

MAY 2020 CSNA REPORT

GEORGIA COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

RESEARCH & EVALUATION UNIT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS
ASSESSMENT (CSNA)**

The Research and Evaluation Unit (REU), housed at the Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD) at the University of Georgia (UGA), the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Georgia Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (GVRA) jointly conducted an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing in the State of Georgia. A needs assessment is required, every three years, by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and is intended to help inform the Unified State Plan developed by the core partners in Georgia's Workforce Development System. The data was gathered analyzed and grouped into the sections listed on the next page. A summary of key findings in each section is contained here. The full results are found in the body of the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SECTION I:

NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

TOP THREE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES				
INDIVIDUAL WITH DISABILITY	STAKEHOLDER PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS	STAKEHOLDER PROFESSIONALS	PROVIDERS PROFESSIONALS	EMPLOYERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to dependable transportation; • Misconceptions about disability held by professionals; • Employers concerns about providing accommodations; • Employers concerns about risks associated with hiring PWD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to dependable transportation; • Misconceptions about disabilities held by professionals; • Employer's concerns about risks associated with hiring IWD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to dependable transportation; • Fear of losing benefits; • Lack of awareness of VR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to dependable transportation; • Fear of losing benefits; • Employer's perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of dependable transportation; • Lack of job preparation, skills, education; • Difficulty learning the job or new responsibilities; • Disability related factors-medical, mental health etc.

» **Recurring themes in this area include:**

- Access to dependable transportation remains the top need for individuals with disabilities related to employment that was identified by participants in all of the five surveys – individuals with disabilities, parents and caregivers, employment service providers, partnering professionals and employers. Georgia is a large state that lacks a reliable public transportation system outside of the metro areas. In the absence of reliable public transportation, people rely on others or other modes of transportation for commuting to work and other places. For individuals with disabilities who are unable to drive due to their disability, this can be a major impediment to employment. Other reasons include the distance to and location of available jobs, inability to access jobs in areas without transportation, availability of transportation of services for specific populations (i.e. aging, wavier eligible recipients), lack of a vehicle and/or driver's license, the cost of transportation, health conditions or the nature of disability, and the reliability and the time required to travel via public transit/paratransit. This issue can be particularly exacerbated for individuals with disabilities who live in rural and suburban areas.

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- The second most frequently cited vocational rehabilitation need of individuals with the most significant disabilities includes benefits counseling. There is a need to educate and counsel consumer on benefits planning and work incentives. Not only is income assurance that the program provides important, but the added reality of eligibility for Medicaid coverage for Social Security recipients is a major incentive for maintaining Social Security eligibility status by limiting or avoiding work altogether. There are many Social Security Work Incentives Programs, which make it possible for people to work without losing access to benefits, but they are complicated and not well understood by recipients, their families, or the professionals influencing decision-making. There is a strong need for providing benefits counseling to individuals with disabilities to help them understand how employment will affect their benefits including SSDI and Medicaid.
- Employer misconceptions about the abilities of individuals with disabilities is a significant barrier to employment and becomes more significant with the increase in the significance of the disability. There is a need to educate professionals and employers including clarifying some misconceptions or myths associated with hiring individuals with disabilities that they may hold.
- Employers need to be provided the assistance and support they need in providing accommodations for individuals with disabilities, including those with most significant disabilities. Long term, on the job support including job coaching and supported employment for individuals with significant disabilities was identified by all target groups as the most important service needed for maintaining employment. The need for job development and job placement services was the second most important service needed by individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.
- Vocational guidance and counseling services were also identified as being a high priority service.
- Individuals with disabilities identified increased confidence in themselves as a top factor in contributing to job success along with supervisors and co-workers being supportive. Respondents also mentioned the job match as being an important factor contributing to job success.

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SECTION II:

NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING THOSE FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC OR MINORITY GROUPS

POPULATIONS MOST LIKELY TO BE UNSERVED OR UNDER SERVED		
STAKEHOLDER PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS	STAKEHOLDER PROFESSIONALS	PROVIDERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals with significant or complex disabilities; • Mental illness; • Rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals with significant or complex disabilities; • Individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities; • People with mental illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual or developmental disabilities; • Significant or complex disabilities; • Living in rural areas; criminal history; • Mental illness

- Individuals with significant or complex disabilities were identified as the most underserved or unserved populations by parents, family members, employment service providers and professionals. The second most underserved or unserved population identified were individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Individuals with mental illness, those having criminal histories and those living in rural areas were also identified among underserved and unserved populations.

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR RACIAL / ETHNIC MINORITY POPULATIONS		
STAKEHOLDER PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS	STAKEHOLDER PROFESSIONALS	PROVIDERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of skills or education needed for job goal; • Lack of long-term services/ job coaching; • Difficulty accessing jobs; • Lack of awareness/ access to job supports, assistive technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to dependable transportation; • Fear of losing benefits; • Lack of family/community support; • Lack of awareness about Vocational Rehabilitation Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to dependable transportation; • Fear of losing benefits; • Lack of family /community support

- The need for skills or education needed for a job goal, transportation assistance and benefits counseling were the top needs related to employment of individuals with disabilities from unserved or underserved groups.

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- The need for long-term job services and on the job support including job coaching and supported employment services were identified as one of the most important needs related to employment. Job development and job placement were also identified as important needs.
- There needs to be greater engagement and education of parents and families so as to increase their support for employment of youth and young adults with disabilities.

SECTION III:

YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUTH/STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES RELATED TO TRANSITION		
STAKEHOLDER PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS	STAKEHOLDER PROFESSIONALS	PROVIDERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of skills or education needed for job goal • Limited work experience • Lack of long-term services and ongoing job coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to dependable transportation • Lack of family /community support • Lack of awareness about Vocational Rehabilitation Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to dependable transportation • Lack of awareness about Vocational Rehabilitation Services • Lack of job preparation, skills, education needed for job

- Skills and education needed for a job was identified as the most important rehabilitation need of youth with disabilities that affected their work experiences and employment.
- Transportation was a major barrier for students and their ability to experience work that needs to be addressed.
- Limited work-based learning experiences and lack of awareness of vocational rehabilitation were important barriers that were identified as important and significant needs.
- The need for long-term job services and on the job support including job coaching and supported employment services were identified as an important need related to employment of youth and students with disabilities in transition. Job development and job placement were also identified as important needs.
- All of the five required pre-employment transition services represent significant rehabilitation needs of students with disabilities in Georgia. Of the Pre-ETS services, the service that was identified as

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being provided or somewhat provided by most respondents was work readiness training followed by work-based learning services. Self-advocacy service was the least provided service mentioned by respondents. Most respondents said they were not at all satisfied with post-secondary training and job exploration service.

- There needs to be greater engagement and education of parents and families so as to increase their support for employment of youth and young adults with disabilities.
- There is a need to start transition and career planning early, as early as middle school, so that families can become aware and engaged in preparing the youth to enter job market like teenagers without disabilities.
- There is a need to clarify expectations of service providers and standardize the curriculum and provision of pre-employment transition services.

SECTION IV:

NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN GEORGIA

- Almost all providers agreed or strongly agreed that there is a need to improve established Community Resource Providers (CRPs) in Georgia and the need to expand current CRPs. About two-third respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there is a need to establish new CRPs and that there is a need to develop newly established CRPs.
- There is a need to develop CRPs' ability to provide services including training and support (which leads to improved job skills and job placement), customized employment and transportation services.
- There is a need to develop CRP's with expertise in working with specific populations such as Deaf and Hard of Hearing, transition age youth, racial and ethnic minority populations and individuals with more significant disabilities.
- Respondents and professionals talked about not having information about who provides employment services in their area and what services they provide. There is a need to maintain and share updated vendor records including details on the services they provide.
- Respondents talked about the need to clarify provider expectations and more guidance for them. They specifically emphasized the need to update the provider manual to include more details about GVRA services, required paperwork and expectations.

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- There is a need to create more oversight and accountability for service providers including centralized data collection and monitoring and evaluation systems as well as outcome or impact evaluations.
- There is still an reliance of facility based services and a limited provision of competitive intergrated employment services. There are also a limited number of providers who provide job development services outside Supported Employment.
- There is a need to focus on use of best practices for creating successful employment outcomes and impact for individuals with disabilities. Respondents shared that some transition and employment service providers are more effective than others. They employ creative practices to provide transition services and create successful employment outcomes. These (individual and agency) providers need to be connected to form a task force that trouble shoots on current issues and informs best practices to meet the needs of transition age youth in Georgia.

SECTION V:

THE NEEDS OF BUSINESSES

- Employers were asked about factors that keep businesses from hiring, retaining or promoting individuals with disabilities. Employers mentioned not having the skills or credentials for the job, budget restrictions or hiring freezes, constraints of job characteristics (complexity, physical demand, skill level) as being important factors.
- The need for additional accommodation and staff time and not knowing how to provide disability-related accommodation were also identified as important factors.
- Not understanding the disability, concerns about liability, worker's compensation or a bad economy were reported to prevent hiring of IWD by businesses to a small or very small extent.
- Service that was identified to be helpful or most helpful to businesses for hiring individuals with disabilities included providing workers with disabilities the tools, education needed to do the job, providing long term on the job supports to workers with disabilities, training employers and staff to implement workplace accommodation, training staff to support co-workers with disabilities, and assistive technology.
- The most frequent feedback received from participants across all groups regarding employers was the need to educate employers and reduce the biases held about the abilities of individuals with disabilities. Employers were frequently characterized as fearful about hiring individuals with disabilities and about their capacity to perform the essential functions of many jobs.

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SATISFACTION WITH GVRA			
INDIVIDUAL WITH DISABILITY	STAKEHOLDER PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS	STAKEHOLDER PROFESSIONALS	EMPLOYERS
<p>Most satisfied with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect, sensitivity and politeness shown by GVRA towards consumers; • GVRA's responsiveness to calls and emails to consumers; • GVRA staff attitudes. <p>Most dissatisfied with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GVRA 's retention of qualified staff; • GVRA individualizing services; • GVRA's explanation of services /who would provide them; • GVRA listening to the consumer. 	<p>Most satisfied with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GVRA's eligibility process for consumers; • GVRA staff attitudes; • Respect, sensitivity and politeness shown by GVRA towards consumers. <p>Most dissatisfied with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer being able to receive all services needed; • Overall experience with GVRA; • GVRA's responsiveness to calls and emails to consumers; • Quality of services provided by GVRA / contracted provider. 	<p>Most satisfied with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect, sensitivity and politeness shown by GVRA towards consumers; • GVRA staff attitudes; • Consumers being able to provide input. <p>Most dissatisfied with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer being able to receive all services needed; • GVRA 's retention of qualified staff; • Overall experience with GVRA; • GVRA's responsiveness to calls and emails to consumers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable/unsure; Dis-satisfied or very dissatisfied, Satisfied or very dissatisfied.

SECTION VI:

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH GVRA AND SUGGESTIONS

- GVRA counselors and staff are characterized as being committed and caring individuals that strive to do their best for consumers. Respondents in all groups were most satisfied with the respect, sensitivity and politeness shown by GVRA staff towards consumers and GVRA staff attitudes. The committed and passionate staff are the greatest asset of GVRA.
- The high turnover of staff has been a challenge for the organization in multiple areas and is related to the pay scale for staff. Respondents were most dissatisfied with GVRA 's retention of qualified staff as well as the quality of services provided by GVRA or contracted providers. The limited number of counselors in field offices seem to have high caseloads. Numerous respondents recurrently talked about the need to improve GVRA's responsiveness to calls and emails to consumers.

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- There is a need for GVRA counselors to listen more to the consumers and individualize services as needed. There is a need for enhanced communication and explanation of GVRA services to consumers including who would provide them and the specific processes and timelines for services. Professionals, however, reported being satisfied with the fact that consumers are able to provide input.
- There was a high level of dissatisfaction among respondents, with consumers not being able to receive all services needed. This led to a large number of respondents reporting their dissatisfaction with their overall experience with GVRA. Respondents in the different groups expressed their needs and dissatisfaction with the agency services overwhelmingly in the various open ended questions asked in all the different surveys.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings from the environmental scan as well as the quantitative and qualitative data collection, below are some recommendations for GVRA to address gaps in services.

CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

- Improve consumer engagement through emphasizing the client-counselor working alliance in counselor competencies and professional practice.
 - » By incorporating best practice approaches that emphasize the client-counselor relationship, such as working alliance constructs and motivational interviewing, consumers are more likely to feel understood, valued and remain engaged. This client-centered service delivery supports more of a holistic approach versus one that is mostly case management driven.
- Measures need to be put in place to improve communication between the consumer and local VR staff that is more timely, consistent and informative.
 - » Identifying expectations early on and having ongoing communication with consumers is recommended. It would be ideal to have dedicated staff whose only role is to process and maintain appropriate paperwork so that skilled and trained VR counselors can focus their time and energies on engaging meaningfully with clients. Additional strategies to explore include ways technology can be used for service provision, including using telehealth strategies. This is especially relevant during the current COVID-19 pandemic in being able to continue service provision to clients with disabilities.

TRANSITION

- There is wide geographic disparity across the state in the quantity and quality of transition services provided by GVRA including pre-employment transition services. GVRA needs to explore the potential causes of service deficits in the counties or school

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districts with low service provision to identify strategies that might provide greater service delivery rates and enhance quality in those areas.

- Explore opportunities to increase the availability of work experiences for students with disabilities that more closely resemble the adult workplace through expanded business partnerships.
 - » Services provided to students with disabilities with a business partnership focus and that more closely resemble the adult work environment appear to have a substantial correlation to achieving an employment outcome.
- There is a need to start transition and career planning early, as early as middle school, so that families can become aware and engaged in preparing the youth to enter job market like teenagers without disabilities.
 - » Parents expressed a strong need for wanting to know about the services that GVRA offers and about transition preparation of their youth at an early age so they can prepare their youth with job preparation and work skills that would be needed for employment.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS

- It is recommended that GVRA maintain and continually update a list of contracted vendors including their locations and details of the services they provide. The agency website could be utilized to disseminate provider information, such as standards, fees, state-wide needs. This list needs to be made readily available to local GVRA staff as well as consumers.
- It is recommended that there be improved communication with community rehabilitation providers about what is expected of them regarding service delivery and outcomes and more guidance and information about GVRA changes that may impact them.
 - » Potential strategies include routinely scheduled meetings between local VR offices and local providers to strengthen communication, cross-training between local VR offices and providers. It is recommended that the provider manual be updated to include more details about GVRA services, required paperwork and expectations.
- It is recommended that there be greater oversight and accountability for service providers including utilizing centralized electronic data collection and monitoring and evaluation systems. There is also a need to conduct formative evaluation as changes are implemented to collect process feedback. It is also recommended to conduct outcome evaluations at regular intervals to track key service and employment outcomes for greater accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a need to develop CRPs' ability and expertise in providing services including training and support (which leads to improved job skills and job placement), customized employment and transportation services. There is also a need to develop CRPs with expertise in working with specific populations such as individuals with more significant disabilities, transition age youth, racial and ethnic minority populations and Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- There is a need to focus on use of best practices for creating successful employment outcomes and impact for individuals with disabilities. Respondents shared that some transition and employment service providers are more effective than others. They employ creative practices to provide transition services and create successful employment outcomes. These (individual and agency) providers need to be connected to form a task force that trouble shoots on current issues and informs the development of a toolkit on best practices to meet the needs of transition age youth in Georgia.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

- Expand the menu of services to employers, such as educating them by sharing success stories of employment of people with disabilities, consultation about accommodations, job task analyses and worksite accessibility. By providing these services, GVRA can better meet the needs of its dual customer, the employer, and increase opportunities for individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.
- Pursue business relationships within those industry sectors that are projected to experience the highest growth. Provide VR counselors with training and resources about industries with the largest potential for growth. As part of informed choice, it is recommended that VR counselors review these industry growth projections with participants and where appropriate, focus job goals and training toward these. In Georgia, new jobs are projected to be created in the following industries: Health Care, Assisted Living, Individual and Family Services and retail sales.
- During current times of the COVID-19 pandemic, certain work-from-home opportunities which are more conducive for people with disabilities are becoming more available. For example, call centers are increasingly looking at hiring from the pool of people with disabilities who may be prepared to handle the surge in phone traffic away from brick-and-mortar offices. GVRA counselors and service providers need to be engaged and direct consumers to opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERALL

- GVRA needs to explore the potential causes of service deficits in certain counties or regions with low service provision to identify strategies that might provide greater service delivery rates in those areas. GVRA should explore the causes behind these service deficits and devise strategies to enhance service.
- There is a need to focus on meaningful employment outcomes for consumers leading to a career (not just a job) that ensure self-sufficiency beyond minimum wage.
- There is a need to channelize funding and build provider capacity in evidence-based strategies like Individual Placement and Supports (IPS), and other best practices that lead to Competitive Intergrated Employment.
- GVRA needs to focus on building or strengthening partnerships and collaborations with other agencies including Georgia Department of Education, DBHDD and service provider agencies. This is important particularly with the Office of Workforce Development to address skill attainment among youth and adults with disabilities to address Georgia's high demand work force needs.
- A high volume of comments to open ended questions throughout the surveys and interviews communicate the broad-based dissatisfaction of stakeholders including individuals with disabilities, families, providers and other professionals, with current GVRA services. It has been well acknowledged that GVRA needs to focus on rebuilding trust with key stakeholders. GVRA also needs to focus on increasing efficiency in VR processes and services including CRP provider management and outcomes so as to enhance successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities in Georgia.

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT REU

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION UNIT (REU)

The Research and Evaluation Unit (REU) at the Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD) at University of Georgia (UGA) provides a full range of applied research and program evaluation services to help organizations answer important social questions and help support informed and accountable decision making. Services that REU provides include designing and conducting formative and summative evaluations, needs assessments, developing logic models, conducting qualitative, quantitative and mixed method research. REU uses a participatory, utilization-focused, strength-based and culturally sensitive approach to research and evaluation, as appropriate. REU places a high premium on being ethical, unbiased, rigorous and collaborative. The multidisciplinary team of researchers at REU has a pooled experience of over 30 years related to program evaluations as well as the vocational rehabilitation system.

INTRODUCTION

**RESEARCH &
EVALUATION
UNIT**



*Institute on Human
Development and Disability*
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT CSNA

COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSNA)

The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency is the state administrator of the federal/state vocational rehabilitation program, which is authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Under the provisions of WIOA, the Governor must submit a Unified State Plan to the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a four-year strategy for the state's workforce development system, which is comprised of six core programs: The Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Title I Workforce Development programs, the Wagner-Peyser Title III program, The Adult Education and Literacy Title II program and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

The Research and Evaluation Unit (REU), housed at the Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD) at the University of Georgia (UGA), the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Georgia Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (GVRA) jointly conducted an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing in the State of Georgia. A needs assessment is required, every three years, by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and is intended to help inform the Unified State Plan developed by the core partners in Georgia's Workforce Development System.

PURPOSE OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT

An important component of the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan are the results from a comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) describing the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities living in the state, particularly those with significant disabilities. The CSNA is to be conducted jointly between the state VR agency (GVRA) and the SRC every three years describing the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State.

The purpose of CSNA as described by Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) is as follows:

1. Identify the rehabilitation needs of individuals in Georgia, particularly the vocational rehabilitation service needs of:
 - » a. Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
 - » b. Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the state vocational rehabilitation program;
 - » c. Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system as identified by those individuals and personnel assisting them through the components of that system; and
 - » d. Youth with disabilities, and students with disabilities, including their need for PreEmployment Transition Services, an assessment of the needs for transition services, and the extent to which services provided are in coordination with the Department of Education, under IDEA.
2. Identify the need to establish, develop or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs within the state.

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT CSNA

APPROACH

For this Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), REU used a multi-method, participatory, utilization focused and culturally competent approach to gather and analyze information. We also used an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach, which is a positive 'Asset-based approach', focusing on the present potential of an organization, rather than the deficit-based approach of identifying problems and fixing them.

UTILIZATION OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES

It is expected that data from the needs assessment effort will provide GVRA and the SRC with direction for planning and allocation of funds as well as guidance in planning for future structure and resource demands. Findings from the needs assessment project ideally also provides information for the strategic development of the state plan. The data that appear in this report are relevant to the following activities:

1. Projecting needed services and redeployment of resources;
2. Identifying needs of specific groups and populations;
3. Identifying perceived gaps in vocational rehabilitation services; and
4. Providing data and a rationale for the development of the Georgia State Plan and amendments to the plan.

DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS

Key findings from the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) were presented to the leadership and members of the State Rehabilitation Council as well as to GVRA leadership through a presentation and a formal report. It is recommended that the leadership of GVRA and SRC share the report or snapshots of findings with various audiences including GVRA staff and counselors, key stakeholders including individuals with disabilities, their families, advocates, professionals working with individuals with disabilities and provider agencies. It is also recommended that the report be made available for download on GVRA website. The SRC plans to invite the researchers from REU at UGA who conducted the CSNA to present snapshots of key findings and facilitate discussions in upcoming quarterly SRC meetings.

LIMITATIONS

It is important to keep in mind certain limitations when interpreting the results. Although best attempts were made to reach participants that were representative of the population, there could be a potential for bias in the selection of participants. The findings that are reported reflect only the responses of those who were willing to participate. Individuals who were disenfranchised, dissatisfied, or who did not wish to be involved with VR may have not have participated in the surveys, or interviews.

INTRODUCTION

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

It is also important to note that the findings of this needs assessment cannot be generalized to the population. The information gathered from respondents may not accurately represent the broader concerns of all potential constituents and stakeholders. Although efforts were made to gather information from a variety of stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process, it cannot be assumed that those who contributed to the focus groups, the key informant interviews, and the survey research efforts constitute a fully representative sample of all of the potential stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process throughout the state. Data gathered from service providers, for example, may reflect only the needs of individuals who are already recipients of services, to the exclusion of those who are not presently served.

KEY ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS FOR CSNA

1. What does the GVRA target and current population look like?
 - » a) What is the prevalence and regional distribution of prospective and current GVRA clients?
 - » b) What is the prevalence of selected GVRA target and current populations, including persons with the most significant disabilities, students transitioning from high school, and individuals with disabilities from racial/ethnic minority groups, persons who are currently underserved or unserved?
2. What are the primary barriers to employment for GVRA clients, and/or what are their service needs?
 - » a) How do barriers to employment vary for selected subgroups, including the selected target populations (listed above)?
 - » b) How are the service needs different for selected subgroups, including the selected target populations (listed above)?
3. What vocational rehabilitation services do GVRA clients need to support achievement of employment goals?
 - » a) How can GVRA services best support client efforts to achieve positive employment outcomes?
4. Are services adequately available to GVRA clients through community service providers? How is the quality of services provided?
5. What are the strengths of GVRA services?
6. What strategic changes to GVRA service provision, if any, are likely to improve employment outcomes for clients?

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

**POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC
CHARACTERISTIC ESTIMATES:**

While the 10-year Census data are a population count, American Community Survey data are population estimates based on sampling. Because of limited sample sizes 1-year ACS data is only available for geographic areas with populations greater than 65,000, and 3-year ACS data is only available for geographic areas with populations greater than 20,000. The 3- and 5-year ACS estimates are averages over the period, so 1-year estimates will provide the most current snapshot; however, the 1-year estimates are less reliable than 3- and 5-year estimates (United States Census Bureau, 2012). Data used for this report utilized all 3 estimates for 2017 when appropriate, but care was given to utilize consistent data that would give the most accurate picture of Georgia's population and prevalence of disability.¹

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

SURVEYS

Surveys were developed to collect input from the following target groups: 1) Individuals with Disabilities; 2) Employers; 3) Employment Service Providers; 4) Parents, professionals, educators and other stakeholders. After data collection, the key stakeholder survey was split into two surveys – one that included responses from parents, family members, advocates and others who cared for individuals with disabilities; and the other that included responses from professionals who serve individuals with disabilities.

All surveys were developed using Qualtrics online survey. The surveys were hosted on a dedicated webpage for CSNA on IHDD's website that was developed by the IHDD Graphic Designer. The webpage provided information about CSNA and provided instructions and links to completing each of the four survey. All four surveys were finalized within the Qualtrics platform and hosted on the webpage

Surveys were developed by the project team at REU and reviewed by SRC leadership. Surveys were piloted to assess their validity, easy of understanding, relevance, length etc. The surveys were pilot tested with a group of respondents and feedback was obtained. Modifications were made to the surveys based on feedback obtained during the pilot testing and from SRC leadership. A revised version of the survey was then ready for wider implementation.

DATA COLLECTION

Data was gathered from this population using an internet-based survey developed in Qualtrics. The customer satisfaction surveys that REU had conducted with current and past GVRA clients were mostly paper surveys. The proliferation of smart phones and electronic access, coupled with the electronic access capabilities of the consumer population of VR indicated that electronic surveys would be a good way to gather the necessary information for the CSNA. The surveys were available online from December 5th 2019 through February 28th, 2020.

The links to the website and surveys were widely disseminated across a wide range of entities including individuals, organizations and networks linked to individuals with disabilities in Georgia. Recruitment efforts included sending an introductory email to the entities introducing the project, along with information that could be copied and pasted when forwarding to others. Key networks that assisted with disseminating the survey information include – State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD), Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD), Parent2Parent of Georgia, Georgia Department of Education personnel including educators, transition coordinators, parent mentors, students and families (GDOE), Service Providers Association for Developmental Disabilities (SPADD), Georgia Interagency Transition Council, Regional transition consortiums, Georgia Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) consortium, Providers participating in the Georgia Living Well project and Advancing Employment project, and various other partners and individuals with disabilities. Many organizations like Georgia Vocational rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), Parent2parent of Georgia and IHDD posted the information on their websites and others like GVRA, GCDD and IHDD shared them through their social media.

METHODOLOGY

SURVEYS

Special attempts were made to advertise and encourage individuals with diverse backgrounds to complete the surveys. Our goal was to capture the perspectives of a wide range of individuals including individuals with significant disabilities; minority individuals with disabilities; unserved and underserved individuals with disabilities. Survey responses collected through the electronic survey approach were then exported to SPSS by the project team at REU for analysis.

DETAILS ABOUT INDIVIDUAL SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

INDIVIDUAL WITH DISABILITIES (IWD) SURVEY

» Survey Instrument

Individuals with disabilities were asked about demographic information including their gender, race/ethnicity, age range, education, disabilities among others. IWD were asked about top three barriers to employment faced by individuals with most significant disabilities, the top three services needed for employment of individuals with most significant disabilities, populations most likely to be unserved or underserved, top three barriers to employment for minority populations including those from racial and ethnic minority populations, top three services needed for employment of individuals minority populations including those from racial and ethnic minority populations, top three barriers to employment for students and youth with disabilities in transition, top three services needed for employment for students and youth with disabilities in transition including their need for pre-employment transition services. IWD were also asked about their perspective on the need to expand and develop current community rehabilitation providers (CRPs) and the need to establish and support new CRPs. IWD were also asked about the strengths of GVRA and suggestions of what GVRA can do to improve their services and employment outcomes for IWD. Respondents were also asked about their current employment status, top challenges to accessing employment, key factors contributing to job success.

» Survey Population

Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as individuals with disabilities who are potential, current or former clients of VR.

KEY STAKEHOLDER- PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS, ADVOCATES

» Survey Instrument

Key stakeholders including parents, family members and advocates were asked about demographic information including their gender, race/ethnicity, age range, education. Parents were also asked to report on demographic characteristics of individuals with disabilities that they care for including the type of disability, their gender among other factors. Parents were asked about top three barriers to employment faced by individuals with most significant disabilities, populations most likely to be unserved or underserved, top three barriers to employment for minority populations including those from racial and ethnic minority populations, top three barriers to employment for students and youth with disabilities in transition, the top three services needed for employment of individuals with most significant disabilities.

METHODOLOGY

SURVEYS

Parents were also asked about their perspective on the need to expand and develop current community rehabilitation providers (CRPs) and the need to establish and support new CRPs.

» **Survey Population**

Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as parents, family members or advocates or anyone in the community who provided care for or advocated for an individual with disabilities.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS – PROFESSIONALS» **Survey Instrument**

Key stakeholders including professionals were asked about demographic information including their gender, race/ethnicity, age range, education. Professionals were also asked to report on demographic characteristics of individuals with disabilities that they serve for including the type of disability, their gender among other factors. Professionals were asked about top three barriers to employment faced by individuals with most significant disabilities, populations most likely to be unserved or underserved, top three barriers to employment for minority populations including those from racial and ethnic minority populations, top three barriers to employment for students and youth with disabilities in transition, the top three services needed for employment of individuals with most significant disabilities. Parents were also asked about their perspective on the need to expand and develop current community rehabilitation providers (CRPs) and the need to establish and support new CRPs.

» **Survey Population**

Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as professionals who serve individuals with disabilities including those in the community and those working with agencies that partner with GVRA.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS» **Survey Instrument**

Employment service providers were asked about demographic information including their gender, race/ethnicity, age range, education. Providers were also asked to report on demographic characteristics of individuals with disabilities that they serve for including the type of disability, their gender among other factors. Providers were asked about the top three barriers to employment faced by individuals with most significant disabilities, the top three services needed for employment of individuals with most significant disabilities, populations most likely to be unserved or underserved, top three barriers to employment for minority populations including those from racial and ethnic minority populations, top three services needed for employment of individuals minority populations including those from racial and ethnic minority populations, top three barriers to employment for students and youth with disabilities in transition, top three services needed for employment for students and youth with disabilities in transition including their

METHODOLOGY

SURVEYS

need for pre-employment transition services. Providers were also asked about their perspective on the need to expand and develop current community rehabilitation providers (CRPs) and the need to establish and support new CRPs. Providers were also asked about the size of their agency, their role, how long their agency has been providing employment services and the frequency with which their agency provides services to individuals with disabilities from various at-risk groups.

» Survey Population

Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as individuals or agencies providing employment services to individuals with disabilities including leadership or staff of employment service provider agencies including employment specialists.

EMPLOYERS

» Survey Instrument

Employers were asked about demographic information including their gender, race/ethnicity, age range, education. Providers were also asked about the type of business, the size of their business, their current role, how long their business has been in operation, whether they have intentionally employed individuals with disabilities in the past, the type of accommodations they have provided to IWD related to their employment, their familiarity with GVRA services and satisfaction with services received from GVRA. Employers were asked about their views on the top challenges faced by IWD related to employment.

» Survey Population

Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as employers in the community who may or may not have employed individuals with disabilities in the past.

METHODOLOGY

SURVEYS

NUMBER OF SURVEYS COMPLETED

A total of **897 valid surveys** were completed by a variety of entities including individuals with disabilities, parents and family members, employment service providers, other community professionals and employers. Valid surveys refer to surveys where the individual completed the survey, even if they did not answer all of the questions. Surveys that are not considered valid were those in which the respondent opened but did not start or complete the survey.

	SURVEYS STARTED	VALID COMPLETED SURVEYS
INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES	311	234
STAKEHOLDERS (PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS, PROFESSIONALS)	525	Stakeholder (Parents) = 272 Stakeholder (Professionals) = 210
EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS	121	121
EMPLOYERS	60	60

Survey participants include 100 educators (i.e., teachers, transition specialists, paraprofessionals, parent mentors, administrators) and 238 parent's /family members of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, of the 295 individuals with disabilities who have participated, 109 are age 14-24, with 32% of those reporting still being in high school.

ACCESSIBILITY

All formats were accessible, readable at the 10.0 grade level or less, reliable and had face validity. The electronic survey was designed using an accessible, internet-based survey application (Qualtrics). Surveys were found to be accessible for individuals with vision impairments or who used screen readers. Respondents were provided with the name and contact information of the project manager at REU in order to place requests for alternate survey formats.

EFFORTS TO ENSURE RESPONDENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Respondents to the survey were not asked to identify themselves when completing the survey. In addition, responses to the electronic surveys were aggregated by the project team at REU prior to reporting results, which served to further obscure the identities of individual survey respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis consisted of computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. Data was analyzed using quantitative statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics v.26, Qualtrics and Excel 2016. Frequencies, percentages, means and other inferential statistics were used for analyzing quantitative data from surveys. Open-ended survey questions, which yielded narrative responses were analyzed using content analysis for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents.

METHODOLOGY

FOCUS GROUPS

DATA COLLECTION

Focus groups were conducted to provide us an opportunity to have meaningful conversations about vocational rehabilitation needs and fill in gaps in data. Four focus groups were held gather a wide range of perspectives. They were paired with leading conferences or quarterly meetings of leading local consortia groups so as to increase response rate. A total of 55 individuals attended the different focus groups that were conducted. Each session lasted about an hour and a half and was audio recorded. Two researchers facilitated each group; one served as moderator and the second as scribe, taking notes. A semi-structured interview protocol (included in the appendices) was used to guide the discussion. A few minutes were devoted to introductions, personal background, and rapport building in order to establish a productive focus group environment. The focus group moderator explained the purpose of the focus group and provided a brief description of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment effort. Discussion ended with the moderator summarizing the themes and issues that emerged, verifying information with participants, and thanking them.

The semi-structured interview protocol was developed by REU researchers. Approvals were obtained from the Human Subjects office at University of Georgia. REU researchers who conducted the focus groups completed the human subjects CITI training and were trained in facilitation techniques. The central question raised in each of the focus group meetings was the following: “What are the most important employment-related needs encountered by people with disabilities?” When appropriate the moderator introduced additional questions prompting respondents to discuss needs associated with preparing for employment, obtaining employment, retaining employment, and increasing the employment of persons with disabilities. Participants were asked to discuss the needs of individuals with most significant disabilities; the needs of individuals from cultural, racial, or ethnic minority groups; and the needs of students with disabilities transitioning from high school.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

A total of 55 individuals with disabilities and professionals attended the various focus groups. The table below give information on the number of participants who attended focus groups.

FOCUS GROUPS	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
PROFESSIONALS FG1	8
PROFESSIONALS FG2	9
EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS	13
PROFESSIONALS FG	25
TOTAL	55

METHODOLOGY

FOCUS GROUPS

EFFORTS TO ENSURE RESPONDENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Only first names were used and identifying characteristics were not recorded by the note-taker. Participants were told that the focus groups would be audio recorded and the audio recordings will be destroyed after study completion. Participants were also informed that their participation is completely voluntary, they can stop the interview at any time, and they only have to answer the questions they want to answer. They were also assured that their replies would be kept confidential. Their responses will not be linked to them individually. The responses will be pooled together and results will be reported in aggregate form.

ACCESSIBILITY

The project team included funds in its budget sufficient to pay for communication accommodations necessary to conduct the focus groups; however, no accommodations were requested.

DATA ANALYSIS

Notes were transcribed and analyzed by the researchers at REU. Narratives were analyzed using content analysis for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents. Results were organized according to the prompts used to stimulate discussion of the needs of individuals with disabilities (e.g., barriers related to employment for individuals with disabilities and so forth). Themes or concerns that surfaced with consistency across groups (within or across regions) were identified and reported as consensual themes in the report narrative.

METHODOLOGY

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

DATA COLLECTION

Key informant interviews were conducted with experts who are particularly knowledgeable about vocational rehabilitation needs of people with disabilities and of the Georgia state rehabilitation service system. Key informants included members of the State Rehabilitation Council, VR counselors, directors or staff of GVRA partners and providers; transition personnel, employers among others. Snowball method was used to decide who the key respondents were. Key informant interviews were conducted between December 5th 2019 through February 28th, 2020. Key informants were initially sent an e-mail message by the researchers at REU informing them of the interview effort. Key informants were then contacted by phone and asked to schedule a time for an interview. Key informants who did not respond to either the email message or telephone call were contacted once more by e-mail and offered an opportunity to participate. Key informant interviews were conducted by telephone. The general format of the interviews was consistent across the interviews. First, participants were asked questions to ascertain their personal and professional expertise and their experience with VR. Participants were then asked open-ended questions about their perceptions of barriers to employment for persons with disabilities. Finally, participants were asked to share their perceptions of how VR could improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

A total of 14 phone interviews were conducted. On an average, each interview lasted for about 45 minutes and were audio recorded. The interview time was coordinated via an email or initial phone interview. Trained researchers conducted the phone interviews. A semi-structured interview protocol (included in the appendices) was used to guide the discussion. A few minutes were devoted to introductions, personal background, and rapport building in order to establish a productive focus group environment. The interviewer explained the purpose of the interview and provided a brief description of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment effort. The interview ended with the interviewer summarizing the themes and issues that emerged, verifying information with participants, and thanking them.

The semi-structured interview protocol was developed by REU researchers. Approvals were obtained from the Human Subjects office at University of Georgia. REU researchers who conducted the interviews completed the human subjects CITI training and were trained in interviewing techniques. The central question raised in each interview was the following: “What are the most important employment-related needs encountered by people with disabilities?” When appropriate the interviewer asked additional questions prompting respondents to share more about the needs associated with preparing for employment, obtaining employment, retaining employment, and increasing the employment of persons with disabilities. Participants were asked to discuss the needs of individuals with most significant disabilities; the needs of individuals from cultural, racial, or ethnic minority groups; and the needs of students with disabilities transitioning from high school.

METHODOLOGY**KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS****NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS**

A total of 14 individuals participated in the key informant interviews.

EFFORTS TO ENSURE RESPONDENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Participants were told that the interviews would be audio recorded and the audio recordings will be destroyed after study completion. Participants were also informed that their participation is completely voluntary, they can stop the interview at any time, and they only have to answer the questions they want to answer. They were also assured that their replies would be kept confidential. Their responses will not be linked to them individually. The responses will be pooled together and results will be reported in aggregate form.

ACCESSIBILITY

The project team included funds in its budget sufficient to pay for communication accommodations necessary to conduct the focus groups; however, no accommodations were requested.

DATA ANALYSIS

The interviewers took notes as the interviews were conducted. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed by the trained REU researchers. Narratives were analyzed using content analysis for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents. Results were organized according to the prompts used to stimulate discussion of the needs of individuals with disabilities (e.g., barriers related to employment for individuals with disabilities and so forth). Themes or concerns that surfaced with consistency across individuals were identified and reported as consensual themes.

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

ESTIMATES OF THE TARGET POPULATION:

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated Georgia's 2017 total population to be 10,429,379, making Georgia the 21st largest state based on population. According to Georgia's Department of Community Health State Office of Rural Health, out of Georgia's 159 counties, 120 are designated as rural. Approximately 44% of the state's estimated population resides in the Metro Atlanta area.

The counties with the highest estimated population include Fulton (1,041,423), Gwinnett (920,260), Cobb (755,754), DeKalb (753,253), Chatham (290,501), Clayton (285,153), Cherokee (247,573), Forsyth (227,967), Henry (225,813), and Richmond (201,800).

The counties with the lowest estimated population include Taliaferro (1628), Quitman (2358), Webster (2605), Clay (3024), Glascock (3062), Baker (3200), Echols (3936), Schley (5213), Warren (5303) and Miller (5838).

GENDER CONSIDERATIONS

It is estimated that approximately 48.6% of Georgia's population is male and 51.4% is female, which is consistent with U.S. averages.

TABLE ON NEXT PAGE...

RESULTS

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

	U.S. (N= 325,719,178)		GEORGIA (N=10,429,379)	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
TOTAL POPULATION	160,402,504	165,316,674	5,070,721	5,358,658
PERCENTAGE (%)	49.2%	50.8%	48.6%	51.4%

AGE CONSIDERATIONS

As the table below shows, 40.8% of Georgia's population is estimated to be between the ages of 25 and 54, with close to 13% age 9 and younger. According to the 2017 ACS, the median age of Georgia's population is 36.8 years, which is slightly younger than the U.S. average.

The counties with the youngest median age (in years) include Bulloch (28.8), Chattahoochee (25.0), Clarke (28.1), and Liberty (28.1), whereas the median age is estimated to be 50 or older for Union County (53.8), Towns (53.3), Talbot (50.8), Quitman (52.2), McIntosh (50.3), Greene (50.1), and Fannin (50.8).

Similarly, on average, 13.4% of Georgia's population is 65 years and older; however, the counties with the highest percentage of individuals in this age range include: McIntosh (23.4%), Quitman (32.1%), Rabun (26.1%) Towns (33.6%), and Union (31.6%).

	U.S. POPULATION	GEORGIA POPULATION
TOTAL ALL AGES	325,719,178	10,429,379
AGE 9 AND YOUNGER	12.3%	12.9%
AGE 10 - 14 YEARS	6.5%	7.1%
AGE 15 - 19 YEARS	6.6%	7.1%
AGE 20 - 24 YEARS	6.7%	6.8%
AGE 25 - 34 YEARS	13.8%	13.6%
AGE 35 - 44 YEARS	12.6%	13.3%
AGE 45 - 54 YEARS	13.0%	13.3%
AGE 55 - 59 YEARS	6.7%	6.4%
AGE 60 - 64 YEARS	6.2%	5.7%
AGE 65 - 74 YEARS	9.1%	8.3%
AGE 75 - 84 YEARS	4.6%	3.8%
AGE 85 YEARS AND OVER	1.9%	1.3%

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

GEORGIA POPULATION ESTIMATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY

According to 2017 population estimates, approximately 32.2% of Georgia's overall population is African American/Black, compared to the national average of 13.9% (2017 ACS estimates). States with the same or higher percentage include Louisiana, Mississippi, and District of Columbia.

Georgia county populations with 55.1% or higher being African American include: Dekalb, Clayton, Rockdale, Taliaferro, Warren, Hancock, Richmond, Bibb, Talbot, Macon, Clay, Randolph, Terrell, Calhoun, Dougherty. It is estimated that 70.1% of Clayton, Hancock and Dougherty counties' population is African American/Black.

Georgia's estimated population of individuals with Hispanic or Latino ethnicity is considerably lower than the national average (9.3% versus 17.6%); however, there are 6 counties whose Hispanic/Latino population is estimated to be 21% to 34% of the counties' total population. These include Whitfield (34.2%), Echols (30%), Stewart (29.8%), Hall (28.6%), Atkinson (24.8%) and Gwinnett (21.2%).

RACE/ETHNICITY	U.S. POPULATION (N=321,004,407)	GEORGIA POPULATION (N=10,201,635)*
WHITE	75.7%	61.3%
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	13.9%	32.6%
AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE	1.7%	0.9%
ASIAN	6.3%	4.5%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN/OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	0.4%	0.2%
SOME OTHER RACE	5.4%	3.1%
HISPANIC OR LATINO (OF ANY RACE)	17.6%	9.3%

* **Note:** Total population estimates vary between 1 and 5 year estimates.

GEORGIA'S POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Georgia's population is expected to increase by 1.3 million people (12%) between 2016 and 2030, with close to 70% of that growth concentrated in a 10-county area surrounding Metro Atlanta. Other counties that are expected to have considerable growth include Columbia, Warren, Crisp, Camden, Atkinson, Coffee, Bacon, Long, Bulloch and Bryan.²

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

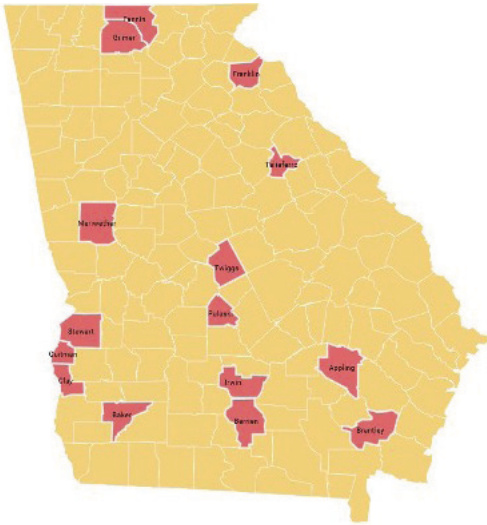
PREVALENCE OF DISABILITY IN GEORGIA:

To identify the prevalence of disability among individuals living in Georgia and their potential need for services through GVRA, population estimates were obtained using 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) data, an annual survey completed by the U.S. Census Bureau, as well as from other state-specific resources. The ACS uses the following questions to identify the prevalence and type of disability:

DISABILITY TYPE	ACS DISABILITY QUESTION
VISION	Is this person blind or does he/she have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?
HEARING	Is this person deaf or does he/she have serious difficulty hearing?
AMBULATORY	Does this person have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs?
COGNITIVE	Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does this person have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?
SELF-CARE	Does this person have difficulty dressing or bathing?
INDEPENDENT LIVING (ages 15 and older only)	Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, does this person have difficulty doing errands along such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping?

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN



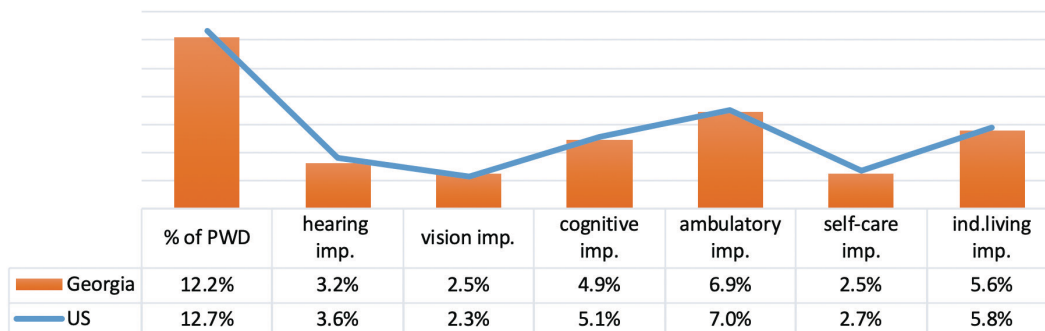
Based on the 2017 ACS data, it is estimated that 12.2% of Georgia's estimated total population (n=10,429,379) had a disability (all ages), which is consistent with the U.S. average of 12.7%.

However, according to the ACS estimates, in 16 counties in Georgia, the estimated population of individuals with disabilities is 20% or higher. These counties include: Madison (27%), Quitman (24.4%), Brantley (23.8%), Fannin (23%), Taliaferro (22.5%), Stewart (22.3%), Irwin (21.9%), Clay (21.7%), Twiggs (21.6%), Franklin (21.5%), Baker (21.3%), Meriwether (20.9%), Gilmer (20.5%), Pulaski (20.5%), Berrien (20.2%), and Appling (20.2%).

It should be noted that the estimated population of individuals aged 65 and older in Georgia is 13.4%; however, for the counties listed above, the estimated percentages range from 15% to 32%.

In regard to disability type, Georgia's population is estimated to have the most difficulty with **ambulation**, followed by difficulties with **independent living**. These estimates are also consistent with U.S. averages.

» Prevalence by Disability Type



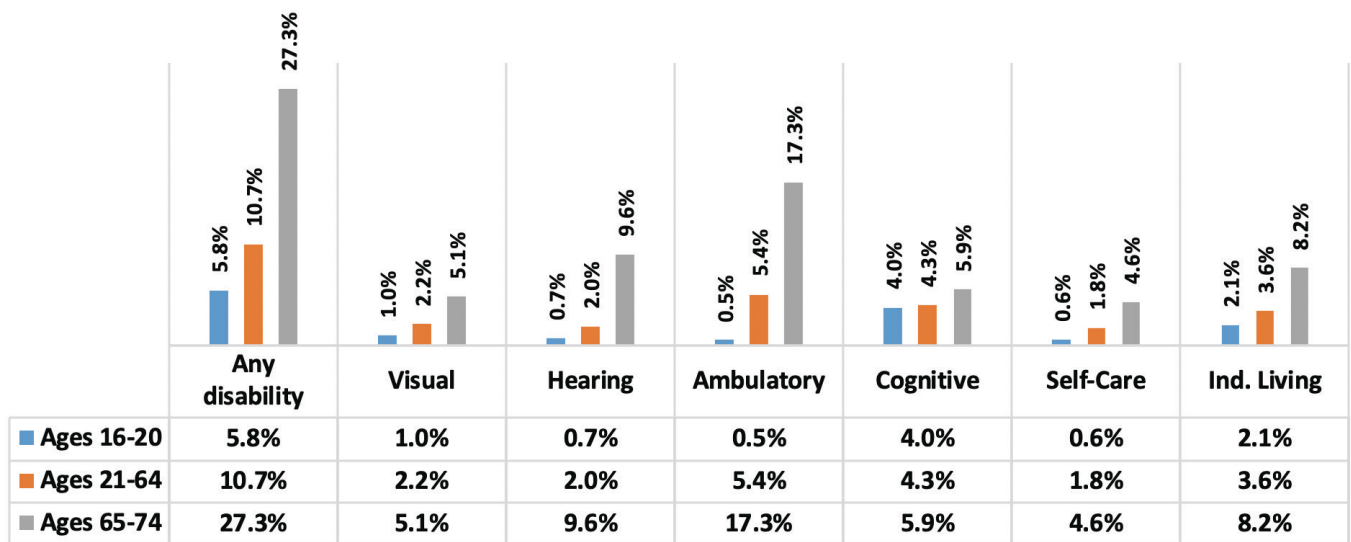
However, as shown on the next page, younger individuals, ages 16-20, are most likely to report having a cognitive disability. Individuals aged 65-74 report difficulties with ambulation at a much higher percentage of 17.3%.

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

» Prevalence by Age and Disability type

PREVALENCE OF DISABILITY AGES 16-74, 2017

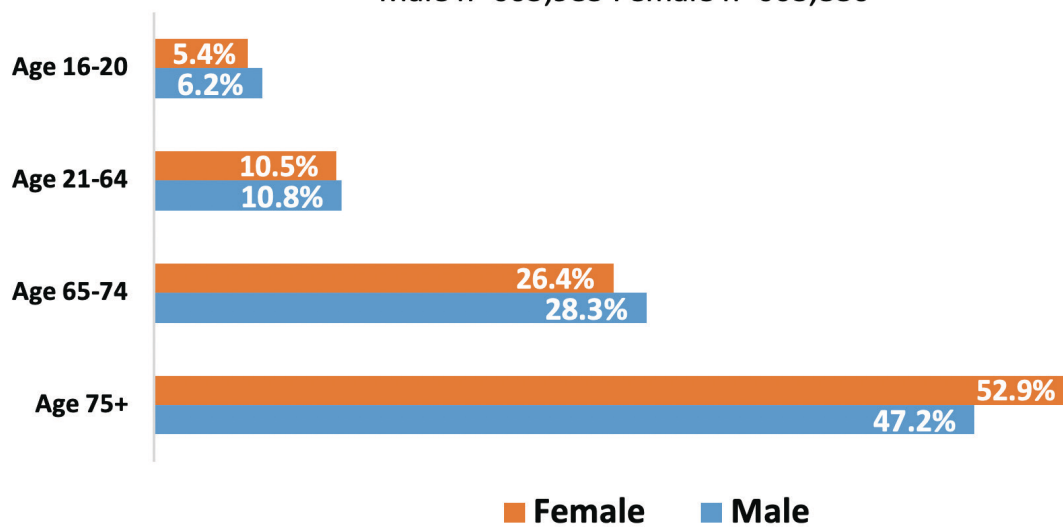


» Prevalence by Age and Gender

Based on 2017 ACS data, it is estimated that among all age groups, 12.4% of all females (n=5,353,872) and 11.9% of all males (n=5,075,507) in Georgia reported having a disability. As their age increases, the prevalence of disability increases equally among males and females.

Age and Gender Differences Among IWD

Male n=603,985 Female n=663,880



RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

» Prevalence by Race and Ethnicity

According to 2017 ACS data, the American Indian and Alaska Native populations have the highest percentage of individuals reporting a disability, for all ages and those of working age. Individuals age 18-64 years of age (working age) among the White or African American populations, are less likely to report having a disability compared to other ages within those populations.

	U.S.		GEORGIA	
RACE/ETHNICITY	TOTAL ESTIMATED POPULATION	PERCENTAGE (%) WITH DISABILITY	TOTAL ESTIMATED POPULATION	PERCENTAGE (%) WITH DISABILITY
WHITE ALONE all ages	233,140,300	13.2%	6,063,200	13.0%
WHITE ALONE age 18-64	143,189,600	10.3%	3,740,400	10.2%
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN ALONE all ages	40,322,600	14.0%	3,230,600	12.4%
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN ALONE age 18-64	25,565,800	13.1%	2,063,700	11.8%
AMERICAN INDIAN/ ALASKA NATIVE, ALONE all ages	2,635,606	17.4%	34,700	14.0%
AMERICAN INDIAN/ ALASKA NATIVE age 18-64	1,644,300	17.4%	23,000	15.0%
ASIAN, ALONE all ages	18,168,600	7.1%	412,800	5.6%
ASIAN, ALONE age 18-64	12,383,700	4.4%	288,100	4.2%
MORE THAN ONE RACE OR SOME OTHER RACE all ages	27,556,700	9.2%	548,900	7.5%
MORE THAN ONE RACE OR SOME OTHER RACE age 18-64	16,125,800	9.3%	292,000	8.2%
HISPANIC / LATINO, OF ANY RACE all ages	58,263,600	8.9%	989,100	5.6%
HISPANIC / LATINO age 18-64	35,661,100	8.1%	587,000	5.5%

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

PREVALENCE OF SPECIFIC IMPAIRMENTS IN GEORGIA

» **Prevalence of Mental Illness:**

The annual average of individuals aged 18 and older in Georgia with serious mental illness is estimated to be 336,000, which is equivalent to 4.25% of the state's 2017 estimated population for this age group.³ Additionally, according to the Georgia Department of Public Health Mental and Behavioral Disorders were the number one cause for inpatient hospital treatment for youth age 10-24 and adults age 25-44 from 2014-2018.⁴

» **Prevalence of Autism:**

A 2018 report by The Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network indicated statistically per 1,000 8-year-olds in Georgia, 17% are diagnosed with ASD.⁵ Based on annual population estimates by the U.S Census Bureau, Georgia's 8 year- old population in 2017 was 138,662; of which 17% would be 23,572.54. Similarly, findings from the 2016-2017 National Survey of Children's Health estimated 22,371.84 (or 3.2%) out of Georgia's total population of children, ages 3 through 17 (n=69,912), had a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder. This estimate is slightly higher than the U.S. average of 2.8%.⁶

» **Prevalence of Special Healthcare Needs:**

According to the Data Resource Center for Child & Adolescent Health, the percent of children with special health care needs in Georgia, ages 0 through 17, is estimated to be 20.5% (n=512,169) of the total population for that age group, compared to the national average of 18.8% (n=13,762,229). The percentage of adolescents, ages 12-17, with special healthcare needs is 14.0% (n=32,898), which is less than the national average of 16.7% (n=1,004,075).⁷

» **Prevalence of ADHD:**

2017-2018 National Survey of Children's Health data indicates that among the Georgia's total population of children ages 3-17, 12% have a current diagnosis of ADHD (n=253,301); of which 4.6% is rated as being mild, and 7.3% rated as being moderate to severe.

