

2021 Annual Report

Kentucky Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation

in Partnership with Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Diligently Flexible



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Letter from the Executive Director



In March of 2020, many organizations began working and participating remotely because of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). Like many of our colleagues across the nation and in Kentucky, we quickly began to experience challenges in figuring out how to continue providing critical services to individuals with disabilities. A key concern was the safety of consumers and staff during the service delivery process.

Continuing in 2021, we encountered staff shortages, the unavailability of personal protective equipment (PPE), and questions surrounding vaccinations, mask wearing,

technology and virtual platforms. OVR staff's ability to be flexible was tested day after day, week after week and month after month. Everyday brought changes to processes bringing new meaning to the phrase "thinking outside of the box."

As staff had time to adjust to the new reality of the pandemic, they began to problem solve and adjust everyday service delivery processes. They realized we had to do things differently in order to provide critical services to individuals with disabilities. At both centers, staff quickly developed virtual curriculums for remote learning. Administrators worked to provide support to providers and recognized how difficult it was for them to continue delivering services to OVR consumers. OVR leadership recognized how important it was for staff to have the technology and tools needed to operate during the pandemic, but due to the shortage of available resources this is an area that we continue to work on.

There are still many challenges ahead of us as we have not resolved every issue that has risen during the pandemic. I want to recognize all the OVR staff that have weathered the storm and held on through this trial. They have expended a lot of time and effort in supporting individuals with disabilities in many different ways and that is what our theme "diligently flexible" means for the annual report this year. I hope you enjoy reading about the many ways the staff made services work during a pandemic. I want to thank the State Rehabilitation Council for all of their input and support during the past year.

Cora McNabb, Executive Director
Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Letter from the Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation Chair



David Allgood is the chair of the Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation Council (SCVR). He has been the Director for Advocacy for the Center for Accessible Living for 22 years. In 1982, his life changed when David experienced an accident that resulted in a C5-C6 spinal cord injury. After rehabilitation services, he decided to return to school with the help of his supportive family. During his junior year, he applied for services with OVR and later attended the University of Kentucky and earned a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling.

When I wrote the message for the annual report in 2020, I was hoping that our unusual and unique experiences would have subsided somewhat by now. We are now experiencing increasing numbers once again from COVID-19 and we all know that this just exasperates the difficulties that all of you experience in performing your jobs. The Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR) is astutely aware of the challenges that you face every day in your jobs because of this as well as the very challenging job market that we currently face in the U.S. We also understand that staff turnover and retirements are a challenge for OVR staff and can be challenging for all of you. Hopefully, soon all of us will be able to interact in person in order to create more competitive full-time employment opportunities for Kentuckians with disabilities.

The members of the SCVR want all the OVR staff to know how much we appreciate and respect the efforts that you all make to create a more positive and inclusive work environment for the largest minority in the state of Kentucky and in the United States, people with disabilities. If we could ever be of any assistance to any of you, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

David Allgood, Chairperson
Statewide Council of Vocational Rehabilitation

Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation

Kentucky's State Rehabilitation Council, referred to in Kentucky as the Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR), was established under the Kentucky Revised Statutes 163.470 and meets the requirements of 34 CFR 361.29. The SCVR is a valued partner to the OVR, participating in the administration of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The SCVR meets quarterly to review policies, program information, and other pertinent topics. The purpose of the SCVR is to advise OVR on matters such as the delivery of services, the preparation of the state plan, the evaluation of effectiveness and consumer satisfaction with OVR services.

Below is the 2020 SCVR membership:

Member Name	Location	Representing
David Allgood, Chair	Louisville	Business, Industry, and Labor
Joe L. Cowan, Co-Chair	Monticello	Statewide Independent Living Council
Matthew Davis	Bowling Green	Individuals with Disabilities
Philip Donahue	Elizabethtown	Business, Industry, and Labor
Susan Farra	Frankfort	State Educational Agency
Lynn Florence	Louisville	Committee of Blind Vendors
Mary Catherine Jackson	Louisville	National Federation of the Blind
Kelly Knoop	Louisville	Individuals with Disabilities who have difficulty representing themselves
Tyler Levy	Louisville	Consumers of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Amy Luttrell	Louisville	Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
Carla Ruschival	Louisville	Kentucky Council of the Blind
Kellie Smith	Nicholasville	Parent Training and Information Center
Todd Stephens	Ashland	Business, Industry, and Labor
Theresa Thomas	Lexington	Bluegrass Council of the Blind
Christopher White	LaGrange	Community Rehabilitation Programs
Necholyia Wright	Louisville	Business, Industry, and Labor
Cora McNabb	Frankfort	Ex-Officio, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Annual Arthur Campbell, Jr. Advocacy Award

In 2015, the Arthur Campbell, Jr. Advocacy Award was established as an annual award given by SCVR to an individual in the commonwealth who has passionately advocated for the rights and equitable treatment of individuals with disabilities, made a significant difference in the quality of life for all individuals with disabilities, and has championed independent living, full inclusion, and employment for all.

2020 Award Recipient, Tina Jackson



The Arthur Campbell Jr. Advocacy Award for 2020 was presented to Tina Jackson for her tireless and resourceful advocacy for individuals with disabilities. Tina's lifelong passion for advocating for inclusion and services for people with disabilities shines through her career and volunteer work. The retiree from Louisa, Kentucky, was born in 1956 with cerebral palsy, and in 1981, lost her ability to speak as the result of a stroke, but that has not stopped her from advocating or helping others.

