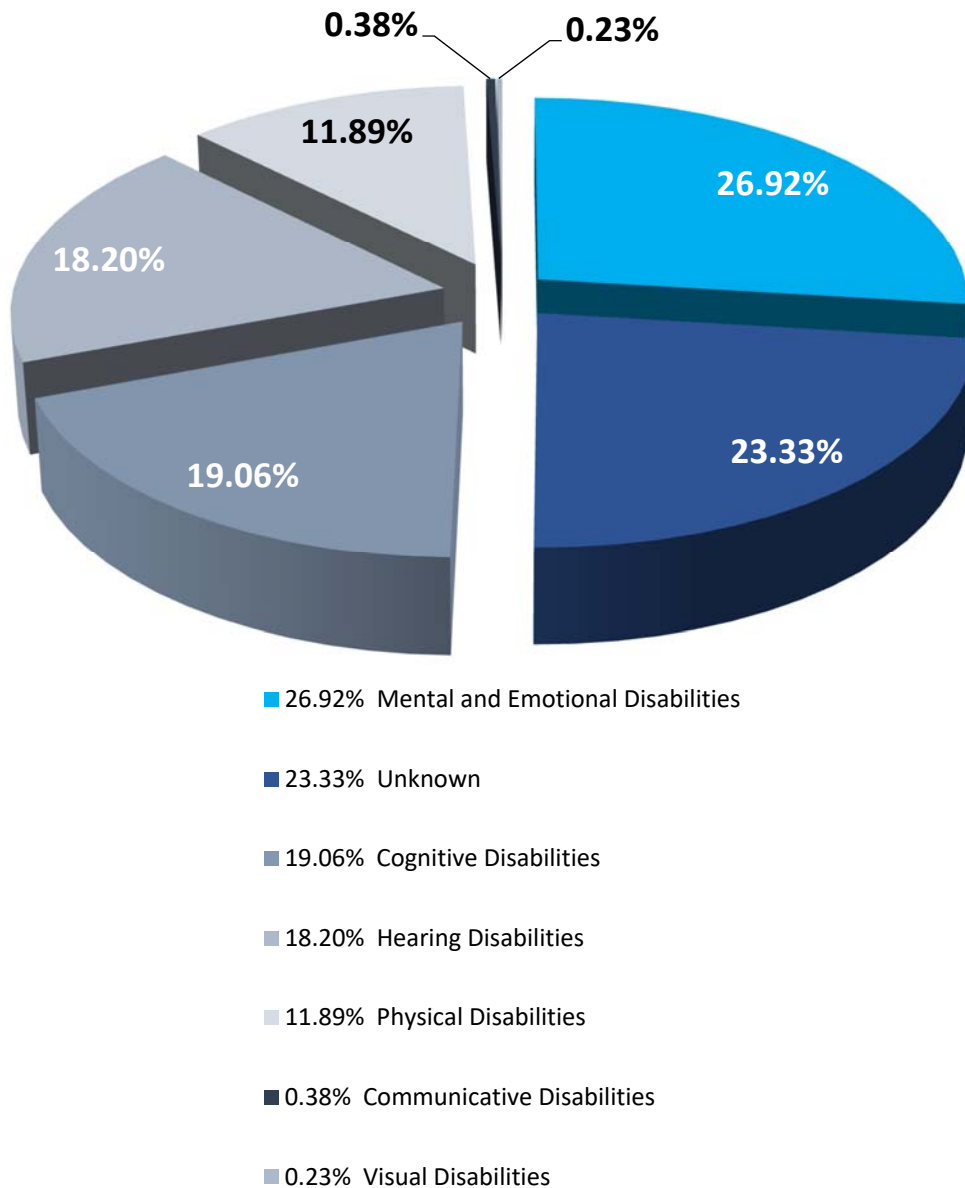
David F. Doukas, Director
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

