

Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council

Annual Report

OCTOBER 1, 2002 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2003

The State Rehabilitation Council's key responsibilities are described in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. Each year the Council's focus varies. The Council's major activities in the year of 2002-2003 are listed below.

letters...

Over 20 letters were written to the Governor, President, employers, community members, state senators, legislators, and members of congress.

work groups...

Budget Work Groups
VR State Plan
By-Laws

forums...

White Earth Reservation American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Project visit
Forum on recruiting and retaining Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
Southwest Minnesota Public Forum

monitored...

VR Performance
Order of Selection
Departments of Trade and Economic Development and Economic Security merger
VR and the Minnesota Budget
Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act

presentations received...

WISE@WORK
Focus on Ability
Ticket to Work

appreciation expressed...

Bob Niemiec for six years of service as Chair of the SRC
Jerry Roberts for four years of service to the SRC

Annual Report

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Scott Dehn
Saint Paul
Business

Rich Diedrichsen
St. Cloud
Advocate

Kris Flaten
Saint Paul
Advocate

Anne Geoghegan
Minneapolis
Business

Peter Hoialmen
Minneapolis
Business

Lois Johnson
Windom
State Independent Living
Council

Mickey Kyler, Vice-Chair
Crookston
Advocate/Consumer

Gloria LaFriniere
White Earth Reservation
American Indian
Vocational Rehabilitation
Program

David Leiseth
Red Wing
Community Rehabilitation
Organization

Mark Netzinger, Chair
Cambridge
Business

Bob Niemiec
Saint Paul
Business

Rachel Parker
Minneapolis
Parent Training &
Information Center

Thant Pearson
Anoka
Vocational Rehabilitation
Counselor

Anne Robertson
Minneapolis
Client Assistance Project

Sarah Simmons
Minneapolis
Advocate/Consumer

Jayne Spain
Roseville
Special Education
Department of Education

>> from the Chair

The tone the Council set this year was very collaborative, despite it being a stressful year of change and diminished resources. We evolved a process where VR provided us with information; we broke into small groups for deliberation, formulated recommendations and brought them back to the large group for discussion and approval. Although each of us at the table represented a different constituency or perspective, the discussion was never framed as “you and I;” it was framed as “we.” With the hard work of deliberation comes the understanding that we are in an environment that cannot provide us the resources we would like. Nonetheless, constructive suggestions are needed more than ever.

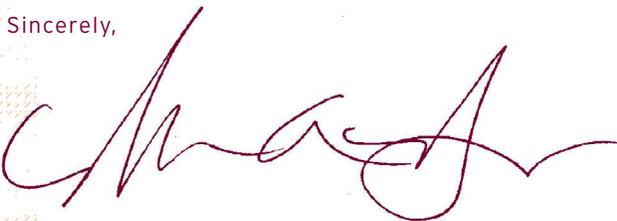
As you read this report, you will see evidence of the Council's large collaborative efforts. We visited the White Earth Reservation and their American Indian VR Project; conducted an August Forum on Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Recruitment and Retention; jointly hosted the September Public Forum in Marshall; and revised portions of the joint SRC/VR state goals.

Additionally, this year the proposed state budget cuts demanded that the SRC be proactive and widen its scope to the broader community. Even though none of the proposed budget cuts directly affected VR, they had a huge effect on the community supports that often contribute to a person with a disability's capacity to work. Study groups were formed, letters describing how proposed cuts would affect VR's capacity were sent, and each group brainstormed how VR could best respond to the changing budgetary environment.

Much of what the Council did this year was in preparation for next year's work. We plan to deliberate and make recommendations based on what we learned at the August VR Counselor Recruitment and Retention Forum and the September Public Forum. We will continue to look for ways to partner with the community and be proactive in our rapidly changing world.

It has been a privilege to provide leadership to such a hardworking, cohesive, and productive Council.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Netzing', written in a cursive style.

