



VERMONT

**AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES
DEPT. OF DISABILITIES, AGING & INDEPENDENT LIVING**

2017 Annual Report

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December 2017

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A Message from the Commissioner

Welcome to the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living Annual Report for 2017. As always, we at the Department are proud of the work we have accomplished on behalf of Vermonters. We are honored by the trust placed in us to set the pace for inclusion, independence and choice, and we are grateful for our partnerships with community providers, families and the people we serve, who push us to continue to strive towards excellence.

This has been a year to celebrate successes. In February 2017, the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) and its partners were recognized by the Zero Project at its 2017 conference held at the United Nations in Vienna, Austria. The Zero Project works for a world with zero barriers for people with disabilities. Vermont received the “Innovative Policy 2017 on Employment, Work, and Vocational Education,” international recognition for Vermont’s commitment to competitive employment in our communities for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Our Long- Term Services and Supports system earned Vermont the inaugural PaceSetter Award from the SCAN Foundation and AARP. Our Survey and Certification Unit received a perfect score from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for our survey and investigation work, ensuring quality and safety in nursing facilities across the state. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired successfully migrated to a new software platform designed to support their transition to a focus on careers and professional credentialing for individuals with disabilities entering or re-entering the workforce. We also kicked off our Linking Learning to Careers Grant, ensuring that we help Vermont’s high school population transition successfully into higher education or the workforce.

Our system also faces challenges. The continuum of care we have built relies on a stable, trained and effective workforce- from personal care attendants to home providers to registered nurses and clinicians. Addressing the need to expand and enhance our Vermont labor pool presents opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and older workers, as well as challenges to ensure an adequate number of workers to meet our state’s needs. As we work to meet

people's needs, we also seek to re-frame the narrative and the conversations about older Vermonters and Vermonters with disabilities to focus on capacity, ability, strength and purpose.

At DAIL, we must hold ourselves accountable, measure the outcomes we are able to achieve and work to improve process and practice. Our Scorecard work remains a priority, and we are proud this year to expand our use of the National Core Indicators consumer surveys across adult services and developmental disabilities services.

DAIL staff remain the heart and soul of our work across the state. Dedicated, compassionate, professional and innovative, they strive every day to represent our values and philosophy in meeting the needs of Vermonters. We are fortunate to have leadership at every level of state government which recognizes the importance of inclusion and independence, and to be able to rely on our partnerships with community providers to deliver a system of care which truly honors choice and community.

In anticipation of another great year,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Monica Caserta Hutt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Monica Caserta Hutt
DAIL Commissioner

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living

DAIL Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living is to make Vermont the best state in which to grow old or to live with a disability, with dignity, respect and independence.

We promote and support self-determination, respect for all, and full inclusion in the life of the community. Our principles:

- The individual will be at the center of all plans and services.
- Individuals, families, providers and staff are treated with respect.
- The individual's personal and economic independence will be promoted.
- Individuals will direct their own lives.
- The individual's services and supports will promote health and well-being.
- Individuals are able to work, volunteer, and participate in local communities.
- Individual needs will guide our actions, requiring flexibility.
- Individuals' needs will be met in a timely and cost-effective way.
- Individuals will benefit from our partnerships with families, communities, providers, and other federal, state and local organizations.

Department Overview

DAIL is a diverse department with a broad range of roles and activities. In our role as the State Unit on Aging and Disability, we support the Older American's Act services in Vermont. We manage individualized service programs that support choice, health, independence and quality of life including Choices for Care for older people and people with physical disabilities; Developmental Disabilities Services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and services for people with Traumatic Brain Injuries. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired help people with disabilities in maintaining employment and self-sufficiency. Adult Protective Services seeks to reduce the rate and impact of abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults while Survey and Certification safeguards the quality of care in licensed facilities and home health agencies. The Office of Public Guardian provides guardianship services to people who cannot represent themselves, and do not have family or friends to represent their interests. As a team, we try to represent the interests of older people and people with disabilities in pursuing full, inclusive lives in their chosen communities.

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living

Staff and Partners

DAIL includes 280 staff positions across five divisions and in the Commissioner's Office. Our partners are numerous and diverse, representing the diversity of our funding and our roles:

1. People...also known as consumers or participants: the people served, whose choices we support and whose lives we work to improve. The people are the focus of what we do.
2. Advocates: Advocates, family members, caregivers, and guardians, who support the people we serve.
3. Providers: Many our services are provided by community providers. Our community partners make a direct difference in people's lives.
4. State partners: DAIL collaborates with a variety of state partners, both within our Agency of Human Services and outside our agency, for example, the Department of Labor, the Green Mountain Care Board, and the Vermont legislature. They help to make our work more effective and efficient.
5. Federal partners: DAIL works with federal partners and funders including the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and the Administration for Community Living. Without funding from our federal partners, many of our services would shrink or disappear.

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

DAIL's recent accomplishments include:

1. Nationally, Vermont's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation ranked #1 among general VR agencies in the number of new applicants per million state population and VR employment outcomes per million state population.
2. The employment rate for working age adults with developmental disabilities who receive DDSD Home and Community-Based Services continues to be sustained at a high rate of 48%. This compares favorably to the national average of individuals participating in ID/DD employment services, estimated to be 18.6% in 2015 (State Data National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes, 2016).
3. The DDSD Supported Employment Program was recognized by the Zero Project, based in Vienna, Austria, for the ZERO PROJECT INNOVATIVE POLICY 2017 award. This award recognized our success in supporting people with developmental disabilities in full community integrated employment.

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living

4. Vermont was ranked third in the nation for the delivery of LTSS by the AARP Long-Term Services & Supports Scorecard in 2017.
5. Vermont was ranked second in the nation for services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by United Cerebral Palsy in 2016.
6. DLP Survey and Certification received a perfect score from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on their annual performance review. This rating shows that the Vermont State Survey Agency is providing timely, appropriate, and balanced oversight to a wide range of facilities.
7. Vermont was ranked #8 in the nation for senior health by the United Health Foundation in 2017. Strengths included a low percentage of older people living in poverty and a high rate of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) enrollment. Challenges included a high prevalence of excessive drinking among older people and a low percentage of hospice care use.
8. DAIL completed revisions of two major guiding documents for Developmental Disability Services, the [Regulations Implementing the Developmental Disabilities Act of 1996](#) and the [Vermont State System of Care Plan for Developmental Disabilities Services - Three Year Plan - FY 2018 - FY 2020](#). Both became effective October 1, 2017. These documents outline how Medicaid funds are used for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. New language was added to both documents to ensure compliance with the federal Home and Community-Based Services rules. The [Vermont Medicaid Manual for Developmental Disabilities Services](#) was also completed in 2017, coinciding with the new Regulations and the new State System of Care Plan.

Future Directions

DAIL will continue to be engaged in a wide variety of activities across our divisions and programs. These include:

1. An increased focus in DVR and DBVI on transition age youth and relevant performance measures, under changes in federal rules (WIOA). Continued expansion in DBVI for the Learn, Earn, and Prosper (LEAP) program for high school students. This includes workforce readiness training during school vacations.
2. Active participation and partnering in Vermont health reform including alignment with the All Payer Model (APM) and the Vermont Model of Care. Core considerations include payment reform, quality/performance measures,

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living

person-centered care, and service integration, with the goal of improving outcomes while controlling costs.

3. Work will continue transition plans that ensure compliance and alignment with federal HCBS (Home and Community Based Services) rules that apply to Choices for Care, Developmental Disabilities Services, and the Traumatic Brain Injury Program.
4. We will continue work with our own staff, partners, and stakeholders on performance improvement and process improvement.
5. DAIL will continue to work with partners and stakeholders to address the changing demographics in our state. These changes include an aging population, increasing numbers of people with dementia, increasing numbers of working age people with disabilities, decreasing numbers of children and youth, and increasing demands for health care providers (including paid caregivers) in a limited workforce.
6. Continued work on Supported Decision Making, which helps people with disabilities or cognitive impairments to make informed and meaningful choices about their own lives while reducing the pressure to pursue guardianship.
7. DAIL will continue work on the Linking Learning to Careers (LLC) Project. This five-year federal grant supports an innovative model for the transition of students with disabilities to early career success.
8. Vermont will work as one of ten states/jurisdictions participating in a five-year initiative to build a Community of Practice on Cultural and Linguistic Competence in Developmental Disabilities. The initiative will advance and sustain cultural and linguistic competence in our system serving people with developmental disabilities.

Results

DAIL continues to develop and improve our performance management and use of performance accountability. The DAIL Scorecard includes a variety of measures that document our performance:

<https://app.resultsscorecard.com/Scorecard/Embed/27950>

DAIL also contributes to the Agency of Human Services Scorecard. This Scorecard includes population-level outcomes of well-being for Vermonters established by the legislature, with indicators that quantify these outcomes. The Agency of Human Services collects and reports population-level data annually to the Legislature through the Chief Performance Officer.

<https://app.resultsscorecard.com/Scorecard/Embed/8131>

Adult Services Division (ASD)

Division Philosophy

The Adult Services Division (ASD) supports older Vermonters and adults with physical disabilities to live as they choose, pursuing their individual goals and preferences within their chosen communities.

Division Overview

ASD is responsible for managing a full array of long-term services and supports (LTSS) for older Vermonters and adults with physical disabilities. The primary source of funds for these services is Vermont Medicaid, the federal Older American's Act and State General Funds.

Staff and Partners

ASD operates with 37 employees located within the Central Office in Waterbury and regionally within district offices. Services are managed within three units: Long-Term Services & Supports Unit, Quality Management Unit and the State Unit on Aging.

ASD partners with a wide variety of organizations in managing services for Vermonters. Partners include:

- Adult Day Centers
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Designated Agencies and Specialized Services Agencies
- Home Health Agencies
- Nursing Facilities
- Residential Care Homes & Assisted Living Residences
- State Long Term Care Ombudsman
- Traumatic Brain Injury Providers
- Vermont Center for Independent Living

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

ASD has had many developments and accomplishments in SFY17. They include:

- Choices for Care (CFC) received a 2% Medicaid rate increase in home-based services in September 2016.

Adult Services Division (ASD)

- We used approximately \$800,000 in CFC savings to:
 - Make a one-time adjustment to Moderate Needs Group provider rates; and
 - Increase Enhanced Residential Care provider rates.
- We initiated a plan to create online CFC training modules for providers.
- We engaged with the [National Core Indicators \(NCI\) for Aging & Disabilities](#) tool that is designed to gather consumer experience data and can be compared to other states. NCI will be used with Choices for Care and Traumatic Brain Injury program beginning 2018.
- We completed the [Companion Aide Pilot](#) in June 2016. The pilot paid four nursing facilities an enhanced Medicaid rate to hire trained companion aides to promote culture change and improve the quality of life for people with dementia. Some positive changes from base line to November 2016 include:
 - 35% average reduction in use of anti-psychotics
 - 25% average reduction in involuntary discharges
- We participated in a Money Follows the Person (MFP) multi-state workgroup initiated by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to help states develop strategies to address critical caregiver workforce shortages. Recommendations will be generated early 2018.
- We collaborated with Vermont's Division of Rate Setting and the Department of Mental Health to finalize standards for in-state specialized nursing facility care incentive rates for Vermonters with atypical behavioral needs. This is intended to help facilities access a higher reimbursement rate for specialized behavior supports for people who need them and are "stuck" in a hospital.
- Vermont was ranked number 3 in the nation by the [AARP Long-Term Services & Supports Scorecard](#) for the delivery of LTSS.
- Vermont received the [Scan Foundation Pacesetter Award](#) for improving LTSS Access and Affordability.
- We hosted the [Frameworks Institute](#) in April 2017 to teach us and our partners more about the research and science behind how we frame aging in the United States. This led to an initiative with stakeholders to create a tool that partners can use as a quick guide about how language affects our thinking and provide example of ways to change language when talking about aging initiatives

Adult Services Division (ASD)

- We implemented a new home delivered meals screening tool with the Area Agencies on Aging intended to help identify people with the greatest need.

Future Directions

In SFY2018 ASD plans to:

- Continue refining a work plan to assure that all Medicaid funded home-based settings meet specific requirements in the Federal Regulations for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) regarding participant rights, freedoms and community participation, and person-centered planning.
- Launch the National Core Indicators (NCI) for Aging & Disabilities as described above.
- Complete Vermont's new State Plan on Aging, a federally required roadmap for OAA funded services in Vermont, effective October 1, 2018-September 30, 2022.
- Improve the Choices for Care and Traumatic Brain Injury program application, assessment and person-centered planning process.
- Continue the development of additional CFC provider training modules.
- Continue the "Reframing Aging" project in Vermont.

Programs and Services

Medicaid Funded Long-Term Services & Supports Programs include:

- Adult Day Health Rehabilitation
- Adult High Technology Program
- Attendant Services Program
- Choices for Care
- Traumatic Brain Injury Program

Older American's Act (OAA) Services include:

- Case Management
- Nutrition Services and Programs
- Flex Funds (State funded only)
- Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
- Information, Referral and Assistance
- Legal Assistance

Adult Services Division (ASD)

- Family Caregiver Support
- State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
- Volunteer Outreach (State funded only)

Other Initiatives, Programs, Services supported by ASD include:

- Aging & Disabilities Resource Connections
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program
- Dementia Respite Grants for Family Caregivers
- Elder Care Clinician Program
- Employer Payroll Support for Self-Directed Services
- Health Insurance Counseling & Support (SHIP/MIPPA)
- Home Delivered Meals for People with Disabilities Under Age 60
- Nursing Facility Quality Initiatives
- Online Direct Care Worker Registry
- Self-Neglect Initiative
- Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program

Special initiatives include:

- Federal HCBS Regulations Assessment & Implementation Project
- Governor's Commission on Alzheimer's and Related Disorders
- Money Follows the Person Project
- Reframing Aging in Vermont
- Substance Abuse Treatment Screening Initiative

Results

ASD strives to utilize the Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework throughout the work we do. As of 2015, all Medicaid services, including Choices for Care, are managed through the State [Global Commitment to Health 1115 Waiver](#) and the accompanying [Comprehensive Quality Strategy](#). The National Core Indicator surveys planned for January 2018 will provide quality and performance measures for CFC and TBI.

- [DAIL Scorecard](#)

Please refer to the following sections of the [2017 ASD Annual Report](#) for data regarding outcomes in these programs:

Adult Services Division (ASD)

- Choices for Care Program
- Eldercare Clinician Program
- Money Follows the Person Grant
- Older American's Act Nutrition Programs
- Traumatic Brain Injury Program

Adult Services Division – Choices for Care

Program Overview

Choices for Care (CFC) is a program covered under [Vermont's Global Commitment to Health 1115 Waiver](#). The CFC “High/Highest” option offers long-term services and supports to adult Vermonters who need nursing home level of care services. If a person is found clinically and financially eligible, they may choose where they want to receive their services whether it is in their own home, the home of another person or in a licensed residential care home, assisted living residence or nursing facility. Limited funding is also available for people who do not need nursing home level of care but do need some preventative or “Moderate Needs” services such as homemaker and adult day services.

Staff and Partners

The Long-Term Services and Supports Unit manages Choices for Care and includes 20 staff, 15 whom are regionally located to manage applications and clinical eligibility for people in their regions.

Many partners provide direct services under CFC, including:

- Adult Day Providers
- Adult Family Care Authorized Agencies
- Area Agencies on Aging
- ARIS Solutions (employer payroll services)
- Home Health Agencies
- Licensed Residential Care and Assisted Living Residences
- Licensed Nursing Facilities
- Providers of Personal Emergency Response Services
- Traumatic Brain Injury Providers

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

Choices for Care had many developments and accomplishments in SFY17. These include:

- 2% Medicaid rate increase in home-based services September 2016.
- One-time reinvestment of approximately \$800K in CFC savings for:
 - Moderate Needs provider rate adjustments (March 2017) and
 - Enhanced Residential Care rate increase (May 2017).
- Collaborated with Vermont's Division of Rate Setting and Department of Mental Health to finalize standards for in-state specialized nursing facility care incentive rates for Vermonters with atypical behavioral needs.

Adult Services Division – Choices for Care

- Contracted with the [National Core Indicators \(NCI\) for Aging & Disabilities](#) consumer survey, for implementation January 2018.
- Ranked number 3 in the nation for the delivery of LTSS and received the [Scan Foundation Award](#) for Access and Affordability.
- Initiated a stakeholder workgroup to identify potential payment and delivery reform for Moderate Needs services.

Future Directions

The Choices for Care (CFC) program continually seeks ways to improve consumer experience, how services are delivered and paid for, and to integrate with healthcare reform efforts in Vermont. Work in SFY2018 is expected to focus on:

- Continued quality management work plan related to new Federal Regulations for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) to assure all Medicaid funded home-based settings meet specific characteristics regarding participant rights, freedoms and community participation in addition to person-centered planning standards.
- Launching the National Core Indicators (NCI) for Aging & Disabilities, to assess quality and performance from participants' perspectives.
- Identifying ways to improve the program application, assessment and person-centered planning process.
- Implementing online program training modules for CFC providers
- Continued participation in healthcare reform efforts with the goal of improving the link between primary care and long-term services and supports (LTSS) and to identify a better way to pay for LTSS that promotes quality, cost efficiency, and access to services.

