

# State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee

## **2011 Annual Report**



*"Magical Night Wintery Scene of Frozen Lake"*

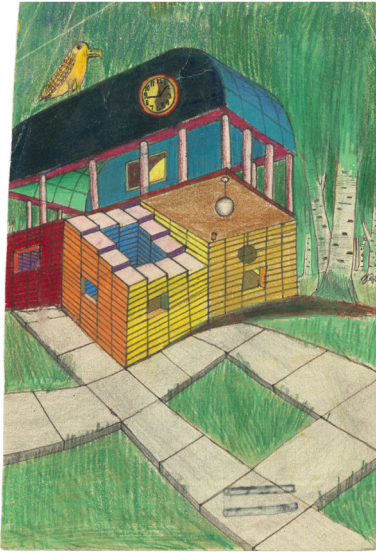
Artist: Michael Powell

*Palmer, Alaska*





**Cover Artist: Michael Powell**  
*Palmer, Alaska*



# Committee Members

**Jim Burton**

*Fairbanks*  
Former DVR Recipient

**John Cannon**

*Wasilla*  
Alaska Workforce  
Investment Board

**Don Ford**

*Dillingham*  
Advocate

**Irma Goodwine**

*Bethel*  
State Independent  
Living Council

**Karla Jutzi**

*Anchorage*  
Community  
Rehabilitation Program

**Don Levine**

*Juneau*  
Dept. of Education &  
Early Development

**Miok Wolbers**

*Anchorage*  
Rehabilitation  
Counselor

**Shaunta Brown**

*Anchorage*  
Parent Training &  
Information Center

**Teresa Sarabia**

*Juneau*  
Tribal Vocational  
Rehabilitation

**David Schneider**

*Wasilla*  
Business

**Dave Berube**

*Anchorage*  
Client Assistance  
Program

**Cheryl Walsh**

*Juneau*  
Division of Vocational  
Rehabilitation Director

**Pat Wendt**

*Wasilla*  
Business

The Alaska State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee (SVRC) is composed of volunteers from around the state who demonstrate a commitment to assist Alaskans with disabilities to achieve their goal for employment.

Appointed by the Governor, the SVRC serves both as an advisor and partner to the Division Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). Its members help to shape policy through participation in strategic planning, needs assessment, consumer satisfaction surveys and ongoing program evaluation.

The SVRC reports annually to the Governor and to the Rehabilitation Services Administration on the status of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program.

The committee includes people with disabilities, community rehabilitation program employees, representatives from independent living, special education and Tribal VR programs, advocates, VR participants and business leaders.

# Strategic Plan

## DVR MISSION

To assist individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.

DVR is committed to continuously improving the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to those Alaskans who are in need of and who are receiving vocational rehabilitation services.

DVR utilizes the strategic plan to put into action this concept of continuous improvement. The strategic planning team is composed of the DVR management team and members of the SVRC including the chair, the representative from the Client Assistance Program, the Tribal VR programs and the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC).

DVR along with the leadership of the SVRC has implemented an on-going three-year strategic planning process. The four goals identified below were identified during the 2010 – 2012 planning cycle and provide the organizational foundation for the work of DVR and for the SVRC as well.

### *Goal 1: High Quality Services*

DVR will deliver high quality vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities to assist them to obtain employment consistent with their career goals. This goal reflects DVR's continued focus on improving the VR service delivery system with the objectives and strategies identified by the CSNA.

### *Goal 2: Highly Skilled Staff*

DVR will recruit, employ, retain and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff. This goal reflects the value DVR places on well trained staff and the serious need for succession planning with the anticipated loss of key staff in the near future.

### *Goal 3: Improve Organizational Systems*

DVR will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational systems. This goal reflects DVR's commitment to organizational effectiveness through the continual analysis and improvement of agency systems and resources including both the delivery of VR service and administrative functions.

### *Goal 4: Distinguish Role in Workforce System*

DVR will distinguish its role in the workforce system and leverage partnerships to maximize resources and support for employment of individuals with disabilities. This goal is intended to strengthen our connection to other programs that serve individuals with disabilities and to develop relationships with employers.



