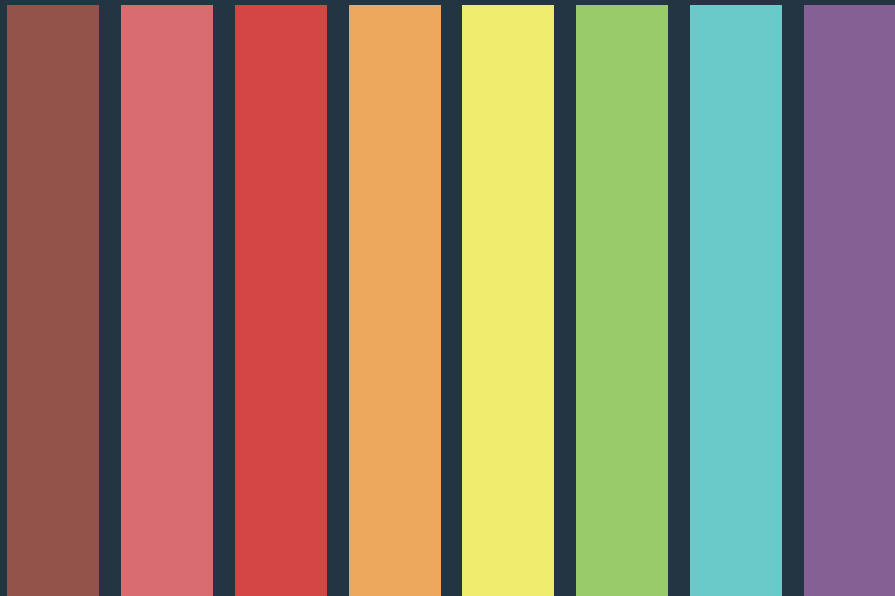




# State Disability Services **2022** TREND REPORT

## EMPLOYMENT



**Virginia Board for  
People with Disabilities**

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**PROJECT LIVING WELL**

# EMPLOYMENT

## *First Edition*

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# EMPLOYMENT

HOUSING

EDUCATION

EARLY INTERVENTION

HEALTH

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

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# BACKGROUND

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**T**he Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) is a subcontractor for Virginia Commonwealth University's Partnership for People with Disabilities (VCU PPD) on Project Living Well, a Project of National Significance that was awarded federal funding by the Administration for Community Living. Project Living Well was established with the purpose of "implementing a replicable and sustainable model of: 1) evidence-based and informed capacity building strategies that will increase knowledge and skills of people with disabilities and their supporters and generate policy change; and 2) community monitoring that will align and augment disparate monitoring and quality initiatives to improve the identification of health and safety risks for people with disabilities." Project Living Well will be implemented over a five-year period, from federal fiscal year 2018 through 2022.

As a result of this subcontract, VBPD began developing a trend report to track service provision and quality of life outcomes regarding people with developmental and other disabilities. The disability services system in Virginia spans numerous state agencies and other organizations, making it difficult to holistically monitor. VBPD hopes that this report helps policymakers, advocates, and the general public easily track performance over time and identify areas for improvement across the disability services system. VBPD also strives to align the trend report indicators with those used in VBPD's assessments of disability service

areas, which discuss the policy implications of key quantitative and qualitative information.

VBPD plans to release one trend report for each of five selected service categories as they are completed in 2020. These service categories are Early Intervention, Housing, Education, Employment, Health and Community Supports. After this first round of release, VBPD will determine the frequency for updating the trend report based on data availability and staff resources, but intends to update the trend report for a given topic at least once every four years. Similarly, VBPD updates its assessment of disability service areas once every four years for a given topic.

*People with disabilities have historically faced employment discrimination. Many Americans believed that people with disabilities were incapable of working and thus excluded them from the workforce. Starting in the 1800s, people with disabilities who worked were typically in facilities known as sheltered workshops. In sheltered workshops, people with disabilities are segregated from people without disabilities and paid sub-*



# BACKGROUND

minimum wage – an average of \$3.34 per hour in 2017-18 - with little to no benefits. Sheltered workshops are still in use today. Following the disability rights movement in the 1960s-1970s, federal legislation was passed to foster inclusion of people with disabilities in the workforce. For example, the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act prohibit employment discrimination based on disability status, require employers to provide reasonable accommodations, and require employment services to be provided in the most integrated setting appropriate to the person's needs and desires. More recently, the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) amended existing laws, including the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, to provide greater emphasis on competitive integrated employment. In addition, WIOA required state vocational rehabilitation agencies to offer pre-employment transition services to all students and youth with disabilities. Competitive, integrated employment refers to jobs that provide competitive pay and allow people with disabilities to work alongside people without disabilities in the community.

Despite these federal protections, employment barriers still exist. Many of these barriers stem from misconceptions. For example, some teachers and family members have low expectations for people with disabilities, and therefore steer them towards sheltered workshops, volunteer activities, or day programs. Similarly, some employers believe that people with disabilities are not able to perform the job or are expensive to accommodate. However, research finds that people with disabilities are able to perform competitive, integrated jobs, when given proper supports, and that the supports are typically low-cost. Another barrier is that many people with disabilities fear that employment will result in loss of federal or state benefits. However, they may not know about some federal and state programs that help mitigate this concern, such as

the Ticket to Work and Virginia Medicaid Works programs. Virginia has taken some positive steps towards employing people with disabilities, though much work remains to be done. Virginia established an Employment First policy in 2012 to guide the state's employment policies. Under this initiative, people with disabilities should be offered competitive, integrated employment options first before any other employment options are explored. To support a coordinated approach to expanding opportunities for competitive, integrated employment, the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services established the Employment 1st Advisory Group. The group meets quarterly with the goal of increasing employment options and opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic led to record unemployment numbers in 2020. The national unemployment rate for people with disabilities reached 18.9% in April 2020, compared to people without disabilities at 14.3%. The full effect of the pandemic on employment for Virginians with disabilities is still unknown, as data is still being collected and analyzed.



# STATEMENT OF VALUES

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD), as Virginia's Developmental Disability Council, advises the Governor, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, legislators, and other groups on issues important to people with disabilities in the Commonwealth. The Virginia Commonwealth University Partnership for People with Disabilities (VCU PPD), as Virginia's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, connects academic research and service delivery systems to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities in the Commonwealth.

As the product of organizations that are tasked to advocate for people with disabilities, help improve the service system, and advise the structure that governs it, this trend report is driven by a core set of beliefs and principles, which can be distilled into three categories:

## QUALITY

People with disabilities should receive quality services and supports which enhance their lives. Quality services and supports should indicate a recognition that

- all people have ***inherent dignity*** regardless of gender, race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability status;
- people with disabilities should be ***presumed capable*** of obtaining a level of independence and make informed choices;
- people with disabilities have the right to ***self-determination*** and should be included in the decision-making processes that affect their lives; and
- all people, including people with disabilities, are valued for contributing to the ***diversity*** of the Commonwealth.

Additionally, quality services and supports

- should be provided in the most ***integrated*** setting appropriate to each person's needs and desires;
- should provide ***freedom from abuse and neglect***; and
- should be ***fiscally responsible***.

## SATISFACTION

Enhancing the satisfaction and wellbeing of people with disabilities should be a central goal of the disability services and supports system. Wellbeing includes feelings of happiness and feelings of autonomy. Because people with disabilities are experts in their own wellbeing, personal satisfaction metrics should be considered whenever possible in system evaluation efforts. Satisfaction of family members who act as caretakers or legal guardians should also be considered when available.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Essential services and supports must be physically and programmatically accessible to people with disabilities, regardless of characteristics such as, but not limited to, the nature of their disability, their income, or where they live.



# EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

People with disabilities have historically faced employment discrimination which persists today. Consequently, many people with disabilities have not worked, or they have worked for subminimum wages in segregated settings. Several federal and state laws have prohibited discrimination and incentivized competitive, integrated employment. These laws have helped improve employment outcomes over time, though opportunity for further improvement remains. The full effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on employment are still being researched.

## GLOSSARY

- DARS** Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
- DBVI** Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
- DD** Developmental Disability
- VR** Vocational Rehabilitation

## KEY

- ↑ Increase that is desirable
- ↓ Decrease that is desirable
- ↑ Increase that is undesirable
- ↓ Decrease that is undesirable
- ↑ Increase that is neutral
- ↓ Decrease that is neutral
- ↔ Little to no change
- N/A** No data available

## QUALITY

Employment outcomes have generally improved in recent years for Virginians with disabilities, but opportunity for further improvements remain. Fewer establishments have been certified to pay less than a minimum wage, and an increasing percentage of workers with disabilities are being employed in competitive, integrated settings. However, people with disabilities continue to be employed at a substantially lower rate than Virginians without disabilities.

# State Disability Services TREND SUMMARY

QUALITY INDICATOR	1 YEAR TREND	4 YEAR TREND	8 YEAR TREND
Employment Rate	↔	↑	↑
Gap in Employment Rates Based on Disability Status	↑	↓	↓
Workplaces Paying Subminimum Wage	↑	↓	↓
Employment Service Recipients Paid Minimum Wage or Greater	↔	↑	N/A
Employment Service Recipients in Supported Employment	↑	↑	N/A
Employment Service Recipients Working Full-time	↑	↑	N/A
DD Service Recipients Who Chose or Helped Choose Job	↑	↓	N/A
DARS VR Service Recipients Employed 12 Months After Case Closure	N/A	N/A	N/A
DBVI VR Service Recipients Employed 12 Months After Case Closure	N/A	N/A	N/A



# State Disability Services TREND SUMMARY

## SATISFACTION

Data on job satisfaction among Virginians with disabilities is limited. Most Virginians with developmental disabilities report liking their current job, but this data is based on a small sample size. Most, though not all, Virginians also reported being satisfied with various aspects of their vocational rehabilitation service provider staff, but this data does not speak to satisfaction with service outcomes.

