

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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2017-2018

Bureau of Rehabilitation Services Highlights

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services works to bring about full access to employment, independence and community integration for people with disabilities.



*The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity in employment and programs.
Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities upon request.*

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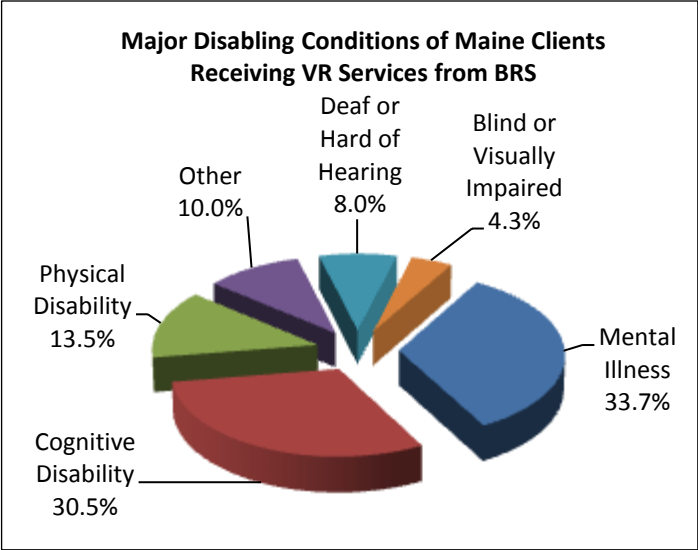
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services Overview – 2017

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 155 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 blind children in Maine.

In 2017, **9,489** Mainers with disabilities received services from BRS; of those participants, **6,896** received services with a plan for employment. Counselors worked with clients who had an employment plan, on average, for 24.0 months. This year, **786** clients were successfully employed earning an average wage of \$342.32 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.

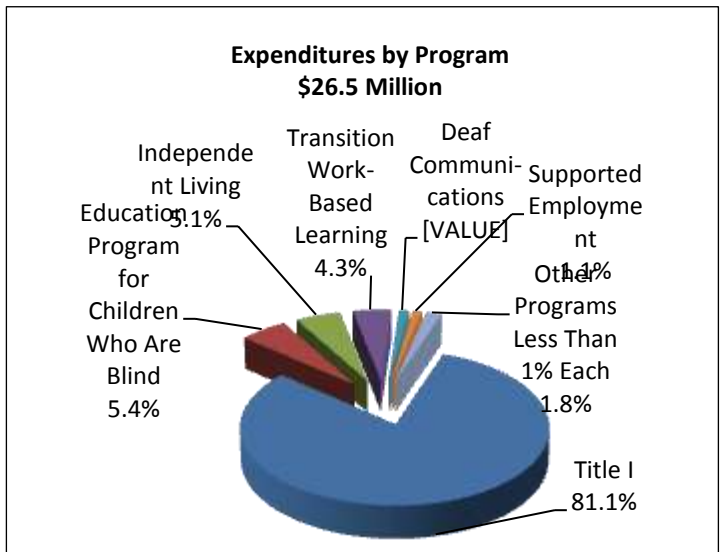
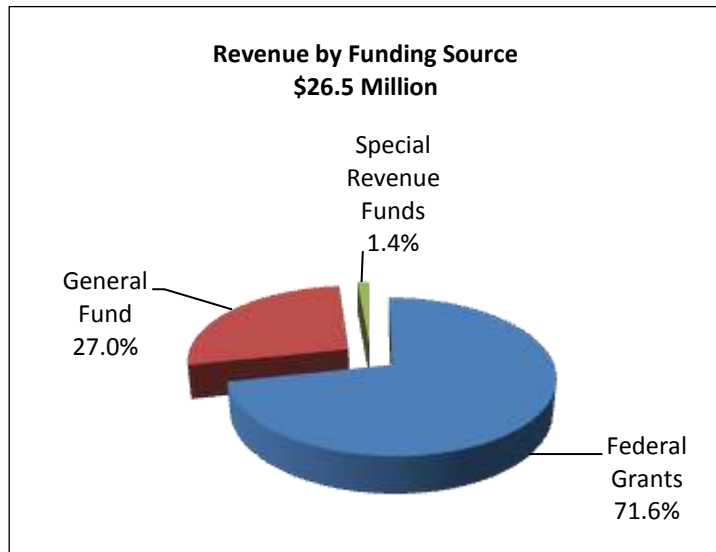


Federal Grants

- 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...



“Jeff”, a law enforcement officer was afraid of losing his job due to progressive hearing loss. Jeff worked with a Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf who assisted him to get hearing aids and other supports. He wrote recently to say “It’s so good to hear well again.”

