1. **DVR SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS IN MAINE**
	1. **Population Characteristics**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) collects a variety of information about individuals when they enter the program, tracks the progress and services they receive, and records a successful closure of the case if the individual successfully completes at least 90 days of employment in an integrated setting.

In this section, DVR data is used to provide an overview of the characteristics of the current VR population, to describe the flow of individuals into and out of the DVR program, to examine outcomes of the VR program in terms of rehabilitation rates, and to outline the costs of DVR services from FFY 2016 through 2019.

Examining data collected on individuals who have moved through the DVR process to closure yields valuable information about the population served. In FFY 2016, Maine DVR closed a total of 4,852 cases, and in FFY 2019, Maine DVR closed a total of 3,396 cases – a decrease of nearly 43%.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Table 1 outlines the characteristics of the individuals represented among all closed cases both years, the percentage change in the number of clients within a given characteristic (fifth column), and the change in the proportion of clients with a given characteristic (last column).

**Findings:**

* As part of the eligibility determination process, DVR staff record applicants’ primary disability type. In FFY 2019, there were 1,104 (33%) cases closed where the individual had a mental illness; 1,012 (30%) with a cognitive disability; 437 (13%) with a physical disability; 349 (10%) with a sensory disability, including deaf and hard of hearing and visual impairments; and 494 (15%) of closed cases were for individuals with no impairment and who were deemed ineligible for services.
* The majority (51%) of cases closed in FFY 2019 were for people between the ages of 23 and 54, although a substantial portion (41%) were transition-age individuals under age 25 at the time they applied for VR services.
* Men are more likely to receive VR services than woman (56% versus 44%).
* A clear majority (92%) of the VR population is White and only 8% identify themselves as being members of a racial or ethnic minority.
* In FFY 2019, there were 886 (26%) cases closed of individuals who received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and 701 (21%) received Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

**TABLE 1**

**Individual Characteristics for Closed Cases for FFY 2016 and 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FFY 2016** | **FFY 2019** | **% Change in # of Closures****(C-A)/C** | **Change in % of Closures****(D-B)** |
| **Number****(A)** | **Percent****(B)** | **Number****(C)** | **Percent****(D)** |
| **All Closures** | **4,852** | **100.0** | **3,396** | **100.0** | **-42.8** | **0.0** |
| **Primary Disability Type** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| No Impairment | 614 | 12.7 | 494 | 14.5 | **-24.3** | **1.8** |
| Sensory\* | 666 | 13.7 | 349 | 10.3 | **-90.8** | **-3.4** |
| Physical | 713 | 14.7 | 437 | 12.9 | **-63.2** | **-1.8** |
| Mental Illness | 1,682 | 34.7 | 1,104 | 32.5 | **-52.4** | **-2.2** |
| Cognitive | 1,177 | 24.2 | 1,012 | 29.8 | **-16.3** | **5.6** |
| **Age at Closure** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Less than 23 | 1,276 | 26.3 | 1,113 | 32.8 | **-14.6** | **6.5** |
| 23-54 | 2,705 | 55.8 | 1,727 | 50.9 | **-56.6** | **-4.9** |
| 55-65 | 710 | 14.6 | 443 | 13.0 | **-60.3** | **-1.6** |
| Over 65 | 161 | 3.3 | 113 | 3.3 | **-42.5** | **0.0** |
| **Education** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Less than HS | 1,512 | 31.2 | 667 | 19.6 | **-126.7** | **-11.6** |
| HS or Equivalent | 2,163 | 44.6 | 1,754 | 51.6 | **-23.3** | **7.0** |
| Some College | 438 | 9.0 | 351 | 10.3 | **-24.7** | **1.3** |
| College or More | 739 | 15.2 | 624 | 18.4 | **-3.3** | **3.2** |
| **Most Recent Work Experience** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Working at time of application | 978 | 20.2 | 588 | 17.3 | **-66.3** | **-2.9** |
| Not working at application | 3,874 | 79.8 | 2,808 | 82.6 | **-37.9** | **2.8** |
| **Gender** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Male | 2,696 | 55.6 | 1,910 | 56.2 | **-41.1** | **0.6** |
| Female | 2,156 | 44.4 | 1,486 | 43.8 | **-45.0** | **-0.6** |
| **Race** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| White | 4,464 | 92.0 | 3,121 | 91.9 | **-43.0** | **0.3** |
| Racial/Ethnic Minority | 387 | 7.8 | 275 | 8.1 | **-40.7** | **0.3** |
| **SSI Income** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Received SSI Income | 1,062 | 21.9 | 886 | 26.1 | **-19.8** | **4.2** |
| Did not receive SSI Income | 3,790 | 78.1 | 2,510 | 73.9 | **-50.9** | **-4.2** |
| **SSDI Income** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Received SSDI Income | 1,013 | 20.9 | 701 | 20.6 | **-44.5** | **-0.3** |
| Did not receive SSDI Income | 3,839 | 79.1 | 2,696 | 79.4 | **-42.3** | **0.3** |

