



~~DISABILITY~~

HIGHLIGHTS

Bureau of Rehabilitation Services 2018-2019

MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF
LABOR
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

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Table of Contents

Bureau of Rehabilitation Services Overview 4

How We Define Success 5

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)..... 6

DVR Initiatives and Innovations 7

Progressive Employment – A Business Relations Activity..... 8

Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) 9

DBVI Initiatives and Innovations 10

Office of the State Accessibility Coordinator 11

Partners in Advocacy, Advisory Boards and Councils 12

BRS Office Directory..... 12

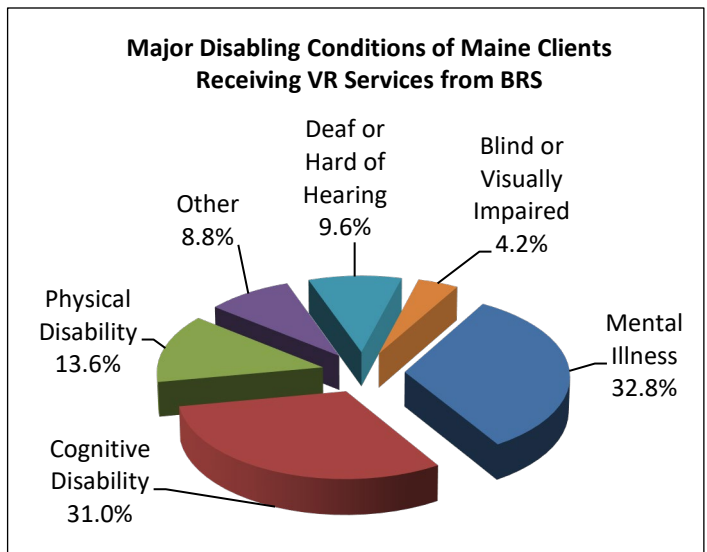
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services Overview – 2018

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) is comprised of three Divisions – the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI), and the Division of Systems Improvement and Quality Assurance (SIQA). A total of 152 BRS employees currently deliver public vocational rehabilitation and independent living services to Maine people with disabilities and are co-located at CareerCenters statewide. BRS also houses the Office of the State Accessibility Coordinator, who leads the State’s compliance under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 (*see page 11*).

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, establishes program eligibility and the scope of services provided through DVR and DBVI. Included are vocational counseling and guidance, physical restoration services, education and skills training, and job placement services. DBVI, in conjunction with the Department of Education, also serves all children who are blind in Maine.

In 2018, **9,550** Mainers with disabilities received services from BRS; of those participants, **6,696** received services with a plan for employment. Counselors worked with clients who had an employment plan, on average, for 23.9 months. This year, **777** clients were successfully employed earning an average wage of \$394.80 per week.

BRS receives most of its funding from federal grants, some of which require matching state funds. The largest (*one administered by DVR and one administered by DBVI*) are from the Department of Education’s Title I grant program for vocational rehabilitation services.

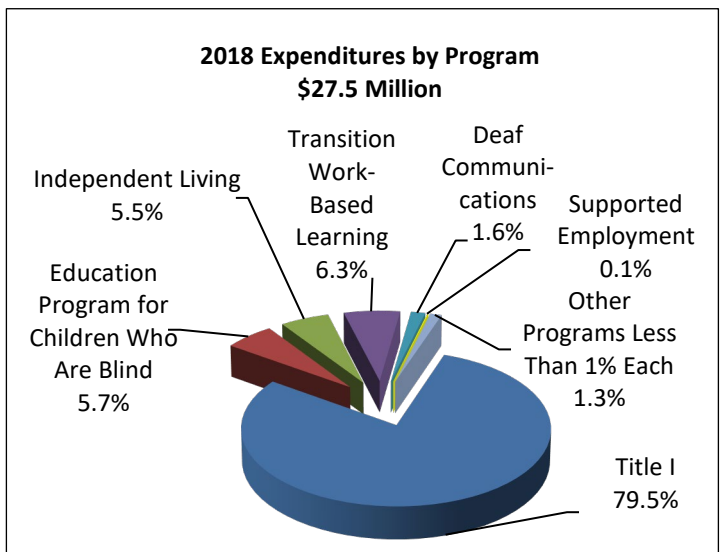
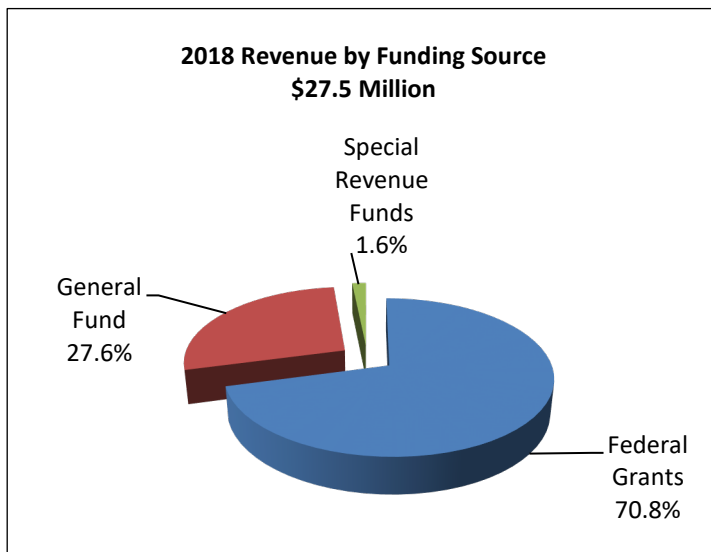