“Linda” was referred to DVR from the Workers Compensation Board following an accident that left her unable to continue her position in a medical office. Linda wanted to continue to help people and worked with her VR Counselor to make a plan that included additional educational coursework. Linda is now happily re-employed as an Ed Tech for a local school district and is looking forward to continuing to move up in her field.



“Joe”, a client with a physical disability, came to DVR after the small business where he had been working closed and he was unemployed for a year. His VR Counselor worked with him to build his confidence by participating in the Career Exploration Workshop and identifying transferrable skills. With her support and encouragement, and a great new resume, he attended job fairs and was recently hired at a great local tech business!

“Jessie”, a young woman living in Washington County, came to DVR after dropping out of high school. Jessie faced many barriers including physical and mental health challenges and significant obesity. While working with VR, Jessie identified that she wanted a career in the social services and re-enrolled in high school. VR assisted Jessie to get a work based learning experience with a local non-profit. She did so well that the agency offered her a job after she graduated. Jessie started feeling very positive about her future and to date has lost 40 pounds! Her next goal is to attend college!



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

While maintaining a wait list for services, DVR assisted **758** people to find employment success in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2017. This resulted in these individuals earning a total of **\$13,501,273.24** in annual wages. Across the state and across industry sectors, DVR clients are joining or rejoining the workforce in such jobs as:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Accountant and Auditor | Education Administrator | Maintenance Worker |
| Automotive Service Technician | Firefighter | Medical Secretary |
| Bookkeeper | First-Line Supervisor | Nursing Assistant |
| Building Cleaning Worker | Food Preparation Worker | Office Assistant |
| Bus Driver | General Manager | Pharmacy Technician |
| Carpenter | Hairdresser | Registered Nurse |
| Cashier | Healthcare Support Worker | Retail Salesperson |
| Childcare Worker | Heavy Truck Driver | Security Guard |
| Civil Engineer | Home Health Aide | Social Worker |
| Community Health Worker | Insurance Sales Agent | Special Education Teacher |
| Computer Programmer | Janitor | Teacher Assistant |
| Customer Service Representative | Laborer | Web Developer |
| Detective | Librarian | Welder |
| Editor | Loan Officer | Writer |

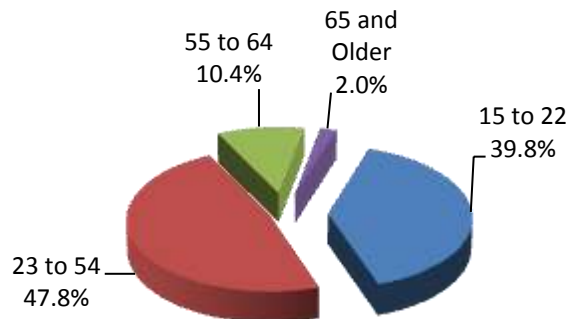
Individuals Served in 2017

- 3,609** New Applicants
- 5,979** Received Services through Employment Plans
- 758** Individuals Placed in Competitive Employment

