



Division of Services for the Blind

**DSB**

**Engage, empower, and employ!**



*2019 Annual Report*

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES &  
THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT



Services include, *but are not limited to:*



*Vocational  
Rehabilitation*



*Business  
Engagement*



*Medical  
Eye Care*



*Independent  
Living*



*Assistive  
Technology*



*Business  
Enterprise*

*The NC Division of Services for the Blind (DSB), an agency under the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) provides services to people who are blind, visually impaired or deafblind to help them reach their goals of independence and employment. This mission is in direct alignment with the mission of NC DHHS in its goal to increase the health and well-being of all North Carolina citizens.*

# Our *2019 Annual Report*

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# NC Division Services for the Blind

## *State Rehabilitation Council 2018-19*

**David Horton, Chairperson,**  
Business, Labor and Industry Representative

**Vacant,**  
Community Rehabilitation Services Provider

**Cody Davis,**  
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Recipient

**Anastasia Powell,**  
Advocacy Group for Persons with Disabilities

**Agreta Limerick,**  
NC Division of Workforce Development

**Willis Hatcher III,**  
Parent of a Child with a Disability

**Dr. Ricky Scott,**  
Statewide Independent Living Council

**Celeste Hunt,**  
Director of Projects Carried out under  
Section 121 of Rehabilitation Act

**Debra Pickens,**  
Parent Training and Information Center

**Tania Bowers,**  
NC Client Assistance Program  
(NCCAP) Advocate

**Dorothy Snyder,**  
Department of Public Instruction

## Ex-Officio Members

**Cynthia Speight, Director**  
Division of Services for the Blind

**Jordan D. Thomas,**  
*Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor*  
Division of Services for the Blind

# State Rehabilitation Council

## *Chairperson's Message*



*As chairperson of the State Rehabilitation Council, it is my privilege to present the 2018-2019 Annual Report of the North Carolina Division of Services for the Blind. This year's theme, ENGAGE, EMPOWER AND EMPLOY, reflects the efforts of the division. We offer (ENGAGE) one of the most underserved populations in our state, the blind and visually impaired, opportunities to learn and grow professionally and personally. Through our programs and services, individuals are taught skills to help them reach their goals of independence and employment (EMPOWER). All this prepares our clients to be placed in employment that lead to life-changing opportunities (EMPLOY).*

*We are proud to report that DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Services were provided to 3,085 individuals with blindness or low vision, a substantial increase from the prior year. DSB VR achieved 306 successful employment closures and average wages were \$13.83/hr. A total of 296 students, aged 14 to 21, are active with DSB and approximately 25 students with the Transition Program are graduating from high school. Last year, 451 DSB VR clients were served by assistive technology field staff, a total of 66 consumers received Evaluation Unit services and 27 individuals received low vision evaluations and/or low vision therapy. Fifty-five VR eligible individuals received training in the Adapting to Blindness in a Learning Environment program and 397 class assessments were provided. Our Independent Living Rehabilitation and Independent Living Older Blind programs served 1,109 eligible individuals. DSB's highly specialized vision rehabilitation services and training provide the skills, devices and resources that facilitate the successful development and adjustment for persons of all ages to thrive beyond vision loss.*

*On behalf DSB and the thousands who receive assistance through our programs, I would like to thank everyone who supported us in 2019. We are very excited about the coming year and look forward continuing to provide services and opportunities that transform the lives of the blind and visually-impaired in North Carolina.*

**David Horton, Chairperson**  
North Carolina State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

# 2019 *Consumer Satisfaction Survey*

## Background

The consumer satisfaction survey was initiated to meet the mandate of Section 105 (c) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which states that the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) shall, among performing other required functions:

Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of and client satisfaction with:

A. the functions performed by the designated State agency;

B. vocational rehabilitation services provided by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this Act;

C. employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this title, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes.

### **Administration**

The administration and management of the consumer satisfaction survey is a coordinated effort between by the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Division of Services for the Blind. For Federal Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019, telephone surveys were conducted in May and August of each year under a contract with NC State University, Center for Urban Affairs and Community Services. Survey samples were generated using a weighted random sampling design that included clients with open cases and those whose cases that had recently closed. Interviewers made up to six attempts to reach each person included in the sample.

## **Description of the Satisfaction Survey Questionnaire**

The survey instrument includes four sections: I. Satisfaction with VR Counselor and Staff; II. Client Assistance Program (CAP) Information; III. Barriers to Employment; and IV. Additional Questions.

**Section I, Satisfaction with the VR Counselor and Staff**, is a battery of 14 items regarding the client's overall VR experience and the professionalism, responsiveness and timeliness of VR staff through eligibility, plan development and employment. Items in this battery were scaled "Yes/No" with a "Not Applicable" option and were prompted based on a skip pattern according to the client's case status code indicating their progression in the VR program at the time survey samples were generated. Clients indicating dissatisfaction on any item were given the option to explain.

**The questions for Section II, Client Assistance Program Information**, includes items asking if the consumer was informed about CAP and their right to appeal agency decisions with which they disagree. Each includes two sub-items that asked whether the CAP information was provided (a) when the client applied for services and (b) when the client and the counselor were developing and individualized plan for employment.

**Section III, Barriers to Employment**, includes a battery of nine items that are prompted if client reportedly was not working at the time the survey was conducted. Some of the items were revised from the previous version of the survey and an additional "N/A" response option was added.

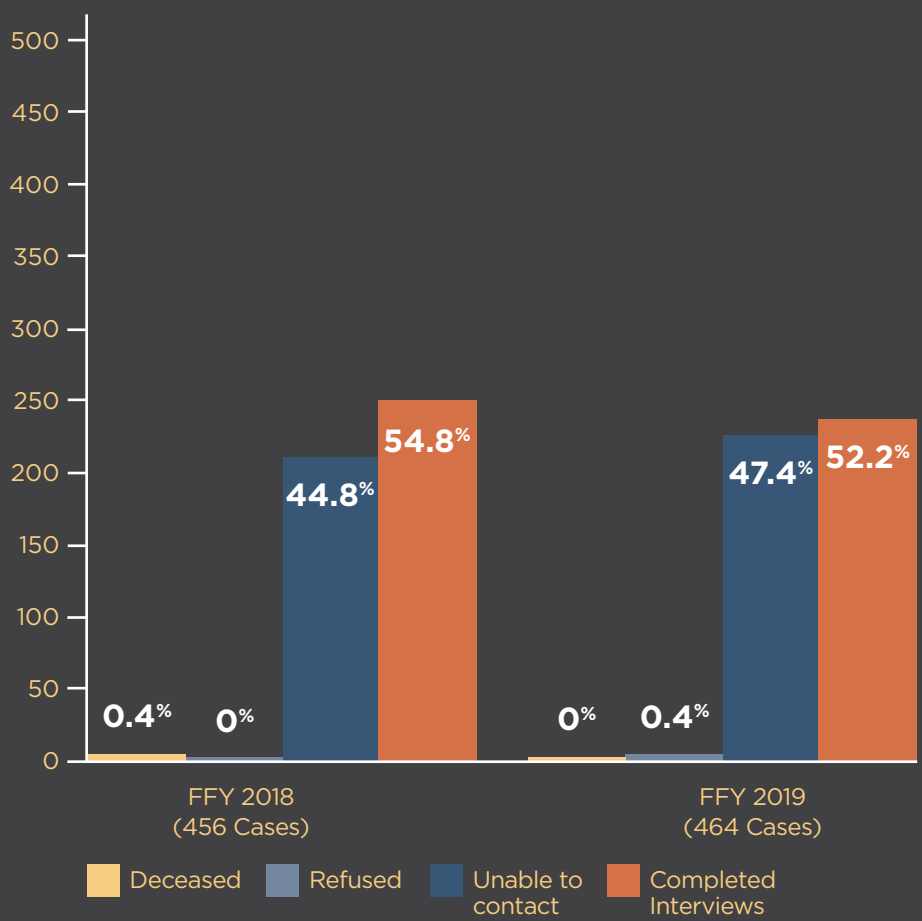
**Two of the additional questions in Section IV** were prompted for clients who exited VR without an employment outcome at any stage of progression in the VR process. These clients were asked why they felt their case was closed before they were employed and whether there was anything VR could have done to help them start working. The third question in this section, is there anything VR could do to improve its services, was asked of all clients.

# Overview of Survey Results

## Completed Survey Interviews

Interviews were completed for more than half of the DSB clients sampled in both FFY 2018 and 2019, averaging a completion rate of 53.5% across the two years for the total 920 DSB VR clients selected. An average of 46.1% of telephone interview calls weren't completed because the telephone contact information was no longer valid, the client couldn't be located or the interviewer call attempts were maxed out after six tries. Two of the former VR clients were deceased in FFY 2018 and two refused the interview in 2019. The completion rate was 2.6% lower in FFY 2019 compared to the prior year. This difference is small enough that it may be due to chance variation in the clients randomly selected for the sample since the margin of error is about  $\pm 3.4\%$  at 90% confidence in samples of this size (456 to 464 cases). However, completion rates may be improved, overall, with more recently updated client contact information.

