Findings from the Vocational Rehabilitation Research and Training Center – State VR Agency Survey and Community Rehabilitation Provider Survey
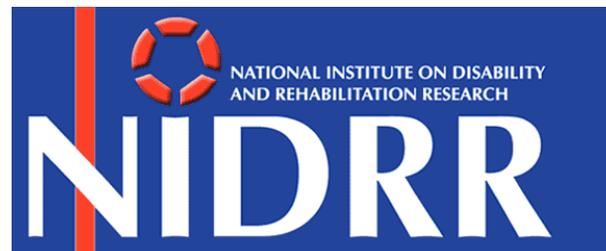
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Presentation Outline

- About the VR-RRTC

- Research goals & strategies

- What does the VR-RRTC offer state VR agencies?

- How can state VR agencies use the VR-RRTC?

- Latest research:

  – State VR Agency Survey findings

  – Community Rehabilitation Provider Survey findings

- Conclusions

- Future research

About the VR-RRTC

- Five-year center funded by NIDRR and RSA

- Established in FY 2008 at the ICI/ UMB

- Charged with building VR program capacity to improve employment outcomes through:
  - Research on policy & practice
  - Training and technical assistance

- Implemented in partnership with InfoUse & the Center for the Study and Advancement of Disability Policy (CSPD)

Research Goals and Strategies

Issue: Lack of evidence-based practices (EBP) in VR

VR-RRTC research goals:

1. Increase knowledge about the VR program, its characteristics, & role within the broader disability & employment system.

2. Increase knowledge about promising/ effective practices.

Research strategies:

1. Systematic review of VR research completed in 2010 confirmed lack of EBP in VR & limited knowledge about VR program structure, operations, management, & impact on outcomes.

2. Series of provider surveys (VR, IDD, MH, Welfare, CRPs)

3. Series of case studies on MSD/ OOS, MH, & IDD practices

What does the VR-RRTC offer state VR agencies?

- Organizational planning & development
- Partnership & influence of VR
- Providers & VR
- Policy & practice
- Knowledge translation
- Networking

How can state VR agencies use the VR-RRTC?

- Organizational change/ improvement
- Partnership development
- Policy & practice
- Provider alliances
- Influence & information/ research

State-By-State Employment Maps
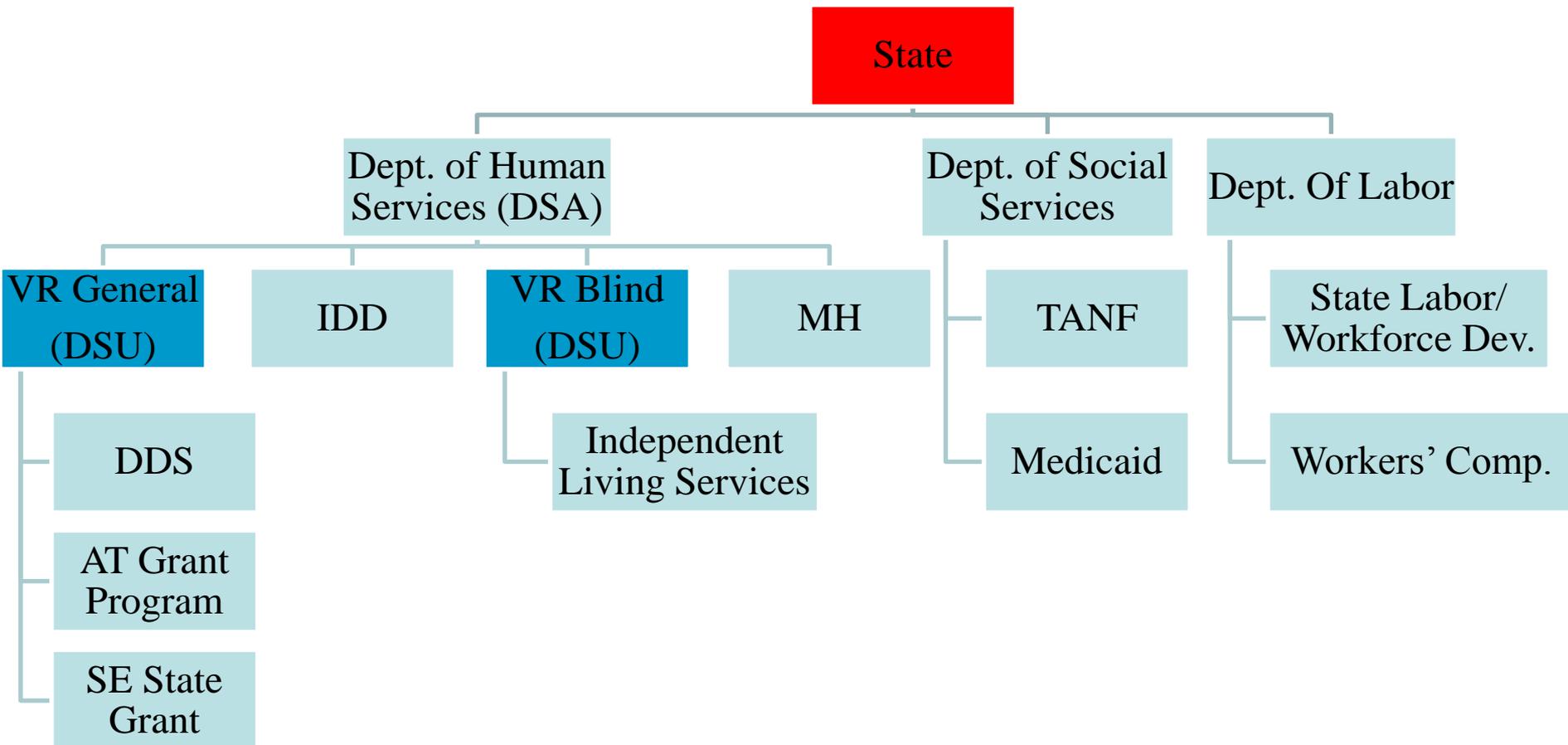
State-By-State Employment Maps