BRS Organizational Chart



BRS Statistics

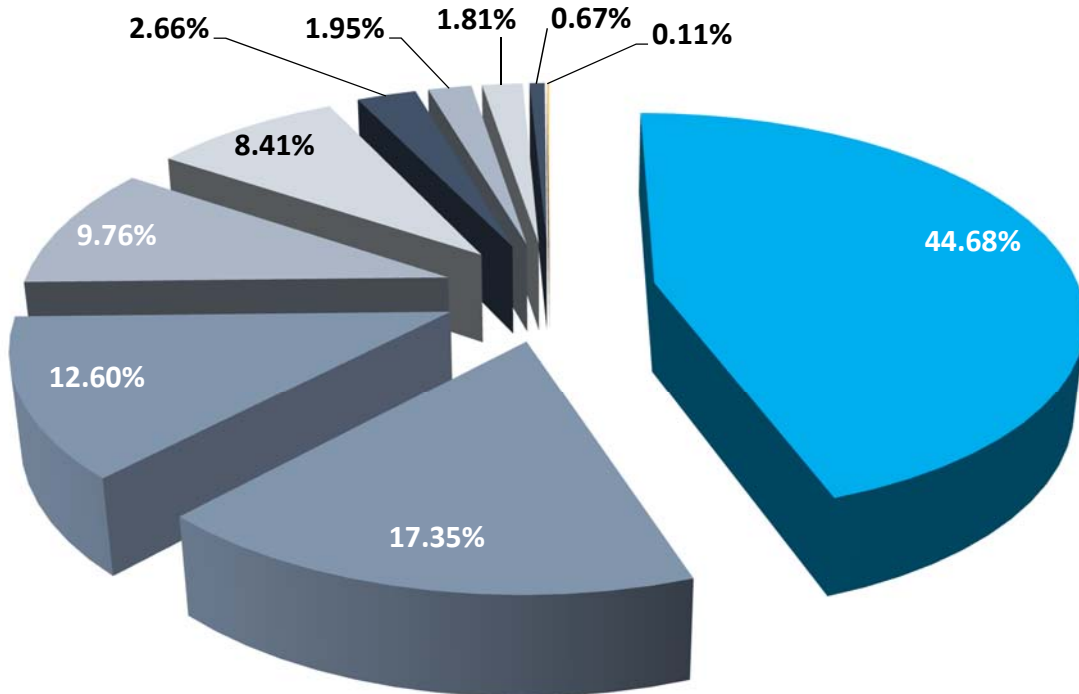
Primary Disability Type of Job Seekers BRS Assisted 6,945 Job Seekers with Various disabilities in Federal Fiscal Year 2019



NOTE: Due to the fact that primary disability demographics are not required to be collected for Level Up (Pre-ETS), some participants are classified as "unknown."

