

Rehabilitation Council of Texas 2022 Annual Report

In partnership with the Texas Workforce Commission

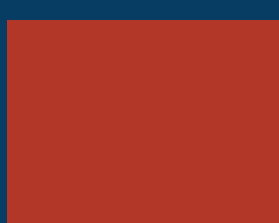
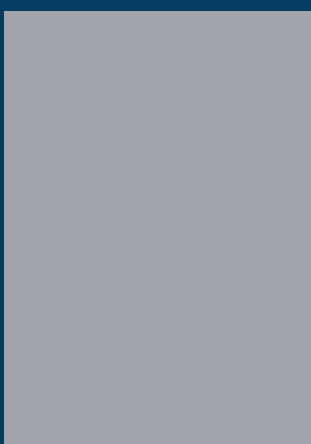
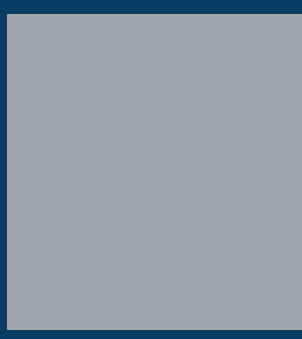
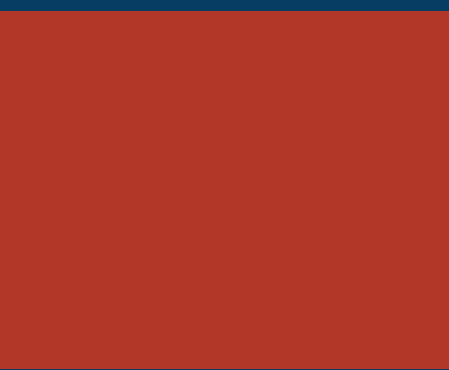
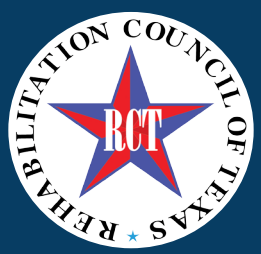


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Messages

Message from Council Chair Michael A . Ebbeler, Jr.



It is with great Texas pride that I report to you that in Fiscal Year 2022 (FY'22) the Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT) has successfully emerged from what I think we all agree could be called our COVID-19 nightmare and has done so with great momentum and a forward-looking outlook.

Although there were, of course, significant challenges along the way, I can say with full certainty that, as Texans will do, the RCT pulled up its proverbial bootstraps and got to work. With FY'22 considered the emergence from the COVID-19 restrictions bestowed upon us, the RCT, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), and Texas as a whole powered through with might and strength and, I am proud to say, came out the other end smelling like a yellow rose.

While we account for and celebrate the relative recovery from the COVID-19 nightmare, it isn't completely behind everyone. For the scars left by the loss of loved ones, we all mourn with you and yours as we also continue to remain vigilant and practice protective health measures per CDC, state, and local guidelines. With that, I can say with confidence and pride that our team held together. Despite the challenges that the entire world experienced, we as a council, a state, and the overall human race grew, advanced, and more than survived. I am proud, humbled, and honored to have had the opportunity to lead through this unprecedented period.

By the time you read this I will have termed out of my membership. I served two full three-year terms and had the great honor of being elected to serve consecutively as chair for three one-year terms. I leave grateful for and humbled by the opportunity to have led such a wise and capable council. With the new leadership in place and poised to succeed, I expect the RCT's forward-moving vocational rehabilitation (VR) progress to continue.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'm. ebbeler'.

Michael A. Ebbeler Jr.
RCT Chairman

Message from Vocational Rehabilitation Division Director Cheryl A. Fuller



As FY'22 comes to a close, I am proud of what we have achieved over the last two years during this time of rapid change and never-before-seen interruptions to our way of doing business.

As director of the Texas VR program, it is my honor, on behalf of TWC, to partner with the RCT to ensure that individuals with disabilities have expanded career opportunities and a clear path to meaningful employment in the growing Texas economy. With the RCT's ongoing support, TWC served more than 89,750 Texans with disabilities in FY'22, leading to more than 10,780 individuals achieving successful employment outcomes.

Over the past two years, we have adapted to these changes by innovating our processes; engaging with staff, providers, and stakeholders; and implementing strategies in the six major goal areas we developed in partnership with the RCT and incorporated into the VR portion of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan (CSP).

Keeping our "Customer FIRST" approach as our guiding principle, VR has worked hard to engage our customers, partner with them to provide the services they need to achieve their employment goals and, in collaboration with our providers across the state, delivered more than 43,670 Pre-employment Transition Services to 14,608 students with disabilities.

As you will see in the CVS Health success story about Bennett Rhymes, who has benefitted from VR services from his teen years to now in college, our services make positive impacts in the lives of individuals with disabilities. Bennett's confidence is apparent as he talks about his paid work experience at CVS.

Our partnership with employers continues to expand as we round out the first biennium of the We Hire Ability employer recognition program. We held nine employer recognition events with TWC Commissioners during FY'22 and partnered with those businesses to promote ongoing disability inclusion. The VR Business Team continues to partner with numerous companies, such as Dell Technologies, United Health Group, Advance Auto Parts, H-E-B, Walgreens, Dow Chemical, and Baylor Scott & White, to create training opportunities for VR customers in work environments that allow for growth and employment opportunities.

I look forward to our partnership in FY'23 as we continue working together to implement the strategies from the WIOA CSP and improve and expand services for Texans with disabilities.

Cheryl Fuller
Vocational Rehabilitation Division Director

About the RCT

Mission, Values , and Responsibilities

The Rehabilitation Council of Texas (Council) advises the state's designated Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program on policy, scope, and effectiveness of services. The Council is federally mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA.

The Council helps ensure that Texans with disabilities have access to effective VR services that result in competitive and integrated employment, greater independence, and community participation. Bylaws that are designed to support this goal govern the Council.

The Texas governor appoints Council members for three-year terms to represent a diverse range of individuals with disabilities and community perspectives. They are charged with being the voice of VR service recipients.

The Council participates in National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils to promote a nationally consistent vision for VR priorities, goals, and outcomes.

Learn more by visiting texasworkforce.org/agency/rehabilitation-council-texas.

Mission

The Council's mission is to partner with the state vocational rehabilitation program to advocate for Texans with disabilities in the vocational rehabilitation process.

