

REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF TEXAS



2008 ANNUAL REPORT

*Advocating for people
with disabilities
in the vocational
rehabilitation process*

DEPARTMENT OF ASSISTIVE AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

REHABILITATION
REHABILITATION
COUNCIL
of TEXAS



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THE TEXAS VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Advocating for people with disabilities in the vocational rehabilitation process

Mission

The Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT) in its partnership with the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services divisions; Division for Rehabilitation Services and the Division for Blind Services, advocates for people with disabilities in the vocational rehabilitation process.

Values

The RCT believes;

- in the worth and dignity of each individual
- the right to choice is realized by access to full information;
- work opportunities open doors to individual independence and participation in community life;
- person-centered goals, service plans and delivery systems lead to individual success;
- shared roles and responsibilities improve satisfaction with the rehabilitation process and outcomes; and
- collaboration and partnerships with federal, state, and private agencies are critical for system improvement.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

It is an honor to submit the 2008 Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT) Annual Report to the people of Texas. The majority of the council members is in their third year of service and continues with diligence and commitment.

As we work to meet the federally mandated activities and maintain the standards of service provision expected and deserved by the people of the great state of Texas we are ever mindful of the need to stay in touch with the communities all across Texas to transform and grow to meet their ever changing needs. The council has focused on consumer outreach through a variety of means this year. The Council has had representation in DRS/DBS Town Hall meetings across the state. We provide opportunities for consumer feed back in the Council meeting by expanding the time allotment for this activity and conducting at least one meeting a year out of Austin. We also are accessible through the RCT web page. Great strides to stay in touch with the community we serve have been successful.

The Assistant Commissioner of Division for Blind Services (DBS) and the Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS) are supportive of the Council and participate in council activities. Designated staff serves actively on council committees. Greatly appreciated is the open line of communication and shared vision between the divisions and the RCT. It not only helps to facilitate day-to-day operations but together we are better able to serve people with disabilities throughout Texas.

I have enjoyed serving as chair with such a dedicated council and look forward to another successful year of service to Texans with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Shawn P. Saladin, PhD, CRC, CPM
Chair
Rehabilitation Council of Texas



LETTER FROM ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HANOPHY

The Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is pleased to partner with the Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT) as we continue to develop stronger more collaborative efforts to work collectively for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities in Texas.

DRS continues to receive guidance and support from the RCT on key issues. The RCT plays such a key role in the DRS planning process because of the wide array of knowledge and perspective that the members bring to the table. This year, much of our focus has been on customer satisfaction and the development of consistently high quality services across the state. The RCT has been invaluable in providing feedback in this area. We also value the partnership with the RCT in developing the comprehensive statewide assessment to determine the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing in the state of Texas.

We appreciate the fact that DRS staff are able to participate in a number of RCT committees such as Planning, Policy, Consumer Satisfaction and Employment to name a few. This partnership helps to inform DRS about issues important to the RCT as well as to inform the RCT of issues that DRS must address. Through the valuable work for these committees, we develop strategies to improve the rehabilitation system which assists persons with disabilities to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment.

Through our collaboration and teamwork, we have learned that we are both striving toward the same goals and that our core values and principles are remarkably similar – most importantly, to provide quality rehabilitation to Texans with disabilities. DRS looks forward to the productive and growing partnership in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

***Jim Hanophy, Assistant Commissioner
Division for Rehabilitation Services***



LETTER FROM ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MADRIGAL

The DARS Division for Blind Services appreciates the contributions of the Rehabilitation Council of Texas, and the time and effort the members dedicate to strengthening the vocational rehabilitation program. The open exchange of information and ideas assist the Division for Blind Services in terms of planning for and administering rehabilitation services for the benefit of persons who are blind and significantly visually impaired.

