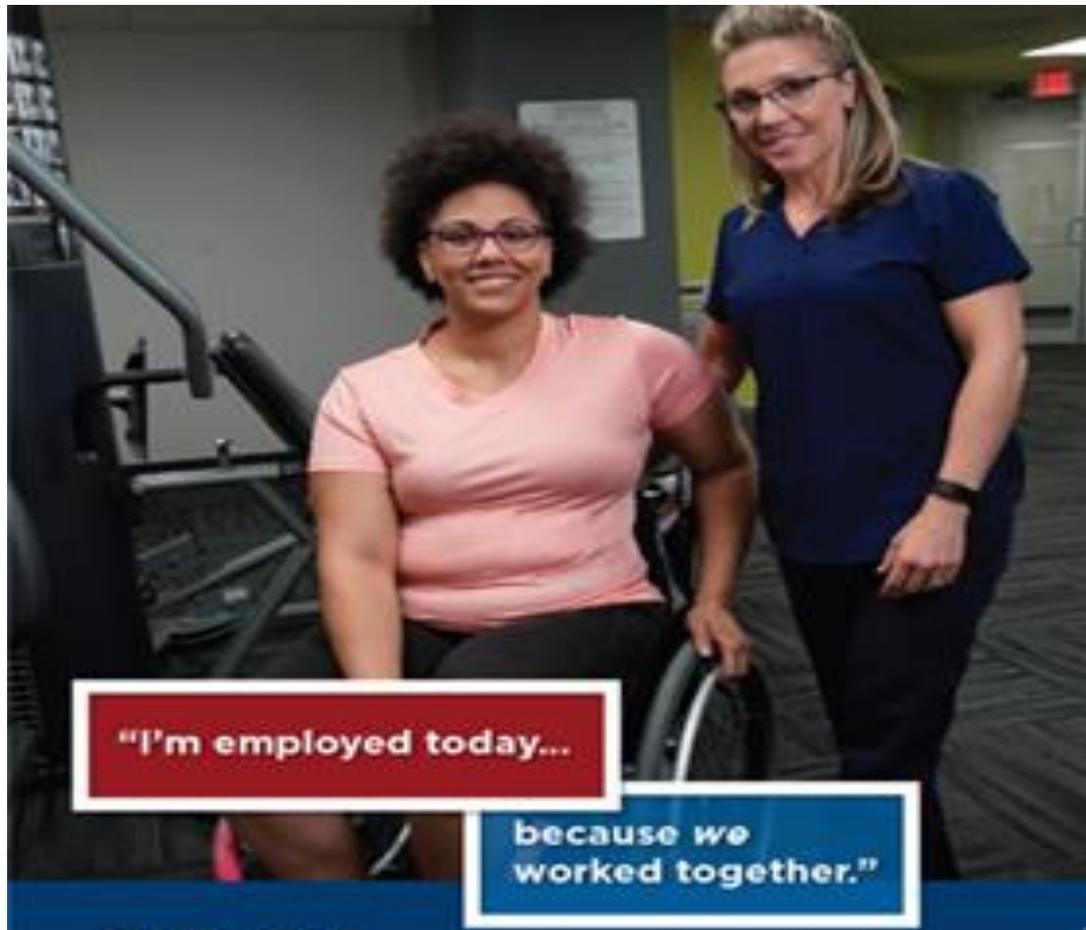


NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

..... providing leadership on behalf of Persons with Disabilities as they prepare for and engage in employment and careers



2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Artwork on cover courtesy of Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)- “Working Works Campaign” – PSA Poster Montage



NH Vocational Rehabilitation
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 20
Concord, NH 03301

Director

Lisa K. Hinson-Hatz

Our Mission

To assist eligible New Hampshire citizens with disabilities to secure suitable employment and financial and personal independence by providing rehabilitation services.

Our Vision

NH Vocational Rehabilitation seeks to become an organization committed to fulfilling the needs of customers by providing continuously improving quality services through an effort of teamwork and professionalism.

