Florida Rehabilitation Council

A Cross-Disability Advocate affiliated with
The Florida Department of Education,
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

2011-12 Annual Report

VISION:
Partnering to create opportunities to employ all people with disabilities in competitive jobs of their choice.

Hello:

As the newly elected Chairperson of the Florida Rehabilitation Council, I am excited about serving in this capacity and starting a new year with such a dedicated group of professionals. First of all I would like to thank Governor Rick Scott for his continued efforts in ensuring that people with disabilities have a voice and are recognized as an untapped source of expertise in the workforce.

It is a privilege to be able to work with such devoted and determined individuals such as the new Director of Vocational Rehabilitation, Aleisa McKinlay, VR staff, the staff of the FRC, and my fellow council members. Each person brings a special talent and unique perspective to the mission of serving our customers. Words cannot express how thankful I am for their unwavering efforts to provide guidance, support and employment for people with disabilities.

The number of customers, 6071 put to work this state fiscal year is exciting. As we continue to implement and encourage best practices news of an increase of 21 percent from previous years is laudable. I am both honored and humbled to assist in skill development while creating environments for the employment of people living with disabilities. This year we will continue to promote awareness through educational outreach and advocacy. As a person with a disability, it is my desire to ensure that people reach their full potential and obtain a job that will underscore their value as a human being.

Welcome to the Florida Rehabilitation Council Annual Report on VR and the outreach efforts to make a difference locally, within the state and nationally. After all, VR and FRC are charged by federal law to assist people with all types of disabilities to find meaningful, competitive employment in integrated community settings; for we all want to be treated with respect and be productive.

Sincerely,

Kara W. Tucker

Kara Wade Tucker, Council Chair

Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC)

Vision

Partnering to create opportunities to employ all people with disabilities in competitive jobs of their choice.

Mission

To increase employment, enhance independence and improve the quality of life for Floridians with disabilities.

VR is a federal/state partnership –

78.7% of funds for VR program expenditures come from federal sources and 21.3% from State of Florida General Revenue.

This equates to an approximate ratio of 4:1 funding, federal to state.

Greetings:

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has enjoyed another successful year, despite a struggling economic climate, helping 6,071 Floridians with significant disabilities get or keep a job! The Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) continues to be a valuable partner in our efforts, and a strong and effective voice in advocating for Floridians with disabilities.

The division has operated under an Order of Selection since 2008, which means that because we cannot serve every eligible individual who comes to the door, we must follow a federal mandate to prioritize services to people whose disabilities pose the greatest barriers to employment. In each year since, the number of customers receiving service from VR has grown. On any given day, there are over 57,000 people in some phase of service with the division, and the complexity of their needs has also increased significantly. Our employees have risen to the challenge, which resulted in a 21% increase in successful job placements over the previous state fiscal year. We are proud of this result, because we know that the lives of the people we serve are changed for the better in ways we can only begin to imagine! Though VR still maintains a waiting list for customers whose disabilities do not present significant barriers to employment, the number awaiting services is only about 1,200. We released 102 individuals into service during October 2012, and anticipate additional releases during the next state fiscal year.

Florida VR has seen other changes this year, as well. We have reorganized our administrative structures to better support our business needs, placing particular emphasis on our contracting processes, our Information Technology infrastructure, and on strategic planning and performance management. Throughout the year, the FRC has continued to express its vision for improving services to our customers, and the division has reached new levels of success in effectively working with customers who have the greatest barriers to employment. We recognize that we must stay on the path of continuous improvement, and look forward to having you by our side every step of the way!

On behalf of Florida VR, THANK YOU, FRC for your support, dedication, and accomplishments.

Regards,

Director Aleisa McKinlay

Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

Vision

To become the first place people with disabilities turn when seeking employment and a top resource for employers in need of qualified employees.

Mission

To help people with disabilities find and maintain employment and enhance their independence.

Partnership with a Purpose

The Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) continue to build a strong partnership with emphasis on our common goals, missions, and visions that encourage independence through employment. Two similar goals are:

1. To encourage and maintain employment opportunities for Floridians living with disabilities; and

2. To adopt best practices when providing efficient and effective rehabilitation services.

The FRC is responsible for reviewing, analyzing and evaluating the effectiveness of VR programs. As dictated by federal law the FRC prepares and submits an Annual Report at the end of the calendar year to State of Florida representatives, such as the Governor, the Senate president, the Speaker of the House, and the Commissioner of Education, as well as federal agencies, such as the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Rehabilitation Services Administration. It is also a priority for the council and FRC staff to provide this report to other stakeholders and states while encouraging the employment of people living with disabilities in jobs of their choice.

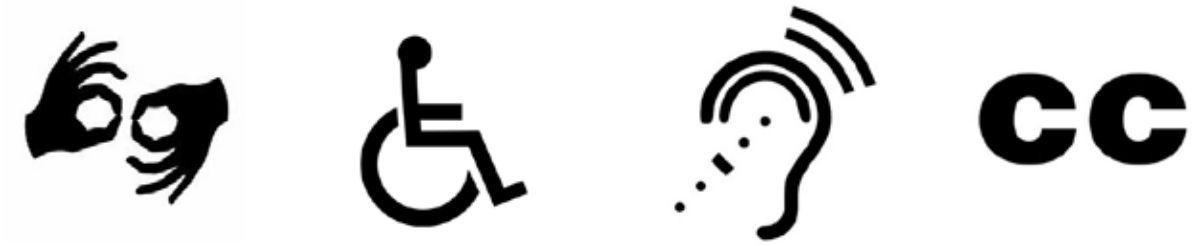
As the FRC Program Administrator it is my pleasure to present the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2011-2012 Annual Report. A special thanks to Andrea Schwendinger and others who worked to create our report. Should you have any questions please contact me at Roy.Cosgrove@vr.fldoe.org.

Respectfully,

Roy Cosgrove, Program Administrator

Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) Statutory Authority:

Governing guidelines may be found within the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part VI 34, Part 61 contained in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The 1998 amendments strengthen State Rehabilitation Council's by requiring the Council and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to work together as strategic partners. Further regulations are specified in the 2008 Florida Statutes (F.S.) Final Rule Chapter 413.405 and 413.273 pertaining to VR, specific to the FRC.



Available in Alternative Formats

To find out more information about alternative formats, please email FRCcustomers@vr.fldoe.org or call toll free: 1-800-451-4327.

National & State Profile of Employment

- According to the 2011 American Community Survey one year estimates, approximately 2,290,252 individuals over the age of 16 in Florida report having one or more disabilities.

- Per the American Community Survey, income levels for working-age people with disabilities indicate a median annual earnings for non-institutionalized persons aged 16 years and over in Florida to be $19,174. This is a slight increase from the previous year Community disabled individuals' annual estimates.

- The National unemployment average for SFY 2012 is 8.5 percent. However, the Florida annual average unemployment rates are running 10.5 percent according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The state is still challenged with a high unemployment rate but it appears to be improving. Yet the unemployment rates for persons living with a disability in the State of Florida are estimated to be 23.5 percent as reported by the US Census Bureau 2011 American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

- Furthermore, The Bureau of Labor statistics reported that 16 out of 67 counties have unemployment rates in the double digits ranging from 10.0 to 14.1 percent with 23 out of 67 counties having rates equal to or less than the national unemployment rate.

Teacher with Disability is Role Model for Students

TAMPA, FL – "I've been in a wheelchair all my life and I don't let it stop me from doing anything," Carolyn Diaz says. Truer words have never been spoken. Carolyn has Larsen Syndrome, an inherited condition that affects the development of bones throughout the body. Both her father and uncle share the same diagnosis.

Carolyn hasn't let her condition stop her from setting high goals for herself. She has maintained a job all her adult life, but in 2009, she knew she needed help to stay in the workforce. Reaching out to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) turned out to be the right move. Carolyn was paired up with her VR Counselor, Kate Seipp, to come up with a plan to keep Carolyn working.

Kate worked with Carolyn to help her find the right career path. They decided pursuing a job as a teacher would be both fulfilling and attainable for Carolyn. "We assisted with counseling and guidance," Kate says. "VR paid for a year of education credits, which led to Carolyn's certification as a special education teacher. VR also purchased a wheelchair for her and helped with making accommodations to her home and modifications to her car."