- **State**
  - **Dept. of Human Services (DSA)**
    - VR General (DSU)
      - DDS, AT Grant Program, & SE State Grant
    - IDD
    - VR Blind (DSU)
      - Independent Living Services
    - MH
  - **Dept. of Social Services**
    - TANF & Medicaid
  - **Dept. of Labor**
    - State Labor/ Workforce Development, & Workers' Compensation

Info That Maps Will Provide:

- State specific information (based on Census data)

- VR specific information (based on VR survey, RSA 911/13/2 data)

- VR partnerships (based on VR, IDD, MH, & Welfare surveys

- Effective practices (based on MSD/ OOS, MH, & IDD case studies)

National Survey of State VR Agencies

Survey Population, Implementation, & Response

- Online survey targeted at VR agencies in all 50 states, DC, & the territories

- Administered between January 17 – April 1, 2011

- 70 agencies responded (87.5%), 4 VR agencies opted out, 6 VR agency surveys are in process.

- Of the 70 respondents 44 were directors and 26 were "other" staff.

Characteristics of VR Directors (n=44)

- Of the 44 responding VR directors, two-thirds (28) had been in this position for less than 5 years.
  - Of those 28, half (14) had worked for **this** VR agency for more than 10 years, and
  - Two-thirds (18) had worked for **any** VR agency for more than 10 years (see Table).
- On average, VR directors had been working for **any** VR agency for 18 years (range: 1– 42 years).

Years	Number of VR Directors with Less Than Five Years of Experience (n=28)	
	Working for this VR agency	Working for any VR agency
0 – 5	8	7
6 – 10	6	3
11 – 20	5	8
21 – 30	6	6
31+	3	4

Characteristics of Other VR Staff (n=26)

- Of the 26 responding VR staff, many (15) had been in this position for less than 5 years.

- The majority (18) had worked for **this** VR agency for more than 10 years (see Table).

- Most (20) had worked for **any** VR agency for more than 10 years (see Table).

Years	Number of VR Staff (n=26)	
	Working for this VR agency	Working for any VR agency
0 – 5	3	2
6 – 10	5	4
11 – 20	7	9
21 – 30	8	7
31+	3	4

- On average, VR staff had been working for **any** VR agency for 19 years (range: 5 – 40 years).