Adult Services Division – Choices for Care

Results

As of June 2017 (SAMS Enrollment Data)

	SFY17	SFY16 - SFY17 % change
Total Enrollments (high/highest/moderate)	5432	-1%
Home-Based Only	1707	3%
Enhanced Residential Care (ERC) Only	491	-3%
Nursing Facility Only	1892	1%
Moderate Needs Group Only	1342	-9%
High/Highest Only	4090	1%
<u>High/Highest</u> : Home-based & ERC % total enrollments	54%	0%
<u>High/Highest</u> : NF% total enrollments	46%	0%
% CFC Clinical Eligibility Completed in <30 days	93%	0%
MNG Wait List end of fiscal year	831	32%

New CFC consumer experience data will be available from the NCI-AD survey, expected to be available in November 2018.

More information about Choices for Care can be found:

- [Adequacy of the Choices for Care System Report – October 2017](#)
- [Choices for Care Reinvestment Report – September 2017](#)
- [Consumer Experience Surveys 2013-2015](#)
- [CMS Quarterly and Annual Reports](#)
- [Information At-A-Glance Resources](#)
- [Program Manuals](#)

Adult Services Division – Eldercare Clinician Program

Program Overview

DAIL collaborates with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to oversee the Eldercare Clinician Program (ECCP), providing mental health services to vulnerable and homebound Vermonters age 60 or older who would otherwise not be able to receive treatment via an office-based setting. The program was created in 2000, funded by a combination of Medicaid, Medicare, commercial insurance, and a state general fund appropriation. At the local level, designated mental health agencies (DA) hire eldercare clinicians to provide services, working closely with local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) to identify older Vermonters in need of services.

Staff and Partners

The Eldercare Clinician Program is coordinated on a statewide level by one staff in the DAIL State Unit on Aging and one staff in DMH. In each region of the state AAAs contract with DAs to provide services.

Designated Agencies Providing Elder Care: Area Agencies on Aging:

Counseling Services of Addison County	Age Well
Northwestern Counseling and Support Services	Central Vermont Council on Aging
Howard Center	Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging
Healthcare & Rehabilitation Services of Vermont	Senior Solutions
Northeast Kingdom Human Services	Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging
Rutland Mental Health Services	
United Counseling Services	
Washington County Mental Health	

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

The mental health needs of older Vermonters are growing as the population ages and the demand for counseling services and other age appropriate treatments increases. According to census projections, by 2030 over 1 in 3 Vermonters will be age 60 or older, and the number over 80 is expected to double. With growing awareness of mental health needs, increasing numbers of co-occurring disorders and substance misuse, people living longer with chronic disease, and earlier detection of dementia and Alzheimer's, we anticipate that the demand for mental health services for elders and their families will continue to grow over the next decade. In fact, by 2030 the number of older adults with mental illness is expected to increase by over 25%.

With this awareness, DAIL, DMH and our community partners are working hard to strengthen the Eldercare Clinician Program by ensuring efficient, quality services

Adult Services Division – Eldercare Clinician Program

across the state address the needs of the most vulnerable through the expertise of the eldercare clinicians. Together, we have developed the following measures of program performance:

- the number and percent of clients who reported treatment made a difference
- the number and percent of clients who reported quality of life improved

Future Directions

The Eldercare Clinician Program meets a critical need in our Vermont communities, serving some of the most vulnerable homebound elders with needed services and supports that they would not otherwise receive. We recognize the interconnectedness between mental health, physical health, and a person's ability to remain independent in their own home. Because of limited funding, community resources have not kept pace with increasing demand. We can expect these challenges to grow in the coming years.

Medicare is the primary insurance for the vast majority of older Vermonters. However, licensed Vermont mental health clinicians cannot bill Medicare for outpatient mental health counseling; only psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers and psychiatric nurses can bill Medicare. DAIL is actively advocating that Vermont pursue a Medicare waiver to allow licensed mental health clinicians to bill Medicare. This would provide more sustainable funding for mental health services provided by Eldercare Clinicians and improve access to mental health services by older Vermonters.

Results

In state fiscal year 2016, 393 elders were served (75% female, 25% male). Of those served, 36% were in the 60's, 35% in their 70's, and 28% were 80+. The vast majority were served in their homes (74%), although some were served in other community settings (10%) or in an office (15%). The most common diagnosis was Depression (45%), followed by Adjustment Disorder (24%) and Alzheimer's/Dementia (17%). Many people had co-occurring conditions. A total of 5,081 service hours were spent providing planning and coordination, clinical assessments, individual and family therapy and medication management.

Adult Services Division – Money Follows the Person Grant

Program Overview

In 2011 DAIL was awarded a five year \$17.9 million “Money Follows the Person” (MFP) demonstration grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The grant was continued through September 2019 with an additional \$8 million. The goal of the MFP grant, working with the Choices for Care Program, is to help people living in nursing facilities to overcome barriers that have prevented them from moving to their preferred community-based setting. The program provides participants the assistance of a Transition Coordinator and up to \$2,500 to address barriers to transition while providing enhanced federal Medicaid match to help rebalance Vermont’s long-term service and support systems.

Staff and Partners

MFP works hand in hand with the Choices for Care program and its partners. The Adult Services Division is responsible for the day to day management of the grant and coordinates its activities.

MFP positions are 100% funded by the federal grant. They include:

- 1 Project Director
- .5 Administrative Assistant
- 1 Data Analyst
- 1 Quality and Program Specialist
- 1 Quality and Program Specialist/Transition Coordinator
- 2 RN Transition Coordinators

Partners include:

- Area Agencies on Aging
- Adult Day Providers
- Adult Family Care Authorized Agencies
- Home Health Agencies
- Hospitals
- Nursing Facilities
- VT Center for Independent Living

Adult Services Division – Money Follows the Person Grant

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

Over the last six years, the MFP program has assisted 334 participants successfully transition from a nursing facility to a community setting. The State of Vermont realized a cost avoidance of \$2,243,598 in state share of Medicaid costs from a total of \$10,081,322 in home and community-based services that these participants received through the quarter ending June 2017. Vermont also received \$3,740,095 to cover the administrative costs of the grant (7.5 FFE positions, expenses and ADRC grant funding). Currently, \$4,482,959 in federal funds are still available to support the remaining service costs for transitions in calendar year 2017 and the administrative costs of closing the grant over the next two years.

Future Directions

Beginning January 2018, the MFP program will no longer enroll new MFP participants, the first step of the grant phase-down process. The MFP program has identified several key areas of improvement necessary to sustain successful living in the community for Choices for Care participants. These improvement opportunities include:

- Discharge planning from the nursing facility
- Affordable/assessible housing
- Caregiver capacity/supports

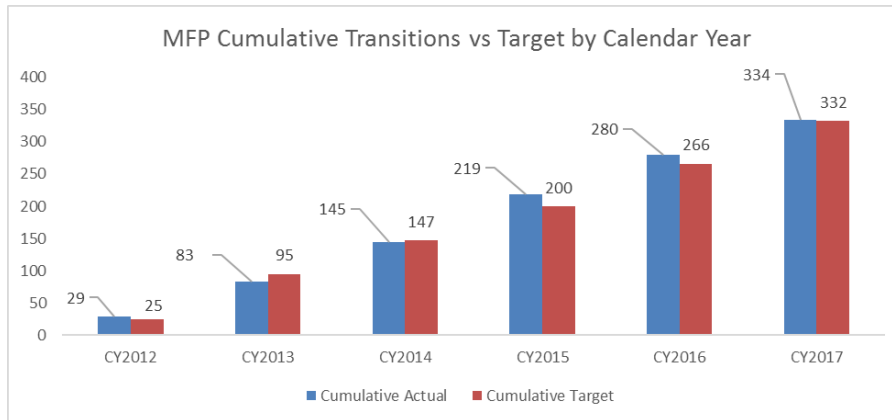
[Vermont's MFP sustainability plan](#) outlines a course of action that will use the lessons learned from this demonstration grant to optimize the overall nursing facility transition processes and supports within the CFC program.

Results

The MFP program focuses on two key benchmarks of performance:

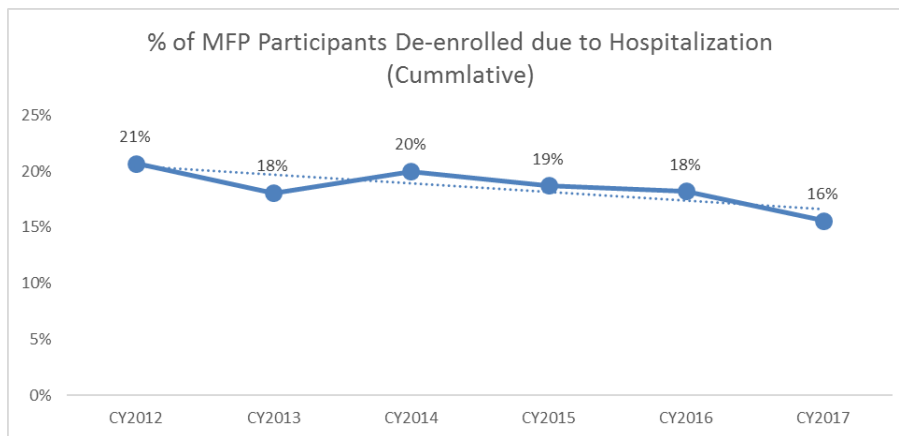
1. Total number of cumulative transitions each calendar year, with targets:
 - CY 2016: 280 cumulative transitions, 5% above the target of 266
 - CY 2017 (as of 9/1/17): Project 334 cumulative transitions, 1% above the target of 332

Adult Services Division – Money Follows the Person Grant



2. Reduce the percent of MFP participants that are de-enrolled from the program due to long-term readmission to a Nursing Facility.

- CY2016: 1% reduction in readmissions from CY2015
- CY2017 (as of 9/1/17): 2% reduction in readmissions from CY2016.



Adult Services Division – Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs

Program Overview

Older Americans Act (OAA) services, provided through Vermont's five Area Agencies on Aging, support Vermonters age 60 and older and are designed to help older Vermonters remain as independent as possible with a high quality of life. OAA services include case management; nutrition services; health promotion and disease prevention; information, referral and assistance; legal assistance; and family caregiver support. This summary focuses on the OAA Nutrition Programs for people 60 and over, referred to as Home Delivered Meals and Congregate Meals.

Home Delivered Meals and Congregate Meals contribute to the food security of older adults and can play an important role in promoting good health, preventing disease, and lowering rates of disability, hospitalization, depression and mortality. According to the USDA over 8% of Vermont senior households are food insecure; over 17,000 are threatened by hunger, and nearly 40,000 are isolated and live alone.

The demand for senior meals is growing. Efforts are being made at the federal, state and local levels to strengthen meal programs and develop innovations in nutrition services.

Staff and Partners

The Adult Services Division (ASD) State Unit on Aging (SUA) manages the OAA services. The unit consists of five staff that manage nine different grants, five area plans and the VT State Plan on Aging. The OAA Nutrition Program partners include the VT Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A) and its five-member agencies:

Age Well

Central Vermont Council on Aging

Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging

Senior Solutions

Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging

Each agency works with a network of meal providers who prepare nutritious meals that meet current USDA Dietary Guidelines. Meals are delivered by dozens of volunteers across the state every day.

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

The SUA has worked closely with the AAAs to monitor the growing demand for meals across the state and find creative ways to serve more people with limited

Adult Services Division – Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs

funding. Examples include streamlining transportation, closing under-performing congregate meal sites, increasing local and private fundraising efforts, implementing a new home delivered meals screening tool to prioritize those at highest risk, and encouraging the use of home delivered meals by people enrolled in Choices for Care and the Attendant Services Program.

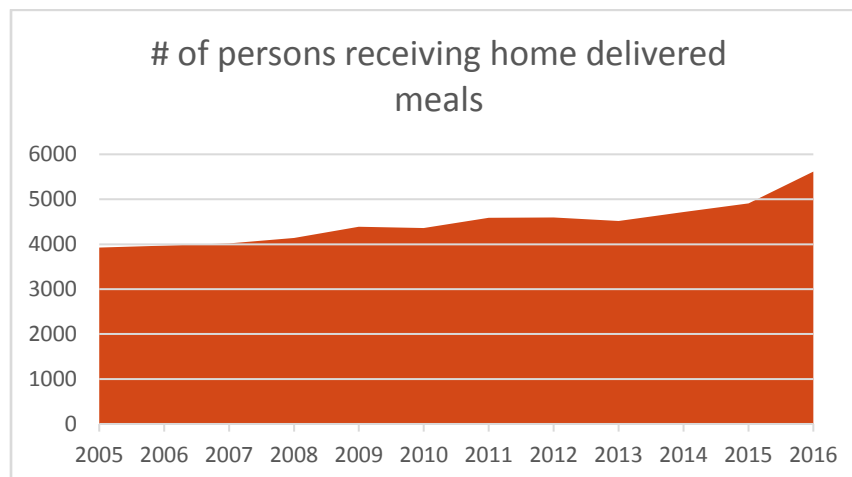
Future Directions

With limited funding, an aging population in need, and a growing understanding about the critical link between good nutrition and positive health outcomes, the AAAs will continue to work closely with the SUA staff to prioritize services for Vermonters at greatest risk and to utilize new performance measures to monitor outcomes and improve performance.

Results

In Federal Fiscal Year 2016 (most current available data):

- 5,616 Vermonters received home delivered meals (14% increase)
- 812,423 meals were delivered to people's homes (0% increase)
- 13,451 Vermonters participated in community meals (21% increase), receiving 353,164 meals across the state (4% decrease).



The five AAAs are now all using the following nutrition program performance measures:

- The number and percentage of home delivered meals clients who report they have enough to eat
- The number and percentage of home delivered meals clients who report that meals help manage or improve their medical condition

Adult Services Division – Traumatic Brain Injury Program

Program Overview

The Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Program is a specialized health population program under Vermont's Global Commitment to Health 1115 Waiver. The TBI program offers rehabilitation focused services and supports to Vermonters age 16 and older who have experienced a recent moderate to severe traumatic brain injury. TBI is a highly structured, community-based program that helps individuals build skills and strategies for independent living in the community, among their family and friends.

People who are clinically and financially eligible may choose the TBI provider they want to work with to identify personal goals and where they want to receive services. The program offers an array of services including:

- Case Management/Service Coordination
- Life Skills Aid 1:1 support
- Residential
- Respite
- Crisis
- Environmental/Assistive Technology
- Counseling

Staff and Partners

The Quality Management Unit manages the TBI Program and includes 1.25 staff to manage applications and clinical eligibility around the state. Partners include:

- Home Health Agencies
- Developmental Services Agencies(DAs/SSAs)
- Specialized TBI Providers
- [Brain Injury Association of Vermont](#)

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

A large focus this year has been on compliance with the new federal regulations for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) including settings characteristics and person-centered planning. A [systemic evaluation](#) and [work plan](#) were developed for TBI through a public process to strengthen policies and procedures and to strengthen certification standards for TBI Providers.

Adult Services Division – Traumatic Brain Injury Program

Future Directions

In addition to continued work related to compliance with the federal HCBS regulations, the Adult Services Division will be engaged in the following for the TBI Program over the next year:

- A Statewide TBI Needs Assessment completed in the fall of 2017 with the [Brain Injury Association of Vermont](#) will be used to plan and create a new TBI State Plan.
- TBI Program participants will be included in the [National Core Indicators for Aging & Disabilities](#) consumer survey in early 2018, providing direct insight into consumer experiences and outcomes.
- DAIL will continue to work on resources to better support the TBI program and the people we serve.

Results

The TBI program served 96 people in SFY17, a 4% increase from SFY2016. The TBI Program has three performance measures:

- Employment: The percentage of people employed while in the Rehab program met the 25% target.
- Graduation to independent living: 5 people graduated from the TBI Program to independent living, a reduction from 7 people the previous year.
- Transition to long-term services: 2 people transitioned to CFC long-term services.

The NCI-AD survey will provide new quality and performance measures, based on consumer experience. Data is expected to be available in November 2018.

Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Division Philosophy

DBVI assists individuals who are blind or visually impaired to meet their employment and independence goals. DBVI uses a holistic rehabilitation approach that helps people to meet their goals, build new skills, and improve their circumstances. The goal is for all participants to achieve or sustain economic independence, self-reliance, and social integration consistent with their interests, abilities, and informed choices.

Division Overview

DBVI helps working age individuals achieve economic independence by obtaining livable wage jobs and income. This involves training to improve employment skills and higher education that leads to degrees or certificates. DBVI helps transition high school students from school to the world of work. DBVI's statewide approach for younger students helps to ensure that all blind and visually impaired high school students have pre-employment transition skills. DBVI also helps individuals of all ages to build adaptive skills related to their visual impairment through assistive technology, low vision, orientation and mobility, and independent living skills.

Staff and Partners

DBVI services are provided by highly qualified professionals who possess specialized training and understanding of the implications of visual loss. Services are provided by ten staff from regional field offices in Montpelier, Burlington, Springfield, and Rutland. Each office has a rehabilitation counselor and a rehabilitation associate who ensure that individualized services are delivered. One rehabilitation technology trainer covers the entire state teaching people how to use assistive technology. The Director of DBVI oversees the statewide program.