DVR client characteristic data is for all cases closed during the Federal Fiscal Year. Characteristics are based on information recorded at time of application, unless otherwise noted. Some totals do not equal the number of clients served because the information was not available for all cases as applicants.

\*Sensory includes deaf/hard of hearing and visual impairments

**SOURCE: biAdaptor DVR Cases\_VR Query**

* 1. **Process Flow**

The VR process begins when a person fills out and submits an application to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and ends with the closure of the case. Chart 1 below outlines across four federal fiscal years on the number of individuals who passed through several key steps in the VR process: New Applications, New Plans Developed, and Case Closures. The solid lines in the chart represent incoming individuals and the dotted lines represent individuals leaving the DVR program (case closures).

**Findings**

* Over the last four years, the number of new applications remained stable with of 3,683 in FFY 2016 to a low of 3,601 in FFY 2019, a 3% decrease.
* Closures decreased between FFY 2016 and FFY 2019 from 4,852 to 3,369.
* There was a 7% decrease in the number of new Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE) developed from 2,541 in FFY 2016 to 2,385 in FFY 2019.

**CHART 1**

**Total Applications, Plans Developed and Closures between FFY 2016 and 2019**

Chart 2 looks more closely at the open caseload (Status 02 through 24) at the end of the federal fiscal year from FFY 2016 to 2019, and breaks out cases by the number of individuals who are waiting for an eligibility determination (Status 02); in Extended Evaluation/Trial Work plan (Status 06); in IPE development (Status 10); and the remainder who have completed IPEs and are in plan implementation (Status 12 through 24).

**Findings**

* The total number of active cases over the four-year period increased each year from 5,237 in FFY 2016 to 5,645 in FFY 2019.
* The number of active cases involved in plan implementation increased over the last four years from FFY 2016 to FFY 2019 due to WIOA changes in moving clients from eligibility determination (Status 02) to plan implementation (Status 12 through 24) within 90 days.

**CHART 2**

**Active Caseload Status End of Fiscal Year Snapshot for FFY 2016 and 2019**

The goal of the VR process is for an individual to achieve and maintain employment consistent with his or her capabilities. However, many individuals exit the program before reaching that employment goal. Chart 3 details the number of individuals whose cases were closed in federal fiscal years 2016 to 2019 based on the type of closure. The different closure types noted indicate how far in the VR process the individual had progressed when his or her case was closed.

**Findings**

* The number of successful employment outcomes (Status 26) substantially decreased from 1,166 in FFY 2016 to 737 in FFY 2018, but increased slightly to 767 in FFY 2019.
* The number of closures where the individual developed and participated in an IPE, but did not achieve 90 days of employment (Status 28), increased from 1,335 in FFY 2016 to 1,464 in FFY 2019.
* The number of cases closed as applicants decreased from 782 in FFY 2016 to 586 in FFY 2019.

**CHART 3**

**All Case Closures by Closure Type between FFY 2016 and 2019**

Another way to examine the flow of individuals through the VR program is to look at the length of time that individuals spend in the overall process and in the various steps along the way. Chart 4 below shows the length of time (in months) that it took successfully rehabilitated (Status 26) individuals to move through the VR process.

**Findings**

* Overall, the number of months it took a VR applicant to complete the entire process remained stable from 22 months in FFY 2016 to 23 months in FFY 2019.
* The length of time it takes to determine eligibility remained at less than two months through the entire four-year period.
* The length of time it took for eligible individuals to move from eligibility determination to the implementation of their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) remained decreased from 4 months in FFY 2016 to 2 months in FFY 2019.
* The average time spent in plan implementation from IPE to Closure remained steady at about 17 months – an average of less than two years.