Values

- The worth and dignity of each individual
 - The right to choice, which is realized by access to full information
 - Work opportunities, which open doors to individual independence and participation in community life
 - Person-centered goals, service plans, and delivery systems leading to individual success
 - Shared roles and responsibilities to improve customer satisfaction with the rehabilitation process and outcomes
 - Collaboration and partnership with federal, state, and private agencies for system improvement
- ### Responsibilities
- Review, analyze, and advise the state vocational rehabilitation programs on performance, effectiveness, customer satisfaction, responsibilities, functions, and eligibility, including the need for order of selection.
 - Submit reports of progress of the vocational rehabilitation program to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) commissioner.

- Help prepare the State Plan for the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and develop a description of the Council's input and recommendations as a part of the plan.
- Review and analyze the vocational rehabilitation program effectiveness, including an assessment of the customer satisfaction and the vocational rehabilitation needs of Texans with disabilities.
- Submit an annual report that highlights vocational rehabilitation services' goals, achievements, and statistics to the Texas governor and RSA commissioner.
- Coordinate working relationships between the state vocational rehabilitation program, State Independent Living Council (SILC), and Centers for Independent Living in Texas.
- Coordinate activities with other councils to avoid duplication of efforts and increase the number of individuals served.

Committees

The following committees are responsible for upholding the mission, values, and responsibilities of the Council in partnership with representatives from the state vocational rehabilitation programs.

Executive Committee

Committee Chair: Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr. Composed of chair, vice chair, and all committee chairs Coordinates with state vocational rehabilitation programs' leadership; develops quarterly meeting agendas; develops public outreach materials; and reviews the Council's budget, bylaws, and amendments.

Planning and Review Committee

Committee Chair: Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr. Helps set and evaluate progress toward goals and priorities for the Combined State Plan for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, recommends ways to improve vocational rehabilitation services, and receives public comment.

Customer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee

Committee Chair: Gennadiy Goldenshteyn, Reviews customer satisfaction survey results and other program data, addresses service concerns, and helps steer a statewide needs assessment every three years.

Membership and Education Committee

Committee Chairs: Bobbie Hodges and Lindsey Geeslin, Educates Council members about federal and state legislation and how to best represent the interests of Texans with disabilities, recruits new members, and plans and oversees new member orientation activities.

Policy, Procedure, and Personnel Development Committee

Committee Chair: Karen Stanfill Comments on changes to vocational rehabilitation policy; reviews appeals decisions; and monitors procedural changes, staffing, training, and impartial hearing officer selection.



Our Work in Fiscal Year 2022

Year in Review

Full Council by Chair Michael A. Ebbeler, Jr.

The RCT had a very productive FY'22, and I would like to highlight a few points of significance.

December 2–3, 2021, First Quarterly Meeting

- Welcomed new members and those reappointed
 - Reappointed Members:
 - Joe Powell
 - Lisa Cowart
 - April Pollreisz
 - New Members:
 - James E. Williams Jr., replacing Jo Anne Fluke
 - Glenda J. Born, replacing Paul Hunt
 - Mark Baird, replacing Matt Berend
 - Michele L. Dobbins, replacing Crystal Stark
- Participated in Zoom meetings with VR program staff to discuss and adopt the WIOA CSP modification, led by Matt Berend

In the fall, Michael Ebbeler Jr., and Karen Stanfill attended the virtual conferences of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) and the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR).

In November, Michael Ebbeler Jr., Jennifer Clouse, Rodrick Robinson, and Joe Powell attended our first back-in-person event, the 2021 TWC Annual Conference in Houston. Although the following experience may not be specific to VR or RCT, given the magnitude of the struggles that COVID-19 created, I'd like to add a personal experience from the conference that provided quite the “we're back” feeling of normalcy. After attending an informative few days of TWC-focused meetings and forums featuring a robust list of influential speakers, we reached the closing ceremony. The speeches and the awards presentation by Chairman Daniel and TWC leadership provided an inspiring ending. As we began to file out of the room into the common areas, we found ourselves flanked by dozens of Hyatt staff members. Lined up on both sides of the hallway, they were all clapping and waving as we exited. At first it was a little confusing as to why this was happening, but then I found out that this was the first large conference at this hotel post COVID-19, and this was a gesture of appreciation by the hotel staff. Not only was this a brilliant marketing gesture by the hotel, but as people in communities all around the world were having their own experiences of getting back to normal, for me this experience was special and very powerful. I hope that other conference attendees experienced a similar feeling of “we made it through” as I did.

In December, Cheryl Fuller, VR Division Director, gave a VR Grants IOI presentation to the RCT, providing us with a clear understanding of the grant process.

February 3–4, 2022, Second Quarterly Meeting

- Presentation of VR Innovation and Expansion Projects, including Project One: Employment First, by Cindy Geisman, Jason Vaden, and Rikka Weintraub
- RCT member training by Karen Stanfill

May 5–6, 2022, Third Quarterly Meeting

This was the first quarterly meeting in which we continued using Zoom while offering the option to return to in-person attendance. (We now call it the Hybrid Quarterly Meeting.)

- Dyslexia presentation by Michelle Reeves, State Dyslexia Coordinator, Texas Education Agency
- US Department of Education notice inviting applications for the FY'21 Disability Innovation Fund by Cheryl Fuller
- RCT member training and strategic planning event preparation, by Jennifer Clouse
- Spring NCSRC and CSAVR conference attendance reports by members

August 4–5, 2022, Fourth Quarterly Meeting

- Recognized RCT members who were terming out
- Held new officer elections
- Discussed outcome of strategic planning session

At every quarterly meeting, the following liaisons presented Quarterly reports:

- Client Assistance Program (CAP): Karen Stanfill
- Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP): Bobbie Hodges
- Partners Resource Network (PRN): Lisa Cowart
- SILC: April Pollreisz
- TEA: Emily Robinson
- Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC): Lindsey Geeslin

We also received the VR Division Report and Performance Update from Cheryl Fuller, VR Division Director, and Geoffrey Miller, Department of Analytics and Evaluation Director. Additionally, TWC Commissioner Alvarez, Commissioner Demerson, Chairman Daniel, and Executive Director Edward Serna were all very supportive and engaged. We are fortunate that they are committed to attending meetings regularly and did so in FY'22.

FY'22 Advances and Significant Achievements

Our committee chairs describe their respective committee accomplishments later in this report, but I would like to point out three specific areas in which the RCT made great strides in FY'22: membership, strategic planning, and updating our meeting format.