Carolyn knows that without help, achieving her goal of

becoming a teacher wouldn't have been likely. "It wouldn't have been financially available to me if VR hadn't stepped in," Carolyn says. "I couldn't have done it without VR's help."

Equipped with her special education certificate, Carolyn landed a job as a high school teacher in Tampa. She says having a disability gives her an advantage in the classroom. "I teach special education to students with disabilities," Carolyn says. "I feel I really am able to affect change. I think they need to see someone like me in a professional setting."

No Limit for Daniel's Dreams

FT. LAUDERDALE, FL – "My biggest challenge was chasing the dream of becoming a pilot," says Daniel Gizzi. Because Daniel has a hearing disability, many thought reaching this dream would be impossible.

Growing up with severe hearing loss made daily tasks such as speech and schooling more difficult for Daniel, but he didn't let that deter him from his dream career. "He knew he wanted to be a pilot from day one," says Julie Emerson, Daniel's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor. "He was so determined that I felt like I owed it to him to give him a chance to do it," she says.

Today, Daniel is more than just a pilot for Ascension Aircraft; he helps run key areas of the company. "This would not have been possible without assistance from VR," says Daniel. "They helped my dreams become a reality."

VR provided Daniel with hearing aids and helped with tuition and books at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. "And I believed in him," says Julie. "I really thought he could accomplish it, and look at him. He did very well."

"He's definitely one of the people that you can count on," says Jamail Larkins, President of Ascension Aircrafts. Daniel is a pilot of the PC12 aircraft, flying customers around the country, and he also is responsible for project oversight, serving as one of the chief liaisons between Jamail and company employees. Daniel makes sure projects are completed on time and that they are prioritized and executed as efficiently as possible.

Daniel also serves as a contact with the board of directors and important customers the company serves. "And then he's a resource manager in some cases," says Jamail. Whenever conflicts develop, Daniel assesses the situation and helps develop solutions before they reach Jamail's office. "His attitude and commitment to getting things done are some of his biggest attributes," says Jamail. "It's what allows him to be successful."

Daniel hopes his story encourages people to reach for their dreams and lets them know that VR is here to help along the way. "It's a phenomenal program," he says. "They have opportunities to help you further yourself through education or in a career, like I was able to do."

VR worked very hard to give me as much help as possible. Thanks to them I feel that my life changed for the better.

-Customer Comment

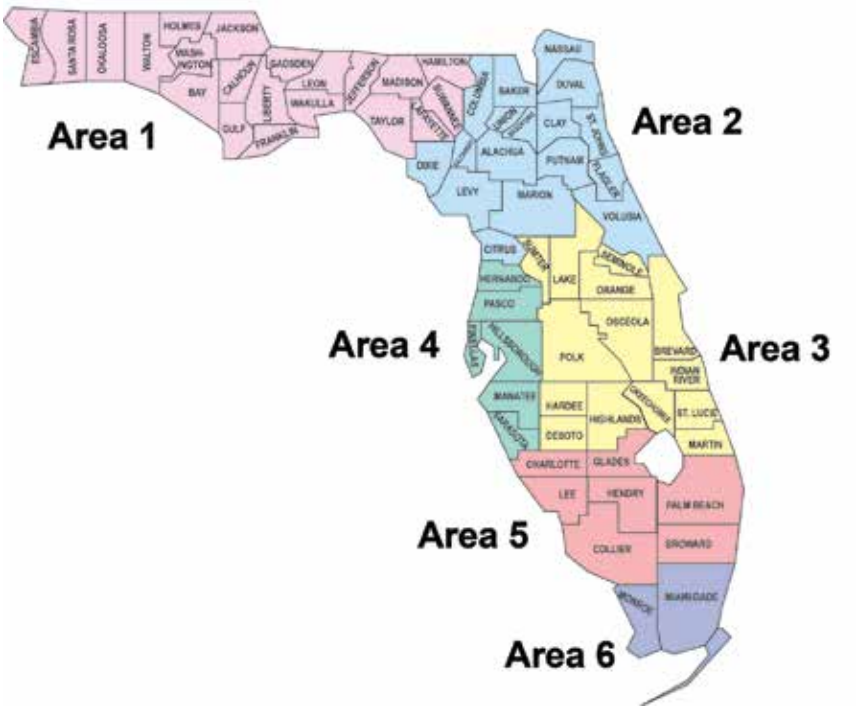
VR Overview

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has been providing employment opportunities for people living with disabilities since 1920. The VR Division has 931 employees that work across the state in six different areas. Each area has multiple offices so our customers are able to access the available services. There are 454 field staff counselors who carry customer caseloads. Given the current number of those served, it averages to about 132 cases, per counselor, per month.

VR Programs include direct services such as:

- School to Work Transition
- Deaf, Hard of Hearing Services
- Supported Employment
- Independent Living Program
- Mental Health Programs
- Ticket to Work
- Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker
- Native American Outreach
- Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST)
- Rehabilitation Technology

Figure 1 VR Area Map



VR Pass-through Programs:

- Adults with Disabilities - 40 School districts and 10 Florida colleges. 13,600 students were enrolled in SFY 2011-12.
- Independent Living - 16 Centers (CILs) and Florida Independent Living Council (FILC) who is a mandated member of the FRC.
- Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST) - Provided training to 23,538 individuals, where 23,450 received access to and acquisition of Assistive Technology services and 1,594 were loaned assistive devices.
- Able Trust - Serving High School and alternative education settings.

VR and the Customer Profile

VR is a federally mandated program, in existence for nearly 90 years, that provides vocational and other rehabilitation services to all types of individuals with disabilities. The following customer profile data points highlight the broad spectrum of disability types and individuals that the agency serves to achieve tax payer status. For the State of Florida, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program is a stand-alone Division within the Florida Department of Education.

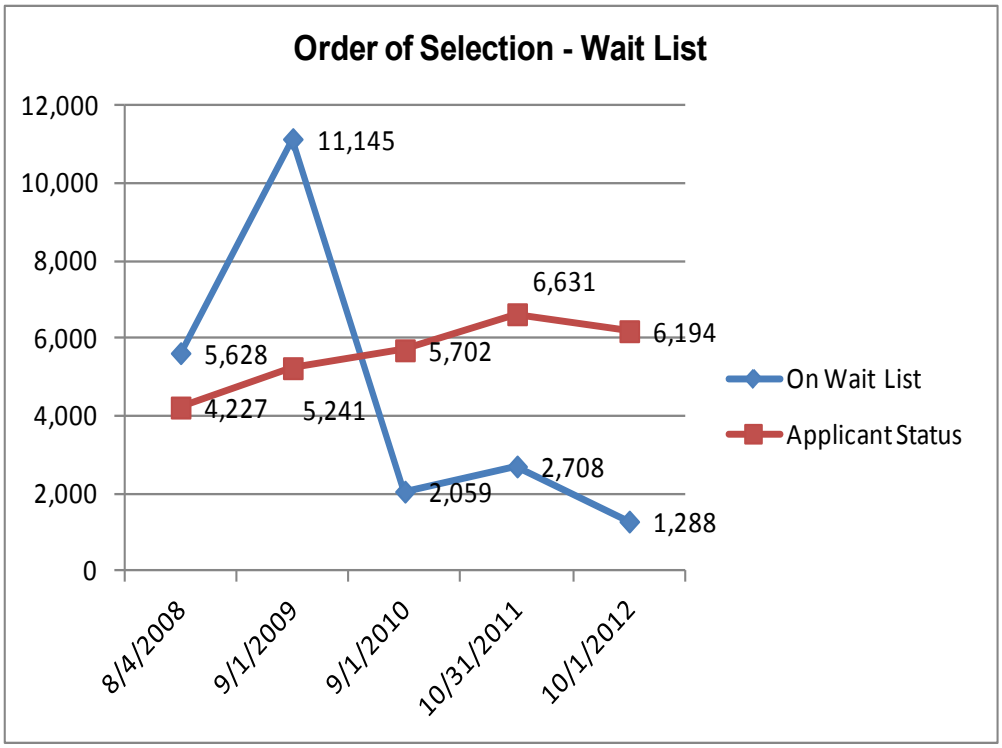
Figure 2 At a Glance

VR Facts at a Glance	2011-2012	2010-2011
Persons with disabilities who entered gainful employment	6,071	5,018
Average hours worked per week	31.99	31.06
Average hourly earnings	$10.86	$10.89
Projected average annual earnings	$17,286	$17,597
Average monthly caseload	55,035	50,515
Average monthly caseload per counselor	132	127
Number of Individual Plan for Employment (IPEs) Written	16,959	21,215
Rehabilitation Rate	48.9%	45.5%
Average cost of case life for customers with a significant or most significant disability	$3,269	$2,614
Customers self-supporting at acceptance	19.3%	22.8%
Customers self-supporting at closure	70.2%	72.7%

VR never gave up on me. They went above and beyond to find the right service providers to help me get a job that I absolutely love.