**CHART 4**

**Average Months in VR Process for Successful Closures between FFY 2016 and 2019**

Keep in mind that Chart 4 represents the best-case scenario in the sense that it only includes individuals who successfully completed the VR process. It is also instructive to examine the length of time that people who did not have a successful outcome spent in the VR process.

Overall time in the VR process is trending downward, not only for successful closures, but also across other closure types as well. Chart 5 shows average time from application to closure for cases closed after the individual received IPE services, for successful closures, and for cases closed before the individual’s IPE was implemented.

**Findings**

* Regardless of the type of closure, time spent in the VR process from application to closure decreased from 20 months in FFY 2016 to 18 months in FFY 2019.
* Time spent in the VR process for those who received IPE services without an employment outcome decreased from 13 months in FFY 2016 to 6 months in FFY 2019.
* Among the cases closed after receiving IPE services without an employment outcome in FFY 2019 were closed were based on the following reasons: 43.3% unable to locate or contact the individual and 39.5% refused further services and
* Similar trends were observed among cases closed before IPE services initiated with 52.5% of individuals could not be located or contacted and 32.2% of individuals who refused further services.

**CHART 5**

**Average Months in VR Process by Closure Type between FFY 2016 and 2019**

* 1. **Outcomes**

An important measure of the success of the Vocational Rehabilitation program is to look at employment outcomes for individuals. A standard federal measure is the rehabilitation rate, which represents the total number of successful (Status 26) closures divided by the total number of closures following the development of an IPE, including both successful (Status 26) and unsuccessful (Status 28) closures. Chart 6 below breaks out the rehabilitation rate by disability type.

**Findings**

* The proportion of cases that were rehabilitated (i.e. worked for at least 90 days in an integrated setting) was an average of 41% from FFY 2016 through FFY 2019, and varied by a few percentage points across this period (See Appendix 2).
* Rehabilitation rates are highest for clients with hearing loss, followed by those with cognitive, physical, and mental illness-related disabilities.

**CHART 6**

**Rehabilitation Rate by Disability Type between FFY 2016 and 2019**

A second outcome measure for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is the change in earnings among individuals who successfully met their employment goal. Chart 7 below describes the change in average earnings among all successful closures.

**Findings**

* The change between wages at application and closure narrowed from 159% in FFY 2016 to 248% in FFY 2018.
* Average weekly earnings for 2018 closures went from $160 at time of application up to $397 at closure.
* Between FFY 2016 and FFY 2019, average weekly earnings at closure remained stable at $400.
* FFY 2019 data cannot be compared due to WIOA changes in reporting wage data.

**CHART 7**

**Average Weekly Earnings at Application and Closure for All Successful Closures**

**between FFY 2016 and 2019**

Chart 8 below examines the earnings and hours worked per week among successful closures by type of disability.

**Findings**

* Clients who are deaf or hard of hearing earned the highest average weekly wage of $687 and worked more hours with 35 hours as the average weekly hours worked, which is followed by those with visual disabilities ($648/week and 27 hours); physical disabilities ($476/week and 28 hours); mental illness-related disabilities ($345/week and 26 hours); and cognitive disabilities ($229/week and 22 hours).

**CHART 8**

**Average Weekly Wages and Hours for Successful Closures in FFY 2019**

* 1. **Services and Expenditures Costs**

Maine’s DVR program and the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act emphasize the importance of informed consumer choice, namely, providing DVR individuals with the information they need to choose vocational goals and determine the available services appropriate to meet those goals. Furthermore, cost information can also serve as in indicator for the mix of services that Maine’s DVR individuals have asked and received approval for the past few fiscal years.

This section highlights trends in annual costs of DVR services and the service areas where these costs are concentrated. DVR classifies services into nearly 100 categories.

For presentation purposes in this report, these categories are aggregated into a smaller set of 11 service groups described below in Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1**

**Description of Vocational Rehabilitation Service Groups**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **VR Service Group** | **Examples of Services** |
| Job Development & Placement | Job Development, Analysis, Placement & Referral |
| College or University Training | Tuition, Boarding, Fees, Books, School Supplies |
| Assessment | Community Based Situational Assessments and Disability Related Evaluations |
| On-the-Job Supports | Job Coaching (both at work site and off site) and On-the-Job Training |
| All Other Services | Readers/Interpreters, Occupational Tools & Equipment, Services to Family Members, Purchased Counseling & Guidance, Pre-Employment Transition Services |
| Occupational/Vocational & Other Training | Business/Vocational Training, Books, Supplies, Boarding, Tutoring, Fees, Adult Education, Literacy, Mobility Training, Truck Driving School, etc. |
| Hearing Aid | Provision of Hearing Aids, Molds, and Repair |
| Transportation | Cab/Bus Fares, Car Repair, Gas |
| Rehabilitation Technology | Computer Equipment, Software, Training, Home/Building or Vehicle Modifications |
| Maintenance | Clothing, Child Care, Food and Shelter to enable IPE |
| Diagnosis & Treatment | Medical Exams, Treatment, Therapy & Counseling |

Table 2 details paid authorizations from FFY 2016 through 2019 by VR service group.

