



# Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)

## Meeting Session #5

January 23, 2023

Maryland State Department of Education  
Division of Rehabilitation Services





# Overview of Commission Responsibilities

1. Overview of Commission Responsibilities
2. National Overview
3. Placement of State VR Agencies

*The important role of Commission members, discussions, and recommendations.*

# Legislative Context

- The Maryland General Assembly has set the following expectations:
  - The Maryland General Assembly passed HB 660 in Spring 2022.
  - HB 660 requires that a “Commission to Study the Division of Rehabilitation Services” be established.
  - The new Commission is to meet at least 5 times and discuss a set of 10 different topics.
  - After the Commission evaluates and makes recommendation on each topic, the Commission is to submit a report to the General Assembly and Governor.
    - An interim report was submitted on December 15, 2022.
    - The final report is due by March 15, 2023.

# Required Topics for Discussion for the Commission

1. Methods for improving stakeholder input on the Division of Rehabilitation Services' programs and services
2. Methods for improving the relationship and communication between transition professionals working at the Division of Rehabilitation Services and the Developmental Disabilities Administration
3. Methods for improving the amount of time it takes to provide vocational rehabilitation and transitional services
4. Methods for improving public-private partnerships to assist more Division of Rehabilitation Services' clients
5. Methods for improving accountability and transparency of the Division of Rehabilitation Services' programs and services
6. Whether the eligibility criteria for the Division of Rehabilitation Services' programs and services should be altered
7. Whether the Division of Rehabilitation Services should continue to be a division of the State Department of Education or should be transferred to another State agency
8. If the Commission determines that the Division of Rehabilitation Services should continue to be a division of the State Department of Education, whether the Division of Rehabilitation Services should have a governing board separate from the State Board of Education
9. Whether there are specific budgetary requests that could support the job training programs provided by the Division of Rehabilitation Services
10. Any other improvements to the Division of Rehabilitation Services' programs and services the Commission considers appropriate

# Today's Focus Topics

- Commission Topic #7- Whether the Division of Rehabilitation Services should continue to be a division of the State Department of Education or should be transferred to another State agency.
- Commission Topic #8 - If the Commission determines that the Division of Rehabilitation Services should continue to be a division of the State Department of Education, whether the Division of Rehabilitation Services should have a governing board separate from the State Board of Education



# National Overview

1. Overview of Commission Responsibilities
2. **National Overview**
3. Placement of State VR Agencies
4. Commission Topic #7- Whether the Division of Rehabilitation Services should continue to be a division of the State Department of Education or should be transferred to another State agency.
5. Commission Topic #8 - If the Commission determines that the Division of Rehabilitation Services should continue to be a division of the State Department of Education, whether the Division of Rehabilitation Services should have a governing board separate from the State Board of Education

*The governance of VR agencies varies across the nation*

# State's placement of their VR program 1 of 5

- **National Perspective**
- **Twenty-two VR agencies** are Designated State Units (DSU) within a larger state agency called Designated State Agencies (DSA). These agencies are also responsible for Titles I, II, and III of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA).
  - Typically, the DSA is the State's Department of Commerce, Economics, Labor or Workforce Development.

Alaska	Delaware - General	Pennsylvania
Arizona	Maine	Texas
Arkansas	Michigan	West Virginia
Colorado	New Jersey - General	Wisconsin

# State’s placement of their VR Program 2 of 5

- **National Perspective**
- **Twenty VR agencies** are housed in a Rehabilitation focused agency or an Independent Commission.

Alabama	Mississippi	Ohio
Georgia	Nebraska Commission for the Blind	Oregon Commission for the Blind
Iowa Commission for the Blind	New Mexico Commission for the Blind	South Carolina



# State’s placement of their VR program 3 of 5

- National Perspective
- Twenty VR programs are DSUs within DSAs whose primary focus is Social and Human Services.

California	Massachusetts	Oregon
Hawaii	Montana	South Dakota
Indiana	North Carolina	Washington
Kansas	North Dakota	Virginia

# State’s placement of their VR program 4 of 5

- National Perspective
- Ten VR programs are DSUs within DSAs whose primary focus is Education.