-Customer Comment

Figure 3 Wait list



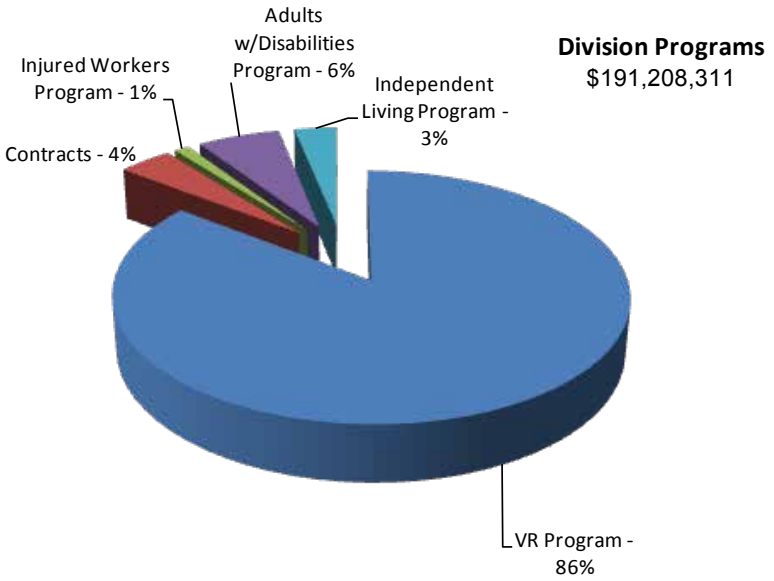
♦ Florida entered into Order of Selection (OOS) in August 2008 based on use of funds in the preceding years, projected funding, projected number and types of referrals, number of eligible individuals, and counselor case loads. An OOS system is required by RSA when the division is unable to provide rehabilitation services to all eligible individuals in the state who apply for the services. In Figure 2 below, various points of interest were pulled. It should be noted that the wait list peaked in September of 2009 to 11,145 individuals. Category (CAT) 1 represents individuals determined to have a most significant disability; CAT 2 represents persons who have a significant disability and CAT 3, represents all other eligible individuals determined to have a disability. The numbers on the wait list vary throughout the month and year, but it appears to highlight the ongoing need for services. Currently only CAT 3 has a wait list. CAT 1 and CAT 2 individuals are being served at application.

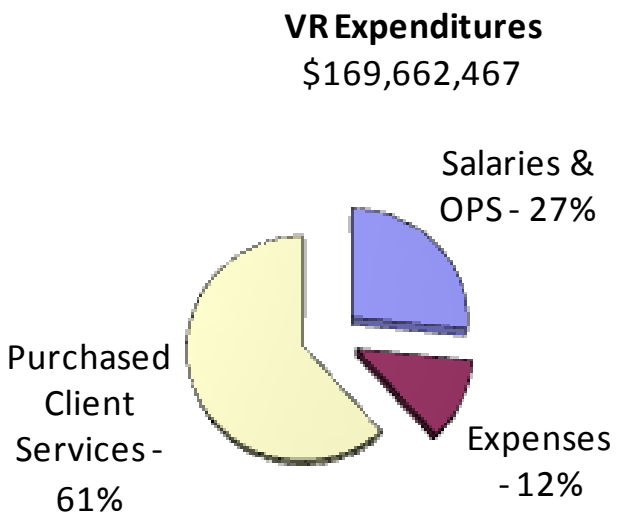
♦ VR serves individuals with a broad range of disabilities. VR customers gainfully employed in SFY 2011-2012 by primary disability group. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) defines primary disability as the individual's primary physical or mental impairment that causes or results in a substantial impediment to employment. Disability groups gainfully employed follow past trends, with minor variances.

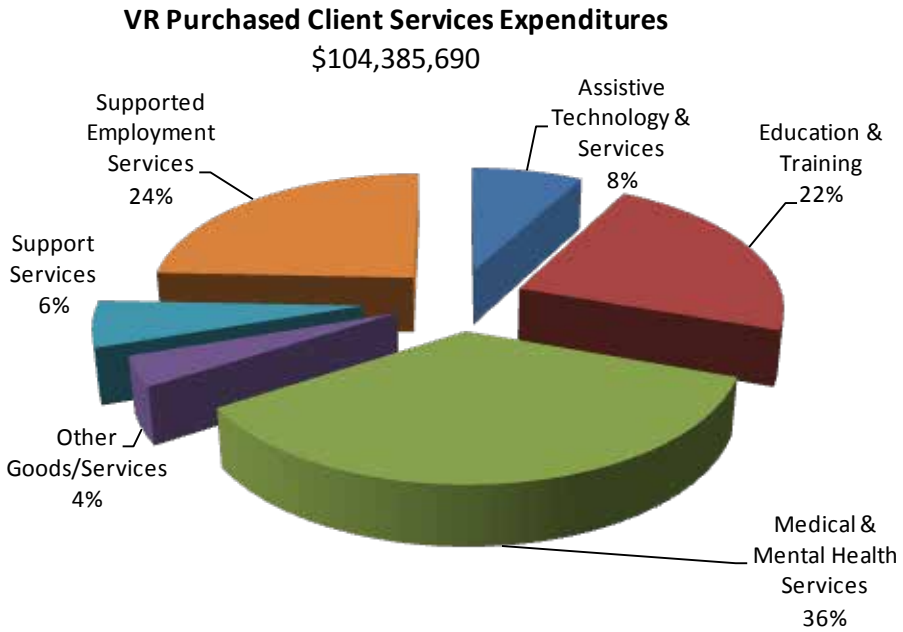
- Mental Health Diagnoses - 50%
- Orthopedic Impairments - 16%
- Chronic Medical Issues - 12%
- Developmental Disabilities - 12%
- Sensory Impairments - 7%
- Substance Abuse Disorders - 2%
- Learning Disabilities - 1%

Figure 4-6 Division Expenses

- Displayed are Division Expenditures (Figure 4-6) for the 2011-2012 State Fiscal Year. The total Division expenditures were $191,208,311. Those Division expenditures include contracts and program funds for the Adults with Disabilities and Independent Living Programs, Florida's Injured Worker Program is a state program that provides rehabilitation and reemployment service to individuals injured on a job covered by the State Workers' Compensation Administration Trust Fund. In addition to the previous programs, 86 percent goes to VR expenses. The VR program works with people living with disabilities to prepare for, gain or retain employment. The VR expenditures (total $169,662,467) are broken out in Figure 8 with general expenses of 12 percent and salaries at 27 percent. The major expense item for VR is the category of Purchased Client Services (61 %.) In Figure 6 the breakdown of the 61 percent of Purchased Client Services equates to total expenditures of $104,385,690. These purchased client service expenditures include assistive technology, support services, education and training, evaluations and employment services, as well as medical and mental health services which is the largest expense category at this time.







- As tax users are employed, they become tax payers, and the investment of both the state and federal government is returned across the economy of the entire state. Collective projected customer earnings at job placement for the first year are estimated to be $104,944,723. For the previous state fiscal year it was an estimate of $88,302,131. This is an increase of over $20 million dollars from last year.