As several members termed out, we added several new members to the RCT. The Education and Membership Committee achieved its goal of replacing vacating seats, therefore keeping the RCT at, or close to, a fully subscribed membership.

We designed and executed our first off-site strategic planning session. The session was initiated with the development of an ad hoc committee that consisted of Karen Stanfill, Jennifer Clouse, Elizabeth Kendall, and Abdi Warsame, who succeeded in assembling a solid plan for the RCT and each committee for the upcoming year. This session exceeded our expectations. Attended by Cheryl Fuller and numerous RCT members, the session was such a productive experience that it will become an annual event.

We continued to discuss, develop, and execute a new hybrid format for our quarterly meetings. Despite the unfortunate consequences presented by the pandemic, RCT members and TWC affiliates did an incredible job rebounding after the initial lockdown and adjusted accordingly. The most dynamic change was the introduction of a farther-reaching, interactive style for our quarterly meetings—a motion that was submitted and acted upon two meetings prior to the lockdown. As I feel this was our greatest growth point of the year and something that I am quite proud of, I feel the need to explain our meeting format in detail.

Like many organizations, the RCT started to conduct meetings via Zoom, which encouraged us to consider using this tool as a way to accomplish our goal of reaching Texans who want to attend our meetings but cannot meet in person. With hard work and extensive research conducted by a small ad hoc committee, the necessary elements came together. We became confident that we could accomplish this goal and received support from Cheryl Fuller and VR staff. I am happy to report that the last two FY'22 quarterly meetings were conducted via our new hybrid format, which opened RCT meetings to the public and offered attendees wishing to give public comment the option to attend in person or virtually. Although this concept was discussed and attempted in councils past, it had not been feasible for one reason or another. So, I am truly grateful, and I am impressed by my fellow members, as well as the TWC leadership, who made it possible for the RCT to follow through with implementation.

In closing, I would like to say that the RCT membership, Coordinator Lisa Godwin, Cheryl Fuller and her vast team, and far too many more to mention, rebounded from this social health catastrophe with great strength and resolve. Although it's difficult to say where we would be today if the pandemic shutdown hadn't happened, the fact is that it did, and as a result, we as an oversight council are definitely working better, smarter, and more efficiently than before. The challenges presented by the pandemic forced us to develop and execute changes and improvements, yet none of it could have happened without the indomitable spirit and independent strength of all parties participating in the RCT. They strived to achieve and provide a better whole, and they did. I am honored, humbled, and privileged to have had the opportunity to chair this council with a dynamic group of great individuals that has worked to deliver a better VR product to the VR customers of the great state of Texas.

Membership and Education Committee by Chair Lindsey Geeslin

In FY'22, the committee strove to achieve the goals set forth by the Executive Committee during the Strategic Planning Conference. In accordance with the year's action plan, the Membership and Education Committee now holds virtual meetings in between each quarterly RCT board meeting. The committee's goals and action items are as follows:

- Follow legislation and coordinate with the VR Division Director to share new legislation with the RCT.
- Adhere to the composition guidelines for RCT membership, work with the appointment office, and closely monitor council vacancies.
- Collaborate with the RCT Chair to initiate and execute the process of RCT member selection.
- Oversee new member mentoring and conduct new member orientation.

- Manage and recruit speakers for quarterly RCT meetings.
- Created a New Member Mentorship Guide to ensure new members have a pathway and assistance in understanding their role as a RCT member with guidance, support and consultation from current RCT members.

Overall, the entire committee worked hard over the last year. The committee collaborated well, took actions to improve processes, and remained compliant with federal mandates.

Customer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee by Chair Gennadiy Goldenshteyn

The Customer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment (CSNA) Committee continued its work to ensure that Texans have access to the best VR services possible. Quarterly, the committee examines the results of CSNA surveys conducted by



Westat, reviews VR performance updates in order to identify strengths as well as areas of opportunity, and then works with TWC staff to implement necessary improvements. In FY'22, the overarching trend was recovery from the effects of COVID-19, with both customer satisfaction responses and performance data continuing to revert to pre-pandemic levels.

To further improve our work, TWC's Scott McCune and the CSNA committee undertook the benchmarking of best practices across VR programs in 18 states on informed choice, customer and vendor satisfaction, and customer satisfaction survey methods. Results of the benchmarking are being used to inform decision-making. For example, best practices from several of the benchmarked programs are being incorporated into our customer satisfaction needs assessment survey process, such as augmenting current phone-only surveys with online capabilities.

The committee has identified the following priorities for 2023:

- Review program results, including the CSNA Survey and other TWC surveys

- Partner with VR staff on CSNA Survey RFP
- Address service concerns expressed by customers
- Partner with VR staff on CSNA townhall sessions (held every three years)
- Explore our approach to understanding satisfaction of employers as a crucial customer base

Policy, Procedures, and Personnel Development Committee by Chair Karen Stanfill

Charged with working with TWS-VRS in reviewing policies and procedures, this committee addresses input for personnel training, retention, and recruitment of staff and also reviews hearing officers' decisions. Additionally, the committee receives internal guidance memorandums, participates in virtual meetings that discuss proposed policy and procedure changes, and reports conflicting guidance in the policy manual.

In FY '22, the RCT worked closely with the TWS-VRS policy team in reviewing the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual (VRSM) and the Standards for Providers (SFP) Manual. The committee commented on supported employment, supported self-employment, employment assessments, and the use of trial work experiences. The committee also examined policies on work experiences, benefits planning services, and post-employment; discussed the addition of policy regarding the ability to pay for deposits; and reviewed the assistive technology chapter. Regarding medical services approvals, we requested that TWS-VRS revise the current policy requiring that a medical director provide approval for services, noting that RSA offers guidance that differs from current policy. TWS-VRS agreed to review and make modifications. The RCT also asked TWS-VRS to review policy regarding inpatient psychiatric treatment, and they agreed.

The committee continues to work with TWS-VRS on other topics, such as providing prompt payment to providers and the challenges surrounding this goal. We suggested that TWS-VRS increase the provider base, which will increase the availability of services in the long run. We have discussed the state's financial needs test and the basic living requirement policy. The committee is concerned that the method of setting rates for certain services may result in a situation in which individuals who lack resources are asked to participate in the cost of services. We are examining ways to improve this situation with TWS-VRS.

