

A large rectangular area filled with a repeating pattern of overlapping circles and semi-circles in various shades of gray (light, medium, and dark) against a black background. A solid red horizontal band cuts across the middle of this pattern.

State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

2025

ANNUAL REPORT

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Letter from the Chair

November 2025

The Honorable Tim Walz
Office of the Governor
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. St. Paul, MN 551

Dear Governor Walz,

As the chair of the SRCB I am proud of the work the council has done this year. It was my first year as chair. I appreciate the council members, SSB staff, committee chairs, and members, and others who have dedicated their time to help.

It has been a complicated year, full of changing policies, new staff, and a lot of important discussion. From actively attempting to improve services to attending conferences, council members have learned a lot this year. At a time when there are a lot of discussions around vocational rehabilitation services, I hope the council's ability to advise SSB will improve life for all blind Minnesotans.

Yours Sincerely,

Samantha Flax, Chair

State Rehabilitation Council-Blind: What, Who, and Why

SRC-B Mission

The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, working on behalf of Minnesotans who are blind, low vision, or DeafBlind is charged with ensuring that State Services for the Blind is in compliance with mandates under Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act. The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind strives to ensure that Minnesotans, who are blind, low vision, or DeafBlind receive the best possible services under the law.

SRC-B Vision

The SRC-B will be a catalyst for the emergence of State Services for the Blind (SSB) as a national leader in the development, implementation and continuous improvement of quality service programs and education for persons of all ages who are blind, low vision, or DeafBlind throughout our state.

The SRC-B, in conjunction with SSB, will strive to ensure people who are blind, low vision, or DeafBlind are made aware of the full array of services available to them, whether aimed at adjustment to blindness training, independent living, employment or education.

The SRC-B will work to make employers aware that people who are blind, low vision, or DeafBlind have tremendous abilities for employment today and must be included in planning for the workforce of the future.

It is our vision that persons who are blind, low vision, or DeafBlind will enjoy full equality of opportunity, education, complete integration in the life of our communities and appropriate employment that fulfills each individual's needs and aspirations.

Letter from Director Jerde

Dear Governor Walz,

As the director of State Services for the Blind (**SSB**), I regularly report on our agency's work to the State Rehabilitation Council of the Blind (**SRC-B**). While these reports often cover routine, though important, matters — such as staffing updates, metrics, and goal progress — the landscape in **2025** was anything but typical.

Commending the SRC-B's Dedication

This year brought a host of significant and challenging circumstances:

- The award of a major grant to implement our **Evolve Employment program**.
- A rapidly evolving federal policy environment.
- A constrained fiscal outlook.
- A budget crisis faced by our sister agency, Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Because of these extraordinary circumstances, I wish to begin this letter by offering my highest commendation and sincerest thanks to the SRC-B members. Their willingness to tackle weighty material, engage in hard work, and make difficult decisions has been invaluable. Their support is deeply appreciated, and the thoughtful, clear, and impassioned challenges they offered throughout the year have unquestionably made our agency better.

Thoughtful Policy Critique

A prime example of the Council's productive engagement occurred at the **September 25, 2025** meeting. The Council received public comment on two draft policies intended to change the delivery of certain services, leading to a lively and impassioned discussion. Members of the public, including council members speaking as consumers, voiced concerns about the policies' potential ramifications.

What truly struck me was the Council's management of this spirited session. They consistently kept the focus on **finding a path forward** that would best serve our consumers. Council members diligently questioned our staff to fully understand the fiscal implications and the requirements of our federal partners. They worked to clarify policy goals and rooted those goals in the principle of ensuring that the needs of our most vulnerable consumers were at the forefront of the discussion.

Following thoughtful deliberation on the public comment, the Council voted to form **two task forces**. Each task force is charged with researching and recommending changes to both policies, with the objective of preserving fairness for all current and prospective customers.



Program and Service Advancements

Evolve Employment Initiative

Evolve Employment is our new model demonstration grant-funded program designed to make our Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) process more **person-centered, timely, and effective** for individuals who are blind, have low vision, or are DeafBlind. The initiative is about testing new approaches that improve outcomes for both participants and staff through **collaboration, innovation, and systems change**.

We are excited to be officially receiving interest and referrals. Looking ahead, Evolve Employment will continue to expand services, including:

- Intensive post-hire job stabilization and rapid response retention.
- Progressive employment, training, and skill-building.
- Sector-specific opportunities.

While we will monitor capacity in real-time, urgent job retention cases will always remain our **top priority**.

Strengthening Minnesota's Economy

We think of our workforce services as a catalyst for employment. This year, more than 80 consumers found jobs across Minnesota.

The average weekly wage for customers who found parttime work was \$414.43.

\$1,312.62 is the average weekly salary for our customers who found fulltime work.

What's more, we continue to seek new opportunities for the small business owners in our Business Enterprises Program. We are pleased that a business owner in the BEP operates vending and dining services at Camp Ripley – a first for our program, and a significant step in maintaining and building strong, viable business opportunities for the entrepreneurs looking to run their own operation.

Senior Services Growth

As Senior Services continues to outpace almost every other state in the number of customers served, our team has intensified efforts to promote skill-building for low-vision Minnesota seniors.

- The Senior Services team also successfully expanded the number of **support groups** across the state.
- Significantly, for the first time, the number of referrals from **medical professionals** surpassed self-referrals. This indicates that eye care clinics are becoming more familiar with our services and regard SSB as a trusted partner.

Communication Center Achievements

Our indispensable engineering team this year embarked on several projects to **increase the number of accessible audio books available nationwide**, and to introduce initiatives to help our Communication Center run more efficiently:

- In conjunction with the Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library, the engineering team **converted more than 400 titles recorded in the cassette era to digital audio**; these titles are now available for the first time nationwide.
- **Staff completed training to repair Perkins Brailers** so that we do not need to send these machines out for repair.
- **Work on new recording software** will bring greater efficiency and convenience to our recording process.
- And **new database software for Audio Services and Radio Talking Book** will replace our outdated systems.

The books recorded and aired by RTB continue to reach a listenership far beyond Minnesota. These titles, most of which are recorded by our team of skilled volunteers, are uploaded to the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) app maintained by the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled. We are proud that many of these selections feature Minnesota authors and books about our state.