- The age groups who received services from VR during the 2011-2012 state fiscal year vary. The ages of 16 to 24 years are an area of interest for many groups, as these are our leaders of tomorrow *(Transition aged as defined by RSA). The average age served through VR services is 34.1 years old. These individuals still have many years to contribute to their community, to be self-sufficient and productive citizens of Florida. White, 52 percent, African American Black 26 percent, Hispanic/Latino White 18 percent served, Haitian Black 1 percent, Hispanic/latino Black 1 percent, and Asian 1 percent served in 2011-2012.

- At the state fiscal year end, the calculated Return on Investment (ROI) indicates that $6.97 is returned to the state economy for every $1 spent in providing services to customers.

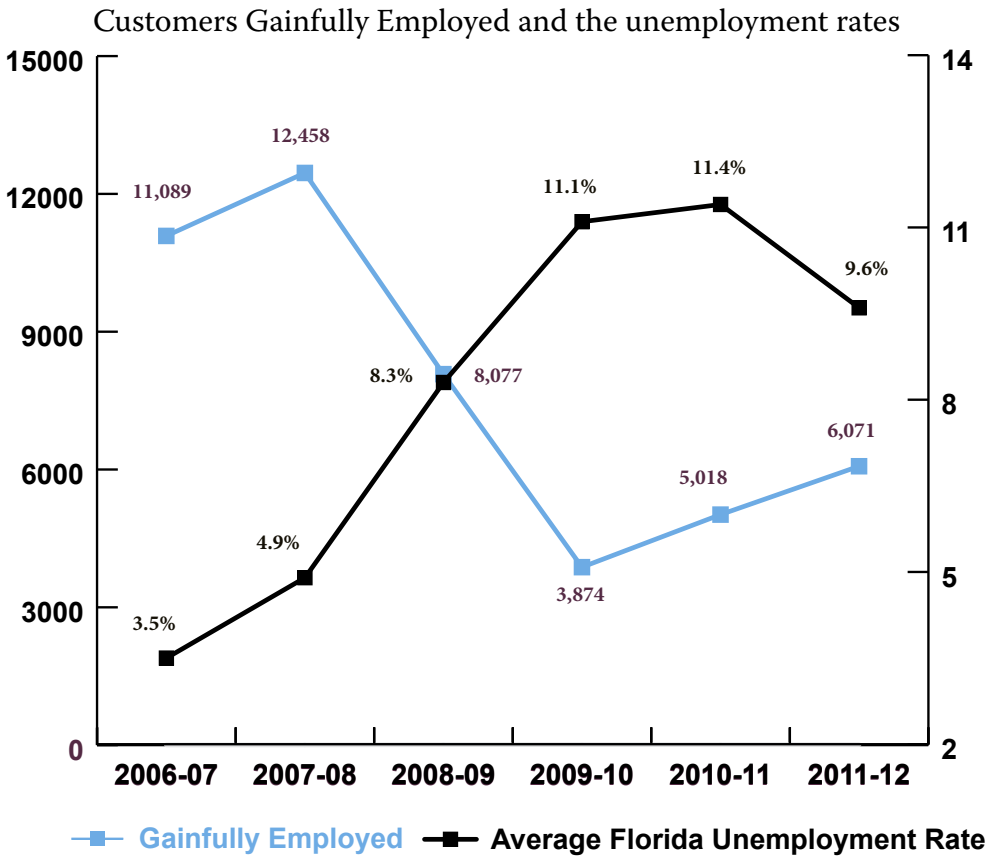
- Third party payers include private insurance companies, Medicare, and Medicaid. These funds help cover VR customer expenses that are medically necessary. For SFY 2011-12 the amount recovered was $3,321,525. The amount recovered by VR for state fiscal year July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 totaled $4,162,082. This amount varies each year. This emphasizes the fact that the money originally spent in VR goes further with the additional dollars recaptured or deferred to another paying source.

- The customer racial groups who received services are presented in Figure 4, with the highest group served being Whites, followed by African Americans, then Hispanic and Haitian individuals served throughout the state.

Figure 7 Number of Customers

"Number of Customers who Received Services Under an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) State Fiscal Year 2011-2012"		
Count of Customers	RACE	%
28,430	White	52%
14,445	African American/Black	27%
9,987	Hispanic/Latino White	18%
722	Haitian Black	1%
624	Hispanic/Latino Black	1%
469	Asian	1%
198	American Indian/Alaska Native	0%
84	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Island	0%
61	Haitian White	0%
6	No Race Identified	0%
55,026		**100%**

Figure 8 Customers Gainfully Employed



- Gainful employment occurs when a customer has job stability for at least 90 days and is placed in employment that is not a sheltered workshop. This table shows that there is an inverse relationship between the number of VR customers gainfully employed and Florida's unemployment rate. As the unemployment rate decreases, the number of gainfully employed customers is likely to increase.

It was reassuring to know VR was there when I needed them!

-Customer Comment

Customer Self-Advocacy Opportunities

Advocacy, equality, and dignity are very important aspects that the FRC and VR encourage. Each individual, family member, or interested party is invited multiple times throughout the year to speak up concerning VR services and plans for the state. All VR staff and FRC members and staff want each person to reach their full potential, with each encounter as important as the next. The FRC would like to encourage all of our customers to:

- Believe in yourself – you CAN do it.
- Be polite and open to hear what the person is saying.
- Ask about programs, rules, laws, and plans that may influence your life.
- Discuss your questions and concerns. Speaking to someone in person or by phone can be an effective way to advocate.
- Listen, but if you disagree with a decision, be calm, and ask for it in writing along with the reasons for the decision.
- Learn about ways to help yourself, as well as better the life of another person living with a disability – offer to volunteer.
- Remember to thank people along the way. Recognize those individuals that provided helpful information and good service.
- Self-determination and freedom of choice is your right and your responsibility.

There are various ways you, your family members, vendors, staff, and other interested parties are needed to help determine how VR conducts business – YOUR VOICE IS WANTED!!!

The following sections are examples of efforts by the FRC and VR to open the lines of communication and to hear from our stakeholders. Opportunities for everyone's voice to be heard are presented below and include:

• Public Forums • the State Plan •

• Needs Assessment • Customer Satisfaction Survey •

Public Forums

Everyone is invited to future FRC public forums scheduled for the following cities…

February 2013 in Tallahassee • May 2013 in Daytona Beach

August 2013 in Fort Myers • November 2013 in Miami

Additional FRC/VR Public Forums or opportunities for input on the State Plan will be provided around April and May of 2013. To find out more information about this or other meetings, please log on to www.rehabworks.org

The State Plan

The VR State Plan, sometimes called the RSA State Plan, is a document that is sent to the federal government providing information about the services that will be provided through VR in the next year. Also detailed are the scope of agreements that will be made with school boards for transitional students, what government agencies VR will work with, how VR will work with the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and Client Assistance Programs (CAP), how VR will work with and train staff, VR goals and priorities, and the scope of supported employment services, among other areas. The State Plan is a document that affects anyone involved with VR – staff member, customer, vendor, or other stakeholder.

In strategic partnership with VR, the FRC helps to inform the public and capture input from customers, vendors and stakeholders on the State Plan. The FRC members representing all standing committees form a State Plan Task Force each year to study the draft of the VR State Plan for the following year, e.g., in 2012, work on the 2013 State Plan is conducted. Comments from all public meetings are reviewed so the FRC members will know how vendors, customers, and staff view VR planning and service delivery. The Council then makes observations and recommendations which are summarized and included in the repot.

The Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) gathers input from staff, customers, vendors, and stakeholders for inclusion into the State Plan. Since the State Plan is a product of feedback from various sources it is important for the FRC to gather insights through online comments, public forums, as well as insights from the customer satisfaction surveys. The FRC conducted four public forums during the 2011-2012 state fiscal year. These forums were held in West Palm Beach, Tampa, Tallahassee and Jacksonville during the Council quarterly meetings. Each forum is open for participation statewide by telephone or Communication Access Real-time Transcription (CART) services online. Past State Plans and comment cards are available online at www.rehabworks.org.

Needs Assessment

During 2010-2011, the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) conducted a comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA). The purpose of the needs assessment is to gather information about factors that affect VR customers' ability to get and keep jobs, as well as to identify any barriers or limitations they may experience. Federal regulations require public VR programs to conduct needs assessments every three years and use the information in developing the goals and priorities in their state plans.