» **Prevalence of Arthritis:**

According to findings from the 2015 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, 41.73% of adults in Georgia age 18-64 are estimated to have a work limitation attributable to arthritis.⁸

» **Prevalence of Diabetes:**

2016 data from the U.S. Diabetes Surveillance System found 11.4 % of adults in Georgia aged 20 and older, are diagnosed with diabetes. As individuals age, the prevalence increases: age 45-64: 17.1%, age 65-74: 26.7%, age 75+: 27.9%.⁹

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

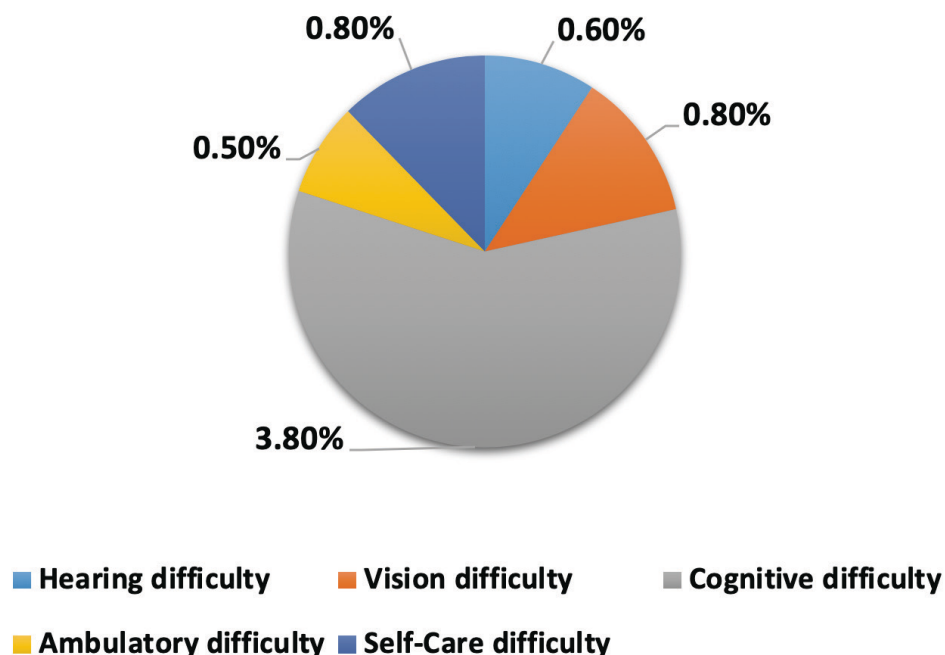
» **Prevalence of Traumatic Brain Injury:**

Per Emory University's TBI task force: "Traumatic brain injury is a silent epidemic and a major public health problem. Even mild TBI may result in family disruption, lost work time, and poor performance. In Georgia, over 50,000 people suffer from a traumatic brain injury and approximately 3,000 will sustain a permanent disability. Currently, an average of 150,000 people has a permanent disability as a result of a brain injury. The number of permanently brain-injured people in Georgia is larger than the number of residents in Athens, Georgia."¹⁰

» **Prevalence of Disability Among Youth with Disabilities:**

2013-2017 ACS 5-year data estimated 5.8% of Georgians, ages 0-17, had a disability (n=2,495,746). Among those with disabilities, cognitive difficulty is the most prevalent.

Note: Based on the margin of error used by ACS to derive population estimates, percentages may not add up to 100%.

» **Prevalence of disability based on special education enrollment in Georgia:**

During the 2018-2019 academic school year, 207,399 Georgia K-12 students were enrolled in special education services, which is approximately 7.4% of the estimated 2017 population of individuals ages 0 to 19. Eligibility for special education services is based on the disability and its impact on the student's learning and education.

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

DISABILITY CATEGORY	NUMBER OF STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIALIST EDUCATION SERVICES (N=129,084)
MILD INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY	4,215	32.7%
MODERATE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY	1,522	11.8%
SEVERE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY	81	<1%
PROFOUND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY	19	<1%
EMOTIONAL-BEHAVIOR DISORDER	5,269	4.1%
SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY	69,322	53.7%
ORTHOPEDIC	17	<1%
AUTISM	15,541	12.0%
DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY	16,383	12.7%
OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT	26,301	20.4%
SPEECH-LANGUAGE	19,371	15.0%

***Note:** According to GDOE's Public Use Data guidelines regarding student privacy, data pertaining to enrollment based on Traumatic Brain Injury or Vision/Hearing impairments was not available due to enrollment numbers not meeting FERPA guidelines.

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

» **Preschool Disabilities Services:**

The Preschool Disabilities Services program, administered by GDOE, provides funding to local school systems to support the inclusion of preschoolers, ages three and four, who have disabilities, in general education settings. During SFY 19, this program served 9,894 preschoolers with disabilities.

» **State Schools Serving Youth with Sensory Disabilities:**

State schools serving students with sensory disabilities, grades 1-12, include the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf (AASD), the Georgia Academy for the Blind (GAB), the Georgia School for the Deaf (GSD), and the Georgia Parent Infant Network for Educational Services (GA PINES), an early intervention program for children under five with a suspected hearing or vision impairment.

Note: (SFY19 enrollment) The count below does not represent those who attend local schools.

- Atlanta Area School for the Deaf: **194**
- Georgia Academy for the Blind: **101**
- Georgia School for the Deaf: **75**

SSDI & SSI RECIPIENTS IN GEORGIA

The Social Security Administration pays disability benefits to individuals who are unable to work due to a mental, physical, or medical condition that is expected to last more than a year or result in death. Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) is the benefit Individuals with disabilities would receive if they have worked long enough and paid Social Security taxes. Supplemental Security Income pays benefits based on financial need and is generally for those with limited work history. Some recipients receive both benefits.

According to the Social Security Administration, in 2017, 282,646 individuals aged 18-64, received SSDI based on having a disability and 191,169 received SSI during 2017. Also, that year, 6,421 individuals under 18 received SSI child benefits based on their disability. The average monthly cash benefit for SSDI in 2017 was \$1198.30 and \$735.00 for SSI recipients.¹¹

As one would expect, the percentage of individuals who receive SSI or SSDI is greater when using the estimated population of people with disabilities:

YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AGE 0-17, 2017		ADULTS OF WORKING AGE WITH DISABILITIES AGE 18-64, 2017		
EST. POPULATION W/ DISABILITY (S)	PERCENTAGE RECEIVING SSI	EST. POPULATION W/ DISABILITY (S)	PERCENTAGE RECEIVING SSI	PERCENTAGE RECEIVING SSDI
98,797	43.60%	669,968	28.5%	42.1%

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Based on the estimated population of individuals in Georgia with a disability age 18-64 (n=669,968), in total, 71.2% received one or both entitlement benefits in 2017, as a result of their disability (See table on the previous page). Of those, an estimated 42% received SSDI and 28.5% received SSI. Additionally, during 2017 only 3.8% (n=7,350) of the SSI recipients age 18-64 in Georgia were employed while receiving benefits.

Once awarded, SSI and SSDI, individuals have the option to work while continuing to receive benefits, particularly if they utilize work incentives options that are available through SSA. Despite the opportunity to access these incentives a low percentage of workers who receive benefits take advantage of them.

Among the 7,350 workers who received SSI during 2017, there were:

- 8 users of the Plans for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) incentive (.10%)
- 133 users of the Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE) incentive (1.8%)
- 15 users of the Blind Work Expenses (BWE) incentive (.20%)

THE TICKET TO WORK PROGRAM AND BENEFIT COUNSELING

Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program, is a free program for individuals age 18-64 who receive SSDI and/or SSI and want to work. These services include benefit counseling, career planning/counseling, job search and placement, ongoing employment supports, training programs, legal support and advocacy, and others.

Individuals who choose to participate in this program, assign their "ticket" to one of several types of service provider, depending on their needs. Provider types include Employment Network service providers (EN), Workforce Employment Network service provider (WF), which is the state's public workforce system, the state's vocational rehabilitation program, the Work Incentive and Planning Assistance (WIPA) program or the state's Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) program.

Currently, there are 55 EN's who provide services in Georgia, some of whom are national organizations and others are local community providers.

Social Security Administration's WIPA program is one that provides community-based Work Incentive expertise and benefit counseling to recipients of SSDI or SSI benefits based on their disability. The goal of the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) program is to provide beneficiaries with the information needed so that they can make an informed choice regarding employment.

GVRA and The Shepherd Center both have SSA-funded WIPA programs. The Shepherd Center provides benefit counseling services in 40 counties in and around Metro Atlanta, as well as in the northwestern and Northwest and northeastern part of the state. GVRA provides benefit counseling to individuals living in the remaining 119 counties in the state.

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Information regarding utilization of Employment Network services or WIPA services in Georgia could not be located.

The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) also has a benefits counseling program called SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery), which is specifically geared for individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have a mental health impairment and/or substance abuse disorder. According to DBHDD's website, SOAR trained staff are available in each of DBHDD's six regions throughout the state.¹²

INCOME & POVERTY

The Georgia Budget & Policy Institute (GBPI) reported in February 2019 that 3.6 million individuals in Georgia live below 200 percent of the federal poverty level or make \$24,000 a year or less. Georgia's poverty rate is estimated to be 20.7%, which is considerably higher than the national average of 14.6%.¹³

Furthermore, as shown below, sixteen (16) counties in Georgia have an estimated poverty rate of 30% or higher, based on 2016 poverty rates. Nine of these counties are estimated to have half or more of their population that is African American/Black. Thirteen of these counties each have 100 or more small farm operations, with Bulloch county with the highest number of farms (478),¹⁴ according to 2017 USDA Agriculture Statistics.

COUNTY	POVERTY RATE (2016)	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION AFRICAN AMERICAN/BLACK
STEWART	41.5%	50%
CLAY	41.4%	64.3%
CLINCH	39.5%	27.1%
TERRELL	35.3%	59.8%
RANDOLPH	35.1%	61.4%
CLARKE	34.1%	28.3%
SUMTER	33.4%	53.2%
CALHOUN	32.3%	60.8%
CANDLER	31.5%	24.6%
CRISP	31.2%	44.5%
TALIAFERRO	31%	56.6%
JENKINS	30.7%	43.6%
DOUGHERTY	30.5%	70.2%
BEN HILL	30.4%	35.9%
BULLOCH	30.4%	29.6%
HANCOCK	30%	71.2%

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

According to 2017 ACS population estimates, the median household income in Georgia is \$56,183, which is slightly less than the national average of \$57,562. The five counties that are estimated to have had the highest household income in 2017 include Forsyth (\$96,445), Fayette (\$84,861), Oconee (\$77,388), Cherokee (\$75,477) and Columbia (\$74,162).

In contrast, the five counties that are estimated to have had the lowest household income include Clinch (\$21,838), Stewart (\$22,413), Clay (\$23,315), Quitman (\$26,750) and Jenkins (\$27,197).

Developed by the University of Washington in 1996, the Self-Sufficiency Standard¹⁵ is a tool widely used by researchers and economists to define the *“amount of income necessary to meet basic needs (including taxes), without public subsidies and without private/informal assistance.”* Based on this measure, the GBPI report indicated that in Georgia, a typical household with one adult and one child, needed approximately \$50,000 a year to cover basic expenses, assuming 2,080 hours for a full-time worker, which is higher than the estimated median earnings of workers in Georgia.

Note: Median earnings only includes wages from employment, whereas median household income is income from all sources.

ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLD INCOME AMONG GEORGIAN’S WITH DISABILITIES

Using 2017 ACS 5-year estimates, table on the next page, reflects 12-month earnings among individuals, age 16 and over, with and without disabilities, which shows individuals with disabilities are more likely to earn considerably less than those without disabilities.

Similarly, the estimated 2017 median earnings for a Georgia worker with a disability was estimated to be \$22,895 compared to \$31,474 for workers without disabilities, which is consistent with the national average.

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

INCOME	UNITED STATES		GEORGIA	
	WITH DISABILITY n=10,439,359	NO DISABILITY n= 155,317,404	WITH DISABILITY n= 306,560	NO DISABILITY n=4,754,561
\$1 TO \$4,999 OR LESS	17.1%	9.6%	15.9%	9.9%
\$5,000 TO \$14,999	21.1%	14.7%	21.0%	15.1%
\$15,000 TO \$24,999	15.2%	14.3%	15.9%	15.3%
\$25,000 TO \$34,999	12.1%	13.2%	12.8%	14.1%
\$35,000 TO \$49,999	12.3%	15.1%	13.2%	15.4%
\$50,000 TO \$74,999	11.7%	15.9%	11.8%	15.2%
\$75,000 OR MORE	10.4%	17.3%	9.5%	15.1%
MEDIAN EARNINGS	\$22,274	\$32,924	\$22,895	\$31,474

GEORGIA'S LABOR MARKET PARTICIPATION

According to the Georgia Department of Labor data, labor participation rate among Georgia's total population aged 16 and older is estimated to have been 62.4% in 2017, with the employment to population rate being 57.7%, which is slightly lower than the national rate of 58.9%. Additionally, during the 4th quarter of 2018, close to 4.5 million individuals were employed, and on average earned a weekly wage of \$1,144.¹⁶

For 2018, five out of the top ten counties in Georgia with the highest (non-farm) employment levels among individuals age 16 and older are those in the Metro area (Fulton, Cobb, Gwinnett, DeKalb, and Clayton), accounting for 45.5% of the estimated employment. The remaining five counties with the highest employment are Chatham, Richmond, Muscogee, Hall, and Bibb. The counties with the lowest employment in 2018 were Taliaferro, Quitman, Glascock, Baker and Webster, two of which also have the highest percentage of individuals aged 65 and older in comparison to the state average, using 2017 population estimates.

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS AMONG PWD

Nationally, for years 2017-2018, individuals without disabilities, age 16 and older, are over three times more likely to be employed than those with disabilities (19% versus 6.5%).¹⁷ Regardless of disability status, women are less likely to be employed than men. However, there is a larger gap in employment rates between men with disabilities and men without as compared to the gap between women with disabilities and women without.

The following table reflects national trends of employment among individuals with disabilities, age 16 and older, of different races, and ethnic backgrounds. As reported in the 2018 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Report on Persons with a Disability Labor Force Characteristics:

- African Americans with disabilities are the least likely to be employed, compared to the other races/ethnic populations
- Individuals with disabilities with Hispanic or Latino ethnic backgrounds who have disabilities are most likely to be employed compared to all other race groups

RACE	U.S. POPULATION WITH A DISABILITY, AGE 16 AND OLDER	PERCENTAGE EMPLOYED	PERCENTAGE UNEMPLOYED
WHITE	23,987,000	19.5%	7.3%
BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	4,151,000	16.3%	11.2%
ASIAN	878,000	17.1%	7.1%
HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY	3,258,000	20.9%	9.8%

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT AMONG WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

Nationally, according to the US BLS Community Population Survey data for years 2017-2019,¹⁸ the factor related to the lowest employment rate among individuals with disabilities is the lack of a high school diploma (or equivalent). In fact, Individuals with disabilities age 25 and above with less than a high school diploma are close to 5 times less likely to be employed than those without disabilities. (9.2% vs 53.9%).

- Individuals age 25 and older without disabilities who have a bachelor's degree or higher are 169% more likely to be employed than those with disabilities who have the same education level.
- Individuals with disabilities who have a bachelor's degree or higher are twice as likely to be employed compared to their counterpart who have less than a high school diploma (9.2% vs 28.1%).

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

State level data related to education level among workers with disabilities is limited to data collected by the American Community Survey (ACS). As shown below, both nationally and in Georgia, individuals with disabilities, age 25 and older, are more likely to have not completed high school and are less likely to have above a high school diploma, compared to individuals without a disability.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT ESTIMATES, 2017	UNITED STATES		GEORGIA	
	WITH DISABILITY	NO DISABILITY	WITH DISABILITY	NO DISABILITY
POPULATION AGE 25 AND OVER	34,915,916	177,302,353	1,082,252	5,463,429
LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	22.1%	10.5%	24.3%	11.3%
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE (INCLUDES EQUIVALENCY)	34.4%	25.8%	34.3%	26.6%
SOME COLLEGE OR ASSOCIATE DEGREE	27.5%	29.4%	26.1%	28.8%
BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER	16.3%	34.2%	15.3%	33.3%

GEORGIA'S EMPLOYMENT-POPULATION RATIO FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

According to 2017 & 2018 ACS population estimates for Georgia, approximately 14 % of Georgia's population aged 16 and older had a disability for each of those years, which is consistent with United States overall statistics for the same age group.

Additionally, as shown in the following table, it is estimated that on average, only 23% of individuals with disabilities age 16 and over were employed (22% in 2017, 24% in 2018), compared to an average of 66% employment rate among individuals without disabilities.

2017		2018	
WITH DISABILITY N=1,154,715	NO DISABILITY N=6,643,256	WITH DISABILITY N=1,160,698	NO DISABILITY N=6,968,233
EMPLOYED: 22.0%	EMPLOYED: 65.5%	EMPLOYED: 24.1%	EMPLOYED: 67.1%
NOT IN LABOR FORCE: 74.2%	NOT IN LABOR FORCE: 29.6%	NOT IN LABOR FORCE: 73.1%	NOT IN LABOR FORCE: 29.8%

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

GEORGIA'S CURRENT EMPLOYMENT TRENDS BY OCCUPATION

Georgia Department of Labor data indicates the total employment for 2019 was 4,471,860. Employment trends within the state according to the percentage of jobs per Standard Occupational Category (SOC) major grouping reflect **Office and Administrative Support Occupations** had the highest number of employed workers in the state during 2019. Examples of specific types of jobs within this category include Bookkeepers, Office Clerks, Mail Clerks and Customer Service Representatives (excluding retail sales). Among state employment, jobs related to **Transportation and Material Moving** were the second most prevalent, which includes jobs such as Heavy/Tractor-Trailer Truck Driving, Fork-Lift Operators and Cargo Handlers.¹⁹

The table below reflects the top 15 detailed occupations with the highest employment in Georgia during 2019, along with both the average hourly and annual wages:

SOC DETAILED OCCUPATION	TOTAL EMPLOYMENT	AVG. HOURLY	AVG. ANNUAL
Retail Salespersons	143,080	\$12.59	\$26,190
Fast Food and Counter Workers	135,320	\$9.51	\$19,780
Laborers/ Freight, Stock & Material Movers, Hand	127,990	\$14.07	\$29,270
Cashiers	115,640	\$10.31	\$21,450
Customer Service Representatives	112,130	\$16.85	\$35,050
Waiters & Waitresses	84,490	\$10.37	\$21,570
General & Operations Managers	83,090	\$54.23	\$112,800
Registered Nurses	75,430	\$33.46	\$69,590
Office Clerks, General	73,860	\$15.67	\$32,600
Secretaries & Admin. Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, Executive	65,440	\$16.63	\$34,580
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	63,010	\$21.83	\$45,410
Miscellaneous Assemblers & Fabricators	60,010	\$14.48	\$30,120
Stockers & Order Fillers	57,900	\$13.01	\$27,070
Janitors & Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	54,920	\$11.89	\$24,720
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	50,250	\$27.98	\$58,190

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

GEORGIA'S LABOR MARKET PROJECTIONS²⁰**GEORGIA'S HOT CAREERS 2016-2026**

Georgia Department of Labor's Office of Workforce Statistics defines "Hot Jobs" as those that are growing faster average annual growth than state annual average growth in terms of employment, as well as having average wages above the state annual average wage. Listed below are the top 10 jobs in Georgia projected to have the most annual openings are listed below, eight of which require a bachelor's degree (see Appendix G for full list).

CAREER	2016-2026 ANNUAL OPENINGS	LEVEL OF EDUCATION NEEDED
General & Operations Managers	8,910	Bachelor's degree
Sales Reps, Wholesale & Mfg., Except Tech & Scientific Products	6,590	High School Diploma or equiv.
Registered Nurses	5,410	Bachelor's degree
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Ed.	4,650	Bachelor's degree
Accountants & Auditors	4,200	Bachelor's degree
Sales Reps, Services, All Other	4,050	High School Diploma or equiv.
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	3,650	Bachelor's degree
Management Analysts	2,650	Bachelor's degree
Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	2,650	Bachelor's degree
Middle School Teachers, Except Special & Career/Tech Ed.	2,420	Bachelor's degree
Software Developer, Applications	2,300	Bachelor's degree

GEORGIA'S INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

- Key industries that are in-demand and critical to Georgia's economic growth have been identified by the Georgia Department of Economic Development and Office of Workforce Development. These industries include: Aerospace, Agribusiness, Business Services, Construction, Education, Energy & Environment, Entertainment, Hospitality and Tourism, Information Technology, Life Sciences (Healthcare), Logistics and Manufacturing.²¹
- The top five industries that are expected to have the most growth, in terms of employment between 2016-2026, are Healthcare related (Outpatient Care Centers (52.2% increase), Retirement Communities and Assisted Living (45.5% increase), Individual and Family Services (41.1% increase), Offices of Other Health practitioners (31.6%), Retail Sales (30.4%).²²

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

- Many of the high demand occupations require technical skills, particularly in jobs related to advanced manufacturing; however, according to the National Skills Coalition, 54% of Georgia's current labor market require skills training beyond high school but not necessarily a four year degree; however, it is estimated that because of lack of access, only 42% of Georgia's workforce have had the skills training and education needed to fill-in demand jobs.²³

However, among the industries that are projected to have the most job losses include Department Stores, Wired Telecommunication Carriers, Newspaper, Periodical, & Book Publishers, and Textile Furnishings Mills.

OCCUPATIONAL TRENDS AMONG GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES

In regards to occupational trends among workers in Georgia who have disabilities, data is limited to American Community Survey estimates, as there is not a public-use database available in Georgia where state agencies or programs providing employment services to individuals with disabilities report outcomes, including details of employment obtained by their consumers.

According to 2017 and 2018 ACS data, on average, the occupational groups with the highest percentage of workers with disabilities include Management, Business, Science and Arts (29.8%) and Sales and Office (24.3%), which is consistent with U.S. percentages.

For both individuals with disabilities and those without, the industries with the highest employment among workers age 16 and older are Education/ Healthcare/ Social Assistance and Retail. However, it should be noted that the percentage rate for employment in the retail industry is higher for individuals with disabilities than for individuals without disabilities.

In regard to alternative work situations, 2017-2018 estimates indicate individuals with disabilities are more likely to engage in self-employment than individuals without disabilities.

SELF EMPLOYMENT AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

2017				2018			
US		GA		US		GA	
IWD	NO DIS	IWD	NO DIS	IWD	NO DIS	IWD	NO DIS
8,600,890	141,981,761	253,742	4,351,666	8,770,789	143,951,282	260,853	4,459,065
11.6%	9.3%	11.8%	9.5%	11.7%	9.4%	11.9%	9.4%

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

GEORGIANS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

WIOA and The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, defines an **Individual with a Significant Disability** as one who has a physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; and whose expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time.

An Individual with a **Most Significant Disability** is one who further meets additional criteria set by the state VR agency. Georgia's VR Program defines an individual with a most significant disability as one who has: *limitations in 3 or more functional capacity areas and requires multiple VR services over 3 or more months; or is receiving supported employment services.*

GEORGIA'S POPULATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

- The number of Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency clients identified as an 'Individual with a Most Significant Disability' in SFY 19 was 15,807, which is 51.57% of total VR clients for that year, per reports received from GVRA.
- According to the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD), the population of people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in 2017 was estimated to be 148,883.²⁴
- Population estimates for 2017 indicated there were 107,500 individuals (+/-7,470), age 18-64, reporting a self-care disability (defined as difficulty dressing or bathing). Additionally, 227,600 individuals (+/- 10,810), age 18-64, reported having an independent living disability (defined as having difficulty doing errands alone due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition).
- According to Georgia's Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission, during 2017, 27,145 individuals, aged 0-99, experienced a Traumatic Brain Injury, Spinal Cord Injury, or both. Of those, 49% (13,279) were of working age (20-64).²⁵
- According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, during 2017-2018, an estimated 336,000 individuals in Georgia, age 18 and older, experienced serious mental illness within the past year.²⁶

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

WIOA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, defines supported employment as a means for individuals with significant disabilities to obtain competitive, integrated employment, that is *individualized and customized consistent with the strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice of the individuals involved*.

» **Supported Employment through GVRA**

According to GVRA's VR Program Policy Manual, Supported Employment Policy (416.2.01):

"Supported Employment is competitive work performed on a full-time or part-time basis; in an integrated work setting that is paid at or above minimum wage, but not less than the customary or usual wage paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled. Placement in an enclave or group setting is not considered employment in an integrated setting."

GVRA utilizes three models of supported employment (SE) for which to provide SE services:

- **Traditional Supported Employment** which is used for individuals who qualify for supported employment services and need intensive job coaching, ongoing supports and extended supports but are not in need of job carving/job negotiation.
- **Customized Supported Employment** is for those who have the most significant disabilities, who would not likely benefit from or have been unsuccessful in the past with traditional supported employment and will require individually negotiated employment. CSE emphasizes a person-centered discovery process that leads to competitive integrated employment that was negotiated/carved to best meet the job seeker and employer's needs.
- **Individual Placement and Supports (IPS)** is a specific evidence-based model that was developed for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. This model places an individual into employment as soon as possible, as it is believed that the employment is an essential component of recovery. Supported Employment services are integrated and coordinated with mental health treatment and vocational rehabilitation services.

According to reports provided by GVRA, between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019 (SFY 19), a total of \$6,670,100 was spent on SE services which were provided by 94 vendors throughout the state.

Note: Funds utilized may have been from other budget years. Additionally, the following trends were noted within these reports:

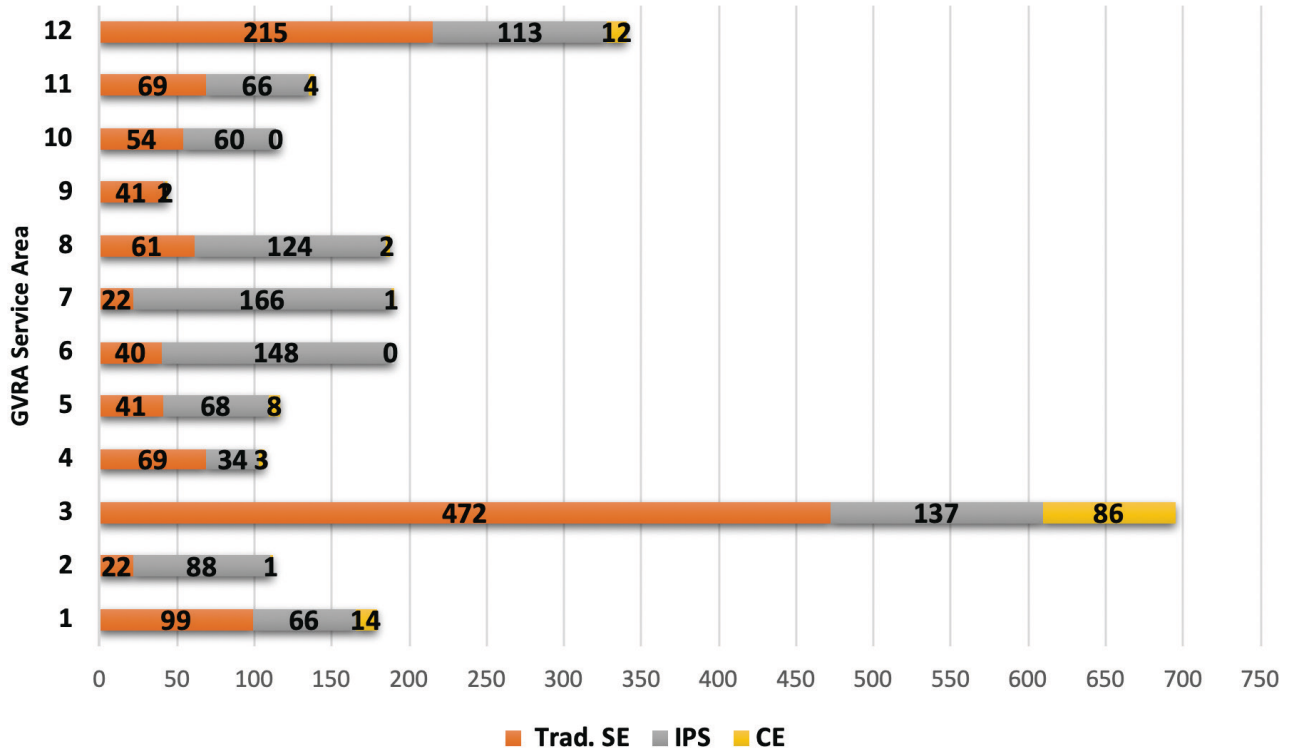
- Through GVRA's VR program, 2409 individuals with significant disabilities received supported employment services.

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

- The traditional supported employment model was utilized for 50% of the total VR clients receiving SE services in SFY19 (n=1205), 44% received evidenced-based SE services (Individual Placement and Supports (IPS))(n=1071), and 6% received customized supported employment services (n=133).
- Of the VR clients receiving SE services in FY2019, 321 cases were closed successfully in employment, which accounts for 18% of all successful closures in SFY 19 (n=1788). Jobs obtained were most commonly in occupations related to office and administrative support, food preparation and serving, building and grounds cleaning/maintenance, as well as in transportation & material moving occupations.
- As shown in the following graph, VR clients receiving supported employment services in GVRA's Service Area 3, account for 29% of all supported employment VR clients statewide. Counties within Service Area 3 include Fulton, Dekalb, Gwinnett, Rockdale, Douglas, Cobb, Cherokee, Fayette, Clayton, and Henry.

Number of VR Clients per SE Model by VR Service Area



RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

» **Supported Employment through DBHDD**

As the state administrator of CMS waiver services, the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Division of Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) funds supported employment services for adults with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities, as well as for adolescents and young adults in some areas. For those not eligible for CMS waiver funding, state-funded Family Support Services, may also be an option.

During SFY18, 1959 individuals received supported employment services funded by the DD division of DBHDD. This is 11.2% of the total individuals served by the division that year. The following year, 1,904 individuals received supported employment, which was only 10.4% of the total individuals served that FY (n=18,306).²⁷

According to data from the Georgia 2017-2018 National Core Indicators (NCI) Adult In-Person Survey, 6% (n=27.9) of the 465 respondents receiving DD funded services indicated they had a job in the community, 45% of which was an individual job with supports and 21% was a “group” job, with or without supports. Whereas, 78% of the respondents indicated they attended a day program or workshop.²⁸

Additionally, the Behavioral Health (BH) Division of DBHDD provides funding for evidenced-based supported employment services, also known as Individual Placement and Supports (IPS), for individuals meeting the definition of “severe and persistent mental illness.” These services are primarily conducted by employment specialists employed by a regional community service board (CSB) organizations or contracted provider.

In 2010, Georgia entered into a settlement with the US Department of Justice to serve DD and BH consumers in the most integrated community setting possible. Within the settlement decree the state BH division was required to implement IPS supported employment services statewide and meet specified annual utilization goals for the number of individuals receiving supported employment services.

During SFY 18, 123,682 adults received community mental health services. Of those, 2% (n=2923) received IPS supported employment services. For both SFY 18 and 19, on average 32% of those enrolled in supported employment are competitively employed.²⁹

» **Extended Follow-Up**

A long-standing challenge for GVRA’s supported employment providers is the expectation that they will provide extended services to the individuals for the life of the job, following VR case closure. Extended services are not only one of the hallmark components of supported employment, it is also federally mandated. However, upon VR case closure, SE providers are not longer able to receive payment for their services, unless the individual is eligible for long-term supports through the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability.

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As result, GVRA providers who are not also providers of DBHDD are reluctant to expand their offerings of supported employment, which impacts the availability of the best practice service for those who don't have Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities, but are still in need of the services, such as those who acquired a traumatic brain injury or spinal cord injury as an adult.

ACCESSING WAIVER SERVICES IN GEORGIA

The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) maintains a short term and long-term “waiting” list for waiver services, which the state uses to prioritize services based on need. Individuals are placed on these lists once they have been found eligible for services but are awaiting funding.

- As of August 2019, 6,048 individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities were awaiting needed waiver services. Of those, 3,283 were on the short-term planning list and 2,765 were on the long-term planning list.
- Supported Employment services was identified as a needed service for 25% of all those on the waiting list. This includes 450 individuals on the short-term planning list, and 379 individuals on the long-term planning list.
- Among DBHDD's six regions for service delivery, Region 3 (Atlanta area), Region 4 (South West Georgia) and Region 6 (West Central Georgia) have the greatest number of individuals needing Supported Employment service.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Individuals with the most significant disabilities often need assistive technology and rehabilitation engineering services in order to perform tasks, access their environment, and live independently.

GVRA is one of the few state VR programs that prioritize Assistive Work Technology (AWT) services by having a dedicated internal unit of rehabilitation engineers, assistive work technologists and occupational therapists who provide direct services to VR clients throughout the state. Recommendations made by this unit addresses issues related to accommodations and/or assistive technology needed to drive independently, participate in training, perform essential job tasks or to improve accessibility within their home.

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For a VR client to receive AWT services, the VR Professional overseeing the case must identify the need and initiate a referral to the AWT unit, as well as authorize the purchase of the equipment, services or other items that were recommended.

During SFY 19, approximately \$1,237,250.00 was spent on services related to assistive technology and/or rehabilitation engineering for 370 VR clients. Note that this number may be higher as there are many services and purchases made on behalf of clients that may have been for AT purposes. Findings from the 2017 VR Counselor Needs Assessment conducted by IHDD's REU unit, showed that among the participating VR Counselors, 41% did not feel confident at all or not very confident in their competency regarding Assistive Technology/Rehabilitation Engineering. Furthermore, 30% either infrequently or had never implemented or been involved with assistive technology.

Housed at the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), Georgia Tools for Life (GATFL) is Georgia's Assistive Technology (AT) Act Program. As required by federal legislation, Tools for Life provides AT demonstration, AT assessments, funding education, AT & durable medical equipment reuse, and training for individuals and groups. Additionally, in partnership with four organizations serving as AT Resource Centers, the Tools for Life Assistive Technology Network provides statewide AT lending services so that individuals can "try out" various equipment before purchasing.³⁰

During 2019 GATFL assisted 66 individuals obtain financial loans to purchase AT devices, 36.4% (n=24) of which were related to daily living activities and 33.3% (n=22) was for vehicle modification.³¹

University of Georgia's Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD), is the administrator of Georgia's AgrAbility Project, which is a national assistive technology program funded by USDA. The goal of the grant is to help farmers with disabilities continue in or return to their production agriculture operation by providing assistive technology recommendations to improve farm accessibility, safety and independence in completing farm tasks. The Georgia AgrAbility Project works directly with field VR staff to facilitate the farmers in receiving the recommended assistive technology.

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GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED GEORGIA VETERANS

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), as of 9/30/2017, the estimated number of veterans in Georgia was 697,127, which is approximately 9% of the state's total population of individuals age 18 and older, putting Georgia among the top 10 states with the highest population of Veterans. As shown in the table below, the percentage of veterans who are 65 and older is 38% compared to the U.S. average of 47%, signifying that the majority (62%) of Georgia's veteran population is estimated to be aged 18-64, and of working age. Additionally, women accounted for 12.73% of Georgia's total veteran population in 2017, which ranked Georgia among the top 5 states with the highest female veteran population.

	U.S.	GEORGIA
Number of Veterans	19,998,799	697,127
% of adult population, age 18 and older, that are veterans	6.60%	8.98%
% of veterans age 65 and older	47.05%	38.08%
Number of women veterans	1,882,848	88,735
% of women veterans among total veteran population	9.41%	12.73%

Using 2017 county population estimates for individuals 18 and older, along with Veteran Affairs estimates for same year, the counties with the highest population of veterans, in ranking order: Liberty: 14,152 (32% of adult population), Chattahoochee: 1,827 (22% of adult population), Camden: 7,712 (19% of adult population), and Houston: 20,776 (18% of adult population).

The 2018 VA data showed among the veterans in Georgia (n=697,127), 28% received compensation for a service-connected disability. Of these, 16% (n=32,427) had a 100% disability rating. Counties that had 40% or more of their veteran population receiving disability compensation: Hancock (40%), Liberty (54%), Long (44%), Muscogee (44%). Quitman (42%), Richmond (43%) and Chattahoochee (56%). Majority of those counties have a lower than average percentage of their population that is age 65 and older with the exception of Quitman (32%) and Hancock (21%) counties.

According to a report by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, in FY2017, approximately 7.3 million veterans nationally used a least one benefit provided by the Veterans Benefits Administration, of which, their Vocational Rehabilitation program was the least utilized, accounting for 1.3% of the benefits received.³²

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Of the 30648 VR clients in SFY19, 1292 were identified as being veterans, accounting for 4.2% of total VR clients for that year. Additionally, 75% (n=922) of the veterans receiving VR services in SFY19 identified as being male, and 36.6% (n=473) had a mental health or substance abuse disability listed as their primary impairment. Of the Veterans whose VR case was successfully closed in employment (n=65), four (4) had received Supported Employment in using the Individual Placement and Supports model, which is the evidence-based model for those with severe and persistent mental illness.

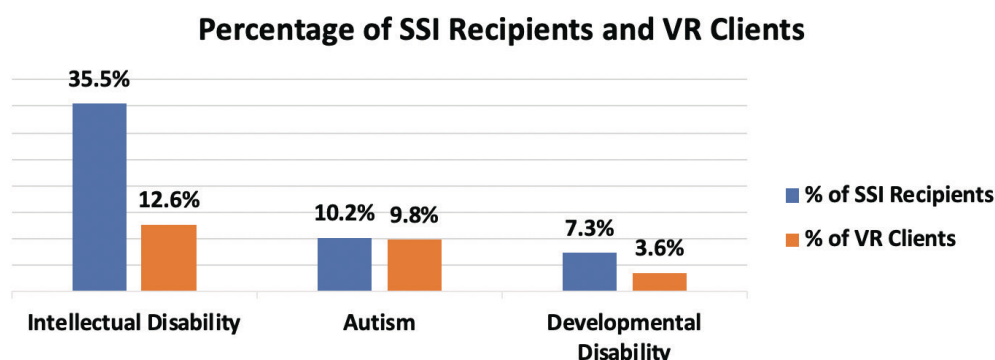
In regards to Veterans with disabilities receiving employment services through other entities, it is noted in the National Mental Health Services Survey Profile for Georgia that, among the mental health treatment facilities reporting (n=219), 13.7% (n=30) reported offering vocational rehabilitation services, 23.7% (n=52) reported offering supported employment services. Of the 77,784 of the total clients in mental health treatment statewide between May 1, 2017 and April 30, 2018, approximately 9% identified themselves as a military veteran.

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES/COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

According to Social Security Administration reports, 35.5% (n=37,593) of the total SSI recipients under the age of 65 (n=105,896) received benefits due to an Intellectual Disability in December 2018. Additionally, 10.2% (n=10,801) of the recipients received benefits due to Autism and 7.3% (n=7,730) due to having a Developmental Disability. Furthermore, 34.6% of the total SSI recipients who worked (n=236,080) were individuals with an Intellectual Disability.

VR client data for SY19 listed Intellectual Disability as the primary cause of the client's impairment for 3707 cases (12.6% of total VR clients). Additionally, 2879 cases listed Autism as the primary cause of the impairment (9.8% of the total VR clients), and 1057 cases listed Developmental Disability related conditions as the primary cause (Cerebral Palsy and Congenital/Birth Conditions), which were 3.6% of the total VR clients.

As shown in the graph below, the number of individuals served by VR with Intellectual Disability as the primary cause of an impairment is significantly less than the number of individuals receiving SSI benefits based on that impairment.



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Additionally, 18,306 individuals with an Intellectual and/or Developmental Disability received services from the Developmental Disabilities division of DBHDD during SFY 19.

Data from Georgia's 2017-2018 National Core Indicators (NCI) Adult In-Person Survey revealed that among the consumers receiving DD services, only 72 out of 225 respondents (32%) who did not have a job in the community, wanted one; and 37 out of 463 (8%) had community employment as a goal in their service plan. Findings from SFY19 quality reviews of DBHDD providers conducted by the Georgia Collaborative Administrative Services Organization showed that only 27% of providers met the expectation for documentation related to supporting individuals in seeking competitive integrated employment, and that half of the provider staff interviewed "had not actually provided options for competitive employment."³³

INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT AND/OR COMPLEX DISABILITIES

Feedback collected during the 2017 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Community Rehabilitation Program Needs Assessment that was completed by IHDD's Research and Evaluation Unit indicated that both VR Counselors and the Community Rehabilitation Program professionals identified **Individuals with significant and/or complex disabilities** as one of the top populations to be under-served or unserved.

According to the 2017 American Community Survey, 2.5% (n=260,734) of Georgia's total population is estimated to have a disability related to self-care, and 5.8% (n=584,045) have a disability related to independent living. Some individuals with these impairments require supports and services that allow them to work and live independently. Examples of populations with significant and/or complex disabilities:

» Multiple Sclerosis (MS):

According to the National MS Society, nearly 1 million people in the U.S. are diagnosed with MS, with 277,000 of those estimated to be living in the Southern Region. 2017 estimates indicate that 75% of those with MS are female.

- Among the individuals eligible for VR services in SFY19, 167 had MS listed as the primary cause of the impairment, which is 1% of the total clients.

» Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury:

According to Georgia's Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission, during 2017, 27,145 individuals, aged 0-99, experienced a Traumatic Brain Injury, Spinal Cord Injury, or both. Of those, 49% (n=13,279) were of working age (20-64).

- Percentage of individuals on VR caseload during SFY 19: 1.9% of total VR clients.

» Schizophrenia and other Psychotic Disorders:

According to SAMSHA, in 2017, over 2.5 million individuals in the U.S were identified as meeting "Severe Mental Illness" criteria, of those, 545,277 (21%) were diagnosed with Schizophrenia or other psychotic disorder.

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- Percentage of individuals on VR caseload during SFY19: 5.7%
- Authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) of Georgia provides guidance to nine Centers of Independent Living that are located throughout the state. Based on the feedback obtained from community town halls in 2018, barriers to impacting the independence of Georgians include:
 1. **Transportation:** lack of awareness of what is available and how to access it, eligibility is limited to Medicaid recipients, costly services, and inaccessibility of bus stops and other physical barriers.
 2. **Employment:** Lack of awareness regarding rights of people with disabilities, financial thresholds for state/federal supports do not allow for individuals to earn “livable” wages, and need for disability awareness training among employers
 3. **Housing:** Limited availability of accessible units, limited affordability, and lack of accountability regarding program accessibility and physical accessibility.

INDIVIDUALS AGE 65 AND OLDER WITH DISABILITIES

In a report for Georgia’s Division of Aging, the Georgia Health Policy Center noted that Georgia has the 11th fastest growing 60+ population and has the 10th fastest growing 85+ population in the US.³⁴ Additionally, according to the Social Security Administration, full retirement benefits start for most people at the age of 66; however, if individuals delay their retirement until the age of 70, they could receive as much as \$1,000 per month in cash benefits.³⁵ As result of this incentive and other economic factors, people are working well past age 65.

Individuals age 65 and older are estimated to be 13.4% of Georgia’s total estimated population (n=10,429,379). However, among Georgia’s population of individuals with disabilities, it is estimated that 27.3% are age 65-74 and 50.1% are age 75 and older. As shown below, only 3% of the VR eligible clients in SFY 19 were age 65 or and older.

AGE	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION OF IWD IN GEORGIA(N=1,267,865)	TOTAL VR CLIENTS, ALL AGES, SFY19 (N=30648)
Age 65-74	27.3%	2.4%
Age 75 +	50.1%	<1%

The Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Aging allocates federal and state funding to Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) for the purpose of providing direct services to individuals age 60 and older meeting eligibility criteria, of which ten percent (10%) is set aside for adults aged 65 and older who have disabilities (defined by having a mobility or self-care limitation). Among the services provided through contracted providers throughout the state, Home and Community-Based Services (non-Medicaid) are the most utilized, with majority of the recipients being aged 70 and older. Information regarding service utilization specific to those with disabilities is not available.³⁶

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Georgia's Division of Aging Services also allocates funding for the Senior Community Service Employment Program, which provides job training and employment for low-income persons who are 55 and older and have poor employment prospects. Eligible individuals are placed in paid part-time community service positions with a goal of transitioning to unsubsidized employment, which are located through community outreach efforts and coordination with Georgia's Department of Labor and state workforce development regions. There is no information available regarding the disability status of individuals who are in this program.

SENSORY IMPAIRMENTS

According to 2017 ACS estimates, 2.1% of Georgia's total population of individuals age 16-64 (n=6,690,800) had a visual disability, and 1.9% had a hearing disability. Additionally, per Social Security Administration information, as of December 2018, 2,141 Georgians were eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) due to Blindness.

Among the total SFY 19 VR clients, 1539 had a primary impairment that was vision related. Of those 397 cases had been closed, with only 52 of them successfully in employment (13%). The remaining 342 were closed for other reasons, 39% of which was due to an inability to locate them. Alternately, of the 1520 VR clients with hearing related impairments, 471 cases were closed with 31% being closed successfully (n=148).

According to the 2018 National Mental Health Services Survey Report for Georgia, of the 219 responding mental health treatment facilities, 62.6% (n=137) indicated they provided services using sign language. However, only 32.8% (n=109) of the facilities specializing in substance abuse treatment indicated the same.

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ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

GAPS IN SERVICES FOR MINORITIES

As noted in the table below, among the total VR clients in SFY 19, 92% identified as being either white or Black/African American. Individuals with disabilities who identify with the other races or ethnic backgrounds make up the remaining 9%, which is well below the state population estimates.

RACE/ETHNICITY	GEORGIA POPULATION (N=10,201,635) *	TOTAL SFY19 CLIENTS (N= 30,411)**
White	61.3%	41%
Black/African American	32.6%	51%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.9%	<1%
Asian	4.5%	1%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.2%	<1%
Some other race	3.1%	3.1%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	9.3%	2%

* Total population estimates vary between 1 and 5-year estimates

** Total VR clients with race and ethnicity identified

Furthermore, findings from the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Needs Assessment showed that 16% of the VR Counselors did not feel confident in providing culturally competent services, and 84% agreed cultural competency training would be helpful.

Seven out of the top 15 counties with the highest rate of poverty in Georgia are also the counties that have the highest estimated population of African Americans. These counties include Clay, Randolph, Terrell, Calhoun, Dougherty, Macon, and Hancock. Each of these counties have a higher estimated population of individuals with disabilities compared to the state's overall average, as well as has higher percentage of their population having less than a ninth grade education or no high school diploma, compared to the overall state estimates.

Among the total VR clients who identified themselves as being African American, 4.8% (n=15,667) lived the counties listed above, with the exception of Clay County which did not have any clients receiving VR services during FY19.

RESULTS

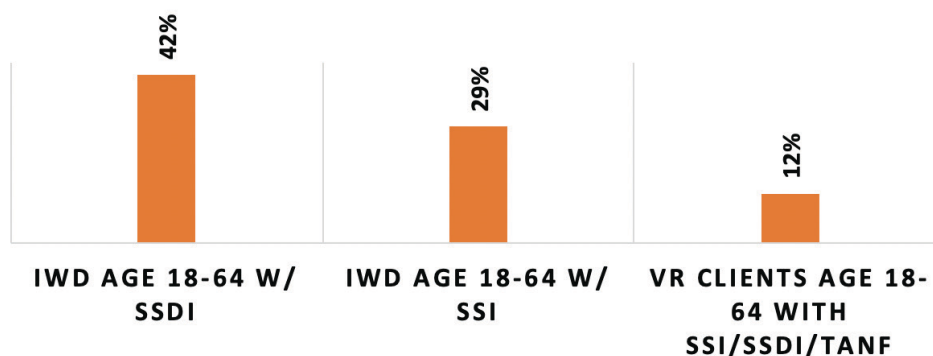
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

DISABILITY BENEFIT RECIPIENTS

As of December 2018, 236,080 Georgians with disabilities received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), of which 3.3% (n=7,854) worked while receiving benefits. Among those working, 34.6% were individuals whose eligibility was based on their intellectual disability.

According to GVRA data for SFY19, 13,473 (12.3%) VR clients, age 18-64, indicated they relied on public benefits (SSI, SSDI or TANF) at application compared to the percentage of individuals with disabilities of the same age, receiving those benefits in 2017. As shown in the graph below, there is a considerable gap between the number of VR clients identified as receiving public benefits, compared to the number of recipients reported by the Social Security Administration.

**COMPARISON OF PERCENTAGE OF IWD RECEIVING
SSDI/SSI, 2017, AND SFY19 VR CLIENTS**



Due to the lack of available information regarding utilization of benefit counseling or other Ticket to Work program services within the state or nationally, it is uncertain if individuals are receiving the information needed to make an informed choice regarding employment.

SSI & MEDICAID WAIVER PROGRAMS

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program is a crucial component of the social safety net for low-income adults with severe disabilities. In addition to providing federal cash payments (with optional state supplements), SSI often serves as a gateway to health insurance under Medicaid, and for 40 states plus the District of Columbia, SSI awardees are categorically eligible for Medicaid. In 34 of the jurisdictions, including Georgia, Medicaid enrollment is automatic. Most of Georgia's long-term waiver services are Medicaid-funded, including the supported employment services available through DBHDD. Therefore, individuals must be eligible for SSI in order to receive those services.

As of June 2019, an average of 43% of Georgia applications for Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) were approved following a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge.³⁷

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YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, TRANSITION AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

The reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, under the Work Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which was signed into law in 2014, included significant changes to the state vocational rehabilitation program, one of which is the greater emphasis on the provision of transition services to youth and students with disabilities, as well as the provision of pre-employment services to transitioning youth, regardless of their VR Eligibility status.

WIOA's amendments created distinct definitions for the terms **“student with a disability”** and **“youth with a disability.”** In general, a student with disabilities, is an individual with a disability, age 16 to 21 (22 in Georgia), who is enrolled in an education program (secondary, postsecondary or other recognized education program), and is eligible for and receiving special education services or in an individual with a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. A “youth with a disability” is one that is age 14 to 24 but is not necessarily enrolled in an education program.

The Rehabilitation Act authorizes a continuum of services, such as **transition services**, job placement services, other VR services, and supported employment services for students and youth with disabilities, as appropriate, to secure meaningful careers. These services are available to groups of students or youth with disabilities or on an individual basis to eligible students or youth with disabilities under an approved individualized plan for employment.

Pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS), on the other hand, are only available to “students with disabilities”, and can be provided regardless of whether they have applied and been determined eligible for VR services or not. These services designed to help students with disabilities to begin to identify career interests that may be explored further through additional VR services, such as transition services, as well as develop and practice workplace skills before exiting HS.

In addition to the Rehab Act amendments stipulating that VR programs collaborate with local education agencies (LEAs) to provide or arrange for the provision of Pre-ETS, states are also required to reserve at least 15% of their Federal VR funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities.

RESULTS

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GEORGIA'S POPULATION OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

It is estimated that 13.8% of Georgia's population in 2017 were individuals aged 15 to 24 (n=1,442,080). Additionally, the estimated population of individuals, aged 5 to 15, with one or more disabilities is 3.9%, and 5.8% for those aged 16 to 20.

Furthermore, according to Social Security Administration data, as of December 2017, 98,797 Georgians under the age of 18 received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits due to a disability, which is 43.6% of the estimated population of individuals with disabilities of the same age.

GEORGIA'S SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS SCHOOL YEAR 2018-2019

Based on special education enrollment data provided by the Georgia Department of Education, during the 2018-2019 academic school year, 208,574 Georgia K-12 students were enrolled in special education services, which was 12.1 % of the total student body for that academic year (n=1,717,863).³⁸

The following table reflects the special education enrollment for all public-school systems in Georgia, including state schools and charter schools. As shown, Specific Learning Disability, is the most prevalent impairment for which special education eligibility is established.

SPED ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	% N=208,574
Deaf	315	0.2%
Hard of Hearing	986	0.5%
Deaf-Blind	214	0.1%
Blind	67	0.0%
Vision Impairment	282	0.1%
TBI	144	0.1%
Orthopedic Impairment	508	0.2%
Profound Intellectual Disability	239	0.1%
Severe Intellectual Disability	979	0.5%
Moderate Intellectual Disability	4631	2.2%
Mild Intellectual Disability	9650	4.6%

TABLE CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

TABLE CONTINUED...

SPED ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	% N=208,574
Emotional-Behavior Disorder	10041	4.8%
Autism	22371	10.7%
Other Health Impairment	34012	16.3%
Specific Learning Disability	76,861	36.9%
Speech Language Impairment	29,041	13.9%
Significant Developmental Delay	25514	12.2%

TRANSITION STUDENTS IN GEORGIA

During the 2018-19 school year, there were a total of 60,689 special education students in grades nine through 12. The following table reflects the disability categories for this age group; however, the percentages are based on 45,369 students as the report provided by GDOE had some information redacted due to privacy (FERPA) rules.

However, from the data that was available, the highest percentage of transitioning students are those whose special education eligibility was based on a **Specific Learning Disability (SLD)** and **Other Health Impairment**, which typically includes **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**, as well as chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, and sickle cell anemia.

SPED ELIGIBILITY CATEGORY	TOTAL
	n=45369
Deaf	< 1%
Speech-Language	< 1%
Profound Intellectual Disability	< 1%
Severe Intellectual Disability	< 1%
Moderate Intellectual Disability	2.0%
Mild Intellectual Disability	4.0%
Emotional-Behavior Disorder	4.8%
Autism	10.9%
Other Health Impairment	21.0%
Specific Learning Disability	56.7%

RESULTS

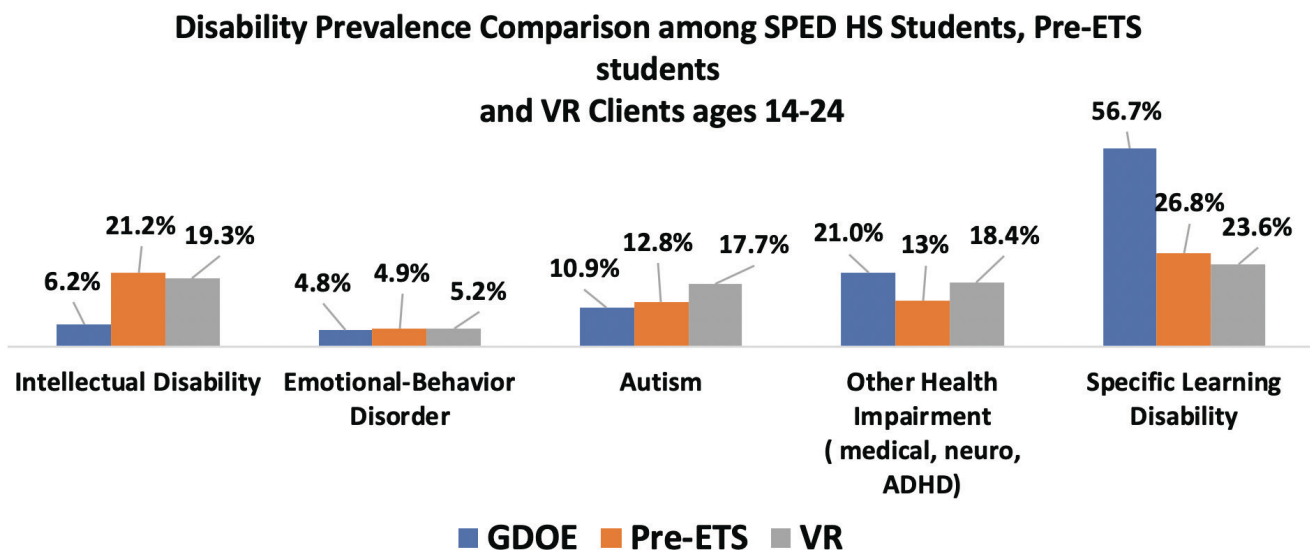
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED BY GVRA

Among the total list of 38,839 individuals with disabilities connected with VR during SFY19 (July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019), 58.3% were individuals aged 14 through 24, which is the age range of youth with disabilities and transition services. Among those who were considered youth with disabilities (n=22,653), 37.2% (n=14,474) were either individuals who had applied for VR services or were eligible for VR services, and 21.1% (n=8179) were individuals listed as Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) students who had not yet applied for VR services.

In regard to the impairments of those being served through the VR program, individuals are most likely to have a cognitive impairment, which includes Intellectual Disability, Specific Learning Disability and ADHD. The graph below compares the prevalence of the most common disability types reported among high school students with an IEP and individuals who are identified as being potentially eligible, as well as transition age VR clients.

Based on the data available, individuals with Specific Learning Disabilities make up the highest percentage of individuals served by VR and Special Education; however, more VR clients are identified to have an intellectual disability compared high school special education enrollment.