In Braille, new shelving has greatly improved production, shipping, and storage efficiency, leading to substantial **time savings**. We are fortunate to have highly skilled new volunteers aiding in the high volume of transcription work.

In addition to its standard recordings for K-12 students, Audio Services took on several interesting and varied projects this year, including:

- Transcribing employee handbooks for a major employer.
- Recording the Tyndale Bible, a translation in Early Modern English.

Building for a Better Future

Making textbooks and school materials accessible is a core part of the work of our Communication Center and an investment in a stronger Minnesota. In the same way, the work of our Youth Services team continues to prepare Minnesota's blind, DeafBlind, and low vision young adults for a future of possibilities. Two peer ambassadors created special events that gave students opportunities to share strategies and experience. Several programs, including collaboration with Wilderness Inquiry, provided our students with the chance to learn advocacy and problem solving skills, while enjoying Minnesota's beautiful landscapes.

Throughout this year, we have kept our focus on serving our customers, even in the midst of a complex fiscal and policy environment. All through the year, in the questions asked, in the issues raised, the debates held, and the actions taken, this council has been steadfast in keeping customer needs and services front and center. I am proud of the work that SSB staff and council have done throughout this year to advance the goals, achievements, access, and independence of those we serve.

Respectfully Submitted,
Natasha Jerde, Director, State Services for the Blind

Beyond the Job Search, The Critical Importance of Retention

By SSB Staff

“Across all of our programs and services we want to continually evolve so that we are addressing needs and offering solutions that make sense for people in their lives today. The Evolve Employment demonstration project gives us the chance to focus on being proactive, agile, and solutions-driven.”

For many blind, DeafBlind, and low vision Minnesotans, the road to finding a job can be a long and arduous one. That’s why it can be especially devastating to meet with unexpected accessibility barriers after landing that job. Even as the SRC-B has paid close attention to the successful employment outcomes of our workforce team, council members recognize that job retention is just as crucial in the employment picture.

“One of the most heartbreaking experiences I’ve gone through in my career,” says DIF Grant Manager Dacia Van Alstine, *“are those situations where a customer who worked so hard to get a job, can’t stay in that job because of an accommodation issue that couldn’t get resolved.”*

“We would do everything we could to make sure that our customers and their employers could resolve accessibility issues, but it would still happen that customers couldn’t stay in a position.”

An equally difficult situation that Dacia remembers from her work as an employment specialist with SSB is that of someone losing their job because of vision loss. *“Often, we would hear of people retiring early because they didn’t think they’d be able to continue in their job,”* Dacia says, *“Experiencing even some vision loss, when it impacts your job, can be frightening and overwhelming. Sometimes, not knowing what else to do, people give up on working because they don’t know that there’s help out there.”*

“When we developed our Evolve Employment project, retention was an issue we knew we wanted to address,” said SSB Director Natasha Jerde, *“We especially wanted to reach those individuals who might not fit eligibility requirements for our typical workforce services, but who need some help because of vision loss. When thinking about retention, we knew we wanted to create a process where we would be able to help employees before they took that drastic step of leaving their job.”*

Callie McInnes, retention Specialist for the Evolve Employment program, noted that the grant was designed to address barriers in the typical vocational rehabilitation model. *“In these situations, often, time is of the essence,”* she says, *“Sometimes, people want to handle the situation on their own, or they are hesitant to reach out, so that by the time they do, the situation is critical and the frustration is high.”*

“The typical VR process often requires more time,” she reflects, *“And what’s needed in these situations is the ability to act quickly.”*

Callie has already begun working with customers to find retention solutions. She’s also working with the Evolve Employment team to get a hotline up and running. *“It will be a way for people to reach us quickly and easily,”* Callie notes, *“We can then respond quickly and see how we can help.”*

Even as the program is still in early stages of rollout, the feedback from both employees and employers has been positive. *“Employees have said it’s a relief to have someone on their side when a job issue comes up or when they’re navigating how to ask for an accommodation after noticing changes in their vision,”* Callie says.

“Employers have shared that having a direct point of contact who can help problem-solve makes a big difference,” she adds.

As Callie works with the rest of the Evolve Employment team in launching this demonstration model, the benefits are already clear. *“Retention is at the heart of Evolve Employment’s goals. It’s about more than helping someone get a new job. It’s about reducing barriers so people can succeed and stay in the jobs they have,”* she says.

“We aim to provide proactive supports and respond at the pace needed to make a real difference,” she continues, *“In traditional VR, businesses often move faster than the VR process allows, not because we don’t want to move quickly, but because of the systematic barriers in place. The rapid response piece is key: meet the person where their at, walk with them right away, expand support if needed, and create a way to link them to the courtesy services that SSB already offers.”*

“At SSB, our watchword has been “evolve,”” Director Jerde says, *“Across all of our programs and services we want to continually evolve so that we are addressing needs and offering solutions that make sense for people in their lives today. The Evolve Employment demonstration project gives us the chance to focus on being proactive, agile, and solutions-driven.”*



COMMUNICATION CENTER COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Charge

The product of this committee consists of reports to the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, containing specific strategies for increasing and improving Communication Center services as well as making visible the accomplishments of the past year.

Committee Activities for 2024-2025

The efforts of this committee are greatly enhanced by the extremely active participation of Communication Center section supervisors and managers. The committee wishes to express our thanks for their efforts and time. Rather than receiving extended general presentations at each meeting, the staff prepares what we have come to refer to as “preview reports” before each meeting. This permits us to concentrate more on asking questions and engaging in meaningful discussion during each meeting. We appreciate the staff effort to produce these reports for us.

This committee held three virtual meetings during the 2024-2025 term. In an effort to understand the services provided by the Communication Center and make recommendations, the following topics were covered in depth at each meeting:

- 12/19/2024 – Gather Ideas for Future Topics and have presentation from Dave Andrews on the new Radio Talking Book app. One of the features is the ability to play Radio Talking Book archives at faster speeds. He requested input from the committee on the specific speeds to be added.
- 3/27/2025 – We received a detailed presentation regarding braille production from Jay Maruska.
- 5/27/2025 – Presentation from Dave Andrews on the new electronic braille format standard that includes some mark-up language as well as permitting translated braille documents to correctly flow onto braille displays having different line lengths.