The needs assessment project, conducted in-house, used qualitative and quantitative methods and consisted of five major parts: a review of state demographics, a customer survey, a VR field staff survey, stakeholder interviews, and regional focus groups.

Information gathered was included in the 2012-2013 State Plan and has been used to inform strategic plans. A summary of the Needs Assessment results will be available online in 2013. The next Needs Assessment is to be conducted in 2016.

Advocacy and Outreach

FRC and VR conduct or participates in a variety of legislative advocacy efforts and other outreach, including Disability Employment Awareness events and advocacy across the state. Events often include local employers, advocates, outstanding VR customers as employees, and FRC members or VR staff. These events provide an opportunity for the public to be educated on the benefits of hiring individuals living with disabilities and for business leaders to share of their successes.

Assessing VR Customer Satisfaction in Florida
Customer Satisfaction Survey 2011-12 Annual Results

The Florida Rehabilitation Council contracts for two separate surveys of VR Customers conducted by Florida State University's Survey Research Laboratory. These surveys are conducted on a monthly basis throughout the year, quarterly the FSU Survey Research Laboratory prepares reports, and the Evaluation Committee is charged with analyzing the results. The survey of customers whose cases are closed began in FY2001-02 while the survey of customers who are currently active started a year later (FY 2002-03). Both surveys have been conducted continuously since their inception that allows for monitoring changes in satisfaction levels over time.

Why Should the FRC Survey VR Customers?

The survey provides customers an opportunity to give feedback to an "outside party" that monitors and provides feedback to the Division. Sometimes customers may feel uncomfortable giving feedback directly to the Division. The survey effort is designed to allow detailed analyses by Areas and disability types. The information gathered from the customers provides data about regional and statewide trends; it can also be used to address specific concerns raised by the Council or VR. The feedback provided by the survey is used to improve on existing services while planning for the future.

Who Is Surveyed?

Customers with Closed Cases. All customers whose cases were closed during the previous month were sent a survey. Both those who "successfully" closed (Status 26) and "unsuccessfully" closed (Status 80-87, 89) are asked to give us feedback. The surveys are sent out each month throughout the year. In FY 2011-12, 10,483 surveys were sent to customers whose cases were closed with 2,238 returning them to date (21%). In the previous year, 23 percent returned the survey. The response rates for customers with closed cases prior to 2009-10 have been between 22 percent and 33 percent.

Customers with Active Cases. All customers who completed their IPE six months earlier were sent a survey. The surveys are sent out each month throughout the year. In FY 2011-12, 15,699 surveys were sent to customers whose cases were active with 4,381 returning them to date (28%). In FY 2010-11, 28 percent of the customers returned the survey. The response rates for customers with active cases since 2002-03 have been between 28 percent and 34 percent.

Efforts are made to achieve the highest response rates possible by making the surveys as convenient and accommodating as possible for customers. Customers may mail in their responses, use a web access, call toll-free and complete the survey by phone, or use a TTY line to respond. Two mailings are done as well as re-mailing the survey to a corrected address.

What Questions Are Asked?

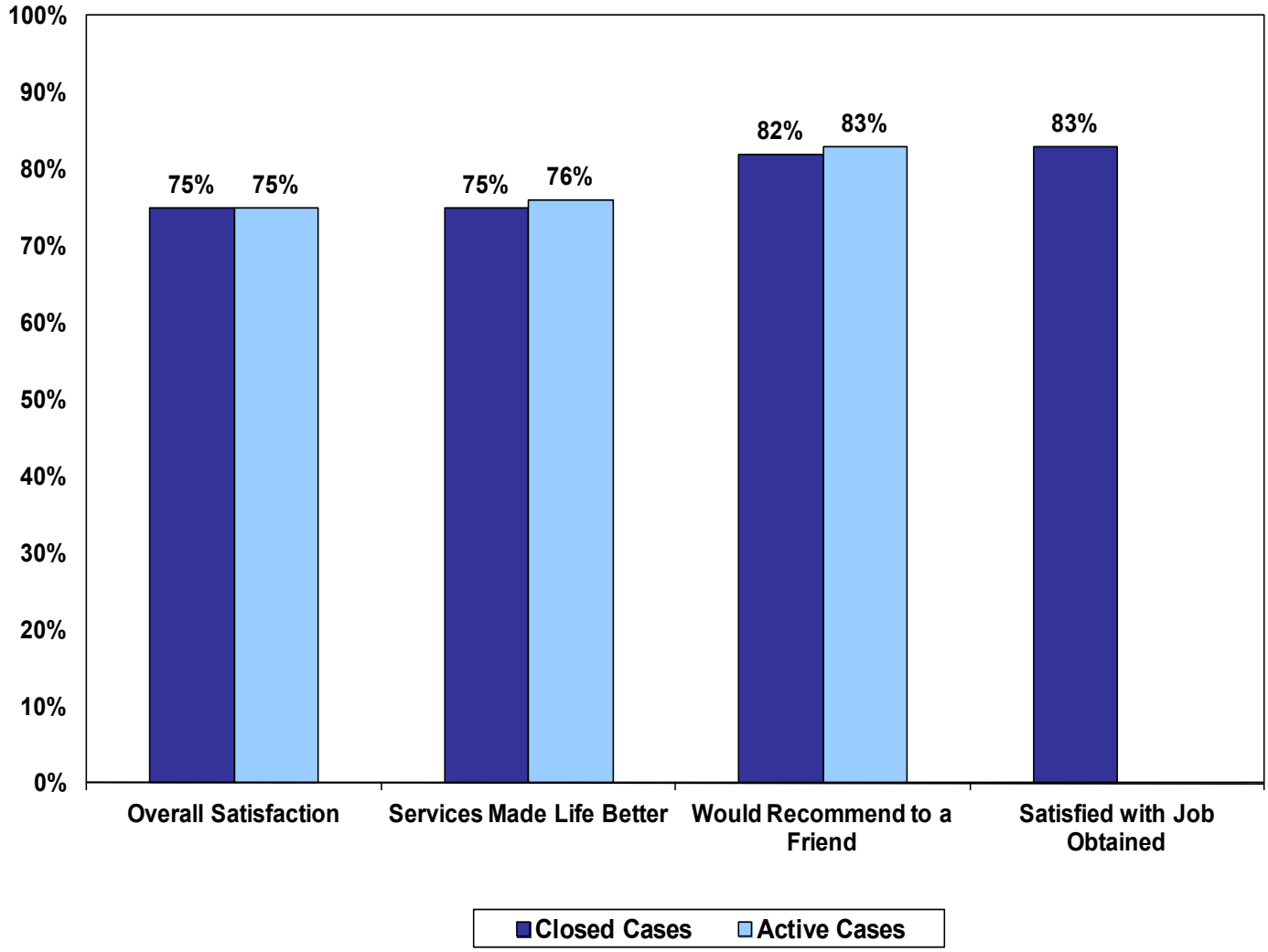
The surveys ask customers about the performance of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services in four areas: Program outcomes, choice, services, and staff. The surveys consist of closed-answer questions and two open-ended questions concerning program services and improvements. The two surveys parallel each other. Feedback about these areas provides longitudinal information that can help monitor and improve VR services. Customers whose cases are closed and were not employed prior to coming to VR for services were asked why they did not get a job. (See Figure 9)

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Customers who are currently in the program and whose cases are closed report similar levels of satisfaction. The satisfaction levels for customers whose cases were closed remained at about the 2010-11 level. The satisfaction with program outcomes for those customers currently in the program remained at about the

2010-11 level.

Figure 9 Program Outcomes FY 2011-12



Overall Satisfaction with Services. In 2011-12, 75 percent of the customers whose cases were closed and 75 percent of those with active cases reported that they were "very" or "mostly'" satisfied with the services they received from VR [Overall Satisfaction]. These levels of satisfaction were unchanged from the previous year. In 2009-10, 74 percent of the customers with closed cases and 77 percent of the active customers were "very" or "mostly" satisfied with the services.