SATISFACTION INDICATOR	1 YEAR TREND	4 YEAR TREND	8 YEAR TREND
DD Service Recipients Who Like Current Job	↑	↑	N/A
VR Service Recipients Who Reported DARS Counselors Did What They Promised	↑	↔	N/A
VR Service Recipients Who Reported DBVI Staff Were Sensitive to Their Needs	↓	↑	N/A
Average Satisfaction Score for DBVI VR Service Recipients	↓	↔	N/A

# State Disability Services TREND SUMMARY

## ACCESSIBILITY

Fewer Virginians accessing vocational rehabilitation (VR) services have reported that long-term unemployment is a barrier to obtaining employment in recent years. Still, more than 40% of DARS VR consumers and more than 50% of DBVI VR consumers reported low income and long-term unemployment as barriers. In addition, DARS has been unable to keep up with demand for vocational rehabilitation services, which limits the ability of Virginians with disabilities to get jobs.

ACCESSIBILITY INDICATOR	1 YEAR TREND	4 YEAR TREND	8 YEAR TREND
DARS Service Recipients Reporting Low Income as Employment Barrier	↓	↓	N/A
DARS Service Recipients Reporting Long-Term Unemployment as Employment Barrier	↓	↓	N/A
DBVI Service Recipients Reporting Low Income as Employment Barrier	↓	N/A	N/A
DBVI Service Recipients Reporting Long-Term Unemployment as Employment Barrier	↓	N/A	N/A
People on the DARS Waiting List at the End of the State Fiscal Year	↓	↑	↓

**EMPLOYMENT**  
**Quality Indicator**  
**SUMMARIES**

# Employment Rate

## WHO:

The percentage of Virginians with disabilities aged 21-64 who were employed.

These disabilities include hearing disability, visual disability, cognitive disability, ambulatory disability, self-care disability, and independent living disability. To be counted for this indicator, the Virginian could not live in a place where they are called a “patient” or “inmate,” such as in a nursing home, mental hospital, or correctional facility.

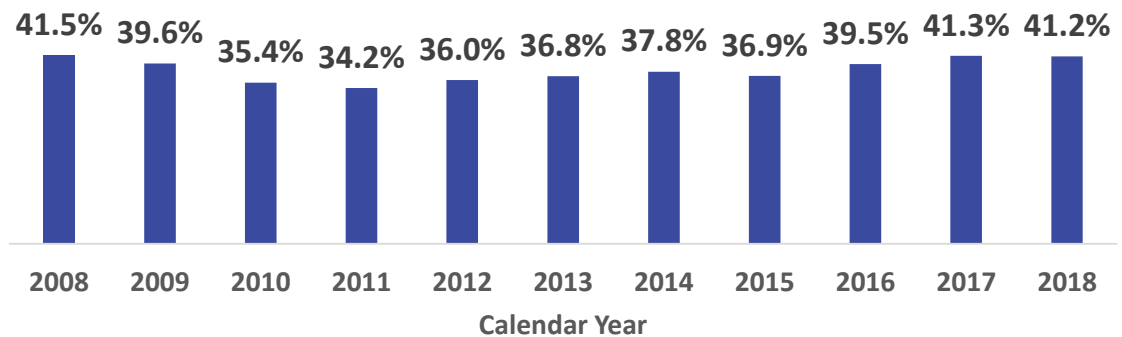
## HOW:

Cornell University calculates these rates based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey. The rates are published in Cornell University’s Disability Status Report.

## WHEN:

Data is reported by calendar year.

## Employment Rate of Virginians with Disabilities



Source: Erickson, William, Camille G. Lee, and Sarah von Schrader. Disability Status Report: Virginia. Ithaca: Cornell University Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability, 2010-2020.

## WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

Less than half of Virginians with disabilities were employed between 2008 and 2018. Though the employment rate has generally improved in recent years, it has not exceeded the early recession employment rate in 2008. The employment rate declined from 41.5% in 2008 to 34.2% in 2011, likely as a result of the recession. Since then, the rate steadily increased to 41.3% in 2017, except for a slight dip in 2015. The employment rate for 2018 was similar to 2017.

# Gap in Employment Rates Based on Disability Status

## WHO:

The percentage point difference between the employment rates of Virginians with and without disabilities, aged 21-64.

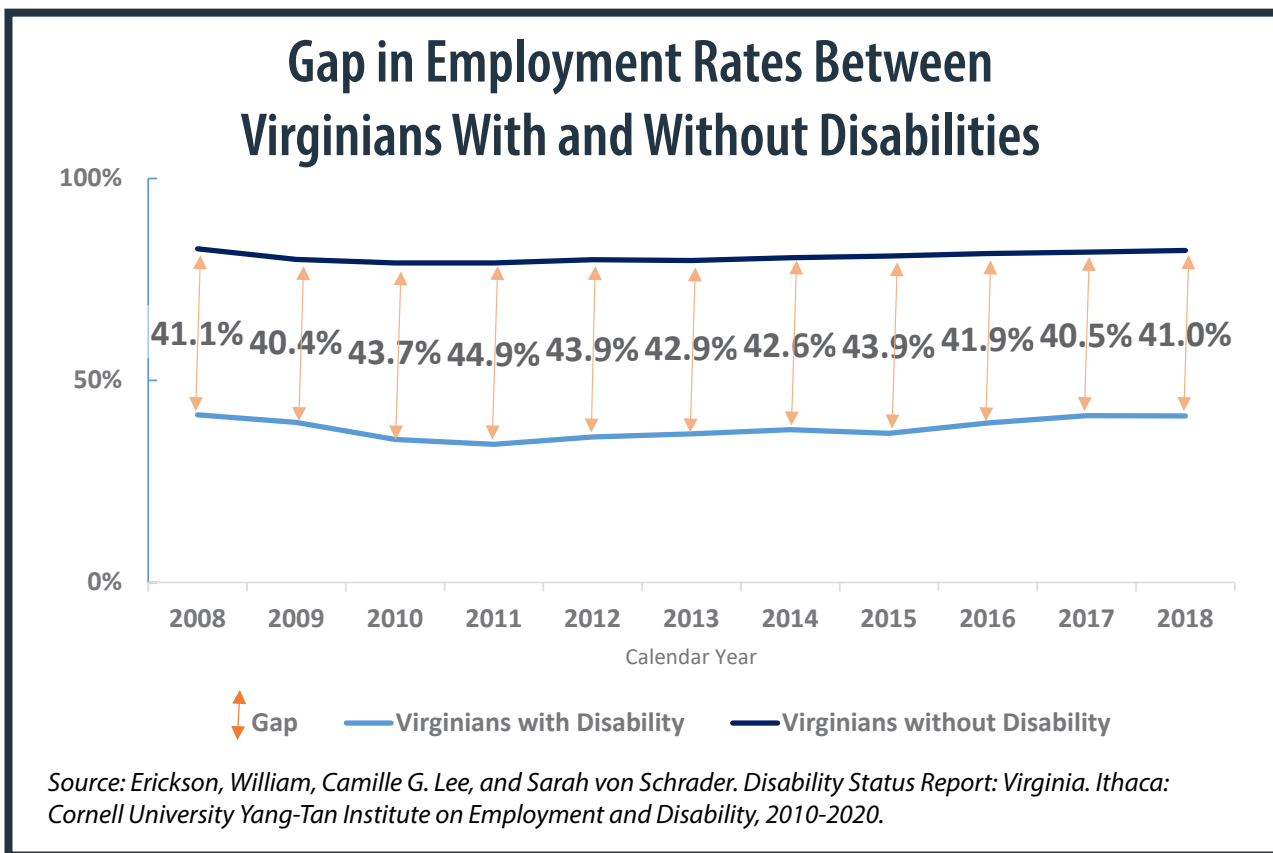
Disabilities include hearing disability, visual disability, cognitive disability, ambulatory disability, self-care disability, and independent living disability. To be counted for this indicator, the Virginian could not live in a place where they are called a “patient” or “inmate,” such as in a nursing home, mental hospital, or correctional facility.

## HOW:

These employment rates are based on American Community Survey data and published in the Disability Status Report by Cornell University.

## WHEN:

Data is reported by calendar year.



## WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

The employment rate for Virginians with disabilities has consistently lagged far behind the employment rate for Virginians without disabilities. The employment gap widened following the Great Recession, which occurred December 2007 to June 2009. The gap increased from about 40 percentage points in 2009 to about 45 percentage points in 2011. Since then, the employment gap returned to its early recession level of about 41%.

## Workplaces Paying Subminimum Wage

### WHAT:

The number of establishments in Virginia authorized to pay less than minimum wage.