**Findings**

* Total expenditures fluctuated from year to with less than 1% decrease from $7.2 million in FFY 2016 to $7.1 million in FFY 2019.
* The implementation of CRP Milestones in FFY 2013 continued the trend of Job Development & Placement being the largest single service group between FFY 2014 to FFY 2016. Job Development & Placement continued to be the largest single service group between FFYs 2017 and 2019.
* Assessment was the only service group that showed a large decrease from $729,766.84 in FFY 2016 to $555,869.46, a 31% decrease in expenditures.
* Hearing Aid also showed a decrease of 16% from FFY 2016 to FFY 2019.
* Diagnosis & Treatment of Impairments increased by 43% from FFY 2016 to FFY 2019.
* Increases were seen with Rehabilitation Technology (34%); On-The-Job Supports (28%); Transportation (11%); Maintenance (3%); and Occupational/Other Training (1%).
* A decrease in service expenditures was seen with College/University Training (8%).

**TABLE 2**

**Case Costs by Service Group and Federal Fiscal Year between 2016 and 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **VR Service Group** | **FFY 2016** | **FFY 2017** | **FFY 2018** | **FFY 2019** | **% Change FFY 2014-2017** |
| Job Development & Placement | $280,246.39 | $1,429,535.49 | $1,971,701.77 | $1,891,989.49 | 85.2 |
| CRP Milestones | $1,959,150.93 | $293,823.75 | $2,100.00 | $1,000.00 | -1958.2 |
| College or University Training | $768,806.48 | $816,169.65 | $770,716.14 | $709,097.96 | -8.4 |
| Assessment | $729,766.84 | $605,003.82 | $632,307.52 | $555,869.46 | -31.3 |
| On-the-Job Supports | $537,437.77 | $641,422.61 | $648,326.75 | $744,075.50 | 27.8 |
| All Other Services | $819,839.86 | $992,022.97 | $873,300.47 | $923,379.29 | 11.2 |
| Occupational/Vocational & Other Training | $540,315.39 | $518,686.99 | $621,612.78 | $546,821.05 | 1.2 |
| Hearing Aid | $723,925.05 | $401,331.98 | $493,454.51 | $623,111.03 | -16.2 |
| Transportation | $280,961.75 | $298,604.29 | $317,372.90 | $315,228.37 | 10.9 |
| Rehabilitation Technology | $342,292.26 | $556,823.35 | $449,334.37 | $516,308.71 | 33.7 |
| Maintenance | $106,686.73 | $96,675.45 | $105,608.39 | $109,424.07 | 2.5 |
| Diagnosis & Treatment | $119,615.66 | $180,574.16 | $127,056.30 | $209,581.45 | 42.9 |
| **TOTAL** | **$7,209,045.11** | **$6,830,674.51** | **$7,012,891.90** | **$7,145,886.38** | **-0.9** |

Chart 10 shows the percent of all DVR expenditures in FFY 2019 that were spent on each type of service.

**Findings**

* Job Development, All Other Service Groups, College or University Training and On-the-Job Supports were the top four service groups in terms of case costs in FFY 2019 with a total of $4.3 million, which accounted for 60% of the $7.1 million in total DVR expenditures that year.

**CHART 10**

**Case Costs by Service Group in FFY 2019**

Chart 11 outlines the trends in service expenditures over the past four federal fiscal years from 2016 to 2019.