"I lived my life as I was taught, to try and bring awareness to disability issues and all minorities in general," she said. "I just happened to be disabled, so my path took that focus."

Tina attended Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVT) and became a strong supporter of the center, even serving on its advisory board. She has served multiple stints on the Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities (CCDD) and through her association with CCDD, became a member of the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities Self Advocate Leadership Circle. Both she and her husband Mark are past members of the SCVR, and she has served on the KATS Network Advisory Council.

Tina has become an effective user of social media to advocate for individuals with disabilities. She started the Facebook group Eastern Kentucky Advocates that frequently post issues of importance to the disability community, such as American Sign Language tips. She has organized fundraising events such as an adaptive-toy drive for children with autism, and the annual Appalachian Bike Tour Scholarship Ride to raise money for college scholarships.

In addition, Tina uses an augmentative communication device to spread her message as a speaker at many events and conferences. She uses every tool and opportunity to raise awareness and educate people about disability issues. Tina said she has been "living a full life despite my limitations, taking on challenges, and educating others on these issues."

Consumer Satisfaction Survey

As part of federal requirements, OVR has collaborated with the University of Kentucky Human Development Institute (HDI) since 1996 to coordinate the annual OVR Consumer Satisfaction Survey. The most recent survey was for completed cases closed between October 2019 – September 2020. Participants randomly were selected. The Evaluation Unit at the HDI emailed and/or telephoned consumers to request participation in the survey between Jan. 17–May 8, 2021. HDI compiled the results and the final report was reviewed by the SCVR Consumer Services and Program Evaluation Committee prior to HDI presenting to the entire council during the July 2021 quarterly meeting.

Results

A total of 539 individuals participated in the survey with responses received from each of the 17 regional districts. The overall statewide consumer satisfaction was 87.5% while the highest satisfaction was reported from the West Blind District (100% satisfaction). For access to the full report visit <https://bit.ly/3B62kLr>.

Highlights from the report include the following:

- regardless of closure status, 87.3% of respondents indicated that services were good or very good.
- overall rating was the highest for those who closed with a Positive Employment Outcome, 95.3% indicated good or very good.
- almost three-fourths of respondents whose cases were closed successfully felt that OVR helped prepare them for their current job.
- 92% of consumers said they would return to OVR in the future.
- 91.2% of consumers who were employed indicated they are satisfied with the kind of work they do.
- 83.1% reported being satisfied with the salary they receive.
- 87.3% reported overall satisfaction with the quality of services as good to very good.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires that a comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) be conducted periodically through a joint effort by OVR and SCVR to help guide the development of Kentucky's annual state plan. The FFY 2020 report was completed by HDI.

The most recent CSNA identified gaps in existing services to assist OVR in determining what programs and policies could be increased or established. Surveys and public forums were utilized to collect information from various stakeholders, consumers and staff across the commonwealth. Below are highlights from the report.

- Counselors indicate that the highest-rated needs are job placement, support services, mental restoration and vocational guidance and counseling.
- The greatest increase in services were for consumers with a mental illness, drug and alcohol use and criminal background.
- Barriers are listed as transportation, job search skills and qualified services providers.
- The highest-rated needs identified are vocational guidance and counseling.

For complete details and results of the assessment, visit the following link:
<https://bit.ly/3C5NwxB>

Agency Statistics

Gender (as reported at application)

- Male: 49.6%
- Female: 50.1%
- Not specified 0.3%

Race/Ethnicity (as reported at application)

- White: 87.1%
- Black: 10.5%
- Others: 2.4%

Disability Type (as reported at application)

- Psychological/Mental: 32.4%
- Cognitive: 23.5%
- Sensory: 26.1%
- Physical: 18.0%

FFY 2021 Purchased Services (not including MOA contracts)

Service	Purchased Amount
Self-Employment	\$35,183.13
Transportation	\$48,708.04
Maintenance	\$119,461.84
Assistive Services	\$186,213.41
Job Placement	\$536,862.50
Other Services	\$554,587.38
Diagnosis and Treatment	\$1,412,551.82
Assessment	\$1,616,340.72
Pre-ETS	\$3,477,212.94
Rehabilitation Technology	\$4,503,772.06
Training	\$10,929,953.18
Sum	\$23,420,847.01

2021 Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes

Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes (CIEO) means full- or part-time (when appropriate) competitive employment in an integrated setting has been achieved. 2,757 individuals with disabilities obtained or maintained employment after receiving services from the OVR in FFY 2021. Below are the highlights for the year.

- As a group, consumers increased their total tax payments by an estimated \$11.48 million.
- Federal income tax payments rose by about \$4.27 million.
- State income tax payments increased by about \$1.78 million.
- Social Security/Medicare tax payments, including employer contributions, rose by about \$5.44 million.

Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes by Standard Occupational Classification

Occupational Group	Number of Cases	Median Hourly Wage
Food Preparation and Serving Related	162	\$9.00
Personal Care and Service	96	\$10.00
Sales and Related	171	\$10.68
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	104	\$11.00
Protective Service	58	\$12.00
Office and Administrative Support	344	\$12.95
Production	194	\$13.42
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	8	\$13.47
Transportation and Material Moving	355	\$13.75
Healthcare Support	82	\$14.00
Community and Social Service	150	\$15.00
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	118	\$16.00
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	36	\$17.00
Construction and Extraction	92	\$17.00
Computer and Mathematical	29	\$18.50
Management	191	\$18.55
Educational Instruction and Library	165	\$18.61
Business and Financial Operations	78	\$19.23
Legal	14	\$20.00
Architecture and Engineering	50	\$25.00
Military Specific	2	\$25.00
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	237	\$25.26
Life, Physical, and Social Science	21	\$25.39

Personal Income and Insurance Benefits

When consumers applied for OVR services, 1,457 (53%) reported that their primary source of support was their personal income with the rest depending upon family or government benefits. At closure, 2,519 (91%) individuals listed personal income as their primary source of support. This is an increase of 1,062 (42%) persons supported by their own income.

Fast Facts

- Average consumer's weekly income increased by 63%.
- Average weekly earnings were \$393.12 at application.
- After employment when their cases were closed, they averaged \$641.05 in earnings per week.
 - This represents an average increase of \$247.93 in weekly income, or \$12,892.36 per year.
- Successful consumers increased their income by an average of almost \$13,000.
- At case closure, 1,699 consumers (62%) were receiving, or eligible to receive, private or employer-sponsored health insurance benefits.

Social Security Updates

In FFY 2021, 490 Social Security recipients obtained employment after receiving services from the OVR. Social Security reimbursed OVR for 238 claims totaling \$2,858,887.27.

Community Engagement

In FFY 2021, OVR purchased \$23,420,847.01 in services for its consumers. These expenditures went to more than 11,122 individuals, businesses, agencies and organizations in communities across the commonwealth.

Looking Forward

Despite all challenges, 2021 has been a successful year for the OVR and the SCVR. The OVR has been flexible, innovative, and continued to do its best to serve those in Kentucky to realize its vision that all Kentuckians with disabilities have an opportunity to be an essential part of Kentucky's workforce and their communities.

We have been diligently flexible while adjusting to the changes 2020 and 2021 have required. Looking forward to 2022, SCVR will continue to work in partnership with OVR to ensure an excellent vocational rehabilitation program for consumers. We will start executing our new strategic plan in FFY 2022 and continue to work to meet our mission to empower Kentuckians with disabilities to maximize independence and economic security through competitive, integrated employment.

The SCVR invites you to attend a quarterly meeting. All SCVR meetings are open to the public. For meeting dates and more information, visit <https://bit.ly/324m9XM>.

The Program Policy and Support Branch

The Program Policy and Support Branch located directly under the executive director has a wide array of responsibilities within the agency and community. They are liaisons to the SCVR, develop and monitor the agency's strategic plan, provide program evaluation, and support the case management system and other technology functions for the agency. This branch coordinates with HDI to complete the Consumer Satisfaction Survey and the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. In addition, this branch oversees other services and provides staff support for the Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation, Kentucky Assistive Technology Services (KATS) Network and Project CARAT (Coordinating and Assisting the Reuse of Assistive Technology). The results for many of the projects and programs supported by this branch are represented in this annual report. For additional information on this branch, visit the following website link:

<https://bit.ly/3BI271t>.

KATS

The KATS Network is one of 56 statewide assistive technology programs federally funded under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended in 2004. The mission of the network is to make assistive technology (AT) information, devices and services easily obtainable for people of any age and/or disability. AT is any item or piece of equipment (both low-tech and high-tech) used to improve and/or maintain independence in the home, at work, school or play. An advisory council provides advice and feedback to ensure that the network maintains a consumer-driven focus to support the mission of the program. The Annual Progress Report for the KATS Network in 2020 is available at the following link:

<https://www.katsnet.org/ffv2020/>.

Project CARAT

The goal of Project Coordinating and Assisting the Reuse of Assistive Technology (CARAT) is to make assistive technology and durable medical equipment (DME) more accessible to people in underserved areas of Kentucky. To make this happen, Project CARAT collaborates with agencies across the state to clean, repair and redistribute donated equipment to people who need it.

There are many reasons a community member might need to access DME through Project CARAT including an inability to afford equipment due to insurance shortcomings, a lack of availability through other channels, and difficulty navigating complex insurance programs.

Project CARAT Results

Center	Location	Distributed Devices	Savings to Consumers
KATS Coordinating Center	Louisville	10	\$12,675.00
CARAT: UK Human Development Institute Center for Assistive Technology Services (CATS)	Lexington	464	\$265,355.66
enTech at Spalding University	Louisville	394	\$81,132.77
CARAT	Paducah	628	\$67,792.27
CARAT: Center for Excellence in Rural Health	Hazard (and satellite sites)	115	\$10,705.96
CARAT: Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center	Thelma	177	\$74,385.00
Redwood Assistive Technology Center	Fort Mitchell	186	\$94,476.98
Wendell Foster Technology and Resource Center	Owensboro	121	\$99,833.86

The total statewide reutilized services distributed during this year 2,095 and the total statewide savings to consumers was \$706,357.43. For additional information on the services and outcomes of Project CARAT, visit the annual report at <https://www.katsnet.org/services/at-reuse/>. For updated stories, current needs for resources and community partnerships, visit the social media page on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ProjectCarat/>.