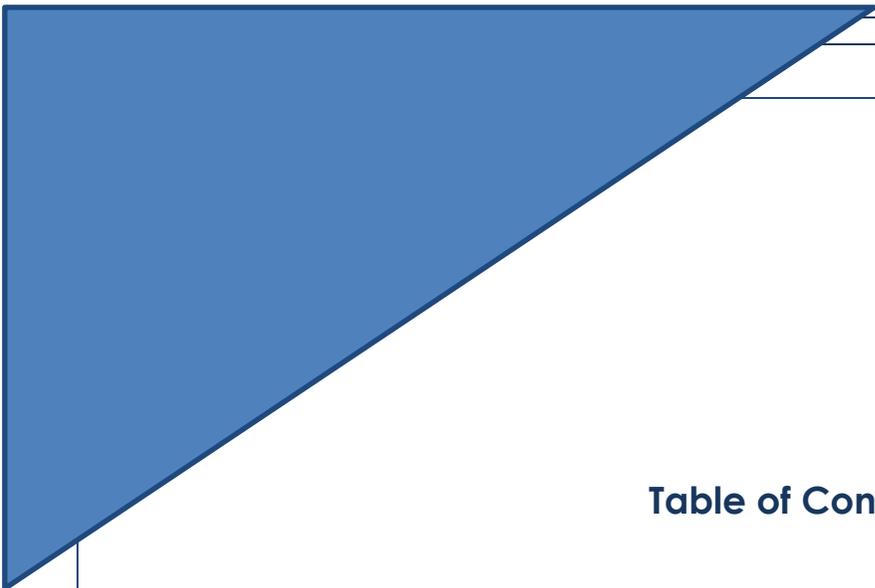


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Message from the SRC Chair...Charles J. Saia, Esq.

I am pleased to submit the 2019 Annual Report on behalf of the New Hampshire State Rehabilitation Council (NH SRC). Change and transition have been mainstay themes over the past few years, and specifically highlighted this past year. 2019 was a year in which the NH SRC immersed itself into the Order of Selection, with the goal of insuring that services were maintained and restored for the benefit of individuals with disabilities. The SRC also examined itself by reviewing its membership as well as its bylaws and committees. By year's end, the NH SRC made great strides in these areas, thereby setting the stage for 2020.

The Order of Selection was a prime focus in 2019. The Order of Selection Group (OOS), convened regularly by NH Vocational Rehabilitation (NH VR) Director Hinson-Hatz, and attended by SRC members offered a clear picture as to the delivery of services. SRC members worked closely with NH VR and freely offered comments and suggestions at SRC meetings and OOS meetings. As of the writing of this Annual Report, NH VR has reported that there are no individuals with disabilities on the NH VR Waitlist. The Client Assistance Program Ombudsman and I attended the RSA Audit meeting of VR and responded to the auditors' inquiries via phone interviews. The NH VR Director debriefed the SRC regularly as to the RSA Audit as well as to the ongoing State of NH Audit conducted by the Legislative Budget Assistant.

The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Education (DOE) continue to support the efforts of the SRC and one or the other have attended SRC meetings or communicated through their VR Director the intent of the Department. DOE Commissioner Edelblut, in responding to the SRC request of more business members to the SRC, has offered recommendations for appointment. The Commissioner also worked with SRC leadership and invited the Commissioner of NH Employment Security to attend an SRC meeting with the goal of fostering stronger relationships and networking with all groups. Collaboration and issue resolution, by both DOE & the SRC, for the benefit of individuals with disabilities are paramount.

The SRC organized itself in work groups to address its existing bylaws and membership. The SRC adopted recommendations and unanimously voted to amend the bylaws to insure accuracy and consistency with the governing federal statute. Changes were also instituted as to existing internal committees' mission and composition. Governor Sununu, upon the advice and vote of the SRC, appointed new members to the SRC, representing the consumer voice as well as a sister State agency. The Executive Committee consisting of Holly Cadwallader, 1st Vice Chair, Chris Purington 2nd Vice Chair, and Nancy Rollins, Immediate Past Chair and I cohesively worked together and collaborated to insure initiatives, appointments and agendas were consistently brought before the full SRC.