**Findings**

* Please note Job Placement & Development and CRP Milestones have been combined for FFY 2016 through 2019 the chart below.
* The results underscore the growth in Job Placement & Development and CRP Milestones in FFY 2016 before a sharp decline in FFY 2017 due to changes in payments for these services.
* Hearing Aid expenditures decreased from FFY 2016 to FFY 2017 before an increase was observed in FFY 2018 and FFY 2019.
* Assessment continued to show a steady decline from FFY 2017 to FFY 2019.
* College/University Training declined in FFY 2016, but increased in FFY 2017, and declined again in FFY 2018 and FFY 2019.
* All Other Services increased in FFY 2017 due to the introduction of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for youth ages 14 to 20 and showed a sharp decrease in FFY 2018, but increased in FFY 2019.

**CHART 11**

**Top 6 Service Groups by Federal Fiscal Year**

Chart 12 presents the average cost on a per person basis per closure.

**Findings**

* On a per person basis, the average cost per successful closure declined from $4,696 from in FFY 2016 to $4,523 in FFY 2019 – a 4% decrease.
* There was a 40% decrease in the average cost for unsuccessful closures and a 32% increase in the average cost for all types of closures.

**CHART 12**

**Average Cost per Closure between FFY 2016 and 2019**

1. **ESTIMATING POPULATION ELIGIBLE FOR DVR SERVICES AND UNMET NEEDS**
	1. **American Community Survey (ACS)**

To estimate the number of people eligible for DVR services in Maine, we use information from the American Community Survey (ACS), conducted each year by the United States Census Bureau.[[2]](#footnote-2) In Maine, among the civilian noninstitutionalized population in 2013-2017, 16% reported a disability. The likelihood of having a disability varied by age – from 7% of people under 18 years of age to 53% of people 18 to 64 years old, and to 40% of those 65 and over. ((ACS), 2013-2017). The ACS is designed to provide both national and State level data on demographic, social, economic and housing characteristics of U.S. households.

* 1. **ACS Disability Characteristics**

To describe the population of individuals eligible for DVR services, the ACS was used to obtain the sample of individuals with a disability described above. The ACS includes several demographic and socioeconomic characteristics that are useful for this purpose. From 2013 through 2017, an average of 208,646 persons with one or more disabilities resided in Maine, equal to about 15.9% of its civilian non-institutionalized population of 1.3 million. This proportion was higher to that of the United States, where an estimated 12.6% of residents had a disability. ((ACS), 2013-2017).

* The distribution of Maine residents with disabilities by age group is similar to the national distribution. Despite the state’s older population, Maine has a slightly smaller share of residents over 64 years of age who have a disability (40%) than the U.S. share (41%). In Maine and the U.S., more than half of those with a disability are of working age (18 to 64 years).
* From 2013 through 2017, an estimated 14% of Maine’s working-age adults had one or more disabilities. Of these individuals, 33% were employed compared to 80% of the working-age population without a disability. Maine’s 33% employment to population ratio among working-age adults with disabilities was lower than the U.S. ratio of 36%.
* The likelihood of working varies widely by type of disabling condition. Persons with sensory difficulties are more likely to be employed than those with other disabilities.
* Educational attainment is positively associated with both employment and earnings. Among adults ages 25 to 64, 42% of those with disabilities have some post-secondary education, compared to 64% of adults with no disability. Only 16% have a four-year college degree or higher compared to 34% of adults without disabilities.
* Adults with disabilities are less likely to be employed than adults with no disability. Fewer than half work or seek work. From 2013 through 2017, 33% of working-age Mainers with disabilities was employed compared to 80% of those with no disability. In addition, the unemployment rate among adults with disabilities was more than three times that of other working age adults.
* Workers will disabilities tend to earn less than those with no disability. From 2013 to 2017, median earnings of Maine workers with disabilities were $18,434 in a twelve-month period, compared median earnings of $31,217 among Maine workers with no disability. The earnings gap between Maine and U.S. was more pronounced among earners with disabilities. The median for Maine earners with disabilities was $3,800 less than the comparable national median, compared to a gap of $1,700 between earners without disabilities.
* People with disabilities and their families may receive income support from two programs administered by the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA): Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). While SSDI and SSI target different populations, there is some program overlap. In 2017, the share of Maine residents receiving worker disability benefits from SSDI and/or SSI was 10% of resident population age 18 to 64, compared to 6% nationally.
	1. **Are DVR Services Reaching the Eligible Population?**

To determine if there are certain segments of the eligible population that are not being reached by the DVR program, BRS compared the characteristics of ACS disability sample against information collected by the agency on current DVR individuals (Table 1).

The result is shown in Table 4. Disability type information is not presented as a side-by-side comparison because the ACS disability measures are not comparable to the way DVR collects primary disability type from each applicant.