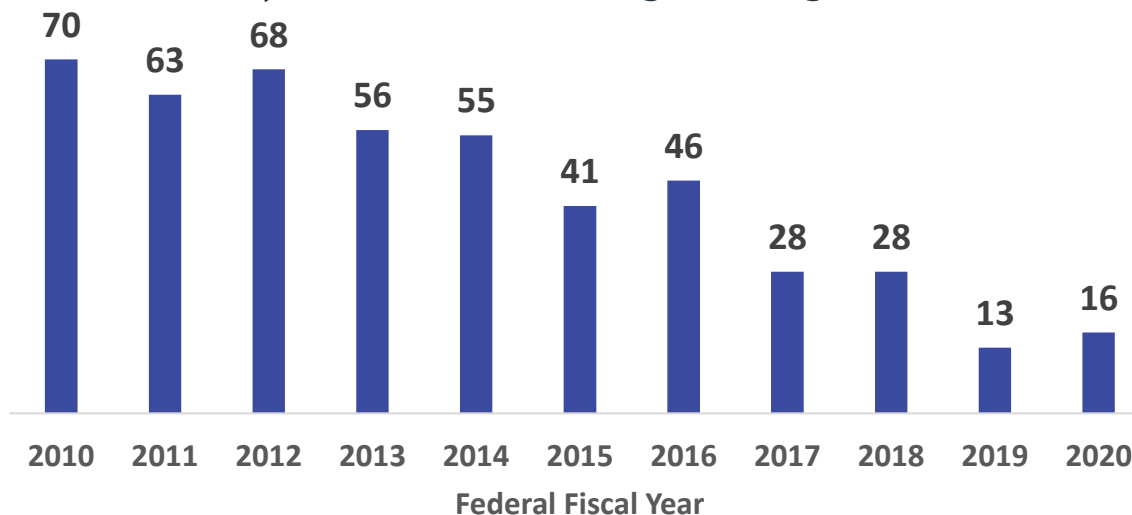
### HOW:

The U.S. Department of Labor issues 14(c) certificates to establishments, authorizing them to pay people with disabilities subminimum wage. The Department of Labor publishes the names and certificate numbers of each establishment online every fiscal quarter. Freedom of Information Act requests can also be made to obtain historical data.

### WHEN:

Data is reported by federal fiscal year.

Number of Establishments Certified to Pay Subminimum Wage in Virginia



Source: U.S. Department of Labor. FOIA 884568 and 2021-F-06333 Responsive Documents. Washington, D.C.: Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division, 2020.

### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

Fewer Virginia establishments were certified to pay subminimum wage in recent years. The number of establishments decreased substantially, from 70 in federal fiscal year 2010 to 16 in 2020. However, from 2019 to 2020, the number of sites increased by three sites (or +23.1%). At these 16 sites in 2020, 1,061 people were paid subminimum wage. Of the establishments certified in 2020, eight allowed their certificates to expire and did not apply for recertification as of April 2021.



# Employment Service Recipients Paid Minimum Wage or Greater

## WHO:

The percentage of Virginians with developmental disabilities (DD) receiving employment services who are paid at least a minimum wage, aged 18 to 64.

People in supported employment, in sheltered workshops, and/or receiving prevocational services were included.

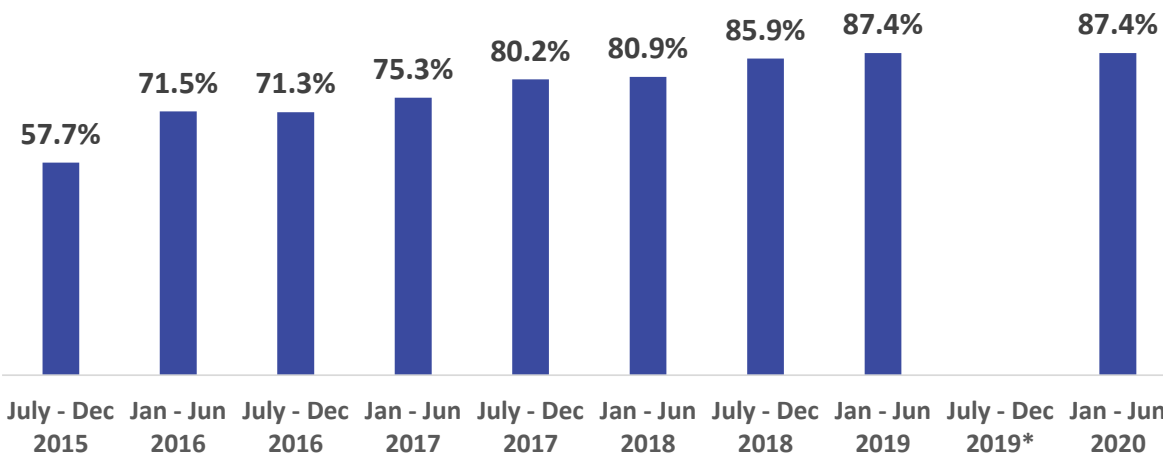
## HOW:

For this indicator, a person with DD had to receive (1) long-term follow along services funded by the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, or (2) supported employment services paid by Medicaid waivers. The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services tracks this data for the Semiannual Employment Report.

## WHEN:

Data is point-in-time data and reported by data collection period.

## Percentage of Service Recipients Paid At Least a Minimum Wage in Virginia



\* Please note that data from July through December 2019 was not available, and is thus not depicted in the graph.  
 Source: Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. DBHDS Semiannual Report on Employment. Richmond: Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, 2016-2020.

## WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

An increasing percentage of Virginians with DD receiving employment services were paid at least minimum wage. The percentage increased from about 58% in 2015 to about 87% in 2020.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, fewer people were employed across all settings (supported employment and sheltered workshops). While the percentage of people paid a minimum wage or higher did not change between the first half of 2019 and 2020, the number of people decreased from about 4,400 to 3,600 (not pictured).

# Employment Service Recipients in Supported Employment

## WHAT:

Percentage of Virginians with developmental disabilities (DD) receiving employment services in supported employment, compared to percentage in a sheltered workshop, aged 18 to 64.

Supported employment is provided in an integrated individual or group setting. Sheltered workshops are segregated and often pay subminimum wage.

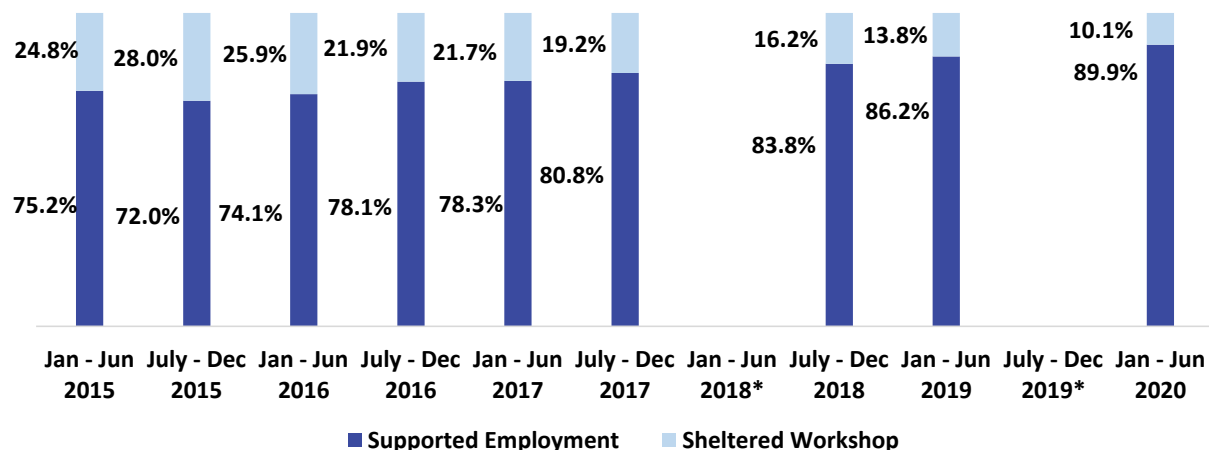
## HOW:

For this indicator, a person with DD had to receive (1) long-term follow along services funded by the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, or (2) supported employment services paid by Medicaid waivers. The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services tracks this data for the Semiannual Employment Report.

## WHEN:

Data is point-in-time and reported by data collection period.

### Employment Service Recipients, by Work Setting, in Virginia



\* Please note that data from January through June 2018 and July through December 2019 were not available, and are thus not depicted in the graph.

Source: Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. DBHDS Semiannual Report on Employment. Richmond: Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, 2016-2020.

## WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

An increasing percentage of Virginians with DD receiving employment services were in supported employment instead of sheltered workshops. The percentage of Virginians with DD in supported employment increased from 72% in the second half of 2015 to about 90% in the first half of 2020. Conversely, a decreasing percentage of service recipients were in sheltered workshops over this same time period.

# Employment Service Recipients Working Full-Time

## WHO:

Percentage of Virginians with developmental disabilities (DD) receiving employment services who worked full-time, compared to part-time. Full-time is 40 or more hours per week.

People in supported employment and sheltered workshops were included in this indicator.

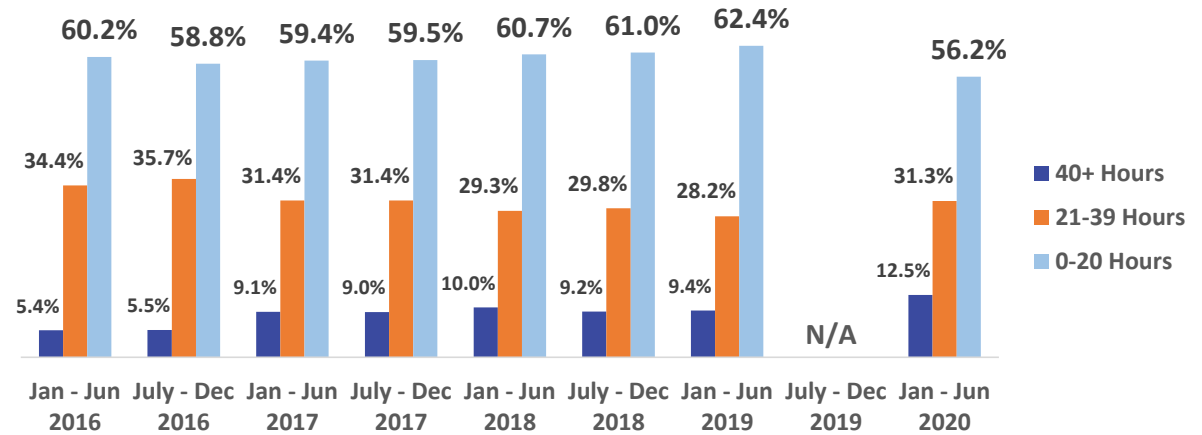
## HOW:

For this indicator, a person with DD had to receive (1) long-term follow along services funded by the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, or (2) supported employment services paid by Medicaid waivers. The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services tracks this data for the Semiannual Employment Report.

