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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE CSNA

PURPOSE

The Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) assesses the vocational rehabilitation needs of Kentuckians with disabilities every three years, as required by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended). OVR uses the results to develop and update its state plan for vocational rehabilitation services, and to help determine objectives and priorities. Conducted by the University of Kentucky's Human Development Institute (HDI), this assessment aims to identify the evolving needs, challenges, and barriers faced by individuals with disabilities in accessing vocational services and achieving employment.

GOALS

The goals of the Kentucky OVR CSNA align with those delineated in the Rehabilitation Act, to assess the general vocational rehabilitation (VR) needs of individuals with disabilities statewide with the focus on five required areas:

- Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services
- Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and those who have been unserved and underserved
- Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system
- Youth and students with disabilities, including their need for Pre-Employment Transition Services (pre-ETS)
- The need to establish, develop, or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs)

TARGET AUDIENCES

CONSUMERS

- Individuals with a disability
- Parents or guardians of an individual with a disability
- Caretakers and other family members of an individual with a disability
- Teachers/Educators
- Support Staff
- Advocates
- Service providers
- Interested members of the community

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS (CRPs)

- Administrators
- Staff

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (OVR)

- Counselors
- Staff

KENTUCKY CAREER CENTER (KCC)

- Staff

STATEWIDE COUNCIL FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (SCVR)

- Council members

DATA SOURCES

The 2021-2023 CSNA, completed from July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024, incorporated the following data sources to complete the required components of the assessment:

- The VR Needs Assessment Guide
- Results from focus groups with Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation (council members only), Kentucky OVR Counselors and Staff, Community Rehabilitation Programs Administrators and Staff, and Consumers.
- Results from surveys of OVR consumers and stakeholders (individuals with a disability, parents or guardians of an individual with a disability, advocates, service providers and interested members of the community), transition-age OVR consumers and shareholders (including transition-age OVR consumers, parents/guardians, caretaker, siblings, other family members, teachers/educators and support staff), Kentucky OVR counselors and staff, Kentucky Career Center staff, and Community Rehabilitation Program administrators and staff.
- Results from key-informant interviews with OVR consumers and guardians, professional advocates and supported employment specialists.
- Results from forums with OVR consumers and interested members of the public, OVR counselors and staff, and Community Rehabilitation Programs.
- Analysis of American Community Survey (ACS) data, OVR caseload data, Kentucky Post School Outcomes (KYSO) data, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Program statistical data, and the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium from the Center for Research.

ABOUT KENTUCKY OVR SERVICES

The Division of Field Services is responsible for providing direct services to consumers across the Commonwealth. The Regional Program services are denoted by five regions across the state with representation on the states 10 Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA).

Table 1. Kentucky OVR Local Workforce Development Areas by Service Region ¹

Services Region	Local Workforce Development Area
West Region	Green River and Western KY
West Central Region	Kentuckiana Works and Lincoln Trail
East Central Region	Northern KY and Bluegrass
South Region	South Central and Cumberland
East Region	Ten County Area (TENCO) and Eastern KY Concentrated Employment Program (EK-CEP)

The Division of Field Services has 17 districts throughout the service regions and also includes the following administrative branches and positions:

- The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Branch
- The Supported Employment/Community Rehabilitation Program
- The Rehabilitation Technology Branch
- The Employer Services Branch
- The Transitions Services Branch
- Social Security/Program Coordinator

The Division provides numerous services to help individuals reach their vocational goals including: Pre-Employment Training Services (pre-ETS); counseling and guidance; vocational and other training services; supported employment; personal assistance; interpreter and notetaking services; telecommunications, sensory and other technological aids and devices; rehabilitation technology; job placement and job retention services; employment follow-up and post-employment

services; the Coordinating and Assisting the Reuse of Assistive Technology (CARAT) Project; the Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corp. (KATLC); and the Kentucky Assistive Technology Services (KATS) Network.

The Division of Blind Services provides individuals with visual disabilities the resources and tools they need to become more independent throughout their lives. ¹

Map 1. OVR Regions and Service Districts ²



Table 2. OVR Regions and Districts by County List ²

County	Region	District
Adair	South	Somerset District
Allen	South	Bowling Green District
Anderson	East Central	Danville District
Ballard	West	Paducah District
Barren	South	Bowling Green District
Bath	East	Ashland District
Bell	East	Hazard District
Boone	East Central	Florence District
Bourbon	East Central	Bluegrass District
Boyd	East	Ashland District
Boyle	East Central	Danville District
Bracken	East	Ashland District
Breathitt	East	Prestonsburg District

County	Region	District
Knox	East	Hazard District
LaRue	West Central	Elizabethtown District
Laurel	South	Somerset District
Lawrence	East	Prestonsburg District
Lee	East	Hazard District
Leslie	East	Hazard District
Letcher	East	Hazard District
Lewis	East	Ashland District
Lincoln	East Central	Danville District
Livingston	West	Paducah District
Logan	South	Bowling Green District
Lyon	West	Paducah District
Madison	East Central	Danville District

County	Region	District
Breckinridge	West Central	Elizabethtown District
Bullitt	West Central	Elizabethtown District
Butler	South	Bowling Green District
Caldwell	West	Paducah District
Calloway	West	Paducah District
Campbell	East Central	Covington District
Carlisle	West	Paducah District
Carroll	East Central	Florence District
Carter	East	Prestonsburg District
Casey	South	Somerset District
Christian	West	Paducah District
Clark	East Central	Lexington District
Clay	East	Hazard District
Clinton	South	Somerset District
Crittenden	West	Paducah District
Cumberland	South	Somerset District
Daviess	West	Owensboro District
Edmonson	South	Bowling Green District
Elliott	East	Prestonsburg District
Estill	East Central	Danville District
Fayette	East Central	Lexington & Bluegrass Districts
Fleming	East	Ashland District
Floyd	East	Prestonsburg District
Franklin	East Central	Bluegrass District
Fulton	West	Paducah District
Gallatin	East Central	Florence District
Garrard	East Central	Danville District
Grant	East Central	Florence District
Graves	West	Paducah District
Grayson	West Central	Elizabethtown District
Green	South	Somerset District
Greenup	East	Ashland District
Hancock	West	Owensboro District
Hardin	West Central	Elizabethtown District
Harlan	East	Hazard District
Harrison	East Central	Bluegrass District
Hart	South	Bowling Green District
Henderson	West	Owensboro District
Henry	West Central	East Jefferson District
Hickman	West	Paducah District
Hopkins	West	Paducah District
Jackson	East	Hazard District
Jefferson	West Central	Louisville & East Jefferson Districts
Jessamine	East Central	Danville District
Johnson	East	Prestonsburg District
Kenton	East Central	Covington & Florence Districts
Knott	East	Prestonsburg District

County	Region	District
Magoffin	East	Prestonsburg District
Marion	West Central	Elizabethtown District
Marshall	West	Paducah District
Martin	East	Prestonsburg District
Mason	East	Ashland District
McCracken	West	Paducah District
McCreary	South	Somerset District
McLean	West	Owensboro District
Meade	West Central	Elizabethtown District
Menifee	East	Prestonsburg District
Mercer	East Central	Danville District
Metcalfe	South	Bowling Green District
Monroe	South	Bowling Green District
Montgomery	East	Ashland District
Morgan	East	Prestonsburg District
Muhlenberg	West	Paducah District
Nelson	West Central	Elizabethtown District
Nicholas	East Central	Bluegrass District
Ohio	West	Owensboro District
Oldham	West Central	East Jefferson District
Owen	East Central	Florence District
Owsley	East	Hazard District
Pendleton	East Central	Covington District
Perry	East	Hazard District
Pike	East	Prestonsburg District
Powell	East Central	Lexington District
Pulaski	South	Somerset District
Robertson	East	Ashland District
Rockcastle	South	Somerset District
Rowan	East	Ashland District
Russell	South	Somerset District
Scott	East Central	Bluegrass District
Shelby	West Central	East Jefferson District
Simpson	South	Bowling Green District
Spencer	West Central	East Jefferson District
Taylor	South	Somerset District
Todd	West	Paducah District
Trigg	West	Paducah District
Trimble	West Central	East Jefferson District
Union	West	Owensboro District
Warren	South	Bowling Green District
Washington	West Central	Elizabethtown District
Wayne	South	Somerset District
Webster	West	Owensboro District
Whitley	South	Somerset District
Wolfe	East	Prestonsburg District
Woodford	East Central	Bluegrass District

DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS

The Human Development Institute (HDI) developed an Information Dissemination Plan for OVR for sharing the findings of the 2024 Kentucky OVR CSNA over a 3-month period. The plan includes several strategic components to ensure that key audiences receive the assessment's insights effectively.

Primary dissemination channels include:

- OVR Website – hosts the full CSNA report, an executive summary, and a presentation toolkit
 - Social media – platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter
 - Targeted Emailing – to OVR partners, focus group participants, and other stakeholders
-

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation's Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (KY OVR CSNA) is a report developed by the University of Kentucky's Human Development Institute's Evaluation Unit (HDI) with guidance from the KY OVR. This CSNA responds to the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The following six sections of this report are structured in response to the VR Needs Assessment Guide. Sections I through V address the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities; individuals with disabilities who are minorities and those who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program; individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system; transition-age youth with disabilities; and the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state. Sections I through V are organized by key insights and suggested action items. Section VI aggregates the comprehensive findings from the Concerns Report Assessment, which included focus groups, surveys, and forums, providing a thorough evaluation of overall satisfaction with OVR services and identifying high satisfaction, potential growth, and priority improvement areas.

SECTION I. NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

Individuals with the most significant disabilities (MSD) in Kentucky face numerous and complex barriers to employment and accessing vocational rehabilitation services. These barriers include:

- High unemployment rates
- High poverty rates
- High rates of housing burden
- Limited access to essential services such as healthcare and transportation.
- Lack of accessible housing availability
- Difficulties in accessing community-based services and mental health care
- Significant transportation barriers, especially in rural areas

This assessment underscores the need for comprehensive and coordinated efforts to address these multifaceted challenges, ensuring individuals with MSD can access meaningful employment opportunities and improve their quality of life.

KEY INSIGHTS

EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS

- **High Unemployment Rates:** The employment rate for working-age Kentuckians with disabilities was 32.3%, significantly lower than the 76.5% employment rate for those without disabilities. The disability employment gap in Kentucky (44.2%) was the third largest in the US.
- **Rural Employment Disparities:** Employment rates were lower in rural areas (23.1%) compared to metro areas (36.5%), with rural areas experiencing a larger employment gap (45.5%).

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

- **High Poverty Rates:** Nearly one-third (31.2%) of working-age Kentuckians with disabilities lived below the poverty line, compared to 12.8% of those without disabilities. This rate was higher in rural areas, with the most rural counties seeing a poverty rate of 35.7%.
- **Benefits Dependency:** Kentucky had one of the highest rates of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits receipt in the US, with 9.8% of the working-age population receiving these benefits, posing a significant barrier to employment.

HOUSING AND HEALTH CARE

- **High Housing Burden:** Nearly one-third (30.3%) of working-age Kentuckians with disabilities experienced housing burden, higher than the rate for those without disabilities (18%).
- **Limited Accessible Housing:** Focus group feedback highlighted a lack of accessible housing options as a major issue for individuals with MSD.
- **Health Insurance Coverage:** A significant majority (94.4%) of Kentuckians with disabilities had health insurance, however two-thirds of Kentuckians with disabilities relied on public coverage.

ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

- **Healthcare Access Issues:** There were significant barriers identified to accessing mental health care and specialized healthcare services (such as dental care or different healthcare specialties) for individuals with MSD.
- **Transportation Barriers:** Availability of accessible transportation options was a significant barrier, particularly in rural parts of the state, limiting access to employment and essential services.
- **Supported Employment:** Availability of supported employment (SE) services varied across the state, as did satisfaction levels with the provision of SE services, indicating the need for improved service delivery.

SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION

- **Challenges in Reaching Staff:** Consumers reported difficulties in reaching staff members and expressed discouragement associated with multiple contact attempts.
- **Website Usability Issues:** Difficulty with website usability and contact information accessibility was a notable concern.
- **Long Wait Times:** Consumers experienced long wait times and difficulties in scheduling appointments.
- **Independent Living Services:** Improving services for independent living was identified as a need.

SECTION II. NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED

The assessment revealed that Kentucky OVR services were inclusive of many traditionally unserved and underserved populations. For example, individuals who identify as Black or African American, those that identify as Hispanic or Latino/a and consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing were all proportionally or better represented in OVR case record data, reflecting strong outreach and service delivery efforts for these populations. However, some unique issues remain for Kentucky's unserved and underserved groups of individuals with disabilities. Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino consumers experience higher exit rates before IPE and lower case success rates, indicating a need for targeted retention strategies. Additionally, the utilization rates for consumers who are blind or visually impaired and Kentuckians of Asian extraction are notably low, suggesting the necessity for specialized outreach and support programs. Disparities in service provision were also identified, with Hispanic/Latino consumers receiving fewer resources and shorter service durations. Finally, while rural and Appalachian consumers demonstrate higher success rates, the reasons behind these positive outcomes should be further explored and replicated. Comprehensive data management improvements are crucial to better understand and address the needs of these populations.

KEY INSIGHTS

UNSERVED/UNDERSERVED GROUPS PROPORTIONALLY REPRESENTED

OVR served most racial and ethnic groups at proportional or better rates compared to state census data. OVR also served consumers who are deaf and hard of hearing at proportional rates.

HIGH PRE-IPE EXIT RATES FROM SERVICES

Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American consumers had high pre-IPE exit rates (34.1% and 30.2%, respectively) compared to White OVR consumers (18.6%).

LOW UTILIZATION RATES

Consumers who are blind or visually impaired were significantly underrepresented, with utilization rates far below the state average (-16.7%). Consumers who identified as Asian were also underrepresented within OVR case records.

DISPARITIES IN SERVICE PROVISION

Certain unserved/underserved groups had lower case expenditures and/or shorter service durations compared to other groups. Most notably, Hispanic/Latino consumers had on average, lower case expenditures (\$4,690) and shorter service durations (507 days) compared to White consumers (\$6,236 and 874 days, respectively).

DISPARITIES IN OUTCOMES

The case success rates varied substantially for unserved/underserved groups. For example, OVR consumers from the rural and Appalachian parts of the state had higher overall case success rates (57.3% and 57.9%, respectively) relative to their metropolitan and non-Appalachian counterparts. Notably, rates of successful outcomes for Black/African American consumers (36%) lagged far behind that of White consumers (57.7%).

SECTION III. STATEWIDE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM

The statewide workforce investment system in Kentucky aims to integrate vocational rehabilitation services with other workforce development initiatives to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The assessment highlighted the need for stronger collaboration among stakeholders, improved access to resources, and targeted programs to address the unique needs of individuals with disabilities. The involvement of OVR in key projects like RETAIN Kentucky and the Inclusive Worker Health Leadership Network (IWHLN) underscores the importance of comprehensive, coordinated efforts to support this population.

KEY INSIGHTS

COLLABORATION AND INTEGRATION

- **Stronger Stakeholder Collaboration:** Enhanced collaboration among vocational rehabilitation services, Kentucky Career Centers, employers, and educational institutions is necessary to streamline service delivery and improve employment outcomes. For example, the Kentucky Career Center (KCC) survey indicated that 80% of respondents reported having a good or excellent working relationship with OVR.
- **Integration with Workforce Development Programs:** Effective integration of VR services with broader workforce development programs, such as RETAIN Kentucky, is essential to provide seamless support for individuals with disabilities.

ACCESS TO RESOURCES

- **Resource Availability:** Improved access to resources, including funding, technology, and support services, is necessary to address the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities. According to KCC survey respondents, 88.3% reported that their technology needs were met, but there are still gaps in resources, particularly for alternate or accessible formats.
- **Infrastructure Support:** Investment in modern infrastructure and technology is crucial to support remote or hybrid service models, particularly in rural areas.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

- **Evaluation of Workforce Programs:** Continuous evaluation of workforce programs is needed to measure their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. The Kentucky Inclusive Workforce Summit and RETAIN Kentucky are examples of initiatives aimed at enhancing program effectiveness.

- **Tailored Programs:** Development of tailored workforce programs that address the specific needs of individuals with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, is vital. Survey data showed that training needs for KCC staff include support for Social Security Work Incentives, Assistive Technology, and various disability-specific supports.

POSITIVE IMPACT OF KEY PROJECTS

- **Kentucky Inclusive Workforce Summit:** This summit, organized by the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, brings together stakeholders to discuss strategies for improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- **RETAIN Kentucky:** This project has served over 3,000 Kentuckians, helping individuals with disabilities stay at work and return to work, demonstrating a positive impact on workforce retention and health integration.

SECTION IV. TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Transition-age youth with disabilities face numerous challenges in transitioning from secondary education to adulthood. These challenges include:

- High rates of early exits from VR services
- Varying VR utilization rates across counties
- Significant barriers to employment, such as limited opportunities, transportation issues, and job-seeking skill gaps

Despite these obstacles, there are areas of high satisfaction within the services provided by OVR, particularly in counselor support and prioritization of consumer preferences. Addressing the identified gaps and building on existing strengths are crucial for enhancing the vocational outcomes for these youth.

KEY INSIGHTS

OUTREACH AND RETENTION

- **High Rates of Early Exit from Services:** A significant proportion (66.3%) of transition-age youth exited services before an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) could be developed.
- **Low pre-ETS Conversion Rates:** The conversion rate from pre-ETS to VR services was 29.9%, with significant variability (ranging from 23.6% to 43%) over the three-year review period.
- **Varied VR Utilization Rates:** VR utilization rates for individuals aged 15 to 21 vary widely across counties. For instance, Ballard County shows an exceptionally high rate (87.5%), while Jackson County has a notably low rate (2.5%).
- **Lack of Awareness of Services:** Only 67.1% of survey respondents feel that students with disabilities are aware of OVR services. This theme also emerged in focus groups and key informant interviews, highlighting a widespread lack of awareness about available services and eligibility for pre-ETS.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

- **High Satisfaction with Counselor Support:** 83.6% of respondents are satisfied with the opportunities for giving feedback and being heard by OVR. Additionally, 82.8% feel that OVR prioritizes student preferences for job goals and assistive technology, and 82.5% are satisfied with the accessibility and ease of use of OVR's communication options.
- **Professionalism and Helpfulness:** 81.8% of transition-age consumers survey respondents feel that OVR counselors and staff are professional and helpful, reinforcing results from the focus groups and key informant interviews.

EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS

- **Lack of Quality Employment Opportunities:** Only 68.2% of respondents feel that OVR helps transition students achieve and maintain quality employment opportunities.
- **Supported Employment Services Availability:** 69.8% of respondents feel that supported employment services are available when needed.
- **Job Seeking Skill Gaps:** There are significant gaps in essential job-seeking skills such as resume writing, interviewing, and job search strategies.

PROVISION OF QUALITY SERVICES

- **Regional Disparities:** High-quality transition services are more available in certain areas, with VR utilization rates in some counties being notably low, indicating potential gaps in service provision.
- **Availability of CRPs and pre-ETS:** Lack of CRPs and pre-ETS availability in certain parts of the state affects the quality of services provided.
- **Specialization and Staffing:** Insufficient OVR staff to specialize and provide focused transition-age services in some regions.

SECTION V. COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) play a crucial role in delivering vocational rehabilitation services to Kentuckians with disabilities. The assessment revealed several strengths and areas for improvement within the CRP framework. CRPs were generally satisfied with the compassion and flexibility demonstrated by OVR counselors and the emphasis on partnerships. However, challenges such as insufficient funding, communication gaps, and logistical issues like transportation and consumer vetting persisted. Additionally, there is a need for better training and support for CRPs, streamlined processes, and enhanced cultural competence. Addressing these issues through targeted recommendations can enhance the overall effectiveness and efficiency of CRPs in serving individuals with disabilities in Kentucky.

KEY INSIGHTS

COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

- **High Satisfaction with Counselor Support:** 88.4% of CRP respondents expressed satisfaction with OVR counselors' compassion and flexibility when working with Kentuckians with disabilities.
- **Strong Partnerships with CRPs:** 87.8% of respondents felt that OVR values and emphasizes partnerships with CRPs.
- **Clear Communication and Support:** 80.8% of respondents indicated that there is clear and open communication between OVR staff and CRP staff.

SERVICE DELIVERY AND SUPPORT FOR CONSUMERS

- **Insufficient Funding:** 39% of CRP respondents identified a lack of long-term support funding as a major barrier to providing services.
- **Need for Better Consumer Vetting:** 66.2% of respondents felt that referrals to CRPs were not always appropriate candidates for services and were not well-informed of service expectations.
- **Transportation Challenges:** 68.7% of respondents cited transportation access as a significant barrier to service delivery.

CHALLENGES WITH PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS)

- **Issues with pre-ETS Rollout and Sustainability:** Only 68.3% of respondents felt that high-quality pre-ETS are being provided to transition-age youth.

- **Desire for Restored Services and Funding Levels:** There is a call for restoring pre-ETS services and funding levels to better meet the needs of transition-age youth.

PROVIDER SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

- **Transparent and Inclusive Planning:** There is a strong desire among CRPs for transparent and inclusive long-term planning with OVR.
- **Need for Increased Support and Financial Transparency:** CRPs advocate for more support and transparency in financial processes.

TRAINING AND RESOURCES

- **Need for Standardized Training:** Calls for more standardized training programs for both counselors and CRPs to ensure consistent quality in service delivery.
- **Access to Resources:** 88.3% of respondents indicated that their technology needs were met, but there is still a call for more quality-focused training and resources.

PROCESS EFFICIENCY AND TIMELINESS

- **Authorization and Reimbursement Delays:** Only 77.8% of respondents were satisfied with the timeliness of OVR authorizations and reimbursements.
- **Lengthy Processes:** Concerns were raised about lengthy authorization and intake processes.

SECTION VI. OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH OVR

Overall constituent satisfaction with the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) has been thoroughly assessed through the Concerns Report Assessment, which included focus groups, surveys, and forums with various stakeholders, including consumers, transition-age consumers, Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), and OVR counselors and staff. This comprehensive assessment revealed numerous areas of satisfaction in OVR's service provision, highlighting areas where the organization excels. However, it also identified several key areas for potential growth and priority improvement areas that need to be addressed to enhance the effectiveness and satisfaction of OVR services. The following report synthesizes these findings, emphasizing OVR's strengths and identifying areas for growth and improvement.

KEY INSIGHTS

HIGH SATISFACTION AREAS

CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK

- OVR provides opportunities for consumers to give feedback and listens to their concerns, with high satisfaction rates among both general and transition-age consumers (89.9% and 83.6%, respectively).
- OVR emphasizes consumer involvement in creating individualized plans of employment, ensuring services are tailored to meet specific needs (86.9% satisfaction among general consumers).

PROFESSIONALISM AND SUPPORT

- OVR counselors are dedicated to providing quality services and are professional and helpful, achieving high satisfaction ratings across various groups (89.7% satisfaction among general consumers and 81.8% among transition-age consumers).
- OVR staff and administration respond in a timely manner to both consumer and CRP needs (84.2% satisfaction among general consumers and 75.9% among CRPs).

ACCESSIBILITY AND AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES

- OVR services are accessible and available to consumers, including those with the most significant disabilities, with high satisfaction ratings (88.3% among general consumers and 81.4% among CRPs).

COLLABORATION WITH CRPs

- OVR values and emphasizes partnerships with CRPs, fostering a collaborative environment to provide necessary services (87.8% satisfaction among CRPs).
- Clear and open communication between OVR staff and CRP staff is a notable strength (80.8% satisfaction among CRPs).

POTENTIAL GROWTH AREAS

AWARENESS AND OUTREACH

- Awareness of OVR services among Kentuckians with disabilities needs improvement, with the lowest satisfaction rating identified among general consumers (62.2%) and transition-age consumers (67.1%).
- CRPs also indicated that awareness of OVR services needs enhancement (67.5%).

RESOURCE AVAILABILITY AND SUPPORT

- Insufficient funding and resources impact the service provision, with CRPs highlighting the need for increased financial support and transparency.
- There are challenges in ensuring that referrals to CRPs are appropriate and well-informed of service expectations (66.2% satisfaction among CRPs).

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- OVR staff performance evaluations, opportunities for growth and advancement, and competitive compensation need improvement to enhance staff satisfaction and effectiveness.
- There is a need for more training and resources for both counselors and CRPs to ensure high-quality service provision.

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

- Transportation access remains a significant barrier for consumers, particularly in rural areas, impacting their ability to access services and employment opportunities.
- Improvements in website usability and accessibility are necessary to enhance service delivery and communication.

SPECIFIC SERVICE GAPS

- Supported employment services need to be more appropriately emphasized and available, particularly for transition-age youth with disabilities.
- Ensuring high-quality pre-ETS and restoring original services and funding levels are critical to better meet the needs of this group.

PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT AREAS

SERVICE EFFICIENCY AND TIMELINESS

- OVR staff are given the time and resources to focus on serving consumers (48.4% satisfaction among OVR counselors and staff).
- There is a reasonable number of staff to address consumers' needs (38.1% satisfaction among OVR counselors and staff).
- The Case Manager System (CMS) is user-friendly and efficient (34.6% satisfaction among OVR counselors and staff).

PRIORITY NEED AREAS AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

PRIORITY NEED AREA 1: ENGAGING AND RETAINING CONSUMERS

IDENTIFIED NEED

Consumers are exiting OVR services early at high rates, particularly among specific subgroups. There is also a low conversion rate from pre-ETS to VR services. Additionally, there are challenges in maintaining open communication with consumers throughout their rehabilitation journey.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Develop a Consumer Retention Program:** Identify consumers at high risk for early exit and establish standards for proactive follow-up and engagement.
- **Improve pre-ETS Conversion Rates:** Implement targeted strategies to better engage transition-age youth and increase conversion rates from pre-ETS to VR services.
- **Enhance Website and Social Media Presence:** Improve the OVR website and be more active on social media. Consider staffing dedicated to these efforts.
- **Utilize Varied Application Methods:** Create opportunities for potential consumers to apply for services in multiple ways, ensuring accessibility and convenience.
- **Promote Active Family Involvement:** Encourage active family involvement to reinforce career goals and provide a supportive home environment. Develop community partnerships to offer mentorship programs and support networks (potentially through partnership with the CILs - Centers for Independent Living).

PRIORITY NEED AREA 2: INCREASING AWARENESS AND OUTREACH

IDENTIFIED NEED

There is low satisfaction with outreach and awareness efforts among staff and counselors. Additionally, certain underserved groups, such as consumers who are blind or visually impaired, Asian consumers, and those who are unemployed and have exited the workforce, are not adequately reached.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Utilize Technology and Community Resources:** Implement grassroots and community-level outreach in areas with low VR utilization. Leverage technology to reach underserved populations.
- **Targeted Outreach Campaigns:** Develop targeted communication strategies to increase awareness about OVR services among communities, including informational sessions and community outreach programs. Specifically target groups with lower rates of VR utilization and those who are unemployed or have exited the labor force.
- **Social media and Online Engagement:** Strengthen online presence and use social media platforms effectively to raise awareness about VR services.

PRIORITY NEED AREA 3: STREAMLINING SERVICE PROCESSES

IDENTIFIED NEED

Low satisfaction with the CMS system and service processes is hindering efficiency. There are also delays in authorization and reimbursement impacting service delivery.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Improve the CMS System:** Enhance the usability and efficiency of the CMS system to better support staff and consumers.
- **Streamline Application Processes:** Simplify the application and eligibility processes to reduce delays and improve consumer experiences.
- **Provide Timely Authorizations:** Ensure timely authorizations and reimbursements to support efficient service delivery.
- **Develop CQI Processes:** Implement feedback mechanisms to continuously improve communication practices.

PRIORITY NEED AREA 4: ADDRESSING GEOGRAPHIC DISPARITIES

IDENTIFIED NEED

There are significant disparities in service utilization and outcomes across different regions, with specific challenges faced by Appalachian Kentucky.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Evaluate Regional Differences:** Conduct evaluations to understand what's working well in regions with positive outcomes and replicate successful strategies. More closely examine areas with poorer outcomes to make data-driven decisions on how to target those areas for improvement.
- **Targeted Support for Rural Areas:** Provide targeted support and resources to regions with low service utilization and poor outcomes.
- **Address Challenges in the Appalachian Region:** Develop specific strategies to address the unique needs and systemic barriers in Appalachian Kentucky.

PRIORITY NEED AREA 5: EXPANDING SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOR CONSUMERS

IDENTIFIED NEED

There are gaps in service provision, particularly for supported employment services, mental health support, and independent living. Additionally, the high incidence of benefits receipt in the state poses a barrier to employment.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

EXPAND INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES

- **Increase Availability:** Increase the availability and quality of independent living services, including skills training and support for daily living.
- **Promote Self-Advocacy:** Provide training and resources to help consumers advocate for their own needs and navigate available services.
- **Enhance Benefits Counseling:** Increase access to benefits counseling and involve family and guardians in the process to ensure they understand how employment can impact benefits and how to navigate these changes effectively.

ENHANCE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

- **Integrate Mental Health with VR Services:** Develop integrated programs that combine mental health support with vocational rehabilitation services.
- **Expand Mental Health Services:** Increase access to mental health counseling and support for consumers with co-occurring conditions.

IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

- **Develop Transportation Solutions:** Collaborate with local transportation providers to develop innovative solutions such as subsidized transportation options or partnerships with ride-sharing services.
- **Expand Transportation Programs:** Increase funding and resources for transportation programs that support consumers in accessing vocational rehabilitation services.
- **Improve Transportation Infrastructure:** Advocate for improved transportation infrastructure in rural areas to enhance accessibility for consumers.

ENHANCE STATEWIDE ACCESS TO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:

- **Expand Supported Employment Programs:** Increase the availability and accessibility of supported employment services to ensure consumers receive the support they need to succeed in the workforce.
- **Provide Ongoing Support:** Offer ongoing support and follow-up services to ensure sustained employment and career advancement for consumers.

PRIORITY NEED AREA 6: ADDRESSING STAFFING ISSUES

IDENTIFIED NEED

High caseloads and insufficient staff impact service delivery. There is also a need for more counselors in specific geographic regions and specialized transition-age counselors.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Increase OVR Staffing Levels:** Hire additional OVR staff to manage caseloads more effectively and provide individualized attention to consumers.
- **Regional Staffing Needs:** Address staffing shortages in specific regions and ensure adequate coverage for specialized populations (e.g., transition-age services and blind services).
- **Provide Specialized Training:** Equip staff with the necessary training to handle diverse and complex consumer needs.

PRIORITY NEED AREA 7: IMPROVING CRP ENGAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

IDENTIFIED NEED

Insufficient funding and resources impact the viability of CRPs. Better communication and collaboration between OVR and CRPs are also needed to ensure effective service delivery.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Collaborative Problem Solving:** Engage in collaborative problem-solving with CRPs to address funding and resource challenges.
- **Alternative Funding Solutions:** Consider alternative funding solutions, including reevaluating fee schedules.
- **Regular Communication Schedule:** Develop and implement a regular schedule for open communication with CRPs, fostering transparency and collaboration. Consider innovative strategies for engaging CRPs consistently and effectively.

PRIORITY NEED AREA 8: STRENGTHENING STATEWIDE AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

IDENTIFIED NEED

There is a need to improve relationships with key partners to enhance service delivery and resource sharing. Strengthening partnerships with educational entities, workforce investment systems, and healthcare providers is crucial.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Enhance Collaboration with Educational Entities:** Strengthen relationships with the Kentucky Department of Education, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and Centers for Independent Living (CILs).
- **Support Workforce Investment System:** Continue to improve partnerships with the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce and support programs like RETAIN Kentucky.
- **Advocate for Inclusive Workforce:** Promote systems change to advocate for an inclusive workforce ecosystem that values people with disabilities as a resource.
- **Partner with Healthcare Providers:** Collaborate with mental health and healthcare entities to advocate for better access for consumers with disabilities and promote universal design and accessibility.

PRIORITY NEED AREA 9: EXPANDING EVALUATION EFFORTS

IDENTIFIED NEED

There is a need for specialized evaluations to understand specific population needs and service effectiveness. Assessing the reach and impact of OVR's online presence and social media efforts is also important.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Conduct Specialized Evaluations:** Perform evaluations focusing on specific populations like Black/African American consumers, consumers who are blind or visually impaired, and reasons for early exit.
- **Assess Online Reach:** Use standard tools to evaluate the effectiveness and reach of the OVR website and social media presence.
- **Regular Assessments of Service Outliers:** Implement regular assessments of cases with abnormally long service durations and high case expenditures to identify and address issues.

PRIORITY NEED AREA 10: ENHANCING DATA MANAGEMENT

IDENTIFIED NEED

Incomplete or missing data impacts the ability to draw meaningful conclusions. There is a need for better data collection and analysis to support decision-making.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Improve Data Collection Methods:** Enhance data collection processes to ensure completeness and accuracy of critical demographic data.
 - **Streamline Data Coding Processes:** Standardize and streamline data coding processes to facilitate better analysis and reporting.
 - **Track Additional Demographics:** Begin tracking data on gender identity, sexual orientation, and criminal backgrounds to better assess service needs and outcomes.
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METHODOLOGY

ASSESSMENT APPROACH

The Concerns Report Methodology, conceived by researchers at the University of Kansas in the 1980s, is a Participatory Action Research framework extensively utilized for eliciting pertinent consumer concerns and establishing an agenda for essential changes in both policy and service provision. This methodology revolves around identifying perceived strengths and issues within a specific demographic, resulting in a comprehensive catalogue of strengths and weaknesses pertaining to policy and practices in a given domain. It goes further by offering recommendations aimed at preserving identified strengths and remedying weaknesses. What sets this methodology apart is its inclusive approach – individuals with disabilities act as partners in the CRM research process, actively contributing to the selection of data collection elements, determining effective data collection methodologies, participating in analysis, interpreting results, and devising problem-solving strategies, thereby ensuring their voices are integral in decision-making processes.