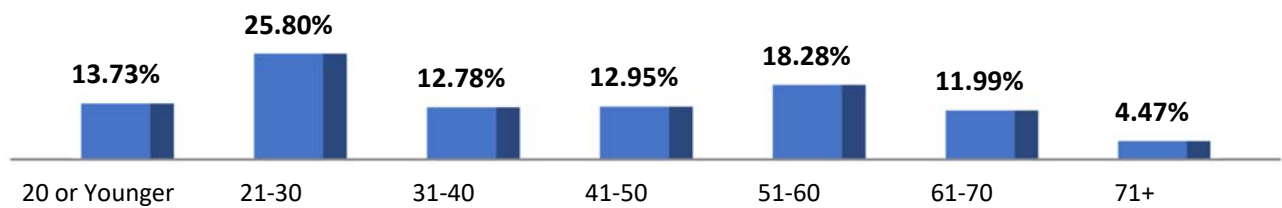
Referral Sources

BRS Received 2,896 new applications for services in Federal Fiscal Year 2019

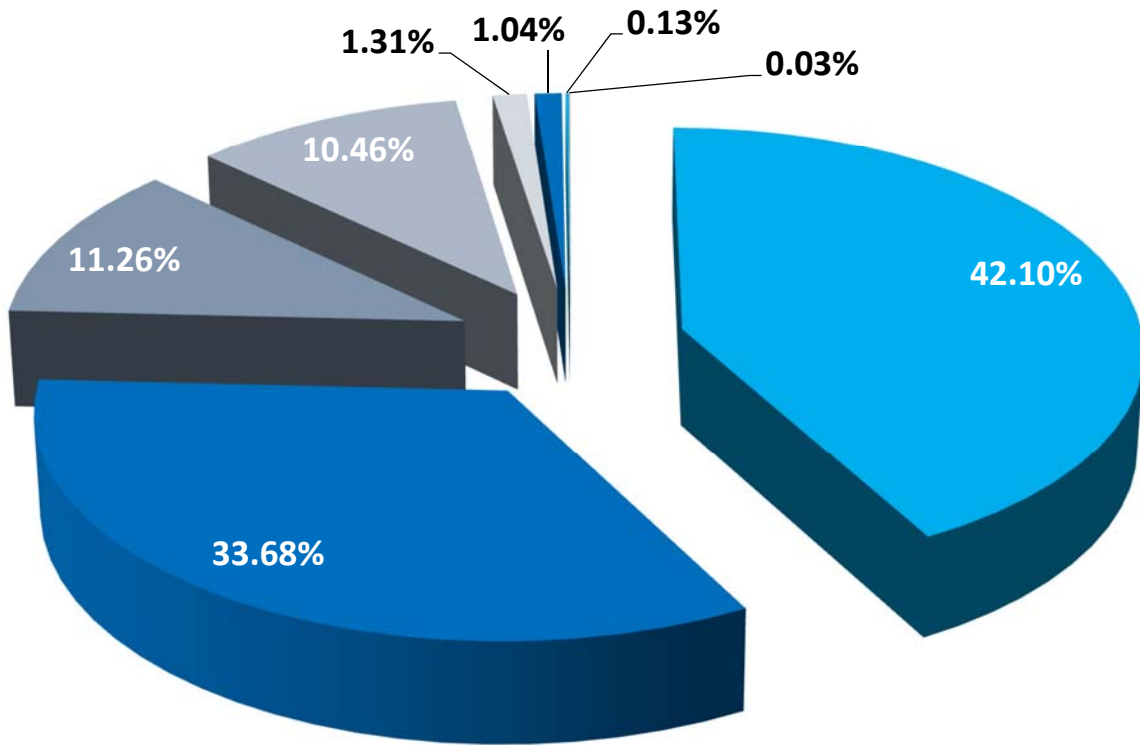


- 44.68% Self-referral
- 17.35% Unknown
- 12.60% Physician or other Medical Personnel or Medical Institutions (public or private)
- 9.76% Educational Institutions (elementary/secondary)
- 8.41% Other sources
- 2.66% Community Rehabilitation Programs
- 1.95% Welfare Agency (State or local government)
- 1.81% Educational Institutions (post-secondary)
- 0.67% Social Security Administration (Disability Determination Service or District office)
- 0.11% One-stop Employment/Training Centers

Applicants by Age at Application - Federal Fiscal Year 2019



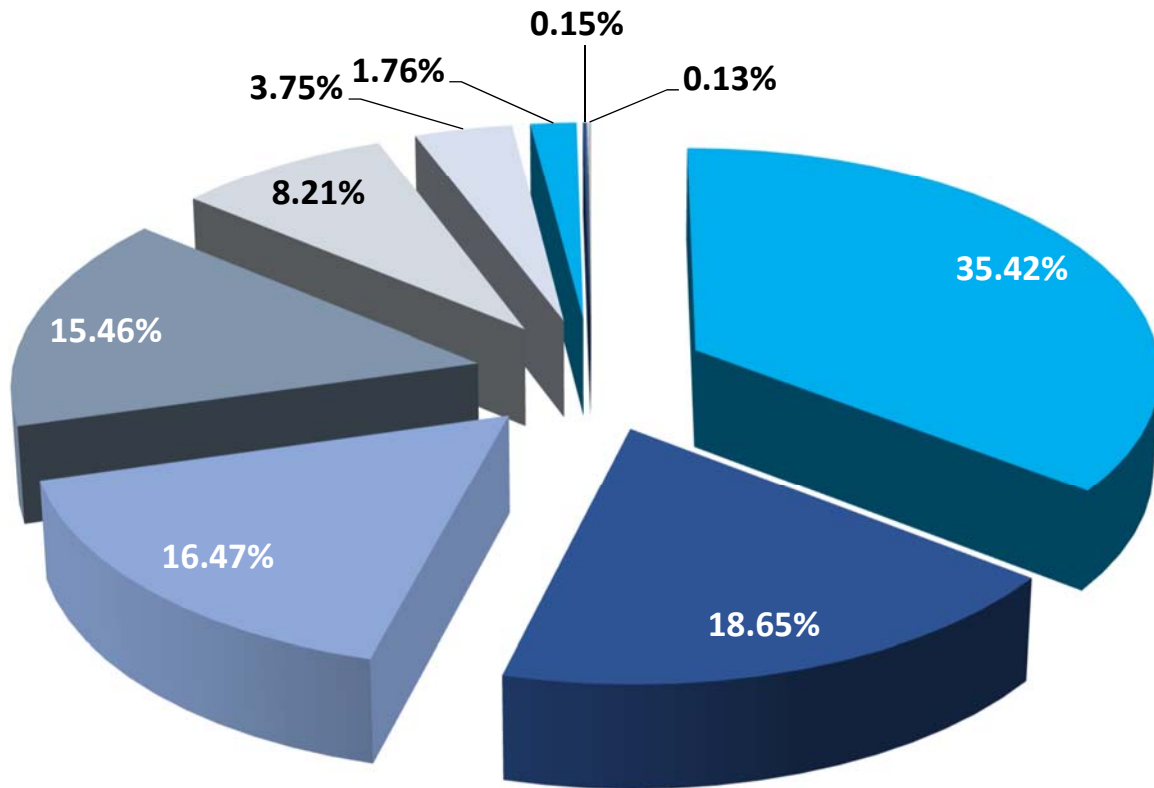
Race/Ethnicity of BRS Job Seekers Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019



