



# VRS Community Partners + VRS Staff Forum

August 5, 2025

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Welcome to the VRS Community Partners + VRS Staff Forum!

- **ASL Interpreters** are designated as “co-hosts”, so they appear at the top of your participant list. If you need the ability to “multi-pin” please email [ann.macheledt@state.mn.us](mailto:ann.macheledt@state.mn.us).
- **Closed Captioning** is available. A livestream is linked in the chat.
- **Your name:** Please change your Zoom name to display your first and last name and the agency where you work. An easy way to rename is: 1) go to the participant list and find your name, 2) hover over your name, 3) select “more”, 4) select “rename”.
- **Questions and Comments:** Please submit feedback, questions, and comments via Microsoft Form: [Q&A Microsoft Form](#).
- **Technical Issues:** If you have technical issues, please contact [ann.macheledt@state.mn.us](mailto:ann.macheledt@state.mn.us).
- **Recording:** This session will be recorded and posted to the VRS website along with the agenda, presentation, and transcript.

# Agenda

- **Welcome:** Lori Thorpe, Director of Contracts and Partnerships
- **VRS Leadership Updates:** Dee Torgerson, Director, Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- **Pre-ETS and PBA Referral Numbers:** Chris McVey, Deputy Director, Disability Employment Services
- **PBA Referral Reminders:** Lori Thorpe
- **Workforce One Partner Access:** Jess Outhwaite, Community Partnerships Program Specialist
- **Extended Employment:** Meghan Hanson, Community Partnerships Program Specialist
- **YesLMS Partner Pilot:** Ann Macheledt, Staff Development Specialist
- **VRS Reminders:** Anne Paulson, Community Partnerships Program Specialist
- **Q & A:** Meghan Hanson
- **Wrap-Up:** Lori Thorpe