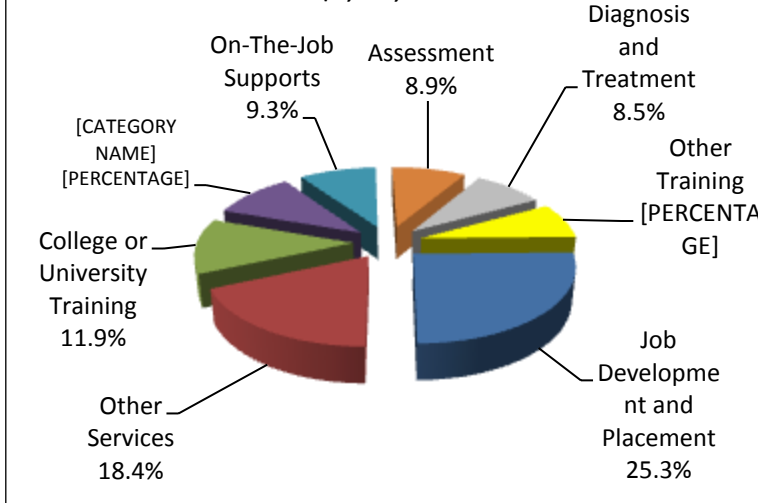
Education Outcomes

- 152** Individuals Increased their Education Level

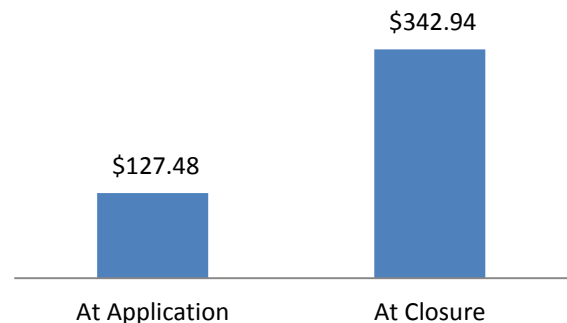
Age At Application



VR Case Service Expenditures in FFY 2017 for DVR
\$6,903,376.88



Average Change in Weekly Wages



DVR Initiatives and Innovations

Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened (DDHHL D) 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. DDHHL D 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. DDHHL D 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 three versions: Adult, Transition, 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 initiatives, MDOE's State Personnel Development Grant and Discovering Personal Genius™, a DHHS supported career planning program for individuals with significant disabilities. 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 new partnerships with schools, 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!

Transition Work-Based Learning Model Demonstration (TWBLM) 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.



**ANNOUNCE
AN INITIATIVE**

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 two years ago, more than 125 VR youth clients have been actively engaged in Progressive Employment activities 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, Goodwill Industries of Northern New England, Trader Joe’s, WMPG Radio, YMCA of Southern Maine, Cinemagic, Renys, Staples, Cabela’s, T.J. Maxx, Gorham Bike and Ski, Cintas, Ace Hardware, O’Reilly Auto Parts, Oxford Auto Salvage, Lowe’s Home Improvement, Walmart, Pat’s Pizza, Portland Sea Dogs, and many more!

“Steve”, a high school student had a love for sports and always had a desire to work in sports, but he struggled with being around a lot of people. Steve started working with an employment specialist through the Progressive Employment model where he started to learn about jobs within sports. Steve went on tours at a local ice arena and a sporting goods store. He also did a trial work experience at a local retail store where he could learn to stock the shelves and help at the store. After the work experience, the employment specialist realized that Steve was very organized and could complete tasks assigned to him. During his summer vacation, Steve completed another trial work experience at the local professional baseball team. Steve thrived in helping and organizing locker rooms for the teams. When school started again, Steve had so much confidence that he applied for a job at a local recreation center where he is currently working as a score keeper. Steve has been successfully employed for 90 days and achieving his dream of working in sports.

Darcy Brock
Business Acc
Maine Depart
Division of V
151 Jetport B
South Portla

Tel: (207) 8
Cell: (207) 2
Fax: (207) 8

E-mail: Darcy@maine.gov

Website: <http://www.maine.gov>

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 7 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.

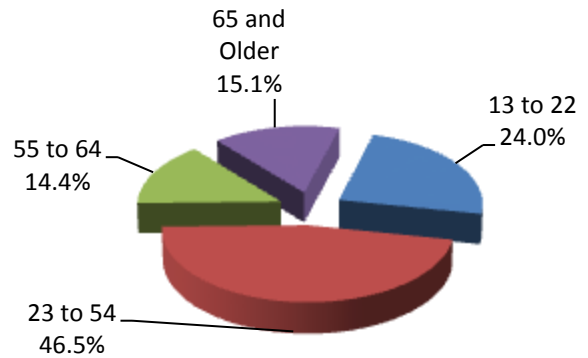
Education Services for Children Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired provides adaptive instruction services or consultation to approximately 300 students annually in home or local schools related to academics and independence.

VR Program

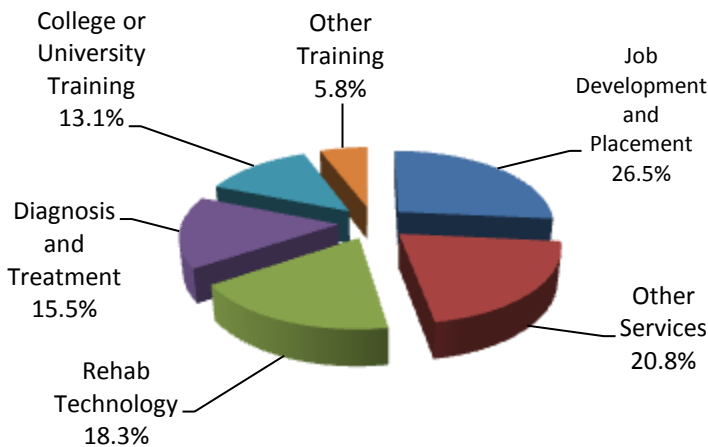
Individuals Served in 2017

- 98** New Applicants
- 315** Received Services through Employment Plans
- 60** Individuals Placed in Employment