The HDI Evaluation Team employed the Concerns Report Methodology to drive the KY OVR CSNA through a multifaceted approach. This involved conducting focused discussions via focus groups involving consumers with disabilities, community rehabilitation providers, and OVR staff members. These interactions aimed to gather critical insights to directly shape the survey items tailored for these groups, facilitating the creation of a comprehensive list delineating OVR's strengths and areas necessitating improvement. Moreover, these survey results informed recommendations made to OVR as a result of the CSNA. Importantly, this methodology extended beyond survey creation. It encompassed post-survey forums designed to provide constituents with platforms to contribute feedback on the survey outcomes and the subsequent recommendations, ensuring their perspectives continued to steer the decision-making process within the OVR, promoting inclusivity, and aligning strategies more effectively with the real needs of the community.

ACCESSIBILITY

All products and services were designed and administered with universal design strategies in mind. The CSNA website, surveys, virtual meeting materials (focus groups, key informant interviews, and forums) and email communications were checked for accessibility. This assessment report was developed in compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA standards.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Focus group and forum participants were provided with a consent agreement to agree to during registration. The confidentiality agreement was also read to participants at the beginning of each focus group and forum.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

An environmental scan is a systematic process used to gather and interpret relevant data from various sources to understand the external and internal conditions that impact an organization or project. This involves collecting information about economic, social, technological, and regulatory factors that could influence the outcomes and strategic planning of an initiative. In this report, we conducted an extensive environmental scan to provide a comprehensive overview of the context in which the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) operates.

We utilized multiple data sources to gather relevant information for our environmental scan. This included data from the American Community Survey (ACS), which provided up-to-date profiles of Kentucky's communities, focusing on population demographics, disability characteristics, and housing information. We also incorporated educational data from the Kentucky Post Secondary Outcomes Center (KYPSO), which offered insights into the post-school outcomes of students with disabilities. Additionally, we examined the Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program and the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium from the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire to understand broader trends and statistics related to disability and employment.

The environmental scan enabled us to identify key trends, challenges, and opportunities affecting individuals with disabilities in Kentucky. By analyzing this data, we could better understand the unique needs of various populations and regions, which informed our strategic recommendations for improving vocational rehabilitation services across the state. The insights gained from the environmental scan were critical in developing a comprehensive and data-driven approach to addressing the needs of Kentuckians with disabilities.

DATA SOURCES

AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

ACS is a large, continuous demographic survey conducted by the US Census Bureau that provides accurate and up-to-date profiles of America's communities every year. Annual and multiyear estimates of population and housing data are generated for small areas, including tracts and population subgroups. This information is collected by mailing questionnaires to a sample of addresses. Although the ACS produces population, demographic and housing unit estimates, the decennial census is the official source of population totals for April 1st of each decennial year. In between censuses, the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program produces and disseminates the official estimates of the population for the nation, states, counties, cities, and towns and estimates of housing units for states and counties.

KENTUCKY POST SECONDARY OUTCOMES CENTER

KYPSO is the Kentucky Department of Education's (KDE) contractor for the collection of post-school outcome data for students who had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in place at the time they exited high school. This includes data related to the federal requirement for Indicator 14 under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and other post-school data necessary and appropriate to improve transition services for youth with disabilities throughout Kentucky. Data is collected through the Youth One Year Out (YOYO) former student interview developed by KYPSO and administered by district-level personnel that KYPSO trains. The YOYO is pre-populated with demographic information provided by the state and includes a series of questions related to post-school employment and education; factors contributing to a student's personal experiences; involvement with agencies; living arrangements; and community engagement.³

ANNUAL DISABILITY STATISTICS COMPENDIUM

The Annual Disability Statistics Compendium, published by the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire, compiles comprehensive statistics on the demographic and economic status of people with disabilities in the United States. The Compendium is designed to make finding and using disability statistics easier by consolidating data from various sources into one comprehensive report. It includes statistics on prevalence, health, education, employment, and income among people with disabilities. The data helps policymakers, advocates, and researchers understand the conditions of people with disabilities and track changes over time. More information can be found here.

ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORT ON THE SSDI PROGRAM

The Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program, published by the Social Security Administration (SSA), provides detailed information on the operation of the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program. This report includes data on the number of beneficiaries, benefits paid, and characteristics of workers with disabilities and their families. It also covers topics such as benefit applications, awards, and terminations, providing a comprehensive overview of the SSDI program's scope and impact. This information is crucial for understanding the program's reach and effectiveness in supporting individuals with disabilities. The latest report can be accessed here.

ACCURACY

Data included in the Environmental Scan was gathered from the 1-year ACS data with a focus on Disability Characteristics as it pertains to the United States and Kentucky, and the Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program. Each 1-year estimate represents data through 2022 as it relates to population, sex, age, race/ethnicity, disability type, and benefits. The ACS estimates are based on data from a sample of housing units and

people in the population, not the full population. For this reason, ACS estimates have a degree of uncertainty associated with them, called sampling error. In general, the larger the sample, the smaller the level of sampling error. While 1-year estimates provide the most accurate current snapshot, they are less reliable than 3-year or 5-year data samples as they are collected over a longer period of time than 1-year data, providing larger sample sizes and increased reliability for less populated areas and small population subgroups. The State Reports for County-Level Data on Employment is composed of data from the US. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year data. We used the most recent data wherever available. Methodological differences may exist between data sources, and so estimates from different sources are not comparable.

DESIGNATIONS

COUNTY TYPES

To further refine our analysis throughout this CSNA, we used county designations of metropolitan and rural (further broken down to micropolitan, and non-core/most rural) to assess the types of counties consumers reside in. These designations are delineated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) based on published standards applied to Census Bureau data. Metropolitan statistical areas have at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more people, micropolitan statistical areas have at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 people, and non-core areas are those that do not meet the criteria for metro or micro areas. These designations help in understanding the economic and social integration within core areas and their adjacent communities.

Map 2. Kentucky County Types ⁴

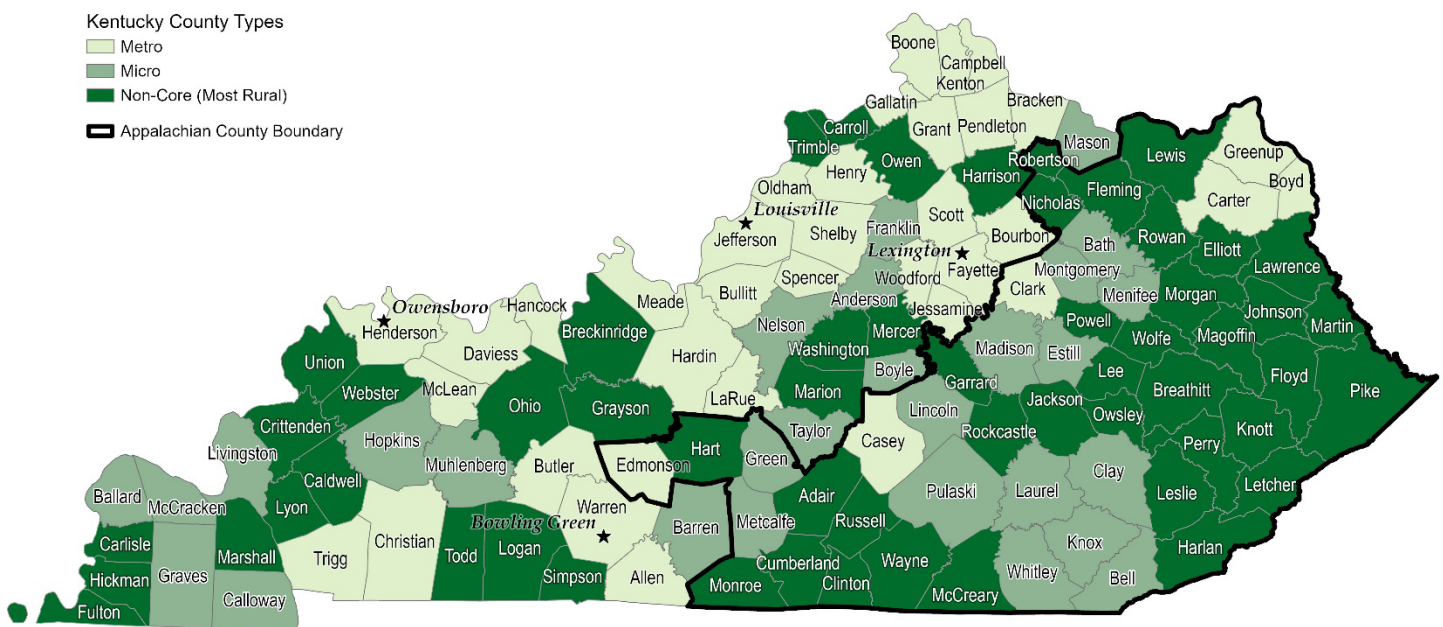


Table 3. Kentucky Counties Designated Metro ⁴

County	County	County	County	County	County
Allen	Butler	Daviess	Hancock	Kenton	Scott
Boone	Campbell	Edmonson*	Hardin	Larue	Shelby
Bourbon	Carter*	Fayette	Henderson	McLean	Spencer
Boyd*	Casey*	Gallatin	Henry	Meade	Trigg
Bracken	Christian	Grant	Jefferson	Oldham	Warren
Bullitt	Clark*	Greenup*	Jessamine	Pendleton	Woodford

*County is in the geographic region of Appalachia as defined by the Appalachian Region Commission (ARC)

Table 4. Kentucky Counties Designated Micro ⁴

County	County	County	County	County	County
Anderson	Boyle	Graves	Lincoln*	Menifee*	Pulaski*
Ballard	Calloway	Green*	Livingston	Metcalfe*	Taylor
Barren	Clay*	Hopkins	Madison*	Montgomery*	Whitley*
Bath*	Estill*	Knox*	Mason	Muhlenberg	
Bell*	Franklin	Laurel*	McCracken	Nelson	

*County is in the geographic region of Appalachia as defined by the Appalachian Region Commission (ARC)

Table 5. Kentucky Counties Designated Non-Core (Most Rural) ⁴

County	County	County	County	County	County
Adair*	Fleming*	Johnson*	Marion	Owsley*	Trimble
Breathitt*	Floyd*	Knott*	Marshall	Perry*	Union
Breckinridge	Fulton	Lawrence*	Martin*	Pike*	Washington
Caldwell	Garrard*	Lee*	McCreary*	Powell*	Wayne*
Carlisle	Grayson	Leslie*	Mercer	Robertson*	Webster
Carroll	Harlan*	Letcher*	Monroe*	Rockcastle*	Wolfe*
Clinton*	Harrison	Lewis*	Morgan*	Rowan*	
Crittenden	Hart*	Logan	Nicholas*	Russell*	
Cumberland*	Hickman	Lyon	Ohio	Simpson	
Elliott*	Jackson*	Magoffin*	Owen	Todd	

*County is in the geographic region of Appalachia as defined by the Appalachian Region Commission (ARC)

APPALACHIA

We chose to specifically examine the Appalachian part of the state for some of our analyses due to its unique socio-economic and geographic challenges. The Appalachian region of Kentucky is defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), which was established by Congress in 1965 to address persistent poverty and economic distress in the region. The ARC identifies specific counties in Kentucky as part of Appalachia based on criteria such as economic status, income, and unemployment rates. As such, this region is characterized by higher rates of poverty, lower employment rates, and more significant health disparities compared to other regions. These factors make it crucial to identify and address the specific needs of individuals with disabilities in this area. By highlighting the Appalachian regions, we aim to develop targeted strategies to improve service delivery and outcomes for these communities.

Map 3. Kentucky Appalachian Counties ⁵

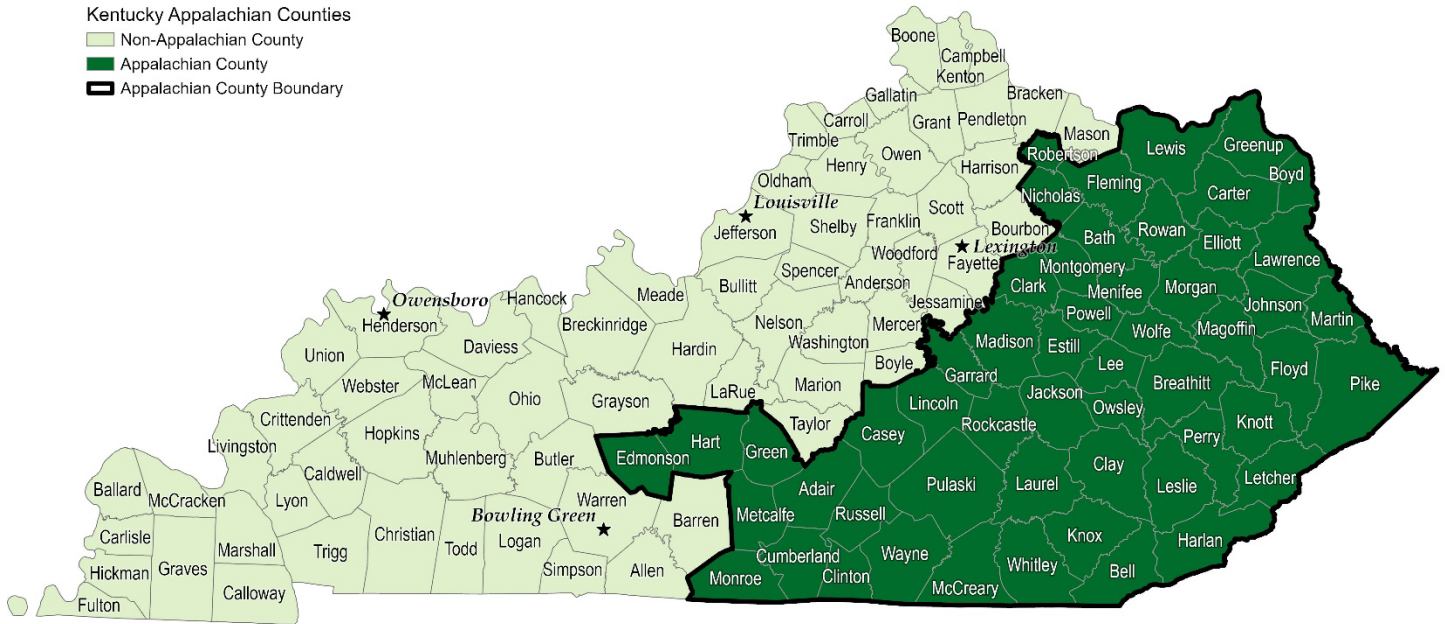


Table 6. Kentucky Appalachian Counties ⁵

County	County	County	County	County	County
Adair	Clinton	Greenup	Lee	Menifee	Powell
Bath	Cumberland	Harlan	Leslie	Metcalfe	Pulaski
Bell	Edmonson	Hart	Letcher	Monroe	Robertson
Boyd	Elliott	Jackson	Lewis	Montgomery	Rockcastle
Breathitt	Estill	Johnson	Lincoln	Morgan	Rowan
Carter	Fleming	Knott	Madison	Nicholas	Russell
Casey	Floyd	Knox	Magoffin	Owsley	Wayne
Clark	Garrard	Laurel	Martin	Perry	Whitley
Clay	Green	Lawrence	McCreary	Pike	Wolfe

Table 7. Kentucky Non-Appalachian Counties ⁵

County	County	County	County	County	County
Allen	Caldwell	Gallatin	Jefferson	McLean	Simpson
Anderson	Calloway	Grant	Jessamine	Meade	Spencer
Ballard	Campbell	Graves	Kenton	Mercer	Taylor
Barren	Carlisle	Grayson	LaRue	Muhlenberg	Todd
Boone	Carroll	Hancock	Livingston	Nelson	Trigg
Bourbon	Christian	Hardin	Logan	Ohio	Trimble
Boyle	Crittenden	Harrison	Lyon	Oldham	Union
Bracken	Daviess	Henderson	Marion	Owen	Warren
Breckinridge	Fayette	Henry	Marshall	Pendleton	Washington
Bullitt	Franklin	Hickman	Mason	Scott	Webster
Butler	Fulton	Hopkins	McCracken	Shelby	Woodford

FOCUS GROUPS

PROCESS

Focus groups were conducted to collect input from key target audiences and inform survey topics of concerns. Invitations to participate in the focus groups were distributed to target audiences via email and social media posts on HDI and OVR social media. When registering for focus groups, potential participants provided basic demographic information. With this information, the HDI team selected a diverse range of participants who represented various facets of their shareholder group. The HDI team facilitated focus groups via video conferencing with four participant groups; OVR counselors & staff, CRP staff and administrators, OVR consumers & public shareholders, and members of the Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR). Focus groups consisted of an explanation of the focus group, review the of confidentiality agreement, and SWOT analysis.

During the SWOT analysis, each group was provided with a list of topics and conversation starters curated by the HDI team. The SWOT analysis was designed as an open conversation, allowing participants to share their qualitative feedback freely. Participants discussed their experiences working with OVR, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. An HDI team member documented the qualitative data provided, ensuring that all items were captured for thematic analysis.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Each HDI OVR team member independently coded focus group qualitative data. The Lead Evaluator organized team codes into themes. Using these themes, the team further refined this information to develop four unique comprehensive concerns lists, that were included in surveys for OVR Consumers, Transition-age Youth, OVR Counselors and Staff, and CRP Staff and Administration.

SURVEYS

PROCESS

Surveys were disseminated to collect input from key target audiences. Questions were created by HDI based on collected focus group feedback. The web-based surveys were developed in Qualtrics and disseminated via a dedicated CSNA web page designed and maintained by HDI. Information on how to participate along with the survey link was shared via HDI and OVR social networks and emailed to corresponding shareholders using distribution lists provided by OVR.

CONCERNS LISTS

The Consumer, Transition-age Youth, OVR, and CRP surveys included a section of concerns identified during focus groups. Survey respondents were presented with each issue and then asked, “Is the issue important?” and “Are you satisfied with the current status of the issue?” All issues determined to be important (via a majority of respondents) were kept and then ranked via their satisfaction ratings. Issues were then sorted into three categories: High Satisfaction Areas, Potential Growth Areas, and Priority Improvement Areas. High Satisfaction Areas were defined as issues in which 75% or more of respondents were satisfied with the current status of the issue. Potential Improvement Areas were defined as those issues with satisfaction ratings between 50 to 74%. Priority Improvement Areas were defined as an issue with satisfaction ratings lower than 50%.

SURVEY COMPLETIONS

Table 8. Survey Completions

Audience	Target	Responses	Completed
Consumers	762	1,002	741
Transition-age Youth	72	239	154
OVR Counselors & Staff	147	284	210
Community Rehabilitation Programs	76	88	77
Kentucky Career Center	5	9	5

FORUMS

Forums were conducted via video conferencing with key OVR shareholder groups; OVR consumers, CRPs and OVR. Invitations to register were sent to shareholder groups via email using email distribution lists provided by OVR. The forums served as an opportunity for the HDI team to present findings from the shareholder’s corresponding survey results. The forum consisted of 2 sections, the Evaluation Lead presenting the findings via PowerPoint to forum participants and then an open conversation where participants were encouraged to provide their feedback on the findings and the 2024 OVR CSNA process.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted by an HDI Evaluation Analyst for 30-45 minutes via video conferencing. The HDI team sent registration invitation emails to KY OVR consumers and caregivers along with supported-employment specialists. Five interviews occurred with KY OVR shareholders; OVR consumers, a parent of an OVR transition-age consumer, and supported-employment specialists.

- Each interview consisted of 17 optional questions with topics including general information, experience and perception, accessibility and outreach, specific needs and challenges, collaboration and partnerships, suggestions for improvement, future direction, and final thoughts. The analyst conducted the interview in a conversational and relaxed manner, asking follow-up questions based on the conversation and what the interviewee noted as important. Not all questions were required but were used as reference for the Analyst conducting the interview.

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

INTRODUCTION

The environmental scan aims to establish a demographic profile of Kentuckians with disabilities who are potentially eligible for services through the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and to understand some of the unique characteristics of working-age adults with disabilities in Kentucky.

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Kentucky's population included 801,061 individuals with disabilities, constituting 18.1% of the state's total population. This placed Kentucky among the top three states nationally for disability prevalence, significantly higher than the national average of 13.4%.

Table 9. U.S. and Kentucky Populations of Individuals with a Disability ⁶

Description	United States	Kentucky
Total Population	328,309,810	4,428,274
Population with a Disability	44,146,764	801,061
Percentage (%) with a Disability	13.4%	18.1%

A closer look at the variation in disability prevalence for working-age Kentuckians (ages 18-64) revealed a wide range of rates across counties from a low of 8.2% in Oldham County to a high of 37.4% in Wolfe County.

Counties with the Lowest Disability Prevalence Rates:

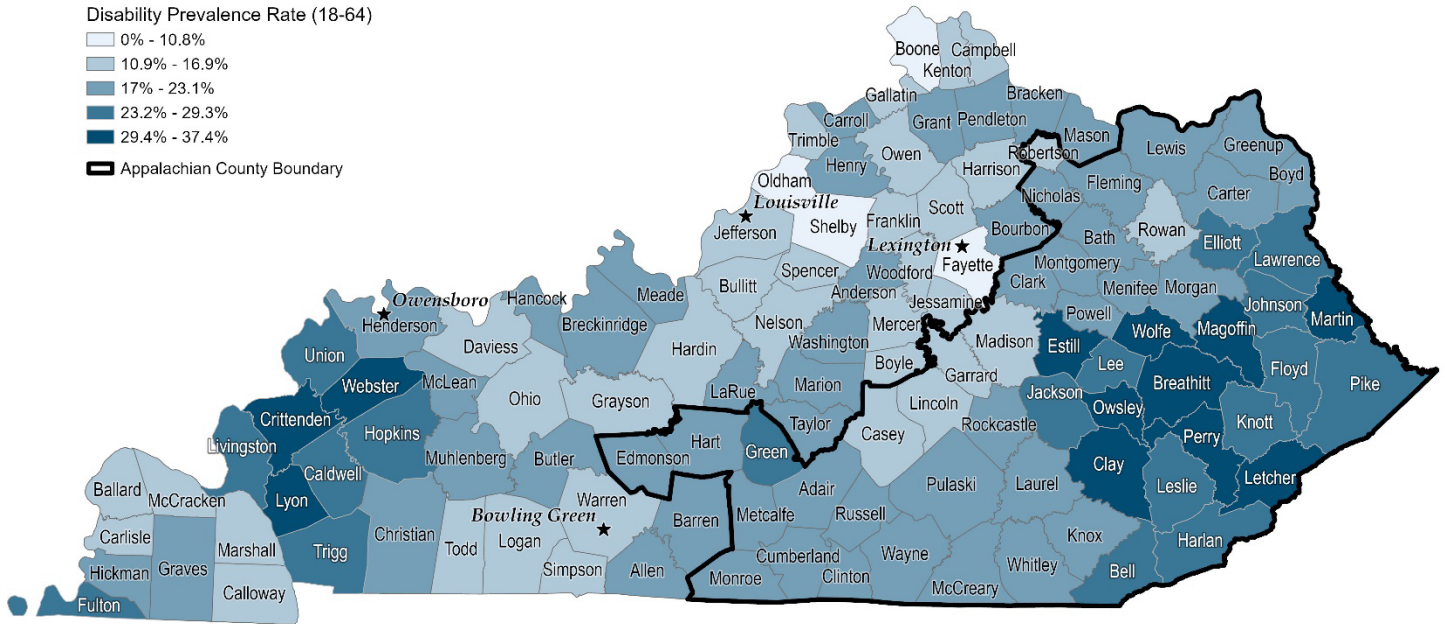
- Oldham County: 8.2%
- Shelby County: 10.1%
- Boone County: 10.3%

Counties with the Highest Disability Prevalence Rates:

- Wolfe County: 37.4%
- Owsley County: 35.2%
- Crittenden County: 35.2%

The highest disability prevalence regions were located in the rural areas of eastern Appalachian Kentucky and western Kentucky.

Map 4. Disability Prevalence Rate (18-64) Map and County List ⁷



County	Rate
Adair*	19.6%
Allen	17.7%
Anderson	19.7%
Ballard	13.2%
Barren	22.3%
Bath*	22.0%
Bell*	25.2%
Boone	10.3%
Bourbon	17.3%
Boyd*	20.7%
Boyle	15.2%
Bracken	17.1%
Breathitt*	30.7%
Breckinridge	20.1%
Bullitt	12.8%
Butler	19.1%
Caldwell	24.4%
Calloway	15.3%
Campbell	10.9%
Carlisle	13.7%
Carroll	18.5%
Carter*	18.7%
Casey*	16.5%
Christian	19.4%

County	Rate
Clark*	17.2%
Clay*	32.1%
Clinton*	22.2%
Crittenden	35.2%
Cumberland*	18.6%
Daviess	14.2%
Edmonson*	21.1%
Elliott*	26.2%
Estill*	30.8%
Fayette	10.8%
Fleming*	21.0%
Floyd*	25.1%
Franklin	14.7%
Fulton	23.3%
Gallatin	16.3%
Garrard*	16.8%
Grant	18.9%
Graves	19.7%
Grayson	16.9%
Green*	25.0%
Greenup*	17.8%
Hancock	21.7%
Hardin	16.7%
Harlan*	27.9%

County	Rate
Harrison	16.4%
Hart*	20.9%
Henderson	22.8%
Henry	17.8%
Hickman	17.5%
Hopkins	27.7%
Jackson*	24.5%
Jefferson	11.9%
Jessamine	13.5%
Johnson*	26.8%
Kenton	11.6%
Knott*	25.4%
Knox*	21.8%
Larue	18.0%
Laurel*	17.1%
Lawrence*	25.4%
Lee*	27.5%
Leslie*	28.1%
Letcher*	30.9%
Lewis*	18.6%
Lincoln*	16.4%
Livingston	28.9%
Logan	13.7%
Lyon	34.1%

County	Rate
Madison*	13.7%
Magoffin*	33.0%
Marion	21.2%
Marshall	15.4%
Martin*	29.6%
Mason	17.7%
McCracken	13.7%
McCreary*	21.8%
McLean	19.6%
Meade	18.1%
Menifee*	21.1%
Mercer	13.0%
Metcalfe*	17.9%
Monroe*	21.9%
Montgomery*	17.0%
Morgan*	22.4%
Muhlenberg	20.1%
Nelson	13.3%
Nicholas*	20.2%
Ohio	15.7%
Oldham	8.2%
Owen	14.8%
Owsley*	35.2%
Pendleton	18.0%

County	Rate
Perry*	30.1%
Pike*	27.5%
Powell*	20.8%
Pulaski*	18.2%
Robertson*	13.3%
Rockcastle*	21.3%
Rowan*	12.1%
Russell*	21.0%
Scott	12.2%
Shelby	10.1%
Simpson	14.8%
Spencer	12.2%
Taylor	17.8%
Todd	13.9%
Trigg	23.4%
Trimble	16.8%
Union	28.8%
Warren	13.1%
Washington	18.1%
Wayne*	22.9%
Webster	31.3%
Whitley*	21.5%
Wolfe*	37.4%
Woodford	11.9%

*County is in the geographic region of Appalachia as defined by the Appalachian Region Commission (ARC)

AGE

Since OVR services are available to Kentuckians with disabilities who are experiencing barriers to employment, data presented will focus on working-age adults (aged 18-64) who identified as having a disability, capturing the majority of OVR's target population. Working-age adults (18-64) with disabilities represented 16.3% of Kentucky's working-age population, higher than the national average of 11%.

Table 10. U.S. and Kentucky Working-Age Adults Populations with a Disability ⁶

Description	United States	Kentucky
Total Population (18-64)	199,645,753	2,656,255
Population with a Disability	22,007,000	433,608
Percentage (%) with a Disability	11%	16.3%

GENDER

Females slightly outnumbered males among Kentuckians with disabilities, making up 51% of this population, consistent with national average.

Table 11. Kentucky Target Population by Gender/Sex ⁶

Description	Male	Female
Population with a Disability by Gender	392,518	408,543
Percentage (%) with a Disability	49%	51%

Table 12. U.S. Population of Individuals with a Disability by Gender/Sex ⁶

Description	Male	Female
Population with a Disability by Gender	21,264,156	22,882,608
Percentage (%) with a Disability	49%	51%

RACE/ETHNICITY

The racial and ethnic distribution of Kentuckians with disabilities was predominantly White (85.6%), followed by Black or African American (7.33%), Hispanic/Latino (2.36%), Asian (0.55%), American Indian/Alaskan Native (0.15%), two or more races (5.23%), and other races (0.98%).

Figure 1. Kentucky Target Population by Race/Ethnicity ⁶

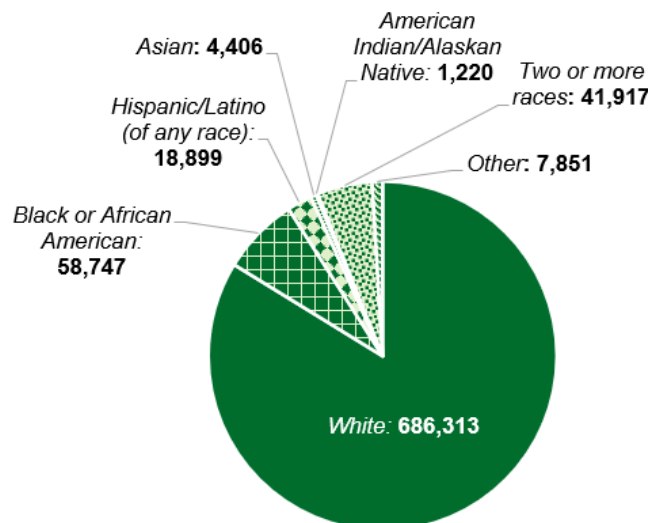


Table 13. Kentucky Target Population by Race/Ethnicity ⁶

Race/Ethnicity	Population with Disability	% With Disability
White	686,313	85.6%
Black or African American	58,747	7.33%
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	18,899	2.36%
Asian	4,406	0.55%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1,220	0.15%
Two or more races	41,917	5.23%
Other	7,851	0.98%

DISABILITY TYPE

The American Community Survey (ACS) assesses disability type using the following (non-exclusive) six categories: Hearing, Vision, Cognitive, Ambulatory, Self-Care, and Independent Living. Among working-age Kentuckians with disabilities, cognitive impairments were the most common (46.1%), followed by ambulatory impairments (44.1%), independent living limitations (35%), vision impairments (20.9%), hearing impairments (19.7%), and self-care limitations (15.2%). *Note: Some individuals identified in more than one category.*

Figure 2. Kentucky Working-Age Adults Target Population by Disability Type ⁶

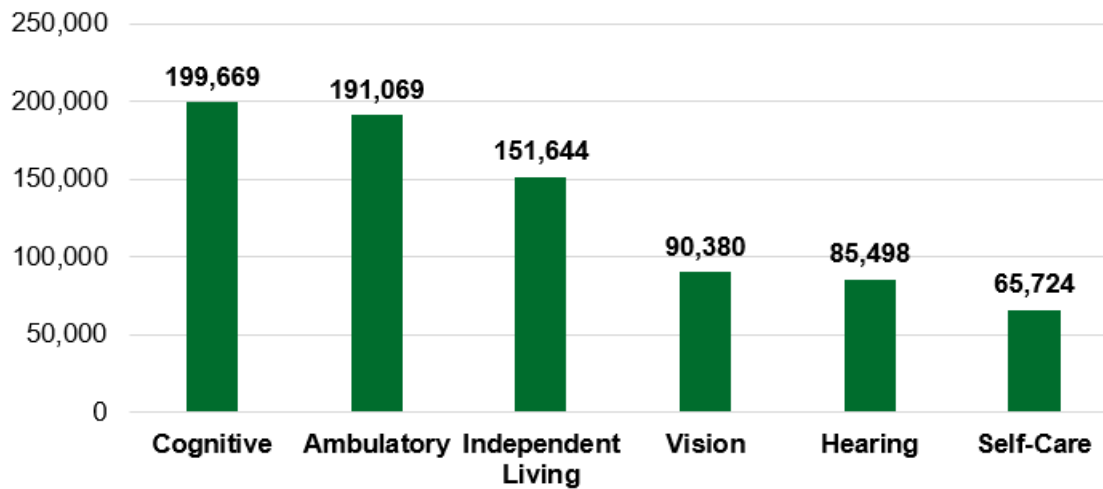


Table 14. Kentucky Working-Age Adults Target Population by Disability Type ⁶

Disability Type	Population	% of Population
Cognitive	199,669	46.1%
Ambulatory	191,069	44.1%
Independent Living	151,644	35%
Vision	90,380	20.9%
Hearing	85,498	19.7%
Self-Care	65,724	15.2%

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment data showed a significant gap between those with and without disabilities. The two most notable gaps between these populations were found for those with less than a high school education (a +12.4% gap) and for those who have attained a four-year college degree (a -10.4% gap).

