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Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council for
the Division for the Visually Impaired

Annual Report – Federal Fiscal Year 2018

Enclosed is a copy of the Delaware Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council for the Division for the Visually Impaired Annual Report to Governor John Carney and the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Thank you for your interest in and support of programs that provide and promote the use of vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs for Delawareans who are blind or visually impaired.

For questions or comments regarding report contents or to request a copy in an alternative format, please contact the Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired:

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April 1, 2019

U. S. Department of Education, OSERS
Rehabilitation Services Administration
Attn: Terrence Martin, Vocational Rehabilitation Program Specialist
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-2800

Dear Terrence:

On behalf of Delaware Health and Social Services, Division for the Visually Impaired and the Delaware Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council, I am pleased to present the 2018 Annual Report as required by Section 105(C) (4) of the 1992 Amendment to the Rehabilitation Act. In accordance with 34 CFR 361.17, a copy of this report has been submitted to the Honorable John Carney, Governor of Delaware. This report represents the 2017-2018 federal fiscal year. It includes details the Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council activities and recommendations, the Division for the Visually Impaired highlights, and significant achievements made by Delawareans with blindness.

The Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired continues to play an integral role in helping people with blindness achieve their vocational goals; however, their successes would not be realized without consumer determination, community advocates, excellent vendor partnerships, and the evolving corporate culture that continues to improve inclusion practices and value diversity in the workplace.

Through the efforts of the Division for the Visually Impaired, in conjunction with the guidance and input of the Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council, we will continue to build on our solid foundation through educational workshops, community outreach, awareness, employer partnerships, and training to ensure the visually impaired and blind population of Delaware have the tools and knowledge needed to successfully gain employment and remain independent, productive citizens.

Sincerely,

Elisha Jenkins
Director
Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired

cc: Office of Governor John Carney

Message from the Chairperson

The Delaware Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council for the blind is pleased to present the annual report for fiscal year 2017 to the Honorable Governor John Carney and the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration.

During fiscal year 2017, Kevin McAllister served as council chair from October 1, 2017 to May 1, 2018. Although the council does not convene during the summer months, there was a change in chairmanship due to board appointment expiration. After a consultation with personnel in the Delaware Boards and Commissions office, Suzanne Howell, vice chair, assumed the position of interim chair commencing in August 2018 until the council was able to vote on a new chairperson for the subsequent fiscal year.

Maintaining positive, yet firm and effective communication between the VRAC and DVI is essential to ensuring effective services are provided to stakeholders who are preparing to seek gainful and fulfilling employment. The council and DVI collaboratively sought input from Delaware citizens with blindness and visual impairments by hosting a Town Hall meeting and completing the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment during FY2017. Both tools theoretically provided greater insight into consumer satisfaction with services, concerns, achievements and emerging needs. Throughout the year, the council continued to work in collaboration with DVI to track employment outcomes, seek stakeholder input and measure consumer satisfaction, while challenging the agency to think creatively, strive to think more strategically, and delivering outcomes which exceed the status quo.

In October 2017, the VRAC and DVI partnered to host a successful event honoring White Cane Safety Day. The awareness event was open to the public and held at a public library. Attendees had the opportunity to visit exhibitor booths and attend information sessions. The celebration also included the VRAC presentation of two awards designed to recognize achievements in advocacy and education. In February 2018, a number of council members presented testimony to Delaware legislatures at the Joint Finance Committee meeting at Legislative Hall. The council comments were well received and facilitated further discussion with key advocates on improving access for consumers and resolving agency challenges concerning VR.

At the end of FY2017, the VRAC had ten members and six vacancies. In order to assure the stakeholders are fully represented by the council, the VRAC works diligently to identify pathways to fill vacant board positions. Additionally, the council uses opportunities such as the town hall meeting, White Cane Day, and other advocacy activities to educate consumers on opportunities to serve on the council and the importance it represents in the community. Moreover, we continue to request that DVI VR counselors and administrators use their additional touch points with consumers to share opportunities for engagement to this pool of potential council members.

Moving forward, it is the hope that DVI and the council will continue to collaborate more effectively on legislation, service delivery, and community engagement which will only serve to uplift, to educate, and to empower our Delaware community for vocational rehabilitation services.

Respectfully Submitted:

Suzanne Alayne Howell

Chair, Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council for the Blind

Kevin P. McAllister

Past Chair, Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council for the Blind

Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council (VRAC)

Description

Mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the VRAC is comprised of advocates, consumers, government representatives and the business community located throughout the state of Delaware. The VRAC serves in an advisory capacity to DVI and acts as the liaison between the state agency for the blind and Delawareans who are blind or visually impaired. The VRAC meets monthly and focuses on Council priorities and DVI services. A great deal of emphasis is placed on areas that the Council perceives as lacking substance, needing improvement, or requiring immediate attention by DVI.

The VRAC provides the following assistance to DVI:

- Review, analyze, and evaluate the performance, effectiveness and quality of services provided by the VR program.
- Collaborate with state and private agencies to ensure that the needs of individuals with visual impairments are appropriately identified and addressed by state and federal legislators, service providers, employers, and relevant members of the community.
- Maintain partnerships with local and national organizations (i.e. State Rehabilitation Advisory Councils, National Federation of the Blind, etc.) to promote services to underserved populations.
- Develop and review the goals and priorities related to the allocation of resources for VR. The Council also assists DVI with preparation of the VR State Plan in accordance with the federal regulations.