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VR Survey Domains

1. **About the Respondent**
   – Title, Years in this position, Years working for this VR agency/ any VR agency

2. **Organizational Structure, Programs, & Staffing**
   – DSA/ DSU structure incl. nature of DSA & related changes
   – Nature of DSU director position & reporting entity
   – Location of agencies/ programs within state government structure
   – DSU/ program staffing incl. specialized staff

VR Survey Domains Cont.

3. **Core Organizational Functions**

   – Control over core org. functions incl. HR, infrastructure, MIS, policies and procedures, finances, SP, PE, QA, purchasing & contracting of services

   – SP processes & written documentation

   – Participation in major QA processes (such as Baldrige, Sterling)

   – Receipt of additional funding & income from other sources over the past 5 years

4. **Interagency Partnerships**

   – VR partnership with 12 agencies/ programs across 10 areas of collaboration

VR Survey Domains Cont.

5. **Post-Extended Services for Individuals with SE Outcomes**
   – Number of individuals closed into SE/ types of extended services
   – Minimum work & wage requirement for SE outcomes
   – Types of employment service settings accepted as SE outcomes
   – VR having a separate program for purchasing SE extended services
   – Type of providers delivering SE extended services in the state
   – Type of mechanisms VR uses to assure continuity of SE extended service delivery by providers incl. written agreements
   – Types of sources to fund SE extended services for VR customers
   – Types of individuals/ customers for whom VR is unable to access funding for SE extended services

Research Questions

1. How are state VR agencies organized?

   - Are the DSA and DSU the same (single entity) or are they different (separate entities)? If separate, what is the nature of the DSA?

2. What is the nature of the DSU director position and to whom does he/ she report?

3. What level of control do state VR agencies have over core organizational functions?

   - Functions: HR; Infrastructure and MIS; Policies, procedures, and finances; Planning, PE, and QA; Vendors

4. With what agencies do state VR agencies partner and in what ways?

VR Agency Organizational Structure

- Of the 70 responding agencies, 30 were **combined**, 21 **general**, & 19 **blind** agencies, representing 45 states, DC, & 4 territories.

- About two-thirds (43) reported the DSA and DSU to be **separate**, compared to 27 agencies that were **single** entities (DSA=DSU).

- Of the 43 separate entities, about half (21) reported their DSA to be a **human, social, or disability services agency**, as opposed to a labor agency (14) or an education (8) agency.

- Five agencies (DC, LA, MO general, TX general, WY) reported that their **DSU had merged** with another agency since FY 2005, resulting in a relocation of the DSU within state government (except WY).

VR Agency Leadership

- About two-thirds of the 70 DSU director positions were **appointments**.
  - Appointments (43)
  - Civil servant/ classified positions (14)
  - Unclassified positions/ mgt. (9)
  - "Other" positions (3)

    (1 agency did not provide this information)

VR Agency Leadership Cont.

- Of the 28 VR directors with less than 5 years of experience, most (17) had been **appointed**.
  - Appointments (17)
  - Unclassified positions/ mgt. (5)
  - Civil servant/ classified positions (4)
  - "Other" position (1)

(1 agency did not provide this information)

VR Agency Leadership Cont.

- Slightly less than half of the 70 DSU directors **reported to the commissioner, secretary, or director** (who report to the governor).

  - Commissioner, secretary, or director (33)

  - Deputy or assistant (23)

  - Governor or board (12)

  (2 agencies did not provide this information)

Agency Type: DSU DirectorReporting Entity:	Combined (n=28)	General (n=21)	Blind (n=19)
Governor/ board (n=12)	5	2	5
Commissioner/ secretary/ director (n=33)	13	11	9
Deputy/ assistant (n=23)	10	8	5

Control Over Organizational Functions

- Single *entities* (DSA=DSU) were the primary decision-makers with respect to core organization functions (see Table). For *separate* entities, it was mostly the DSU that had primary decision-making power.