## WHEN:

Data is point-in-time data and reported by data collection time period.

### Hours Worked Per Week by Employment Service Recipients in Virginia



Source: Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. DBHDS Semiannual Report on Employment. Richmond: Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, 2016-2020.

## WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

The vast majority of Virginians with DD who received employment services worked fewer than 21 hours. About 60% worked fewer than 21 hours in the first half of 2016, which decreased to about 56% in the first half of 2020. At the same time, the percentage who worked 40 hours or more increased, from about 5% to almost 13%. Meanwhile the percentage who worked 21 to 39 hours decreased.

# DD Service Recipients Who Chose or Helped Choose Job

## WHO:

Percentage of Virginians receiving Developmental Disability (DD) waiver services who had a paid community job and gave input or chose their job, compared to the national average.

The national average is weighted. 35 to 38 states participated in the National Core Indicator (NCI) In-Person Survey from 2017 through 2019.

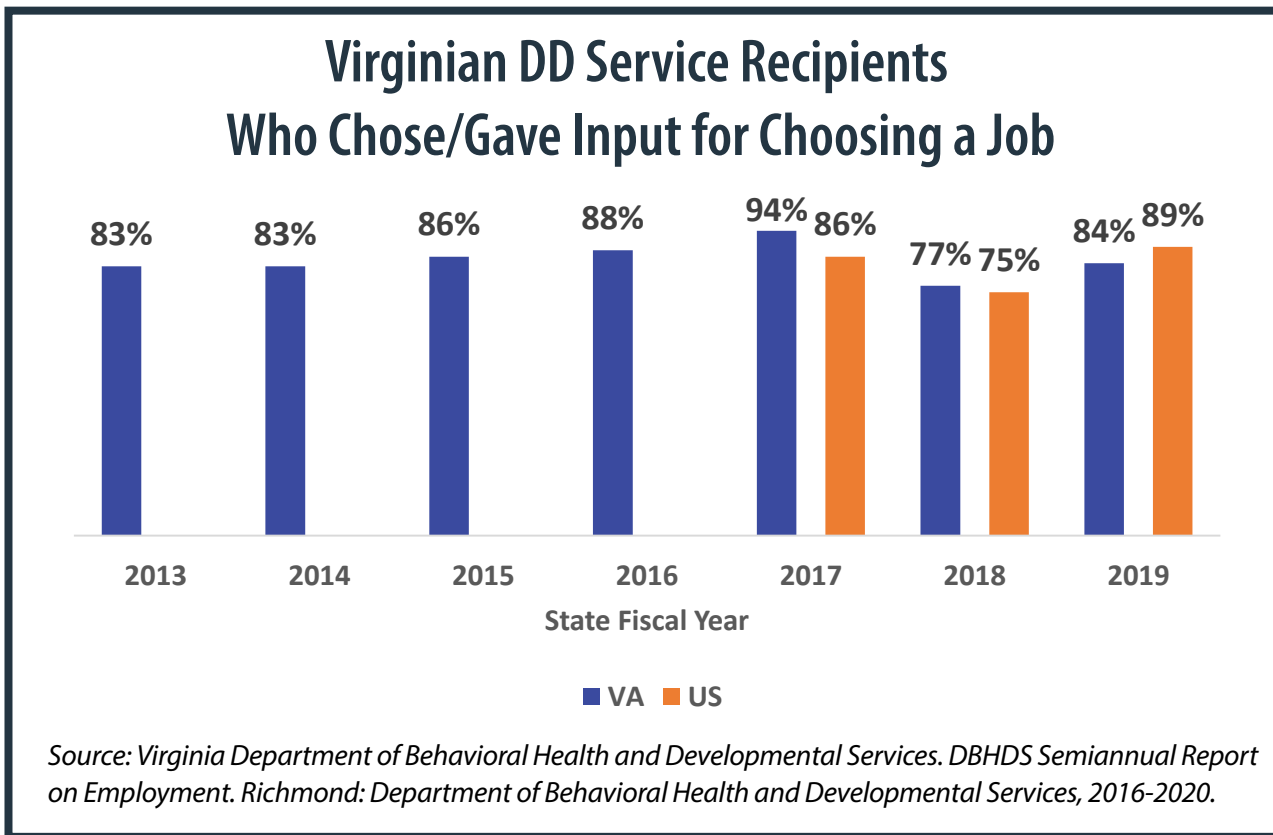
## HOW:

Virginians with DD aged 18 or older receiving at least one Medicaid waiver service (excluding case management) were randomly selected and interviewed face to face. If the person with DD had difficulty responding to this question, someone close to them responded.

Fewer than 100 people answered this question each year, so interpret this data with caution.

## WHEN:

Data is point-in-time data and reported by data collection time period.



## WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

A majority of Virginians receiving DD waiver services who had a competitive, integrated job reported choosing or helping to choose their job. The percentage of these Virginians ranged from 77% in state fiscal year 2018 to 94% in 2017. From 2018 to 2019, the percentage increased seven percentage points (or +9.1%). Virginia reported a higher percentage of people with DD who helped choose their job compared to the national average in 2017 and 2018, but not in 2019.

## DARS VR Service Recipients Employed 12 Months After Case Closure

### WHO:

The percentage of people who were still employed six and 12 months after their case was closed at the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program.

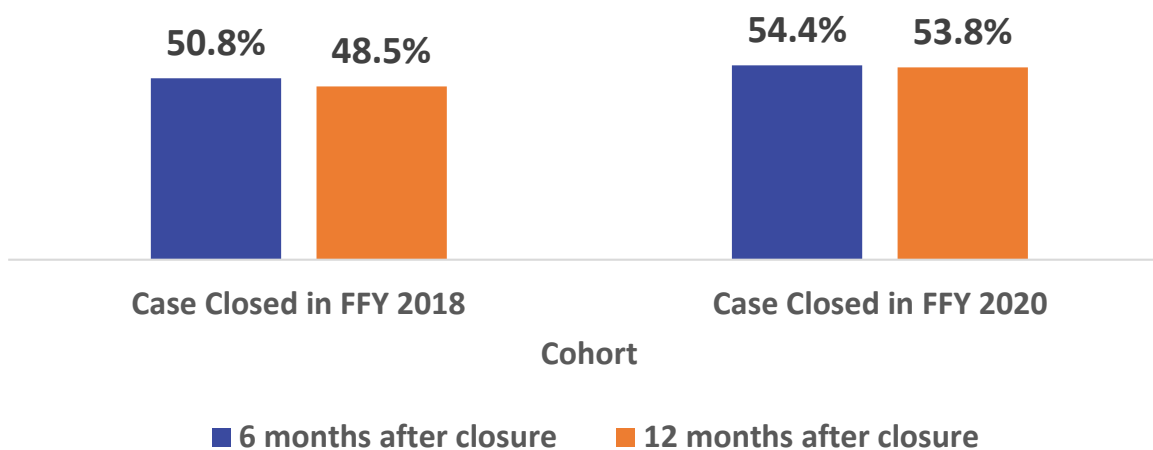
### HOW:

This data is collected quarterly by DARS for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) federal reporting. The job in which the service recipient was employed by the time of data collection did not have to be the same job they had when their case was closed.

### WHEN:

Data is reported by the federal fiscal year (FFY) during which a person's case was closed.

### Percentage of DARS VR Service Recipients Still Employed 6 and 12 Months After Their Cases Were Closed



Source: Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. WIOA Scorecard. Richmond: Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, 2019-2020.

### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

About half or more of DARS vocational rehabilitation service recipients remained employed six and 12 months after their cases were closed. The percentage of DARS service recipients who remained employed six months after their cases closed in 2018 and 2020 ranged from about 51% to 54%, respectively. Fewer DARS service recipients remained employed 12 months after case closure. The percentage ranged from about 49% to 54% for case closures in 2018 and 2020, respectively.

# DBVI VR Service Recipients Employed 12 Months After Case Closure

## WHO:

The percentage of people who were still employed six and 12 months after their case was closed at the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program.

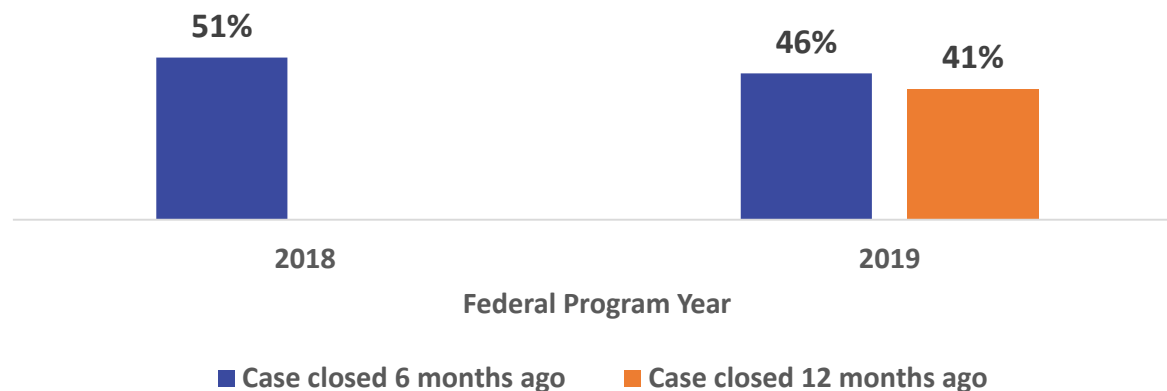
## HOW:

DBVI collects this data each quarter for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) federal reporting. The job in which the service recipient was employed by the time of data collection did not have to be the same job they had when their case was closed.