Figure 3. Kentuckians Aged 25 and Older Educational Attainment ⁶

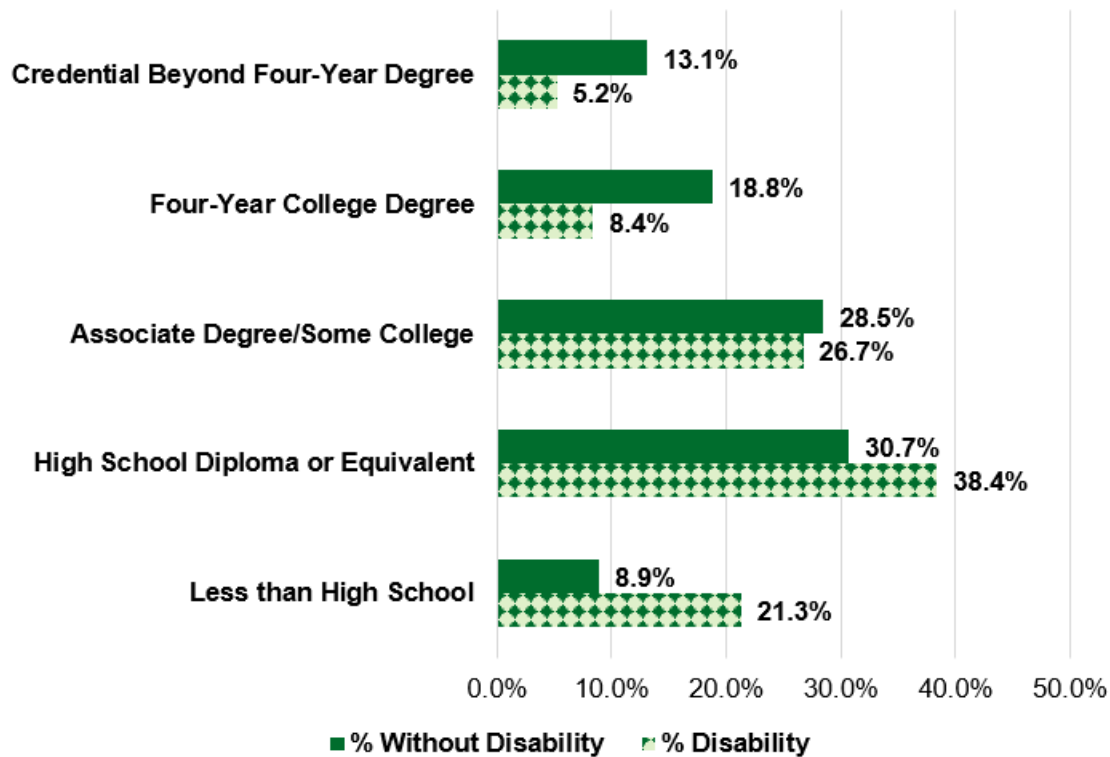


Table 15. Kentuckians Aged 25 and Older Educational Attainment ⁶

Educational Attainment	% Disability	% Without Disability	Gap (%)
Less than High School	21.3%	8.9%	12.4%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	38.4%	30.7%	7.7%
Associate Degree/Some College	26.7%	28.5%	-1.8%
Four-Year College Degree	8.4%	18.8%	-10.4%
Credential Beyond Four-Year Degree	5.2%	13.1%	-7.9%

VETERANS STATUS

Most recent data showed 118,466 civilian veterans living in the commonwealth of Kentucky. Of those civilian veterans, just over one-quarter (26.4%) had a service-connected disability.

Table 16. Kentucky Veterans with a Service-Connected Disability ⁷

Description	Kentucky
Total Population	4,428,274
Civilian Veteran Population	118,466
Percent (%) Civilian Population	2.67%
Civilian Veteran Population with a Service-Connected Disability	26.4%

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

During the 2022-2023 academic year, 16.5% of Kentucky students received special education services under IDEA, with the most common disabilities being speech or language impairment (27%), specific learning disability (16.6%), other health impairment (14.9%), developmental delay (12.2%), and autism (9.9%).

Figure 4. Kentucky Youth with Disabilities Receiving Special Education by Disability Type ³

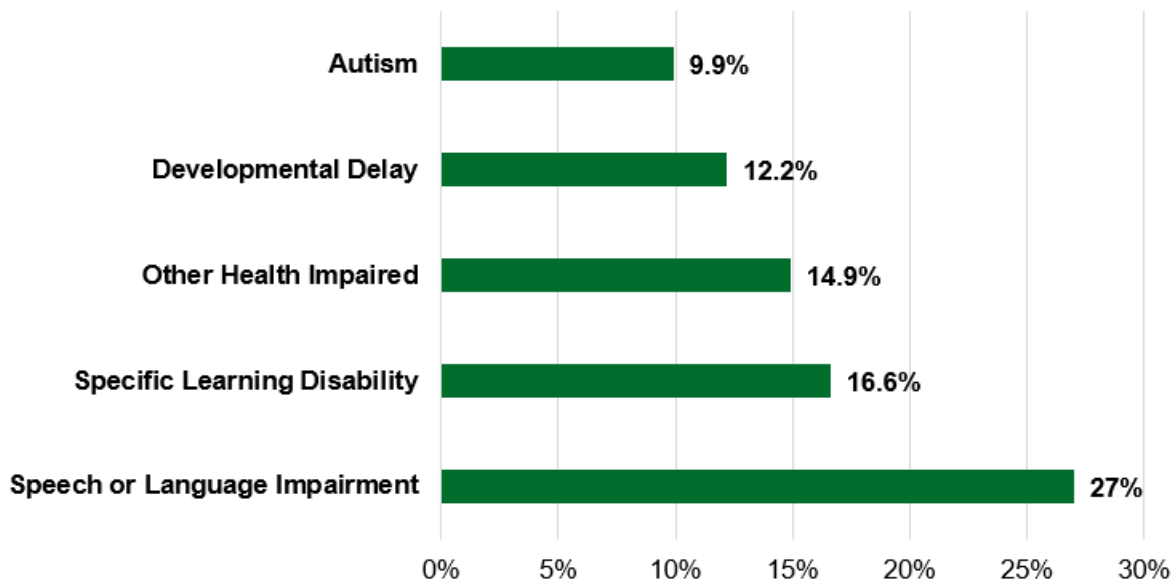


Table 17. Kentucky Youth with Disabilities Receiving Special Education by Disability Type ³

Disability Category	% of OVR Consumers
Speech or Language Impairment	27%
Specific Learning Disability	16.6%
Other Health Impaired	14.9%
Developmental Delay	12.2%
Autism	9.9%

Outcome data for Kentucky students with disabilities exiting high school revealed that fewer than 1 in 2 are employed in a competitive integrated setting within a year of exiting high school, and fewer than 1 in 6 (16%) were attending a postsecondary institution.

Figure 5. Kentucky Youth with IEPs Transition Employment Outcomes (2020-2021) ³

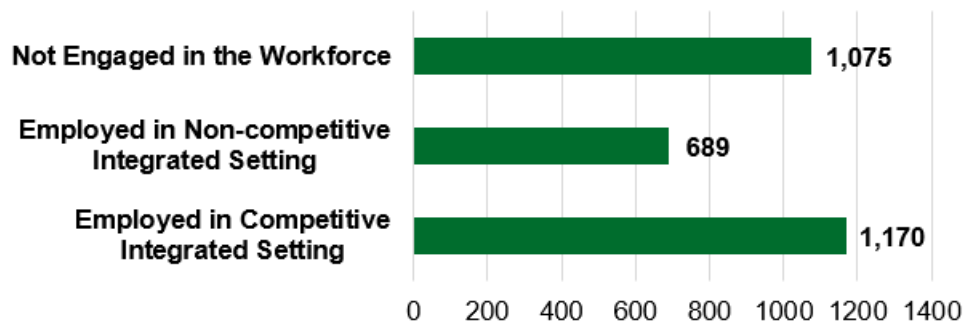


Table 18. Kentucky Youth with IEPs Transition Employment Outcomes ³

Transition Outcome	Kentucky Students with IEPs	% of Kentuckians
Employed in Competitive Integrated Setting	1,170	39.9%
Employed in Non-competitive Integrated Setting	689	23.5%
Not Engaged in the Workforce	1,075	36.6%

EMPLOYMENT RATE

The employment rate for working-age Kentuckians with disabilities was 32.3%, which was lower than the national average for Americans with disabilities (40.7%) and significantly lower than the employment rate for Kentuckians without disabilities (76.5%). Kentucky's 44.2% disability employment gap was the third largest such gap in the US.

Table 19. U.S. and Kentucky Working-Age Adults with Disabilities Employment Rate ⁷

Region	Population with Disability	Total Employed	Employment Rate
United States	21,375,164	8,705,513	40.7%
Kentucky	426,523	137,580	32.3%

A closer examination of employment rate by county type showed that the employment gap was even larger in rural areas of the state.

Table 20. Kentucky Working-Age Adults with Disabilities Employment Rate by County Type ⁷

County Type	% Disability	% Without Disability	Employment Gap
Metro	36.5%	79.6%	-43.1%
Micro	27.6%	73.2%	-45.6%
Non-Core (Most Rural)	23.1%	68%	-44.9%
Rural (Micro and Non-Core combined)	25.2%	70.7%	-45.5%

Examining the employment rates for working-age Kentuckians with disabilities by county highlighted significant disparities, reflecting regional economic conditions and accessibility issues. The employment rates ranged from a low of 8.8% in Wolfe County to a high of 65.9% in Lyon County. This wide range underscored the varying levels of economic integration and support for individuals with disabilities across the state.

Counties with the Lowest Employment Rates for Working-Age Kentuckians with Disabilities:

- Wolfe County: 8.8%
- McCreary County: 9.9%
- Lawrence County: 9.4%

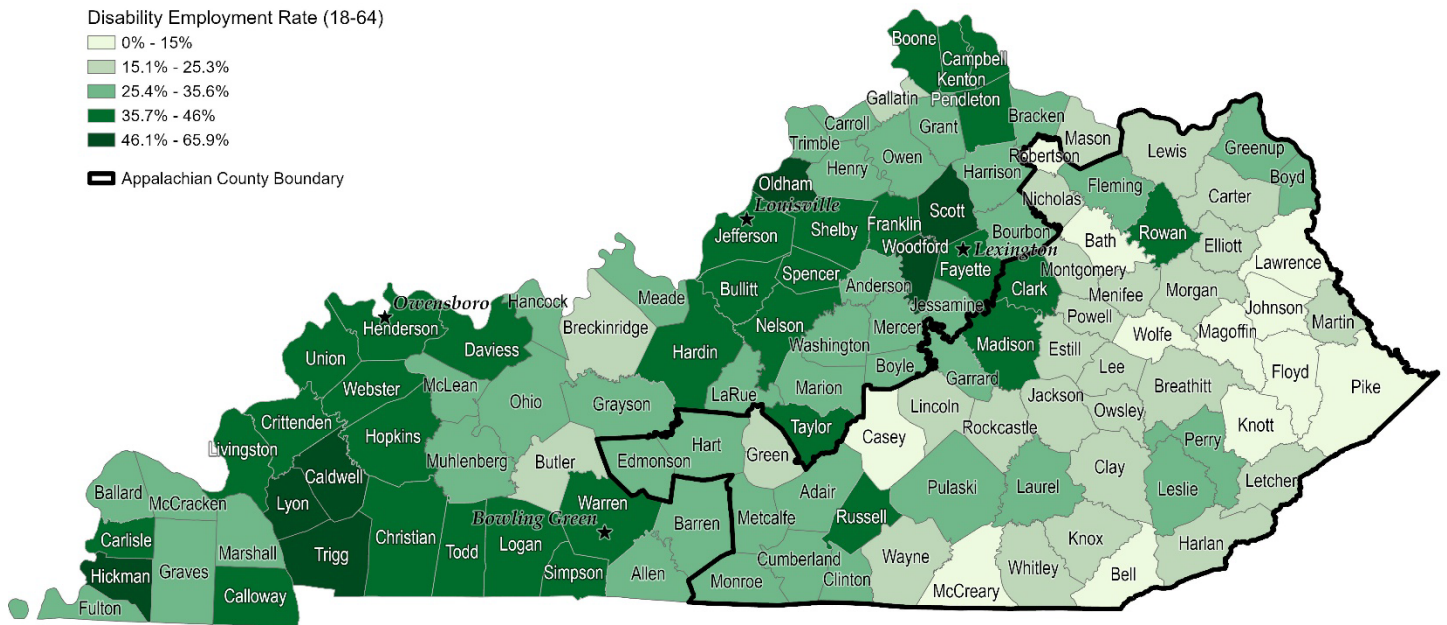
Counties with the Highest Employment Rates for Working-Age Kentuckians with Disabilities:

- Lyon County: 65.9%
- Caldwell County: 52.2%
- Hickman County: 51.5%

Counties with the lowest employment rates were primarily located in the eastern and southeastern Appalachian parts of the state, which often face significant economic challenges, including limited job opportunities, higher poverty rates, and fewer resources for vocational support. Conversely, counties with higher rates were generally situated in the western region of Kentucky. These areas might be benefitted from better access to employment programs, stronger local economies, and more effective vocational rehabilitation services. The data suggested that rural areas, particularly in eastern Appalachian Kentucky, struggled more with integrating individuals with disabilities into the workforce compared to urban and some western regions. This may point to a need for targeted interventions and enhanced support services in these low-employment regions.

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Map 5. Disability Employment Rate (18-64) Map and County List ⁷



County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate
Adair*	30.2%	Clark*	41.2%	Harrison	26.9%	Madison*	36.0%	Perry*	28.0%
Allen	32.0%	Clay*	17.7%	Hart*	27.8%	Magoffin*	13.1%	Pike*	14.0%
Anderson	33.0%	Clinton*	28.7%	Henderson	36.6%	Marion	27.2%	Powell*	23.1%
Ballard	33.4%	Crittenden	46.0%	Henry	30.0%	Marshall	33.8%	Pulaski*	31.1%
Barren	31.0%	Cumberland*	32.5%	Hickman	51.5%	Martin*	20.5%	Robertson*	12.0%
Bath*	14.4%	Daviess	36.0%	Hopkins	40.5%	Mason	22.8%	Rockcastle*	24.5%
Bell*	14.3%	Edmonson*	28.6%	Jackson*	22.2%	McCracken	31.5%	Rowan*	37.0%
Boone	45.8%	Elliott*	24.5%	Jefferson	40.4%	McCreary*	9.9%	Russell*	41.0%
Bourbon	31.0%	Estill*	20.8%	Jessamine	35.3%	McLean	35.2%	Scott	46.4%
Boyd*	32.8%	Fayette	45.5%	Johnson*	14.4%	Meade	32.9%	Shelby	41.9%
Boyle	30.3%	Fleming*	31.5%	Kenton	45.1%	Menifee*	21.3%	Simpson	36.0%
Bracken	26.6%	Floyd*	14.3%	Knott*	13.4%	Mercer	29.8%	Spencer	40.2%
Breathitt*	22.3%	Franklin	42.3%	Knox*	19.9%	Metcalfe*	32.6%	Taylor	36.9%
Breckinridge	19.5%	Fulton	25.9%	Larue	27.5%	Monroe*	27.7%	Todd	39.3%
Bullitt	37.1%	Gallatin	24.6%	Laurel*	28.5%	Montgomery*	23.6%	Trigg	48.0%
Butler	25.1%	Garrard*	33.3%	Lawrence*	9.4%	Morgan*	18.6%	Trimble	30.6%
Caldwell	52.2%	Grant	34.4%	Lee*	24.1%	Muhlenberg	32.9%	Union	40.6%
Calloway	38.0%	Graves	27.1%	Leslie*	25.4%	Nelson	40.0%	Warren	44.6%
Campbell	40.0%	Grayson	27.3%	Letcher*	22.9%	Nicholas*	23.5%	Washington	32.4%
Carlisle	35.7%	Green*	17.4%	Lewis*	19.1%	Ohio	30.4%	Wayne*	23.5%
Carroll	34.9%	Greenup*	29.5%	Lincoln*	20.9%	Oldham	48.3%	Webster	41.3%
Carter*	23.7%	Hancock	35.5%	Livingston	45.5%	Owen	29.5%	Whitley*	23.6%
Casey*	14.7%	Hardin	39.0%	Logan	36.4%	Owsley*	22.7%	Wolfe*	8.8%
Christian	36.9%	Harlan*	17.2%	Lyon	65.9%	Pendleton	37.8%	Woodford	46.5%

*County is in the geographic region of Appalachia as defined by the Appalachian Region Commission (ARC)

POVERTY RATE

Nearly one-third (31.2%) of working-age Kentuckians with disabilities lived below the poverty line, compared to 12.8% of those without disabilities (+18.4% gap). This put Kentucky 5.8% higher than the national average of working-age adults with disabilities poverty rate (25.4%).

Table 21. Kentucky Working-Age Adults with Disabilities Poverty Rate ⁷

Region	Total	Living in Poverty	Poverty Rate
U.S.	21,375,164	5,420,980	25.4%
Kentucky	423,429	132,271	31.2%

The poverty rate was higher in rural areas, with the most rural counties observing a poverty rate of 35.7%.

Table 22. Kentucky Working-Age Adults with Disabilities Poverty Rate by County Type ⁷

County Type	% Disability	% Without Disability	Employment Gap
Metro	27.6%	10.6%	+17%
Micro	33.6%	15.2%	+18.4%
Non-Core (Most Rural)	35.7%	17.5%	+18.2%
Rural (Micro and Non-Core combined)	34.7%	16.3%	+18.4%

A county analysis of the poverty rates for working-age Kentuckians with disabilities revealed significant disparities across counties, reflecting varying levels of economic hardship and access to support services. Across Kentucky, the poverty rates for working-age individuals with disabilities ranged from a low of 9.0% in Woodford County to a high of 55.5% in Cumberland County.

Counties with the Lowest Poverty Rates for Working-Age Kentuckians with Disabilities:

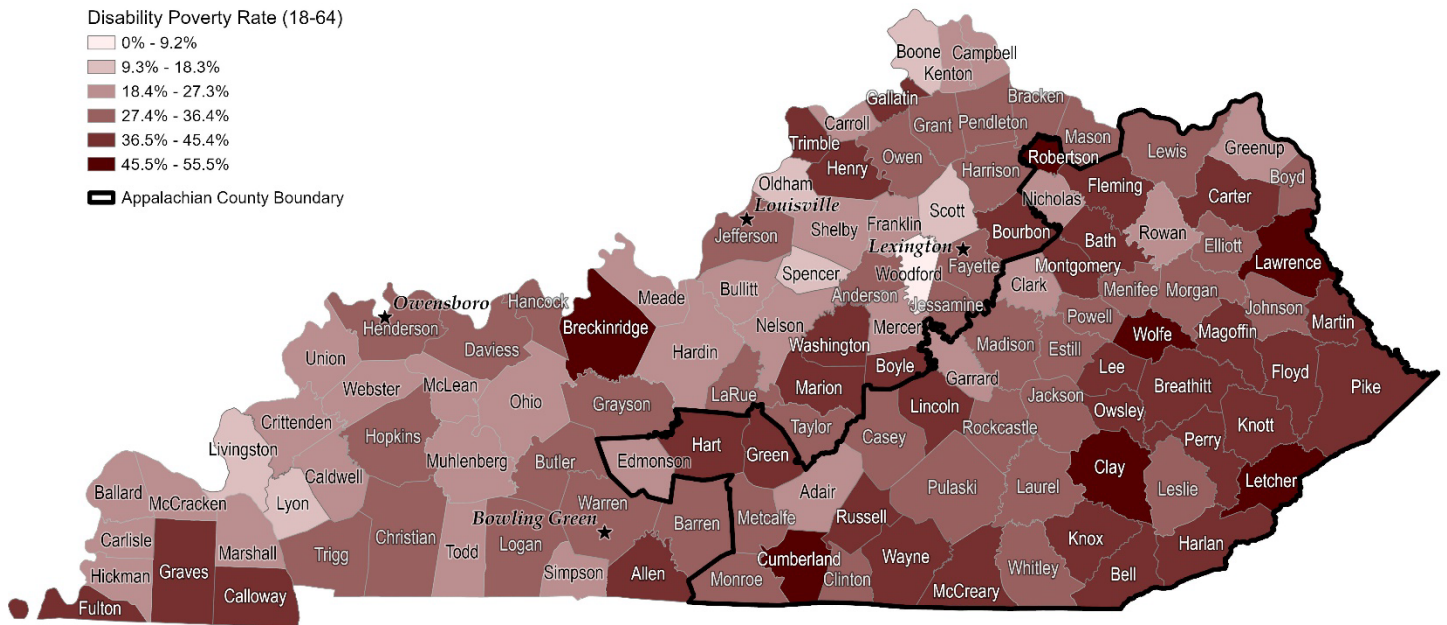
- Woodford County: 9.0%
- Lyon County: 10.4%
- Spencer County: 10.6%

Counties with the Highest Poverty Rates for Working-Age Kentuckians with Disabilities:

- Cumberland County: 55.5%
- Robertson County: 53.0%
- Wolfe County: 48.1%

Counties with the lowest poverty rates for individuals with disabilities were primarily located in central and western Kentucky and seem to benefit from stronger local economies and better access to resources and support services. In contrast, the counties with the highest poverty rates were mostly in eastern Appalachian Kentucky, and appeared to face significant economic challenges, including high unemployment rates, limited job opportunities, and insufficient support services. Regional patterns indicated that eastern Appalachian Kentucky counties generally have higher poverty rates for individuals with disabilities, reflecting broader economic challenges in these areas. These findings highlighted the need for targeted economic support and vocational rehabilitation services to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities in the most affected regions.

Map 6. Disability Poverty Rate (18-64) Map and County List ⁷



County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate
Adair*	26.5%	Clark*	23.2%	Harrison	34.3%	Madison*	30.4%	Perry*	37.2%
Allen	36.5%	Clay*	45.5%	Hart*	41.3%	Magoffin*	37.0%	Pike*	38.7%
Anderson	32.7%	Clinton*	34.0%	Henderson	27.7%	Marion	38.8%	Powell*	36.4%
Ballard	18.4%	Crittenden	21.1%	Henry	37.0%	Marshall	25.5%	Pulaski*	30.3%
Barren	35.9%	Cumberland*	55.5%	Hickman	20.1%	Martin*	40.1%	Robertson*	53.0%
Bath*	43.2%	Daviess	27.6%	Hopkins	29.2%	Mason	34.5%	Rockcastle*	33.7%
Bell*	43.8%	Edmonson*	25.0%	Jackson*	32.5%	McCracken	26.4%	Rowan*	24.2%
Boone	14.2%	Elliott*	36.4%	Jefferson	29.6%	McCreary*	43.0%	Russell*	37.2%
Bourbon	39.5%	Estill*	32.9%	Jessamine	30.2%	McLean	20.2%	Scott	14.3%
Boyd*	29.2%	Fayette	28.2%	Johnson*	31.6%	Meade	25.8%	Shelby	21.1%
Boyle	40.2%	Fleming*	39.4%	Kenton	24.1%	Menifee*	36.4%	Simpson	22.0%
Bracken	31.0%	Floyd*	43.9%	Knott*	40.0%	Mercer	24.5%	Spencer	10.6%
Breathitt*	37.7%	Franklin	26.9%	Knox*	39.7%	Metcalfe*	33.6%	Taylor	31.8%
Breckinridge	47.5%	Fulton	37.3%	Larue	28.1%	Monroe*	34.1%	Todd	23.4%
Bullitt	22.8%	Gallatin	41.5%	Laurel*	34.3%	Montgomery*	41.1%	Trigg	28.3%
Butler	32.9%	Garrard*	26.6%	Lawrence*	49.6%	Morgan*	29.1%	Trimble	41.1%
Caldwell	25.0%	Grant	32.4%	Lee*	39.5%	Muhlenberg	26.5%	Union	21.7%
Calloway	37.0%	Graves	43.3%	Leslie*	36.2%	Nelson	22.3%	Warren	30.1%
Campbell	26.5%	Grayson	34.8%	Letcher*	47.3%	Nicholas*	25.1%	Washington	39.3%
Carlisle	23.7%	Green*	37.1%	Lewis*	29.9%	Ohio	22.9%	Wayne*	41.1%
Carroll	24.4%	Greenup*	23.0%	Lincoln*	37.8%	Oldham	11.7%	Webster	24.7%
Carter*	43.7%	Hancock	29.3%	Livingston	12.9%	Owen	33.1%	Whitley*	33.3%
Casey*	36.3%	Hardin	19.7%	Logan	30.2%	Owsley*	39.9%	Wolfe*	48.1%
Christian	33.4%	Harlan*	36.9%	Lyon	10.4%	Pendleton	33.9%	Woodford	9.0%

*County is in the geographic region of Appalachia as defined by the Appalachian Region Commission (ARC)

For the veterans in Kentucky living with service-connected disabilities, the poverty rate was 18.7%.

Figure 6. Kentucky Civilian Veterans Living with a Service-Connected Disability Poverty Rate ⁷

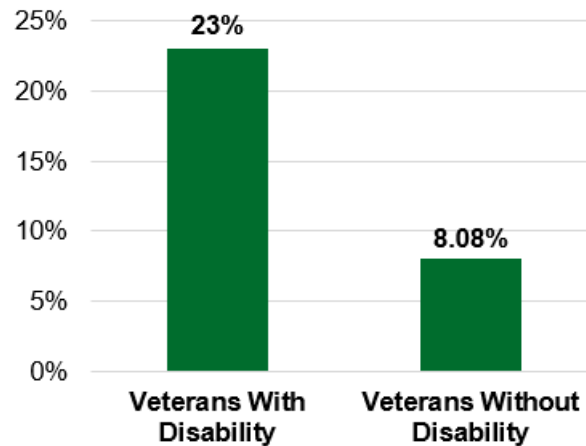


Table 23. Kentucky Civilian Veterans Living with a Service-Connected Disability Poverty Rate ⁷

Poverty Rate	Veterans With Disability	Veterans Without Disability
Poverty	5,852	6,517
No Poverty	25,393	80,704

BENEFITS RECEIPT

While receipt of SSI/SSDI benefits provides a needed safety net for many Americans with disabilities, it has frequently been cited as one of the most significant barriers to entering/staying in the workforce. Kentucky had one of the highest rates of SSI/SSDI benefits receipt, with 9.8% of the working-age population receiving benefits. This placed Kentucky behind only West Virginia in the proportion of working-age adults receiving these benefits. Most recent data have indicated that there were just over a quarter million beneficiaries between the ages of 18 and 64 in Kentucky with 179,666 receiving SSDI benefits, 75,188 receiving SSI only, and 26,340 receiving both SSI and SSDI.

Figure 7. Kentucky Working-Age Adults SSI/SSDI Benefits Receipt ⁸

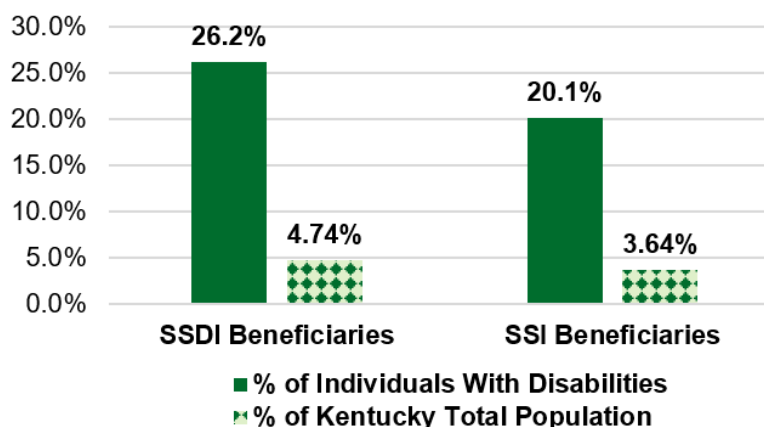


Table 24. Kentucky Working-Age Adults SSI/SSDI Benefits Receipt ⁸

Benefits	% of Individuals with Disabilities	% of Total KY Population	Gap
SSDI Beneficiaries	26.2%	4.74%	21.5%
SSI Beneficiaries	20.1%	3.64%	16.4%

INCOME

Kentuckians with disabilities earned a median full-time income of \$40,689, which was \$5,629 less than the median income for those without disabilities.

Figure 8. Kentucky Working-Age Adults Median Income ⁶

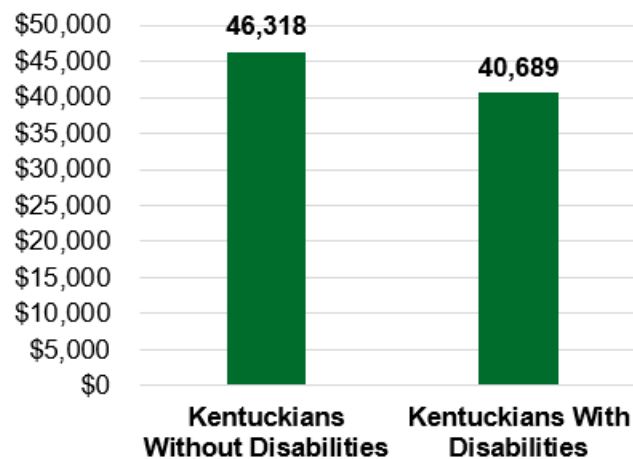


Table 25. Kentucky Working-Age Adults Income ⁶

Population	Median Full-Time Income
Kentuckians Without Disabilities	\$46,318
Kentuckians With Disabilities	\$40,689
Annual Gap	\$5,629

HOUSING BURDEN

Access to affordable, secure housing is an integral piece of economic stability. Lack of affordable housing production, increasing housing prices, and stagnant/lower wages have led to many individuals across the Commonwealth experiencing a housing burden. ⁹ The impact has been especially felt by historically marginalized populations, including those with disabilities. Housing burden is defined as households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs and utilities. Nearly one-third of working-age Kentuckians with disabilities (30.3%) experienced housing burden, which was higher than the rate for those without disabilities.

Table 26. Kentucky Housing Burden Rate ⁷

Population	Housing Burden Rate
Kentuckians With Disabilities	30.3%
Kentuckians Without Disabilities	18%

HEALTH INSURANCE

Access to healthcare and the presence of health insurance coverage are critical for many individuals with disabilities to maintain their overall wellness, manage any ongoing conditions, and be able to afford needed treatments and medications. A significant majority (94.4%) of Kentuckians with disabilities had health insurance coverage, with 38.3% having private coverage and 66.2% having public coverage.

Figure 9. Kentucky Target Population Insurance Coverage Type ⁷

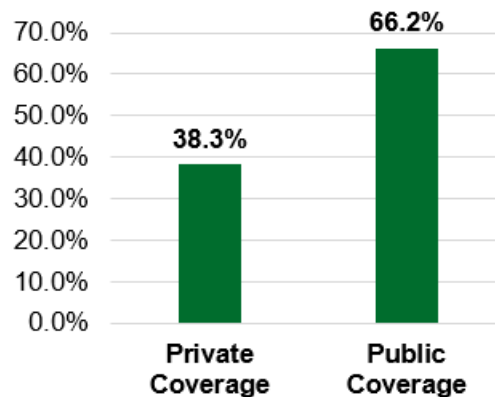


Table 27. Health Insurance Coverage for Kentuckians with Disabilities ⁷

Insurance Coverage Type	% Consumers Insured
Private Coverage	38.3%
Public Coverage	66.2%

OVR THREE-YEAR DATA REVIEW

PURPOSE

This analysis provides an overview of the aggregate case data from the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) for federal fiscal years (FFY) 2021 through 2023. It aims to offer insights into the demographics of OVR consumers, a comparison of the population of working-age Kentuckians with disabilities to OVR’s consumer base, case outcomes, expenditures, and employment data.

CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Over the three-year period of review, OVR closed a total of 38,465 cases. Over half (54.1%) of OVR consumers identified as male and 45.9% as female. The mean age of individuals served by the KY OVR during this period was 39 years, with a median age of 35 years. The age range of clients varied from 15 to 97 years. The distribution of OVR consumers across age groups showed that transition-age youth (aged 15-25) made up over one-third of OVR consumers (34%), followed by early-career (aged 26-35) consumers (17.3%), mid-career consumers (aged 36-45; 13.9%), late-career consumers (aged 46-55; 13.6%), disengagement/pre-retirement consumers (aged 56-65; 12.7%), and finally consumers in the legacy stage of their careers (over age 65; 8.6%).

Figure 10. OVR Consumers Gender/Sex ¹⁰

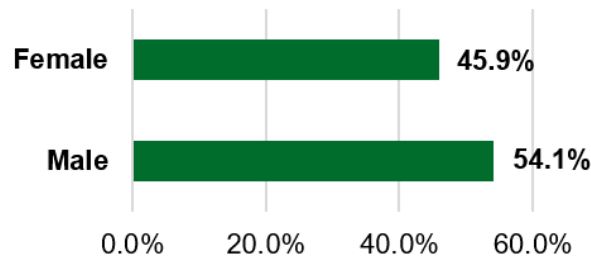


Table 28. OVR Consumers Gender/Sex ¹⁰

Gender/Sex	% of OVR Consumers
Male	54.1%
Female	45.9%

Table 29. OVR Consumers Age Range ¹⁰

Statistic	Age
Mean age	39 years
Median age	35 years
Age Range	15 to 97 years

Figure 11. OVR Consumers Age Group ¹⁰

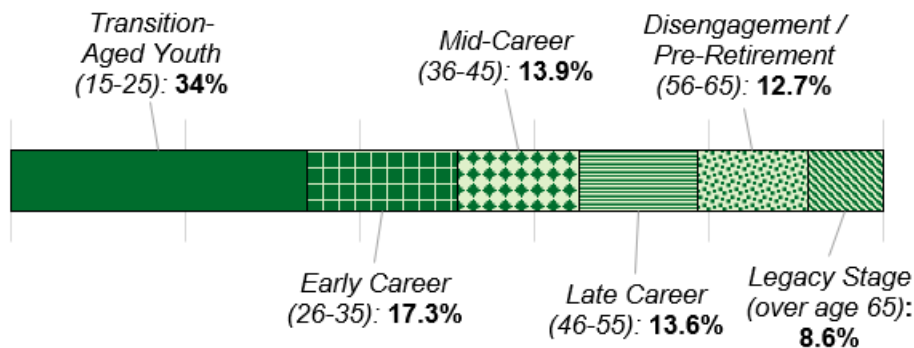


Table 30. OVR Consumers Age Group ¹⁰

Consumer Group	% of OVR Closed Cases
Transition-age Youth (15-25)	34.0%
Early Career (26-35)	17.3%
Mid-Career (36-45)	13.9%
Late Career (46-55)	13.6%
Disengagement / Pre-Retirement (56-65)	12.7%
Legacy Stage (over age 65)	8.6%

RACE/ETHNICITY

The majority of OVR consumers identified as White (79.9%), followed by Black or African American (10%), Hispanic/Latino (of any race; 8.8%), Asian (0.3%), Native American or Alaskan Native (0.2%), Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.1%), and two or more races (0.6%).