Mark Netzing, Chair

>> from the Director of Rehabilitation Services

The challenge this year, and no doubt in years to come, is responding to an extremely tight budgetary environment and the increasing complexity of VR participant's needs. Although the state's 4.5 billion dollar shortfall did not cause direct cuts to VR services, the cuts had a significant impact on the broad array of community services that support many VR participants. Additionally, for many years now Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation Program has been essentially flat funded. That means that our federal appropriation has barely, if even, kept up with the rate of inflation. The result has placed us in a position where we are unable to serve all who would otherwise qualify for our services and we have had to resort to a waiting list of eligible consumers.

By law, we are required to ensure that available resources are targeted to those who have the most significant disabilities. Community based support services' budgets are also stretched to unprecedented levels, adding to the complexity of the challenge of serving the needs of VR participants. In addition to examining the efficacy of each and every expenditure, we are challenged and committed to seeking out and forging new community alliances, strengthening public-private partnerships, and implementing new and innovative ways to respond to the disability communities' employment needs.

As you can see when reading this report, the State Rehabilitation Council's leadership and advice has proven invaluable and was a mainstay in our efforts this past year. From an in-depth study of the challenges of counselor recruitment and retention, to advice on responding to the diminished capacity of community services, the SRC has done its homework, asked the hard questions and provided sound guidance and productive recommendations. I look forward to a bright future as we pursue our common goals.



Howard Glad, Director, Rehabilitation Services

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM MISSION

Minnesotans with
disabilities to reach their
working and living
community.

PRINCIPLES

quality services...

PRINCIPLES OF THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

The Council is well served by the Principles developed in the year 2000–2001. An annual review and reaffirmation of these Principles has kept the Council mindful of the values and mission shared with Vocational Rehabilitation.

■ CONSUMER CHOICE

Individuals with disabilities their representatives are full partners in a VR Program and must be involved in meaningful and informed choices with the selection of employment outcomes, services needed, service providers, and the methods used to secure such services.

■ LEGAL/DUE PROCESS

The legal rights of consumers such as data privacy, confidentiality, as well as the rights established under the Americans with Disabilities Act must be protected. Opportunities to resolve differences through due process must be safeguarded..

■ RELATIONSHIPS

Valued relationships developed by the VR Program must be preserved and enhanced. This includes relationships with consumers, the State Rehabilitation Council, stakeholders, other existing advisory bodies, vendors, and providers.

■ VR PROGRAM SERVICES

The VR Program must continue to improve and streamline services for consumers. This includes easy access to both programs and facilities. Any relocation or organizational restructuring must assure that individualized services and consumer programs are uninterrupted.

The individualized, one-on-one relationship between the consumer and the VR counselor must be preserved.

The VR Program must continue its efforts to provide services to individuals with

disabilities in underserved populations such as transition age youth, deaf/ hard of hearing people, people with traumatic brain injuries, serious mental illness, HIV infection, chemical dependency, hidden disabilities, and those in new and emerging groups.

■ ADMINISTRATIVE

The VR Program must be managed and directed by VR personnel.

VR must have the autonomy and the freedom to operate in a way that promotes staff creativity, informed choice by consumers, and efficient use of program funds.

At a minimum, the VR Program, Extended Employment program, Independent Living program, Disability Determination Services, and State Services for the Blind should remain aligned within the same department.

■ WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The VR Program is an employment program under Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act and must be a fully participating partner in all Minnesota workforce development activities. As such, the VR Program must demonstrate an ongoing effort in advocating for people with disabilities to be included as valued members of Minnesota's workforce. VR must continue its efforts to work collaboratively with the business community to increase employers' access to qualified workers with disabilities.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM VISION

LETTERS

01-30-03

Letter to Governor Pawlenty introducing Vocational Rehabilitation

Congratulations as you begin your administration and chart the future of the State of Minnesota.... Currently, Minnesota has the highest percentage of people with disabilities successfully integrated into the work force of any state in the nation.... Research has shown that “when VR consumers work, they pay back \$11 in taxes for every \$1 that was expended to implement their VR plan.”... Of course, no one can put a price tag on the change in the quality of life one enjoys when they make the transition from dependency to independence.