Florida - Blind and General	Maryland
Iowa-General	Nebraska - General
Missouri	New York - General

# State's placement of their VR program 5 of 5

- National Perspective
- Five VR programs are DSUs within DSAs that provide several disability services in the State.

Connecticut

Oklahoma

- One VR program under federal law only one agency reports directly to the Governor.
  - American Samoa



# Placement of State VR Agencies

1. Overview of Commission Responsibilities
2. National Overview
3. **Placement of State VR Agencies**
4. Commission Topic #7- Whether the Division of Rehabilitation Services should continue to be a division of the State Department of Education or should be transferred to another State agency.
5. Commission Topic #8 - If the Commission determines that the Division of Rehabilitation Services should continue to be a division of the State Department of Education, whether the Division of Rehabilitation Services should have a governing board separate from the State Board of Education

*Spotlight on the placement of the Vocational Rehabilitation program within a State*

# State Comparisons

- In the following State comparisons, the State that were chosen is based on one of two factors:
  - The **State population** is similar to Maryland, or
  - The **Vocational Rehabilitation grant** is similar to Maryland.
- This will allow for a better comparison of the performance data that is presented.
- Virginia is included as a regional comparison.

# Division of Rehabilitation Services

## Maryland

- State Population 6.1 million
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is overseen by the Maryland State Department of Education.
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is a combined program.
- FY 22 VR Federal Funding - \$48,623,984
- Federal Funding per person - \$7.97
- State Match Requirement - \$13,159,985
- Order of Selection- Yes- Categories: 1, (open), 2 (closed) but individuals are being rolled off at this time, and (3) closed
- Waitlist – 2,722
- DORS has 136 VR counselors in the Offices of Field Services and Blindness and Vision Services.

# Division of Rehabilitation Services

## Maryland Governance

- The Maryland State Department of Education is overseen by the State Board of Education. The State Board has fourteen members that are appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate.
- The Superintendent of the Maryland State Department of Education is appointed by State Board
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is under the Superintendent and the Deputy State Superintendent for Organizational Effectiveness
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is responsible for the Disability Determination Services.

# Division of Rehabilitation Services

## Maryland

- Total number of VR clients served by Program Year\* (PY):
  - PY 2019 - 21,419
  - PY 2020 - 18,190
  - PY 2021 - 17,928
- Total number of VR clients employed second quarter after exiting the program.
  - PY 2019 - 1,488
  - PY 2020 - 1,798
  - PY 2021 - 1,410
  - In PY 20,\*\* **ninety-seven percent** of the individuals who were employed in a competitive integrated setting were considered Most Significantly Disabled.
    - Source ETA 9169 annual performance report
    - \*\* RSA 911 data



# VR within a Workforce Agency

## Wisconsin

- State Population 5.9 million
- The Vocational Rehabilitation program is overseen by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (WDWD).
- The VR program is one of six Division's within the WDWD.
- VR program is a combined program
- FY 22 VR Federal Funding- \$66,303,351
- Federal funding per person - \$11.23
- State Match requirement- \$17,944,871
- Order of Selection- Yes - Category: 1 (open); 2 are (open), Category 3 (closed)
- No wait list
- The Vocational Rehabilitation program has 229 VR Counselors.

# VR within a Workforce Agency

## Wisconsin Governance

- No governing Board, reports to the Governor.
- WDWD has a Department Level Secretary appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate.
- Cabinet level positions include a Deputy and Assistant Deputy Secretary.
- The Vocational Rehabilitation program focus strictly on training, employment, and Pre-Employment Transitioning Services.
- The Vocational Rehabilitation program does not manage the Disability Determination Services.

# VR within a Workforce Agency

## Wisconsin

- Total number of VR clients served by Program Year (PY):\*
  - PY 2019 (July 1,2019-June 30, 2020)- 28,201
  - PY 2020 (July 1,2020-June 30, 2021)- 25,530
  - PY 2021 (July 1,2021-June 30, 2022)- 25,775
- Total number of VR clients employed second quarter after exiting the program.
  - PY 2019 - 4,123
  - PY 2020 - 3,627
  - PY 2021 - 3,467
- In PY 20,\*\* **forty-six percent** of the individuals who were employed in a competitive integrated setting were considered Most Significantly Disabled, compared to Maryland at ninety-seven percent.
  - Source ETA 9169 annual performance report
  - \*\*RSA 911 data