Table 31. OVR Consumers Race/Ethnicity ¹⁰

Race/Ethnicity	% of OVR Consumers
White	79.9%
Black or African American	10%
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	8.8%
Asian	0.3%
Native American or Alaskan Native	0.2%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1%
Two or more races	0.6%

PRIMARY IMPAIRMENT/DISABILITY

OVR collects data related to a consumer’s reported disability. The main category collected is the primary source of impairment or disability that has resulted in the consumer experiencing a barrier to attaining or retaining employment. The five most common reported primary impairments among OVR consumers included psychosocial and mental disabilities (30.9%), deafness and hearing loss (29.1%), cognitive disabilities (21.2%), physical and mobility impairments (14.2%), and blindness and other visual disabilities (4.2%).

Figure 12. OVR Consumers Disability Type ¹⁰

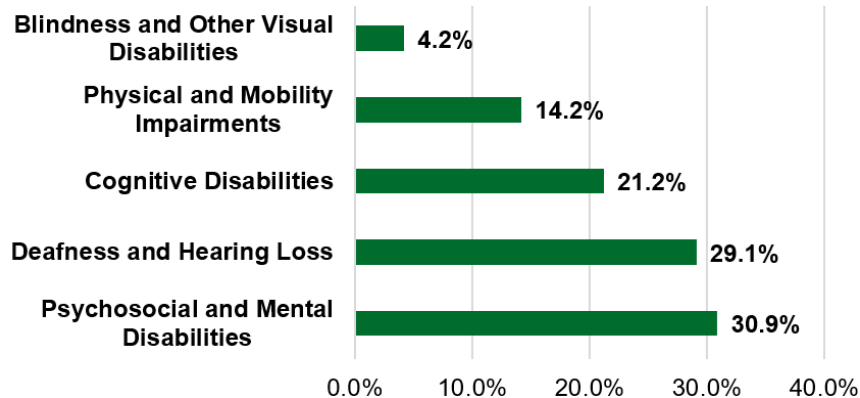


Table 32. OVR Consumers Disability Type ¹⁰

Primary Impairment	% of OVR Consumers
Psychosocial and Mental Disabilities	30.9%
Deafness and Hearing Loss	29.1%
Cognitive Disabilities	21.2%
Physical and Mobility Impairments	14.2%
Blindness and Other Visual Disabilities	4.2%

AREA OF RESIDENCE

OVR consumer data showed that 54.4% resided in metropolitan counties, while 45.6% lived in rural areas. Additionally, over one-third of OVR consumers were from Kentucky's Appalachian region. This geographic distribution indicates OVR's reach across both urban and rural areas, with significant representation from the Appalachian region.

Figure 13. OVR Consumers Area of Residence ¹⁰

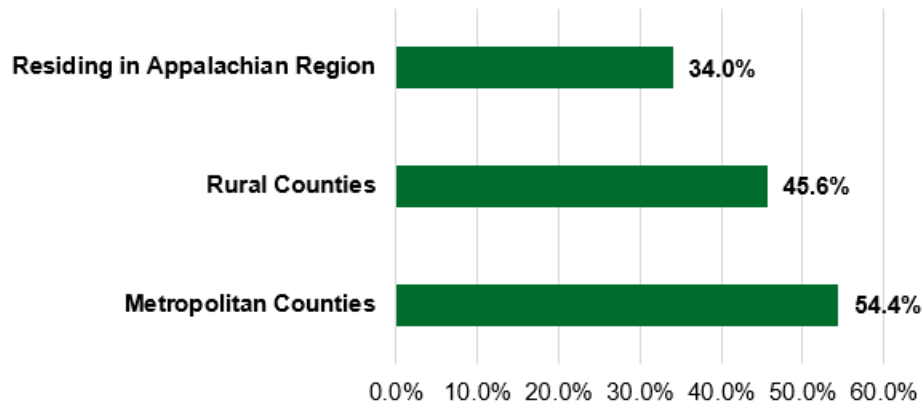


Table 33. OVR Consumers Area of Residence ¹⁰

Location	% of OVR Consumers
Metropolitan Counties	54.4%
Rural Counties	45.6%
Appalachian Region Residents	34%

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICE UTILIZATION RATES

WORKING-AGE ADULTS

The VR service utilization rates for working-age adults with disabilities in Kentucky was 7.3%, but a county analysis revealed significant regional disparities. These rates reflected the percentage of cases closed by OVR over a three-year period relative to the total population of working-age adults with disabilities in each county. The data indicated that counties with higher utilization rates tend to be more urbanized or have stronger outreach programs, while lower rates were often found in more rural or isolated regions.

Top Three Counties by VR Utilization Rate:

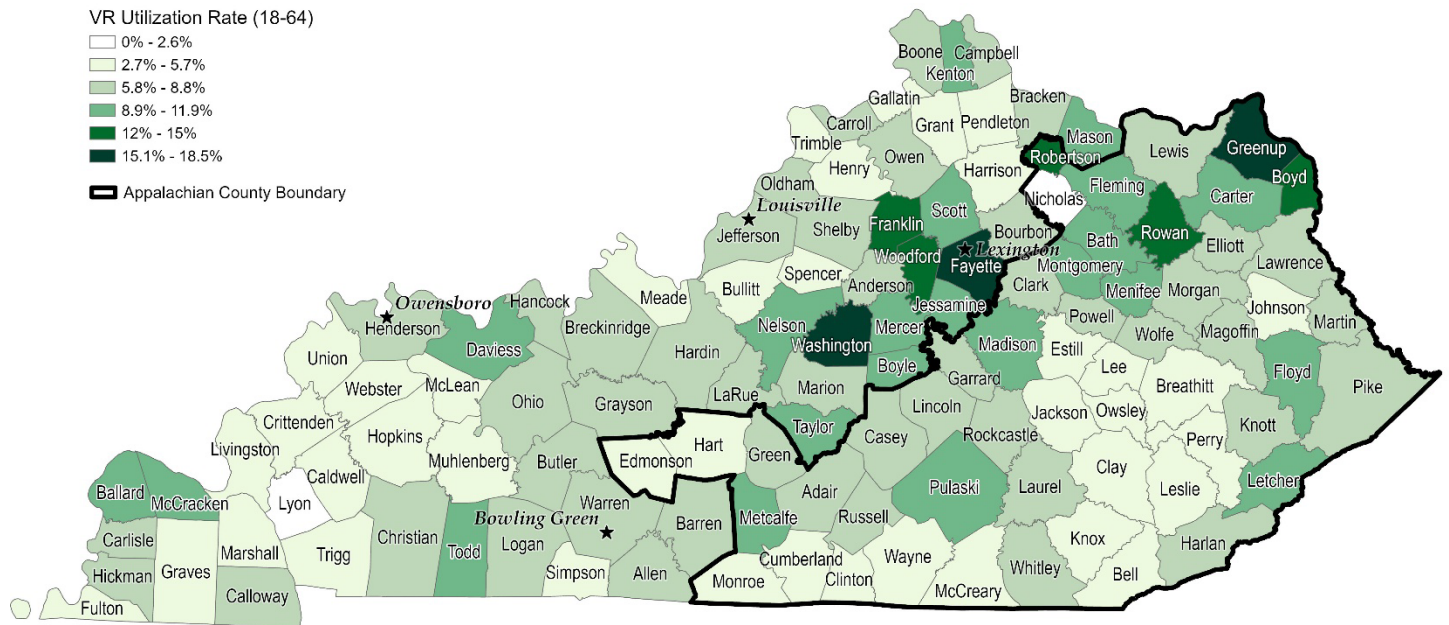
- Rowan County: 14.5%
- Greenup County: 18.5%
- Washington County: 16.3%

Bottom Three Counties by VR Utilization Rate:

- Nicholas County: 2.1%
- Lyon County: 2.3%
- Livingston County: 2.9%

Counties with more dense urban centers, like Fayette and Franklin, showed high rates of VR utilization, likely due to better access to resources and services. More rural and isolated counties, such as Nicholas and Lyon, showed much lower utilization rates, likely due to limited access to services and barriers to outreach.

Map 7. VR Utilization Rate (18-64) Map and County List ¹⁰



County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate
Adair*	8.4%	Clark*	8.7%	Harrison	5.7%	Madison*	10.2%	Perry*	5.1%
Allen	6.0%	Clay*	3.7%	Hart*	5.0%	Magoffin*	5.9%	Pike*	8.3%
Anderson	7.5%	Clinton*	5.0%	Henderson	7.8%	Marion	7.8%	Powell*	8.8%
Ballard	9.6%	Crittenden	2.7%	Henry	4.3%	Marshall	4.8%	Pulaski*	9.9%
Barren	8.6%	Cumberland*	5.6%	Hickman	6.6%	Martin*	7.6%	Robertson*	13.9%
Bath*	9.1%	Daviess	9.6%	Hopkins	4.7%	Mason	11.8%	Rockcastle*	6.0%
Bell*	4.6%	Edmonson*	5.1%	Jackson*	3.2%	McCracken	9.3%	Rowan*	14.5%
Boone	7.5%	Elliott*	6.0%	Jefferson	7.2%	McCreary*	4.1%	Russell*	7.5%
Bourbon	7.2%	Estill*	4.1%	Jessamine	11.4%	McLean	5.4%	Scott	9.6%
Boyd*	14.3%	Fayette	16.3%	Johnson*	5.6%	Meade	5.1%	Shelby	6.9%
Boyle	10.2%	Fleming*	9.1%	Kenton	10.4%	Menifee*	10.1%	Simpson	4.5%
Bracken	6.7%	Floyd*	10.0%	Knott*	6.1%	Mercer	10.0%	Spencer	4.2%
Breathitt*	4.5%	Franklin	14.5%	Knox*	5.6%	Metcalfe*	9.8%	Taylor	11.7%
Breckinridge	6.3%	Fulton	5.1%	Larue	7.8%	Monroe*	4.2%	Todd	9.7%
Bullitt	4.3%	Gallatin	4.4%	Laurel*	7.8%	Montgomery*	11.3%	Trigg	4.2%
Butler	7.5%	Garrard*	6.5%	Lawrence*	8.1%	Morgan*	8.7%	Trimble	3.6%
Caldwell	3.2%	Grant	5.0%	Lee*	4.2%	Muhlenberg	5.1%	Union	3.6%
Calloway	6.4%	Graves	5.2%	Leslie*	3.8%	Nelson	9.1%	Warren	8.0%
Campbell	7.2%	Grayson	6.2%	Letcher*	9.0%	Nicholas*	2.1%	Washington	16.3%
Carlisle	7.4%	Green*	6.9%	Lewis*	7.7%	Ohio	6.3%	Wayne*	4.1%
Carroll	6.6%	Greenup*	18.5%	Lincoln*	8.3%	Oldham	8.1%	Webster	3.1%
Carter*	9.4%	Hancock	6.5%	Livingston	2.9%	Owen	6.4%	Whitley*	6.4%
Casey*	8.0%	Hardin	8.7%	Logan	6.3%	Owsley*	5.0%	Wolfe*	6.9%
Christian	6.2%	Harlan*	8.3%	Lyon	2.3%	Pendleton	3.4%	Woodford	12.9%

*County is in the geographic region of Appalachia as defined by the Appalachian Region Commission (ARC)

SCHOOL-AGED CONSUMERS

The average utilization rate for school-aged consumers (aged 15-21) in the Commonwealth was 23%. A county-by-county analysis of utilization rates for school-aged youth with disabilities highlighted the effectiveness of transition programs across Kentucky counties. This rate was calculated by dividing the number of cases OVR closed over a three-year period for consumers aged 15-21 by the total number of students with IEPs in grades 9-14 in those counties. Higher utilization rates in certain counties suggested more active engagement and successful outreach efforts for youth, while lower rates pointed to potential areas needing targeted intervention.

Top Three Counties by School-Aged VR Utilization Rate:

- Ballard County: 87.5%
- Crittenden County: 78.9%
- Hickman County: 50.0%

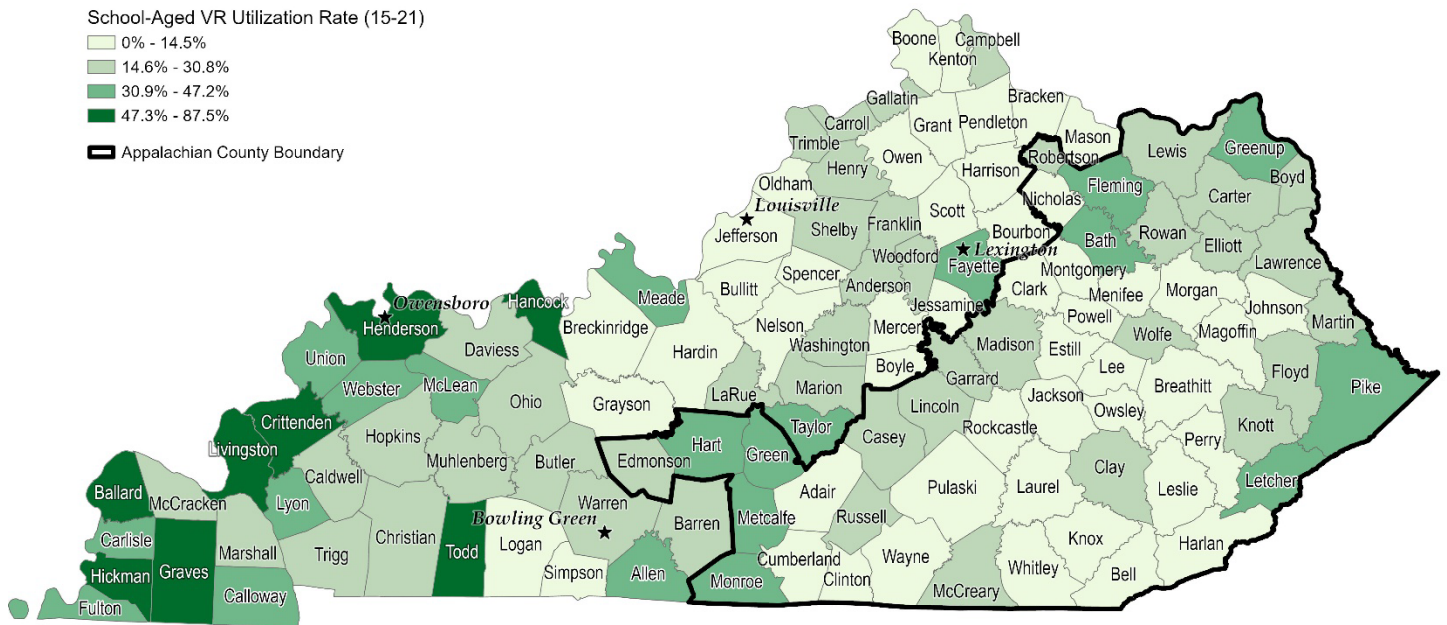
Bottom Three Counties by School-Aged VR Utilization Rate:

- Jackson County: 2.5%
- Wayne County: 4.2%
- Nicholas County: 4.9%

Counties like Ballard and Crittenden demonstrated high utilization rates, likely due to robust school-to-work transition programs. In contrast, counties such as Jackson and Wayne had notably low utilization rates, indicating a need for enhanced outreach and support services in these regions.

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Map 8. School-Aged VR Utilization Rate (15-21) Map and County List ¹⁰



County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate
Adair*	10.2%	Clark*	6.7%	Harrison	6.7%	Madison*	23.8%	Perry*	6.5%
Allen	33.1%	Clay*	20.5%	Hart*	37.0%	Magoffin*	7.2%	Pike*	30.9%
Anderson	17.4%	Clinton*	6.8%	Henderson	74.9%	Marion	16.4%	Powell*	12.7%
Ballard	87.5%	Crittenden	78.9%	Henry	23.0%	Marshall	21.6%	Pulaski*	10.2%
Barren	26.3%	Cumberland*	13.3%	Hickman	50.0%	Martin*	27.3%	Robertson*	23.8%
Bath*	35.1%	Daviess	27.5%	Hopkins	18.8%	Mason	14.2%	Rockcastle*	10.5%
Bell*	4.6%	Edmonson*	17.1%	Jackson*	2.5%	McCracken	28.6%	Rowan*	27.5%
Boone	13.0%	Elliott*	14.6%	Jefferson	10.5%	McCreary*	17.4%	Russell*	14.9%
Bourbon	9.5%	Estill*	13.7%	Jessamine	13.2%	McLean	41.9%	Scott	12.2%
Boyd*	25.1%	Fayette	30.9%	Johnson*	10.7%	Meade	38.4%	Shelby	19.4%
Boyle	9.8%	Fleming*	44.8%	Kenton	13.3%	Menifee*	9.6%	Simpson	6.0%
Bracken	8.3%	Floyd*	26.4%	Knott*	14.7%	Mercer	10.8%	Spencer	10.4%
Breathitt*	5.9%	Franklin	22.3%	Knox*	8.2%	Metcalfe*	47.2%	Taylor	37.3%
Breckinridge	9.4%	Fulton	39.4%	Larue	17.9%	Monroe*	37.7%	Todd	66.7%
Bullitt	10.8%	Gallatin	14.9%	Laurel*	11.1%	Montgomery*	13.9%	Trigg	25.0%
Butler	22.2%	Garrard*	26.9%	Lawrence*	23.7%	Morgan*	13.1%	Trimble	21.4%
Caldwell	30.0%	Grant	12.0%	Lee*	8.3%	Muhlenberg	19.6%	Union	36.8%
Calloway	35.1%	Graves	58.7%	Leslie*	9.9%	Nelson	13.7%	Warren	17.6%
Campbell	15.9%	Grayson	10.8%	Letcher*	44.7%	Nicholas*	4.9%	Washington	17.6%
Carlisle	36.4%	Green*	34.5%	Lewis*	21.5%	Ohio	29.5%	Wayne*	4.2%
Carroll	29.1%	Greenup*	43.8%	Lincoln*	16.0%	Oldham	9.8%	Webster	39.8%
Carter*	21.7%	Hancock	65.9%	Livingston	63.6%	Owen	7.0%	Whitley*	7.2%
Casey*	23.1%	Hardin	14.0%	Logan	11.2%	Owsley*	13.9%	Wolfe*	19.6%
Christian	22.6%	Harlan*	12.9%	Lyon	34.8%	Pendleton	9.1%	Woodford	19.7%

*County is in the geographic region of Appalachia as defined by the Appalachian Region Commission (ARC)

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

At the application stage, 58.7% of OVR consumers were unemployed, while 39.8% were engaged in competitive integrated employment, and 1.5% were employed in non-integrated settings. Employed OVR consumers reported a median annual income of \$31,200, working a median of 40 hours per week at a median wage of \$15 per hour. Regarding financial support, 59.7% of consumers relied on others as their primary income source, and 22% received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits at the time of application.

Figure 14. OVR Data by Employment Status ¹⁰

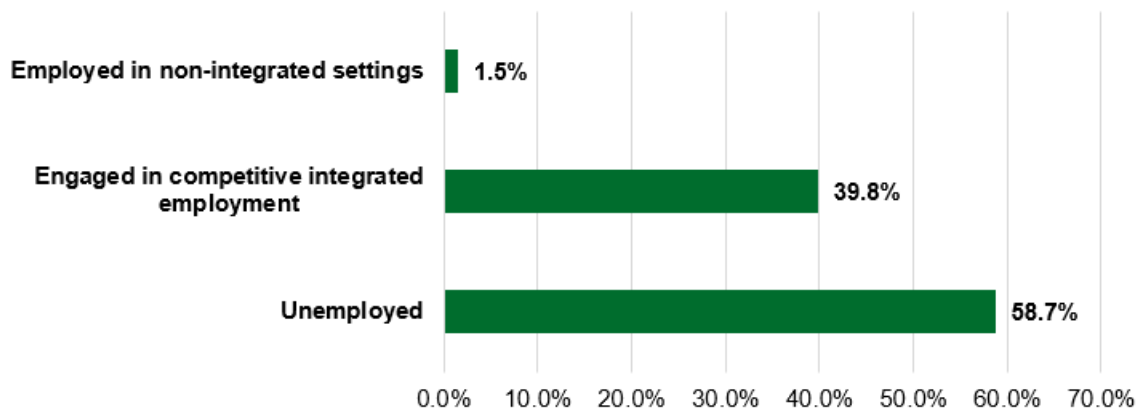


Table 34. OVR Consumers Employment Status ¹⁰

Employment Status	% of OVR Consumers
Unemployed	58.7%
Engaged in Competitive Integrated Employment	39.8%
Employed in Non-integrated Settings	1.5%

Figure 15. OVR Data by Income ¹⁰

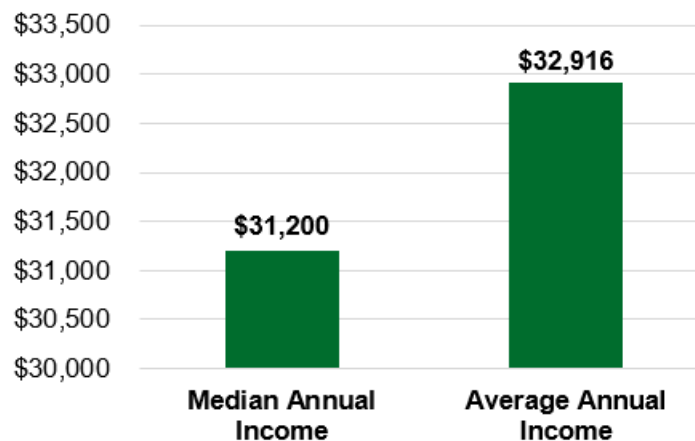


Table 35. OVR Consumers Income ¹⁰

Statistic	Income
Median Annual Income	\$31,200
Average Annual Income	\$32,916

Table 36. OVR Consumers Wages ¹⁰

Hours & Wages	Value
Median Hours Worked Per Week	40 hours
Average Hours Worked Per Week	32.9 hours
Median Wage	\$15 per hour
Average Wage	\$19.24 per hour

Figure 16. OVR Consumers Financial Support ¹⁰

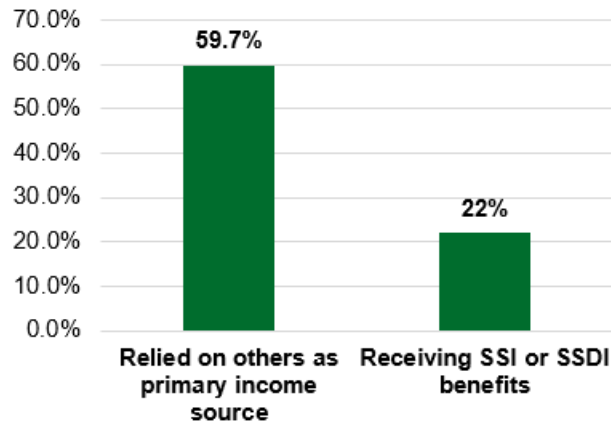


Table 37. OVR Consumers Financial Support ¹⁰

Financial Support	% of OVR Consumers
Relied on Others as Primary Income Source	59.7%
Received SSI or SSDI Benefits	22%

CASE SUCCESS RATES

The three-year case success rates for OVR cases across Kentucky was 27.8%, meaning slightly more than 1 in 4 OVR consumers achieved a successful case outcome. A breakdown of success rates across Kentucky counties revealed significant disparities. These rates are calculated by dividing the total number of successful case closures by the total number of cases closed in each county during the three-year review period. The data showcased notable regional patterns, with certain counties achieving higher success rates likely due to better resource allocation, efficient service delivery, and robust support systems. Conversely, lower success rates in other counties may indicate a need for improved strategies and support mechanisms.

Top Three Counties by Case Success Rate:

- Russell County: 57.0%
- Metcalfe County: 56.6%
- Bracken County: 49.3%

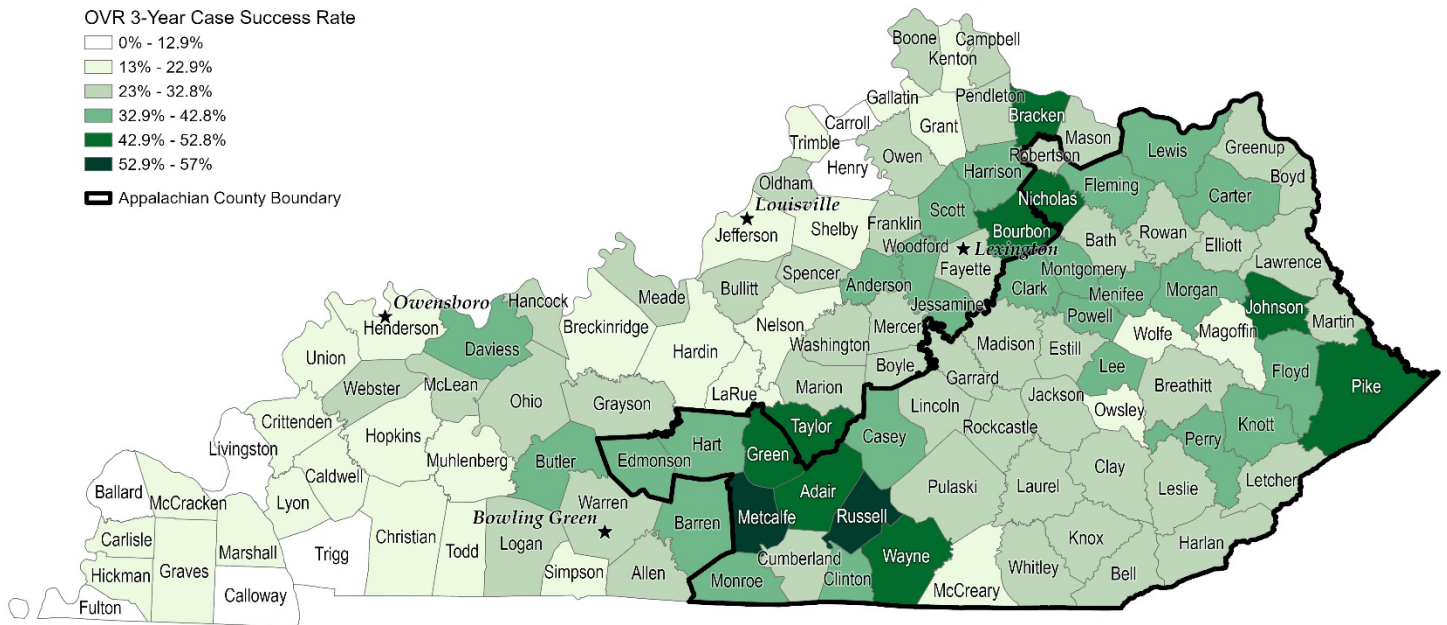
Bottom Three Counties by Case Success Rate:

- Fulton County: 7.3%
- Ballard County: 8.9%
- Carroll County: 10.7%

The high success rates in southern Appalachian Kentucky may be attributed to strong community engagement, robust support structures, and effective VR strategies tailored to the local population. In contrast, the lower success rates in Western Kentucky and parts of North-Central Kentucky suggested the need for a thorough evaluation of existing VR practices and resources. Addressing potential gaps in service delivery, enhancing community outreach, and improving local support mechanisms could be crucial steps in improving outcomes in these regions. By identifying and replicating the successful strategies from higher-performing areas, OVR can work towards increasing the overall effectiveness and reach of its vocational rehabilitation services across the state.

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Map 9. OVR 3-Year Case Success Rate Map and County List ¹⁰



County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate	County	Rate
Adair*	46.5%	Clark*	36.1%	Harrison	42.0%	Madison*	29.1%	Perry*	35.9%
Allen	29.7%	Clay*	23.6%	Hart*	33.1%	Magoffin*	20.4%	Pike*	43.7%
Anderson	36.8%	Clinton*	33.3%	Henderson	19.2%	Marion	32.6%	Powell*	36.9%
Ballard	8.9%	Crittenden	15.4%	Henry	12.0%	Marshall	13.0%	Pulaski*	26.8%
Barren	39.9%	Cumberland*	26.3%	Hickman	17.2%	Martin*	25.2%	Robertson*	28.6%
Bath*	25.5%	Daviess	34.8%	Hopkins	15.4%	Mason	29.5%	Rockcastle*	25.6%
Bell*	23.2%	Edmonson*	35.8%	Jackson*	28.8%	McCracken	18.3%	Rowan*	25.5%
Boone	23.0%	Elliott*	31.5%	Jefferson	20.0%	McCreary*	22.6%	Russell*	57.0%
Bourbon	45.7%	Estill*	27.5%	Jessamine	33.8%	McLean	23.7%	Scott	39.8%
Boyd*	25.5%	Fayette	30.9%	Johnson*	43.4%	Meade	23.4%	Shelby	20.0%
Boyle	27.3%	Fleming*	36.1%	Kenton	20.2%	Menifee*	35.5%	Simpson	17.5%
Bracken	49.3%	Floyd*	36.5%	Knott*	36.0%	Mercer	27.9%	Spencer	30.2%
Breathitt*	24.0%	Franklin	29.5%	Knox*	27.2%	Metcalfe*	56.6%	Taylor	43.5%
Breckinridge	20.6%	Fulton	7.3%	Larue	19.5%	Monroe*	38.4%	Todd	22.9%
Bullitt	25.4%	Gallatin	22.5%	Laurel*	31.6%	Montgomery*	37.6%	Trigg	12.7%
Butler	33.6%	Garrard*	26.9%	Lawrence*	27.1%	Morgan*	42.4%	Trimble	19.4%
Caldwell	21.4%	Grant	17.4%	Lee*	38.2%	Muhlenberg	14.8%	Union	15.6%
Calloway	12.7%	Graves	13.0%	Leslie*	27.1%	Nelson	18.5%	Warren	25.9%
Campbell	23.1%	Grayson	31.4%	Letcher*	25.5%	Nicholas*	45.0%	Washington	26.2%
Carlisle	18.5%	Green*	45.3%	Lewis*	34.1%	Ohio	27.5%	Wayne*	43.8%
Carroll	10.7%	Greenup*	26.3%	Lincoln*	27.8%	Oldham	28.6%	Webster	23.6%
Carter*	39.8%	Hancock	30.0%	Livingston	12.5%	Owen	28.6%	Whitley*	27.5%
Casey*	36.9%	Hardin	16.0%	Logan	28.2%	Owsley*	13.3%	Wolfe*	18.4%
Christian	16.0%	Harlan*	27.7%	Lyon	14.7%	Pendleton	26.2%	Woodford	35.9%

*County is in the geographic region of Appalachia as defined by the Appalachian Region Commission (ARC)

PRE-ETS UTILIZATION

PRE-ETS CONSUMERS

Over the three-year review period, OVR closed 6,739 cases for consumers who received pre-ETS (1,894 in 2021, 1645 in 2022, and 3200 in 2023), accounting for 17.5% of all OVR consumers served. The average age of the pre-ETS consumers at case closure was 21.8 years (SD = 1.5) and a majority (64.4%) identified as male.

In terms of racial and ethnic identities, a majority of consumers who received pre-ETS identified as White (79.9%), followed by Black or African American (9.6%), Hispanic or Latino/Latina (8.8%), Asian (0.7%), Native American or Alaskan Native (0.1%), Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.1%), and those who identified with two or more races (0.8%). Just over half of OVR’s transition-age consumers resided in Kentucky’s rural counties (53.2%) with over a quarter (27.6%) living in the most-rural (or non-core) counties. Over one-third of the consumers received pre-ETS (34.1%) were living in the Appalachian region of the state.

In terms of employment and income, at the time of application 8.9% of transition-age consumers reported being engaged in competitive integrated employment, 2.5% were primarily reliant on their own income sources, and 24.9% reported receipt of SSI/SSDI benefits.

PRE-ETS CONVERSION RATES

Of the 6,739 closed cases for consumers who received pre-ETS from FFY21-23, 4,726 (or 70.1% of consumers) never applied for VR services. In other words, the conversion rate from pre-ETS to VR application for closed cases during this time period was 29.9%. The conversion rate varied significantly from year to year with a 29.1% conversion rate in 2021, followed by a 43% rate in 2022, and 23.6% rate in 2023. It is worth noting that even for those that did apply for services, fewer than 1 in 4 consumers (22.9%) who received pre-ETS across the three-year period ever made it to the IPE-phase of services.

Figure 17. Pre-ETS Conversion Rates by Year ¹⁰

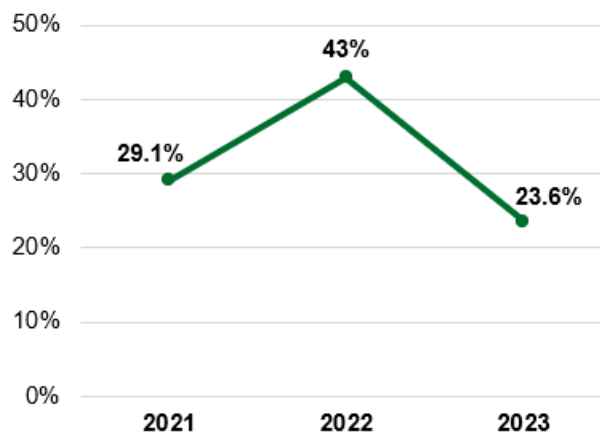


Table 38. Pre-ETS Conversion Rates by Year ¹⁰

Year	Conversion Rate
2021	29.1%
2022	43%
2023	23.6%

OUTCOMES

Among consumers who received pre-ETS that made it past the IPE stage into services, less than one-third (31.4%) of cases resulted in a successful closure. On average, \$8,253 was spent on each transition-age case and the typical duration of services was approximately 778 days. From application to case closure, pre-ETS consumers in successful cases showed a 71 percentage-point gain in income self-reliance. At the same time, the SSI/SSDI benefits receipt rate increased slightly by 0.2 percentage-points. In terms of income, pre-ETS consumers reported increases in wages (from \$1.23 at application to \$11.80 at closure) and hours worked (from 2.2 hours per week to 26.3 hours per week), resulting in an average annual income gain of \$15,997 (from \$141 per year to \$16,138 per year).

COMPARISON TO KENTUCKIANS WITH DISABILITIES

PURPOSE

Examine the overall demographic profile of the consumers served by OVR from FFY 2021-2023 compared to the profile of working-age (18-64) Kentuckians with disabilities established in the environmental scan.