DBVI partners with several organizations to accomplish our mission. The major provider of direct instruction for teaching blindness related skills is the non-profit Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VABVI). Their staff include certified blindness professionals who are highly trained in the areas of Orientation and Mobility, Low Vision and Rehabilitation Therapists. For other DBVI partners please visit www.dbvi.vermont.gov

Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

This year DBVI organized several events around the state to educate the public about White Cane Safety. The white cane is a symbol of strength and independence for blind and visually impaired people, used by people who are blind as they travel independently. Members of the public received training in safe travel techniques from an Orientation and Mobility Instructor, increasing awareness of what it is like to travel with the white cane.

The main events were in Burlington, Montpelier, and Rutland. Each included a walk guided by an Orientation and Mobility Specialist to demonstrate proper use of the white cane and safe travel techniques. These events are great opportunities to educate the public and to have meaningful discussions about how blind and visually impaired individuals travel within their communities independently.

DBVI staff worked closely as a team this year to accomplish major initiatives. This included updating several policies to reflect the intent of the recent Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This Act represents a significant shift towards serving students transitioning to work. This year DBVI staff participated in several regional and statewide events to collaborate and share resources about helping students successfully prepare and enter the workforce.

Another major initiative was the successful rollout of the AWARE automated case management system. This initial design phase was followed by pilot testing, training, and full implementation. This system moves DBVI into compliance with the new WIOA reporting requirements and will help DBVI staff to efficiently complete their work.

Future Directions

DBVI believes the best path forward includes a solid foundation in technology. Relevant new technologies emerge every day, and our staff stay current to determine the solutions that help our customers achieve their employment and independence goals. Several new products have emerged this year. For example, a new free application was launched this year that allows users to read text by pointing the camera of their phone towards the text. It also can read the bar code on items in a store and read back the contents of the item. Technology helps people to accomplish tasks independently, and DBVI will maintain a strong foundation in new innovations.

Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired

New technologies are exciting and open many new doors; however, DBVI is committed to the importance of the basics such as touch typing and the importance of Braille. These skills are essential for students transitioning to higher education and job training. The Job Readiness Workshops will incorporate opportunities to use these skills in the upcoming year.

DBVI will be piloting some exciting work from home opportunities this year. Our goal is to identify the skills and service products needed by Vermont employers. We will then support specialized training and technology to meet those business needs.

Programs and Services

Vision Rehabilitation Employment Services

The goal of DBVI's vocational rehabilitation services is to help people with vision loss to retain, return, or secure employment. Individuals meet with a DBVI counselor to identify goals and develop a plan to improve their functional independence.

DBVI counselors provide guidance related to employment and help people explore interests and abilities. On their individual path to employment, most people who work with DBVI:

- Build and strengthen vocational skills
- Learn new adaptive skills to remain independent regardless of vision loss
- Learn to use specialized technology needed to do their jobs
- Receive services to maximize visual function
- Help with a job search and provide training in job skills
- Assist with attending college
- Provide technology and training that allow access to printed materials completing work tasks

DBVI is exceptionally proud of the accomplishments of our customers. To read some success stories of our customers and their experiences with DBVI, visit our website: www.dbvi.vermont.gov.

Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Services for High School Students

DBVI's transition services provide high school students with opportunities for learning independent living and job skills. DBVI collaborates with several partners including the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), VABVI, ReSOURCE, and the Gibney Family Foundation. DBVI is also working with partners to make sure that all blind or visually impaired high school students are building solid pre-employment skills.

The LEAP (Learn, Earn, and Prosper) program provides paid summer employment for youth in a residential setting. LEAP empowers students to take charge of their employment future by gaining early employment success, and helps students make a successful transition from school to work.

Independent Living Services

DBVI helps individuals maintain independence. A DBVI rehabilitation associate meets an individual in his or her own home to discuss the individual's goals and develop a plan to achieve the highest possible degree of independence in activities such as traveling, preparing meals, and managing medications. Direct instruction is provided by certified blindness professionals through a grant agreement with the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VABVI). VABVI also administers the Older Blind Program to provide specialized vision rehabilitation services, serving 820 individuals over the age of 55 in FFY 2017.

Technology

Effective use of assistive technology is critical for many people with vision loss. DBVI invests significant effort to stay current in new assistive technology to help people with employment, participate in their communities, and eliminate other barriers caused by vision loss.

Results

Performance Measures

Better Off: Our focus is to help our consumers to become better off by building new skills and improving their circumstances.

Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Employment Rate: DBVI has consistently delivered a high Employment Rate. The percentage of people served by DBVI who have achieved an employment outcome successfully attained a vocational goal for a minimum of 90 days:

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	National Standard
Employment Rate	77%	80%	79%	73%	75%	80%	68.9%

Deliver Services Well: We also have a strong focus on delivering services well. Customer satisfaction is measured regularly in the following key areas. Results from the 2017 statewide customer satisfaction survey:

- 93%--Overall, how satisfied are you with the DBVI vocational rehabilitation program?
- 93%=Overall, I am better off as a result of the services I received from DBVI.
- 95%=DBVI staff treated me with dignity and respect.
- 94%=How helpful were the staff of DBVI in helping you achieve your vocational rehabilitation goals?
- 92%=Considering all of the expectations you may have had about the services provided by DBVI to what extent have these services met your expectations?
- 89%=The DBVI vocational rehabilitation services I received helped me become more independent in general.
- 84%=DBVI helped me reach my job goals.

Our approach for assisting individuals on their path to employment and independence begins with the belief that each person can achieve their goals and DBVI can help. We also know that the “voice of the customer” is important and our strategies are geared to meet the needs of the individual customer. Each staff member is committed to delivering services well and knows that their job makes a difference in the lives of people we serve. Please visit the success story link on the DBVI website at www.dbvi.vermont.gov to see real examples of people reaching their goals.

Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired – LEAP

Program Overview

The LEAP Program provides students and young adults, ages 14-24, who are blind or visually impaired the opportunity to gain skills needed to be independent, confident, and productive with the outcome of increased employability. LEAP is a workforce development program which delivers Pre-Employment Transitional Services. The program provides work-based learning experiences, internships and workshops so that participants are more competitive entering the workforce.

LEAP includes an intensive summer residential program which includes living in community housing and focuses on independent life skills, leadership, working with others, and achieving success working a full week.

LEAP also facilitates year-round Professional Growth Retreats focused on work-based readiness training for students to develop social and independent living skills. Themes of past retreats have included: Technology and Transportation; Workplace Relationships; Food and Finance; The Interview; The Resume; Networking, and more.

To understand the power and impact of LEAP, check out our video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVrG1ESEsjM>.

Staff and Partners

The Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) works with LEAP students to prepare and recruit them for the LEAP Program. DBVI staff also works to make sure that students have access to resources and accommodations required to be successful. This staff includes four Counselors, an Assistive Technology Trainer, and the Director of DBVI.

ReSOURCE, a nonprofit organization in Burlington, is contracted by DAIL to provide LEAP Pre-Employment Transitional services to students who are blind or visually impaired. ReSOURCE works closely with DBVI and the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VABVI) to identify and recruit students to the program. ReSOURCE also partners closely with VABVI to provide specialized services to students including Orientation and Mobility, Vision Rehabilitation Therapy, and Instruction in Assistive Technology.

Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired – LEAP

ReSOURCE works with many partners in the community to provide work experiences and Internship sites to our students. These partners include The Overlook Café, Sara Holbrook Community Center, The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Salvation Farms, Burlington City Arts, WBTV Radio Station, Mt. Mansfield Media, Sangha Yoga Studio, King Street Youth, and more.

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

A significant accomplishment for the LEAP Program has been creating opportunities for students to engage in leadership development amongst their peers and their communities. During our summer residential program, we place returning students to become Student Leaders or Crew Leader Assistants. These leaders serve as significant role models for younger students, while the experience provides the leaders with a sense of confidence, accomplishment and responsibility.

One student wrote a thank you letter to her mentor:

“You are the best mentor I could ask for. That's because you didn't just teach me skills like food preparation and cane travel. You taught me that blindness is not a tragedy, not something to be ashamed of or covered up. Just by being your cheerful, caring, funny, and independent self, you showed me that I don't have to live by the low expectations that others set for me.”

Future Directions

The LEAP Program is currently developing its **Technology Builds Brighter Futures Program**. Our society is becoming increasingly reliant on technology. It is essential that individuals with blindness or visual impairments have access to this space as digital citizens. LEAP is committed to empowering our students to access the tools they need to become as capable and competitive as their sighted peers.

The **Technology Builds Brighter Futures** classes will encourage students to collaborate on creative projects using assistive technology. In 2018, each student will participate in an assistive technology class that encompasses a digital culture of sharing, collaboration, and creativity.

Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired – LEAP

Results

From 2014 to 2017 the LEAP program has grown from 18 to 61 participants. The number of training hours has increased from 15,000 in 2014 to 27,000 in 2017. This has resulted in significant skill gains for students in employment and independent living skills. Each student receives a report of their progress which is shared with school teams, teachers of the visually impaired, and DBVI counselors. Students learn to identify their strengths and areas of vocational interest. In 2017, 75% of the interns had enrolled in college programs, and the remaining 25% are working with their DBVI counselors to match their skills to a career path.

Success story:

In summer 2017, LEAP worked with a student with a visual impairment who had been struggling in school and desperately needed a positive experience. She has significant anxiety and depression and lives in a challenging home environment. She was encouraged to attend LEAP, but it became clear that the residential aspect would be overwhelming.

LEAP created a two day a week work experience for her at a store. She was provided with a job coach and a driver. She had a successful summer and learned to use special magnification to complete work tasks. She engaged with customers and fellow employees, was enthusiastic about her job tasks, and connected with her job coach. In her LEAP Report, her job coach wrote that by the end of the summer she needed very few prompts to complete the tasks and it no longer seemed necessary for her to have a job coach.

She completed her summer work experience with a new sense of confidence and success. She brought this confidence back to school with her, and her teachers remarked about a significant positive change in her attitude. She shared with her school team that she had a mentor in her supervisor at the store. Because of this success, LEAP is continuing to provide her with a work experience at the store throughout the school year.

Quotes from LEAP Students:

“My favorite part of working at ReSOURCE was communicating and interacting with my other coworkers and customers because working with people effectively improved communication and customer service skills. I'll be more prepared for possible employment opportunities in the future.”

-LEAP Corps Member, ReSOURCE Household Goods Store

Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired – LEAP

“I learned that there will always be changes that you aren't expecting at a workplace, and that it is good to ask questions and talk about them.”

-LEAP Intern, Burlington City Arts

“I am most proud of being able to run a broadcast on my own. I once thought that being blind was going to make radio impossible for me pursue, but this experience helped me understand my abilities.”

-LEAP Intern, WBTV Radio Station

“I am proud of the fact that I was able to get to and from work independently, that I did my job well, and that I felt more confident as time went on.”

-LEAP Intern, Overlook Café

Developmental Disabilities Services Division

Division Philosophy

The Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD) helps people to make choices and to direct their own lives; pursuing their own choices, goals, aspirations and preferences. To be effective and efficient, services must be individualized to the goals, capacities, needs, and values of each person. Everyone can make decisions for themselves, can live in typical homes, and can contribute as citizens to the communities where they live. Our communities are stronger when everyone is included.

Division Overview

DDSD plans, coordinates, administers, monitors and evaluates state and federally funded services for people with developmental disabilities and their families within Vermont. We provide funding for services, systems planning, technical assistance, training, quality assurance and program monitoring and standards compliance. We also exercise guardianship to adults with developmental disabilities and older Vermonters age 60 on behalf of the commissioner for people who are under court-ordered public guardianship.

Staff and Partners

Our work is carried out by a Quality Management Unit of six personnel, six Specialist Services staff and twenty-six (26) staff working within the Office of Public Guardianship, including twenty-two (22) full time guardians.

The Agency of Human Services contracts with fifteen private, non-profit developmental disabilities services providers to provide or arrange for services to people with developmental disabilities and their families through Master Grant Agreements. We emphasize the development of community capacities to meet the needs of all individuals, regardless of the severity of their disability. DDSD works with a variety of people and organizations to ensure that we meet the changing needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families: people with disabilities, families, guardians, advocates, service providers, the State Program Standing Committee for Developmental Disabilities Services and state and federal governments.

Developmental Disabilities Services Division

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

Increased Funding for Direct Support Workers:

The Vermont legislature provided increased funding to allow Developmental Disabilities Services provider agencies to increase wages for direct support staff to a minimum of \$14 per hour. This was in response to difficulties hiring sufficient numbers of workers to provide essential care and support. The state will monitor the staff vacancy rate to determine whether increased wages helps alleviate the worker shortage so that people receive the services they need.

Vermont Clinical Training Consortium Focuses on the Power of Relationships:

The Vermont Clinical Training Consortium (VCTC) includes clinicians from developmental disabilities services provider agencies, the Director and Assistant Director of the Vermont Crisis Intervention Network, the Co-Executive/Clinical Director of the Francis Foundation and a DDSD representative. VCTC was formed in response to a need for more readily available resources, including training and technical assistance, for Vermonters with developmental disabilities with complex trauma.

VCTC has developed a three-day training titled “The Transformative Power of Relationships.” Multiple presenters deliver trauma-informed subject matter on topics including Caregiver Affect Management; Attachment as the Primary Response to Distress; Attunement and Co-Regulation; the Bio-, Psycho-, Social Model of Support; Defensive and Advancement Systems; Thinking About Consequences; Teaching Self-Regulation Skills and Building Emotional Alliances. As of December 2017, VCTC had presented to over sixty (60) direct support workers including service coordinators, community support staff, shared living providers and DDSD staff. VCTC has more trainings scheduled for 2018 and continues to offer targeted training and follow-along supervision.

Revision of Best Practices Manual for Supervision and Treatment of Sex Offenders with Developmental Disabilities:

Robert McGrath, an expert in the treatment of sexual abusers under contract with the Developmental Disabilities Services Division, collaborated with other contributors to complete a revised version of the Vermont Best Practices Manual – Assessment, Treatment, and Risk Management with Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and Problematic Sexual Behaviors. This new (January 2017) manual, championed by DDSD leadership and community professionals,

Developmental Disabilities Services Division

includes many updates to research and best practice. The previous manual has been cited and used by professionals around the world. The new manual is posed on the DDSD website: <http://ddsd.vermont.gov/vt-best-practices-manual-supervision-and-treatment-sex-offenders-dd>

Person Centered Thinking Training:

The Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD) established a training series to create a self-sustaining training network and community of practice in person-centered skills in our community system workforce. The practice of person centered thinking (PCT) is a set of principles and core competencies that are the foundation for person centered planning. The training introduces seven PCT skills and tools to build capacity for person centered practices. The tools provide practical strategies for gathering meaningful information and facilitating conversations about goal setting, problem solving and action planning. This process ensures that that focus remains on the perspectives of individuals that receive supports.

This training series began by developing three certified PCT trainers. Ten workshops were provided to 300 participants, including direct support professionals, service coordinators, mid-level managers and senior leadership.

Future Directions

Home and Community-Based Services Rule:

The Developmental Disabilities Services Division is working in collaboration with the Agency of Human Services on the transition plan to ensure full compliance with the Federal Home and Community-based Services (HCBS) rule by 2023. The intent of the rule is to ensure that individuals receiving long-term services and supports through HCBS programs have full access to the benefits of community living and the opportunity to receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate. The rule promotes choice and control, inclusion and protection of participants rights. In the past year, a self-assessment was completed by providers regarding their compliance with the rule. The providers also developed their plans for coming into compliance. The Division amended regulations and policies to come into alignment with the requirements of the rule. The next steps include site visits to ensure providers are implementing their plans.

Developmental Disabilities Services Division

Manchester Housing Project:

The Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD) is partnering with community members in supporting the development of potential housing options for adults with developmental disabilities. We at DDSD believe that by working together with local schools, developmental disabilities services agencies, housing development agencies and families receiving services, adults with developmental disabilities can make meaningful choices about which communities and settings they choose to live in while accessing needed and familiar supports.

DDSD is working with Creedo, a nonprofit organization formed by parents and professionals in southern Vermont, United Counseling Service and the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union to support the development of an apartment setting for adults who wish to live in their own home. This project includes four studio apartments with an additional apartment for support staff, so support staff can be available during the overnight hours.

Continuing Integration of Services for Children at the Agency of Human Services:

Integrating Family Services was an Agency of Human Services (AHS) initiative intended to streamline and integrate services currently provided to children and families through multiple AHS departments. The goal was to create a holistic, seamless system of service delivery across the state. The intent was to streamline the intake process for families, increase access to a variety of services and reduce fragmentation of funding and service delivery. While AHS remains committed to a holistic, integrated system of care, the next steps will focus on state level integration activities. This includes having integrated outcomes, determining priorities in the children's system and payment reform. The unique "IFS" identifier as an initiative will no longer formally exist. However, the current IFS master grants in Addison and Franklin/Grand Isle Counties will continue to be supported under the management of the Department of Mental Health. The IFS website will continue to be maintained and updated with information relevant to integration efforts. The IFS Director position has been moved into the Department of Mental Health as the Interagency Planning Director to provide leadership, oversight and direction of these integration efforts within AHS and the State of Vermont.

