

# DARS



# TEXAS

Department of Assistive  
and Rehabilitative Services

PARTNERSHIPS FOR INDEPENDENCE

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# ANNUAL REPORT 2005

# VISION

A Texas where people with disabilities and families with children who have developmental delays enjoy the same opportunities as other Texans to pursue independent and productive lives.

# MISSION

To work in partnership with Texans with disabilities and families with children who have developmental delays to improve the quality of their lives and to enable their full participation in society.



Department of Assistive  
and Rehabilitative Services

## Commissioner's Comments Terrell I. Murphy, Commissioner

Since being appointed as the Commissioner of the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), I've traveled around Texas meeting employees, stakeholders and consumers and working with our legislators on disability policy. Each day I am reminded and inspired by the words of Helen Keller who said, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

Ms. Keller's simple but profound observation is more than words on paper. It is a philosophy that is alive and in motion at DARS. In an atmosphere that values collaboration and innovation, DARS focuses on creating partnerships for independence, and these exciting opportunities are already working to benefit Texans who use our services. It truly has been a most exciting time in my career in public service, and it is an honor to be this department's first commissioner.

Shortly after DARS was created on March 1, 2004, our staff quickly responded to the concerns of Texans who are deaf, deaf-blind or hard of hearing. Through public hearings, this large group of consumers made clear that services for them had been under-funded for many years. The new DARS culture encouraged staff and stakeholders to work together with unprecedented flexibility and authority to find solutions. Today, the result is a valuable partnership that locates the new Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services within the DARS Division for Rehabilitation Services.

DARS' partnerships extend to our stakeholders with whom we worked closely during the 79th Legislative session to enhance programs and increase funding for Texans with disabilities. With the help of the Traumatic Brain Injury Association of Texas, DARS worked with legislators to restore funding to the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Fund, which provides services to people who have sustained a traumatic brain or spinal cord injury.

DARS also partnered with the National Federation of the Blind to ensure that their audio newspaper service, Newline, was fully funded.

These are just a few examples of the good work being done throughout the state by DARS staff, stakeholders and legislators. As you read through this first Annual Report, you will learn more about the divisions and the diverse array of programs and services administered by the department. It is my hope that you will see that DARS is more than a state agency. The department represents a renewed commitment to working together effectively and efficiently for the good of all Texans.

Disability is a natural part of the human experience. By creating partnerships for independence, we enrich our lives and our state.



Terrell I. Murphy, Commissioner, Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services

## JANUARY

2006

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## TERRELL I. MURPHY PROFILE

Terry Murphy was appointed commissioner of the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) in December, 2003. Before his appointment, Commissioner Murphy served more than three decades at the Texas Commission for the Blind. In addition to his distinguished career in public service, Commissioner Murphy is a proud veteran who was awarded three Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart during his service in Vietnam. He is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin.

# DARS



## Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services

# OVERVIEW

The Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, or DARS, administers programs that ensure Texas is a state where people with disabilities, and children who have developmental delays, enjoy the same opportunities as other Texans to live independent and productive lives.

The department has four divisions:

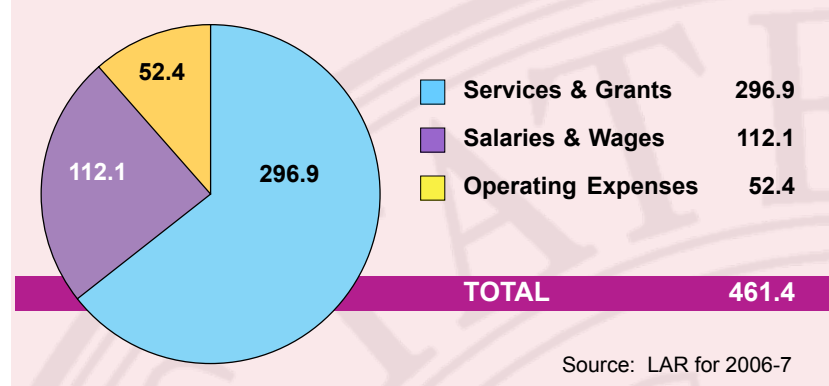
- Rehabilitation Services
- Blind Services
- Early Childhood Intervention Services
- Disability Determination Services

Through these divisions, DARS administers programs that help Texans with disabilities find jobs through vocational rehabilitation, ensure that Texans with disabilities live independently in their communities and prepare children with disabilities and developmental delays to meet education goals.

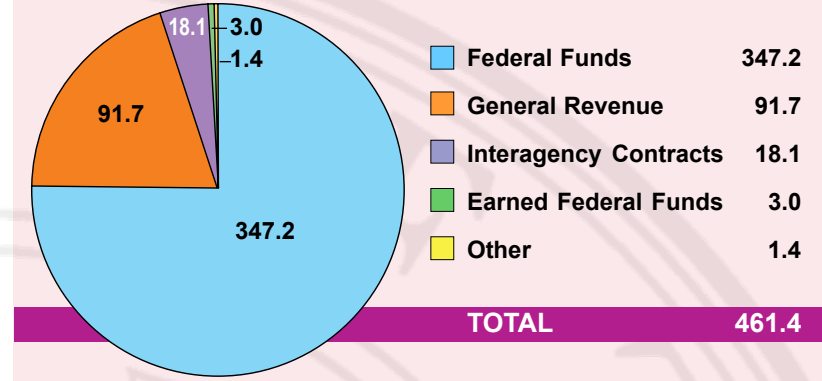
It is a fundamental value of DARS to listen, to learn, and to be responsive to our stakeholders and our consumers in an ongoing effort to make programs and services even better. If you have suggestions or comments, please call the **DARS Inquiries Unit** at **1-800-628-5115**, or email **[DARS.Inquiries@dars.state.tx.us](mailto:DARS.Inquiries@dars.state.tx.us)**.