GENDER/SEX

While 51% of Kentuckians with disabilities identified as female, less than half of OVR consumers were female (45.9%). However, when excluding cases that never reached the IPE stage, the gender composition of OVR consumers (48.4% female) was closer to the known demographic profile. A closer examination of the gender gap in services shows that 58.6% of consumers who exit OVR before the IPE stage are male and nearly half (45.2%) are transition-age youth. This indicated that the observed gap is due, in part, to a disproportionate number of young males receiving school-based transition services (such as pre-ETS).

Table 39. OVR Consumers Compared to Kentuckians with Disabilities by Gender/Sex ¹⁰

Gender/Sex	% OVR Consumers	% OVR Consumers (Exit Pre-IPE Removed)	% Kentuckians with Disabilities
Female	45.9%	48.4%	51%
Male	54.1%	51.6%	49%

RACE/ETHNICITY

OVR served a higher proportion of consumers who identified as Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native American or Alaskan Native, and Hawaiian or Pacific Islander compared to the general population of Kentuckians with disabilities. However, OVR served a lower proportion of consumers who identified as Asian. The overall data suggests that OVR is excelling in their efforts to provide services to marginalized population groups, particularly Kentuckians who identified as Hispanic or Latino/a. The low proportional service rate for Kentuckians of Asian extraction should be further examined, particularly in the wake of rising rates of discrimination against Asian Americans in the post COVID-19 era. ¹¹

Table 40. OVR Consumers Compared to Kentuckians with Disabilities by Race/Ethnicity ¹⁰

Racial/Ethnic Identity	% OVR Consumers	% Kentuckians with Disabilities
Black or African American	10%	7.33%
Hispanic or Latino/a	8.8%	2.36%
Native American or Alaskan Native	0.2%	0.15%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%
Asian	0.3%	0.6%

DISABILITY TYPE

OVR services reached a proportionally higher number of consumers with hearing impairments but a lower number of consumers with visual impairments compared to the general population of Kentuckians with disabilities. This highlights the effectiveness of OVR's specialized program for those who are deaf or hard of hearing and suggests a potential area for improving services for those with visual impairments.

Table 41. OVR Consumers Compared to Kentuckians with Disabilities by Disability Type ¹⁰

Disability Category	% OVR Consumers	% Kentuckians with Disabilities
Visual Impairments	4.2%	20.9%
Hearing Impairments	29.1%	19.7%

EMPLOYMENT

The employment rate for working-age Kentuckians with disabilities was 32.3%, lower than the US average of 40.7%. OVR data showed that 39.8% of their consumers were employed at the time of application, indicating a potential focus on those already employed and a need for targeted outreach to unemployed individuals with disabilities and those who are disconnected from the labor force.

Table 42. OVR Consumers Compared to Kentuckians with Disabilities by Employment Rate ¹⁰

Description	% OVR Consumers at Application	% Working-Age Kentuckians with Disabilities	United States Average (%)
Employment Rate	39.8%	32.3%	40.7%

SSI/SSDI BENEFICIARIES

Data collected via the Social Security Administration (SSA) revealed that 9.8% of the resident working-age population in the Commonwealth receive SSI or SSDI benefits. That is the second highest SSI/SSDI beneficiary rate in the US ⁸. Data collected by OVR from consumers indicated that 22% of their consumers reported receiving SSI or SSDI benefits at the time of application.

Table 43. OVR Consumers Compared to Kentuckians by Benefits ¹⁰

SSI/SSDI Benefit Status	% of OVR Consumers	% of Working-Age Kentuckians
Receives SSI/SSDI Benefits	22%	9.8%

AGGREGATE OUTCOMES

There are numerous reasons why a consumer with an open case at KY OVR may have their case closed. The main categories of case closure examined include: an unsuccessful case closure prior to the IPE stage of services (exit before IPE), an unsuccessful case closure after the consumer had established an IPE (exit after IPE), and a successful case closure, which occurs when a consumer is engaged in competitive integrated employment and no longer requires OVR services. Of the 38,465 cases closed by OVR from FFY 2021-2023, over a quarter resulted in a successful case closure, nearly half never made it to the IPE stage, and the remainder resulted in an unsuccessful closure after an IPE had been established.

Figure 18. Overall Case Closure for OVR Consumers ¹⁰

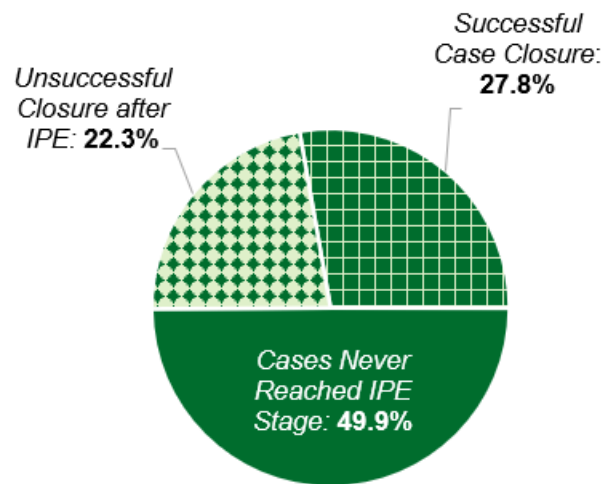


Table 44. Overall Case Closure for OVR Consumers ¹⁰

Case Closure Category	% of OVR Consumers
Successful Case Closure	27.8%
Cases Never Reached IPE Stage	49.9%
Unsuccessful Closure after IPE	22.3%

EXIT BEFORE IPE

Nearly half of all OVR cases closed in the three-year review period exited unsuccessfully before reaching the IPE stage. Examples of consumers exiting at this stage include those who left during the application, referral, or potentially eligible stages, as well as those deemed ineligible. The most common reasons for exiting at this stage were listed as "all other reasons," no longer being interested in services, and being unable to locate or contact the individual.

Figure 19. Reason for Exit Before IPE for OVR Consumers ¹⁰

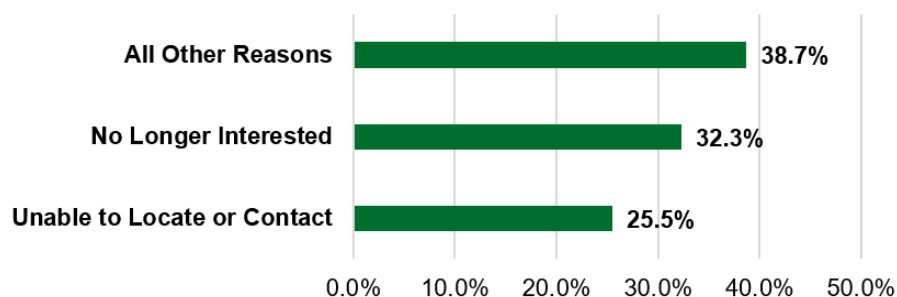


Table 45. Reason for Exit Before IPE for OVR Consumers ¹⁰

Reason for Exit Before IPE	% of OVR Consumers
Unable to Locate or Contact	25.5%
No Longer Interested	32.3%
All Other Reasons	38.7%

UNSUCCESSFUL CLOSURE AFTER

These cases (22.3% of all case closures) reached the IPE phase but were ultimately closed as unsuccessful. Common reasons for these closures include the consumer no longer being interested in services, being employed in a non-competitive setting, or being unable to be located. The most frequently cited reasons for these unsuccessful closures were an inability to contact or locate the individual, a lack of continued interest in services, and "all other reasons".

Figure 20. Reasons for Case Closure after IPE for OVR Consumers ¹⁰

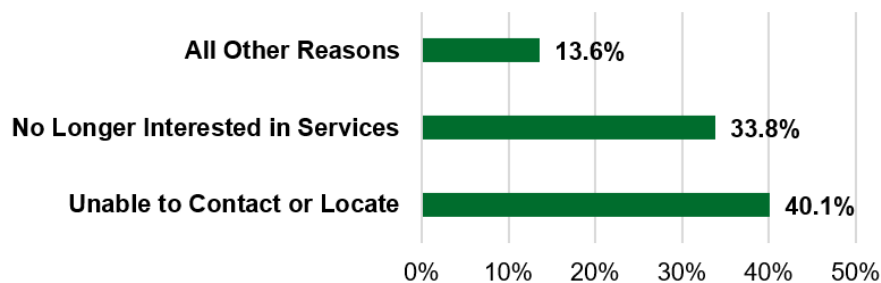


Table 46. Reasons for Case Closure after IPE for OVR Consumers ¹⁰

Unsuccessful Closure After IPE Reasons	% of OVR Consumers
Unable to Contact or Locate	40.1%
No Longer Interested in Services	33.8%
All Other Reasons	13.6%

CASE EXPENDITURES AND SERVICE DURATION

For cases that were closed unsuccessfully after the IPE stage, the median case expenditure was \$3,462, with an average expenditure of \$5,837. The duration of these cases ranged widely, with a median of 729 days and an average of 1,033 days. The case expenditure and service duration data were heavily skewed by older cases with higher overall case expenditures.

Table 47. Case Expenditures for OVR Consumers in Unsuccessful Cases ¹⁰

Statistic	Value
Median Case Expenditure	\$3,462
Average Case Expenditure	\$5,837
Range of Case Expenditure	\$10 to \$794,728
Median Service Duration	729 days
Average Service Duration	1,033 days
Range of Service Duration	6 days to 10,629 days

SUCCESSFUL CLOSURES

A successful case closure at OVR occurs when a consumer achieves competitive integrated employment and no longer requires OVR assistance. The overall successful case closure rate for all closed cases from FFY 2021-2023 was 27.8%. When excluding the cases that never reached the IPE stage, the success rate rises to 55.5%, indicating that over half of those who engaged fully in OVR services achieved successful outcomes.

Table 48. Successful Case Closures for OVR Consumers ¹⁰

Statistic	Value
Overall (All Closed Cases from FFY 2021-2023)	27.8%
Excluding Cases That Never Reached the IPE Stage	55.5%
Total Number of Successful Case Closures	10,699

CASE EXPENDITURES AND SERVICE DURATION

Successful case closures had a median expenditure of \$3,124 and an average expenditure of \$6,384. The duration of these cases also varied, with a median of 355 days and an average of 692 days. Compared to unsuccessful closures after IPE, successful cases were generally less costly and had shorter service durations, supporting the notion that a higher intensity of services delivered over a shorter period tends to result in better outcomes ¹².

Table 49. Case Expenditures for OVR Consumers in Successful Cases ¹⁰

Case Expenditures and Duration	Value
Median Case Expenditure	\$3,124
Average Case Expenditure	\$6,384
Range of Case Expenditure	\$6.84 to \$407,094
Median Service Duration	355 days
Average Service Duration	692 days
Range of Service Duration	93 days to 7,144 days

SUCCESSFUL CLOSURE INCOME AND SUPPORT

For OVR consumers whose cases ended in competitive integrated employment, the median annual income reported at closure was \$33,280, with an average income of \$35,731. This represented a significant increase from the income levels reported at application, with a median increase of \$15,808. Additionally, a higher percentage of these consumers reported being primarily reliant on their own income at closure compared to at application, and there was a slight decrease in the percentage receiving SSDI/SSI benefits.

Figure 21. Annual Income for OVR Consumers in Successful Cases ¹⁰

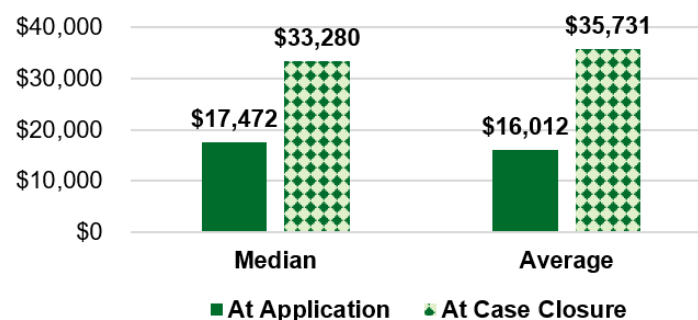


Table 50. Annual Income for OVR Consumers in Successful Cases ¹⁰

Successful Closure	Annual Income	Median	Average
At Application		\$17,472	\$16,012
At Case Closure		\$33,280	\$35,731

YEAR BY YEAR TRENDS

The closure data for FFY 2021 through 2023 indicated a steady increase in the number of cases closed by OVR. In 2021, there were 10,908 closures, which increased to 11,410 in 2022 and further rose to 16,147 in 2023. This upward trend suggests an increased demand for vocational rehabilitation services in the state, possibly reflecting a post-COVID-19 labor force engagement rebound for Kentuckians with disabilities.

Figure 22. OVR Consumers Overall Case Closures ¹⁰

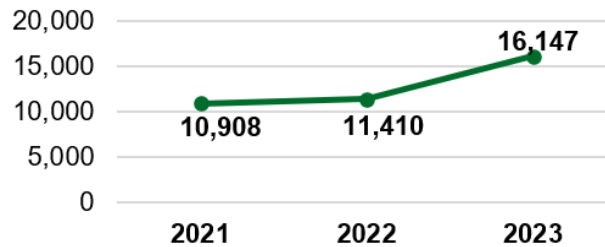


Table 51. OVR Consumers Overall Case Closures ¹⁰

Fiscal Year	# of Closures	% of Total Closures
2021	10,908	28.4%
2022	11,410	29.7%
2023	16,147	42%

SUCCESSFUL CASE CLOSURES

Analysis of closure types revealed significant shifts over the three-year period. Successful closures among cases that reached the IPE stage increased from 50.6% in 2021 to 55.9% in 2022, and further to 58.6% in 2023. Not only did the proportion of successful closures increase each year, but the absolute number of successful case closures also rose steadily.

Figure 23. OVR Consumers Successful Case Closures ¹⁰

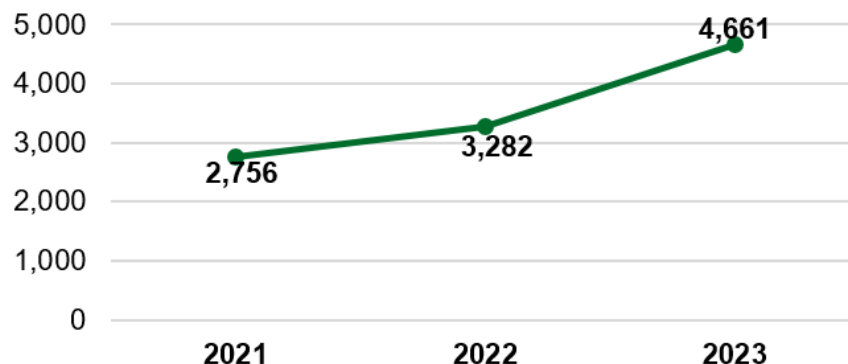


Table 52. OVR Consumers Successful Case Closures ¹⁰

Fiscal Year	Successful Closures	% of Successful Closures
2021	2,756	50.6%
2022	3,282	55.9%
2023	4,661	58.6%

SERVICE DURATION

The median service duration for cases that made it past the IPE phase showed a dramatic reduction over the three-year period. In 2021, the median service duration was 617 days, decreasing to 470 days in 2022, and further to 389 days in 2023. This represents an overall 37% decrease in the median service duration from 2021 to 2023, indicating that cases were resolved more quickly over time.

Figure 24. OVR Consumers Service Duration ¹⁰

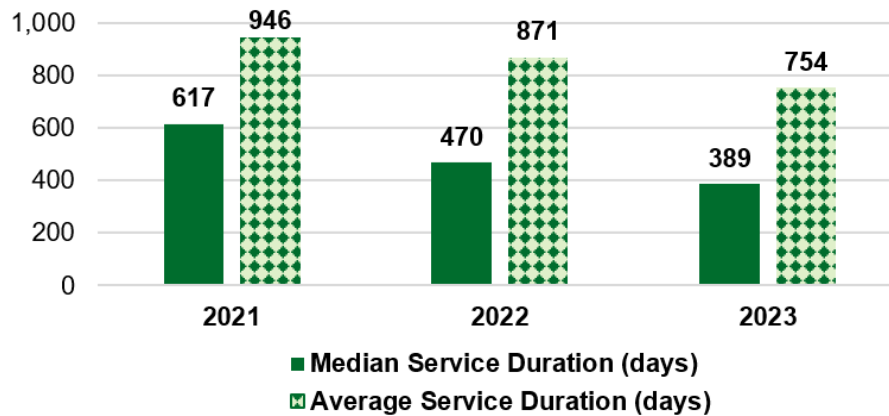


Table 53. OVR Consumers Service Duration ¹⁰

Fiscal Year	Median Service Duration (days)	Average Service Duration (days)
2021	617	946
2022	470	871
2023	389	754

CASE EXPENDITURES

Despite the reduction in service duration, case expenditures remained relatively stable over the three years. The median case expenditure was \$3,278 in 2021, \$3,206 in 2022, and \$3,211 in 2023. This stability suggests that OVR consumers received a consistent level of services even as the duration of service decreased.

Figure 25. OVR Consumers Case Expenditures ¹⁰

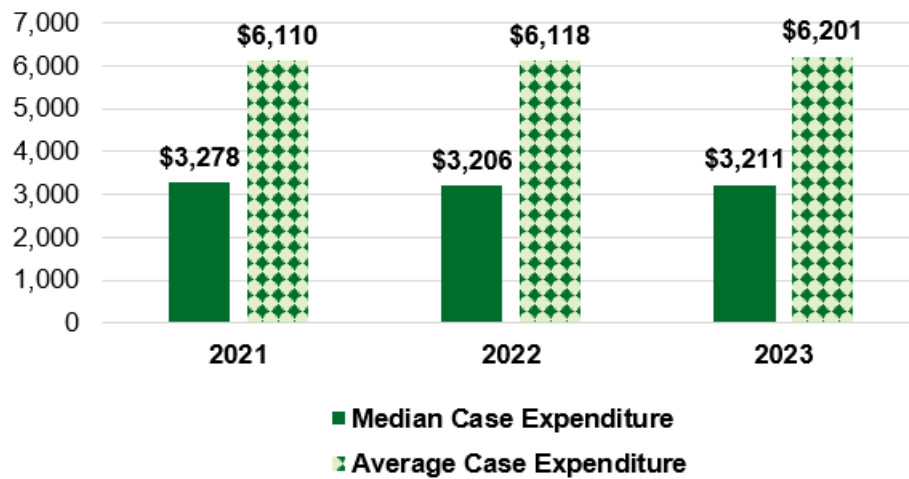


Table 54. OVR Consumers Case Expenditures ¹⁰

Fiscal Year	Median Case Expenditure	Average Case Expenditure
2021	\$3,278	\$6,110
2022	\$3,206	\$6,118
2023	\$3,211	\$6,201

INCOME SOURCE

The first year (FFY 2021) of this review saw OVR boost the number of consumers served who were able to primarily rely on their own income sources by 17.9 percentage-points. The following year the increase was 15.2 percentage-points. Finally, FFY 2023 saw a 13.4 percentage-point increase in reliance on self-income. While the overall gains in reliance on self-income reduced each year, the percentage of consumers who were reliant on their own income sources at closure steadily increased each year from 51.4% in 2021 to 58.5% in 2023.

Figure 26. OVR Consumers Financial Stability ¹⁰

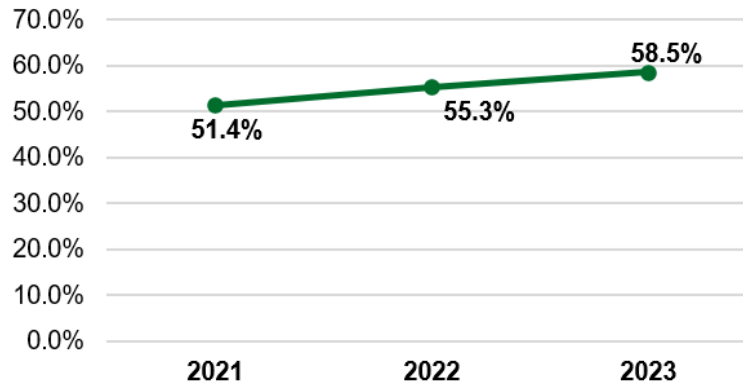


Table 55. OVR Consumers Financial Stability ¹⁰

Fiscal Year	% Consumers Primarily Relying on Self-Income at Closure
2021	51.4%
2022	55.3%
2023	58.5%

SSI/SSDI BENEFICIARIES

For FFY 2021, consumers that received OVR services saw a 1.5 percentage-point decrease in receipt of SSI/SSDI benefits. The following year (FFY 2022), consumers reported a 1.2 percentage-point decrease in benefits receipt. Finally, in FFY 2023, OVR achieved a three-year best, with a 2.3 percentage-point reduction in SSI/SSDI beneficiaries.

Figure 27. OVR Consumers Benefit Status at Case Closure ¹⁰

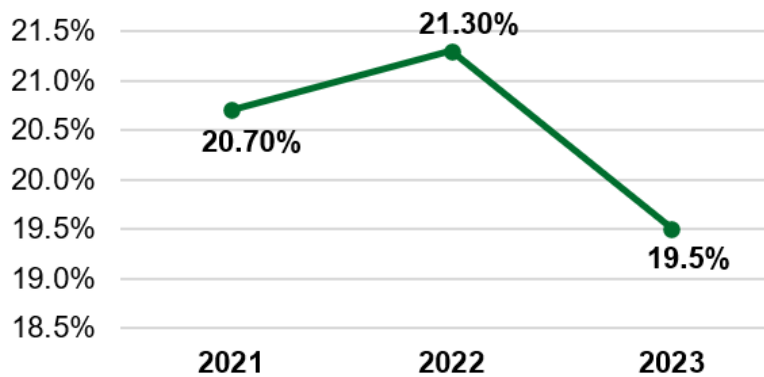


Table 56. OVR Consumers Benefit Status at Case Closure ¹⁰

Fiscal Year	% Consumers Receiving SSI/SSDI Benefits at Closure
2021	20.7%
2022	21.3%
2023	19.5%

ANNUAL INCOME CHANGES

For successful OVR case closures, there were notable increases in median annual income. In 2021, consumers reported a median annual income increase of \$21,674, which decreased to \$17,628 in 2022, and further to \$13,104 in 2023. Although the amount of increase got smaller each year, the overall earnings at closure rose from \$31,096 in 2021 to \$36,400 in 2023.

Figure 28. Annual Income Increase for OVR Consumers ¹⁰

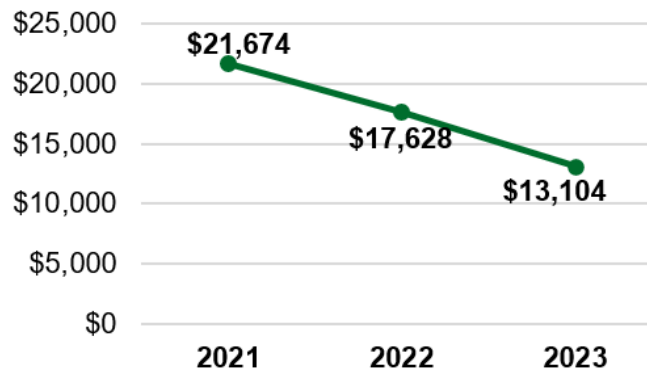


Table 57. Annual Income Increase for OVR Consumers ¹⁰

Fiscal Year	Median Annual Income Increase for Successful Case Closures
2021	\$21,674
2022	\$17,628
2023	\$13,104

PRE-ETS UTILIZATION

From FFY 2021 to 2023, OVR allocated a total of \$13,954,178.42 to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (pre-ETS) to transition-age Kentuckians with disabilities, serving a combined total of 13,900 consumers. The annual pre-ETS expenditures and the number of pre-ETS cases served varied over this period.

In FFY 2021, OVR allocated \$4,059,411.53 towards pre-ETS, successfully serving 4,873 cases (average of \$833 per case). In FFY 2022, there was a decrease in both funding and the number of cases served, with \$3,423,264.68 spent and 4,812 cases served (average of \$711 per case). In FFY 2023, OVR spent \$6,471,502.21 on pre-ETS, with the number of cases served decreasing to 4,215 (average of \$1,535 per case).

Figure 29. Pre-ETS Expenditures per Year ¹⁰

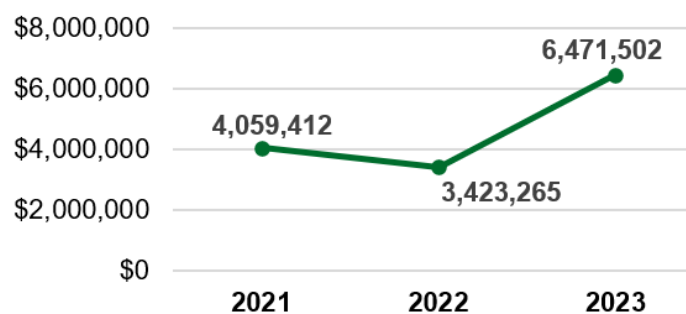


Figure 30. Pre-ETS Number of Cases Served per Year ¹⁰

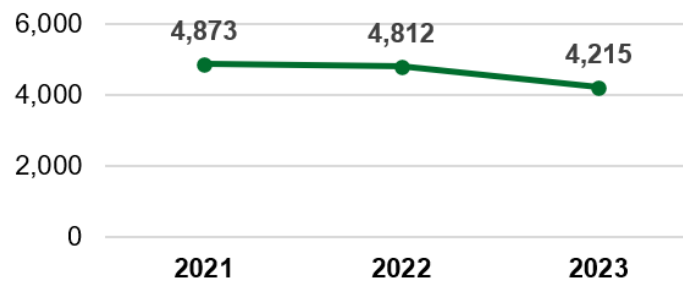


Table 58. Pre-ETS Case Expenditures and Number of Cases Served per Year ¹⁰

Year	Case Expenditure	Cases Served
2021	\$4,059,411.53	4,873
2022	\$3,423,264.68	4,812
2023	\$6,471,502.21	4,215

This data highlights a trend of decreasing cases served from FFY 2021 to FFY 2023, coupled with a significant increase in funding for pre-ETS, particularly between FFY 2022 and FFY 2023. Specifically, there was an 84.3% increase in funding per case from FFY 2021 to FFY 2023, while the number of cases served decreased by 13.5% over the same period.

SELECTED POPULATIONS (UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED)

FEMALE CONSUMERS

Over the three-year review period, OVR closed 13,426 cases for consumers who identified as female, comprising 45.8% of the total population of consumers served. The average age of the OVR female consumers was 39.5 years (SD = 17) and an examination of the age distribution of female consumers revealed that nearly one-third of the female consumers were in the transition-age group (32.1%), followed by early-career (17.8%), late-career (14.6%), mid-career (13.8%), disengagement/pre-retirement (13.1%) and legacy stage (8.6%). 16.9% of female consumers received pre-ETS services, compared to 26.1% of male consumers.

Racial and ethnic identities of female consumers were primarily White (80%), followed by Black or African American (10.3%), Hispanic or Latina (8.2%), Asian (0.5%), Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.2%), Native American or Alaskan Native (0.2%), and two or more races (0.6%). Compared to males, female consumers had higher representation in the Black or African American (+0.6%), Asian (+0.3%), and Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (+0.1%) categories, but lower representation among Hispanic or Latino/a consumers (-1%).

Just over half of OVR's female consumers resided in Kentucky's metropolitan areas (52.4%) and 37.2% resided in the Appalachian region, with females being slightly more likely than males to live in Appalachia (+2.3%). At the time of application, 41.5% of female consumers were employed in competitive integrated settings, 38.1% relied on their own income, and 20.9% received SSI/SSDI benefits. These figures indicate higher employment rates (+3.3%), higher income self-reliance (+2.2%), and lower SSI/SSDI benefits receipt (-2.2%) for female consumers compared to males. ¹⁰

EARLY EXIT RATE

Just under one in three OVR female consumers exited services before an IPE could be established (30.8%). This is a lower rate than the 37.3% of male consumers who exited before the IPE. The top three given reasons for cases closed before IPE among female consumers were "all other reasons" (48.6%), no longer interested in services (26.3%), and unable to contact or locate (19.2%). ¹⁰

OUTCOMES

For cases that reached the IPE stage, 55.1% of female cases resulted in successful closures, slightly lower than male cases (-0.9%). Female consumers had lower overall case expenditures (\$6,014) and longer service durations (890 days) compared to males (\$6,285 and 803 days, respectively). Successful female cases saw a 30.5 percentage-point increase in income self-reliance and a 0.9 percentage-point decrease in SSI/SSDI benefits receipt. Their average annual income increased by \$19,371, slightly higher than the increase for males (\$18,965).¹⁰

BLACK AND AFRICAN AMERICAN CONSUMERS

Over the three-year review period, OVR closed 2,427 cases for consumers who identified as only Black or African American (AA), comprising 10% of the total population of consumers served. The average age of the OVR Black/AA consumers was 40.5 years (SD = 15.6) and an examination of age distribution revealed that the most frequently served age group among Black/AA consumers was those in the transition-age group (24.5%), followed by early-career (19.2%), late-career (18%), mid-career (17.4%), disengagement/pre-retirement (14.9%) and legacy stage (6.1%). Over half (50.3%) identified as male, and 79.6% resided in metropolitan areas, with only 7.1% living in the Appalachian region.

In terms of employment and income, at the time of application 24.6% of Black/AA consumers reported being engaged in competitive integrated employment, 21.1% relied on their own income, and 39.2% received SSI/SSDI benefits. These figures show significantly lower employment (-17.2%), lower income self-reliance (-18%), and higher SSI/SSDI benefits receipt (+19.1%) compared to White consumers.¹⁰

EARLY EXIT RATE

Just under one in three Black/AA consumers exited services before an IPE could be established (30.2%). This is a much higher rate of exit (+11.6%) compared to the 18.6% of White consumers who exited before the IPE. The top three given reasons for cases closed before IPE among Black/AA consumers were no longer interested in services (34.7%), unable to contact or locate (27.7%), and “all other reasons” (26.8%).¹⁰

OUTCOMES

The successful closure rate for Black or African American cases was 36%, significantly lower than for White consumers (-21.7%). These cases had slightly higher expenditures (\$6,485) and shorter service durations (839 days) compared to White consumers (\$6,236 and 874 days). Successful Black or African American cases saw a 44.3 percentage-point increase in income self-reliance and a 3.5 percentage-point decrease in SSI/SSDI benefits receipt, with an average annual income gain of \$19,379, lower than the increase for White consumers (\$21,684). The final annual income for successful Black or African American consumers (\$23,676) was notably lower than for White consumers (\$41,063).¹⁰

HISPANIC AND LATINO/A CONSUMERS

Over the three-year review period, OVR closed 2,144 cases for consumers who identified as Hispanic or Latino/a (of any race), comprising 8.8% of the total population of consumers served. The average age of the OVR Hispanic/Latino consumers was 39.5 years (SD = 17.1) and an examination of age distribution revealed that the most frequently served age group among Hispanic/Latino consumers was those in the transition-age group (31%), followed by early-career (18.2%), mid-career (15.1%), disengagement/pre-retirement (13.7%), late-career (13.6%), and legacy stage (8.3%). More than half (54.7%) identified as male, with a majority residing in rural counties (55%) and 46.6% in the Appalachian region.

At the time of application, 40.4% were employed in competitive integrated settings, 37.8% relied on their own income, and 18.5% received SSI/SSDI benefits, showing slightly lower employment (-1.4%), lower income self-reliance (-1.3%), and lower SSI/SSDI benefits receipt (-1.6%) compared to White consumers.¹⁰

EARLY EXIT RATE

Just over one in three Hispanic/Latino consumers exited services before an IPE could be established (34.1%). This is a much higher rate of exit (+15.5%) compared to the 18.6% of White consumers who exited before the IPE. The top three given reasons for cases closed before IPE among Hispanic/Latino consumers were “all other reasons” (30.5%), no longer interested in services (29.9%), and unable to contact or locate (29.5%).¹⁰

OUTCOMES

The successful closure rate for Hispanic or Latino/a cases was 56.7%, slightly behind White consumers (-1.0%). These cases had substantially lower expenditures (\$4,690) and shorter service durations (507 days) compared to White consumers (\$6,236 and 874 days). Successful Hispanic or Latino/a cases saw a 25 percentage-point increase in income self-reliance and a 0.8 percentage-point decrease in SSI/SSDI benefits receipt, with an average annual income gain of \$17,098, lower than White consumers (\$21,684).¹⁰

TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

Over the three-year review period, OVR closed 13,087 cases for consumers who were transition-age (aged 15-25), comprising over one-third (34%) of the total population of consumers served. The average age of the OVR transition-age consumers was 21.9 years (SD = 1.9) and a majority (60.7%) identified as male.

In terms of racial and ethnic identities, transition-age consumers were primarily White (77.6%), followed by Hispanic or Latino/a (10.9%), Black or African American (9.7%), Asian (0.6%), Native American or Alaskan Native (0.1%), Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.1%), and those who identified with two or more races (1.0%). Just over half of OVR’s transition-age consumers resided in Kentucky’s metropolitan areas (52.8%) and just over one in three (34.8%) were living in the Appalachian region of the state.

At the time of application, 14.7% were employed in competitive integrated settings, 7.8% relied on their own income, and 18.4% received SSI/SSDI benefits.¹⁰

EARLY EXIT RATE

About two-thirds of transition-age consumers exited services before an IPE could be established (66.3%). Over half (54.4%) of OVR transition-age consumers exited as potentially eligible after receiving pre-ETS services, serving as the primary cause for the exceptionally high pre-IPE closure rate in the group. The three most prevalent reasons given for case closure were “all other reasons” (57%), no longer interested in services (24.1%), and unable to contact or locate (17.3%).¹⁰

OUTCOMES

For cases that reached the IPE stage, 33.4% of transition-age cases resulted in successful closures. On average, \$7,627 was spent per case, with a typical service duration of 923 days. Successful cases saw a 72.6 percentage-point increase in income self-reliance and a 0.5 percentage point decrease in SSI/SSDI benefits receipt, with an average annual income gain of \$21,269.¹⁰

RURAL CONSUMERS

Over the three-year review period, OVR closed 17,500 cases for consumers residing across Kentucky’s 85 rural counties, comprising 45.6% of all OVR consumers. Over half (54.1%) of rural OVR consumers identified as male. The average age of rural consumers was 39.2 years (SD = 17.6) and an examination of the age distribution revealed that over one-third of the rural consumers were in the transition-age group (35%), followed by early-career (16.6%), late-career (13.1%), mid-career (12.9%), disengagement/pre-retirement (12.4%) and legacy stage (10%). Additionally, rural consumers were more represented among those that received pre-ETS services (+5.2%) than consumers living in metropolitan areas (20.2% and 15%, respectively).