In 2020, Project CARAT implemented a consumer satisfaction survey. 95% of consumers surveyed reported that they were very satisfied. Demographic feedback indicates that Project CARAT serves a diverse population across Kentucky. For the reporting year, Oct. 1, 2020 – Sept. 30, 2021, non-profit group SOS estimates they donated to Project CARAT 6,125 pounds of equipment valued at approximately \$98,000.

KATS Network and Project CARAT Spotlight

For nearly a decade, Rick Boggess enthusiastically has served with KATS Network council and the council has benefited greatly by knowing and working with him. Born in South Charleston, West Virginia, Rick has been visually impaired all his life. Originally, he had some light perception and could see shadows without any actual recognition but has been completely blind for years.



Rick attended the West Virginia School for the Blind and Fairmont State College (now Fairmont State University) to obtain his bachelor's degree in education. Then in 1977, he attended George Peabody College to work on his master's degree and hired up to 15 student readers to assist him with reading for activities such as library research and taking exams. Since he went college before the days of screen readers and personal computers, Rick had to rely on readers who would work in shifts, picking up where one left off. In 1978, he received his master's degree in special education, specifically for the visually impaired. Within two weeks of his graduation, he had received multiple job offers. Ultimately, he relocated to Owensboro, Kentucky, and worked for the school system for 33 years. During this time, he also got married and had three boys.

Throughout his life, Rick has enjoyed technology. Originally, he majored in business and computer programming. At that time, computers did not have the components that they have today. He had to learn how to work on computers and install items that would benefit visually impaired students. He believes that technology can have a positive impact on all lives, but if you have a disability it can change your life. He loves having all the technology he uses on one device, like his smart phone or iPad.

In 2011, while checking out an iPad in the Owensboro office, Rick learned about the KATS council and began attending workshops and meeting the staff. When a vacancy opened on the council, the staff asked him to join. From his experiences while teaching, he felt that there was a gap between the council's understanding and what individuals with visual disabilities needed. At that time, there was more focus on Mac computers versus other technology more readily available for the visually impaired. On the council, he exchanged information about resources with other members so they could help people with visual impairments while he learned about resources for people with other types of disabilities. KATS meeting locations vary throughout the year, providing members greater insight into how different centers and locations operate.

Rick has been especially impressed with Project CARAT and the redistribution of items to those who cannot afford new things or do not have insurance. In particular, he appreciates the program for hearing aids and one that provides ramps for individuals who suddenly find themselves in need of a way to get into their homes. If not for this program, many consumers would wait months to receive items. He hopes that funding increases for KATS, so people continue to have access to more services and assistive technology.



The Path of a Donation: Donors, Volunteers and Consumers

Project CARAT was approached with an amazing donation of a massive ramp system valued at between \$10,000-\$17,000. The challenge was how to break it down into manageable pieces to transfer it to a refurbish site. JustServe Kentucky, a service to help link community needs with volunteers, stepped in with a team to assist. The team of about 15 people from three congregations of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Louisville. It took about 20 hours to take down sections, remove railing, and use grinder tools on soldered parts.

The ramp system went to a Project CARAT site in Paintsville, Kentucky, and parts have been distributed to four consumers in need. One individual was returning from a rehabilitation facility and could not enter or exit his home without ramps. Insurance would not cover home modification. Project CARAT provided the ramp and his neighbors installed it for him. The second individual needed ramps to assist his wife in and out of their home. He indicated that he had been lifting and pulling her into the home, but due to his own physical condition was becoming less able to move her. Project CARAT provided the ramp which greatly improved this family's mobility. We are so grateful for JustServes investment of time and labor, truly an essential part of Project CARAT's mission to get much needed equipment to those in need.

Division of Kentucky Business Enterprise

The Division of Kentucky Business Enterprise (KBE) is one of the nation's leading vending and food service programs operated by people who are visually impaired or blind. The program trains and places individuals as self-employed operators of snack bars, dining facilities and automated vending facilities in public and private buildings across the state.



This year has been one of rebuilding for both the blind vendors and the staff of KBE. In 2020, KBE vendors saw the office buildings they serve empty of customers, as the majority of staff worked from home because of the COVID-19 pandemic. KBE used this time to do a deep dive into its operations and assess its locations. They found they had new opportunities inside their existing locations with the use of micro markets and enhanced technology.

Over the past federal fiscal year, KBE placed its first micro market in the Romano Mazzoli Federal Building in Louisville with Justin Purvis as the blind vendor manager. Micro markets are an unmanned retail space where individuals can purchase a wide variety of food and beverages, such as fresh and healthy items that are restocked regularly.

These popular additions to employee break rooms can be custom fitted to the size and shape of the area and feature refrigerated cases that offer enticing fresh foods such as salads, sandwiches, beverages, fruit, vegetables and other perishable snacks. They also can feature specialty coffees and dry

goods such as energy bars and frozen treats.

These easy-to-use self-service markets have intuitive self-checkout kiosks. Micro-market kiosks offer a variety of convenient payment options such as fingerprint readers, credit and debit cards and cash.

This first market has exceeded both the vendor's and the agency's expectations, while getting rave reviews from the building's customers for selection and out-of-the-box thinking. The building staff enjoys the ever-changing selection and options that the micro market provides, which are not possible from traditional vending machines.