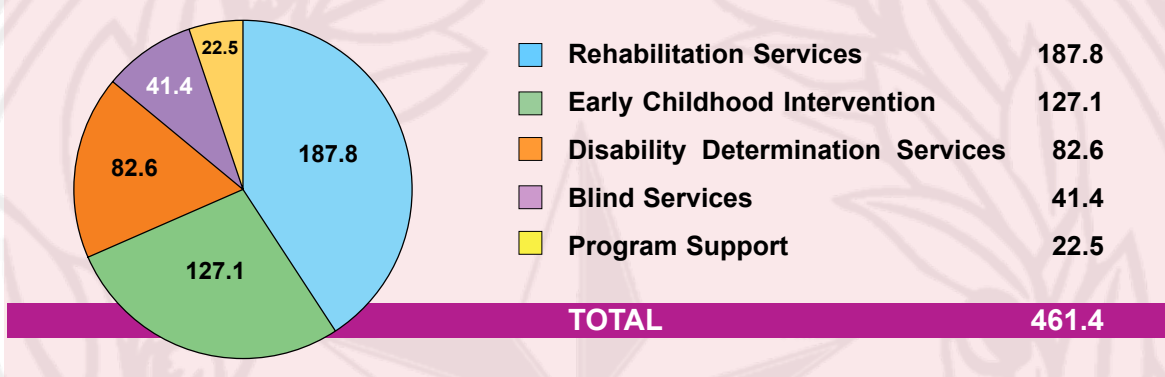
### EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY SFY 2005 Million \$



### METHOD OF FINANCE SFY 2005 Million \$



### BUDGET BY DIVISION SFY 2005



FEBRUARY

2006

ANNUAL REPORT 2005

DARS

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## AT A GLANCE

DARS is composed of four divisions focused on people with disabilities and children with developmental delays. The department includes the Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS), the Division for Blind Services (DBS), the Division for Disability Determination Services (DDS) and the Division for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI).

# DARS



## Division for Rehabilitation Services

# OVERVIEW

The DARS Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is designated as the state's principal authority on the vocational rehabilitation of Texans with disabilities, except persons with visual impairments and the legally blind. DRS assists people with disabilities to participate in their communities by achieving employment of choice, living as independently as possible, and accessing high quality services through the following programs:

- Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR)
- Independent Living Centers (ILCs)
- Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services (CRS)
- Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS)
- Independent Living Services (ILS)

DRS has the following personnel available to meet the needs of the division's consumers:

- 519 Counselors
- 50 Area Managers
- 519 Rehabilitation Services Technicians
- 234 other Field Operations Managers, Specialists, and Support Staff

DRS staff is located in Central Office in Austin, five regional offices and 125 field offices located throughout Texas. The Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT), which is federally mandated by the Rehabilitation Act, joins in a partnership with DRS to review, analyze, and advise DRS on policy and the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services and eligibility requirements. The RCT also contributes to the preparation of the DRS State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation.

For more information about DRS programs and services, call the DARS Inquiries Unit at **1-800-628-5115**, or visit the DARS website at [www.dars.state.tx.us](http://www.dars.state.tx.us) and select Division for Rehabilitation Services.



# PROGRAMS

- **The Vocational Rehabilitation Program** helps people with disabilities prepare for, find and keep jobs. Services are individualized and may include counseling, training, medical treatment, assistive devices, job placement assistance, and other services. Supported Employment serves consumers who need ongoing support to maintain competitive employment.
- **The Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS)** works in partnership with people who are deaf or hard of hearing to

eliminate barriers and improve equal access for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. DHHS advocates for people of all ages who are deaf or hard of hearing to enable them to express their freedoms, participate in society to their individual potential, and reduce their isolation regardless of location, socioeconomic status, or degree of disability.

- **Independent Living Services and Independent Living Centers** concentrate on self-sufficiency and quality of life, even if work potential is limited. ILCs and ILS promote

self-sufficiency despite significant disability by providing people with improved mobility, communication, personal adjustment and self-direction. ILCs are operated throughout the state to provide assistance through peer counseling, information and referral, advocacy support and other services.

- **The Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services Program** assists persons with spinal cord and brain injuries by providing intensive therapies to increase independence.

MARCH

2006

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DRS

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## MISSION STATEMENT

### Division for Rehabilitation Services

To work in partnership with Texans with disabilities to assist them in achieving their employment goals and living independently.

# DARS



## Division for Rehabilitation Services

# CONSUMER STORY

### The Path to Independence

Corina Cruz is thirty years old with three young children living in Laredo, Texas. She had been receiving Social Security Disability Insurance for some time due to her disability of deafness.

She communicates using sign language; and applied with the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services for vocational rehabilitation in order to better herself by preparing for a job.

Ms. Cruz received a comprehensive assessment, counseling, guidance, books, interpreter services, supported employment services, job placement assistance, and job coaching.

Through vocational rehabilitation services, Ms. Cruz was able to complete a training program that led to a Certificate in Office Systems Technology. Ms. Cruz was successfully placed in a competitive employment setting without support.