**Findings**

* DVR participants are generally less educated than the eligible population with 20% lacking a high school diploma versus only 18% in the ACS with a disability sample.
* DVR individuals are also more likely to be male (56% versus 44%).
* Table 4 indicates that DVR serves proportionately fewer individuals of racial or ethnic minorities than those identified in the ACS work disability population.

**TABLE 4**

**Client Characteristics and Selected Comparisons to ACS Population**



##

## Social Security Recipients in Maine

An alternative source of information that can be used to estimate the number of people in Maine who are eligible for DVR services comes from the Social Security Administration (SSA). Maine residents who receive SSI or SSDI are presumed to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, as long as the individual is interested in getting a job.[[3]](#footnote-3) Therefore, all SSI and SSDI recipients who qualify for payments from the Social Security Administration under a disability eligibility category are potentially eligible for DVR services and/or services from the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI).

Table 5 lists the number of Maine recipients of both SSA programs by VR region in FFY 2019 from October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019.

**Findings**

* The data shows there are 36,860 SSI recipients and 64,708 SSDI recipients living in Maine. Based on the fact many of these individuals are eligible for both SSI and SSDI, BRS cannot compute a precise total of individuals eligible for Social Security benefits. It is estimated there are approximately 83,603 Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities living in Maine, all of whom would meet the DVR eligibility definition of “substantial impediment to employment.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

**TABLE 5**

**Open Maine DVR Cases with SSI and SSDI Recipients in FFY 2019**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **VR Region** | **Open DVR Cases** | **SSI Recipients** | **SSDI Recipients** |
| **Number** | **Percent** | **Number** | **Percent** | **Number** | **Percent** |
| **Region I** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Counties: Cumberland, York | 572 | 29.1 | 8,984 | 24.3 | 19,023 | 29.4 |
| **Region II** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Counties: Androscoggin, Franklin, Oxford, Sagadahoc | 458 | 23.2 | 7,802 | 21.2 | 12,722 | 19.7 |
| **Region III** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Counties: Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Somerset, Waldo | 494 | 25.1 | 8,949 | 24.3 | 15,078 | 23.3 |
| **Region IV** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Counties: Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Washington | 322 | 16.3 | 8,518 | 23.1 | 13,678 | 21.1 |
| **Region V** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| County: Aroostook | 124 | 6.3 | 2,607 | 7.1 | 4,207 | 6.5 |
| **TOTAL** | **1,970** | **100.0%** | **36,860** | **100.0%** | **64,708** | **100.0%** |

**Sources:**

Cases\_VR\_DVR Table Query from the biAdaptor for all open cases in FFY 2019.

U.S. Social Security Administration, Office of Policy. *SSI Recipients by State and County, 2018* <https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi_sc/>

Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program, Released October 2018 <https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/di_asr/2018/index.html>

The Social Security data includes breakdowns by county, the data can also be used as a proxy to examine whether DVR is reaching the geographically dispersed population of people with disabilities in Maine. Chart 13 compares the distribution of open Maine DVR cases with SSI recipients and SSDI beneficiaries reported in FFY 2019.

**Findings**

* The geographic distribution of both SSI and SSDI recipients is similar.
* Region I (Cumberland and York counties) has a slightly higher concentration of SSDI recipients than SSI recipients (29% versus 24%), but the other Maine regions are essentially the same, which supports the idea that Social Security information is a reasonable indicator of where Maine residents with severe disabilities are living.
* When comparing the distribution of open DVR cases against the Social Security program data, there is a much lower proportion of open DVR cases who lived in Regions IV and V (22%) relative to SSI recipients (30%) and SSDI recipients (28%).

**CHART 13**

**Distribution of Open Maine DVR Cases with SSI and SSDI Recipients in FFY 2019**

## Minority Populations in Maine

Table 6A shows the distribution by minority group for all cases closed between FFY 2016 and FFY 2019.

**Findings**

* As indicated in Table 4, most the DVR population is white, and the work disability population identified in the ACS is 5.7% compared to 8.1% for Maine DVR – potentially identifying a population of unserved individuals.