Having examined itself and instituted changes, the SRC is invigorated to move forward to insure the most vulnerable of our society are heard. Although the wait list has been eliminated, we can all learn from the past to insure that NH VR does not find itself in similar situation again. The SRC has effectively worked with DOE and in particular NH VR, and the SRC looks forward to continuing this healthy relationship.



Director's Report-2019 Lisa K. Hinson-Hatz

2019 was a year of buckling down and working to eliminate the Order of Selection. I am happy to say that as of December 27, 2019 there will be no more individuals with disabilities on the VR waitlist in NH! Our staff have worked tirelessly to serve individuals nearly every month as they are released off the list and enter service status, writing plans and planning future careers. It feels good to know we will begin 2020 with a semblance of a new normal. The Order of Selection created many impacts on our data this last two years. We have had less individuals applying for services all the way through achieving competitive integrated employment opportunities. We expect all our data points to increase in the coming years as we train new staff and provide new exposure to career pathways customers can enter within our sectors of employment (Hospitality, Healthcare, Information Technology, Construction and Manufacturing).

Our State Rehabilitation Council members provided excellent support to the agency this last year as we navigated the Order of Selection and completed all the necessary work that must be done by the program. We had two consistent members of the Council attend all of the Order of Selection Management Group meetings. At these meetings, we discussed past and potential future releases of customers from the waitlist and discussed all the strategies provided by offices to complete the work necessary. Special thanks to all members of this workgroup. Your efforts along the way were very valuable. This group will continue to meet to view applicants and see that current customers' needs are met in terms of completing their plans for employment.

2020 will be a year of responding to our Legislative Budget Office audit recommendations that seek to enhance the VR program. In addition, we will develop a new and productive program created to make employment opportunities occur for individuals with disabilities. We will also enhance our training materials for our business partners. We will see a new VR logo as well as marketing materials for all aspects of the program. It will be a busy and positive year of growth for the program.

Sincerely,
Lisa Hinson-Hatz

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Purpose

Providing Leadership on Behalf of Persons with Disabilities and Guidance to Vocational Rehabilitation Programs.

Mission

New Hampshire State Rehabilitation Council, through action and advocacy, partners with New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation (NHVR) to strengthen the agency's operation and effectiveness in the delivery of quality and timely services to individuals with disabilities, as they prepare for and engage in employment and careers.

Vision

By collaborating with key disability-related organizations and building strong partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and employers' groups, the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides leadership and advocacy that increases the number of qualified individuals with disabilities who strive to realize their goals of becoming successfully employed. The SRC maintains and widely publicizes the success of this ongoing relationship. This is evidenced by Congressional and State legislative recognition of the cost-effective benefits of the VR program, as they provide consistent financial support for NHVR services.

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

The SRC's responsibilities include:

- Reviewing, analyzing and advising in strategic partnership with NHVR services regarding the performance of the VR agency relating to eligibility, including Order of Selection, extent, scope, and effectiveness of VR services and functions that affect an individual's ability to obtain employment.
- Working in partnership with the state VR program, the SRC develops and reviews state goals established by the VR program, evaluates the effectiveness of the programs and services of the VR agency, and provides a yearly report of progress.
- Providing information and assisting with the development of the unified or combined state plan, plan amendments and needs assessments.
- Conducts and presents an annual customer satisfaction survey to assist the agency in making program improvements and to celebrate successes.
- Prepares and submits an annual report on the status of the VR program.
- Coordinates activities with the other Councils in the state (Independent Living, DD Council and Special Education Council) to avoid duplication of efforts and to develop prosperous relationships to assist in our mission.
- Coordinates the establishment and ongoing relationship with the Independent Living Council and Center for Independent Living program.
- Performs other comparable functions to assist the VR agency, consistent with the purpose of the SRC.

