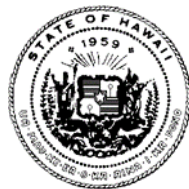


**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



**RYAN I. YAMANE**  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

**JOSEPH CAMPOS II**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

**TRISTA SPEER**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

December 26, 2024

The Honorable Governor Josh Green, M.D.  
Executive Chambers  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania St.  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Governor Green,

Enclosed is the following report submitted in accordance with section 348-8(d), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), related to the State Rehabilitation Council's Annual Report to the Governor.

Per section 93-16, HRS, this report will be available to review electronically at the Department's website, at <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/reports/legislative-reports/>. For questions regarding this report, contact Lea Dias, Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, at [ldias@dhs.hawaii.gov](mailto:ldias@dhs.hawaii.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "R. Yamane".

Ryan I. Yamane  
Director

Enclosure

c: Lieutenant Governor's Office  
Department of Budget and Finance  
Senate President Ronald D. Kouchi  
House Speaker Nadine Nakamura  
Legislative Auditor  
Legislative Reference Bureau Library (1 hard copy)  
Hawaii State Public Library, System State Publications Distribution Center (2 hard copies, one electronic copy)  
Hamilton Library, Serials Department, University of Hawaii (1 hard copy)

SFY 2024

# Hawaii State Rehabilitation Council

## ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR

Submitted By: Ms. Annette Tashiro, Chair

This report fulfills the reporting requirement in Hawai'i Revised Statutes §348-8(d), and regulations at 34 CFR 361.17(h).



State of Hawaii | Department of Human Services | Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Hawaii State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a group of individuals, including individuals with disabilities, advocates, and professionals, who work with the Hawaii Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to ensure the best possible services are available to support people with disabilities in finding and keeping jobs.

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBER					
#	Composition	Member Name	Term Begins	Term Ends	Term Status
1	Statewide Independent Living Center Representative	Judy Guajardo	7/1/2022	6/30/2025	First
2	At least one Representative of a Parent Training & Information Center (§348-8(a)(1))	Rosie Rowe	7/1/2020 7/1/2022	6/30/2022 6/30/2025	First Second
3	At least one Representative of the Client Assistance Program (§348-8(a)(2))	Howard Lesser	7/1/2022	6/30/2025	Exempt
4	Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (§348-8(a)(3))	Sandi Jakob	7/1/2023	6/30/2026	Interim Status
5	Representative of Community Rehabilitation Program Service Providers (§348-8(a)(4))	Tira Kamaka	7/1/2021	6/30/2024	First
6	Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor (§348-8(a)(5))	Scott Hedrick	7/1/2021	6/30/2024	First
7	2. Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor (§348-8(a)(5))	Ramon Ruiz	7/1/2023	6/30/2026	Interim Status
	3. Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor (§348-8(a)(5))	Vacant			
	4. Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor (§348-8(a)(5))	Vacant			
8	Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor (§348-8(a)(5))	Evalina "Nani" Watanabe	7/1/2020 7/1/2022	6/30/2022 6/30/2025	First Second
9	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Catherine Taylor	7/1/2021 7/1/2022	6/30/2022 6/30/2025	First Second
10	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Stan Young	7/1/2019 7/1/2022	6/30/2022 6/30/2025	First Second
11	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Vickie Kennedy	7/1/2021 7/1/2023	6/30/2023 6/30/2025	First Second
12	Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (§348-8(a)(6))	Annette Tashiro	7/1/2020 7/1/2022	6/30/2022 6/30/2025	First Second
13	Current or Former Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (§348-8(a)(7))	Meriah Nichols	7/1/2021	6/30/2024	First

14	At least one Representative of the State Educational Agency Responsible for the Public Education of Students with Disabilities (§348-8(a)(8))	Dr. Heather Chapman	7/1/2022	6/30/2025	First
15	One Representative of the State Workforce Development Council (§348-8(a)(9))	Sean Knox	7/1/2023	6/30/2026	Interim Status
16	Administrator of the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Department of Human Services (§348-8(a)(10) ex-officio/non-voting member)	Lea Dias	Exempt	Exempt	Exempt

## State Rehabilitation Council Members

### **October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024**

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

## Accomplishments since October 1, 2023

### **1. National Conference Participation**

SRC members gained valuable insights by attending the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) and Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Fall conferences held in Savannah, Georgia October 28-November 1, 2023. Based on the information presented at the conferences, the SRC reviewed the best practices for delivering DVR services in Hawaii and the national advocacy priorities of the public VR system. Two SRC members from Hawaii participated in the Spring NCSRC and CSAVR conferences, held in Bethesda, MD from April 6-10, 2024, and submitted reports.