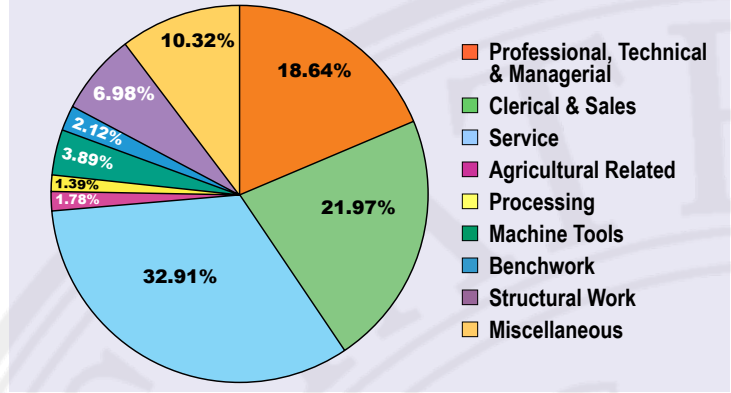
Today, Ms. Cruz lives independently and is able to provide for her three children. She is employed by the Laredo Independent School District and is enrolled in school to pursue an Associate's Degree in Applied Science in Office Systems Technology-Administrative and Secretarial Services.

Thus far, she has completed 45 hours of the 75 hours required to obtain her degree.

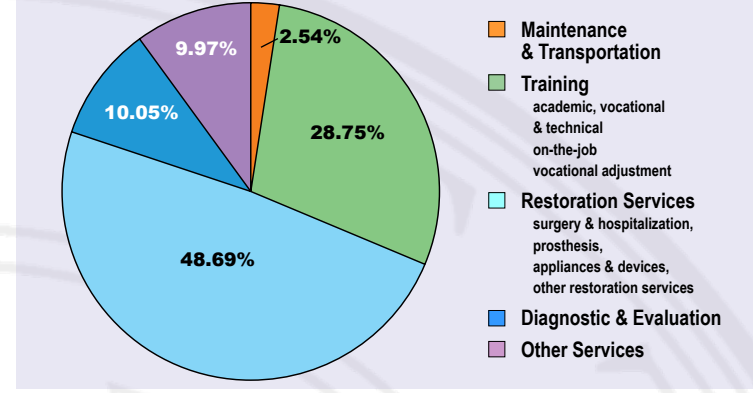
Recently, Ms. Cruz was recognized for her hard work. During the ceremony she was asked to say a few words.

"Thanks to Mr. Garza (Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor) and DARS, I now have a job," Ms. Cruz said through an interpreter. "I am very happy to be working. Thank you everyone at DARS for helping my family and me."

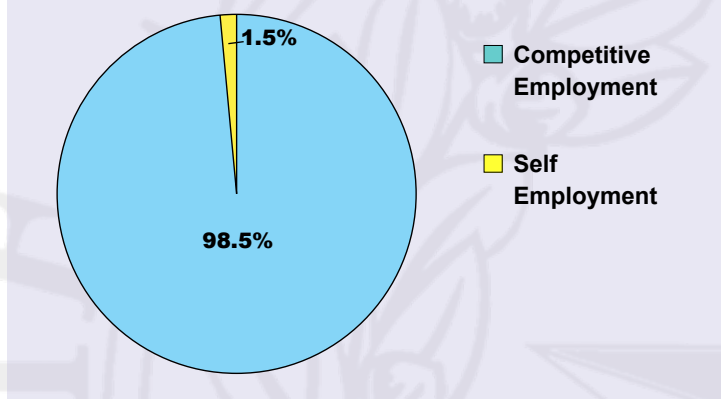
**SUCCESSFUL CLOSURES BY OCCUPATION SFY 2005**



**SERVICES PURCHASED FOR VR CONSUMERS SFY 2005**



**VR EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES SFY 2005**



**ELIGIBLE SERVED BY PRIMARY DISABILITY IN VR PROGRAM SFY 2005**

Primary Disability	COUNT	PERCENT
Musculo-skeletal	21,869	28.65
Substance Abuse	4,973	6.51
Deaf & Hard of Hearing	6,201	8.12
Mental/Emotional	14,229	18.64
Cardiac/Respiratory/Circulatory	1,464	1.92
Cognitive	11,883	15.57
Neurological	3,145	4.12
Traumatic Brain/Spinal Cord Injury	2,248	2.94
Other Impairments	10,325	13.53
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76,337</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**APRIL**

**2006**

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**DRS**

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**AT A GLANCE**

For every dollar spent on vocational rehabilitation, consumers generate more than \$13 in personal taxable income through the remainder of their work lives. By retirement, the average rehabilitated consumer will have repaid the cost of services at least seven times through taxes paid. Eligible consumers served in SFY 2005 total 76,337, and successfully rehabilitated consumers total 14,563.

# DARS



## Division for Blind Services

# OVERVIEW

The DARS Division for Blind Services (DBS) assists individuals of all ages who are blind or visually impaired and their families. Depending upon their goals and needs, DBS offers services to help Texans live independently and participate fully in community life, find a high quality job, or receive the training needed to be successful in school and beyond.

In a society designed by sighted people for sighted people, barriers are inadvertently created for people who are without sight. To overcome these barriers, a person who is blind or severely visually impaired must have specialized adaptive skills and a high level of personal confidence. An extensive continuum of services and an effective partnership between the consumer and DBS are the keys to successfully acquiring these skills and bolstering personal confidence.

No person's rehabilitation plan is the same as another's, and DBS strives to ensure that each rehabilitation program is tailored to fit the needs of the consumer. Services must be matched to the consumer's choices, skills, aptitudes, and capabilities to assure better success.

The Division for Blind Services envisions a Texas where people who are blind or visually impaired enjoy the same opportunities as other Texans to pursue independence and employment.