Federal Grants

Vocational Rehabilitation
Independent Living
Supported Employment
Client Assistance

Required General Fund Match

4:1 (21%)
9:1 (11%)
None
None



Special Revenue income is received from the Business Enterprise Program (*see page 9*) managed by DBVI, from the Worker’s Compensation Board through a memorandum of understanding with DVR (*see page 7*), and from the Public Utilities Commission for telecommunications managed by the Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened (*see page 7*). The use of the Special Revenue funds is restricted for these specific purposes.

How We Define Success...



With VR support for rehabilitation technology, “Florence” reached her employment goal of working as a Residential Counselor with a large non-profit agency.

“Michael” came to VR unemployed and experiencing depression and several physical health issues. VR supported him to participate in a vocational assessment, addressed his transportation needs, and helped him get fitted for hearing aids. He was then offered full-time placement as an electrician making \$25 per hour!



“Jorge” is a Disabled Veteran. With VR support, he was hired as the head of manufacturing for a large company making pontoons for seaplanes. He is extremely happy and “loving every minute” of his job because it directly relates to his passion for aviation, as well as computer work. He is a salaried employee making \$55,000 a year to start.

“James,” a young man who was off-track for high school graduation, was able to use his DVR-sponsored work experience to earn the high school credits needed to graduate. While gaining work skills, he also built confidence and is now pursuing a career in masonry.



Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

Maine's DVR assists eligible individuals with disabilities who wish to achieve or retain employment in the community. Any individual who is committed to work and has a disability that creates a barrier to employment is encouraged to apply. Once determined eligible, individuals develop a plan for employment, which outlines the services needed to successfully achieve their employment goal.

Contributing to the Maine Economy

Although maintaining a wait list for services, DVR assisted **737** people to find employment success in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2018. This resulted in these individuals earning a total of **\$15,158,509.60** in annual wages. Across the state and across industry sectors, DVR clients are joining or rejoining the workforce in such jobs as:

Administrative Services Manager	File Clerk	Medical Assistant
Automotive Service Technician	Firefighter	Mental Health Counselor
Bookkeeper	First-Line Supervisor	Office Support Worker
Building Cleaning Worker	Food Preparation Worker	Personal Care Support Worker
Bus Driver	General Manager	Production Worker
Carpenter	Hairdresser	Registered Nurse
Cashier	Health Educator	Retail Salesperson
Childcare Worker	Healthcare Support Worker	Security Guard
Community Health Worker	Heavy Truck Driver	Social Worker
Computer Support Specialist	Interpreter and Translator	Software Developer
Counselor	Janitor	Special Education Teacher
Customer Service Representative	Laborer	Transportation Worker
Dishwasher	Light Truck Driver	Veterinary Assistant
Elementary School Teacher	Maintenance Worker	Welder

