

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

December 31, 2020

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi,  
President and Members of the Senate  
Thirty-First State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 409  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Scott K. Saiki, Speaker  
and Members of the House of  
Representatives  
Thirty-First State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 431  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki, and Members of the Legislature:

Enclosed is the following report submitted in accordance with section 348-8, Hawaii Revised Statutes, Related to the Annual Report of the State Rehabilitation Council.

In accordance with section 93-16, HRS, the report is available to review electronically at the Department's website, at <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/reports/legislative-reports/>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "CB", is written over a horizontal line.

Cathy Betts  
Director

Enclosure

c:  
Governor's Office  
Lieutenant Governor's Office  
Department of Budget & Finance  
Legislative Auditor  
Legislative Reference Bureau Library (1 hard copy)

President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki

December 31, 2020

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Hawaii State Public Library, System State Publications Distribution Center (2 hard copies, 1 electronic copy)

Hamilton Library, Serials Department, University of Hawaii (1 hard copy)

# **REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR**

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION  
348-8(c), HAWAII REVISED  
STATUTES, THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STATE  
REHABILITATION COUNCIL**

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION  
December 2020**

## **STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**

Section 348-8(c), Hawaii Revised Statute (HRS), requires the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to submit an annual report to the Governor on vocational rehabilitation programs within the State and make the report available to the public. The Annual Report highlights the Council's past fiscal year activities and accomplishments.

### **Council Purpose**

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) gives advice to and works in partnership with, the Hawaii Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The SRC was created and mandated by the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended in 1998. The Hawaii State Legislature codified the SRC in section 348-8, HRS, to support individuals with disabilities. The SRC works in partnership with the Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and carries out its purpose by performing the following duties and responsibilities:

- Review, analyze and advise the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency regarding its performance of responsibilities that affect the ability of consumers to achieve employment outcomes;
- Develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities of the VR program;
- Assist VR in the preparation of the VR State Plan, amendments to the plan and needs assessment;
- Review and analyze the effectiveness of the VR Program and consumer satisfaction;
- Prepare and submit a DVR annual report to the Governor and Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration; and
- Coordinate its activities with the activities of other disability-related councils within the State.

### **Council Structure**

The Council meets four times per year. The purpose of these meetings is to:

- Learn about programs, activities, and needs specific to each Island of the State;
- Build/support collaborations with public and private partners involved in rehabilitation and employment in Hawaii; and
- Conduct the business of the Council in a public setting.

**State Rehabilitation Council Members October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020**

	<b>Composition</b>	<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Term</b>
<b>1</b>	Administrator of the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Department of Human Services (§348-8(a) (10) ex-officio/nonvoting member.	Maureen Bates	7/1/19 - 6/30/22
<b>2</b>	At least one Representative of the Client Assistance Program (§348-8(a)(2))	Howard Lesser	7/1/19 - 6/30/22
<b>3</b>	Statewide Independent Living Center Representative	Annette Tashiro	7/1/20 - 6/30/22
<b>4</b>	At least one Representative of a Parent Training & Information Center (§348-8(a)(1))	Rosie Rowe	7/1/19 - 6/30/22
<b>5</b>	Representative of Community Rehabilitation Program Service Providers (§348-8(a)(4))	Michele Ku	7/1/19 - 6/30/21
<b>6</b>	Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (§348-8(a)(3))	Joshua Graham – Vice Chair	7/1/19 - 6/30/22
<b>7</b>	Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor (§348-8(a)(5))	Jodi Asato	7/1/19 - 6/30/22
<b>8</b>	Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor (§348-8(a)(5))	Rene Berthiaume	7/1/19 - 6/30/21
<b>9</b>	Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor (§348-8(a)(5))	Evan Nakatsuka – Chair	7/1/20 - 6/30/23
<b>10</b>	Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor (§348-8(a)(5))	Caroline Campbell	7/1/20 - 6/30/23
<b>11</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Arthur Cabanilla	7/1/20 - 6/30/23
<b>12</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Terry-Ann Moses	7/1/19 - 6/30/22
<b>13</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Christina Pascua	7/1/19 - 6/30/22

<b>14</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Evalina “Nani” Watanabe	7/1/19 - 6/30/22
<b>15</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Stan Young	7/1/19 - 6/30/22
<b>16</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Wally Soares – Secretary/Treasurer	7/1/19 - 6/30/22
<b>17</b>	Current or Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (§348-8(a)(7))	Dustin Park	7/1/19 - 6/30/21
<b>18</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Vacant	
<b>19</b>	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Vacant	
<b>20</b>	At least one Representative of the State Educational Agency Responsible for the Public Education of Students with Disabilities (§348-8(a)(8))	Vacant	
<b>21</b>	One Representative of the State Workforce Development Council (§348-8(a)(9))	Vacant	

Section 348-8, HRS, mandates that SRC be comprised of at least one member from each county, and a majority of the council members shall be persons who have disabilities and are not employed by the DVR. Council members shall serve without compensation (voluntary) and shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses, including travel expenses, necessary for the performance of their duties. The SRC consists of diverse memberships, who are advocates for individuals with disabilities.