# VRS Leadership Updates

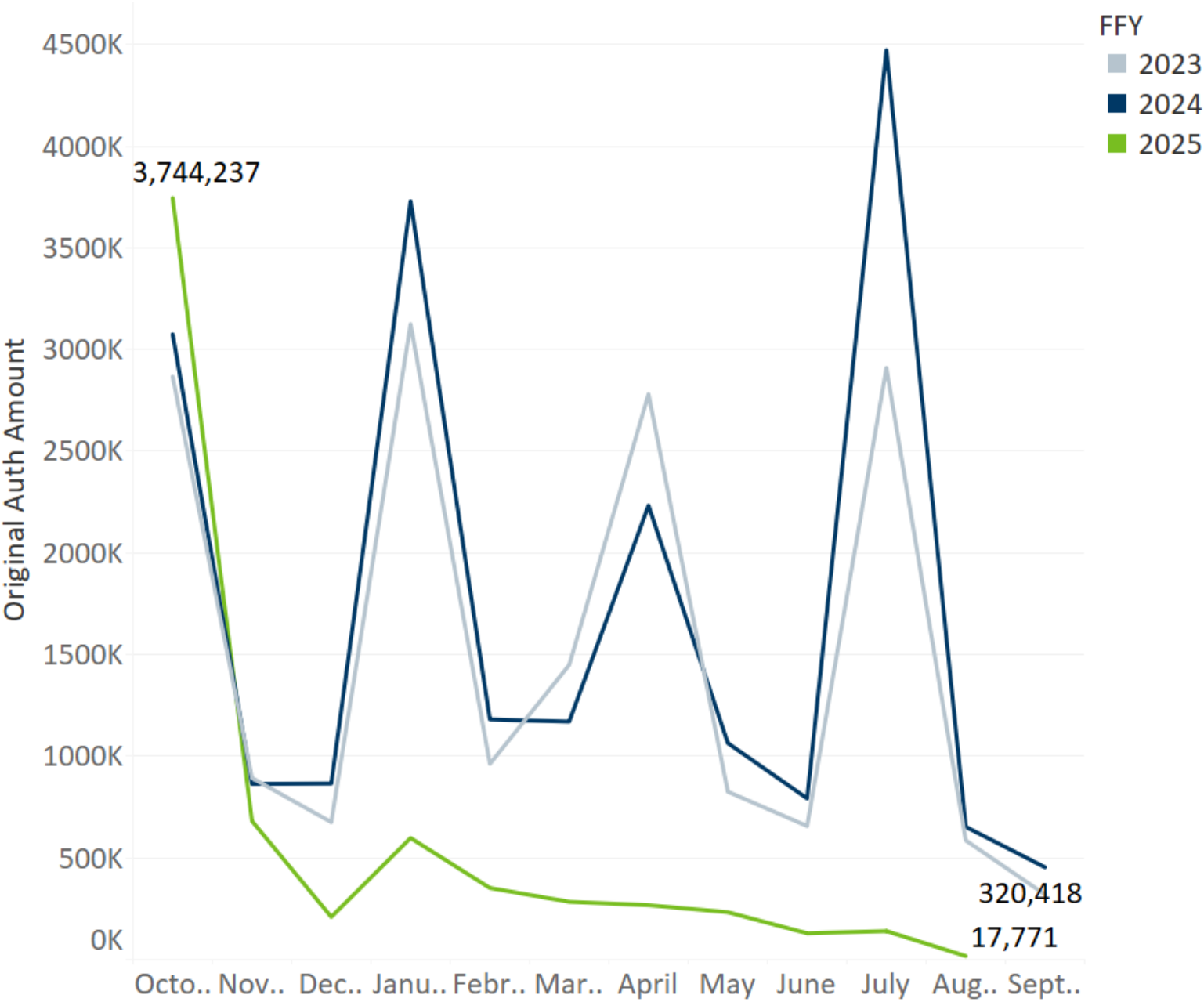
Dee Torgerson, Director

# DEED-VRS Budget Updates

- VRS continues to forecast and plan through the end of FFY25 (September 2025) and beyond into FFY2030.
- Our goal is to maintain a balanced budget while planning for long-term sustainability.
- The SFY 2026 Minnesota budget includes an additional \$5 million added to the State Match base for VRS.

# VRS Service Update

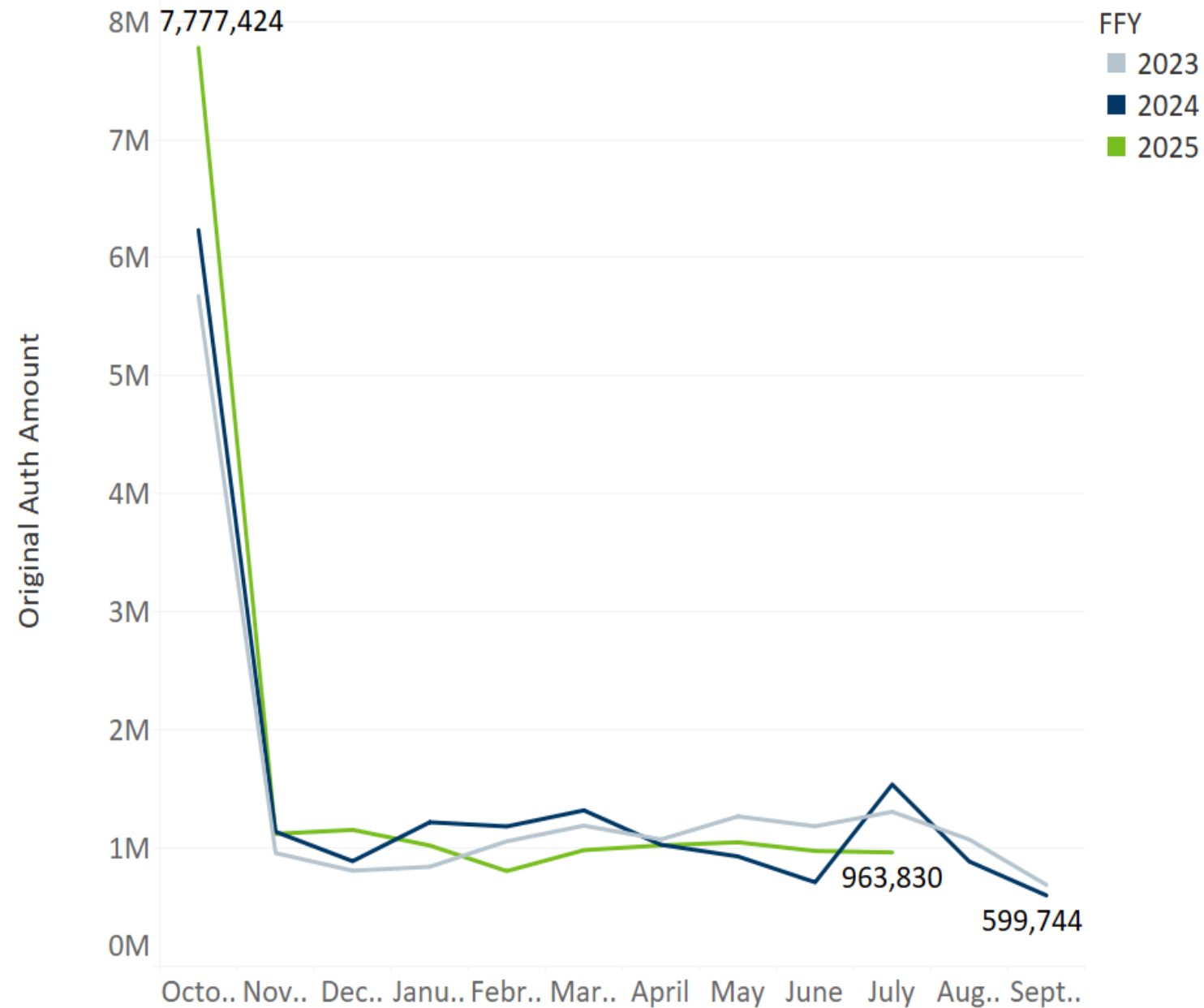
Pre-ETS Authorization Trends Year Over Year