Table 1- Survey Interviews Completed





### Satisfaction with VR Counselors and Staff

Table 2 shows, for FFY 2018 and 2019, the number of valid client responses, percent satisfied and margin of error at 90% confidence for each of the interview questions regarding satisfaction with the client’s VR counselor and other VR program staff. When considering the margin of error in comparing the two years, there is likely a real, but only slight, decrease in satisfaction in the VR population for (h) the time it took to determine eligibility. Across the other questions in this section, the differences in satisfaction from FFY 2018 and 2019 are within the margin of error. The areas with the most opportunity for improvement, across both years, are (e) helping clients decide on job choices, which averaged 77% satisfaction, and (l) helping clients find a job, which averaged 67% satisfaction. Clients’ overall satisfaction with their experience with the VR program was about 90% in FFY 2019 and averaged 91% across both years.

Table 2a- Are you satisfied with your VR counselor and other VR program staff in terms of:

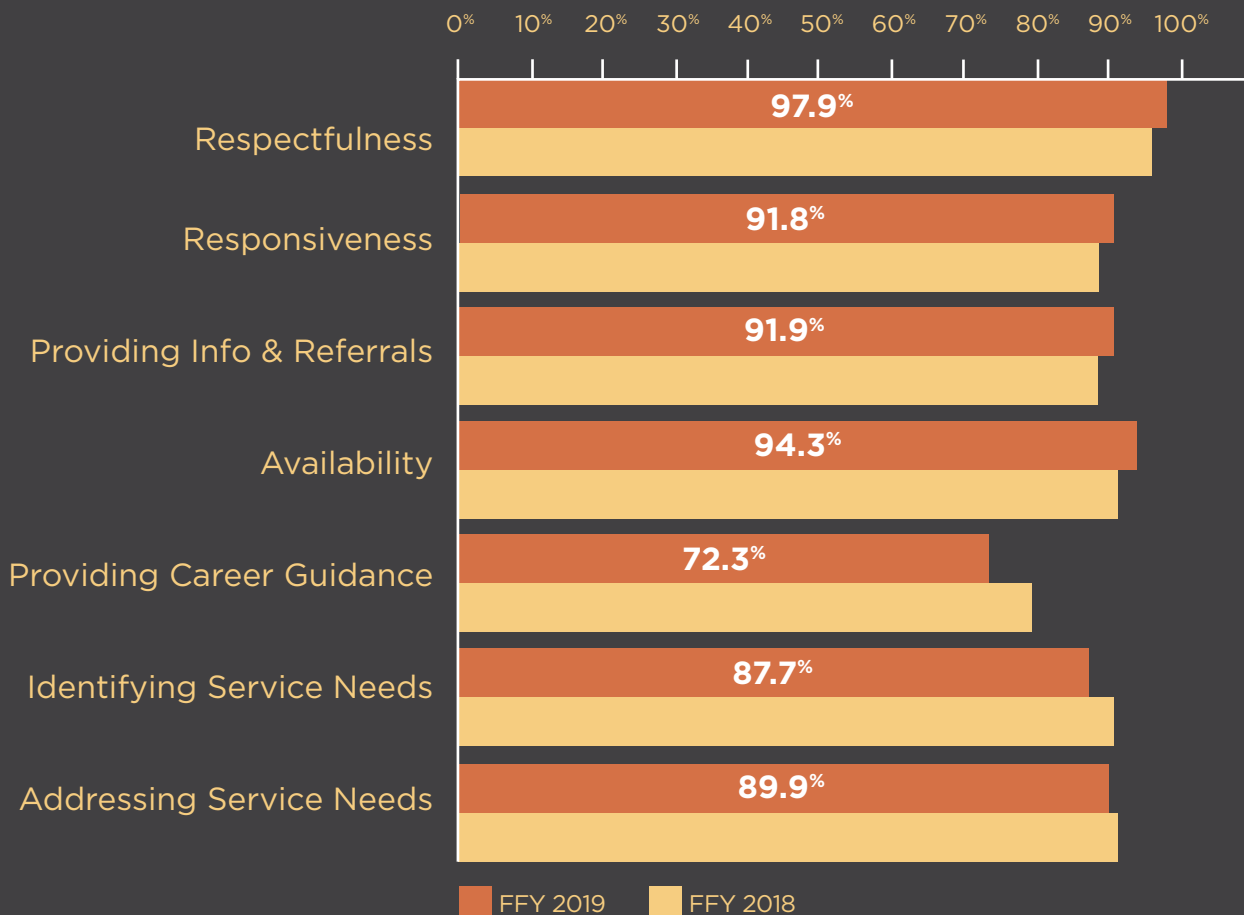
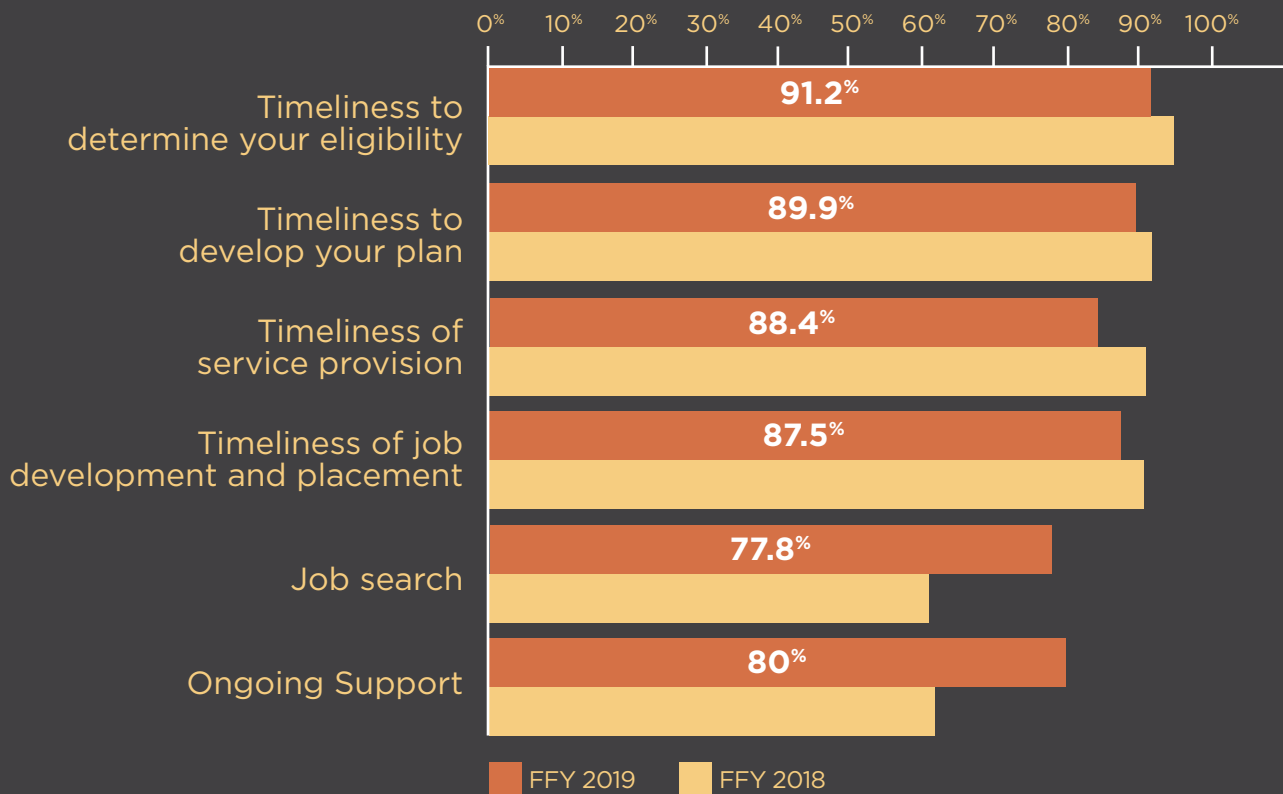
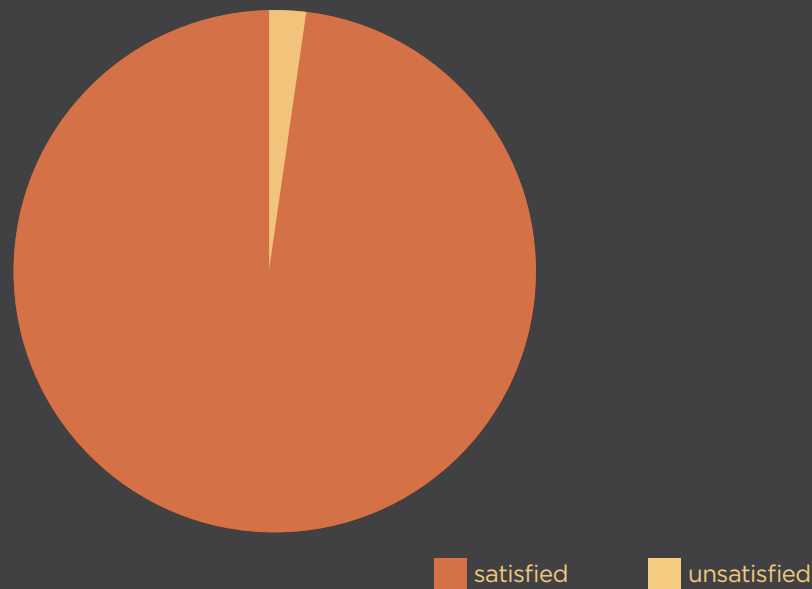


Table 2b- Are you satisfied with your VR counselor and other VR program staff in terms of:



### Satisfaction with Overall Experience

**90.1 percent of survey respondents reported being satisfied with their overall experience with DSB.**



### Client Assistance Program Information

The second section of the survey asks clients if their counselor informed them about the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and their right to appeal agency decisions with which they disagree. With the sample sizes being similar for FFY 2018 and 2019, the margin of error in the responses is from 3.2% to 3.5% at 90% confidence. Comparing responses from the two years, there wasn't much difference in the proportion that answered "no," they weren't informed. The change was 1.6% more clients reported they were informed about CAP and a 2% less responded being informed about their right to appeal, both of which are well within the margin of error. However, from 2018 to 2019, there was a decrease of about 22% to 23% in the proportion of respondents that answered "yes" to both questions, with nearly that proportion answering that they "didn't remember" in 2019. These differences are large enough that they're not likely due to chance in the clients that were randomly selected for the sample, although there could be another reason for the change in percent.