NH State Rehabilitation Council Membership

Executive Committee

Charles J. Saia, Chair
Governor's Commission on Disability

Holly Cadwallader, First Vice Chair
Walpole

Chris Purington, Second Vice Chair
Granite State Independent Living

Nancy Rollins, Immediate Past Chair
Easter Seals of NH

General Membership

Dawn Breault
Merrimack

Kimm Phillips
Parent Information Center

Brent Cote
Nashua

Lauri Jean Pevear
NH Brain Injury Association

Jeff Dickinson, Chair
Statewide Independent Living Council

Lorrie Ripley
Client Assistance Program

Courtney Lockwood
Disability Rights Center

Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre
NH Council on Developmental
Disabilities

Kristen McGraw
Upreach Therapeutic Riding Center

Michael Rudis
Merrimack

David Morgan
Future in Sight

Therese Wilkomm
University of New Hampshire

Jo Moncher
NH DHHS

Ex Officio/Advisory

Lisa K. Hinson-Hatz, Ex Officio
NH VR Director

Peter Darling
Services for Blind & Visually Impaired

Michelle Lapointe, Ex Officio
VR Counselor

Carrie Dudley
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Advocacy/ Outreach

Advocate for NHVR to the State Legislature and the Congressional Delegation. Develop SRC advocacy guideline and internal coordination structure. Develop data to show cost/benefit of the VR program. Develop NHVR success stories. Monitor the committee's strategic plan accomplishment. Increase the public's knowledge of NHVR through an SRC outreach program. Develop a SRC Speakers Bureau, deliver presentation sharing NHVR success stories. Provide SRC input into the customer satisfaction survey and customer needs assessment survey.

Governance/ Membership Development

Responsible for the review and updating of the NH SRC By-Laws; making recommendations to the full SRC. Participate in review and updating of the current NH SRC Purpose, Mission and Vision statements; make recommendations to the full SRC. Prepare a process for identifying and engaging new Council members to fill positions vacated by Council members vacating and/or terming out of their slot. Assure the membership list is up-to-date; new member applications are prepared and sent to the Governor's office; and exiting members are acknowledged and thanked for their service.

Policy

Participate in and review the development of VR policies. Monitor Order of Selection and review policy manual regulations.

State Plan

Participate in, review and monitor the development of the State Plan and monitor the multi-agency State Plan. This committee also has responsibility for providing input and recommendation on the activities for the triennial comprehensive statewide needs assessment.

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Recap of the SRC's Year – Highlights

October 2018 The Policy Director from the Governor's office was present to listen to council member's concerns to get a better understanding of issues facing the VR program in order to become more of an advocate for VR.

Committee updates were provided by Policy, SBVI, Deaf & Hard of Hearing, State Plan, Advocacy/Outreach and Governance/Membership.

January 2019 The Council is briefed on an upcoming audit by RSA to be held in the spring of this year. The VR Director identified OOS management and working out of the order as the highest priority. Fiscal management, complete policy updates, staff training and support follows as priorities for 2019.

April 2019 The Commissioner of Education attended the April meeting to give a progress update on the upcoming one-year anniversary date of the agency entering into an OOS. VR is now open to all Most Severely Disabled customers. The Commissioner is asked to assist the Council to engage with NH's business community more effectively, specifically in terms of membership recruitment.

June 2019 The Commissioner of NH Employment Security met with the Council to discuss connecting VR customers to various employment markets. The Commissioner and Employment Security staff will work to identify NH business members who may be interested in joining the council.

The VR Director provided an update on both the RSA Federal audit and State Legislative Office audit currently in progress.

September 2019 Representatives from the Human Services Research Institute updated the Council on the results to date of the NHVR's statewide needs assessment in preparation of the completion of NHVR's State Plan.

The Governance/Membership Committee presented revisions made to the SRC by-laws, which were last updated in June of 2010. The Council votes to adopt the changes.