As a shared goal, the committee and TWS-VRS aim to simplify the purchasing and approval processes. The committee provided input to the TWS-VRS Approvals Project work group, identifying areas where approvals could be adjusted, reduced, and removed, and it offered comments on at least 19 different approvals for consideration.

The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) is another area in which the committee offered guidance. At each meeting, we addressed the retention, recruitment, and morale of TWS-VRS staff and provided ideas, suggestions, and feedback. We also discussed salary concerns and improvements for agency staff, career ladders, and ways to increase the number of applicants for position vacancies. The committee would like to complement many of the steps that TWC has taken to increase assistance to staff and clients by establishing a program in which retired counselors work on a temporary basis for a period of six months and help with caseloads during job vacancies. This is only one of several steps the agency has taken in this area. For example, although 13 appeals were filed during the year, the agency was able to resolve them at an informal level or by mediation, resulting in only four appeals pending a hearing at the end of the year.

In all, the Policy, Procedures, and Personnel Development Committee had a successful FY'22. With an active and dedicated group of individuals who give of their time to work collaboratively with TWS-VRS, the committee worked hard to meet its goals and have a productive year.

Measures of Success

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The following survey results describe satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services provided by the Texas Workforce Commission in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022. Surveys were completed by customers with an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) whose cases were closed as either successful (employed) or unsuccessful (not employed) the month prior to the survey. Percentages indicate customers who responded “yes” or those who answered “satisfied” or “very satisfied” and do not include data for survey responders who chose not to answer the question.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Result: All Disabilities (including both General and Visual Disabilities)

General disabilities include behavioral and mental health conditions; hearing impairments, including deafness; alcohol or drug addiction; intellectual, learning and developmental disabilities; and physical disabilities, including traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, back injury, paralysis and impaired movement. Visual disabilities include blindness, significant visual impairments, and deaf blindness.

I was treated in a friendly, caring, and respectful manner when I dealt with VR staff	93.7%
TWC VR staff demonstrated a can-do attitude when working with me.....	89.8%
When contacting my local VR office, someone responded to me no later than the next business day	77.5%
TWC VR staff explained when and why appointments were scheduled with them.....	88.8%
My counselor and I maintained contact as often as agreed to in my IPE	83.2%
I was satisfied with the explanation of services to help me reach my goal	86.3%
I had input in setting my employment goals	88.6%
I had input in planning the services I received	86.4%
My counselor and I discussed when services would begin and end.....	84.0%
I was involved in choosing who provided services (such as Job Placement, Supported Employment, Training, Orientation & Mobility, Diabetes Education, or other services) included on my IPE.....	66.9%
VR staff provided me the guidance I needed.....	83.3%
My services were not interrupted because my counselor changed, or my counselor was absent.....	78.5%
My services were not interrupted due to the Covid-19 pandemic.....	72.3%
I have the ability to receive services remotely	88.3%
The main reason I cannot receive services remotely is no internet, don't know how to participate, don't have the equipment (respectively)	22.1%, 38.5%, 39.4%
My preference for VR service delivery is in person, remotely over the internet or a mixed approach (respectively)	26.1%, 32.4%, 41.5%
I was satisfied with the services I received from service providers that my counselor sent me to	88.2%
I was satisfied with my counselor	87.4%
I was satisfied with my overall experience with VR	86.0%
I am working now	69.7%

I lost my job due the Covid-19 pandemic (percent of those who reported not working)	16.8%
My job loss is: Permanent, Temporary, of Unknown Duration (respectively).....	46.9%, 14.5%, 38.6%
I am satisfied with my wages.....	83.9%
I have employee benefits such as vacation, sick leave, and health insurance.....	60.4%
I am satisfied with not having employee benefits.....	49.8%
I am satisfied with the employee benefits I have.....	92.2%
I am satisfied with my chance for advancement.....	79.8%
I am satisfied with my Job overall	91.3%

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results : Visual Disabilities

Visual disabilities include blindness, significant visual impairments, and deaf blindness.

I was treated in a friendly, caring, and respectful manner when I dealt with VR staff	91.4%
TWC VR staff demonstrated a can-do attitude when working with me.....	87.4%
When contacting my local VR office, someone responded to me no later than the next business day	73.6%
TWC VR staff explained when and why appointments were scheduled with them.....	87.9%
My counselor and I maintained contact as often as agreed to in my IPE	77.4%
I was satisfied with the explanation of services to help me reach my goal	83.1%
I had input in setting my employment goals	89.2%
I had input in planning the services I received	86.6%
My counselor and I discussed when services would begin and end.....	82.5%
I was involved in choosing who provided services (such as Job Placement, Supported Employment, Training, Orientation & Mobility, Diabetes Education, or other services) included on my IPE.....	60.3%
VR staff provided me the guidance I needed.....	80.0%
My services were not interrupted because my counselor changed, or my counselor was absent.....	73.2%
My services were not interrupted due to the Covid-19 pandemic.....	68.5%
I have the ability to receive services over the internet	82.1%
I am not able to receive services over the internet because I don't have internet , I don't know how to participate remotely , or I don't have the equipment to participate	20.5%, 35.2%, 44.3%
My preference for VR service delivery is in person, remotely, or a mixed approach (respectively).....	25.6%, 30.4%, 44.0%
I was satisfied with the services I received from service providers that my counselor sent me to.....	86.8%
I was satisfied with my counselor	85.4%
I was satisfied with my overall experience with VR	84.5%
I am working now	56.1%
I lost my job due the Covid-19 pandemic (percent of those who reported not working)	11.9%
My job loss is: Permanent, Temporary, of Unknown Duration (respectively).....	69.2%, 11.5%, 19.2%

I am satisfied with my wages.....	79.6%
I have employee benefits such as vacation, sick leave, and health insurance	51.0%
I am satisfied with not having employee benefits	47.1%
I am satisfied with the employee benefits I have	86.8%
I am satisfied with my chance for advancement	80.7%
I am satisfied with my Job overall	97.1%

Statistics

Statistics: General Disabilities

The following statistics describe vocational rehabilitation services for persons with general disabilities (other than vision impairment) provided in SFY 2022 by the Texas Workforce Commission. For age-related data, age reported at the start of the fiscal year was used. General disabilities include behavioral and mental health conditions; hearing impairments, including deafness; alcohol or drug addiction; intellectual, learning and developmental disabilities; and neurological and physical disabilities, including traumatic brain and spinal cord injury, back injury, paralysis and impaired movement.