“They have been friendly, they are helpful, they can joke around, but boy can they be dead serious, and they have provided immeasurable guidance for me.”

- DVR Participant



In FY 2011, the SVRC and DVR continued to focus on improving transition services for youth with disabilities. Efforts included DVR hiring a transition coordinator and the SVRC holding community forums on transition in conjunction with the SVRC’s quarterly meetings. The information gathered from the forums was analyzed and included in DVR’s long-range transition plan.

One of DVR’s transition programs fully supported by the SVRC is Project Search. The Project Search High School Transition Program is a unique, business-led, one year school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and on-the-job training and support through internships or work site rotations. The goal for each student participant is competitive employment.

Twenty-seven students from Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Valley and Fairbanks participated in Project Search in 2011. Seven students from the Mat-Su School District were in internships with the Mat-Su Region Medical Center; fourteen students from the Anchorage school district were at Providence Hospital and six students from the Fairbanks North Star Borough were located at the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital.



*Students from Project Search participating in internships at local hospitals.*

The individuals who represent DVR's caseload are of all ages and from all walks of life. Although each person has his or her own unique story, looking at aggregate numbers provides an understanding of the overall scope of the VR program in Alaska.

## **VR Outcomes for FY2011**

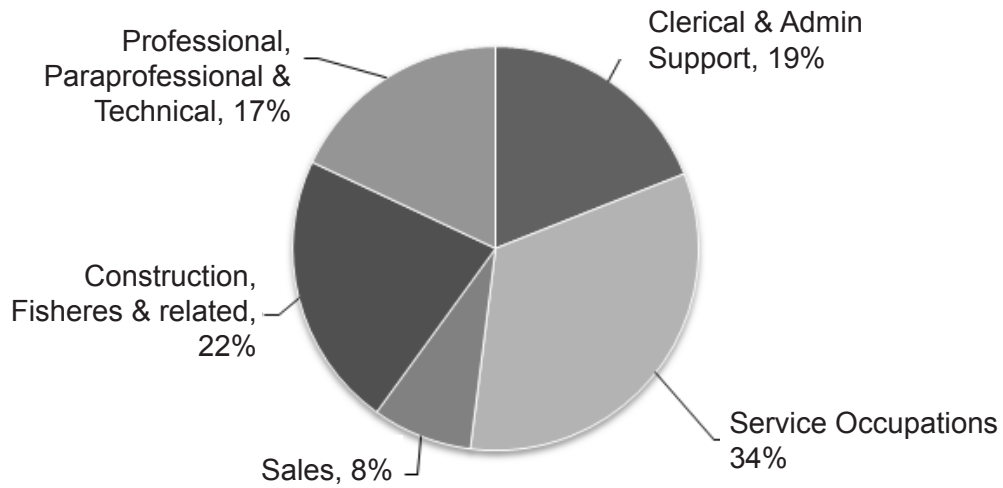
- 4,239 individuals participated in the VR program
- 400 different Alaskan employers hired DVR participants
- 634 individuals exited the DVR program employed which is a 20% increase from the 530 closed in FY2010
- 76% were employed by the private sector, 18% by federal, state or local governments including school districts and 6% were self-employed
- For those individuals exiting employed, the average hourly wage increased from \$4.39 at application to \$14.39 at closure.
- 1,849 individuals applied for VR services
- 3,564 individuals received information and referral services through DVR's orientation
- 2,369 individuals received VR services under an Individualized Plan for Employment

## **Who DVR Serves**

- 88% of DVR participants were considered to be significantly disabled with two or more functional limitations to employment
- 74% were Caucasian; 21% were Alaska Natives; 8% were Black; 5% were Hispanic or Latino; 3% were Asian and 2% were Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian
- 20% of the applicants were youth (age 23 and under)