The Communication Center provides an important service to blind and other print-disabled people, and it plays a significant role in the education of blind children as well as other children with disabilities that prevent them from reading print. This committee attempts to play a meaningful role in making these services as effective as possible.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Charge

This committee exists to support and advise SSB regarding measuring the outcomes realized by the recipients of training in adjustment to blindness and technology. This committee will provide input to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and the full Council for consideration in the development of annual goals and priorities in conjunction with SSB and will monitor those goals and priorities throughout the year.

Summary of Recommendations

The primary work product of this committee was to bring to the council recommendations on key measures to improve the response rate for the quarterly community partners survey administered to customers. Persistent low response rates limit our ability to gauge the effectiveness of community partners and hold them accountable for the services they provide.

In 2023 our committee identified survey timing as a major barrier to achieving higher response rates; however, the existing manual survey distribution process still prevents efficient, timely outreach. Consequently, the committee believes outside expertise is critical to address this ongoing challenge. Additionally, we have now identified the importance of providing surveys in each customer's first or preferred language—an approach that supports broader participation and more representative feedback.

- Key barriers identified include the timing of the survey and the manual distribution process. The committee recommends the following actions to improve response rates and inclusivity:
- Reinstate the Phone Survey Method: Phone surveys have historically yielded higher response rates and more detailed feedback. The committee recommends contracting an external provider due to SSB's limited staffing.
- Engage an Outside Consultant: An external consultant should evaluate the current survey methods, suggest modernizations, and improve consistency, particularly around timing. This would help in collecting more comprehensive data, possibly including focus groups.
- Provide Surveys in Customers' Preferred Languages: To ensure accessibility and broaden participation, surveys should be provided in customers' preferred languages, such as Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.

In conclusion, these strategies aim to improve data quality, ensuring that blind and low vision individuals receive high-quality services. The committee requests an update on these recommendations by the end of 2025.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND GOALS AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE

Charge

This committee exists to carry out specific duties contained in federal regulation for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. These include:

1. Review the analysis of the consumer satisfaction with:
 - The functions of the Department of Employment and Economic Development,
 - Vocational Rehabilitation services provided within the state (except adjustment to blindness and technology services), and
 - The employment outcomes of persons served.
2. In collaboration with SSB, evaluate the extent to which SSB achieved its goals and priorities, strategies used, and factors that impeded success and performance on the federal standards and indicators.
3. Jointly with other committees of the Council, and in partnership with SSB, develop and revise an annual statement of goals and priorities.
4. Evaluate and propose changes to the annual satisfaction process, which might include hosting focus groups.

The product of this committee must include a statement of goals and priorities, a customer satisfaction report, and a joint report with SSB on progress made in improving the effectiveness of the VR program, including progress concerning goals and priorities. Quarterly progress shall be reported to the Council.

Part I

State's Performance Under the Performance Accountability Measures of Section 116 of WIOA

Performance Indicators	PY2020	PY2021	PY2022	PY2023	PY2024
Quarter 2 Employment Rate After Exit	37%	36%	39%	54%	50%
Quarter 2 Median Wage After Exit	\$4,872	\$7,348	\$7,326	\$6,424	\$8,058
Quarter 4 Employment Rate After Exit	37%	35%	35%	48%	46%
Credential Attainment			34%	37%	31%
Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) Rate	25%	34%	41%	54%	56%

The Performance Accountability Measures represent SSB separately from general VR.

In PY24, SSB maintained strong performance outcomes overall, with results that remain above pre-2022 levels in nearly every category. While a few indicators softened slightly from last year's peaks, the broader trend reflects **steady progress in skill development and earnings, accompanied by slightly lower post-exit employment rates**.

While satisfaction and performance metrics measure different aspects of SSB's work, they often move in tandem. The **decline in satisfaction with how well services met expectations (from 86% to 76%)** and the modest drop in satisfaction that services helped plan for or maintain employment (**from 77% to 71%**) may partly explain the slight decrease in employment rates this year. Individuals who feel less informed or supported may be slower to engage fully in the job search or less confident in pursuing new opportunities.

Employment Outcomes

The **Quarter 2 employment rate after exit held at 50%**, down modestly from the 2023 high of 54% but well above earlier years (averaging 37–39% from PY2020–2022). Similarly, the **Quarter 4 employment rate remained strong at 46%**, just below last year's 48% yet still far higher than the 35% range reported before 2023. Customers are continuing to achieve post-program employment, though some of 2023's exceptional gains moderated slightly.

The **median wage at Quarter 2** rose notably to **\$8,058**, the highest figure in five years and a clear increase from \$6,424 in PY23. This suggests that while a slightly smaller share of customers found work, those who did were employed in better-paying positions, marking a positive shift in the quality of employment outcomes.

Education and Skill Development

The **Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) rate** continued its steady upward trajectory, rising from 54% to **56%**, more than doubling the rate recorded in PY2020 (25%). This improvement reflects continued investment in training and educational supports that build customer readiness for employment.

By contrast, the **Credential Attainment rate dipped to 31%**, down from 37% in PY2023, potentially indicating timing differences in program completion or challenges with postsecondary credential tracking.

Part II Customer Satisfaction Survey Review

The customer satisfaction survey for PY2024, conducted annually near the end of the program year, covers customers served January through June 2025. This report includes summarized data, while the full set of data will soon be available on the DEED web site.

The Committee reviewed the CSS results for PY2024.

SSB Customer Satisfaction Survey PY2024 Summary Results

Summary	PY2020	PY2021	PY2022	PY2023	PY2024
Q1: Satisfied with time it took to receive an answer	83%	84%	90%	83%	85%
Q2: Satisfied that counselor (staff) understood customer's needs	77%	83%	90%	87%	87%
Q3: Satisfied that customer given enough info to make good choices on employment plan	75%	75%	84%	79%	74%
Q4: Satisfied that customer had an active role in decisions about services	84%	87%	90%	86%	84%
Q5 Satisfied that services helped plan for/maintain employment	72%	73%	80%	77%	71%
Q11: Overall satisfaction with services provided	76%	80%	87%	81%	81%
Q12: Extent to which services have met expectations	71%	69%	79%	86%	76%
Q13: Comparison with "ideal" set of services	72%	68%	77%	72%	73%

Compared with prior years, PY2024 results show a generally stable but slightly downward or flat trend across most satisfaction measures, following notable peaks in PY2022 and PY2023.