## WHEN:

Data is reported by federal program year, six and 12 months since case closure.

## Percentage of DBVI VR Service Recipients Still Employed 6 and 12 Months After Their Cases Were Closed



Source: Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired. Outcomes from the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program from the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI). Richmond: Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, 2021.

## WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

In federal program years 2018 and 2019, about half of people whose DBVI vocational rehabilitation cases were closed six months prior were still employed. In 2019, 41% whose cases were closed 12 months prior were still employed.



**EMPLOYMENT**  
**Satisfaction Indicator**  
**SUMMARIES**

## DD Service Recipients Who Like Current Job

### WHO:

Percentage of Virginians receiving Developmental Disability (DD) waiver services who had a paid community job and liked their job.

The national average is weighted. 35 to 38 states participated in the National Core Indicator (NCI) In-Person Survey from 2017 through 2019.

### HOW:

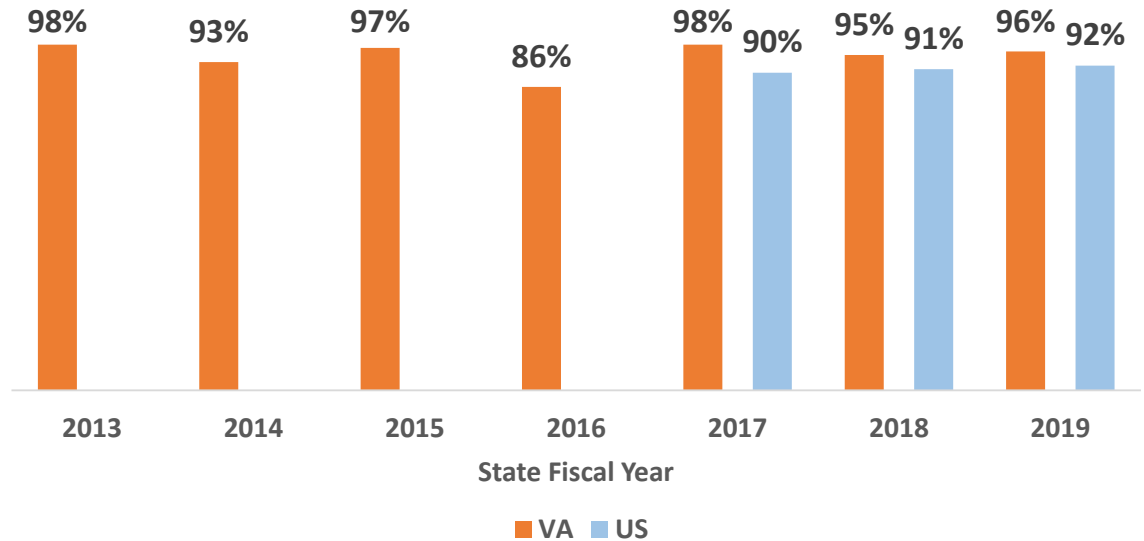
Virginians with DD aged 18 or older who are receiving at least one Medicaid waiver service (excluding case management) are randomly selected and interviewed face to face. The NCI In-Person Reports are published annually.

Fewer than 100 people answered this question each year, so interpret this data with caution.

### WHEN:

Data is reported by state fiscal year.

### Virginian DD Service Recipients Who Like Their Current Paid Job



Source: Human Services Research Institute and the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services. National Core Indicators (NCI) In-Person Survey. Cambridge: Human Services Research Institute, 2014-2020.

### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

The vast majority of Virginians who received DD waiver services, and had a competitive integrated job, reported liking their job. This satisfaction rate ranged from 86% in state fiscal year 2016 to 98% in 2013 and 2017. From 2018 to 2019, the rate increased one percentage point (or +1.1%). The percentage of Virginians with DD who liked their jobs was greater than the national average in recent years for which data was available.

## VR Service Recipients Who Reported DARS Counselors Did What They Promised

### WHO:

Percentage of Virginians receiving Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, who believed program counselors did what they said they would do.

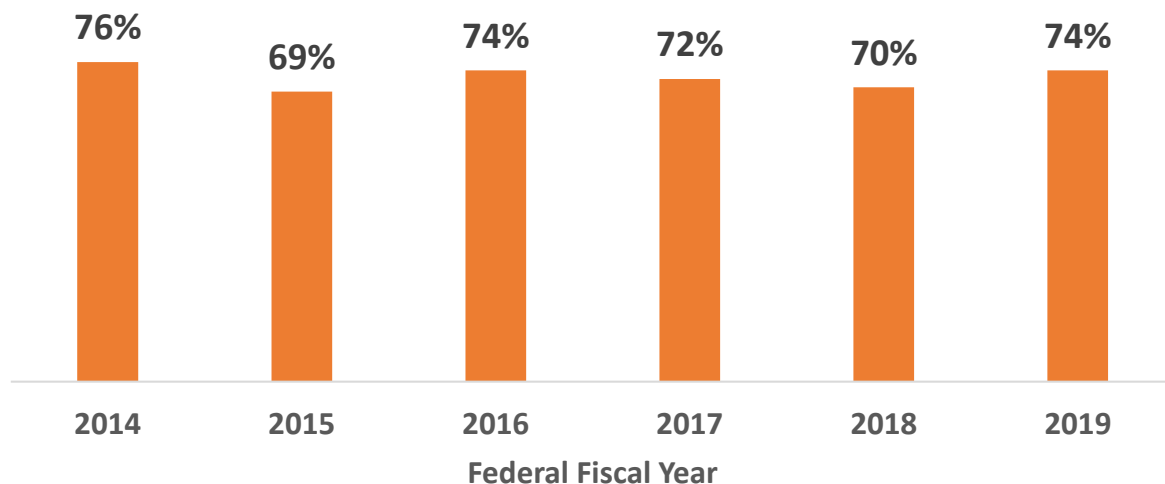
### HOW:

Data was collected from a stratified sample of people currently receiving DARS VR services. People were asked, "Is your counselor doing what he/she said they would do to help you reach your job goal?" Proxies could complete, or help the consumer complete, the mailed survey. The State Rehabilitation Council for DARS publishes this data in an annual report the following year.

### WHEN:

Data is reported by federal fiscal year during which the survey was administered.

### VR Service Recipients Who Reported DARS Counselors Did What They Promised



Source: Virginia State Rehabilitation Council. Virginia State Rehabilitation Council Annual Report. Richmond: State Rehabilitation Council Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, 2016-2021.

### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

In recent years, more than two-thirds of vocational rehabilitation service recipients said they believed DARS counselors were doing what they said they would do. The rate ranged from 69% in federal fiscal year 2015 to 76% in 2014. From 2018 to 2019, the rate increased by four percentage points (or +5.7%) to 74%.

## VR Service Recipients Who Reported DBVI Staff Were Sensitive to Their Needs

### WHO:

Weighted percentage of Virginians who received Department of the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, who believed staff were sensitive to their needs.

### HOW:

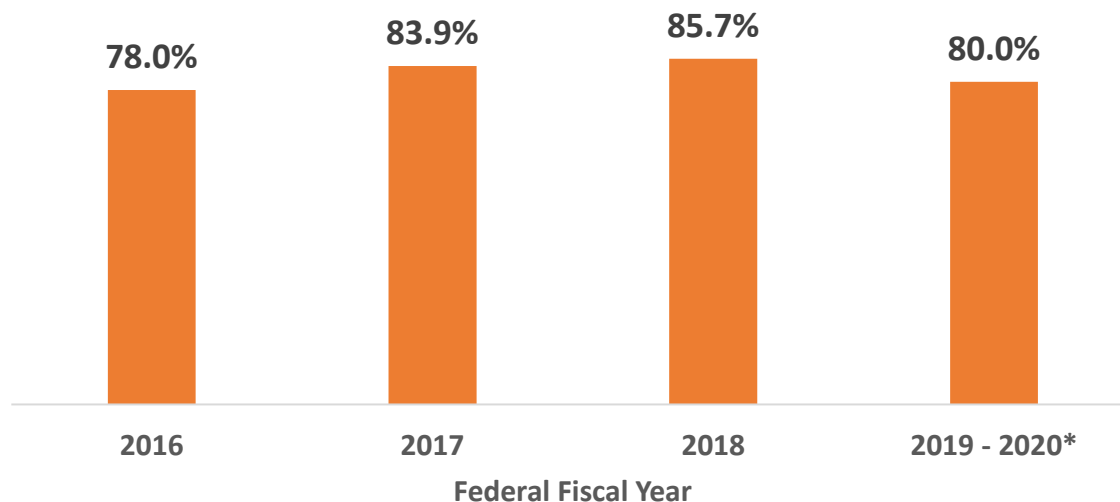
Responses are on a five point Likert scale. Responses are averaged and weighted from 20 to 100 to account for sample size. Higher weighted percentage reflects a greater portion of people with positive perceptions of staff.

DBVI administers Consumer Satisfaction Surveys monthly through mail, phone, and online to Virginians who received their VR services and whose cases were recently closed. Data is published in the State Rehabilitation Council for DBVI annual report.

### WHEN:

Data is reported by federal fiscal year during which the survey was administered.

### VR Service Recipients Who Reported DBVI Staff Were Sensitive to Their Needs



\*2019 and 2020 were combined due to an 8% response rate.

Source: Virginia State Rehabilitation Council. Annual Report on Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Richmond: State Rehabilitation Council Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, 2016-2021.

### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

Since federal fiscal year 2016, over three-quarters of Virginians who received DBVI vocational rehabilitation and obtained employment, weighted to account for sample size, reported that DBVI staff were sensitive to their needs. The weighted percentage ranged from 78% in 2016 to nearly 86% in 2018. From 2018 to the combined years 2019 and 2020, the weighted percentage decreased by about six percentage points (or -6.7%).

## Average Satisfaction Score for DBVI VR Service Recipients

### WHO:

Average score for Virginians who received Department of the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, who reported satisfaction with VR services overall.

### HOW:

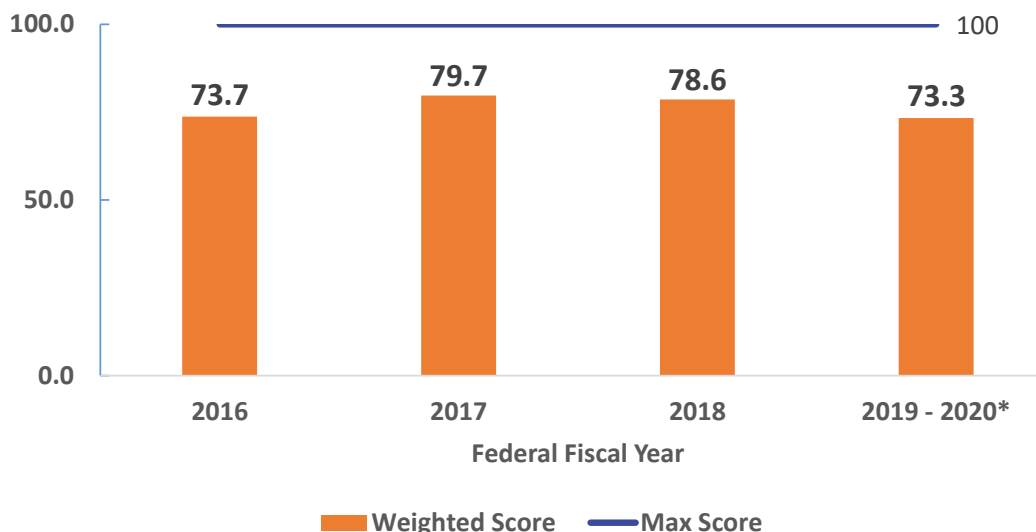
Responses are on a five point Likert scale. Responses are averaged and weighted from 20 to 100 to account for sample size. Higher average score reflects greater overall satisfaction among survey respondents.

DBVI administers Consumer Satisfaction Surveys monthly through mail, phone, and online to Virginians who received their VR services and whose cases were recently closed. Data is published in the State Rehabilitation Council for DBVI annual report.

### WHEN:

Data is reported by federal fiscal year of survey administration.

### Average Satisfaction Score for DBVI VR Service Recipients



\*2019 and 2020 were combined due to an 8% response rate.

Source: Virginia State Rehabilitation Council. Annual Report on Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Richmond: State Rehabilitation Council Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, 2016-2021.

### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

Since federal fiscal year 2016, the average satisfaction score of DBVI vocational rehabilitation service recipients, weighted to account for sample size, was greater than 70. The average satisfaction score ranged from about 73 in the combined years 2019 and 2020 to about 80 in 2017. From 2018 to 2019 and 2020, the score decreased by about five points (or -6.7%). This decrease may be due, at least partially, to the 8% response rate in 2019 and 2020.

**EMPLOYMENT**  
**Accessibility Indicator**  
**SUMMARIES**



## DARS Service Recipients Reporting Low Income as Employment Barrier

### WHAT:

The percentage of people eligible or receiving any services through the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), who said low income makes it hard for them to get employment.

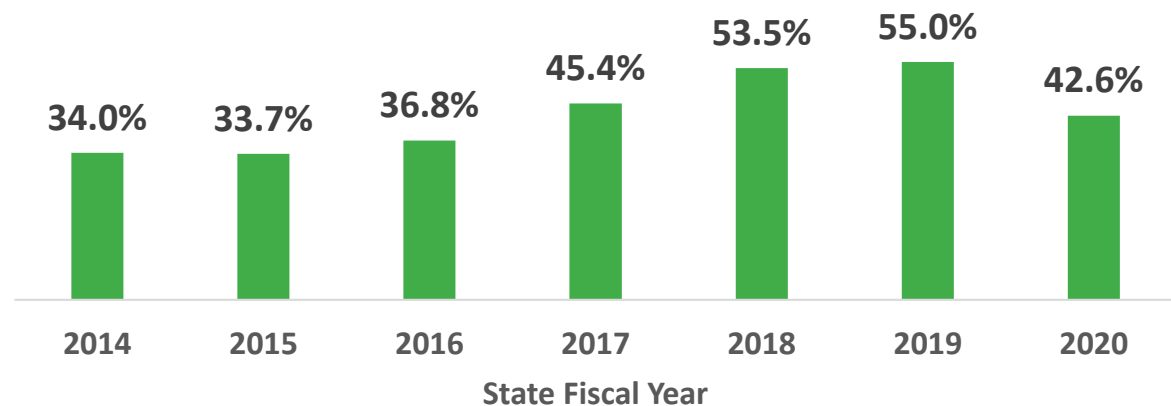
### HOW:

This information is collected during the intake process by DARS employment counselors.

### WHEN:

Data is reported by state fiscal year.

### DARS Service Recipients Reporting Low Income as Employment Barrier



Source: Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. *Barriers to Employment for Clients*. Richmond: Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, 2019-2020.

### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

In recent years, at least one-third of all DARS service recipients reported that having low income was a barrier to obtaining employment. The rate increased from 34% in 2014 to 55% in 2019, after which it decreased substantially to about 43% in 2020. It is uncertain whether this trend data reflects an increasing portion of all unemployed Virginians having low income or whether low income is increasingly a barrier to employment. Based on the number of applications to the DARS VR program each year (not shown here), the increased percentage does not appear to be a result of more Virginians becoming aware of and accessing VR services

## DARS Service Recipients Reporting Long-Term Unemployment as Employment Barrier

### WHAT:

The percentage of people eligible or receiving any services through the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) who reported that long-term unemployment makes it hard for them to get employment.

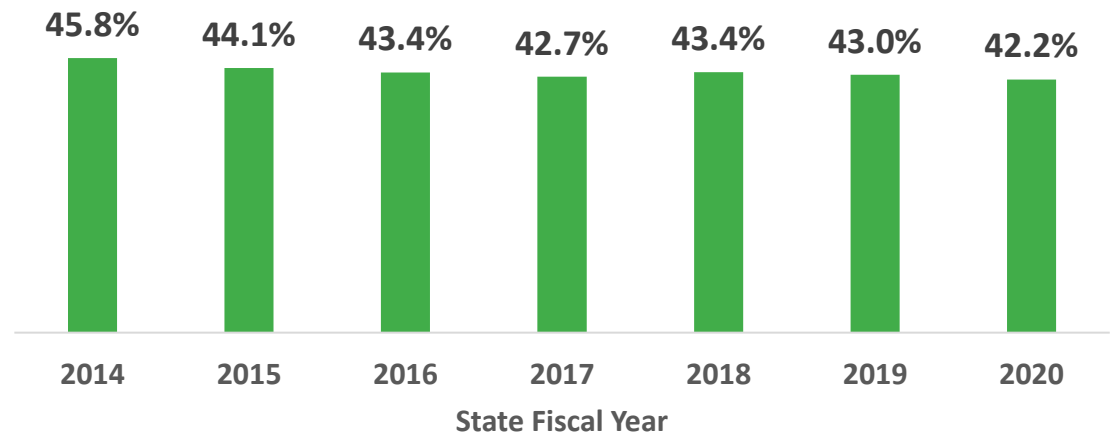
### HOW:

This information is collected during the intake process by DARS employment counselors.

### WHEN:

Data is reported by state fiscal year.

### DARS Service Recipients Reporting Long-Term Unemployment as Employment Barrier



Source: Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. *Barriers to Employment for Clients*. Richmond: Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, 2019-2020.

### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

In recent years, more than 40% of DARS service recipients reported that long-term unemployment made it difficult for them to obtain new employment. The rate decreased from about 46% in 2014 to about 42% in 2020.

## DBVI Service Recipients Reporting Low Income as Employment Barrier

### WHAT:

Percentage of Virginians receiving Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, who said low income makes it hard for them to get employment.

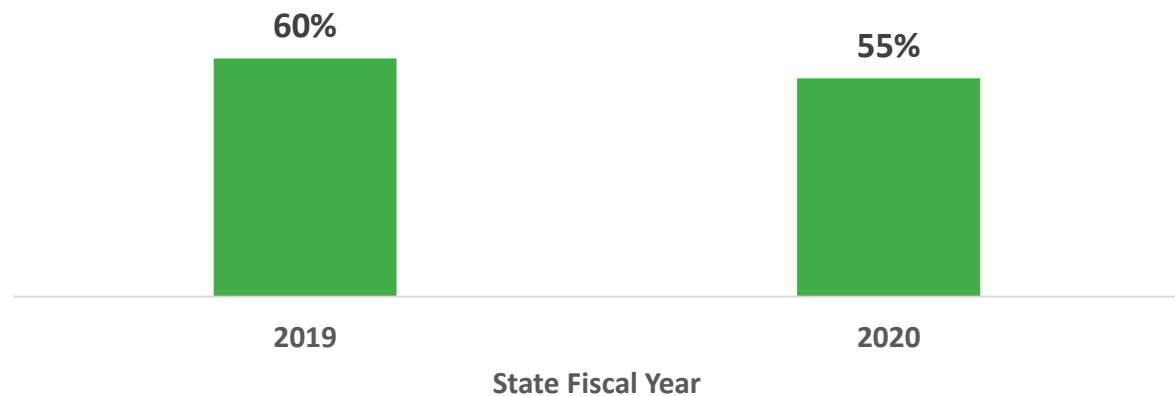
### HOW:

This information is collected at intake, application, or during service provision by DBVI VR counselors.