Council Composition (FFY2018)

Code Requirement	Individual	Council Role
i. State Independent Living Council	Suzanne Howell	Chairperson
ii. Parent Information Center	Vacant	
iii. Client Assistance Program	Blake Roberts	Member
iv. VR Counselor	Patricia Burrell	Ex Officio
v. Community Rehabilitation Program	Darryl Garner	Member
vi. Business	Jacqueline Poquette	Member
vi. Business	Vacant	
vi. Business	Vacant	
vi. Business	Vacant	
vii. Blind Disability Advocate	Vacant	
viii. I-Disability & Blind	William McCafferty	Member
viii. II- Parent	Vacant	
ix. Recipient	Pham Thang	Member
x. Education Representative	Dale Matusевич	Member
xi. State Workforce Development Board	Alice Coleman	Member
xii. Director of Division for the Visually Impaired	Elisha Jenkins	Ex Officio

VRAC Accomplishments

- Established legislative agendas used to promote the need for increased employment opportunities, better assistive technology availability, improved transportation options, and employment sustainability.
- Coordinated with DVI to analyze consumer satisfaction surveys; used analysis to determine strengths and define areas in need of improvement.
- Coordinated with DVI to co-host a White Cane Safety Day Event at the Rt. 9 Library & Innovation Center. The event was intended to raise awareness of visual impairments and the significance of the white cane. Attendees visited exhibitors and break-out sessions.
- Collaborated on strategic initiatives, the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, Combined State Plan, evaluation of needs, and other joint-participative activities.



Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired



Mission

To provide educational, vocational and technical support to empower and foster independence for Delawareans with visual impairments.

Vision

A leader in creating a world without barriers for individuals with vision loss.

Executive Summary

The Division for the Visually Impaired annual report describes the highlights and achievements of the past year and provides compelling evidence of the tremendous impact DVI vocational services have on the blind community in Delaware. Much of the success can be attributed to the fact that all programming encourages workplace inclusion, promotes career development, presents opportunities for consumers to gain marketable education and/or training to obtain gainful employment, and strives to eliminate barriers to independence.

DVI is appreciative of the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Honorable Governor Carney, and the Delaware General Assembly for providing the resources to efficiently serve all Delawareans with blindness. Since FY2011, the Division has operated without an Order of Selection. DVI recognizes the value in having the ability to provide services to all eligible consumers and continues to act as responsible stewards of program funds. When compared to other states, the Delaware blind and visually impaired population is relatively small; however, the effect services have on the lives of consumers is equally impactful. DVI will continue to diligently maintain fiscal integrity, produce high-quality programs, and uphold our commitment to continued improvement. Most important, the Division is dedicated to the success of the consumers and privileged to help while they continue to bravely overcome obstacles along their journey to independence.



Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 1: Highest Consumer Achievement

Coordinate and secure high-quality training, education, work experiences and partnerships that create opportunities for blind and visually impaired Delawareans to obtain and maintain independence, post-secondary education credentials, and successful employment outcomes.

Goal 2: Seamless Coordination and Maximum Access

Create a comprehensive service delivery system that fosters accessibility and provides positive experiences for blind and visually impaired Delawareans enabling them to progress from school/training to work.

Goal 3: Skilled Workforce and Economic Development

Assist blind and visually impaired Delawareans with obtaining, maintaining and advancing in competitive integrated employment.

Goal 4: Quality Efficient Services

- a. Continue to develop an accountable and exemplary division workforce that provides customer-oriented, high-quality services.
- b. Reduce barriers to independence by streamlining assistive technology procurement process and reducing device acquisition time to fourteen days.
- c. Develop a comprehensive outcome management system designed to efficiently collect data, effectively analyze programs and identify gaps, and serve as a vehicle for service improvement.

Success Story – Aaron Brown



Aaron Brown spent his life overcoming challenges faced by severe visual impairments, learning difficulties, Cerebral Palsy and significant mobility issues. From a very young age, he became accustomed to working harder than most to achieve his goals. Despite what many perceived to be overwhelming odds, he learned to read and write, secured a job in a work center, and moved into his own apartment. Although Aaron was proud of his accomplishments, he desired a change and decided it was time for an upward career trajectory.

Aaron was actively engaged with the Delaware Division of Developmental Services (DDDS) and the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI) when he decided to pursue competitive employment. He was referred to the Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) for Supported Employment to help him accomplish his career goals. Aaron and his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) completed orientation, established goals, and created his Individual Plan for Employment. After working through the informed choice process, Aaron strengthened his support team by selecting St. John's Community Services (St. John's) and the Delaware IT Institute (DITI).

Aaron knew he wanted to be a receptionist but first needed to update his computer skills. He began training with the DITI to ensure that his skills matched what would be expected by his desired job. His St. John's job coach developed a volunteer role as a receptionist at the Delaware chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). This crucial step was taken to provide invaluable real work experience and professional references. Once the volunteer position was secure, Aaron's team worked together to ensure he had the necessary accommodations, tools, and support. DVI completed a job site evaluation and provided a host of tools such as bump dots and memory aids. St. John's job coach assisted Aaron with job coaching and support. Aaron's hard work and perseverance paid off when his job coach developed a paid receptionist position at the Greater Newark Boys and Girls Club. Once again, the team sprang into action! DVI completed a worksite evaluation and provided memory, tactile, and visual tools; St. John's provided job coaching Aaron to help him transfer skills from his volunteer job and learn all the duties of his new position; and DDDS secured the funds to support Aaron in his job after successful VR closure.