For more information about DBS programs and services, call the DARS Inquiries Unit at **1-800-628-5115** or visit the DARS website at [www.dars.state.tx.us](http://www.dars.state.tx.us) and select Division for Blind Services.

# PROGRAMS

- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program** is designed for adults whose visual condition limits their ability to begin or continue work. Program services may include counseling and guidance, physical or mental restoration, vocational diagnostics, vocational and adaptive skills training, adjustment to blindness services, orientation and mobility training, braille skills, services to individuals who are deaf-blind, Transition Program services to provide educational and career guidance to youths and young adults, assistive technology and employment assistance services, supported employment services, and assistance in obtaining employment.
- The Business Enterprises of Texas (BET)** program is a federally sponsored, state-administered program that provides food management opportunities for Texans who are blind or visually impaired.
- The Independent Living Program** assists adults who are blind or visually impaired to learn adaptive skills to continue to live independently and confidently with vision loss.
- The Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC)**, located in Austin, is a residential program that offers intensive training in basic blindness skills to Texans who are blind.
- The Blind Children's Vocational Discovery and Development Program** assists children who are blind or visually impaired to develop their individual potential. Specialized services reduce the impact of vision impairment on the child's social, emotional, physical, educational, and vocational development.
- The Blindness Education, Screening and Treatment Program (BEST)** works to help Texans keep their vision healthy. The intent of the BEST program is to prevent blindness. This program is funded with voluntary donations when Texans renew their drivers' licenses.

MAY

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DBS

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## MISSION STATEMENT

### Division for Blind Services

To work in partnership with Texans who are blind or visually impaired to reach their goals.



# DARS



## Division for Blind Services

# CONSUMER STORY

### Achieving Through Education

William Sickler is thirty-three years old. He graduated from the University of Texas-San Antonio in December of 2003 with a Bachelor's Degree in Information Systems, and he's currently working towards a Master's Degree in the same field.

Mr. Sickler began losing his eyesight in 1995 due to diabetic retinopathy. By 1997 he had permanently lost his sight and was no longer able to continue working as a manager at a local amusement park. When he contacted the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services-Division for Blind Services

(DBS) for assistance, his vocational rehabilitation counselor explored several vocational options with him. Mr. Sickler decided to pursue a college degree and enrolled in San Antonio Community College.

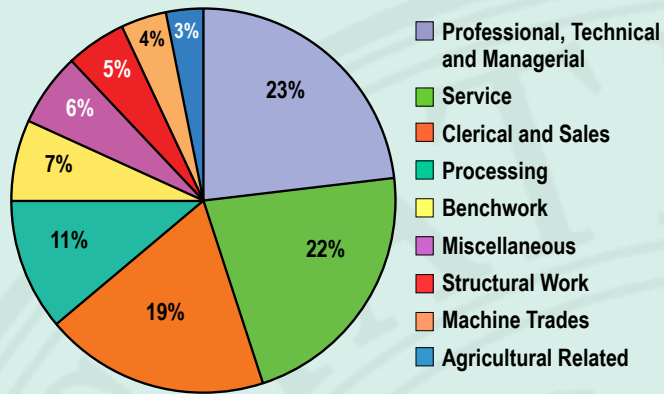
Vocational rehabilitation services, orientation and mobility training, rehabilitation teacher services, employment assistance services, and assistive technology equipment and training provided by DBS helped Mr. Sickler achieve his goal of graduating from college. He did well academically and enjoyed the experience so much that he now is

applying to graduate school to further his studies. In the meantime, he has secured employment with General Dynamics Company and is currently using his newly acquired computer skills in his position as a web developer under contract to Brooks Air Force Base in San Antonio.

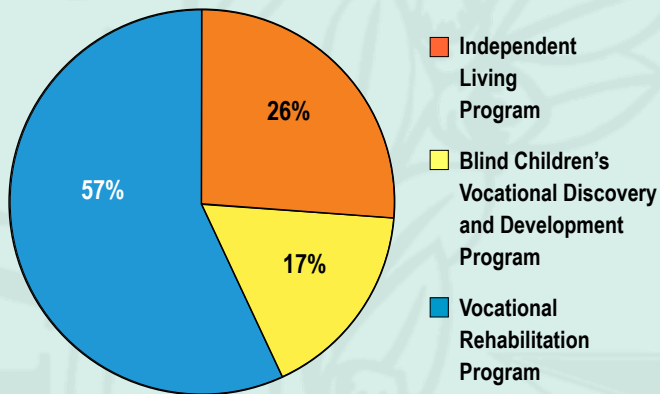
Mr. Sickler's contributions have been an inspiration to others. "Everybody thinks that if they have an employee who is impaired that they are not functional or reliable," Mr. Sickler's supervisor says. "But I have such confidence in William that he has full control of our Internet pages."