- 42.10% White
- 33.68% Unknown
- 11.26% Black or African American
- 10.46% Persons of Hispanic or Latino Origin
- 1.31% Multiracial
- 1.04% Asian
- 0.13% American Indian or Alaska Native
- 0.03% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

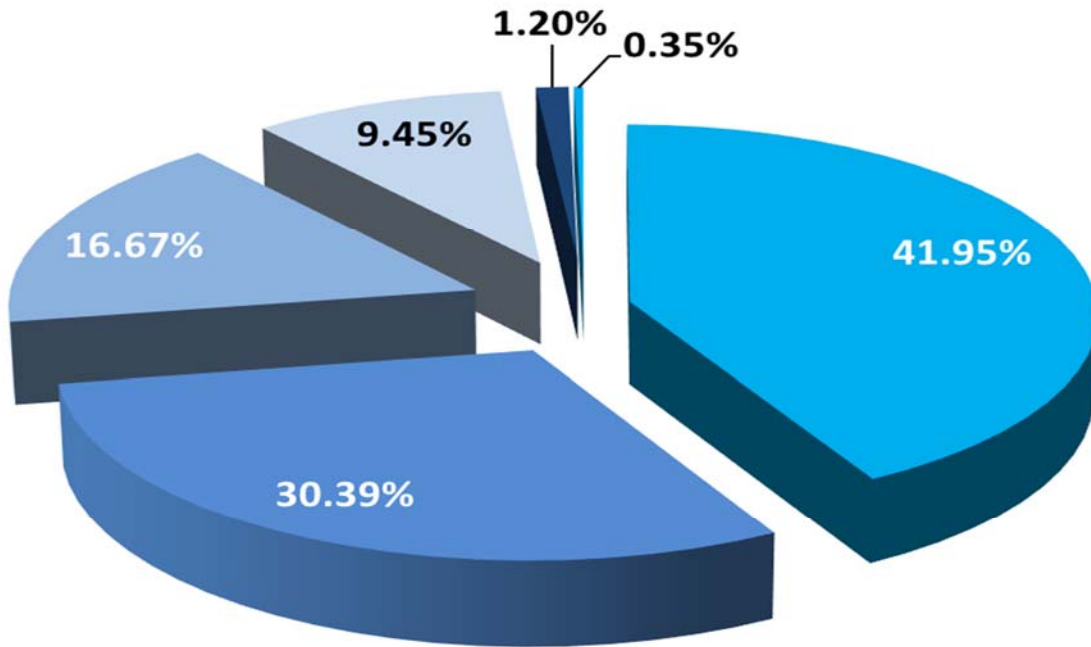
NOTE: Due to the fact that race/ethnicity demographics are not required to be collected for Level Up (Pre-ETS), some participants are classified as "unknown."