Community of Practice on Cultural and Linguistic Competence:

Recognizing the increasing diversity of residents and citizens with developmental disabilities, Vermont applied for and was selected as one of ten states/jurisdictions to participate in a five-year initiative building a Community of

Developmental Disabilities Services Division

Practice on Cultural and Linguistic Competence in Developmental Disabilities. The aim of the project is to advance and sustain cultural and linguistic competence in developmental disabilities service systems. A state “transformation leadership team” will receive technical assistance from experts at the Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence to examine and recommend changes to policies, structures and practices; assess and respond to educational and training needs; and foster both statewide and local dialogue and information sharing. The team starts with mandatory participants from the state Developmental Disabilities entity (Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD)), the University-affiliated program (Center on Disability and Community Inclusion), the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, and Disability Rights Vermont. It also includes representatives from Green Mountain Self-Advocates and the Vermont Center for Independent Living and will expand to include key leaders from other culturally and linguistically diverse groups and communities.

Revisions to the Developmental Disabilities Services Regulations and the System of Care Plan:

In FY 17, a significant amount of work was done to two major guiding documents, the [Regulations Implementing the Developmental Disabilities Act of 1996](#) and the [Vermont State System of Care Plan for Developmental Disabilities Services - Three Year Plan - FY 2018 - FY 2020](#), both of which were finalized October 1, 2017. This was the culmination of over a year-long process gathering input and public comment from major stakeholders. The Regulations were updated in response to legislation that required certain categories of the System of Care Plan to be adopted by the rulemaking process, including identifying the priority programs, the criteria for receiving services or funding, the types of services provided and the process for evaluating the success of programs. Together these documents outline how Medicaid funds are used for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. New language was added to both documents to ensure compliance with the new Home and Community-Based Services rules.

Programs and Services

Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) are provided through our designated agency and specialized service agency partners. These include Service Coordination, Community Supports, Work Supports, Home Supports – including 24-hour Shared Living, Staffed Living, Group Living and Supervised Living (hourly home supports in the person’s own home and hourly supports in the home of a

Developmental Disabilities Services Division

family member). Services can be managed by the agency, self-managed, managed by family members, or shared-managed (a combination of agency and self/family managed services).

Family Managed Respite is provided through designated agencies to offer families a break from caring for their child with a disability.

The Bridge Program provides care coordination to families to help them access and coordinate medical, educational, social or other services for their children with developmental disabilities.

Targeted Case Management provides assessment, care planning, referral and monitoring.

Flexible Family Funding provides funding for respite and goods for children and adults who live with their biological or adopted family or legal guardian. These funds are used at the discretion of the family for services and supports that benefit the individual and family.

Results

The DDSD Quality Services Reviews (QSRs) meet our commitment to monitor and review the quality of services provided with Federal and State Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) funding. The purpose of the QSR is to ascertain the quality of the services provided by the Designated Agencies (DAs) and Specialized Services Agencies (SSAs) and to ensure that minimum standards are met with respect to DAIL DDSD guidelines and policies. The QSR is one component of a broader effort to maintain and improve the quality of services. In FY 17, eight agencies (five Designated Agencies and three Specialized Service Agencies) received QSRs resulting in 199 individuals reviewed who received HCBS. In addition, two agencies went through the re-designation review process.

Other components supported by the review team and DDSD include monitoring and follow-up regarding agency designation; Medicaid and HCBS eligibility; housing safety and accessibility inspections; monitoring of critical incident reports; responding to grievances and appeals; providing technical assistance; and independent surveys of consumer perception and satisfaction.

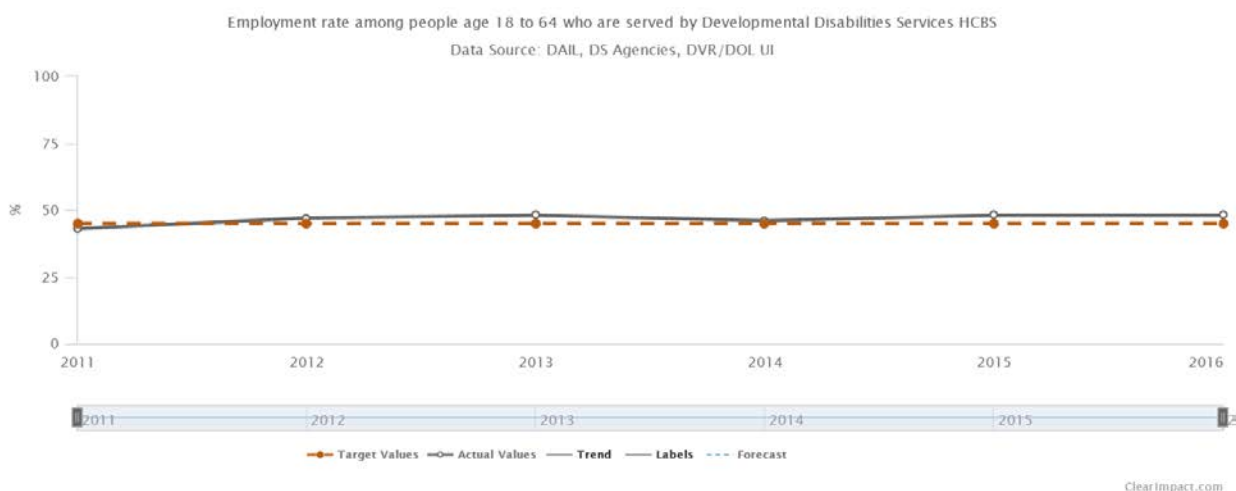
Our division participates in the National Core Indicators project that applies a national standardized Adult In-Person Survey. Data from the 2015-16 survey

Developmental Disabilities Services Division

showed, of the adults receiving home and community-based services who were surveyed:

- 95% said they said they like where they work.
- 92% said they like where they live.
- 91% said direct support workers show up and leave when they are supposed to.
- 71% said they have friends (who are not staff or family).
- 58% said they can see friends when they want.
- 28% did not have adequate, reliable speech which is understood by others.
- 27% said they volunteer.
- 8% said they feel lonely.

Our employment services have been recognized as a national model with a 42% increase in the number of people on the job over the past ten-year period. Vermonters who experience disabilities are earning total wages of over \$4 million, yielded a potential tax contribution of \$613,585 from employees and their employers. The employment rate for working age adults with ID/DD who receive Home and Community-Based Services continues to be sustained at a high rate of 48% (FY 16). This compares favorably to the national average of individuals participating in ID/DD employment service estimated to be 18.6% in 2015 (State Data National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes, 2016.)



More Vermonters with disabilities are going on to post-secondary education than ever before and our Think College Vermont, College Steps and SUCCEED programs are helping them get there. Project SEARCH is a school-to-work youth transition program that matches students who are in their final year of high school with

Developmental Disabilities Services Division

internships in host businesses where they learn multifaceted skills that lead to employment at graduation. These four youth transition programs have enabled young adults to live independently and attain occupations in media, public relations, human resources, data entry, baking, and human services. Participating colleges include Castleton University, Northern Vermont University – Johnson and Lyndon Campuses, Southern Vermont College and University of Vermont. For the 2017 academic year, the employment rate for these programs was 86%.

Vermonters age 22 and over with ID/DD who receive Home and Community-Based Services have high access to quality health care. Ninety-three percent (93%) had access to preventive health services. This compares favorably to an 83% statewide average for the general Medicaid population. The expectation that adults with ID/DD receive an annual physical exam helps ensure that individuals have a visit with a medical professional to review chronic conditions and other health issues.

DD Services Division – Supported Decision-Making

Program Overview

A Vermont Task Force on Supported Decision-Making was established to create a statewide “culture” of Supported Decision-Making (SDM). The Task Force established work groups to explore SDM-based, collaborative, coordinated, cross-system policies, practices, and educational materials. The expected outcomes are to increase self-determination and access to needed supports for older adults and people with disabilities and to reduce over-reliance on guardianship by empowering older adults and people with disabilities to make their own decisions and direct their own lives.

Staff and Partners

The Task Force was chaired by the DD Services Division Director with staff participation that included the Director of the Office of Public Guardian. Representatives from the Department of Mental Health, Department of Vermont Health Access and the Agency of Education have contributed, as well as those from the court system, community provider groups and advocacy organizations.

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

Two work groups have been active to address goals set by the Task Force. These include:

- A collaboration between Upper Valley Services, Public Guardians, Guardianship Evaluators, attorneys and the Attorney General’s Office. This project is designed to: 1) Identify 5-7 people currently under public guardianship who can direct their own lives with appropriate supports and services; 2) Convene a team for each person that will plan, create a written document that will memorialize the supports and put those supports in place; 3) Conduct a new capacity evaluation for each person that reviews his/her functional ability to direct his/her own life with those supports; and 4) File a petition asking the Court to terminate the guardianship for each person for whom the evaluation shows that he/she can direct his/her own life.
- A collaboration with the Disability Law Project (DLP) of Vermont Legal Aid who represent youth turning 18 in probate court guardianship proceedings in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. Working in collaboration with DLP and Green Mountain Self Advocates (GMSA) will develop standard supported decision-making agreements which will assure that youth with

DD Services Division – Supported Decision-Making

disabilities are empowered to make their own decisions affecting their lives, with the supports they need to have the information necessary to make those decisions, including decisions concerning their education, employment and health care.

Future Directions

Our Office of Public Guardian and Guardianship Evaluators will continue work to:

1) Review Vermont's Capacity Evaluation Guidelines and amend as needed to ensure that they focus on the person's actual and potential functional ability to direct his or her own life in determining whether or not the person should be placed under guardianship; 2) Develop model procedures for conducting capacity evaluations (including which abilities and life areas to review); and 3) Conduct outreach and training to evaluators and other stakeholders (including providers who may have in-house evaluators) on the model procedures.

Results

In the past year, Vermont Superior Court issued a ground-breaking court order dismissing a petition for guardianship in favor of a Supported Decision-Making Agreement which detailed the type of decision making support the individual needs and the people the individual chose to assist him.

Developmental Disabilities Services Division – Transition Age Youth Program

Program Overview

The Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD) and community partners have collaborated for ten years to help transition age youth enter the work force and experience successful transitions. Supported education and supported job training services are located statewide to support youth age 18 to 28 with developmental disabilities (DD) in their transitions from school to work or higher levels of education. Services include specialized career training, customized job placement, independent living skills training, experiential internships, and post-secondary education (PSE). Collaborative partnerships between DDSD, provider agencies, and a host of community partners support two options in youth transition services. One option is a business-based training project provided by the Project SEARCH program. The other option is a post-secondary career-oriented college program located at Vermont colleges and provided by three post-secondary support programs. The goal of all programs is successful employment in viable careers at graduation or soon after.

Project SEARCH provides technical training for students in their last year of high school through three internships located in host businesses: Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, Rutland Regional Medical Center and The Edge Fitness Center. Host businesses oversee skill development and provide direct feedback to students as they rotate through their internships. The engagement of these host companies has resulted in employment for most of the students who graduate from the program. Project SEARCH is sponsored by DAIL, Agency of Education, local school districts, three host businesses, and three provider agencies—Howard Center, Lincoln Street Incorporated and Rutland Mental Health Services. Three post-secondary education programs – Think College Vermont at the University of Vermont, SUCCEED at Howard Center and College Steps – improve employment outcomes through course work and internships geared toward specific careers. This model promotes campus inclusion with older students serving as peer mentors to students with DD. Facilitating course selections based on vocational interests and independent living skill training has significantly increased self-sufficiency and employment outcomes among these young graduates. Students graduate with a 2-year *Certificate of Higher Learning* conferred by their colleges in their areas of vocational concentration. The PSE support programs share a similar approach to integrate youth into post-secondary coursework and extracurricular activities at their collaborating

Developmental Disabilities Services Division – Transition Age Youth Program

colleges. SUCCEED is the only residential program, providing a continuum of skill development to help graduates move into their own apartments. PSE programs rely on close working relationships with Johnson State College, Lyndon State College, Castleton University, University of Vermont, and Southern Vermont College, all dedicated to assuring that the students with DD are authentically included in campus life.

Staff and Partners

Designated staff from DDSD, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), and the Agency of Education (AOE) make up a State team to support the work of the PSE programs. This team meets with programs to improve, sustain, and expand services for transition age youth. DDSD, DVR, AOE, Vermont Family Network, PSE programs, and DD service providers meet quarterly as a group known as the PSE Consortium to share resources and to serve as a unified service delivery system that educates the general public about options for youth.

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

A new strategy implemented this year, to develop final internships before program completion, successfully resulted in job offers. After observing a student's capabilities in a hosted internship, The Vermont Agency of Transportation, offered the Castleton University graduate a job with the highway crew. The Rutland Regional Medical Center and Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center each hired two of their own Project SEARCH graduates after observing their skills in internship placements. Graduates also secured employment at other companies including Phoenix Books, The Edge Play Space, Upper Valley Produce, Marshalls, Lowes, Petco, and Stowe Mountain Resort.

Future Directions

The PSE Consortium continues to work together to inform high school students, educators and families about the benefits of enrolling in a DDSD PSE program. The primary focus for the next few years will be to stabilize and sustain the existing programs through student recruitment and process improvements. Expansion through an additional Project SEARCH site is also under consideration.

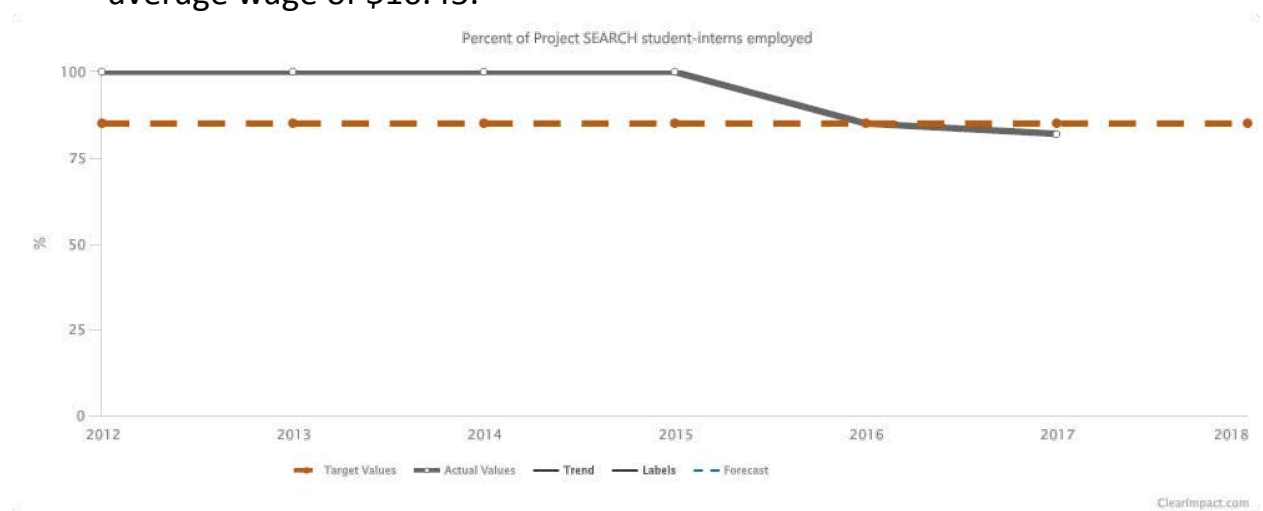
Developmental Disabilities Services Division – Transition Age Youth Program

Results

DDSD assesses quality through performance measures and site monitoring of each PSE and Project SEARCH program at the start and end of each school year. In addition, the National Project SEARCH organization collects annual data on employment outcomes and provides input after performing an onsite audit every three-years at each location. The audits help to assure adherence or fidelity to the Project SEARCH model. The first audit in 2016 recognized many strengths including the exceptional involvement of the host businesses and the skills of the training staff in training complex tasks.

2017 Performance Measures:

- 86% statewide employment rate of the 37 PSE program graduates.
- 32 college graduates became employed within 4 months of graduation.
- The wage range of employed graduates was from \$10.00 to \$14.00, with an average wage of \$10.45.



Division of Licensing and Protection

Division Philosophy

Balanced and assertive regulation of health care organizations ensure that vulnerable Vermonters receive care with dignity, respect, and independence. When vulnerable Vermonters are maltreated, there should be an effective investigation and protective services put in place to prevent additional harm.

Division Overview

The Division of Licensing and Protection (DLP) has two branches that work to protect vulnerable adults and individuals receiving care:

- Survey and Certification (S&C) is the State Survey Agency for the State of Vermont. In this role, S&C licenses and certifies health care organizations to ensure they meet minimum state and federal regulatory compliance. Details can be found at: <http://dlp.vermont.gov/survey-cert>
- Adult Protective Services (APS) investigates allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults and implements protective services, as necessary, to limit future maltreatment. The APS Annual Report can be found at: <http://dlp.vermont.gov/aps/statistical-info>

Staff and Partners

S&C has 21 employees, 18 of which are Registered Nurses who are federally trained and certified to perform investigations and surveys, 15 of which are home based and travel throughout the state to investigate complaints received and to perform recurring, scheduled surveys. S&C follows federal regulations and procedures developed by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

APS has 16 employees, 11 of which are home based investigators who travel throughout the state to investigate allegations of maltreatment of vulnerable adults. APS frequently partners with law enforcement agencies and human service providers in the performance of their investigations.