Rural consumers were primarily White (84.6%), followed by Hispanic/Latino (10.2%), Black or African American (4.3%), Asian (0.2%), Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.1%), Native American or Alaskan Native (0.1%), and two or more races (0.4%). Compared to metropolitan consumers, rural consumers had higher representation of White (+8.9%) and Hispanic/Latino (+2.7%) individuals, and lower representation of Black and African American consumers (-10.8%).

At the time of application 42.4% of OVR's rural consumers were engaged in competitive integrated employment, 40% were primarily reliant on their own income sources, and 18.9% reported receipt of SSI/SSDI benefits. This means that rural consumers entered OVR services with higher employment rates (+4.9%), higher levels of income self-reliance (+5.8%), and lower rates of SSI/SSDI benefits receipt (-5.9%) than OVR's metro-area consumers.¹⁰

OUTCOMES

Nearly half of the rural consumers exited services before an IPE could be established (47.4%), but this early exit rate was lower than that of their metro counterparts (51.8%). More than half (57.3%) of the rural cases that made it past the IPE phase resulted in a successful outcome for the consumer, which was slightly higher (+3.4%) than the rate observed for metropolitan consumers. On average, rural OVR consumers spent less time in services (Rural: 838 days; Metro: 848 days) and had lower overall case expenditures (Rural: \$5,159; Metro: \$6,528).

For successful cases, rural consumers saw an increase of 28.6 percentage-points in income self-reliance rate and a 1.2 percentage-point decrease in SSI/SSDI benefits receipt rate from the time of application to case closure. For reference, metropolitan consumers reported a 31.5 percentage-point increase in income self-reliance, and a 0.9 percentage-point decrease in SSI/SSDI benefit receipt rate. In terms of income, rural consumers, on average, reported increases in wages (from \$13.60 at application to \$19.08 at closure) and hours worked (from 24.4 hours per week to 35.1 hours per week), resulting in an average annual income gain of \$17,569 (from \$17,256 per year to \$34,825 per year).¹⁰

APPALACHIAN CONSUMERS

Over the three-year review period, OVR closed 10,475 cases for consumers residing across Kentucky's 54 Appalachian counties, comprising 36% of all OVR consumers. Over half (52.4%) of Appalachian consumers identified as male. The average age of Appalachian consumers was 39.1 years (SD = 17.6) and an examination of the age distribution revealed that over one-third were in the transition-age group (34.6%), followed by early-career (17.9%), late-career (12.8%), mid-career (12.7%), disengagement/pre-retirement (11.9%) and legacy stage (10.1%). Additionally, 17.4% of Appalachian consumers received pre-ETS services, similar to non-Appalachian consumers (17.3%).

Appalachian consumers primarily identified as White (86.3%), followed by Hispanic/Latino (11.2%), Black or African American (1.9%), Asian (0.2%), Native American or Alaskan Native (0.1%), Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.1%), and those who identified with two or more races (0.3%). Compared to non-Appalachian consumers, Appalachian consumers had higher representation of White (+10%) and Hispanic/Latino (+3.8%) individuals, but lower representation of Black and African American consumers (-12.7%).

At the time of application 43.3% of Appalachian consumers were engaged in competitive integrated employment, 41.2% relied on their own income, and 15.6% received SSI/SSDI benefits. This indicates higher employment rates (+5.5%), higher income self-reliance (+6.4%), and lower SSI/SSDI benefits receipt (-10.1%) compared to non-Appalachian consumers.¹⁰

OUTCOMES

Appalachian consumers had a lower early exit rate (44.1%; exiting services before IPE is established) than their non-Appalachian counterparts (52.8%). More than half (57.9%) of the rural cases that made it past the IPE phase resulted in a successful outcome for the consumer, which was slightly higher (+3.8%) than the rate observed for non-Appalachian residents. On average, Appalachian consumers spent more time in services (Appalachian: 1,024 days; non-Appalachian: 848 days) but had lower overall case expenditures (Appalachian: \$4,847; non-Appalachian: \$6,501).

For successful cases, Appalachian consumers saw an increase of 30.1 percentage-point in income self-reliance rate and a 1.7 percentage-point decrease in SSI/SSDI benefits receipt rate from the time of application to case closure. For reference, non-Appalachian consumers reported a 30 percentage-point increase in income self-reliance, and a 0.6 percentage-point decrease in SSI/SSDI benefit receipt rate. In terms of income, Appalachian consumers, on average, reported increases in wages (from \$13.43 at application to \$19.63 at closure) and hours worked (from 24.2 hours per week to 35.8 hours per week), resulting in an average annual income gain of \$19,643 (from \$16,900 per year to \$36,543 per year).¹⁰

CONCERNS REPORT ASSESSMENT

CONSUMERS

SUMMARY

The OVR Consumer survey exceeded the target number of respondents (762) by 31.5% with a total of 1,002 responses. Consumers with disabilities themselves made up 90.7% of survey respondents. Survey respondents were primarily female (61.7%) and resided in 99 of Kentucky's 120 counties. The most represented disabilities among respondents were deafness/hard of hearing (39%), behavioral/mood disorder (23.4%), other disabilities (open-ended; 9.9%), other physical impairment.

In terms of the Concerns Report issues that were generated from the OVR Consumer/Public focus group, each of the 18 items were rated as important by the respondents (average importance rating of 93.5%). The final Concerns Report concluded that 100% of the items were viewed as high satisfaction areas or potential growth areas by OVR consumers, with 17 of the 18 being rated as high satisfaction areas (having a satisfaction rating of 75% or higher).

The items that garnered the highest satisfaction ratings included:

- OVR provides opportunities for consumers to give feedback and listens to their concerns (89.9%)
- OVR counselors are dedicated to providing quality services (89.7%)
- OVR counselors and staff are professional and helpful (89.5%)
- OVR provides accessible and easy to use communication options to consumers (89.1%)
- OVR physical locations are accessible (88.3%).

Over half of the respondents were employed full-time (51.7%) and an additional 18% were employed part-time. Most employed respondents (80.9%) were satisfied with their current job and felt secure in their employment (85.2%). Many respondents indicated their technology needs were met (71.7%) and smartphones (77.2%) and computers (73.5%) were by far the most commonly used types of technology utilized. Consumers were largely satisfied with the OVR experiences (81% satisfaction rating) and most (88.8%) would recommend OVR services to someone who needs assistance.

SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC

Respondents who completed the survey identified as:

- An individual with a disability (90.7%)
- Parent or guardian of an individual with a disability (10.6%)
- Advocate (1.9%)
- Service provider (2.5%)
- Interested member of the community (4.89%).

The respondents identified primarily as female (61.7%), followed by male (35.0%), Non-binary/non-conforming (1.8%), Prefer not to respond (1.1%). The remaining 0.4% of responses were split between Transgender and Other.

The racial/ethnic background of survey respondents was as follows:

- White (88.6%)
- Black or African American (7.19%)
- Hispanic or Latino/a (1.9%)
- American Indian or Alaskan Native (1.8%)
- Asian (1.0%)
- Other (1.7%)
- Unknown (0.9%).

Table 59. Consumer Survey - Respondents by Type

Respondent Type	% Respondents
Individuals with a disability	90.7%
Parents or guardians of an individual with a disability	10.6%
Advocates	1.9%
Service Providers	2.5%
Interested members of the community	4.89%

Table 60. Consumer Survey - Respondents by Gender/Sex

Gender/Sex	% Respondents
Female	61.7%
Male	35%
Non-binary/Non-conforming	1.8%
Prefer not to respond	1.1%
Transgender	0.3%
Other	0.1%

Table 61. Consumer Survey - Respondents by Race/Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Background	% Respondents
White or Caucasian	88.6%
Black or African American	7.2%
Hispanic or Latino/a	1.9%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.8%
Other	1.7%
Asian	1%
Unknown	0.9%

Nearly half of respondents (49%) fell between the 45–64-year-old age range with 25.7% being 45-54 and 23.3% being 55-64, followed by 35-44 (19.7%), 26-34 (16%), 65-74 (13.7%), and 75 and older (1.7%).

Of the 120 Kentucky counties, two counties make up over 25% of responses: Fayette County (12.8%) and Jefferson County (12.4%)

Respondents were asked to identify their disability type(s) where one or more disability could be identified. Most of the prevalence in disability type came from deafness and hard of hearing with 39% of respondents, followed by behavioral/mood disorders at 23.4%, Other, in which they could specify their disability(s), at 19.9%, which included many chronic illnesses. Other physical impairments, other mental impairments or illnesses, and orthopedic impairments each received slightly over 10% of respondents identifying with the disability type. All other types of disability received less than 10% of responses. Of those who responded, 37.7% indicated their case is currently open, 29.3% said their case was closed, 26.3% didn't know the status of their case, and not applicable received 6.59% of responses.

Table 62. Consumer Survey - Respondents by Age

Age	% Respondents
26-34 years	16%
35-44 years	19.7%
45-54 years	25.7%
55-64 years	23.3%
65-74 years	13.7%
75 years or older	1.7%

Table 63. Consumer Survey - Respondents by Disability Type

Disability Type	% Respondents
Deafness/Hard of hearing	39%
Behavioral/Mood disorder	23.4%
Other	19.9%
Other physical impairment	13.1%
Other mental impairment or illness	11.7%
Orthopedic impairment	10.5%
Blind/Visual impairment	9.88%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	9.28%
Intellectual disability	8.58%
Substance abuse disorder	7.49%
Cognitive impairment	6.49%
Brain injury/stroke	5.39%
Respiratory impairment	4.59%
Other communication impairment	3.49%
Spinal cord injury/paralysis	3.49%
Deaf/Blind	0.7%

Table 64. Consumer Survey - Respondents by Case Status

Case Status	% Respondents
Open	37.7%
Closed	29.3%
Don't know	26.3%
Not applicable	6.59%

CONCERNS REPORT RESULTS

The focus group conducted with OVR consumers resulted in the identification of eighteen unique issues. All eighteen issues were presented to survey respondents. The number of respondents on the issues ranges from 746 to 943. The final concerns report model retained all eighteen items as each carried at least a 50% importance rating. The importance ratings on the issues ranged from 80.2% to 97.7% with an average importance rating of 93.5%.

HIGH SATISFACTION AREAS

Seventeen of the eighteen issues (94.4%) were identified as high satisfaction areas. The issue with the highest satisfaction was *OVR provides opportunities for consumers to give feedback and listens to their concerns*.

Table 65. Consumer High Satisfaction Areas

Issue	Satisfaction Rate
OVR provides opportunities for consumers to give feedback and listens to their concerns.	89.9%
OVR counselors are dedicated to providing quality services.	89.7%
OVR counselors and staff are professional and helpful.	89.5%
OVR provides accessible and easy to use communication options to consumers.	89.1%
OVR physical locations are accessible.	88.3%
OVR emphasizes consumer involvement in creating their plan of employment (e.g., what services are provided, job goals, and what vendors will provide the services).	86.9%
OVR counselors are available and easy to communicate with.	86.8%
OVR services help consumers reach their independent living goals.	86.8%
OVR provides a wide range of services and resources.	86.3%
OVR consumers have control over their case and how their needs are addressed.	85.6%
OVR helps address consumers' transportation concerns.	85%
The OVR website is helpful and easy to use	84.3%
OVR staff and administration respond in a timely manner	84.2%
OVR helps consumers attain high-quality employment opportunities.	82.8%
OVR offers services that are timely and fit consumers' needs.	82%
OVR services are readily available and easy to access.	81.9%
OVR provides essential services to all consumers, including those with significant challenges due to disabilities.	79.4%

POTENTIAL GROWTH AREAS

One of the eighteen issues (5.6%) was identified as a potential growth area. The issue was related to awareness of OVR services.

Table 66. Consumer Potential Growth Areas

Issue	Satisfaction Rate
Kentuckians with disabilities are aware of OVR services.	62.2%

PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT AREAS

None of the issues presented were marked as priority improvement areas as each item had a satisfaction rating of at least 50%.

EMPLOYMENT

OVR consumers who completed the survey were asked about their current employment status. The majority of consumers (51.7%) were employed full time while 18% were employed part time, 21.2% were not working, 2.4% had retired, and 6.7% selected Other. Consumers who responded as being employed were then asked three follow-up questions. First, consumers were asked what sector they currently worked in with most (34.6%) choosing Other in which they could specify their sector of work, followed by Healthcare (21.3%), Education (15.1%), Government (12.8%), and Retail (7.93%). Another 4.84% worked in either Information Technology or Real Estate, and 3.48% preferred not to disclose. Employed participants were then asked how satisfied they were with their current job. The vast majority (80.9%) were either satisfied (31.4%) or very satisfied (49.5%) with their current job. In response to how secure they felt their job was, 85.2% of consumers indicated they were either somewhat secure (29.5%) or very secure (55.7%).

Table 67. Consumer Survey - Employment Status

Employment Status	% Respondents
Yes, full-time	51.7%
Yes, part of the time	18%
Not working	21.2%
Retired	2.42%
Other	6.71%

Table 68. Consumer Survey - Job Sector

Job Sector	% Respondents
Healthcare	21.3%
Information Technology	3.48%
Real Estate	1.35%
Retail	7.93%
Education	15.1%
Government	12.8%
Prefer not to disclose	3.48%
Other	34.6%

TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

Most OVR consumers (71.7%) indicated that their technology needs, as they related to employment, were met whereas 21.8% responded they sometimes had the technology needed to stay connected, and 6.47% indicated they did not have the technology needed to stay connected. When asked what kind of technology was used to stay connected, the most common methods were smartphones (77.2%) and computers (73.5%). Tablets received 25.9% of responses while 15.9% of consumers selected Other in which they could specify other technology used, like hearing aids, narrators, and visual technology.

Table 69. Consumer Survey - Technology Needs

Technology Need	% Respondents
I don't have the technology to stay connected.	6.47%
I sometimes have the technology to help me stay connected.	21.8%
My technology needs are met.	71.7%

Table 70. Consumer Survey - Technology Used

Technology Used	% Respondents
Smartphone	77.2%
Computer	73.5%
Tablet	25.9%
Other (please specify)	15.5%

SATISFACTION WITH OVR

In an effort to stay updated on how OVR is serving its consumers, participants were asked to provide insight into their experience with OVR services and their likelihood of recommending OVR to others. When consumers whose cases had been closed were asked how satisfied they were with the outcome of their Vocational Rehabilitation experience, 69% stated they were very satisfied while 16.4% were satisfied, 6.9% were neutral, 4.74% were dissatisfied, and 3.02% were very dissatisfied. With regard to overall satisfaction with OVR services, 55.6% of consumers were very satisfied, 25.4% were satisfied, 10.8% were neutral, and 8.23% were either unsatisfied (4.32%) or very unsatisfied (3.91%) with their OVR experience. An overwhelming majority (88.8%) indicated they were likely or very likely to recommend someone to OVR with 15.7% selecting likely and 73.1% choosing very likely.

Finally, consumers were asked to provide feedback on their experiences with OVR where there was a range of comments. Some consumers gave suggestions for ways to improve services while others praised the efforts being made and highlighted specific examples of how OVR has supported them.

Table 71. Consumer Survey - Satisfaction with Case Outcome

Satisfaction with Case Outcome	% Respondents
Very satisfied	69.0%
Satisfied	16.4%
Neutral	6.9%
Dissatisfied	4.74%
Very dissatisfied	3.02%

Table 72. Consumer Survey - Recommendation Likelihood

Recommendation Likelihood	% Respondents
Very likely	73.1%
Likely	15.7%
Not sure	6.34%
Unlikely	1.62%
Very unlikely	3.24%

TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

SUMMARY

The Transition Age Youth survey exceeded the target number of respondents (72) by 231.9% with a total of 239 responses. Parents or guardians of transition-age consumers with disabilities comprised more than half of survey respondents (52.3%) and transition-age consumers made up another 44.4% of the responses. Over half of Kentucky’s 120 counties (63 in total) were represented by survey respondents. The most commonly represented disabilities included autism (37.2%), behavioral/mood disorder (26.4%), and intellectual disability (21.8%).

In terms of the Concerns Report issues that were generated from the OVR Consumer/Public focus group, each of the 20 items were rated as important by the respondents (avg importance rating of 90.1%). The final Concerns Report concluded that 14 of the items (70%) were viewed as high satisfaction areas (having a satisfaction rating of 75% or higher) and the remaining 6 items (30%) were potential growth areas. The items that garnered the highest satisfaction ratings included:

- OVR provides opportunities for consumers to give feedback and responds to their concerns (83.6%)
- Student preferences for job goals and assistive technology are prioritized by OVR staff (82.8%)
- OVR provides accessible and easy to use communication options to consumers (82.5%)

Over half of the respondents were employed (51.9%) at the time of the survey and most felt that their technology needs were currently being met (78%). The most commonly identified current or future service needs of respondents included job placement (62.3%), independent living skills (55.8%), resume and interviewing skills (53.9%), vocational evaluation (50%), and paid work experience (45.5%).

SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC

The Transition-Age Youth survey respondents identified primarily as male (49.4%), followed by female (45.6%), non-binary/non-conforming (2.09%), transgender (1.26%), Prefer not to respond (1.26%), and other (0.42%). The racial/ethnic background of survey respondents was as follows: White (86.2%), Black or African American (10%), Hispanic or Latino/a (2.51%), Asian (3.77%), Unknown (1.26%), and Other (1.26%).

Table 73. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Respondents by Gender/Sex

Gender/Sex	% Respondents
Male	49.4%
Female	45.6%
Non-binary/Non-conforming	2.09%
Transgender	1.26%
Other	1.26%
Prefer not to respond	0.42%

Table 74. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Respondents by Race/Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Background	% Respondents
White	86.2%
Black or African American	10%
Hispanic or Latino/a	2.51%
Asian	3.77%
Unknown	1.26%
Other	1.26%

Fifty-two percent (52.3%) of respondents were the parent or guardian of an OVR consumer, whereas 44.4% were OVR transition-age consumers. The breakdown in age for respondents was as follows: 18 years (15.9%), 19 years (17.2%), 20 years (15.5%), 21 years (13.8%), 22 years (10.9%), 23 years (10%), 24 years (7.1%), and 25 years (9.6%).

The Kentucky counties with the greatest representation were Boone (5.04%), Fayette (9.66%), and Jefferson (10.9%).

Respondents were asked to identify their disability type(s) where one or more disability could be identified. Most of the prevalence in disability type came from autism spectrum disorder with 37.2% of respondents, followed by behavioral/mood disorders at 26.4%, intellectual disabilities with 21.8%, and other disabilities at 20.1%, which included many chronic illnesses like cerebral palsy and epilepsy.

Forty-four percent (43.5%) of respondents indicated they were not currently in school, followed by those at university or college (22.6%), and those in community college (13.8%). An overwhelming majority of respondents (80.8%) identified their living situation as living with other people.

Table 75. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Respondents by Type

Respondent Type	% Respondents
Youth/Transition OVR consumer	44.4%
Parent/Guardian	52.3%
Other	2.1%
Caretaker	0.84%
Other Family Member	0.42%

Table 76. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Respondents by Age

Age	% Respondents
18 years	15.9%
19 years	17.2%
20 years	15.5%
21 years	13.8%
22 years	10.9%
23 years	10.0%
24 years	7.11%
25 years	9.62%

Table 77. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Respondents by Disability Type

Disability Type	% Respondents
Autism Spectrum Disorder	37.2%
Behavioral/Mood disorder	26.4%
Intellectual disability	21.8%
Other	20.1%
Cognitive impairment	11.7%
Other mental impairment or illness	10.5%
Blind/Visual impairment	8.79%
Other physical impairment	8.79%

Disability Type	% Respondents
Deafness/Hard of hearing	7.11%
Brain injury/stroke	5.44%
Orthopedic impairment	5.02%
Other communication impairment	4.18%
Spinal cord injury/paralysis	2.93%
Respiratory impairment	2.51%
Substance abuse disorder	1.67%
Deaf/Blind	1.26%
Prefer not to answer	0.84%

Table 78. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Respondents Education Situation

Education Situation	% Respondents
I am not currently in school or taking any courses.	43.5%
I am taking classes at a University or College (Bachelor or graduate program).	22.6%
I am taking classes at a Community/Technical College (technical/paraprofessional training).	13.8%
Other	11.7%
I currently attend a public high school (other than KSD or KSB).	7.53%
I am taking Adult Vocational Education (advanced job training).	6.28%
I currently attend a private or parochial high school.	0.42%
I am a home-schooled student.	0.42%

CONCERNS REPORT RESULTS

The focus group conducted with transition-age consumers and their supports resulted in the identification of twenty unique issues. All twenty issues were presented to survey respondents. The number of respondents on the issues ranged from 159 to 220. The final concerns report model retained all 20 items as each carried at least a 50% importance rating. The importance ratings on the issues ranged from 80.2% to 96.9% with an average importance rating of 90.1%.

HIGH SATISFACTION AREAS

Fourteen of the twenty issues (70%) were identified as high satisfaction areas. The issue with the highest satisfaction, like the Consumer Survey, was *OVR provides opportunities for consumers to give feedback and listens to their concerns*.

Table 79. Transition-Age Youth High Satisfaction Areas

Issue	Satisfaction Rate
OVR provides opportunities for consumers to give feedback and responds to their concerns.	83.6%
Student preferences for job goals and assistive technology are prioritized by OVR staff.	82.8%
OVR provides accessible and easy to use communication options to consumers.	82.5%
OVR provides services to all consumers, even those with the most significant barriers/limitations.	81.8%
OVR counselors and staff are professional and helpful.	81.8%
OVR services are available and accessible to students with disabilities.	80.0%
The OVR website is helpful and easy to use.	79.7%
OVR consumers have control over their case and how their needs are met.	79.2%

Issue	Satisfaction Rate
OVR emphasizes consumer involvement in creating their individualized plan of employment (e.g., what services are provided, job goals, and what vendors will provide the services).	78.4%
OVR staff and administration respond in a timely manner.	78.4%
OVR counselors coordinate and collaborate well with school transition staff.	76.2%
The enrollment process into OVR services from school transition services is organized and smooth.	76.1%
OVR services help students reach their transition goals.	75.9%
OVR helps address consumers' transportation concerns.	75.6%

POTENTIAL GROWTH AREAS

Six of the twenty issues (30%) were identified as potential growth areas. Three of the potential growth areas were related to the OVR services while the remaining three focused on transition teams, employment opportunities, and awareness of OVR services.

Table 80. Transition-Age Youth Potential Growth Areas

Issue	Satisfaction Rate
OVR provides high-quality pre-ETS (pre-employment transition services).	74.7%
OVR counselors and staff are an active part of student transition teams (including being present at student IEP meetings and being an active part of student transition planning).	73.3%
OVR services are timely and fit consumers' needs.	72.4%
Supported employment services are available when needed.	69.8%
OVR helps transition students achieve and maintain quality employment opportunities.	68.2%
Students with disabilities are aware of OVR services.	67.1%

PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT AREAS

None of the issues presented were marked as areas for improvement as each item had a satisfaction rating of at least 50%.

TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

When asked what kinds of technology were used to stay connected, the most prevalent methods were smartphones (85.1%) and computers (56.5%) followed by tablets (25.3%). Other methods of technology specified include Braille display, iPhone, laptop, and smartwatch. Most respondents (78%) indicated that their technology needs were met whereas 18.2% responded they sometimes had the technology needed to stay connected, and 3.77% indicated they did not have the technology needed to stay connected.

Table 81. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Technology Used

Technology Used	% Respondents
Smartphone	85.1%
Computer	56.5%
Tablet	25.3%
Other	4.55%

Table 82. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Technology Needs

Technology Need	% Respondents
I don't have the technology to stay connected.	3.77%
I sometimes have the technology to help me stay connected.	18.2%
My technology needs are met.	78%

EMPLOYMENT

OVR transition-age consumers who completed the survey were asked about their current employment status in which more than one answer could be selected. Over fifty-percent of respondents reported currently working with 12.7% working full time (more than 30 hours a week), while 39.2% were employed part time (less than 30 hours a week), 24.1% were not currently working but had a job in the last 5 years, and 25.3% indicated they had not worked in the last 5 years. Consumers who responded as being employed were then asked whether their current wage in which 91.4% of respondents made at least or more than minimum wage (\$7.25 per hour) in their main job. The remaining 8.64% of respondents indicated they make less than minimum wage at their main job. For those who responded as not currently working under employment status, 100% of consumers responded they have not tried to get a job.

Table 83. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Current Work Situation

Current Work Situation	% Respondents
I am working full-time (more than 30 hours/week).	12.7%
I am working part time (less than 30 hours/week).	39.2%
I had a job in the last five years but am not currently working.	24.1%
I have not had a paid work experience in the last five years.	25.3%

Table 84. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Current Pay for Those Employed

Current Pay	% Respondents
Less than minimum wage (\$7.25 per hour) in my main job.	8.64%
At least or more than minimum wage (\$7.25 per hour) in my main job.	91.4%

JOB PREPAREDNESS AND SERVICES

Consumers reported on a range of activities they engaged in to prepare for employment, such as researching jobs online, discussing career options with teachers or counselors, learning about educational requirements, and attending job fairs or meetings with recruiters.

Table 85. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Job & Education Search Experience

Job & Education Search Experience	% Respondents
I have used the internet to research jobs.	57.1%
I have researched different type of jobs and careers.	55.2%
I have talked to a teacher/counselor about types of jobs or careers.	55.2%
I have learned about education or training requirements to get different types of jobs.	46.8%
I know what career I want in the future.	41.6%
I have attended college or job fairs.	40.3%
I have read job postings advertised on the internet, newspaper, and/or other places.	32.5%
I have met with other postsecondary representatives (ex. trade school).	15.6%
I have met with a college or military recruiter.	13.6%

Respondents shared their practical experiences related to job applications, paid work, interviews, volunteer work, job shadowing, and internships.

Table 86. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Job Preparation & Work Experience

Job Preparation & Work Experience	% Respondents
I have filled out job applications.	72.1%
I have received a paycheck.	69.5%
I have had real-life (paid) work experiences.	68.8%
I have interviewed for a job.	64.3%
I have had a volunteer experience.	53.9%
I have attended a career fair or employer tour.	37%
I have a job shadowing experience.	30.5%
I have had an internship experience.	18.2%

Respondents indicated their use of technology for job preparation.

Table 87. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Job Preparation Technology Use

Job Preparation Technology Use	% Respondents
Using tablets or smartphones	87.7%
Using computers to find information online	82.5%
Utilizing keyboard	69.5%
Reading in standard or large print	55.8%
Using computers for note-taking and various software applications	50.6%
Using assistive technology for internet browsing	16.2%
Using braille for reading (one respondent)	0.6%

Respondents provided insights into their understanding of different educational pathways, including vocational/trade schools, community colleges, universities, and the training required for their chosen careers.

Table 88. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Job & Education Search Experience

Job & Education Search Experience	% Respondents
I understand what training is required for my chosen career.	46.8%
I understand the difference between a community college and university.	46.1%
I understand the difference between a vocational or trade school and community college.	41.6%
I am already attending a college, university, or other vocational training program.	39.6%
I have already applied or been accepted to a training program (vocational, community, technical college, or university) after high school.	35.1%
I have talked to a teacher/counselor about how to apply to community colleges.	22.1%
I have participated in vocational preparation classes in high school (drafting, plumbing, welding, electrician, etc.).	20.1%
I have talked to a teacher/counselor about how to apply to vocational and trade schools.	17.5%
I am taking classes in high school for college credit (AP, IB, Dual Credit).	4.55%

Respondents identified the services they found or would find helpful, such as job placement, independent living skills, resume and interviewing skills, vocational evaluation, mental health counseling, and transportation support.

Table 89. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Services Needed

Services	% Respondents
Job placement (help finding jobs)	62.3%
Independent living skills (laundry, money, shopping, cooking, cleaning, etc.)	55.8%
Resume and interviewing skills	53.9%
Vocational evaluation (identification of job interests and skills)	50%
Paid work experience	45.5%
Mental health counseling (help with anxiety, depression, etc.)	43.5%
Job or career shadowing	42.9%
Understanding my public benefits and how they will be affected when I work.	41.6%
Use of public transportation	29.2%
Assistive technology (readers, education tools, mobility assistance, etc.)	26%
Indoor and outdoor travel skills (orientation and mobility)	25.3%
Learning about colleges and degree programs	22.7%
Participation in summer work and transition programs	21.4%
Other	5.19%
Braille classes	1.3%

Participants also reported their involvement in various programs, including job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, postsecondary counseling, workplace readiness training, and self-advocacy instruction.

Table 90. Transition-Age Youth Survey - Program Participation

Program	% Respondents
Job Exploration Counseling	42.9%
Work-Based Learning Experiences	26.6%
Post-Secondary Counseling	24.7%
Workplace Readiness Training	20.1%
Other	20.1%
Self-Advocacy Instruction	18.2%

Finally, respondents highlighted unmet needs related to employment, such as finding summer jobs between school semesters, acquiring a driver's license, finding jobs that match their education and experience, and securing part-time employment while attending college.

OVR COUNSELOR & STAFF

SUMMARY

The OVR Counselor and Staff survey exceeded the target number of respondents (147) by 93.2% with a total of 284 responses. The counselor/staff survey respondents were primarily female (75.4%), both counselors and staff had representation (40.1% and 59.9%, respectively), and all 18 OVR districts in the Commonwealth were represented, including Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCD)/Statewide as a district. In terms of the Concerns Report issues that were generated from the OVR Counselor/Staff focus group, each of the 19 items were rated as important by the respondents (avg importance rating of 92.5%). The final Concerns Report concluded that 84.2% of the items were viewed as high satisfaction areas or potential growth areas by OVR counselors and staff. The high satisfaction areas with the highest satisfaction ratings were related to a positive workplace environment and services provided to OVR consumers. The identified areas for improvement included the need for more staff and resources to serve consumers, and a need to reevaluate the current CMS system.

Counselors and staff were generally very positive about their work at OVR. Overall, the OVR counselors and staff indicated that they were satisfied with their job (82.9% satisfaction rate). This included positive satisfaction ratings for the communication and collaboration within OVR (71% satisfaction rate), the resources and tools available to them (70% satisfaction rate), and their current compensation and benefits packages (67.6% satisfaction rate). The most common issues noted by counselors and staff who were dissatisfied with their jobs were base salary (77.4%) and workload (51.6%). A majority of counselors and staff indicated that their technology needs were met (71.9%) and that they believed they could complete their work effectively while telecommuting (80%).

The survey respondents seemed in agreement that there is a strong need for more Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) and that more resources are needed to further develop and expand the existing CRPs. This is in line with the sentiment from the Concerns Report which indicated that counselors and staff believe they need more resources to be able to effectively serve their consumers. Some of the most commonly utilized CRP services included traditional supported employment (77.3%), employment and retention (73.9%), job development (68.2%), person-centered job selection (63.6%), and individual placement support (IPS; 53.4%).

SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC

The respondents identified primarily as female (75.4%), followed by male (21.8%), and those who preferred not to respond (2.82%). The racial/ethnic background of survey respondents was as follows: White (87.3%), Black or African American (9.15%), Hispanic or Latino/a (1.41%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.7%), Asian (0.35%), Other (0.35%) and Unknown (2.11%).

Table 91. OVR Counselor & Staff Survey - Respondents by Gender/Sex

Gender	% Respondents
Female	75.4%
Male	21.8%
Prefer not to respond	2.82%

Table 92. OVR Counselor & Staff Survey - Respondents by Race/Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Background	% Respondents
White	87.3%
Black or African American	9.15%
Hispanic or Latino/a	1.41%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.7%
Asian	0.35%
Other	0.35%
Unknown	2.11%

Sixty percent (59.9%) of respondents were OVR staff, whereas the other 40.1% were OVR counselors. In terms of tenure at OVR, 33.8% of respondents had worked at OVR between 1-5 years, 19.4% had worked between 6-10 years, 12.7% between 11-15 years, 11.6% between 21-25 years, 9.86% between 16-20 years, 7.75% over 25 years, and 4.93% less than 1 year.

For the counselors that completed the survey, the most commonly reported caseload size was 101-150 cases (46.5%), followed by 51-100 cases (22.8%), 151-200 cases (14.9%), less than 50 cases (5.26%), 201-250 cases (5.26%), and finally over 250 cases (5.26%). The counselors were also asked to report their highest level of educational attainment. Seventy-nine percent (78.9%) of counselors held a master's degree, 20.2% held bachelor's level credentials, and 0.88% indicated holding a doctorate or other advanced degree beyond a master's program.

All 18 KY OVR districts were represented by survey respondents ranging from 5 respondents (RCD/Statewide) to 24 respondents (Prestonsburg).

Table 93. OVR Counselor & Staff Survey - Current Position

Current Position	% Respondents
Counselor	40.1%
Staff	59.9%

Table 94. OVR Counselor & Staff Survey - Years at OVR

Years at OVR	% Respondents
Less than 1 year	4.93%
1-5 years	33.8%
6-10 years	19.4%
11-15 years	12.7%
16-20 years	9.86%
21-25 years	11.6%
Over 25 years	7.75%

Table 95. OVR Counselor & Staff Survey - Average Caseload Size

Average Caseload Size	% Respondents
Less than 50 cases	5.26%
51-100 cases	22.8%
101-150 cases	46.5%
151-200 cases	14.9%
201-250 cases	5.26%
Over 250 cases	5.26%

Table 96. OVR Counselor & Staff Survey - Highest Level of Educational Training

Educational Training	% Respondents
Bachelor's Degree	20.2%
Master's Degree	78.9%
Doctorate or Other Advanced Degree	0.88%

Table 97. OVR Counselor & Staff Survey - Respondents by OVR District Assignment

OVR Districts	% Respondents
Ashland	4.58%
Bluegrass	5.28%
Bowling Green	5.99%
Covington	2.11%
Danville	3.87%
East Jefferson	4.93%
East Kentucky Blind Field Services	2.82%
Elizabethtown	2.11%
Florence	3.17%
Hazard	3.87%
Lexington	5.28%
Louisville	7.39%
Owensboro	6.69%
Paducah	5.28%
Prestonsburg	8.45%
RCD/Statewide	1.76%
Somerset	4.58%
West Central Kentucky Blind Services	2.82%
Other (please specify)	19%

CONCERNS REPORT RESULTS

The focus group conducted with OVR counselors and staff resulted in the identification of nineteen unique issues. All nineteen issues were presented to survey respondents. The number of respondents on the issues ranged from 232 to 272. The final concerns report model retained all 19 items as each carried at least a 50% importance rating. The importance ratings on the issues ranged from 75.7% to 98.3% with an average importance rating of 92.5%.