Purchased Traditional Goods and Services Total Expenditures = \$8.2 Million Federal Fiscal Year 2019



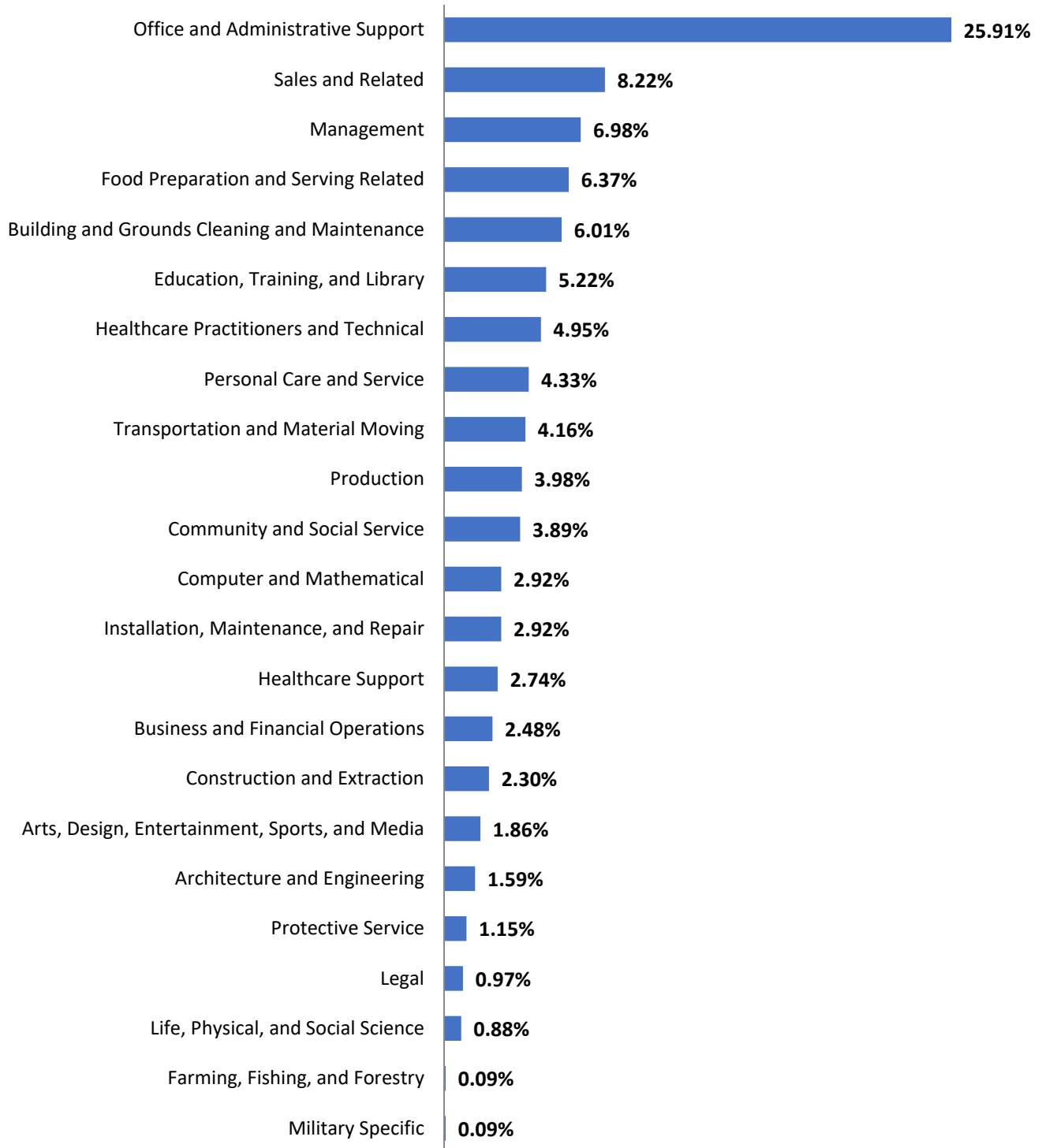
- 35.42% CRP Services
- 18.65% Appliances
- 16.47% Training
- 15.46% Level Up
- 8.21% Adaptive Tech and Services
- 3.75% Medical & Psych
- 1.76% Other
- 0.15% Equipment and Supplies
- 0.13% Maintenance

**Services Purchased From
Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP)
Total Expenditures \$4.2 Million
in Federal Fiscal Year 2019**



- 41.95% CRP-Assessment
- 30.39% Pre-Employment Transition Services
- 16.67% CRP-Placement/SD
- 9.45% CRP-Job Coach
- 1.20% Work Readiness Training
- 0.35% CRP-Other