### **DVR SUMMARY**

The DVR program's primary measurements of success are:

1. The number of participants who have successfully achieved their employment goals and remain employed in the second quarter after exit;
2. The number of participants who have successfully achieved their employment goals and remain employed in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after program exit;
3. Measurable Skill Gains rate;
4. Credential Attainment Rate; and
5. Median Earnings in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit.

## **DVR PERFORMANCE STATISTICS**

State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs are required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to submit an annual statewide performance report called the ETA 9169 Report. The WIOA Section 116(f)(1)(B) and its implementing regulations at 34 CFR §361.185 require States to submit the WIOA Annual Report by October 1 following the end of each Program Year. Data collected for this report is from Program Year (PY) 2023 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024). States must submit the WIOA Annual Report by October 1, following the end of each Program Year. Data collected for this report is from PY 2023 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024).

**WIOA STATEWIDE AND LOCAL PERFORMANCE REPORT  
PY2023**

OMB Control Number 1205-0526  
Expiration Date: 04-30-2027

ETA-9169

Statewide Performance Report				
PROGRAM			TITLE (select one):	
STATE: Hawaii	Title I Local Area: N/A		<input type="checkbox"/> Title I Adult	<input type="checkbox"/> Title II Adult Education
REPORTING PERIOD COVERED (Required for current and three preceding years.)			<input type="checkbox"/> Title I Dislocated Worker	<input type="checkbox"/> Title III Wagner-Peyser
From: 7/1/2023	To: 6/30/2024		<input type="checkbox"/> Title I Youth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation
			<input type="checkbox"/> Title I and Title III combined	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY INFORMATION				
Service	Participants Served (Cohort Period: 07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024)	Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024)	Funds Expended (Cohort Period: 07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024)	Cost Per Participant Served (Cohort Period: 07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024)
Career Services	2,054	85	\$336,236	\$164
Training Services	586	18	\$1,359,998	\$2,321
Percent training-related employment <sup>1</sup> :		Percent enrolled in more than one core program:		Percent Admin Expended:
N/A		13.0%		N/A

BY PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS													
		Total Participants Served (Cohort Period: 07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024)	Total Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024)	Employment Rate (Q2) <sup>2</sup> (Cohort Period: 07/01/2022 - 06/30/2023)		Employment Rate (Q4) <sup>2</sup> (Cohort Period: 01/01/2022 - 12/31/2022)		Median Earnings (Cohort Period: 07/01/2022 - 06/30/2023)	Credential Rate <sup>3</sup> (Cohort Period: 01/01/2022 - 12/31/2022)		Measurable Skill Gains <sup>3</sup> (Cohort Period: 07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024)		
				Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate	
				<b>Total Statewide</b>				<b>Negotiated Target</b>					
				<b>Actual</b>	64	33.9%	58	34.1%	\$5,669	13	43.3%	109	33.3%
Sex	Female	1,405	62	22	30.6%	22	32.8%	\$6,149	5	41.7%	49	34.8%	
	Male	1,859	74	42	36.2%	36	35.3%	\$5,314	8	47.1%	58	31.9%	
Age	< 16	197	8	8	47.1%	6	46.2%	\$2,779	-	-	10	33.3%	
	16 - 18	822	26	23	41.1%	22	39.3%	\$6,541	4	36.4%	49	33.6%	
	19 - 24	477	13	8	44.4%	7	33.3%	\$3,602	-	-	26	48.1%	
	25 - 44	893	41	10	23.3%	9	27.3%	\$4,614	-	-	17	26.2%	
	45 - 54	445	26	9	39.1%	8	30.8%	\$9,344	-	-	5	23.8%	
	55 - 59	204	14	4	23.5%	5	41.7%	\$7,793	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
	60+	235	8	-	-	-	-	\$16,469	0	0.0%	-	-	
Ethnicity/Race	American Indian / Alaska Native	102	-	-	-	-	-	\$5,826	0	0.0%	-	-	
	Asian	1,657	56	37	37.0%	37	40.7%	\$6,472	9	45.0%	55	32.0%	
	Black / African American	160	6	-	-	-	-	\$8,949	0	0.0%	5	20.0%	
	Hispanic / Latino	216	14	-	-	4	33.3%	\$8,514	-	-	8	34.8%	
	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	1,182	55	27	50.9%	27	42.9%	\$4,013	7	53.8%	33	28.2%	
	White	1,343	65	28	29.8%	24	28.9%	\$7,804	4	26.7%	57	38.8%	
	More Than One Race	895	35	21	39.6%	22	37.9%	\$5,826	6	42.9%	35	32.1%	