01-30-03

Letter to President Bush emphasizing the importance of supported employment

On behalf of Minnesotans with “the most” significant disabilities, we ask you to reverse your request for elimination of the State SE Grant Program....

We urge you to fully fund supported employment along with Projects With Industry and the Seasonal Migrant Worker Program as separate funding streams from the general VR funding.

02-11-03

Letter written in support of the White Earth Reservation American Indian VR project grant reapplication

Having recently held a SRC meeting on the White Earth Reservation, the Council was impressed by the work that has been accomplished and believes that the continuation of this project is vital to meeting the vocational rehabilitation needs of the people of the White Earth Reservation.

02-13-03

Letter written to the Chair of the Governors Workforce Development Council (GWDC) inviting their participation on the SRC

Representation from the GWDC on the SRC would provide a rich opportunity for coordination of labor force development and collaboration on the important issue of assisting people with disabilities to gain employment.

05-27-03

Letters written to Representatives Kline, McCollum, and Boehner regarding the reauthorization of the Workforce Reinvestment and Adult Education Act

The proposed language of the Workforce Reinvestment and Adult Education Act curtails the Workforce Center required partners to an advisory committee of the local workforce council. Without full membership, it is likely that the unique perspective of people with disabilities will not be available.

06-03-03

Letters of invitation to Senator Coleman, Senator Dayton, and Congresswoman McCollum to discuss aspects of the Workforce Reinvestment and Adult Education Act with the SRC

Because you will have the opportunity to deliberate and influence this Act when it comes before the Senate this fall, we would cordially invite you or your representative to attend a State Rehabilitation Council meeting to discuss some important aspects of the bill....

09-17-03

Letters of invitation to attend a Public Forum in SE Minnesota written to State Senator Frederickson, U.S. Representative Peterson, and State Representative Seifert, elected officials from the SE Minnesota area

The joint VR/SRC Public Forum will be held on September 24 in Marshall.... Please come, share your thoughts, and hear your communities’ comments on the important issue of the employment of people with disabilities.

FORUMS

The State Rehabilitation Council is authorized to hold forums. A forum can focus on a specific issue or be more general, simply providing the broader community an opportunity to share their thoughts, suggestions and concerns about Vocational Rehabilitation services. This year, three forums were held, two focused on specific issues and the final was a public open forum. ■

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AMERICAN INDIAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROJECT FORUM

In October of 2002, the White Earth Reservation American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Project hosted a SRC meeting on the White Earth Reservation. The Council learned about the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Project and discussed with tribal leaders the unique collaboration between the Minnesota VR Program and the Project. Tribal leaders shared information on tribal history, special considerations when working with American Indians, and the needs of American Indian special education students.

The Council thanks the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Project and tribal leaders for sharing their time, history, and expertise.

"The Council is authorized to hold such hearings and forums as the Council may determine to be necessary to carry out the duties of the Council."

– Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act

REHABILITATION COUNSELOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION FORUM

The Council's work on the joint VR/SRC goal, "Build a healthy and productive work environment" inspired the forum on Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Recruitment and Retention. Aware that up to one third of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and managers are likely to retire within the next five years, the Council decided to more fully inform themselves by organizing a day long forum centering on the issues of recruitment and retention of Vocational Rehabilitation professional staff.

The Council convened a panel of graduate students, university professors and VR managers, counselors, and job developers to discuss the issue. Some of the topics included: how to attract students into the field of rehabilitation counseling; the recruitment of people with disabilities and/or people of color; and factors that help the state retain qualified vocational rehabilitation staff. The forum

proved to be an excellent opportunity for staff of Rehabilitation Services, the Council, and community experts to discuss a pressing issue and embark on the process of long term planning.