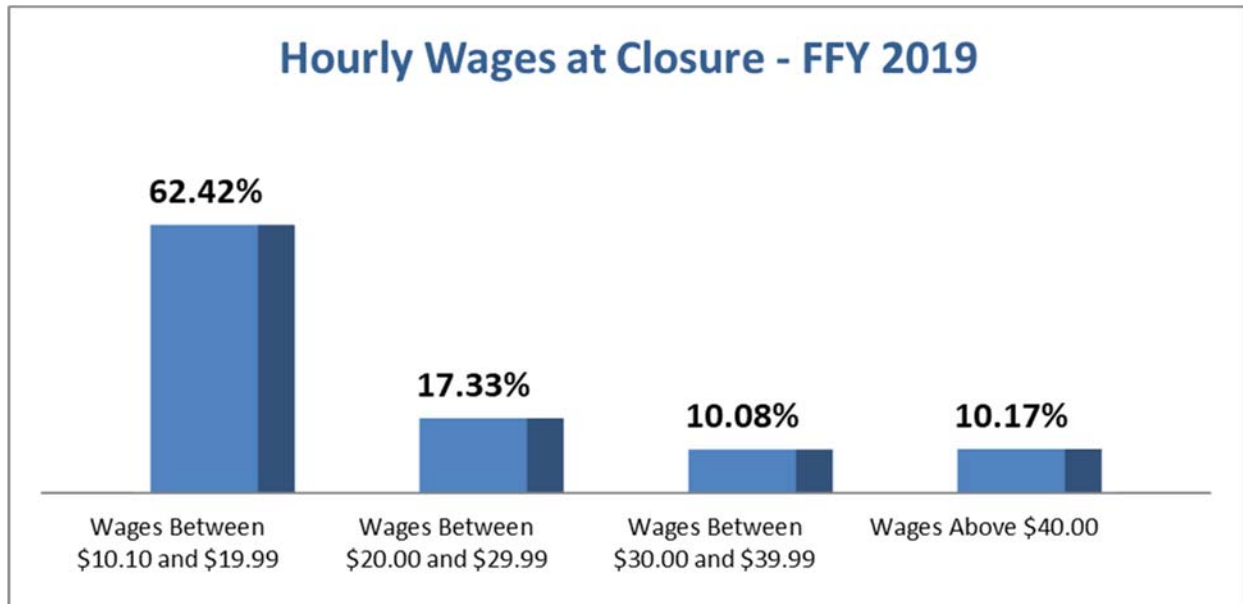
Jobs Acquired or Maintained in Competitive Employment in Federal Fiscal Year 2019



Competitive Employment Federal Fiscal Year 2019

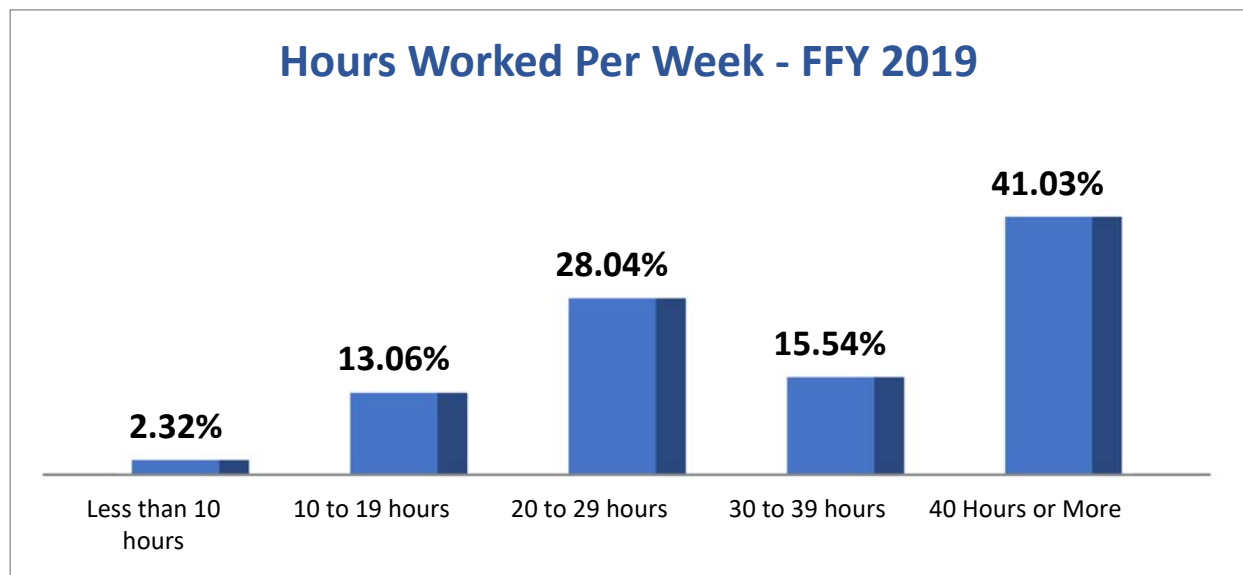
BRS assisted **1,248** job seekers to enter or maintain employment in FFY 2019.