## VR EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES SFY 2005

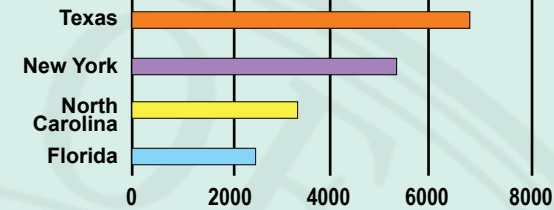


## PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SERVED SFY 2005

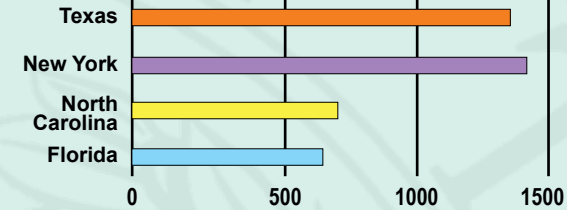


## BLIND SERVICES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

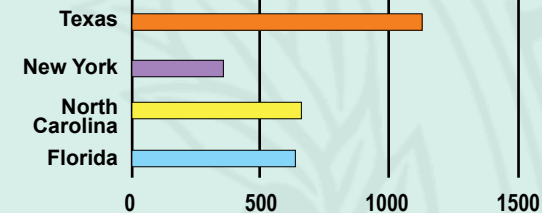
### CONSUMERS RECEIVING PLANNED SERVICES \*



### CONSUMERS CLOSED SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED \*



### NUMBER OF CLOSURES AT/ABOVE FEDERAL MINIMUM WAGE \*



\* Based on FFY 2004 reports. May not match state fiscal year numbers.

JUNE

2006

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DBS

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## AT A GLANCE

- From a DBS Transition Program consumer:  
"Transition services assisted me in finding my way to independence and a future."
- From Joe McNulty, Director of Helen Keller National Center for Deafblind Youths and Adults:  
"If you want to see how it's done right, look at Deafblind Services in Texas."
- From a DBS VR Program consumer:  
"At CCRC, I learned that my life was not over and that there is a world of opportunity out there as long as I am willing to work for it."

# DARS



## Division for Early Childhood Intervention Services

# OVERVIEW

DARS Division for Early Childhood Intervention Services coordinates a statewide system of early childhood intervention (ECI) services for families of infants and toddlers, birth to age three, with disabilities or delays. ECI provides services through contracts with local community agencies and organizations. These include mental health/mental retardation community centers, school districts, education service centers, and private non-profit organizations.

Eligibility is determined by a team of professionals, and the family. Children are eligible for ECI services if they meet one of the following criteria:

- **Developmental delay:** Children with delays in one or more areas of development (cognitive, motor, communication, social-emotional or self-help skills).
- **Atypical development:** Children who demonstrate age-appropriate skills but whose patterns of development are different from their peers, such as a child with problematic social patterns.
- **Medically diagnosed conditions:** Children who have medically diagnosed conditions such as Down syndrome or spina bifida.

ECI services are funded through federal, state, and local funds, Medicaid, private insurance, and a family cost share system.

To make a referral or for more information, call the ECI Care Line at [1-800-250-2246](tel:1-800-250-2246) or the DARS Inquiry Unit at [1-800-628-5115](tel:1-800-628-5115), or visit the DARS website at [www.dars.state.tx.us](http://www.dars.state.tx.us) and select Early Childhood Intervention Services.

# ECI SERVICES

- **Referral**

Most ECI referrals come from the medical community or directly from families. Other referral sources are Child Protective Services, child care centers, and social service agencies.

- **Individualized Planning Process**

In the family's home, an interdisciplinary team conducts comprehensive evaluations and assessments to determine eligibility and plan services.

- **Comprehensive Services**

Services may include: family education and support; audiology and vision services; nursing and nutrition

services; and physical, occupational and speech-language therapies.

ECI teams help families and caregivers learn how to promote development in daily lives and routines.

- **Service Coordination**

ECI service coordinators seek community services for the child and family; coordinate services received from other agencies; and monitor service provision.

- **Home and Community Settings**

Services are provided where babies and toddlers learn best, in their homes and other familiar places.

- **Licensed or Credentialed Professionals Provide Services**

Licensed speech language pathologists; physical and occupational therapists; psychologists; registered nurses; registered dietitians; social workers and counselors; and early intervention specialists (EISs) are part of ECI teams.

- **Beyond ECI**

As children near age three, when ECI stops providing services, the team (including the family) reviews options and decides on the next step, which may include public school services, preschool services, Head Start, child care centers, or others.

**JULY**

**2006**

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**ECI**

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## MISSION STATEMENT

**Division for Early Childhood Intervention Services**

ECI assures that families with young children with developmental delays have the resources and supports they need to reach their goals.

# DARS



## Division for Early Childhood Intervention Services

# CONSUMER STORY

### Living a Normal Life

As a nurse, Chris Simon saw children with developmental delays and conditions like Down syndrome when she worked in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and in pediatric clinics. So when she gave birth to Andre, a child with Down syndrome, she thought she was prepared. But it's different when you are the mother and it's your child.

A NICU social worker arranged for the nearest Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Program to contact the Simons. Andre's physical and speech therapist, and early intervention specialist, came to his home and child care program.

"Nothing seemed like treatment," Ms. Simon explained. "They gave us the confidence we needed to incorporate Andre's needs into our everyday life."

ECI staff also helped Ms. Simon and her husband transition Andre into Public School Early Childhood Education on his third birthday. The staff members attended meetings with the school district and talked with teachers about how Andre was performing at home and in child care.