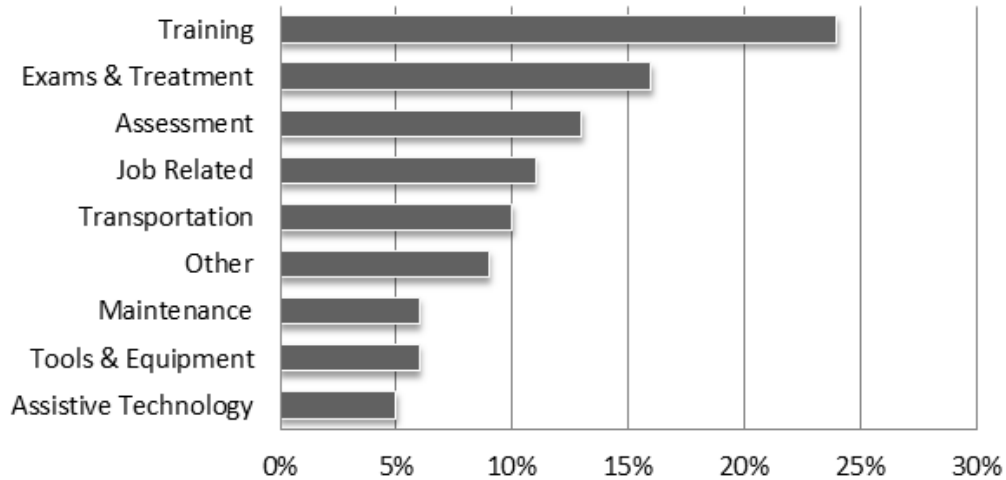
For a more complete picture of DVR's participants, please see "The 2010 Comprehensive Needs Assessment" at: [www.labor.alaska.gov/dvr/about\\_us/Comprehensive-Needs-Assessment-2010.pdf](http://www.labor.alaska.gov/dvr/about_us/Comprehensive-Needs-Assessment-2010.pdf).

## Occupations of VR Participants

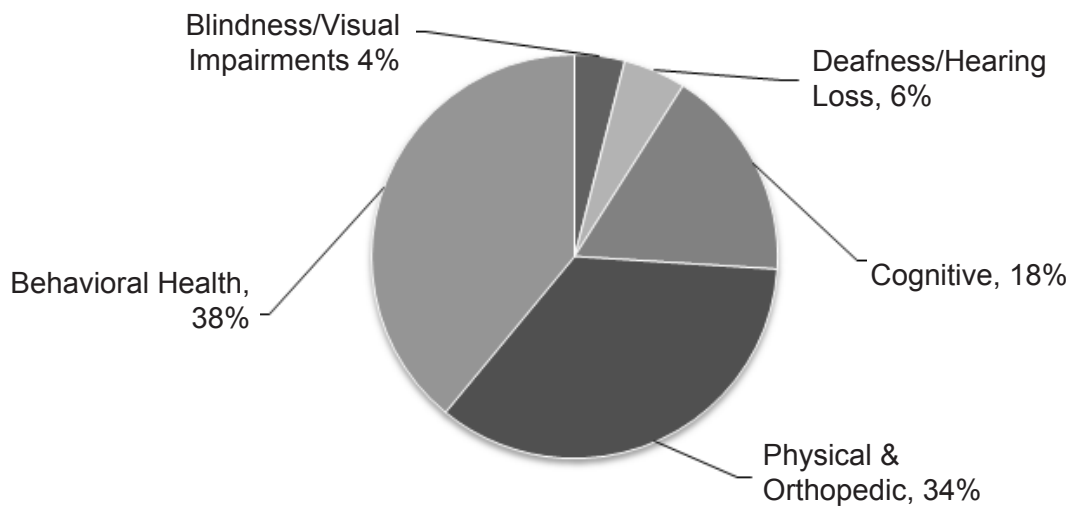


## Purchased VR Services

(\$5.7 million)



## DVR Participants by Disability



# Consumer Satisfaction

## Cases Closed from an Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE)

The SVRC collaborates with DVR to conduct an ongoing survey of DVR participants whose cases are closed from an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The report is available at:

[www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/consumer-satisfaction-survey-fy2010.pdf](http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/consumer-satisfaction-survey-fy2010.pdf)