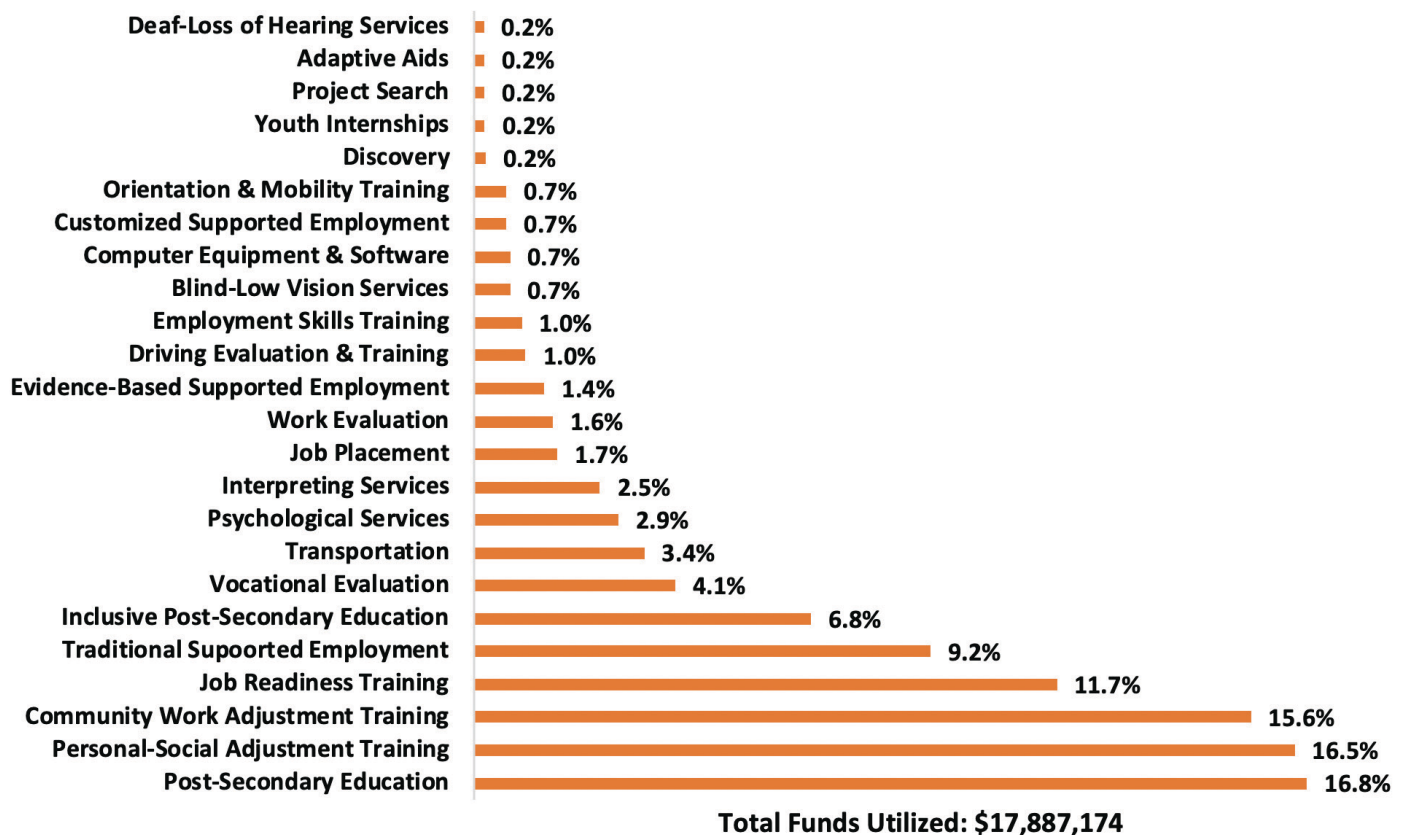
RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

TRANSITION SERVICES FROM GVRA

According to GVRA reports, a total of 15,496 individuals received one or more services funded by VR during SFY19. Of those, 9,468 were of transition age (ages 14-24), which accounts for 61% of the total individuals receiving one or more funded services by the VR program. Services that were the most utilized, according to dollars spent, were Post-Secondary Education, Personal-Social Adjustment Training and Community Work Adjustment Training.

Transition Services Funded by VR during SFY 19



RESULTS

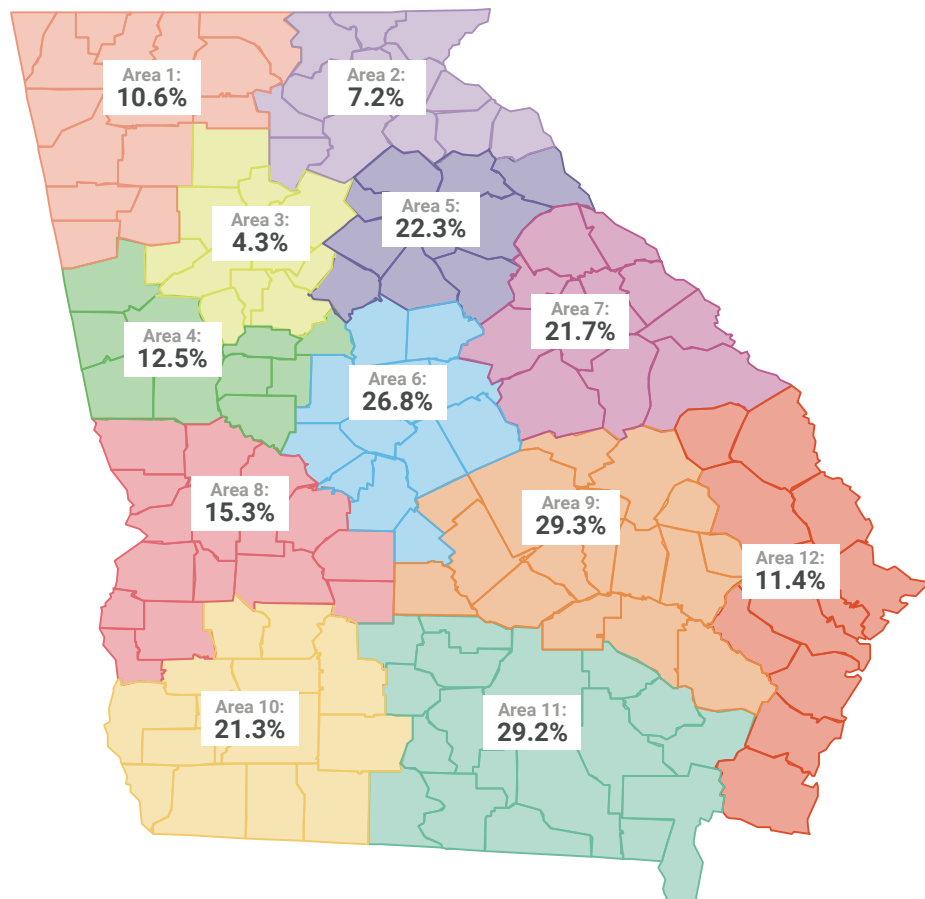
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PRE-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

As previously reported, VR programs are mandated to “provide or arrange for the provision of pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) for all students with disabilities in collaboration with the local education agencies involved, who are in need of such services, regardless of whether they have applied or have been determined eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services.”³⁹

Of the individuals connected with GVRA during SFY 19 aged 14-24, 21.1% (n=8179) were Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) students who had not yet applied for VR services, which is 13.5% of the total number of students with disabilities under an IEP in grades 9 through 12, according to GDOE special education enrollment reports for the 18-19 school year.

In order to determine the extent to which high school students with disabilities are accessing pre-employment transition services, as intended by WIOA, the map below reflects the percentage of Pre-ETS students connected with VR for each GVRA service area relative to the total number of special education students in high school in those areas. For example, among the individuals living in counties served by GVRA’s Service Area 3 (Metro Atlanta region), 1152 were identified as being Pre-ETS students. This is 4.3% of the total number of special education students in grades 9 through 12 (n=26,661) attending public schools in those same counties, according to GDOE 18-19 SPED enrollment reports.



Using the GVRA Pre-ETS student to HS SPED enrollment ratio for each GVRA service area, the map reflects the considerable variability in which students with disabilities throughout the state were receiving pre-employment services. In fact, five counties did not have any Pre-employment transition students listed, which were Terrell, Talbot, Glascock, Taliaferro, and Hart county.

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Based on GVRA reports regarding service payments between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019, over \$4.3 million dollars were spent on Pre-ETS services (budgets from multiple years may have been utilized). Furthermore, among the 8,179 Pre-ETS students connected with GVRA during SFY19, **62.2%** (n= 5,090) received one or more pre-employment transition services during that time frame. **The most utilized Pre-ETS services were Community Work Adjustment Training, Job Readiness Training and Personal-Social Adjustment Training.**

According to WIOA legislation, “Pre-Employment Transition Services” consist of five (5) required activities:

1. **Job exploration:** Activities which help students identify viable career options or solidify careers that a student may want to explore further. Of those who received Pre-ETS services during SFY19, **8.7% had participated in vocational evaluation services, and 7 participated in job sampling activities.**
2. **Work-based Learning:** using the workplace or real work to provide students with the knowledge and skills that will help them connect school experiences to real-life work activities and future career opportunities. Of those who received Pre-ETS services during SFY19, **10.6% participated in community work adjustment training**, which was one of the most frequently utilized services for Pre-ETS students. Additionally, **internships were funded for 7 Pre-ETS students.**
3. **Counseling on Post-Secondary Education Options:** Increasing understanding of options that are available for higher education, including comprehensive transition programs, along with the requirements for attending, skills needed for success, accommodations that are available, and financial aid. Data regarding the provision of this service was not available.
4. **Work Readiness Training:** Training to develop social/interpersonal skills, soft skills, independent living skills, and employability/job readiness skills, all of which are commonly expected in the world of work. Of those who received Pre-ETS services during SFY19, **27.5% received job readiness training, which was the most utilized service provided, and 14.6% received work readiness related personal-social adjustment training.**
5. **Instruction on Self-Advocacy:** Instruction for developing student’s ability to effectively communicate needs, interests and desires so that they can, direct their own lives, pursue the things that are important to them and experience the same life opportunities as other people in their communities. Of those who received Pre-ETS services during SFY19, **7% received self-advocacy related personal social adjustment training services.**

RESULTS

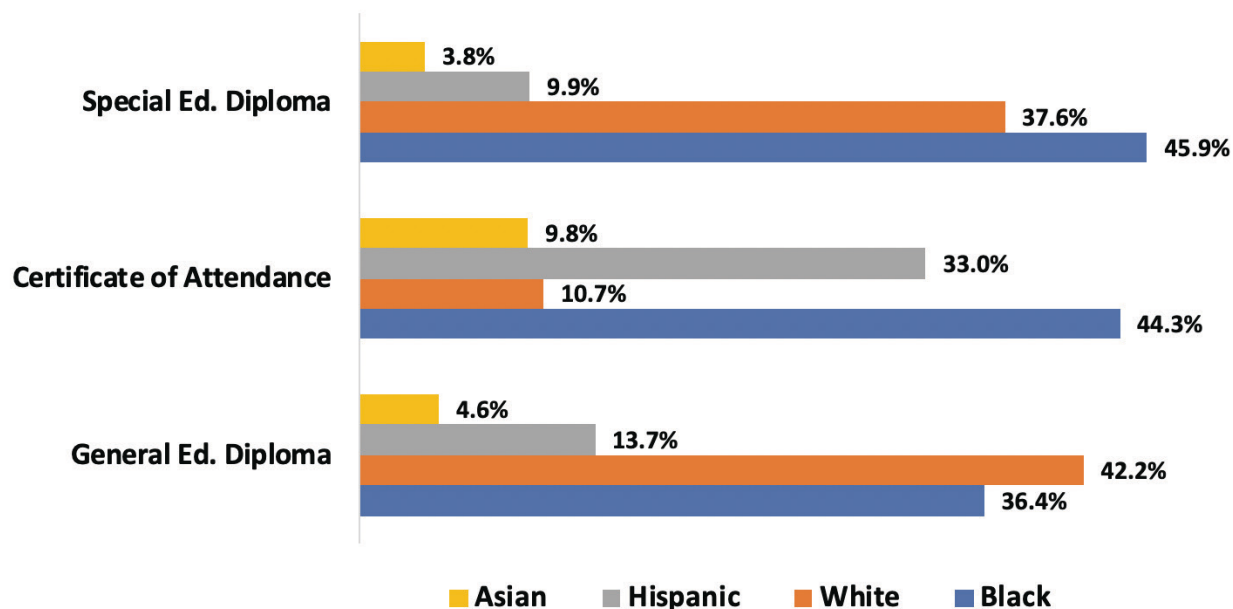
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

TRANSITION OUTCOMES AMONG DIVERSE POPULATIONS

Georgia has the 3rd highest number of rural students in the country and the 8th largest percentage of low-income K-12 students attending Georgia public schools, according to the report by the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education.

Among high school students graduating from a public school in the 2018-2019 school year, 314 received a Special Education Diploma, 336 received a Certificate of Attendance, and 112,968 received a General Education Diploma. As shown in the graph below, among the High School completers, students who identified as being African American were more likely to have earned a special education diploma or certificate of attendance, compared to the other race/ethnic groups represented. Other races receiving a general education diploma that are not listed below include Native American/Alaskan Native, 0.2%, and Multi race, which was 3.0%. The percentages for the other credential types were not available due to the low number.

Credentials Earned by Georgia H.S. Graduates, by race, 2018-2019

**INCLUSIVE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION (IPSE) IN GEORGIA**

Since 2010, the US Department of Education has funded the National Coordinating Center for Transition Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (Think College) along with 51 TPSID programs throughout the US, to create or expand inclusive postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities. As of 2019, these programs, have served close to 4,000 students in 31 states.⁴⁰

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According to Think College, approximately 34% of the students nationally received state vocational rehabilitation services while participating in their IPSE program during the 2018-2019 academic year. Services most frequently consisted of workplace skills instruction, work-based learning experiences, benefits counseling, and job coaching. Additionally, 55% of the TPSID grantees reported have a partnership with their state VR agency to provide Pre-ETS services as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

As a model demonstration grantee, The Center for Leadership in Disability (CLD) at Georgia State University established The Georgia Inclusive Postsecondary Education Consortium (GAIPSEC) in order to provide statewide training, coordination, technical assistance to the IPSE programs in Georgia, as well as to build capacity through start-up funds seeking to establish an IPSE program.

Members of the consortium include the Georgia Council on Developmental Disability (GCDD), who is the fund administrator for the grant, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, institutions with IPSE programs, and other stakeholders throughout the state.

Among Georgia's nine (9) IPSE programs, **240 students were enrolled during the 2018-2019 academic year**, and 75% of the 2017 graduates had obtained employment following graduation.⁴¹

During SFY 19, **VR provided \$151,866 in funding for 59 IPSE students to attend inclusive programs in Georgia and out of state.**

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Through Georgia's Department of Juvenile Justice school system, youths who are serving short- and long-term detentions attend classes at one of 30 Georgia Preparatory Campus' across the state, which are located in Regional Detention Centers, Youth Developmental Campuses and Education Transition Centers.

According to GDOE enrollment data, **309 youth offenders received special education services** during the 18-19 school year, with Augusta Youth Development Center having the highest percentage of students with disabilities (44.6% of the entire student body).

Information is not available regarding the extent of which these youth received transition-related services from GVRA or other entity.

EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK

During the 2019 school year, 17.9% of students with disabilities were identified as have chronic absenteeism, and 5.1% (3,555) students under an IEP dropped out of high school. A 2017 Federal State Performance Report cited the desire to obtain employment as a potential reason student with disabilities

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dropped out, based on feedback obtained from LEAs.⁴² According to data collected by US. DOL's Bureau of Labor Statistics, **the factor related to the lowest employment ratio among individuals with disabilities is the lack of a high school diploma (or equivalent).**

In an annual publication by the Georgia Partnership For Excellence In Education, it is reported that by **2026 an estimated 66% of jobs will require at least some Post-Secondary Education;**⁴³ but a “majority of Georgians (regardless of disability status), graduating from high school today and **entering Post-Secondary Institutions are low income, and less than half are graduating within 6 years, compared to 70% of their most affluent counterparts.**”⁴⁴

According to GDOE's 2018-2019 Special Education Annual Report regarding post-school outcome indicators, only 24.4% of youth with an IEP who are no longer in secondary school were enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school.⁴⁵

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES AMONG VR'S TRANSITION AGE YOUTH

VR clients under the age of 25 account for 41% of all VR cases closed successfully in employment during SFY19. GVRA reports indicated that at the time their VR case was successfully closed they worked an average of 29 hours per week and earned an average of \$9.50 an hour. The top 3 occupational groups jobs were in: **Office and Administrative Support Occupations Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations, Sales and Related Occupations.**

According to the findings from the 2017 Customer Satisfaction Survey that was completed by IHDD's REU, among the individuals whose VR case was closed successfully during SFY18, those that were **aged 14-24 had the highest job retention** compared to the age groups of other consumers who participated in the survey.

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GEORGIA'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The Technical College System of Georgia's (TCSG) Office Workforce Development (OWD) is the administrator of *WorkSource Georgia*, the state's WIOA Title I Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker programs, which are regulated by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration unit.

The focus of WIOA's Title I programs include 1) provide job training and career services to unemployed or underemployed low-income individuals, 2) meet the workforce needs of businesses in high demand industries, and 3) facilitate access to the American Job Centers in each state.

WIOA Title I youth services focus on assisting out-of-school youth and in-school youth with one or more barriers to employment with preparing for Post-Secondary education or employment, attaining the educational and/or skills training credentials needed for specific industries, and securing employment. To be eligible for WIOA Youth Services, out of school youth must be between the ages of 16 and 24, not attending school, and have one or more barriers to employment. In school youth must be between the ages of 14 and 21, attending school, low income, and have one or more barriers to employment, which includes having a disability.

The majority of the Title I funds are allocated by the OWD to 19 local workforce development areas (LWDA) for the provision of services that are tailored to the specific workforce and labor needs of that area. Additionally, WIOA requires local areas spend at least 75 percent of WIOA Youth program funds on the out of school population, and at least 20% must be spent on providing work experience opportunities.

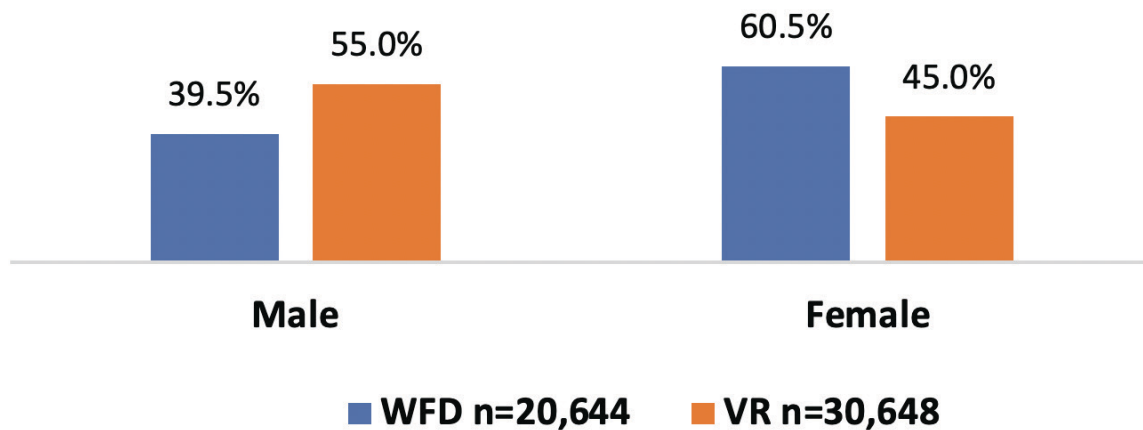
During SY18 (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018), **a total of 20,644 individuals received Workforce Development services through these LWDAs**, of which, 49.6% received Title I Adult services, 12.7% received Title I Dislocated Worker services (adults who have been laid off or received notice of termination from employment due to economic reasons), and 37.7% received Title I Youth Services.

The graph on the next page compares the gender of individuals served by Georgia's Workforce Development Title I program and those served by GVRA's VR program, which shows a higher percentage of females participated in WFD services whereas higher percentage of males participated in VR services.

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Gender Differences among of WFD and VR Consumers



RACE AND ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED THROUGH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

As indicated in the table below, individuals who identify as being African American or Black, are more likely to be connected to employment services through the workforce development system or vocational rehabilitation, compared to the other race/ethnic groups. However, the workforce development program serves more individuals with Hispanic or Latino ethnic backgrounds.

RACE/ETHNICITY	% SERVED THROUGH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM (N=20,644)	% OF SFY 19 VR CLIENTS (N=30411)
White	34.7%	41%
Black or African American	59.9%	51%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1%	<1%
Asian	1.5%	1%
More than one race or some other race	2%	5%
Hispanic / Latino	5.8%	2%

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TRAINING SERVICES & CAREER SERVICES

Training programs funded by Workforce Development are those that consist of “courses or classes, or structured regimen that leads to a recognized Post-Secondary credential, secondary school diploma or its equivalent, employment, or measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment.”⁴⁶ Furthermore, training is available from eligible providers and for training programs that are prioritized by each of the 19 Local Workforce Area Board.

Training can include occupational skill development, OJT, apprenticeships, adult education, or entrepreneurial training to name a few. Career Services can include such things as assessments of skills and service needs of eligible program participants, career planning assistance, work preparation activities, resume development and internships or work experiences.

Among the WFD (WIOA Title I) adult service participants in FY19 (n=10,233), 88.4% received training services and 11.5% received career services, with 82.4% of adult service participants enrolled in more than one core program.

Whereas, among the 15,497 VR clients with a VR-funded service in SFY19, 5.3% received funding for education and training, 10% received job-readiness training, 7.5% participated in community work adjustment services, and 4.4% received vocational assessment services, to include Discovery.

Examples of Youth services under WIOA Title I WFD program can include paid and unpaid work experiences, basic education skills training, tutoring, mentoring opportunities, GED services and career exploration services. Occupational skills training is limited to youth ages 18-24.

During SFY 19, 7,783 qualifying youth participated in WFD activities, 84.7% of which received career services and 15.3% received training services, with 92.4% of the youth service participants enrolled in more than one core program.

GVRA reports for SFY 19 indicate that among the VR clients age 14-24 (n=9,468) who received a funded service, 5.4% received Post-Secondary education, 3.3% participated in community work adjustment training, and 3.3% received vocational assessment services.

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SERVING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Among the adult and youth WIOA Title I WFD programs (n=20,640), 4.3% self-identified as having a disability. These individuals are not required to provide supporting documentation unless they are needing accommodations for testing or Post-Secondary education. In comparison, of the 30648 individuals listed as VR clients in SFY 19, only 58 of those were cases closed due to the individual not having a disabling condition/impairment or impediment to employment resulting from a disability.

Although both the Title I Workforce Development program and state Vocational Rehabilitation program provide training and career services to individuals, there are differences between the two core WIOA programs.

Although the specific services may vary among the local workforce area, there is limited flexibility regarding the type of services, as well as the parameters for providing them. VR services, on the other hand, are individualized according to the unique needs of the consumer.

Training opportunities available through the Local Workforce Regions are based on labor market and employer needs within those specific areas. In contrast, training and other services provided by VR are based on the individual's stated employment goal.

Lastly, a successful employment outcome for Workforce is counted on day one of a person's employment. VR clients must work a minimum of 90 days prior to the case closing successfully.

COLLABORATION WITH VR

Although the office of workforce development is responsible for the overall program delivery Title I WIOA services within Georgia, the local workforce areas do all the planning and coordination of services for their specific regions, which includes contracts with community providers for service delivery and/or MOUs with partnering agencies and organizations.

A focus of WIOA is the alignment of core employment programs in each state. As result, Georgia's Local Workforce Areas and GVRA's VR Program Service Areas are more aligned with respect to counties served. However, due to LWDA having more local control over service delivery, the level of collaboration with VR varies significant across the state.

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COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

The Rehabilitation Act, as amended, defines Community Rehabilitation program as one that “provides directly or facilitates the provision of one or more vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities to enable those individuals to maximize their opportunities for employment, including career advancement.”⁴⁷

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDERS IN GEORGIA

GVRA utilizes community services providers for the direct provision of specific vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. These providers can be community rehabilitation programs, self-employed vendors or other organizations; all of whom must meet the minimal provider standards and qualifications set forth by GVRA; as well as have a service agreement or contract in place for the specific services they are intending to provide. The provider management process is completed at the VR Program state office level utilizing field staff assigned to the relevant geographic area when needed.

Accessing VR services is reliant on the assigned Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or other Rehabilitation Professional to first identify the need for the service, determine availability of service providers, complete the referral process, then authorize payment for the service (s).

Similarly, services funded by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities are obtained through approved providers that have met specific accreditation and qualification standards set forth by DBHDD, which are often based on Center for Medicaid Services (CMS) criteria. The provision of these services is administered through field offices located in each of DBHDD’s six (6) regions, which are the first point of contact for consumers.

Additionally, core services funded by either the state DD program or Behavioral Health program, are primarily provided by Community Service Boards (CSBs) organizations located in each of DBHDD’s regions, or by a contracted provider.

Community service providers for GVRA, DBHDD including their CSBs, as well as providers contracted with the Area Aging Agencies and the Local Workforce Development Area, often have contracts or service agreements with multiple applicable agencies; however, there is minimal public information available for consumers to access regarding which entities the providers are contracted with, the specific program requirements related to employment, provider performance, service area, expertise of provider staff, or the steps a consumer has to take in order to receive quality services.

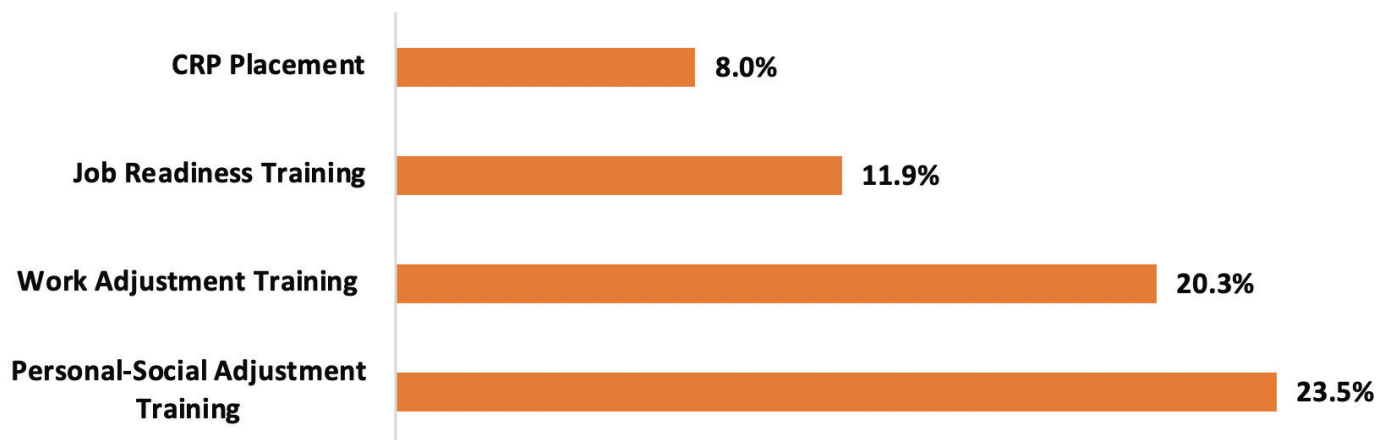
As of Spring of 2019, there were approximately **279 VR service providers** with either an agreement to provide one or more employment related services, a supported employment agreement or were one of the **17 contracted community rehabilitation programs**. The contracted “CRPs” vary in size and geographic location and have the option of delivering a full range of employment services which are listed in their contract.

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EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDED BY COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Contracted CRPs are currently the only providers who can provide job placement services, excluding supported employment. As result, providers with service agreements tend to focus on “work readiness” types of services, which is illustrated in the graph below.

Percentage of VR Funds Utilized by Community Providers, SFY19

According to the *Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)*, there are approximately 40 community programs/organizations accredited in Georgia that provide community employment services, majority of whom are DBHDD Community Service Board organizations with multiple locations throughout the state.

Over the past eight years, DBHDD and GVRA have made concerted efforts to encourage supported employment providers to be dually approved with both agencies so that individuals could get the long term supports following their successful transition from VR services. As result of these efforts, 54% of the VR clients who received SE services, did so through a DBHDD CSB organization.

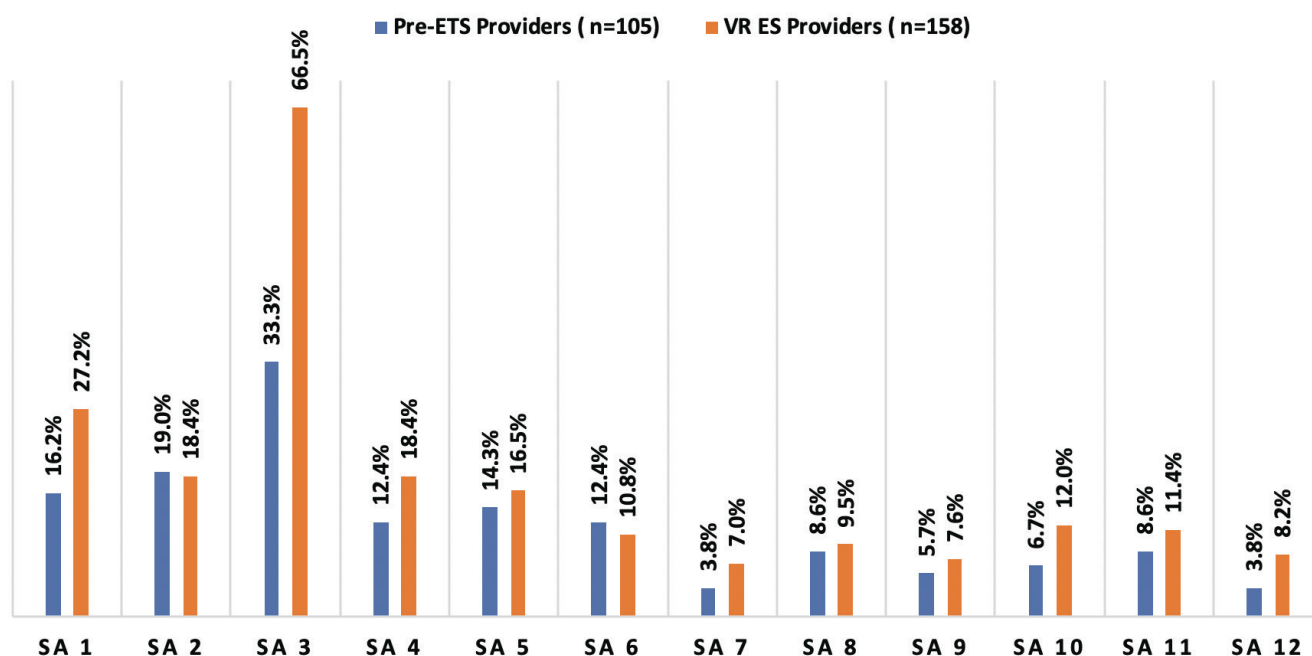
During SFY 19, there were a total of 158 employment service providers who were funded to assist VR clients throughout the state, many of whom were among the 105 with service agreements to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services to students with disabilities.

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The graph below depicts the percentage of the total number of providers utilized for both employment-related VR services as well as Pre-Employment Transition Services per GVRA Service Area during SFY19, based on the VR consumers' county of residence. VR Service Area 7 (includes Burke, Columbia, Glascock, Hancock, Jefferson, Lincoln, McDuffie, Richmond, Taliaferro, Washington, and Wilkes counties) and Service 12 (includes Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Jenkins, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, and Screven counties) had the lowest percentage of utilization compared to the other areas.

PERCENTAGE OF VR & PRE-ETS PROVIDERS FUNDED DURING SFY19, BY VR SERVICE AREA



FACILITY-BASED SERVICES

The Department of Justice issued an integration mandate in June 2011 regarding the enforcement of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and *Olmstead v. L.C.* and the expectation that states would develop a plan to address moving individuals who “spend their days in sheltered workshops or segregated day programs” to “integrated settings,” which they defined as those located in “mainstream society” where they could “interact with non-disabled persons to the fullest extent possible.”⁴⁸

In 2014, The Center for Medicaid Services (CMS) issued new regulations for Home and Community Based Waiver Services (HCBS), known as the “Settings Rule,” which requires states to provide services in an “integrated settings and in the most community-inclusive manner.” All HCBS providers must be “certified” as complying by 2022.⁴⁹

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- Among the total number of individuals receiving community based mental health services statewide during SFY19 (n=153,524), 11.8% participated in Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services,⁵⁰ which is provided in a group setting.
- Of the total VR clients who participated in Community Work Adjustment Training during SFY19 (n=662), 23% did so in an “in-house” facility-based program.

SUB-MINIMUM WAGE CERTIFICATE HOLDERS

According to the Wage and Hour Division (WHD) of the U.S. Department of Labor, as of January 1, 2020, nationally, 100,302 workers with disabilities were being paid sub-minimum wages by 1559 employers with certificates issued under section 14 (c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Of the total employers, 93% were community rehabilitation programs,⁵¹ most of which provide services to individuals with Developmental Disabilities.

In Georgia, there are currently 13 community provider programs with active 14 (c) certificates where 490 individuals are being paid sub-minimum wage, and 11 additional programs have their status as pending but have had active certificates in the past. Among the active and pending certificate holders, 16 are current providers for GVRA, five (5) of which are contracted CRP organizations, five (5) are DBHDD CSBs, and six (6) are private, non-profit providers.

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS SERVICES FOR SENSORY POPULATION

It was estimated that among Georgia’s estimated total population in 2017 (n=10,429,379), 2.5% had a vision disability and 3.2% had a hearing disability.

Based on the information provided by GVRA, during SFY19, VR utilized 29 providers for specialized employment services that were specialized for clients with visual impairments, two of which are contracted community rehabilitation programs. Among those providing audiological, interpreting and other similar services, two organizations provided employment related services to VR clients with hearing impairments statewide.

Information available on DBHDD’s website did not address services or supports specifically for individuals with vision impairments; however, their site identified one substance abuse treatment provider and one behavioral health provider for individuals with Deafness or who are Hard of Hearing.

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COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM FEEDBACK

IHDD's Research and Evaluation Unit conducted a Community Rehabilitation Program Needs Assessment in 2017. Among the data collected during this project, CRP staff and administrators indicated:

- 80% had never provided assistive technology services, 83% either only sometimes or never provided benefit counseling services, 60% had only sometimes or never provided OJT/Apprenticeship/Internship services and 33% had never provided person-centered planning (Discovery).
- Better communication and collaboration among other CRPs would be an important change CRPs could make to support clients' effort.
- The top two challenges in meeting client needs were the on-going changes among state/federal partners and a fragmented service delivery system.

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BACKGROUND OF GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY (GVRA)

The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) operates five statutory programs that have the shared purpose of assisting individuals with disabilities achieve independence and meaningful employment. This includes:

- Blind Enterprise Program (BEP) supports individuals who are Blind or have a significant visual impairment, and are interested in owning and operating vending businesses (authorized by the Randolph-Shepperd Act).
- Georgia Industries for the Blind (GIB) is a program that supports employment of individuals who are Blind in jobs at manufacturing/packaging facilities in Bainbridge, Albany and Griffin.
- Georgia Disability Adjudication Services (DAS), is the state agency responsible for developing medical evidence and making the initial determination on disability claims filed with the Social Security administration.
- Roosevelt Warm Springs/Cave Springs Residential programs, which provides opportunities for young adults with disabilities gain independent living skills and job skills.
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is the largest of the programs under the GVRA umbrella, and provides services authorized by the Rehab Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of WIOA.

Additionally, located under GVRA is the state's Employment First Council, which was created when Georgia's Employment First Act was signed into law in May 2018.

THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

The state VR program is 78.7 % federally funded (often referred to as 110 dollars), 21.3% state funded. States must receive and spend the fully state match before being able to "draw down" or access the full federal amount. For many years, Georgia has had to "turn back" millions of federal dollars because of not receiving enough state dollars. Federal funds awarded to Georgia over last three years:

PROGRAM	FFY 2019	FFY 2018	FFY 2017
VR State Grant	117,372,000	100,000,000	100,000,000
Older Blind Independent Living Grant	867,000	871,332	853,684
Supported Employment Grant	533,000	650,000	723,055

» Eligibility

Individual has a physical, mental or emotional disability which materially limits, or if untreated, must be expected to materially limit physical or mental functioning. The impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment. The individual requires VR services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain competitive integrated employment.

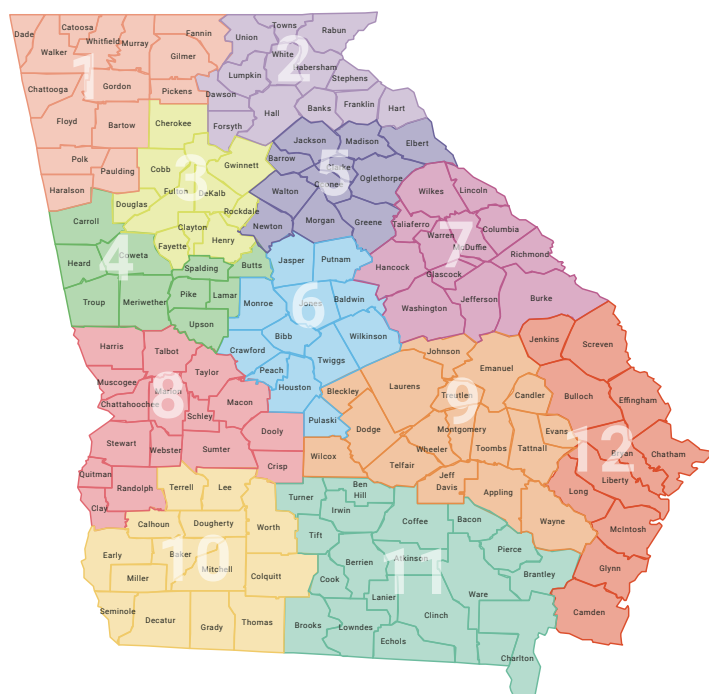
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Additionally, Georgia VR, along with many other states, operates under an Order of Selection system, which is the second step in qualifying individuals for VR services. Once determined eligible, consumers are then assigned to priority categories that prioritizes those with the **most significant disabilities** and service needs. Assignment is based on a person's functional limitations, numbers of services needed and length of services.

GVRA'S PRIORITY CATEGORIES FOR ORDER OF SELECTION

PRIORITY CATEGORY 1	PRIORITY CATEGORY 2	PRIORITY CATEGORY 3
Individual with a Most Significant Disability	Individual with a Significant Disability	Individual with a Disability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitations in 3 or more functional capacity areas, and requires multiple VR services over 3 or more months; or is receiving Supported Employment Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recipient of SSI/SSDI, or has limitations in 1 or more functional capacity areas, and requires multiple VR services over 3 or more months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is not one who has a significant or most significant disability, and requires 1 or more VR services not over an extended period of time



» VR Program Service Areas

Georgia's 159 counties are divided by GVRA into service areas, which are numbered 1-12. Additionally, the service areas are assigned to a quadrant based on geography.

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QUADRANT	SERVICE AREA	COUNTIES
West	1	Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Haralson, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Walker, Whitfield
	4	Butts, Carroll, Coweta, Heard, Lamar, Meriwether, Pike, Spalding, Troup, Upson
	8	Chattahoochee, clay, Crisp, Dooly, Harris, Macon, Marion, Muscogee, Quitman, Randolph, Schley, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taylor, Webster
Metro	3	Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Rockdale
East	2	Banks, Dawson, Forsyth, Franklin, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, White
	5	Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Greene, Jackson, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Walton
	6	Baldwin, Bibb, Crawford, Houston, Jasper, Jones, Monroe, Peach, Pulaski, Putnam, Twiggs, Wilkinson
	7	Burke, Columbia, Glascock, Hancock, Jefferson, Lincoln, McDuffie, Richmond, Taliaferro, Warren, Washington, Wilkes
South	9	Appling, Bleckley, Candler, Dodge, Emanuel, Evans, Jeff Davis, Johnson, Laurens, Montgomery, Tattnall, Telfair, Toombs, Truetlen, Wayne, Wheeler, Wilcox
	10	Baker, Calhoun, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, Seminole, Terrell, Thomas, Worth
	11	Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, Ware
	12	Bulloch, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Jenkins, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, Screven

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

GVRA PERFORMANCE

The following information is a snapshot of GVRA's performance in providing vocational rehabilitation services and pre-employment transition services throughout the state, utilizing reports received from GVRA for SFY 19 (July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019). The data contained in the reports provided were based on information collected from VR's Case-Management System; therefore, care should be taken when interpreting the information due to possible data entry errors.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES (EXCLUDES PRE-ETS)

- Between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2019, statewide
- 10,123 new VR applications were taken for individuals
- 9,418 individuals were determined eligible for VR services
- 1,788 VR cases were closed successfully "in employment"
- 10,434 VR cases were closed citing "other" reasons

Records obtained from GVRA for SFY19 contained a list of 38,839 individuals whose VR case was open or closed during the time frame (July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019). Of those, 8,179 were identified as Pre-Employment Transition Students (PTS) who had yet applied for Vocational Rehabilitation services, and 30,648 were identified as being a VR case.

» As of June 30, 2019, statewide:

- 16,171 individuals were in the "In Service" status, meaning they were actively receiving planned services or somewhere along the continuum of service provision
- 1,050 individuals had obtained employment and were being followed for at least 90 days before the case could be successfully closed.

The following table reflects the number of VR clients per GVRA Service Area in comparison to the estimated population for each of the counties assigned to the service area, as shown in the map below. Service Area 3 VR offices, which serve the Metro Atlanta area, had the highest number of clients compared to the other service areas; however, it is consistent with the state's population for those counties.

GVRA SERVICE AREA	% OF TOTAL ESTIMATED STATE POPULATION (N=10,429,379)	% OF TOTAL VR CLIENTS RESIDING IN GA (N=30,376)
Service area 1	6.7%	10.2%
Service area 2	6.7%	7.2%
Service area 3	43.9%	37.1%
Service area 4	4.9%	4.0%
Service area 5	5.9%	5.5%

TABLE CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

TABLE CONTINUED...

GVRA SERVICE AREA	% OF TOTAL ESTIMATED STATE POPULATION (N=10,429,379)	% OF TOTAL VR CLIENTS RESIDING IN GA (N=30,376)
Service area 6	4.9%	7.3%
Service area 7	4.5%	5.7%
Service area 8	3.5%	3.9%
Service area 9	2.9%	3.9%
Service area 10	3.3%	6.1%
Service area 11	4.3%	4.6%
Service area 12	6.5%	4.4%

GENDER AND AGE OF VR CLIENTS

The average age (in years) of the individuals served by VR in SFY 19 was 31.7, compared to the state's overall estimated median age of 36.8. Among the individuals eligible for VR services in SFY 19, 55% were male and 44.8% were female, which is slightly different than the Georgia population estimates. Among both genders served by VR, a higher percentage of male clients were age 16-20, compared to the females. Despite the increased prevalence of disability among older individuals, VR clients age 65 and older account for only 3% of the total number of VR clients in SFY19.

	GA IWD n=603,985 (11.9% of total pop)	GA IWD n=663,880 (12.4% of total pop)	VR CLIENT SFY19 n=16,849 (55% of total VR)	VR CLIENTS SFY19 n=13,744 (44.8% of total VR)
Age	Male	Female	Male	Female
16-20	6.2%	5.4%	4445 (26.3%)	2680 (19.5%)
21-64	10.8%	10.5%	12037 (74.4%)	10640 (77.4%)
65-74	28.3%	26.4%	334 (2.0%)	385 (2.8%)
75+	47.2%	52.9%	33 (<1%)	39 (<1%)

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

RACE AND ETHNICITY OF VR CLIENTS

As shown below, a higher percentage of VR clients identify themselves as African American or Black, which is not unexpected given the larger number of individuals being served are in the Metro Atlanta area. However, the overall racial demographics of the individuals served by VR are not representative of the state's estimated population of other diverse groups.

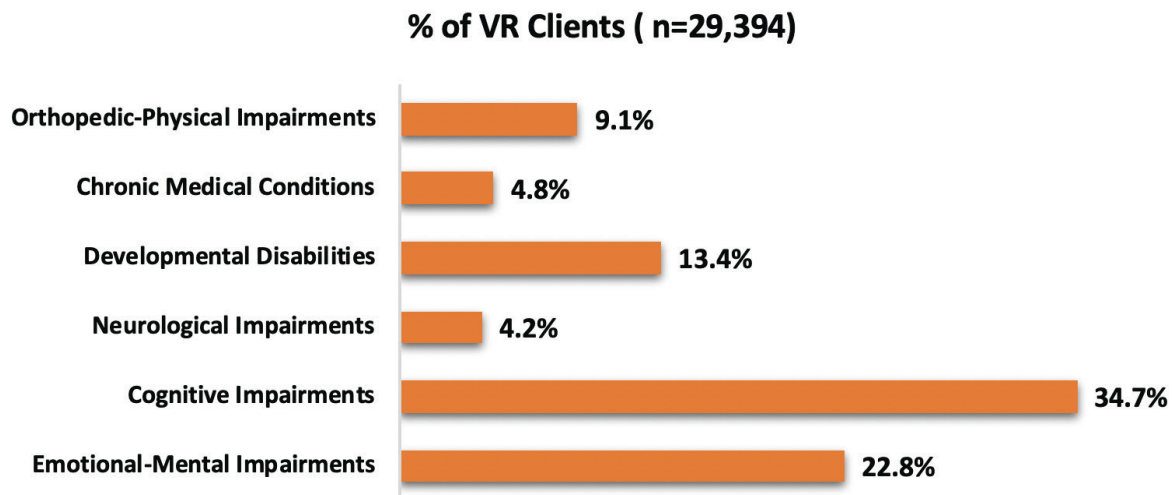
RACE/ETHNICITY	GEORGIA'S ESTIMATED TOTAL POPULATION 2017	ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITY	% OF TOTAL VR CLIENTS
	(n=10,201,635)	(n=1,267,865)	(n=30,411)
White alone all ages	61.3%	13.0%	41%
Black or African American Alone, all ages	32.6%	12.4%	51%
American Indian/Alaska Native, alone, all ages	0.9%	14.0%	<1%
Asian, alone, all ages	4.5%	5.6%	1%
More than one race or some other race, all ages	3.1%	7.5%	5%
Hispanic / Latino, of any race, all ages	9.3%	5.6%	2%

IMPAIRMENTS SERVED

Out of the 30,648 VR cases listed, 1,254 were excluded due to lack of impairment information or had been found to not have an impairment. The graph on the next page reflects the primary impairment that was identified for each of the remaining VR cases for which information was available. A third of the individuals served by the VR program during SFY 19 had a cognitive impairment (34.7%). Individuals with a neurological impairment (i.e., stroke, epilepsy, TBI, etc.) made up the lowest percentage of individuals on the VR caseload (4.2%).

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN



Note: The developmental disability number includes individuals with primary impairment of Autism, Cerebral Palsy, as well as Congenital Condition unless it was the source identified for sensory impairments.

SELECTED DISABILITY POPULATIONS

Estimates for specific disabilities where were identified earlier in this report are compared below with the percentage of VR clients with the same disability listed as their primary impairment. VR clients with intellectual disabilities are served at a higher rate than the state's estimated prevalence, according to GVRA reports.

	STATE POPULATION ESTIMATES	% OF VR CLIENTS (N=29,394)
ID/DD	4.9%	12.6%
Vision Impairment	2.5%	5.2%
Hearing Impairment	3.2%	5.2%
Arthritis	41.7%	1.2%
Diabetes	11.4%	1%
Traumatic Brain Injury	1.4%	1.1%
Serious Mental Illness	4.2%	21.5%*

* Mental illness numbers for VR clients included all mental health impairments.

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

SSDI/SSI RECIPIENTS

Based on the estimated total population of individuals in Georgia with a disability aged 18-64 (n=664,968), an estimated 42% received SSDI based on their disability and 28.5% received SSI. In comparison, as reflected the following table, among the total SFY19 VR clients aged 18-64 (n=13,473), 12.3% indicated they received public benefits at application according to the data received from GVRA.

2017 ESTIMATED POPULATION WITH DISABILITIES, AGE 18-64	% OF POPULATION RECEIVING SSI BENEFITS	% OF POPULATION RECEIVING SSDI BENEFITS	VR CLIENTS WITH SSI/SSDI AT APPLICATION, ALL AGES (N=30,648)
669,968	28.5%	42.1%	30% (n=9,045)

During 2017 only 3.8% (n=7,350) of the SSI recipients age 18-64 in Georgia were employed while receiving benefits. Among the VR clients of the same age range receiving public support at application, and whose case was closed during SFY19 (n=1658), only 4.1 % were successfully closed in employment. The remaining 1589 cases were closed for other reasons.

VETERANS

Of the 30,648 VR clients reviewed, 1,292 were identified as being veterans, accounting for 4.2% of total VR clients in SFY19, half of which resided in the Metro Atlanta and served by VR Service Area 3.

GEORGIA'S TOTAL ESTIMATED VETERAN POPULATION (2017)	% VETERANS WITH A DISABILITY	NUMBER OF VETERANS WITH DISABILITY RATING OF 70% OR HIGHER	% OF VR CLIENTS IDENTIFIED AS BEING A VETERAN (N=30,648)
697,127	28% (n=196,621)	13% (87,959)	4.2%

Additionally, Veterans account for 3.6% of all VR cases closed successfully in employment during SFY19.

Trends noted among those closed successfully:

- Average weekly hours worked at closure: 33
- Average hourly wage: \$12.87
- 35% of the Veterans obtained jobs paying \$14.00 per hour or more
- The top 3 occupational groups jobs were in:
 - » *Office and Administrative Support Occupations*
 - » *Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations*
 - » *Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations*
- Among the veterans successfully closed, 4 participated in Evidenced-Based Supported Employment
- 8 veterans received placement services from a local community rehabilitation program

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

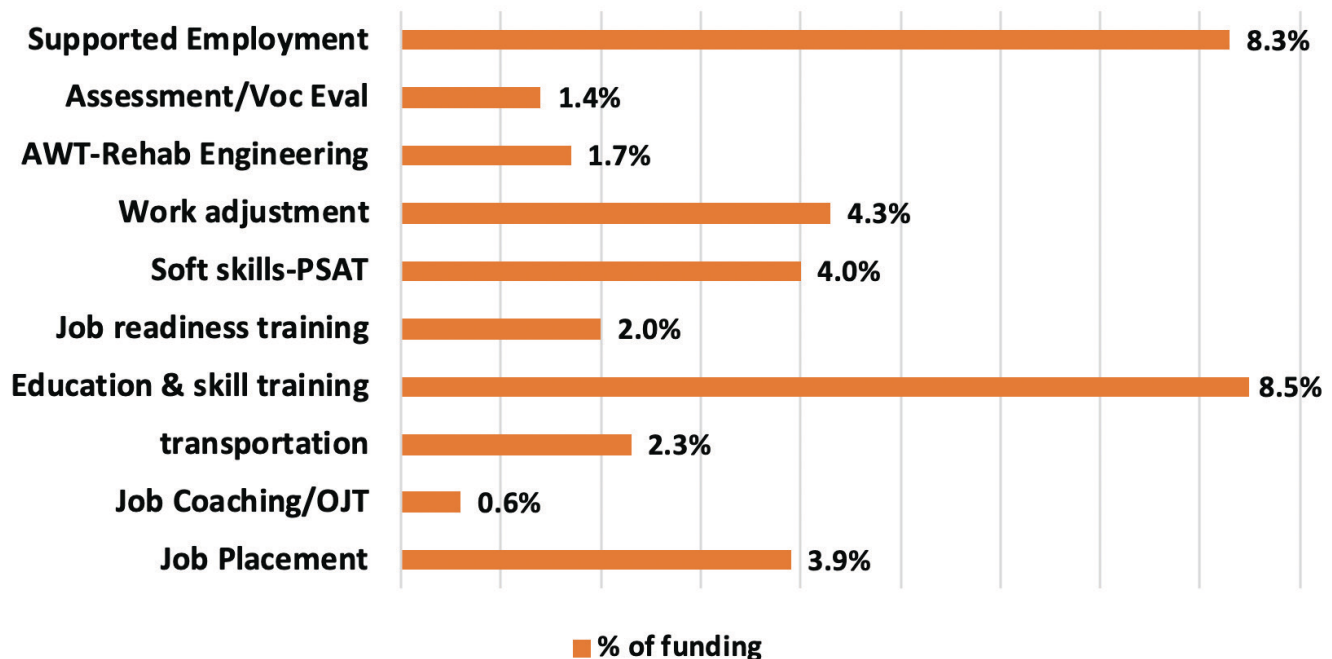
SERVICES RECEIVED

Statewide, 24% (n=7,356) of the total VR clients during SFY19 had Individual Plans for Employment developed, and 50.6% (n=15,496) of the total clients received one or more services funded by VR during SFY19. Among those, 4,995 were of aged 15 through 24 (excluding those receiving PTS services).

During SFY19, \$80,725,516.56 in funds were spent on services for VR eligible clients. An additional \$4,307,574.90 was spent on Pre-employment transition services for potentially eligible students with disabilities.

Note: funds expended may have been from multiple year budgets.

Among the total amount funded for VR clients, 37% (\$29,850,260.18) were for services identified in the graph below. Supported Employment, Post-Secondary Education and employment skills training received the most funding. Job Coaching (non-supported employment) was funded the least.



RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

VR CASE CLOSURE

Among the total VR cases closed in SFY19, 14.5% were closed in employment and 85% were closed unsuccessfully. When compared to the estimated number of individuals with disabilities in Georgia who are working, as shown below, the percentage of employed individuals following VR services is considerably less.

2018 GEORGIA POPULATION ESTIMATES		SFY19 VR CASE CLOSURES
PWD n=1,160,698	PWOD n=6,968,233	VR Closures (n=12,340)
EMPLOYED 24.1%	EMPLOYED 67.1%	EMPLOYED 14.5% (n=1788)
NOT IN LABOR FORCE 73.1%	NOT IN LABOR FORCE 29.8%	CLOSED "OTHER" 85.2% (n=10,526)

To gain insight into the successful closure rate among the different impairment categories during SFY19, the following table shows the percentage of VR cases that were closed during SFY 19 for each impairment category, as well as the the percentage of the type of closure (Rehabilitated- In Employment or Other Than Rehabilitated).