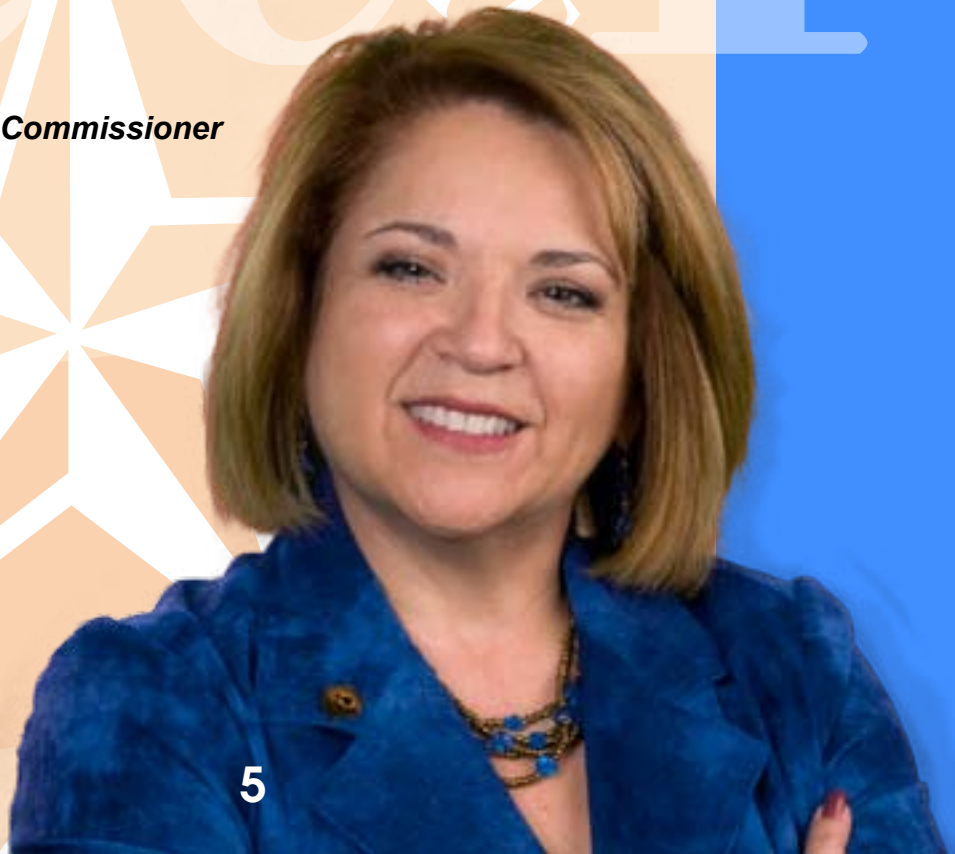
The Rehabilitation Council of Texas consists of individuals with a wide range of backgrounds and experience, and tremendous knowledge of the rehabilitation process. Over the last year, the Council has provided valuable input regarding initiatives such as the development of the Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan, Employment Refocus and the National Employment Network. In addition, the Council was very involved in developing and conducting the comprehensive statewide assessment to determine the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in Texas.

One of the ways the Council has worked effectively with the Division for Blind Services is through its various committees. These provide an opportunity for staff of the Division for Blind Services to work directly with Council members on issues related to rehabilitation services, and results in further strengthening what I think is already a quality program.

I particularly value the candor of the Council members during our discussions, and the spirit of partnership that is so evident in the work we do together. It is a pleasure to collaborate with the knowledgeable and committed individuals serving on the Council. I very much appreciate their efforts and look forward to continuing this effective and productive partnership in the future.

Sincerely,

**Barbara J. Madrigal, Assistant Commissioner
Division for Blind Services**





PURPOSE OF THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC -- in Texas it is known as the Rehabilitation Council of Texas, RCT) was created to provide the state Vocational Rehabilitation Agency with an external voice from consumers, business and industry and other interested partners and stakeholders in regards to vocational rehabilitation services provided in the state. Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended and 34 CFR 361.17 of its implementing regulations provide more detailed information as to the functions purpose and responsibility of the RCT. To highlight the Act and regulations the RCT is to:

Review, analyze, and advise DRS and DBS regarding their performance related to:

- Eligibility, including order of selection;
- Extent, scope and effectiveness of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services;
- Functions performed by State agencies that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve an employment outcome.

In partnership with DRS and DBS:

- a. Develop, agree to and review State goals and priorities.
- b. Evaluate the effectiveness of the VR program and submit annual progress reports to the Rehabilitation Services Administration Commissioner. (RSA)
- c. Conduct a statewide needs assessment of individuals with living in the State every three years.

Advise DRS and DBS regarding VR activities.

Assist in the preparation of the State plan, amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations, including those necessary for the VR agency to satisfy the requirements of developing a “comprehensive system of personnel development” and establishing an “order of selection.”

Review and analyze the effectiveness of and the consumer satisfaction with:

- VR agency functions;
- VR services provided by the VR agency and other entities; and
- Employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals served by VR.

PURPOSE OF THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

continued

Prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and RSA on the status of VR services. Report should be made available to the public.