Due to the success of the first micro market, KBE is in the process of placing three additional markets and expanding the initial location. KBE and vendors understand that their customers' needs and expectations are changing and they are dedicated to meeting those expectations through new and innovative ways like micro markets.

Division of Blind Services

The Division of Blind Services is comprised of specialized staff who provide programs and services to individuals who have visual disabilities. Programming includes McDowell Center for the Blind (training in low vision and blindness skills), Independent Living/Older Individuals who are Blind Program (IL/OIB), Orientation and Mobility Services, Deaf Blind Program, and Bioptic Driving Program.

Due to face-to-face meeting restrictions as a response to the pandemic, staff noted that through virtual services they discovered they could meet with more consumers. The IL/OIB counselors continued to provide services to individuals with a vision impairment to maintain or improve their ability to function independently within homes, communities and workplaces.

Because of the unique nature of a “virtual world,” IL/OIB counselors developed more community partnerships that promoted services, which in turn introduced more eligible individuals to the program. The counselors’ dedicated approach enabled them to serve more individuals than in previous years. These individuals reported a high satisfaction level, even utilizing full-virtual services. This a huge testament to counselors’ dedication and skill.

Kentucky was one of only four states chosen for a learning collaborative with the Institute for Community and Inclusion (ICI). This collaborative will mesh with the work experience at the McDowell Center in providing consumers progressive opportunities with a variety of employers and consisting of everything from a workplace tour to an internship. It also gives employers a better opportunity to learn the capacities and capabilities of consumers. The collaborative provides Kentucky with a state mentor that has been involved for the past four years in the program.

Blind Services Consumer Highlights



PATH Camp is a three-week camp that focuses on Pre-Employment Transition Services with exploration of jobs in the future. PATH Camp was held via Zoom Monday through Friday from July 12-23 for two hours and 30 minutes each day.

Seven students participated in the “superhero” themed program. With guidance from superhero instructors and guest speakers in the blindness community, the students unleashed their own superpowers through daily discussions around how to access, discover and build their abilities to reach their full potential. Guest speaker superheroes shared their personal stories and passed on knowledge of how they developed their own

superpowers. Each instructor and guest had their own superhero secret identity, showcasing specific talents to highlight the various valuable assets a person can bring to their career and daily life.



Every student received a “power pack” before the program began with the tools they needed to participate. They received instruction on the braille alphabet and use of braille and labeling in everyday situations. They learned how to utilize smart devices to assist with time management, including the set-up and use of an Amazon Echo Show device provided to each camper. Students watched videos about kitchen preparation and safety and had homework assignments involving cooking independently or with family. They also learned about the importance of advocacy and assertiveness, identifying their own skills and talents, fostering curiosity and improving listening skills.

Students played trivia and listening games for socialization and critical thinking. Students got to know each other’s interests and personalities and several new friendships were formed between students who live in different parts of the state. On the first day of PATH Camp, students were asked to think about their own skills and abilities and pay attention to new talents that might be revealed over the course of the program. The final project was to reveal their own superhero identity and describe their main superpower, indicating how they use it in their daily lives.

Division of Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTC) is a residential facility in Thelma, Kentucky, that provides educational opportunities and coordinates services as needed with consumers in the area who do not need residential services. To read more about the services provided at CDPVTC, access the brochure at the following: <https://bit.ly/3wsjRwI>.

Mission Statement

The mission of the CDPVTC is that persons will achieve sustainable, competitive, integrated employment, maximize independence, and gain self-respect through the provision of comprehensive services.

Vision Statement

To be the preferred choice for transforming lives through individualized comprehensive services.

The mission and vision of the center is accomplished in the day-to-day success for each student. Some of the services and success stories of the center are outlined below.

Certificates/credentials

The center has issued more than 20 industry credentials including OSHA 10, Industrial Truck Operator's License, Pallet Jack Operator, National Retail Federation Certificate, Through the Customer's Eyes Certificate, and the Basic Certified Custodial Technician.

Student Success Stories



Brittany Hilly

We always enjoy seeing former Perkins Center students achieve new milestones in their careers and lives. Brittany Hilly, a 2016 childcare training graduate, found work just a month after graduating from the center. Since then, her career has taken off as she worked as a teacher of preschool, day care and 12–18-month students at early learning centers in Georgetown, Kentucky. She continues to work and grow as a professional and recently earned her childcare director's credential.



Tim Jones

Tim Jones, a CDPVTC Academic and Life Skills Program of Higher Achievement (ALPHA) participant, is currently pursuing an associate degree at Big Sandy Community and Technical College (BSCTC). A traumatic brain injury survivor, he plans to continue his education as an occupational therapy assistant to work with other individuals who have brain injuries. Tim said he wants to give other people hope at the beginning of their recovery when hope is hard to find. The Shelbyville resident was recently elected as the school's Student Government Association (SGA) president and is on the Dean's List.

Carroll Burchett

Carroll Burchett joined the wellness program in March 2021 to prepare for knee replacement surgery. Following surgery in April 2021 and home therapy, Carroll returned to the wellness program to gain knee range of motion and overall strength. After the surgery, he developed complications and had to return to the hospital twice. Afterwards, Carroll returned to CDPVTC to continue activities to further enhance healing and overall functional mobility, strength and endurance. Carroll attended the program until September 2021, when he returned to his farming and recreational activities without knee pain or fatigue.