IMPAIRMENT CATEGORY	VR CLIENTS SFY19 (N=29,394)	PERCENTAGE OF VR CASES	TOTAL CLOSED	% CLOSED "REHABILITATED"	% CLOSED "OTHER THAN REHABILITATED"
Sensory-Communication	3223	11.0%	914	23%	77%
Orthopedic-Physical	2679	9.1%	1165	12%	88%
Chronic Medical Conditions	1412	4.8%	626	11%	89%
Developmental Disability	3936	13.4%	1049	24%	76%
Neurological	1243	4.2%	488	13%	87%
Cognitive	10,191	34.7%	3932	16%	84%
Emotional-Mental	6710	22.8%	3008	15%	85%

RESULTS**ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN****SNAPSHOT OF VR SUCCESSFUL CASE CLOSURES (N=1,788)**

Trends noted regarding employment at case closure:

- The average weekly hours of all VR clients successfully closed was 29.5
- Median hourly wage was \$9.14; however, the average hourly wage for 50% of the successful closures was \$8.05 per hour, and 10% earned \$ 11.00 per hour or more.
- Contracted community rehabilitation programs and other employment service providers were listed as the employer for 9% of the successful closures

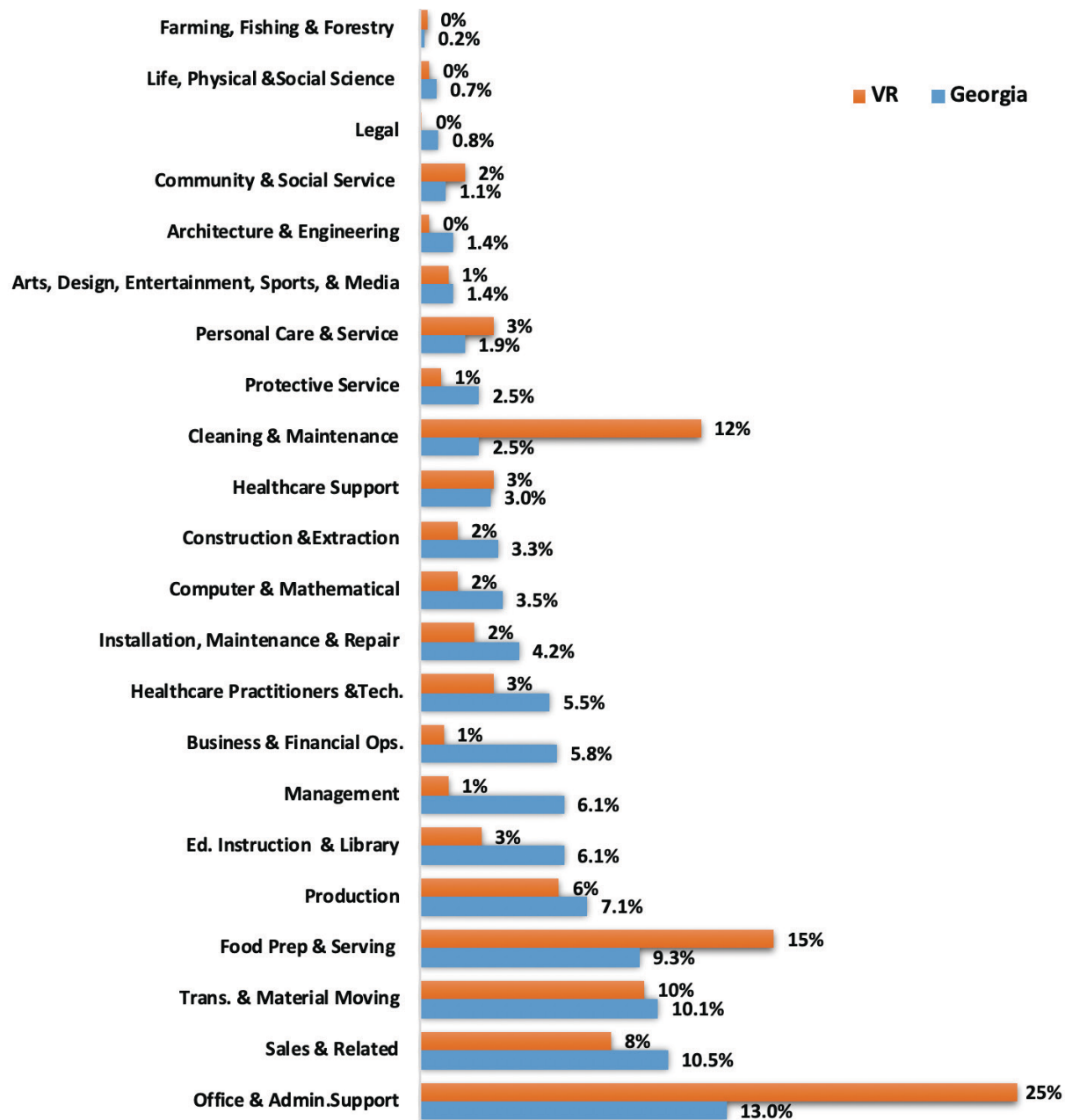
OCCUPATIONS AT VR CASE CLOSURE COMPARED TO GEORGIA EMPLOYMENT NUMBERS

The Georgia Department of Labor indicated that the total employment for the state in 2019 was 4,471,860, with the highest number of employed workers in jobs related to “Office and Administrative Support” occupations, followed by jobs in Transportation and Material Moving.

Similarly, jobs in the “office and administrative support” occupations were the most common among VR clients closed in employment during SFY19 (n=1788); however, a much higher percentage jobs related to food prep and cleaning/maintenance were obtained by VR clients, compared to the state’s overall employment trends, which is reflected in the graph on the next page.

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN



RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

According to GVRA reports received for SFY19, 8,179 students with disabilities were identified as Pre-Employment Transition Students. The table below reflects the percentage of new applications for pre-employment transitions services per GVRA-VR Program Service Area, and the percentage of pre-employment transition cases closed. Service area 3 (Metro Atlanta area) and 5 (Athens and surrounding counties) account for the largest percentage of Pre-ETS applications during SFY19, whereas service areas 3 and service area 8 (Americus and Columbus area) account for the largest percentage of closures.

While the closure reason is not specified for a majority of the closed Pre-ETS cases, 20.6% did cite the reason was due to the student was not interested in VR services.

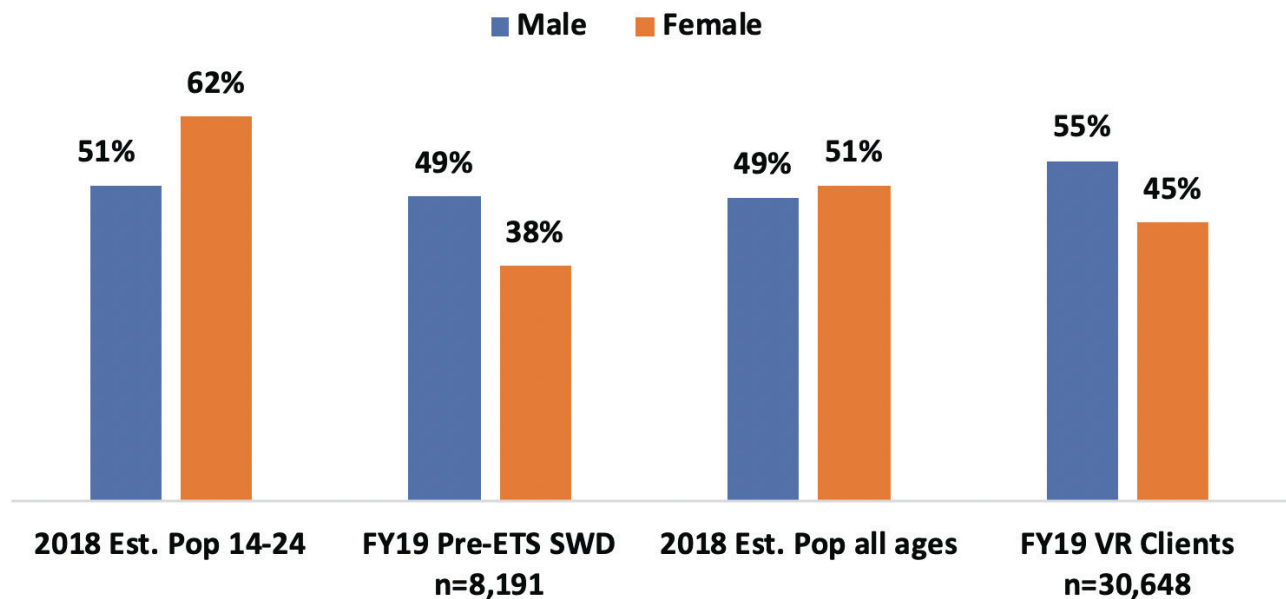
	% OF TOTAL (N=6410) PRE ETS APPLICATIONS	% OF TOTAL PTS CASES CLOSED (N=1921)
Service Area 1	8.1%	6.4%
Service Area 2	5.4%	4.3%
Service Area 3	22.8%	20.0%
Service Area 4	3.7%	3.3%
Service Area 5	11.0%	11.0%
Service Area 6	9.4%	9.1%
Service Area 7	6.1%	5.8%
Service Area 8	4.0%	16.6%
Service Area 9	5.1%	5.9%
Service Area 10	5.0%	2.7%
Service Area 11	7.0%	8.4%
Service Area 12	8.5%	6.5%

RESULTS

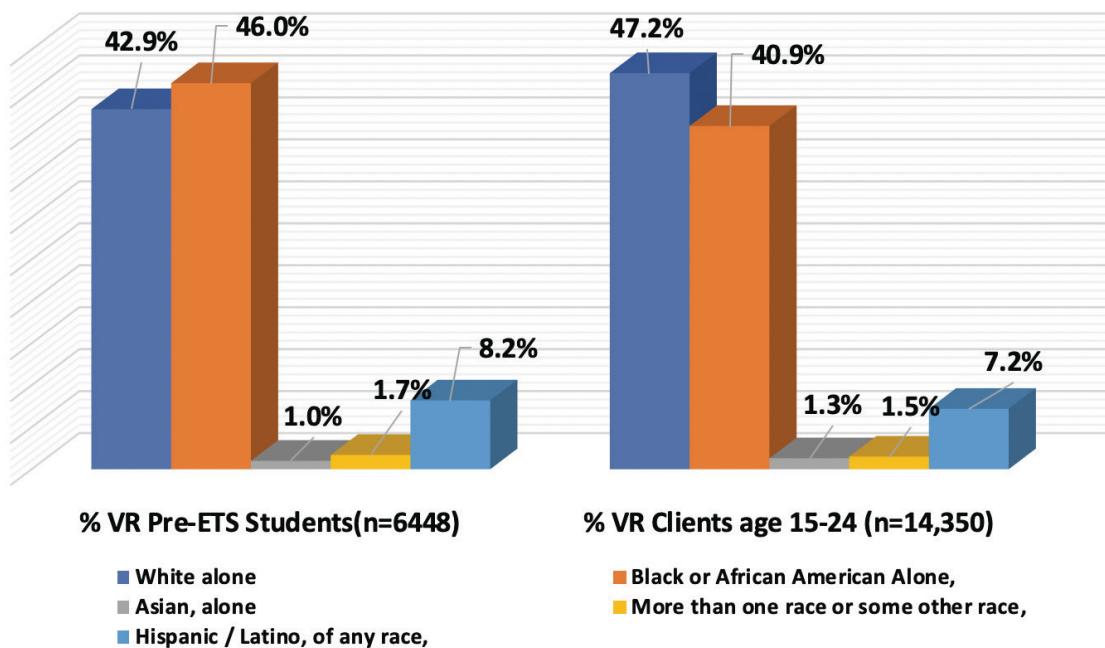
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

As shown below, similar to the gender ratio among VR clients, a higher percentage of pre-employment transition students are male, whereas it is estimated that 62% of the population of youth age 14-24 are female.

Gender of Pre-ETS SWD and VR Clients, SFY 19



The graph below compares the race and ethnic background of pre-employment transition (Pre-ETS) students with VR clients who are aged 15-24. A higher percentage of Pre-ETS students identify themselves as African American or Black, compared to the VR clients.

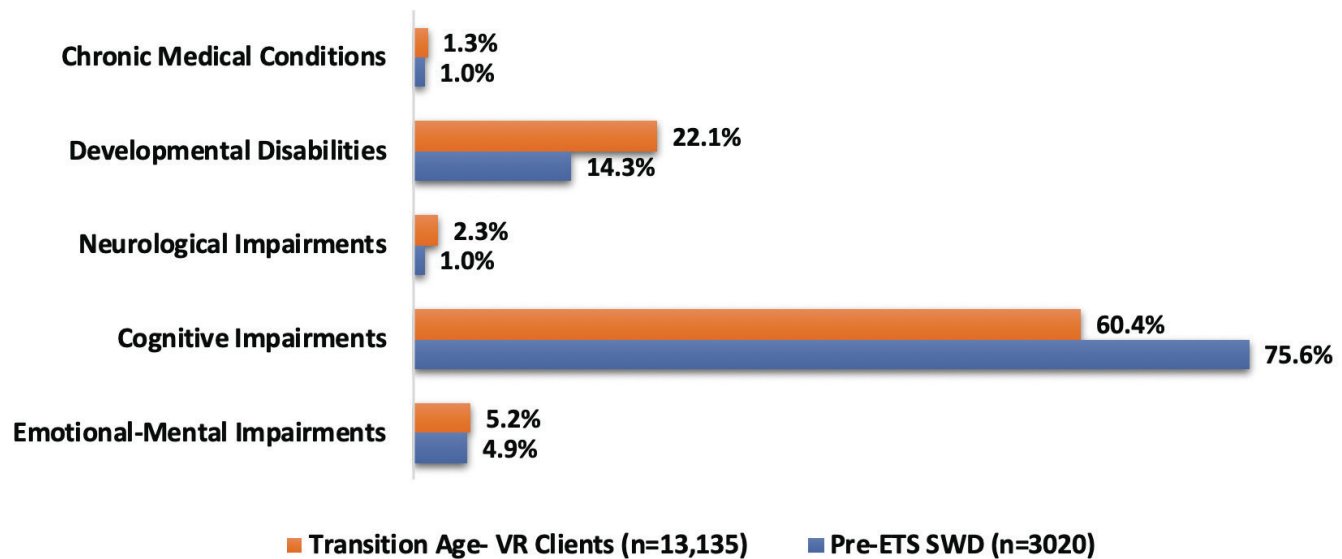


RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Lastly, for those with impairment information available, cognitive impairments was the pre-dominant disability identified for both Pre-ETS students and VR clients, aged 15-24. Specific impairments under this category include Intellectual Disability, ADHD, and Specific Learning Disability. However, more individuals with developmental disabilities were VR clients during SFY19.

Impairments of VR Clients, aged 15-24, and Pre-ETS Students, SFY19



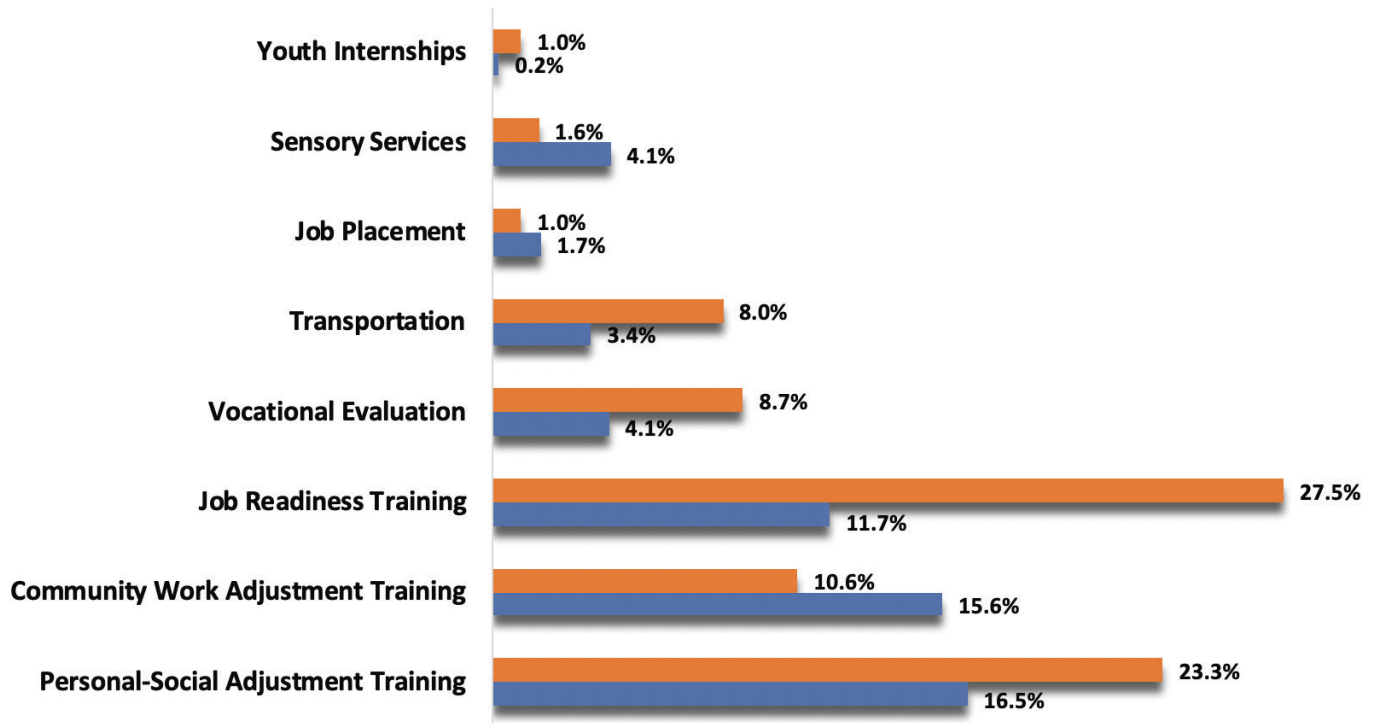
PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

Of the 8,191 identified as a Pre-ETS Student in SFY19, 61.8% (n= 5,060) participated in a VR- funded pre-employment transition service. The graph on the next page shows the percentage of the total funds utilized for pre-employment transition services (\$ 4,307,574.90) for the services listed, in comparison to the percentage of VR funds utilized for services for VR clients age 15-24 (\$17,887,174). As shown, funds for Pre-ETS services focused on job readiness and personal social adjustment training services compared to what similar age individuals received who were VR clients.

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Percentage of Services Funded for VR Clients age 14-24 and Pre-ETS Students,
SFY 19



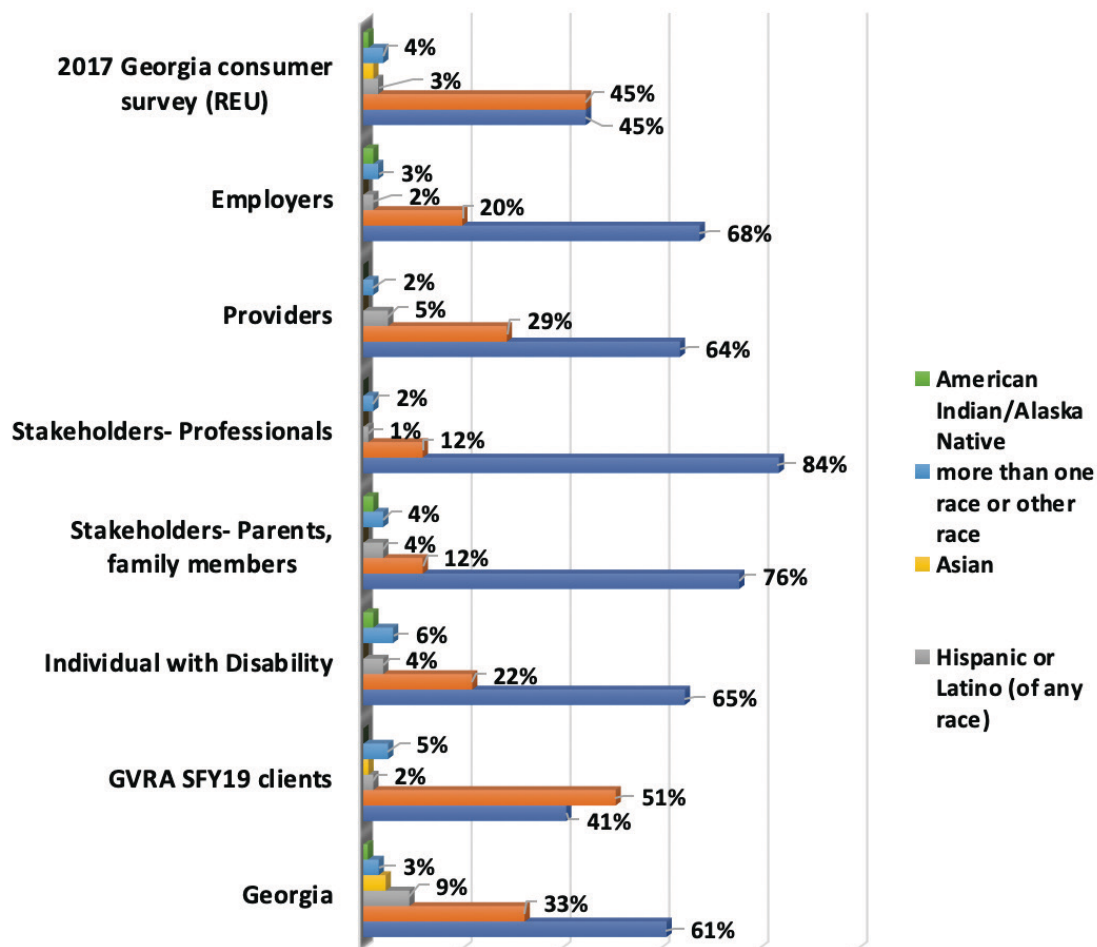
RESULTS**RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION****DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS****RACE/ETHNICITY OF RESPONDENTS**

The graph on the next page depicts the racial/ethnic backgrounds of survey respondents and how they compare to the racial distribution of people with disabilities in Georgia (first column) as well as the racial distribution of GVRA 2019 clientele. As you in the graph below and table on next page, the representation of African Americans with disabilities in the 2020 Survey for Individuals with Disabilities was 22% which is lower than the state representation (33%) and less than the GVRA clientele representation (51%). Although African Americans are under represented in the 2020 individuals with disabilities survey, they were well represented (45%) in the 2017 customer satisfaction survey that we at REU had conducted for GVRA. It is therefore important to also refer to the summary findings from REU 2017 consumer satisfaction survey to further understand the needs of the African American population with disabilities.

**RESULTS OF
DATA COLLECTION**

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION



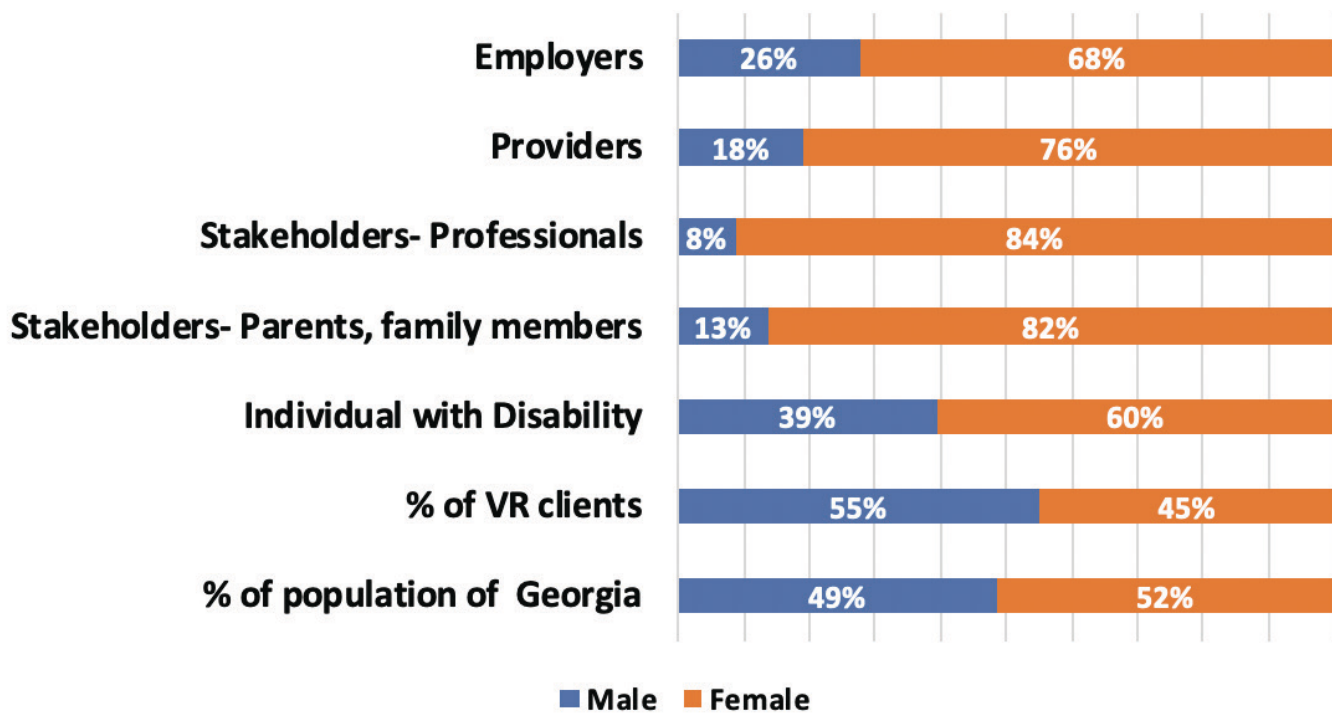
RACE/ETHNICITY	INDIVIDUAL WITH DISABILITY		STAKEHOLDER PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS		STAKEHOLDER		PROVIDERS		EMPLOYERS	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
WHITE	65	164	76	152	84	140	64	55	68	41
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	22	55	12	24	12	20	29	25	20	12
AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE	2	6	2	4	0	0	0	0	2	1
ASIAN	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	2
NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
HISPANIC OR LATINO	4	11	4	8	1	2	5	4	3	1
OTHER	6	15	4	9	2	4	0	2	3	2
TOTAL	100	253	100	201	100	166	100	86	100	60

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

The graph below shows the gender distribution of respondents. A slightly higher percentage of females (60%) responded to the individuals with disabilities survey compared to the prevalence of females in the Georgia population (52%) and the proportion of GVRA clients who are female (45%). For most of the other surveys, the proportion of women who responded was very high. Among stakeholders in the parents, family members category, a majority of the respondents (82%) were mothers of individuals with disabilities. Females are over-represented in social service and care-taking professions, so it was not surprising that the majority of professionals (84%) and employment service providers (76%) were female. It is noteworthy that the majority of employers who responded to this survey were also female (68%).

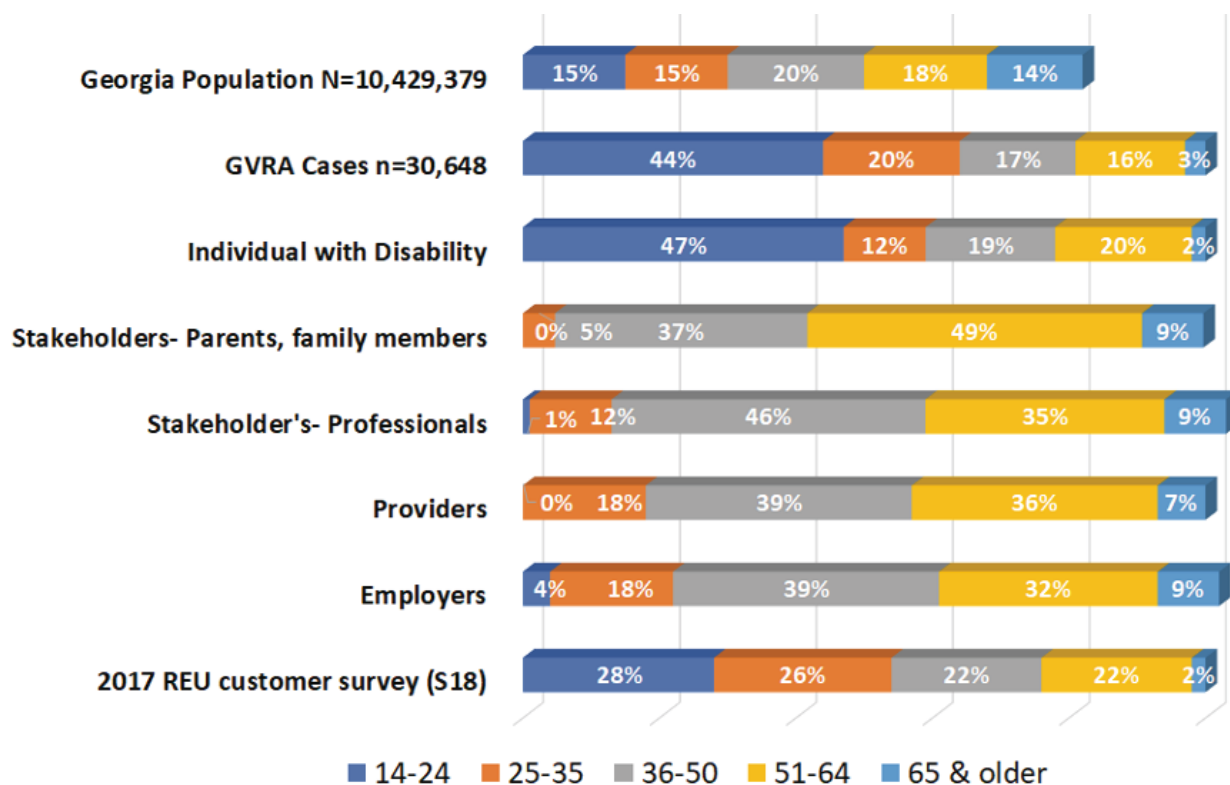


RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

AGE RANGE OF RESPONDENTS

The age distribution of survey respondents for the individuals with disabilities survey was representative of the age distribution of 2019 GVRA clientele. Although youth between 14 and 24 years of age make up only 15% of the Georgia population, almost half of current GVRA clientele (44%) are youth in that age range, and 47% of the respondents to the individual with disability survey were in that age group. The REU 2017 customer satisfaction survey only included 28% of youth between 14-24 years. The percentage of other older individuals with disabilities who responded to the 2020 survey were comparable in percentage to GVRA 2019 clients.

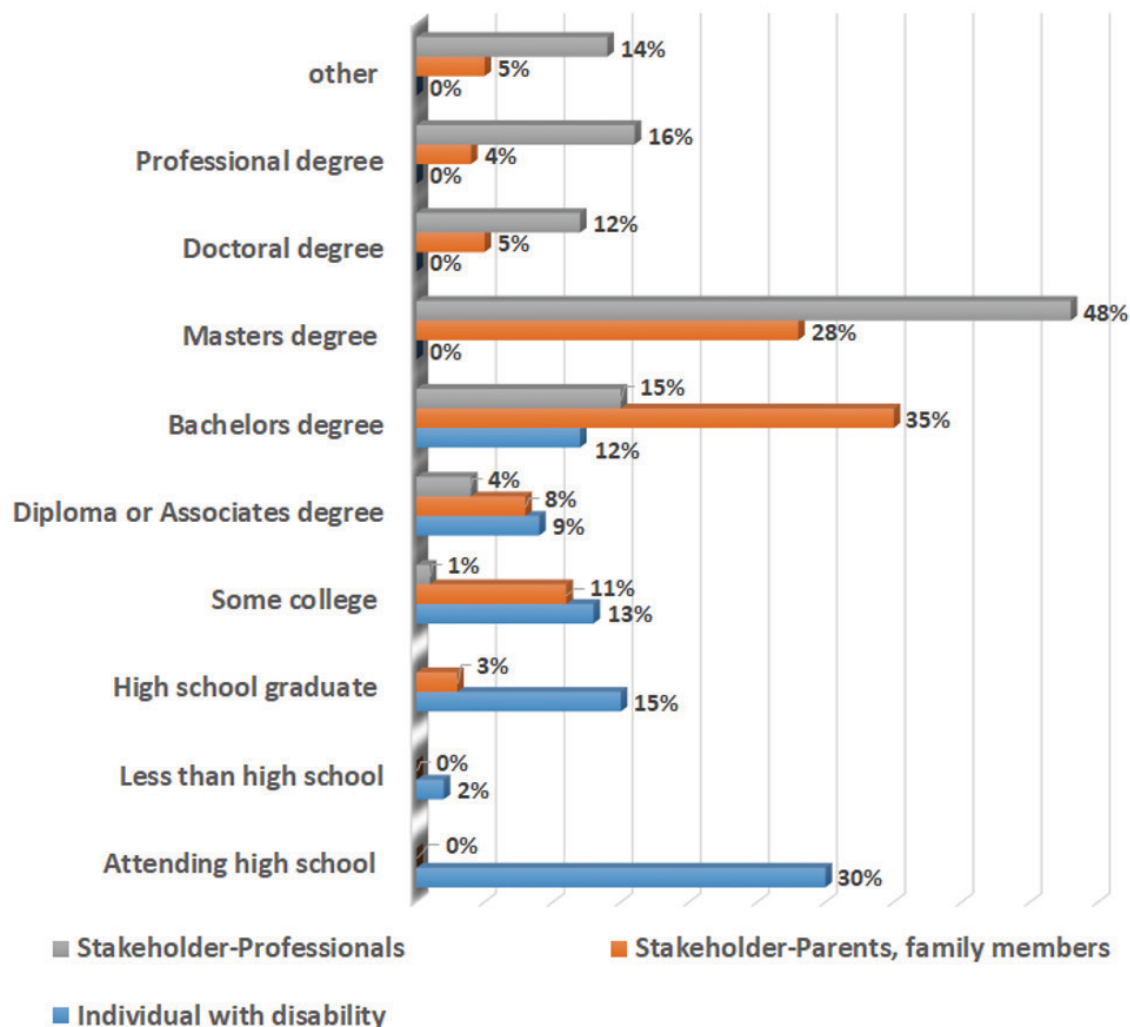


RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS

About one-third (30%) of individuals with disabilities survey respondents were currently attending high school and another 15% report being high school graduates. This is in line with the fact that 47% of individuals with disabilities survey respondents are between the ages of 14 and 24 years of age. Another 13% reported having some college, 9% reported having a diploma or associates degree, and 12% reported having a bachelors' degree. For professionals, almost half (48%) reported having a bachelor's degree with another 12% having a doctoral degree and 16% reported having a professional degree.



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

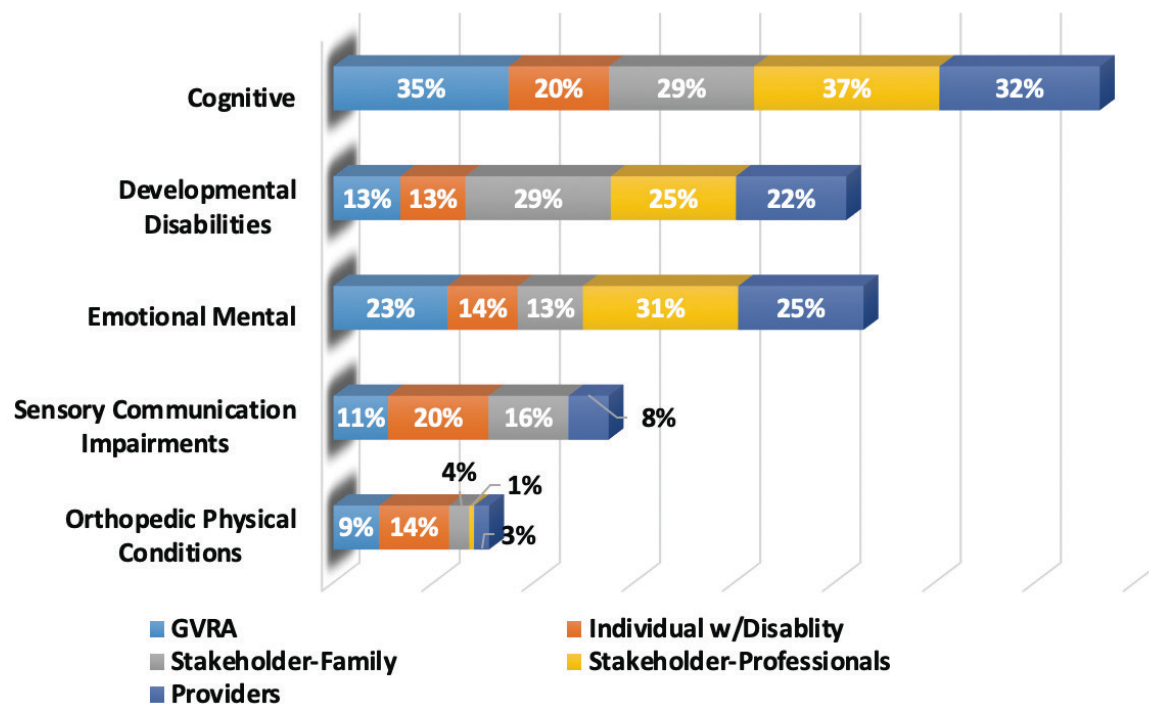
	INDIVIDUAL WITH DISABILITY		STAKEHOLDER PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS		STAKEHOLDER PROFESSIONALS	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
ATTENDING HIGH SCHOOL	30%	71	0%	0	0%	0
LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL	2%	5	0%	1	0%	0
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	15%	36	3%	6	0%	0
SOME COLLEGE	13%	30	11%	21	1%	2
DIPLOMA OR ASSOCIATES DEGREE	9%	21	8%	16	4%	7
BACHELORS' DEGREE	12%	28	35%	68	15%	27
MASTERS DEGREE	0%	21	28%	55	48%	85
DOCTORAL DEGREE	0%	6	5%	9	12%	21
PROFESSIONAL DEGREE	0%	3	4%	8	16%	28
OTHER	0%	12	5%	10	14%	25

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

TOP IMPAIRMENTS FOR SELF OR FOR THOSE SERVED

Respondents in each of the surveys were asked to pick the top three impairment categories for themselves or for those they care for or serve. The top impairment identified by individuals in all of the five target groups was a cognitive impairment which includes intellectual disability, learning disability, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) among others. The second most identified category by respondents was developmental disability which includes autism, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, genetic disorders among other things. The infographic below shows how the top impairment categories selected by each of the target groups stack against each other. For example, 20% of the 234 individuals with disabilities selected cognitive impairment as one of the top three categories for themselves. The percentages in the graph do not relate to each other. They merely show us that cumulatively, cognitive impairment was the category chosen by most respondents across all the five surveys. The table below gives details on the percentages and counts for each of the surveys. (Table on next page).



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

	GVRA CASES	IMPAIRMENTS FOR IWD SELF IDENTIFIED (N=234)		STAKEHOLDER PARENTS (N=272)		STAKEHOLDER PROFESSIONALS (N=210)		PROVIDERS (N=174)	
	%	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
ORTHOPEDIC-PHYSICAL CONDITIONS (i.e. spinal cord injury, amputation, arthritis, back/neck, chronic pain, etc.)	9%	14%	73	4%	16	3%	3	3%	8
SENSORY- COMMUNICATION IMPAIRMENTS (i.e.vision, hearing, speech, etc.)	11%	20%	109	16%	72	1%	1	8%	24
EMOTIONAL-MENTAL HEALTH (i.e. Bipolar Disorder, Depression/Anxiety, Schizophrenia, PTSD, Substance Depen- dence, etc.)	23%	14%	75	13%	56	31%	21	25%	74
DEVELOPMENTAL (i.e. Autism, Spina Bifida, Cerebral Palsy, Genetic Disorders, etc.)	13%	13%	68	29%	129	25%	17	22%	66
COGNITIVE (i.e. Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, ADD/ADHD, etc.)	35%	20%	108	29%	128	37%	25	32%	94

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES - CUMULATIVE RESULTS**

Participants in each of the five surveys were asked the question, ‘In your experience, generally, what are the top three barriers to employment encountered by people with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities’. Participants were asked to select any three options from a long list of different options. Lack of access to dependable transportation was the top barrier identified by participants in all of the five surveys. Georgia is a large state that lacks a reliable public transportation system outside of the metro areas. In the absence of reliable public transportation, people rely on other modes of transportation for commuting to work and other places. For individuals with disabilities, who are unable to drive due to their disability, this can be a major impediment to employment. Similarly, youth with disabilities who have not yet learned to drive or lack the confidence or the resources to own a vehicle, transportation can present a barrier to accessing internship and other paid or unpaid work experiences. This issue can be particularly exacerbated for individuals with disabilities who live in rural and suburban areas.

The second barrier identified by most participants was the fear of losing benefits. Not only is income assurance that the program provides important, but the added reality of eligibility for Medicaid coverage for Social Security recipients is a major incentive for maintaining Social Security eligibility status by limiting or avoiding work altogether. There are many Social Security Work Incentives Programs, which make it possible for people to work without losing access to benefits, but they are complicated and not well understood by recipients, their families, or the professionals influencing decision-making. There is a strong need for providing benefits counseling to individuals with disabilities to help them understand how employment will affect their benefits including SSDI and Medicaid.

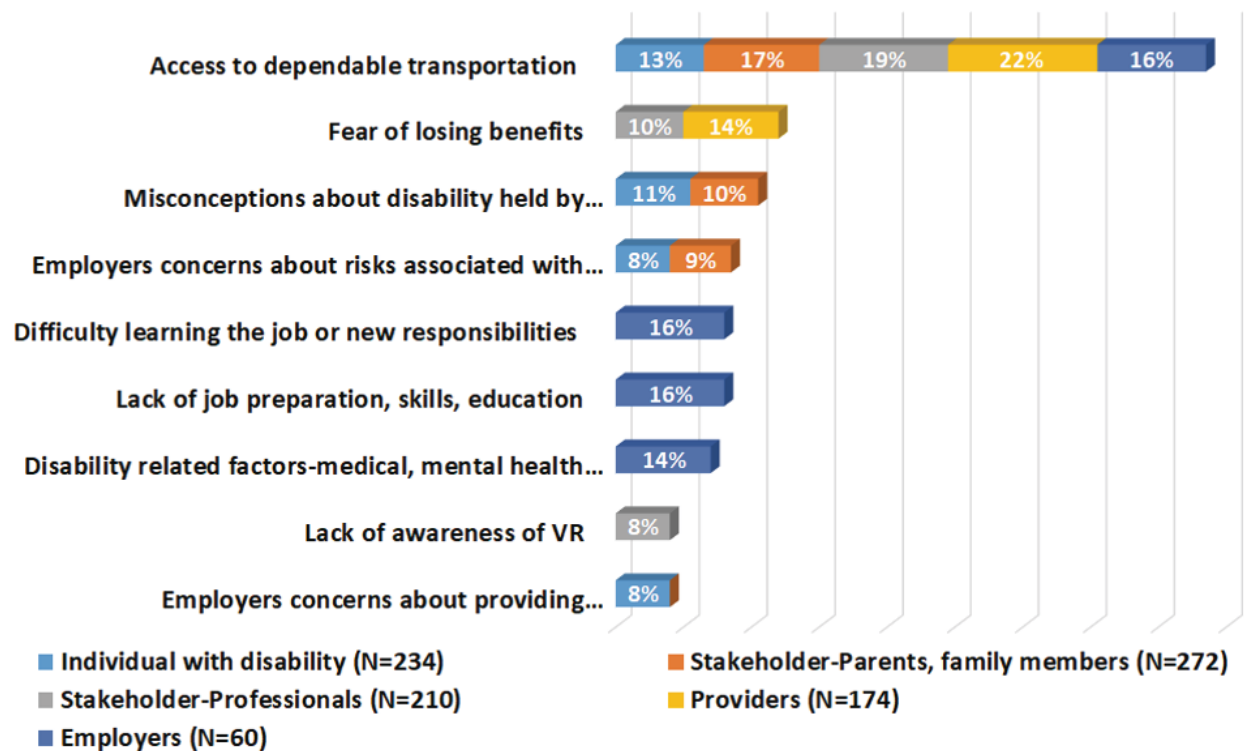
The infographic on the next page shows how the top barriers selected by each of the target groups stack against each other. For example, 17% of participants who responded to the individuals with disabilities survey selected lack of access to dependable transportation as one of the top three barriers for obtaining employment. The percentages in the graph do not relate to each other. They merely show us that cumulatively, lack of dependable transportation was the category chosen by most respondents across all the five surveys. The next few graphs below show the categories selected by each of the targeted groups.

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES - CUMULATIVE RESULTS



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES****» Perspective of Individual with Disabilities (n=234)**

When asked about what the top three barriers to employment encountered by people with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, the majority of the individuals with disabilities selected lack of accessible transportation as the top barrier (13%). The second barrier identified by individuals with disabilities was the misconceptions about disabilities held by professionals (11%). In spite of an evidence base that individuals with most significant disabilities can maintain employment with the needed support, some professionals may have misguided beliefs or attitudes of the capacities of individuals with disabilities, including the abilities of those with most significant disabilities to maintain competitive and meaningful employment.

Following that were concerns of employers regarding providing accommodations for individuals with disabilities for employment (8%) and employer's concerns about the risks associated with hiring individuals with disabilities (8%). Employers may be fearful of or lack the needed knowledge, skills and self efficacy, or confidence in being able to provide appropriate accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Many employers incorrectly assume and expect to have added insurance costs, less productivity, more days off, or other additional costs when they hire someone who has a disability. The reality is that hiring people with disabilities is financially and culturally beneficial for businesses. A 2018 study by Accenture found that companies who hired people with disabilities outperformed their peers and saw a wide variety of improvements. These businesses saw 72% more productivity, 45% better workplace safety, 30% higher profit margins, and 200% higher net income.

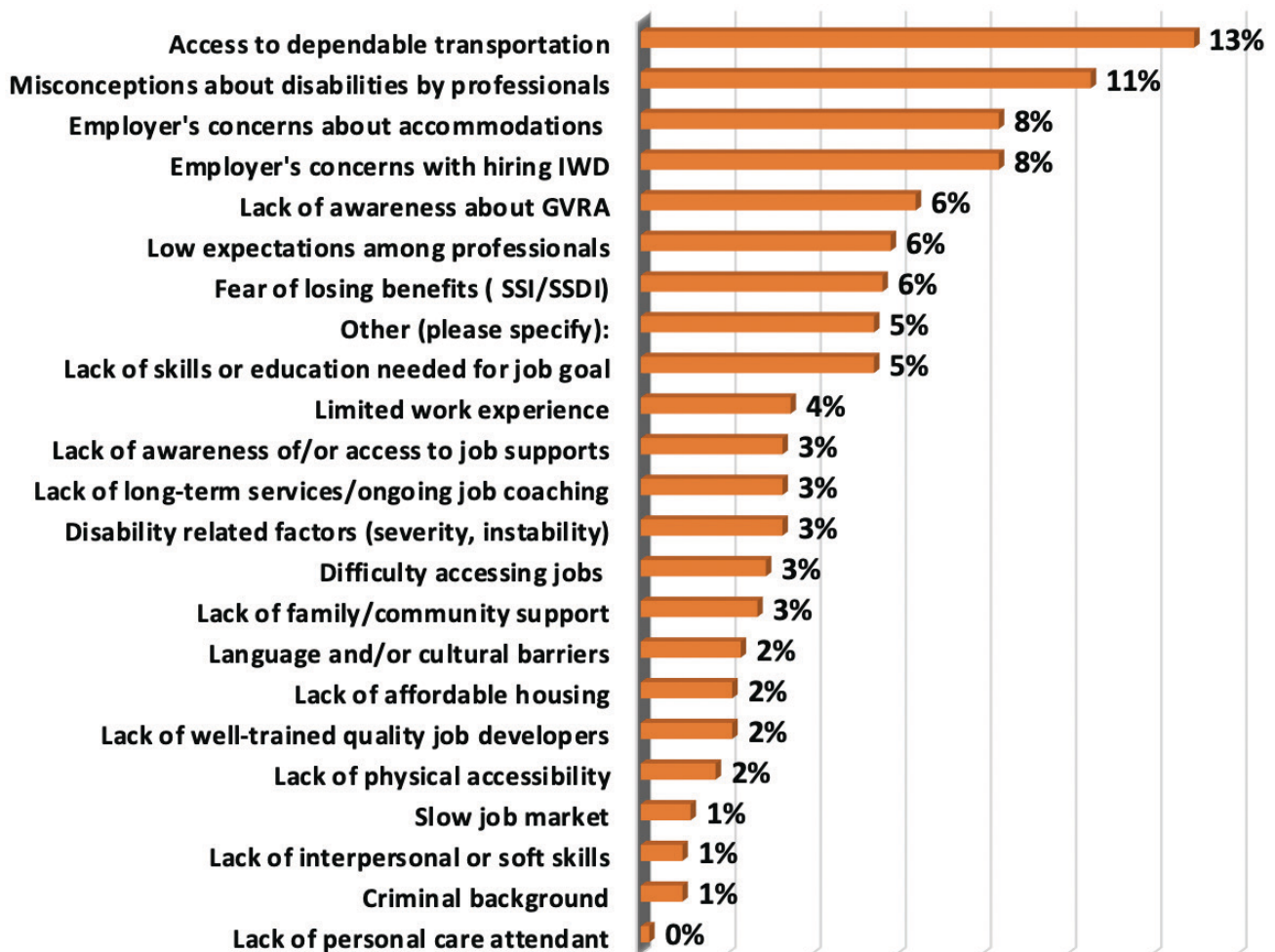
RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR
NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

Top three barriers to employment for PWD (n=234)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

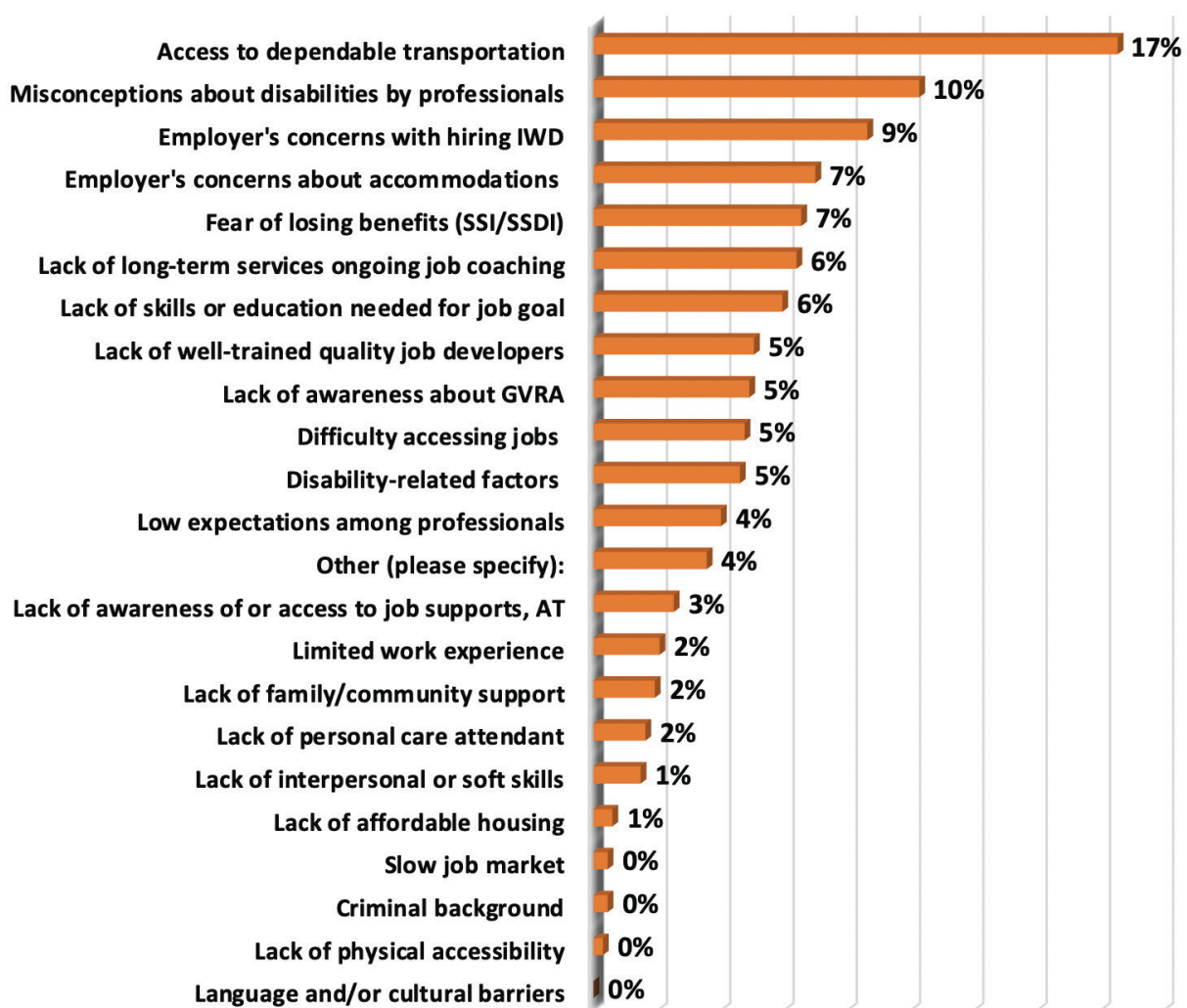
INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

» Perspective of Key Stakeholders including Parents, Family Members, Advocates (n=272)

When asked about what the top three barriers to employment encountered by people with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities were, the majority of the individuals with disabilities selected lack of accessible transportation as the top barrier (17%). The second barrier identified by individuals with disabilities was the misconceptions about disabilities held by professionals (10%). Following that was the employer's concerns about the risks associated with hiring individuals with disabilities (9%). Employer's concerns regarding providing accommodations for individuals with disabilities for employment (7%) and fear of losing benefits was the next most cited concern (7%).

Top Three Barriers to Employment (n=272)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

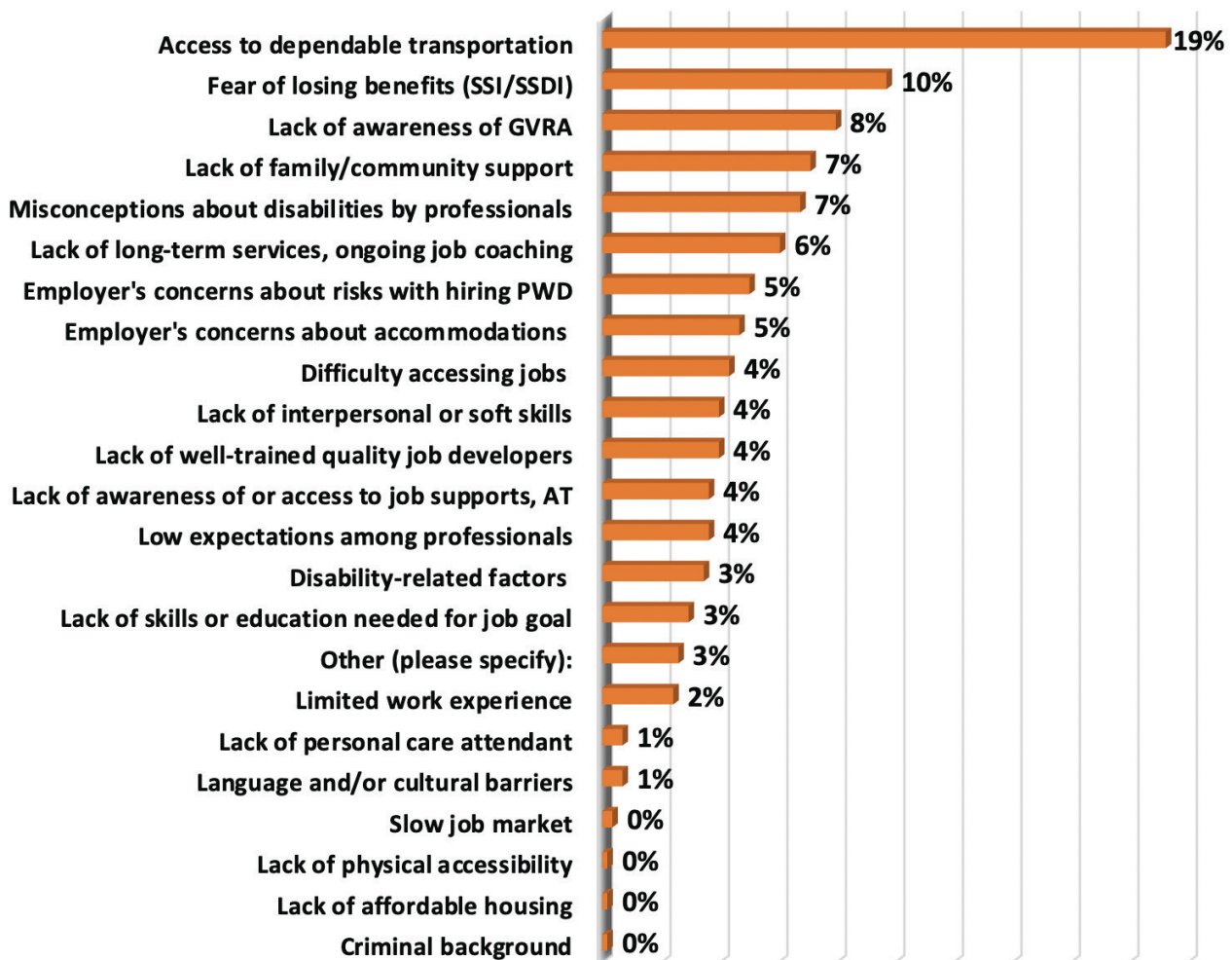
INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

» Perspective of Key Stakeholders including Professionals (n=210)

Professionals who work with individuals having disabilities were asked about the top three barriers to employment encountered by people with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities. Provider's perspectives mirrored those of individuals with disabilities as well as that of their family members. According to professionals, lack of accessible transportation was one of the top barriers (19%). The second barrier identified by professionals was the fear of losing benefits (10%). Lack of awareness of vocational rehabilitation agency (GVRA) was another top barrier mentioned by professionals (8%).