Individuals Served in 2018

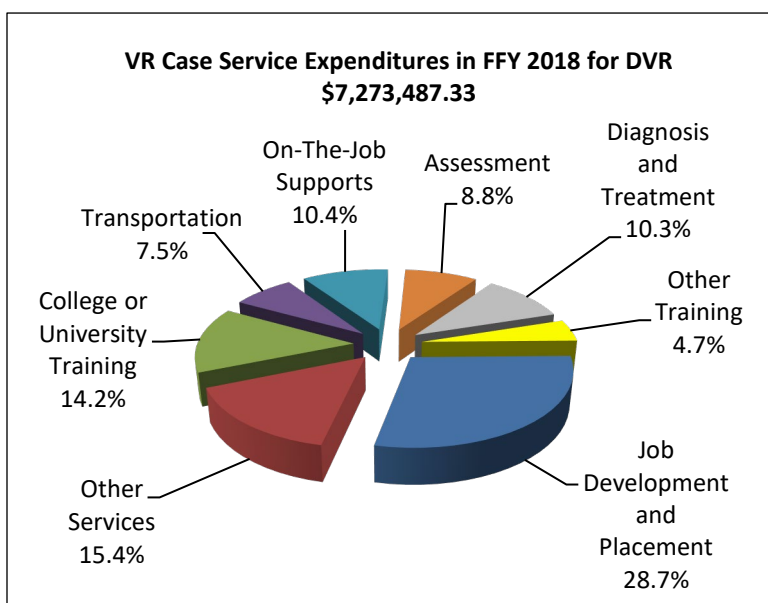
3,643 New Applicants

6,395 Received Services through Employment Plans

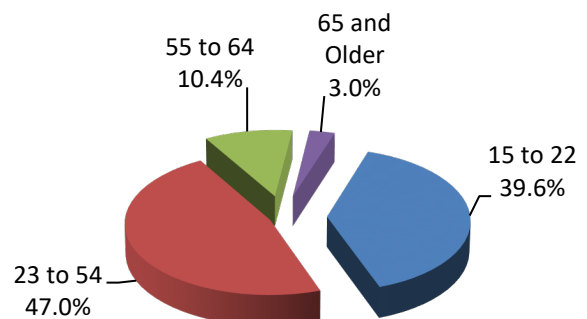
737 Individuals Placed in Competitive Employment

Education Outcomes

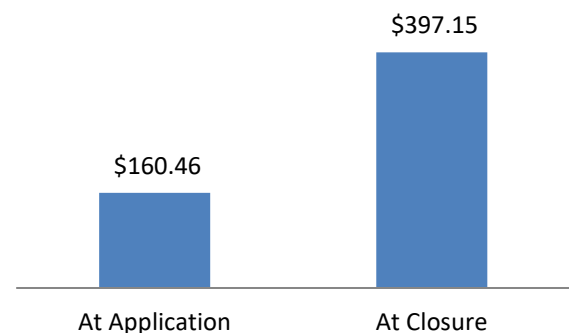
224 Individuals Increased their Education Level



Age At Application



Average Change in Weekly Wages



DVR Initiatives and Innovations

Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened (DDHHLD) houses a director, assistant to the director, and four Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCDs). The RCDs help individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing access and maintain employment. DDHHLD provides referrals, information and training to employers and other state agencies, as well as deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind consumers regarding equal access issues. DDHHLD administers a contract with Disability Rights Maine Deaf Services to provide Telecommunications Equipment, Civil Rights and Advocacy services.

Career Exploration Workshop (CEW) Series, developed by DVR and partners, is designed to introduce participants to the world of work through activities that uncover skills and identify career interests. CEW is available in multiple versions: Adult, Transition, Deaf and Bridge – Pathways to Employment. The CEW series utilizes flexible modules making it ideal for delivery in schools and provider agencies as well as CareerCenters around the state.

Workers' Compensation Board's Memorandum of Understanding with DVR has meant a number of injured Maine workers have been able to return to employment. Through participation in VR services, these individuals received the supports and resources they needed to return to the Maine workforce.

DVR Continues Strong Partnership with the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) through joint planning, service delivery and regional and statewide staff training opportunities. With these partners, DVR is actively involved in Maine's Employment First efforts, a career planning program for individuals with significant disabilities, and the development of a youth advisory group. These shared efforts and many others promote stronger transition planning for youth and employment outcomes for all of those with disabilities served by each of the agencies.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) is a result of the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which expanded opportunities for DVR to serve students with disabilities through the delivery of five new services: Job Exploration Counseling, Work-based Learning Experiences, Counseling on Opportunities for Post-Secondary Training and Education, Workplace Readiness Training to Develop Social Skills, and Independent Living and Instruction in Self-Advocacy. Through exciting partnerships with schools, employers, families, community rehabilitation providers, Maine's Center for Independent Living and other organizations, Maine young people are now becoming better prepared to enter the world of work!