Function	SINGLE (n=27)		SEPARATE (n=43)*		
	DSA/ DSU	Other Entity	DSA	DSU	Other Entity
Human resources	25	2	7	29	6
Infrastructure	20	7	13	24	6
Management Information Systems	21	6	11	24	8
Policies and procedures	26	1	2	41	0
Finances	27	0	3	40	0
Planning	27	0	1	42	0
Quality Assurance	25	2	2	40	1
Service purchasing and contracting	25	2	4	36	3

*n=42 for HR function.

VR Partnerships

- VR agencies reported collaborating with other agencies/ programs mostly to **coordinate service delivery** & **SE extended services, share physical space, fund programs** & **customers,** & **share data.**

- There was less of an emphasis on **jointly funding staff**, & **sharing CRP certification, monitoring, & rate setting.**

- Six VR agencies reported collaborating with other agencies/ programs in all of the 10 areas listed above.

- Of the 70 VR agencies, slightly more than half (38) collaborated with other agencies/ programs in 6 or more areas. The remaining 32 VR agencies collaborated in 5 or fewer areas with other entities.

- 2 VR agencies collaborated with other entities in only 1 area.

Partnerships by VR Agency Type

- General & combined agencies collaborated with a greater number of agencies/ programs related to employment than blind agencies.

- General, blind, & combined agencies did not differ in terms of the number of areas in which they collaborated.

Number of Agency Collaborations	General/ Combined (n=51)	Blind (n=19)
0– 5	8	12
6– 12	43	7

Number of Areas of Collaboration	General/ Combined (n=51)	Blind (n=19)
0– 5	24	8
6– 10	27	11

VR – IDD Partnership

- VR and IDD agencies collaborated mostly to coordinate service delivery & SE extended services and, to some extent, to fund customers & share data (see Table).

- 2 VR agencies collaborated with IDD in 9 of the 10 areas.

- 10 VR agencies collaborated with IDD in only 1 area.

Area of Collaboration	N	Area of Collaboration	N
Coordinate service delivery	43	Share CRP certification process	9
Coordinate SE extended services	38	Share CRP rate setting	9
Jointly fund customers	24	Share physical space	8
Share data	24	Share CRP monitoring process	8
Jointly fund programs	16	Jointly fund staff at any level	4

Respondents could select more than one area of collaboration.

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VR – MH Partnership

- VR and MH agencies collaborated mostly to coordinate service delivery & SE extended services and, to some extent, to fund customers & programs (see Table).

- 2 VR agencies collaborated with MH in 8 of the 10 areas.

- 16 VR agencies collaborated with MH in only 3 areas.

Area of Collaboration	N	Area of Collaboration	N
Coordinate service delivery	48	Jointly fund staff at any level	10
Coordinate SE extended services	40	Share physical space	9
Jointly fund customers	29	Share CRP certification process	9
Jointly fund programs	23	Share CRP monitoring process	8
Share data	21	Share CRP rate setting	6

Respondents could select more than one area of collaboration.

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Partnership Characteristics of High Performing VR Agencies (n=7)

- Of the 70 responding VR agencies, 7 agencies met all performance indicators of RSA Evaluation Standard 1: To Assess VR's Impact on Employment ("high performers").

- High performers partnered on average with 6 agencies and in 5 areas.

- All high performers partnered with Primary & Secondary Education incl. Special Education, followed by SWIBs (6 of 7), MH (5), and IDD/ LEAs/ LWIBs/ WIPA (4).

- All high performers collaborated with other agencies to coordinate service delivery. This was followed by coordinating SE extended services (5 of 7), funding customers, programs, & staff at any level (4), as well as sharing physical space (4).

National Survey of Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs)

Survey Sample, Implementation, & Response

- Targeted at CRPs in all 50 states and DC
- Stratified (by state) random sample of CRPs
- Administered between June 2010 – February 2011
- Two-phase data collection effort: full-length survey and condensed survey
- 1,350 of 3,592 agencies responded (37.6%)

Response Rate and Non-Response Bias

Non-response bias analysis:

- Offered non-respondents a condensed version of the survey 5 months after survey launch.

- Used respondents of the condensed survey as proxies for non-respondents.

- Compared respondents of the condensed survey with those of the full-length survey with respect to core survey items

- Found no statistically significantly differences between the two groups, suggesting low response bias.