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

For the second year in a row, S&C received a perfect score from CMS on their annual performance review. The review is based on an evaluation of S&C's surveys and investigations and includes on site evaluations by CMS surveyors. This rating shows that the Vermont State Survey Agency is providing timely, appropriate, and balanced oversight to a wide variety of facilities.

Division of Licensing and Protection

APS continued to develop operating guidelines so that recent improvements can be sustained and built upon. With the assistance of the APS Committee of the DAIL Advisory Board, APS published a new appeals and hearings section of the APS Policy Manual to help ensure consistency in practice. In addition, APS continues to refine its use of data to evaluate program output and performance measurement. These steady developments, while not dramatic in nature, demonstrate consistent progress in managing the program effectively.

Future Directions

CMS is implementing a new, standardized national survey process for nursing homes. S&C will begin using the new survey process in December 2017. The new process is less prescriptive and predictable than the previous CMS system, and will allow surveyors greater professional leeway in evaluating regulatory compliance of nursing homes.

Programs and Services

Both S&C and APS work to protect and serve vulnerable adults. Vulnerable adults are individuals who are over 18 years in age and are residents of a facility licensed by S&C, are residents of a psychiatric hospital, recipients of home health services, have a diminished capacity to care for themselves, or a diminished capacity to protect themselves from maltreatment.

- S&C conducts scheduled surveys at health care facilities, and investigates complaints made about the care received in these facilities. The surveys and investigations can result in fines and other corrective action, up to revoking the license of an organization to operate.
- When APS discovers that a person has maltreated a vulnerable adult, that person may be placed on the Adult Abuse Registry, which is used by organizations that serve children and vulnerable adults to check the backgrounds of employees and volunteers.

Results

- S&C conducted 315 onsite investigations of health care organizations.
- S&C completed 100% of federal surveys on time.
- APS received 3,261 reports alleging the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults, resulting in 852 investigations.
- APS placed 79 individuals on the Adult Abuse Registry.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Division Philosophy

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's (DVR's) mission is to help Vermonters with disabilities prepare for, obtain, and maintain meaningful employment and to help employers recruit, train and retain employees with disabilities. Consumer choice and self-direction are core values that drive DVR's approach to providing services and developing new programs. DVR's ability to help jobseekers succeed also depends on clearly understanding the needs of our other customers – employers. To that end, DVR plays an important facilitating role in Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS), an Agency of Human Services (AHS) initiative that builds on DVR's initial employer outreach work.

Division Overview

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation serves people with disabilities in Vermont who face barriers to employment. We help VR consumers figure out what work will work for them through careful assessment, counseling and guidance from our expert staff. We capitalize on our extensive networks in the employer community to create job opportunities and make good placements that match employer needs with jobseeker skills, and help employers retain staff with disabilities. We use our financial resources within Vermont communities to support our consumers as they transition to stable employment, and our employers as they try out new workers.

Staff and Partners

DVR believes in collaborating with other service providers to reach people facing the greatest challenges to employment. Through collaboration, DVR has created innovative partnerships to serve youth, offenders, veterans, people receiving public benefits, and those who need ongoing support in order to work.

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

Careers Initiative: Congress passed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014 and introduced new Common Performance Measures (CPM) by which core partners and DVR will be measured. The measures are focused on: job retention, median earnings, credential attainment, measurable skills gains, and employer satisfaction. Historically, VR was primarily evaluated by how many people the program assisted to get a job, but WIOA's change from quantitative to qualitative measures requires a major paradigm shift in practice and performance management. Thus, DVR's Careers Initiative, launches in 2018 and focuses on: realigning resource allocation, modifying the rehab process, increasing the use of vocational assessment tools, and creating a new dashboard.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Linking Learning to Careers: Linking Learning to Careers (LLC) is a 5-year, \$9M research project awarded to DVR by the U.S. Department of Education. This is an exciting opportunity to improve career outcomes for Vermont students with disabilities by offering and analyzing a set of enhanced services on top of the excellent core services already available through DVR Transition Counselors. LLC is a timely and direct compliment to recent WIOA regulatory changes and offers valuable real-world-tested insight into the most effective VR practices for working with students. Statewide, 800 students will participate in the project through September of 2021.

OCS and JFI: DVR partners with the Office of Child Support (OCS) on the problem of non-payment. Many individuals with a child support order face employment barriers – often disabilities – which prevent them from meeting their support obligations. EAP counselors help identify these barriers, as well as treatment options and resources. Those referred to the program have increased their child support payments between five and seven-fold. The success of OCS formed the basis of Jobs for Independence (JFI). Working with Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients as part of a multi-million-dollar federal grant with DCF and VDOL, JFI focuses on those experiencing homelessness, drug addiction, chronic mental illness and/or Corrections involvement. To date, staff have helped 341 individuals obtain work.

The State as a Model Employer: On March 23, 2016, Governor Shumlin signed an Executive Order establishing a “Disability Employment Working Group” comprised of representatives from DAIL, DHR and members of the Governor’s Workforce Equity and Diversity Committee. The group was charged with developing a model to help State agencies recruit, train and retain workers with disabilities to both diversify and meet the needs of Vermont’s “greying” workforce. In 2017, CWS piloted the model in the Barre-Berlin-Montpelier corridor before launching statewide, and information sessions were held for 10 groups of Hiring Managers and Supervisors from across the state.

“Spirit of the ADA” Awards: During National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the Governor’s Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities (GCEPD) selects Vermont businesses who excel in recruiting, promoting, and retaining Vermonters with disabilities. Award winners are recognized in their local communities, and work with the Committee to share their experience and strategies. Business Account Managers from CWS and the Committee worked closely to gather nominations from across the state. This year, Governor Scott attended the award ceremonies for VTrans in Saint Johnsbury, and for Casella Recycling in Rutland.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Pre-Employment Transition Services: Through strong working relationships with both the Agency of Education and local high schools, students are being introduced to services available through DVR as early as age 14. District-based Interagency Core Transition Teams support this collaboration, meeting to share local resources and identify projects that would benefit students, families, and professionals working with youth. The 3rd annual Interagency Core Transition Team event brought together 200 professionals and community members to network, educate, and collaborate.

Future Directions

DVR understands the importance of continuous improvement through staff education and training. To that end, several district offices have instituted a “Peer Learning” initiative where staff with expertise in certain areas develop and present trainings. This approach was piloted successfully, and other offices are developing a similar model. Trainings that have been offered include how to work with consumers:

- With criminal backgrounds
- With substance use disorders
- On the Autism spectrum
- With persistent mental illness

Programs and Services

Assistive Technology Program (VATP)
Benefits Counseling
Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS)
Developmental Services and Jump on
Board for Success (JOBS)
Invest EAP – Employee Assistance
Program (EAP)
Jobs for Independence (JFI)
Linking Learning to Careers (LLC)
Mature Worker Program

Office of Child Support Pilot (OCS)
Progressive Employment Program
Rehabilitation Counseling for the Deaf
and Hard of Hearing (RCD)
Supported Employment (SE)
Transition (high-school aged youth and
young adults)
Vermont AT Reuse Project
Vermont Senior Community Service
Employment Program (SCSEP)

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation Services: DVR services to jobseekers are tailored to the person and driven by his or her own interests, job goals and needs. Each person meets regularly with his or her VR counselor, who helps to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and manages the services and supports needed to realize the person's career goals. The core services of vocational assessment, counseling and guidance, job training, and job placement provided by DVR staff and partners are enhanced with a range of purchased services and supports.

Placement Services: DVR counselors benefit from dedicated Employment Consultants who provide job development, job placement, and workplace supports to help people find and keep jobs. DVR has longstanding partnerships with Designated and Specialized Services Agencies (DAs and SSAs) to provide supported employment services to people with significant disabilities. DVR also has an ongoing partnership with the Vermont Association of Business, Industry, and Rehabilitation (VABIR) to provide employment services to DVR customers.

Results

How many people we serve: 9,623 Individuals served

How well we serve them:

Our customer survey is conducted approximately every two years. Our 2016 customer survey results show that:

- 97% felt welcomed when they went to DVR for services;
- 95% would tell their friends with disabilities to visit DVR for help with employment;
- 94% indicate it is easy to access vocational rehabilitation services;
- 88% are very satisfied or satisfied with the services provided by DVR;
- 97% indicate that DVR staff treated them with dignity and respect;
- 81% said DVR helped them achieve their job goal.

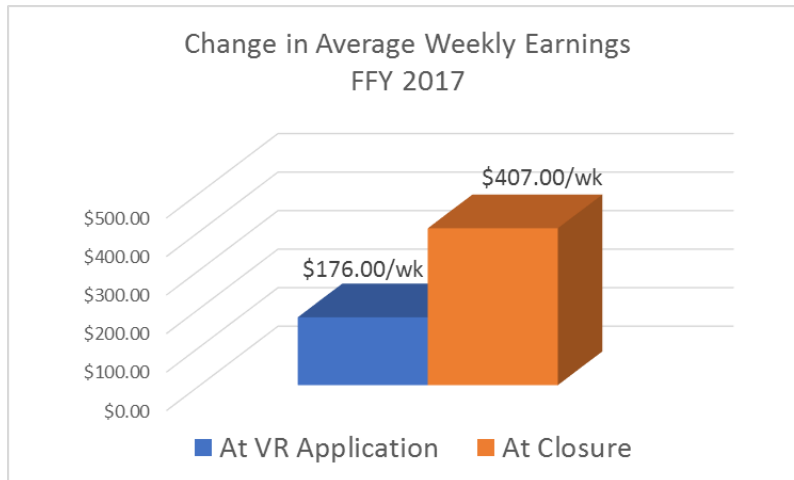
Nationally, Vermont DVR ranks #1 among general VR agencies in:

- New VR applicants per million state population.
- VR employment outcomes per million state population.

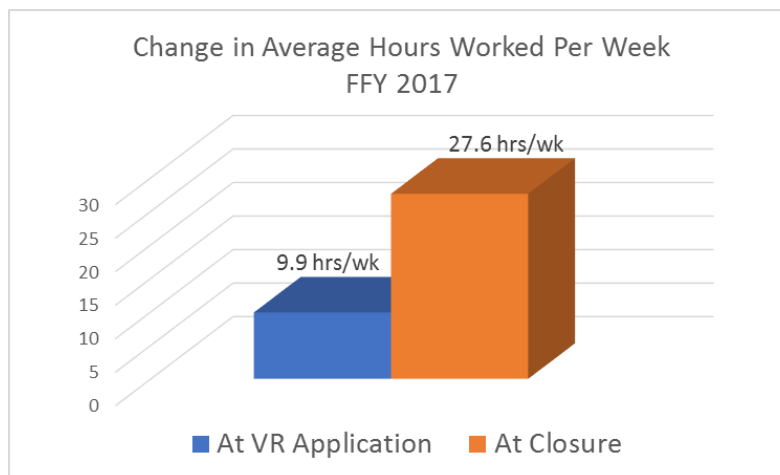
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

How People are Better off:

Change in Average Weekly Earnings of people served by DVR who achieve an employment outcome



Change in Average Hours Worked Per Week of people served by DVR who achieve an employment outcome



Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Assistive Technology

Program Overview

The Assistive Technology (AT) Program works to support full access and integration for Vermonters with disabilities and aging related needs in education, work and their communities. We provide creative tools and strategies that help people live, learn, work, and play. Staff support consumers and organizations by providing information and assistance, equipment demonstrations and loans, technical assistance, funding resources as well as consultations for VR consumers.

Staff and Partners

DAIL staff include one Program Director and one Service Coordinator who work in partnership with the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion (CDCI) at the University of Vermont. CDCI operates three regional AT Tryout Centers, each staffed by an AT Specialist serving Vermonters across the state. Other partners include:

- Linking Learning to Careers
- Vermont Center for Independent Living
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Fanny Allen
- Opportunities Credit Union
- Vermont Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program
- Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports
- Children with Special Health Needs
- Vermont Communication Task Force

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

- Staff helped devise a training to assist VR counselors to better serve consumers with hearing loss. This training included education on various types of hearing loss, hearing aids and devices, and funding opportunities for consumers.
- Program staff have been working closely with Linking Learning to Careers to provide technical assistance to the program and training for two new AT Specialists who have been hired to work in Vermont communities to improve career and college readiness for high school students with disabilities.

Future Directions

- Program staff are working with community partners to promote services and reach additional Vermonters. An example of this includes technical assistance that staff provided to the Aging and Disability Resource Connection to create an equipment demonstration kit as well as a video training series to be distributed to Area Agency on Aging staff and clients.
- Staff are working on an initiative with the Agency of Digital Services, Department of Human Resources, Buildings and General Services and Office of

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Assistive Technology

- Risk Management to provide State of Vermont employees greater accessibility to information and communication technology.

Results

Information and assistance:

- 1044 individuals were given information and assistance relating to AT Devices or Services
- 146 individuals were given information and assistance related to AT Funding

Device Demonstrations:

- 809 demonstrations

Device Loans:

- 733 items loaned out

Outreach:

- 55 outreach events and trainings for approximately 2,748 participants

Success Stories (pseudonyms used)

Laura was having a very difficult time hearing and it was impacting her job and general quality of life. She worked with staff at one of our tryout centers to determine the best hearing device for her. Laura borrowed it, tried it out and ended up purchasing one for herself. She now hears much better and reports, “it’s my favorite piece of equipment. I don’t have to struggle anymore.”

Sara is a 72-year-old writer who is no longer able to type. Staff introduced her to speech recognition software that works with her computer, so she can continue to write. She thought the technology would be challenging but found it to be easy to learn and use.

Sharon, a speech and language pathologist from a home health and hospice agency, approached AT staff to help Thomas who had been diagnosed with ALS and relied on his partner for all daily living tasks. Staff helped configure a computer tablet that Thomas was able to use to operate the lights, phone, and television in his home as well as the internet, including social media. As a former engineer, Thomas is grateful for the technology and the level of assistance and independence AT provides him.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Benefits Counseling Program

Program Overview

DVR Benefits Counselors work with individuals receiving assistance through the state and/or disability benefits (health care, 3 squares, SSI, SSDI). The goal of the program is to provide information to people interested in going to work so they can make informed decisions about their benefits as they enter or reenter the workforce.

DVR Benefits Counselors support consumers by:

- Explaining the impacts of work and wages on an individual's benefits;
- Helping people plan for starting work and obtaining financial independence;
- Helping people take advantage of work incentives that will increase the amount of money available to them;
- Telling people about programs that may allow them to keep necessary cash or health benefits when they go to work or school;
- Explaining notices received from the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) or the Vermont Economic Services Division (ESD); and
- Teaching people how to report their earnings to ESD and SSA.

Staff and Partners

Four DVR Benefits Counselors provide Work Incentives counseling to Vermonters through remote counseling, in person meetings in one of twelve regional DVR offices, or through the DVR Benefits Counselor Helpline. The program is supported by one Program Coordinator. All staff are Certified Work Incentives Counselors, accredited through The Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) National Training and Data Center (NTDC).

To provide Work Incentives Counseling, Benefits Counselors partner with the Rutland, Montpelier, and Burlington Social Security Administration offices, Designated Agencies around the state, DVR Counselors, Division for Blind & Visually Impaired Counselors, Economic Services Division, Vermont Health Connect, Vermont Center for Independent Living, and the Vermont State Housing Authority.

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

The DVR Benefits Counseling Program has successfully reorganized its operations and structure. To improve service quality and timeliness to consumers we added a

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Creative Workforce Solutions

Benefits Helpline for consumers to call or email to receive general work incentives information. The Helpline provides basic information to consumers and can link them to a Benefits Counselor if more in depth services are required.

Future Directions

The Vermont DVR Benefits Counseling Program is one of eight states in the country participating in the Promoting Opportunities Demonstration. The Promoting Opportunity Demonstration (POD) will test simplified work incentives and a benefit offset in the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program to determine the effects on outcomes such as earnings, employment, and benefit payments. In this five-year demonstration benefits are reduced by \$1 for every \$2 earned above the POD threshold, which is the greater of the current Trial Work Period level or the participant's itemized impairment-related work expenses (up to Substantial Gainful Activity). Random assignment will place volunteers in one of three groups; a control group and two treatment groups. The control group continues under usual rules. Treatment group 1 is subject to the offset and we will suspend benefits for any month in which SSDI benefits are reduced to zero. Treatment group 2 is subject to the offset and we will terminate SSDI entitlement when benefits are reduced to zero for 12 consecutive months. Both treatment groups are eligible for POD-specific benefits counseling. This is an opportunity for Vermonters who are eligible for the Demonstration to increase their earnings potential.

Results

Over 33,000 people of working age receive Social Security Disability benefits (SSI/SSDI) in the state of Vermont. According to the Joint Fiscal Office a higher proportion of younger people are on the SSI/SSDI programs in Vermont than in most other states, meaning more young people are out of the workforce. Because of the complex work rules within the SSI/SSDI programs, many beneficiaries do not work and minimize their earnings because they fear what might happen to their cash and healthcare benefits if they do go back to work. Benefits counseling is a proven strategy to help beneficiaries negotiate the complex Social Security return to work rules. Research from Vermont published in the Journal of Rehabilitation showed that beneficiaries who received benefits counseling were more likely to work and work at higher levels than those who did not receive benefits counseling.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Creative Workforce Solutions

Program Overview

Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS) is an initiative of the Agency of Human Services (AHS) that offers a consolidated and coordinated approach to employment services and provides equal access to meaningful work in the competitive job market. CWS offers the business community a simplified staffing service that helps them access qualified candidates to meet their staffing needs. All services are free to businesses in Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and New York.