After the strong gains recorded in PY2022—when nearly every measure hit its highest point in five years—most indicators have flattened or declined modestly in PY2024. The overall satisfaction (Q11) remained stable at 81%, equal to last year but still below the 2022 high of 87%. The same plateau is visible in satisfaction with counselors' understanding (Q2: 87%) and in customers' sense of involvement in decision-making (Q4: 84%), which are largely unchanged from PY2023.

The most significant declines appear in the following areas:

1. Information for Employment Planning (Q3) – Dropped to 74%, down 5 points from 79% in PY2023 and 10 points from its 2022 high of 84%. This is now the lowest level since PY2021, suggesting respondents feel less informed or supported when developing their employment plans.
2. Services Helping Plan for or Maintain Employment (Q5) – Fell to 71%, a six-point decrease from 77% in PY2023 and the lowest rating in five years, indicating a possible weakening in the perceived practical impact of services on employment outcomes.
3. Extent to Which Services Met Expectations (Q12) – Decreased sharply from 86% to 76%, a ten-point drop after last year's record high. This represents the largest single-year decline in the dataset and signals a shift in how customers perceive the program's ability to meet their personal goals or expectations.

By contrast, timeliness (Q1) and staff understanding (Q2) improved slightly or held steady, suggesting that day-to-day interactions remain positive even as customers express greater concern about long-term outcomes and impact.

SSB's results on the Customer Satisfaction Survey are also computed by the Minnesota Department of Economic Development utilizing the Minnesota Customer Satisfaction Index (MnCSI). Simply put, this index summarizes overall satisfaction with services by applying a formula to the responses for Questions 11, 12, and 13 on the survey. Using the MnCSI makes it possible to compare the customer satisfaction ratings of SSB with those of other agencies in Minnesota and with industry in general.

Customers Served	PY20	PY2021	PY2022	PY2023	PY2024
Average MnCSI Scores	68.9	72.0	78.2	74.7	72.8
N size	144	150	154	122	197

In PY2024, the MnCSI score was 72.8, a modest decline from 74.7 in PY2023 and a more noticeable drop from the PY2022 high of 78.2. While the score remains above pre-2021 levels, the two-year decline suggests a cooling trend in overall satisfaction. Notably, the sample size increased significantly to 197 respondents, capturing a broader set of experiences.

Assistive Technology

The committee continued to track the questions about assistive technology that began to be asked on the survey in the year ending 2015:

Q6 *Have you received any Assistive Technology from State Services for the Blind? This could be hardware or software.*

Responses	PY2020	PY2021	PY2022	PY2023	PY2024
Yes	64%	58%	56%	60%	56%
No	30%	35%	30%	35%	34%
Don't know / Unsure	5%	7%	14%	5%	10%
N Size	174	179	185	141	223

Q7 *Think about when you most needed to use your Assistive Technology. How prepared did you feel to use the Assistive Technology when you needed it? Were you very well prepared, somewhat prepared, not very well prepared, or not prepared at all?*

Responses	PY2020	PY2021	PY2022	PY2023	PY2024
Very prepared	50%	55%	54%	45%	59%
Somewhat prepared	35%	31%	32%	39%	29%
Not very well prepared	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%
Not at all prepared	6%	4%	4%	5%	3%
Don't know/Refused	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
N Size	109		101	84	119

Q8 *How useful do you think the Assistive Technology equipment that you received will be/was in helping you meet your vocational plan goals? Do you think it will be very useful, somewhat useful, not very useful, or not at all useful?*

Responses	PY2020	PY2021	PY2022	PY2023	PY2024
Very useful	69%	76%	81%	73%	74%
Somewhat useful	26%	16%	14%	23%	17%
Not very useful	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Not at all useful	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Don't know/Refused	2%	6%	6%	6%	5%
N Size		102	101	101	119

Additionally, the committee reviewed results from the three questions added to the survey in 2020 to address changes in service delivery caused by the pandemic.

Q8a *Please describe the primary method in how you interacted with SSB to receive your services.*

Responses	PY2020	PY2021	PY2022	PY2023	PY2024
In person meeting	10%	7%	10%	16%	18%
Phone call	44%	45%	40%	35%	40%
Email	29%	30%	30%	35%	29%
Online meeting (e.g. Zoom, WebEx, Skype platforms)	17%	18%	21%	15%	13%
N Size	163	174	177	135	210

Q8b *How satisfied are you with the non-traditional method you used with SSB to receive your services?*

Responses	PY2020	PY2021	PY2022	PY2023	PY2024
Very satisfied	34%	38%	44%	39%	41%
Satisfied	47%	50%	42%	49%	47%
Dissatisfied	12%	5%	6%	6%	6%
Very dissatisfied	4%	3%	2%	1%	3%
DK/Refused	3%	4%	6%	5%	3%
N Size	147	157	158	114	172

Q8c *Please explain how the process of meeting in a non-traditional way (e.g. Phone, Email, Online meeting, Other) went for you in receiving your services from SSB.*

Overall, respondents described meeting in non-traditional ways—such as by phone, email, or online platforms—as largely positive, with strong themes of convenience, flexibility, and accessibility. Many participants appreciated being able to communicate on their own schedules, avoid travel and transportation barriers, and maintain a written record of their correspondence. The majority reported that phone and Zoom meetings were efficient and effective, noting that their needs were met smoothly and that these formats saved time and allowed for more timely responses.

The most common benefits were efficiency, flexibility, and accessibility; the most common challenges were delayed communication, reduced personal connection, and occasional technology barriers.

At the positive extreme, respondents emphasized quick communication, supportive counselors, and the ability to receive services remotely despite geographic or mobility limitations. At the negative extreme, some expressed frustration with slow responses, lack of follow-through, or a sense of disconnection from their counselors, while a few cited technological difficulties or unmet expectations for in-person contact.