Anyone interested in becoming a member of the State Rehabilitation Council may apply by completing the following steps:

1. Go to Boards & Commissions Application website:  
<https://forms.ehawaii.gov/pages/board-survey/>
2. Scroll down to the Department of Human Services (DHS) and click on the dropdown menu
3. Check box: State Rehabilitation Council
4. Scroll down to the bottom and click SUBMIT



5. Complete the application
6. Attach Resume and Letter of Interest
7. Click SUBMIT: Applicants will need a resume and a Letter of Interest stating why they would like to become a State Rehabilitation Council member. The Governor appoints members to serve a three-year term; members cannot serve more than two consecutive terms, except for the Client Assistance Program).

The SRC performs several functions to execute their duties, as outlined in the Rehabilitation Act, mainly to monitor the performance of DVR. The DHS DVR is the state agency with the sole purpose of assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain, maintain, and advance in employment. The SRC meets quarterly in partnership with DVR to discuss and make recommendations to support DVR's effectiveness. The DVR's mission is to work as a team so participants can achieve their hopes and aspirations for meaningful employment through timely and individualized services.

For upcoming SRC meeting dates for FFY2021 and agenda and minutes from previous meetings, go to the Hawaii SRC website: <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/vr/state-rehabilitation-council-src/>.

## **SRC ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

1. The SRC convened four meetings during Federal Fiscal Year 2020  
In July 2020, the SRC transitioned to completely virtual meetings to adhere to COVID-19 health and safety precautions. During four virtual public meetings, the SRC established a quorum and continued to advise DVR on any issues regarding how to best serve individuals with disabilities. SRC meetings took place on the Zoom platform with captioning and American Sign Language interpreters through Isle Interpret.
2. Election of new officers and members  
Despite the pandemic, all SRC applicants had a remote testimony hearing, and eleven SRC members were approved and appointed in July 2020. The SRC added nine new members for their first term, and two members began their second terms. The SRC is currently comprised of 16 voting members and continues to maintain representation from each county.
3. Participation in weekly Zoom conferences focused on providing services and support during the COVID-19 pandemic  
The Client Assistance Program advocate participated in DVR and Center on Disability Studies sponsored weekly Zoom conferences on "Pandemic Partnerships for Individuals with Disabilities and Their Family Members."

4. Established DVR data report format for quarterly SRC meetings  
The SRC requested that DVR report their quarterly WIOA performance measure data at each SRC meeting. DVR will also update the SRC about the Order of Selection, DVR applicants by county, and employment placement data.
5. Collaboration with the Workforce Development Council (WDC)  
SRC members participated in the WDC Employer Engagement Committee and Sector Strategies and Partnerships Committee meetings in 2020. SRC Chair Evan Nakatsuka began serving as the co-chair of a newly formed WDC Subgroup for Opportunity Populations.
6. Sunshine Law presentation to SRC, July 10, 2020  
The SRC invited Lori Wada, Deputy Attorney General, to present on the Sunshine Law. Ms. Wada provided an overview and review of the Sunshine Law and offered guidance regarding virtual public meetings.
7. Reviewed and discussed the 2019 DVR Consumer Satisfaction Survey  
The SRC invited the University of Hawaii Pacific Disabilities Center to present the 2019 DVR Consumer Satisfaction Survey at the September 25, 2020 meeting.
8. National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils, Inc. (NCSRC) Quarterly Online Meeting  
The SRC Chair represented the Hawaii SRC at NCSRC virtual meetings in August and October 2020. These meetings replaced the annual NCSRC Conference in 2020 and guided SRC membership and SRC annual reports.
9. Standing SRC Committees  
The SRC maintained standing committees so they could convene on topics of concerns requiring additional research and oversight. The committee members presented their efforts to the Council for final approval at quarterly meetings. The standing committees are as follows:
  - Executive
  - Legislative
  - Membership
  - Needs Assessment
  - Policy & Procedures
  - State Plan

## **VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM (VR)**

**VR MISSION** – The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) exists to serve its participants. DVR staff works as a team so that participants can achieve their hopes and aspirations for meaningful employment through timely and individualized vocational rehabilitation services.