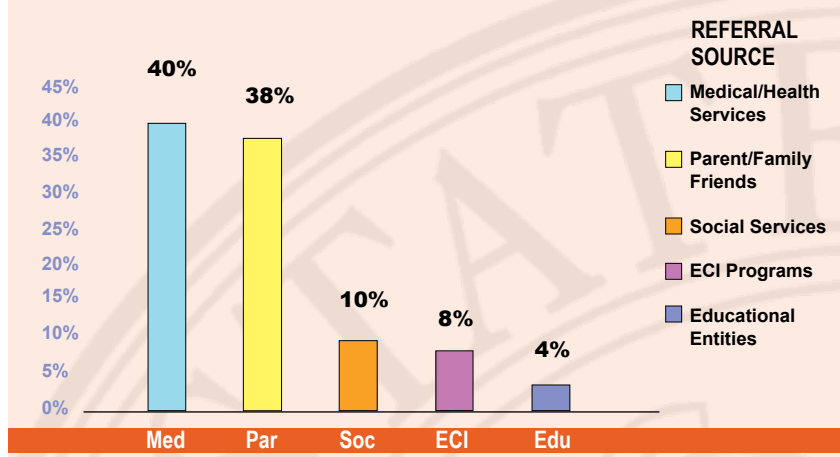
"Andre is doing great now," Ms. Simon said. "He is fully included in regular first grade classes, without an aide.

He gets extra help in reading and math from the resource teacher and is getting excited about starting soccer in the fall."

Having Andre has changed her as a nurse, Ms. Simon explained. "Before Andre, I'd shy away from parents who were going to have kids with disabilities or conditions like Down syndrome. Now, I seek them out and talk to them about how it will change their lives in some ways and not in others. It makes a big difference to them to see a nurse who lives with a child with Down syndrome every day. It helps them see that they can lead a normal life even though they have a child with a disability."

## SOURCES OF REFERRALS TO ECI SERVICES

SFY 2005

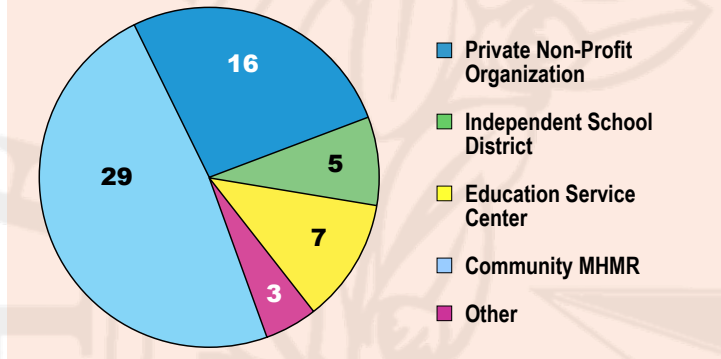


## REASONS FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILDREN ENROLLED IN ECI SFY 2004

BASIS FOR ELIGIBILITY	PERCENT
Medical Diagnosis	11
Of those with medically diagnosed condition:	
Chromosomal Anomalies	32
Disorders of the Nervous System	16
Congenital Anomalies - Brain/Spinal Cord	14
Symptoms and Ill-Defined Conditions	12
Congenital Anomalies - Facial Clefts	9
Conditions Originating in Perinatal Period	6
Congenital Anomalies - Musculoskeletal	5
Developmental Delay	74
Atypical Development	15

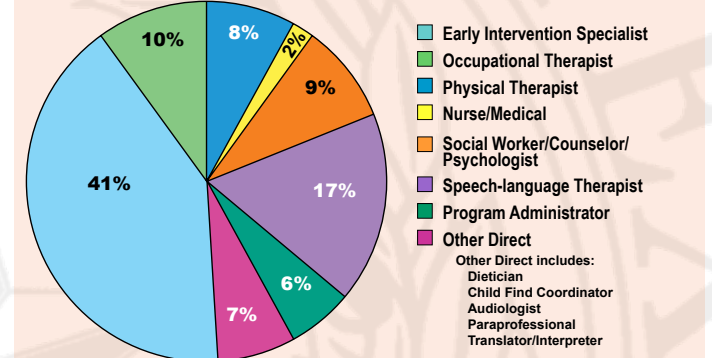
33% of children have delays in more than one area.

## NUMBER OF ECI PROGRAMS BY AFFILIATION SFY 2005



Local agency affiliation

## TYPES OF ECI DIRECT SERVICE PERSONNEL (PERCENT FTEs)



Source: Funding applications, submitted SFY 2005

AUGUST

2006

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ECI

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# AT A GLANCE

Since the initiating legislation in 1981, more than 350,000 children and families in Texas have received ECI services.



# DARS



## Division for Disability Determination Services

# OVERVIEW

The DARS Division for Disability Determination Services (DDS), funded entirely through the Social Security Administration (SSA), makes disability determinations for Texans with severe disabilities who apply for Social Security Disability Insurance and/or Supplemental Security Income. Texans with physical and/or mental impairments apply for benefits at their local Social Security Administration (SSA) field office and their applications are forwarded to the division for a disability determination. SSA, however, is responsible for making final decisions as to whether or not a person is eligible to receive benefits.

This DARS division is responsible for developing medical evidence and making the determination on whether or not a claimant is disabled under the law. Usually, the division first tries to obtain evidence from the claimant's own medical sources. If that evidence is unavailable or insufficient to make a determination, arrangements will be made for a consultative examination (CE) to obtain the additional information needed. After completing its development of the evidence, trained staff makes the disability determination and returns the case to the field office for appropriate action. If the staff determine that the claimant is disabled, SSA completes an eligibility determination, computes the benefit amount, and begins paying benefits. If the claimant was found not disabled, the file is kept in the field office in case the claimant decides to appeal the determination.

To apply for disability benefits, call the Social Security Administration at **1-800-772-1213** or visit their website at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) to learn more about the application process for disability benefits. If you already have filed a disability claim with Social Security, you may contact the DARS Division for Disability Determination Services at **512-437-8000** or **1-800-252-7009** for information or questions concerning your claim.