# VR within an Educational Agency

## Missouri

- State Population 6.1 million
- Missouri has a General and Blind agency
- The General Agency is in the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- The Blind Agency is in the Missouri Department of Social Services
- FY 22 VR Federal Funding - \$76,518,479
  - General Agency receives - \$66,571,077
  - Blind agency receives - \$9,947,402
  - Federal funding per person - \$12.54
- State Match Requirement -\$20,709,576
- Order of Selection- Yes - General Agency only- Categories: 1 (open), 2 (open) and 3 (closed)
- No waitlist
- The General agency has 130 VR counselors, data for the number of VR counselors for the Blind agency not publicly available.

# VR within an Educational Agency

## Missouri Governance

- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is overseen by the State Board of Education. The State Board has eight members selected by the Governor and approved by the Senate.
- The Commissioner of Education is appointed by State Board
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is under the Deputy Commissioner for Learning Services
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is responsible for the Disability Determination Services.
- Missouri Department of Social Services is overseen by a Director who is appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate.
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program for the Blind is under a Deputy Director for Family Services

# VR within an Educational Agency

## Missouri

- Total number of VR clients served by Program Year\* (PY):
  - PY 2019 - 28,427
  - PY 2020 – 24,223
  - PY 2021 – 23,348
- Total number of VR clients employed second quarter after exiting the program.
  - PY 2019 - 5,006
  - PY 2020 - 4,583
  - PY 2021 - 4,138
- In PY 20,\*\* **fifty-four percent** of the individuals who were employed in a competitive integrated setting were considered Most Significantly Disabled, compared to Maryland at ninety-seven percent.

\* Source ETA 9169 annual performance report which reports the total for both General and Blind VR programs

\*\* Source RSA data

# VR within a Disability Agency

## Oklahoma

- State Population 4.1 million
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is overseen by the Department of Rehabilitation Services .
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is one of six programs within the Department of Rehabilitation Services.
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is a combined program
- FY 22 VR Federal Funding - \$53,494,081
- Federal Funding per person - \$13.04
- State Match Requirement - \$14,478,067
- Order of Selection- Yes- Categories: 1(open), 2 (open), and 3 (open)
- Waitlist – 585
- Number of VR counselors no publicly available.

# VR within a Disability Agency

## Oklahoma Governance

- Overseen by three Commissioners, one individual is appointed by the Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the President of the Senate.
- Executive Director appointed by the Commissioners
- Executive Director is responsible for the following programs:
  - General Vocational Rehabilitation program
  - Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired
    - This includes Vocational Rehabilitation program, Independent Living Older Blind and the Library for Blind and Physically Handicapped
  - Disability Determination Services
  - Oklahoma School for the Blind
  - Oklahoma School for the Deaf



# VR within a Disability Agency

## Oklahoma

- Total number of VR clients served by Program Year\* (PY):
  - PY 2019 - 10,465
  - PY 2020 - 10,006
  - PY 2021 - 11,315
- Total number of VR clients employed second quarter after exiting the program.
  - PY 2019 - 1,246
  - PY 2020 - 1,401
  - PY 2021 - 1,099
- In PY 20,\*\* forty-four percent of the individuals who were employed in a competitive integrated setting were considered Most Significantly Disabled, compared to Maryland at ninety-seven percent.

\*Source ETA 9169 annual performance report

\*\* RSA 911 data

# VR within a Health/Human Services Agency

## Massachusetts

- State Population 7.0 million
- Massachusetts has a General and Blind Agency
- Both organizations are overseen by the Massachusetts Department of Health and Human Services
- FY 22 VR Federal Funding - \$50,177,075
  - General Agency receives - \$42,061,264
  - Blind agency receives - \$8,115,811
- Federal funding per person- \$7.17
- State Match Requirement - \$ 13,580,326
- Order of Selection- No\*
- No waitlist
- The General program has 160 VR counselors, data for the number of VR counselors for the Blind agency not publicly available.
  - **The General Agency was provided an additional \$10 million in State funding above Match to prevent the program from going into Order of Selection**

# VR within a Health/Human Services Agency

## Massachusetts Governance

- No governing Board, reports to the Governor.
- Both Vocational Rehabilitation programs are overseen by Massachusetts Department of Health and Human Services
- The two Vocational Rehabilitation programs are two of twelve agencies overseen by the Department of Health and Human Services
- The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services is appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate
- The Commissioners for Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind are appointed by the Secretary of Health and Human Services with the approval of the Governor.