Now, months later, Aaron continues to be happily employed by the Boys & Girls Club and performs most of his job duties independently. He continues to receive on-the-job support from his job coach during times that best meet his employment needs. The job coach reinforces techniques, helps the supervisor introduce new tasks, and assists Aaron with problem-solving. In addition to the funded support, Aaron now has a core group of co-workers that he accesses when he needs assistance.

Aaron may have required support with his journey, but he is definitely the shining star of this inspirational story. He was determined to obtain a job despite his blindness, use of a wheelchair and learning difficulties. In a short amount of time, he left the work center, developed a support team, expanded his computer skills, enhanced his marketability through volunteerism, obtained his dream job, and became a model employee. Most people will never experience the magnitude of obstacles Aaron hurdled to become a part of the American workforce. His fortitude has propelled him to heights once thought unreachable and DVI is excited to learn what Aaron has planned next.

DVI Year in Review – Achievements & Highlights

The DVI team of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Orientation & Mobility Specialists, Vision Rehabilitation Therapists, Assistive Technology Specialists and Teachers for the Visually Impaired, collectively served 936 people who were actively engaged in employment activities, technology, independent living and orientation/mobility training.

DVI maintains a very strong community presence and offers balanced programming to engage consumers during their employment journey. The 2018 achievements and program highlights include the following:

DVI Administrative

AmeriCorps VISTA Program – During the previous fiscal year, DVI and the Delaware School for the Deaf partnered on a grant application to the Federal Corporation for National and Community Service. The project consisted of recruiting AmeriCorps Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) volunteers to implement a creative project designed to solve a mutual need; reducing current and future poverty levels of the blind, deaf/blind, and otherwise disabled populations. DVI was awarded two AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers to assist with program development and implementation. The unique program centers on recruiting statewide volunteers to provide services such as; college and SAT preparatory study, discussion of career options and college tours. The goal was to build a robust, sustainable program by the time the VISTAs complete one year of service. Midway through FFY2018, the DVI project administrator successfully recruited the VISTAs; both of whom had project management and program development skills. The program will carry-over into FFY2019; however, significant accomplishments were achieved by the end of September 2018:

- Policies and procedures; including background verification, orientation and training of volunteers, were developed;
- Twelve highly-qualified volunteers, located throughout the state, were recruited, vetted and trained;
- Strong partnerships were formed with the Delaware School for the Deaf key personnel, the Deaf Independent Living Association, and the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families; and,
- The program underwent and successfully completed a compliance audit performed by the Federal Corporation for National and Community Service (grantor).

WIOA Leadership Team & WINTAC – DVI continued to be an active member of the statewide WIOA Leadership Team and assumed the integral role of coordinating technical assistance through the Workforce Innovation and Technical Assistant Center (WINTAC). The leadership team is comprised of core partners responsible for creating a seamless, customer-focused, one-stop delivery system that integrates service delivery and enhances access across all programs. This level of the continuum requires independent agencies to establish trust and share resources so that consumers benefit from service continuity. Seeking technical assistance from WINTAC was essential for developing and implementing a system to ensure consumers are served quickly and efficiently. During FFY2018, the core partners worked with WINTAC to develop a mapping process identifying how services are accessed to meet the needs of all citizens inquiring about services, regardless of who they ask. The mapping process will be integrated into all state social service agencies once completed. The desired outcome is that all Delaware social service agency personnel have the means to ensure consumers receive timely services and are provided with effective resources. DVI is proud to act as the point of contact for WINTAC and excited to be part of the design and implementation process.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) – During FFY2018, DVI in partnership with the Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council for the Blind (VRAC) conducted a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) to identify factors preventing VR consumers from obtaining and retaining employment, and any other barriers or limitations VR consumers experience. The CSNA was conducted by collecting primary data from stakeholders including consumers, community providers, interest groups, government partners, DVI employees and members of the public. Various tools and techniques were used to gather input such as a statewide public survey, face-to-face interviews, telephone surveys and focus groups. The findings revealed that the most frequently mentioned needs among consumers surveyed were employment, transportation, assistive technology and education. Findings and recommendations from the CSNA will assist DVI with future strategic planning, developing performance measures, and designing state plans objective.

Conversion to Unified English Braille – Collectively the DVI Education and Independent Living programs provide statewide Braille instruction to visually impaired citizens ranging from school-age to senior citizens. Unified English Braille (UEB) is the revised code international code for transcribing Braille in the English language. As the primary agency for Braille instruction and education materials in Delaware, UEB conversion is an agency priority. DVI developed a five-year UEB implementation plan at the start of FY2015 for K-12 education materials. Despite some obstacles along the way, the division is on-target to achieve full implementation by close of FY2020 as outlined in the plan. In addition to providing Braille instruction, DVI is responsible for converting education materials into multiple formats, for all vision impaired school-age children in Delaware. Producing Braille materials requires certified Braille Transcribers and specialized equipment. In Delaware, the production of accessible materials is made possible through the efforts of DVI staff, volunteers and Braille Transcribers from the Men with a Message (MWM) program. MWM is a cooperative partnership between DVI and the Department of Correction. Located at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center, the program employs inmates who successfully complete the Library of Congress Braille Transcribers certification. Working together on a regular basis, the MWM team and DVI staff ensure school students' materials, such as text books and materials, are properly converted. Since plan implementation, DVI Braille instructors (Teachers of the Visually Impaired and Certified Vision Rehabilitation Specialists) completed UEB courses and production workers are completing training as prescribed to maintain their Library of Congress certification.