### Client Assistance Program Questions:

Table 3a- Did your counselor inform you about the Client Assistance Program during application?

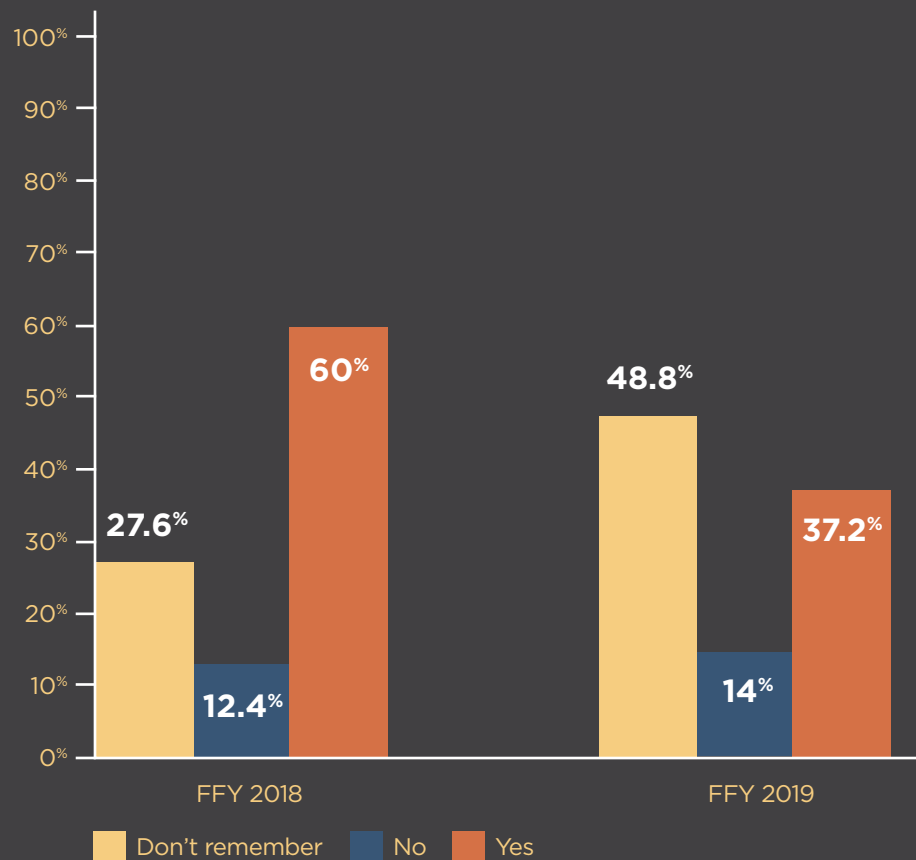
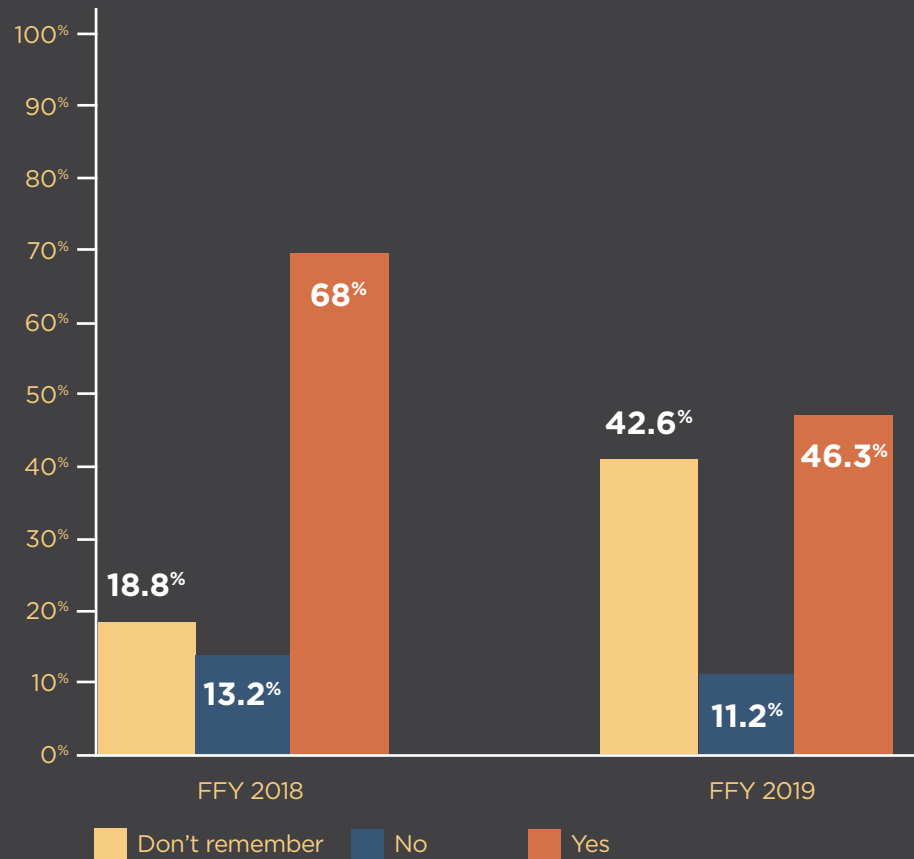


Table 3b- Did your counselor inform about the right to appeal to decisions you disagree during application?