# PROGRAMS

The Social Security Administration (SSA) administers two disability programs which pay cash benefits and provide medical coverage to people who are unable to work because of severe physical or mental impairments. They are designed to replace part of the income lost if a person becomes disabled. Many people are qualified to apply for both of these programs. Regardless of the program, DDS will make the disability determination for SSA but only SSA can determine who is eligible to receive benefits.

- **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)** is related to *work*. A person earns coverage for themselves and family members by paying Social Security tax.

The program covers workers age 18 – 65 who are disabled, disabled widows/widowers and disabled adult children of workers.

- **Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)** continued: Claimants must wait five months from onset of disability before getting their first check; they must wait 24 months after first check before Medicare starts.

- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** is related to *means* - what a person has or owns. A person who does not own much or have much income may be able to qualify for this program. SSI covers adults 18 – 65 years of age and children new born to age 18. There is no waiting period for benefits to start; Medicaid begins with the first check.

**SEPTEMBER**

**2006**

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**DDS**

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## MISSION STATEMENT

### Division for Disability Determination Services

To improve the quality of life for Texans with disabilities who apply for or receive SSA disability benefits, by making timely and accurate disability determinations.

# DARS



## Division for Disability Determination Services

# Going Paperless

Imagine a world without paper. That is the vision of the Social Security Administration (SSA) as it transitions throughout the country from a paper disability folder to one that is entirely electronic.

Any visitor to this DARS division is immediately impressed with the tremendous number of disability claims folders being maintained in the building. On any given day there are approximately 50,000 files pending action. Each day more than 1,000 new case folders are received from Social Security field offices and each day an equal number of completed files are returned to SSA. These claims folders contain large amounts of medical reports ranging from one to several hundred pages in length.

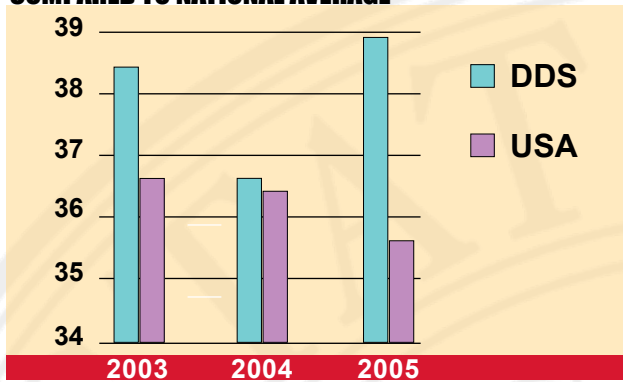
The thickness of folders is measured in inches and the total number of pages of paper is staggering.

Beginning in late 2004, the Division for Disability Determination Services began a year-long rollout process that will culminate in most initial disability claims folders being received, maintained and transmitted in an electronic environment. Instead of receiving countless pages of medical reports, scanned electronic images will be available for viewing on a computer screen. Instead of boxing up and mailing paper folders to SSA field offices, files will be transmitted electronically at the touch of a button. The savings in postage and mail time will be significant.

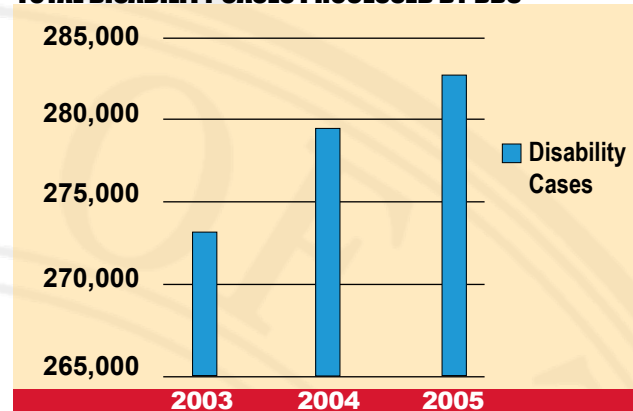
For the staff this has been, and continues to be a major activity. Working with SSA experts, computer systems have been upgraded, countless hours of testing performed and training plans formulated.

Instrumental in making this happen has been a twenty person workgroup each of whom was recognized with a prestigious SSA Commissioner's Citation for their efforts. The result will be a much more efficient system to provide timely, accurate and cost-effective Social Security disability determinations for the citizens of Texas.

**PERCENT OF INITIAL DISABILITY CASES ALLOWED COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGE**

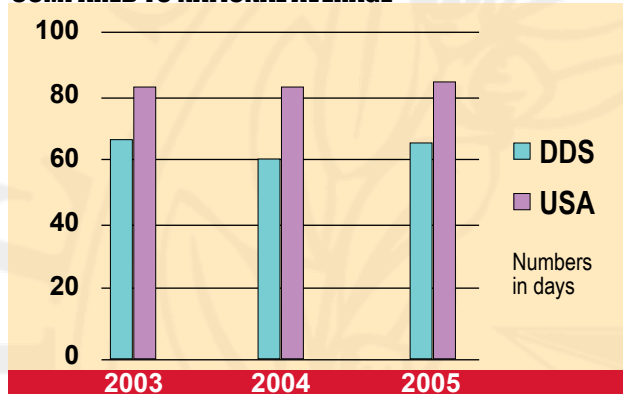


**TOTAL DISABILITY CASES PROCESSED BY DDS**



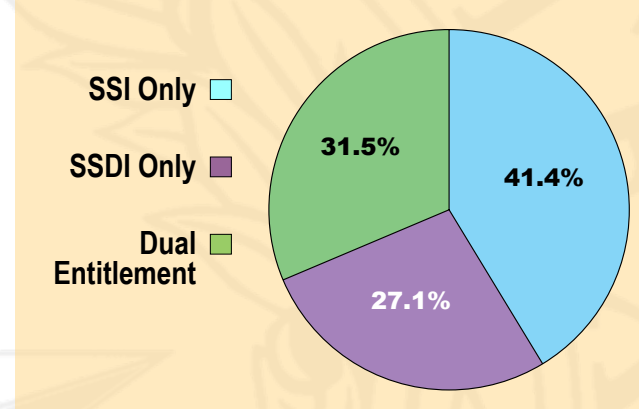
All DDS data is for the Federal Fiscal Year, October-September