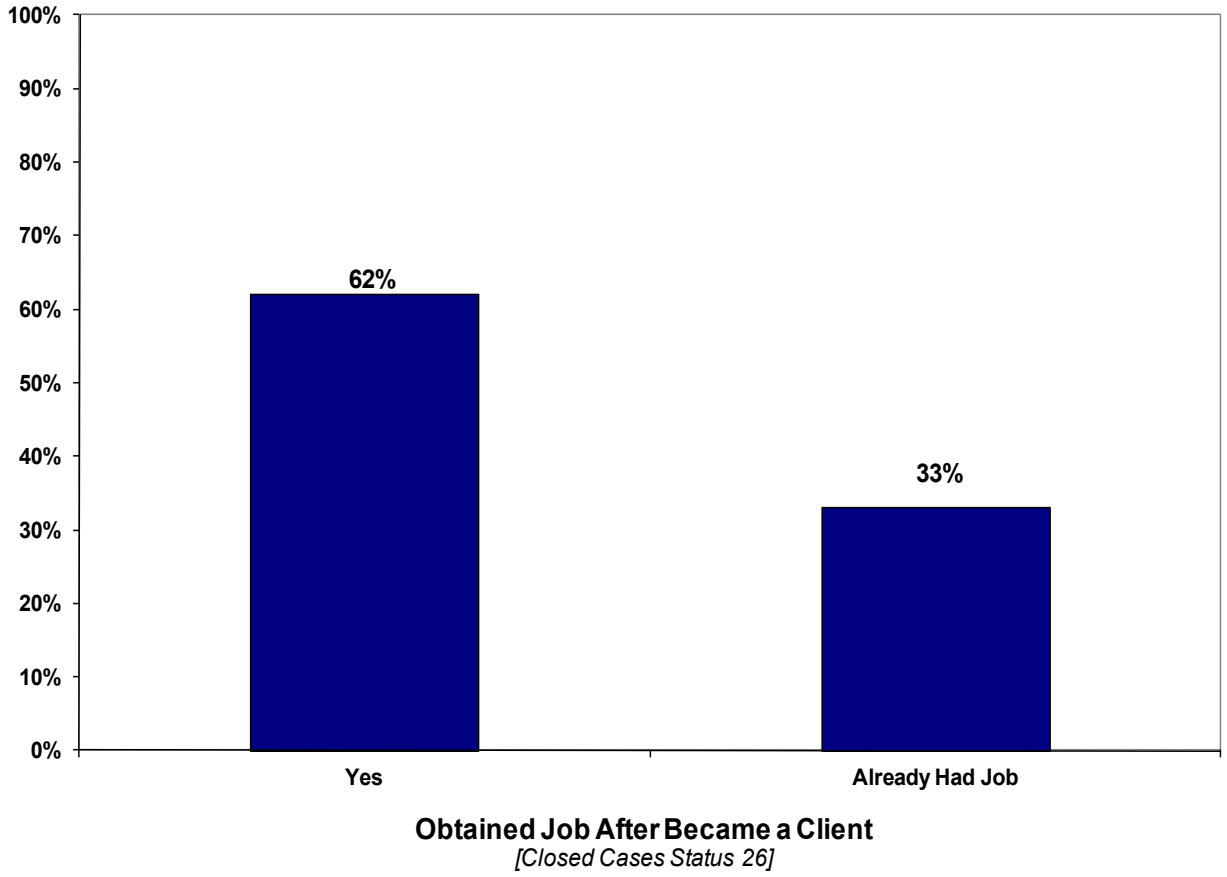
Services Made Life Better. The percent of customers who felt that the services made their life better was about the same as the previous year. In 2011-12, 75 percent of the customers whose cases were closed and 76 percent of those with active cases felt the services made their life better [Services Made Life Better]. It was slightly higher in 2010-11 where 76 percent of the customers whose cases were closed and 77 percent of those with active cases felt the services made their life better. In 2009-10, 73 percent of the customers with closed cases and 77 percent of the active customers felt the services made their life better.

Would Recommend Services to A Friend. In 2011-12, 82 percent of clients whose case was closed reported they would recommend VR services to a friend. Among customers whose cases were active, the percentage was (83%). In 2010-11, 83 percent of the customers with closed cases and 84 percent of customers with active cases would recommend the program to a friend. In 2009-10, 81 percent of the customers with closed cases and 85 percent of customers with active cases would recommend the program to a friend.

Employment Status and Satisfaction with Job Obtained. A majority of the customers with closed cases (Status 26) obtained jobs since becoming a VR client (62%). Among these clients who obtained a job since becoming a client, 83 percent reported they were "mostly" or "very" satisfied with this job. This was at the same level or satisfaction as in the previous year (83%) and in 2009-10 82% reported high levels of satisfaction.

Employment Status. Among the respondents whose cases were closed under Status 26 (Successfully Rehabilitated), over one-half (62%) reported that they got a job and (see Figure 10). About one-third (33%) already had a job when they became a client. This was about the same proportion as the previous year. The proportion of those who already had a job has dropped dramatically since the program changes made in 2007-08 implementing order of selection and a financial needs test. Between 2005-06 and 2007-08, the proportion of customers who indicated they already had a job had been steadily increasing to 60 percent. In 2007-08, 60 percent of those responding to the survey reported they already had a job when they became a client compared to 48 percent in 2008-09 and 31 percent in 2009-10.

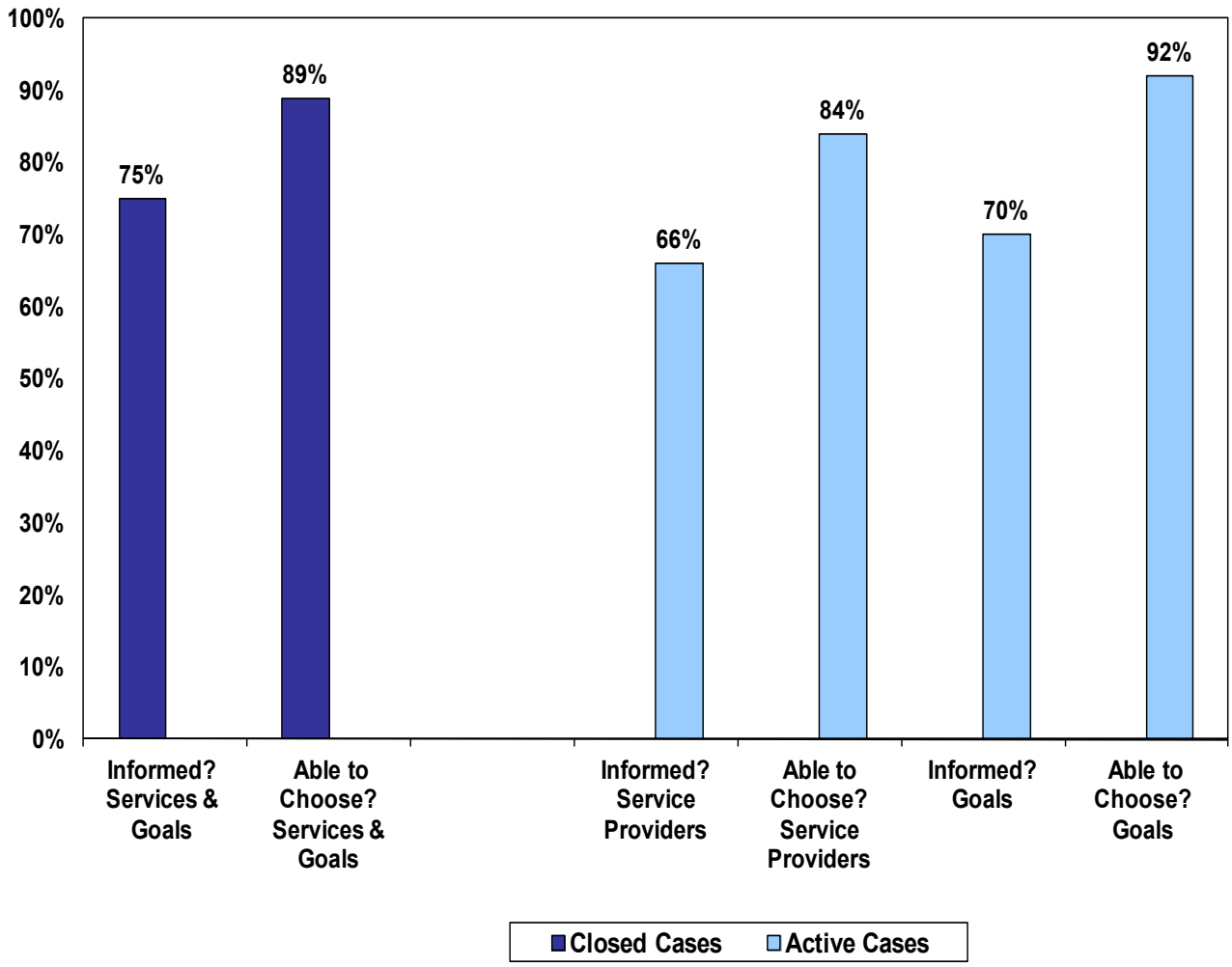
Figure 10 Program Outcomes: Employment Status FY 2011-12



PROGRAM CHOICE

A higher proportion of customers whose cases were closed state they were informed of alternative choices in service providers and vocational goals than active customers. However, a large proportion of customers regardless of their case status who were informed of alternatives report they were able to choose service providers and vocational goals. (See Figure 11.)