CWS Employment Consultants and Business Account Managers (BAMs) are available to employers statewide to review business needs, offer qualified candidates, and develop training plans for job candidates. The goal of CWS is to provide a streamlined recruitment and retention service for Vermont businesses while also offering training and support to Vermonters who find entering, or re-entering the workforce challenging.

Staff and Partners

Creative Workforce Solutions is staffed by 10 BAMs covering all 12 AHS Districts. BAMs convene local CWS Employment Teams, where programs can share business contacts, problem-solve difficult cases, and hear directly from Hiring Managers. In addition to the BAMs, CWS also includes Employment Consultants who are contracted through various organizations including the Designated Agencies, the Vermont Association of Business, Industry & Rehabilitation (VABIR), the Vermont Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and a variety of specialized employment programs.

As an initiative of the Agency of Human Services, Creative Workforce Solutions represents candidates and individuals served by the following partners:

- Economic Services Division, Reach Up
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Mental Health
- Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living
- Vermont Veterans
- New Americans/Refugees
- Vermont's Recovery Center Network
- Office of Child Support
- At-risk youth service organizations

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Creative Workforce Solutions

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

The State as a Model Employer – On March 23, 2016, Governor Shumlin signed an Executive Order establishing a “Disability Employment Working Group” comprised of representatives from DAIL, the Department of Human Resources, and members of the Governor’s Workforce Equity and Diversity Committee. They were charged with developing a model to help State agencies recruit, train and retain workers with disabilities to both diversify and meet the needs of Vermont’s “greying” workforce. In 2017, CWS piloted the model in the Barre-Berlin-Montpelier corridor before launching statewide, and information sessions were held for 10 groups of Hiring Managers and Supervisors from across the state.

Future Directions

Creative Workforce Solutions has ongoing relationships with over 3,000 businesses across Vermont and adjoining counties in NY, MA and NH. Business Account Managers are now working with their local communities to develop training “pipelines” into various sectors of the economy. Recent training programs have been established to prepare individuals for careers in:

- Healthcare
- Hospitality
- Commercial driving
- Customer service/cashier
- State Government
- Food Preparation and delivery

We see this demand-driven model as the key to meeting the needs of employers who are struggling to find workers. In developing training programs, the starting point is always with the businesses in a community, the ultimate “end users” of our employment services. By taking the time to understand the staffing needs of businesses, we can better craft trainings that meet their needs while also offering the skill development that may be lacking for job candidates. Through collaborations with adult education programs, training providers, Tech Centers and other community partners, CWS can build customized training that aligns with higher-wage jobs in a wide range of economic sectors.

Results

All CWS business engagement activities are recorded in Salesforce. The three elements below are used to track the business outreach activities of the CWS employment teams statewide in SFY 2017 (July 2016 through June 2017):

- New Contacts: 1,680 Contacts identified in 1,192 businesses
- New Opportunities identified: 4,459
- Activities with business: 5,295 in 1,645 distinct businesses

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Jobs for Independence

Program Overview

Vermont secured a multi-year research grant to explore the impact of “enhanced” employment services for SNAP-Eligible Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDS). The target populations for this project were intentionally the hardest to serve in our communities:

- Individuals with Substance Abuse disorders
- Vermonters with mental health concerns
- Homeless and housing insecure individuals
- Ex-Offenders

The Jobs for Independence (JFI) program, is a demonstration project administered by the Department for Children and Families (DCF) Economic Services Division (ESD). The goal of the program is to test innovative approaches that will reduce dependence on SNAP (3Squares Vermont). DCF/ESD contracts with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to:

- 1) provide clinical assessments through its Employee Assistance Program (EAP) staff, to identify barriers to employment that confront SNAP recipients; and
- 2) connect SNAP recipients to treatment and resources, including employment services through DVR and the Vermont Association for Business Industry and Rehabilitation (VABIR), to reduce barriers to employment and help recipients obtain employment.

Staff and Partners

Each DVR district office has one dedicated Vocational Counselor to serve the JFI participants in that district. EAP supports the project with 7.5 positions, and VABIR supports the project with 7 staff.

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

Regional teams were developed over the past year to support implement the project. Teams include staff from:

- Department of Children and Families, Economic Services Division
- Department of Labor
- Community College of Vermont
- Local Community Action Programs across the State

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Jobs for Independence

Future Directions

Now that the study has enrolled all participants, work will focus on strengthening the delivery of services so that participants can overcome their barriers to employment. The needs of this population are so deep and challenging that coordinated services and support is essential. Based on the study's success so far, EAP and DVR are now working with DCF/ESD, VDOL, and CCV to see if there are ways to sustain the work and the partnership after the study is complete in December 2018. The hope is to maintain the partnerships and find funding to continue the program.

Results

Over the last year the study has enrolled over 2,500 participants. Half (1,250) have been assigned to the treatment group and 80% of the treatment group participants attended their first EAP appointment. Close to 5000 referrals to community resource organizations have been made for services including education and training, substance abuse and mental health treatment, housing and transportation, primary care and work search. These supports, and services have helped 341 participants obtain jobs.

Success Stories (pseudonyms used):

Joe and Jill moved here a few months ago. Joe lost his job, and Jill is on SSI. They have been homeless and staying in hotels. Joe has been coming in weekly to prepare for and apply for jobs. Both Joe and Jill recently started attending Vermont Adult Learning. Joe has interviewed with 4 different companies in the past month. This week Joe was offered a full-time position with a local transportation company as a cleaner and fueler. Joe was referred to VDOL and the WIOA Orientation to attain his CDL. Lastly, they have found an apartment within walking distance to Joe's new job!

Sarah has been homeless since last December and unemployed since 2014. Sarah started a work experience supported by VABIR and DVR at a local thrift store in August. We created a resume, searched and applied for jobs. Sarah was hired at McDonald's part time, but is often called in, working 40+ hours weekly. Sarah is looking at apartments and asked for help with the applications from the Homeless Prevention Center. Jim has struggled finding employment as he is on the sex offender registry. Jim started receiving his SSI benefits again, after losing them during incarceration. We helped him find part-time work on a cleaning crew at a

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Jobs for Independence

local resort in July. Since that time, he has met with the benefits counselor and bought a car. As a result of our ongoing support, he was offered a full-time supervisor position at his job, and he was pre-approved for a home loan.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Linking Learning to Careers

Program Overview

Linking Learning to Careers (LLC) is an exciting new opportunity to improve career and college readiness for Vermont high school students with disabilities. This 5-year (2016-2021) statewide initiative will build on effective career exploration and employment services already provided to students and engage them in additional experiences, called enhanced services, that will help them to successfully transition from high school into adulthood. The enhanced services include college and career exploration opportunities, work-based learning experiences, and assistive technology supports. Each student will develop an LCC Plan that reflects their aspirations and experiences and guides informed choices regarding their future.

Staff and Partners

LLC Staff & State of Vermont Partners	Non-State of Vermont Partners
LLC Career Consultants (11)	Community College of Vermont
LLC Assistive Technology Specialists (2)	Vermont Association of Business, Industry and Rehabilitation (VABIR)
LLC Director and Assistant Director	Vermont High Schools, Career and Technical Education Centers
DVR Transition Counselors	Mathematica Policy Research (research evaluator)
Vermont Agency of Education (AOE)	TransCen, Inc. (technical assistance provider)

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

After a year of planning, staffing, training, contracting, promoting, outreach, and initial partner development, LLC enrollment is in full swing. Milestones and accomplishments include:

- Convening an LLC Implementation Team to provide DVR oversight and guidance for the project;
- Implementing a project Pilot, enrolling 2-3 students in each district to test and refine outreach methods;
- Establishing work groups to determine transportation enhancements, and develop essential tools for the LLC project; Creating a set of resources to support full enrollment including an Implementation Guide, consent form,

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Linking Learning to Careers

- brochures, letters, marketing material, scripts, FAQs, and other documents to facilitate service delivery;
- Visiting each of the DVR district offices to meet full local youth teams;
- Contracting with Mathematica Policy Research for overall project evaluation, TransCen for technical assistance and monitoring, and Community College of VT for postsecondary educational opportunities and coordination;
- Conducting monthly professional development days for LLC staff;
- Designing and conducting initial fidelity monitoring visit with TransCen.

Future Directions

Enrollment activities continue, with the majority of recruitment planned for year two. Service provision will also gain momentum in 2018 as more students come onboard, and post-secondary options and transportation funding are utilized. Data collection will begin to reach a critical mass, allowing for more and better formative evaluation analysis and technical guidance by Mathematica and TransCen. With this information, we will be able to make on-the-fly adjustments to service delivery, work more efficiently with students, collaborate with schools, and improve post-secondary and work-based learning opportunities.

Results

Over 100 Vermont high school students have been enrolled in 2017. Full enrollment is planned for 2018, with the goal of providing enhanced services to 400 students until the program ends in 2021.

LLC will also participate in a 5-year rigorous evaluation study supported by Mathematica Policy Research. The results of the evaluation will provide qualitative and quantitative evidence of the impacts of LLC services on students' early career outcomes including paid competitive employment, postsecondary school enrollment, and improved confidence to achieve career goals. This information will assist the transition field by providing evidence of LLC's effectiveness along with potential replicability in other states.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Mature Worker Program

Program Overview

The Mature Worker Program has two major areas of responsibility.

- 1) The first major area is managing the US Department of Labor funded Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), a community service and work-based job training program for older Americans. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, SCSEP provides training for low-income, unemployed seniors. SCSEP participants gain work experience in a variety of community service activities at non-profit and public facilities, including schools, hospitals, day-care centers, and senior centers. Participants work an average of 20 hours a week, and are paid the highest of federal, state or local minimum wage. The training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities for participants, who must be at least 55, unemployed, and have a family income of no more than 125% of the federal poverty level. Enrollment priority is given to veterans and qualified spouses, then to individuals who are over 65, have a disability, have low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, reside in a rural area, are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have low employment prospects, or have failed to find employment after using services through the American Job Center system. (source: <https://www.doleta.gov/seniors/>).
- 2) The second major area involves advocating for the hiring and retaining of mature workers. An activity that promotes this goal is the Governor's Award for Business Excellence in Supporting Mature Workers. Each year, DAIL co-sponsors this award, recognizing businesses that embrace practices that are effective in hiring and retaining mature workers:
 - Recruitment and Retention Policies
 - Work Schedule Flexibility and Accommodations
 - Training and Skill Development Opportunities
 - Retirement and Retirement Planning

Other activities include promoting a multi-generational approach to Vermont's economy and economic development.

Staff and Partners

Multiple DAIL staff support and promote activities for the State's mature population. DVR's Mature Worker Program Coordinator has the responsibility for managing the SCSEP and establishing partnerships with multiple partners, including: Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD)

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Mature Worker Program

- Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL)
- Higher Education (Vermont State Colleges and University of Vermont)
- AARP
- State's Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- Vermont Associates for Training and Development (VATD) Business Community
- Business Associations

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

The second annual presentation of the Governor's Award for Business Excellence in Supporting Mature Workers took place in September 2017, at the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) fall conference. Four employers received awards, presented by Governor Phil Scott.

Future Directions

- DAIL will continue to manage the SCSEP during Program Year 2017.
- The Department will again administer the Governor's Award for Business Excellence in Supporting Mature Workers.
- Existing partnerships will be supported and enhanced, and new ones developed.
- Special efforts will be made to engage, educate and learn from the business community.
- Grant opportunities will be identified, prioritized and pursued.

Results

The State's SCSEP grantee, Vermont Associates for Training and Development (VATD), achieved the highest level of performance in the country during Program Year 2016 (July 2016-June 2017). VATD achieved 123.8% of required program outcomes. In the first quarter of Program Year 2017 (July 2017-June 2018), VATD achieved 126.6% of required program outcomes.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Office of Child Support

Program Overview

Many individuals cannot meet their child support obligations because they are not fully engaged in the workforce and thus do not earn enough money to meet their obligations. Many individuals with a child support order face employment barriers – often disabilities – that prevent them from meeting their support obligations. Through the Work4Kids program, EAP counselors meet with these individuals to assess these barriers, connect them to key resources and treatment that reduce barriers to employment, and provide emotional and motivational support. EAP counselors then work with DVR and Vermont Association of Business, Industry and Rehabilitation (VABIR) partners to help these individuals secure suitable employment.

Staff and Partners

Twelve EAP Counselors, twelve DVR Counselors and a similar number of VABIR Employment Consultants provide support to individuals participating in Work4Kids. VABIR staff provide important access to private sector employers throughout the state.

Recent Developments and Accomplishments

DVR partners with the Office of Child Support (OCS) in addressing non-payment of child support. The people served by the program have increased their child support payments between five and seven-fold. The success of an OCS pilot project led to expansion to all regions of the state in the past year.

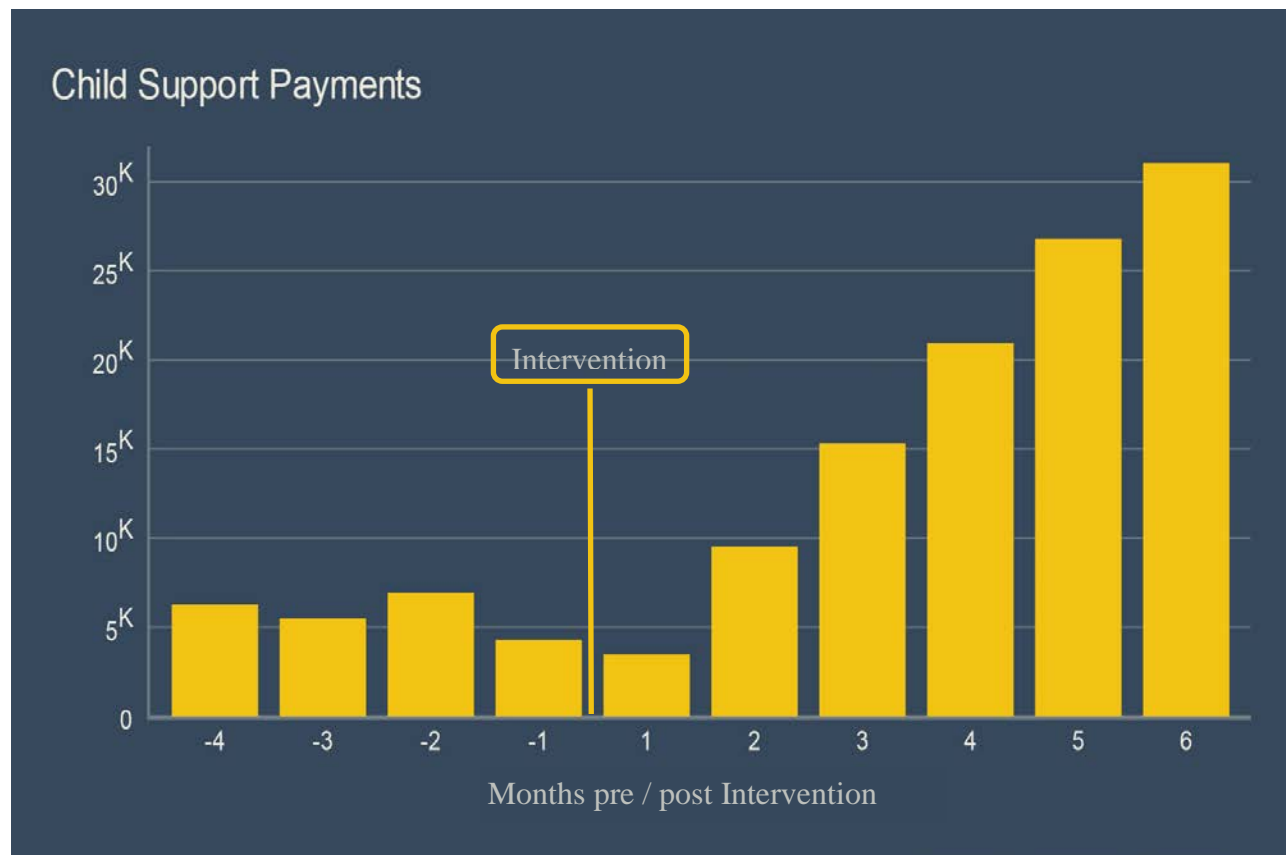
Future Directions

Work4Kids currently focuses on individuals who are already out of compliance with child support payments. The Office of Child Support has an interest in expanding the reach of Work4kids to include those who are at risk of not meeting future child support obligations.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Office of Child Support

Results

Child support payments by Work4Kids participants increased seven-fold, comparing the month prior to referral to the month six months after referral:



Carlos (pseudonym) was referred to the Work4Kids program. He came to the assessment reluctant to trust program staff. He had been in and out of homeless shelters, often living in a tent.