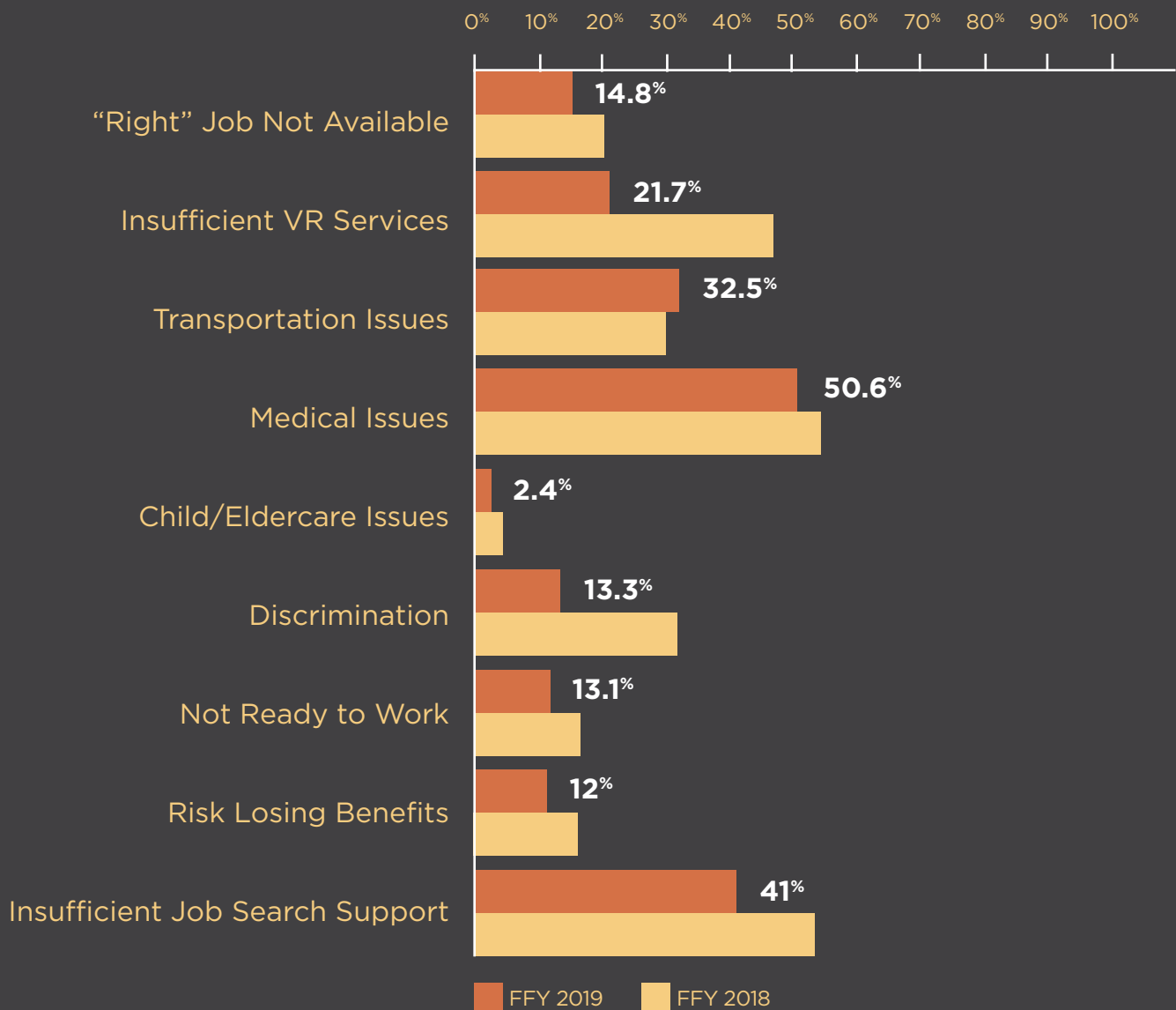
### Barriers to Employment

The third section of the survey asks the screening question of whether respondents were currently working. Those that indicated they were not employed were then asked to answer nine sub-questions regarding barriers to employment. Of 197 clients that responded to this question in FFY 2019, 115 (58%) answered they were not employed, which was about the same proportion as the prior year. This count includes individuals with open VR cases progressing towards their goal and former VR clients with recent case closures.

The VR clients not working were provided nine sub-items regarding their barriers to employment. For FFY 2019, the barriers to employment most commonly reported were: (d) medical problems (51%), (i) the need for additional help with job search (41%), (c) transportation (33%) and (b) the need for additional VR services (22%).

In comparing the results from FFY 2018 with 2019, there was a “statistically significant” decrease in clients who reported (b) the need for additional VR services, from nearly 49% ±9% in FFY 2018 to about 22% ±7% in FFY 2019, and (f) discrimination against persons with disabilities as barriers to employment decreased from roughly 30% ±8% in FFY 2018 to 13% ±6% in FFY 2019. The decreases in the percent of clients who reported (g) they were not ready to work decreased from about 23% ±7% in FFY 2018 to 13% ±6% in FFY 2019, and (i) the need for additional help with job search decreased from 54% ±9% in FFY 2018 to 41% ±9% in FFY 2019, are also likely not due to chance variation in the random selection of clients for the sample.

Table 4- Barriers to Employment



Currently unemployed- 197 persons (58.4%)

# DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Program

DSB's Vocational Rehabilitation Program provides vocational and rehabilitative services to individuals with disabilities to help them prepare for, secure, regain, retain and advance in employment. Persons with disabilities face some challenges in today's workplace. We believe that competitive, integrated employment is the first choice for individuals with disabilities. Vocational rehabilitation services can reduce or remove barriers to employment.

## Eligibility

To be eligible for DSB VR services, a person must have vision loss, blindness or deafblindness that accompanies a substantial impediment to employment; be able to benefit from VR services in terms of employment; and require VR services to prepare for, enter, engage in, retain or advance in employment.

Once eligibility is established, a DSB VR counselor assists the consumer to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The IPE identifies the vocational goal and the services that will be provided in order to achieve that goal. To help eligible DSB consumers obtain employment, DSB VR provides comprehensive rehabilitation services, which may include information and referral, assessment services, counseling and guidance, physical restoration, vocational training or other post-secondary education, job search, job placement and job coaching, and supported employment. DSB VR assists eligible consumers to locate employment

by developing and maintaining close relationships with businesses through a dual-customer approach.

## Informed Choice

The DSB VR Program assures that consumers are provided information and support services to assist them in exercising informed choice regarding their IPE. Informed choice begins when an individual first contacts the agency to apply for VR services and continues throughout the rehabilitation process. As an applicant or an individual eligible to receive VR services, consumers have the right to exercise informed choice in decisions related to the provision of VR services including: the provision of assessment services; choices among the methods used to procure VR services; the selection of an employment outcome; the specific services needed to achieve the employment outcome; and the staff or vendors that will provide the services to help them achieve their employment outcome. The information provided



*DSB booth at a job fair*

by the counselor will consider consumers' unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities and interests that are needed to help them achieve their employment outcome. Accessible services are planned according to each person's employment goals and needs.

**These services may include but are not limited to:**

- Guidance and counseling services, such as vocational/career counseling, job retention counseling, adjustment to vision loss counseling and supportive counseling
- Training services, such as vocational and/or job specific or academic training, on-the-job training, supported employment or work adjustment job coaching
- Training and services provided at the DSB Career and Training Center
- Assistive technology evaluations and purchase of equipment, low vision and digital magnification evaluations and training in use of the equipment either locally or at the DSB Career and Training Center
- School-to-work transition services begins at age 14 including specialized programs such as the Summer Adapting to Blindness Vital to Visually Impaired Youth (SAVVY) program at the DSB Career and Training Center and Youth Mini-Centers.
- Job placement services, job search skills training, work experiences, job modification and follow-up services.
- Medical services that are required for eligible persons to obtain, maintain, regain or advance in employment, such as diagnostic eye examinations, eyeglasses or other types of corrective lens, eye treatment, eye care education and eye surgery.

## Specialized Services

DSB VR staff refer consumers for other DSB specialized services when needed that are provided by Business Services Representatives, Community Employment Specialists, a Rehabilitation Engineer, Assistive Technology Consultants, Assistive Technology Instructors, Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Nursing Eye Care Consultants, DSB Career and Training Center staff, as well as Deafblind Specialists who work with people with both blindness and hearing loss. Consumers are also referred to our Independent Living Programs as needed.



*DSB VR booth display with staff and a man in a power wheelchair.*

## DSB VR Outcomes for SFY 2018-2019

- **DSB Vocational Rehabilitation Services were provided to 3,085 individuals with blindness or low vision. This is a substantial increase from the prior year of 2,770 consumers served.**
- **DSB VR has achieved 306 successful employment closures**
- **Average wages for successfully employed consumers: \$13.83 per hour, which is a slight increase from the prior year.**
- **115 VR consumers were supported through sponsorship and assistive technology to participate in work experiences to prepare them for their chosen profession.**
- **DSB has participated in job fairs and career-based events within various communities in North Carolina over the past year. These events build job opportunities for the VR consumers we serve.**



## Impact of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA)

WIOA is landmark legislation that is designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers. Since its initial launch in 2014, DSB has progressively worked to implement initiatives and goals set forth in the WIOA.

Due to this legislation, the division has focused on building career-based employment opportunities for consumers through increased college and vocational training, as well as increasing the numbers of individuals with the most significant disabilities obtaining and maintaining employment through provision of supports. This focus has also led to increased wages and benefits for many consumers.

Additionally, DSB has increased efforts significantly to collaborate with community partners through our contractual commitment of engagement with local One-Stop Centers to addressing barriers to employment for consumers. Many of our staff maintain a regular presence in these centers across the state.

*This focus  
has also led  
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consumers.*

## DSB *Assistive Technology Services*

DSB offers assistive technology services through its seven district offices as well as the DSB Career and Training Center to assist people who require assistive technology (AT) to be successful with employment, training, education and independent living goals.

DSB has six AT consultants and one rehabilitation engineer. These staff are based in district offices and provide individualized technology assessments and services at a person's job site, school setting or home. AT consultants conduct assessments, recommend equipment, facilitate the purchase of equipment, deliver and set up the equipment either in the home or at a job, and follow-up to make sure the equipment is being used as designed. Equipment and adaptations addressed may include computers, braille displays, high tech low vision devices, mobile devices, lighting

adaptations and safety concerns. Consultation to employers of individuals who are visually impaired, blind or deafblind is also provided. Four AT instructors are available to provide individualized assessments of AT instruction needs as well as one-on-one and small group instruction across the state. AT instructors are available to guide persons in maximizing their ability to utilize adaptive equipment. Each district office contains a selection of equipment for evaluation and training purposes.

The center offers numerous classes on various types of technology including

computers, mobile technologies and braille technology. A Technology Resource Center based at the Center has adaptive equipment for large print, speech and braille access. This equipment is available by appointment for demonstration and evaluation.

*AT instructors are available to guide persons in maximizing their ability to utilize adaptive equipment.*



*A SAVVY WOW participant utilizing assistive technology while working at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences.*

## DSB VR Assistive Technology Outcomes

***Assistive technology is constantly evolving. Assistive technology staff meets yearly for in-service training to maintain expertise in providing AT services to blind, visually impaired and deafblind consumers. This year, training was provided on Voice Dream Suite Including Scanner, Apps with Accessibility Features for Android Devices, Mac Voice Over Commands, Differences between Screen Readers JAWS/NVDA, El Braille, Modified Haptics, Subscription Services and AT software, etc.***

***During this FFY, 451 DSB VR clients were served by assistive technology field staff. At the center, 81 individuals took technology classes and 20 received technology-only training.***

## DSB *Business Enterprises* Program



*Business Enterprises licensed three future operators who successfully completed classroom instruction and on the job training in 2019.*

The Business Enterprises Program offers legally blind participants the opportunity to operate their own food service or vending facility. This program provides initial training for potential licensees and ongoing counseling and management services to established operators.