HIGH SATISFACTION AREAS

Four of the nineteen issues (21%) were identified as high satisfaction areas. Two of these items directly related to OVR services being available to consumers, and the other two were related to technology and continuing education opportunities available for OVR staff.

Table 98. OVR Counselor & Staff High Satisfaction Areas

Issue	Satisfaction Rate
OVR counselors are able to serve all categories of consumers	89.2%
Cost sharing continues to be suspended for consumers	87.9%
OVR employees have access to high-quality and diverse continuing education opportunities	85.9%
Required technology and communication systems are accessible to OVR staff	78.9%

POTENTIAL GROWTH AREAS

Twelve of the nineteen issues (63.2%) were identified as potential growth areas. Eight of the potential growth areas were related to the workplace environment, three were related to OVR services, and one was related to the OVR fee schedule.

Table 99. OVR Counselor & Staff Potential Growth Areas

Issue	Satisfaction Rate
The OVR fee schedule has been updated and encourages vendors to provide services through OVR	73%
OVR staff performance evaluations are reflective of the quality of effectiveness of their work	70.4%
OVR staff are competitively compensated and have access to needed benefits	68.9%
Communication between OVR administration (central office) to OVR staff is clear and helpful	68.6%
OVR employees have opportunities for growth and advancement	68.1%
OVR policies and procedures are clear and appropriate guidance is provided to address any areas of concern for OVR staff	61.8%
There is an appropriate number of staff dedicated to providing services to transition-age youth with disabilities	61.7%
There is a strong synergy between OVR central office and field staff	61.4%
OVR physical facilities are accessible and facilitate a quality work environment for OVR staff	61.3%
Transportation access is emphasized through services provided by OVR	58.2%
Supported employment is appropriately emphasized through the number of providers and services available to transition-age youth with disabilities	56.9%
Kentuckians with disabilities are aware of OVR services	50.8%

PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT AREAS

Three issues presented were marked as priority improvement areas. Two of the priority improvement areas were related to counselor and staff resources. The priority area with the lowest satisfaction rating was related to the CMS system.

Table 100. OVR Counselor & Staff Priority Improvement Areas

Issue	Satisfaction Rate
OVR staff are given the time and resources to focus on serving consumers	48.4%
OVR has a reasonable number of staff to address consumers' needs	38.1%
The CMS system is user friendly and efficient	34.6%

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROVIDERS (CRPs)

OVR counselors who completed the survey were asked a number of questions related to CRPs. Respondents were first asked which services they routinely refer consumers to CRPs to receive. The top five responses included:

- Traditional supported employment (77.3%)
- Employment and retention (73.9%)
- Job development (68.2%)
- Person-centered job selection (63.6%)
- Individual placement support (IPS; 53.4%)

Counselors were then asked if they believed that there are enough CRPs to serve consumers in need of services in their area. An overwhelming majority (80.7%) of counselors either disagreed (47.7%) or strongly disagreed (33%) with this statement. In response to whether the existing CRPs had adequate education and professional training to meet the VR needs of their consumers, a majority of counselors (53.4%) either agreed (47.7%) or strongly agreed (5.68%). Similarly, a majority of counselors (61.4%) agreed (58%) or strongly agreed (3.41%) that CRPs provide quality services that meet identified needs of their consumers. When asked if there was a need to establish new CRPs in the Commonwealth, a strong majority (90.9%) of counselors either agreed (40.9%) or strongly agreed (50%) that new CRPs are needed. Similarly, when asked if there is a need to further develop recently established CRPs, 86.4% of counselors either agreed (61.4%) or strongly agreed (25%) that more should be done. Finally, 87.5% of counselors surveyed indicated they either agreed (54.5%) or strongly agreed (33%) that there is a need to expand the current CRPs.

Table 101. OVR Counselor & Staff Survey - Services Referred to CRPs

Services	% Respondents
Traditional Supported Employment	77.3%
Employment and Retention	73.9%
Job Development	68.2%
Person-Centered Job Selection	63.6%
Individual Placement Support (IPS)	53.4%
Career Profile	51.1%
Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation	44.3%
Vocational Assessment	35.2%
Skills Training resulting in Competitive Employment	21.6%
Customized Supported Employment	14.8%
Other (please specify)	6.82%
Adjustment Services	5.68%

JOB SATISFACTION

OVR counselors and staff responses indicated that they were largely satisfied with their work at OVR. Over three-quarters of survey respondents (82.8%) reported they were either satisfied (49%) or very satisfied (33.8%) with their work at OVR. Meanwhile only 6.19% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their work at OVR with 3.81% reporting they were dissatisfied and 2.38% indicating they were very dissatisfied.

OVR staff and counselors indicated they were largely satisfied with the communication and collaboration within OVR (71% satisfaction rate), as well as with the resource and tools available to them (70% satisfaction rate), and their current compensation and benefits packages (67.6% satisfaction rate).

For those that indicated they were dissatisfied with their work at OVR (31 respondents), they were asked which factors most contribute to their job dissatisfaction. The most common response was base salary (77.4%), followed by workload (51.6%), incentives or bonuses (41.9%), benefits (35.5%), and finally professional development opportunities (3.23%).

When surveyed regarding their preparedness to meet the needs of consumers, a stark majority of OVR counselors (96.5%) felt either prepared (72.1%) or very prepared (24.4%) to meet their consumers' needs.

Table 102. OVR Counselor & Staff Survey - Job Satisfaction

Satisfaction	% Respondents
Very dissatisfied	2.38%
Dissatisfied	3.81%
Neutral	11%
Satisfied	49%
Very satisfied	33.8%

Table 103. OVR Counselor & Staff Survey - Satisfaction with Compensation & Benefits Package

Satisfaction	% Respondents
Very dissatisfied	2.9%
Dissatisfied	11.9%
Neutral	17.6%
Satisfied	45.2%
Very satisfied	22.4%

Table 104. OVR Counselor & Staff Survey - Reason for Dissatisfaction with Compensation & Benefits

Reason for Dissatisfaction	% Respondents
Base salary	77.4%
Benefits (Healthcare, Retirement, etc.)	35.5%
Incentives or Bonuses	41.9%
Workload	51.6%
Professional Development Opportunities	3.23%
Other	12.9%

Table 105. OVR Counselor & Staff Survey - Preparation Level to Meet Consumer Needs

Preparation Level	% Respondents
Not prepared	3.49%
Prepared	72.1%
Very Prepared	24.4%

TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

In an ever-changing work world that required a multitude of policy and practice adjustments during the COVID-19 pandemic, we felt it was important to assess technology needs and the practical reality of telecommuting for OVR counselors and staff. When asked about technology needs, almost three-quarters of survey respondents (71.9%) indicated that their technology needs were met, while 23.3% reported that they “sometimes” have the technology to help them stay connected, and only 4.76% firmly indicated that they do not currently have the technology to stay connected. With regard to whether OVR counselors and staff feel that they can do their job while telecommuting, most (80%) reported they can do their jobs either very effectively (62.9%) or effectively (17.1%) from home. Only 7.14% of respondents did not feel confident in their ability to work from home with 2.38% indicating they felt ineffective and 4.76% stating they felt very ineffective when attempting to work from their home.

Table 106. OVR Counselor & Staff Survey - Technology Needs

Technology Needs	% Respondents
I don't have the technology to stay connected	4.76%
I sometimes have the technology to help me stay connected	23.3%
My technology needs are met	71.9%

Table 107. OVR Counselor & Staff Survey - Effectiveness in Telecommuting

Effectiveness	% Respondents
Very Ineffective	4.76%
Ineffective	2.38%
Neutral	12.9%
Effective	17.1%
Very Effective	62.9%

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

SUMMARY

The Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) survey exceeded the target number of respondents (76) by 15.8% with a total of 88 responses. CRP respondents were primarily female (71.6%), and 17 KY OVR regions (94.4%) were served by the respondent CRPs. Louisville was the most represented region with 30.7% of respondents indicating they provided services in the greater Louisville area. A majority of CRP respondents (60.2%) receive 25 or fewer referrals and (62.5%) send 25 or fewer referrals to OVR annually. In terms of the Concerns Report issues that were generated from the CRP focus group, each of the 19 items were rated as important by the respondents (avg importance rating of 94.8%). The final Concerns Report concluded that 100% of the items were viewed as high satisfaction areas or potential growth areas by CRP respondents.

The top three highest rated high satisfaction areas were as follows:

- OVR counselors demonstrate compassion and flexibility when working with Kentuckians with disabilities (88.4% satisfaction rating)
- OVR values and emphasizes partnerships with CRPs (87.8% satisfaction rating)
- OVR provides necessary services to all categories of consumers including those with the most significant disabilities (81.4% satisfaction rating).

A majority of CRP respondents indicated that their technology needs had been met (88.3%) and that they had what they needed to meet virtually with consumers (96.1%). 71.4% of CRPs reported they were able to respond to referrals within a week and 67.5% said they currently have no waiting list for services.

The top five barriers to providing services to OVR consumers identified by respondents included:

- Lack of long-term support funding (39%)
- Low KY-OVR fee for service rates (35.1%)
- Lack of available qualified and/or trained staff (33.8%)
- Lack of available financial resources (31.2%)
- Increases in consumers with multiple disabilities (27.3%)

SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC

The respondents identified primarily as female (71.6%), followed by male (27.3%), and those who preferred not to respond (1.14%). The racial/ethnic background of survey respondents was as follows: White or Caucasian (86.4%), Black or African American (6.82%), Hispanic or Latino/a (2.27%), Asian (2.27%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (1.14%), and Other (1.14%).

Table 108. CRP Survey - Respondents by Gender/Sex

Gender/Sex	% Respondents
Female	71.6%
Male	27.3%
Prefer not to respond	1.14%

Table 109. CRP Survey - Respondents by Race/Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Background	% Respondents
White	86.4%
Black or African American	6.82%
Hispanic or Latino/a	2.27%
Asian	2.27%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.14%
Other	1.14%

In terms of time employed, 25% of respondents had worked between 6-10 years, 17% had worked 21+ years, 17% between 3-5 years, 12.5% each between 1-2 years and 11-15 years, 10.2% between less than a year, and 5.68% between 16-20 years.

The greatest length of time organizations had provided OVR services to consumers was 21+ years (31.8%), followed by 6-10 years (17%), 11-15 years (15.9%), 1-5 years (14.8%), less than 1 year (12.5%), and 16-20 years (7.95%).

When CRPs were asked approximately how many referrals they receive from KY OVR on a yearly basis, 60.2% said either fewer than 10 referrals (31.8%) or 11-25 referrals (28.4%). Another 11.4% received 26-50 referrals, 7.95% from 51-75 referrals, 10.2% between 76-100 referrals, and 10.2% received more than 100 referrals.

When asked about the number of referrals sent to KY OVR annually, the responses revealed a diverse range of engagement levels. The majority of respondents, 40.9%, reported sending fewer than 10 referrals each year. Meanwhile, 21.6% indicated they sent between 11 and 25 referrals, and 19.3% sent between 26 and 50 referrals annually. On the higher end, 4.55% of respondents sent between 51 and 75 referrals, 7.95% sent between 76 and 100 referrals, and only 5.68% reported sending more than 100 referrals each year.

Regarding staff size, the data showed that many organizations operate with relatively small teams or relatively large teams. Specifically, 40.9% of the organizations employed fewer than 10 staff members while 29.5% had more than 50 employees. A smaller segment, 12.5%, had between 10 and 20 employees. Additionally, 5.68% of organizations reported having between 21 and 30 staff members, and the same percentage had between 31 and 40 staff members. Another 5.68% employed between 41 and 50 staff members.

Lastly, 17 OVR regions were served by respondent CRPs. Respondents were able to select all OVR regions their organization regularly works with. Louisville and Lexington were the most represented regions with over half of respondents (54.5%) serving, at least, one of the regions. The OVR region with no respondent CRPs was West Central Kentucky Blind Field Services.

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Table 110. CRP Survey - Years Employed at Organization

Years Employed	% Respondents
Less than 1 year	10.2%
1-2 years	12.5%
3-5 years	17%
6-10 years	25%
11-15 years	12.5%
16-20 years	5.68%
21+ years	17%

Table 111. CRP Survey - OVR Districts Respondents Work With

OVR Districts	% Respondents
Ashland	5.68%
Bluegrass	13.6%
Bowling Green	7.95%
Covington	9.09%
Danville	12.5%
East Jefferson	17%
East Kentucky Blind Field Services	5.68%
Elizabethtown	9.09%
Florence	10.2%
Hazard	4.55%
Lexington	23.9%
Louisville	30.7%
Owensboro	4.55%
Paducah	6.82%
Prestonsburg	2.27%
RCD/Statewide	1.14%
Somerset	4.55%
Other (please specify)	10.2%

CONCERNS REPORT RESULTS

The focus group conducted with OVR CRPs resulted in the identification of nineteen unique issues. All nineteen issues were presented to survey respondents. The number of respondents on the issues ranged from 77 to 86. The final concerns report model retained all nineteen items as each carried at least a 50% importance rating. The importance ratings on the issues ranged from 84.1% to 100% with an average importance rating of 94.8%.

HIGH SATISFACTION AREAS

Thirteen of the nineteen issues (68.4%) were identified as high satisfaction areas. Seven of the high satisfaction areas were related to the workplace environment and the other six high satisfaction items were related to OVR services. The issue with the highest satisfaction rate (88.4%) was *OVR counselors demonstrate compassion and flexibility when working with Kentuckians with disabilities*.

Table 112. CRP High Satisfaction Areas

Issue	Satisfaction Rate
OVR counselors demonstrate compassion and flexibility when working with Kentuckians with disabilities.	88.4%
OVR values and emphasizes partnerships with CRPs.	87.8%
OVR provides necessary services to all categories of consumers including those with the most significant disabilities.	81.4%
There is clear and open communication between OVR staff and administration with CRP staff and administration.	80.8%
OVR sets clear expectations for CRPs and provides adequate training and technical assistance for CRPs to provide services.	80.8%
OVR services are available and accessible to individuals living in underserved areas of Kentucky (e.g., rural Appalachian Kentucky).	79.7%
OVR provides necessary training and technical assistance to CRPs when launching new programs and/or initiatives.	79.5%
OVR administration and staff are open to and seek constructive feedback from CRP administration and staff.	78.8%
OVR appropriately emphasizes transition services for youth with disabilities in Kentucky.	78.3%
OVR provides needed support to CRPs to provide quality services to Kentuckians with disabilities.	78.0%
OVR authorizations and reimbursements are handled in a timely manner.	77.8%
OVR staff and administration respond in a timely manner to CRP needs and requests.	75.9%
OVR programs and initiatives are accompanied by adequate training and technical assistance to CRPs to provide corresponding services.	75.6%

POTENTIAL GROWTH AREAS

Six of the nineteen issues (31.6%) were identified as potential growth areas. The potential growth area with the lowest satisfaction rate was *OVR ensures that referrals to CRPs are appropriate candidates for services and are well-informed of service expectations*.

Table 113. CRP Potential Growth Areas

Issue	Satisfaction Rate
OVR fee schedule has been updated and encourages vendors to provide services through OVR.	71.6%
OVR referrals include ample information for CRPs to provide timely and effective services to consumers.	71.4%
Transportation access is emphasized through services provided by OVR.	68.7%
High-quality pre-ETS are being provided to transition-age youth in Kentucky.	68.3%
Kentuckians with disabilities are aware of OVR services.	67.5%
OVR ensures that referrals to CRPs are appropriate candidates for services and are well-informed of service expectations.	66.2%

PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT AREAS

None of the issues presented were marked as priority improvement areas as each item had a satisfaction rating of at least 50%.

TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

Most OVR consumers (88.3%) indicated that their technology needs, as they related to employment, were met whereas 11.7% responded they sometimes had the technology needed to stay connected. Those who stated their technology

needs were sometimes met were asked what technology they need to do their job. Respondents specified technology needs including separate phone with e-mail, up-to-date computers, smartphone, laptop, file storage, software programs, literature/manuals for life skills and education, iPad, and the ability to teach blind and low vision persons accessibility on their phones. CRPs were asked if they have the technology needed to meet virtually with consumers, in which 96.1% responded with Yes. The 3.9% of CRPs who responded No were asked what technology was needed to meet virtually with consumers. Respondents stated they had the technology needed but needed new and updated computers, and that a tablet would be easier to carry around than a big laptop.

When asked how quickly CRPs were able to initiate Vocational Rehabilitation services after receiving a referral, the majority of respondents indicated within a week (59.7%), with another 20.8% between one week and two weeks. Most of the CRPs (67.5%) responded No when asked if they currently have a waiting list for one or more of the CRP services. Those who responded Yes identified services like employment and retention, IPS (supported employment), and vocational training.

When asked which issues significantly impact their organization's ability to provide persons with disabilities, CRPs identified three prevalent issues:

- Lack of long-term support funding (39%)
- Low KY-OVR fee for service rates (33.8%)
- Lack of available qualified and/or trained staff (35.1%).

Finally, CRPs were asked what supports related to employment could help them to serve their clients effectively to which feedback was provided such as having proper funding to hire high-quality employees, more access to social security counselor, and willing employers to give Kentuckians with disabilities an opportunity for employment.

Table 114. CRP Survey - Time to Initiate Services

Time to Initiate Services	% Respondents
Same day as referral	11.7%
Within a week	59.7%
Between one and two weeks	20.8%
Between two and three weeks	5.19%
More than three weeks	2.6%

Table 115. CRP Survey - Issues Impacting Organization

Issue	% Respondents
Lack of long-term support funding	39%
Low KY-OVR fee for service rates	35.1%
Lack of available qualified and/or trained staff	33.8%
Lack of available financial resources (grants, contracts, in-kind payments, etc.)	31.2%
Increase in consumers with multiple disabilities	27.3%
Rising cost of commodities (gas, utilities, etc.)	24.7%
Timely receipt of KY-OVR authorizations for services	20.8%
Lack of referrals	19.5%
Limited information shared by VR Counselors	19.5%
Slowing economy	16.9%
Employee turnover	15.6%
Other (please specify)	10.4%

KENTUCKY CAREER CENTER

SUMMARY

The Kentucky Career Center (KCC) survey exceeded the target number of respondents (5) by 80% with a total of 9 responses. The KCC survey respondents were primarily female (77.8%) and represented seven unique regions across the Commonwealth:

- Cumberlands
- Green River
- KentuckianaWorks
- Lincoln Trail
- Northern KY
- South Central
- Tenco

All but one respondent (88.9%) indicated that individuals with disabilities were able to fully access and participate in their available services.

The most identified training needs for KCC staff were:

- Social Security Work Incentives
- Assistive Technology
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support
- Intellectual/Learning Disability Support
- Blindness and Low Vision Support

A majority of respondents (80%) reported to have a good or excellent working relationship with OVR, and relatedly indicated that it was easy to refer someone to OVR services (80%) and that the process was seamless and high-quality (80%). Generally speaking, KCC representatives indicated a high level of knowledge related to disability and accessibility related topics, however, 40% of representatives reported a “poor” level of knowledge related to providing materials in alternate or accessible formats.

SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC

The respondents identified primarily as female (77.8%), followed by male (22.2%). The racial/ethnic background of survey respondents was as follows:

- White (66.7%)
- Black or African American (22.2%)
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (11.1%)

Respondents provide services to seven unique regions in Kentucky ranging from 1-3 responses in Cumberlands (3), Green River (1), KentuckianaWorks (3), Lincoln Trail (1), Northern KY (1), South Central (1), and Tenco (1).

Table 116. Kentucky Career Center Survey - Respondents by Gender/Sex

Gender/Sex	% Respondents
Female	77.8%
Male	22.2%

Table 117. Kentucky Career Center Survey - Respondents by Race/Ethnicity

Racial/Ethnic Background	% Respondents
White	66.7%
Black or African American	22.2%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	11.1%

Table 118. Kentucky Career Center Survey - Kentucky Regions Served

KY Region	% Respondents
Cumberlands	33.3%
Green River	11.1%
KentuckianaWorks	33.3%
Lincoln Trail	11.1%
Northern KY	11.1%
South Central	11.1%
Tenco	11.1%

SERVICES AND WORKING WITH OVR

Participants were asked a series of questions as it pertains to services and working with OVR. When asked, “Are individuals with disabilities able to access and participate in the same level of services as other center customers,” 88.9% of respondents answered Yes. One participant indicated that a barrier to individuals with disabilities accessing and participating in Career Center services was that “the elevator is broken half the time due to the age of the building and individuals who have a hard time walking up and down the stairs.”

Participants were asked to identify which trainings related to people with disabilities that staff needed. The areas most selected (3 respondents each) were:

- Social Security Work Incentives
- Assistive Technology
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support
- Intellectual/Learning Disability Support
- Blindness and Low Vision Support

When asked, “How would you rate your career center's working relationship with local staff of the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and OVR staff,” 80% of respondents said Good or Excellent. One participant explained their reasoning for selecting Fair stating, “OVR staff are difficult to partner with sometimes and are frequently negative or unwilling to contribute to common Career Center needs.”

Participants were asked to identify resources available when accommodating a job seeker with a disability at the Career Center. The most common resource with 5 responses was Office of Vocational Rehabilitation staff, followed by Utilize internet resources with 4 responses. Ask the job seeker or the referring employer and Referral to Social Security or other human service organizations each received 3 responses.

Most respondents (80%) indicated it was Easy or Very Easy when asked, “How would you rate your experience with the process of referring a job seeker with a disability in the career center to OVR for services in terms of its ease, accessibility, and overall quality?” One respondent indicated it was Difficult stating, “The process is slow and customers frequently do not get connected in a meaningful way.” Finally, 80% of participants responded Easy or Very Easy when asked, “How would you rate your experience with the process of OVR referring job seekers with a disability to the career

center in terms of its seamlessness and overall quality?” One person reasoned, “There isn’t much collaboration with OVR staff and other KCC partners with regard to cross-referrals,” as to why they indicated their experience as Difficult.

Table 119. Kentucky Career Center Survey - Trainings Needed

Trainings Needed	% Respondents
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	40%
Social Security Work Incentives	60%
Assistive Technology (screen readers, alternative computer input, etc.)	60%
Vocational Rehabilitation Services	20%
Employer Resources/Tax Credits	20%
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support	60%
Spinal Cord Injury Support	20%
Intellectual/Learning Disability Support	60%
Autism Support	40%
Blindness and Low Vision Support	60%
Substance Use Disorder Support	40%
Mental Health Condition Support	40%

Table 120. Kentucky Career Center Survey - Resources Available

Resources Available	% Respondents
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation staff	100%
Ask the job seeker or the referring employer	60%
Utilize internet resources	80%
Referral to Social Security or other human service organizations	60%
Based on my own professional expertise, I determine if they are able or unable to seek employment.	20%

KNOWLEDGE OF TOPICS

Participants were asked to rate their knowledge over seven topics from Poor to Excellent. Of the seven topics, five received 80% Good or Excellent responses; “Effective strategies that support employment outcomes for customers with disabilities,” “Accommodations on the job for a variety of disabilities,” “Self-Disclosure regarding one’s disability to employers and potential employers,” “Information about vocational rehabilitation services,” and “How working can impact Social Security and other benefits.” To the statement, “Assistive technology and how to obtain assistive devices through various funding sources,” 60% responded with either Good or Excellent in their knowledge. Notably, “Providing materials in alternate or accessible formats,” received 60% Good or Excellent responses with the remaining 40% responding as Poor.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW FINDINGS

SUMMARY

Interview participants touched on a variety of themes including ableism, working with OVR counselors, satisfaction with and gratitude for OVR services, difficulty maintaining employment, transition support, OVR communication, school services, employment in rural areas, disempowerment issues, and supportive employment.

INFORMANT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 2 OVR consumers
- 1 Transition-age youth consumer guardian
- 2 supported-employment specialists

HIGH SATISFACTION AREAS

- OVR counselors
- Job support for vulnerable populations
- OVR goals aligning with supported employment specialists

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Turnover rate of counselors
- Clear and streamlined communication with counselors
- Transition supports
- Public awareness of OVR services
- Referral process

Table 121. Key Informant Interview Findings

Role	Themes	OVR Strengths	OVR Needs Improvement
Consumer	Ableism; OVR counselors, satisfaction w/ OVR services; Job discrimination; Physical challenges; Limiting medical conditions; Difficulty maintaining employment; OVR job support; Gratitude for OVR services	Services; Job support for vulnerable populations; Job skills assessment / recommendations / referral	Inconsistency in quality of service; Turnover of counselors; Communication with counselors; Counselor caseloads / overworked
Transition-Age Consumer Parent/Guardian	Transition support; Limited employment options for segments of the disability community; School; OVR communication; School services	Some of OVR's employees are - knowledgeable, supportive, resourceful	Transition support; Organization; Clear communication
Supportive Employment Specialist	Employment in rural areas; Poverty and disability; Disempowerment issues; Supportive employment collaborations; Challenges with employers; Advocacy; Teaming with OVR counselors; Communication & support from OVR counselors	Excellent communication with OVR counselors; Counselors are goal oriented; OVR goals align with SES'; Receptive to requests and respond quickly	Publicize services - public unaware of their office and what they do; More support needed in the referral process

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – CONSENT AGREEMENT

ABOUT

Throughout the project, the team frequently used the project website for communications to shareholders. The site included information on the CSNA and how to sign up for opportunities to provide feedback. The project site featured a page containing the following consent agreement. Participants of the focus groups, key informant interviews, and forums agreed to the consent agreement upon registration. Additionally, at the beginning of each focus group, key informant interview, and forum, participants were reminded of the consent agreement and were given the opportunity to ask any questions before proceeding.

CONSENT AGREEMENT

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information shared during the focus group, forum, and/or key informant interview discussions will be kept confidential. Your identity will not be disclosed in any reports or documents resulting from this evaluation.

Participants are expected to respect the confidentiality of others and refrain from sharing personal information shared by fellow participants.

The focus groups, forums, and/or key informant interviews will be recorded and utilized by the University of Kentucky Human Development Institute's Evaluation Team only for the purposes of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. The recordings will be destroyed upon completion of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

You have the right to withdraw your participation at any point during the focus group, forum, and/or key informant interview discussions without any penalty.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

By participating in focus groups, forums, and/or key informant interviews, you acknowledge that you have read and reviewed this agreement.

APPENDIX B – FOCUS GROUP MATERIALS

Individual Invitation to Participate letters were sent to eligible OVR consumers and families, OVR staff and counselors, CRP Staff, and KY Statewide Council for Vocaitonal Rehabilitation Members.

INVITATION LETTER

 Human Development Institute

10/17/2023

Dear Eligible OVR Consumers and Families,

We greatly appreciate your participation as we conduct a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Your input in our focus groups is invaluable to this evaluation, and we want to ensure that you are fully informed about the process and your rights as a participant. Please carefully read this Consent Agreement before proceeding.

Purpose of the Focus Groups:

The focus groups play a vital role in our evaluation of Kentucky OVR. By participating, you contribute significantly to our understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of vocational rehabilitation services across Kentucky. Your insights and opinions will help shape future programs and policies related to vocational rehabilitation.

Confidentiality:

- All information shared during the focus group discussions will be kept confidential. Your identity will not be disclosed in any reports or documents resulting from this evaluation.
- Participants are expected to respect the confidentiality of others and refrain from sharing personal information shared by fellow participants.
- The focus groups will be recorded and utilized by the University of Kentucky Human Development Institute's Evaluation Team only for the purposes of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. The recordings will be destroyed upon completion of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Right to Withdraw:

- You have the right to withdraw your participation at any point during the focus group discussions without any penalty.

By submitting your registration and selecting "yes" to consent, you acknowledge that you have read and reviewed the focus group participation agreement and are willing to be considered as a participant in our focus groups.

[Register for the Public Focus Group](#)

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this important evaluation. Your contribution to the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment is deeply appreciated, and it will undoubtedly help us gain valuable insights into the vocational rehabilitation services in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Regards,



Dr. Mykal Leslie
Ph.D., LPCC-S, CRC
Evaluation Unit Director
University of Kentucky | Human Development Institute

View the [2024 Kentucky OVR CSNA Website](#) for more information.

FOCUS GROUP TOPICS

A list of Focus Group Topics was sent to eligible OVR consumers and families, OVR staff and counselors, CRP Staff, and KY Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation Members.

2024 KY Office of Vocational Rehabilitation | Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

Focus Group Topics

Groups

Groups of OVR consumers, potential consumers, and stakeholders.

Aging Population
Individuals with Mental Illness
Individuals with Drug and Alcohol Use Disorders
Individuals with a Criminal Background
Individuals with Disabilities
Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities
Unserved Populations
Underserved Populations
Transition-Aged Youth/Minorities

Programs

Programs currently supporting OVR services.

Employment First – Competitive Integrated Employment
Workforce Investment System (WIOA)
Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs)

Services

Services OVR currently offers or prospective services for OVR.

Staff/Counselor Mental Health Support
Unique Appalachian Resources
Career Counseling
Vocational Guidance and Counseling
Assistive Technology
Job Placement
Help Finding Jobs
Job Training
Mental Health Counseling
Self-Employment Services
Supported Employment Services
Supported Employment Services for Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities
Support Services

Barriers

Barriers to accessing OVR services.

Transportation
Social Skills
Job Search Skills
Qualified Service Providers
Employer Attitudes
Long-Term Support
Money Management
Asking for Accommodations
Virtual Service Delivery
Access to VR Application Process

APPENDIX C – SURVEY QUESTIONS: CONSUMERS

DEMOGRAPHICS/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Who is completing this survey? Please identify yourself from the choices below (select one that best describes you).
 - Individual with a disability
 - Parent or guardian of an individual with a disability
 - Advocate
 - Service provider
 - An interested member of the community

Please respond to the best of your knowledge in consideration of the experiences and perspectives of the consumer you are representing. Note: Shown if respondent is not OVR consumer.

- What is your gender identity?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Transgender
 - Non-binary/Non-conforming
 - Other
 - Prefer not to respond
- What is your race/ethnicity? (select all that apply)
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Latino/a or Hispanic
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - White or Caucasian
 - Other (please specify)
 - Unknown
- What is your age group?
 - 26-34 years
 - 35-44 years
 - 45-54 years
 - 55-64 years
 - 65-74 years
 - 75 years or older
- Please select your Kentucky county of residence. Note: All 120 counties listed in addition to the options “Don’t know”, “Other”, “Prefer not to answer”
- Please check one or more of the following which describe your disability(s).
 - Deafness/Hard of hearing
 - Deaf/Blind
 - Blind/Visual impairment
 - Other communication impairment
 - Orthopedic impairment
 - Respiratory impairment
 - Spinal cord injury/paralysis
 - Brain injury/stroke
 - Other physical impairment

- Behavioral/Mood disorder
- Intellectual disability
- Cognitive impairment
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Substance abuse disorder
- Other mental impairment or illness
- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to answer
- Is your case currently open or closed?
 - Open
 - Closed
 - Don't know
 - Not applicable

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

Please respond to the best of your knowledge in consideration of the experiences and perspectives of the consumer you are representing. *Note: Shown if respondent is not OVR consumer.*

On the following pages, you will find a list of items related to the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). For each item, please indicate whether it is important to you (yes or no) and then indicate whether you are satisfied with the current status of that item (yes or no). *Note: The following items asked the same two Yes/No questions: 1) Is this item important? 2) Are you satisfied with the current status of the item? The following short answer question displayed when a dissatisfied response was received.*

- OVR provides essential services to all consumers, including those with significant challenges due to disabilities.
 - What prevents OVR consumers with the most significant barriers/limitations from accessing OVR services?
- The OVR website is helpful and easy to use.
 - What aspects of the website are challenging or unhelpful?
- OVR staff and administration respond in a timely manner.
 - Why do you feel OVR staff and administration do not respond in a timely manner?
- OVR counselors and staff are professional and helpful.
 - Why do you feel the OVR counselors and/or staff are not as helpful or professional as needed?
- OVR offers services that are timely and fit consumers' needs.
 - Why do you feel OVR services are not timely and/or do not fit consumers' needs?
- OVR services are readily available and easy to access.
 - Why are you dissatisfied with the availability and accessibility to OVR services for Kentuckians with disabilities?
- OVR helps consumers attain high-quality employment opportunities.
 - Why do you feel that OVR does not sufficiently assist consumers in achieving or maintaining quality employment opportunities?
- OVR consumers have control over their case and how their needs are addressed.
 - Are there specific instances where you felt you didn't have control over your case or how your needs were addressed by OVR?
- OVR emphasizes consumer involvement in creating their plan of employment (e.g., what services are provided, job goals, and what vendors will provide the services).
 - Have there been instances where your input wasn't considered in creating your individualized plan of employment?
- OVR services help consumers reach their independent living goals.

- What aspects of OVR services do you feel are not effectively contributing to consumers reaching their independent living goals?
- OVR counselors are available and easy to communicate with.
 - What communication barriers have you encountered with OVR counselors that made communication less accessible or easy to use?
- Kentuckians with disabilities are aware of OVR services.
 - What do you feel contributes to a lack of awareness among Kentuckians with disabilities about OVR services?
- OVR physical locations are accessible.
 - Why are you dissatisfied with the accessibility at OVR physical locations?
- OVR provides a wide range of services and resources.
 - Why are you dissatisfied with the range of services and resources OVR offers?
- OVR provides accessible and easy to use communication options to consumers.
 - What communication barriers have you encountered while interacting with OVR that made it less accessible or easy to use?
- OVR counselors are dedicated to providing quality services.
 - What makes you feel that OVR counselors are not dedicated to providing quality services?
- OVR helps address consumers' transportation concerns.
 - In what instances did you feel OVR fell short in addressing transportation concerns effectively?
- OVR provides opportunities for consumers to give feedback and listens to their concerns.
 - In what instances did you feel OVR fell short in providing opportunities for consumers to give feedback and listen to their concerns?