Coordinate the activities of the SRC with the activities of other councils, such as the:

- SILC;
- Advisory panel established under IDEA;
- State Developmental Disabilities Council;
- State mental health planning council; and
- State Workforce Investment Board.

Provide for the coordination and the establishment of working relationships between the VR agency and the SILC and the centers for independent living
and

Perform other functions that it determines appropriate and comparable to its other functions, provided they are consistent with the purpose of title I of the Act and its implementing regulations.



2008 REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF TEXAS *The Year in Review*



- Six new members were appointed by Commissioner Hawkins in June 2008 to replace members who resigned at the beginning of the 2008 fiscal year.
- The Statewide Needs Assessment /Planning Committee provided input on the needs assessment process and reviewed the results of the needs assessment, addressing the most frequently identified concerns in the development of goals for the State Plan. They also monitored the achievement of goals in the previous year's plan.
- The RCT partnered with DARS to conduct a hearing regarding the Needs Assessment in October 2007.
- The Coordination Committee met with a representative of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to discuss transition of foster youth exiting the DFPS system. They recommended that DARS request a representative from DFPS be named to serve on the DARS Community of Support System transition group to facilitate the success of the Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor initiative across the State.
- The Coordination Committee recommends having a representative of DARS present to the Council regarding adding persons with disabilities to the Historically Underutilized Business State Statute.
- The Coordination Committee discussed coordination of issues involving the: State Independent Living Council, Continuing Advisory Committee (Special Education), Texas Council on Developmental Disabilities, Workforce Investment Council, and Mental Health Advisory Council.
- The Coordination Committee met with a representative of the Texas Higher Education Coordination Board (THECB) to discuss the responsibilities of the THECB. The committee discussed the need to ensure accessibility of distance learning classes and career/technology classes that transfer to junior/community colleges as course credits. The Committee also discussed concerns regarding adequate numbers of university training programs for vocational rehabilitation counselors across the state.

2008 REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF TEXAS The Year in Review

- The Consumer Satisfaction Committee is working in partnership with DRS and DBS in analyzing the types of jobs consumers are obtaining. The committee's goal is to help the agencies identify the jobs consumers obtain and set a goal to improve the job and pay consumers receive.
- The Employment Committee embraced the concept of the dual customer and encouraged the employer development plan as proposed by DARS. They heard presentations by Jim Hanophy and met with Rebecca Soto, the Business Services Unit Manager, to kick-start the changes in building and maintaining successful business relationships. The committee also proposed that the Council take a more active role in recruiting non-disability related employers to participate as members of the Council when seats are available. They requested experts on the Medicaid Buy-In plan address the council as well as an employer who has pledged to give on-going job opportunities to persons with disabilities.
- The Council held a meeting in Dallas and invited 550 recently closed consumers for DRS and DBS to provide feedback at the Council meeting regarding their satisfaction of VR services. The feedback was shared with the agencies.
- The RCT is represented by one of their members on the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils and agreed to support the organization.
- The Council toured the Division for Blind Services technology lab.
- The RCT and CAP worked with DRS and DBS in getting their policy manuals on the respective websites. These policy manuals are now available on the DARS website.
- The RCT worked with DRS in rewriting their policy manual which was accomplished this year.



COMMITTEES

The following standing committees are composed of volunteers from the RCT membership and work with a customer/consumer-driven focus to honor the Mission of the RCT. The committees and their functions are:

Executive – develops the RCT’s meeting agendas, deals with issues raised by RCT committees and others in the interim between RCT meetings, drafts letters of support, and prepares the RCT annual report.

Planning – Works in partnership with the VR divisions on the State Plan and reviews the DARS Strategic Plan.

Policy – provides input to VR divisions on order of selection (final approval requires full RCT vote), provides assistance/partnership with divisions on informed choice policies, assist divisions in developing and revising policies to be in line with regulations and the Rehabilitation Act, and reviews hearing decisions.

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) – works in partnership with the VR divisions regarding counselor training and staff retention and recruitment.

By-Laws – Drafts and develops by-laws reviewing them annually to ascertain whether amendments need to be made; and, if so, draft the amendments and present to the RCT for approval. Ensure the RCT acts within the guidelines of the by-laws.

Employment – Works in partnership with the divisions on job placement, customized employment, supported employment, and developing business relationships in the state.

Needs Assessment – Works in partnership with the division on Statewide Needs Assessments (every three years) and assessing and determining what community rehabilitation provider are needed to provide services to consumers.