NC Business Enterprises currently has 48 licensed blind operators who manage 146 food and vending facilities on state, federal and private properties. During FFY

2018-2019 gross sales from all BEP food service and vending facilities increased to \$11,203,986.90, in comparison to the prior year's total earnings at \$10,052,825.30.

The NC Business Enterprises administration consist of 13 employees. The administration, in collaboration with the Elected Committee of Blind Vendors, continues to focus on the overall growth of NC Business Enterprises.

## DSB School to Work Transition Services



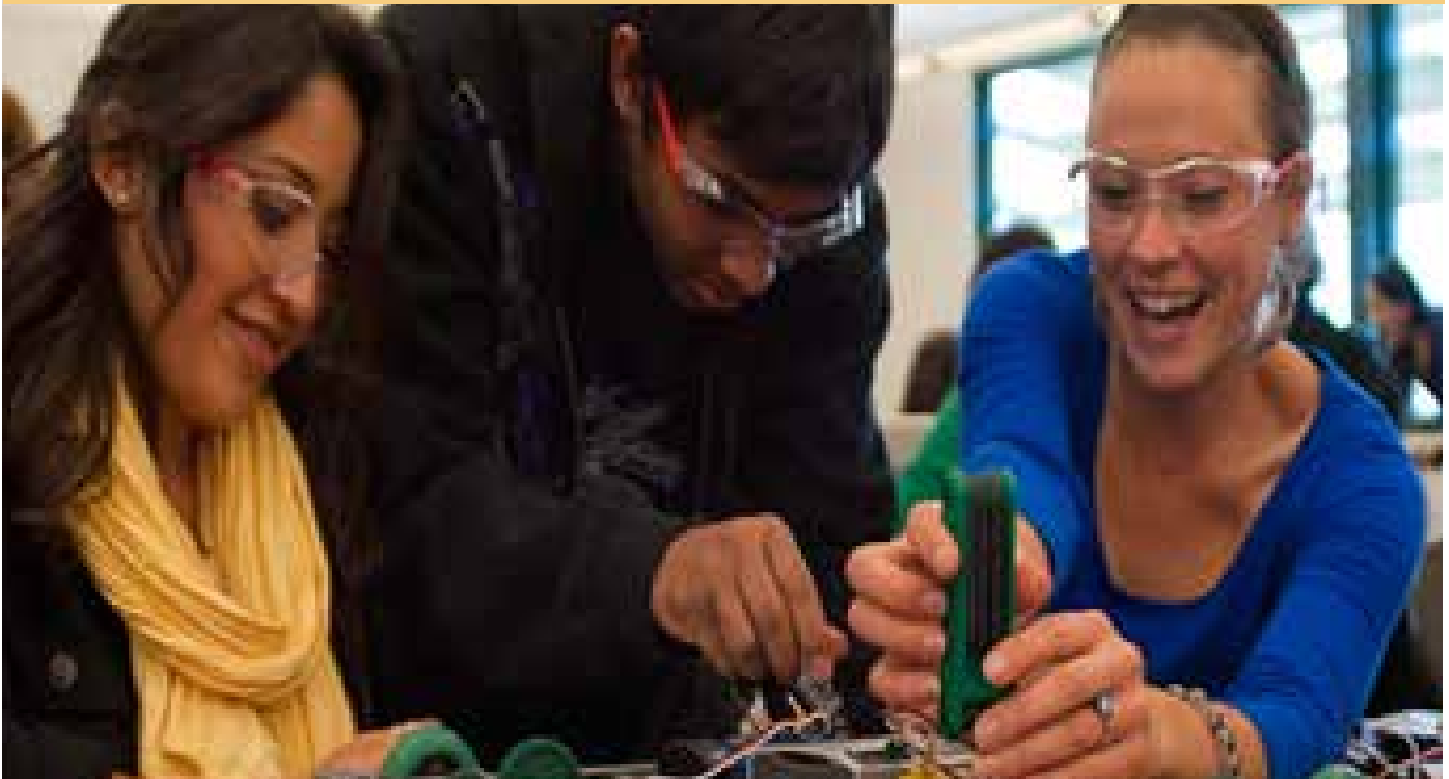
*SAVVY College Prep Group Takes a College Tour.*

DSB Transition VR Counselors and Community Employment Specialists throughout the state seek job-shadowing opportunities and trial work experiences tailored to each student's vocational interest and career goals. Together, these staff members also continue to seek internship opportunities with employers.

During FFY 2018–2019, 398 youth were served by NC Services for the Blind Transition VR Counselors; 189 of those youth were students, and 82 of those students were served by Community Employment Specialists. Some of the services that were provided to these students were guidance and counseling,

post-secondary training and support services for the training, orientation and mobility services, assistive technology services, vocational evaluations, work-based learning experiences, low vision services, supported employment services, job coaching services for work-based learning experiences, job placement and many other support services. Fifty-seven students were supported in post-secondary training.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) were also provided to students with disabilities. The services included job readiness training, work-based learning experiences, self-advocacy training, job



### *Youth Daily Living Skills Classes*

exploration counseling and counseling on higher education/vocational training. There were three Pre-ETS mini-centers held in different areas across the state. Some of the activities included, college tours, financial literacy training, self-advocacy training, resume writing, community work-based learning experiences with different businesses, attending career fairs with counselors, interest testing, identification of career pathways, informational interviews, job shadowing experiences, counseling on disability disclosure, etc.

The youth also received services in resume writing skills, interviewing skills, job development and placement services, supported employment, work adjustment training, post-secondary training support,

assistive technology, orientation and mobility, adjusting to blindness training, etc.

In nine school systems, specialized third-party agreements have been established, and specialized programs are in place to serve students at the Governor Morehead School for the Blind. These programs allow trained DSB VR counselors and community employment specialists to work with students, as well as with school systems to enhance opportunities in students' home communities. These students participate in summer jobs, World of Work (WOW) work experiences and other summer programs, such as learning independent living skills at available mini-centers — science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs or summer camps.

## College Tours for DSB Youth

Students who require additional educational training after high school to reach their vocational goals are assisted by a DSB VR counselor in planning and obtaining the required training. The counselor can assist in locating a vocational or post-secondary training site featuring classes that prepare them for their job goal, help identify financial resources to cover part or all the training costs, including financial assistance from DSB, and in obtaining assistive technology required to complete the training. The counselor continues working with the student throughout the post-secondary program to ensure success.

Students planning to go to work after high school receive assistance in job exploration, job seeking, job development

and placement from a DSB community employment specialist and counselor. If the student requires additional one-on-one assistance or specialized job seeking and training programs, such as community-based work adjustment or supported employment, DSB is available to help in many cases.

Our assistive technology consultants provide AT assessments to youth transitioning from high school to post-secondary educational institutions. AT assessments are also performed for consumers who need accommodations at their worksite for them to maintain employment. For consumers already enrolled in college, DSB purchased the recommended technology needed to be successful in college, including computers, printers, portable digital magnifiers and JAWS or Zoomtext software.



## DSB *Pre-Employment Transition Services*

Student mini-centers are held to assist students in developing their pre-employment transition skills and other skills as listed that are necessary to become a successfully employed adult. These services are provided in small groups, large groups, one-on-one or in a combination of methods. The more traditional student mini-center involves a variety of DSB VR staff and DSB specialists (Orientation & Mobility, Nursing Eye Care Consultants Deaf blind Specialists, Assistive Technology Consultants and Instructors, Community Employment

Specialists and more) to make sure every area is addressed with the students, involves some aspect of at least four out of five of the Pre-Employment Transition Services and includes independent living rehabilitation skills teaching and community involvement. A targeted student mini-center has more of a singular or dual focus involving at least one of the Pre-Employment Transition Services and allowing the students to focus on a particular area of need.

## Pre-Employment Transition Services Highlights

- ***Services to 20 potentially eligible secondary school students through contractually hired staff. Potentially eligible students are individuals who have not yet applied for, or not yet been determined eligible for, VR services. These students could still benefit from some service provision and may later become traditional VR consumers. Services that they receive are also inclusive of job exploration counseling, workplace readiness training, work-based learning experiences, counseling on postsecondary training options and instruction in self-advocacy.***

***This past year, SFY ending 2019, the transition program provided 28 work experiences to youth with vision loss, blindness and deafblindness.***

- ***Increased development of contracts with local community rehabilitation providers and school systems, as well as other public and private entities for additional provision of Pre-ETS services. There are currently nine developed at this time in various areas of the state.***

- ***Youth Daily Living Skills Classes***

***Learning essential skills to obtain overall independence during their transition to adulthood and employment.***



## DSB *Supported Employment Services*

The overarching goal of supported employment is to obtain jobs for people with disabilities and help them retain those jobs through consistent training and coaching. The crucial component of the program is to give the individual the skills and confidence they need to successfully perform their job duties in an integrated and competitive environment, rather than simply doing the job for them.

Following a referral process through DSB, a supported employment program pairs an individual with a job coach, whose initial task is to negotiate with an employer regarding the terms of employment and the accommodations that will be provided for the employee. The job coach then transitions to a hands-on support system, providing on-the-job training for the individual while they

learn to navigate their specific job duties and build their role in their workplace.

