

# DVR *Division of Vocational Rehabilitation*



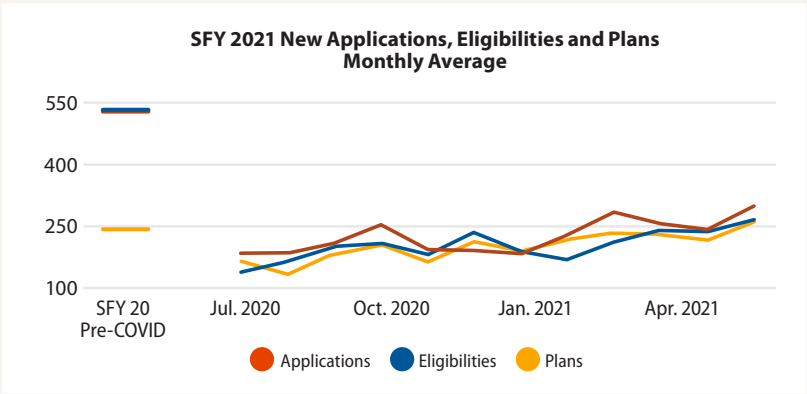
## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



In 2021, staff's resilience helped DVR persevere. Staff drove forward innovative ways to improve vital services for customers. DVR also revolutionized its work culture, professional development, and equity, diversity, access, and inclusion practices.

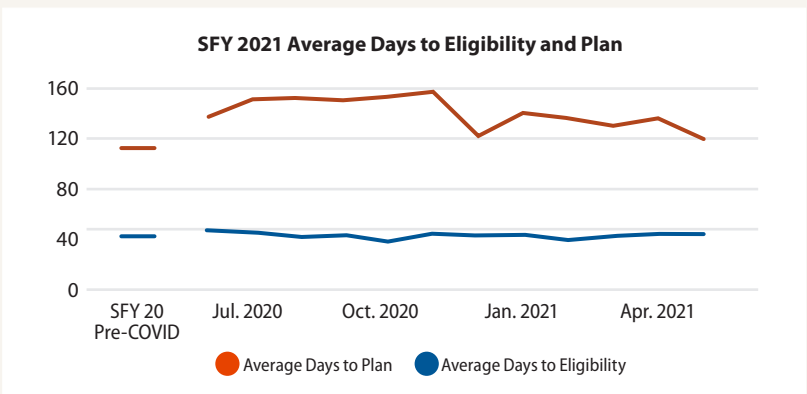
### DVR's COVID-19 Response

Remote services for customers continued. A hybrid approach started in November. A large percentage of DVR customers will continue to receive virtual services. Our ability to serve customers in-person will expand when it is safe.



In State Fiscal Year 2021, new applications and eligibility for DVR services fell 40%, compared to previous levels, due largely to customers delaying their job search. New customer counts increased in the second half of the year, and new monthly customer plans hit pre-COVID levels the last quarter.

Timely completion of customer plans for employment averaged 30-40 days longer than pre-COVID in the first half of the year. Factors affecting plan development included transitioning to remote services, job market conditions, reduced vendor capacity, and customer hesitancy to engage in community-based activities. Average days to plan decreased and approached pre-COVID levels starting the end of the fiscal year. Average days for eligibility determination remained stable during SFY 2021 ending June 30.



### Order of Selection (OOS)

DVR continues to release customers from the waitlist. At the end of State Fiscal Year 2021, there were 2,716 customers on the waitlist, a sizeable decrease from 5,703 in SFY 2020.

DVR reopened, and has kept open, Priority category 2, reducing customer count in that category to zero. Priority category 1 is always open. DVR regularly evaluates its capacity in order to serve the greatest number eligible. Federal law requires OOS when a VR agency cannot serve all eligible customers.

### Intake and Eligibility

Standardization of some intake processes and forms occurred. Waves, the new case management system (CMS), expected summer 2022, will streamline processes, leading to predictable and consistent eligibility practices statewide.