Vocational Rehabilitation – General

VR and WINTAC Agreement – During FFY2018, VR entered into a technical assistance agreement with WINTAC to assist with full WIOA implementation, program evaluation, and statewide integration of blind services. WINTAC and DVI developed comprehensive goals including:

Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Implementation: Develop Pre-ETS policies and procedures that address eligibility, expenditures and staff/stakeholder training.

Workforce Development Integration: Develop strategies to enhance partner agency collaboration, evaluate service alignment that results in inclusive career pathway models, and enhance job seeker outcomes by using labor market information and increase business engagement.

Common Performance Measure Transition: Develop processes for system analysis and improvement of collaboration with core partners including a logic model that addresses shared interest in WIOA implementation.



Employer Engagement Event – VR kicked off FFY2018 by honoring achievements and recognizing partnerships in October. In addition to a motivational key note address from Kirk Adams (CEO, American Foundation for the Blind), the ***Business Champions Breakfast*** attendees received Americans with Disabilities Act training, sensitivity training and an overview of DVI business services. The event convened after presentation of recognition awards for consumers, employers, and community. DVI was excited to offer this event during National Disability Employment Awareness and World Blindness Month(s).

Delaware Park Annual Employee Health Fair – Delaware Park Casino is one of the larger employers in the state and a long-term DVI business partner. Every year the casino hosts an employee health fair to provide their staff with convenient access to an abundance of health resources. DVI was happy to honor the request to be an exhibitor at this worthwhile event.

DVI Provides Goodwill with Training – VR and Independent Living (IL) staff coordinated blindness sensitivity training for a group of Goodwill Delaware employees. The training provided Goodwill with tools and resources as they prepared to develop a training curriculum to meet the needs of transition youth and supported employment participants with blindness and visual impairments.

Delaware Mental Health Conference – For the past sixteen years the Mental Health Association in Delaware has sponsored an annual conference. In addition to exhibiting at the event, a VR staff member is a member of the conference planning committee and was a panel discussion moderator. With 40 exhibitors and more than 300 attendees, this well-attended event affords VR an opportunity to promote services and expand business relationships through exhibiting and attending.

Vocational Rehabilitation – Pre-Employment Transition Services & Transition Services

Enhanced Services for Transition Students – During FFY 2017, transition students, aged 14-21, who were potentially eligible or eligible for DVI/VR services were provided the opportunity to work with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to receive Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). In FFY 2018, this initiative was expanded by enhancing current programming to offer students with visual impairments additional opportunities to explore career options, learn about and prepare for college, and participate in summer employment or internship experiences. DVI/VR works with students as young as 14, collaborating with our internal Education Unit and Local Education Agencies statewide to ensure students are aware of DVI's VR services and offered the opportunity to apply for and receive transition services. With the support and guidance of a VR counselor, students develop their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) including a projected vocational goal. They participate in a variety of transition programs and assessments to learn about their strengths, interests and identify assistive technology needs. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors assist students with visual impairments to develop their self-determination skills and prepare for life after high school. The transition initiative, including Pre-ETS services, has contributed to the expansion of an interdivisional collaboration, decreased duplication of services and has been well-received by students and families.

PIPEline to Career Success for Students with Disabilities – DVI is partnering with the Department of Education, the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, National Alliance on Partnership in Equity and local school districts to pilot a program designed to ensure the

success of ALL students with disabilities in high school career and technical education (CTE) pathways. Project planning began in FFY2018. The objective is to increase the number of students with disabilities who:

- 1) Enroll in CTE pathways;
- 2) Participate in related work-based learning experiences in authentic employment settings;
- 3) Earn college and career credentials in CTE pathways;
- 4) Graduate from high school as a CTE pathway completer;
- 5) Continue their education and training beyond high school; and
- 6) Enter high-demand employment.

Delaware Transition Conference – DVI was a proud sponsor of the statewide Transition Conference, coordinated by several state entities and offered to Delaware students each year. Each year more than 400 high school students attend the event designed to help them make informed choices about career goals and their futures. DVI provided support and accessible materials, ensured students with visual impairments were active participants and offering outreach and resources to the transition community.



Delaware Pathways Initiative & Conference – The Delaware Pathways initiative is a partnership between Delaware businesses and educators, working together to build a robust, skilled workforce ready to meet future industry needs. VR staff and transition students participated in the Delaware Pathways Conference held in April. Additionally, two VR transition students presented a break-out session on self-advocacy and self-determination. The audience was impressed by their stories and their determination to make a difference.

Parent Information Sessions – VR hosted evening information session for students and their families. Families learned about all components of DVI including VR, Transition, Education, Technology Center, Independent Living, Instructional and Resource Material Center, and Volunteer opportunities. Topics included how to navigate the education system, career and college discussions, what to expect from the adult system, FAFSA, financial coaching and much more.