**DDS AVERAGE INITIAL CASE PROCESSING TIME COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGE**



**TYPES OF DISABILITY CASES RECEIVED**

FFY 2005



**OCTOBER**

**2006**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2005**

**DDS**

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**AT A GLANCE**

- Texans receive \$430 million each month in Social Security disability benefits.
- This year the DDS received the Social Security Commissioner's Citation for outstanding performance.
- The Texas DDS is the largest centralized DDS in the United States.
- On an average day the DDS receives over 6,000 pieces of mail, 1,100 disability cases and 2,200 pages of faxes.

# DARS



## Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services

# MANAGEMENT TEAM

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# EXECUTIVE SUPPORT

## Center for Consumer and External Affairs: Glenn Neal, Director

- Maintains proactive stakeholder relations.
- Evaluates and analyzes consumer input and makes recommendations to improve customer satisfaction.
- Serves as the DARS liaison for governmental affairs and federal oversight entities.
- Tracks and coordinates analysis of legislation.
- Responds to media inquiries.

## Center for Program Coordination: Robert Packard, Director

- Manages the DARS business improvement process and supports the management of the DARS project portfolio.
- Provides business improvement services that help DARS divisions find better ways to do their work.
- Provides program reporting and analysis (PRA) services that help DARS managers make informed decisions.
- Provides standard and routine reports, like federal and state performance reporting and DARS employee attrition and retirement reports.

## Center for Policy and Innovation: Lynn Blackmore, Director

- Manages the DARS publication systems that ensures accessibility and usability for all electronic information.
- Administers the DARS policy/procedure and rule development and approval process to ensure efficiency and coordination for program and administrative policy and rules.
- Pursues innovative service delivery methods and the use of grant funds to provide opportunities for improvements in all agency activities.

**NOVEMBER**

**2006**

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Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

## EXECUTIVE SUPPORT

The Centers were created during the implementation of House Bill 2292 to help departments improve client services. The improvements are accomplished by providing additional points of input for stakeholders, developing strategies to integrate and improve administrative functions, strengthening accountability, and generally ensuring that tax dollars are spent more effectively.



# DARS



## Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services

# CONTACT INFORMATION

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**Inquire toll free about DARS programs and services:**

(800) 628-5115 TTY

**Additional Information about DARS**

Additional information about each of the DARS service divisions is available at [www.dars.state.tx.us](http://www.dars.state.tx.us).

### Texas Health and Human Services Commission

**Mailing Address:**

Texas Health and Human Services Commission  
Office of the Ombudsman, MC H-700  
P O Box 13247  
Austin, TX 78711-3247

**Physical Address/Headquarters:**

HHSC Headquarters  
Brown-Heatly Building  
4900 N. Lamar Blvd., 7th Floor  
Austin, TX 78751-2316

**Additional Information about Health  
and Human Services**

Call 2-1-1 for access to information about health and human services in your community.



# DARS-2005, A Year in Review

It has been said that “nothing great ever happens without enthusiasm,” and that could not be more appropriate to describe the great strides made by the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). DARS Commissioner Terry Murphy credits the department’s success to increased collaboration that would never have occurred without consolidation. “The synergy at DARS has created a culture that values innovation. The exciting partnerships with consumers and stakeholders, as well as among our divisions, have led to new sources of funding that enhance services and improve business processes,” DARS Commissioner Murphy said. “This is a new way of running state government that is working for disabled Texans.” In 2005 DARS:

- Created the Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing within the Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS). This partnership went into effect March 1, 2005, and within one year after consolidation, it is projected that \$1 million will be added for deaf and hard of hearing services, tripling the number of people served.
- The Division for Blind Services (DBS) partnered with DRS to combine the best Social Security Administration Vocational Rehabilitation business processes which reimburse states for services to consumers

who become employed through vocational rehabilitation programs. By working together to better manage federal dollars, these two DARS divisions have added an additional \$1 million for programs for people with disabilities.

- As DARS continued to take shape, it became apparent that programs administered through DBS for children who are blind could also benefit some of the children who were currently being served by the Division for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI).

Collaboration between these divisions has resulted in improved services for children who are blind or visually impaired.

- Stakeholders and consumers also are seeing the benefit of one consolidated department. During the 79th Legislative Session, DARS worked cooperatively with the Brain Injury Association of Texas to eliminate the waiting list for DARS’s Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services Program, a program dedicated to serving people who have suffered a traumatic brain or spinal cord injury.

**DECEMBER**

**2006**

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Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## Special Thanks to the Following People for their Contribution to the First DARS Annual Report:

Charlie Clikeman, Division for Rehabilitation Services, Kathleen Wolfington, Division for Blind Services, MaryJo Miller, Division for Early Childhood Intervention Services, Bruce Rollman, Division for Disability Determination Services, Michael Peal, Steve Grimes, Kathie Elkins of Media Services.

# DEPARTMENT OF ASSISTIVE AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

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You may also view this annual report on the Internet at:  
**<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/>**

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