Jane Ann Daniels

Jane Ann Daniels suffered a stroke on March 13, 2021, resulting in weakness on the right side of her body. When she began physical, occupational and speech therapy at CDPVTC, she could not walk or perform daily living tasks without assistance and could not work. She also experienced decreased motor and cognitive skills.

Following a few months of treatment at the Perkins Center, she was discharged from speech therapy after meeting all of her motor control and high-level cognitive skills. She can walk without an assistive device, perform daily living tasks without assistance and has returned to work part time.

Jane is continuing therapy to regain fine motor control, normalize her gait pattern, and improve overall strength and conditioning. She plans to return to full-time employment as a small business owner soon.

Students Served

The following table provides the district name along with the number of students served from each area. In addition, 63 students received Certified Vocational Evaluations.

District	Students Served
Ashland	17
Bluegrass	13
Bowling Green	6
Covington	5
Danville	13
East Jefferson	5
Elizabethtown	13
Florence	5
Hazard	6
Lexington	20
Louisville	4
Owensboro	10
Prestonsburg	29
Paducah	16
Somerset	1
Total	163

Virtual Graduation

The saying “the show must go on” became the motto for many Perkins Center events in the 2020-2021 fiscal year. In April 2021, 82 students, family, community members and staff came together for a virtual graduation ceremony to celebrate their important achievement.

Graduation from CDPVTC is always one of the highlights of the year for OVR staff. While the pandemic created an especially difficult hurdle for this important milestone, the staff rallied together to make sure that students had a graduation to receive the recognition and accolades they deserved for reaching their goals.

Technology for Workforce Preparation at CDPVTC



Since the beginning of the pandemic, CDPVTC staff have been working to enhance training areas and offer services virtually. This challenged the center to implement new methods of instruction and develop resources compatible with the ever-changing training needs of the students. One of the more notable new resources at the center is the forklift simulator. The forklift-training program now has a Real-Forklift Premium VR Simulator to aid in the training of its students. The simulator consists of both the physical model and an

Oculus VR headset for an artificial intelligence option. The device and software include:

1. Systematic training covering Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements.
2. OSHA compliant lessons and exercises.
3. Over 30 performance measures to monitor driver behavior.
4. On-the-spot verbal corrections via virtual trainer.
5. Scoring, damage and mistake reports for every session.

Whether in-person or virtual, the center continues to seek new opportunities to support students in pursuit of their goals. This new resource benefits the students and supports future operators in obtaining their goal.

Division of Field Services

Back to the offices!

In May 2021, with extensive safety measures in place, OVR staff excitedly returned to providing in-person services across the commonwealth. Since that time, the Division of Field Services has worked diligently to identify ways that service delivery can be flexible while expediting and maximizing the impact for consumers. Division staff have been adjusting to a hybrid-service delivery model where they provide services both in-person and virtually. Virtual service has been a popular option among many consumers as it allows them to stay home and reduce time off work.

The Division of Field Services supervises all functions that occur within field offices including specialized counseling services for the deaf and hard of hearing, and blind and visual disabilities. In addition, this division houses the ancillary support services to ensure a robust service delivery program. The ancillary support services are supervised by two assistant directors.

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Branch



The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) Branch continues to provide vocational rehabilitation services both virtually and in person to consumers. During this year, DHHS has developed trainings for counselors who serve individuals who are deaf and who have hearing loss. The branch partnered with University of Kentucky Audiology to do presentations on cochlear implants and with Hauser

Institute on the topic of hearing loss and hearing aids. Staff also participated in the Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness, and Amanda Friend, the manager of the branch was honored to be chosen as a presenter. DHHS staff along with other agency staff were trained on the use and implementation of DocuSign and SARA. These programs will enhance consumer engagement and make communications more effective and efficient for consumers and staff alike.

The Employer Services Branch



The Employer Services Branch has found ways to provide services virtually to assist consumers in reaching their employment goals during this year. Nearly 200 consumers have been employed as a direct result of services provided by the branch. In addition, well over 2,000 business and employer contacts have been established. Job placement

specialists participate in business services teams across the state, and in the Louisville area are an integral part of a progressive employment initiative at the McDowell Center. Staff in the branch have participated in a series of trainings, such as Individualized Supports for Autistic Workers (ISAW) offered by HDI.

Transition Services Branch



Transition services became a greater focus when the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was enacted in 2014, because it requires agencies to use 15% of their federal funds towards providing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Pre-ETS are considered the first on a continuum of services designed to ensure students with disabilities explore their employment and career options. As this area

becomes more clearly defined by the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration, OVR continues to pursue new and innovative ways to meet the requirements of the law and fulfil the commitment to transition-age youth.

In 2020, the agency launched a Transition Services Branch with certified rehabilitation counselors with vast field experience in transition services. The agency streamlined transition processes and hired employees for newly created Pre-ETS coordinator positions that are reducing the paperwork burden on field staff.

Coordinators also monitor student progress to help them determine if and when they should apply for OVR services. To ensure compliant, timely and flexible transition services, the branch also offered extensive trainings to local education agencies. The Pre-ETS coordinators work closely with service providers including the Community Work Transition Programs (CWTP), Educational Cooperatives, Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), Kentucky Career and Technical College System (KCTCS), and local Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) to coordinate services to students across the state.