After the forum, the Council went to work. Small groups convened. Comments and suggestions from the panel discussion are being considered and crafted into recommendations. Look in next year's annual report for the Council's recommendations, Vocational Rehabilitation's responses to the recommendations, and the joint action taken to address this issue.

EXCERPT FROM LETTER TO GRADUATE STUDENTS ATTENDING AUGUST FORUM

The Council thanks the following graduate counseling program educators for sharing their time and expertise.

- Glen Peterson, Ph.D., Minnesota State University, Mankato
- John Hotz, Rh.D., Saint Cloud State University
- Bob Peters, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Stout

OPEN FORUM

PUBLIC FORUM

The Council and VR held a joint open forum in Marshall, Minnesota, in September 2003. It proved to be an excellent opportunity to meet with community members and hear about the unique challenges people with disabilities face when seeking employment in Southwest Minnesota.

Testimony was provided by people from many walks of life. Service providers, parents, high school teachers, Vocational Rehabilitation participants, WorkForce Center partners, University students, Southwest Minnesota State University staff, students, Vocational Rehabilitation managers, staff from the Southwestern Center for Independent Living, and transportation providers weighed in on many issues. Transportation, affordable housing, accessing community resources, the stigma of labels, the need for vocational choices, lack of supported employment, school to work transitions, and the economic downturn's effect on services to people with disabilities were discussed.

The Council will take the information provided and use it to guide their future recommendations. ■

FORUM TESTIMONY:

"Just the idea of what it is like to be a college freshman, plus having a disability at the same time, is incredibly hard."
—student, Southwest State University, Marshall

"We are seeing an increasing number of students with sensory disabilities, learning disabilities, and so the numbers are growing..." —Marilyn Leech, Director, Learning Resource Center, Southwest State University, Marshall

"I am optimistic of a bright future now... and I am very grateful to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program for all that they have done..." —consumer living with serious mental illness, nearing completion of her degree program at Southwest State University, Marshall

"Families need to know what agencies are available. They need to know, as a student progresses, what's going to happen when a student gets out of high school."
—parent and advocate, Marshall

"My daughter is 28 years old, developmentally delayed and suffers from depression... we live in a rural community and I need to have a better understanding of services... she needs to be more productive so that the depression doesn't go deeper along with loss of self-worth." —parent

TOP SIX 2003 VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION REFERRAL SOURCES

1. Educational institutions	20%
2. Self-referral	19
3. Government agencies	13
4. WorkForce Center partner	8
5. Community Rehabilitation Program	8
6. Health care	8

- Participants served: 24,851
- Number of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors: 167
- Average caseload of a VR Counselor: 149
- Of the 10,973 people who applied for Vocational Rehabilitation services this year, 9,201 were determined eligible. 7,546 of those determined eligible received VR services and 1,655 were placed on a wait list.
- 3,346 VR participants obtained employment.
- 20 percent of the persons that VR assisted in obtaining employment utilized long-term employment supports.
- The participants who secured competitive employment, including those who had long-term support, earned on average \$9.71 per hour.
- The average wage of participants who did not require long term support was \$10.24.
- \$10.24 compares favorably with \$10.28, the average wage for all job vacancies listed during the fourth quarter of 2003.
- 34% of all Vocational Rehabilitation participants received Social Security.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION EXPENDITURES (in millions) 2003

- Services purchased for consumers
- Services provided to consumers by Vocational Rehabilitation staff
- State and MDES direct and indirect charges
- Field office operations
- Vocational Rehabilitation administrative costs