Eventually, the goal is for the employee to have developed a self-sustaining support system at their place of work and the day-to-day assistance from their job coach take a backseat. Supported employment services then shift into a long-term support role for the employee with the goal of helping them retain their position and perform their duties effectively.

Supported employment relies on providers who are employed through private vendors, and they are also given training on enabling people with disabilities to achieve their

best in the workplace. Job coaches are also specially trained in various supported employment principles and tactics, allowing the employer, coach and employee to work together in building a sustainable career.

*...to give the individual the skills and confidence they need to successfully perform their job duties in an integrated and competitive environment.*

# Supported Employment Focus Story

## **Self-Determination and Collaboration: Two Key Components to Success**

Anna and her family moved from another state to Pender County in North Carolina in 2016, where Anna was a junior at Topsail High School. At birth, Anna was diagnosed with hydrocephaly and spina bifida and was later diagnosed with blindness after her shunt failed. She is also a recipient of a successful kidney transplant. Anna was referred to a DSB transition counselor through collaboration between Pender County Schools (PCS) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. At the time of the initial intake meeting, the family and Anna were unsure of her future in employment.

The family, school system and DSB began to brainstorm and took advantage of work-based learning experiences through the agency. With Anna's resilience and self-



determination, and the collaborative efforts with all parties involved, including personal care services, her family, DSB, DVRS, employers and community rehabilitation programs, she gained experience at Food Lion, Quicksilver Analytics and PPD Pharmaceuticals.

Anna displayed her coachability and great attitude with each employer and was offered a part-time position with PPD Pharmaceuticals in March 2019. Successful partnerships and collaborations allowed opportunities for Anna

to showcase her many talents and abilities. However, Anna's self-determination, work ethic and positive attitude is the reason for her successful tenure at PPD Pharmaceuticals. Competitive integrated employment is the goal of all DSB Vocational Rehabilitation clients.

## *Community Based Work Adjustment*

DSB also provides services to individuals with significant disabilities through community-based work adjustment services programs with assistance from several community rehabilitation programs for eligible individuals who require initial services. These programs assist in providing intervention to improve and increase productivity, attendance, punctuality, ability to interact appropriately with coworkers and supervisors and work tolerance, yet do not require long-term support. CRP's across the state have developed specialized programs

for these services that include situational assessments, job placement and job coaching services. Payments are made to the CRP's using an outcome-based format, with increment payments made based on milestone accomplishments. This program differs slightly from supported employment programs, as the consumers have less significant disabilities and typically require less services to maintain employment once stabilized. DSB has provided 36 consumers with Community-Based Work Adjustment Training during SFY ending 2019.

*DSB also provides services to individuals with significant disabilities through community-based work adjustment services program*

## DSB Career and Training Center

Since its inception in 1946, DSB's Rehabilitation Center for the Blind has been known as "the center." In early 2019, the center officially changed its name to the DSB Career and Training Center. This change better communicates the nature of the services at the center to our consumers and many community partners. We are excited about moving into the 2020s with our new name as we continue to adapt to changing times in order to effectively serve our consumers.

### Evaluation Unit

DSB Career and Training Center's Evaluation Unit is located on the campus of the Governor Morehead School for the Blind in Raleigh, NC. The Evaluation Unit provides consumers the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive vocational evaluation to help identify their rehabilitation needs. The consumer, along with their vocational rehabilitation counselor, can then develop a plan to address their personal and pre-vocational goals and the skills needed to obtain, regain and maintain and advance employment, as well as increase independent living skills.

#### **2019 DSB Evaluation Unit Results**

- 66 total consumers received EU services
- 53 general evaluations
- 30 low vision evaluations
- 2 psychological-only evaluations
- 5 vocational-only evaluations

### Independent Living Week

In April of 2019, 14 participants received special training in techniques of daily living, cooking, orientation and mobility, braille, assistive technology, self-defense and much more. Informational and interactive workshops included disability rights, self-advocacy, yoga and relaxation, arts and crafts, fitness and games, shopping and bowling — which gave them opportunities to socialize and engage in community-based activities.

### NEST

The center hosts the New Employee Sensitivity Training (NEST) for DSB employees to expose them to the skills essential for working with persons with a visual impairment. The skills training included areas such as cooking and home management, orientation and mobility, braille, adaptive computer usage, careers, college prep, consumer education and recreational therapy, as well as sessions on the psychological effects of visual impairment, diabetes, low vision concerns and adaptations, issues related to deafblindness, business enterprises and 1Touch (self-defense). The employees reside on campus and engage in evening campus and community activities of choice.

#### **Nest Participants**

Fall 2018- 11

Spring 2019- 16

## 2019 SAVVY

The 2019 SAVVY Summer program theme was “Designing Your Future.” Twenty-five participants were provided opportunities to engage in classes, workshops, recreation activities, innovative thinking, leadership development and effective communication. Participants worked on enhancing interpersonal and daily living skills in a fun, exciting and educational setting.

## Youth in Transition (YIT)

Eleven teens in the Youth in Transition program participated in four weeks of training classes aimed to increase their independence. The students were assigned to eight classes — Assistive Technology/Computers, Education, Braille, Cooking Skills, Techniques of Daily Living, Consumer Education, Orientation and Mobility, and Careers.

## College Prep (CP)

Six teens participated in the 2019 SAVVY College Prep program. The program was face-to-face but also involved an online component. The students utilized assistive technology alongside Blackboard Course sites where they submitted online assignments, completed online tests and participated in discussion boards. Students toured Eastern Carolina University, NC State University, Wake Tech main campus and Campbell University. College Prep students prepared in-class presentations and participated in mock lectures and study groups. College Prep’s focus revolves around having the right mindset when entering college. SAS Institute visited our

campus twice to orient our students to the SAS Graphics Accelerator program and to practice some computer science concepts using the CodeSnaps iOS application.

## World of Work (WOW)

Eight teens participated in the SAVVY-WOW program in 2019. They spent three days preparing for work, participating in various activities learning about job expectations, time management, appropriate and inappropriate behaviors on the worksite, networking, communication and transportation to the worksites.

## 2019 Summer Worksite Placements and Tasks included:

### **Raleigh Rescue Mission**

Sort donations to determine resale value, place goods on sales floor

### **Second Chance Pet Adoptions**

Prepare animal cages, laundry, socialize animals

### **The Salvation Army Family Store and Donation Center**

Sort donations, place goods on sales floor, tag prices on items

### **CAM Raleigh (Contemporary Art Museum)**

Engage in light clerical work, prepare and provide support for school group activities visiting the museum, provide tours and info

### **Carlie C’s**

Organize items on shelves, replace misplaced items to appropriate location

## **Habitat Wake ReStore**

Organize item displays, assembled small furniture/donations as needed for display

## **KidzNotes Summer Camp**

Assist music class teachers, tune campers' violins, answer camper questions

## **NC Museum of Natural Sciences**

Sort and organize data from visitor exit surveys, provided reports of data

## **Open House**

The center hosted two successful Open House events in October 2018 and in March 2019. Our first session had a small number of attendees, but for the March sessions, we had approximately 25 guests. Guests included family and friends of consumers who are currently attending the ABLE program at the center. They were provided with information on the center and DSB. Consumers took the guests on a tour of center's classrooms to meet with instructors and learn about each class topic. They were also provided with a tour of the dorms. Our orientation and mobility staff provided a hands-on sighted guide workshop where the guests had the opportunity to wear a blindfold and practice guiding each other.

## **Skip Day**

In June 2019, the center consumers and staff traveled out into the community to practice skills such as orientation and mobility and technology. One morning, they walked to a nearby park where they practiced their travel skills, traveling to many activities within the park. In the afternoon, they went to the NC Museum

of History for a tour of the exhibit hall. Consumers utilized travel skills to walk throughout the museum, navigating safely in a variety of lighting situations. They also utilized technology by using QR code readers on their phones to access information on exhibits.

## **Guest Speakers**

The center invites motivational speakers to address the consumers regarding visual impairments and vocational skills in the workplace. Speakers this year included Terry Lewis, employed at LCI for 10 years, and Katie Pender, employed at NCSU as a Computer Programmer for 12 years. The speakers addressed job readiness, interviewing skills and employment. Tyree Daye, an award-winning poet and professor from UNC-Chapel Hill, also visited. Students participated in poetry exercises and said they were empowered by their self-expression.

## **Braille Lab**

The center offers a braille lab for students to practice skills in the evening, and a student assistant is assigned to orient the new students to the lab. The student leader generally knows enough braille to answer basic questions. This student explains the sign-in procedure, gets the new students' reactions to their first day and experience in braille, leads a braille topic and is available to answer questions in the lab at least one hour per week.

## New Technology Acquisitions

### **MATT Connect by APH**

A revolutionary device that combines the universality of an Android tablet with a framework to allow for desktop and distance magnification, as well as Optical Character Recognition for scanning printed text to browsable audio.

### **IrisVision 2.0**

Head borne device that utilizes a Samsung smartphone to enhance low vision consumers' ability to see objects in their environment.

### **Blackboard Course sites**

A free site that allows an instructor to create instructional content in an organized layout to deliver a variety of instruction mediums. By combining this with existing instructional materials to provide a self-paced option for higher performing students to learn at their own rate without having to wait for an instructor to direct them to the next learning activity.