Average Hourly Wages: **\$21.55** Average Annual Salary: **\$38,191.05**

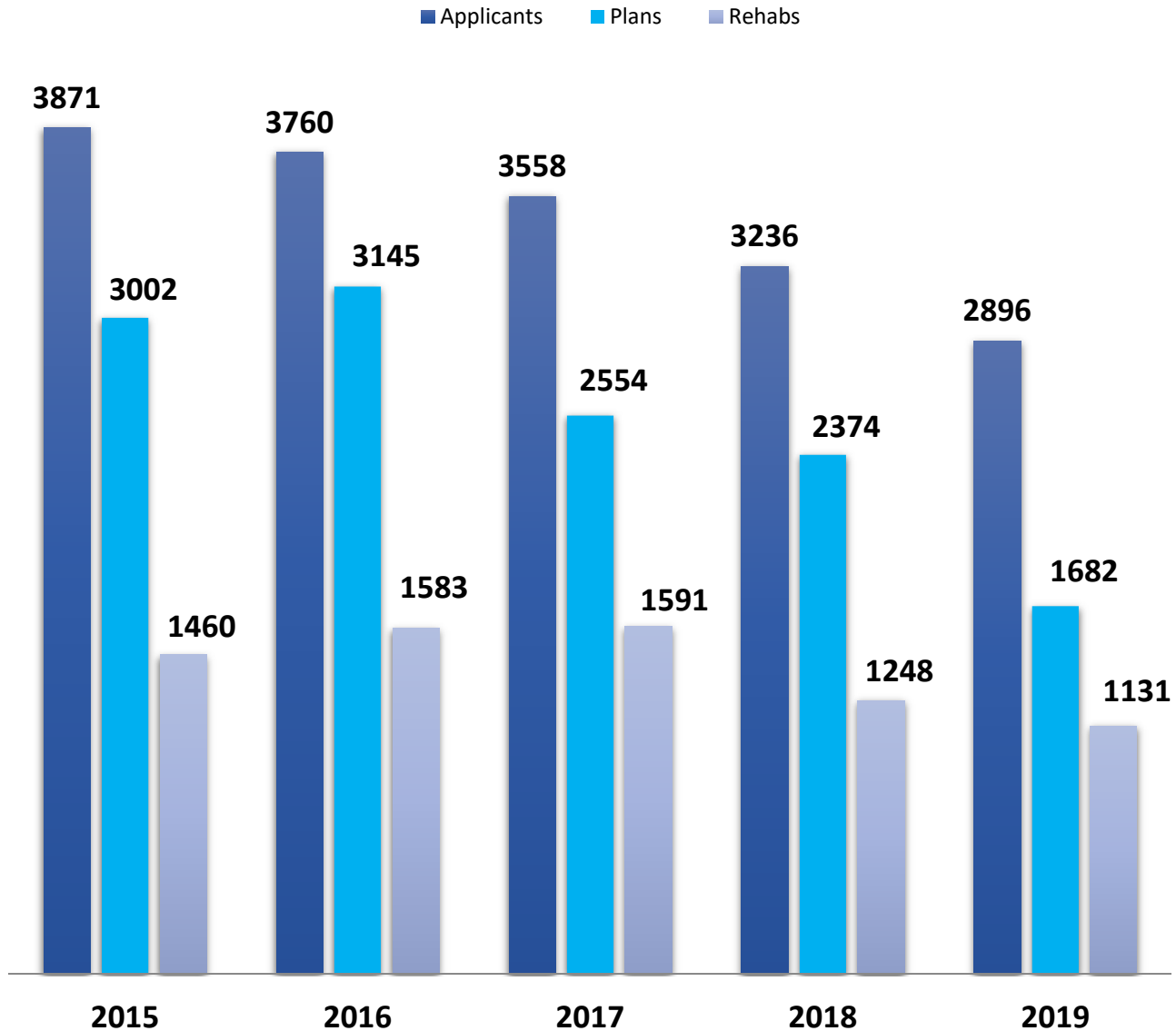


Average # of Hours Per Week
 % of Job Seekers working F/T (>=35hours)
 % of Job Seekers w/ Medical Benefits from Employer

31.31
49.60%
37.49%



Comparison of Applicants, Plans, and Successful Closures Over Last 5 Years - 2015 to 2019



Status	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Applicants	3871	3760	3558	3236	2896
Plans	3002	3145	2554	2374	1682
Rehabs	1460	1583	1591	1248	1131

BRS Office Telephone Numbers

Central Office

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

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

Toll-Free in Connecticut: 800-537-2549

Video Phone: 860-920-7163

Northern Region

184 Windsor Avenue, Windsor, CT 06095

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

Video Phone: 860-920-7171

Local Offices

Danielson: 860-455-1617

East Hartford: 959-200-4400

Manchester: 860-647-5960

New Britain: 860-612-3569

Willimantic: 860-455-1606

Southern Region

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

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

Video Phone: 203-584-9840

Local Offices

Middletown: 860-740-1080

Uncasville/Montville: 860-848-5950

Western Region

1057 Broad Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604

Telephone: 203-683-0500 Fax: 203-579-6903

Video Phone: 203-416-6761

Local Offices

Danbury: 203-702-0152

Stamford: 203-653-1939

Torrington: 860-294-0013

Waterbury: 203-578-4550

Effective December 2019

SRC Members

Officers

Chairperson

Kate Travis

Vice Chairperson

Thomas Boudreau

Treasurer

Gary Prushko

Voting Members

Thomas Boudreau

Vicki Kowaleski

Kristen Lippi

Shannon McCann

Patrick Melfi

Linda Mizzi

Linda Rammler

Beth Reel

Bruce Stoval

Melissa Taylor

Kate Travis

Joe Wendover

Ex-Officio Members

David Doukas

Sean Kennedy

SRC 2020 Meeting Dates

SRC Meeting Dates

- **January 22, 2020**
- **March 18, 2020**
- **May 20, 2020**
- **June 17, 2020**
- **September 16, 2020**
- **November 18, 2020**

With the exception of the January conference call, meeting locations rotate around the BRS offices and will be announced once they are scheduled.