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FUNDING SOURCES 2003

- Federal
- State match
- Social Security reimbursement
- Other match

ESTIMATES OF MINNESOTANS WITH DISABILITIES 2003

Minnesotans of working age (18-64) unemployed due to a work disability	264,334 ¹²
Students between 16-21 in special education	20,068 ³
Minnesotans of working age on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	71,533 ⁴
Minnesotans of working age on Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	42,476 ⁴
Minnesotans of working age unemployed with serious and persistent mental illness	67,147 ⁵
Minnesotans of working age with HIV/AIDS	4,778 ⁶
Minnesotans of working age with traumatic brain injury	35,015 ⁷
Minnesotans of working age who are deaf or hard of hearing	318,226 ⁸

¹ Cornell University, "Economics of Disabilities Research Report #4" Table 3.
² 2000 Profiles of General Demographic Characteristics as provided by Minnesota Planning, State Demographic Center.
³ Minnesota Department of Education.
⁴ Social Security Administration, duplicate count. An estimated 30% of recipients receive both SSI and SSDI.
⁵ Minnesota Department of Human Services formula for Federal block grant reporting.
⁶ Minnesota Department of Health, preliminary data for 2003.
⁷ Minnesota Department of Health. Minnesotans hospitalized, 1993 through 2002, due to traumatic brain injury.
⁸ Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development estimate, based on formula from the Center for Sight & Hearing.

PRIMARY DISABILITY OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PARTICIPANTS

	2001		2002		2003		2003
	Participants	% of caseload	Participants	% of caseload	Participants	% of caseload	% of employment outcomes (3346 total)
Serious Mental Illness	9,617	34%	9,371	34%	8,435	34%	30
Learning Disability	3,492	12	3,614	13	3,409	14	13
Low Incidence Disabilities ¹	2,920	10	3,037	11	2,828	11	12
Mobility Impairments ²	3,834	14	3,469	13	2,712	11	12
Mental Retardation	2,707	9.5	2,536	9	2,385	10	12
All Other Impairments	1,098	4	1,290	5	1,357	5	5
Traumatic Brain Injury/Stroke	1,548	5.5	1,449	5	1,306	5	6
Chemical Dependency	1,652	6	1,431	5	1,163	5	4.5
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	1,267	4.5	1,230	4.5	1,134	4.5	5
HIV/AIDS	146	0.5	132	0.5	122	0.5	0.5
TOTAL	28,281	100%	27,559	100%	24,851	100%	100%

¹ Includes arthritis, rheumatism, respiratory impairments, cerebral palsy, diabetes mellitus, Parkinson's disease, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, autism, and muscular dystrophy.

² Includes spinal cord injuries, orthopedic, and neurological impairments.

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES BY TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT

	2000	2001	2002	2003	
Competitive Employment ¹	3,028	3,128	2,742	2,583	77%
Self-Employment	80	88	93	101	3
Supported Employment ²	547	672	721	652	19.5
Center-Based Employment ³	324	379	-	-	-
Homemaker/Unpaid Family Worker	11	11	15	10	0.5
TOTAL	3,990	4,278	3,571	3,346	100%

¹ Above minimum wage without long-term supports.

² Paid work in the community for a person who requires ongoing support to keep the job.

³ 2001 was the last year for center-based employment as an employment outcome.

TYPE OF MEDICAL INSURANCE AT CLOSURE 2003

TYPE OF MEDICAL INSURANCE	TOTAL	PERCENT
Consumer's Job	997	30%
Medicaid/Medicare/MNCare/Workers Comp	1,476	44
Other Private Insurance	538	16
None	335	10
TOTAL	3,346	100%

COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENTS 2003

	Without support		With support (above minimum wage)	
	% by occupational type	Average hourly wage	% by occupational type	Average hourly wage
Total Number Placed		2,676		496
Service	27%	\$8.55	55%	\$6.74
Clerical/Sales	24	9.50	20	7.12
Professional/Technical/Managerial	19	13.91	1	10.34
Industrial Trade	18	10.56	15	6.93
Miscellaneous	9	9.79	7	6.75
Farming/Fishing/Forestry	3	9.48	2	7.06
	100%	\$10.24	100%	\$6.87