Transition Spring Break Program – VR hosted another successful spring break program for transition students ranging in age from 14-19. This year participants engaged in activities focused on daily living, employment and assistive technology. The students traveled to the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) in Baltimore, Maryland where they spent the day exploring new technology and participated in Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) activities.

Level Up in Wichita, KS – VR supported several high school students to attend the Level Up Conference in Wichita, KS during the summer of FFY2018. Level Up is a week-long training program for students across the nation, who are blind or visually impaired. Located on the Wichita State University Campus, the high school experience is designed to prepare students to successfully transition to college or career. Those who attended explored new

technology and various careers. Additionally, students were connected with a mentor from their industry of interest and were provided with a free laptop.

Summer Youth Employment Opportunities – Eleven transition students spent their summer engaged in workplace learning experiences made possible by community partners and government entities. This year participants worked with Habitat for Humanity, New Castle County Government, the State of Delaware and the City of Wilmington.

Graduation Celebration – DVI hosted a celebration to recognize the accomplishments of participants who graduated from middle school, high school and college; those who completed the Summer Skills Academy; and, some completed internships. The Keynote Speaker, Jamie Meyer, shared her journey as a visually impaired professional ballet dancer with First State Dance Academy. She inspired the audience to keep striving to meet their goals despite their varying abilities.



Another Successful Camp Abilities Delaware Week – Camp Abilities Delaware is part of an international organization of educational adaptive-sports camps for DVI consumers between the age of 5 and 21. Once again, the day camp was held at Killens Pond State Park and staffed with volunteers who are certified Teachers for the Visually Impaired and Orientation and Mobility Specialists. The volunteers spend their summers assisting the camps taking place throughout the U.S. and South America. Thirty-three students attended the 2018 camp where they were introduced to a variety of sports, including cross-country running, field events, golf, football, and much more. Designed for transitioning youth, the educational component includes work-related topics including careers, work readiness activities, teambuilding, and conflict resolution. The purpose of the camp is to encourage physical activity, develop awareness of health and wellness, enhance teamwork skills and improve confidence and self-esteem.

Disability Mentoring Day – VR staff partnered with local school districts, the University of Delaware, and the Department of Health & Social Services, to plan and implement Disability Mentoring Day in New Castle County in October 2017. Four students from DVI participated in the one-day event, which focused on employment preparation and career development for students with disabilities. During lunch, local businesses participated on a panel about employment, followed by small-group discussions with the youth.

Beach House Weekend – Each year DVI partners with the Children’s Beach House in Lewes, Delaware, to host a weekend of learning disguised as fun. The weekend also provides plenty of opportunities for students to naturally transfer skills considered useful and marketable in the workplace. The environment allows for fun, practical ways to practice and observe Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) skills. ECC is specialized instruction designed to compensate for decreased opportunity to learn incidentally and/or through visual observation. Due to the program success, DVI plans to add a second weekend during the first quarter of FFY2019. The weekend event, held in May, was attended by twenty-two students. Students participated in ECC activities that focused on self-determination, independent living skills, social interaction, visual efficiency, and compensatory skills. Activities included meal preparation, and dining etiquette, country fact hunt with assistive technology devices, Minute to Win It, Braille fortune cookies, Bobsledding, Car parts (exploring what you need to know), Olympic trivia, Pixels with Patti, talent show, rock-climbing, and bowling.

Summer Skills Academy – Eight students with visual impairments attended the DVI Summer Skills Academy during the summer of 2018. The day camp style program was extended to two weeks and held at BlindSight Delaware, a partner agency dedicated to Delawareans with blindness. The comprehensive program provided students with a variety of learning opportunities related to careers, living independently, assistive technology, leisure and mobility. In addition to DVI and BlindSight Delaware staff, some activities had guest presenters including the University of Delaware’s Cooperative Extension’s Nutrition Program, Art Therapy Express and PAWS for People. The chart below provides a snapshot of the program activities.



TYPE OF ACTIVITY	TOPIC
WORKSHOPS AND CLASSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction to VR ▪ Career Exploration ▪ Independent Living after High School
ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Money Management ▪ Food Preparation ▪ Assistive Technology ▪ Nutrition and Healthy Eating ▪ Pet Therapy ▪ Art Therapy
ORIENTATION & MOBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessed ability to transfer O&M skills to new environments ▪ Provided instruction based on assessments
FIELD TRIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Franklin Institute located in Philadelphia, PA ▪ National Aquarium located in Baltimore, MD ▪ Delaware Rock Gym located in Bear, DE



Mission Transition 2018 – Every summer for over a decade, DVI organizes the Mission Transition program. The program is designed to give college-bound students with blindness and visual impairments a real taste of college life. DVI arranges for the participants and staff to live to in college dorms for the career-focused multi-day event. Attended by nine transition youth, the 2018 program was once again hosted by Wesley College in Dover, DE. Upon arrival, the group received a brief orientation of their dorms before beginning the first of many independent living tasks; plan a menu, prepare a grocery list and go shopping. Throughout the trip, students participated in activities in the dorms and around town. This year the students visited a Texas Roadhouse restaurant to learn about food service careers. While there, students rolled up their sleeves, donned aprons and learned how to make the delicious Texas Roadhouse rolls and the

Steak Kabob entrees. Other activities included dressing for success, participating in mock job interviews, meeting college advisors, preparing meals, arranging transportation, planning evening leisure activities, and experiencing life in a dorm with a roommate. The jam-packed trip is rounded out with multiple education lessons (via games or lectures) conducted by DVI staff. By the end of the trip, students have been introduced to budgeting, networking, research, safety and reliability, controlling their social media footprint, tuition and living expenses, credit, loans, interest, and realistic salary expectations.