Notably, one respondent questioned the premise of the question itself, stating, “I don’t see these communication standards as non-traditional. Perhaps some SSB/DEED employees still consider them non-traditional?”—reflecting a view that these digital and remote formats have become standard modes of communication.

Verbatim Comments

Finally, the members of the committee read the verbatim comments elicited by the following two survey questions to determine if trends or issues specific to SSB were apparent.

Q9 *In your opinion, what is/was the most important part of the services you received from SSB?*

The most common responses this year centered on technology assistance (34 comments), meeting customer needs and tailoring services (26), help finding or searching for a job (19), provision of specific equipment (18), and orientation and mobility training (17). Compared to last year’s findings—which emphasized job search help, staff or vendor assistance, and education or training—this year’s responses reflect a noticeable shift toward technology- and equipment-related support as primary areas of impact.

Many respondents described technology help and device access as crucial for independence and daily functioning. Others noted that services were well-matched to their needs and that job search assistance remained valuable, though less dominant than before. Equipment and mobility training were also frequently mentioned as practical supports that enhanced self-sufficiency.

The overall tone of responses was predominantly appreciative and constructive, with many participants emphasizing gratitude for services that improved independence, education, or employment outcomes. Words like grateful, helpful, and supportive appeared frequently. However, a smaller but distinct portion of respondents conveyed frustration or disappointment, citing slow communication, unmet needs, or incomplete follow-up.

Taken together, the comments reflect a positive but uneven experience: while most clients view SSB’s technology, education, and training services as life-changing, a minority voiced serious concerns about responsiveness and accessibility—suggesting strong satisfaction with core offerings but room for improvement in consistency and service delivery.

A smaller but meaningful subset of respondents specifically mentioned **housing support during their education** as a critical component of their success. These individuals often tied housing assistance directly to their ability to continue or complete college, explaining that without help covering room and board, their education would not have been financially possible. Several respondents expressed deep gratitude, noting that SSB’s financial support “*let me focus on school more and worry less about bills*” and that “*without tuition and housing support, I would not have been able to do this.*” A few others voiced concern that such funding had been reduced or was no longer available, describing it as an emerging barrier to reaching their long-term career and independence goals. Overall, comments about housing aid reflected both **appreciation for its life-changing impact and concern about its future availability**.

Q10 *If you could change one thing about the services you received, what would you change?*

Roughly half of respondents expressed satisfaction or gratitude, indicating appreciation for available services. However, a substantial minority voiced **frustration with system inefficiencies**, particularly around communication, delays, or unclear processes. A small number were sharply critical, describing systemic barriers, lack of follow-up, or feeling overlooked.

The verbatim responses fell into six, primary categories:

- 1. No Changes or High Satisfaction:** The most frequent response was that no changes were needed or that respondents were fully satisfied with their services. Many wrote simply *“nothing,” “I wouldn’t change anything,”* or similar comments, emphasizing appreciation for SSB’s support.
- 2. Communication and Follow-Through:** Among those suggesting improvements, the most consistent concern involved communication delays and inconsistent follow-up. Respondents cited unreturned calls, long waits for updates, unclear points of contact when counselors were absent, and delays in receiving technology or training. A few emphasized the need for *“more regular check-ins”* or clearer communication about case status and counselor availability.
- 3. Service Access, Clarity, and Consistency:** Several respondents requested clearer explanations of **what services are available and how to access them**. Comments described confusion about eligibility, program limits, and counselor discretion in approving requests. Others noted inconsistency between staff in information provided or responsiveness, and a few called for more equitable or regionally available services, especially in rural areas.
- 4. Training Improvements:** Respondents commonly asked for **more or better training opportunities**, including additional technology instruction, hands-on braille and computer training, job coaching, and mobility training. A few specifically called for **in-person services to increase**.
- 5. Staffing Improvements:** Some respondents felt counselors rely too heavily on labor market data when guiding career choices. One noted that certain job goals are *“put on the backburner”* if not seen as viable, while another suggested counselors should *“offer more related career options.”* Some also recommended better counselor expertise in the areas of technology and cultural competence. Two Deafblind respondents noted difficulty in the reception area: one noted a lack of prompt attention when arriving in person and another said the office *“lacks essential assistive technology, such as a braille display or any kind of assistive technology for communicating with the receptionist when an ASL/ProTactile interpreter is unavailable.”*
- 6. Program Structure and Policy Changes** – A smaller but notable set of detailed responses raised **systemic critiques**, such as the need to shorten surveys, address long O&M waitlists, update employment models, or allow greater flexibility in funding and technology purchases. A handful expressed frustration with what they saw as overly bureaucratic processes, slow approvals, or restrictions on tuition and housing support.

Part III Review of Goals and Priorities – Program Year 2024 July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

D. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals. For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year as required by Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe.

Goals/Priorities:

Goal 1: Improve Partnerships. Increase interagency coordination with local and state workforce partners so individuals who are blind, low vision, and DeafBlind, and employers have a customer-centric, positive experience now matter which “door” they enter. The basis for this goal/priority is SSB’s Evolve: VR Initiative.

Strategies:

- **Implement an outreach and training campaign that increases the relationships and engagement between Community Partners and SSB Staff, so customers quickly receive needed services by:**
 1. Building a Community Partner search tool in WF1 so staff can quickly locate services providers.
 2. Hosting regularly scheduled Community Partner and WDU staff training sessions that focus on a certain service type and inviting partners who provide that service to introduce themselves and their services.
 3. Developing a schedule to regularly engage with Workforce partners to remind and educate them about how best to work with, and refer individuals to, SSB.
- **Develop and nurture old and new partnerships with entities that represent underserved groups.**
- **Develop a universal application and process**
 1. Create a digital, accessible referral process that quickly and easily connects customers to WDU staff
 2. Design an electronic application that is easy to complete and deliver to WDU staff.
- **Further advance and support the E1MN framework by:**
 1. Hiring a Multiple Systems and Pathways Navigator that works with students with significant disabilities, families, educators, and other in navigating the complex employment services program (including waiver services).
 2. Training identified staff in becoming benefits planning experts that can help individuals who are receiving benefits understand the implications of employment (both positive and negative) on their financial situation.
 3. Pre-ETS Coordinator delegates counselors to serve on regional E1MN teams who meet quarterly with representatives from the general agency, local school districts, and county case workers. This allows teams to build partnerships and implement the framework locally.