SERVICE AND OUTCOME BY CULTURAL/ETHNIC GROUP

% of total Minnesota population ¹	2001		2002		2003		2003 average hourly salary
	% of total caseload	% of total employment outcomes	% of total caseload	% of total employment outcomes	% of total caseload	% of total employment outcomes	
3.5 African American	8.0%	6.7%	8.8%	6.7%	9.9%	7.4%	\$10.35
1.1 American Indian	3.0	2.7	2.4	2.2	2.2	1.9	9.42
2.9 Asian Pacific Islander	1.9	1.7	2.2	1.7	2.2	1.7	9.09
89.4 Caucasian	84.4	86.7	84.0	86.9	83.0	87.0	10.30
2.9 Hispanic/Latino ²	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.4	8.71
1.7 Two or more cultural/ethnic groups ³	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.7	0.5	9.32
1.3 Other ⁴	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
not reported ⁵	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	-
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

¹ 2000 Census, Minnesota Planning, State Demographic Center.

² Duplicate count.

³ New category, VR began collecting this data Oct. 1, 2000.

⁴ Vocational Rehabilitation does not gather data on "other races."

⁵ VR allows participants to "not report"; 2000 Census requires a cultural/ethnic group.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PARTICIPANTS RECEIVING SSI/SSDI 2003

	SSI	SSDI	SSI&SSDI	Total	Percent
Serious Mental Illness	1,524	1,905	415	3,844	46%
Mental Retardation	796	215	72	1,083	13
Low Incidence Disabilities ¹	408	408	75	891	11
Mobility Impairments ²	281	375	42	698	8
Traumatic Brain Injury/Stroke	220	359	38	617	7
All Other Impairments	167	189	31	387	5
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	179	120	28	327	4
Learning Disability	209	56	19	284	3
Chemical Dependency	81	70	12	163	2
HIV/AIDS	36	43	9	88	1
TOTAL	3,901	3,740	741	8,382	100%

¹ Includes arthritis, rheumatism, respiratory impairments, cerebral palsy, diabetes mellitus, Parkinson's disease, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, autism, and muscular dystrophy.

² Includes spinal cord injuries, orthopedic, and neurological impairments.

NUMBER OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PARTICIPANTS BY COUNTY

AITKIN	20	LAC QUI PARLE	20	STEARNS	931
ANOKA	1307	LAKE	61	STEELE	120
BECKER	84	LAKE OF THE WOODS ..	20	STEVENS	35
BELTRAMI	273	LE SUEUR	149	SWIFT	36
BENTON	275	LINCOLN	30	TODD	144
BIG STONE	19	LYON	148	TRAVERSE	6
BLUE EARTH	375	MCLEOD	113	WABASHA	34
BROWN	96	MAHNOMEN	17	WADENA	71
CARLTON	133	MARSHALL	36	WASECA	70
CARVER	229	MARTIN	80	WASHINGTON	843
CASS	122	MEEKER	79	WATONWAN	57
CHIPPEWA	46	MILLE LACS	109	WILKIN	16
CHISAGO	203	MORRISON	160	WINONA	275
CLAY	396	MOWER	176	WRIGHT	378
CLEARWATER	67	MURRAY	24	YELLOW MEDICINE	50
COOK	14	NICOLLET	120		
COTTONWOOD	51	NOBLES	126	NOT IN MINNESOTA	44
CROW WING	349	NORMAN	19	COUNTY UNKNOWN	12
DAKOTA	1996	OLMSTED	624		
DODGE	60	OTTER TAIL	267		
DOUGLAS	102	PENNINGTON	69	TOTAL SERVED	24,851
FARIBAULT	56	PINE	141		
FILLMORE	74	PIPESTONE	44		
FREEBORN	165	POLK	176		
GOODHUE	191	POPE	31		
GRANT	28	RAMSEY	3218		
HENNEPIN	5404	RED LAKE	20		
HOUSTON	143	REDWOOD	70		
HUBBARD	110	RENVILLE	33		
ISANTI	181	RICE	280		
ITASCA	138	ROCK	37		
JACKSON	49	ROSEAU	106		
KANABEC	91	SAINT LOUIS	1364		
KANDIYOHI	194	SCOTT	330		
KITTSOON	29	SHERBURNE	238		
KOOCHICHING	79	SIBLEY	45		

A LOOK AHEAD

Ticket to Work...