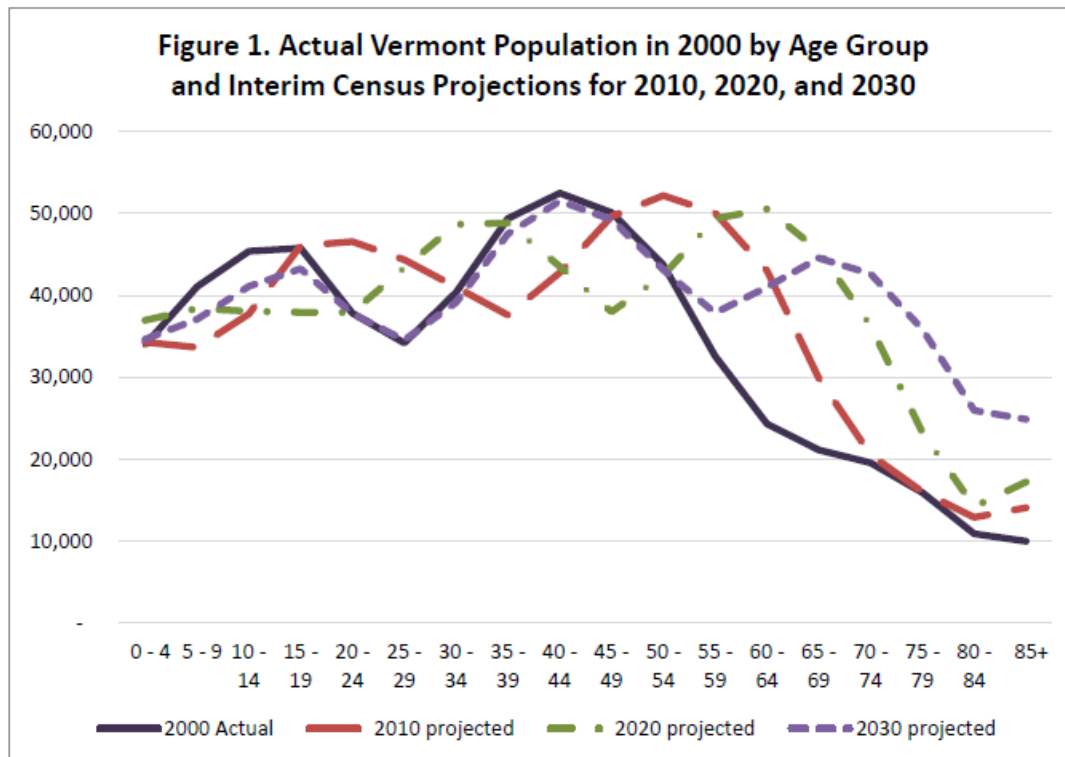
Carlos made a connection with an EAP counselor, and his trust gradually increased. He came to understand that his challenges included physical limitations from years of manual labor, which he could no longer do, as well as emotional challenges from PTSD, depression and anxiety.

Carlos connected with appropriate treatment. Work4Kids staff helped him find stable housing, as well as a job that fits his interests and abilities.

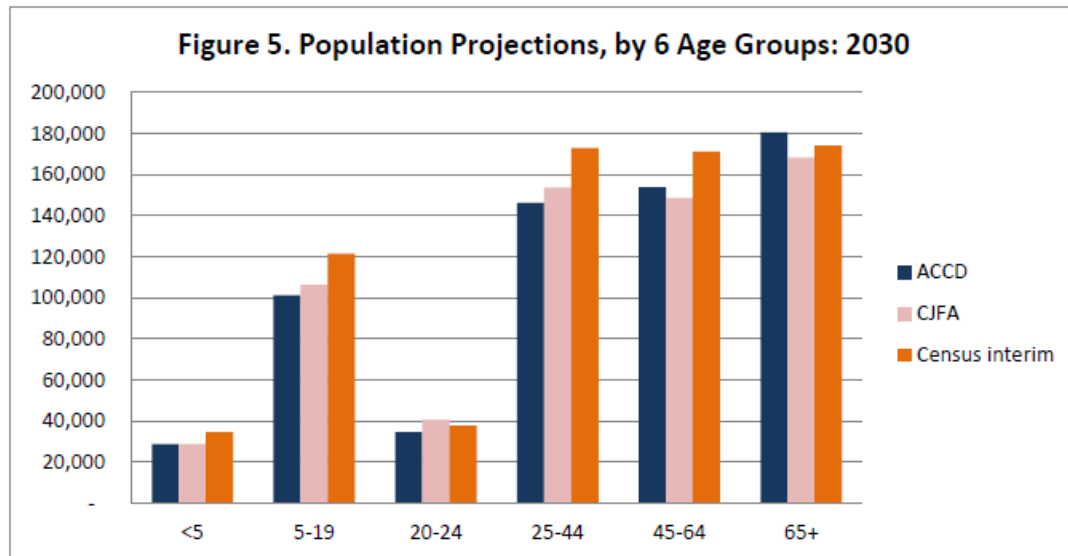
Facts and Figures

Vermont's Population is Not Growing...But is Growing Older...

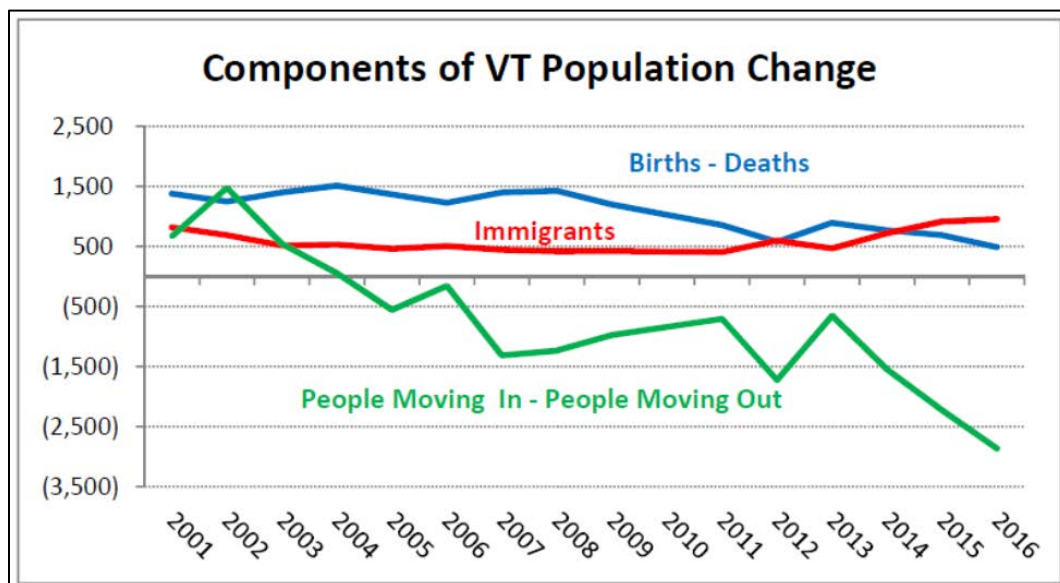
In 2016, Vermont had the third highest median age (42.7) in the United States, surpassed by only Maine (44.6) and New Hampshire (43.0). Vermont is aging more rapidly than the rest of the nation. Over the last quarter century, the median age in Vermont has increased twice as much as in the U.S. Vermonters over age 65 are expected to increase from about 18% of the state's population in 2017 to about 28% of the state's population by 2030. In 2010, about 10,000 Vermonters were over the age of 85; this is projected to increase to over 20,000 by 2030. Because this oldest age group is most likely to need support services, partly due to a high prevalence of dementias, we can expect increased demand for support services and a caregiving workforce.



Facts and Figures



The average Vermont woman currently has about 1.58 babies in her lifetime, the second lowest in the United States. In recent years our low birth rate, combined with emigration of Vermonters to other states, has led to a stable population that is aging. While this may be a positive trend for the effect of the human population on the planet, including climate change, it presents numerous challenges to our state and our state's economy.



<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/money/2016/12/29/vermont-population-declining-out-migration-art-woolf/95886408/>

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2017/cb17-100.html>

Facts and Figures

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/money/2017/06/29/vermont-population-aging-faster-than-nation/435238001/>

http://www.leg.state.vt.us/jfo/issue_briefs_and_memos/Projecting_Vermont_s_Population_.pdf

<http://www.longtermcorecard.org/databystate/state?state=VT>

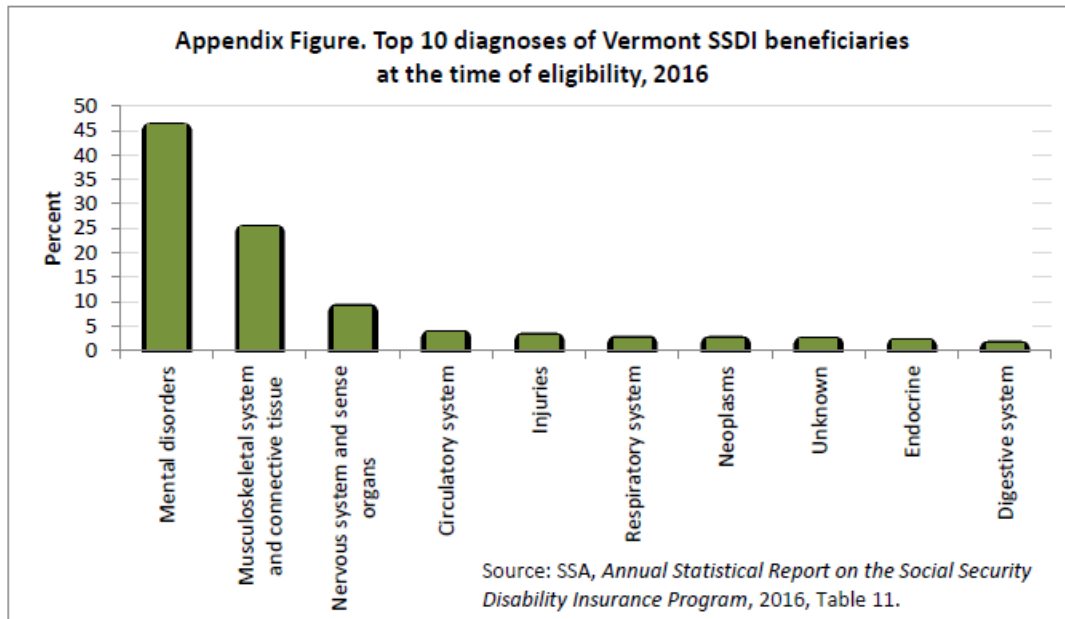
...With Increasing Rates of Disability Among Working Age Vermonters

Vermont has high rates of disability among working age adults. An Issue Brief produced by Joyce Manchester of the Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) found that in 2013, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine had the highest rates of adults under age 35 enrolled in the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program. Between 2000 and 2013 most people on SSDI under age 35 and ages 35 to 44 in northern New England rose almost four times faster than the national average. Most of the population on SSDI among people ages 45 to 54 rose twice as fast as the national average. “Policymakers need to pay attention to the number of people enrolled in the SSDI program because beneficiaries are no longer fully engaged in the labor force and contributing to the state’s economy but instead rely on income support from the government. ...Recognizing the relatively high rates of young people on the SSDI program may provide more reasons to invest in enhancing job opportunities and work supports as well as strengthening educational opportunities and policies that will alleviate drug abuse and keep people off the program. In addition, policymakers may want to ask whether more can be done to help people already on the SSDI program move beyond that reliance and return to the work force.”

In a related Issue Brief, Joyce Manchester found that more than two-thirds (71%) of the 25,738 Vermonters on the SSDI program in December 2016 became eligible for the program based on mental health disorders or diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue. Vermont has many SSDI beneficiaries who were eligible based on mental health disorders than the country, this has increased steadily since 2001. “People with mental health disorders on SSDI, especially younger people, should be considered in discussions of Vermont’s workforce because most beneficiaries do not work. ...Also, beneficiaries with mental health diagnoses are likely to stay on the program for

Facts and Figures

many years.”



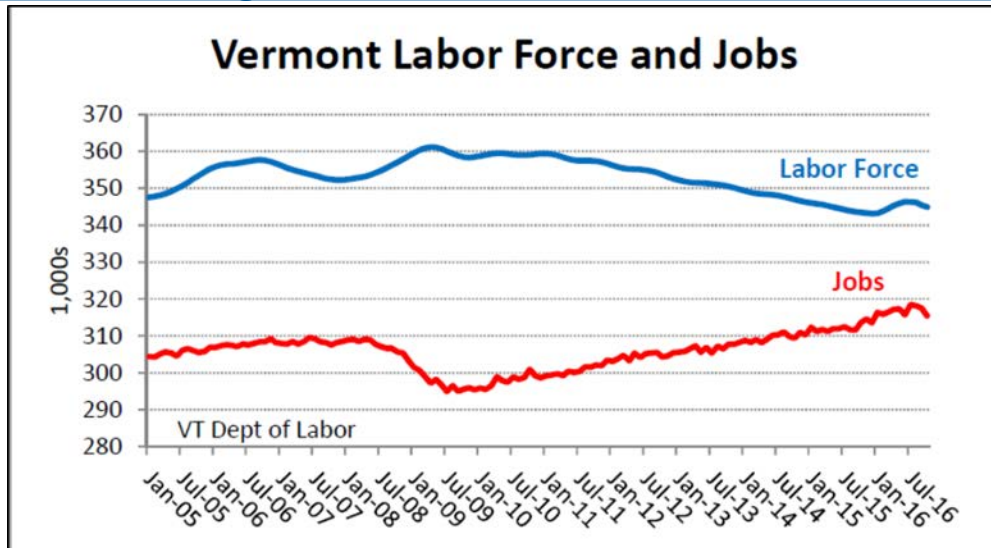
[http://www.leg.state.vt.us/Jfo/issue_briefs_and_memos/SSDI Prevalence Issue Brief.pdf](http://www.leg.state.vt.us/Jfo/issue_briefs_and_memos/SSDI_Prevalence_Issue_Brief.pdf)

[http://www.leg.state.vt.us/jfo/issue_briefs_and_memos/SSDI Mental Health and Musculoskeletal Diagnoses.pdf](http://www.leg.state.vt.us/jfo/issue_briefs_and_memos/SSDI_Mental_Health_and_Musculoskeletal_Diagnoses.pdf)

Workforce: A Demographic Challenge

Recent data from the Vermont Department of Labor suggests that we face an increasing demographic challenge. While the labor force has decreased, the demand for workers has increased. This is particularly acute in health and human services, because the demand for workers in these jobs is increasing faster than for most other jobs. In March 2017, the Vermont Department of Labor projected short-term job openings for occupations in Vermont between 2016 and 2018. The projected annual ‘openings’ (representing both job growth and replacement) include registered nurses (n=272), nursing assistants (n=116), and social and human service assistants (n=66). Combined with a limited labor force, level funding, low wages, and sometimes difficult working conditions, employers seeking to recruit and retain direct care workers are likely to face increasing challenges across our state and our systems of care.

Facts and Figures



<http://www.vtlmi.info/projst.pdf#page=2>

[http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/money/2016/12/29/vermont-population-declining-out-migration-art-woolf/95886408/;](http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/money/2016/12/29/vermont-population-declining-out-migration-art-woolf/95886408/)

<https://www.scribd.com/document/332801654/Comparison-of-Vermont-s-job-force-and-employment-trends>