COMMITTEES (continued)

Coordination – Works with the State Independent Living Council, State Education Agency, Texas Workforce Investment Council, Disability Policy Consortium, Developmental Disabilities Council, and State Mental Health Planning Council to avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served.

Consumer Satisfaction – Works in partnership with the divisions to monitor consumer satisfaction surveys and is responsible for comparing results and identifying areas that may need additional attention.

Legislative – Coordinates a strategy to keep the RCT informed and of bills and legislative issues relative to vocational rehabilitation programs and organizes efforts to provide RCT support to DARS whenever it is appropriate.



VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION IN TEXAS

Vocational Rehabilitation helps people with disabilities prepare for, find and keep jobs. There are a variety of services that can be provided including, counseling and guidance, training, medical services, assistive devices, equipment for employment, and job placement services. In Texas, these services are provided through the Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and the Division for Blind Services (DBS).

*The following pages
provide some of the statistics
for these programs,*



DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Statistics

VR ELIGIBLES SERVED BY PRIMARY DISABILITY Disability Group (Primary Disability Only)	SFY 2008 Percent
Musculo-Skeletal	25
Cognitive	19
Mental/Emotional	17
Deaf & Hard of Hearing	10
Neurological	5
Substance Abuse	4
Traumatic Brain Injury/Spinal Cord Injury	3
Cardiac/Respiratory/Circulatory	2
Other Impairments	14
TOTAL	100

VR EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Employment Type	Percent
Competitive Employment	98.6
Self Employment	1.4
TOTAL	100

Total number served - 84,433 Total number of successful closures - 11,568

Note: Data as of 10/9/07 for SFY 2007 Source: DRS Case Management System

SERVICES PURCHASED FOR VR PROGRAM

Based on Total Encumbered for Program VR & Budget Year 2008	Percent
Restoration Services	32.84
Training	31.46
Assistive Technology	14.01
Diagnostic & Evaluation	9.64
Maintenance & Transportation	4.69
Other	7.37
TOTAL	100

DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Statistics

VR SUCCESSFUL CLOSURES BY OCCUPATION

Occupation	Percent
Service	21.41
Professional, Technical & Managerial	16.70
Office & Administrative Support	17.67
Healthcare Related	10.36
Transportation & Material Moving	7.53
Construction, Maintenance & Repair Related	7.35
Sales & Related	8.47
Production	7.74
Protective Service & Military	2.26
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	0.40
Homemaker or Unpaid Family Worker	0.12
TOTAL	100

CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Service	Number of Services Provided *
Information & Referral	13,289
IL Skills Training	8,011
Peer Counseling	5,835
Advocacy	3,312
Housing Referral & Home Modifications	3,242
Recreation Services	2,651
Youth Services	1,837
Transportation Services	1,659
Vocational Services	1,537
Children's Services	1,484
Relocation Services	1,025
Other	6,147
Total Number of Services:	50,029

* CIL consumers (with a plan or waiver) may have tapped these services multiple times; each instance the service was provided is reflected in these statistics. Additional services (e.g., information and referral) also were provided to many more individuals throughout the state, but the numbers reported in this chart were those provided to the 6,977 CIL consumers reported as the total served for SFY 2008. *Source: Centers for Independent Living*
 Total number served - 6,977 in SFY 2008 *Source: Key Performance Measure Report*

DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Statistics

COMPREHENSIVE REHABILITATION SERVICES (CRS)



- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) 64.23%
- Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) 32.43%
- TBI + SCI 3.34%

265 consumers who received Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services in SFYs 2006, 2007, and/or 2008 were transferred to vocational rehabilitation.

Total number served: 629

*Source:
Key Performance Measure Report*

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING SERVICES

Service	Number Served
Communication Access Services	47,095
Consumer Education and Interpreter Training	1,195
Interpreter Certificates Issued	1,796
Equipment/Service Vouchers Issued	23,748
Total Number Served:	73,834

Source: Contractor reports and consumer sign-in sheets

DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Statistics

INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES

DRS ILS Expenditures by Service Category

Service	Amount	Percent of Expenditures
Assistive Technology	\$3,359,982.97	75.74
Other Restoration Services	\$861,470.61	19.42
Diagnostic & Evaluation Services	\$152,015.91	3.43
Vocational Adjustment Training	\$19,953.30	0.45
Surgery & Hospitalization	\$16,886.37	0.38
Maintenance & Transportation	\$12,601.36	0.28
Academic Training	\$10,431.92	0.24
Other Services	\$2,834.93	0.06
Total Services	\$4,436,177.37	100