### Staff Training

In November 2021, DVR hired a new training manager to oversee the statewide training team and coordinate consistent delivery of agency-wide training. In 2022, the team will adopt cutting-edge development tools, adult-learning best practices, and deliver effective CMS training. Meanwhile, Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (VRI) will continue foundational field services courses, popular among field staff.

### Business Management Modernization Project (BMMP)

In 2021, DVR began implementing Laserfiche, a new electronic document management system (EDMS) to help DVR go paperless. In 2022, the BMMP team anticipates the launch of Waves on July 1.

### DVR's Equity, Diversity, Access, and Inclusion

In June 2021, DVR appointed its first EDAI Administrator. DVR mobilized the EDAI program and developed a Community of Practice made up of EDAI practitioners representing staff at all levels. The CoP has helped assimilate staff to the long-term goals behind EDAI.

### Looking Ahead

In 2022, DVR's priorities will include reducing the number of customers on the waitlist; increasing customer engagement; enhancing staff training; improving transition services delivery; and finally, modernizing our CMS. Of course, this great work could not be possible without the support of our staff, stakeholders, employers, and partners.

*thank you!*

# DVR PRIORITIZES COMMITMENTS TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY, ACCESS, AND INCLUSION IN STATE FISCAL YEAR 2021

DVR values and is committed to Equity, Diversity, Access, and Inclusion (EDAI) in all its forms. This includes commitment and dedication to Truth, Social Justice, and Dismantling Racism. DVR recognizes we are stronger when we are a diverse organization serving diverse customers, centering lived experience, and collaborating with customers and the community to produce results.

To elevate, address, and prioritize EDAI concerns, DVR established the first-ever EDAI Administrator role for DVR in June 2021. Prior to the establishment of this position, EDAI work was included as one of the many responsibilities under a program manager. The EDAI Administrator manages, promotes, and serves as the expert regarding all matters, issues, activities, and policy and program development related to EDAI.

Some examples of the work DVR has already completed related to EDAI include:

- Establishing the “Measures that Matter” EDAI data dashboard accessible to all DVR staff.
- Developing an EDAI Community of Practice made up of staff statewide to accomplish the DVR mission by promoting, supporting, and enhancing EDAI initiatives.
- Hosting listening sessions with all staff to collect information and operationalize feedback to improve EDAI, and anti-racist actions.
- Implementing monthly “More Than a Moment: EDAI Awareness Conversations,” an activity that introduces specific EDAI topics monthly and provides staff the opportunity to discuss the topics, learn from each other, and apply the knowledge gained to their work.
- Creating online resource libraries featuring lists of books, films, and articles related to EDAI that staff can use to supplement their learning and development.
- Assigning staff as the Language Access Advisor and the ADA Advisor to ensure program access for all customers and staff.

In 2022 and beyond, DVR will continue to expand efforts related to EDAI and anti-racism across the division to ensure staff are empowered to do their best work and customers are receiving effective and meaningful services.

---

## ASPIRING FABRICATOR SECURES CAREER JOB IN WELDING

At Ferndale-based Tri-Van, a custom builder of specialty commercial vehicles, this family-owned business of 85 staff employs Andrew, a 27-year-old welder/fabricator, whose passion for artistic expression with his hands is part of his family DNA.

Andrew secured employment at Tri-Van in August 2020. He gives thanks to his VR team at Bellingham DVR, comprised of Patrick Feuer, and Nick Harris.

“I’m so grateful and thankful for Nick’s and Patrick’s help,” Andrew says. “They helped me to become a responsible adult.”

Andrew experiences learning disabilities, including dyslexia and ADHD. Sitting still and focusing on a task, or on reading, has always been difficult for him.

In 2012, while attending Ferndale High School, Andrew opted in to the 21 Program. A couple teachers helped connect him to Goodwill where he was able to access an unpaid internship and learned beneficial soft skills. In 2014, Patrick and Nick helped Andrew update his cover letter. This helped Andrew get his first job.