Total customers served, all ages*: 80,355

Total customers served under age 22:** 30,286

Total Pre-ETS Students Served*:** 29,146

*"Customers Served" = from Initial Contact with Case Assignment forward

**Under the age of 22 as of 9/1/2021

***Pre-ETS count also includes potentially eligible students without a Case Assignment



Percent Served by Gender

All Ages: 45.3% Female 54.7% Male

Under Age 22: 38.9% Female 61.1% Male

Race/Ethnicity of General Disabilities Served

Race/Ethnicity	Total General VR Customer Responses	Percent General VR Customers Served
Non Hispanic Pacific Islander	304	0.4%
Non Hispanic American Indian/Alaskan	549	0.7%
Non Hispanic Asian	1,742	2.2%
Not Reported/Unavailable	2,316	2.9%
Non Hispanic African American	19,718	24.5%
Hispanic	25,219	31.4%
Non Hispanic White	31,874	39.7%
Total*	81,722	101.7%

*Customers self-report and may claim multiple categories. Thus, the total is greater than customer counts.

SSI/SSDI Information

SSI/SSDI Information	Total General VR Customers Served	Percent General VR Customers Served	Total General VR Successful Closures	Percent General VR Successful Closures
SSI/SSDI at Application	10,765	13.4%	1,011	10.1%
SSI/SSDI During Case (at app, current or close)	15,119	18.8%	1,447	14.5%
SSI/SSDI at Closure	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	1,329	13.3%

Percent Expenditure by Service Type

Expenditures by Service Category	All Ages	Under 22
Restoration Services	0.1%	0.0%
All Other Goods & Services	0.4%	0.1%
Computers and Related Equipment	1.0%	0.8%
Other Services	1.3%	0.3%
Maintenance and Transportation	1.4%	0.9%
Prosthetics and Orthotics	3.7%	0.3%
Assistive Technology, including evaluation	4.8%	0.6%
Job Placement Services	5.9%	5.1%
Room and Board (Academic/Vocational Training)	6.0%	13.3%
Medical Services	7.0%	0.6%
Supported Employment Services	8.4%	10.8%
Pre-Employment Transition Services	10.4%	31.3%
Diagnostic and Evaluation	12.6%	5.0%
Hearing Aids and Interpretive Services	17.7%	2.6%
Academic and Vocational Training	19.4%	28.2%
Total	100%	100%

This table contains General case expenditures (service authorization payments) included in ReHabWorks that are associated with a specific case and is not inclusive of other client services expenditures routed through the purchase order processes (such as Statewide Initiatives) in the agency's accounting system. The TWC Finance Division reports Combined VR expenditures, which includes both General and Blind cases. Total Combined case service expenditures across all categories and populations is \$246,058,011 (per TWC Finance).

Age is based on age at start of the SFY. 'Other Services' includes: Miscellaneous, Other Services for Family Members, Child Care, State License Fees, Uniform Items for Employment, Employment Goods and Equipment – Non-Consumable, Self-Employment Goods and Equipment – Non-Consumable, Other Rehab Tech Services, Other Personal Attendant Services, Translator for Limited English Proficiency, Self-Employment Services, and Halfway House Services - CRP.

Disabilities Served

Primary Disability	% of Customers, All Age	% of Customers, Under Age 22
Other Impairments	0.25%	0.31%
Substance Abuse	1.12%	0.07%
Traumatic Brain Injury/Spinal Cord Injury	2.18%	0.79%
Cardiac/Respiratory/Circulatory	2.63%	0.51%
Other Physical Debilitation or Impairments	5.63%	1.26%
Mental /Emotional/Psychosocial	17.14%	10.18%
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	18.11%	5.98%
Neurological/Musculoskeletal/Orthopedic	19.10%	8.08%
Neurodevelopmental Disorders	33.82%	72.81%
Total	100%	100%

* Disability type is unavailable for most customers prior to the eligibility determination phase.

Successful Closures

Total successful closures: 10,008

Total successful closures under age 22: 1,398

Percent Successful Closures Served by Gender

All Ages: 45.4% Female 54.6% Male

Under Age 22: 32.6% Female, 67.4% Male



Percent of Successful Closures by Occupation

Successful Closures by Occupation	Successful General VR Closures, All Ages	% of General VR Successful Closures, All Ages	Successful General VR Closures, Under Age 22	% of General VR Successful Closures, Under Age 22
All Other Occupations	30	0.3%	<5	<5
Construction and Extraction	267	2.7%	13	0.9%
Computer, Engineering, and Science	313	3.1%	9	0.6%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	441	4.4%	64	4.6%
Production Occupations	460	4.6%	76	5.5%
Sales and Related Occupations	587	5.9%	101	7.2%
Management, Business, and Financial	686	6.9%	14	1.0%
Healthcare Practitioners, Technical, and Healthcare Support	854	8.5%	55	3.9%
Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, and Media	1,060	10.6%	31	2.2%
Office and Administrative Support	1,579	15.8%	206	14.8%
Transportation & Material Moving	1,763	17.6%	387	27.8%
Service Occupations	1,968	19.7%	438	31.4%
Total	10,008	100%	1,394	100%

* Counts less than 5 are masked.

This table contains customers who have achieved an employment outcome as described in their Individualized Plan for Employment, maintained employment for 90 days after substantial services are completed, and are employed at closure. 'All Other Occupations' includes Farming, Fishing, Forestry and Military Specific Occupations.

Statistics : Visual Disabilities

The following statistics describe vocational rehabilitation services for persons with visual disabilities provided in state fiscal year 2022. For age-related data, age reported at the start of the fiscal year was used. Visual disabilities include blindness, significant visual impairments, and deaf blindness.

Total Customers Served, All Ages*: 9,396

Total Customers Served, Under Age 22: 1,859**

Total Pre-ETS Students Served*: 1,843**

*"Customers Served" = from Initial Contact with Case Assignment forward

**Under the age of 22 as of 9/1/2021

***Pre-ETS count also includes potentially eligible students without a Case Assignment

Percent Served by Gender

All Ages: 49.3% Female 50.7% Male

Under Age 22: 47.6% Female 52.4% Male

Race/Ethnicity of Blind VR Customers Served

Race/Ethnicity	Total Blind VR Customer Responses	Percent Blind VR Customers Served
Non Hispanic Pacific Islander	33	0.4%
Non Hispanic American Indian/Alaskan	57	0.6%
Not Reported/Unavailable	178	1.9%
Non Hispanic Asian	234	2.5%
Non Hispanic African American	2,209	23.5%
Non Hispanic White	3,071	32.7%
Hispanic	3,614	38.5%
Total*	9,396	100%

*Customers self-report and may claim multiple categories. Thus the total is greater than customer counts.