Review:

SSB has continued to increase interagency coordination with local and state workforce partners by increasing and improving our communications with VRS and coordinating with other state agencies. Activities included presentations and outreach events with the Governor's office and other DEED agencies.

In an effort to increase relationships with Community Partners and SSB staff, SSB's Community Partners team has added bi-monthly Community Partner Forums and drop-in cafes where Community Partners share information about the services they provide with SSB staff. Some forums have included special topic trainings provided by Community Partners. The SSB Community Partners team has created and implemented an interactive map posted to the SSB website where both SSB staff and customers can sort through Community Partners based on the services they provide and their locations they work within the state. This map helps both SSB staff and customers find options for services quickly and efficiently. Additionally, Community Partners have been given the opportunity to create 'elevator pitch' videos – short 2–5-minute videos introducing themselves and the services they provide. These videos have been added to both the interactive map and on a separate page on the Community Partners webpages and are available for staff and customers to view.

A digital, accessible referral process has been completed and is operating smoothly. This helps WDU staff be more efficient and quicker in their response to customers.

After further review, WDU staff found that it was not possible to design an electronic application for WF1 because the customer would have to already have a WF1 record for the application to go into their file. This idea has been tabled until there is a different option within WF1.

The Pre-ETS team has hired a Multiple Systems Pathways Navigator to work with students with significant disabilities, families, and educators as they navigate the complex employment services and waiver programs. Pre-ETS Coordinator did delegate counselors to service on the regional E1MN team and attend regular meetings. However, these meetings have changed and are no longer happening. The new plan is that there will be a few "pilot teams" that VRS is coordinating, and SSB will have staff involved if these teams have a blind, low vision, or DeafBlind participant.

As part of the Disability Innovation Fund grant, the new Evolve Employment team has a Benefits Navigator on staff who works cooperatively with WDU staff when benefits counseling is needed.

Goal 2: Increase the Workforce Participation Rate. Build relationships with businesses that lead to career opportunities with family sustaining wages for individuals who are blind, low vision, and DeafBlind. It is recognized that services prior to job placement in the individuals plan may include internships and work opportunities that build a work foundation which leads to meaningful and career path employment. The basis for this goal/priority is SSB's Evolve: VR Initiative.

Strategies:

- Redesign how we prepare job seekers and connect them with vacancies by implementing the Rapid Placement Model that places customers into their chosen field as quickly as possible by:
 - Reimagining WDU's employment services model so the framework meets the needs of customers, businesses, and staff.
 - Establishing a system and process that connects customers to vacancies quickly and efficiently.

- Better utilizing the WF1 Talent Pool page so job leads are easily shared with customers.
- Engaging fully with E1MN to develop and use relationships with long-term support providers to accelerate customers transition to those supports.

Review:

- SSB has continued to prioritize business engagement strategies that connect individuals with disabilities to meaningful employment opportunities.
- Staff have worked to identify employers offering career-path positions with competitive wages and to build partnerships that result in job placements, internships, and work-based learning experiences.
- Emphasis has been placed on early work experiences (e.g., internships, job shadows, and temporary work) as foundational steps toward long-term employment.
- The Evolve Employment team has supported this goal by:
 - Collaborating with employers to identify customized employment opportunities.
 - Working with WDU staff to ensure job seekers are prepared and matched to appropriate roles.
 - Promoting career exploration activities that align with participants' interests and long-term goals.

Goal 3: Create an agency that better meets the needs of the current and emerging workforce.

Strategies:

- Develop new, and nurture existing partnerships with entities that represent underserved groups.

Review:

SSB continues in the goal to activate overlooked workers. By hiring a second Outreach and Marketing Coordinator, SSB has been able to be at more in-person events to share information on the services we provide and reach more potential customers. Outreach has participated in the Governor's office Mind, Body, & Soul convenings as well as coordinated with other DEED agencies in their outreach efforts.

The Evolve Employment team works with new and potential customers in referring them to WDU services if they fit eligibility requirements. This team also collaborates with businesses throughout the state to educate them on the benefits of hiring blind, low vision, and DeafBlind employees.

The Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund (ERAF) has served multiple businesses with assisting in offsetting the cost of implementing accommodations needed for their current employees to remain actively employed as well as assisting new hires who need accommodations for their employment.

SSB has hired a Language Specialist who assists with effective communication between customers and SSB counselors and staff.

While concrete positive steps have been made toward fulfilling this goal, this continues to be a priority for SSB.

Goal 4: Marketing Work Ready Individuals to Employers. Identify and implement innovative and evidence-based practices, and service-delivery approaches so that individuals with disabilities have the same opportunities in the labor market as everyone else. The basis for this goal/priority is SSB's Evolve: VR Initiative.

Strategies:

- Utilize all available opportunities to encourage eligible employers to use the Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund for potential and existing employees with disabilities.
- Develop and launch a public outreach and engagement campaign using multiple modes of communication to broadcast to employers that hiring blind, visually impaired, and DeafBlind people is essential to solving their workforce shortages.
- Create a Rapid and Continuous Engagement framework so customers can begin receiving services quickly and sustain their momentum while they are engaged in services. This framework may include:
 - Rapid Eligibility Model
 - Rapid Assessment Model
 - Continuous Engagement Model
 - Rapid Placement Model

Review:

The Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund team continues to connect with businesses across the state to help offset the cost of implementing accommodations necessary for employees to retain or find employment.

Ongoing outreach continues in efforts to share information with working individuals and potential employees. The Evolve Employment team works directly with employers to educate them on the benefits of hiring blind, low vision, and DeafBlind employees.

SSB has made facilities improvements for community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) for the purpose of providing vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to applicants and eligible individuals, as well as pre-employment services to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for the VR program.