**WIOA STATEWIDE AND LOCAL PERFORMANCE REPORT  
PY2023**

BY EMPLOYMENT BARRIER <sup>4</sup>												
	Total Participants Served (Cohort Period: 07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024)	Total Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024)		Employment Rate (Q2) <sup>2</sup> (Cohort Period: 07/01/2022 - 06/30/2023)		Employment Rate (Q4) <sup>2</sup> (Cohort Period: 01/01/2022 - 12/31/2022)		Median Earnings (Cohort Period: 07/01/2022 - 06/30/2023)	Credential Rate <sup>3</sup> (Cohort Period: 01/01/2022 - 12/31/2022)		Measurable Skill Gains <sup>3</sup> (Cohort Period: 07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024)	
				Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate
<b>Total Statewide</b>	3,273	136	<b>Negotiated Target</b>		37.0%		39.5%	\$4,500		22.0%		36.0%
			<b>Actual</b>	64	33.9%	58	34.1%	\$5,669	13	43.3%	109	33.3%
Displaced Homemakers	34	-		0	0.0%	0	0.0%	\$0	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
English Language Learners, Low Levels of Literacy, Cultural Barriers	958	40		29	38.7%	25	32.9%	\$4,496	5	41.7%	20	25.0%
Exhausting TANF within 2 years (Part A Title IV of the Social Security Act)	96	-		-	-	-	-	\$7,287	6	35.3%	0	0.0%
Ex-offenders	4	0		0	0.0%	0	0.0%	\$0	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Homeless Individuals / runaway youth	66	4		-	-	-	-	\$6,133	0	0.0%	-	-
Long-term Unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)	1,591	87		36	28.8%	28	28.0%	\$4,506	7	33.3%	76	36.7%
Low-Income Individuals	2,155	97		46	30.7%	43	31.4%	\$5,486	12	52.2%	53	29.0%
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers	14	0		0	0.0%	0	0.0%	\$0	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Individuals with Disabilities (incl. youth)	3,273	136		64	33.9%	58	34.1%	\$5,669	13	43.3%	109	33.3%
Single Parents (incl. single pregnant women)	116	-		-	-	-	-	\$4,732	0	0.0%	-	-
Youth in foster care or aged out of system	75	-		-	-	0	0.0%	\$5,230	0	0.0%	-	-

<sup>1</sup>Applies to Title I only.

<sup>2</sup>This indicator also includes those who entered into a training or education program for the Youth program.

<sup>3</sup>Credential Rate and Measurable Skill Gains do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser program.

<sup>4</sup>Barriers to Employment are determined at the point of entry into the program.

**Public Burden Statement (1205-0526)**

Persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Respondent's reply to these reporting requirements is required to obtain or retain benefits (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Section 185(a)(2)). Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to range between 240 and 360 minutes which averages 300 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate to the Office of Policy Development and Research • U.S. Department of Labor • Room N-5641 • 200 Constitution Ave., NW, • Washington, DC • 20210. Do NOT send the completed 9169 application to this address.

The report is available to view on the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) website at:  
<https://rsa.ed.gov/wioa-resources/wioa-annual-report>

<b>DVR Data for Program Year (PY) 2023</b> (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024)					
<b>Branch</b>	<b>Applications</b>	<b>Eligibility Determination</b>	<b>Individualized Plan for Employment</b>	<b>Closures</b>	<b>Rehabilitated</b>
Oahu	355	306	241	148	20
Hawaii	76	75	56	40	6
Maui	94	63	99	10	4
Kauai	23	66	22	19	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>32</b>

### **DVR IMPARTIAL HEARINGS**

Individuals who have applied or are receiving Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services have the right to due process via Request for Review if they are unsatisfied with a decision or action taken by the Division via an Impartial Hearing at the state’s Administrative Appeals Office (AAO). DVR reports all requests and results to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) every Federal Fiscal Year (FFY). There were two (2) new Request for Review during the year, but both were resolved before an Impartial Hearing was scheduled. One Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO) decision favoring the Division from a hearing occurred last FFY. This claimant was not satisfied with the decision and filed in Civil Court. Information regarding fair hearings is reported annually on the RSA-722 Report.