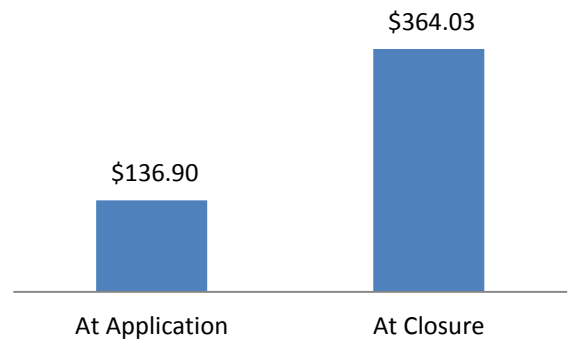
Age At VR Application



VR Case Service Expenditures in FFY 2017 for DBVI
\$263,075.11



Average Change in Weekly Wages



DBVI Initiatives and Innovations

Maine's Business Enterprise Program (BEP) operations have changed substantially since the program's beginning. BEP now operates four types of facilities: vending machines, snack bars, full-service cafes and Micro Markets. BEP operations have grown due to legislative amendments, program initiatives, competition, and customer demand for the highest level of quality, service and cleanliness. Food service operations exist in federal, state, county and municipal locations serving the Department of Defense, U.S. Postal Service, Colleges, State Parks, as well as Federal and State government employees from Kittery to Limestone. The BEP, through its self-employed managers, currently provides employment for more than 40 individuals, many of them people with and without disabilities.

LIFE 101 – (L: Learning, I: Independence, F: Fun, E: Employment) is a two-week residential program immersing young adults in utilizing their strengths, building relationships and fostering independence. The focus of the program is to offer “real life” situations that teenagers and adults often face daily. Through instruction and social experiences, the students navigate various scenarios to increase confidence. Students also have opportunities to practice daily living skills, such as planning, budgeting and preparing meals, learning various travel modes with the instruction of an Orientation and Mobility Instructor, and beginning the process of vocational development with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. This program allows for socialization, increased self-awareness and self-advocacy.

LIFE 201 – (L: Learning, I: Independence, F: Fun, E: Employment) is a three-week residential program with an emphasis on community work experience. Students will reside in Portland and will be supported by staff both at the residence, during community activities, and at the worksite. Students will have the opportunity to expand on and practice daily living skills. The focus of the first week will be orientation and mobility lessons to the campus and worksite. Students will participate in general sessions around apartment/home search, paying bills, banking, loans, taxes, employment forms, budgeting, organization, time management, personal safety and ongoing vocational development. Students will participate in daily meal preparation and ongoing social skill development. The second and third week is focused on the students participating in a paid work experience at a local business.

Living on Your Own (LOYO) is a four-and-a-half-day overnight experience for blind and visually impaired high school students. The focus of LOYO is to expose teens in a safe and supportive environment real life experiences of living on your own. Teens will be required to utilize problem solving skills that can be transferred to home, school and work environments. The program is designed to develop skills in independence and confidence to transition into work, social settings and living independently. Teens will work on socialization, group dynamics, self-awareness, personal strengths, peer relationships, decision making, personal safety, home safety and home management. This skill training will increase the employable skills for the teen to gain future meaningful employment. The program also encourages parent participation. Parents will be provided a survey to identify their son/daughter's level of independence within their home, school and community. Parents can identify any fears, concerns or needs to address during and after the program. Parents will participate in four hours of programming during the LOYO program to facilitate discussion around independence and future goals. Parents will also be able to witness their son/daughter's progress through the LOYO program through social media.

Expanded Core Curriculum Programs: Regions 1 and 2 involves two cooking programs where students create a menu, budget for ingredients, shop for products, and receive cooking lessons. Students also spend the day with staff at various locations and volunteer for part of the day. Students also receive lessons focused on appropriate dress for interviews and purchasing clothing items at a thrift store. Orientation and mobility instruction is weaved throughout the day.

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 that meets five days a week while living in the dorms and eating at the cafeteria. They also participate in daily learning labs related to succeeding in college as a student who is blind or visually impaired. In addition to the college course and 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 provided an opportunity to do a work-study experience on campus and participate in community service projects and recreational activities during the program.

Office of the State Accessibility and Independent Living Coordinator

State Accessibility Highlights

The Accessibility Coordinator leads the State's compliance under the Americans 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.