SSB has been hiring their own in-house staff to provide some ATB services. Specifically, we have hired two rehabilitation teachers, one for the VR program, and one for the Older Blind program. For that reason, infrastructure improvements were completed, including a cafeteria remodel into a rehabilitation teaching space, which have provided better availability to serve customers. This flexibility allows our customers to receive their services quickly and in a transportation-friendly environment.

Since the pandemic, a large shift was made toward a hybrid service delivery model. This means offering services through a variety of methods, including virtual. Many of our meetings and trainings with customers, community partners, and council members are either virtual or a combination of virtual and in-person. Technology infrastructure improvements at our 2200 University headquarters now allows for accessible hybrid meetings, which means our customers and partners can have as much flexibility in their ability to choose how they receive their services.

- The **Rapid and Continuous Engagement Framework** is in development, with several components looking to be piloted:
 - **Rapid Eligibility:** Streamlined intake processes have been introduced to reduce delays in service initiation.
 - **Rapid Assessment:** Staff are using tools and strategies to quickly identify customer strengths, needs, and employment goals.
 - **Continuous Engagement:** Efforts are underway to reduce service gaps and maintain consistent communication with participants.
 - **Rapid Placement:** Employment specialists are working closely with business partners to identify immediate job opportunities and match them with work-ready individuals.
- These models are being integrated into the Evolve Employment team’s service delivery, with a focus on equity, speed, and sustainability in employment outcomes.



DEAFBLIND COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Charge

This committee exists to support and advise SSB regarding its services to individuals who are deaf/ hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired. This committee will provide input to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and the full Council for consideration in the development of annual goals and priorities in conjunction with SSB and will monitor those goals and priorities throughout the year.

Projects:

- Planning for DeafBlind committee members to work toward a video for SSB staff and the public to showcase the spectrum of DeafBlind people
- Sought clarity regarding the Goals and Priorities pursuant to the DeafBlind Committee and a new plan going forward
- Assisting SSB with developing the in-house training for the Council and staff on how to better interact with DeafBlind people.

D-A COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Charge

The role of this committee is to advise State Services for the Blind (SSB) with specific strategies concerning its services to individuals from traditionally under-served communities. Additionally, the committee is responsible to provide input to the council, and both the customer satisfaction and the goals and priorities committee in order to develop the annual goals and priorities in conjunction with State Services for the Blind.

Committee Report

This year the committee focused on how to help workers and prospective workers who may need particular services due to being underrepresented in our community. We paid particular attention to those who are English Language Learners, we met with the new ELL teacher to hear about her successes and struggles, and we were impressed by her hard work, dedication, and skill. We also recommend having more staff working with this population because one person can't do it all. We encourage SSB to continue to improve services for underrepresented groups.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Charge

This committee exists to provide advice and propose strategies to increase the quantity and quality of employment outcomes for individuals served through the state vocational rehabilitation services for the blind system.

Committee Report

The Employment Committee reviewed data, gathered community feedback, and advised the SSRC-B and SSB about employment for the blind in the recent past, present, and future. The Committee found that major barriers to job acquisition and retention included (a) insufficient adjustment-to-blindness training, (b) digital accessibility barriers with job application processes, (c) digital accessibility barriers with technology used in the workplace, (d) driver's license requirements for jobs for which driving is not an essential job function, (e) problematic attitudes toward blindness, and (f) problematic attitudes toward intersecting marginalized identities that customers may hold. The Minnesota Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund (ERAF), which existed to assist employers with the costs of implementing reasonable accommodations, may have been a useful resource in addressing these barriers. Unfortunately, the dissolution of ERAF during the year of this report leaves no reasonable expectation of learning what long-term benefit ERAF could have provided.

The Committee has learned that SSB customers tended to have higher median earnings than the median earnings of the combined vocational rehabilitation agency. A common historical explanation for this difference has been that SSB customers tended to have higher levels of education than customers of the combined agency as a whole. In Program Year 2023, SSB customers experienced only a 54 percent employment rate six months after case closure, which leaves room for improvement.

The Committee has learned that there were some areas where there seemed to be some need for greater clarity about when customers should be classified as being in unstable employment versus stable employment. Sometimes, a customer may enter employment, initially be classified as being in unstable employment, and later transition to being classified as being in stable employment. The decision on when to transition the customer largely falls upon the professional judgment of the counselor. While we respect the power given to the counselors in this situation, we also notice that this creates unexplained variation in classifications as we attempt to interpret the job retention data.

One theme that becomes relevant in the case closure timeline is the concept of probation upon hiring and the relationship between probationary status. It is not clear that a consensus exists among vocational rehabilitation counselors about whether a customer who has been hired but is only in probationary status in that job has achieved stable employment. If a customer enters a job, has their case closed by their counselor, and then never makes it off probation, then they may become included in the group within the data set that is unemployed six months after closure.

The Committee learned about inconsistency in SSB's financial support for the costs associated with the acquisition of occupational licenses and certifications. In our April 2025 report, the Committee recommended that SSB explore more ways to help cover the cost of occupational licenses and professional certifications. The Committee also found a dearth of policy guidance directly pertaining to occupational licenses and professional certifications. Shortly after the report of the SRC-B Employment Committee about this issue, SSB created new policy in the College Student Handbook clarifying that "SSB does not support ongoing costs associated with maintaining certifications or licenses." The Committee further advised that, while this new policy may address

inconsistency, it may end up creating a barrier for customers whose employment goal requires maintenance of a professional licensure or certification prior to the point at which their case becomes closed. There will be some customers for whom initial licensure is part of an intermittent step on the path toward an employment goal that must be achieved after gaining other experience or credentials beyond that initial licensure. In this case, renewal of the initial licensure or certification may be required before the employment goal can be reached. This blanket ban may undermine the provision of necessary vocational rehabilitation services in support of certain employment goals.

The Committee found that economic downturns can present opportunities for customers to invest in themselves by attending comprehensive adjustment-to-blindness training. Adjustment-to-blindness training at programs accredited by the National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB) have been consistently associated with employment outcomes superior to those associated with other training programs (Bell & Silverman, 2018), so rehabilitation counselors should inform customers of these documented advantages. These advantages of NBPCB-accredited training programs may be related to the way they connect students with consumer organizations of blind people, which provide role models and mentoring that help blind people become successful. For this reason, Bell and Silverman (2018) recommended that vocational rehabilitation service providers encourage customers to explore the benefits of these consumer organizations. To help improve employment outcomes, Minnesota State Services for the Blind can follow this guidance.