Top Three Barriers to Employment (n=210)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

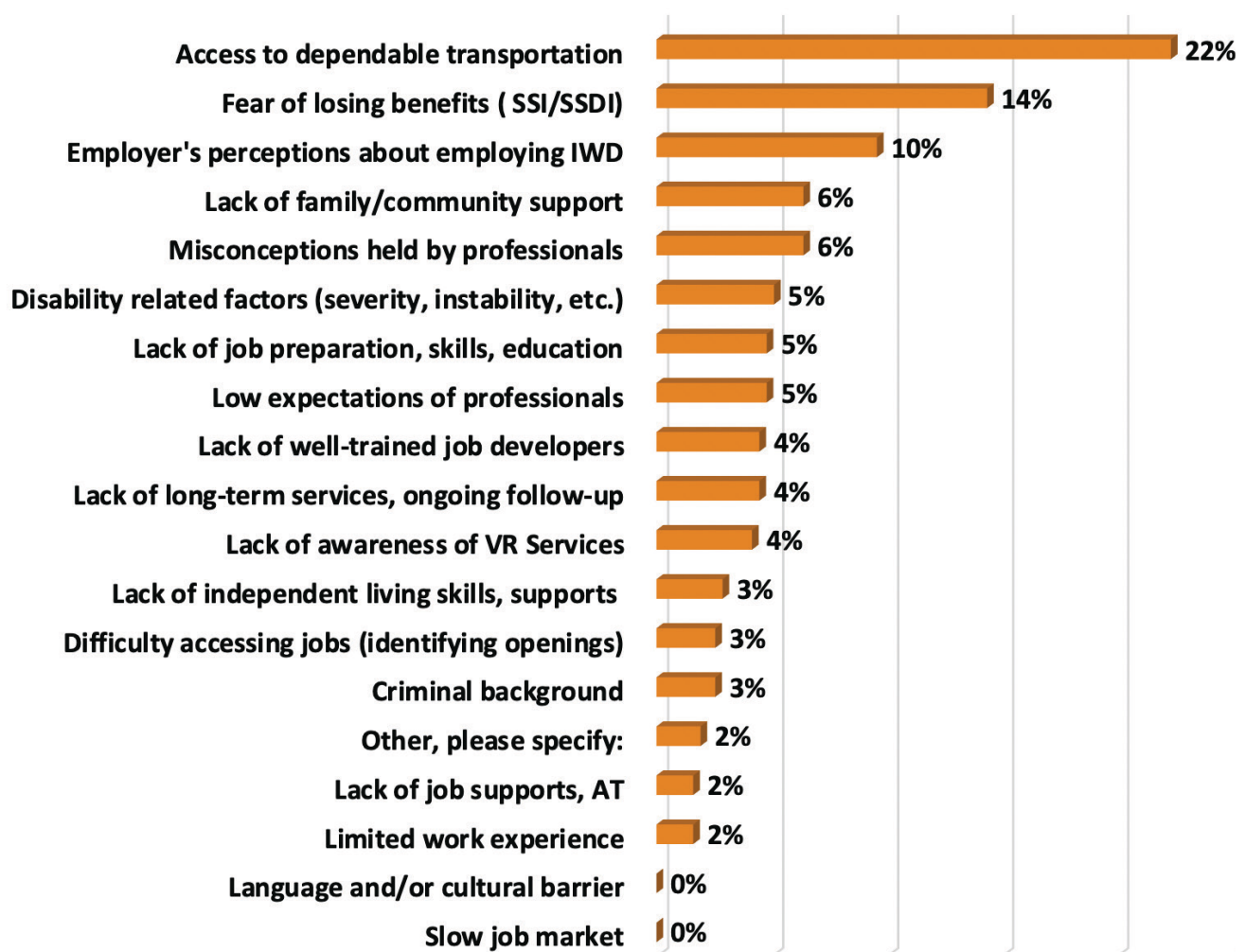
INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

» Perspective of Employment Service Providers (n=121)

Employment service providers who work with individuals having disabilities were asked about the top three barriers to employment encountered by people with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities. Provider's perspectives mirrored those of other professionals in the community and that of individuals with disabilities as well as their family members. According to service providers, lack of accessible transportation was one of the top barriers (22%). The second barrier identified by professionals was the fear of losing benefits (14%). Employer's perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities (10%) was identified as the other major barrier that acts as an impediment to the employment of individuals with disabilities.

Top Three Barriers to Employment (n=121)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

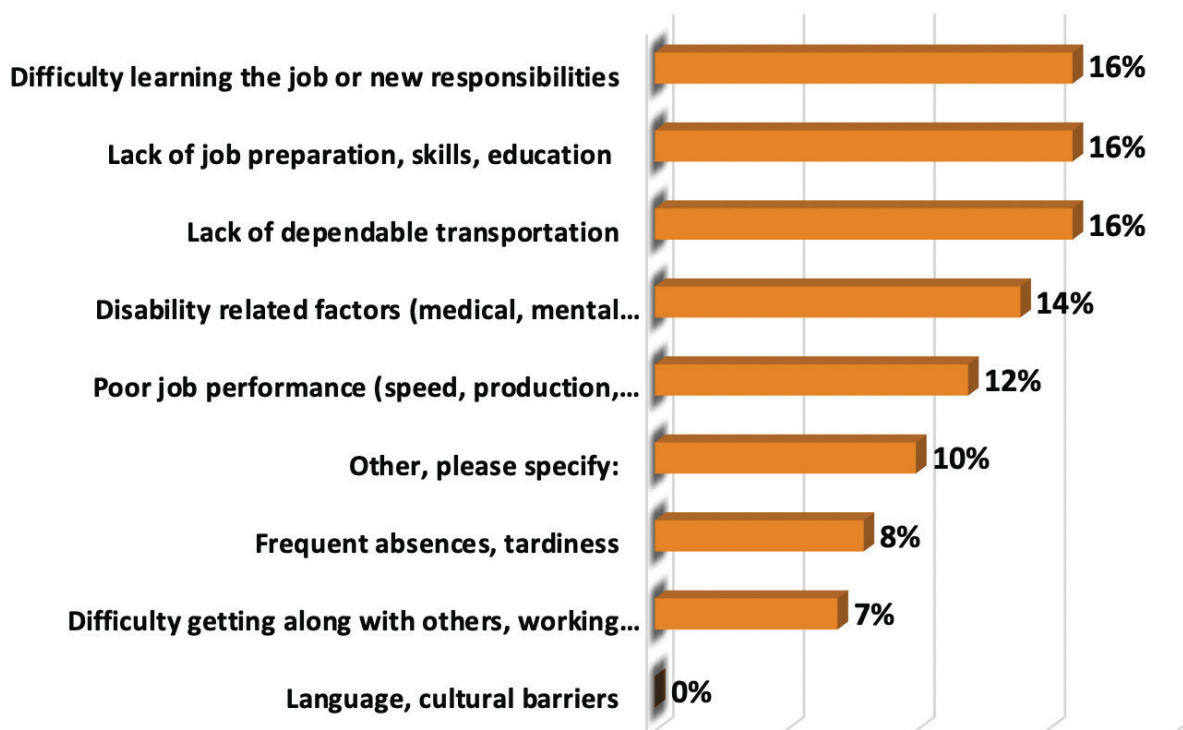
INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

» Perspective of Employers (n=60)

Employers were asked the question, 'With respect to employees with disabilities you have now or have had in the past, what are the top three (3) challenges you have experienced with them regarding job retention?'. They were asked to choose only three responses from a longer list of responses. The three top challenges to employing and retaining individuals with disabilities identified by employers included lack of job preparation, skills, education needed for the job (16%), lack of dependable transportation (16%), and difficulty learning the job or new responsibilities. Employers also identified specific disability related factors (medical, mental health etc.) as being challenges to retaining employees with disabilities. Poor job performance (speed, duration, and quality) was mentioned by 12% of the employers as being a challenge.

Top Three challenges for Job Retention (n=36)



RESULTS

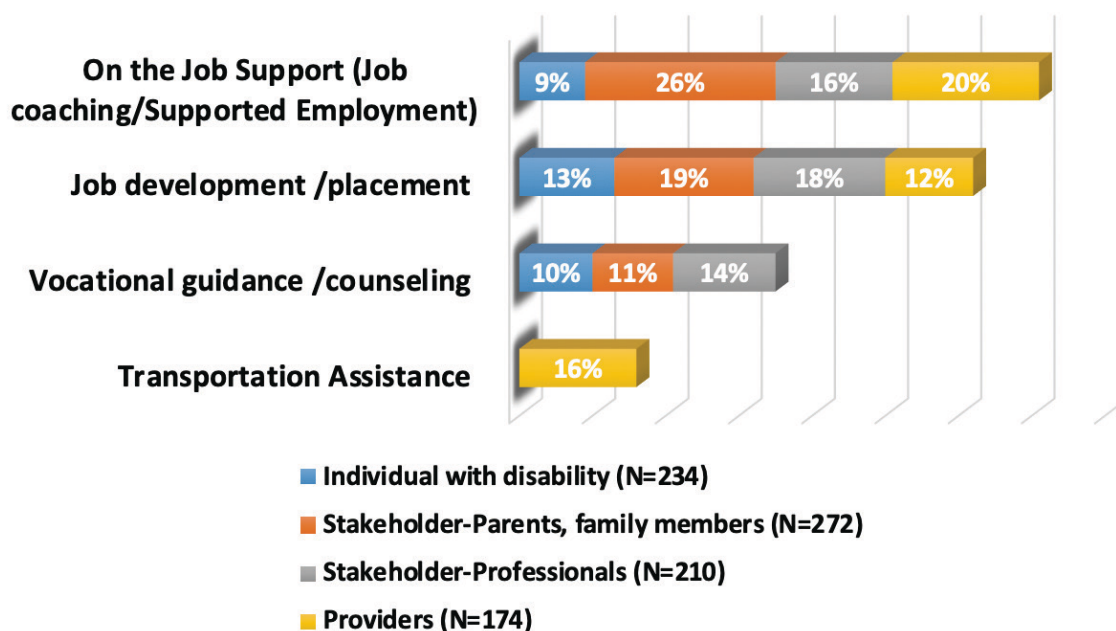
RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

SERVICES MOST NEEDED BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES - CUMULATIVE RESULTS

Participants in each of the five surveys were asked the question, 'In your opinion, please identify the top three (3) services that are most needed by individuals with disabilities for obtaining meaningful employment.' Participants were asked to select any three options from a long list of different options. On the job support including job coaching and supported employment was identified by all target groups as the most important service needed for maintaining employment of individuals with significant disabilities. The second most important service identified was the need for job development and job placement services. Vocational guidance and counseling services were also identified as being a high priority service. Assistance with transportation was identified by providers as an important service needed for the employment of individuals with disabilities.

The infographic below shows how the top services identified by each of the target groups stack against each other. For example, 26% of participants who responded to the stakeholder parents and family members survey selected on the job support (job coaching/supported employment) as one of the top three services needed by individuals with disabilities to maintain jobs. The percentages in the graph do not relate to each other. They merely show us that cumulatively, on the job support was the category chosen by most respondents across all the five surveys. The next few graphs below show the categories selected by each of the targeted groups.



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

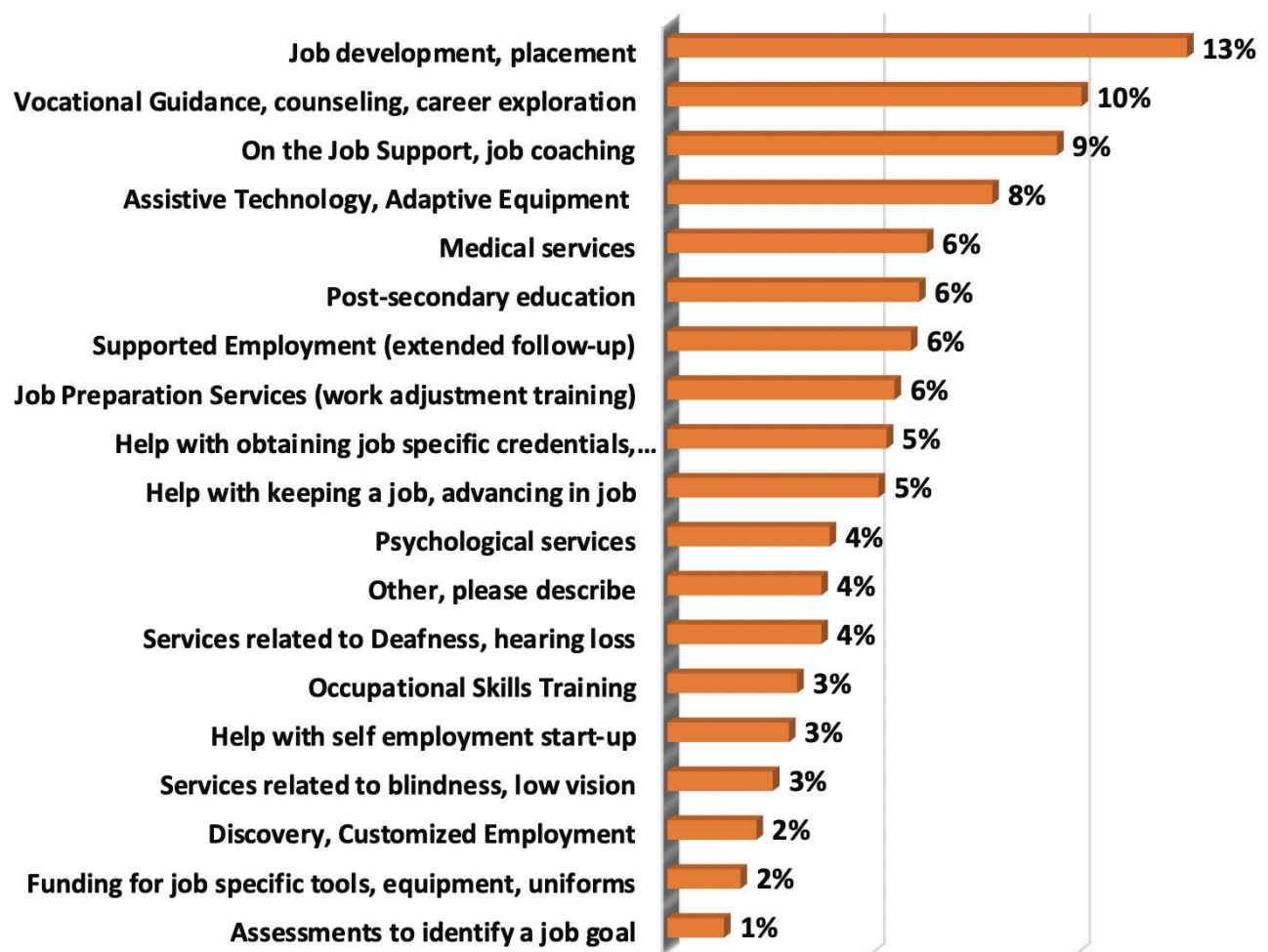
INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

SERVICES MOST NEEDED BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

» Perspective of Individuals with Disabilities

When asked about what the top three most needed services by individuals with disabilities for obtaining meaningful employment, the majority of individuals with disabilities identified job development and job placement as the most needed service (13%). The second most important service identified was the need for vocational guidance and counseling to include career exploration (10%). The need for on the job support including job coaching and supported employment was the third most important service identified by individuals with disabilities (9%).

Three Services most needed by PWD for employment (n=234)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

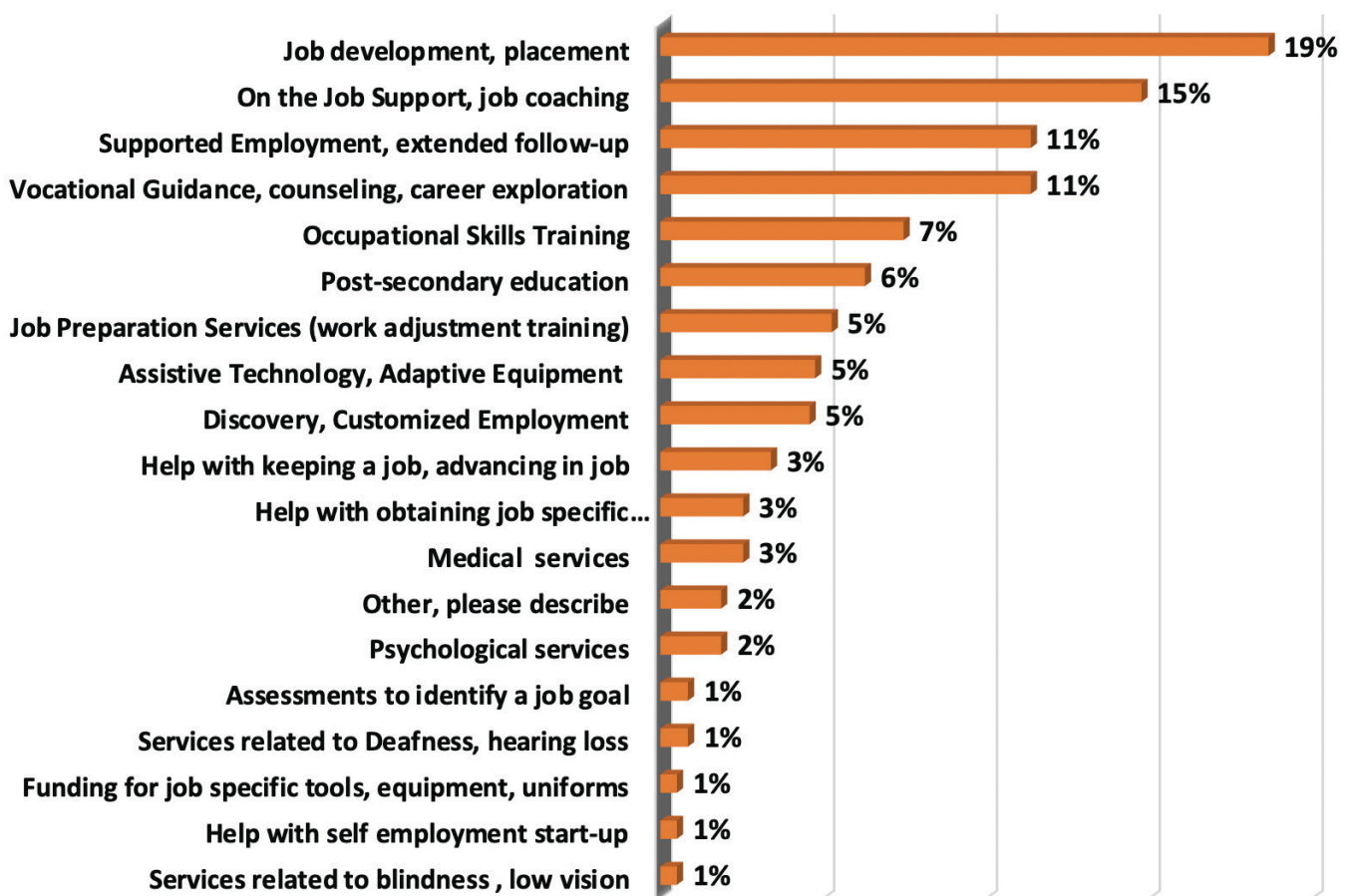
INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

SERVICES MOST NEEDED BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

» Perspective Key stakeholders including parents, family members and advocates (n=272)

When asked about what the top three most needed services by individuals with disabilities for obtaining meaningful employment, the majority of individuals with disabilities identified job development and job placement as the most needed service (19%). The need for on the job support including job coaching was the third most important service identified by individuals with disabilities (15%). The need for extended follow-up, including supported employment, was identified by 11% of the respondents along with the need for vocational guidance and counseling to include career exploration, which was mentioned by an equal proportion (11%) of respondents.

Top Three Services needed for employment (n=272)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

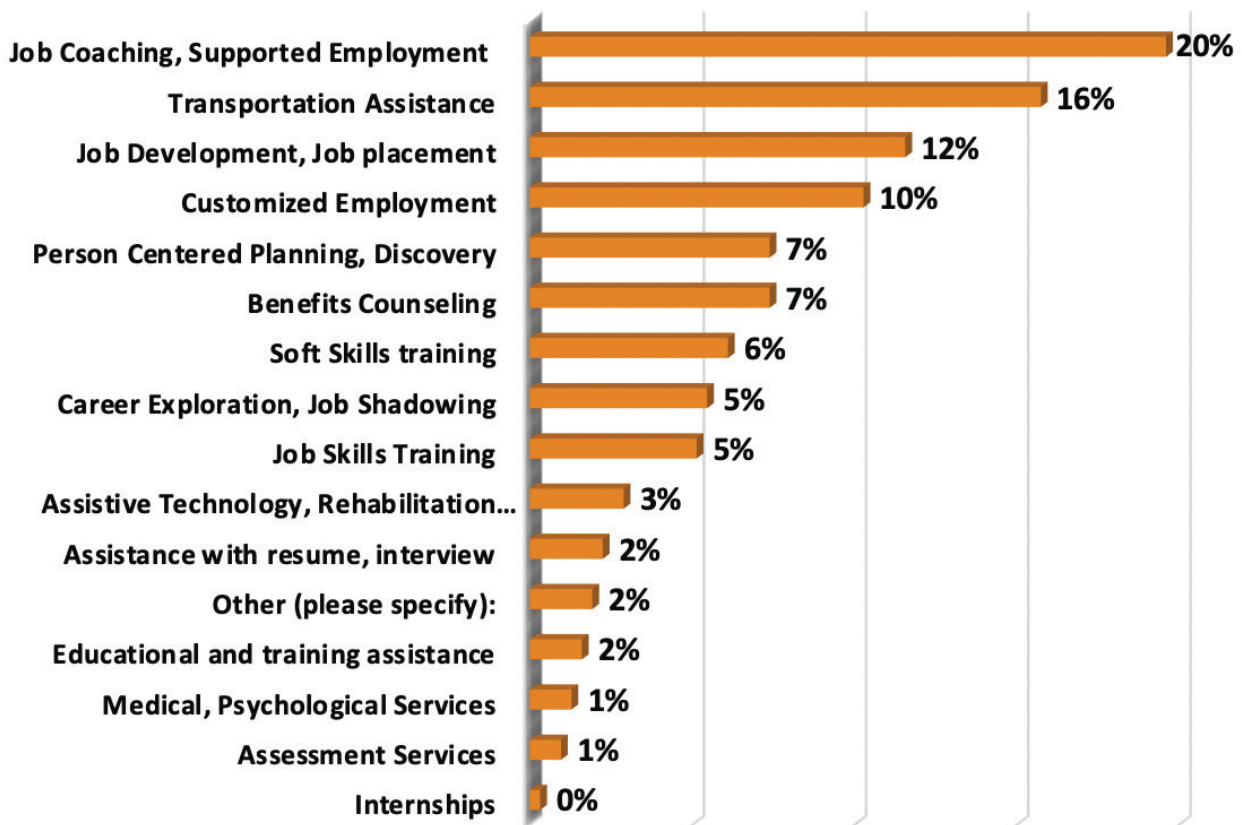
INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

SERVICES MOST NEEDED BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

» Perspective of Employment Service Providers (n=121)

When asked about what the top three most needed services by individuals with disabilities for obtaining meaningful employment, the need for on the job support, including job coaching and supported employment, was the most important service identified by employment service providers (20%). The second most important service identified by employment service providers was transportation assistance (16%). Job development and job placement (12%) was the third most important service identified by service providers.

Services needs of individuals with most significant disabilities (n=121)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

PHONE INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

» **Timeliness of services**

- *“We need to speed up the process. I currently have a person who applied for Supported employment in July and she is still waiting to see if she will be approved. Her referral was turned in from GVRA to DBHDD and just is taking a long time. This individual has said “its not ever going to happen.”*
- *“VOC Rehab needs to move faster with their process and have more knowledge of the I/DD population!”*

» **Transportation**

- *“Transportation is a big barrier in areas without public transportation systems.”*
- *“Have real transportation solutions.”*

» **Strength-based rather than deficit-based approach**

- *“Feedback gathered from parents, clients, and other stakeholders indicates that evaluations and assessments are usually conducted in brief half day appointments consisting of testing only -- but they are called “comprehensive.” They focus on limitations and impairments rather than having people an idea of what they are capable of.”*
- *“More time needs to be spent identifying a client’s strengths and working with that individual to provide a diversity of services that can have long lasting benefits..”*

» **Provide Long term Job Supports**

- *“Provide long term job coaching if warranted.”*

» **Capacity of CRPs**

- *“CRPs do not serve the population of people with significant barriers to employment with customized services and are not the solution to putting more people to work.”*
- *“Cultivate more Customized Employment providers and support their work.”*
- *“A system of accountability for these providers so that they move toward goals with fidelity, not just leave clients unserved.”*
- *“If Georgia is to fully actualize what it means to be an employment first state, VR will need to work as partners, not adversaries, with their providers. We are a team in serving people with disabilities. I definitely feel that message is lost in our area.”*
- *“VR also needs to provide the proper support and education for providers of VR expectations.”*

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

» Relationship with Employers

- *“A connection needs to be made with large manufacturers etc for employment opportunities for individuals.”*

» Supported employment funds allocation

- *“Supported and customized employment work!!!!” “We need to do a better job! SE needs to be the preferred service and be financially reimbursed as such.”*
- *“The state needs to honor its commitments. The state has mismanaged funds appropriated to support employment services for the disabled. This mismanagement has resulted in a lack of funding when their should be ample funds available. As a result, the state provides an interpretation of “service-need” based on availability of funds to support rather than what is best for the community it serves.”*

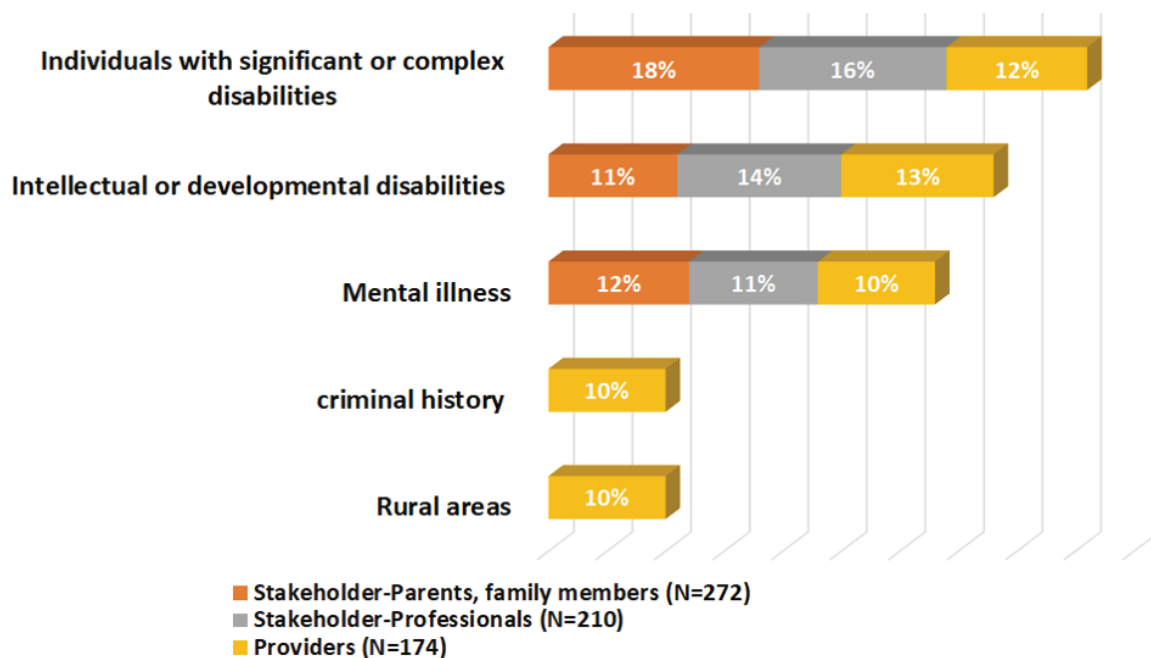
RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE STATE VR PROGRAM INCLUDING MINORITIES

POPULATIONS MOST LIKELY TO BE UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED - CUMULATIVE RESULTS

Respondents in each of the surveys were asked about who they think are most likely to be under-served or unserved and encounter barriers accessing employment services. They were asked to select all options that applied to them. The infographic below shows how the top under-served or unserved group selected by each of the target groups stack against each other. Individuals with significant or complex disabilities were identified as the most underserved or unserved populations by parents, family members, employment service providers and professionals. The second most underserved or unserved population identified were individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Individuals with mental illness, those having criminal histories and those living in rural areas were also identified among underserved and unserved populations. For example, 18% of participants who completed the key stakeholder-parents or family members survey identified individuals with significant or complex disabilities as the most under-served or unserved group. The percentages in the graph do not relate to each other. They merely demonstrate that cumulatively, individuals with significant or complex disabilities were identified as the most under-served group by most respondents across all the five surveys. The next few graphs below show the categories selected by each of the targeted groups.



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

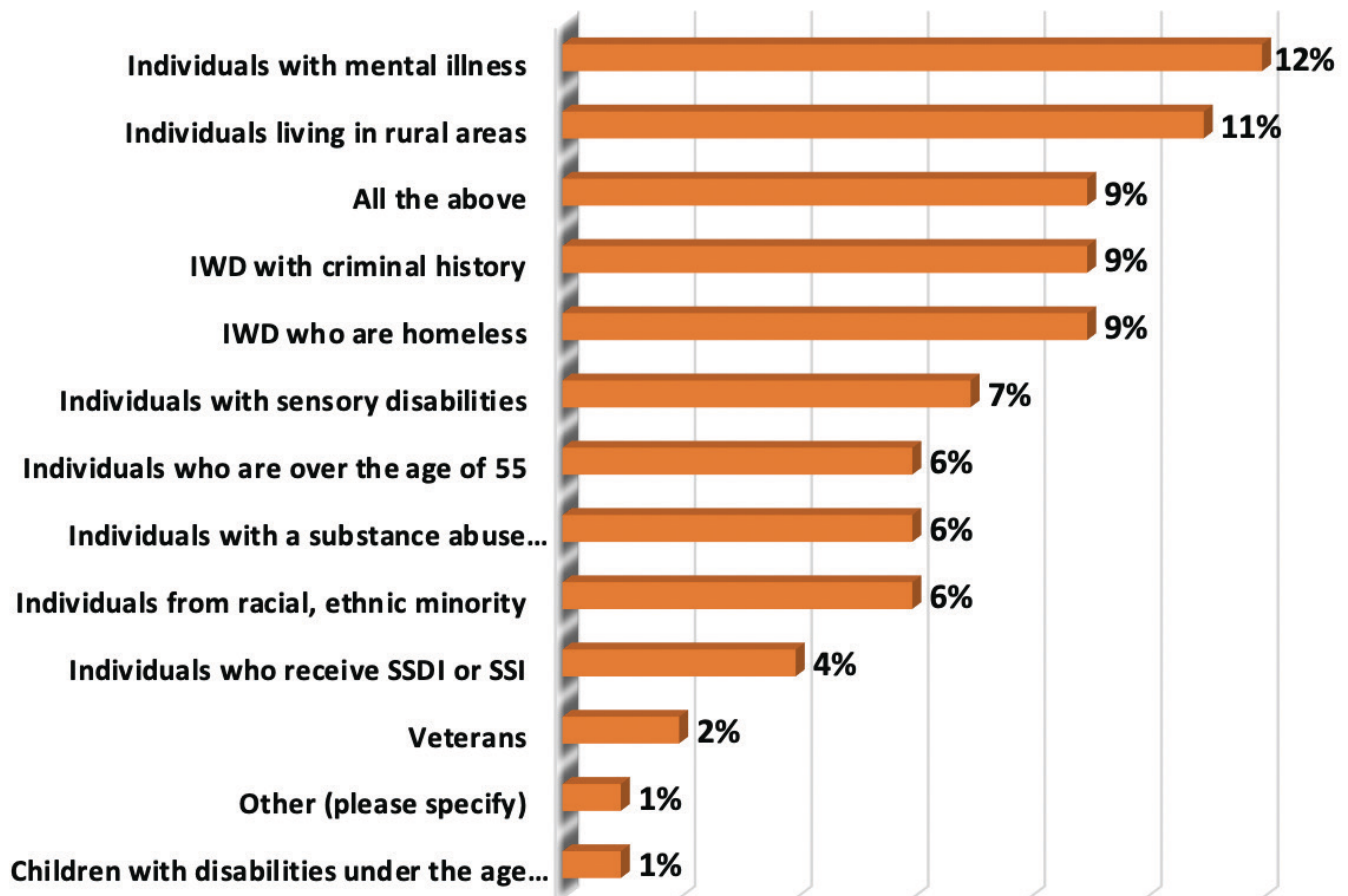
INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE STATE VR PROGRAM INCLUDING MINORITIES

POPULATIONS MOST LIKELY TO BE UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED

» Perspective of Parents and Family Members

When asked about who they think are most likely to be under-served or unserved and encounter barriers accessing employment services, the majority of parents/family members identified individuals with significant and complex disabilities (18%). The second most important group identified by parent/family members were individuals with mental illness (12%) followed by those living in rural areas (11%).

Unserved or Underserved Populations (n=272)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

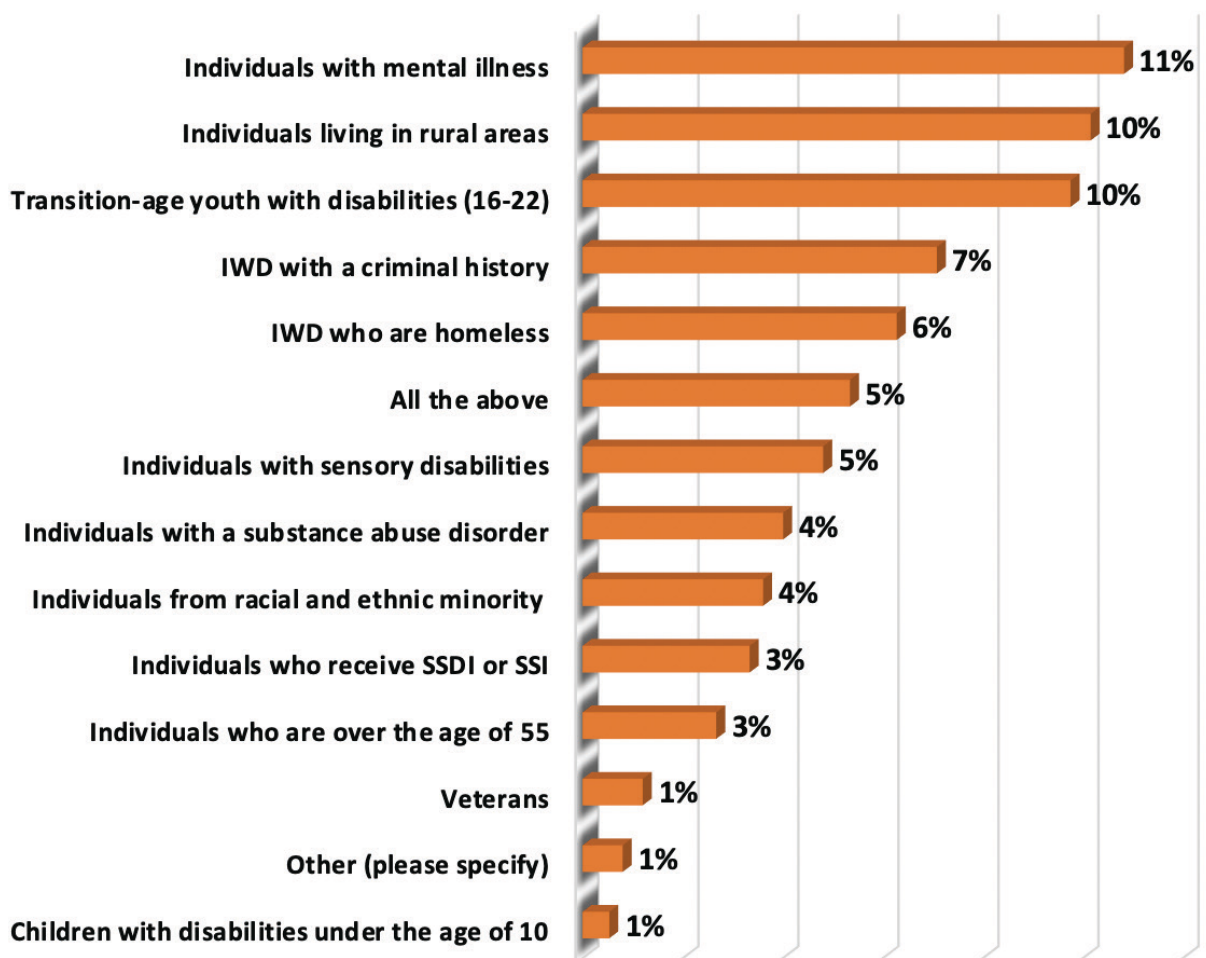
INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE STATE VR PROGRAM INCLUDING MINORITIES

POPULATIONS MOST LIKELY TO BE UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED

» Perspective of Professionals (n=210)

When asked about who they think are most likely to be under-served or unserved and encounter barriers accessing employment services, the majority of professionals identified individuals with significant and complex disabilities (16%). The second most important group identified by parent/family members were individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (14%) followed by those with mental illness (11%).

Underseved or underserved populations (n=210)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

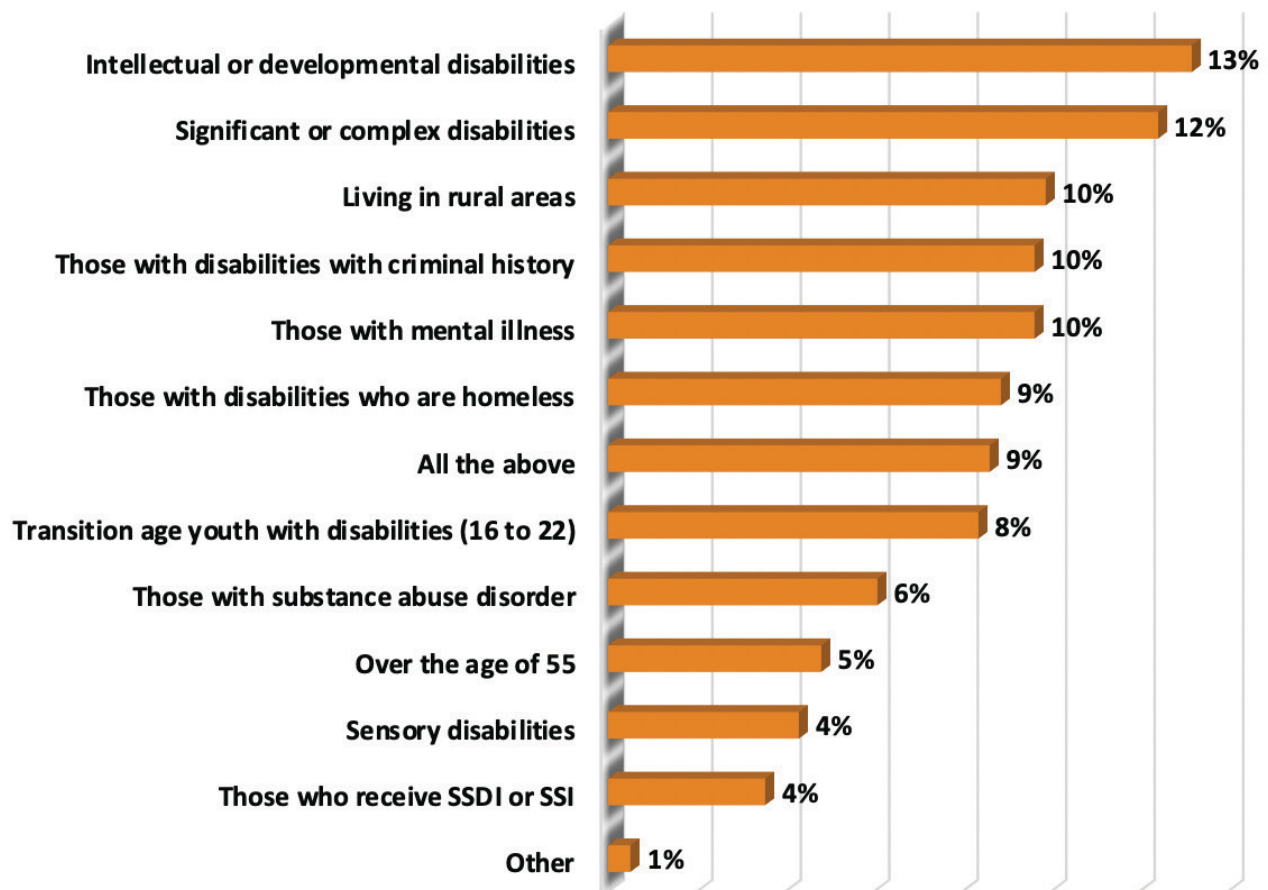
INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE STATE VR PROGRAM INCLUDING MINORITIES

POPULATIONS MOST LIKELY TO BE UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED

» Perspective of Employment Service Providers (n=121)

When asked about who they think are most likely to be under-served or unserved and encounter barriers accessing employment services, the majority of employment service providers identified individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (13%). The second most important group identified were individuals with significant or complex disabilities (12%). This was followed by three categories of individuals- those living in rural areas (10%), those having mental illness (10%), and those having a criminal history (10%).

Most likely to be Unserved or Underserved (n=121)



RESULTS

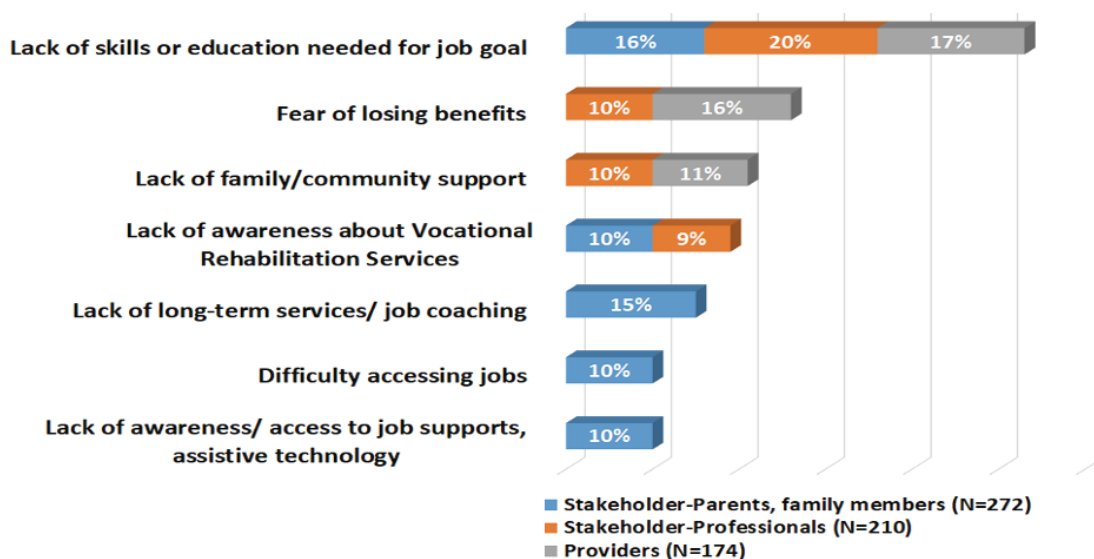
RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE STATE VR PROGRAM INCLUDING MINORITIES

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR MINORITY POPULATIONS- CUMULATIVE RESULTS

Participants in the surveys were asked the question, 'In your experience, generally, what are the top three barriers to employment encountered by people with disabilities from racial/ethnic minority populations?'. Participants were asked to select any three options from a long list of different options. Lack of skills or education needed for a job goal was the top barrier identified by participants in the surveys. The second barrier identified by most participants was the fear of losing benefits. As discussed earlier, not only is income assurance that the program provides important, but the added reality of eligibility for Medicaid coverage for Social Security recipients is a major incentive for maintaining Social Security eligibility status by limiting or avoiding work altogether. There are many Social Security Work Incentives Programs, which make it possible for people to work without losing access to benefits, but they are complicated and not well understood by recipients, their families, or the professionals influencing decision-making. There is a strong need for providing benefits counseling to individuals with disabilities to help them understand how employment will affect their benefits including SSDI and Medicaid. Lack of family or community support for employment was mentioned as a barrier by community professionals and employment service providers but not by parents or family members. Lack of long-term job services and ongoing job coaching was also identified as a barrier.

The infographic below shows how the top barriers selected by each of the target groups stack against each other. For example, 16% of participants who responded to the parents and family members survey selected lack of skills or education needed for a job goal as one of the top three barriers for obtaining employment. The percentages in the graph do not relate to each other. They merely show us that cumulatively, lack of dependable transportation was the category chosen by most respondents across all the five surveys. The next few graphs below show the categories selected by each of the targeted groups.



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

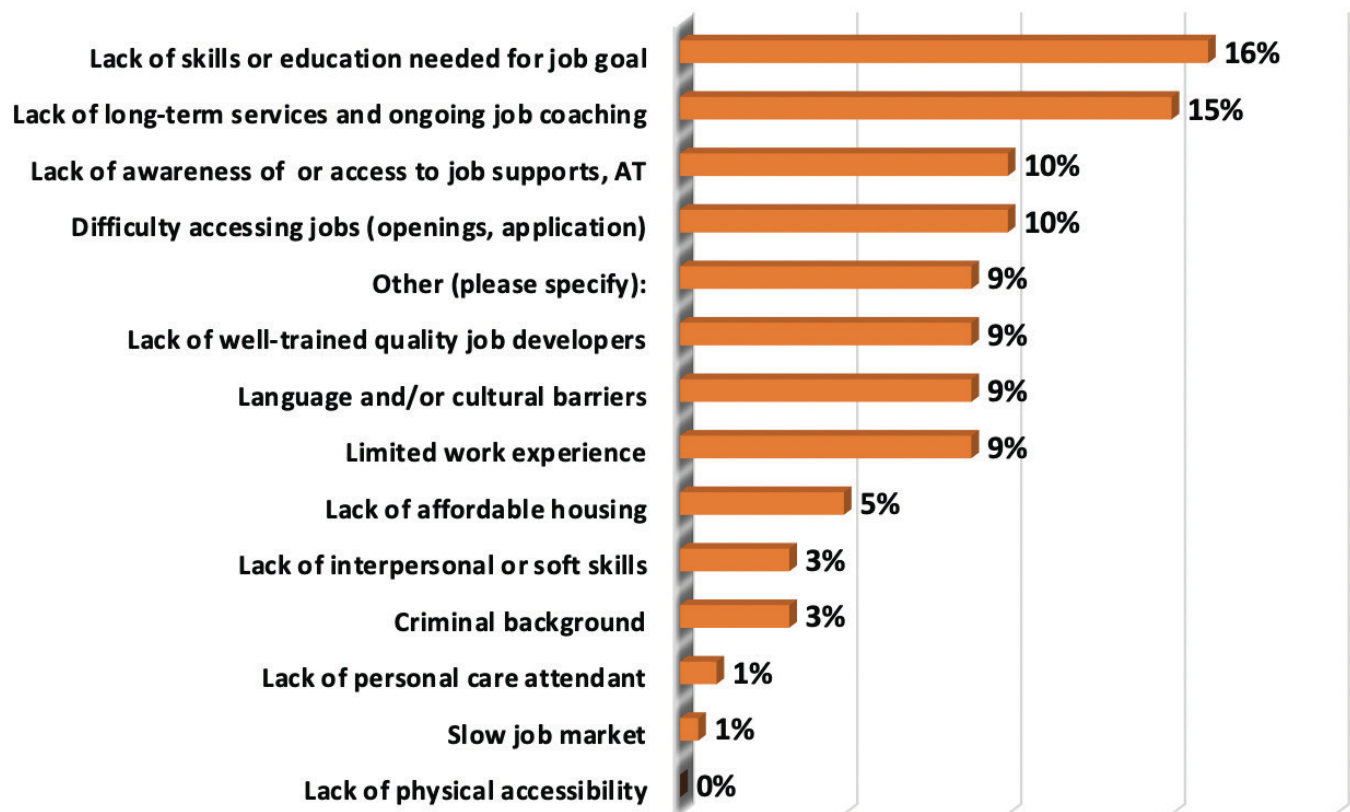
INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE STATE VR PROGRAM INCLUDING MINORITIES

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR MINORITY POPULATIONS

» Perspective of Parents, Family Members, Advocates (n=272)

When asked about what the top three barriers to employment encountered by people with disabilities from minority backgrounds, the majority of parents, family members, and advocates selected lack of skills or education needed for a job goal as the top barrier (16%). The second barrier identified by individuals with disabilities was lack of long-term job services and ongoing job coaching (15%). Lack of awareness of or access to job supports, assistive technology (10%), and difficulty accessing jobs (identifying openings, job applications) (10%) were also identified as barriers by parents, family members, and advocates.

Barriers for Racial and Ethnic Minority backgrounds (n=272)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

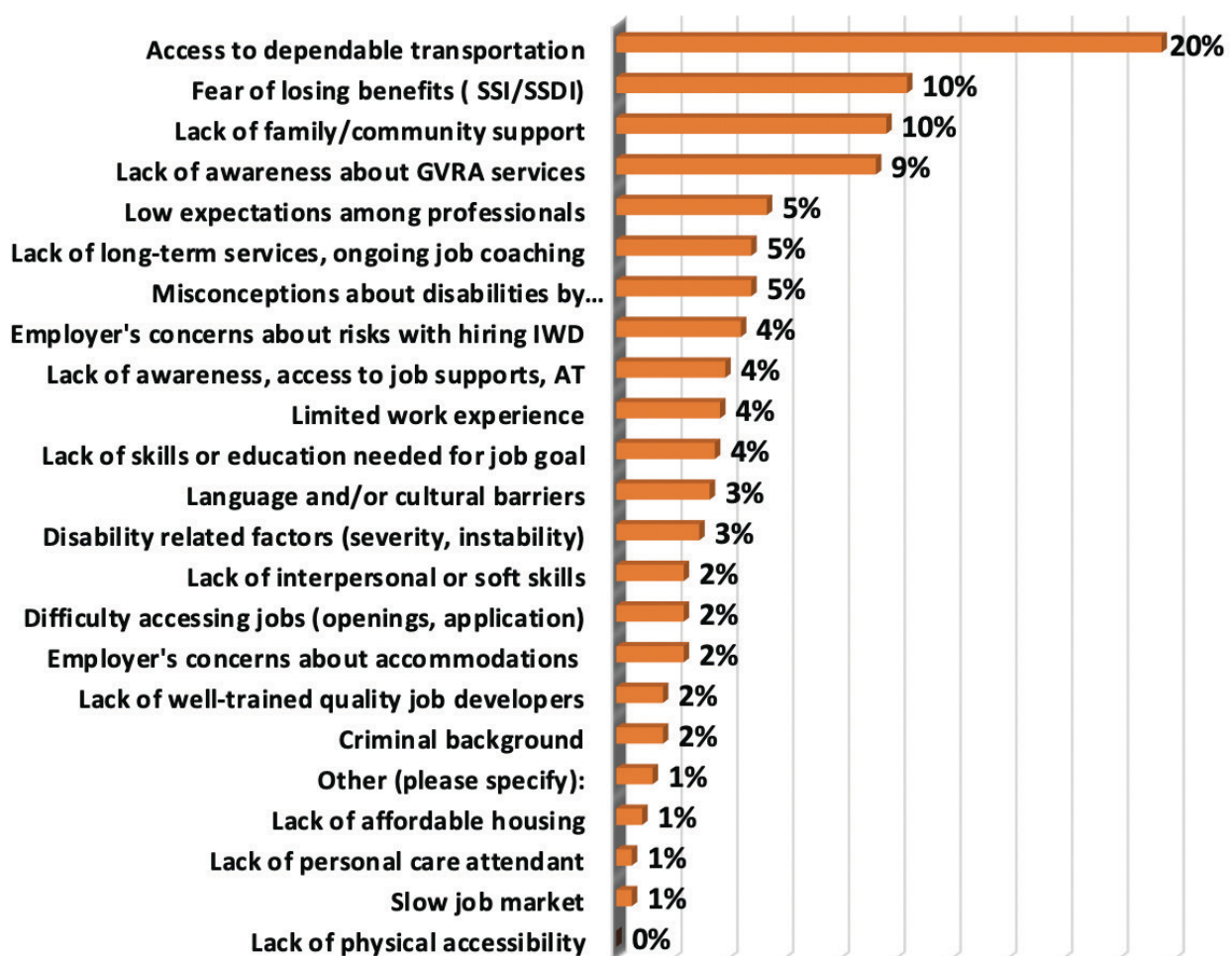
INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE STATE VR PROGRAM INCLUDING MINORITIES

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR MINORITY POPULATIONS

» Perspective of Professionals (n=210)

When asked about what the top three barriers to employment encountered by people with disabilities from minority backgrounds, the majority of professionals identified lack of access to dependable transportation as a key barrier (17%). The second barrier identified by professionals included fear of losing benefits (16%). Lack of family or community support (11%) was also identified as one of the top barriers by professionals.

Barriers to Employment people from Racial Ethnic minority backgrounds (n=210)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

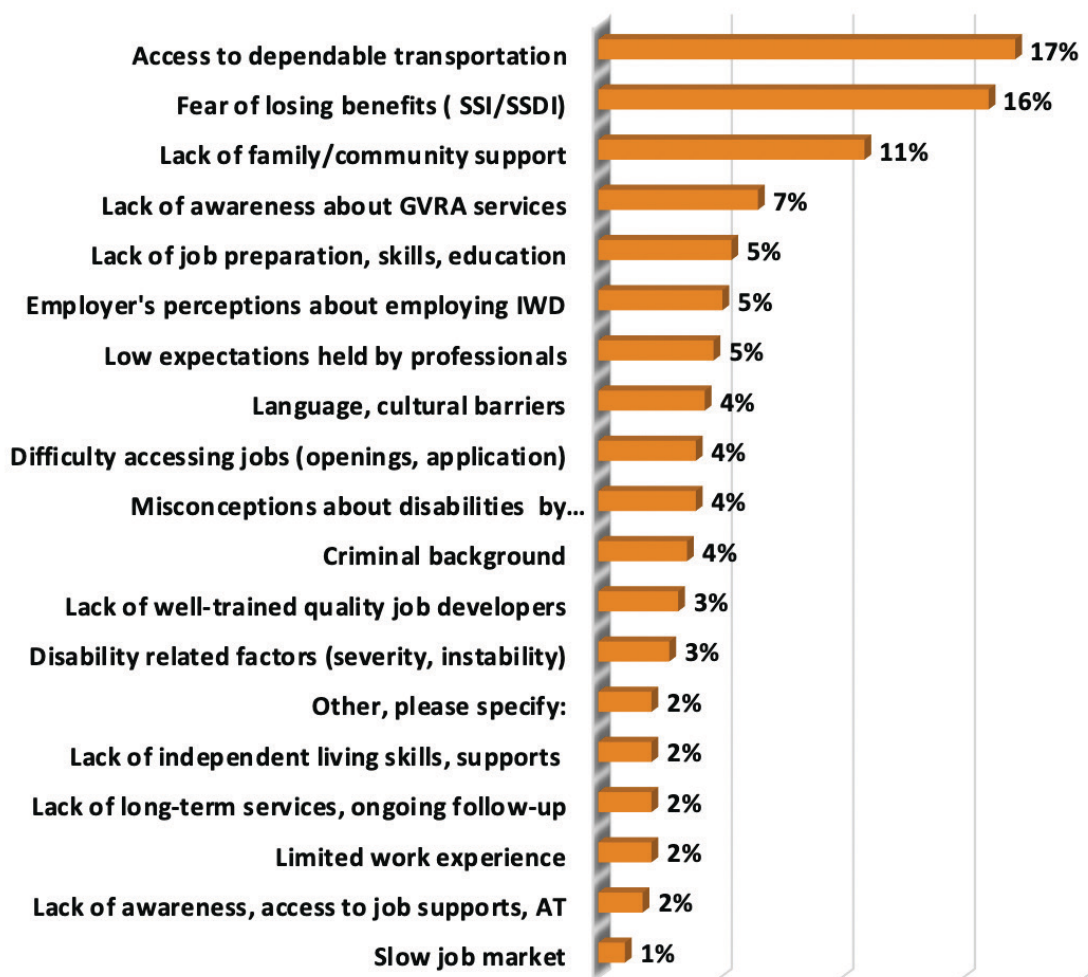
INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE STATE VR PROGRAM INCLUDING MINORITIES

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR MINORITY POPULATIONS

» Perspective of Employment Service Providers (n=121)

When asked about what the top three barriers to employment encountered by people with disabilities from minority backgrounds, the majority of professionals identified lack of access to dependable transportation as a key barrier (17%). The second barrier identified by professionals included fear of losing benefits (16%). Lack of family or community support (11%) was also identified as one of the top barriers by professionals.