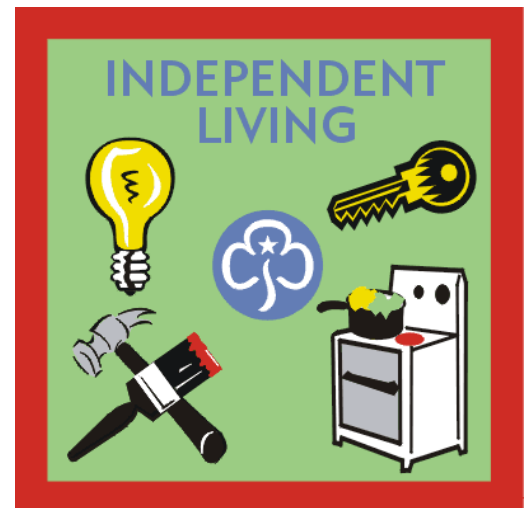
- Through the Information Technology Accessibility Committee (ITAC), advises the Office of Information Technology (OIT) about assistive technology for accommodation of State employees and for public access to State services, programs, and the internet.
- Coordinates a Universal Access work group to implement accessibility for Department of Labor and CareerCenter programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- As part of the Maine Trails Advisory Committee, reviews local project proposals for using Recreational Trails Program funds.
- Responds to questions from businesses and individuals about public accommodations and housing, develops informational materials, and offers public education.



Independent Living Highlights

The State Independent Living (IL) Coordinator monitors the Alpha One Independent Living Services Program and coordinates with the Maine Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) to plan and advocate for improved community opportunities for people with disabilities. The Coordinator also chairs the mPower Adaptive Equipment Loan Program.

- As a Chair of the mPower Loan Board, leads the planning with Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) and Alpha One to transition the flexible loan program to a new financial service provider.
- Completed the Travel Voucher Work Group report to the Legislature for a pilot project to create "purchase of service" transportation programs in rural areas.
- Oversees the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation activities delivered through a contract with Alpha One for Pre-Employment Transition Services in high schools.
- With the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Aging and Disability Services and Alpha One, creates a collaborative approach to reducing wait time for individuals eligible to receive independent living services.



Eric Dibner, ADA Accessibility Coordinator
150 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333
(207) 623-7950 voice, TTY users call Maine Relay 711
Email: Eric.Dibner@maine.gov

Partners in Advocacy, Advisory Boards and Councils



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>

Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened is an advisory council that provides a review of the status of services to deaf and hard-of-hearing persons, recommends priorities for development, evaluates the progress made as a result of recommendations, and sets goals for activities of the division to carry out its obligations and responsibilities to the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities. Website: http://www.maine.gov/rehab/advisory_councils/dod

Commission on Disability and Employment (CDE) is a subcommittee of the State Workforce Board. The commission fosters workforce development in Maine that includes meaningful employment and equal opportunity for people with disabilities and promotes collaboration to increase public awareness and influence public policy. Website: <http://www.maine.gov/swib/committees/disabilities/index.shtml>

DBVI State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a diverse group of people concerned with the quality of vocational rehabilitation services provided to blind Maine citizens. The SRC's core functions are to review, analyze and advise on the policies and other related entities involved with the employment of people who are blind or have vision impairments. Website: <http://maine-src-dbvi.org>

DVR State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) serves its mission to partner with DVR in developing state goals, priorities, policy and practice, as well as to review and analyze DVR's results and performance in support of securing and maintaining employment through a process of informed choice for individuals with disabilities. Website: <http://www.mainesrc.org>

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>

BRS Office Directory

From any location, TTY users call Maine Relay 711

Central Administrative Office

Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
150 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333
Tel: 207-623-6799

Augusta CareerCenter

45 Commerce Drive, Augusta, ME 04333
Tel: 207-624-5120 or 1-800-760-1573

Bangor CareerCenter

45 Oak Street, Suite 1, Bangor, ME 04401
Tel: 207-561-4000 or 1-888-545-8811

Houlton DVR Office

DHHS, 11 High Street, Houlton, ME 04730
Tel: 207-532-5019 or 1-800-432-7338

Lewiston CareerCenter

5 Mollison Way, Lewiston, ME 04240
Tel: 207-753-9000 or 1-800-741-2991

Machias CareerCenter

53 Prescott Drive, Suite 2, Machias, ME 04654
Tel: 207-255-1926 or 1-800-770-7774

Greater Portland CareerCenter

151 Jetport Boulevard, Portland, ME 04102
Tel: 207-822-3300 or 1-877-594-5627

Presque Isle CareerCenter

66 Spruce Street, Suite 3, Presque Isle, ME 04769
Tel: 207-760-6300 or 1-800-635-0357

Rockland CareerCenter

91 Camden Street, Suite 202, Rockland, ME 04841
Tel: 207-594-2641 or 1-877-421-7916

Skowhegan CareerCenter

98 North Avenue, Suite 20, Skowhegan, ME 04976
Tel: 207-474-4958 or 1-800-760-1572