### WHEN:

Data is reported by state fiscal year.

### DBVI VR Service Recipients Reporting Low Income as Barrier to Employment



Source: Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired. Outcomes from the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program from the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI). Richmond: Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, 2021.

### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

More than half of DBVI VR service recipients reported low income as an employment barrier in recent years for which data is available. From state fiscal year 2019 to 2020, the percentage decreased by five percentage points (or -8.3%).

## DBVI Service Recipients Reporting Long-Term Unemployment as Employment Barrier

### WHAT:

The percentage of Virginians receiving Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, who reported that long-term unemployment makes it hard for them to get employment.

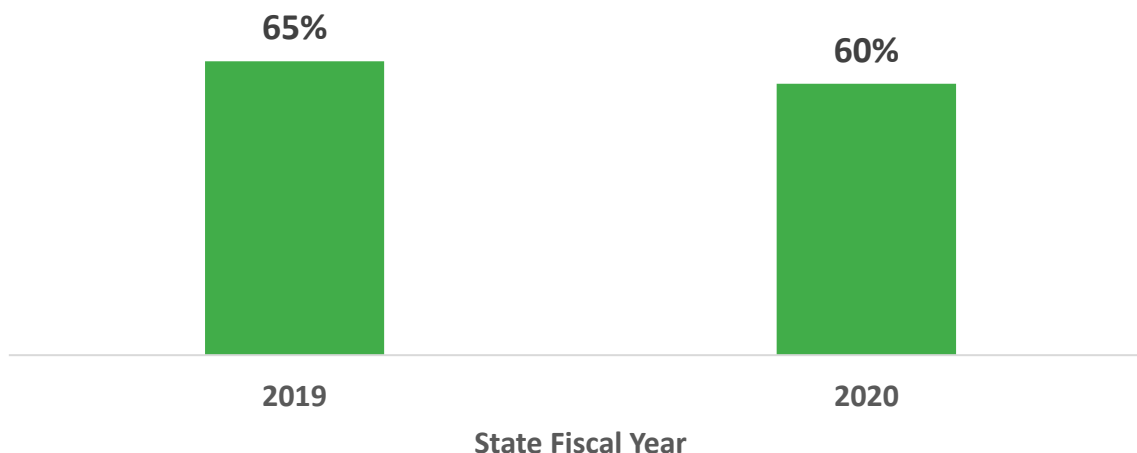
### HOW:

This information is collected at intake, application, or during service provision by DBVI VR counselors.

### WHEN:

Data is reported by state fiscal year.

### DARS Service Recipients Reporting Long-Term Unemployment as Employment Barrier



Source: Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired. Outcomes from the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program from the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI). Richmond: Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, 2021.

### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

About 6 in 10 Virginians who received DBVI VR services reported that long-term unemployment was an employment barrier in recent years for which data was available. From state fiscal year 2019 to 2020, the percentage decreased by five percentage points (or -7.7%).

## People on the DARS Waiting List at the End of the State Fiscal Year

### WHO:

The number of people on the waiting list for vocational rehabilitation services from the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), on the last day of the state fiscal year.

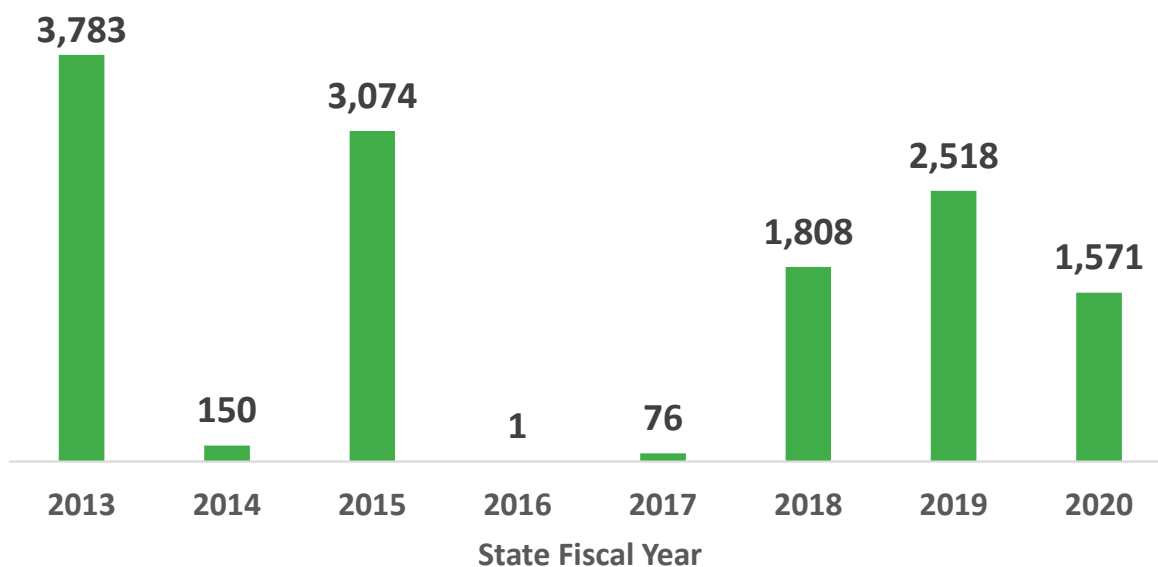
### HOW:

When people apply for vocational rehabilitation services, they are immediately placed on the waiting list. They are removed from the waiting list by order of application. These numbers are tracked and recorded each week by the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services.

### WHEN:

Data is reported by state fiscal year.

### Virginians on the DARS VR Waiting List on the Last Day of the State Fiscal Year



Source: Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. DARS Waiting List. Richmond: Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, 2021.

### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

Based on the number of people left on the waiting list by the end of the state fiscal year, service need often outpaces DARS funding. The extent to which this occurs appears to vary widely each year. The number of Virginians left on the waiting list on the last day of the fiscal year has varied from one person in 2016 to almost 3,800 in 2013.

# METHODOLOGY

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**1. Researched how other states and organizations measure service quality and quality of life:** VBPD identified nine states/regions that offered online public access to quality assurance data of services: Washington, D.C., Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington. VBPD also identified several national scorecards including the United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) Case for Inclusion, and the State Scorecard on Long-Term Services and Supports. VBPD reviewed the data points that were reported, and the method through which they were presented. Many scorecards included data that related to quality of life, such as Washington D.C.'s Provider Certification Reviews, which included measures of individual rights protection; Connecticut's Quality Service Review, which included measures of relationships and community inclusion; and UCP's Case for Inclusion, which included measures of health and safety.

**2. Reviewed academic literature on the measurement of quality of life for people with developmental disabilities:** Academic literature discusses quality of life in terms of rights, choice or self-determination, community inclusion and interpersonal relationships, safety, health and wellness (including emotional, physical, and mental well-being), and satisfaction. Researchers agree that measuring outcomes from these different categories is important in determining whether people with DD are living their best lives, in addition to measuring their subjective satisfaction levels.

**3. Reviewed agency state plans, policies, and procedures; federal benchmarks; and other national benchmarks:** This step helped in the identification and selection of indicators most relevant to

Virginia's disability services system, as well as the identification of targets against which to meaningfully compare the data. VBPD initially intended to make systematic comparisons between Virginia data and other states' data, national data, and data for people without disabilities. Although such comparative data is available for some indicators, VBPD decided not to make this systematic comparison due to data limitations. For example, for some indicators, other states chose differing methodologies for measurement, so direct comparisons would be misleading. Direct comparisons with national average data which are based on these states' data would also be misleading. Additionally, data on people without disabilities does not exist for many indicators. For example, data on independent living is gathered for individuals with disabilities, but not for people without disabilities.

**4. Identified data sources for reporting service and quality of life outcomes:** VBPD first reviewed and compared data that was already publicly available online, in order to minimize the extent to which state agencies would need to provide additional data and to better ensure sustainability of the trend report. Next, VBPD solicited feedback from and discussed possibilities of data sharing with other agencies that serve the DD population: the Centers of Independent Living (CIL), the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). Each agency expressed enthusiasm for the project, and some have offered to share additional data.

**5. Selected indicators:** Indicators that best addressed the three following categories were included in the trend report:

i) Quality: VBPD defined quality based largely on VBPD's statement of values and factors which researchers and other states have found important to measuring positive life and service outcomes for people with DD. VBPD's stated values, which are published in each annual policy assessment, are inherent dignity, presumed capacity, self-determination, integration, diversity, freedom from abuse and neglect, and fiscal responsibility. The quality of life areas identified by researchers and other states are listed in #2 above.

ii) Satisfaction: Satisfaction was identified by researchers as an important factor of measuring life and service outcomes,

as identified in #2 above. VBPD separated satisfaction indicators from the "quality" category in order to highlight the importance of the experiences of the individuals being served and their families, recognize that satisfaction may be based on factors including but not limited to quality, and recognize that satisfaction may not necessarily mirror observable measures of quality due to its subjective nature.

iii) Accessibility: Accessibility is an important component of service delivery. If the service is inaccessible, then the quality of the service is moot. The accessibility of a service can be affected by factors such as funding levels and staffing levels, and can be observed via measures including but not limited to service wait times and cost to the beneficiary.

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***Special thanks to the agencies and organizations  
that provided feedback for this trend report:***



# DATA SOURCE & LIMITATIONS

**1) Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS):** DARS is a state agency which provides a wide variety of services to youths, people who are aging, people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and more. DARS provided data for this report in response to a series of data requests by VBPD. Requested data was used for the following indicators: *DARS VR Service Recipients Employed 12 Months After Case Closure*, *DARS Service Recipients Reporting Low Income as Employment Barrier*, *DARS Service Recipients Reporting Long-Term Unemployment as Employment Barrier*, and *People on the DARS Waiting List at the End of the State Fiscal Year*.