A transition-age young client, "Jessica," was supported by VR to participate in several work experiences. She was very motivated to work and made the most of her time at each business. Following the work experiences, she applied to a large grocery chain and was hired. She has now been working there for more than five months. She loves her job and has made new friends at work. The employer has shared that she is doing very well. A great first step on the pathway to employment!

Transition Work-Based Learning Model Demonstration (TWBL) grant is a partnership with Jobs for Maine Graduates (JMG), the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston, American Institutes for Research (AIR), and the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). This project uses a quasi-experimental design to conduct rigorous evaluation of two innovative interventions, Enhanced JMG and Progressive Employment (see page 8 for additional information). These interventions will serve at least 200 students with disabilities, who are within two years of graduation from high school, to test whether a model of work-based learning improves attainment of competitive integrated post-secondary employment and education outcomes. Maine DVR expects that the TWBL Model Demonstration will enhance statewide collaboration that facilitates the transition process from secondary and postsecondary schools to competitive integrated employment at or above minimum wage. Within one year after graduation, at least 90% of study participants will enter postsecondary education or competitive integrated employment.

DVR/Corrections Workgroup is a partnership to better support the re-entry of individuals with disabilities who are exiting incarceration – or other involvement with the corrections system – and entering employment. Through development of policies and procedures and corrections liaisons in each VR office, the partnership is leading to stronger collaboration and innovative pilots to increase employment outcomes and reduce recidivism.

Progressive Employment – A Business Relations Activity

“Progressive Employment,” a DVR initiative to introduce employers in southern Maine to the next generation of workers, is proving to be beneficial. Launched as a pilot in 2015 in the Maine Division for Rehabilitation Services (DVR) Portland and Lewiston offices, Progressive Employment has now spread, thanks to the Transition Work-Based Learning Grant, to Augusta and Bangor. Across the state, youth and young adults engaged in Progressive Employment have completed hundreds of Progressive Employment experiences where they are matched to area employers through activities, such as:

Job Tours

Let youth (age 14 to 24) see what your business is all about!

Interviews

Offer a young jobseeker an opportunity to practice interview skills or, better yet, let them interview you to discover more about you and your business!

Job Shadows

Invite a youth to see jobs at your business in action.

Work Experience

Provide a work experience to help a youth gain skills, with wages and workers’ compensation paid through DVR.

On-the-Job Training

Hire a young person and have some initial training costs offset.

Participating Businesses

PetSmart, Planet Dog, Old Orchard Beach Ball Park, Maine State Crime Lab, Extreme Clean, No View Farm, Hilton Garden Inn, Trader Joe’s, WMPG Radio, YMCA of Southern Maine, Cinemagic, Renys, Staples, Cabela’s, Home Depot, T.J. Maxx, Gorham Bike and Ski, Domino’s, Cintas, Ace Hardware, O’Reilly Auto Parts, Oxford Auto Salvage, Lowe’s Home Improvement, Walmart, Pat’s Pizza, Portland Sea Dogs, Tractor Supply, R.T. Farms, Cusick’s Auto Repair, Good Shephard Food Bank of Maine, Applewald Farm, Maine Geeks, St. Joseph Hospital, Darling’s Honda, PetPro, Auto Vision, New Age Tanning & Spa, Windswept Stables, and many more!

“Carrie” was referred to Progressive Employment because she was undecided on a career path. She did some tours in retail and food service, but had not found her passion. Then, her VR Counselor told her about an upcoming group tour at an assisted living facility. Carrie agreed to attend and learned about PCA and CNA positions. She got interested in learning more about those careers and toured a couple other settings where PCAs and CNAs work. As a result, Carrie applied and was hired by an assisted living facility and is receiving company-paid training to become a PCA!



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Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI)

Maine's DBVI provides a continuum of rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind or have low vision. Services may include individual counseling and guidance related to employment and adjustment to blindness issues, use of adaptive technology, low vision therapy, alternative skill training in communication (such as braille), instruction to develop independent travel skills (orientation and mobility), and instruction of daily living skills geared to being more self-sufficient. These services are provided through various programs, including:

Vocational Rehabilitation Program is primarily for working-age adults who seek competitive, integrated employment. Services may include individual vocational counseling and guidance, vocational assessment, orientation and mobility instruction, low vision services, independent living services (vision rehabilitation therapy), and more.

Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides training and support to seven licensed managers who operate snack bars, cafeterias, micro markets and vending machines at 21 sites on state, federal and municipal properties across Maine. BEP also provides employment to many other individuals with disabilities.