**RSA-722 for FY-2024:  
Submission #208**

Fiscal Year 2024  
October 1, 2023 to September 30,  
2024

Grant Award Number  
H126A240015  
Submitting Organization Hawaii  
Division of Vocational  
Rehabilitation

**I. Mediation**

A. Request for Mediation

1. Pending requests for mediation, October 1 (carryover from prior fiscal year) **0**
2. New requests for mediation, October 1 **0**
3. Total requests for mediation this fiscal year **0**

B. Disputes Resolved during Mediation Process

1. Disputes settled prior to the development of a written agreement **0**
2. Disputes resulting in a written mediation agreement **0**
3. Total disputes resolved during mediation process **0**
4. Disputes not resolved during mediation process **0**

C. Mediation Request Carried Over

1. Mediation requests pending resolution, September 30 **0**

**II. Impartial hearing process**

A. Requests for Impartial Hearings

1. Pending Impartial hearing requests, October 1 **0**
2. New requests for impartial hearings since October 1 **2**
3. Total requests for impartial hearings this fiscal year **2**
4. Number from Line II.A3 which had also been through the mediation process this fiscal year **0**

B. Disputes Resolved during Impartial Hearing Process

1. Disputes resolved without IHO decision **1**
2. IHO decisions favoring the individual **0**
3. IHO decisions favoring the agency **1**
4. Total IHO decisions **1**

5. Total disputes resolved during impartial hearing process **2**

6. Disputes not resolved during impartial hearing process **0**

C. Impartial Hearing Requests Carried Over

1. Impartial hearing requests pending, September 30 **0**

**III. Review of IHO decisions**

Has your agency established a process for review of IHO decisions? No

A. Requests for Review of IHO Decisions

1. Requests for review of IHO decisions in process, October 1 **0**
2. New requests for review of IHO decisions since October 1 **0**
3. Total requests for review of IHO decisions this fiscal year **0**

B. Reviews of IHO Decisions Completed

1. IHO decisions favoring the individual sustained **0**
2. IHO decisions favoring the individual reversed **0**
3. IHO decisions favoring the agency sustained **0**
4. IHO decisions favoring the agency reversed **0**
5. Total reviews of IHO decisions completed **0**
6. IHO decisions not reviewed **0**

C. Reviews of IHO Carried Over

1. Reviews of IHO decisions pending, September 30 **0**

**IV. Civil actions**

A. Civil Actions Filed

1. Civil actions pending, October 1 **0**
2. New civil actions filed this fiscal year **1**
3. Total civil actions this fiscal year **1**

B. Civil Actions Resolved

1. Civil actions resolved in individual favor (sustaining final administrative decision) **0**
2. Civil actions resolved in individual favor (reversing final administrative decision) **0**
3. Civil actions resolved in agency favor (sustaining final administrative decision) **0**

4. Civil actions resolved in agency favor (reversing final administrative decision) **0**

5. Total civil actions resolved **0**

6. Civil actions not resolved **0**

C. Civil Actions Carried Over

1. Civil actions pending, September 30 **1**

**V. Types of complaints/issues involved in disputes**

1. Applicant eligibility for VR

- Mediation (a) **0**  
Impartial Hearings (b) **0**  
Reviews of IHO Decisions (c) **0**  
Civil Actions (d) **0**

2. Nature/contents/scope of IPE

- Mediation (a) **0**  
Impartial Hearings (b) **0**  
Reviews of IHO Decisions (c) **0**  
Civil Actions (d) **0**

3. Quality of counseling services

- Mediation (a) **0**  
Impartial Hearings (b) **1**  
Reviews of IHO Decisions (c) **0**  
Civil Actions (d) **0**

4. Delivery/quality of other VR services

- Mediation (a) **0**  
Impartial Hearings (b) **1**  
Reviews of IHO Decisions (c) **0**  
Civil Actions (d) **0**

5. Cost of services

- Mediation (a) **0**  
Impartial Hearings (b) **0**  
Reviews of IHO Decisions (c) **0**  
Civil Actions (d) **0**

6. Termination of services/service record closure

- Mediation (a) **0**  
Impartial Hearings (b) **0**  
Reviews of IHO Decisions (c) **0**  
Civil Actions (d) **0**

7. All other complaints/issues

- Mediation (a) **0**  
Impartial Hearings (b) **0**  
Reviews of IHO Decisions (c) **0**  
Civil Actions (d) **0**