# VR within a Health/Human Services Agency

## Massachusetts

- Total number of VR clients served by Program Year\* (PY):
  - PY 2019 – 29,963
  - PY 2020 – 29,389
  - PY 2021 – 26,922
- Total number of VR clients employed second quarter after exiting the program.
  - PY 2019 - 4,670
  - PY 2020 - 3,067
  - PY 2021- 3,341
- In PY 20,\*\* **fifty-nine percent** of the individuals who were employed in a competitive integrated setting were considered Most Significantly Disabled, compared to Maryland at ninety-seven percent.

\*Source ETA 9169 annual performance report which reports the total for both General and Blind VR programs.

\*\* RSA 911 data

# VR as a Disability Agency

## Mississippi

- State Population 2.94 million
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is a standalone disability agency
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is a Combined program
- FY 22 VR Federal Funding - \$48,272,648
- Federal funding per person - \$16.42
- State Match Requirement - \$13,064,897
- Order of Selection- Yes- Categories: 1(open), 2 (open), and 3 (open)
- No waitlist
- Number of VR counselors not publicly available

# VR as a Disability Agency

## Mississippi Governance

- The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation is governed by an eight-member Board of Directors:

Governor Appointee	Superintendent of Education	Exec. Director, Dept. of Mental Health	Representative of the Disability Community
Associate State Superintendent of Education	Exec. Director, Dept. of Human Services	Representative of the Office of Special Education	State Health Officer

- The Representative of the Disability Community is appointed by the Governor with approval from the Senate
- Executive Director is appointed by the Board of Directors
- The Vocational Rehabilitation program manages the Disability Determination Services

# VR as a Disability Agency

## Mississippi

- Total number of VR clients served by Program Year\* (PY):
  - PY 2019 – 16,162
  - PY 2020 – 15,081
  - PY 2021 – 15,446
- Total number of VR clients employed 2 quarter after exiting the program.
  - PY 2019 – 2,201
  - PY 2020 – 2,455
  - PY 2021 – 2,188
- In PY 20,\*\* **Fourteen percent** of the individuals who were employed in a competitive integrated setting were considered Most Significantly Disabled, compared to Maryland at ninety-seven percent.

\* Source ETA 9169 annual performance report.

\*\* Source RSA 911 data

# Regional Comparison

## Virginia

- State Population 8.68 million
- Virginia has a General and Blind Agency
- Both organizations are overseen by the Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources
- FY 22 VR Federal Funding - \$81,263,725
  - General Agency receives - \$70,530,474
  - Blind agency receives - \$10,733,251
- Federal funding per person- \$9.36
- State Match Requirement -\$21,993,867
- Order of Selection- Yes, General Agency only - Categories: 1 (open), 2 (open), and 3 (open)
- No waitlist
- Number of VR counselors not publicly available



# Regional Comparison

## Virginia Governance

- No governing Board, reports to the Governor.
- Both Vocational Rehabilitation programs are overseen by Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources
- The two Vocational Rehabilitation programs are two of twelve agencies overseen by the Department of Health and Human Resources
- The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Resources is appointed by the Governor and approved by the General Assembly
- The Commissioners of the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services and the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by General Assembly. The term of the Commissioners coincides with the term of the Governor.

# Regional Comparison

## Virginia

- Total number of VR clients served by Program Year\* (PY):
  - PY 2019 – 21,789
  - PY 2020 – 20,887
  - PY 2021 – 22,649
- Total number of VR clients employed 2 quarter after exiting the program.
  - PY 2019 - 3,072
  - PY 2020 - 2,649
  - PY 2021 - 2,544
- In PY 20,\*\* **ninety-five percent** of the individuals who were employed in a competitive integrated setting were considered Most Significantly Disabled, compared to Maryland at ninety-seven percent.

\*Source ETA 9169 annual performance report which reports the total for both General and Blind VR programs

\*\* Source RSA 911 data

# Discussion

Discussion on items to be presented in the second session of topics #7  
and #8