Community Rehabilitation Program Branch



Given the impact of COVID-19, there have been significant concerns about the sustainability of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) throughout the state. As a result, changes were made to long-standing policies concerning payments and fees for support services.

During FY20-21, a total of 91 CRPs provided supported employment services resulting in 471 individuals obtaining successful supported employment outcomes for a minimum of at least 90 days. There were 507 individuals who achieved a minimum of 60 days of successful supported employment outcomes. There were 242 individuals employed through CRP employment and retention services with \$2,245,500 in supported employment expenditures, \$3,729,114 related expenditures for a total of \$8,815,012.

Customized employment continues to be a major focal point as illustrated through the continuation of four contracts with CRPs for services. This endeavor is supported through our partnership with HDI, which provides specialized training opportunities through their affiliation with Marc Gold & Associates. A Memorandum of Agreement was implemented with HDI to assist with fidelity monitoring and technical assistance to Individual Placement and Support (IPS) providers to expand IPS throughout Kentucky. IPS supported employment serves individuals with serious mental illness and/or substance use conditions. The OVR is also working with four new IPS providers to begin services in unserved or underserved areas.

The CRP Branch hired an additional CRP consultant and an assistant increasing the staff to six. As a result, the branch has increased its focus on service capacity and delivery to individuals who are deaf, blind, or deaf blind. This includes CRP training opportunities to better serve these populations.

Ticket to Work

Kentucky OVR has been in the implementation phase of the Ticket Tracker Program and is excited about this being used to its full potential. Currently well over 2,000 consumers have Tickets in use with OVR.

Diversity Team



The mission of the Diversity Team is to create a culturally diverse and inclusive environment for OVR staff, consumers and community partners. The Diversity Team has grown to more than 25 members and includes representatives from OVR, the Personnel Cabinet and the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet. The team has provided valuable feedback on the development of the OVR Strategic Plan, developed a diversity training that has been incorporated into new employee orientation and made available to all staff, and conducted a survey of agency staff that will be used in policy development. The team is currently developing its own strategic plan to achieve its vision and further the mission of the agency.

Assistive Technology Branch

The Assistive Technology Branch helps consumers reach their vocational goals by assessing, recommending and providing appropriate AT solutions and training. More than 700 consumers received agency-purchased equipment and services that helped them to prepare for, gain or maintain employment. Of that number, 254 got assistance with becoming independent drivers, eliminating transportation as a barrier to employment. The agency provided modifications to 64 personal vehicles at a total cost of over \$1,080,778. Repairs and upgrades of current modifications were provided to an additional 34 individuals. A total of 178 consumers were given driver evaluations and 166 received driver's training.

An additional \$698,157 was spent on other types of assistive technology for 493 consumers, including about \$230,747 for 150 individuals with vision impairments. A total of about \$2,339,945 was spent on assistive technology equipment and services for OVR consumers.

Even after face-to-face services returned, many consumers opted for remote assistive technology services. Using tools developed during the pandemic, the staff provided remote assessments, installation and training for individuals attending school. This interactive process allows the branch to streamline services and reach students from more remote areas of the state quickly and effectively.

The branch is always exploring technology and services so consumers can take advantage of remote training. In 2021, the branch obtained a learning management system to improve the training experience for remote learners.

The branch also worked with the KATS Network to present the 17th Annual "Summer AT Workshop" this year. This was the second time in a row that the annual event was held virtually. More than 100 virtual participants were trained in subjects such as wheelchair refurbishing, accessible documents, and augmentative and alternative communication, and had the option of getting continuing education credits for classes.

AT Consumer Spotlight 1:



One notable improvement in AT for those with vision impairments has been the development of wearable aids. While these aids have been around for several years, they are becoming more advanced and more effective for wearers.

The Assistive Technology Branch recently purchased a pair of eSight glasses for a consumer who has advanced macular degeneration and works for a grocery distribution company. She travels to western Kentucky stores to monitor stock, neaten shelves and create reports for her company. As part of her job duties, she scans large areas of shelf space to identify the correct products, narrow in on specific items, and confirm bar code matches. The eSight glasses allow her to keep doing her job because the glasses autofocus very quickly as she moves her head while scanning the shelves. In addition to improvements in focus, these glasses are easy to wear because they are wireless. Without this advanced assistive technology device, she would not be able to perform many of her job duties and keep working.

AT Customer Spotlight 2:

One effect of the coronavirus pandemic has been an influx of work-from-home and telecommuting consumers. Miranda, a 39-year-old woman with a cervical-level spinal cord injury, obtained a job as a work-from-home customer service representative with a credit card company. She lives in a mobile home with her fiancée and three school-aged children. She works weekends because the pay is better, but this means that the mobile home is noisy. Due to her spinal cord injury, Miranda is unable to regulate her body temperature and her mobile home's central air conditioner quit working years ago. Initially, she used a window unit to cool her office, but it is too loud to use during calls. Miranda worked from her wheelchair at a card table used as a makeshift desk, causing muscle and nerve pain in her neck and shoulders.