Barriers for Racial / Ethnic Minority Populations (n=121)



RESULTS

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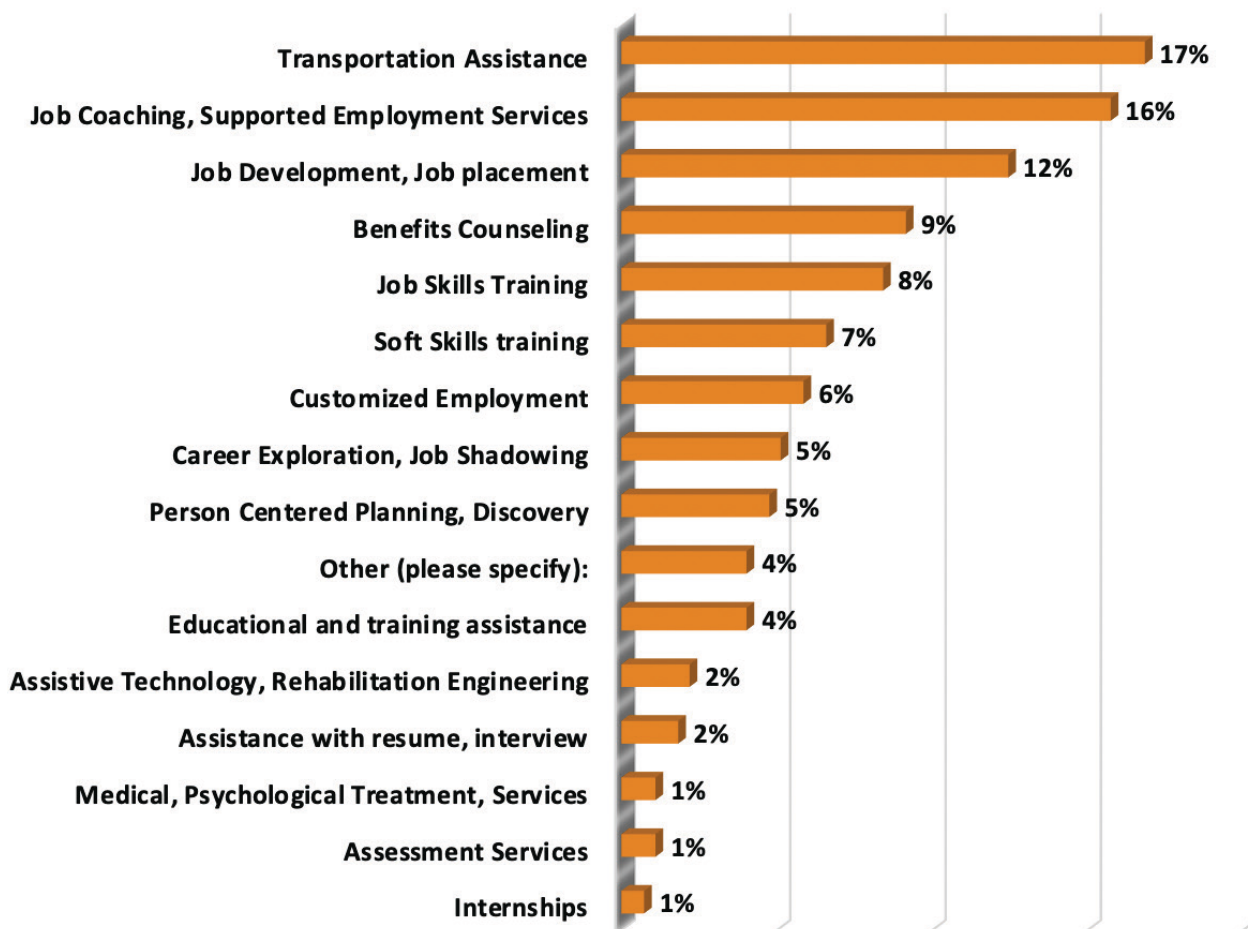
INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE STATE VR PROGRAM INCLUDING MINORITIES

SERVICES MOST NEEDED BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

» Perspective of Employment Service Providers (n=121)

When asked about what the top three most needed services by individuals with disabilities from racial / ethnic minority populations related to competitive integrated employment, transportation assistance was identified as the most important need (17%) followed by the need for on the job support including job coaching and supported employment services (16%). Job development and job placement (12%) was the third most important service identified by service providers.

Service Needs of Racial /Ethnic Minority Populations (n=121)



RESULTS

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INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE STATE VR PROGRAM INCLUDING MINORITIES

PHONE INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

» Cultural diversity training

- *“Improve training for state agency employees and their contractors on cultural diversity and inclusion.”*
- *“Increase cultural diversity training. Go over training on a yearly basis to ensure new staff members gain the same knowledge. Ensure that there are counselors specialized in different areas serving the participants.”*
- *“GVRA/providers must look at the entire dynamics of the individual’s culture. Not everyone is knowledgeable about racial/ethnic minority populations. Personal bias must also be removed to provide adequate services to this group of individuals.”*
- *“...looking at each client’s circumstances individually and from a holistic life point of view to include social norms, cultural differences, expectations, family history, and available resource and knowledge will eliminate any differences in the racial/ethnic minority populations.”*
- *“1. Partnership with employers willing to hire the disabled. 2. TELL THE TRUTH and do NOT mislead the disabled leading to further rejection and depression! 3. STOP providing services to only select racial groups! 4. Recognize you are working with PEOPLE not PAPER!”*

» Increased outreach to diverse populations

- *“Additional outreach is needed. Many cultures do not “deal” well with admitting a disability exists and therefore they do not get the services that can be so critical.”*
- *“Hire more people of color within GVRA. Help to make changes to policies so the minority population gets the services they need for however long they need them.”*

» Benefits Planning

- *“Make sure that everyone knows the possibility of work in conjunction with the benefits counseling and other benefits to actually achieve a life worth living.”*
- *“Increase benefits training; teach cultural diversity.”*
- *“Effective communication regarding maintenance of benefits while working.”*

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES**TOP BARRIERS FOR YOUTH AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN TRANSITION-CUMULATIVE RESULTS**

Participants in the surveys were asked about what they thought were the three most important barriers to employment encountered by youth with disabilities who are in transition. Participants were asked to select any three options from a long list of different options. Lack of job preparation, skills, and education needed for a job was the top barrier identified by parents/family members (26%) as well as employment service providers (12%). Lack of access to dependable transportation was the second most important barrier identified by both employment service providers (15%) and other professionals in the community (21%). Georgia is a large state that lacks a reliable public transportation system outside of the metro areas. In the absence of reliable public transportation, people rely on other modes of transportation for commuting to work and other places. For individuals with disabilities who are unable to drive due to their disability, this can be a major impediment to employment. Youth with disabilities who have not yet learned to drive or lack the confidence or the resources to own a vehicle, transportation can present a barrier to accessing internship and other paid or unpaid work experiences. This issue can be particularly exacerbated for individuals with disabilities who live in rural and suburban areas. Lack of long-term job services and ongoing job coaching (26%) was mentioned as the third most important barrier cumulatively but was one of the top barriers mentioned by parents and family members of individuals with disabilities. Lack of awareness of vocational rehabilitation and limited work experience were also important barriers that were mentioned. Professionals mentioned lack of family and community support as an important barrier to employment for youth and students with disabilities in transition.

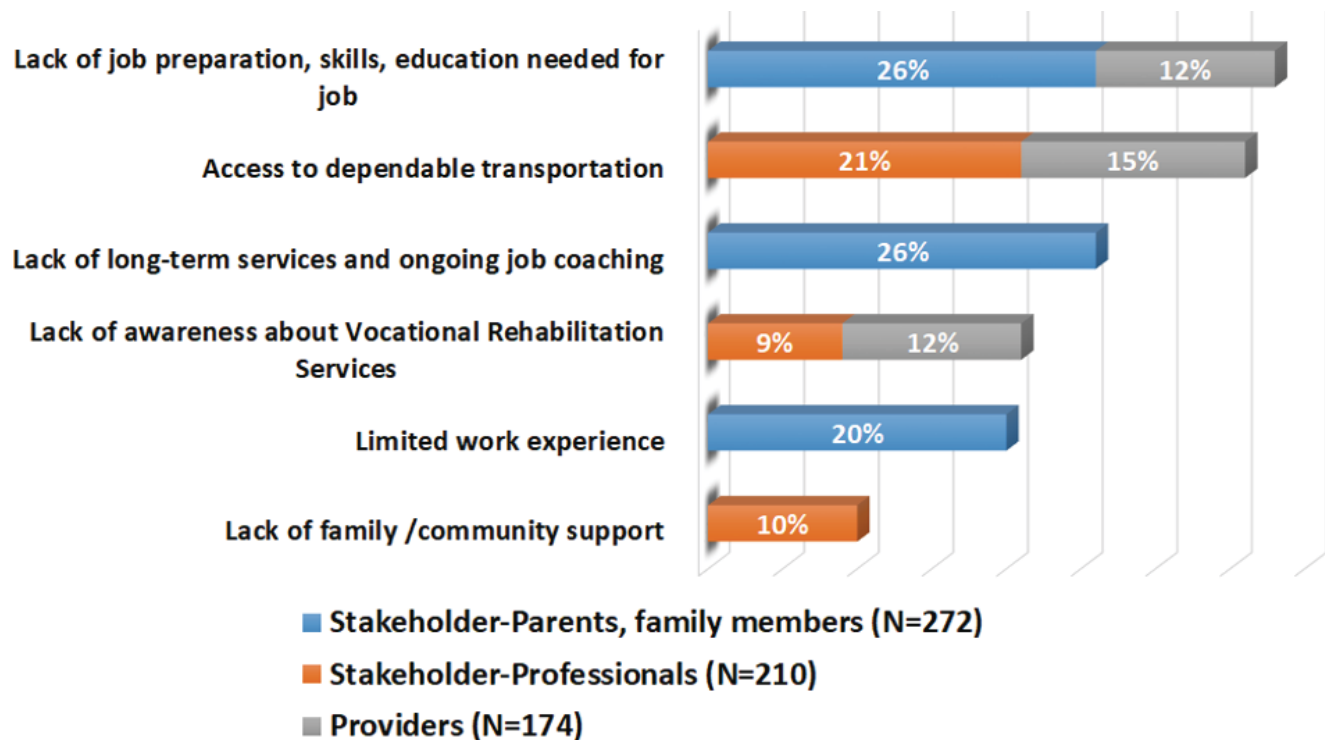
The infographic on the next page shows how the top barriers selected by each of the target groups stack against each other. For example, 26% of participants who responded to the parents and family members survey selected lack of job preparation, skills, and education needed for a job as one of the top three barriers for obtaining employment. The percentages in the graph do not relate to each other. They merely show us that cumulatively, lack of job preparation, skills, and education needed for a job was the category chosen by most respondents across the surveys. The next few graphs below show the categories selected by each of the targeted groups.

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

TOP BARRIERS FOR YOUTH AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN TRANSITION-CUMULATIVE RESULTS



RESULTS

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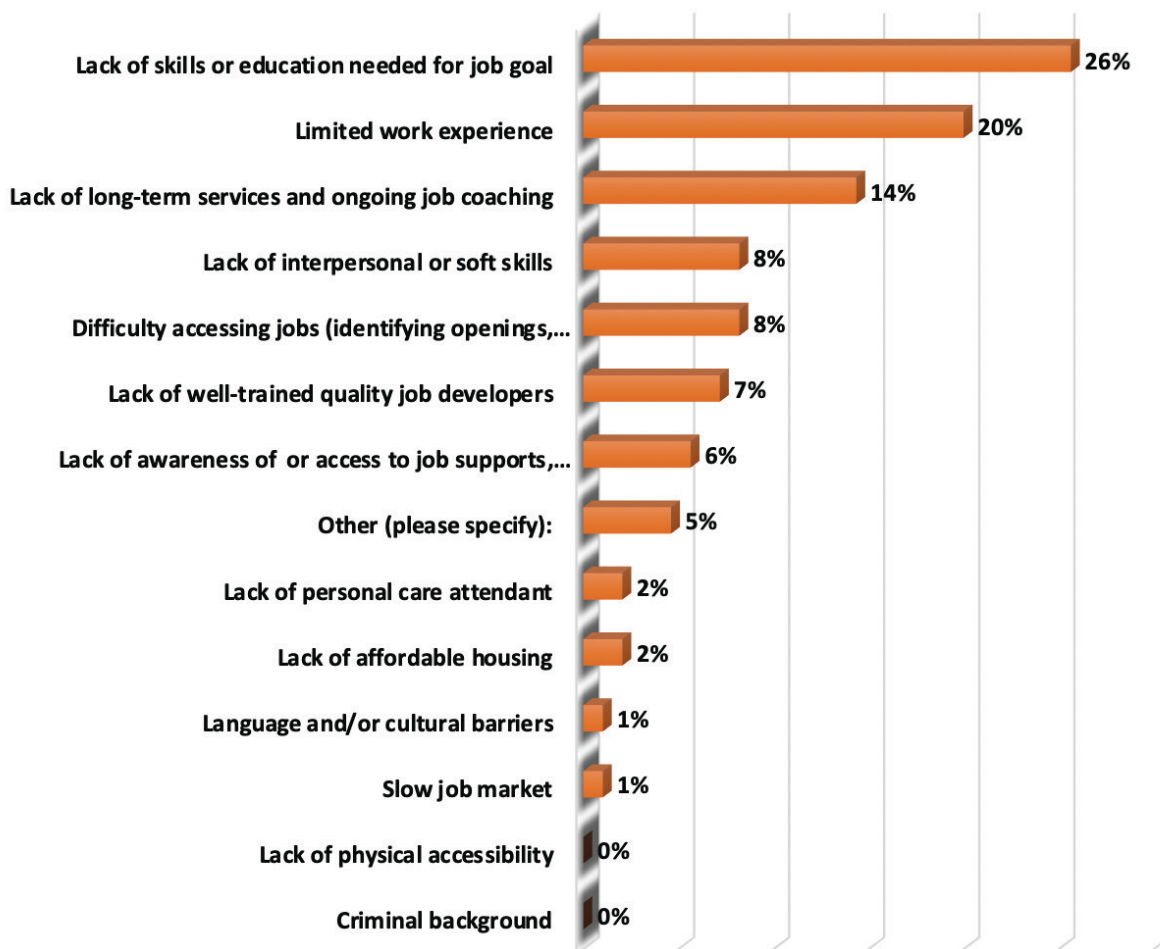
YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

TOP BARRIERS FOR YOUTH AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN TRANSITION

» Perspective of Parents, Family Members, Advocates (n=272)

When asked about what the top three barriers to employment encountered by youth and students with disabilities in transition, the majority of the parents, family members, and advocates selected lack of skills or education needed for a job goal as the top barrier (26%). Limited work experience (20%) was the second most important barrier identified by parents and family members of youth with disabilities. Lack of long-term job services and ongoing job coaching (14%) was the third most important barrier mentioned by parents and family members related to employment of youth and students with disabilities in transition.

Barriers for Youth in Transition (N=272)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

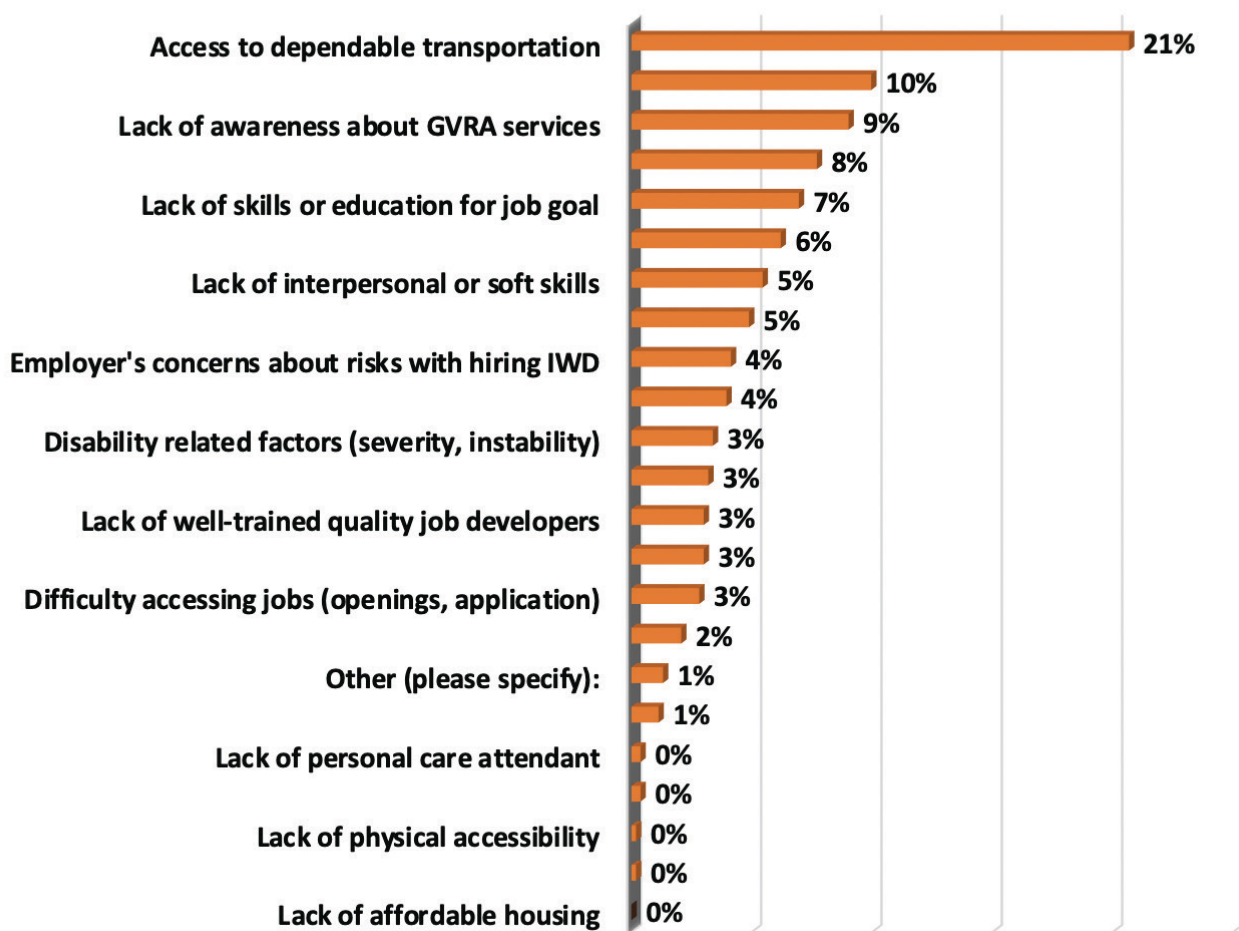
YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

TOP BARRIERS FOR YOUTH AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN TRANSITION

» Perspective of Professionals (n=210)

When asked about what the top three barriers to employment encountered by youth and students with disabilities in transition, the majority of the professionals identified lack of dependable transportation as the top barrier (21%). Lack of family or community support (10%) and lack of awareness of vocational rehabilitation (9%) were also identified as barriers to employment of youth and students with disabilities in transition.

Barriers for Youth with Disabilities in Transition (n=210)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

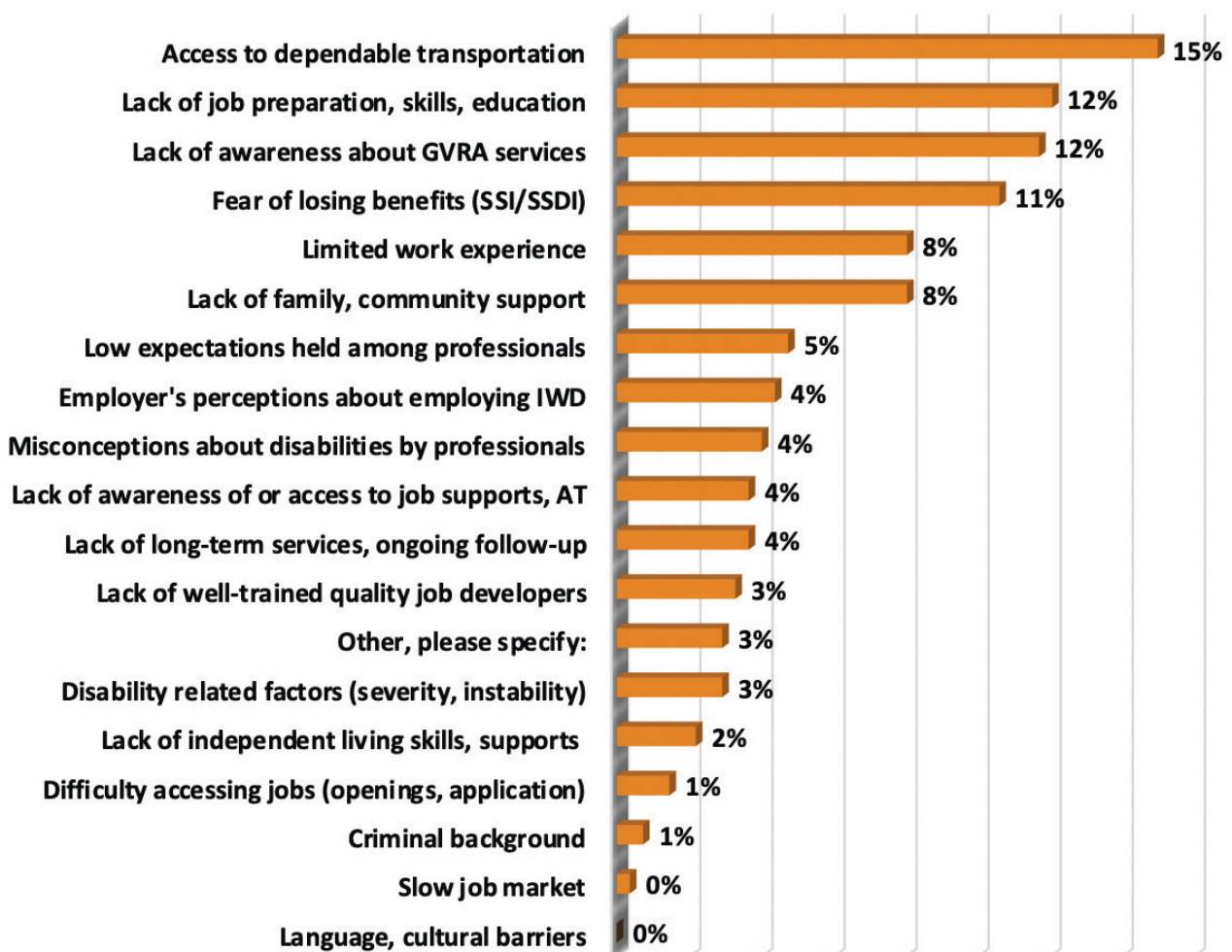
YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

TOP BARRIERS FOR YOUTH AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN TRANSITION

» Perspective of Employment Service Providers (n=121)

When asked about what the top three barriers to employment encountered by youth and students with disabilities in transition, the majority of the employment service providers identified lack of dependable transportation as the top barrier (15%). Lack of skills or education needed for a job goal (12%) and lack of awareness of vocational rehabilitation (12%) were identified as second most important barriers by employment service providers. Fear of losing benefits (SSI/SSDI) (11%) was also identified as the third most important barrier. Limited work experience (8%) and lack of family or community support (8%) were also identified as barriers to employment for youth and students with disabilities in transition.

Barriers for Youth with Disabilities in Transition (n=121)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

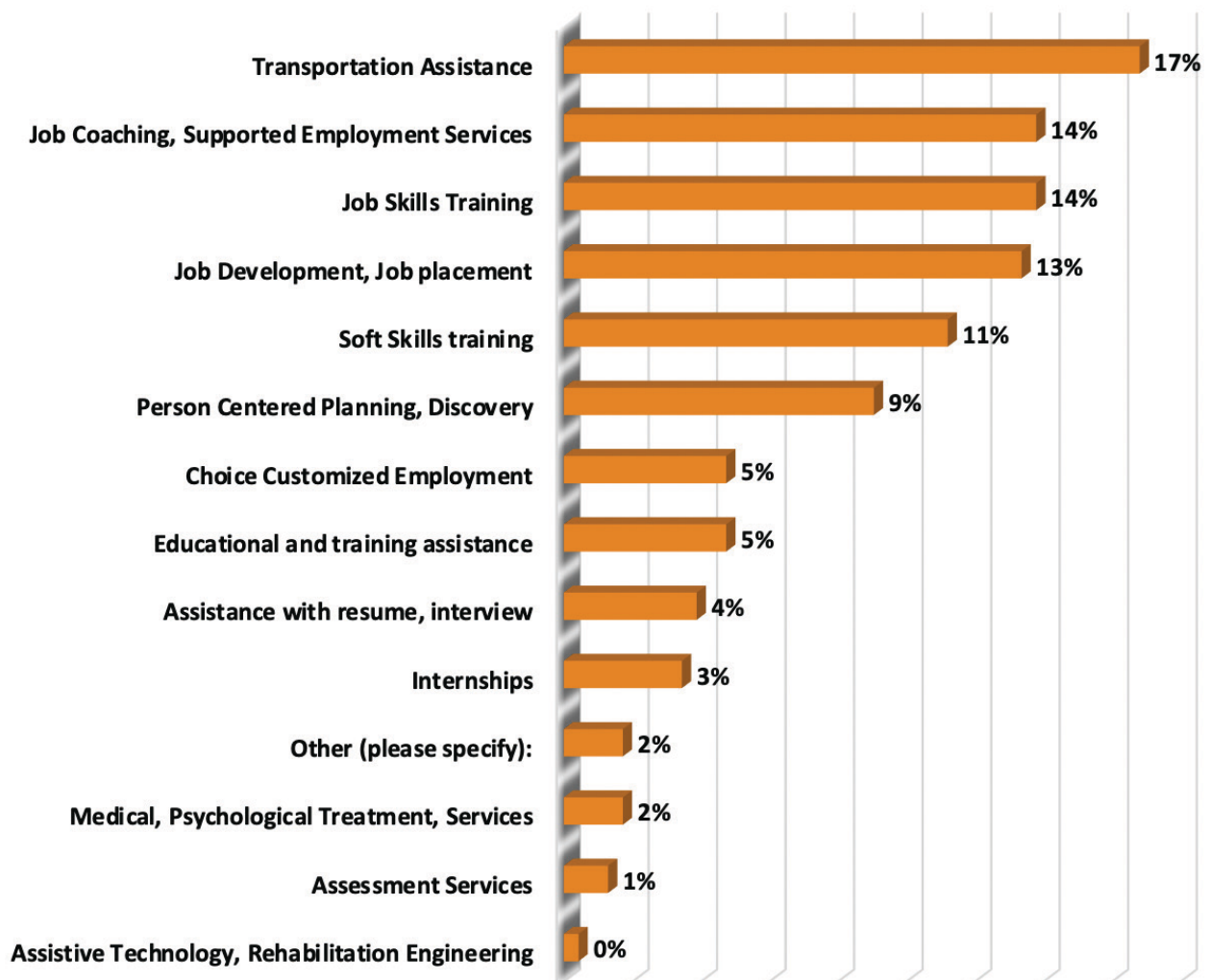
YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

SERVICES MOST NEEDED BY YOUTH AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN TRANSITION

» Perspective of Employment Service Providers (n=121)

When asked about what the top three most needed services by youth and students with disabilities in transition, transportation assistance was identified as the most important need (17%). The need for on the job support including job coaching and supported employment services (14%) and job skills training (14%) were identified as the second most needed service needed by youth and students with disabilities in transition. Job development and job placement (13%) was the third most important service identified by service providers.

Service needs of youth with disabilities in transition (n=121)



RESULTS

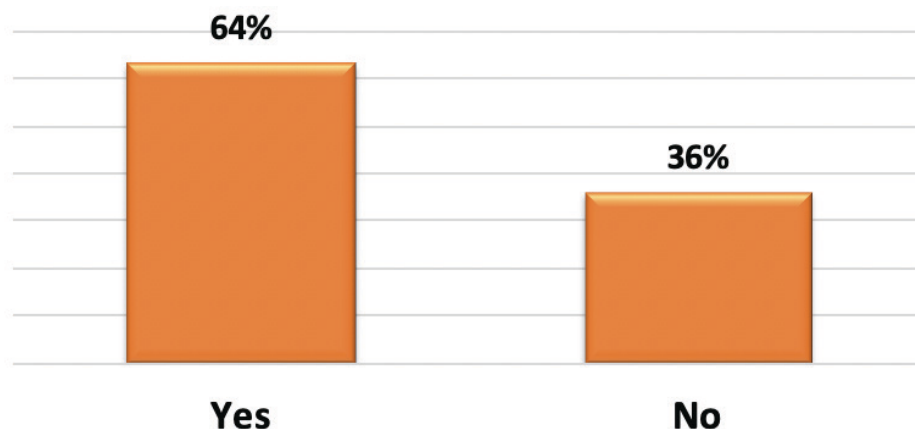
RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES**PRE- EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS) FEEDBACK**

Two focus groups were conducted as a part of the 2019 ALL Students (formally IDEAS) conference to obtain feedback related to youth and students with disabilities in transition. Turning Point polling was incorporated in the first part of each focus group, which allowed for capturing quantitative data related to Pre-ETS. Each of the focus groups was approximately 1.5 hours in length. The polls were completed by a total of 17 individuals, many of whom were educators, transition coordinators or counselors. Another focus group was conducted in the community which was attended mainly by educators and transition coordinators from local school districts. A total of 16 individuals attended the focus group. A quantitative survey was completed by participants, which allowed for capturing quantitative data related to Pre-ETS. Results from the surveys have been presented in the section below.

» Familiarity with Pre- Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Participants were asked the question, 'Are you familiar with what Pre- Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) is? (purpose, target population, services)'. About one-third of participants (36%) were not familiar with Pre-ETS services. Following this question, participants were given a description of what each of the five components of Pre-ETS services (job exploration, work-based learning, post secondary training, work readiness training, and self advocacy service) and asked if students in their setting receive those particular services.

Familiar with Pre-Ets? (n=33)

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

PRE- EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS) FEEDBACK

» Job Exploration

Participants were given a description of what job exploration services were as follows.

Job exploration - Activities which help students identify viable career options or solidify careers that a student may want to explore further.

- Identifying vocational interest
- Learning about and exploring the labor market demands
- Learning about in-demand industries, non-traditional employment options
- Identification of career pathways of interest to the students
- Attending career speaker events and participation in student career organizations

They were then asked two questions following it. The first question was 'To what extent is this service provided to students with disabilities in your setting?' Participants could choose from one of the three options - service provided, somewhat provided and not provided. About 78% of respondents said job exploration service was provided or somewhat provided in their setting.

Extent Job Exploration is Provided (n=32)



The second question was 'How satisfied are you with the quality of this service provided to your students with disabilities?' Participants responded on a 4-point rating scale ranging from not at all satisfied to very satisfied. Almost half (44%) of respondents mentioned being not at all satisfied, followed by 34% being somewhat satisfied with the quality of job exploration service provided to their students.

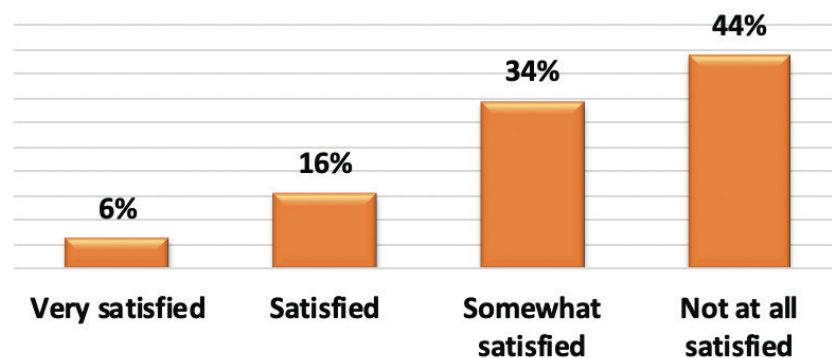
RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

PRE- EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS) FEEDBACK

Satisfaction with Quality of Job Exploration Service provided to Students? (n=32)



» Work Based Learning

Participants were given a description of what work-based learning was as follows. Work-based Learning - using the workplace or real work to provide students with the knowledge and skills that will help them connect school experiences to real-life work activities and future career opportunities. The work based learning experience must be provided in an integrated setting in the community.

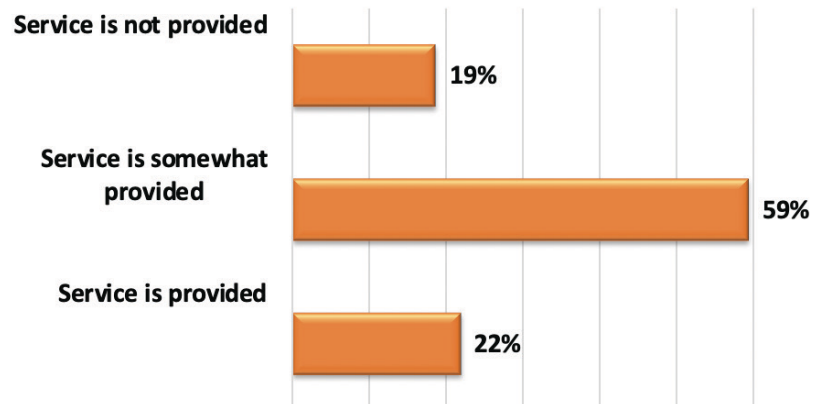
EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- Job Shadowing
- Informational Interviews
- Workplace Tours
- Internships (Paid or Non-Paid)
- Paid work experience
- Job Try-Outs
- Volunteering

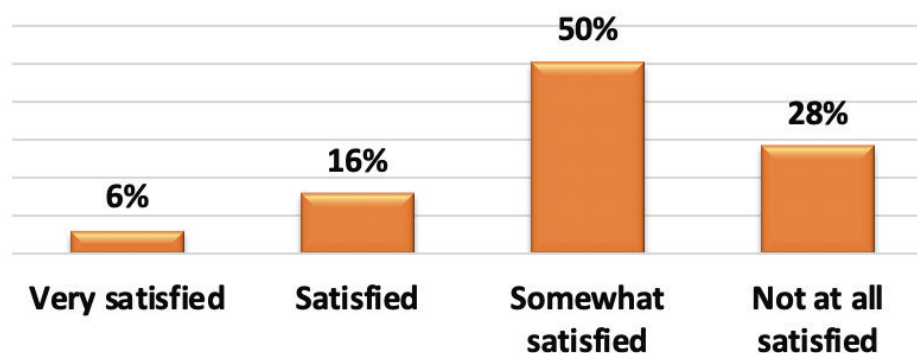
They were then asked two questions following it. The first question was 'To what extent is this service provided to students with disabilities in your setting?' Participants could choose from one of the three options - service provided, somewhat provided and not provided. About 81% of respondents said work-based learning was provided or somewhat provided in their setting.

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

**YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING
THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES****PRE- EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS) FEEDBACK****Extent Work based Learning is Provided (n=32)**

The second question was 'How satisfied are you with the quality of this service provided to your students with disabilities?' Participants responded on a 4-point rating scale ranging from not at all satisfied to very satisfied. About a third (28%) of respondents mentioned being not at all satisfied, followed by half (50%) being somewhat satisfied with the quality of work-based learning provided to their students.

**Satisfaction with Quality of Work based
Learning Service provided to Students?
(n=32)**

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

PRE- EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS) FEEDBACK

» Post Secondary Training

Participants were given a description of what counseling on post secondary options was as follows. Counseling on Post- secondary education Options - Increasing understanding of options that are available for higher education, including comprehensive transition programs, along with the requirements for attending, skills needed for success, accommodations that are available, and financial aid.

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- Using US DOL Career Clusters to researching career pathway options
- Attending college fairs & tours
- Exploring assistive technology and other support needs
- Exploring IPSE options

They were then asked two questions following it. The first question was 'To what extent is this service provided to students with disabilities in your setting?' Participants could choose from one of the three options - service provided, somewhat provided and not provided. About 77% of respondents said counseling on post secondary options was provided or somewhat provided in their setting.

Extent Counseling on PST Options is Provided? (n=31)



RESULTS

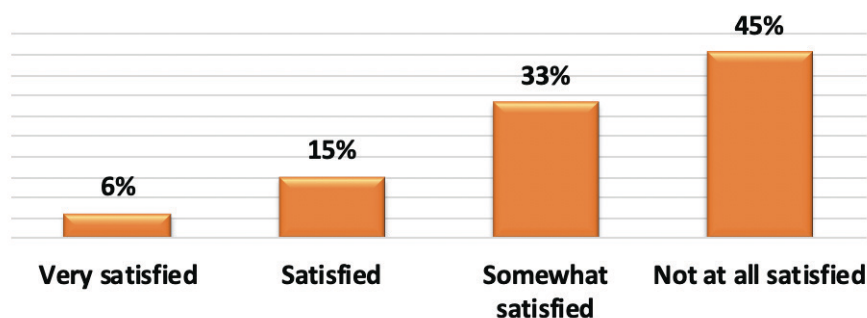
RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

PRE- EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS) FEEDBACK

The second question was ‘How satisfied are you with the quality of this service provided to your students with disabilities?’ Participants responded on a 4-point rating scale ranging from not at all satisfied to very satisfied. Almost half (45%) of respondents mentioned being not at all satisfied, followed by a third (33%) being somewhat satisfied with the quality of counseling on post secondary options provided to their students.

Satisfaction with Quality of Counseling on PST Options Service to Students ? (n=33)



» Work Readiness Training

Participants were given a description of what work readiness training was as follows.

Work readiness training - training to develop social/interpersonal skills, soft skills, independent living skills, and employability/job readiness skills, all of which are commonly expected in the world of work. Activities may focus on:

- Communication
- Conflict resolution
- Services and supports
- Orientation and mobility skills
- Money Management
- Job seeking skills
- Time Management

They were then asked two questions following it. The first question was ‘To what extent is this service provided to students with disabilities in your setting?’ Participants could choose from one of the three options - service provided, somewhat provided and not provided. About 84% of respondents said work readiness training was provided or somewhat provided in their setting.

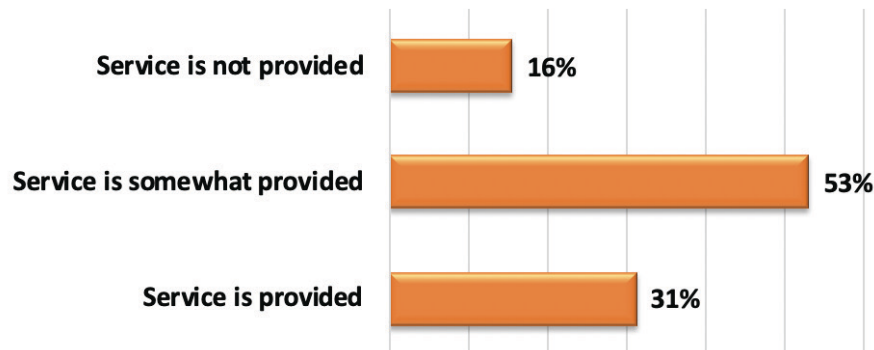
RESULTS

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YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

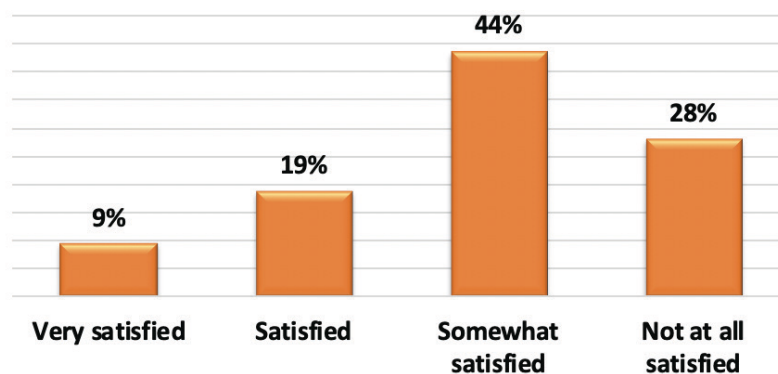
PRE- EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS) FEEDBACK

Extent Work Readiness Training Service is Provided? (n=32)



The second question was 'How satisfied are you with the quality of this service provided to your students with disabilities?' Participants responded on a 4-point rating scale ranging from not at all satisfied to very satisfied. About a third (28%) of respondents mentioned being not at all satisfied, followed almost half (44%) being somewhat satisfied with the quality of work readiness training provided to their students.

Satisfaction with Quality of Work Readiness Training Service provided to Students? (n=32)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

PRE- EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS) FEEDBACK

» Self Advocacy Service

Participants were given a description of what instruction in self-advocacy was as follows.

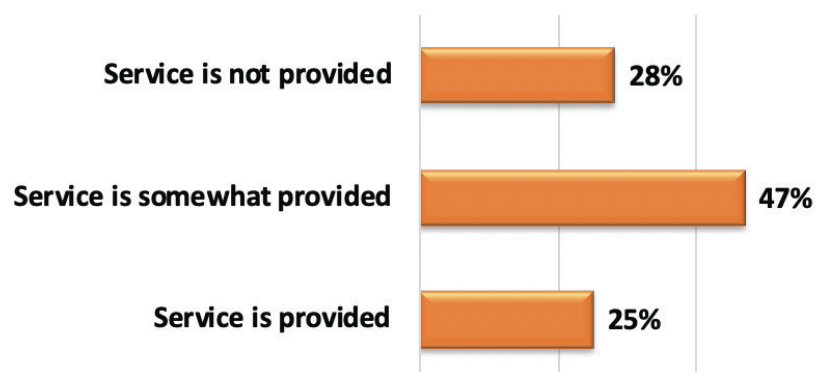
Instruction in self-advocacy - instruction for developing student's ability to effectively communicate needs, interests and desires so that they can, direct their own lives, pursue the things that are important to them and experience the same life opportunities as other people in their communities.

ACTIVITIES MAY FOCUS ON:

- Understanding their disability, and their support needs
- Disability disclosure
- Peer Mentoring
- Learning how to ask for and accepting help

They were then asked two questions following it. The first question was 'To what extent is this service provided to students with disabilities in your setting?' Participants could choose from one of the three options - service provided, somewhat provided and not provided. About 72% of respondents said instruction in self-advocacy was provided or somewhat provided in their setting.

Extent Instruction in Self-advocacy Service is provided? (n=32)



The second question was 'How satisfied are you with the quality of this service provided to your students with disabilities?' Participants responded on a 4-point rating scale ranging from not at all satisfied to very satisfied. About a third (31%) of respondents mentioned being not at all satisfied, followed almost half (47%) being somewhat satisfied with the quality instruction in self-advocacy provided to their students.

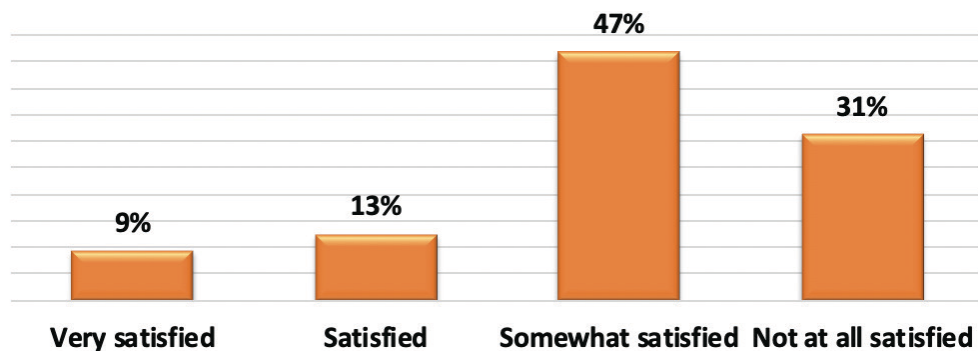
RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS) FEEDBACK

Satisfaction with Quality of Instruction in Self-Advocacy Service is Provided to Students? (n=32)



» Summary Results

Of the Pre-ETS services, the service that was identified as being provided or somewhat provided by most respondents was work readiness training (84%) followed by work-based learning (81%). Self-advocacy (72%) service was the least provided service mentioned by respondents. Most respondents said they were not at all satisfied with (45%) post-secondary training and job exploration service (44%).

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

PHONE INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

» Geographic Variability In Services (Access And Quality)

There seems to be a wide variability in transition services across the state. There is a need to increase provision of transition and pre-ETS services in rural areas.

- *“We need more representatives in rural areas of GA. Kids are falling through the cracks because there isn’t follow up with GVRA representatives.”*
- *“Provide adequate pre-ETS outside the Metro Atlanta area”*
- *“Hire more staff that directly serve HS students, there are not enough to cover all the schools and some schools report much better coverage by VR than others”*
- *“In our area, VR has taken the pre-employment training in house and does not contract it out to outside providers. It is difficult to believe that the VR can provide the services needed to these youth when they are so heavily burden with individuals on their caseload. VR needs to utilize outside providers to ensure quality services for this population.”*

» Timeliness of Services

- *“As a professional, I have had a difficult time getting the services needed by my students. It took over twelve months to start the process of intake after getting parent signatures. Now, my students are in 12th grade and we are struggling with enough time to get the needed supports in place before graduation.”*
- *“Employment Express” that takes over a year with no measurable results. Can’t even leave the system to access Waiver funding for supported employment staff needs. Students are stuck! And no relief in sight.*

» Awareness of Services

It is essential for local school and VR staff to educate parents regarding employment services available to students and their families.

- *“As a parent, it’s very disappointing to hear that the service is available ... This great agency who could be involved in her educational planning and that’s never been mentioned... I do think in our county though, that we do a good job of trying to educate our parents”*
- *“More awareness of services. Work more with schools (middle to high schools) and focus on this population.”*

» Introduce Students and Families to Transition Early

There needs to be greater engagement and education of parents and families so as to increase their support for employment of youth and young adults with disabilities. There is a need to start transition and

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

career planning early, as early as middle school, so that families can become aware and engaged in preparing the youth to enter job market like teenagers without disabilities.

- *“Start as early as middle school letting family’s an educator’s they can prepare the youth to enter the job market just like any other teenager.”*
- *“Introduce voc-rehab resources earlier in school to the individual, their families, and teachers before they enter into high school.”*
- *“One of the most important things missing for youth is career planning. They need an opportunity to start planning their transition early on and not when they are in 11 and 12 grade, because that may be too late for reach some opportunities. Some of them may have the potential to pursue further education but due to lack of planning and supports they end up at home after high school.”*

» Transportation for Students

With Georgia being a large state that lacks a reliable public transportation system, there is a need to provide transportation services so that all youth can participate in transition services through the school or GVRA.

- *“They are unable to address our lack of community transportation--and simply discount a student who cannot independently arrange transportation.”*

» Attitude of Staff

There is wide variability in the knowledge, skills and attitudes of GVRA staff. There is a need for GVRA staff to take a more strength-based rather than deficit-based approach.

- *“Untrained provider staff, VR staff who leave their jobs too frequently, gaps in service, poor communication, lack of responsiveness, and so much more. Too few VR staff understand WIOA. They continue to declare students unemployable.”*
- *“The entire system is inadequate....both in size and understanding. I have encountered ignorant staff who only list what my students cannot do. Staff are negative and less than helpful to my parents and families that want and need services They weed out bc they simply can not handle the numbers so it is easier to discount individuals from the onset...”*

» Communication and Collaboration with Schools

A collaborative relationship must be established between the school district staff and vocational rehabilitation agency staff, and distinct roles must be communicated.

- *“Communicate and be in consistent informative contact with schools and districts about the services they provide and seek opportunities through schools and districts to make contact with families about the supporting students as part of the student’s post-secondary transition.”*

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

- *“We’ve had where we’re not given information and we don’t know who has done intakes... We don’t know if all the Pre-ETS basic information is being done because that is not always communicated to us.”*
- *“Assist the schools more by providing Job Readiness Training in the schools.”*
- *“Require counselors to collaborate with experts within their own agency. Sensory and cognitive disability experts are there to support the students’ goals. ..Support Customized Employment.”*

» **Clear Expectations and Standardization**

- *There is a need to clarify expectations of service providers and standardize the curriculum and provision of pre-employment transition services.*
- *“...pre-ETS program...has been poorly executed with no clear process or provider expectations.”*
- *“Work with school systems or DOE at a high level to standardize Pre-ETS services.”*
- *“Give Pre-Vocational instruction in the high school some standardized guidelines for their programs. Stop allowing it to be a gateway for providers to funnel individuals into their under-developed supported employment programs”*

» **Focus on Best Practices and Outcomes**

There is a need to focus on use of best practices for creating successful employment outcomes and impact for individuals with disabilities. Respondents shared that some transition and employment service providers are more effective than others.

- *“VR needs to be more active in promoting and supporting providers in this category who are showing good outcomes. We are making positive differences with low budgets while millions is being spent to maintain programs with extremely low successful placements in community integrated work.”*

RESULTS

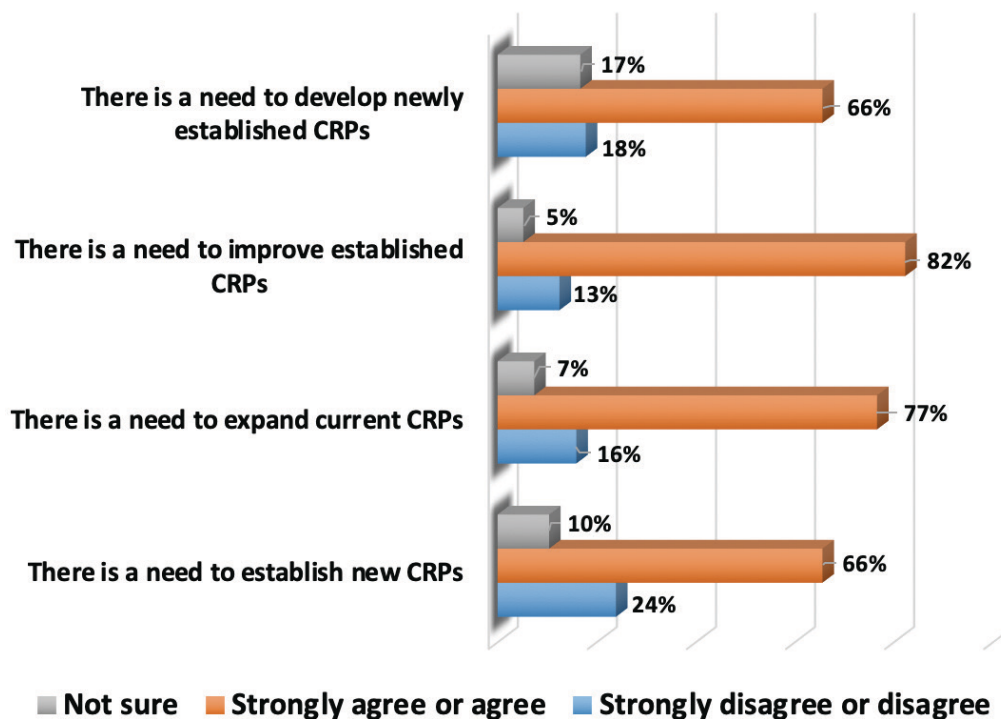
RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE

KEY SURVEY RESULTS

Employment service providers were asked the following question, 'Considering existing community rehabilitation programs' (CRPs) capacity to provide employment services to Georgians with disabilities, please check the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.' The results have been presented in the graph below. Almost all (82%) of providers mention that there is a need to improve established Community Resource Providers (CRPs) in Georgia, followed by 77% who agree or strongly agree that there is a need to expand current CRPs. About two-third of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there is a need to establish new CRPs and that there is a need to develop newly established CRPs.

Capacity of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs)
(n=96)



RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE

PHONE INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

» Enhanced Communication and Clear Expectations

There is a need for improved communication with community rehabilitation providers about what is expected of them regarding service delivery and outcomes and more guidance and information about GVRA changes that may impact them.

- *“The outsourcing manual and our contract is all we have to go by when understanding VR expectations. The manual really needs further development to really explain these services and what’s expected of providers. It would also be helpful if VR held provider meetings; much like DBHDD. It provides providers the opportunity to learn more about what VR wants from us and gives us an opportunity to ask questions. Communication between VR and providers is terribly lacking.”*
- *“GVRA policy manuals and provider manuals should be complete and available to current and perspective providers. Having the base payment rates available to perspective providers would help in the capacity-building process.”*
- *“VR also needs to provide the proper support and education for providers of VR expectations.”*
- *“If Georgia is to fully actualize what it means to be an employment first state, VR will need to work as partners, not adversaries, with their providers. We are a team in serving people with disabilities. I definitely feel that message is lost in our area.”*

» Increased Accountability of Providers

- *“Cultivate more Customized Employment providers and support their work. A system of accountability for these providers so that they move toward goals with fidelity, not just leave clients unserved.”*
- *“We had no idea of who they contracted with or how to go about finding those services. Still not sure who their vendors are and what each provides.”*

» CRP Expertise

- *“CRPs do not serve the population of people with significant barriers to employment with customized services and are not the solution to putting more people to work.”*
- *“Train and maintain staff to process payments to CE providers in timely manner. Stop withholding this service and stop claiming there are no providers.”*
- *“In our area, VR has taken the pre-employment training in house and does not contract it out to outside providers. It is difficult to believe that the VR can provide the services needed to these youth when they are so heavily burden with individuals on their caseload. VR needs to utilize outside providers to ensure quality services for this population.”*

» Focus On Best Practices And Outcomes

- *“VR needs to be more active in promoting and supporting providers in this category who are showing good outcomes. We are making positive differences with low budgets while millions is being spent to maintain programs with extremely low successful placements in community integrated work.”*

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

ARE GVRA SERVICES MEETING THE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES?

STRENGTHS OF GVRA

» Staff attitude and staff helpfulness.

Staff were frequently noted to be caring, willing to help, and supportive.