Cascade Connections, a Community Rehabilitation Program, taught Andrew interpersonal communications skills. These skills helped him to keep a job for one year. Proving himself opened doors to completing a welding certificate in 2019 at Bellingham Technical College. DVR paid Andrew’s way.

“When DVR put me through school, I had to tell myself that this was my job, that I have to be focused,” Andrew says. “This was going to be my main priority.”

Andrew attended school and worked full-time. “It was really challenging at times,” he says. “But I did what I had to do to succeed at both.”

Now, more than a year in to what he sees as a career job, Andrew is earning \$19 an hour. He wants to grow within Tri-Van and learn from his talented colleagues. He wants to be a parts fabricator. He also is saving to buy a house.



**Andrew**

*By Patrick Feuer,  
Bellingham DVR*

# DVR BY THE NUMBERS

(in State Fiscal Year 2021)

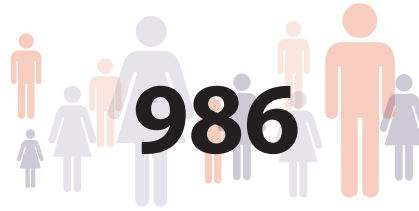
## DVR CREATES INDEPENDENCE



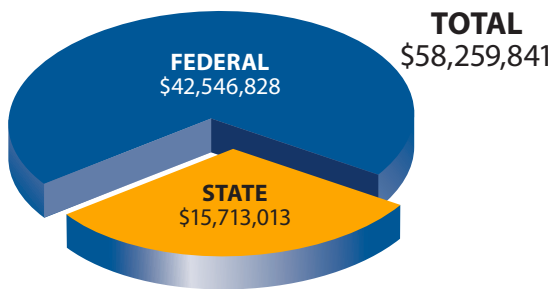
median yearly earnings at application

median yearly earnings at closure

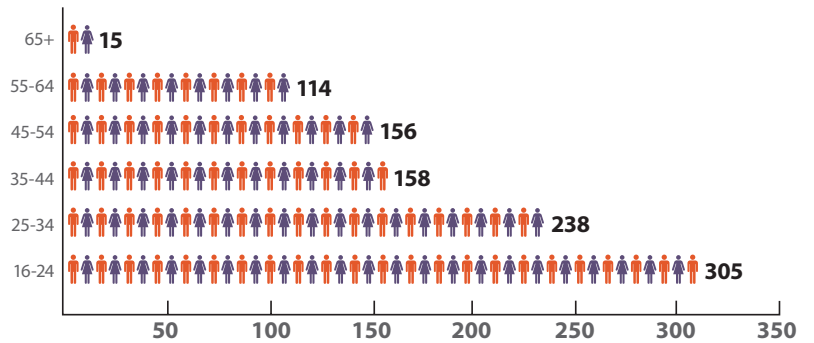
## NUMBER OF SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED



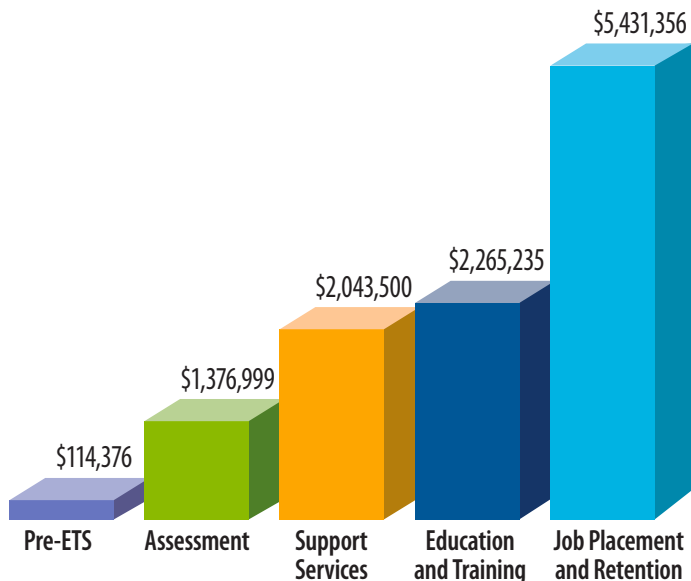
## SOURCES OF REVENUE FOR DVR



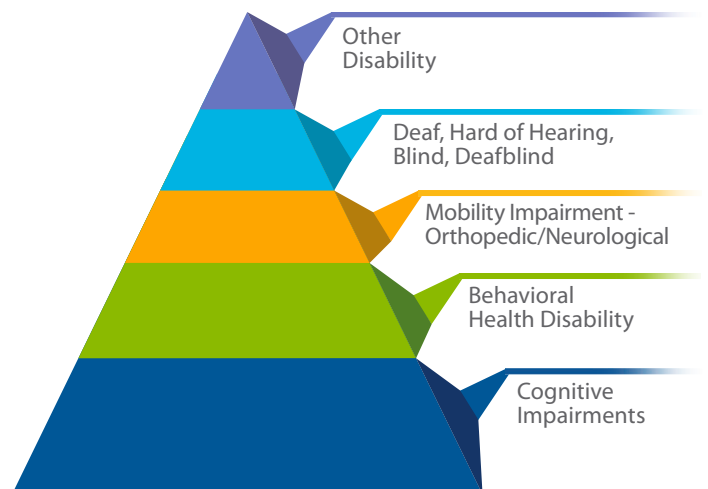
## AGE GROUPS OF SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED



## CASE SERVICE EXPENDITURES



## DISABILITY TYPES





## Flynn

By Jay Hopkins,  
Silverdale DVR

## RESTAURANT JOB LIFTS CUSTOMER'S SELF-ESTEEM, CONFIDENCE, AND INDEPENDENCE

For Flynn, working at his favorite local restaurant, The Madison Diner on Bainbridge Island, means more to him than just a job and a regular paycheck. It means independence and satisfaction knowing he is finally earning his own income.

When Flynn received his first paycheck, it took his mother Dinah and his job coach a few minutes to help him realize what the piece of paper represented. When Flynn finally understood that he held the fruits of his labor in his hands, he got very excited and to celebrate, he treated his mother to a meal to honor her birthday.

Flynn came to DVR for vocational rehabilitation services after he and his mother moved from California to Washington. Flynn had participated in a program there but during the time he lived in California, he was never able to land a job interview and secure employment.

Once in Washington, Flynn applied for DVR services and with the support of his VR team, got his first job working part-time as a lobby attendant at The Madison Diner. DVR connected Flynn to Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) services, public transportation assistance and training, and a variety of other benefits. Flynn receives long-term supports from DDA, and manages most of his own transportation arrangements.

Flynn's self-esteem and independence has improved significantly, so much so that he has gone on to find a second part-time job at Westside Pizza all on his own.

Meanwhile, his mother, using respite hours, plans to take her first vacation with friends without bringing Flynn along. Likewise, Flynn says he is delighted for his mother, because now he will not have to trudge along with her through the "boring museums and art exhibits."

---

## HARD WORKING TEACHER'S AIDE IS DOING WHAT SHE LOVES

Alexandra started at DVR in 2017 through a referral from her teacher at Kamiakin High School.

Alexandra's sweet, quiet, nature and excellent work ethic was obvious from the start. She wanted to be a preschool teacher's aide. In 2017, she attended Kennewick School District's Tri-Tech Skills Center and its Early Childhood Education Program. She stayed in school through June 2018, while attending Tri-Tech in the morning and gained work experience in the afternoon at Tri-Tech's laboratory preschool. She eventually earned a certificate of completion in Early Childhood Education.