### **Digital Apex by TrainingWare**

Continue to utilize Digital Apex by TrainingWare for developing meaningful instructional materials. New units have been added in Office 2016 titles.

## Conferences

AT staff attended the Assistive Technology Industry Association Conference in Orlando, FL and attended multiple workshops focused on accessibility. Participants in turn shared knowledge gained from this conference with other DSB staff.

Information on the rapidly evolving head borne technology was presented at the North Carolina Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired conference in Asheville, NC.

O&M staff attended the Southeastern Orientation & Mobility Association conference, the 2019 Orientation and Mobility Symposium, the North Carolina Conference on Visual Impairment and Blindness and a Seminar for O&M instructors at Guiding Eyes for the Blind. Topics presented included accessible streets and sidewalks, street crossing techniques, orientation through technology and transition from cane to guide dog. These sessions provided the O&M staff with a refresher of familiar skills and techniques, enhanced knowledge of topics such as travel and touch techniques for working with clients who are deafblind and provided curriculum ideas for the inclusion of some of the newer O&M topics such as technology via GPS.

O&M also held two guide dog seminars from Guiding Eyes for the Blind. Our adult consumers were provided information on their program and their application process. During the SAVVY program with our teen consumers, they were also provided with program and application information. They were given the opportunity to walk with a dog guide to experience guide dog travel.

## Internships

An Orientation & Mobility intern from NC Central University began working at the Center in July and is expected to complete her internship in the spring of 2020.

## DSB Career and Training Center Results

**55** VR eligible individuals received training in the Adapting to Blindness in a Learning Environment program

**25** teens were provided transition services through the SAVVY Youth in Transition, College Prep and World of Work programs

**47** individuals received assessments by classroom instructors

**397** class assessments were provided

**27** individuals received low vision evaluations and/or low vision therapy



## DSB *Independent Living Services*

The social workers for the blind are on the front line of DSB to find the people who are struggling with vision loss within their respective communities. They provide services and supports that assist individuals who are blind, visually impaired and deafblind to independently manage their activities of daily living and prevent or reduce institutional care. The Independent Living Services Program provides services to eligible individuals in all 100 counties of the state. NC is unique in that we have social workers for the blind, who served 3,851 visually impaired individuals during SFY 2018. These services are provided at no cost to recipients and without regard to income.

Social workers provide adjustment counseling and casework assistance to individuals and their families to assist individuals to choose, obtain and use needed resources. Social workers also provide consumers basic instruction in activities of daily living, adaptive devices to support independence and facilitate experiences to help individuals adjust to and accept visual limitations. So many times, the social workers are told by visually impaired consumers how much

of an impact being able to set the dials on their ovens, microwaves, washing machines and dryers have made in their lives because they are now able to make a cup of coffee or prepare a meal without the assistance of another person. By utilizing basic cooking techniques and sometimes adaptive aids and appliances, preparing a meal is no longer something unattainable. Being able to locate the numbers on the telephone and dial without the use of vision enables the person to call to schedule their own appointments. They can jot down numbers and notes using adaptive writing aids. The ability to learn to pay bills and manage money in privacy is an area of independence that is so often reported to social workers as being

important and missed after vision loss. Little successes can have a huge impact on a person's quality of life who is living and struggling with vision loss.

Additionally, social workers provide consumers housing resource assistance and information and referrals to the local organizations. Communication with local agencies is an integral part of identifying the resources and building support

*Communication with local agencies is an integral part of identifying the resources and building support systems...*

systems within the community that are so important for the visually impaired individual and their families. Some of our community partners include adult services, home health agencies, housing, mental health, support groups, civic groups, doctors, charities, the Division of Social Services, disability advocates, the National Federation for the Blind, American Council of the Blind, senior centers, adult care facilities, hospitals, community colleges, food banks, local school systems and early education staff — to mention a few. Social workers cultivate relationships with these agencies in order to advocate for the specialized needs of individuals who are visually impaired, blind and deafblind.

NC Lions Clubs have a parallel mission to serve the blind and visually impaired. Many Lions Clubs also assist social workers in providing eye exams and/or glasses for North Carolina citizens with limited incomes. Social workers coordinate with NC Lions Clubs to support all aspects of the annual NC Lions VIP Fishing Tournament. More than just a fishing tournament, the participants engage in educational and recreational activities, are introduced to the

latest adaptive technologies and socialize with VIPs from around the state. With over 500 visually impaired participants and their guests, the tournament is the largest service project of its kind in the world.

Camp Dogwood, located on the shores of Lake Norman, is the headquarters of the Lions Clubs International and hosts VIPs from across the state every summer for education, fellowship and fun. VIPs can experience water sports, do crafts, dance and perform or simply enjoy the rocking chairs on the lakefront porch.

With the help of the social workers, people who might otherwise become isolated due to vision loss are able to interact with others in support group settings across the state. They learn to function more independently by taking on roles of responsibility within the group settings and establish a strong friendship base

with others who are experiencing some of the same challenges. Throughout the group process, teaching and learning take place by sharing the successes in daily lives regarding new accomplishments and barriers overcome.

*With the help of the social workers, people who might otherwise become isolated due to vision loss are able to interact with others...*

## Independent Living Focus Story: From the *Shelby Star*: Service dog helps Kings Mountain teacher



*Tina Mallén walks with her guide dog, Juno, outside Kings Mountain High School. Juno helps the Spanish teacher and librarian navigate crowded hallways, find doors and seats and other daily tasks at the school. [Casey White/The Star].*

Tina Mallén cannot always see what is right in front of her, but a new guide dog has changed the way she looks at life.

The Kings Mountain High School Spanish teacher and librarian was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa in 2004. The genetic disorder has caused Mallén to experience tunnel vision and total lack of vision when there isn't enough light.

But Juno, her new black lab, helps her get around in a way a cane never could.

“He is such a good guide for me. He helps me avoid obstacles altogether,” Mallén said.

Juno helps the teacher find doors and chairs, make her way up steps and through crowded hallways without worry, and leads

her on cloudy days and in dark rooms, where her vision is totally lost.

The guide dog has also become a loving companion for her family.

“When he’s got his harness on, he’s all business,” Mallén said. “When he takes that harness off, he’s all puppy. Lots of love.”

### **NC DSB Blind Services**

Mallén began working with the Services for the Blind through the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services in 2012. It was a big step, but one Mallén was skeptical to take since she was not totally blind.

The Kings Mountain teacher quickly found useful services. They helped her with resources for preparing food at home, keeping productive at work despite declining vision, and orientation mobility classes that taught her how to use a cane.

But even as she adapted to her visual obstacles, Mallén tried to avoid obstacles like crowded school hallways and stairs.

Lucy Plyler, a social worker for the blind, suggested a guide dog. It was another idea that took Mallén time to warm up to, but hearing about a friend’s experience with one helped convince her.

Mallén worked with Guiding Eyes for the Blind for around a year. The process involved applications, interviews, studies, and training. Since working with Juno in October, Mallén’s life has changed.

“Having the dog, she’s been able to realize that, ‘Wow, I can do this by myself now. I’ve never been able to do that,’” Plyler said.

### **Changing the mindset**

Like many who experience losses in sight, Mallén initially had fears about how her life would be impacted. Plyler said her goal is to help people realize that they can adapt.

“It’s just a matter of changing your mindset,” Plyler said. “Instead of giving up and doing nothing, it means, ‘I can still do this. I just have to do things a little differently.’”

One of Mallén’s major worries along the way was that retinitis pigmentosa would prevent her from continuing the job she loved at Kings Mountain High.

But now Mallén said she thanks God for the help that the DSB have provided her, and the way her family, friends, school staff and administration and students have helped her through the process.

“There’s so many ways to get around the problems I have,” Mallén said. “There’s no surgery available for me or any treatments available for me, but hey, you’ve just got to keep going. That’s just life. Everybody has something. You just can’t let it hold you back.”

Service Dog Helps Kings Mountain Teacher. Posted Dec 18, 2018 at 7:41 AM Updated Dec 18, 2018 at 7:41 AM

*Retrieved on December 18, 2019 from <https://www.shelbystar.com/news/20181218/service-dog-helps-kings-mountain-teacher>*

## DSB *Medical Eye Care* Program

The Medical Eye Care Program provides sponsorship for medical services that prevent blindness or additional loss of vision and procedures and treatments that help restore sight. Services are based on income eligibility and are generally available to those who have no other comparable benefit.

During SFY 2018, 1,376 individuals received Medical Eye Care Program services.

*Services are based on income eligibility and are generally available to those who have no other comparable benefit.*

During SFY 2018, Nurse Eye Care Consultants provided low vision evaluations and evaluations for video magnification systems for 1,882 eligible individuals. Other program achievements are listed below.

### Program Achievements

- **566** eye exams
- **561** treatments and/or surgeries sponsored
- **24** eye glasses purchased
- **297** eye medications purchased

## *DSB Independent Living Rehabilitation and Independent Living Older Blind Programs*

We had a full and exciting year. As another year ends, the need for assistive technology training continues. Subsequently, we have more district offices offering iPad training to meet the growing demand of our consumers. This year we had nine iPad Daily Living Skills classes that served 109 consumers. There is a lot of interest from our consumers on voice controlled smart speakers (Echo Dot, Google Home Mini). The introduction of these devices is driving the need for more technology training.