## DVR PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

- DVR staff provided essential services for individuals with disabilities seeking vocational rehabilitation (VR) services or independent living supports via in-person or remotely as preferred by the individual.
- DVR staff collaborated with community partners, employers and other DHS programs to strengthen employment pipelines. These pipelines included work-based learning experiences, apprenticeships, internships, and job placements in competitive integrated employment settings, leveraging job retention and advancement opportunities for VR candidates to fulfill their career goals.
- Partners included, but are not limited to:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ➤ American Job Centers   | ➤ Society of Human Resource Managers Hawaii   |
| ➤ Assistive Technology Resource Centers of Hawaii  | ➤ State Public Libraries  |
| ➤ Centers for Independent Living <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to Independence</li> <li>▪ Aloha Independent Living Hawaii</li> </ul>   | ➤ University of Hawaii Career Counselors  |
| ➤ Child & Adolescent Mental Health Division  | ➤ University of Hawaii Center on Disability Studies   |
| ➤ Community Rehabilitation Providers   | ➤ US Military Bases   |
| ➤ Consumer organizations of persons with disabilities  | ➤ Workforce Development Division  |
| ➤ Cooperative Agreements with UH, DOH, DOE, DHS, & DVR   | ➤ Veterans Services   |
| ➤ Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism   | ➤ Advocacy  |
| ➤ Department of Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Office of Special Supports</li> </ul>   | ➤ Networks/Boards/Councils/Stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advocacy Groups</li> <li>▪ Hawaii Association of the Blind</li> <li>▪ Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Board</li> <li>▪ Developmental Disability Council</li> <li>▪ Hawaii Disability Rights Center</li> <li>▪ Hawaii Legislature: Deaf and Blind Task Force</li> <li>▪ National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii</li> <li>▪ Special Parent Information Network</li> <li>▪ Hawaii State Committee of Blind Vendors</li> <li>▪ State Council on Mental Health</li> <li>▪ State Education Advisory Council</li> <li>▪ State Rehabilitation Council</li> <li>▪ Statewide Independent Living Council</li> <li>▪ Workforce Development Council</li> <li>▪ Oahu Workforce Development Board</li> </ul> |
| ➤ Department of Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developmental Disability Division</li> </ul>   |   |
| ➤ Department of Human Services Benefit, Employment & Support Services Division <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First to Work Program</li> </ul> |   |
| ➤ Department of Labor and Industrial Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Workforce Development Division</li> </ul>                        |   |
| ➤ Department of Transportation   |   |
| ➤ Hawaii Clubhouse Coalition   |   |
| ➤ Local Businesses   |   |
| ➤ Maui Economic Opportunity  |   |
| ➤ Pacific Islands Healthcare System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Veterans Benefits and Mental Health Programs</li> </ul>                     |   |
| ➤ Partnership Plus Employment Networks   |   |

- DVR has established MOUs and IFAs with counties to provide outreach and access to VR consumers who use AJC resources.
- DVR aimed to increase successful exits from DVR services by enhancing the quality of Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) in career pathways that sustain employment

for individuals with disabilities beyond the 4th quarter after exiting from the DVR program.

- DVR worked with various programs to offer training and employment services to VR consumers via their Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE). These partnerships included WIOA Title I, II, and III entities such as Job Corps, Youth Build, Alu Like, the University of Hawaii System, Continuing Education Programs at Community Colleges, DOE Adult Education, DLIR's Workforce Development Division, and the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program.
- DVR serves as the Designated State Entity (DSE) to work with the Statewide Independent Living Council, Centers for Independent Living, and community service providers. These entities address the independent living needs of our community.
- DVR has improved and expanded services for individuals with disabilities.
- DVR received technical assistance to devise strategies for the expenditure of all funds by state and federal regulations. Budget forecasting has proved successful for ensuring funds are most effectively utilized in FFY24 (October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024).
- DVR temporarily assigned an Administrative Officer to manage, monitor and expand services for DVR's 57 contracts. DVR streamlined and evaluated all contracts; following are some examples:
- DVR worked with community providers contracted by the Social Security Administration (SSA). These providers were representatives of the Partnership Plus MOU, which aimed to support job retention for SSA Ticket to Work holders. These ticketholders were SSDI and SSI beneficiaries who were returning to work. The MOU provided long-term support to individuals with significant disabilities to help them retain employment through the statewide Employer Network of providers.
- DVR contracts with the University of Hawaii's Comprehensive Services Center (CSC). The CSC offers workshops, classes, events, tutoring, and camps for individuals who are hard of hearing, deaf, or deaf-blind. Additionally, the CSC provides individualized appointment scheduling, assists individuals in understanding the mail they receive, and helps them with follow-up requirements, such as making appointments, providing tech support, and job searches.
- DVR contracts with the Assistive Technology Resource Center of Hawaii (ATRC). The center provides assistive technology education, device demonstrations, loans, and public training to reinforce and strengthen independent living and vocational skills.
- DVR contracts with San Diego State University (SDSU) to conduct the triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) as required by federal regulations. The United States Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) requires DVR to perform this assessment every three years. The CSNA, conducted jointly by each state's vocational rehabilitation agency and State Rehabilitation Council, identifies and addresses the vocational rehabilitation service needs of individuals with disabilities. SDSU conducted surveys and in-person focus group interviews as well as conducting a review of DVR's data. The CSNA Report is projected to be completed in December 2024. DVR will consult with the SRC for input. The results generated from

the assessment and the SRC's feedback will determine strategies to meet the community's needs.