NH Vocational Rehabilitation FY 2019 in Review October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019

Vocational Rehabilitation is a joint State/Federal program that assists eligible individuals with disabilities to become contributing members of their community. To this end, New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation supports the following programs and priorities

- Rehabilitation Services
- Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Independent Living
- Transition & Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Supported Employment

Working with People with Disabilities.....

During Federal Fiscal Year 2019, NH Vocational Rehabilitation

- Helped **406 individuals** with disabilities gain employment
- The average hourly wage was **\$13.69**
- The average hours worked per week was **25**
- The average weekly salary was **\$375**
- The average annual salary was **\$19,509**

NH Vocational Rehabilitation FY 2019 in Review October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019

People with disabilities can work and take advantage of the opportunities available to the citizens of New Hampshire. Yet they face barriers unique to their situation, barriers that prevent them from achieving their goals. Vocational Rehabilitation assists persons with disabilities to achieve their employment goals through the provision of services to address those barriers.

Who Are Our Customers

During Federal Fiscal Year 2019, NH Vocational Rehabilitation....

- Worked with 3,930 eligible customers
- Received 1,329 new applicants

Types of Disabilities

Mental Health	32%
Cognitive	34%
Physical Disability	15%
Hard of Hearing	5%
Blind or Visual Impairment	7%
Deafness	2%
Communicative	3%
Other	2%

NH Vocational Rehabilitation FY 2019 in Review October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019

In Fiscal Year 2019:

- NHVR assisted 115 individuals with a Supported Employment goal in achieving their successful outcome.
- NHVR assisted 786 individuals in writing Plans for Employment; 286 or 36% of those were students.
- NHVR assisted 19 individuals in completing their Individual Plan for Employment in Self-Employment.
- NHVR recognized five NH businesses at our 11th Annual Employment Leadership Awards.

No one should be deprived of an opportunity to recognize and realize their talents and potentialities because of a disability.

Average Earnings

*.. for Federal Fiscal Year 2019
the Average annual earnings of customers before and after rehabilitation.*

**Before
\$7,188**



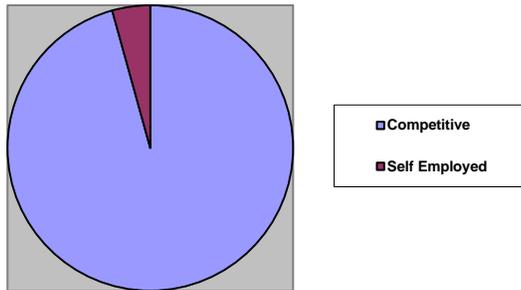
**After
\$19,509**



NH Vocational Rehabilitation FY 2019 in Review October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019

Types of Jobs.....

*During Federal Fiscal Year 2019,
406 customers gained employment.*



Sources of Revenue

During Federal Fiscal Year 2019, NHVR received....

Federal Funds	\$11,425,925
State Funds	\$3,276,375
Program Income	\$2,481,657
Total	\$17,183,957

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired: Changes and Plans for Growth

In July 2019, Daniel Frye joined the New Hampshire Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (NHVR) as the new Administrator of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI), the blindness-specific unit within NHVR, focusing on vocational rehabilitation, independent living services for the older blind population, and all other programs and services that cater to the needs of New Hampshire's blind and vision-impaired community. Prior to joining SBVI, Dan served, among other roles, as the Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) from October 2013-January 2018; as the National Manager for Randolph-Sheppard with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) from July 2010-October 2013; in successive management roles on the national staff of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) from September 2005-July 2010; and as the National Advocate for the Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand (ABCNZ) from November 2002-February 2005. Dan earned his JD. from the University of Washington, School of Law in 1993 and his BA. In History from Erskine College in Due West, South Carolina in 1990.

Asked to comment on his appointment, Dan said, "I'm delighted to have been invited to join the team at SBVI and NHVR. Recognizing the hard work of my predecessors, I am looking forward to building on the program's legacy of high-quality, comprehensive programs and services for the blind and vision-impaired residents of the state."