- » *“Listening and helping me find ways to overcome my barriers”*
- » *“They were very helpful in finding the information I needed.”*
- » *“Concerned field staff that truly want to help their clients.”*
- » *“Great people who care about individuals.”*

» GVRA Services are valuable

- » *“Services like evaluations, trainings, and funding were deemed as essential.”*
- » *“The services offered by GVRA are essential. The job readiness training is a very valuable resource.”*

» Staff responsiveness and staff knowledge

- » *“We have a very good caseworker - he knows the requirements and is responsive.”*

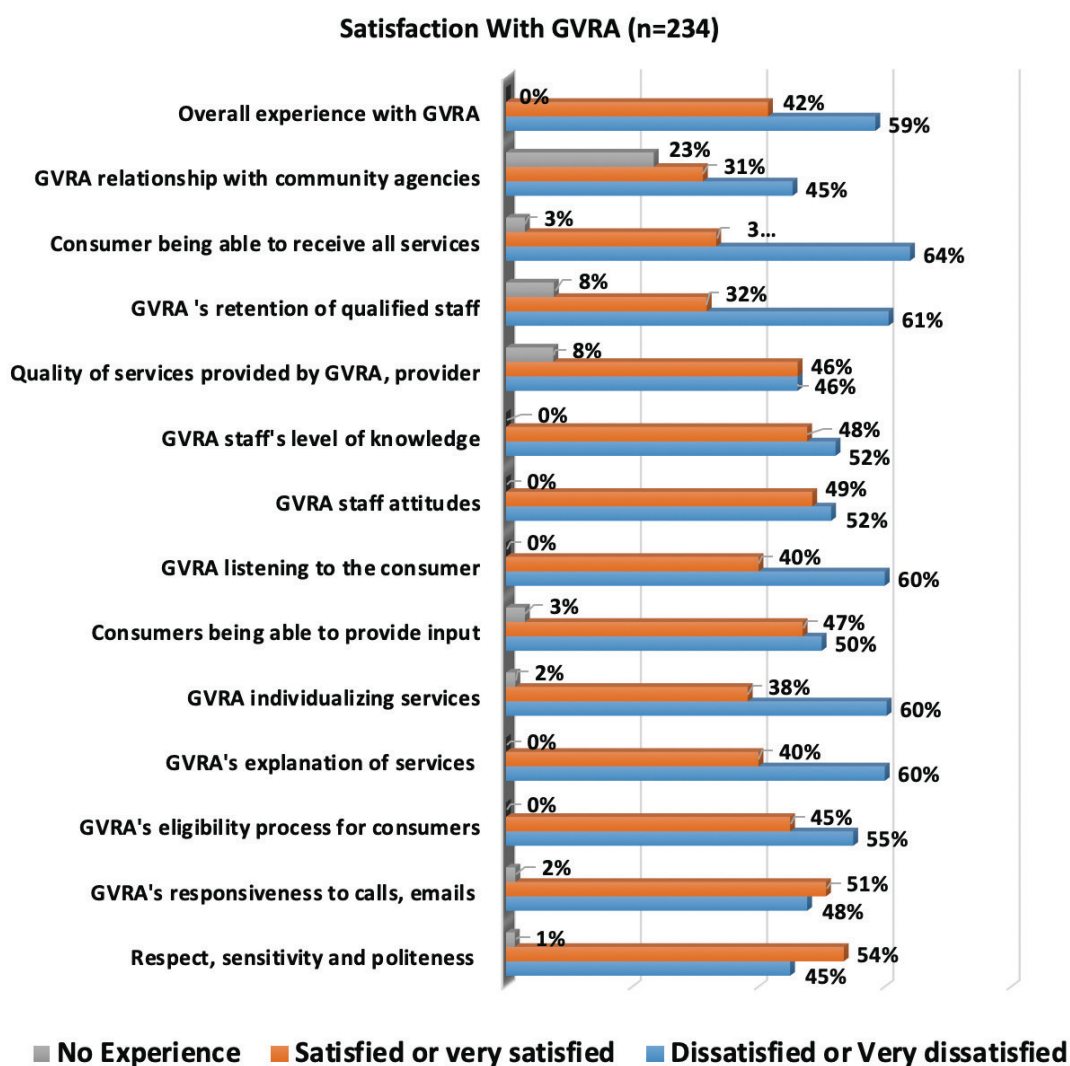
RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

ARE GVRA SERVICES MEETING THE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES?

EXPERIENCE OF GVRA - INDIVIDUAL WITH DISABILITY (N=117)

Individuals with disabilities were asked to rate their experience with GVRA on a 4-point scale ranging from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. Individuals with disabilities were most satisfied with the respect, sensitivity and politeness shown by GVRA towards consumers (54%), followed by GVRA's responsiveness to calls and emails to consumers (51%) and GVRA staff attitudes (49%). Individuals with disabilities reported to be most dissatisfied with GVRA's retention of qualified staff (61%), GVRA individualizing services (60%), GVRA's explanation of services /who would provide them (60%) and GVRA listening to the consumer (60%).



RESULTS

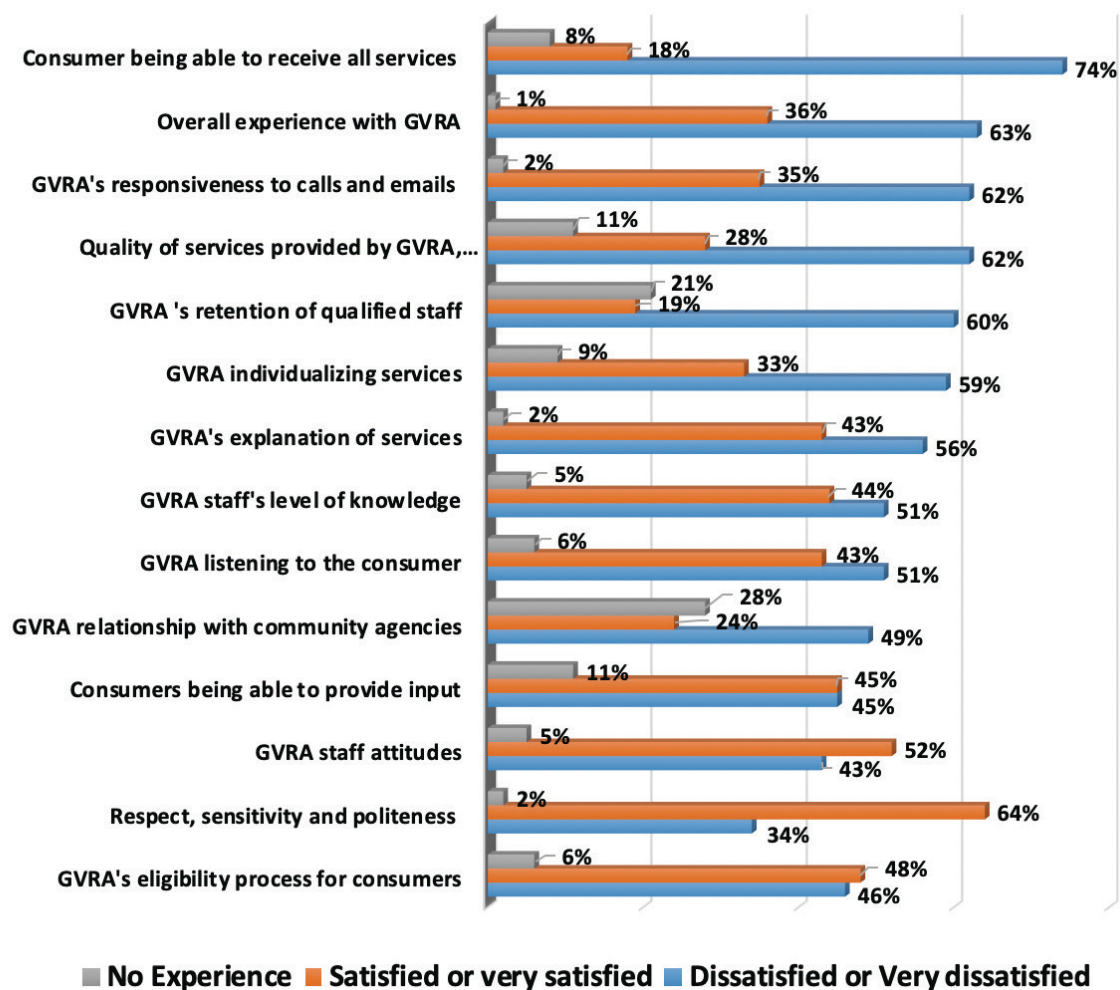
RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

ARE GVRA SERVICES MEETING THE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES?

EXPERIENCE WITH GVRA - STAKEHOLDER-PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS (N=125)

Parents and family members of individuals with disabilities were asked to rate their experience with GVRA on a 4-point scale ranging from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. Parents and family members were most satisfied with the respect, sensitivity and politeness shown by GVRA towards consumers (64%), followed by GVRA staff attitudes (52%) and consumers being able to provide input (45%). Parents and family members were most dissatisfied with consumers being able to receive all services needed (74%). This was followed by their dissatisfaction with the overall experience with GVRA (63%), GVRA's responsiveness to calls and emails (62%) and the quality of services provided by GVRA / contracted providers (62%).

Satisfaction With GVRA (n=272)



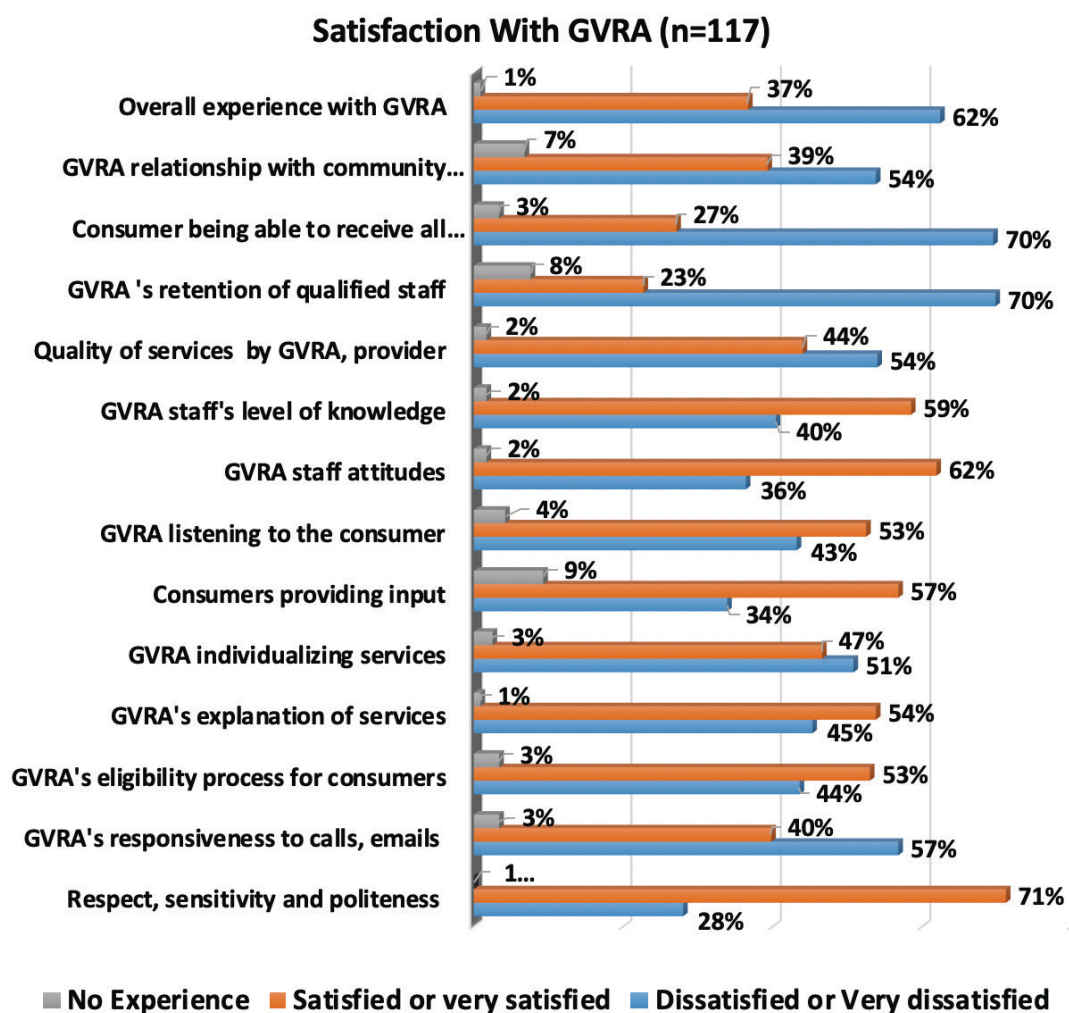
RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

ARE GVRA SERVICES MEETING THE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES?

EXPERIENCE OF GVRA - STAKEHOLDER: PROFESSIONALS (N=117)

Professionals working with individuals having disabilities were asked to rate their experience with GVRA on a 4-point scale ranging from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. Professionals reported to be most satisfied with the respect, sensitivity, and politeness shown by GVRA towards consumers (71%), GVRA staff attitudes (62%), and consumers being able to provide input (57%). Professionals were most dissatisfied with consumers being able to receive all services needed (70%) and GVRA's retention of qualified staff (70%). This was followed by their dissatisfaction with GVRA's responsiveness to calls and emails to consumers (57%) and the overall experience with GVRA (62%).



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RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

ARE GVRA SERVICES MEETING THE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES?**SUGGESTIONS FOR GVRA****» Geographic Variability in Services (access and quality)**

- “There are pockets in the state where families have been satisfied with GVRA, I think GVRA should look at what worked in these pockets, and how can they replicate it. The GVRA model offers individualization (when it’s done properly).” I am unable to identify any strengths since VR services in my county are practically nonexistent.”
- “We need more representatives in rural areas of GA. Kids are falling through the cracks because there isn’t follow up with GVRA representatives.”

» Timeliness of Services and Responsiveness of Counselors

- “The VR staff I work with are spending the majority of their time on paperwork and not with individuals with disabilities, it takes them too long to get referrals ready and approve services/pay for services”
- “At this time, I do not have any strengths to list for GVRA. I listen to people with disabilities on a regular basis tell me about their horrible experiences. If they call, they cannot get a person on the phone. If they are finally successful, GVRA employees are either unhelpful or rude. I know a person with a significant disability that has not been able to get any assistance at all.”
- “It just takes too long to get things done it really does not matter what it is.”

» High Staff Turnover

- “GVRA has a great need to keep qualified people in their jobs. VR counselors are always leaving and then it take forever to get someone else hired. The system for hiring new folks need to be stream lined. It just takes too long to get things done it really does not matter what it is. Hiring counselors and keeping them is the biggest issue. Apparently they need to be paid more or the degree requirements need to be relaxed.”
- “GVRA needs to hire/retain qualified staff’. The caseloads of staff members need to be lessened.”
- “The system is understaffed and under paid, want better people pay them a competitive wage.”

» Counselor Attitudes

- “GVRA staff has told the parent that her son is “too disabled” to work yet no one has done any discovery, testing, or job exploration with him.”
- “Counselors being judgmental of people with disabilities and what they can’t do.”

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» **Job Placements**

- “Voc rehab needs to train folks to identify job opportunities in the community. This never happens in the community where we live. There is a lot of training, assessments and talking but no job placement.”
- “Provide more self employment Micro business opportunities. Provide more job coaching and job creation services.”

» **Communication**

- With public:
 - » *“GVRA communicate better their policies, procedures and the services they offer to clients and parents. One way to do this is create a website that will make their policies and procedures more publicized.”*
 - » *“Counselors seemed to overwhelmed so that causes long delays in services provided and also very slow sometimes non-existent communication with families / caregivers / providers.”*
- Intra-agency:
 - » *“Have professional learning so that when new initiatives are launched all of the case managers will know the information. I have gone to information sessions where the leaders of GVRA talk about things that are coming down the pike, but the case managers have no idea what you are talking about if you mention what you heard.”*

» **Transition Services**

- “Make GVRA Counselors come to the High Schools and participate in the Transition Planning starting with age 16 to prevent potential GVRA Applicants from aging out of High School at age 22 and still not have GVRA Services ready to implement.”

» **Consistency in Services**

- “Work to ensure consistency in services. We don’t know from month to month if services are approved. We cannot plan care around that kind of schedule and parents cannot always take off when services suddenly stop, or funding is reduced.”

» **Lack of Transportation**

- “They are unable to address our lack of community transportation- and simply discount a student who cannot independently arrange transportation.”

» **Complicated Process**

- “Parents shared that the intake process, application and eligibility process was too complicated and should be streamlined.”

RESULTS

RESULTS FROM DATA COLLECTION

» **Insufficient Collaboration**

- “Insufficient collaboration with...business and other agencies.”

» **Focus on Outcomes**

- “GVRA’s employment outcomes are disappointingly low, compared to the amount of funding VR receives.”
- “As a special educator myself, it is very frustrating to work so hard to get student job ready and then they sit at home because voc rehab and every other agency in the state fails them over and over again. change has got to happen for all persons with disabilities in the state of Georgia!!!”

» **Employers Perspective**

- “Share information and be available to support the business and the staff.”
- “Providing more supported employment opportunities assist the individual as well as the business. Job coaching is also a vital need.”
- “More support staff, additional providers and extended follow up.”
- “Job coaches, peer mentors, one on one training...”
- “...ergonomic/adaptive equipment, assistive technology.”
- “Often GVRA is minimally interested in working with the business community.”

» **Culture of GVRA, Reorganization of GVRA, as a Whole.**

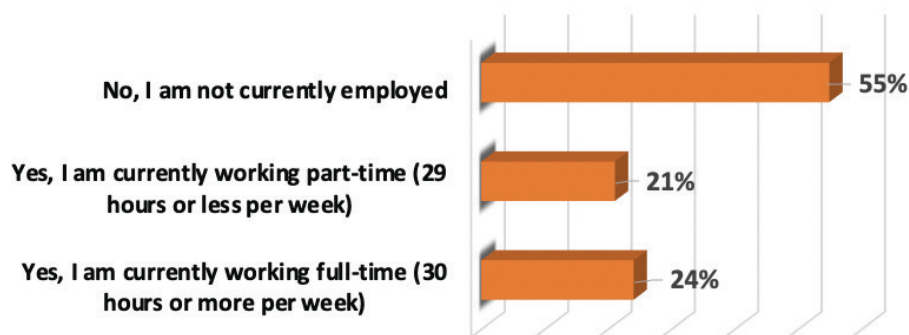
- “Georgia ranks a dismal 37th in the nation for the employment of the disabled. The state clearly doesn’t view employment for the disabled as a high priority.
- “GVRA has lost trust upon the service-provider community based on a failure to honor its commitments.”
- “... the agency is presently encountering a mass exodus of VR counselors and cannot possibly provide adequate support to those it is supposed to serve.”
- “Change the culture of the agency.”

RESULTS

OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SURVEY RESULTS

Respondents to the individuals with disabilities survey were asked about their current employment status. About one-fourth of participants (24%) reported to be currently employed full-time (30 hours or more per week), one fifth (21%) were employed part-time (29 hours or less per week) and a little over half of them (55%) were not currently employed. Of the ones that were not employed currently, about half (51%) reported that they were currently looking for a job, another one-third (34%) reported to be not currently looking, and about one-sixth (15%) gave other situations that explained why they were currently not looking for a job (for example, they are currently working on obtaining education).

Current Employment Status (n=204)

Close to a third of respondents (31%) reported to currently receive Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)/ Supplement Security Income (SSI) benefits. A little over half (56%) did not currently receive benefits and another three percent reported to be in the process of applying or appealing the benefits.

RESULTS

OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SURVEY RESULTS

When asked about their familiarity or engagement with GVRA, about one fourth respondents mentioned that they had been GVRA clients in the past (26%) with another one fourth (25%) mentioning that they were not familiar with GVRA (25%). One-eighth (12%) said they were currently receiving services from GVRA with some others that preferred not to answer (12%) or picked the other category (10%).

Best describes you (n=190)



RESULTS

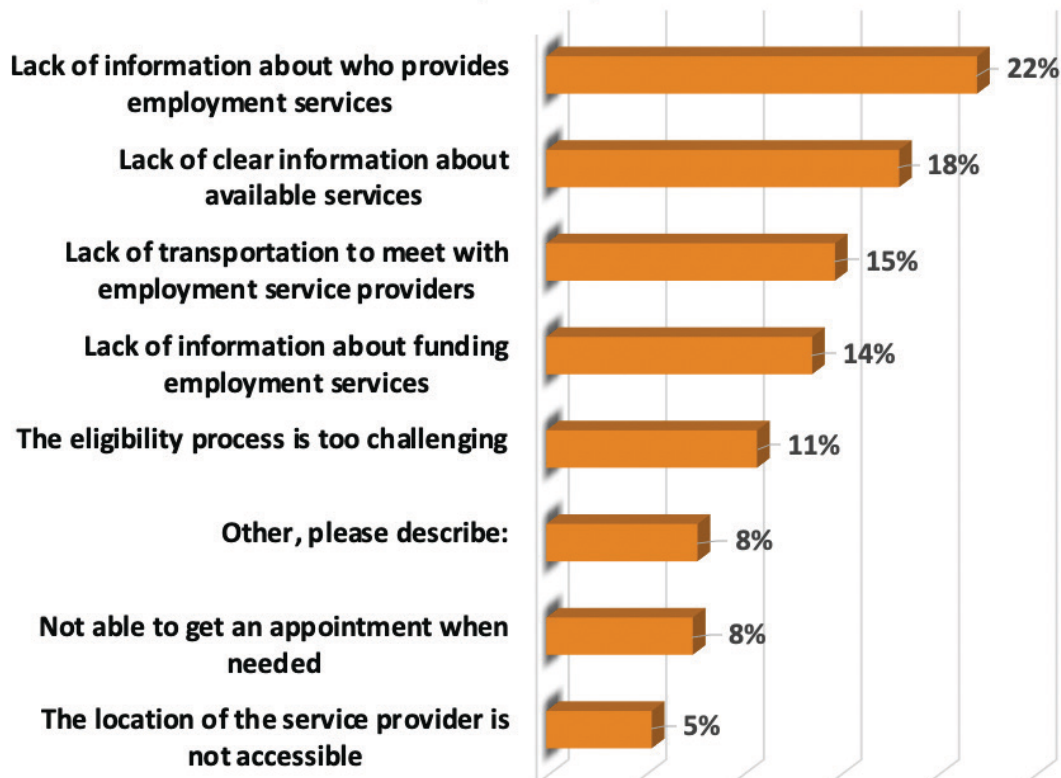
OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SURVEY RESULTS

TOP CHALLENGES IN ACCESSING EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Individuals with disabilities were asked about the top challenges in accessing employment for people with disabilities. The top challenge identified was lack of information about who provides employment services (22%) followed by lack of clear information about available services related to obtaining jobs (18%). The third most important barrier identified by individuals with disabilities included lack of transportation to meet with employment service providers.

**Top challenges in accessing employment for PWD
(n=234)**



RESULTS

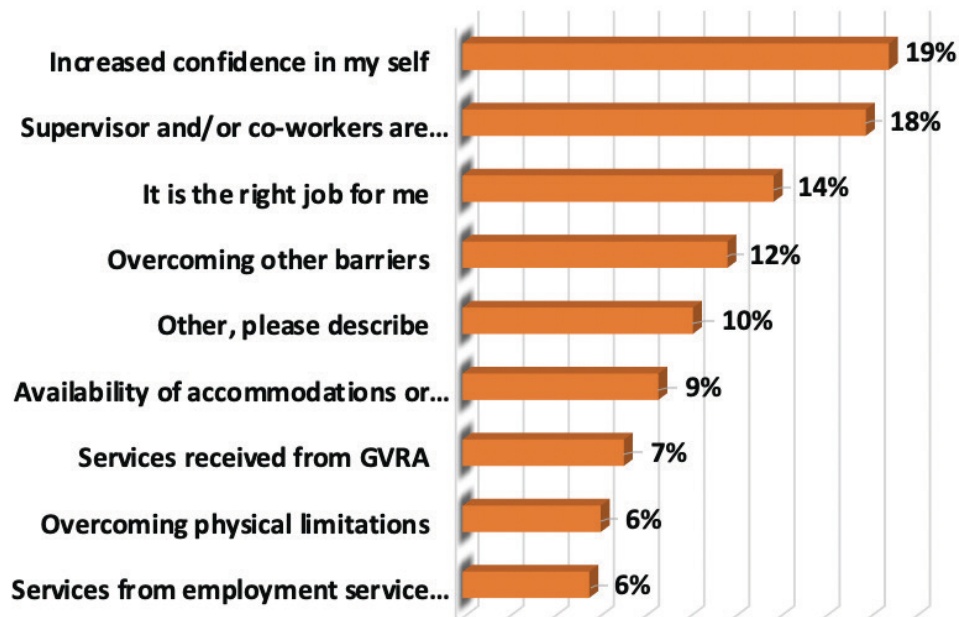
OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SURVEY RESULTS

KEY FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO JOB SUCCESS

Individuals were asked about the key factors contributing to job success for people with disabilities. One-fifth (19%) of respondents identified increased confidence in themselves as the top factor (19%) along with supervisors and/or co-workers being supportive (18%). Respondents also mentioned 'its the right job for me' as being a factor (14%) and 'overcoming other barriers' (12%) as being important factors contributing to job success.

Key Factors contributing to Job Success (n=196)



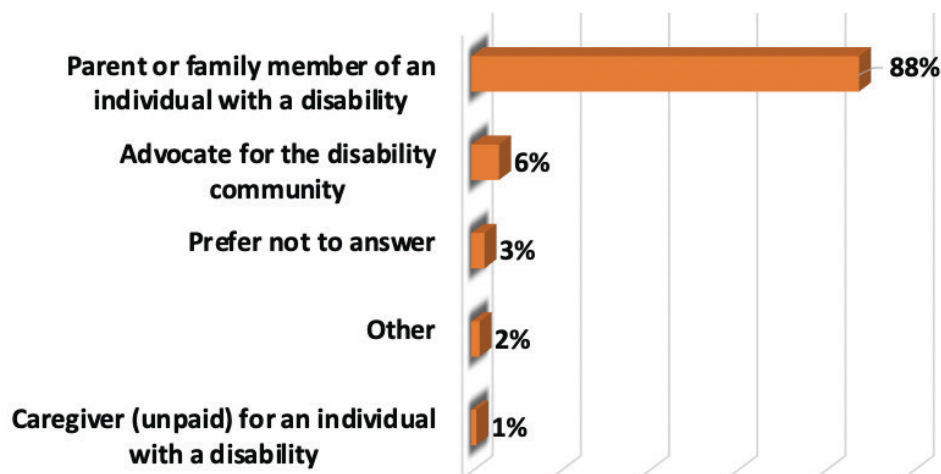
RESULTS

OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

KEY STAKEHOLDERS (PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS)

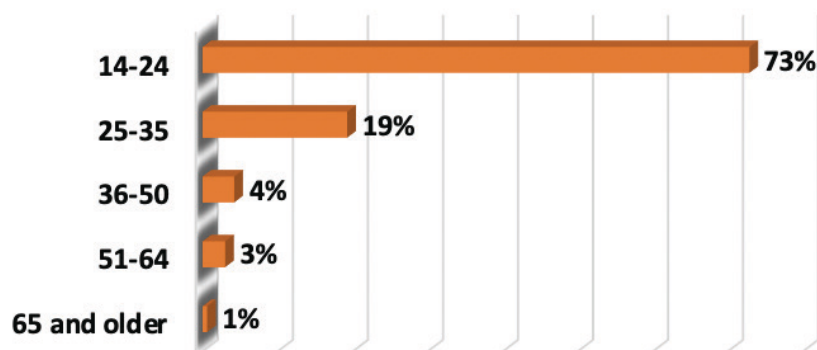
The majority (88%) of respondents were either parents or family members of an individual with a disability. Only 1% were unpaid caregivers of an individual with disabilities and another 6% were advocates for an individual with disabilities. Two-thirds of respondents (66%) had contacted GVRA in the past while close to a fourth (27%) had never contacted GVRA.

Best describes you (n=272)



Three-fourth (73%) of individuals with disabilities that parents and family member care for were between 14 and 24 years of age. Another one-fifth (19%) were between 25 and 35 years of age. Close to five-eighths (63%) were female and 29% were male with 6% choosing 'prefer not to say'.

Age range of person with disability

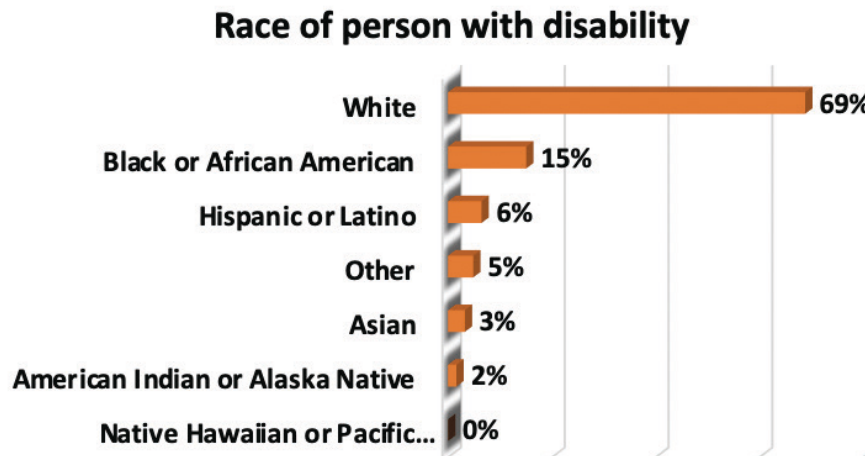


RESULTS

OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

KEY STAKEHOLDERS (PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS)

Almost two-thirds of individuals they care for are white (69%) and only 15% were African Americans. African American individuals with disabilities are under-represented in this 2020 survey. In contrast, individuals from African American backgrounds were over represented (45%) in the 2017 survey that REU conducted.



RESULTS

OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

KEY STAKEHOLDERS (PROFESSIONALS)

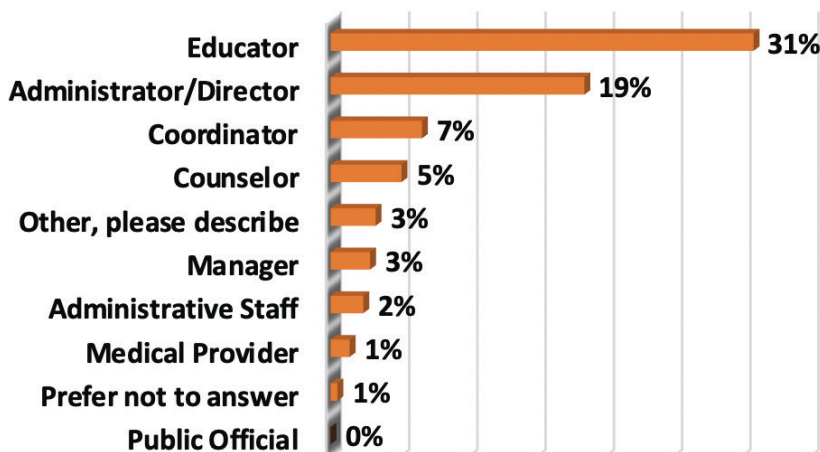
Almost half (45%) of respondents were professionals with a partnering agency followed by one-fourth (26%) who were professionals in the community. One-sixth of respondents were Direct Support Professional (15%). A point to note is that many Direct Support workers had picked the other category saying they did not identify themselves as professionals which has implications for how Direct Support Workers form their identity, as well as, the role of appropriate training in helping them understand and build confidence in their roles as professionals in the community.

What best describes you (n=210)



Less than a third of all respondents to the stakeholder, professionals survey were educators (31%) and a fifth (19%) were administrators or directors. About 12% were coordinators or counselors. More than two-thirds of respondents (69%) had contacted GVRA and with less than a third (29%) of them reporting to have never contacted GVRA.

Current professional position (n=210)

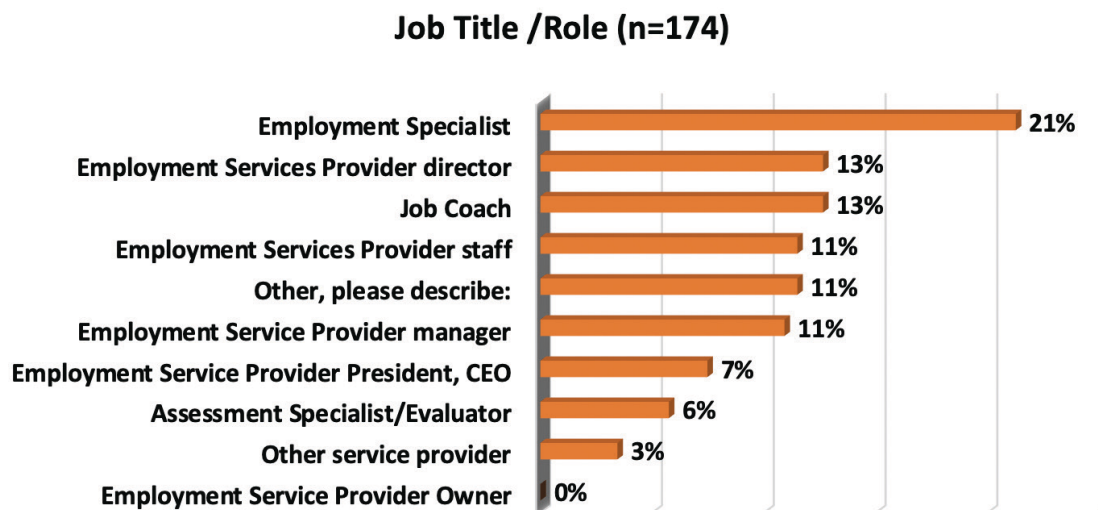


RESULTS

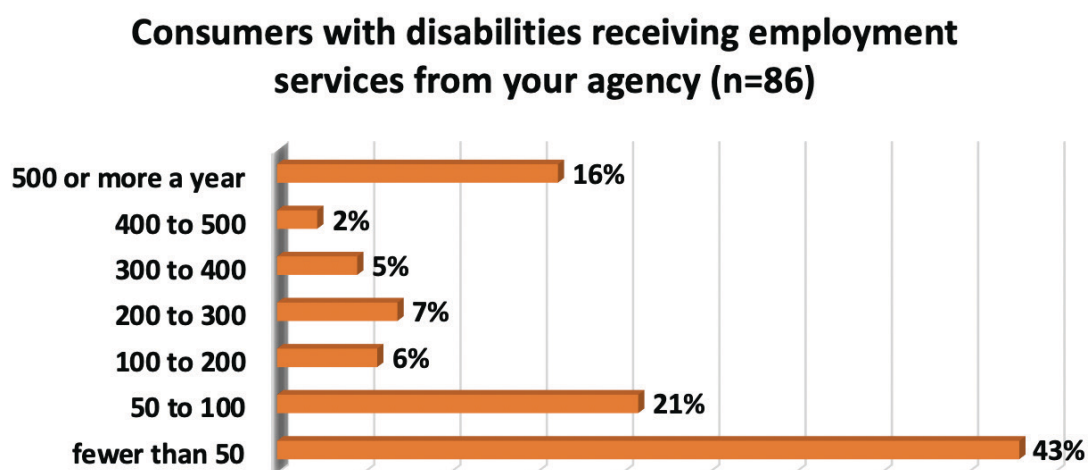
OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS

The job titles that people hold included employment specialist (21%), employment services provider director (13%), job coach (13%), employment service provider staff (11%), employment service manager (11%) among others.



Almost half (43%) of provider agencies provided services to fewer than 50 individuals with disabilities. One-fifth (21%) provided services to between 50 and 100 individuals with disabilities, and 16% provided services to more than 500 individuals with disabilities a year.



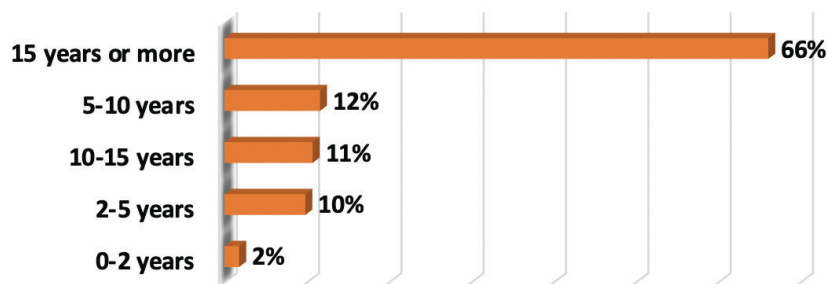
RESULTS

OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS

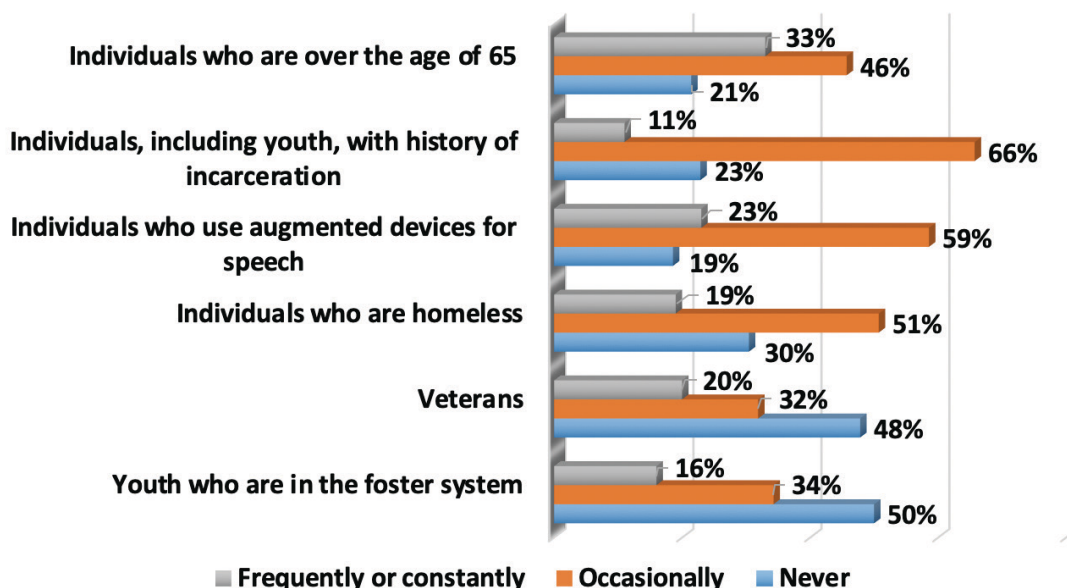
In terms of longevity of service provision, providers were asked how long they have been providing employment services to individuals with disabilities. Two-thirds of providers (66%) mentioned providing employment services to IWD for 15 or more years. Some other reported durations were between 5 to 10 years (12%), 10 to 15 years (11%) and 2 to 5 years (10%).

How long has the agency been providing employment services (n=112)



Providers reported on the frequency with which they provide services to IWD with specific characteristics. Providers reported to be always working with individuals who are over 65 years of age (33%) as well as individuals who use augmented device for speech (23%). Providers reported to never or only occasionally provide services to incarcerated youth (89%), youth in foster system (84%), or veterans (80%).

Frequency of Providing Services

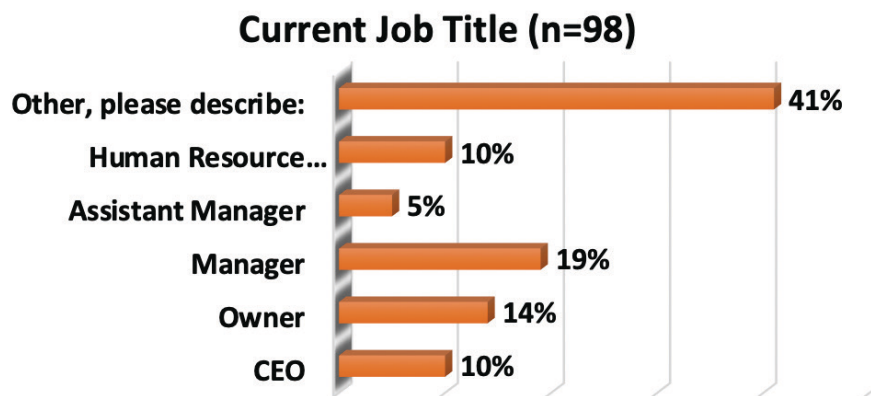


RESULTS

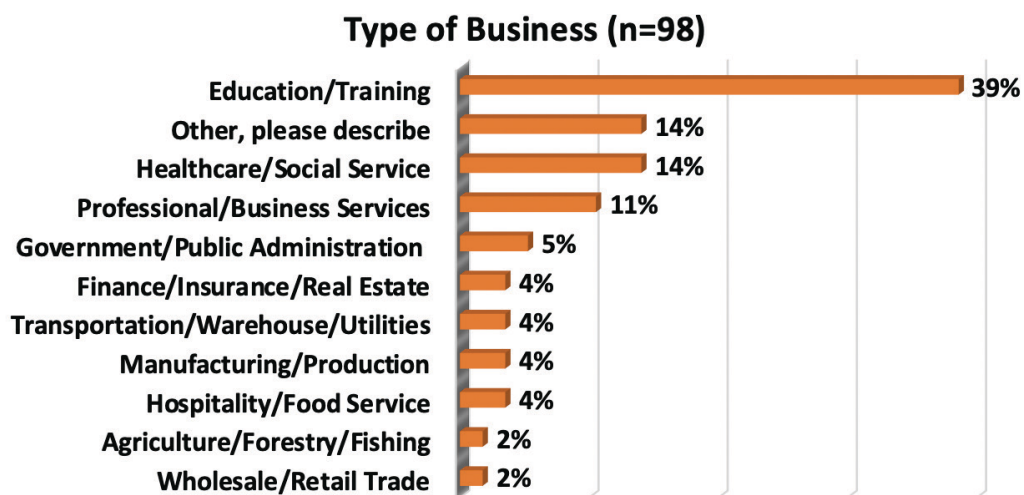
OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

EMPLOYERS

Fourteen percent of employers who responded to the survey were owners followed by ten percent who were Chief Executive Officers (CEOs). One-fifth (19%) had the title of managers and another 10% identified themselves as Human Resource (HR personnel). Two-fifth (41%) of respondents identified themselves as school personnel. It is very possible that these individuals are educators or professionals within the school system but ended up completing the employer's survey.



The type of business that respondents owned or worked for included Education/Training (39%), Healthcare /Social Service (14%); Others (14%). Professional or business services (11%) and public administration (5%) were also mentioned by respondents.



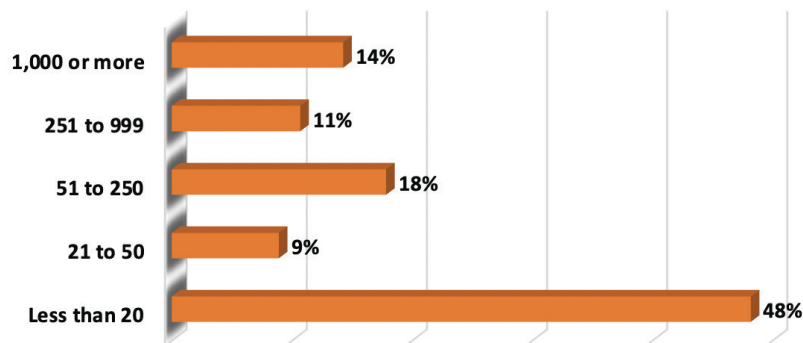
RESULTS

OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

EMPLOYERS

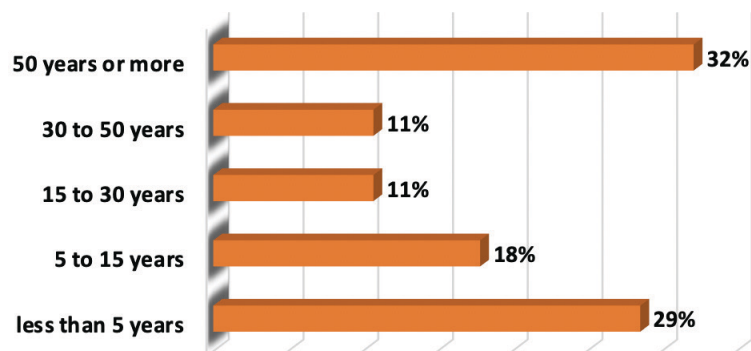
Almost half (48%) were small businesses that employed less than 20 individuals and close to one-fifth (18%) employed between 51 and 250 employees. Close to one-eighth (14%) were large businesses that employed more than 100 individuals.

Number of people Employed at Business (n=98)



Close to a third of businesses were in operation for 50 years or more (32%) while another one-third were newer businesses that had been in operation for less than 5 years (29%).

**Years business has been in operation
(n=98)**

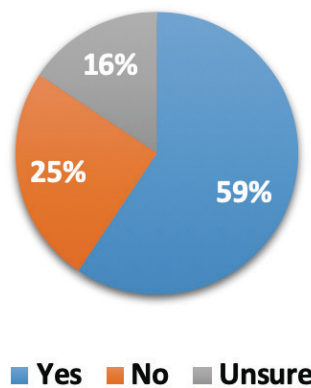


RESULTS

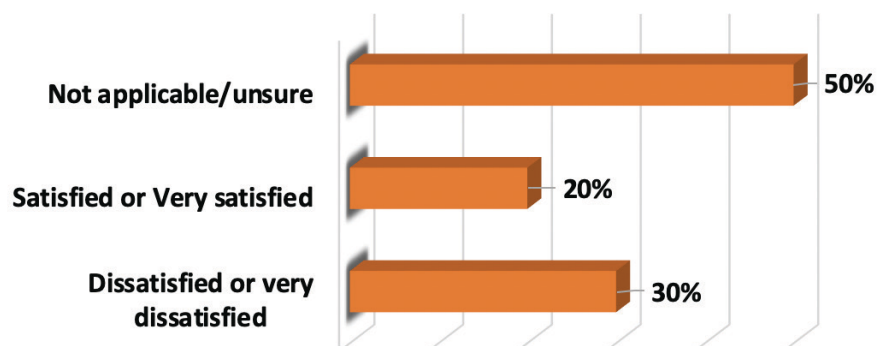
OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

EMPLOYERS

Three-fifth (60%) of employers reported that they had knowingly hired individuals with disabilities in the past, with about 16% not sure about it.

Hired individuals with disabilities (n=32)

Five-sixth (83%) of respondents to the employer survey reported to be familiar with GVRA and two-thirds (67%) were familiar with GVRA services. Close to half (45%) of respondents received services from GVRA or contracted providers, while about 16% were unsure if they had. Only 14% respondents were federal contractors. When asked if they were satisfied with GVRA services, about half of the respondents said the question was not applicable to them. Of the other half, about 30% reported being dissatisfied with GVRA services that they received.

Satisfied with GVRA services (n=98)

RESULTS

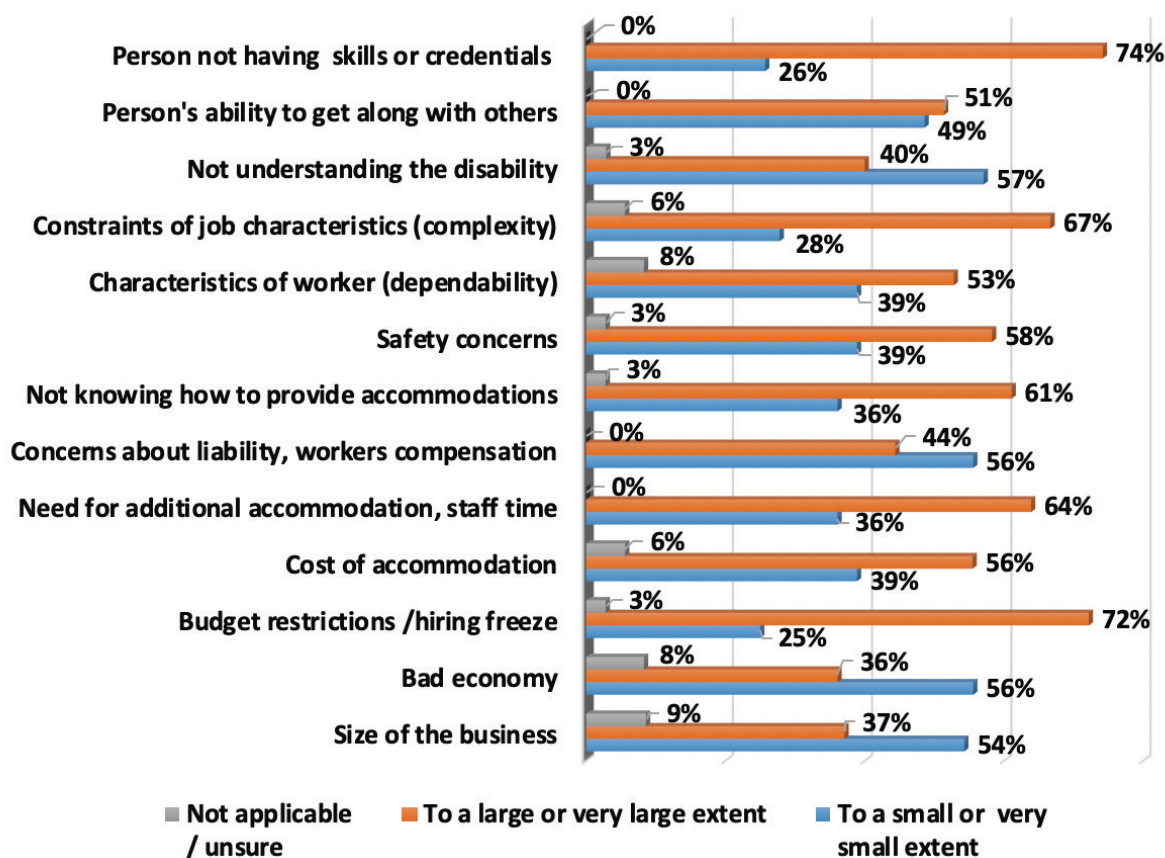
OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

EMPLOYERS

CHALLENGES THAT PREVENT BUSINESSES FROM HIRING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Employers were asked to what extent do the following factors keep businesses from hiring, retaining or promoting individuals with disabilities. Employers reported that they agreed to a large or very large extent that the person with disabilities not having the skills or credentials for the job (74%), is a factor that prevents businesses from hiring IWD. Budget restrictions or hiring freezes (72%) was the next most important factor mentioned followed by constraints of job characteristics (complexity, physical demand, skill level) (67%). The need for additional accommodation and staff time (64%) and not knowing how to provide disability-related accommodation (61%) were also identified as important factors. Not understanding the disability (57%), concerns about liability, worker's compensation (56%) or a bad economy (56%) were reported to prevent hiring of IWD by businesses to a small or very small extent.

Challenges that prevent business from hiring (n=36)



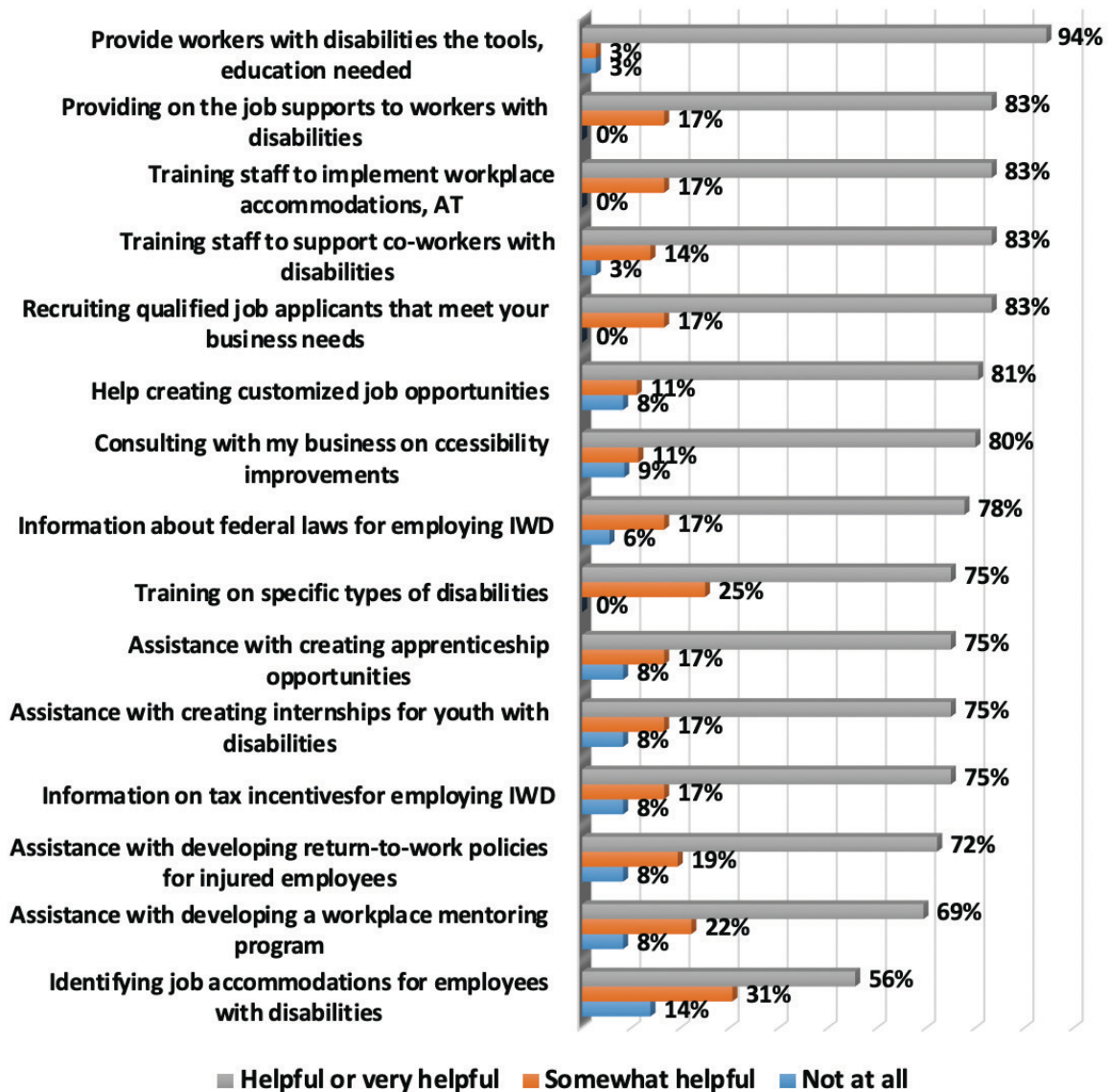
RESULTS

OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

EMPLOYERS

GVRA SERVICES HELPFUL TO BUSINESSES FOR RECRUITING IWD

The service that was identified to be helpful or most helpful was to provide workers with disabilities the tools, education needed to do the job (94%). Other helpful services include providing on the job supports to workers with disabilities (83%), training staff to implement workplace accommodation, assistive technology (83%), training staff to support co-workers with disabilities (83%), and recruiting job applicants that meet your business needs (83%).



RESULTS

OTHER RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

EMPLOYERS

TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS THE BUSINESS HAS PROVIDED TO EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES.

Extended time and training were the most common accommodations cited that were provided for employees with disabilities. If extra help was needed for the employee to complete their necessary tasks, then peer mentors and interpreters (mainly for deaf individuals) were provided for guidance in all areas of the job. Assistive technology and equipment provided when needed.

- *“Extended time, mentors, extended training, layering tasks and recommended accommodations per individual.”*
- *“Job coaches, peer mentors, one on one training...”*
- *“...ergonomic/adaptive equipment, assistive technology.”*
- *“Extra time to train and complete tasks Visual task lists.”*

WHAT MORE CAN GVRA DO TO BEST MEET THE NEEDS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY?

More staff support and additional providers to assist with new hire training and services were mentioned as important needs. Many of the businesses discussed the need for consistent and effective communication with them. Responsiveness to questions and updates, as well as, clear and direct answers in the services offered were mentioned; the business communities indicated that there was a general miscommunication between them and GVRA.

- *“Often GVRA is minimally interested in working with the business community”*
- *“More support staff, additional providers and extended follow up.”*
- *“Be honest and upfront with what they can offer. Communicate consistently and effectively.”*
- *“Be clear about what services that are offered. Be available if staff need support after their cases are closed.”*

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK REGARDING WAYS GVRA CAN PARTNER WITH BUSINESSES TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

Additional support for staff, businesses, and individuals looking for employment was a common need stated; sharing information; learning the needs of candidates; and job coaching were repeated suggestions about improvement.