**TABLE 6A**

**Maine DVR Minorities Served**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Minorities Served** | **Maine DVR** |
| **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| **Count** | **Percent** | **Count** | **Percent** | **Count** | **Percent** | **Count** | **Percent** |
| All | 4,852 | ---- | 3,459 | ---- | 3,393 |  | 3,396 |  |
| White | 4,595 | 94.7% | 3,210 | 92.8% | 3,099 | 91.3% | 3,121 | 91.9% |
| Black/African American | 177 | 3.6% | 120 | 3.5% | 134 | 4.0% | 116 | 3.4% |
| Native American/Alaska Native | 108 | 2.2% | 68 | 2.0% | 76 | 2.2% | 81 | 2.4% |
| Asian | 28 | 0.6% | 21 | 0.6% | 22 | 0.6% | 25 | 0.7% |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 20 | 0.4% | 4 | 0.1% | 5 | 0.1% | 3 | 0.1% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 75 | 1.5% | 36 | 1.0% | 50 | 1.5% | 50 | 1.5% |
| **Total Number of Minorities** | **408** | **----** | **249** | **----** | **287** | **----** | **275** | **----** |

*Note:* The total exceeds the number of clients because individuals may list multiple race/ethnicity groups.

Another way to determine unmet needs for the minority population is to identify where this population is located. Table 6B shows the distribution of the minority population served by DVR regions.

**Findings**

* Although Region I only closed 29.2% of the cases in FFY 2019, 34.5% of the minorities served were in this region.
* Region II only closed 21.9% of the cases with the second highest percentage (25.8%) of minorities served in this region.
* Region III had the highest percentage of cases closed (25.8%) of which 19.3% of minorities were served in this region.

**TABLE 6B**

**Maine DVR Minorities Served – Closed Cases**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Minorities Served by Region** | **Maine DVR** |
| **Minorities Closed in FFY 2019** | **All Cases Closed in FFY 2019** |
| **Count** | **Percent** | **Count** | **Percent** |
| Region I*Cumberland and York* | 95 | 34.5% | 990 | 29.2% |
| Region II*Androscoggin, Franklin, Oxford, and Sagadahoc* | 71 | 25.8% | 744 | 21.9% |
| Region III*Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Somerset, and Waldo* | 53 | 19.3% | 876 | 25.8% |
| Region IV*Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Washington* | 48 | 17.5% | 544 | 16.0% |
| Region V*Aroostook* | 6 | 2.2% | 179 | 5.3% |
| Out of State | 2 | 0.7% | 63 | 1.8% |
| **TOTAL** | **275** | **100.0%** | **3,396** | **100.0%** |

## Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are both represented in DVR’s current caseload and are an indicator of the possible disability distribution and needs of the future. Using a current breakout of student ages 14 to 20 by disability category (see Chart 14), DVR can project that the students with learning disabilities and those with physical impairments continue to be the largest disability population.

**Findings**

* Based on a total of 9,338 students in this age group in Maine schools, only 37 students (0.4%) are identified as hearing impaired and 19 students (0.2%) are identified as having a traumatic brain injury.
* Autism numbers continue to grow with a total number of students (n=859) in 2016, further analysis (see Section E. Other Populations with Disabilities below) reveals that this number will be increasing significantly in the coming years.

**CHART 14**

**Anticipated Need for Employment Services among Special Education Students**

**Ages 14 to 20 from School Year 2012–2019**

## Distribution of DVR Transition Counselors

Each Maine high school and private special purpose school has an assigned VR Counselor who has primary responsibility for serving its students. Recent changes in Maine law have required administrative consolidation of school districts. Thus, many high schools are in new districts that may not align with DVR service districts. Additionally, a small number of high schools have closed or have been combined with other high schools. Chart 15 examines the numbers of VR Counselors who serve transition students with the current population of students in special education who are between the ages of 14 and 20.

**Findings**

* While not all of these students will become VR clients, based on this analysis, there may be greater capacity in certain areas of the state than others. In particular, Region I (Cumberland and York) has the potential to be asked to serve a greater number of transition-age clients per counselor in comparison to Region III (Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Somerset, and Waldo) and Region V (Aroostook).
* In Region II (Androscoggin, Franklin, Oxford, and Sagadahoc) and Region IV (Hancock, Piscataquis, Penobscot and Washington), there appears to be more equitable ratio of students to counselors.