The SRC meetings will occur 1:00pm – 3:30pm and are **open to the public**. Please contact the SRC Liaison to register your attendance and to request accommodations.

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

How to Become a Member of the SRC

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

If you would like to be considered for appointment to the SRC or would like to recommend someone for appointment, please mail or fax the completed SRC application (found on pages 24 and 25), along with a current resume, to the SRC Liaison listed below.

SRC Liaison

Kerri Fradette, SRC Liaison

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

Phone: 860-424-4858
Toll-free: 800-537-2549
Video Phone: 860-920-7163
Fax: 860-424-4850
Email: kerri.fradette@ct.gov
Website: www.ct.gov/brs



State Rehabilitation Council to the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services Application Form



Name of Nominee: _____

Home Address/City/Zip: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Home E-Mail: _____

Employer: _____

Address/City/Zip: _____

Work Telephone: _____ Work E-Mail: _____

Name of the Nominator (if different than nominee): _____

Address/City/Zip: _____

Day Telephone: _____ Day E-Mail: _____

Please identify your race/ethnicity (voluntary).

- African-American* *Asian* *Caucasian* *Other*
- Multi-racial* *Hispanic/Spanish Speaking* *Native American/Alaskan*

The SRC membership must include representatives of the following categories:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Statement of Commitment

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

Signed,

(your name)

(date)

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

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

Last Updated: December 2019

SRC 2019 Annual Report Credits

Statistical Data:

David Johnson, *BRS Consultant*

Editing, Layout Design, and Photos:

Kerri Fradette, *BRS Consultant and SRC Liaison*

Katlyn Williams, *BRS Office Support*

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

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