- *“Share information and be available to support the business and the staff.”*
- *“Providing more supported employment opportunities assist the individual as well as the business. Job coaching is also a vital need”*
- *“Funding Ability to serve individuals the time appropriate to them, not according to the budget”*

APPENDIX - A

SURVEY - GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES

The Research and Evaluation Unit (REU) at the Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD), located at the University of Georgia (UGA), in partnership with the **Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA)** and their State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), is conducting a needs assessment to learn more about the employment needs of individuals with disabilities in Georgia. The information you provide will inform GVRA's portion of Georgia's Unified State Plan, as well as influence decision making and delivery of vocational services to individuals with disabilities.

This survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, and your participation is completely voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, and you are free to answer only the questions you are comfortable with. Your responses will be kept confidential, and you will not be asked to provide your name or the name of your organization. Feedback gathered through this survey will be combined into a summary report along with other data collected for this project.

Should you need accommodations or would like this survey in an alternate format, please send an email to (Project Manager Information).

Note: For the purpose of this survey, an "individual with a disability" is a person who has a physical, mental, sensory or cognitive impairment that impacts their ability to prepare for, obtain or maintain gainful employment.

In advance, thank for your time and participation!

APPENDICES

APPENDIX - A

SURVEY - GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES

SURVEY

Q2 WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ Prefer to not say (3)

Q3 ARE YOU OR HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE US ARMED SERVICES?

- ☐ Currently serving (active duty, reserves or guard) (1)
- ☐ Yes, I am a veteran (2)
- ☐ No (3)

Q4 WHAT COUNTY IN GEORGIA DO YOU CURRENTLY LIVE IN?

Q5 WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT AGE RANGE?

- ☐ 14-24 (1)
- ☐ 25-35 (2)
- ☐ 36-50 (3)
- ☐ 51-64 (4)
- ☐ 65 and older (5)

Q6 WHAT IS YOUR RACE/ETHNIC BACKGROUND? (PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ White (1)
- ☐ Black or African American (2)
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- ☐ Asian (4)
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino (6)
- ☐ Other (7)

Q7 WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF SCHOOL YOU HAVE COMPLETED OR THE HIGHEST DEGREE YOU HAVE RECEIVED?

- ☐ Currently attending high school (1)
- ☐ Less than high school (2)
- ☐ High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED) (3)
- ☐ Some college or technical school but no degree (4)
- ☐ Diploma or Associates degree (5)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree (6)
- ☐ Master's degree (7)

APPENDIX - A

SURVEY - GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES

- ☐ Doctoral degree (8)
- ☐ Professional degree (JD, MD) (9)
- ☐ Other, please describe (10) _____

**Q8 DO YOU CURRENTLY RECEIVE SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INCOME (SSDI)/
SUPPLEMENT SECURITY INCOME (SSI)?**

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ In the process of applying or appealing (3)
- ☐ Not sure (4)

**Q9 FROM THE LIST BELOW, PLEASE IDENTIFY THE IMPAIRMENT(S) THAT IMPACT YOU THE
MOST:**

- ☐ Blindness / Low Vision (1)
- ☐ Deafness / Loss of Hearing (2)
- ☐ Speech Impairment (3)
- ☐ Spinal Cord Injury (4)
- ☐ Amputation (5)
- ☐ Arthritis or Joint Condition (6)
- ☐ Back/Neck Condition (7)
- ☐ Chronic Pain (including fibromyalgia) (8)
- ☐ Nerve/Muscle Conditions (20)
- ☐ Digestive Disorder (9)
- ☐ Cancer (10)
- ☐ Respiratory Conditions (asthma, allergies, COPD) (11)
- ☐ Diabetes/Kidney Disease (12)
- ☐ Cardiac Conditions (13)
- ☐ Autoimmune Conditions (14)
- ☐ Traumatic Brain Injury (15)
- ☐ Parkinson's/Muscular Dystrophy (16)
- ☐ Stroke (17)
- ☐ Seizures/Epilepsy (18)
- ☐ Autism (31)
- ☐ Cerebral Palsy (21)
- ☐ Spina Bifida (22)
- ☐ Genetic Conditions (23)

APPENDIX - A

SURVEY - GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES

- ☐ Intellectual Disability (24)
- ☐ Learning Disability (25)
- ☐ Attention Deficit Disorder (26)
- ☐ Depression/Anxiety (27)
- ☐ PTSD (28)
- ☐ Other Mental Health Condition (29)
- ☐ Substance Dependence (including alcohol) (30)
- ☐ Other, please describe: (33) _____

Q10 IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, GENERALLY, WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT ENCOUNTERED BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES? (PLEASE SELECT ONLY THREE BOXES)

- ☐ Access to dependable transportation (1)
- ☐ Lack of awareness about Vocational Rehabilitation Services (2)
- ☐ Low expectations among professionals (3)
- ☐ Misconceptions about disabilities held by professionals (4)
- ☐ Employer's concerns about risks associated with hiring individuals with disabilities (e.g. worker's comp) (5)
- ☐ Employer's concerns about providing accommodations for individuals with disabilities (6)
- ☐ Lack of family/community support (7)
- ☐ Disability related factors (severity, instability, etc.) (8)
- ☐ Fear of losing benefits (SSI/SSDI) (9)
- ☐ Criminal background (10)
- ☐ Lack of skills or education needed for job goal (11)
- ☐ Limited work experience (12)
- ☐ Slow job market (13)
- ☐ Lack of long-term services/ongoing job coaching (14)
- ☐ Language and/or cultural barriers (15)
- ☐ Difficulty accessing jobs (identifying openings, application process, interviewing, etc.) (16)
- ☐ Lack of well-trained quality job developers (17)
- ☐ Lack of interpersonal or soft skills (18)
- ☐ Lack of awareness of/or access to job supports, assistive technology or accommodations (19)
- ☐ Lack of affordable housing (20)
- ☐ Lack of physical accessibility (21)
- ☐ Lack of personal care attendant (22)
- ☐ Other (please specify): (23) _____

APPENDIX - A

SURVEY - GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES

Q11 IN YOUR OPINION, PLEASE IDENTIFY THE TOP THREE SERVICES THAT ARE MOST NEEDED BY INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR OBTAINING MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT (PLEASE SELECT ANY THREE BOXES).

- ☐ Medical services (1)
- ☐ Post-secondary education (2)
- ☐ Psychological services (3)
- ☐ Assistive Technology/Adaptive Equipment for home/work (4)
- ☐ Vocational Guidance & Counseling to include career exploration (5)
- ☐ Job development/placement (6)
- ☐ Services related to blindness/low vision (7)
- ☐ Occupational Skills Training (8)
- ☐ On the Job Support (job coaching) (9)
- ☐ Supported Employment (extended follow-up) (10)
- ☐ Services related to Deafness/hearing loss (11)
- ☐ Job Preparation Services (work adjustment training) (12)
- ☐ Assessments to identify a job goal (13)
- ☐ Discovery/Customized Employment (14)
- ☐ Help with self employment start-up (15)
- ☐ Help with keeping a job/advancing in job (16)
- ☐ Help with obtaining job specific credentials/certifications (17)
- ☐ Funding for job specific tools/equipment/uniforms (18)
- ☐ Other, please describe (19) _____

Q12 IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE TOP CHALLENGES A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY EXPERIENCES IN ACCESSING EMPLOYMENT SERVICES IN GEORGIA? (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLIES)

- ☐ Lack of information about who provides employment services (1)
- ☐ Lack of information about funding employment services (2)
- ☐ Not able to get an appointment when needed (3)
- ☐ Lack of transportation to meet with employment service providers (4)
- ☐ Lack of clear information about available services (5)
- ☐ The eligibility process is too challenging (6)
- ☐ The location of the service provider is not accessible (7)
- ☐ Other, please describe: (8) _____

APPENDIX - A

SURVEY - GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES

Q13 ARE YOU CURRENTLY EMPLOYED FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME?

- ☐ Yes, I am currently working full-time (30 hours or more per week) (1)
- ☐ Yes, I am currently working part-time (29 hours or less per week) (2)
- ☐ No, I am not currently employed (3)

Q14 IF YES, IN THE COMMENT BOX BELOW, PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR JOB TITLE OR TYPE OF WORK.

Q15 IF YES, PLEASE IDENTIFY THE KEY FACTORS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR JOB SUCCESS. (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY).

- ☐ Services received from GVRA (1)
- ☐ Services from employment service providers other than GVRA (2)
- ☐ Increased confidence in my self (3)
- ☐ Overcoming physical limitations (4)
- ☐ Overcoming other barriers (5)
- ☐ Availability of accommodations or other supports on the job (6)
- ☐ It is the right job for me (7)
- ☐ Supervisor and/or co-workers are supportive (8)
- ☐ Other, please describe (9) _____

DISPLAY THIS QUESTION:

IF ARE YOU CURRENTLY EMPLOYED FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME? = NO, I AM NOT CURRENTLY EMPLOYED

Q16 IF NO, ARE YOU CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR A JOB?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Other, please describe (3) _____

Q17 HAVE YOU EVER RECEIVED ASSISTANCE FROM AN ORGANIZATION TO FIND A JOB?

- ☐ Yes (4)
- ☐ No (5)
- ☐ Unsure (6)

APPENDIX - A

SURVEY - GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES

DISPLAY THIS QUESTION:**IF HAVE YOU EVER RECEIVED ASSISTANCE FROM AN ORGANIZATION TO FIND A JOB? = YES****Q27 IF YES, PLEASE LIST THE ORGANIZATION(S) THAT ASSISTED YOU.**

Q18 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOU? (PLEASE CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLIES)

- ☐ I have never been a GVRA client (1)
- ☐ I am currently receiving services from GVRA (2)
- ☐ I have been a GVRA client in the past (3)
- ☐ I am not familiar with GVRA (4)
- ☐ Prefer to not answer (5)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (6) _____

Q19 PLEASE RATE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH GVRA, ON A SCALE FROM 1 (VERY DISSATISFIED) TO 4 (VERY SATISFIED) FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS.

Please refer to the next page.

APPENDIX - A

SURVEY - GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES

	VERY DISSATISFIED (1)	DISSATISFIED (2)	SATISFIED (3)	VERY SATISFIED (4)	NO EXPERIENCE (5)
Respect, sensitivity and politeness shown by GVRA towards consumers (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA's responsiveness to calls and emails to consumers (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA's eligibility process for consumers (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA's explanation of services /who would provide them (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA individualizing services (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consumers being able to provide input (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA listening to the consumer (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA staff attitudes (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA staff's level of knowledge (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of services provided by GVRA / contracted provider (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA 's retention of qualified staff (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA relationship with community agencies (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consumer being able to receive all services needed (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall experience with GVRA (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX - A

SURVEY - GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES

Q20 WHAT, ACCORDING TO YOU, ARE SOME STRENGTHS OF THE GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY (GVRA)?

Q21 WHAT SUGGESTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR GVRA SO IT CAN PROVIDE BETTER SERVICES THAT LEAD TO IMPROVED EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR ITS CLIENTS?

Q22 YOUR INPUT IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED. IS THERE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE TO HELP US UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN GEORGIA?

APPENDIX - B

SURVEY - STAKEHOLDER

The Research and Evaluation Unit (REU) at the Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD), located at the University of Georgia, in partnership with the **Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA)** and their SRC, is conducting a needs assessment to learn more about the employment needs of individuals with disabilities in Georgia.

The information you provide will inform GVRA's portion of Georgia's Unified State Plan, as well as influence decision making and delivery of vocational services to individuals with disabilities.

This survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, and your participation is completely voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, and you are free to answer only the questions you are comfortable with answering. Your responses will be kept confidential, and you will not be asked to provide your name or the name of your organization.

In advance, thank for your time and participation!

Should you need accommodations or would like this survey in an alternate format, please send an email (Project Manager Information).

Note: For the purpose of this survey, an "individual with a disability" is a person who has a physical, mental, sensory or cognitive impairment that impacts their ability to prepare for, obtain or maintain gainful employment.

SURVEY

Q2 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOU?

- ☐ Parent or family member of an individual with a disability (1)
- ☐ Caregiver (unpaid) for an individual with a disability (2)
- ☐ Direct support professional/personal attendant for an individual (s) with a disability (3)
- ☐ Advocate for the disability community (4)
- ☐ Professional with partnering agency or organization (5)
- ☐ Professional in the community (6)
- ☐ Prefer not to answer (7)
- ☐ Other (8) _____

APPENDIX - B

SURVEY - STAKEHOLDER

Q3 IF YOU ARE A PROFESSIONAL, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CURRENT POSITION?

- ☐ Administrator/Director (1)
- ☐ Manager (2)
- ☐ Counselor (3)
- ☐ Coordinator (4)
- ☐ Educator (5)
- ☐ Medical Provider (6)
- ☐ Public Official (7)
- ☐ Administrative Staff (8)
- ☐ Prefer not to answer (9)
- ☐ N/A (10)
- ☐ Other, please describe (11) _____

Q4 IF YOU ARE A PARENT OR CAREGIVER, WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE PERSON YOU ARE CARING FOR, ASSISTING OR ADVOCATING FOR?

- ☐ Parent (1)
- ☐ Adult sibling (2)
- ☐ Cousin/Aunt/Uncle (3)
- ☐ Grandparent (4)
- ☐ Family friend (5)
- ☐ Neighbor (6)
- ☐ Church member (7)
- ☐ Other relative (8) _____
- ☐ N/A (9)
- ☐ Prefer not to answer (10)
- ☐ Other (11) _____

Q5 IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, GENERALLY, WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT ENCOUNTERED BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES? (PLEASE SELECT ONLY THREE BOXES)

- ☐ Access to dependable transportation (1)
- ☐ Lack of awareness about Vocational Rehabilitation Services (2)
- ☐ Low expectations among professionals (3)
- ☐ Misconceptions about disabilities held by professionals (4)
- ☐ Employer's concerns about risks associated with hiring individuals with disabilities (e.g. worker's comp) (5)

APPENDIX - B

SURVEY - STAKEHOLDER

- ☐ Employer's concerns about providing accommodations for individuals with disabilities (6)
- ☐ Lack of family/community support (7)
- ☐ Disability-related factors (severity, instability, etc.) (8)
- ☐ Fear of losing benefits (SSI/SSDI) (9)
- ☐ Criminal background (10)
- ☐ Lack of skills or education needed for job goal (11)
- ☐ Limited work experience (12)
- ☐ Slow job market (13)
- ☐ Lack of long-term services and ongoing job coaching (14)
- ☐ Language and/or cultural barriers (15)
- ☐ Difficulty accessing jobs (identifying openings, application process, interviewing, etc.) (16)
- ☐ Lack of well-trained quality job developers (17)
- ☐ Lack of interpersonal or soft skills (18)
- ☐ Lack of awareness of or access to job supports, assistive technology or accommodations (19)
- ☐ Lack of affordable housing (20)
- ☐ Lack of physical accessibility (21)
- ☐ Lack of personal care attendant (22)
- ☐ Other (please specify): (23) _____

Q6 IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING POPULATIONS ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE UNDER-SERVED AND ENCOUNTER BARRIERS TO ACCESSING EMPLOYMENT SERVICES? (PLEASE MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ Individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (1)
- ☐ Transition-age youth with disabilities (ages 16 to 22 years) (2)
- ☐ Individuals with significant or complex disabilities (3)
- ☐ Individuals from racial and ethnic minority populations (4)
- ☐ Individuals with disabilities who are homeless (5)
- ☐ Individuals with mental illness (6)
- ☐ Individuals with a substance abuse disorder (7)
- ☐ Individuals with disabilities with a criminal history (8)
- ☐ Individuals living in rural areas (9)
- ☐ Individuals with sensory disabilities (10)
- ☐ Individuals who receive SSDI or SSI (11)
- ☐ Individuals who are over the age of 55 (12)
- ☐ Children with disabilities under the age of 10 (13)

APPENDIX - B

SURVEY - STAKEHOLDER

- ☐ Veterans (14)
- ☐ All the above (15)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (16) _____

Q7 IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, GENERALLY, WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT ENCOUNTERED BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FROM RACIAL/ETHNIC MINORITY POPULATIONS? (PLEASE SELECT ONLY THREE BOXES)

- ☐ Access to dependable transportation (1)
- ☐ Lack of awareness about Vocational Rehabilitation Services (2)
- ☐ Low expectations among professionals (3)
- ☐ Misconceptions about disabilities held by professionals (4)
- ☐ Employer's concerns about risks associated with hiring individuals with disabilities (e.g. worker's comp) (5)
- ☐ Employer's concerns about providing accommodations for individuals with disabilities (6)
- ☐ Lack of family/community support (7)
- ☐ Disability related factors (severity, instability, etc.) (8)
- ☐ Fear of losing benefits (SSI/SSDI) (9)
- ☐ Criminal background (10)
- ☐ Lack of skills or education needed for job goal (11)
- ☐ Limited work experience (12)
- ☐ Slow job market (13)
- ☐ Lack of long-term services and ongoing job coaching (14)
- ☐ Language and/or cultural barriers (15)
- ☐ Difficulty accessing jobs (identifying openings, application process, interviewing, etc.) (16)
- ☐ Lack of well-trained quality job developers (17)
- ☐ Lack of interpersonal or soft skills (18)
- ☐ Lack of awareness of or access to job supports, assistive technology or accommodations (19)
- ☐ Lack of affordable housing (20)
- ☐ Lack of physical accessibility (21)
- ☐ Lack of personal care attendant (22)
- ☐ Other (please specify): (23) _____

Q8 IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, GENERALLY, WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT ENCOUNTERED BY YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE IN TRANSITION? (PLEASE SELECT ONLY 3 BOXES)

- ☐ Access to dependable transportation (1)
- ☐ Lack of awareness about Vocational Rehabilitation Services (2)
- ☐ Low expectations among professionals (3)
- ☐ Misconceptions about disabilities held by professionals (4)

APPENDIX - B

SURVEY - STAKEHOLDER

- ☐ Employer's concerns about risks associated with hiring individuals with disabilities (e.g. worker's comp) (5)
- ☐ Employer's concerns about providing accommodations for individuals with disabilities (6)
- ☐ Lack of family/community support (7)
- ☐ Disability related factors (severity, instability, etc.) (8)
- ☐ Fear of losing benefits (SSI/SSDI) (9)
- ☐ Criminal background (10)
- ☐ Lack of skills or education needed for job goal (11)
- ☐ Limited work experience (12)
- ☐ Slow job market (13)
- ☐ Lack of long-term services and ongoing job coaching (14)
- ☐ Language and/or cultural barriers (15)
- ☐ Difficulty accessing jobs (identifying openings, application process, interviewing, etc.) (16)
- ☐ Lack of well-trained quality job developers (17)
- ☐ Lack of interpersonal or soft skills (18)
- ☐ Lack of awareness of or access to job supports, assistive technology or accommodations (19)
- ☐ Lack of affordable housing (20)
- ☐ Lack of physical accessibility (21)
- ☐ Lack of personal care attendant (22)
- ☐ Other (please specify): (23) _____

DISPLAY THIS QUESTION:

IF WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOU? = PARENT OR FAMILY MEMBER OF AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY

Q9 IF YOU ARE A PARENT OR FAMILY MEMBER OF AN INDIVIDUAL WITH DISABILITIES, WHAT RESOURCES HAVE YOU USED TO LEARN ABOUT EMPLOYMENT SERVICES IN GEORGIA?

APPENDIX - B

SURVEY - STAKEHOLDER

Q10 IN YOUR OPINION, PLEASE IDENTIFY THE TOP THREE (3) SERVICES THAT ARE MOST NEEDED BY INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR OBTAINING MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT. (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY 3).

- ☐ Medical services (1)
- ☐ Post-secondary education (2)
- ☐ Psychological services (3)
- ☐ Assistive Technology/Adaptive Equipment for home/work (4)
- ☐ Vocational Guidance & Counseling to include career exploration (5)
- ☐ Job development/placement (6)
- ☐ Services related to blindness/low vision (7)
- ☐ Occupational Skills Training (8)
- ☐ On the Job Support (job coaching) (9)
- ☐ Supported Employment (extended follow-up) (10)
- ☐ Services related to Deafness/hearing loss (11)
- ☐ Job Preparation Services (work adjustment training) (12)
- ☐ Assessments to identify a job goal (13)
- ☐ Discovery/Customized Employment (14)
- ☐ Help with self employment start-up (15)
- ☐ Help with keeping a job/advancing in job (16)
- ☐ Help with obtaining job specific credentials/certifications (17)
- ☐ Funding for job specific tools/equipment/uniforms (18)
- ☐ Other, please describe (19) _____

Q11 HAVE YOU EVER CONTACTED THE GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY (GVRA) FOR ASSISTANCE AND/OR RECEIVED ASSISTANCE ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE ELSE OR FOR YOURSELF?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Prefer not to answer (3)
- ☐ Unsure (4)

Q12 PLEASE RATE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH GVRA, ON A SCALE FROM 1 (VERY DISSATISFIED) TO 4 (VERY SATISFIED) FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS.

Please refer to the next page.

APPENDIX - B

SURVEY - STAKEHOLDER

	VERY DISSATISFIED (1)	DISSATISFIED (2)	SATISFIED (3)	VERY SATISFIED (4)	NO EXPERIENCE (5)
Respect, sensitivity and politeness shown by GVRA towards consumers (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA's responsiveness to calls and emails to consumers (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA's eligibility process for consumers (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA's explanation of services /who would provide them (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA individualizing services (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consumers being able to provide input (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA listening to the consumer (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA staff attitudes (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA staff's level of knowledge (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of services provided by GVRA / contracted provider (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA 's retention of qualified staff (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GVRA relationship with community agencies (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consumer being able to receive all services needed (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall experience with GVRA (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX - B

SURVEY - STAKEHOLDER

DISPLAY THIS QUESTION:

IF HAVE YOU EVER CONTACTED THE GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY (GVRA) FOR ASSISTANCE AND/OR... = YES

Q13 WHAT, ACCORDING TO YOU, ARE SOME STRENGTHS OF THE GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY (GVRA)?

DISPLAY THIS QUESTION:

IF HAVE YOU EVER CONTACTED THE GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY (GVRA) FOR ASSISTANCE AND/OR... = YES

Q14 WHAT SUGGESTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR GVRA SO IT CAN PROVIDE BETTER SERVICES AND IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR ITS CLIENTS?

Q15 WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF SCHOOL YOU HAVE COMPLETED OR THE HIGHEST DEGREE YOU HAVE RECEIVED?

- ☐ Currently attending High School (1)
- ☐ Less than high school degree (2)
- ☐ High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED) (3)
- ☐ Some college but no degree (4)
- ☐ Diploma or Associate degree in college (5)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree (6)
- ☐ Master's degree (7)
- ☐ Doctoral degree (8)
- ☐ Professional degree (JD, MD) (9)
- ☐ Other, please describe: (10) _____

APPENDIX - B

SURVEY - STAKEHOLDER

Q16 WHAT COUNTY IN GEORGIA DO YOU CURRENTLY LIVE IN?

Q17 WHAT IS YOUR RACE/ETHNICITY? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ White (1)
- ☐ Black or African American (2)
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- ☐ Asian (4)
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino (6)
- ☐ Other (7)

Q18 WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ Prefer to not say (3)

Q19 WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT AGE RANGE?

- ☐ 14-24 (1)
- ☐ 25-35 (2)
- ☐ 36-50 (3)
- ☐ 51-64 (4)
- ☐ 65 and older (5)

DISPLAY THIS QUESTION:

IF WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOU? = PARENT OR FAMILY MEMBER OF AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY

OR WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOU? = CAREGIVER (UNPAID) FOR AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY

OR WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOU? = DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL/ PERSONAL ATTENDANT FOR AN INDIVIDUAL (S) WITH A DISABILITY

APPENDIX - B

SURVEY - STAKEHOLDER

Please answer the next 5 questions keeping in mind the individual with a disability you are caring for. If you are currently caring for multiple individuals, please choose all the responses that apply.

Q21 IF YOU WORK WITH OR CARE FOR INDIVIDUAL (S) WITH A DISABILITY, PLEASE IDENTIFY THE TOP THREE (3) IMPAIRMENTS THAT IMPACT THEM THE MOST. (PLEASE SELECT ONLY THREE).

- ☐ **Sensory-Communication Impairments** (i.e.vision, hearing, speech, etc.) (1)
- ☐ **Orthopedic-Physical Conditions** (i.e. spinal cord injury, amputation, arthritis, back/neck, chronic pain, etc.) (2)
- ☐ **Chronic Medical Conditions** (i.e. digestive, cancer, respiratory, diabetes, cardiac, auto-immune, etc.) (3)
- ☐ **Neurological Conditions** (i.e. TBI, Parkinson's, Seizures, MS, Stroke, etc.) (4)
- ☐ **Developmental** (i.e. Autism, Spina Bifida, Cerebral Palsy, Genetic Disorders, etc.) (5)
- ☐ **Cognitive** (i.e. Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, ADD/ADHD, etc.) (6)
- ☐ **Emotional-Mental Health** (i.e. Bipolar Disorder, Depression/Anxiety, Schizophrenia, PTSD, Substance Dependence, etc.) (7)
- ☐ **Other, please describe** (8) _____

Q22 WHAT COUNTY IN GEORGIA DOES THE PERSON YOU WORK WITH OR CARE FOR CURRENTLY LIVE IN?

Q23 WHAT IS THE RACE/ETHNICITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ White (1)
- ☐ Black or African American (2)
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- ☐ Asian (4)
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino (6)
- ☐ Other (7)

Q24 WHAT IS THE GENDER OF THE INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY?

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ Prefer to not say (3)

APPENDIX - B

SURVEY - STAKEHOLDER

Q25 WHAT IS THE CURRENT AGE RANGE OF THE INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY?

- ☐ 14-24 (1)
- ☐ 25-35 (2)
- ☐ 36-50 (3)
- ☐ 51-64 (4)
- ☐ 65 and older (5)

Q26 YOUR INPUT IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED. IS THERE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE TO HELP US UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN GEORGIA?

APPENDIX - C

SURVEY - PROVIDER

The Research and Evaluation Unit (REU) at the Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD), located at the University of Georgia, is conducting a needs assessment in partnership with the **Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA)**, and their SRC is seeking your input regarding the employment needs of individuals with disabilities in Georgia.

The information you provide will inform GVRA's portion of Georgia's Unified State Plan, as well as influence decision making and delivery of vocational services to individuals with disabilities.

This survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, and your participation is completely voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, and you are free to answer only the questions you are comfortable with answering. Your responses will be kept confidential, and you will not be asked to provide your name or the name of your organization.

In advance, thank for your time and participation!

Should you need accommodations or would like this survey in an alternate format, please send an email to (Project Manager Information).

Note: For the purpose of this survey, an "individual with a disability" is a person who has a physical, mental, sensory or cognitive impairment that impacts their ability to prepare for, obtain or maintain gainful employment.

SURVEY

Q2 FROM THE LIST BELOW, PLEASE CHOOSE THE TITLE (S) THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CURRENT ROLE WITH THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDER ORGANIZATION. (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ Employment Services Provider staff (1)
- ☐ Employment Services Provider director (2)
- ☐ Employment Service Provider President/CEO (3)
- ☐ Employment Service Provider Owner (4)
- ☐ Employment Service Provider manager/coordinator (5)
- ☐ Employment Specialist (6)
- ☐ Job Coach (7)
- ☐ Assessment Specialist/Evaluator (8)
- ☐ Other, please describe: (9) _____

APPENDIX - C

SURVEY - PROVIDER

Q3 WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ Prefer to not say (3)

Q4 WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT AGE RANGE?

- ☐ 14-24 (1)
- ☐ 25-35 (2)
- ☐ 36-50 (3)
- ☐ 51-64 (4)
- ☐ 65 and older (5)

Q5 WHAT IS YOUR RACE/ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

- ☐ White (1)
- ☐ Black or African American (2)
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- ☐ Asian (4)
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino (6)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (7) _____

Q6 ON AVERAGE, APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY CONSUMERS WITH DISABILITIES RECEIVE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FROM YOUR ORGANIZATION IN A GIVEN YEAR (FROM ANY SOURCE)?

- ☐ Fewer than 50 (1)
- ☐ 50 to 100 (2)
- ☐ 100 to 200 (3)
- ☐ 200 to 300 (4)
- ☐ 300 to 400 (5)
- ☐ 400 to 500 (6)
- ☐ 500 or more a year (7)

Q7 HOW LONG HAS YOUR AGENCY BEEN PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES?

- ☐ 0-2 years (1)
- ☐ 2-5 years (2)
- ☐ 5-10 years (3)
- ☐ 10-15 years (4)
- ☐ 15 years or more (5)

APPENDIX - C

SURVEY - PROVIDER

Q8 FROM THE LIST BELOW, PLEASE IDENTIFY THE TOP 3 IMPAIRMENT CATEGORIES YOUR ORGANIZATION TENDS TO SERVE THE MOST (PLEASE SELECT ONLY THREE).

- ☐ **Sensory-Communication Impairments** (i.e. vision, hearing, speech, etc.) (1)
- ☐ **Orthopedic-Physical Conditions** (i.e. spinal cord injury, amputation, arthritis, back/neck, chronic pain, etc.) (2)
- ☐ **Chronic Medical Conditions** (i.e. digestive, cancer, respiratory, diabetes, cardiac, auto-immune, etc.) (3)
- ☐ **Neurological Conditions** (i.e. TBI, Parkinson's, Seizures, MS, Stroke, etc.) (4)
- ☐ **Developmental** (i.e. Autism, Spina Bifida, Cerebral Palsy, Genetic Disorders, etc.) (5)
- ☐ **Cognitive** (i.e. Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability, ADD/ADHD, etc.) (6)
- ☐ **Emotional-Mental Health** (i.e. Bipolar Disorder, Depression/Anxiety, Schizophrenia, PTSD, Substance Dependence, etc.) (7)
- ☐ **Other, please describe** (8) _____

Q9 IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING POPULATIONS ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE UNSERVED OR UNDER-SERVED AND ENCOUNTER BARRIERS TO ACCESSING EMPLOYMENT SERVICES? (PLEASE MARK ALL THAT APPLY).

- ☐ Individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (1)
- ☐ Transition age youth with disabilities (ages 16 to 22 years) (2)
- ☐ Individuals with significant or complex disabilities (3)
- ☐ Individuals from racial and ethnic minority populations (4)
- ☐ Individuals with disabilities who are homeless (5)
- ☐ Individuals with mental illness (6)
- ☐ Individuals with substance abuse disorder (7)
- ☐ Individuals with disabilities with criminal history (8)
- ☐ Individuals living in rural areas (9)
- ☐ Individuals with sensory disabilities (10)
- ☐ Individuals who receive SSDI or SSI (11)
- ☐ Individuals who are over the age of 55 (12)
- ☐ All the above (13)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (14) _____

Q10 IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, GENERALLY, WHAT ARE THE THREE (3) MOST IMPORTANT BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT ENCOUNTERED BY INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY THREE)

- ☐ Access to dependable transportation (1)
- ☐ Lack of awareness about Vocational Rehabilitation Services (2)

APPENDIX - C

SURVEY - PROVIDER

- ☐ Low expectations held among professionals (3)
- ☐ Misconceptions about disabilities held by professionals (4)
- ☐ Employer's perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities (5)
- ☐ Lack of family/community support (6)
- ☐ Disability related factors (severity, instability, etc.) (7)
- ☐ Fear of losing benefits (SSI/SSDI) (8)
- ☐ Criminal background (9)
- ☐ Lack of job preparation, skills, education needed for job (10)
- ☐ Limited work experience (11)
- ☐ Slow job market (12)
- ☐ Lack of long-term services and ongoing follow-up (13)
- ☐ Language an/or cultural barriers (14)
- ☐ Difficulty accessing jobs (identifying openings, application process, interviewing, etc.) (15)
- ☐ Lack of well-trained quality job developers (16)
- ☐ Lack of awareness of or access to job supports, assistive technology or accommodations (17)
- ☐ Lack of independent living skills and/or supports (i.e. personal attendant) (18)
- ☐ Other, please specify: (19) _____

Q11 IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE THREE (3) MOST IMPORTANT SERVICES NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES RELATED TO COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY THREE)

- ☐ Career Exploration/Job Shadowing (1)
- ☐ Benefits Counseling (2)
- ☐ Job Skills Training (3)
- ☐ Soft Skills training (4)
- ☐ Assistance with preparing resume or for interview (5)
- ☐ Job Development / Job placement (6)
- ☐ Job Coaching and/or Supported Employment Services (7)
- ☐ Educational and training assistance (8)
- ☐ Transportation Assistance (9)
- ☐ Assessment Services (10)
- ☐ Assistive Technology/Rehabilitation Engineering (11)
- ☐ Medical, Psychological Services (12)
- ☐ Person Centered Planning/Discovery (13)
- ☐ Customized Employment (14)
- ☐ Internships (15)
- ☐ Other (please specify): (16) _____

APPENDIX - C

SURVEY - PROVIDER

Q12 WHAT CAN THE GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY OR THEIR CONTRACTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDER DO TO IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES?

Q13 IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, GENERALLY, WHAT ARE THE THREE (3) MOST IMPORTANT BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT ENCOUNTERED BY INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FROM RACIAL / ETHNIC MINORITY POPULATIONS? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY THREE)

- ☐ Access to dependable transportation (1)
- ☐ Lack of awareness about Vocational Rehabilitation Services (2)
- ☐ Low expectations held among professionals (3)
- ☐ Misconceptions about disabilities held by professionals (4)
- ☐ Employer's perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities (5)
- ☐ Lack of family/community support (6)
- ☐ Disability related factors (severity, instability, etc.) (7)
- ☐ Fear of losing benefits (SSI/SSDI) (8)
- ☐ Criminal background (9)
- ☐ Lack of job preparation, skills, education needed for job (10)
- ☐ Limited work experience (11)
- ☐ Slow job market (12)
- ☐ Lack of long-term services and ongoing follow-up (13)
- ☐ Language an/or cultural barriers (14)
- ☐ Difficulty accessing jobs (identifying openings, application process, interviewing, etc.) (15)
- ☐ Lack of well-trained quality job developers (16)
- ☐ Lack of awareness of or access to job supports, assistive technology or accommodations (17)
- ☐ Lack of independent living skills and/or supports (i.e. personal attendant) (18)
- ☐ Other, please specify: (19) _____

APPENDIX - C

SURVEY - PROVIDER

Q14 IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE THREE (3) MOST IMPORTANT SERVICES NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FROM RACIAL / ETHNIC MINORITY POPULATIONS RELATED TO COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY THREE)

- ☐ Career Exploration/Job Shadowing (1)
- ☐ Benefits Counseling (2)
- ☐ Job Skills Training (3)
- ☐ Soft Skills training (4)
- ☐ Assistance with preparing resume or for interview (5)
- ☐ Job Development / Job placement (6)
- ☐ Job Coaching and/or Supported Employment Services (7)
- ☐ Educational and training assistance (8)
- ☐ Transportation Assistance (9)
- ☐ Assessment Services (10)
- ☐ Assistive Technology/Rehabilitation Engineering (11)
- ☐ Medical and/or Psychological Treatment or Services (12)
- ☐ Person Centered Planning/Discovery (13)
- ☐ Customized Employment (14)
- ☐ Internships (15)
- ☐ Other (please specify): (16) _____

Q15 WHAT CAN THE GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY OR THEIR CONTRACTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDER DO TO IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FROM RACIAL / ETHNIC MINORITY POPULATIONS?

Q16 IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, GENERALLY, WHAT ARE THE THREE (3) MOST IMPORTANT BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT ENCOUNTERED BY YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE IN TRANSITION? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY THREE)

- ☐ Access to dependable transportation (1)
- ☐ Lack of awareness about Vocational Rehabilitation Services (2)
- ☐ Low expectations held among professionals (3)
- ☐ Misconceptions about disabilities held by professionals (4)
- ☐ Employer's perceptions about employing individuals with disabilities (5)
- ☐ Lack of family/community support (6)

APPENDIX - C

SURVEY - PROVIDER

- ☐ Disability related factors (severity, instability, etc.) (7)
- ☐ Fear of losing benefits (SSI/SSDI) (8)
- ☐ Criminal background (9)
- ☐ Lack of job preparation, skills, education needed for job (10)
- ☐ Limited work experience (11)
- ☐ Slow job market (12)
- ☐ Lack of long-term services and ongoing follow-up (13)
- ☐ Language an/or cultural barriers (14)
- ☐ Difficulty accessing jobs (identifying openings, application process, interviewing, etc.) (15)
- ☐ Lack of well-trained quality job developers (16)
- ☐ Lack of awareness of or access to job supports, assistive technology or accommodations (17)
- ☐ Lack of independent living skills and/or supports (i.e. personal attendant) (18)
- ☐ Other, please specify: (19) _____

Q17 IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE THREE (3) MOST IMPORTANT SERVICES NEEDS OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE IN TRANSITION RELATED TO COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT? (PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY THREE)

- ☐ Career Exploration/Job Shadowing (1)
- ☐ Benefits Counseling (2)
- ☐ Job Skills Training (3)
- ☐ Soft Skills training (4)
- ☐ Assistance with preparing resume or for interview (5)
- ☐ Job Development / Job placement (6)
- ☐ Job Coaching and/or Supported Employment Services (7)
- ☐ Educational and training assistance (8)
- ☐ Transportation Assistance (9)
- ☐ Assessment Services (10)
- ☐ Assistive Technology/Rehabilitation Engineering (11)
- ☐ Medical and/or Psychological Treatment or Services (12)
- ☐ Person Centered Planning/Discovery (13)
- ☐ Customized Employment (14)
- ☐ Internships (15)
- ☐ Other (please specify): (16) _____

APPENDIX - C

SURVEY - PROVIDER

Q18 WHAT CAN THE GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY OR THEIR CONTRACTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDER DO TO IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE IN TRANSITION?

Q19 CONSIDERING EXISTING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS' (CRPS) CAPACITY TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO GEORGIANS WITH DISABILITIES, PLEASE CHECK THE EXTENT WHICH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

	STRONGLY DISAGREE (1)	DISAGREE (2)	AGREE (3)	STRONGLY AGREE (4)	NOT SURE (5)
There is a need to establish new CRPs (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a need to expand current CRPs (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a need to improve established CRPs (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a need to develop newly established CRPs (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX - C

SURVEY - PROVIDER

Q21 IF THERE IS ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE RELATED TO COMPETITIVE, INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN GEORGIA, PLEASE USE THE SPACE BELOW.

Q20 IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT IS THE ESTIMATED FREQUENCY YOUR ORGANIZATION PROVIDES SERVICES TO THE FOLLOWING POPULATIONS WITHIN A GIVEN YEAR?

	NEVER (1)	OCCASIONALLY (2)	FREQUENTLY (3)	CONSTANTLY (4)
Youth who are in the foster system (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Veterans (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals who are homeless (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals who use augmented devices for speech (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals, including youth, with history of incarceration (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals who are over the age of 65 (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX - D

SURVEY - EMPLOYER

The Research and Evaluation Unit (REU) at the Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD), located at the University of Georgia, is conducting a needs assessment to learn more about the needs of businesses and employers with respect to partnering with the **Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA)**, and employing and accommodating workers with individuals with disabilities.

The information you provide will assist GVRA in providing effective services to the business community, as well as influence decision making and delivery of vocational services to individuals with disabilities.

This survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, and your participation is completely voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers, and you are free to answer only the questions you are comfortable with answering. Your responses will be kept confidential, and you will not be asked to provide your name or the name of your organization.

In advance, thank for your time and participation!

Should you need accommodations or would like this survey in an alternate format, please send an email to (Project Manager Information).

Note: For the purpose of this survey, an “individual with a disability” is a person who has a physical, mental, sensory or cognitive impairment that impacts their ability to prepare for, obtain or maintain gainful employment.

SURVEY

Q2 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING INDUSTRIES BEST DESCRIBES YOUR TYPE OF BUSINESS?

PLEASE SELECT ONLY ONE.

- ☐ Hospitality/Food Service (1)
- ☐ Wholesale/Retail Trade (2)
- ☐ Manufacturing/Production (3)
- ☐ Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing (4)
- ☐ Construction (5)
- ☐ Transportation/Warehouse/Utilities (6)
- ☐ Communication/Media/Publishing (7)
- ☐ Government/Public Administration (including protective services) (8)
- ☐ Education/Training (9)
- ☐ Healthcare/Social Service (10)
- ☐ Finance/Insurance/Real Estate (11)
- ☐ Professional/Business Services (12)
- ☐ Other, please describe (13) _____

APPENDIX - D

SURVEY - EMPLOYER

Q3 WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CURRENT JOB TITLE?

- ☐ CEO (1)
- ☐ Owner (2)
- ☐ Manager (3)
- ☐ Assistant Manager (4)
- ☐ Human Resource Professional (5)
- ☐ Other, please describe: (6) _____

Q4 ARE YOU (AND BUSINESS) CONSIDERED A FEDERAL CONTRACTOR OR SUBCONTRACTOR?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Unsure (3)

Q5 HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED AT YOUR BUSINESS? IF MULTIPLE LOCATIONS, CHOOSE TOTAL NUMBER.

- ☐ Less than 20 (1)
- ☐ 21 to 50 (2)
- ☐ 51 to 250 (3)
- ☐ 251 to 999 (4)
- ☐ 1,000 or more (5)

Q6 HOW MANY YEARS HAS YOUR BUSINESS BEEN IN OPERATION?

- ☐ Less than 5 years (1)
- ☐ 5 to 15 years (2)
- ☐ 15 to 30 years (3)
- ☐ 30 to 50 years (4)
- ☐ 50 years or more (5)

Q7 WHAT IS YOUR RACE/ETHNIC BACKGROUND? (PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ White (1)
- ☐ Black or African American (2)
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- ☐ Asian (4)
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino (6)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (7) _____

APPENDIX - D

SURVEY - EMPLOYER

Q8 WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ Prefer to not say (3)

Q9 WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT AGE RANGE?

- ☐ 14-24 (1)
- ☐ 25-35 (2)
- ☐ 36-50 (3)
- ☐ 51-64 (4)
- ☐ 65 and older (5)

Q10 ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY (GVRA)?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Unsure (3)

Q11 ARE YOU AWARE OF THE SERVICES OFFERED TO BUSINESSES BY GVRA OR THROUGH ONE OF THEIR VENDORS?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Unsure (3)

APPENDIX - D

SURVEY - EMPLOYER

Q12 IN YOUR OPINION, TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD THE FOLLOWING FACTORS KEEP A BUSINESS FROM HIRING, RETAINING OR PROMOTING A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY?

	TO A VERY SMALL EXTENT (1)	TO A SMALL EXTENT (2)	TO A LARGE EXTENT (3)	TO A VERY LARGE EXTENT (4)	NOT APPLICABLE /UNSURE (5)
Size of the business (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bad economy (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Budget restrictions/hiring freeze (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cost of accommodation (s) (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Need for additional supervision/staff time (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Concerns about liability/workers compensation (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not knowing how to provide disability-related accommodations (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety concerns (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Characteristics of worker (dependability, productivity, performance, etc.) (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Constraints related to job characteristics (complexity, physical demand, skill level) (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not understanding the disability (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Person's ability to get along with others (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Person not having the skills or credentials for the job (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

APPENDIX - D

SURVEY - EMPLOYER

Q13 HOW HELPFUL WOULD EACH OF THE FOLLOWING GVRA SERVICES BE IN HELPING YOUR BUSINESS EMPLOY WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES?

	NOT AT ALL HELPFUL (1)	SOMEWHAT HELPFUL (2)	HELPFUL (3)	VERY HELPFUL (4)	NOT APPLICABLE /UNSURE (5)
Recruiting qualified job applicants that meet your business needs (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training staff how to successfully work with / support co-workers who have disabilities (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Consulting with my business to recommend accessibility improvements (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying job accommodations for employees with disabilities (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training staff how to implement workplace accommodations/ assistive technology (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing on the job supports to workers with disabilities (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide workers with disabilities the tools/ education needed to do the job (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide information on tax incentives available for employing workers with disabilities (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assistance with creating internships for youth with disabilities (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assistance with creating apprenticeship opportunities (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

TABLE CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

APPENDIX - D

SURVEY - EMPLOYER

TABLE CONTINUED...

	NOT AT ALL HELPFUL (1)	SOMEWHAT HELPFUL (2)	HELPFUL (3)	VERY HELPFUL (4)	NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE (5)
Assistance with developing a workplace mentoring program (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training on specific types of disabilities (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information about federal laws related to employing people with disabilities (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assistance with developing return-to-work policies for employees who are injured / acquires a disability. (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help creating customized job opportunities (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14 HAVE YOU KNOWINGLY HIRED INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE PAST?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Unsure (3)

Q15 WITH RESPECT TO EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES YOU HAVE NOW OR HAVE HAD IN THE PAST, WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE (3) CHALLENGES YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED WITH THEM REGARDING JOB RETENTION? PLEASE CHOOSE ONLY THREE.

- ☐ Lack of dependable transportation (1)
- ☐ Disability related factors (medical, mental health, etc.) (2)
- ☐ Lack of job preparation, skills, education needed for job (3)
- ☐ Language and/or cultural barriers (4)
- ☐ Frequent absences/tardiness (5)
- ☐ Poor job performance (speed, production, quality) (6)
- ☐ Difficulty learning the job or new responsibilities (7)
- ☐ Difficulty getting along with others/working on a team (8)
- ☐ Other, please specify: (9) _____

APPENDIX - D

SURVEY - EMPLOYER

Q16 PLEASE DESCRIBE BELOW THE TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS YOUR BUSINESS HAS PROVIDED TO EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES.

Q17 HAVE YOU OR YOUR BUSINESS RECEIVED SERVICES FROM THE GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY OR ONE OF THEIR CONTRACTED VENDORS IN THE PAST?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Unsure (3)

Q18 IF YES, DID THOSE SERVICES HELP YOU WITH RECRUITING /RETAINING EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Not applicable/unsure (3)

Q19 HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU WITH THE SERVICES THAT WERE PROVIDED?

- ☐ Very satisfied (1)
- ☐ Satisfied (2)
- ☐ Dissatisfied (3)
- ☐ Very dissatisfied (4)
- ☐ Not applicable/unsure (5)

Q20 WHAT MORE CAN GVRA DO TO BEST MEET THE NEEDS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY?

Q21 IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK REGARDING WAYS GVRA CAN PARTNER WITH BUSINESSES TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, PLEASE DO SO BELOW.

APPENDIX - E

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Please describe your affiliation with individuals with disabilities – person with disability, family member, friend, advocate, professional. Please share more about your current role and past background as it relates to individuals with disabilities in Georgia. (Please share more about the person with disabilities - gender, age, abilities or limitations).

EMPLOYMENT GOALS

- What barriers do people with disabilities in Georgia face in getting or keeping a job?
(Probes: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options)
- What services are needed to help a person with a disability ‘get’ a job and ‘keep’ a job?

GVRA SERVICE ACCESS

- What are the barriers that you (or your loved one, client, friend, etc.) have faced (or people with disabilities face) when trying to ‘initiate’ or ‘maintain’ services with GVRA?

UNSERVED/UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

- Who are unserved or underserved populations with disabilities in your area? That is, what groups or areas are not receiving GVRA services? (Probes- individuals from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds, individuals with significant disabilities, individuals living in rural areas)
- Why are these populations not receiving services from GVRA?
- What can GVRA do to outreach to these populations and improve the provision of services to these populations?

MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

Now we are going to move into a discussion of people with the “most significant disabilities.”

- » *The individual has a physical or mental impairment that seriously limits three or more functional capacities in the following areas: mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills in terms of an employment outcome;*
- » *And Vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple core vocational rehabilitation services for an extended period of time.*
- What are the rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities?
- Does GVRA offer enough opportunities for individuals with the “most significant” disabilities to gain competitive employment in an integrated setting with co-workers who are not disabled?
- How could GVRA improve the services offered to individuals with the “most significant” disabilities?

APPENDIX - E

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Moving on to our next topic, we would like to talk about the need for Supported Employment services. *The individual has not worked, or has worked only intermittently, in competitive employment;*

- » *The individual has been determined eligible for VR services based on a comprehensive assessment, including consideration of Supported Employment as an employment outcome*
- » *The individual needs extended services in order to maintain employment following successful VR closure. (Extended services means ongoing support services provided by another agency or provider that are needed to support the consumer in maintaining their job after the VR case is closed); and*
- » *The individual has the potential to maintain competitive employment with the necessary supports in place. For GVRA consumers who need Extended Supports, often referred to as Long-term Supports, to maintain competitive employment in an integrated setting:*

- Please describe how effective the SE program is in Georgia. What populations are receiving SE services? What SE needs are not being met?
- What can VR do to improve these services in your area?

TRANSITION (14 – 22 YEARS)

- What services for students with disabilities are most likely to lead to improved employment outcomes?
- How well are these needs being met by GVRA? Schools? Service providers?
- What can GVRA do to improve Pre-ETS and transition services in Georgia?
- Are you familiar with Pre-ETS? How would you describe the quality of Pre-ETS (Pre Employment Transition Services) provided by GVRA and schools in Georgia?

CRPS (NEED FOR ESTABLISHMENT, DEVELOPMENT OR IMPROVEMENT OF CRPS)

- In your opinion, how effective is the system of service providers in Georgia in meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities?
- In your opinion, is there a need for an improvement in services provided by existing Community Rehabilitation Providers? If yes, what suggestions do you have for GVRA to facilitate needed improvement(s)?
- What community-based rehabilitation service are most helpful? What makes them so?

GVRA OVERALL SERVICES AND OUTCOMES

- What are some things that GVRA is currently has/is doing that is working well in meeting the employment needs of individuals with disabilities in Georgia?
- What can GVRA do to improve their ability to provide vocational rehabilitation services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities in the State?

APPENDIX - F

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

EMPLOYMENT GOALS

- What are some key barriers that people with disabilities in Georgia face when it comes to getting or keeping a job? (*Probes: lack of job skills, soft skills, adequate work experience, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes of employers, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options*)
- According to you, what services are needed to help a person with a disability get and keep a job? (*Probes: job skills training, educational or vocational training, assistance with job search/job placement, vocational assessment, job development, job placement, employer relationships, Job exploration counseling, work-based learning, counseling on post- secondary education options, work readiness, instruction in self-advocacy*)

UNSERVED/UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

- Who are unserved or underserved populations of people with disabilities in your area? (what groups or areas are not receiving GVRA services? (*Probes- individuals from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds, individuals with significant disabilities, rural areas, transition age youth*))
- Why are these populations unserved/underserved? What are the barriers that these populations face when accessing and maintaining services with GVRA? (*Probes: transportation, language and culture, lack of knowledge of VR, lack of family support related to employment*)
- What can GVRA do to outreach to these populations and improve the provision of services to unserved and underserved populations of people with disabilities?

MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

DEFINITION - most significant disability - The individual has a physical or mental impairment that seriously limits three or more functional capacities in the following areas: mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills in terms of an employment outcome; and Vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple core vocational rehabilitation services for an extended period of time.

- What are the rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities? (*Probes: employment, housing, transportation, direct support provision*)
- How successful has GVRA been in offering adequate opportunities for individuals with the “most significant” disabilities to gain competitive employment in an integrated setting with co-workers who are not disabled?
- How could GVRA do a better job of providing services to individuals with the “most significant” disabilities?

GVRA SERVICES

- What are some barriers that you (or your loved one, client, friend, etc.) faced when trying to access and maintain services with GVRA?

APPENDIX - F

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

- What can GVRA do to improve their ability to provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities in the State?

CRPS

- In your opinion, how effective is the system of service providers in Georgia in meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities?
- What community-based rehabilitation services are most successful? How are they most successful or what makes them so?
- What suggestions do you have for GVRA to facilitate improvement(s) related to community-based rehabilitation services?

TRANSITION

- What are some barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition? (*Probes: no job skills, no education or training, poor social skills, work based experiences*)
- What are some services that are most likely to lead to improved employment outcomes for students with disabilities? (*Probes: job skills training, educational or vocational training, assistance with job search/ job placement, vocational assessment, job development, job placement, employer relationships, Job exploration counseling, work-based learning, counseling on post- secondary education options, work readiness, instruction in self-advocacy*)

PRE-ETS

- Are you familiar with Pre-ETS? (*15% funds Students with disabilities 16 to 21(22 in Georgia) who are enrolled in an education program, and are eligible for and receiving special education services or is an individual with disability under Section 504. 5 components - Job exploration counseling, work-based learning, counseling on post- secondary education options, work readiness, instruction in self-advocacy*)
- How would you describe the quality of Pre-ETS (Pre Employment Transition Services) provided by GVRA, GA schools and providers? What can GVRA do to improve Pre-ETS and transition services in Georgia?

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

- Please describe how effective the SE program is in Georgia. What populations are receiving SE services? What SE needs are not being met?
- What can VR do to improve these services in your area?

GVRA OVERALL SERVICES AND OUTCOMES

- What are some things that GVRA is currently has/is doing that is working well in meeting the employment needs of individuals with disabilities in Georgia?

APPENDIX - G

ENVIROMENTAL SCAN

GEORGIA LONG TERM LABOR MARKET PROJECTS

INDUSTRIES WITH THE MOST GROWTH 2016-2026

INDUSTRY TITLE	2016 BASE YEAR EMPLOYMENT	2026 PROJ. YEAR EMPLOYMENT	TOTAL CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT	PERCENT CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT	PROJ. ANNUAL GROWTH RATE
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS	264,990	299,500	34,510	13.0%	1.2%
EMPLOYMENT SERVICES	142,010	167,880	25,870	18.2%	1.7%
RESTAURANTS AND OTHER EATING PLACES	345,650	367,750	22,100	6.4%	0.6%
OTHER GENERAL MERCHANDISE STORES	71,290	92,980	21,690	30.4%	2.7%
GENERAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL HOSPITALS	155,180	174,780	19,600	12.6%	1.2%
OFFICES OF PHYSICIANS	85,830	105,060	19,230	22.4%	2.0%
LOCAL GOVERNMENT, EXCLUDING EDUCATION AND HOSPITALS	142,880	155,040	12,160	8.5%	0.8%
MANAGEMENT OF COMPANIES AND ENTERPRISES	66,030	78,050	12,020	18.2%	1.7%
INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY SERVICES	24,550	34,620	10,070	41.1%	3.5%
CONTINUING CARE RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES AND ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES FOR THE ELDERLY	17,490	25,440	7,950	45.5%	3.8%
COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES, AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS	76,360	84,100	7,740	10.1%	1.0%
AUTOMOBILE DEALERS	40,130	47,720	7,590	18.9%	1.7%
CROP PRODUCTION	73,370	80,880	7,510	10.2%	1.0%
AGENCIES, BROKERAGES, AND OTHER INSURANCE RELATED ACTIVITIES	38,680	46,150	7,470	19.3%	1.8%

TABLE CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

APPENDIX - G

ENVIROMENTAL SCAN

TABLE CONTINUED...

INDUSTRY TITLE	2016 BASE YEAR EMPLOYMENT	2026 PROJ. YEAR EMPLOYMENT	TOTAL CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT	PERCENT CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT	PROJ. ANNUAL GROWTH RATE
MANAGEMENT, SCIENTIFIC, AND TECHNICAL CONSULTING SERVICES	36,640	44,010	7,370	20.1%	1.8%
OUTPATIENT CARE CENTERS	13,860	21,100	7,240	52.2%	4.3%
ARCHITECTURAL, ENGINEERING, AND RELATED SERVICES	39,740	46,820	7,080	17.8%	1.7%
OFFICES OF OTHER HEALTH PRACTITIONERS	22,220	29,240	7,020	31.6%	2.8%
ACCOUNTING, TAX PREPARATION, BOOKKEEPING, AND PAYROLL SERVICES	33,380	40,010	6,630	19.9%	1.8%
ANIMAL SLAUGHTERING AND PROCESSING	36,190	42,790	6,600	18.2%	1.7%

APPENDIX - H

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