*Key findings of the federal FY2010 closed from IPE satisfaction survey:*

- 869 surveys were mailed with a 20% response rate.
- 442 surveys were emailed with an 11% response rate.
- Overall satisfaction with VR services decreased 6% from the previous year to 82% most likely as a result of fewer leaving employed.
- 89% of respondents were willing to refer either friends or family to DVR.
- 88% of respondents felt they were treated with courtesy and respect.
- 79% reported services were provided in a reasonable amount of time which is an 11% decrease from FY2009.
- The relationship with the VR counselor and the help received are what individuals liked most about their experience with DVR. 21% stated the time required for VR services was too long which is up by 11% from the previous year.

“I really appreciated DVR... helping me out with everything they do. It’s been, for me, more than 28 years in prison. [Now] I’ve got another year [of school] to go. So when I get the certificate I’ve got an opportunity to either get a job through the Job Center or my school counselor.”

- DVR Participant



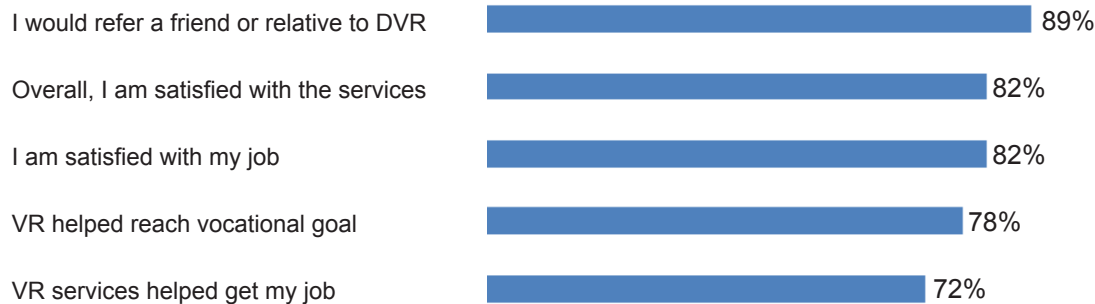
“DVR has helped me to push through obstacles that get in my way, and when memory or depression comes knocking, I push a little harder, that’s what DVR has taught me.”