CRP Survey Domains

1. **General Provider Information**
   - Type of org., Geographic scope of org. programs, Total operations budget, Numbers of individuals served in empl. and non-work services or both

2. **Customer Data for Employment Services**
   - Types of empl. services (integrated and segregated) CRP provides & numbers of individuals with any disability/ with IDD served in each type
   - Trends in empl. service delivery over the past 3 years (by type of empl. service)
   - CRP funding for empl. services
   - Types of disabilities of CRP customers receiving empl. services

CRP Survey Domains Cont.

3. **Customer Data for Non-Work Services**

   – Types of non-work services (integrated and segregated) CRP provides and numbers of individuals with any disability/ with IDD served in each type

   – Trends in non-work service delivery over the past 3 years (by type of empl. service)

4. **Participation in the Ticket to Work Program**

   – CRP status as approved Employment Network (EN) or part of such network

   – Plans to become an EN

   – Number of individuals for whom CRP received ticket payments in last 12 months

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CRP Survey Domains Cont.

5.   **Supporting Customers from State VR Agencies**

   – Provision of empl. services to VR customers

   – Percent of CRP income coming from VR

   – Trends in CRP business with VR over the past 3 years

   – Types of disabilities/ gender/ age of VR customers supported by CRPs

   – Types of VR and related services provided by CRPs

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CRP Demographics

The majority of CRPs (82%) were private nonprofit organizations.

Most CRPs (73%) provided both employment & non-work services.

Type of Organization	% CRPs
Private nonprofit	82
Private for profit	8
Public- state/tribal sponsored	4
Public- local sponsored	3
Other type	3

Type of Provider	% CRPs
Employment & non-work services	73
Employment services only	18
Non-work services only	9

Percentages are based on the number of CRPs that responded to the respective survey question.

CRP Demographics Cont.

- The majority of CRPs (81%) reported total operations budget for employment & non-work services under $5 million.

Operations Budget (in Million)	% CRPs
Less than 1	41
1 – 5	40
5 – 10	9
10 – 15	4
More than 15	6

Percentages are based on the number of CRPs that responded to this survey question.

CRP Business with State VR Agencies

- About sixty percent reported providing services to VR customers.
- Of those CRPs, about two-thirds reported that less than 20 percent of their total income for employment services comes from VR.

Percent CRP Income From VR	% CRPs
0 – 19	63
20 – 39	12
40 – 59	7
60 – 79	5
80 – 100	13

Percentages are based on the number of CRPs that responded to this survey question.

Characteristics of VR Customers Supported By CRPs

- The top three disabilities of VR customers served by CRPs were: intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental illness, and learning disability.

Disability Category	Average Percentage of VR Customers Supported by CRPs
Intellectual and developmental disability	49
Mental illness	29
Learning disability	18
Physical disability	12
Substance abuse	7
Other disability	6
Blindness/ visual impairments	5
Deafness/hearing impairment	5

VR customers could be represented in more than one disability category.

Conclusions

- High turnover among VR directors in the past 10 years; however, VR directors (and staff) have a long VR tenure.

- Of the separate entities, half of the DSAs were in human, social, or disability service agencies, as opposed to education and labor agencies.

- DSUs (regardless of single or separate entity) exert a high level of control over critical organizational functions.

- VR collaborates extensively with a host of agencies incl. IDD and MH – a hallmark of the public VR system.

- Large percent of CRPs support VR customers, but VR does not make up a large part of CRP income for employment services.

Future Research

- Large number of VR directors with less than 5 years of experience and how to best support them (e.g., peer mentoring).

- Location of the VR agency within the state structure (human, social, disability services vs. education vs. labor) & implications for customer demographics, referral sources, partnerships, & for how the VR agency is perceived by governor's offices and state policy makers.

- Control over critical organizational functions & implications for VR operations, management, performance.

Future Research Cont.

- Depth and breadth of VR partnerships (e.g., sharing space – organizational and/ or program space?) & impact on outcomes; characteristics of high performing VR agencies.

- VR partnership with IDD and MH specifically (e.g., what types of data are being shared and how?) & impact on outcomes.

- Role of VR (compared to IDD and MH) in CRP business.

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