Pre-ETS Referrals

Fiscal Year (10/1-9/30)	Original Auths Issued Pre-ETS	Auths Paid Pre-ETS
2023	\$18.0M	\$6.0M
2024	\$20.5M	\$8.6M
2025 as of 7/25/25	\$6.6M	\$2.8M

PBAs Authorization Trends Year Over Year  
(note this includes full amount for \$1 PBAs)



## PBA Referrals

Fiscal Year (10/1-9/30)	Original Auths Issued PBAs (adjusted for \$1)	Auths Paid PBAs
2023	\$17.1M	\$8.0M
2024	\$17.7M	\$8.7M
2025 as of 7/25/25	\$16.8M	\$6.1M



- VRS Priority Category 1 remains open currently.
- Priority Category 1 includes all individuals with three or more areas of functional limitation.
- We encourage all potential or new applicants to continue with our regular intake process and complete an application as appropriate.
- The waitlist will be managed by application date within the priority category being opened.

# VRS Virtual Intake Unit (VIU)

All individuals interested in vocational rehabilitation services are being asked to contact their local VRS office for intake appointments. VRS applicants are no longer required to complete the interest form, though it will continue to be one of the ways to connect with VRS.

Here is the link to the VRS interest form:

<https://www.mnworkforceone.com/Resources/InterestFormForAgencyAdd.aspx?a=100000170>

VRS staff should ensure the following are completed and made available to the partner placement professional with reasonable time to review prior to the signed placement plan meeting:

- Relevant information from Assessment of Vocational Rehabilitation Needs
- Sample Employment Application
- Invitation to Placement Team and accompanying documents

VRS Counselor will invite the job seeker, placement professional, and waiver case manager (if E1PBA) to the placement plan meeting. The waiver case manager may attend in person, virtually, or by phone, whenever possible.

# Invitation to Placement Team – PBA Referrals

## Please check which items are attached

### Required

- ☐ Relevant information from Assessment of Vocational Rehabilitation Needs
- ☐ Completed sample employment application
- ☐ Pertinent medical/psychological reports
- ☐ Form I-9 documentation verified\*

\*Form I-9 documentation will not be attached.

### Required if Completed

- ☐ Skills assessment test results
- ☐ Community evaluation information
- ☐ Resume / Visual Resume
- ☐ Independent Living Needs
- ☐ Completed Discovery Document

### For specific job goals

- ☐ Copy of criminal background report

# PBA Monthly Progress Reports



Please use this version of the PBA  
Monthly Progress Report:

[https://mn.gov/deed/assets/monthly-progress-report-job-placement-acc\\_tcm1045-487379.docx](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/monthly-progress-report-job-placement-acc_tcm1045-487379.docx)

- All invoices from partners should include the specific VRS office, address, city and zip code in the "bill to" spot.
- Authorization, Invoices, and Reports resources can be found on our website: <https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/partners/guide/contracted-services/billing/>

# Community Partnership Team Updates

VRS staff are completely trained in WF1 access

Current vs. new process

- Email vs. WF1 access

Moving forward

- Current partners utilizing WF1 Partner Access will be trained
- New partners – starting soon



# Extended Employment Updates

- SFY26 Contract Updates
- EE Referrals
  - Connecting with Extended Employment Providers

# YesLMS Partner Pilot

- YesLMS is a learning management system VRS has been using internally
- July 17th we kicked off the YesLMS Partner Pilot
- We have 10 partner organizations and 18 individuals in the pilot
- Pilot participants will provide feedback on the learning management platform by taking on demand and live training
- The pilot will run through September 30, 2025
- VRS will then begin rolling YesLMS out statewide.