The week of April 9th, 14 consumers participated in a one-week Independent Living Week at the DSB Career and Training Center in Raleigh. This program continues to get better each year. It allows consumers to receive more training in assistive technology, orientation and mobility, self-defense, techniques of daily living and much more. The consumers learned a lot

in a short length of time and enjoyed their week. Feedback from the surveys let us know how much the consumers learned and how much they enjoyed the program.

Each year the independent living rehabilitation counselors (ILRCs) receive training on topics that support the hard work they do. This year, the ILRCs received two and a half days of training in Raleigh. This year's topics were conflict resolution, grief and loss, basic first aid, home visit safety, trauma-informed care and audio description. There was also roundtable discussion that generated rich conversation around these topics.

The ILR program also collaborated with the vocational rehabilitation program on two youth classes that served 18 Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) consumers.

## DSB ILR an ILOB 2019 Outcomes

- **1,109** eligible individuals served – 365 ILR and 744 ILOB
- **445** eligible individuals rehabilitated
- **33** Daily Living Skills Classes held
- **380** eligible individuals attended Daily Living Skills classes

## Success Story: Shawn

Shawn was accepted for services in March 2016 after losing vision as a result of sudden trauma to the head. He had worked at Wells Fargo in Charlotte as a payroll business analyst. He and his wife had divorced and had two young daughters who he was no longer able to see regularly. After losing his vision, he moved in with his mother outside of Salisbury.

When the ILRC began working with Shawn, he was struggling to adjust to blindness. At that time, he was unmotivated and let his mother do most things for him. The counselor found a way to work with Shawn on taking small steps to do things for himself, such as doing his own laundry, warming up food in the microwave, orienting himself to the kitchen and setting up the dinner table. His ILRC also focused on providing extensive adjustment to vision loss counseling.

During the Christmas holidays in 2016, the consumer's mother was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and passed away in January 2017. He then moved in with an uncle. Later, Shawn stated that losing his mother was the wakeup call for him that



he needed to start taking care of himself.

His ILRC talked with him about the Daily Living Skills classes that were going to take place in neighboring Cabarrus County. His aunt arranged to bring him to the classes, and he attended all weekly training sessions in the spring of 2017. During these classes, he came out of his shell and was eager to learn. Then he attended the IL Week at DSB Career and Training Center in Raleigh in 2017. He stated that he learned that he could do so much and realized that there were other career avenues open for him to pursue.

In the summer of 2018, Shawn moved to a residence of his own and was able to visit with his daughters more often. In 2019, he attended the ABLE program at the DSB Career and Training Center and rode the train on his own for the very first time. He also started dating a woman he met on the train who lived in Raleigh who is also visually impaired. Shawn began working with a DSB VR Counselor, completed the ABLE program and is weighing his new career options at this time.

## DSB *Deafblind* Services

Each year, DSB serves individuals with vision and hearing loss through the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and its Independent Living programs. Since the inception of the agency in 1935, with assistance from Helen Keller, DSB has provided support, training and other services to people with hearing and vision loss. DSB's goal is empower individuals with hearing and vision loss to achieve their goals of independence and employment.



*Deafblind individual making a delivery for Fed-Ex*

When someone experiences both vision and hearing loss, serious issues and self-doubt can arise. Many times, initial assessments are conducted with people who are skeptical of services since dealing with a dual sensory loss can be overwhelming. With the help of DSB services, individuals can feel empowered and thrive again. DSB has five deafblind specialist positions which serve all 100 counties in North Carolina. These specialists provide leadership in the provision of services to deafblind consumers by engaging in both direct services to consumers and serving as consultants to other staff. Despite long-term vacancies for two of these positions

this year, our deafblind specialists provided services to 148 qualified individuals referred by our programs.

The division works closely with its sister agency, the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, on the National Deafblind Equipment Distribution Program NDBEDP exists to provide 21st century telecommunication assistive technology to individuals who are deafblind. Our five deafblind specialists are uniquely qualified to provide assessments on assistive technology needs based on the

goals, communication mode and level of AT knowledge of deafblind individuals. DSB has been an active partner working with DSDHH since the NDBEDP pilot, which began in 2012. Our deafblind specialists complete the NDBEDP assessment, deliver the equipment to the consumer's home, coordinate trainers and provide a 90 day follow up session. Our deafblind specialists served 13 out of 26 new and approved deafblind individuals in this program.

The agency also collaborates with other organizations that serve individuals who are deafblind. DSB collaborates with the



Department of Public Instruction Deafblind Project and has an active member on the Deafblind Advisory Council facilitated by the DPI DB Project Director. We work together on issues and concerns related to deafblind consumers and their families that are in the school systems age 14 and above. This year DSB partnered with the NC Deafblind Project (as the host), National Center on Deafblindness, Helen Keller National Center and DSDHH to bring the Southeast Transition Institute to North Carolina. Any teen or young adult with dual sensory loss (deafblindness), aged 16 through 22 who is on a career path to work, technical school or college was invited to participate. Participants came from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina and Tennessee.

In addition, DSB is a member of the National Community of Partners sponsored by the Helen Keller National Center. This national forum discusses issues and concerns related to deafblind consumers and their families. We also collaborate with the HKNC regional representative for North Carolina as appropriate.

DSB has been an active supporter of the NC Deafblind Associates since its inception. We assist deafblind individuals

across the state with finding sponsorship to the annual Camp Dogwood Deafblind Weekend. We work closely with our local NC Lions Clubs who sponsor many of our deafblind campers based on what county they live in. Our deafblind specialists also assist with transporting our campers and working as a Support Service Provider while at camp. That means we serve as the eyes and ears of our deafblind campers as needed. In fall 2018, 50 deafblind campers attended Camp Dogwood Deafblind Weekend. NCDDBA has many additional activities throughout the year that we gladly support including the NCDDBA Conference, the NCDDBA Helen Keller Deafblind Awareness Day, the NCDDBA Holiday Party and quarterly board meetings.

This year, DSB partnered with Sprint Accessibility, Relay NC, DSDHH and HKNC to bring a first-of-its-kind event to North Carolina called the DeafBlind Taste of Technology Expo. This sponsored event was a collaborative event to reach individuals and professionals interested in learning about telecommunication access and technologies for people with hearing and vision loss. DSB is honored to actively better the lives of our deafblind consumers in employment, independent living and full participation in society.

## Looking ahead:

### *Staff development in focus as we move forward*

An employee who receives training becomes more confident in their ability to perform their job duties and can do so more effectively and efficiently. DSB invests in providing employees continuous training to promote their professional growth and development. The following chart is reflective of learning programs that were completed over the past year.

#### **Training Activity**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New Employee-Related training (NEST, NELVT, etc.)</li><li>• NRTC Improving Business Development Skills</li><li>• Best Practices for New Counselors</li><li>• Supervisor/SERT Training</li><li>• NCCVIB</li><li>• NCETA Conference</li><li>• NCRA Conference</li><li>• NCATP Training</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NCWorks Partnership Conference</li><li>• Annual In-Service (BEAM/ENCORE) Position-Related Training</li><li>• Supervisory/Leadership Development</li><li>• DSB Career and Training Center (Formerly RCB)</li><li>• Miscellaneous Conferences</li><li>• Annual Medical Update Training Registered Staff</li></ul>
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## DSB Staff at Medical Update Training 2019



## How to *Contact* DSB

<b>Asheville District Office:</b>	828-251-6732/1-800-422-1881
<b>Charlotte District Office:</b>	704-563-4168/1-800-422-1895
<b>Fayetteville District Office:</b>	910-486-1582/1-800-422-1897
<b>Greenville District Office:</b>	252-355-9016/1-800-422-1877
<b>Raleigh District Office:</b>	919-527-6740/1-800-422-1871
<b>Wilmington District Office:</b>	910-251-5743/1-800-422-1884
<b>Winston-Salem District Office:</b>	336-896-2227 /1-800-422-0373
<b>DSB Administration Office:</b>	919-527-6700/1-866-222-1546

**in Spanish 1-800-662-7030**

**<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/dsb>**



*NC Division of Services for the Blind's Fisher Building and Administrative Office*

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Services for the Blind provides services to people who are blind, visually impaired or deafblind to help them reach their goals of independence and employment. This mission is in direct alignment with the mission of NCDHHS in its goal to increase the health and well-being of all North Carolina's citizens.

Legislative guidance provided to DSB by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) provides focus on collaboration, engagement and partnerships in order to assist individuals with gaining employment and sustainability. WIOA's mandates ensure that employment and training services provided by the core programs are coordinated and complementary, so job seekers acquire skills and credentials that meet the growing needs of employers, creating avenues for empowerment.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 also strives to maximize the independence, well-being and health of older adults and people with disabilities, and their families and caregivers. DSB strives to provide services in areas in which individuals with disabilities often face significant challenges with living independently. This report describes the array of programs and services offered by DSB to help individuals with vision loss, blindness and deafblindness reach their goals of self-sufficiency and sustainability.



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Services for the Blind

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