**CHART 15**

**DVR Transition Counselors and Exceptionality Population by VR Region**

**Students Ages 14 to 20 as of February 2018**

**Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened**

Individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing are estimated to be 15% (37.5 million) of adults nationwide (National Health Interview Survey, 2012). Rates of individuals identified with hearing loss increases with age. In 2017, an estimated 23,142 (51%) Maine individuals of working age have a hearing disability. After age 65, the percentage of individuals with hearing loss increases substantially (CWRI, 2019). As seen in Chart 6, individuals with hearing loss served by DVR have a consistently higher rehabilitation rate (77% in FFY 2019) in comparison to individuals with other disabilities. Individuals with hearing loss also have higher average weekly wages and hours worked at the time of DVR successful closure (See Chart 8).

Maine DVR’s Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened (DDHHLD) houses a director, assistant to the director, and three Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCDs). The RCDs help individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing access and maintain employment. BRS has a contractual agreement to procure hearing aids for eligible Maine clients of the Vocational Rehabilitation program. This contract is in the form of a cooperative agreement through the state of Minnesota, which in turn contracts directly with hearing aid manufacturers around the US. BRS has been making use of these contracts since October 2010 and has realized significant savings for the state, which has allowed DVR to serve additional individuals who otherwise may not have been able to access services.

The implementation of the wait list in 2016 changed the spending patterns for hearing aid and audiological expenditures. Chart 15-1 demonstrates a 41% decrease in the number of participants between FFY 2016 and FFY 2017, and the average costs decreased from $1,681 to $1,561 – a 7% decrease. The number of participants increased by 72% from FFY 2017 to FFY 2019 and the average costs increased from $1,561 in FFY 2017 to $1,848 in FFY 2019 – a 16% increase.

**CHART 15-1**

**Hearing Aid and Audiologist Expenditures**

* 1. **Appendix 2 – All Closures**

**Case Closure Status by Disability Type from FFY 2016 to FFY 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ALL DVR CLOSURES** | **FFY 2016** | **FFY 2017** | **FFY 2018** | **FFY 2019** |
| Total Closures | 4,852 | 3,459 | 3,393 | 3,396 |
| Rehabilitated (Status 26) | 1,166 | 758 | 737 | 767 |
| Other than Rehabilitated (Status 28) | 1,336 | 1,292 | 1,365 | 1,472 |
| Rehabilitation Rate\* | 47% | 37% | 35% | 34% |
| Visual or No Impairment | 631 | 494 | 488 | 499 |
| Rehabilitated (Status 26) | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Other than Rehabilitated (Status 28) | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Rehabilitation Rate\* | 17% | 33% | 0% | 60% |
| Deaf or Hard of Hearing | 649 | 313 | 197 | 231 |
| Rehabilitated (Status 26) | 454 | 169 | 149 | 177 |
| Other than Rehabilitated (Status 28) | 117 | 50 | 29 | 32 |
| Rehabilitation Rate\* | 80% | 77% | 76% | 77% |
| Physical  | 713 | 462 | 567 | 550 |
| Rehabilitated (Status 26) | 142 | 103 | 134 | 140 |
| Other than Rehabilitated (Status 28) | 210 | 215 | 261 | 267 |
| Rehabilitation Rate\* | 40% | 32% | 23% | 25% |
| Mental Illness | 1,682 | 1,245 | 1,207 | 1,104 |
| Rehabilitated (Status 26) | 299 | 245 | 221 | 201 |
| Other than Rehabilitated (Status 28) | 598 | 569 | 605 | 605 |
| Rehabilitation Rate\* | 33% | 30% | 18% | 18% |
| Cognitive  | 1,177 | 945 | 934 | 1,012 |
| Rehabilitated (Status 26) | 270 | 239 | 233 | 246 |
| Other than Rehabilitated (Status 28) | 406 | 418 | 466 | 566 |
| Rehabilitation Rate\* | 40% | 36% | 25% | 24% |

**\***Rehabilitation Rate = Status 26 Closures/Status 26 + Status 28 Closures

1. Closures in Table 1 include all types of closures, including successful closures, as well as cases where the individual was found not eligible, found their own employment, did not complete their VR plan, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For more information on the ACS, see <http://www.census.gov/acs> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Maine Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Policy Manual 2010 Final Rules [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. To compute this estimate, the assumption is that the proportion of all Maine SSI recipients (both aged and disabled) who are also eligible for SSDI (39%) is the same for disabled SSI recipients only. There is a total of 36,860 SSI recipients with disabilities and 64,708 SSDI recipients with disabilities deducted from 14,398 SSI recipients with disabilities who are also eligible for SSDI for the overall total of 87,170 SSI and SSDI recipients in Maine with disabilities. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)