Business Enterprise Program (BEP)

BEP Strategic Plan Implementation – With the assistance of the National Federation of the Blind Association of Blind Merchants Entrepreneurs Initiative (NFBEI), BEP personnel and the Blind Vendors Committee (BVC) completed a thorough program evaluation and comprehensive strategic plan last year and diligently worked on program objectives during FFY2018. Strategic plan objective accomplishments include the following:

- **Policy development** – 11 submitted for review, 3 drafted, and drafted revisions to BVC bylaws;
- **Procurement** – Developed and implemented a procurement process and standard contract language for all locations. Ensured all OMB/Facilities Management regulations and operator responsibilities were incorporated into the procurement process;
- **Healthy Vending** – Continued to increase healthy options in state vending locations, increased customer input and feedback through electronic surveys and live taste test;
- **Marketing** – Developed communications and marketing materials;
- **Training** – Secured training and development of BEP-related topics for operators and program personnel;
- **Procedures**-Reviewed and implemented program procedures; and,
- **Finance**-Monitored program finances and internal controls.

BEP Explores Micro Market for State Building – The BEP blind vendors operate two eateries inside of a large state office building. The Delaware Office of Management & Budget (OMB) requested that BEP and the BVC explore converting one of the establishments from a café to a Micro Market. Often located in large workplaces, Micro Markets are kiosks that offer convenient grab-n-go options for meals and snacks. High quality food options are regularly restocked to ensure freshness. The Micro Market model focuses on consumer preferences, promotes healthier options, allows for greater variety, and includes locally-sourced innovative meal choices. DVI suggested BEP create an electronic survey for the nearly 1,000 employees who work in the building. At the very end of FFY2018, the three-minute survey was emailed to the building personnel. The survey analysis was shared with all parties after the survey close date. The next steps will take place during FFY2019.

Blind Vendors Coordinate Food Trucks for State Employees – The BEP food truck project continued on the Department of Health and Social Service (DHSS) Herman Holloway campus during FFY2018. The program success resulted in a project expansion. Midway through the fiscal year, food trucks were providing meals for a DHSS office park in another county.

BEP Open House – DVI continued to invite the public to BEP Open Houses to generate interest and recruit potential blind operators. Events were held simultaneously in all three counties and available via conference call. Attendees were provided with a thorough explanation of eligibility and training requirements and had ample time to ask questions. Five people expressed an interest in the program.

Healthy Options Integrated into Vending Machines – Through a collaboration with the Division of Public Health, BEP continued to introduce healthy vending options throughout the state using a strategically planned roll-out to track sales and products, gain consumer input and address concerns, and gradually replace items with healthier choices. By the end of September 2018, healthy options sales increase by 11%; 40% of snack machines were stocked with healthy options; and, beverage machines contained 50% healthy options. In an effort to gain consumer input and improve customer experience, BEP began using electronic surveys and live taste-tests to gauge site-specific healthy preferences and vending habits. Both methods of gaining consumer input have been very well received. BEP intends to continue employing these techniques at all locations as they adjust to healthy options.



Independent Living & Community Outreach

DVI maintains a registry of over 3,000 people who meet the division eligibility requirements and regularly communicates with those who wish to be contacted. Information is routinely sent in various formats, according to consumers' desired media preferences. This includes electronic, automated phone calls, Braille and the US Postal Service. DVI utilizes an electronic marketing system, to create fully accessible newsletters and announcements and an automated phone system to send quick informational messages. During FFY2018 consumers received 36 automated calls and 23 newsletters and announcements. The number of people on the DVI registry may seem high; however, data suggests that Delaware could have anywhere from 17,000 to 21,000 who meet DVI eligibility mainly because of degenerative diseases such as Macular Degeneration, Glaucoma & Diabetic Retinopathy. As a result, a great deal of outreach, programming and education efforts target older adults, who are losing or have lost their vision.

Enhanced Low Vision Services – Low Vision Services expanded to DVI's Milford Office in 2018. Certified Low Vision Specialist, Dr. Daniel Baruffi, provides low vision examinations on location on the third Friday of every month. This service provides a convenient location for Kent and Sussex consumers to receive their exams.

Older Individuals Who Are Blind Program Improvements

During FFY2018, the Independent Living (IL) program coordinated technical assistance from the Older Individuals who are Blind Technical Training Assistance Center (OIB-TAC), which was developed by the National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision (NRTC) at Mississippi State for the purpose of improving the operation and performance of OIB programs. OIB initiatives are state grants funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) programs, which are intended to help older adults with severe visual impairments age in place with dignity. Individualized, year-long consultation helps state OIB programs to develop program improvement goals, and strategies to meet those goals, through training, technical assistance, and action plans

OIB-TAC training and technical assistance activities are designed to work with state OIB programs to improve administration, operation, and performance of OIB programs by addressing:

- Community outreach
- Best practices in provision and delivery of services

- Program performance, including data reporting and analysis
- Financial and management practices, including administrative compliance

All activities are designed to improve the operation and performance of OIB programs through improved community outreach, use of best practices in the provision of services, improved data reporting and analysis, and stronger financial and management practices. The OIB-TAC team used a systematic, multi-faceted approach to providing technical assistance. The beginning of the process was dedicated to discovery and evaluation; part two consisted of planning and leadership development with administrators; and, the final component focused on staff training.