The indicator *DARS VR Service Recipients Employed 12 Months After Case Closure* used data from DARS' Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Scorecard. The WIOA Scorecard tracks vocational rehabilitation (VR) outcomes for federal reporting. Although WIOA was passed in 2014, Virginia only finalized reporting measures in the past few years. Because this indicator required lag data, and because of changes in understanding of federal standards, only data for federal fiscal years 2018 and 2020 were available.

The indicators *DARS Service Recipients Reporting Low Income as Employment Barrier* and *DARS Service Recipients Reporting Long-Term Unemployment as Employment Barrier* used self-reported data. This data was available from state fiscal year 2011, but only data from as early as 2014 was used due to changes in methodology beginning that year. Barrier data was self-reported during an interview between the DARS counselor and client during the intake process. Clients were not required to give a response. All DARS clients with open cases were included in the data collection. These clients were enrolled in the Vocational Rehabilitation, Youth in Transition, Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities programs, and the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center. For the indicator *DARS Service Recipients Reporting Low Income as Employment Barrier*, consumers who reported low income as a barrier could voluntarily state what qualified them as having low income. Some stated they

were receiving Social Supplemental Income, Temporary Aid to Needy Families, or reduced-price school lunch. Because this data is voluntarily self-reported, the reported percentages may be an undercount.

The indicator *People on the DARS Waiting List at the End of the State Fiscal Year* used DARS waiting list data. This data is collected on a weekly basis, but the data provided in this trend report is reported by the last day of the state fiscal year. The waiting list is opened when a category of service is closed under Order of Selection.

**2) Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) Semiannual Employment Report:** DBHDS is a state agency that administers and oversees many services for people with developmental disabilities or behavioral health conditions. DBHDS releases a semiannual employment report for people with developmental disabilities in compliance with the Department of Justice Settlement Agreement. This report was the basis for the following indicators in this trend report: *Employment Service Recipients Paid Minimum Wage or Greater*, *Employment Service Recipients in Supported Employment*, and *Employment Service Recipients Working Full-time*. This trend report does not include data before 2015 because earlier methodology differed. Beginning with the January through June 2015 data, DBHDS gathered data on Virginians with developmental disabilities (DD) aged 18-64 who were receiving long-term follow along services funded by the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), or who were receiving employment services paid by Medicaid. For all indicators from this data source, preliminary draft reports were used for data from 2018 and onwards. Final values published by DBHDS may differ from the values in this trend report.

The data is gathered through DBHDS and DARS surveys of employment service organizations. The data is unduplicated point in time data, meaning the data



describes employment conditions only at the time of reporting. Conditions may have changed by the time the data was published. Data is published every six months and covers data collected throughout the six month period. Employment survey organization participation in the surveys is voluntary and self-reported. The first report published in February 2015, which included July through December 2014 data, had a 44% response rate. The response rate has since increased to 100% beginning with the October 2016 report, which included June 2016 data. Because of the difference in response rate, 2014 data was excluded from this trend report. Additionally, because data is self-reported, there is a risk of under- or over-reporting. Finally, the Semiannual Employment Report focuses on Virginians with DD receiving specific publicly-funded services, so wage data for Virginians with DD or other disabilities not receiving these services is unknown.

**3) Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI):** DBVI is an agency which provides services to Virginians who are blind, vision impaired, and deafblind to achieve the life outcomes they desire in multiple areas of life, including employment. DBVI provided data on their Vocational Rehabilitation program for this report, in response to a data request. Requested data was used for the following indicators: *DBVI VR Service Recipients Employed 12 Months After Case Closure*, *DBVI Service Recipients Reporting Low Income as Employment Barrier*, and *DBVI Service Recipients Reporting Long-Term Unemployment as Employment Barrier*.

Data was provided by federal program year for *DBVI VR Service Recipients Employed 12 Months After Case Closure*, and by state fiscal year for *DBVI Service Recipients Reporting Low Income as Employment Barrier*, and *DBVI Service Recipients Reporting Long-Term Unemployment as Employment Barrier*.

For the indicator *DBVI VR Service Recipients Employed 12 Months After Case Closure*, individuals had to be employed for at least 90 days before their case was closed in order to be included in the measure.

For indicators *DBVI Service Recipients Reporting Low Income as Employment Barrier* and *DBVI Service Recipients Reporting Long-Term Unemployment as*

*Employment Barrier*, barrier data could have been collected during intake, during initial review with a vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor, during application, or while the consumer was receiving VR services. Because barrier data is based on self-report, it is possible that data may be an undercount of the actual number of people who experience low income or long-term unemployment as an employment barrier.

**4) Disability Status Report:** Cornell University publishes this report every year. The earliest report was published in 2008. Disability Status Report data is based on American Community Survey (ACS) data, which reports only on people who do not live in an institution and who meet the ACS definition of disability. A person with a disability, according to ACS, reported having deafness or blindness; or having serious difficulty with hearing, seeing, walking or climbing stairs, bathing, memory, concentration, or decision-making. A non-institutionalized person does not live in a place where they are called a “patient” or inmate,” such as in a nursing home, mental hospital, or correctional facility. Due to the broad definition for disability that was used, the *Employment Rate and Gap in Employment Rates Based on Disability Status* indicators likely captures people who do not have a developmental disability diagnosis.

**5) National Core Indicators (NCI) In-Person Survey:** Since state fiscal year 2012, Virginia has voluntarily collected information annually through face-to-face interviews for the NCI Adult In-Person Survey. Interview participants are randomly selected from all Virginians with developmental disabilities (DD) aged 18 or older who are receiving at least one publicly-funded service (excluding case management). NCI asks states to collect a minimum size sample of 400 people, but Virginia did not meet this minimum in 2012. The data from that year is therefore excluded from this trend report.

Virginia’s overall sample size for the In-Person Survey has ranged from as low as 429 in 2013 to as high as 1,062 in 2015. Because inclusion in each measure depends on meeting certain parameters, however, sample size for each measure varies. For the indicators included in this trend report called *DD Service Recipients Who Chose or Helped Choose Job* and *DD Service Recipients*

*Who Like Current Job*, the sample size did not exceed 100 in any reported year. Thus, the NCI data here must be analyzed with caution.

The NCI average, referred to as the national average in this report, is based on data from states that participated in the survey. The average may not be reflective of states that did not participate. Additionally, while a national average was available for years prior to 2017, the methodology for average calculations changed in 2017. Beginning in 2017, the national average calculations changed from a simple average to a weighted average based on participating states' sample and population sizes. For that reason, only averages from 2017 and onward were included in this report.

**6) Virginia State Rehabilitation Council for DARS Annual Report:** The Virginia State Rehabilitation Council publishes for DARS an Annual Report on the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program and on the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) VR Program.

The Annual Report on DARS VR includes data from the DARS-administered consumer satisfaction survey, from which this trend report draws the *VR Service Recipients Who Reported DARS Counselors Did What They Promised* indicator. Beginning in federal fiscal year 2014, the survey was distributed to a stratified sample of people who had an Individualized Plan of Employment through the vocational rehabilitation program, were still receiving services, and had not yet obtained employment. The survey consists of questions regarding services and counselors at the time of survey, including the question "Is your counselor doing what he/she said they would do to help you reach your job goal?" on which the above indicator is based. Proxies are permitted to respond on behalf of the person with the Individualized Plan of Employment, so it is possible that some responses do not reflect the thoughts of the actual consumer. Additionally, it is possible that the responses of those who did not complete the survey may have varied from the people who did. Statistics published in reporting were based only on people who completed the survey independently or with help. The response rates for 2017 and 2018 were 22%, while the response rate for 2019 was 20%.

**7) Virginia State Rehabilitation Council for DBVI Annual Report:** The Annual Report on DBVI VR includes data from DBVI-administered consumer satisfaction surveys. This trend report's indicators *VR Service Recipients Who Reported DBVI Staff Were Sensitive to Their Needs* and *Average Satisfaction Score for DBVI VR Service Recipients* come from this annual report. DBVI distributes consumer satisfaction surveys each month through mail, phone, and online. Surveys are provided to people who have received VR services and had their case closed. Consequently, the opinion of consumers who are still receiving VR services are unknown. From federal fiscal year 2015 to 2018, the response rate ranged from about 10% to 32%. The response rate for the combined 2019 and 2020 survey results was lower than normal, at 8%, so responses should be interpreted with this limitation in mind.

**8) U.S. Department of Labor (DOL):** The U.S. DOL issues 14(c) certificates under the Fair Labor Standards Act Section 14(c), authorizing employers to pay subminimum wage to people with disabilities. An employer must obtain a 14(c) certificate for each site at which they intend to pay subminimum wage, so one employer may hold multiple certificates. This trend report uses 14(c) data for the indicator called *Workplaces Paying Subminimum Wage*.

Each fiscal quarter, the U.S. DOL Wage and Hour Division publishes a list of employers that hold 14(c) certificates. This list includes information such as employer name, address, certificate start date and end date, number of workers paid subminimum wage, and more. The list is updated online each quarter, and historical data is not available. Thus, VBPD staff obtained historical 14(c) data for this trend report through two Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. The first FOIA request, for data from federal fiscal years 2010 to 2019, resulted in obtaining data on the number of certified sites. The second FOIA request, for data from 2020, asked for data on the number of certified sites as well as the number of workers who were paid subminimum wage. Consequently, this trend report is able to provide insight into how many workers were actually paid less than minimum wage for 2020, but not for the preceding years.

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