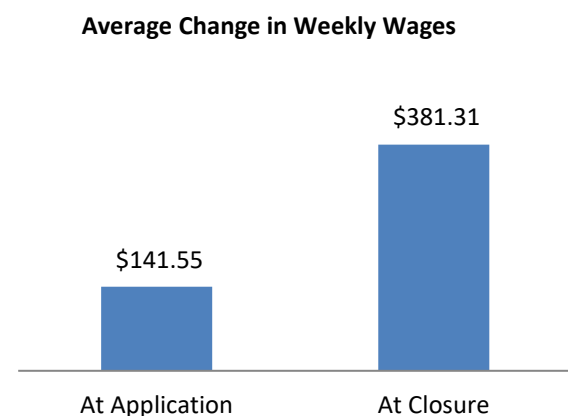
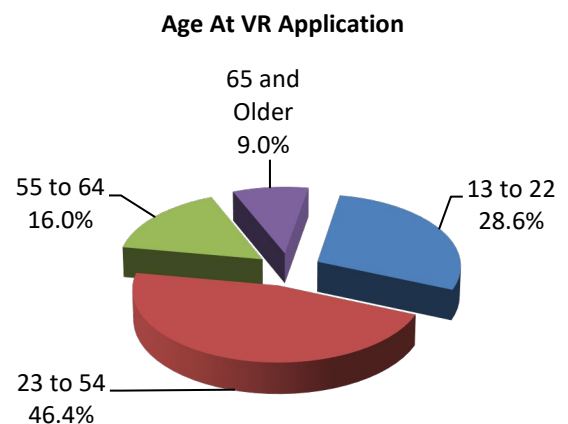
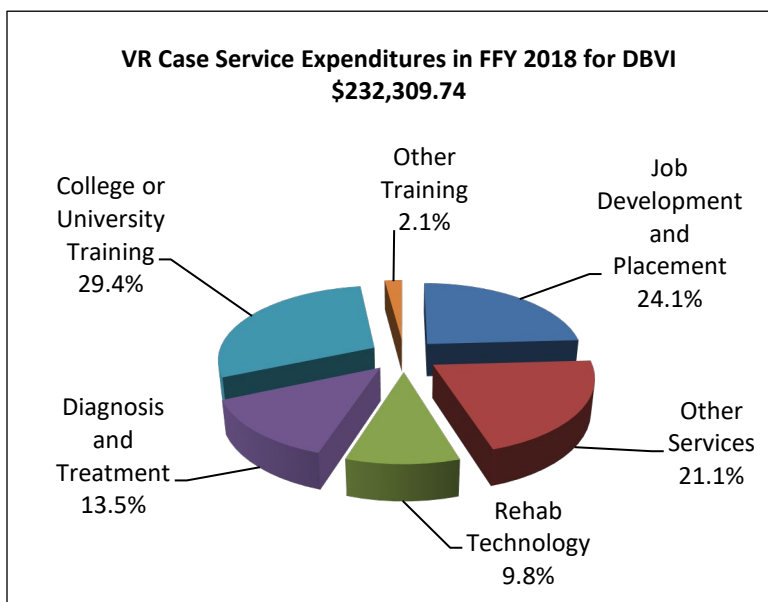
Independent Living Services (IL) provides training in adaptive skills and alternative techniques for accomplishing daily tasks that enable approximately 400 individuals who are older and blind to be more self-sufficient each year.

Education Services for Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired provides adaptive instruction services or consultation to approximately 300 students annually in home or local schools related to academics and independence.

VR Program

Individuals Served in 2018

- 94** New Applicants
- 301** Received Services through Employment Plans
- 40** Individuals Placed in Competitive Employment



DBVI Initiatives and Innovations

Maine's Business Enterprise Program (BEP) continues to evolve to keep pace with changing work environments, meet customer needs and preferences, and to provide meaningful self-employment opportunities for individuals who are blind and visually impaired. One of the fastest growing types of vending service is the Micro Market. These are self-service convenience stores in secure buildings, which provide fresh food options, hot and cold beverages, and other odds and ends that customers may want to have available 24/7. The BEP places a very high priority on working with new and existing facilities and providing the type of vending service that best suits each location with all of its employees and customers. In addition to providing these valuable entrepreneurial experiences for BEP managers, employment opportunities are available for other citizens of Maine, with and without disabilities, as a result of being hired by managers as employees at these locations.