- DVR contracts with the Pacific Disabilities Center at the University of Hawaii at Manoa's John A. Burns School of Medicine to conduct the Consumer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) as required by federal regulation to ensure that VR agencies meet their programmatic responsibilities to individuals receiving VR services. The survey measures consumer satisfaction with the interactions and services obtained from DVR. The yearly survey results are reviewed with the SRC to provide guidance and recommendations on how DVR should proceed to increase satisfaction with services to individuals with disabilities.
- DVR contracts with GuideSoft Inc. dba Knowledge Services as a Managed Service Provider (MSP) for various VR services. Using this contract, DVR increased the opportunities for VR consumers' informed choice with statewide access to a continuous network of service providers. Currently, Supported Employment and Job Coaching services are provided. In the coming year, the services offered through this contract will expand to assistive technology, Trial Work Evaluation services, and one-on-one Support Service Provider (SSP) services that assist Deaf-Blind consumers with their independent living goals.
- DVR issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Communication Access Services statewide for Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and Deaf-Blind to have equal access to State programs, services, and activities through compliance with federal regulations. The RFP resulted in two (2) new contracts with local in-state vendors providing American Sign Language (ASL) qualified interpreters and other Communication Access Services such as Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART).
- DVR issued an RFP for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) statewide to provide required services to Students with Disabilities (SWD). The RFP resulted in eleven (11) new contracts with vendors statewide.
- DVR continues its commitment to serving students and youth with disabilities in our effort to strengthen Hawaii's future workforce.
- DVR's collaboration with the Department of Education (DOE) has continued to strengthen as we jointly execute a new State Educational Agency (SEA) Agreement aligning the delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to Students with Disabilities (SWD) and Transition Services to youth.
- In February 2024, DVR staff were trained on new Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Policies and Procedures with assistance from the federally-funded Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center – Quality Management (VR TAC-QM).
- DVR hosted and participated in quarterly transition meetings. These meetings are with staff from the Department of Education, the Department of Health's Developmental Disabilities Division, the Developmental Disabilities Council, and the UH Center for Disability Studies. Meetings focus on exchanging information and sharing opportunities to streamline and collaborate on service delivery for students with disabilities.
- DVR completed their section of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) 2024 – 2027 Hawaii Unified State Plan (USP). The USP provides the framework for States to outline a strategic goal to develop, align, and integrate the State's workforce

development systems and provide a platform to achieve the State's vision and strategic and operational goals. In accordance with federal regulations, DVR included a summary of the SRC's input into the USP and any resulting revisions, including recommendations from the SRC's annual reports, the review and analysis of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, and other SRC Reports. The VR Section of the USP was opened for public comment and RSA approval before deadline. All Core Partners completed their sections and the final USP was approved for a four-year period.

- DVR submitted its report on the SFY24 DHS Strategic Plan (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024). Goals included improving services to individuals with disabilities and data indicated the percentage of those applying for & receiving services has steadily increased.
- DVR made substantial progress on its federal Corrective Action Plan. DVR was monitored by Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in 2019 which resulted in 27 Corrective Actions. DVR submits a Corrective Action Plan Report every quarter and has resolved 18 thus far.
- DVR continued to utilize federally funded technical assistance via the VR Technical Assistance Center – Quality Management (VR TAC-QM). VR staff were received remote and on-site assistance with streamlining processes, revising Policies & Procedures, creating mechanisms for internal controls, analyzing data, and conceiving new innovative strategies for rapid engagement and improving quality and timeliness provision of VR services with successful results.
- DVR streamlined and released the Referral and Application forms for ease of completion which are now available on the DHS DVR website. DVR received positive feedback from the community with increased referrals and applications compared to SFY23.
- DVR served 261 more individuals with disabilities in SFY24 (3273) compared to SFY23 (3012).
- DVR services increased participants' median earnings by \$222 in SFY24 (\$5,669) compared to SFY23 (\$5,447).
- Updated written policies governing the provision of services for individuals with disabilities which ensured that they are relevant, current, and accurate for compliance with federal regulations.
- Introduction of new Employment Verification forms made documentation easier for both the DVR staff and participants improving internal compliance levels for federal reporting.
- DVR reviewed and developed new strategies to make improvements in staff performance and the provision of services which included staff training, improving overall performance and morale.
- Monthly trainings on the new Managed Service Providers contract provided by Knowledge Services.
- Leadership Teambuilding provided by VR TAC – QM (October 2023)
- Supported Employment - Advancing Quality Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) for Individuals with Disabilities Part 1 which include Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) for two-day training event provided by VR TAC – QM November 2023)
- Case Management Webinar provided by CSAVR (December 2023)