# VR Learning Connection

The next **VR Learning Connection** on Cultivating Balance: Enhancing Well-Being to Support Others! is August 7<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 – 11:00a.m.

- All partners, VRS, and SSB staff are welcome
- Information and registration are under the Learning Connections tab:

<https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/partners/updates/>

# CP Conversations

The VRS Community Partners Team hosts **CP Conversations** (office hours) on the second Friday of the month from 9:00 - 9:30a.m. All partners are welcome.

Here is the recurring Zoom link to join us:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1607690258?pwd=bG4vTTR5TnhGSFdKd04zdFJyTm84dz09>

# Professional Technical Contract Updates

- All VRS contracts with our Limited Use Vendors (LUVs) expire on 6/30/26.
- VRS will have an open Request for Proposal (RFP) period in January of 2026 for Limited Use Vendors to once again contract with VRS.
- New partners to VRS can apply during the open RFP period.
- Partners who are CARF accredited have contracts that run through 6/30/2027 so they do not need to re-apply in January of 2026.

The VRS Staff Directory has been updated and can be found on our webpage under Contact Information:

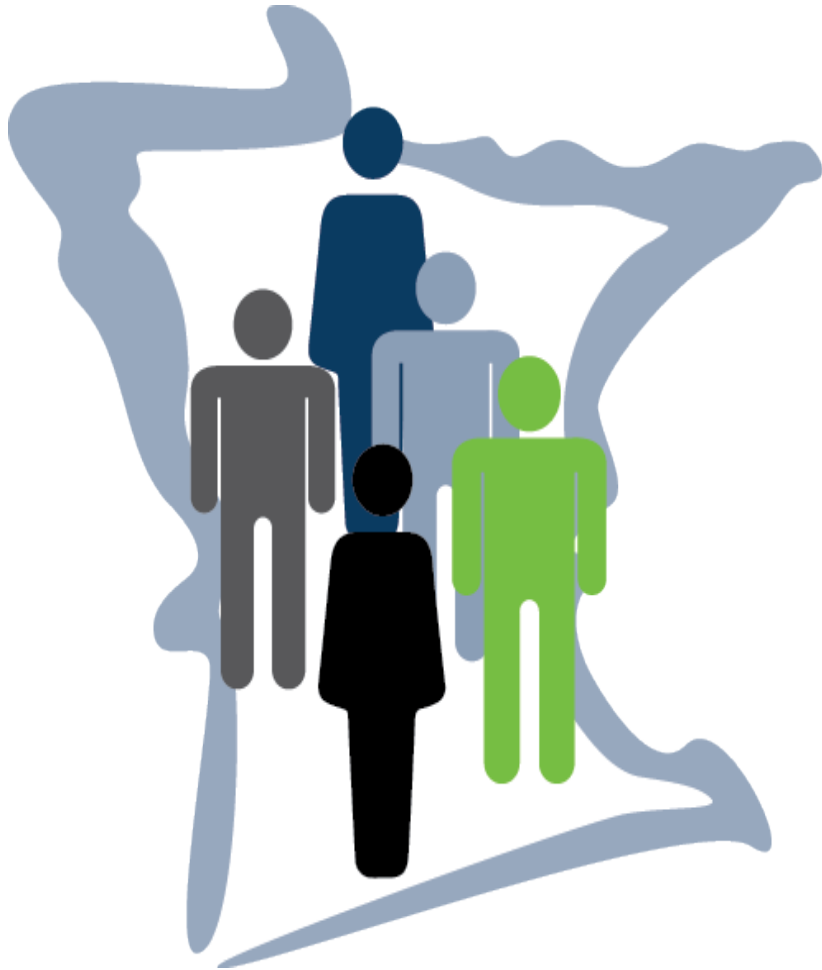
[https://mn.gov/deed/assets/field-staff-directory\\_tcm1045-131440.pdf](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/field-staff-directory_tcm1045-131440.pdf)

# Questions

Use this Microsoft Form for questions:

<https://forms.office.com/g/uZ78ZMdb4L>

# Thank You



*We'd love to hear your feedback on our VRS Community Partner + VRS Staff Forums.*

*Please provide your thoughts in the Microsoft Form below. The forum feedback questions are at the end of the form.*

[\*MS Form for Q&A and Forum Feedback\*](#)



# Funding Notice

The VR program receives 76% percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The state of Minnesota has appropriated 24%.