Living on Your Own (LOYO) is a five-day overnight experience for high school students who are blind and visually impaired. The focus of LOYO is to expose teens to real-life experiences of living on their own in a safe and supportive environment. Teens are required to utilize problem solving skills that can be transferred to home, school, and work environments. The program is designed to develop skills and self-confidence necessary as they transition into work, social settings, and living independently. Teens work on socialization, group dynamics, self-awareness, personal strengths, peer relationships, decision making, personal safety, home safety, and home management. Importantly, teens gain skills that prepare them for future meaningful employment.

Throughout the five days, there are many opportunities for LOYO participants to develop and practice skills that transfer to the work place and community. Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are an important focus for the LOYO participants as self-advocacy, work readiness training, independent living skills, "soft" skills, and orientation and mobility skills are woven throughout the program.

LOYO also encourages parent involvement in identifying their son's or daughter's level of independence within their home, school and community, as well as any fears, concerns, or needs to be addressed during and after the program. Parents participate in four hours of programming during the LOYO programs to facilitate discussion around independence and future goals. Parents also witness their child's progress through the LOYO program via social media as students will set up a Facebook page to help communicate their experiences.

DBVI College Prep is a five-week college preparation program designed for high school students who are blind or visually impaired. The students take an entry-level college course at the University of Maine in Orono, live in the dorms, and eat at the cafeteria. They also participate in daily learning labs related to success in college as a student who is blind or visually impaired. In addition to the college course and daily learning labs, participants learn how to integrate their current assistive technology to meet the pace of reading, notetaking, and studying requirements at the college level, and receive training in a variety of blindness-specific skills geared toward enhancing success while at college. The students are also provided an opportunity to do a work-study experience on campus and to participate in community service projects and recreational activities during the program.

"Justin," a youth client of DBVI, attended the College Prep Step Up Day for students interested in attending the next session. The young man had been through a difficult year with significant health and adjustment to vision loss issues that caused him to miss a great deal of school. His mother sent this note following her son's attendance: "HE LOVED IT! It was such a great experience to hear about the program and talk to the other kids. He is so excited to be there and be a part of that experience! He can't stop talking about how much he also loved the campus and how he felt while he was there. He's excited to have a job and to be able to do things independently and that he can take a class – even though "...it'll be hard work but it will be worth it...I'll get THREE credits!" Thank you so much for sharing the info!"

Office of the State Accessibility and Independent Living Coordinator

State Accessibility Highlights

The Accessibility Coordinator leads the State's compliance under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504. Executive branch departments adopt and carry out policies that apply to state services (including contracted services), facilities, web design, communication, and employment. The State Accessibility Coordinator works with departments to resolve any disability-based discrimination complaints. Examples of ADA projects are:

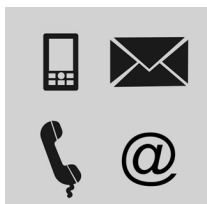
- Through the Information Technology Accessibility Committee (ITAC), advising and working with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) to ensure public and employee access to Executive Branch services, programs, and the Internet.
- Developing training for Departmental ADA Coordinators about accessibility and effective communication in State programs.
- Coordinating with the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) on implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- Reviewing trail standards and local project proposals for funding from the Recreational Trails Program.



Independent Living Highlights

The State Independent Living (IL) Coordinator monitors contracts with the Independent Living Services (ILS) Program and the Maine Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), which develop and provide opportunities for improved community access for people with disabilities. Additional IL roles:

- As Chair of the mPower Loan Board, Maine's flexible loan program for assistive technology, facilitate the transition of the program to a new financial service provider, Alpha One.
- Oversee a Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVR) contract with Alpha One for Pre-Employment Transition Services in high schools.
- Provide technical assistances for businesses and individuals about public accommodations, housing, employment, and disability rights.



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Client Assistance Program, operated by C.A.R.E.S., Inc. provides information, advice, advocacy, and (if determined necessary) legal representation to persons who have concerns about the rehabilitation services they receive from DVR and DBVI. Website: <http://caresinc.org>

http://www.maine.gov/rehab/advisory_councils/dod

https://www.maine.gov/swb/committees/disability_employment/index.shtml

State Independent Living Council (SILC) promotes a philosophy of independent living, which encompasses consumer control, peer support, self-help, self-determination and equal access, as well as individual and system advocacy to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence and productivity of individuals with significant disabilities. Website: <http://www.mainesilc.org>

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