SSI/SSDI Information Blind

SSI/SSDI Information	Total Blind VR Customers Served	Percent Blind VR Customers Served	Total Blind VR Successful Closures	Percent Blind VR Successful Closures
SSI/SSDI at Application	2,039	21.7%	149	16.0%
SSI/SSDI During Case (at app, current or at close)	2,624	27.9%	199	21.4%
SSI/SSDI at Closure	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	181	19.5%

Percent Expenditure by Service Type

Expenditures by Service Category	All Ages	Under 22
All Other Goods and Services	0.1%	0.0%
Other Services	1.1%	0.3%
Supported Employment Services	1.4%	1.3%
Job Placement Services	1.5%	0.7%
Orientation and Mobility Training	2.8%	0.6%
Computers and Related Equipment	3.1%	4.4%
Maintenance and Transportation	3.2%	1.0%
Eyeglasses, Lenses, Low Vision Devices	5.7%	3.4%
Room and Board (Academic/Vocational Training)	6.3%	18.2%
Pre-Employment Transition Services	8.0%	36.1%
Academic and Vocational Training	10.2%	14.4%
Diagnostic and Evaluation	12.3%	3.0%
Restoration Services	17.5%	2.5%
Assistive Technology, includes related evaluation & training	27.0%	14.1%
Total	100%	100%

* Amounts do not include expenditures that are not associated with a specific case.

This table contains BVI case expenditures (service authorization payments) included in ReHabWorks that are associated with a specific case and is not inclusive of other client services expenditures routed through the purchase order processes (such as Statewide Initiatives) in the agency's accounting system. The TWC Finance Division reports Combined VR expenditures, which includes both General and Blind cases. Total Combined case service expenditures across all categories and populations is \$246,058,011 (per TWC Finance).

Age is based on age at start of the SFY. 'All Other Goods & Services' includes Diabetes Education, Other Goods & Equipment, and Other Goods and Equipment - Youth.

Successful Closures

Total Successful Closures: 929

Total Successful Closures, Under Age 22: 32

Percent Successful Closures by Gender

All Ages: 49.8% Female, 50.2% Male

Under Age 22: 43.8% Female, 56.3% Male

Percent of Successful Closures by Occupation

Successful Closures by Occupation	Successful Blind VR Closures, All Ages	% of Blind VR Successful Closures, All Ages	Successful Blind VR Closures, Under Age 22	% of Blind VR Successful Closures, Under Age 22
All Other Occupations	11	1.2%	<5	<5
Production Occupations	24	2.6%	<5	<5
Computer, Engineering, and Science	29	3.1%	<5	<5
Construction and Extraction	30	3.2%	<5	<5
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	37	4.0%	<5	<5
Sales and Related Occupations	60	6.5%	<5	<5
Transportation & Material Moving	87	9.4%	<5	<5
Management, Business, and Financial	91	9.8%	<5	<5
Healthcare Practitioners, Technical & Healthcare Support	100	10.8%	<5	<5
Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts and Media	132	14.2%	<5	<5
Office and Administrative Support	160	17.2%	9	28.1%
Service Occupations	168	18.1%	7	21.9%
Total	929	100%	32	100%

* Counts less than 5 are masked.

This table contains customers who have achieved an employment outcome as described in their Individualized Plan for Employment, maintained employment for 90 days after substantial services are completed, and are employed at closure. All Other Occupations includes Farming, Fishing, Forestry and Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Operators.