Figure 11 Program Choice: Services and Vocational Goals FY 2011-12



Closed Cases: Choice. About the same proportion of customers (75%) stated they were informed of alternative choices in service providers and vocational goals and were able to make choices as the previous three fiscal years (76%). Of those reporting they were informed of choices, 89 percent responding to the Customer Survey were able to make choices with respect to service providers and vocational goals, the same proportion as the previous year. In 2009-10, 87% reported they were able to choose services and goals.

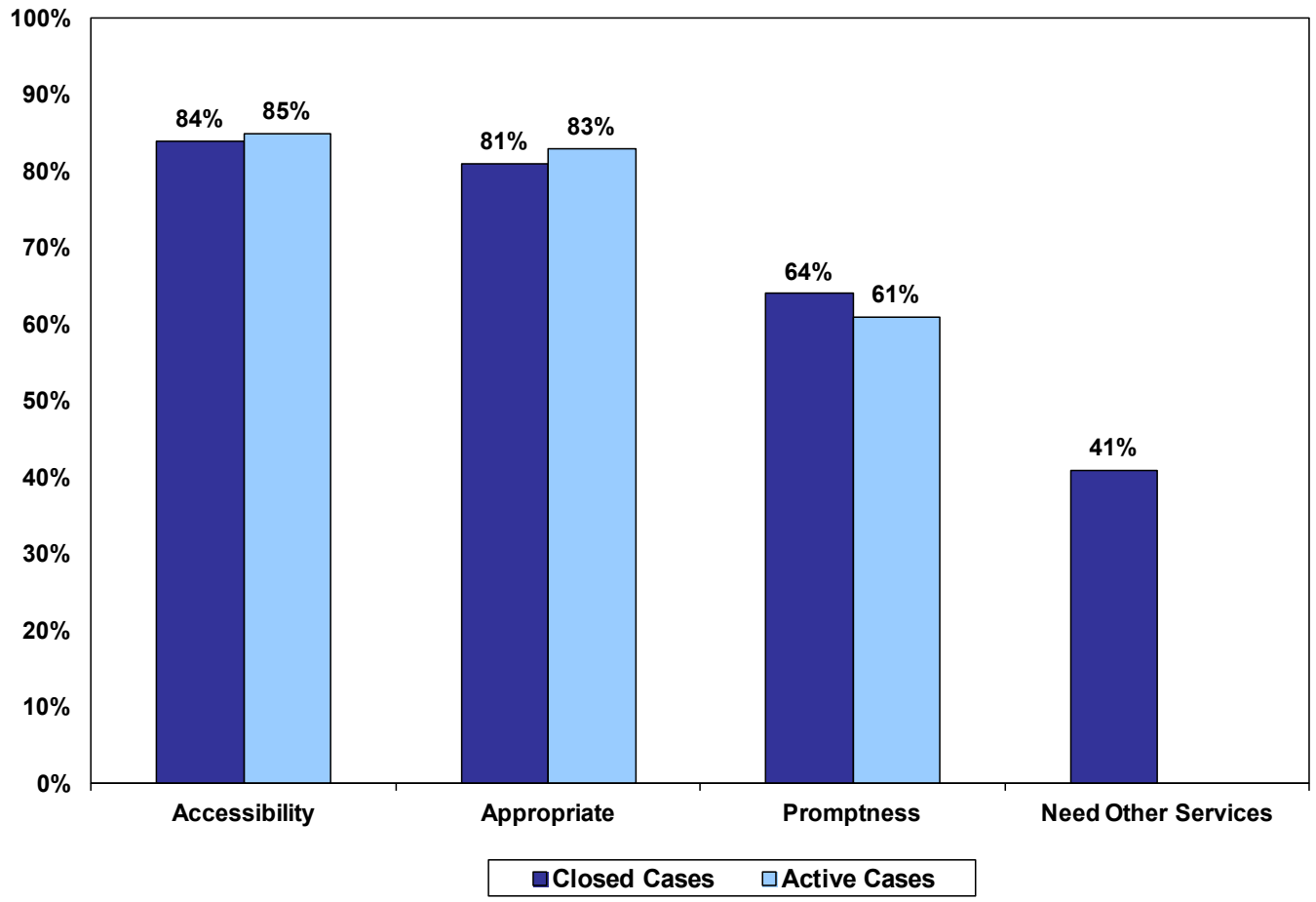
Active Cases: Choice. A slightly higher proportion of 2011-12 current customers (66%) reported they were informed of alternative choices concerning service providers than the previous year (64%). In 2009-10, 68 percent stated they were informed about alternative service providers. Of those who were informed, 84 percent stated they were able to make choices in service providers. The previous two years, 85 percent reported they were able to make choices in service providers.

The proportion of 2011-12 current customers stating they were informed about alternative vocational goals (70%) increased slightly since the previous fiscal year (68%). In 2009-10, 70% of the current customers reported they were informed about alternative vocational goals. In 2011-12 92 percent of those customers informed of vocational goal alternatives stated they were able to choose vocational goals. In the previous two fiscal years, 93 percent of current customers informed of vocational goal alternatives reported they were able to choose their goals.

PROGRAM SERVICES

Satisfaction with the accessibility of offices and the appropriateness of services are rated highly by all customers surveyed regardless of their case closure status. Promptness of service delivery has lower levels of satisfaction than other areas. About 40 percent of customers whose cases were closed reported they needed other services and did not receive them (41%). [See Figure 12.]

Figure 12 Program Services FY 2011-12



Accessibility to VR Offices. In 2011-12, clients whose cases were closed (84%) and active clients (85%) expressed about the same levels of satisfaction with VR office accessibility. These were both at the same levels as the previous two fiscal years.

Appropriateness of Services Considering Rehabilitation Goals. A slightly lower proportion of customers whose cases were closed (81%) compared to current customers (83%) feel the services provided were appropriate. The level of satisfaction with the appropriateness of services remained about the same as in previous years among active clients.