- Staff Performance & Accountability provided by DVR Admin SME (January 2024)
- Pre-Employment Transition Services provided by VR TAC – QM (February 2024)
- Case Services provided by VR TAC – QM (February 2024)
- Supported Employment - Advancing Quality Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) for Individuals with Disabilities Part 2, which included Community Rehabilitation Providers for a two-day training event provided by VR TAC – QM (June 2024)
- DVR monitored participants exiting DVR in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) to retain employment in the 2nd, 4th, and 6th quarters (18 months due to lag with UI/SWIS unemployment data filings) after exit to meet negotiated retention rates.
- DVR worked with Alliance Group to resolve issues with the Akamai-Aware Case Management System for federal reporting and improving data-informed decision making for process improvements.
- DVR celebrated National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). DVR is an active Hawaii Employment First Taskforce member and obtained an NDEAM Proclamation from the Governor. DVR recognized partnerships with Employers and Consumers statewide during NDEAM, highlighting the vital role people with disabilities play in making the nation's workforce diverse and inclusive. The annual recognition program was an opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of DVR's participants who have achieved employment success, the contributions of employers, and the work of Counselors and Employment Specialists to support consumers in attaining their goals. These success stories communicate, personally, how effective the DVR program and staff are in meeting the needs of consumers and employers.
- DVR's Ho'opono Services for the Blind Branch sponsored the 31st annual White Cane Walk, held on Oahu on October 23, 2023 with corresponding events on neighbor islands. The purpose of this event was to increase the public's awareness of the white cane as a symbol of independence and empowerment for persons who are blind. With the white cane, individuals who are blind can get to and from wherever they need to go, including work, when and where they choose. Over 200 persons participated in the awareness event in downtown Honolulu, which was also highlighted on three local news channels.
- DVR welcomed the new Department of Human Services (DHS) Director Ryan Yamane on May 09, 2024. He formerly served as the Deputy Director of the State of Hawaii Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD), as well as in the State Legislature.
- DVR's Oahu Branch moved to 707 Richards Street, 5th floor, Honolulu, HI. This move resulted in a more accessible location for participants and staff and increased internet access.

## **DVR STAFF VACANCIES**

DVR Staff vacancies continue to be a concern. Discussions/negotiations with DHS Human Resources & the Department of Human Resources Development continue regarding revising minimum qualifications for positions to enhance the recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

Below is a table of vacancies as of June 30, 2024:

<b>Vacancy Report</b> <i>DVR is actively hiring qualified individuals for various positions.</i>	
<b>Staff Vacancies as of 8/6/24</b>	
<b>County</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>
<b>Oahu/Administration and Staff Services Office</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Oahu Branch</b>	<b>21.5</b>
<b>Services for the Blind Branch (Ho`opono)</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Hawaii Branch (Hilo/Kona)</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Maui Branch (Maui, Molokai/Lanai)</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Kauai</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Total: 45/111 = 41% vacancies</b>	<b>45</b>

## DVR SUCCESS STORIES

### Oahu Branch

#### **Success Story #1**

A participant started with DVR after high school graduation. DVR supported her Post Secondary Education from 2017 to 2024. She completed her degree in psychology with a 3.0 GPA at Chaminade in 2019. DVR supported graduate school for the individual. She completed her degree, moved back to Hawaii, passed the NBCOT Examination, and was hired on 3/4/24 at Hawaii Hand and Rehabilitation Services as a full time Occupational Therapist.

Starting Pay: \$67,392 per year based on 36 hours per week.

Benefits include:

- Full medical coverage for the employee (medical, drug, vision, dental).
- Paid Time Off (PTO).
- Paid holidays.
- Simple IRA.
- Paid parking.



- Continuing Education if funds allow for this benefit (\$1000/yr for 40 hrs/wk, prorated for less than 40 hrs/wk).
- Successfully closed by DVR on 10/29/2024.

### **Success Story #2**

A participant started as a college student at KCC pursuing a degree in Tourism Management. He completed his general education requirements, transferred to the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and completed his bachelor's degree in 2022. DVR assisted with job development and placement. He secured a job placement at Sheraton Princess Kaiulani Hotel under Marriott International as a Dishwasher and was promoted to custodial engineer.