DRS ILS Assistive Technology Expenditures by Subcategory*

Subcategory	Amount	Percent of Expenditures
Durable Medical Equipment	\$2,183,868.03	65
Vehicle Modifications	\$587,467.27	17
Assistive Technology	\$289,488.56	9
Home Modifications	\$299,159.11	9
Total	\$3,359,982.97	100

*Expenditures are all SFY 2008 expenditures for ILS program services

Total Number Served: 2,275 Source: DRS Consumer Case Management System, as of 11/18/08

Blind Services Vocational Rehabilitation Statistics

VR EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES SFY 2008

Occupations	Percent
Professional, Technical & Managerial	23.6
Service	18.3
Office & Administrative Support	14.1
Production	11.6
Construction, Maintenance & Repair Related	7.7
Homemaker or Unpaid Family Worker	6.9
Sales & Related	6.6
Healthcare Related	6.1
Transportation & Material Moving	3.2
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	1.2
Protective Service & Military	0.7
TOTAL	100

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SERVED SFY 2008

Programs	Percent
Vocational Rehabilitation	60
Independent Living	20
Blind Children's Vocational Discovery & Development	20
TOTAL	100

Total number served - 16,162

Source: DBS Case Management System

DBS Vocational Rehabilitation Statistics

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

BLIND SERVICES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Consumers Receiving Planned Services *

STATE	Total
Texas	6,403
Florida	3,415
North Carolina	2,927
New York	2,449

Consumers Closed Successfully

Employed

STATE	Total
Texas	1,385
Florida	710
North Carolina	700
New York	655

Source of Information for the national statistics is the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Website.

**Numbers are based on FFY 2007 reports. May not match state fiscal year numbers.*

DBS Vocational Rehabilitation Statistics

Blind Children's Vocational Discovery and Development Program

Every year, hundreds of Texas families turn to the DARS Division for Blind Services Blind Children's Vocational Discovery and Development Program (BCVDDP) for information and support to help their children grow and thrive. A blind children's specialist – an expert in providing services for children with visual impairments – works with each child and family to create a family service plan.

BCVDDP offers a wide range of services that are tailored to each child and family's needs and circumstances. Services are associated with six major program components: adjustment to blindness, independent living skills, travel, communication, support system, and vocational discovery and development. We think of them as stepping stones to an independent, productive, and satisfying life.

BCVDDP Expenditures by Service Category

Service	Amount	Percent of Total Expenditures
Assessments	\$15,765	3.5
Training	\$110,483	24.6
Restoration	\$33,296	7.4
Developmental Equipment	\$239,690	53.4
Maintenance and Transportation	\$49,436	11.1
TOTAL	\$448,670	100