Promptness of Services Provided. Promptness of service delivery continues to have lower levels of satisfaction than other areas. Only 64 percent of customers whose cases were closed and 61 percent of the current customers felt that services were delivered promptly. The proportion of customers with closed cases who felt that services were delivered promptly declined from 77 percent in 2006-07 to 63 percent in 2009-10. In 2010-11, 65 percent of the customers with closed cases felt that services were delivered promptly. Among current customers, the satisfaction with promptness was the same as the previous year and was lower than 2009-10 (63%)

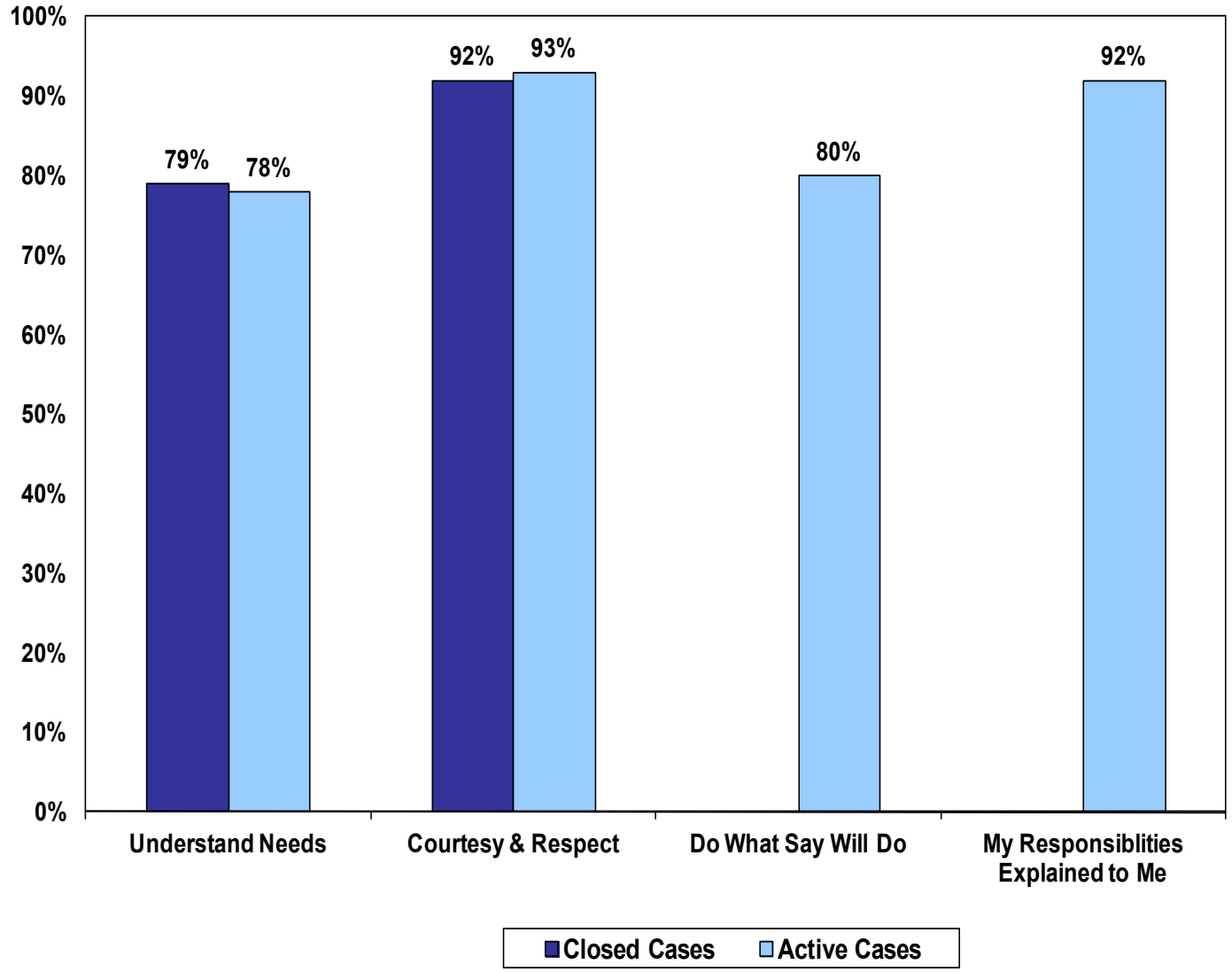
Need Other Services But Did Not Receive. The proportion of customers whose cases were closed but

stated they needed other services (41%) declined slightly from the previous year (43%). Only customers with closed cases were asked about the need for additional services. In 2009-10, 42 percent reported they needed other services.

PROGRAM STAFF

VR staff continues to treat customers with courtesy and respect. Customers, regardless of their case closure status, rate program staff high in terms of their professionalism and ability to understand their needs and feelings. Over 90 percent of the customers responding to the two surveys felt staff treated them with courtesy and respect. The proportion of current customers (93%) who felt that staff treated them with courtesy and respect increased slightly from the previous year (94%). The proportion of customers whose cases were closed (92%) who felt that staff treated them with courtesy and respect increased slightly from the previous year (91%). [See Figure 13.]

Figure 13 Program Staff FY 2011-12



Understand Needs and Feelings. About the same percentage of clients whose cases were closed (79%) and clients with active cases (78%) felt that VR staff understands their needs. These proportions were the same as the previous year. In 2009-10, 80 percent of the active clients felt staff understood their needs.

Treated with Courtesy and Respect. Over 90 percent of the clients responding to both surveys reported that VR staff treated them with courtesy and respect. Ninety-two percent of clients whose case had been closed stated they were treated with courtesy and respect by VR staff. This was slightly higher than the previous fiscal year (91%). Current clients responded in a similar manner (93%). This was slightly higher than the previous fiscal year (92%).

Do What Say. Eighty percent of active clients reported that VR staff "do what they say they will do" in 2011-12. In 2010-11, 81 percent and in 2009-10 83 percent reported VR Staff did what they said they would do.

Explained Responsibilities as Client. Since 2002-03, nearly all the active clients (92% to 94%) felt that their responsibilities as a client had been explained to them. In 2011-12, 92 percent felt this way as well.

I am grateful for VR and the opportunities it has brought into my life. My sincere thanks!

-Customer Comment

VR gave me confidence and hope.

-Customer Comment

Council Representatives

It takes the collective cooperation and meaningful investment of many to advocate for people living with disabilities in the State of Florida. The investment of time and effort is found in private industry, the Federal government, State legislators, the Florida Department of Education, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, with families, and with other interested parties. Without these entities and persons, advocacy efforts of the FRC council members and staff would be limited. Following are the FRC Members, as appointed by the Governor of Florida, for the period of July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012:

The Council offers a special thanks to the following for their meritorious services as they moved on to other advocacy roles during the 2011-2012 fiscal year:

From Council Service: Jeff Barrett, Tara Bremer, Don Chester and Pollyanna, Don Corwin, John Henry Douglas, Alan Getreu, Valerie Stafford-Mallis, Cheryl Stone, and Debra Thompson.

From VR Service: Dr. Marilyn Campbell, Yolanda Triplett, and Paige Sharpton.

From CAP Service: Corey Hinds,

The FRC wishes to recognize Ann Robinson, from Disability Rights Florida, for continuing to advocate with the FRC on Behalf of the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and members of Florida

Meet the FRC Staff

(L to R):
Andrea Schwendinger, Roy Cosgrove, and Nia Young.

Staff Member:	**Roy Cosgrove**
Position:	Program Administrator – responsibilities include managing all FRC programs, staffing Business and Executive committees.
Contact Information:	Roy.Cosgrove@vr.fldoe.org
Staff Member:	**Andrea Schwendinger**
Position:	Government Analyst – responsibilities include the Annual Report, Strategic Planning, reviewing the State Plan and staffing the Legislative, Public Awareness and Planning committees.
Contact Information:	Andrea.Schwendinger@vr.fldoe.org
Staff Member:	**Nia Young**
Position:	Government Operations Consultant– responsibilities include managing and tracking fiscally related activities (purchasing and contract payments), council travel and program support.
Contact Information:	Nia.Young@vr.fldoe.org

Council Board Members

Kara Tucker, Council Chair
Hometown: Neptune Beach, FL
Represents: Other persons with disabilities, representatives of state and local government, employers, and community organizations

Becki Forsell
Hometown: Tampa, FL
Represents: Other persons with disabilities, representatives of state and local government, employers, and community organizations

Yolanda Herrera
Hometown: Miami, FL
Represents: Groups and persons with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities

Cathy Bishop
Hometown: Tallahassee, FL
Represents: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Department of Education (DOE)

Benedict Gresik
Hometown: Melbourne, FL
Represents: Workforce Florida Board

Rusty Van Sickle
Hometown: Palm Beach Gardens, FL
Represents: Groups and persons with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities

Afzal Choudhry
Hometown: Leesburg, FL
Represents: Business, industry and labor

Aleisa McKinlay
Hometown: Tallahassee, FL
Represents: Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Director - ex-officio

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The service was great. It helped me a lot to get back to work. Everything this agency does is the best!

-Customer Comment

Florida Rehabilitation Council

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Vocational Rehabilitation