**VR VISION** – VR provides vocational rehabilitation services to assist individuals with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining, and maintaining/regain employment. The economic benefits of VR services are significant, including increased earnings and purchasing power, increased taxes paid, and a decreased dependency on public assistance. VR is a cost-effective program. Within the first two years of employment, the average rehabilitated individual will have repaid the full cost of vocational rehabilitation services through state/federal taxes associated with their employment in Hawaii's workforce.

DVR Services Program Funding consists of 78.8% Federal award, with a 21.3% State match for these federal funds awarded annually. The federally awarded funding is available for a maximum period of performance of two years, provided state match is made in the first year of the federal award.

#### **DVR FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2020 (October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020)**

The vocational rehabilitation program's primary measure of success is the number of job seekers with a disability who have successfully achieved their employment goals. A corresponding measure of success is the number of VR participants who are engaged in Hawaii's workforce while they are working towards fulfilling their career goals.

#### **DVR PERFORMANCE STATISTICS**

<b>DVR FFY20</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Total Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) cases	3075
Total Potentially Eligible (PE) cases	821
Total number served	3896

<b>DISABILITY STATUS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Most Significantly Disabled	2040	66%
Significantly Disabled	908	30%
Non-Significantly Disabled	57	2%
Not Completed	70	2%
Total VR Served	3075	100%

<b>DVR FFY20</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Applications	420
Determined Eligible	369
New Individualized Plans Developed	434
Job Ready Participants	96
Employed Participants	147
Successful Rehabs for Participants	58

## FY 2020 DVR PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

- Hawaii Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has sustained essential services for individuals with disabilities seeking vocational rehabilitation services and or independent living supports during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- DVR staff adapted services to address individualized vocational rehabilitation needs remotely, and as necessary, meeting face-to-face with safety precautions in place during the pandemic.
- DVR staff have been tasked with providing essential services timely and creatively adapting to participants' access and capability to meet remotely.
- DVR staff provided the full range of VR services that included the application process, intake interview, eligibility determination, creating an employment plan, and assistance with job placement amidst the pandemic. Many of the DVR participants were fortunate to maintain or obtain employment during this time with DVR staff's support.
- DVR has cleared 605 individuals from the Category 1 Most Significantly Disabled (MSD) Order of Selection (OOS) deferred list between October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020 (FFY20). DVR first determines and reviews the total costs associated with the planned services required to obtain identified vocational goals. Then, considering staff vacancies and caseload assignments, DVR will begin planning a timeline for eligible individuals with disabilities in Category 2 (SD) and Category 3 (NSD) to be removed from the OOS deferred list. DVR continued to work with our community partners and stakeholders, including the American Job Center, to provide referrals for other government services while these eligible individuals are on the OOS deferred list.
- DVR annually runs a Summer Youth Employment Program as one of the five Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS), but this year has presented very unusual circumstances with COVID-19. Despite this challenge, DVR and community partners collaborated to create alternative virtual learning opportunities for participants to continue their PreETS career exploration.
  - On Oahu, Abilities Unlimited, Lanakila Pacific, and Network Enterprises conducted live virtual classes focused on furthering professional soft skill development activities and vocational interest exploration activities. Abilities Unlimited placed students as interns with organizations that lost volunteers because of COVID-19 concerns, like the Institute for Human Services for participants to gain work-based experiences. This unique strategy was featured on Hawaii News Now by Jim Mendoza on June 30, 2020.
    - <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2020/06/30/prepare-students-with-disabilities-workforce-nonprofit-turns-online-learning/>

- Neighbor island communities have continued to experience challenges as many families do not have the necessary resources to participate actively. Participants have concerns about their health and safety with the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in public settings. DVR has requested laptops and internet resources to address these challenges and support career exploration activities.
- As DVR prepared to re-engage with students for the 2020-2021 school year, it aligned service delivery with DOE. Both agencies collaborated to integrate DVR's program services with DOE's remote and face-to-face schedules. DVR anticipated having to offer more virtual class experiences and planned accordingly.
- DVR collaborated with community providers contracted by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to form the Partnership Plus memorandum of understanding (MOU) to reinforce job retention for SSA ticket holders (SSDI beneficiaries returning to work). The MOU is pending review by the Department of the Attorney General. Once effective, this MOU will support individuals with the most significant disabilities to return to work and retain employment with long-term supports provided by the SSA Employer Network of providers statewide.
- DVR implemented a communications plan that includes: maintaining agendas and minutes from management meetings to be shared with front line direct-service staff, an email protocol for alignment with DHS practices, quarterly reviews of staff development and training plans, and updates to existing policies and procedures, posting Internal Communications Forms (ICF) on procedures using secure internal DVR drives statewide for all staff to remotely access, and monthly management reporting to integrate quality assurance and track progress on existing Division initiatives.
- DVR, as the designated state entity (DSE), collaborates with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), Centers for Independent Living (CILs), and community providers. Together, we advocate for additional funding for our community's needs, given our high unemployment rates, cost of living, and high rates of homelessness.
- DVR Ho'opono Services for the Blind/Visually Impaired Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) program served over 200 individuals 55 and over with blindness or severe vision loss throughout the State supporting their access to community resources and strengthening their skills for self-sufficiency.
- DVR Ho'opono Services for the Blind/Visually Impaired Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) program collaborated with Lanakila Pacific, in partnership with several community organizations on Oahu received a generous grant from the Hawaii Public Health Institute. The project, entitled EMSP-SPD (Expanded Meal Service Plus for Seniors & Persons with Disabilities), ran through November 2020. The grant provided meals and wraparound services for up to 254 vulnerable seniors and or persons with disabilities.