- DVR Participant



## Consumer Satisfaction Survey 2010 Results

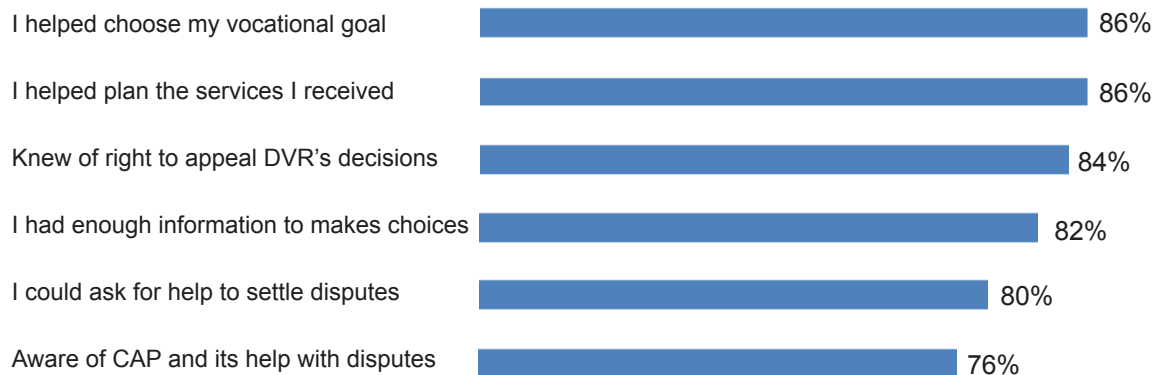
### 1. Program Satisfaction



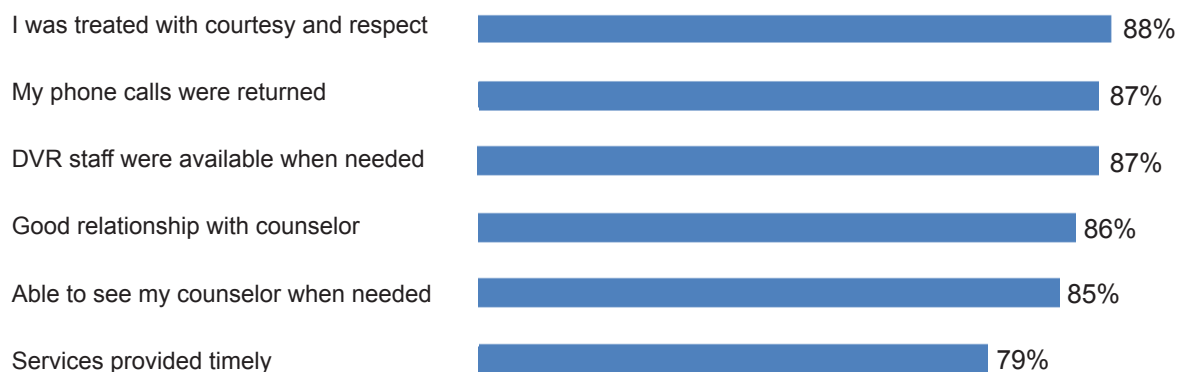
### 2. Program Information



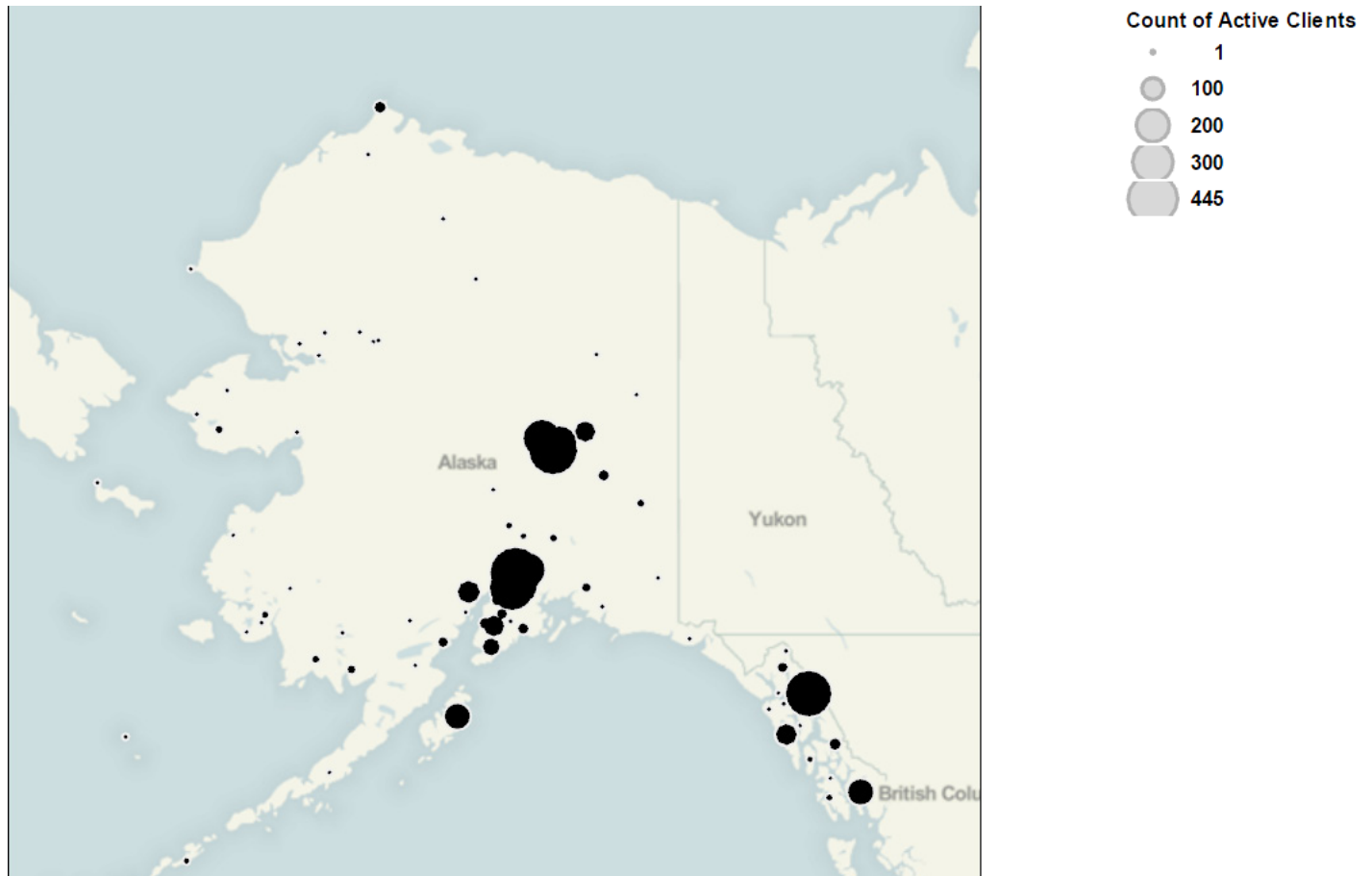
### 3. DVR Participant Involvement



### 4. DVR Participant and Staff Interaction



# DVR Participants



Distribution of all individuals served by DVR in FFY2011 by zip code

Source: DVR Management Information System

The map above demonstrates DVR's presence throughout the state including rural Alaska. The strongest client base is along the primary road corridors of the Kenai Peninsula and from south central Alaska (Anchorage/Wasilla/Palmer) to the interior (Fairbanks). Southeast Alaska is represented with offices in Juneau, Sitka and Ketchikan.

"My ex-husband, who has multiple sclerosis and was a mechanic before he used the Voc Rehab services, he ended up not being able to feel his hands enough to be able to identify the smaller parts that are required of mechanical work. So Voc Rehab supported him in going back to school to become an accountant. And he's doing so well now. He's making twice what he was as a mechanic. So I think that I'm really thankful that there was somebody out there to give him a hand with that." - DVR Participant

# The Committee Seeks Your Input

*The State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee invites you to:*

## **Apply for Membership**

If you care about issues pertaining to disability and employment, the SVRC encourages you to apply for committee membership.

You may apply online at: [gov.alaska.gov/parnell/services/boards-commissions/apply-online.html](http://gov.alaska.gov/parnell/services/boards-commissions/apply-online.html)

You may also apply by sending a completed boards and commissions application, resume and a brief letter explaining your desire to serve the State of Alaska, to:

### **Office of Governor Sean Parnell**

Attention: Jason Hooley, Director of Boards & Commissions  
P.O. Box 110001, Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

Contact the Boards and Commissions office:

**Call:** 907-465-3500

**Fax:** 907-465-8110

**E-mail:** [boards@alaska.gov](mailto:boards@alaska.gov)

## **Attend a Meeting or Public Forum**

All State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee meetings and forums are open to the public. Meeting dates are available at [labor.alaska.gov/svrc/calendar.htm](http://labor.alaska.gov/svrc/calendar.htm). Notification of the meeting times and the agenda are posted 30 days prior to the meeting at [notes3.state.ak.us/pn/pubnotic.nsf](http://notes3.state.ak.us/pn/pubnotic.nsf).

More information about the SVRC is available at [labor.alaska.gov/svrc/](http://labor.alaska.gov/svrc/) including minutes from previous meetings and DVR participant and stakeholder public testimony.

## **Share Your Thoughts and Ideas Directly with the SVRC**

**Call:** Voice/TDD 907-269-3570 or 1-800-478-4378

**Write:** Chair, State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee  
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
619 Ship Creek Avenue, Suite 331  
Anchorage, AK 99501-1677

**Fax:** 907-269-3632

**E-mail:** [gary.waller@alaska.gov](mailto:gary.waller@alaska.gov)



# **State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee**

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Sean Parnell, Governor

Clark Bishop, Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development

### **Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development**

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

801 West Tenth Street, Suite A

Juneau, AK 99801-1894