TWC FY 2022 VR Budget \$274,745,229

FY 2022 VR Client Services Budget \$148,034,891

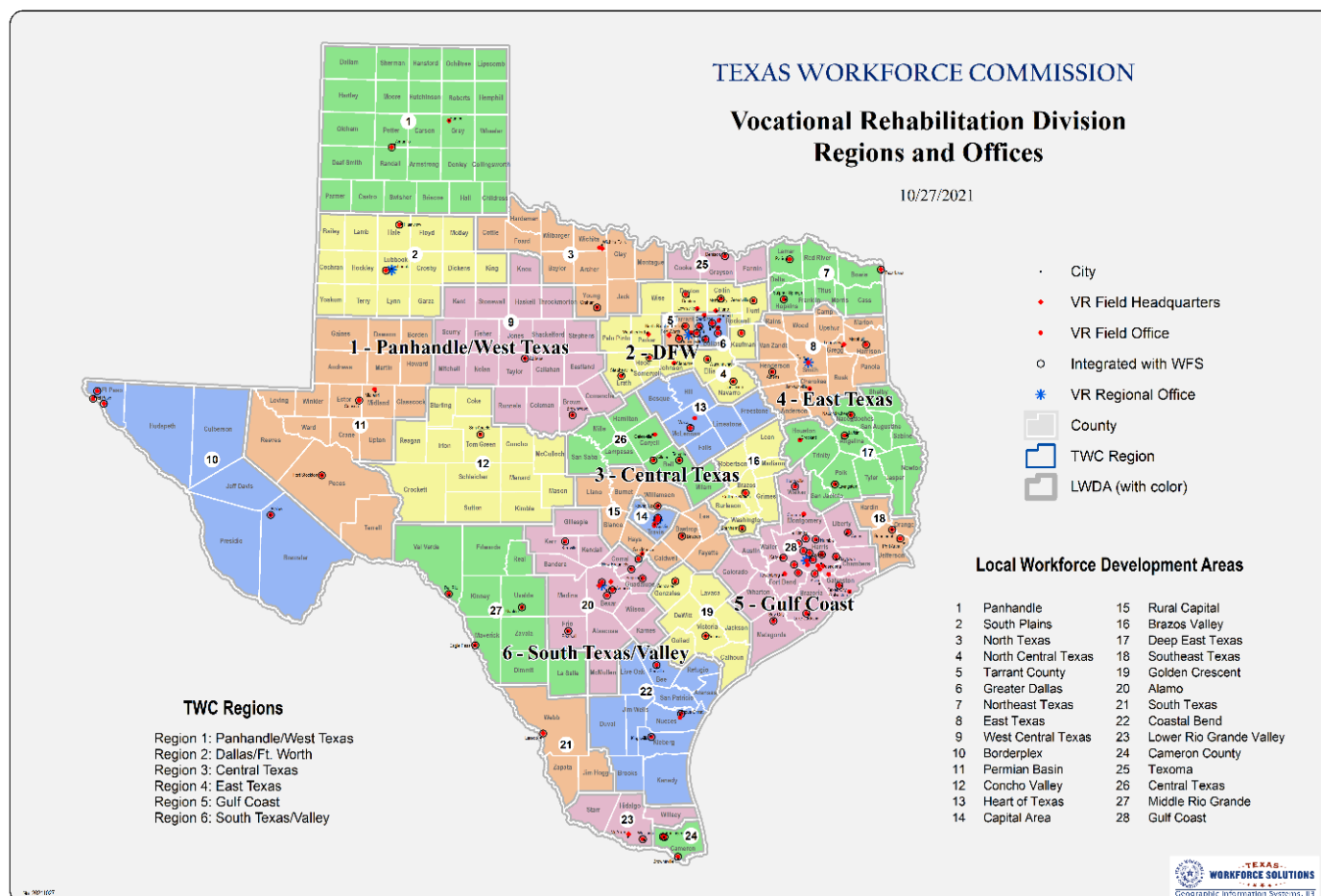
TWC-VR Division Regions and Offices Map

To locate your TWC VR office please contact:

(512) 936-6400

vr.office.locator@twc.texas.gov

www.twc.texas.gov/VRNearMe



Success Stories

Judy Stokes



East Texas resident Judy Stokes was used to looking after others in her career as a home health care worker.

However, the role of care giver can be physically challenging. Eventually, Judy sustained a serious knee injury that required her to stop working in order to do physical therapy and recover.

As she remembers those times, it was Judy's determination, and the right support from her Nacogdoches community that came together when she most needed it.

"When I experienced my knee injury, I didn't bounce back like I thought I would. I couldn't stand more than a few minutes and couldn't walk very far," she recalls. "I even broke down and used a motorized cart at the grocery store. So, there I was I couldn't go back to what I was doing."

Judy's church, family and friends lent support during this time, but not having an income was taking a toll her and her family.

"I hadn't worked in over a year and I was surviving not thriving. I was behind on some bills," she said. "My self-esteem was low, my confidence was low and I began to struggle with depression."

She knew it was time for a change and to make the needed transition to another career, Judy turned again to her community.

Judy reached out to Love Inc. Nacogdoches for financial assistance. Love Inc. listened to her story and made a referral to Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and to Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Christina Ward who had just met with Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC).

"I had to reinvent myself. And I couldn't do that alone – I needed help and if it wasn't for the help I received I wouldn't have been able to take the job I have now," she shared. "When I was given Christina's number, I knew that a door was about to open."

Judy's passion for giving back and volunteering often in her Nacogdoches community made her a perfect candidate to place in the Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC). Through the Texas Workforce Solutions- Vocational Rehabilitation Services Paid Work Experience (PWE) program, she received an income while training, building skills and confidence in preparation for full-time employment.

In December 2020, Judy began her paid work experience program as an Administrative Assistant at CWJC. Her job duties included answering telephones, data entry and filing records. Judy did so well that CWJC was eager to train her in additional areas.

“Judy’s progress was impressive, and she was approved for two additional 12-week paid work experiences at CWJC, which allowed her to continue to expand her skills, such as accounting software like Quick Books and Excel, using a 10-key calculator, among others, which were aligned with her new employment goal of bookkeeping,” said her VR Counselor Christina Ward.

“It was life-changing,” said Judy. “If it weren’t for this I would be sitting around my house and feeling I had nothing to give society.”

As her confidence has grown, Judy knows she is on the path that was meant for her. She credits her faith and is thankful to God for her success.

“As a Christian, I believe that God answered my prayers and was the one who opened doors for me to be where I am today. I am very thankful for all who were a part of helping me overcome the struggles and reach new success, but I don’t for a second believe it would have happened without God.”

In Sept. 2021, Judy began full-time employment at Pathways Forensic & Mental Health Services as a receptionist. She is excited to be employed in a position where she is back to helping people.

“In my new position, sometimes I’m the first point of contact for patients through scheduling appointments and intake such as sign-in for group therapies. I take payments and send them a new patient packet and I’m also learning to process paperwork. I do a lot of little jobs that help keep the business running,” she says.

Reflecting on the last two years, Judy said, “I’m really thankful that through the community partnerships of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Love Inc. and Community Action, it all led me to where I am now. They really helped build me back up.”

Bennett Propels His Future as He Gains Confidence and Job Skills

Bennett Rhymes is motivated to keep building his employment skills, even as he hits the books and starts his college years. He's majoring in game design and is supported at school by his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) Jeana and a learning specialist to help him navigate college.

As Bennett focuses on college, he credits the support of his family and his experience with VR for setting him up for success.

Bennett participated in Pre-Employment Transition Services through Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services, including a paid work experience at CVS Health®.

"For me, personally I have improved, started to make a lot more active efforts to improve myself as a person and I think starting at the Workforce was one of the big things," said Bennett. I've started journaling every day and things like that, so I think you can use that momentum to really propel your life."

Bennett's mom Jessica Taylor discovered VR Services when talking to a friend who has a son with disabilities. She reached out to VRC Jeana Chen who has supported Bennett throughout his time receiving VR Services.

"When he became a teenager, it became clear to me that there was something definitely a little bit different about Bennett, so we had him tested, and he was diagnosed with high-functioning autism, what a lot of people know as Asperger's," said Jessica. As a mom you have worries, how is this going to work? How is my child going to be successful in school? How far can they go? How will they start their first job? How will that go? How can I support them, but still let them fly?"

Jeana arranged for Bennett to participate in three pre-employment transition activities, including work readiness, self-advocacy, and a career exploration STEM camp. Jeana saw Bennett's steady improvement and encouraged him to take the next step. It didn't take long before Bennett's drive to improve and learn new things eventually landed him a job with CVS Health.

"At CVS, he had a coach and three other students he was working with, and I remember reading the coaching notes, and he was doing progressively well every week, and by the end of 12 weeks I knew he could work independently," said Jeana.

Upon finishing the paid work experience, Bennett applied and was hired for a position at a CVS store in Spring, and during the summer applied the skills he learned as a store associate. He says working with customers is his favorite part of the day. "After the first or second semester I'll probably look for a job, hopefully at CVS, they've been very kind to me."