Upon learning about Alexandra's intellectual disability, Alexandra's VR team encouraged her to apply for Developmental Disability Administration services and Social Security Administration benefits. The team explained to Alexandra's mother why applying for DDA services and SSA benefits would be beneficial for Alexandra's long-term success. Alexandra's mother did not want her to apply for SSA benefits because of the perceived stigma. At the same time, she was concerned about Alexandra's ability to make decisions on her own.

Following benefits planning counseling provided to Alexandra and her mother, Alexandra applied for DDA services and SSA benefits. She was eligible for both.

In February 2020, Alexandra achieved her job goal as a teacher's aide, working at Level Up Preschool in Kennewick.

Alexandra continued receiving services from DVR, which included participation in a Community Based Assessment, Job Placement services, and Intensive Training services with Columbia Industries. After successfully completing these services, she transitioned into DDA long-term care and supports, and her DVR case successfully closed in February 2021.

Today, Alexandra is doing what she loves: working with children.



## Alexandra

By Monica Valencia,  
Kennewick DVR



## MECHANICAL ENGINEERING GRADUATE GAINS EMPLOYMENT WITH BIOTECH COMPANY

Jerod is a humble individual whose story stems from personal successes, creativity, and a heartfelt passion to better the world. In 2015, Jerod graduated magna cum laude from Washington State University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. With DVR's help, Jerod, in April 2021, attained a rewarding career in the field of engineering at Genentech, an award-winning San Francisco-based biotech firm (with offices in Portland, Oregon) specializing in the production of medicines to treat millions

worldwide experiencing chronic medical conditions. Jerod has Spinal Muscular Atrophy, so Genentech's mission is important to him. He says he understands more than most how Genentech can positively affect and improve the quality of life of individuals experiencing Spinal Muscular Atrophy.

### Jerod

By Averie Brookie,  
Vancouver DVR

Jerod supports product management, author's documents, facilitates meetings, explores robotic solutions and creates 3D designs and models for Genentech. He teleworks 40 hours per week, aided by natural supports on the job. His colleagues consistently recognize Jerod for his attention to detail, leadership qualities, and communication skills.

Jerod's Genentech journey started with a workplace tour. During that visit, he remembers the staff's kindness and the immediate symmetry of his and Genentech's values for bettering the world. With WA DVR's and Oregon DVR's Business Teams' unified support, Genentech shared with Jerod how he could be an effective asset to the organization. DVR staff helped Jerod connect with Genentech and got his questions answered through virtual meetings, phone calls, and emails.

Jerod would enjoy the ability to work in-person more at the jobsite. Jerod, who uses a power wheelchair for mobility, is collaborating with his VR team to explore the possibility of acquiring an adaptive van to ensure a safe commute. He plans to continue his dream job at Genentech and contribute to the company's mission of helping people around the world live their best life.

If you want to go fast,  
go alone. If you want  
to go far, go together.

– African proverb

---

**DSHS Mission** – To transform lives

**DVR's Mission** – Transforming lives by assisting individuals with disabilities to fully participate in their communities through meaningful employment.

**DVR's Vision** – Dedicated professionals leading the field of vocational rehabilitation, delivering exceptional experiences to every customer, every time.

**DVR's Values**

- **Transparency** through clear, honest communication with customers, staff, and partners
- Acting with **Integrity**, upholding the ethics and values of our profession
- Promoting a culture of **Empowerment** for customers and staff
- Advancing rehabilitation practices through **Innovation**
- **Collaboration** with customers, staff, and partners that produces results
- Committed to **Equity, Diversity, Access, and Inclusion** in all its forms to achieve excellence



Transforming lives

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Washington State Department of Social and Health Services  
PO Box 45340 • Olympia, WA 98504-5340

800-637-5627

Washington Relay: 711

[www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr)

Providing Vocational Rehabilitation services since 1933

State and Federal funds are used to deliver DVR services. The VR program receives approximately 78 percent in Federal funds and 22 percent in State funds. For detailed information on the dollar amount of Federal funds for the program, please visit <https://rsa.ed.gov/fiscal/grant-awards>