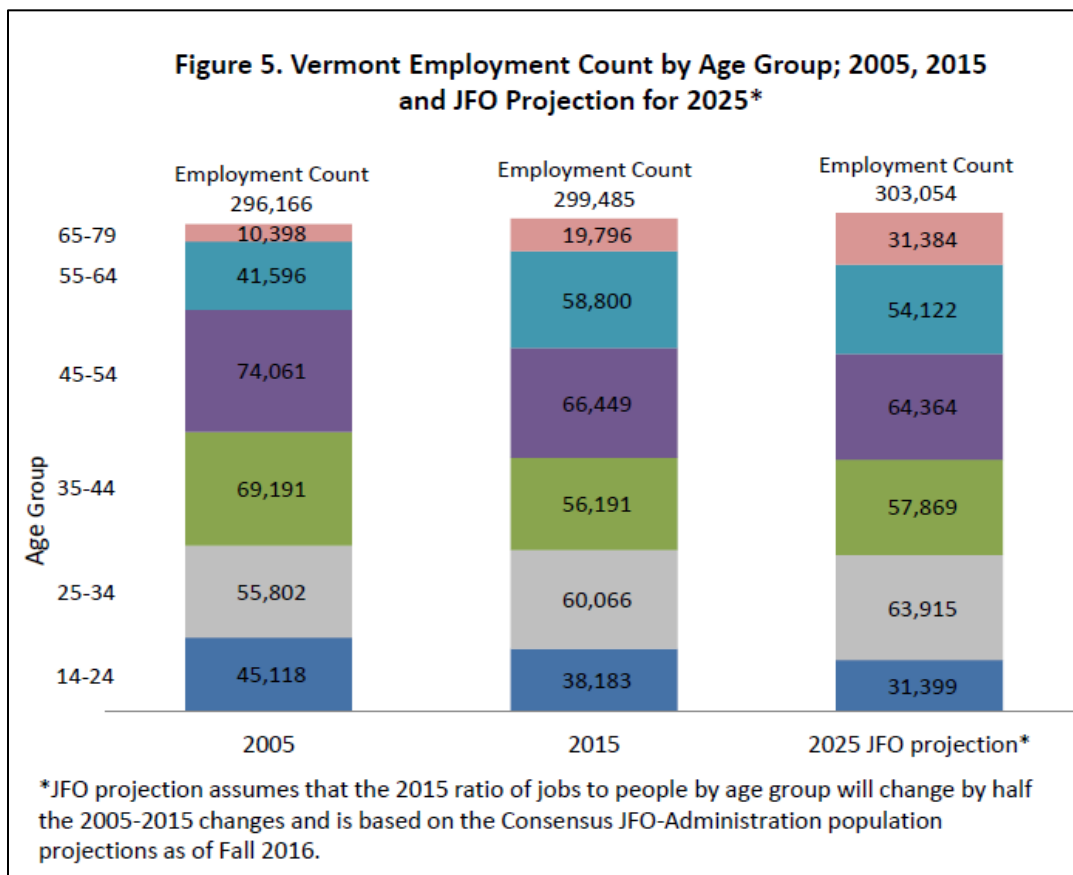
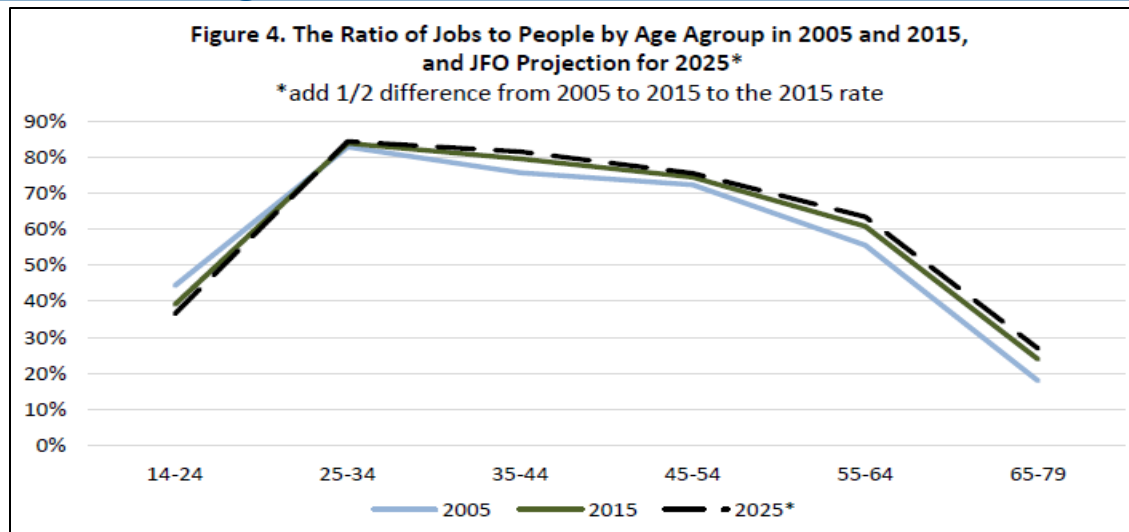
Employment of Older Workers

Vermont places great value on the positive contributions of our older citizens. When older Vermonters maintain their health, and remain active in their communities, it has a positive impact on the State's economic sustainability and improves their physical, mental and financial well-being. This also helps to address our state's workforce challenges.

In December 2016, Joyce Manchester from the Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office published an issue brief regarding employment by age. Between 2005 and 2015, the share of jobs held by people age 55 to 64 rose from about 14 percent to almost 20 percent, and the share for people age 65 or older almost doubled from 3.5 percent to almost 7 percent. Employment among older people rose for two reasons: an increase in the number of older people, and a greater likelihood that an older person is working. The report predicts that the number of jobs held by people age 65 and older will continue to increase, and that this will help to offset a decrease in the number of younger workers.

Without the older workers, Vermont's employment count would shrink significantly. This illustrates the importance of older workers in Vermont's labor market and economy.

Facts and Figures



http://www.leg.state.vt.us/jfo/issue_briefs_and_memos/Vermont's%20Jobs%20Filled%20By%20Age%20Group%20final.pdf

Governor's Award for Business Excellence in Supporting Older Workers

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) and the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) co-sponsor the Governor's Award for Business Excellence in Supporting Older Workers. In partnership with the Governor's

Facts and Figures

Commission on Successful Aging, the award recognizes Vermont employers who demonstrate exceptional commitment to employment practices that benefit and support the inclusion and retention of older workers. Four Vermont businesses earned this award in 2017:

Chroma Technology Group, Bellows Falls

GW Plastics, Bethel

Vermont Associates for Training and Development, St. Albans

Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice, Berlin

These employers consistently demonstrate exceptional commitment to employment practices that benefit and support the inclusion and retention of older workers, resulting in a positive impact on our state's economy and contributing to the health and well-being of older Vermonters.

Employment of People with Developmental Disabilities

Vermont has been highly successful in supporting community employment for people with developmental disabilities. The employment rate among people age 18 to 64 who are served by Developmental Disabilities Services is 48% (2016). National Core Indicator interviews of adults with developmental disabilities receiving Home and Community-Based Services found that 42% of the people interviewed have a paid job in the community, the highest rate in the United States.

The DDS Supported Employment Program was recognized by the Zero Project, based in Vienna, Austria, for the ZERO PROJECT INNOVATIVE POLICY 2017 award. This award recognized our success in supporting people with developmental disabilities in full community integrated employment.

http://www.nationalcoreindicators.org/upload/state-reports/2014-15_ACS_Vermont_Report.pdf

<http://app.resultsscorecard.com/Program/Embed/14904>

Post-Secondary Education for People with Developmental Disabilities

In partnership with community providers, DAIL has developed options for post-secondary education for people with developmental disabilities. Three organizations (Think College Vermont, College Steps and SUCCEED) help youth to integrate into post-secondary coursework at collaborating colleges; the latter of which specializes in teaching independent living skills in a transitional living model. A fourth program (Project SEARCH) matches students who are in their final year of high school with internships located within host businesses where

Facts and Figures

they learn multifaceted skills that lead to employment at graduation. These four youth transition programs have collectively enabled young adults to live independently and/or attain occupations in media, public relations, human resources, data entry, baking, and human services. As of June 2017, 37 young adults had graduated from these programs and 32 were employed at graduation for an 86% graduation rate.

Health Disparities

People with disabilities tend to experience health disparities. Health disparities are related to a combination of social and economic factors including poverty, poor access to health care, and lower education. Special Olympics found that of ten athletes with disabilities:

- 4 have obvious tooth decay
- 1 needs an urgent referral to a dentist
- 6 are obese or overweight
- 3 fail a hearing test
- 4 need glasses, and 2 have an eye disease
- 5 have a significant problem with flexibility
- 4 have a significant problem with balance

In March 2010 the Vermont Department of Health reported that adult Vermonters who have a disability were more likely to suffer worse health outcomes:

- 43% of the people who had an income less than 125% of the poverty level have a disability
- 42% of the people who did not graduate from high school had a disability
- 22% of those who had a disability smoke, compared to 17% of the total population
- 56% of people with disabilities did not get regular physical activity, compared to 42% of the total population

http://dail.vermont.gov/sites/dail/files//documents/Health_dispartities_in_people_with_DD.pdf

The Health Disparities of Vermonters, 2010

Senior Health: Strengths and Challenges

The United Health Foundation produces an annual senior health ranking report, with data for each state. In 2017 Vermont was ranked #8 overall. The 2017 report includes strengths and challenges for older Vermonters:

Strengths:

Facts and Figures

- Low percentage of ICU (Intensive Care Unit) use
- High SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) enrollment
- Low percentage of seniors living in poverty

Challenges:

- Low percentage of healthcare-associated infection reporting policies
- High prevalence of excessive drinking
- Low percentage of hospice care use

Highlights:

- In the past two years, poverty decreased 10% from 7.3% to 6.6% of adults aged 65+
- In the past three years, food insecurity increased 43% from 10.8% to 15.4% of adults aged 60+
- In the past three years, hip fractures decreased 32% from 6.9 to 4.7 hospitalizations per 1,000 Medicare enrollees
- Since 2013, obesity increased 13% from 23.8% to 26.9% of adults aged 65+
- Since 2013, hospice care increased 57% from 23.5% to 37.0% of Medicare decedents aged 65+

https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/2017-senior-report/measure/overall_sr/state/VT

Increasing Rates of Dementia...with a Growing Need for Family Caregivers

In the United States, nearly one in every three seniors who dies each year has Alzheimer's or another dementia. Since 2000, deaths from Alzheimer's disease have increased by 89%, while deaths from heart disease have decreased by 14%. In 2014, Vermont had the fourth highest death rate from Alzheimer's in the United States, with Alzheimer's disease the fifth leading cause of death. The Alzheimer's Association estimates that 12,000 Vermonters over the age of 65 had Alzheimer's disease in 2017, and that this number will increase by 42% to 17,000 Vermonters by 2025.

People with dementia often rely on friends and family to provide care. Support provided to family caregivers helps improve the quality of life for both people with dementia and their family members. Caregiver supports can delay the need for publicly funded services including nursing home care. In 2015, an estimated 34 million adults in the United States had been a caregiver to an adult age 50 or older in the prior 12 months; thus, about 14% of all American adults were caregivers to someone age 50 or older. In Vermont, an estimated 30,000

Facts and Figures

caregivers provided about 34,000,000 hours of unpaid care to people with dementia in 2016.

https://www.alz.org/documents_custom/facts_2017/statesheet_vermont.pdf

<http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2015/caregiving-in-the-united-states-2015-report-revised.pdf>

https://www.alz.org/facts/?gclid=CjwKCAiA9f7QBRBpEiwApLGUigubNekfcj5H6WSHmxc64fVT8sVR0L4Ou5dNpVFplt6RwnJ8w93QhoCeXoQAvD_BwE

Long-Term Services and Supports: Pacesetter Award

In 2017, Vermont's long-term services and supports were ranked #3 in the United States in the [Long-Term Services & Supports State Scorecard](#) produced by AARP and The Scan Foundation, earning Vermont the Pacesetter Award for improving long-term services and supports. The scorecard ranks each State on long-term services and supports for older adults, people with physical disabilities, and family caregivers. From the Scan Foundation: "Vermont is a proven national leader in providing accessible, affordable, quality health, and LTSS coverage for its residents. Vermont moved up from No. 19 in the 2011 Scorecard to No. 3 in 2017, exhibiting more improvement in "Affordability and Access" than any other state. The state has also risen through the ranks in overall LTSS performance, moving from No. 20 in 2011 to No. 3 in 2017."

Vermont's ranking in specific dimensions:

- Affordability and Access: 3
- Choice of Setting and Provider: 5
- Quality of Life & Quality of Care: 19
- Support for Family Caregivers: 10
- Effective Transitions: 9

Success Highlights:

- Vermont improved access to Medicaid and increased the percentage of low-income adults with disabilities who are covered by Medicaid.
- Since 2011, there has been no waiting list for home- and community-based services for people with high needs who qualify for a nursing home level of care.
- Affordability of home care and nursing home care has improved.
- Vermont reinvested savings to expand access to homemaker and adult day services for the moderate need population, people who are not eligible for nursing home care.

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living

Success Stories

- Vermont adjusted provider rates to help attract a high-quality, LTSS workforce to provide home care.
- Vermont expanded LTSS options, including Adult Family Care.

<http://www.longtermscorecard.org/~media/Microsite/Files/2017/Web%20Version%20LongTerm%20Services%20and%20Supports%20State%20Scorecard%202017.pdf>

<http://www.thescanfoundation.org/vermont-wins-pacesetter-prize-affordability-and-access>

Success Story

ASD



Chandra is a Nepalese refugee who was hospitalized for two months. Not only was he without a home because his family could no longer manage his care, but it was very hard to find a provider due to the language barrier combined with his complex care needs. Most people believed that a nursing facility was his only option. However, after the ASD transition team met with Chandra, they

referred him to the Adult Family Care (AFC) home provider network which offers a matching service and contracted care arrangements through private homes. All the providers met Chandra, but without finding a match. Each time Chandra's translator, Megnath, explained to Chandra who the provider was, a description of what an AFC home is, and how it might be an option for him.

One day, Chandra's interpreter asked if he could talk in private with the ASD transition coordinator. Amazingly, Megnath volunteered to be Chandra's AFC home provider! This was a great match, since he could speak Chandra's language and they had developed a good relationship. Megnath went to work getting his home ready for a safety and accessibility inspection. Since Megnath was doing the renovations himself, it was a slow process. During this time, Chandra was admitted to a nursing facility. While he was at the nursing facility, Chandra sat in his wheelchair with his head down, eyes closed, and did not interact...he appeared very depressed.

After several hurdles, Chandra's discharge team pushed through, and Chandra was discharged from the nursing facility in October 2017. There was one last

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living

Success Stories

hurdle...during Chandra's 3-hour trip from Bennington to Winooski they discovered that his durable medical equipment was going to the wrong place! But no worries, the equipment was re-routed and both Chandra and the equipment he needs made it to his new home. Upon Chandra's arrival, Megnath stated that he knew Chandra recognized him while putting his hand to his chest. Now Chandra sits with his head up and a big smile on his face. It's amazing what a difference one person can make in another person's life.

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living

Success Stories

Success Story

DBVI



Alek was born blind and lived in an orphanage in Russia until he was adopted at the age of 6, when he moved to the U.S. His family has challenged and supported him throughout his childhood, and he has benefited from quality special education services. His long-term work with Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments and Orientation and Mobility specialists from the VT

Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired helped him succeed academically and to learn the skills he needs to live independently. Now, at age 18, he is a senior in high school and has been accepted to his Number 1 choice college. On “Instant Decision Day” no less!

Alek began working with DBVI when he was 15, with a goal to become a radio broadcaster. Because of his outgoing personality and single-minded focus, he started sports broadcasting for his high school as a freshman and has become a local celebrity.

Starting in 2015, he attended the Learn, Earn and Prosper (LEAP) Program, a summer residential, employment program sponsored by DBVI in partnership with ReSOURCE VT. LEAP provides work experiences and internships to students who are blind or low vision, with a focus on job readiness and self-advocacy training. During his first two LEAP summers, Alek participated in work experiences in the ReSOURCE computer department. In 2017, Alek was an Intern at WBTV Radio Station, when he wrote this about his experience: “I am proud of being able to run a broadcast on my own. I once thought that being blind was going to make radio impossible for me pursue, but this experience helped me understand my abilities.” Follow this link to see how Alek records voiceovers for his radio show using the screen reader software JAWS and APH’s studio recording program: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kfHOGt_kGQ

Alek has also provided mentoring and technology training to younger students in LEAP. This past summer, he helped to produce a podcast during the summer technology classes. Alek worked with his peers on this creative project while providing mentoring in audio programming and editing. Alek is a natural and

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living Success Stories

enthusiastic leader; he is patient with his peers and younger students and supported many of these students with challenging assistive technology.

LEAP staff have had the pleasure to watch Alek grow into a bright and capable young man. LEAP has provided Alek with encouragement and feedback over the past three summers, and Alek approaches any challenge presented to him in LEAP with a “can do” attitude.” A quote from Alek:

“I absolutely love the LEAP program. It has changed my life. Each year LEAP has taught me something important, whether it was learning how to get to and from work by bus or cooking on my own. This past summer, I was managing my own bank account and traveling to and from work on my own. If it wasn't for LEAP, I wouldn't be prepared for being on my own in the near future. Next year I'll be heading to college. LEAP has prepared me for this because of the skills I was taught. I also love the program because you meet new people every year. I have such a wide variety of friends from this program. Most of us are visually impaired or have no sight which makes it easier to share stories and connect with each other. It's honestly a summer family- we are always looking out for each other.”

DBVI is proud of Alek's accomplishments and we wish him the best in his studies at the nationally-recognized broadcasting program at Lyndon State College. He'll be heading there in August 2018, already adept at using technologies: a Brailenote Touch portable notetaker, a new laptop computer with JAWS screen reading software, a portable refreshable braille device that can connect to his laptop or his iPhone, and a Victor Reader Trek device for finding his way around campus. This young man is ready to take on the world!

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living Success Stories

Success Story

DDSD

Supporting a Parent to Raise her Daughter at Home

My name is Tanya and I have a 17-month-old daughter named Payton whom I love dearly and feel so grateful that I am in a shared living environment where I am able to successfully parent her.

Before moving in with my current shared living provider, Pam, my life was unstable sometimes living with parents and at other times living with friends only on a temporary basis – moving from one to the other. I had tried living with a shared



living provider a few years ago when my other two daughters were in DCF custody and then adopted. I had my emotions to deal with and being in a shared living environment was not for me at that time.

Four months before the birth of my daughter Payton, I moved in with Pam, my current shared living provider.

Living with Pam gives me a secure home with the ability to raise my daughter. Pam helps me when I am frustrated and helps me develop my parenting skills.

She helps me by giving me reminders to remember where Payton is and to focus on her safety. Pam has also helped me to get to the point where I can help prepare healthy meals for all in the home while still

paying attention to my daughter.

I get to spend time with Payton in the community and work on directing her on how to be safe, helping her to interact with other children, being nice and I get to be a parent surrounded by other caring parents. Watching other parents make choices, (both good and bad), helps me to be a better parent and make better choices for myself. Going to story time and other community events with my daughter along with my supports not only helps me with parenting skills but it also gives my daughter a chance to play with other kids, too. Having access to counseling and people to talk to about my life and whatever the ball throws at me has been helpful. Coming up with a weekly and monthly plan for my time out in the community has been helpful because it helps me to know what's going on day to day and how every day and each activity connects to my goals.