To help Miranda continue to work and reduce further injury, the Assistive Technology staff created a quieter work environment by insulating the doors in her mobile home and installing a new, quieter window air conditioner. The staff also relieved her neck and shoulder pain by giving her an ergonomic workstation consisting of a desk, monitor arms and a wireless headset. These improvements helped Miranda to keep her job and continue to support her family.

Accessibility Team



Accessible communications would seem to be an area of expertise for agencies working with individuals with disabilities. While the OVR staff uses email daily, and often creates documents, letters and forms to be dispersed to customers, an examination of practices found room for improvement to ensure all communications are accessible.

The Strategic Plan for 2021-2024 contains specific language regarding accessible communications and a commitment to work toward 100% accessibility compliance for all work products created by the agency. To reach that commitment, OVR created an Accessibility Team to review the overall condition of accessible communications and explore policies, procedures and methods to enhance all staff skill sets in this area. In addition, OVR has hired a dedicated staff person to review and assist with accessible communications and plans to increase overall knowledge of this important skillset through staff training. OVR is examining current forms and documents to create a timeline for updating anything not in compliance with standards.

Consumer Success Stories



Amy

In 2002, Amy was hurt in an automobile accident, resulting in a spinal cord injury with paralysis below the waist as well as having her left foot amputated. Amy recalls being found “wrapped around a tree” after the accident.

After rehabilitation, Amy was determined to return to the workforce and applied for OVR services in 2019. OVR supported Amy with a team approach and worked through employment goals, disability benefits, transportation and medical needs, work accommodations, and gaining independence.

As a culmination of her hard work, Amy was hired at an elementary school as an after-school aide. Once employed, Amy’s OVR team obtained and modified a minivan so she did not have to rely on others or public transportation to get to work. Amy named her new van Delilah and took driving lessons to learn how to operate the modified vehicle. Amy is thrilled to have her independence again.

Amy said, “All of our hard work has paid off. I am so thankful and appreciative! I do have the BEST TEAM EVER!”



Joey

Joey Gipson is a 35-year-old male from Union County, Kentucky, living with cerebral palsy and bipolar disorder. He came to the OVR on Aug. 24, 2017 and was accepted for services less than a month later. Joey's long-term goal was supported employment. OVR worked with him on many ways to present himself as well as ways to communicate with others.

Joey obtained a position as a dishwasher, but COVID-19 affected his employment status. Due to mandates, the restaurant only could offer curbside services, so it did not need a dishwasher during that time. While he did not lose his job, it was hard to predict how and when he would return to work. While he was unable to work during the shutdown, Joey obtained his driver's license so he could request services to modify his car. When the restaurant opened back up to in-person dining he was ready to return to work.

Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes (CIEO) by County

Consumer County	PEOs
ADAIR	22
ALLEN	5
ANDERSON	25
BALLARD	1
BARREN	52
BATH	5
BELL	2
BOONE	51
BOURBON	14
BOYD	89
BOYLE	16
BRACKEN	12
BREATHITT	15
BRECKINRIDGE	8
BULLITT	27
BUTLER	23
CALDWELL	5
CALLOWAY	12
CAMPBELL	35
CARLISLE	2
CARROLL	4
CARTER	33
CASEY	4
CHRISTIAN	27
CLARK	35
CLAY	3
CLINTON	3
CRITTENDEN	1

Consumer County	PEOs
CUMBERLAND	3
DAVISS	75
EDMONSON	8
ELLIOTT	9
ESTILL	4
FAYETTE	359
FLEMING	15
FLOYD	56
FRANKLIN	65
FULTON	2
GALLATIN	1
GARRARD	4
GRANT	7
GRAVES	9
GRAYSON	14
GREEN	16
GREENUP	80
HANCOCK	4
HARDIN	34
HARLAN	27
HARRISON	9
HART	4
HENDERSON	19
HENRY	3
HOPKINS	16
JACKSON	3
JEFFERSON	288
JESSAMINE	51

Consumer County	PEOs
JOHNSON	7
KENTON	84
KNOTT	13
KNOX	17
LARUE	5
LAUREL	33
LAWRENCE	7
LEE	2
LESLIE	3
LETCHER	8
LEWIS	12
LINCOLN	14
LIVINGSTON	2
LOGAN	11
LYON	2
MADISON	41
MAGOFFIN	3
MARION	9
MARSHALL	6
MARTIN	6
MASON	25
MCCRACKEN	24
MCCREARY	5
MCLEAN	3
MEADE	12
MENIFEE	7
MERCER	10
METCALFE	19

Consumer County	PEOs
MONROE	11
MONTGOMERY	36
MORGAN	18
MUHLENBERG	13
NELSON	11
NICHOLAS	2
OHIO	10
OLDHAM	26
OWEN	10
OWSLEY	1
PENDLETON	3
PERRY	19

Consumer County	PEOs
PIKE	117
POWELL	14
PULASKI	23
ROBERTSON	1
ROCKCASTLE	7
ROWAN	14
RUSSELL	28
SCOTT	47
SHELBY	14
SIMPSON	5
SPENCER	4
TAYLOR	43

Consumer County	PEOs
TODD	3
TRIMBLE	3
UNION	2
WARREN	71
WASHINGTON	10
WAYNE	2
WEBSTER	4
WHITLEY	13
WOLFE	9
WOODFORD	34
OUT OF STATE	24
TOTAL	2757