- Start Date 5/25/2023.
- Pay rate is \$26.90.
- Benefits include medical, dental, and hotel discounts.
- Successfully closed by DVR on 11/01/2024.

### **Success Story #3**

A participant started with DVR as a high school student. He was supported to complete his bachelor's in science, Mechanical Engineering in May 2021 at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. DVR assisted him to obtain employment as a Project Coordinator starting June 1, 2021 at Mechanical Enterprise, Inc.

- Start Date: June 1, 2021.
- Job Duties: Designs plumbing, fire suppression, and HVAC systems for commercial, residential, Federal, and State buildings as a prime/sub consultant. Provides cost estimates of design, documents all communications, and does site inspections for the duration of the projects.
- Starting salary: \$47,000 (Received a raise in Dec. 2021 to \$50,000).
- Benefits: 401K, Health, Dental, and bonuses.
- Successfully closed by DVR on 10/29/2024.

## **Ho`opono Services for the Blind Branch**

### **Success Story #4**

A participant was referred for assistive technology training and devices to help him maintain employment with a progressive vision loss condition. His job is in a high-profile leadership role, and he was having his subordinates read things such as contracts to him because his vision was too poor to see standard print. Vocational Rehabilitation referred him to see Dr. Sween and the Low Vision Clinic, and Dr. Sween made several recommendations for devices that Ho`opono's Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) Program already had on hand, such as a hand-held magnifier and a CCTV. He took these products home with him on the same day as he was seen by the Low Vision Clinic. DVR Counselor also referred him to the Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC) where an assessment was completed, and additional recommendations were made. He will be trained on the use of these additional technology devices with the goal of



maintaining his leadership role within the organization. Only two months after being seen by the Low Vision Clinic, he appeared on the Local News and everything is going great with his job.

### **Success Story #5**

DVR has many people working in self-employment. One example is a participant whose blindness was caused by physical assault, so he also has traumatic brain injury.

DVR helped him get a job first as a janitor at Pearl Harbor, where he got security clearance to work in the highest-security areas, specifically the areas for the submarines that may or may not have nuclear weapons. He was very proud that they trusted him enough to work in that area, but he could remember his capabilities before his injuries. He had been working on a master's in business administration but could no longer pass the classes due to his brain injury.

He created a cleaning service company after working with his VR counselor for several years. He has three customers: one is a private home, and the other two are businesses where he does full janitorial and even outdoor pressure washing. He is now working with DVR to grow his business so that he can pursue government contracts for janitorial services. Plus, his business has grown to the point where he needs employees, and DVR will be helping him learn scheduling, payroll, and all that comes with being a manager.

### **Success Story #6**

This is an example of what blind people can do when they get the proper supports from DVR and are also very independent. One of Ho`opono's prior in participants called to check in and DVR helped her with ideas for her resume. She's working at the Federal Transit Authority (a job that our Employment Specialist and VR counselor helped her to obtain). She's now managing \$670 billion worth of federal grants. These include one in New York: the Midtown Bus Terminal Replacement, with 64 million annual riders, creating 3.5 acres of walkable green space in the city, and adding 6,000 long-term jobs.

### **Hawaii Branch**

### **Success Story #7**

A participant applied for DVR services on the diploma track in 10/2015 while a sophomore in high school. The participant wasn't sure of a job goal at that time and received pre-employment transition services, a work-based learning experience, and summer youth employment. The participant gained skills in the cleaning industry and office settings.

He graduated with his diploma in 5/2017 and wanted to work as an airline's baggage handler. DVR partnered with the Workforce Development Division (WDD) and was able to help him secure a job with Aloha Air Cargo, loading and unloading goods. He appeared to be doing well, but he felt the job didn't fit him well. DVR and WDD worked with the employer and individual to support him, but the participant decided to leave the job and requested DVR case closure on 3/2019.

The participant tried to secure employment on his own with two employers in 2019 and 2021. He ended up getting terminated at both jobs and decided to reapply for DVR services on 5/2023. He realized he needed additional support to help him learn how to cope in stressful situations in a work environment and manage his anxiety better.

DVR connected him with supported employment services, where he received work readiness skills, job placement, job monitoring and follow-up with The Arc of Kona. He got hired at Lowes in 11/2023 as a stock clerk, working full-time and earning a competitive wage. His case was closed successfully on 10/2024, reported he was doing well and excited that he started training and volunteering his time to become a basketball referee. He has always had a passion for basketball and worked as the team manager for the local high school girls' basketball team every season. He would also occasionally volunteer his time post high school and is now working towards his goal of officiating future basketball.