Bennett encourages others to participate in Vocational Rehabilitation Services to propel their futures.

Through the collaboration between CVS Health® and TWC's Vocational Rehabilitation, many students with disabilities have gained work experience, and earn wages that lead to greater independence, while also feeling more connected to their communities.

"We've hosted hundreds of participants who have come through these doors and really just changed the lives of our store managers, our assistant managers, everyone. Not to mention the impact it's had on families and participants who have come through the program," said Yani Hurst, CVS Health Workforce Initiatives Department Senior Manager

(L to R): Yani Hurst, CVS Health Workforce Initiatives Department, Senior Manager; Sam Gay, CVS Health Store Manager; Sharon Correa, CVS Health Workforce Initiatives, Manager; Bennett Rhymes, CVS Health Store Associate, Eliza Charles, CVS Health Workforce Initiatives Associate Manager

(L to R): Jeana Chen, Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services VR Counselor and Bennett Rhymes, Vocational Rehabilitation participant and CVS Health Store Associate.



Tanner Key Lands His Dream Job:

For Tanner Key, it's his dream job to be working at H-E-B.

When Tanner's mom, Aimee Cline, was asked how Tanner likes his job she said "He loves his job and comes home from work with a smile on his face," says Aimee. "At H-E-B, he is welcomed and supported – H-E-B is the absolute best employer. The management is wonderful, Justin (Tanner's supervisor) is especially amazing. There are no words to express how happy Tanner is with his dream job! We're so thankful for this opportunity!"

Tanner's Mom Aimee sought the support of Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services after Tanner's participation in VR during high school. Tanner received a CPA (Career Planning Assessment) in April 2022 and then was referred to VR provider Bloom Consulting for Supported Employment services, which provides individuals with disabilities with vocational rehabilitation services such as training, job development, and job coaching. Janna Redding, a Supported Employment Specialist, quickly learned that Tanner had a dream of working at HEB and helped Tanner to make his dream come true.

Tanner set his sights on his employment goal, and his hard work paid off when he was offered a position as a Customer Support Specialist this past spring at an H-E-B in Round Rock.

Although H-E-B's policy is for all entry level positions to be interviewed in a group setting, this would not allow Tanner to have the support he would need to interview. Janna helped Tanner apply for his position at HEB through the online system

Indeed and assisted Tanner in asking for an accommodation for his interview. Tanner requested he have a one-on-one interview with a manager as an accommodation based on his disability. H-E-B granted this accommodation request and Janna supported Tanner through his interview process.

Bloom Consulting has continued to provide Supported Employment services for Tanner throughout his employment with H-E-B, which includes help with onboarding, supports to allow him to learn his job skills through job coaching, and regular check-ins to receive feedback from his supervisors and developing natural supports on the job. The managers at HEB love him and praise him for always being early and showing up when he is scheduled. Tanner is on track to have a successful completion to his Vocational Rehabilitation Services in the new year.

Thanks to the team of vocational rehabilitation professionals supporting Tanner, he is proving his abilities and enjoys a work environment at H-E-B that helps him fulfill his career potential.



Tanner Key: H-E-B Customer Support Specialist

Through Supported Employment services, Tanner is completing a successful job placement with H-E-B in Round Rock, where he helps customers with carrying and unloading their groceries, helps stock shelves, picks up trash, returns products to shelves, among other tasks as needed.

Membership and Meetings



Michael A. Ebbeler Jr.,
RCT Chairman
Disability Representative
Houston, TX



Lisa Cowart
RCT Vice Chairman
Parent Training & Information
Representative
Sour Lake, TX



Mark Baird
State VR Counselor
Representative
San Angelo, TX



Glenda J. Born
Disability Representative
Austin, TX



Amanda Bowdoin
Disability
Representative
Forney, TX



Jennifer Clouse
VR Services Recipient
Representative
Temple, TX



Michele L. Dobbins
State VR Counselor
Representative
LaPorte, TX



Cheryl Fuller
State VR Director
Representative
Austin, TX



Lindsey R. Geeslin
Texas Workforce Investment
Council Representative
Lorena, TX



Gennadiy Goldenshteyn
Disability Representative
Dallas, TX



Bobbie Hodges
Community Rehabilitation
Program Representative
Fort Worth, TX



Elizabeth Kendell
Business, Industry and Labor
Representative
San Antonio, TX



Lisa Maciejewski-West,
Business, Industry, and Labor
Representative
Horseshoe Bay, TX



April Pollreis
Statewide Independent Living
Council Representative
Amarillo, TX



Joe Powell
Disability Representative
Irving, TX



Emily Robinson
State Educational Agency
Representative
Pflugerville, TX



Rodrick Robinson
Business, Industry and
Labor Representative
McKinney, TX



Karen Stanfill
Client Assistance Program
Representative
Houston, TX



Crystal Stark
State VR Counselor
Representative
College Station, TX



Abdi Warsame
Business, Industry and Labor
Representative
Irving, TX



James E. Williams, EdD
Vocational Rehabilitation
Services Recipient
Leander, TX



Lisa Godwin
RCT Coordinator
Surfside Beach, TX

Become a Member

If you are an individual with a disability or someone interested in providing input on VR services for Texans with disabilities, the RCT may be for you. Interested individuals must submit an application to the governor of Texas. Council members are appointed by the governor for three-year terms and represent a diverse range of disabilities and community perspectives. RCT must include representatives from the state's designated VR program, the State Independent Living Council, community rehabilitation programs, and other disability organizations and programs, as well as individuals with disabilities and their family members or authorized representatives. Business, industry, and labor representatives, as well as those from the State Workforce Investment Board and Texas Education Agency, are also required.

Learn more by visiting the [RCT website](#).

2022 Rehabilitation Council of Texas Quarterly Meeting Schedule

Council members convene for quarterly meetings to participate in discussion panels, presentations, and committee meetings in support of the RCT's mission, values, and responsibilities.

Meeting Times:

1st day 9:00 am – 4:30 pm

2nd day 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Meeting Location:

To be determined

2023 Quarterly Meeting Schedule:

October 28, 2022

February 2–3, 2023

May 4–5, 2023

August 3–4, 2023

Meeting dates and location are subject to change. For additional meeting information and materials, visit the Webpage at: <http://texasworkforce.org/agency/rehabilitation-council-texas#meetingScheduleAgendasMinutes>



TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION

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