Discovery activities performed by the OIB-TAC team:

- A thorough review of best practices in the field of low vision services for OIB consumers
- Conducted three stakeholders focus groups to gather input and feedback about OIB services
- Performed comprehensive case reviews
- Developed a program logic model to identify technical assistance focus and staff training

Planning and development sessions with members of leadership:

- Developed strategies to operate efficiently and effectively
- Financial management
- Data collection
- Successful on-boarding practices
- Developing SMART goals

Direct service provider workshops:

- Developing smart goals for consumers
- Providing support and assisting those adjusting to blindness
- Conducting functional assessments
- Working with special populations

DVI Sponsored Community Outreach

Healthy Vision Family Night at the Delaware Children’s Museum – DVI and the Delaware Children’s Museum (DCM) co-sponsored the second annual Healthy Vision Family Night in May. In addition to participating in regular museum activities, dozens of exhibitors offered the opportunity to learn about maintaining healthy vision and accessing services. May is Healthy Vision Month and as such, the perfect time to raise awareness about eye disease and prevention. DCM and DVI agreed to co-sponsor the event annually.

Family Fun Day at DVI – The Division hosted its First Family Fun Event for all DVI consumers and their guests. Registration topped 145 for this “Backyard BBQ” that included yard games, board games, and music played by a visually impaired DJ. Feedback about the event was overwhelmingly positive. Many people expressed the pleasure derived from reuniting with old friends, interacting with DVI’s younger generation, or meeting families of children with similar barriers. It was invigorating to hear two parents planning a playdate for their children.

DVI & VRAC White Cane Day Event – In October 2017, the VRAC and DVI cohosted a successful White Cane Safety Day designed to raise awareness of blindness, visual impairments and white cane safety. The event was open to the public and held at Delaware’s newest public library. Attendees had the opportunity to visit

exhibitor booths and attend information sessions. The celebration also included the VRAC presentation of two awards recognizing achievements in advocacy and education.

Independent Living Workshops – The DVI Independent Living program coordinated workshops nearly every month throughout FFY2018. The topics are chosen to meet the needs of people with visual impairments; however, most are very suitable for all people with disabilities so are advertised to the public as well as the DVI registry. The majority of workshops were offered in person or by conference call to provide flexibility for all Delaware residents. Examples of FFY2018 workshops include: Labeling and Organization, Accessible Publications, Emergency Preparedness, and DE Emergency System for People with Disabilities, and Accessible Mainstream Electronics.

Social Media – DVI uses Facebook to connect with the general public and reach those who other people who may need services. The page is used to advertise workshops and events, promote DVI and share valuable information. DVI continues to increase the number of users, post reactions, and private vision-related inquiries. The DVI Facebook page was created to reach under-served populations and the public at large. The uptick in followers, increase in service-related inquiries, and innovative use of the site features prove this will continue to develop into a valuable outreach tool.

Community Sponsored Outreach

DVI staff are frequent exhibitors at community events, health fairs and local conferences. During FFY2018, DVI exhibited and/or sponsored more than twenty community outreach events; presented eight vision loss workshops; and, provided blindness sensitivity training throughout the state, effectively providing vision-related information to hundreds of people.

2018 Delaware Diabetes Expo – The Annual Delaware Diabetes Expo, held in November, is a collaboration between the Delaware Diabetes Coalition and other community partners and agencies. DVI had a very active role in facilitating this event, as it has annually. The Expo featured breakout sessions, vendors, and screenings for participants. The DVI Independent Living Administrator served as the Expo's Mistress of Ceremonies and facilitated a session on Diabetes Self-Management for the visually impaired. Additionally, members of the Independent Living Program exhibited at the expo, answering questions and disseminating information to attendees.

LIFE Conference – DVI exhibited at the annual LIFE (Legislation, Independence, Families, and Education) Conference. This well-attended (500+) event offers guests a variety of breakout sessions and an opportunity for people with disabilities and their families to meet with vendors, state agencies and community resources.