Toward this end, SBVI has undertaken several initiatives to improve services to eligible consumers across the lifespan: First, plans are underway to create a more robust, blindness-specific program of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Specifically, work is currently underway

VR Program Highlights

to develop a summer program focusing on acquisition of nonvisual blindness skills and early employment awareness for interested youth. Further, efforts are also underway to create a regular, year-round series of community gatherings (including blind and vision-impaired students, their parents, and special education teachers) that will focus on the critical soft skills that are essential for preparing youth to ready themselves for college or post-secondary employment. Finally, under the umbrella of transition, initial steps are being taken to create a series of self-advocacy seminars for blind and vision-impaired youth, preparing them for the opportunities and challenges of navigating life in school, college, or the early days of employment. Stay tuned for this exciting array of transition-related measures that will be introduced over the next twelve months and more.

At the other end of the spectrum, Dan and the dedicated staff of SBVI have concentrated on developing a stronger program for the state's blind and vision-impaired older blind community, defined by Federal regulation as fifty-five and older. In an effort to evaluate and plan for the future of the Sight Services for Independent Living (SSIL) program, staff from the Independent Living Older Blind Technical Assistance Center at Mississippi State were engaged to visit New Hampshire, interact with staff and stakeholders of the SSIL program, and make recommendations and observations about potential improvements to be adopted for this constituency. Subsequent to their visit, plans are under way to expand and enhance services to qualified consumers. Some of the anticipated changes include offering more comprehensive Access Technology instruction to interested customers, and on the more ambitious end of the scale, creating a series of week-long blindness skills retreats for those who want more than the current level of introduction to, and training in, blindness that they currently receive.

VR Program Highlights

It would be remiss if, in this report, we failed to pay tribute and ever-lasting gratitude to Rose Prescott, who has coordinated the SSIL program for the last several decades. After serving with distinction blind and vision-impaired consumers of SBVI, in one capacity or another, since 1970, Rose has decided to retire at the end of this year. Her strong championship of opportunities and programs for blind and vision-impaired residents of New Hampshire will forever be remembered and will leave an impact of which she should be justifiably proud. We at SBVI will miss her good humor, kind spirit, and deep knowledge of all things blindness-related. And while plans are in the works to hire behind Rose, guaranteeing the continuation of this program, it will be hard to identify anybody who will have the respect of the community and institutional knowledge of our programs that Rose brought with her to work every day.

In an effort to promote increased participation in, and effectiveness of, New Hampshire's Randolph-Sheppard program, our existing managers have had the opportunity to participate in multiple upward mobility training sessions (nationally and locally) during the last year. In collaboration with other partners in state government, SBVI has worked to improve opportunities for its Randolph-Sheppard managers who operate businesses along the interstate highway system. Looking forward, plans are being made to review and strengthen the Randolph-Sheppard operating rules and systems in the year ahead.

Finally, SBVI's dedicated Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors continue to help blind and vision-impaired adults prepare for, and secure, integrated, competitive employment. Toward this aim, SBVI has considered during the last months of this year, and will examine in the year ahead, policies that are calculated to expand the diversity

VR Program Highlights

and number of blind and vision-impaired consumers who aspire to work. Among these practices will be a personal and professional success; this simple but profound philosophy of service provision will be SBVI's touchstone going forward.

Improvement in these and other areas of SBVI programming could not be accomplished without the support of the SBVI Advisory Council, a committee of diverse stakeholders who come together quarterly to advise the SBVI Administrator and staff on ideas to maintain a strong and vibrant program. In this regard, an invitation has gone out to encourage new people to join the SBVI Advisory Council, and we are optimistic that this new and committed group of stakeholders will play an important role in helping Dan and the SBVI staff to forge a bright and bountiful future for the consumers of SBVI.

In closing, if you are blind, vision-impaired, or are experiencing significant difficulty seeing, please reach out to SBVI for information, resources, and services. SBVI aspires to be the one-stop shop for all things blindness in New Hampshire. Put us to the test; you will not be disappointed.