References

- Bell, E. C., & Mino, N. M. (2013). Blind and visually impaired adult rehabilitation and employment survey: Final results. *Journal of Blindness Innovation and Research*, 3(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.5241/2F1-35>
- Bell, E. C., & Silverman, A. M. (2018). Rehabilitation and employment outcomes for adults who are blind or visually impaired: An updated report. *Journal of Blindness Innovation and Research*, 7(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.5241/8-148>

SENIORS SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Charge

The Senior Services Committee exists to assist State Services for the Blind to improve and expand services to blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind Minnesotans who are not interested in employment. The majority of this group is seniors. These customers face significant barriers to independence, but they can benefit from services which help maintain or increase their independence. Activities include identifying unmet needs, recommending services necessary to meet these needs and identifying strategies to remove or reduce barriers to their independence.

Committee Report

In its meetings this committee received updates from Ed Lecher, supervisor of the Senior Services program, and heard from staff in the Senior Services unit. Because the senior services team is at capacity, and because customers are very satisfied with the services provided, the committees work this year consisted mainly in hearing from staff and monitoring progress in serving Minnesota blind, DeafBlind, and low vision seniors.

TRANSITION COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Charge

This committee provides specific advice and counsel regarding services to transition-age youth (ages 14-21). This committee will provide input to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and the full Council for consideration in the development of annual goals and priorities in conjunction with SSB and will monitor those goals and priorities throughout the year.

Report Summary

The following programs, events, and services were highlighted during the reporting period:

Student and Family Engagement

- **Career Networking Day (October 5):** A “big success” with 65 attendees (students, parents, mentors) aimed at connecting students with mentors and providing opportunities to discuss employers, disclosure, and hiring.
- **College 101:** A virtual event held on November 25 featuring a panel of college students (including a PSEO senior and a technical college student) discussing their experiences. Recordings are made available online.
- **Peer Ambassador Activities:** The Peer Ambassadors coordinated Zoom hangouts, an in-person picnic (July), and a Winter Celebration (January 3) with 15 students. They also planned for future winter activities like ice skating/skiing and did a podcast with Blind Abilities.
- **Parent Engagement:** SSB sent a survey to families regarding interest in parent engagement topics.
- **Metro High School Bowling Event:** A December 11 event used as a possible outreach opportunity.
- **Low Vision Clinics:** SSB provided technology demonstrations at clinics in both Metro and Rochester areas.

Summer and Short-Term Programs

- **Summer Transition Program (STP):** 19 students participated, receiving good feedback. Five STP students subsequently engaged in summer work experiences.
- **Short-Term Program (STP) Collaborations:** Several sessions were noted, with particular mention of a collaboration between MSAB and SSB on the Penny Up financial literacy program (March 31-April 3). Many students were reported as being waitlisted for STP.
- **Outdoor and Adventure Programs:**
 - **Wilderness Inquiry:** A 3-day camping trip (St. Croix) for six students, a day canoe trip (July), and an August overnight camping trip (Afton State Park) were booked. A February 15 event at Fort Snelling was also scheduled.
 - **Blind Golf Clinic:** Six students attended a one-day clinic led by Angie Aulsebrook of USBGA in June.
- **Duluth Lighthouse Program:** Two camps were held in July/August for 14 and 5 students, covering ATB (Assistive Technology and Braille) skills, tech, O&M (Orientation & Mobility), and Self-Defense.
- **Other Camps:** One student attended the Envision Level-Up camp in Kansas.

Skills, Literacy, and Training

- **Financial Literacy:** Individual work and an event at STP utilized the Penny Forward Blind Financial Literacy curriculum, focusing on employment goals, earning, expenses, and budgeting.
- **Braille Events:** The Braille Challenge was scheduled for February 8 and later postponed to March 22.
- **Self-Advocacy:** The Sky's the Limit program (self-advocacy instruction, light tech training, career exploration) was planned, including a collaboration with MSAB.
- **Presentations:** Shane was scheduled to present on Braille Literacy in Transition at the Charting the C's event in April.
- **ATB Training:** Discussions included the availability of training through Blind, Inc. (now MN Center for the Blind), Vision Loss Resources, Duluth Lighthouse, and contracting with out-of-state structured discovery programs (Iowa, Colorado, Louisiana).

Policy and Statewide Initiatives

- **Supported Decision Making:** Discussions addressed SSB's role in supporting decisions regarding Guardianship vs. Supported Decision Making, noting that PACER receives calls for support and a state-level movement (WINGS) is working to enforce guardianship laws.
- **Collaboration:** Coordination with other entities included the Coalition of Rehab Agencies (April 7) and efforts to collaborate with State Rehab Councils.
- **Summer Employment Planning:** SSB works to identify students for summer work experiences by January, collaborating with counselors in April and May.



SRC-B COUNCIL MEMBERS

The members of Minnesota's State Rehabilitation Council-Blind, serving as of December 2025 are:

Connie Berg, Paulo Castro, Diane Dohnalik, Frank Eller, Sue Fager, Samantha Flax, Deborah Gleason, Ryan Haenze, Hannah Harriman, Thomas Heint, Robert Hobson, Natasha Jerde, Thea Kramer, Kelly Lemke, Pat McGee, Jeff Mihelich, Corbb O'Connor, Jennifer Points, Justin Salisbury, Steve Sawczyn, Ryan Strunk, Patrick Vellia



*Back Row, left to right: Justin Salisbury, Patrick Vellia, Rob Hobson, Thea Kramer and Corbb O'Connor
Front Row: Jeff Mihelich, Samantha Flax and Natasha Jerde*



State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

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State Services for the Blind's vocational rehabilitation program is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education with a state match. For Federal Fiscal Year 2025, the total amount of federal grant funds used for these services is \$12,243,684. The state match appropriation is \$3,313,729.

Upon request, the information in this document can be made accessible for persons with disabilities.

Equal opportunity employer and service provider.

DECEMBER 2025