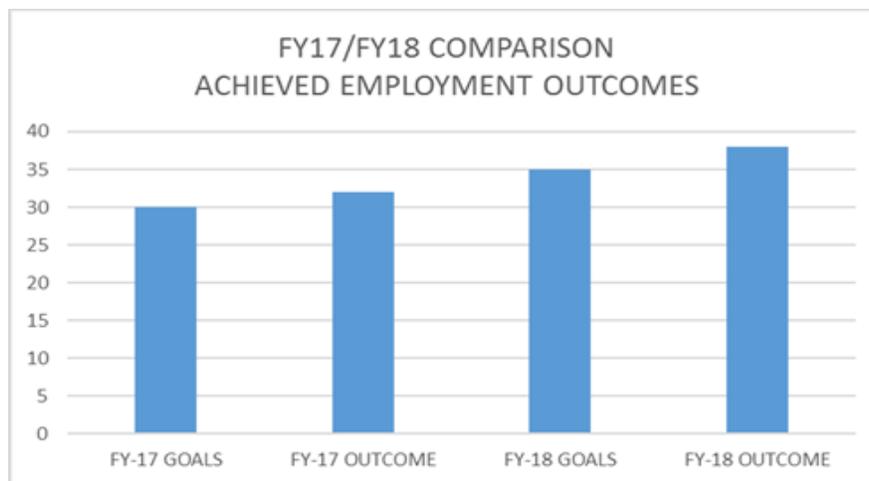
Vision-related healthcare professionals – Often the number one referral resource for people with severe vision loss, DVI routinely exhibits or attends Delaware Optometric Association's annual conference affording the opportunity to speak with approximately fifty medical professionals. DVI staff are active members of six large community resource sharing organizations. Each group offers organized time to learn about services and all are very well-attended. Collectively the groups have nearly 800 members throughout the state. Meetings average anywhere from 15%-40% membership attendance and group facilitators will distribute all information such as events and newsletters. The group environments have afforded DVI the opportunity to educate nearly 300 potential referral sources about DVI services annually.

Consumer Satisfaction

The consumer satisfaction survey gathers perspectives of DVI clients concerning program services, levels of satisfaction, and areas for program improvement. Historically, DVI provided traditional mechanisms by which to provide feedback; either in-person or on the phone. In an effort to increase the rate of response and streamline the data analysis process, the Division began using Survey Monkey during FFY2018. The consumers now are provided a choice of using the electronic system or completing their survey on the telephone. In addition to program-related surveys, DVI developed agency questionnaires to capture data related to customer service and agency interaction in regard to general contact and all services. During FFY2018, forty-five people who were closed with VR participated in the consumer survey either by phone or through Survey Monkey. Once data was combined and analyzed from all systems of collection, it became obvious that substantial flaws in the system skewed the results. The results indicated that nearly 100% of consumers surveyed satisfied in every category/question. Since this is significantly higher than previous years, we are left to believe our data is inconclusive and the integration of new and former systems posed more of a challenge than anticipated. DVI is committed to correcting the consumer satisfaction issue. A team has been developed to identify the problems and properly integrate the systems so FFY2019 data properly represents the way in which services are provided.

Impact Data

DATA ELEMENT	ACHIEVEMENT
Caseload	241
Number determined eligible during FY18	49
Number/percent new completed plans for VR services	46/95%
Total number of individuals in training/higher education	68
Total number of transition age students (14-21)	88
Total number closed with successful outcomes	38
Average hourly wage at closure	\$18.43
Average hours worked at closure	34/week



Success Story – Anthony Smith

Anthony Smith's visual impairment causes extreme difficulties during light/dark transitions. For example, he struggles when sun peeks through the clouds on an overcast day; when entering a dimly-lit restaurant from the sunny sidewalk; or, stepping into a well-lit hallway from a darkened movie theater. Although Anthony wanted to work, determining his career path was hindered by his visual limitations.

Anthony found his first job as a supermarket parking lot attendant while still a teen. He easily mastered the job duties but faced unpredictable lighting and uncontrollable vehicles on a regular basis. Even though Anthony enjoyed the job, he realized the risks far outweighed the rewards. He knew it was time to find a work environment more conducive to accommodating his visual needs. Anthony always had supportive parents who respected his decisions and his desire to find the right job. His mom knew her son needed a change and did what most moms do...sprang into action and helped with his job search. His mother's assistance yielded results when Anthony was offered a pizza maker position at Prichotti's Pizza, located in Delaware Park.



For many years, Delaware Park has provided countless employment opportunities for people with disabilities and are accustomed to providing reasonable accommodations. Additionally, the manager of Prichotti's Pizza Tom Spittel, worked as an Employment Specialist for several years. His role was to help people with disabilities obtain employment and assist employers to identify and implement accommodations. When he started his new job, Anthony expected to face challenges and quickly learned of a visual limitation that affected one of the most important pizza making functions; he was unable to see inside the oven well enough to bake the pizza. In addition, Anthony was experiencing eye fatigue by the end of his six-hour shifts. Fortunately, he was surrounded by people who knew how to explore solutions.

Delaware Park and Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) have a long history of collaborating on behalf of employees experiencing vision-related workplace difficulties. Upon learning about Anthony's struggles, Delaware Park contacted DVI to explore options for Anthony. DVI conducted a physical assessment of the job site and provided Anthony with a low-vision evaluation. Anthony was fitted with customized sunglasses; a low-vision aid to improve lighting issues. DVI conducted Americans with Disabilities Act and sensitivity training for restaurant employees so they gain an understanding of accommodations and realize the magnitude of Anthony's challenges. The VR staff recommended adjustments to the pizza making area to improve transfers to the oven. They also suggested a schedule adjustment to reduce the eye fatigue.

Delaware Park implemented all suggested adjustments and even went a step further by customizing the work flow to capitalize on Anthony's strengths. The new flow dedicated Anthony to preparing pizzas while another employee operated the oven. "Anthony enjoys and takes pride in what he does. He doesn't just make pizzas, he makes them well," stated Spittel, "I want to do what it takes to help Anthony succeed." Customizing tasks is a highly effective method for reducing workplace barriers with minimum effect on productivity. In addition, this method is representative of forward-thinking employers who are accustomed to creating accommodations.