BCVDDP

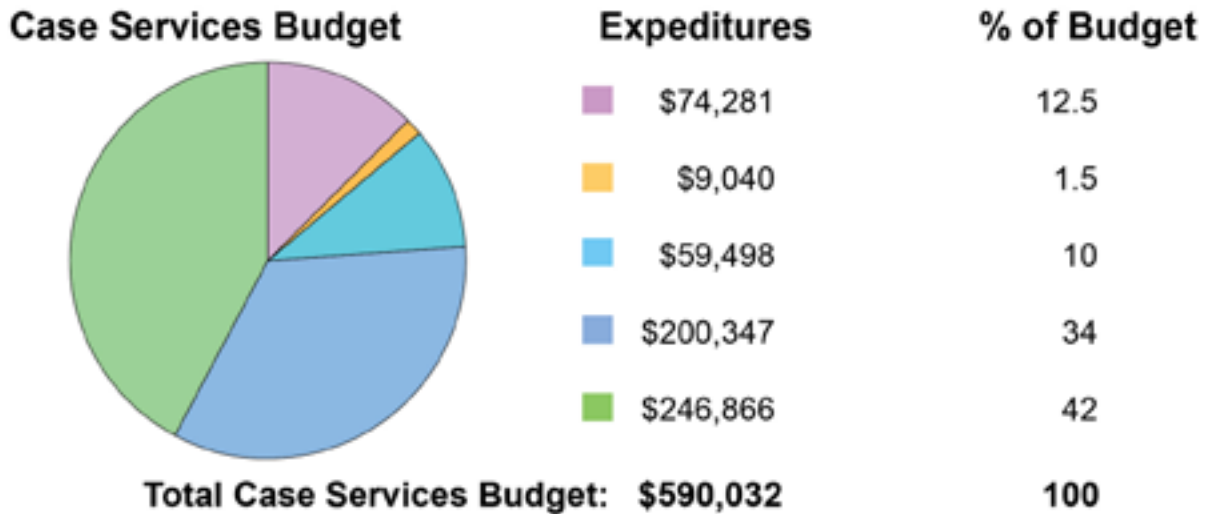
Consumer Profile

Age	Number of Consumers	Percent of Consumers
0 - 9	2,377	73.14
10 - 17	778	23.94
18 - 22	95	2.92
Total Served:	3,250	100

95 of the children served in FY 2008 moved on to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

DBS Vocational Rehabilitation Statistics

IL Program Expenditures for Purchased Services for SFY 2008*



BUDGET CATEGORIES

- Medical & functional assessments to determine diagnosis & impact of disabling condition (e.g., eye exam, low vision exams, orientation & mobility evaluation, diabetes educator evaluation)
- Assistance with expenses related to participation in diagnostic procedures &/or training (e.g., lodging, transportation)
- Eye glasses, low vision devices, & other prosthetic devices
- Training in performing daily living tasks (e.g., information & referrals, learning to prepare meals, travel safely in home & community, identify medication)
- Low to high - technology adaptive products that facilitate independent living (e.g., large-dial telephone, talking alarm clock, closed circuit television)

*Services are provided directly by agency staff as well as through purchased services. Total number served - 3,224 Source - Key Performance Measure Report

CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

The Rehabilitation Council of Texas works in partnership with DRS and DBS in reviewing and analyzing the client satisfaction survey results. Attempts are made to contact a consumer whose case has been closed by the agency by a contracted vendor who asks them a series of questions. DRS and DBS do not use the same questions. The results of these surveys for Fiscal Year 2008 are:

Division for Blind Services Consumer Satisfaction Survey results:

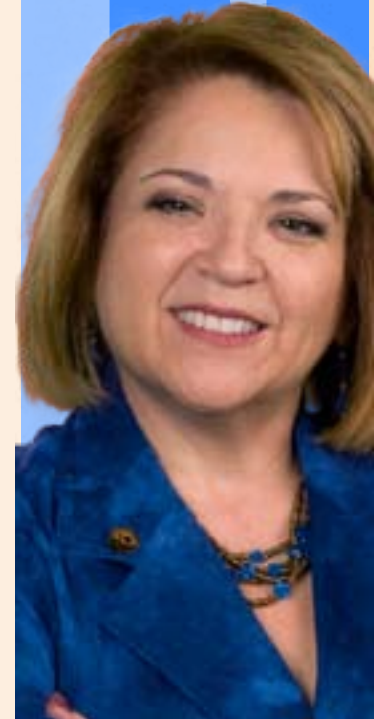
In response to the following questions, the percentages indicate the percentage of consumers who were either satisfied or very satisfied.

I was treated with courtesy and respect by DBS staff.	99.8%
I felt involved in planning and choosing my work goals and the services I received.	99.6%
My counselor listened to and considered my needs and concerns.	99.5%
I have increased skills and abilities because of the assistance I received from DBS.	99.2%
How would you rate your overall experience with DBS?	99.4%

Division for Rehabilitation Services Consumer Satisfaction Survey results

In response to the following questions, the percentages indicate the percentage of consumers who were either satisfied or very satisfied.

Were you treated with courtesy & respect by the DRS staff?	93.6%
Did you take part in setting your work goals?	84.3%
Did you take part in planning the services you received?	85.3%
On a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being Very Satisfied, how would you rate your satisfaction with your DRS counselor?	88.9%
On a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being very satisfied, how would you rate your overall experience with DRS?	88.5%



MEMBERS OF THE REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF TEXAS

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Client Assistance
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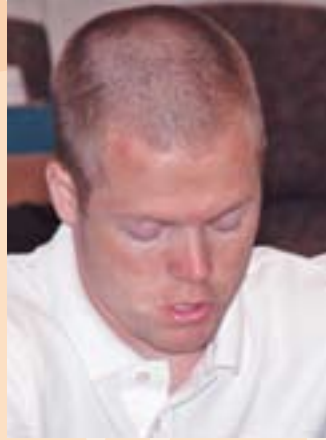
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