- DVR Ho'opono Services for the Blind/Visually Impaired collaborated with the American Job Center on hiring a new City/County of Honolulu Residential Counselor who will support Ho'opono's New Visions Program.
- DVR Ho'opono Services for the Blind/Visually Impaired Ho'opono conducted the annual White Cane Walk in October 2019 to highlight its significance of independence for individuals who are blind/visually impaired residents statewide.
- DVR's contracted provider, Assisted Technology Resource Center of Hawaii (ATRC), served approximately 1,500 individuals with assistive technology education, device demonstrations, loans, and public training during the pandemic utilizing technology to reinforce and strengthen independent living skills.
- DVR's contracted provider, Comprehensive Services Center (CSC), supports individuals who are hard of hearing, deaf, or deaf-blind. During the pandemic, CSC served 70 to 100 people each quarter of FFY20 statewide, in addition to having 450 participants attend workshops, classes, events, tutoring, and camp; 70 of these participants included VR clients. The CSC averaged 88 visitors monthly and served 134 consumers during 1:1 appointments, assisting individuals with understanding mail they received and follow up required, calling and making appointments, tech support, job searches, etc.
- DVR's contract vendors have submitted Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) during the pandemic to ensure services are sustained for individuals with disabilities while safeguards are in place to protect staff and community members.
- DVR leadership is working with community partners, providers, participants, employers, and staff to develop our re-opening plans to ensure DVR is inclusive and flexible in our approach and integration of best practices for social distancing addressing limitations on remote accessibility.

## **BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT**

- DVR continues to work on strategies and activities with our workforce partners to provide solutions to business needs in our community. Several job fairs for both adult and youth/students with disabilities were held remotely with collaboration across community workforce partners based on employer demand. In addition to job fairs, other initiatives are taking place to fill workforce shortages in the public and government sectors.
- DVR and the community partners discuss ways to promote awareness during October annually, the National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), for stakeholders to be engaged and informed about employment opportunities in Hawaii's workforce.
- DVR staff worked with the Developmental Disabilities Council and the Governor's office as part of the National Governor's Association to review and update legislation for the employment of persons with disabilities in government.



- DVR Employment Service Specialists (ESS) provided multiple VR presentations to employers and employer groups about the opportunities associated with an integrated workforce.
- DVR ESS collaborated on the distribution of information about the disability employment webpage where two examples of resources available are the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) and the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN).
- Hawaii Employment First Taskforce (HEFT) worked on the Governor's Proclamation, inviting input from policymakers, business leaders, disability employment advocates, private agencies, self-advocates, and parents.
- DVR staff and community partners participated in staff development activities for business engagement, including the WINDMILLS training, a Train-the-Trainer: Certificate Program sponsored by Council of State Administrators Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), National Employment Team (NET), and Milt Wright & Associates, Inc. The four-part WINDMILLS training series specifically focused on business engagement that empowers and equips employment professionals to strengthen business partnerships and support businesses with having a more inclusive culture and integration of individuals with disabilities in their workplace.
- DVR is in the planning process to launch TapAbility. TAP (Talent Acquisition Portal), an online system that includes both a national talent pool of VR candidates looking for employment and a job posting system for businesses looking to hire individuals with disabilities.
- Economic Development Alliance Hawaii has two programs - Kupu Aina Corps and Aloha Connects Innovation for youth and displaced workers. DVR is in the process of sharing updates on these resources statewide through ESS and Maui and Hawaii Branch Administrators or their designees. The links to the two programs are:
  - <https://www.edahawaii.org/aloha-connects-home>
  - <https://www.kupuhawaii.org/programs/>
- DVR ESS also provided staff with updates on the Hawaii is Hiring website to support participant's employment goals:
  - <https://www.hawaiiishiring.com/>