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Improvement Act was passed in December of 1999. It created the Ticket to Work Program, a program that provides a variety of incentives designed to enable beneficiaries to return to work at income levels high enough that they no longer need Social Security benefits. There are approximately 103,000 Minnesotans who will be receiving tickets over the next year as this program is phased in.

One of the primary goals of the Ticket to Work program is ensuring SSA beneficiaries have choices about the agencies or "Employment Networks" (ENs) that assist them with their employment goals, one of which is VR. Ticket holders could cause a huge influx of persons requesting services from VR. In other states that have implemented the Ticket program, most beneficiaries have assigned their Tickets to VR. In federal fiscal year 2003, VR served roughly 4,000 persons who would have been eligible for the Ticket.

The Ticket to Work legislation also addresses a number of beneficiary concerns about access to health care and reinstatement of Social Security benefits if there is an exacerbation of the disability. In Minnesota, Medical Assistance for Employed People with Disabilities (MA-EPD) provides continued access to health care benefits through a sliding fee based premium.

Over the past year, VR has been very busy planning and preparing to serve many potential new clients. The State Rehabilitation Council received periodic presentations on Ticket to Work. VR has participated in several public meetings where members of the disability community provided input and suggestions on implementing Ticket to Work. ■

MINNESOTA VR'S TICKET TO WORK MISSION

Assisting SSA beneficiaries to achieve employment with earnings sufficient to eliminate dependence on SSA cash benefits.

MINNESOTA VR'S TICKET TO WORK VISION

Minnesota will be a national leader in assisting Ticket users to successfully work.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

- **Vocational Rehabilitation Ticket to Work Program**
1-888-749-8153; TTY 1-651-296-3900 or 1-800-657-3973;
or the local WorkForce Center 1-888-438-5627
- **Employment Networks**
<http://www.yourtickettowork.com>
www.yourtickettowork.com
or 1-866-968-7842; TDD 1-866-833-2967
- **Social Security Benefits**
<http://www.ssagov.work>
www.ssa.gov/work
1-800-772-1213

This report can be made available in braille, large print, audiotape, or other formats upon request by calling 651-296-5629, 1-800-328-9095, or TTY 1-800-657-3973. Speech-to-speech telephone re-voice: 1-877-627-3848.

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
REHABILITATION SERVICES
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
390 NORTH ROBERT STREET
SAINT PAUL, MN 55101

THE COUNCIL WANTS PUBLIC INPUT

There are many ways to let the Council know your thoughts.

You can call:

Voice 651-296-5629 or 1-800-328-9095

TTY 651-296-3900 or 1-800-657-3973

Speech-to-speech telephone re-voice 1-877-627-3848

You can write:

Chair, State Rehabilitation Council
Department of Employment and Economic Development
Rehabilitation Services
Vocational Rehabilitation
390 North Robert Street
Saint Paul, MN 55101

You can fax:

651-297-5159

You can attend a meeting:

All State Rehabilitation Council meetings are public. Meetings are the fourth Wednesday of every month with the exception of July and a combined meeting in November and December. Locations and time are in the Minnesota State Register at a public library or on the Internet:

www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore/stateregister.asp

www.mnwfc.org/rehab/councils/src/src.htm

You can apply to become a member:

If you are interested in becoming a member of the State Rehabilitation Council, an application form can be obtained by calling 651-296-5629 or on the Internet:

www.sos.state.mn.us/openapp/forms.html