CURRENT WORK SITUATION

Please respond to the best of your knowledge in consideration of the experiences and perspectives of the consumer you are representing. *Note: Shown if respondent is not OVR consumer.*

- Are you currently employed?
 - Yes, full-time
 - Yes, part of the time
 - Not working
 - Retired
 - Other (please specify)

Note: The following questions were asked if a "Yes, full-time" or "Yes, part of the time" response was received.

- What sector do you currently work in?
 - Healthcare
 - Information Technology
 - Real Estate
 - Retail
 - Education
 - Government
 - Prefer not to disclose
 - Don't know
 - Other (specify below)
- How satisfied are you with your current job?
 - Very satisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Neutral

- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- How secure do you feel your job currently is?
 - Very secure
 - Somewhat secure
 - Neutral
 - Somewhat insecure
 - Very insecure

TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

Please respond to the best of your knowledge in consideration of the experiences and perspectives of the consumer you are representing. *Note: Shown if respondent is not OVR consumer.*

- Which best describes your technology needs (related to employment)?
 - I don't have the technology to stay connected.
 - I sometimes have the technology to help me stay connected.
 - My technology needs are met.
- What kinds of technology are you using (related to employment)? (select all that apply)
 - Smartphone
 - Computer
 - Tablet
 - Other (please specify)

OTHER

Please respond to the best of your knowledge in consideration of the experiences and perspectives of the consumer you are representing. *Note: Shown if respondent is not OVR consumer.*

- How satisfied are you with the outcome of your Vocational Rehabilitation experience? *Note: Question asked to consumers with a closed case.*
 - Very satisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Neutral
 - Dissatisfied
 - Very dissatisfied
- How would you rate your experience working with OVR?
 - Very satisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Neutral
 - Unsatisfied
 - Very unsatisfied
- How likely would you be to recommend someone who needs assistance to OVR?
 - Very likely
 - Likely
 - Not sure
 - Unlikely
 - Very unlikely
- Do you have any additional comments or feedback you would like to share about your experience with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation?

APPENDIX D – SURVEY QUESTIONS: TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH

DEMOGRAPHICS/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Who is completing this survey? Please select the most appropriate option that best describes your role or relationship to the Youth/Transition-Age OVR consumer:
 - Youth/Transition-Age OVR consumer
 - Parent/Guardian
 - Caretaker
 - Sibling
 - Other Family Member
 - Teacher/Educator
 - Support Staff
 - Other (please specify)

Please respond to the best of your knowledge in consideration of the experiences and perspectives of the transition-age consumer you are representing. *Note: Shown if respondent is not Youth/Transition-Age OVR consumer.*

- What is your age?
 - 18 years
 - 19 years
 - 20 years
 - 21 years
 - 22 years
 - 23 years
 - 24 years
 - 25 years
- What is your gender identity?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Transgender
 - Non-binary/Non-conforming
 - Other
 - Prefer not to respond
- What is your race/ethnicity? (select all that apply)
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Latino/a or Hispanic
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - White or Caucasian
 - Other (please specify)
 - Unknown
- Please select your Kentucky county of residence. *Note: All 120 counties listed in addition to the options “Don’t know”, “Other”, “Prefer not to answer”*
- Please select one or more of the following which describe your disability(s).
 - Deafness/Hard of hearing
 - Deaf/Blind
 - Blind/Visual impairment
 - Other communication impairment

- Orthopedic impairment
 - Respiratory impairment
 - Spinal cord injury/paralysis
 - Brain injury/stroke
 - Other physical impairment
 - Behavioral/Mood disorder
 - Intellectual disability
 - Cognitive impairment
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Substance abuse disorder
 - Other mental impairment or illness
 - Other (please specify)
 - Prefer not to answer
- Which of the following describes your current situation? (select all that apply)
 - I currently attend a private or parochial high school.
 - I am a home-schooled student.
 - I currently attend Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB).
 - I currently attend Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD).
 - I currently attend a public high school (other than KSD or KSB).
 - I am taking classes at a Community/Technical College (technical/paraprofessional training).
 - I am taking Adult Vocational Education (advanced job training).
 - I am taking classes at a University or College (Bachelor or graduate program).
 - I am not currently in school or taking any courses.
 - Other (please specify)
 - Which of the following describes your current living situation? (select all that apply)
 - I live alone.
 - I live with other people (family, roommates, group home).
 - I contribute to the rent or mortgage of my residence.
 - I live in an apartment.
 - I live in a house.
 - I live in a group home.
 - Other (please specify)
 - Prefer not to respond

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

Please respond to the best of your knowledge in consideration of the experiences and perspectives of the transition-age consumer you are representing. *Note: Shown if respondent is not Youth/Transition-Age OVR consumer.*

On the following pages, you will find a list of items related to the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). For each item, please indicate whether it is important to you (yes or no) and then indicate whether you are satisfied with the current status of that item (yes or no). *Note: The following items asked the same two Yes/No questions: 1) Is this item important? 2) Are you satisfied with the current status of the item? The following short answer question displayed when a dissatisfied response was received.*

- OVR provides services to all consumers, even those with the most significant barriers/limitations.
 - Why are you dissatisfied with the services OVR provides to consumers with the most significant barriers/limitations?
- The OVR website is helpful and easy to use.
 - What aspects of the OVR website are challenging or unhelpful?
- OVR staff and administration respond in a timely manner.

- Why do you feel OVR staff and administration do not respond in a timely manner?
- OVR counselors and staff are professional and helpful.
 - Why do you feel OVR counselors and/or staff are not as helpful or professional as needed?
- OVR services are timely and fit consumers' needs.
 - Why do you feel OVR services are not timely and/or do not fit consumers' needs?
- Supported employment services are available when needed.
 - Why do you feel supported employment services are not available when needed?
- The enrollment process into OVR services from school transition services is organized and smooth.
 - What difficulties exist during the enrollment process that made it less organized or smooth?
- OVR counselors and staff are an active part of student transition teams (including being present at student IEP meetings and being an active part of student transition planning).
 - Why do you feel OVR counselors and staff are not an active part of student transition teams?
- OVR helps transition students achieve and maintain quality employment opportunities.
 - Why do you feel that OVR does not sufficiently assist transition students in achieving or maintaining quality employment opportunities?
- OVR consumers have control over their case and how their needs are met.
 - Are there specific instances where you felt you did not have control over your case or how your needs were addressed by OVR?
- OVR emphasizes consumer involvement in creating their individualized plan of employment (e.g., what services are provided, job goals, and what vendors will provide the services).
 - Have there been instances where your input was not considered in creating your individualized plan of employment?
- OVR services help students reach their transition goals.
 - What aspects of OVR services do you feel are not effectively contributing to reaching transition goals?
- OVR provides high-quality pre-ETS (pre-employment transition services).
 - What are some areas where you feel the pre-ETS provided by OVR lacked quality?
- OVR counselors coordinate and collaborate well with school transition staff.
 - Why do you feel OVR counselors do not coordinate and collaborate well with school transition staff?
- Student preferences for job goals and assistive technology are prioritized by OVR staff.
 - Why do you feel student preferences for job goals or assistive technology are not given priority by OVR staff?
- Students with disabilities are aware of OVR services.
 - What do you feel contributes to a lack of awareness among students with disabilities about OVR services?
- OVR services are available and accessible to students with disabilities.
 - Why are you dissatisfied with the availability and accessibility to OVR services for students with disabilities?
- OVR provides accessible and easy to use communication options to consumers.
 - What communication barriers have you encountered while interacting with OVR that made it less accessible or easy to use?
- OVR helps address consumers' transportation concerns.
 - In what instances did you feel OVR fell short in addressing transportation concerns effectively?
- OVR provides opportunities for consumers to give feedback and responds to their concerns.
 - Have there been occasions where you felt your feedback wasn't adequately addressed or responded to by OVR?

TECHNOLOGY

Please respond to the best of your knowledge in consideration of the experiences and perspectives of the transition-age consumer you are representing. *Note: Shown if respondent is not Youth/Transition-Age OVR consumer.*

- What kind of technology are you using? (select all that apply)
 - Smartphone
 - Computer
 - Tablet
 - Other (please specify)
- What best describes your technology needs?
 - I don't have the technology to stay connected.
 - I sometimes have the technology to help me stay connected.
 - My technology needs are met.

CURRENT WORK SITUATION

Please respond to the best of your knowledge in consideration of the experiences and perspectives of the transition-age consumer you are representing. *Note: Shown if respondent is not Youth/Transition-Age OVR consumer.*

- Which of the following describe your work situation? (select all that apply)
 - I am working full-time (more than 30 hours/week).
 - I am working part time (less than 30 hours/week).
 - I had a job in the last five years but am not currently working.
 - I have not had a paid work experience in the last five years.
- I currently make... *Note: Question asked to respondents currently working only.*
 - Less than minimum wage (\$7.25 per hour) in my main job.
 - At least or more than minimum wage (\$7.25 per hour) in my main job.
- I have... *Note: Question asked to respondents not currently working.*
 - Tried to get a job but have been unsuccessful.
 - Not tried to get a job.

JOB PREPAREDNESS AND SERVICES

Please respond to the best of your knowledge in consideration of the experiences and perspectives of the transition-age consumer you are representing. *Note: Shown if respondent is not Youth/Transition-Age OVR consumer.*

- Which of the following are true for you? (select all that apply)
 - I know what career I want in the future.
 - I have researched different type of jobs and careers.
 - I have learned about education or training requirements to get different types of jobs.
 - I have used the internet to research jobs.
 - I have talked to a teacher/counselor about types of jobs or careers.
 - I have read job postings advertised on the internet, newspaper, and/or other places.
 - I have met with a college or military recruiter.
 - I have met with other postsecondary representatives (ex. trade school).
 - I have attended college or job fairs.
- Which of the following are true for you? (select all that apply)
 - I have had real-life (paid) work experiences.
 - I have interviewed for a job.
 - I have received a pay check.
 - I have filled out job applications.

- I have a job shadowing experience.
 - I have had an internship experience.
 - I have had a volunteer experience.
 - I have attended a career fair or employer tour.
- Which of the following are true for you? (select all that apply)
 - I use a computer to find information on the internet.
 - I type on a keyboard.
 - I use a tablet or smartphone.
 - I use different software programs on a computer.
 - I use a computer to read or to take notes.
 - I read standard print or large print materials.
 - I use braille to read.
 - I use assistive technology to browse the internet for information.
- Which of the following is true to you? (select all that apply)
 - I have participated in vocational preparation classes in high school (drafting, plumbing, welding, electrician, etc.).
 - I have talked to a teacher/counselor about how to apply to vocational and trade schools.
 - I have talked to a teacher/counselor about how to apply to community colleges.
 - I understand the difference between a community college and university.
 - I understand the difference between a vocational or trade school and community college.
 - I understand what training is required for my chosen career.
 - I have already applied or been accepted to a training program (vocational, community, technical college, or university) after high school.
 - I am already attending a college, university, or other vocational training program.
 - I am taking classes in high school for college credit (AP, IB, Dual Credit).
- Which of the following services would be useful to you now or in the future? (select all that apply)
 - Indoor and outdoor travel skills (orientation and mobility)
 - Independent living skills (laundry, money, shopping, cooking, cleaning, etc.)
 - Vocational evaluation (identification of job interests and skills)
 - Resume and interviewing skills
 - Job placement (help finding jobs)
 - Learning about colleges and degree programs
 - Use of public transportation
 - Assistive technology (readers, education tools, mobility assistance, etc.)
 - Paid work experience
 - Understanding my public benefits and how they will be affected when I work.
 - Job or career shadowing
 - Mental health counseling (help with anxiety, depression, etc.)
 - Braille classes
 - Participation in summer work and transition programs
 - Other (please specify)
- Please select all of the following programs you have participated in.
 - Job Exploration Counseling
 - Post-Secondary Counseling
 - Self-Advocacy Instruction
 - Work-Based Learning Experiences
 - Workplace Readiness Training
 - Other (please describe)
- Please describe any unmet needs related to employment which you would like services for.

APPENDIX E – SURVEY QUESTIONS: OVR COUNSELOR & STAFF

DEMOGRAPHIC/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- What is your gender identity?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Transgender
 - Non-binary/Non-conforming
 - Other
 - Prefer not to respond
- What is your race/ethnicity? (select all that apply)
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Latino/a or Hispanic
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - White or Caucasian
 - Other (please specify)
 - Unknown
- Which of the following best describes your current position?
 - Counselor
 - Staff
- How many years have you worked in Vocational Rehabilitation?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-15 years
 - 16-20 years
 - 21-25 years
 - Over 25 years
- What is your average caseload size? *Note: Question asked to OVR Counselors.*
 - Less than 50 cases
 - 51-100 cases
 - 101-150 cases
 - 151-200 cases
 - 201-250 cases
 - Over 250 cases
- What is your highest level of educational training? *Note: Question asked to OVR Counselors.*
 - Less than a Bachelor's degree
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Master's Degree
 - Doctorate or Other Advanced Degree
- In which KY OVR district are you assigned?
 - Ashland
 - Bluegrass
 - Bowling Green
 - Covington
 - Danville

- East Jefferson
- East Kentucky Blind Field Services
- Elizabethtown
- Florence
- Hazard
- Lexington
- Louisville
- Owensboro
- Paducah
- Prestonsburg
- RCD/Statewide
- Somerset
- West Central Kentucky Blind Field Services
- Other (please specify)

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

On the following pages, you will find a list of items related to the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). For each item, please indicate whether it is important to you (yes or no) and then indicate whether you are satisfied with the current status of that item (yes or no). *Note: The following items asked the same two Yes/No questions: 1) Is this item important? 2) Are you satisfied with the current status of the item? The following short answer question displayed when a dissatisfied response was received.*

- The CMS system is user friendly and efficient.
 - Why are you dissatisfied with the user-friendliness and efficiency of the CMS system?
- Cost sharing continues to be suspended for consumers.
 - Please explain your reason(s) for dissatisfaction with the continued suspension of cost sharing for consumers.
- OVR counselors are able to serve all categories of consumers.
 - Why do you feel OVR counselors are unable to serve all categories of consumers?
- Transportation access is emphasized through services provided by OVR.
 - What aspects make you unsatisfied with the emphasis on consumer transportation access through services provided by OVR?
- There is a strong synergy between OVR central office and field staff.
 - What factors contribute to the lack of synergy between OVR central office and field staff.
- OVR staff are given the time and resources to focus on serving consumers.
 - What prevents OVR staff from having the necessary time and resources to focus on serving consumers effectively?
- OVR staff performance evaluations are reflective of the quality of effectiveness of their work.
 - In what ways do you feel that OVR staff performance evaluations don't reflect the quality of effectiveness of their work?
- Supported employment is appropriately emphasized through the number of providers and services available to transition-age youth with disabilities.
 - Why do you think supported employment isn't appropriately emphasized through the number of providers and services available to transition-age youth with disabilities?
- The OVR fee schedule has been updated and encourages vendors to provide services through OVR.
 - What aspects of the OVR fee schedule discourage vendors from providing services through OVR?
- There is an appropriate number of staff dedicated to providing services to transition-age youth with disabilities.
 - Why are you dissatisfied with the number of staff dedicated to providing services to transition-age youth with disabilities?

- OVR policies and procedures are clear and appropriate guidance is provided to address any areas of concern for OVR staff.
 - What specific areas of concern exist due to unclear OVR policies and procedures, or inadequate guidance provided to address areas of concern for OVR staff?
- Communication between OVR administration (central office) to OVR staff is clear and helpful.
 - What aspects of communication between OVR administration (central office) and OVR are unclear or unhelpful?
- OVR has a reasonable number of staff to address consumers' needs.
 - What makes you believe that OVR doesn't have a reasonable number of staff to address consumers' needs?
- OVR staff are competitively compensated and have access to needed benefits.
 - Why do you feel that staff aren't competitively compensated and/or lack access to needed benefits?
- Kentuckians with disabilities are aware of OVR services.
 - Why do you think Kentuckians with disabilities might not be aware of OVR services?
- OVR physical facilities are accessible and facilitate a quality work environment for OVR staff.
 - What aspects of OVR's physical facilities hinder accessibility and fail to facilitate a quality work environment for staff?
- OVR employees have opportunities for growth and advancement.
 - What aspects of OVR's structure prevents employees from having opportunities for growth and advancement?
- OVR employees have access to high-quality and diverse continuing education opportunities.
 - What limitations exist regarding OVR employees' access to high-quality and diverse continuing education opportunities?
- Required technology and communication systems are accessible to OVR staff.
 - What aspects of OVR's technology and communication systems hinder accessibility for staff?

UNSERVED & UNDERSERVED CONSUMERS

- Please identify any consumer groups that you have seen an increase in serving over the past three years.
- From your experience, who do you believe to be unserved populations of individuals with disabilities?
- From your experience, who do you believe to be underserved populations of individuals with disabilities?
- What can OVR do to improve the provision of services to unserved and underserved individuals with disabilities?

CRPs

Note: The following questions were asked to OVR Counselors.

- For which of the following services do you routinely refer consumers to CRPs? (select all that apply)
 - Vocational Assessment
 - Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation
 - Person-Centered Job Selection
 - Job Development
 - Career Profile
 - Adjustment Services
 - Employment and Retention
 - Skills Training resulting in Competitive Employment
 - Traditional Supported Employment
 - Individual Placement Support (IPS)
 - Customized Supported Employment
 - Other (please specify)

- Please read the following statements regarding CRPs and rate how well you agree with each statement. *Note: The following questions were formatted with a 4-point scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree).*
 - There are enough CRPs to serve consumers in need of services in my area.
 - CRP staff have adequate education and professional training to meet the VR needs of my consumers.
 - CRPs provide quality services that meet identified needs of my consumers.
 - There is a need to establish new CRPs.
 - There is a need to develop recently established CRPs.
 - There is a need to expand current CRPs.
- Please provide any other information you feel would be useful for OVR to consider when determining the needs for future CRP services.

COUNSELOR/STAFF NEEDS

- Please rate your overall job satisfaction at OVR.
 - *Options: Very dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Neutral; Satisfied, Very satisfied*
- What do you find most satisfying about your work at OVR?
 - *Options: Very dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Neutral; Satisfied, Very satisfied*
- What aspects of your job or workplace do you think need improvement?
- How satisfied are you with the communication and collaboration within OVR including interactions with colleagues, supervisors, and management.
 - *Options: Very dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Neutral; Satisfied, Very satisfied*
- Do you have any suggestions for improving communication and collaboration within OVR?
- Are you satisfied with the resources and tools available to you to perform your job effectively?
 - *Options: Very dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Neutral; Satisfied, Very satisfied*
- What additional resources and tools do you think would be beneficial in enhancing your job performance?
- How satisfied are you with your current compensation and benefits package?
 - *Options: Very dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Neutral; Satisfied, Very satisfied*

Note: The following questions were asked if a dissatisfied or very dissatisfied response was received.

- What specific factors contribute to this dissatisfaction? (select all that apply)
 - Base salary
 - Benefits (Healthcare, Retirement, etc.)
 - Incentives or Bonuses
 - Workload
 - Professional Development Opportunities
 - Other (please specify)
- If dissatisfied with your current compensation and benefits package how does this impact your work performance at OVR? Please explain why below.
- How well-prepared do you feel to meet the needs of consumers? *Note: Question asked to OVR Counselors.*
 - Not at all prepared
 - Not prepared
 - Prepared
 - Very Prepared
- What training and professional development opportunities would help you better meet the needs of consumers?
Note: Question asked to OVR Counselors.
- Which best describes your technology needs as it relates to doing your job?
 - I don't have the technology to stay connected.
 - I sometimes have the technology to help me stay connected.
 - My technology needs are met.

- How effectively can you do your job when telecommuting to work?
 - Very Ineffective
 - Ineffective
 - Neutral
 - Effective
 - Very Effective
 - What technology and resources would be beneficial for when you telecommute to work?
-

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APPENDIX F – SURVEY QUESTIONS: COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

DEMOGRAPHIC/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- What is your gender identity?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Transgender
 - Non-binary/Non-conforming
 - Other
 - Prefer not to respond
- What is your race/ethnicity? (select all that apply)
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Latino/a or Hispanic
 - White or Caucasian
 - Unknown
 - Other (please specify)
- What is your job title?

CRP INFORMATION

- How long have you been employed by your organization?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1-2 years
 - 3-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-15 years
 - 16-20 years
 - 21+ years
- How many years has your organization provided services to OVR consumers?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-15 years
 - 16-20 years
 - 20+ years
- Approximately how many referrals do you RECEIVE FROM KY OVR on a yearly basis?
 - Fewer than 10 referrals
 - 11-25 referrals
 - 26-50 referrals
 - 51-75 referrals
 - 76-100 referrals
 - More than 100 referrals
- Approximately how many individuals do you refer TO KY OVR on a yearly basis?
 - Fewer than 10 referrals
 - 11-25 referrals
 - 26-50 referrals
 - 51-75 referrals

- 76-100 referrals
 - More than 100 referrals
- How many staff does your organization employ?
 - Fewer than 10 staff
 - 10-20 staff
 - 21-30 staff
 - 31-40 staff
 - 41-50 staff
 - More than 50 staff
- Which of the following KY OVR districts does your organization regularly work with? (select all that apply)
 - Ashland
 - Bluegrass
 - Bowling Green
 - Covington
 - Danville
 - East Jefferson
 - East Kentucky Blind Field Services
 - Elizabethtown
 - Florence
 - Hazard
 - Lexington
 - Louisville
 - Owensboro
 - Paducah
 - Prestonsburg
 - RCD/Statewide
 - Somerset
 - West Central Kentucky Blind Field Services
 - Other (please specify)

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

On the following pages, you will find issues generated from a focus group with CRP administration and staff. For each issue, please rate the importance of the issue and your satisfaction with OVR's efforts related to that issue. *Note: The following items asked the same two Yes/No questions: 1) Is this item important? 2) Are you satisfied with the current status of the item? The following short answer question displayed when a dissatisfied response was received.*

- OVR provides necessary services to all categories of consumers including those with the most significant disabilities.
 - Please explain what dissatisfied you about OVR's efforts in providing necessary services to all categories of consumers with significant disabilities.
- OVR counselors demonstrate compassion and flexibility when working with Kentuckians with disabilities.
 - What aspects of OVR counselors' approach make you dissatisfied with their demonstration of compassion and flexibility while working with individuals with disabilities in Kentucky?
- Transportation access is emphasized through services provided by OVR.
 - Please describe any dissatisfaction you have regarding how OVR emphasizes transportation access through its services.
- OVR appropriately emphasizes transition services for youth with disabilities in Kentucky.
 - What dissatisfies you about OVR's efforts in appropriately emphasizing transition services for youth with disabilities in Kentucky?

- OVR staff and administration respond in a timely manner to CRP needs and requests.
 - What dissatisfies you regarding the timeliness of responses from OVR staff and administration to CRP needs and requests?
- OVR provides needed support to CRPs to provide quality services to Kentuckians with disabilities.
 - Please explain what aspects of the support provided by OVR to CRPs for delivering quality services to individuals with disabilities in Kentucky dissatisfy you.
- OVR values and emphasizes partnerships with CRPs.
 - What aspects of the OVR's efforts in valuing and emphasizing partnerships with CRPs do you find dissatisfactory?
- High-quality pre-ETS are being provided to transition-age youth in Kentucky.
 - What aspects of the provision of high-quality pre-ETS to transition-age youth in Kentucky dissatisfy you?
- OVR fee schedule has been updated and encourages vendors to provide services through OVR.
 - Please explain what dissatisfied you regarding the updated OVR fee schedule and its encouragement for vendors to provide services through OVR.
- OVR authorizations and reimbursements are handled in a timely manner.
 - What dissatisfies you about the handling of authorizations and reimbursements by OVR, particularly regarding timeliness?
- OVR administration and staff are open to and seek constructive feedback from CRP administration and staff.
 - What aspects of OVR's openness to seek and accept constructive feedback from CRP's administration and staff do you find dissatisfactory?
- OVR services are available and accessible to individuals living in underserved areas of Kentucky (e.g., rural Appalachian Kentucky).
 - Please explain what dissatisfies you about the availability and accessibility of OVR services to individuals residing in underserved areas of Kentucky, such as rural Appalachian Kentucky.
- OVR sets clear expectations for CRPs and provides adequate training and technical assistance for CRPs to provide services.
 - What dissatisfies you regarding the clarity of expectations set for CRPs and the adequacy of training and technical assistance provided by OVR?
- OVR provides necessary training and technical assistance to CRPs when launching new programs and/or initiatives.
 - Please explain what aspects of the training and technical assistance provided by the OVR to CRPs when launching new programs or initiatives dissatisfy you.
- There is clear and open communication between OVR staff and administration with CRP staff and administration.
 - What aspects of communication between OVR staff/administration and CRP's staff/administration do you find dissatisfactory?
- OVR programs and initiatives are accompanied by adequate training and technical assistance to CRPs to provide corresponding services.
 - Please explain what dissatisfies you about the adequacy of training and technical assistance provided by the OVR to CRPs in correlation to its programs and initiatives.
- OVR ensures that referrals to CRPs are appropriate candidates for services and are well-informed of service expectations.
 - What dissatisfies you about the OVR's efforts in ensuring that referrals to CRPs are appropriate candidates for services and well-informed of service expectations?
- OVR referrals include ample information for CRPs to provide timely and effective services to consumers.
 - Please explain what aspects of the information provided in OVR referrals for CRPs to deliver timely and effective services to consumers dissatisfy you.
- Kentuckians with disabilities are aware of OVR services.
 - What aspects regarding the awareness of the OVR's services among individuals with disabilities in Kentucky dissatisfy you?

TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

- Which best describes your technology needs as it relates to doing your job?
 - I don't have the technology to stay connected.
 - I sometimes have the technology to help me stay connected.
 - My technology needs are met.
- What technology do you need to do your job? *Note: Question asked if "I don't have the technology to stay connected" or "I sometimes have the technology to help me stay connected" response was received.*
- Do you have the technology needed to meet virtually with consumers?
 - Yes
 - No
- What technology do you need to meet virtually with consumers? *Note: Question asked if "No" response was received.*
- Usually, how quickly are you able to initiate services with VR consumers after receiving a referral from OVR?
 - Same day as referral
 - Within a week
 - Between one and two weeks
 - Between two and three weeks
 - More than three weeks
- Do you currently have a waiting list for one or more of your CRP services?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
- What CRP services do you currently have a waitlist for? *Note: Question asked if "Yes" response was received.*
- Which of the following issues significantly impact your organization's ability to provide services to persons with disabilities? (select all that apply)
 - Lack of available qualified and/or trained staff
 - Rising cost of commodities (gas, utilities, etc.)
 - Employee turnover
 - Slowing economy
 - Low KY-OVR fee for service rates
 - Lack of available financial resources (grants, contracts, in-kind payments, etc.)
 - Lack of referrals
 - Increase in consumers with multiple disabilities
 - Limited information shared by VR Counselors
 - Timely receipt of KY-OVR authorizations for services
 - Lack of long-term support funding
 - Other (please specify)
- In your opinion, what are the supports (related to employment) that you would like to have to serve your clients effectively?
- In your opinion, what are the gaps in employment services that Kentuckians with disabilities are facing?
- In your opinion, what are the employment service needs that your clients have?

APPENDIX G – SURVEY QUESTIONS: KENTUCKY CAREER CENTER

DEMOGRAPHICS/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- What is your gender identity?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Transgender
 - Non-binary/Non-conforming
 - Other
 - Prefer not to respond
- What is your race/ethnicity? (select all that apply)
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Latino/a or Hispanic
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - White or Caucasian
 - Other (please specify)
 - Unknown
- Which region(s) does your career center serve? (select all that apply)
 - Bluegrass
 - Cumberlands
 - Green River
 - KentuckianaWorks
 - Lincoln Trail
 - Northern KY
 - South Central
 - Tenco
 - West KY
 - EKCEP
 - Other (please specify)

SERVICES AND WORKING WITH OVR

- Are individuals with disabilities able to access and participate in the same level of services as other center customers?
 - Yes
 - No
- Please describe the challenges for individuals with disabilities to access and participate in career center services.
Note: Question asked if a “no” response was received.
- My staff needs the following training(s) related to people with disabilities. (select all that apply)
 - The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - Social Security Work Incentives
 - Assistive Technology (screen readers, alternative computer input, etc.)
 - Vocational Rehabilitation Services
 - Employer Resources/Tax Credits
 - Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support
 - Spinal Cord Injury Support
 - Intellectual/Learning Disability Support

- Autism Support
 - Blindness and Low Vision Support
 - Substance Use Disorder Support
 - Mental Health Condition Support
 - Other (please specify)
- How would you rate your career center's working relationship with local staff of the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and OVR staff?
 - Poor
 - Fair
 - Good
 - Excellent
- Please tell us more about your choice of rating above. *Note: A follow-up, short answer question displayed when a fair or poor response was received.*
- When accommodating a job seeker with a disability in the career center, what resources do you have? (select all that apply)
 - Office of Vocational Rehabilitation staff
 - Ask the job seeker or the referring employer
 - Utilize internet resources
 - Referral to Social Security or other human service organizations
 - Based on my own professional expertise, I determine if they are able or unable to seek employment.
 - Other (please specify)
- How would you rate your experience with the process of referring a job seeker with a disability in the career center to OVR for services in terms of its ease, accessibility, and overall quality.
 - Very Difficult
 - Difficult
 - Neutral
 - Easy
 - Very Easy
- Please tell us more about your choice of rating above. *Note: A follow-up, short answer question displayed when a difficult or very difficult was received.*
- How would you rate your experience with the process of OVR referring job seekers with a disability to the career center in terms of its seamlessness and overall quality.
 - Very Difficult
 - Difficult
 - Neutral
 - Easy
 - Very Easy
- Please tell us more about your choice of rating above. *Note: A follow-up, short answer question displayed when a difficult or very difficult was received.*

KNOWLEDGE OF TOPICS

Note: The following questions were formatted with a 4-point scale (Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent).

- Rate your knowledge of assistive technology and how to obtain assistive devices through various funding sources.
- Rate your knowledge of effective strategies that support employment outcomes for customers with disabilities.
- Rate your knowledge of accommodations on the job for a variety of disabilities.
- Rate your knowledge of providing materials in alternate or accessible formats.
- Rate your knowledge of self-disclosure regarding one's disability to employers and potential employers.

- Rate your knowledge of information about vocational rehabilitation services.
 - Rate your knowledge of how working can impact Social Security and other benefits.
-

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APPENDIX H – KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Could you please introduce yourself and describe your relationship or interactions with the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)?

EXPERIENCE AND PERCEPTION

- How would you describe the services provided by OVR?
- In your experience, what are the strengths of OVR in meeting the needs of consumers/partnering organizations/vendors?
- What are the areas where OVR could improve its services or support?
- Can you share any specific success stories or positive experiences you or someone you know has had with OVR?

ACCESSIBILITY AND OUTREACH

- How accessible do you find the services offered by OVR? Are there any barriers to access?
- How would you describe your experience in communicating with OVR, OVR staff, and/or OVR counselors?
- What outreach methods do you believe could effectively reach more individuals who could benefit from OVR services?

SPECIFIC NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

- What are the most pressing needs or challenges faced by individuals seeking vocational rehabilitation in Kentucky?
- Are there specific groups or demographics that might face unique barriers or challenges when accessing OVR services?

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Are there any organizations or entities that you believe OVR should collaborate with to better serve its consumers/constituents?
- How effective do you think the current partnerships or collaborations of OVR are in addressing the needs of individuals seeking vocational rehabilitation?

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- If you had the authority to make changes, what would be your top priority in improving the services offered by OVR?
- Are there any innovative approaches or strategies you believe could enhance the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services in Kentucky?

FUTURE DIRECTION

- How do you envision the ideal support system for individuals seeking vocational rehabilitation in the future?
- What role do you think technology could play in improving access to and the quality of OVR services?

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Is there any additional information or perspective you'd like to share regarding the needs and experiences of individuals seeking vocational rehabilitation services in Kentucky?
-

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APPENDIX I – ACRONYMS

A

AA – African American
ACS – American Community Survey
ADA – American Disabilities Act
ARC – Appalachian Regional Commission

C

CARAT – Coordinating and Assisting the Reuse of Assistive Technology
CIL – Center for Independent Living
CMS – Case Management Software
CQI – Continuous Quality Improvement
CRP – Community Rehabilitation Program
CSNA – Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

E

EK-CEP – Eastern KY Concentrated Employment Program

F

FFY – Federal Fiscal Year

H

HDI – Human Development Institute

I

IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP – Individualized Education Program
IPE – Individualized Plan for Employment
IWHLN – Worker Health Leadership Network

K

KATLC – Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corp.
KATS – Kentucky Assistive Technology Services
KCC – Kentucky Career Center
KDE – Kentucky Department of Education's
KY – Kentucky
KYPSSO – Kentucky Post School Outcomes Center

L

LEA – Local Education Agencies
LWDI – Local Workforce Development Areas

M

MSD – Most Significant Disabilities

O

OMB – Office of Management and Budget
OVR – Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

P

pre-ETS – Pre-Employment Transition Services

R

RSA – Rehabilitation Services Administration

RCD – Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf

RETAIN – Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network

S

SCVR – Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation

SD – Standard Deviation

SE – Supported Employment

SSA – Social Security Administration

SSDI – Social Security Disability Insurance

SSI – Supplemental Security Income

SWOT – Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat

T

TENCO – Ten County Area

U

UK – University of Kentucky

US – United States

V

VR – Vocational Rehabilitation

W

WIOA – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Y

YOYO – Youth One Year Out

APPENDIX J – REFERENCES

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