NH Employment Leadership Award for 2019

Five Guys is one of the five businesses awarded with the 2019 NH Employment Leadership Award and also recognized by NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs “Spotlight Award”.

At Five Guys, the philosophy is simple: great burgers and fries, crafted in a clean restaurant run by friendly staff. There are 11 New Hampshire locations where their guests receive consistent, enthusiastic service and excellent food sourced from quality providers.

All employees are treated equally, with respect and dignity. Employment opportunities are welcomed and promoted for anyone interested, including members of our society that may need additional assistance to be successful. Promotions from the existing employee pool are also encouraged and Five Guys works hard to find – even create – the best mutual fit for our crew members. They work with a number of agencies to make that happen.

Kipp Johnson, the HR manager for Five Guys began working with the NHVR Business Relations Consultant in 2017. The partnership has led to many successful employment opportunities for NHVR participants. Five Guys is truly committed to creating a diverse workplace by hiring individuals with disabilities or who are otherwise disadvantaged, making accommodations so that they can be successful in the workplace. They hold strong to the philosophy that customers deserve consistency and quality and that everyone has value, the right to a fulfilling job and a meaningful place in the community.

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey

Our most recent customer satisfaction score was 78 for the overall agency.

Our priorities in a new customer satisfaction survey will be to determine customer satisfaction with the following:

- Community Rehabilitation Providers
- Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Business Relations
- Satisfaction with VR Staff
- Client Assistance Program

A new Request for Proposals was published in the summer of 2019 for the upcoming year's customer satisfaction scores.

NH State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

The SRC continues to develop linkages and forge productive relationships with a number of Councils and Boards, including:

- State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB)
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Committee
- Services for Blind and Visually Impaired Advisory Committee
- Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD)
- Granite State Independent Living
- Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
- Client Assistance Program
- Parent Information Center
- NH Council on Developmental Disabilities
- NH Department of Health and Human Services: Bureau of Developmental Services and the Bureau of Mental Health Services

A VR Counselor recently sent the following success story to share with our SRC and staff:

Mr. S experiences functional limitations due to MS. He uses an electric scooter to be mobile. He was previously in the construction design business for several years in a more physical capacity. However, his diagnosis of MS made getting out to construction sites difficult. He wanted to continue his design expertise from the comfort of his home. This career is his passion. He had positive aspects and influences from his family, extensive knowledge of the field, and the drive to engage in a self-employment plan to build his own business for Home Design Architect. He also had a drive for recruiting a customer base. He received SSDI and did not want to jeopardize his benefits. He knew to stay within the realm of the requirements and speak to a benefits specialist to assure himself of this.

The software for his business was expensive; he would also need the computer technology to support it as well. He did all his own research, supplied his computer and made sure it would support the software needed. Vocational Rehabilitation secured the Chief Architect software for Mr. S. He was able to educate himself quickly and proficiently with it. He had customers immediately, and was turning out plans for them. He was able to utilize QuickBooks, and furnish his profits and loss statements quickly and accurately.

Mr. S had a positive attitude at all times and knew he was going to be successful. He continues to strive with his customer base. He networks well and receives positive feedback from all his clients.

Call: 603-271-3348
Sue Roma, SRC liaison

Fax: 603-271-7095

Write:
Chair, State Rehabilitation Council
NH Vocational Rehabilitation
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 20
Concord, NH 03301

Website:

<http://education.nh.gov/career/vocational/advisory.htm>

Attend a Meeting or Public Forum:

The State Rehabilitation Council meetings and Public Forums are open to the public. SRC meetings are generally held in October, January, March and June with a special retreat each September/October. Public forums are generally held in February or March. The meeting locations, dates and times are posted on the SRC webpage.

<http://education.nh.gov/career/vocational/advisory.htm>

Apply for Membership:

If you are interested in becoming a member of the SRC, you can contact Sue Roma, SRC Liaison at 603-271-3348.