

Memo DRAFT

Excerpt from summary of United States Census data by former DVR Research Analyst Roua McNeel

Background

DVR often receives requests for information regarding the number of persons with disabilities in Wisconsin. In the past, DVR has quoted estimating methods (Ridge Worrall), other survey data, and Census data to answer these requests. All of these methods/sources give different answers. They are done at different times, ask different questions, use different sampling, survey different populations etc. This data inconsistency can cause confusion among the public, therefore we are sharing with you our current thinking on estimating DVR's target population. None of the alternatives are ideal in all respects. We are now choosing to use the Census data as the primary source for estimating the potential VR population. Also included in Tables 4 is the original Census estimates of all of the demographic information on Wisconsin's disabled population. Table 5 reports Census estimates of the disabled population by county in Wisconsin.

Identifying and Estimating DVR's Target Population

Using the Census data as our source for estimating DVR's target population, we are able to identify our potential customers in terms of their labor force participation status. Census categorizes all individuals between the ages of 16 and 64 into categories according to their labor force participation. Individuals who are not working are separated into three distinct categories.

Looking for Work: Those who are not working but are actively looking for work are still considered to be a part of the labor force (the group from which the unemployment rate is calculated).

Unable to work due to a work disability, also referred to as "prevented" from working.

Other: Includes retirees, homemakers, students, and others who have voluntarily left the labor force. Individuals who have "given up" in discouragement would be categorized here. Also referred to as "not prevented" from working.

Table 1: 1990 Wisconsin Labor Force Participation: Persons 16 to 64 years of age
Source: 1990 Census Tables on Disability

	Wisconsin General Population		Wisconsin Residents with a Work Disability	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Employed	2,319,112	76%	89,920	40%
Not Employed	734,936	24%	133,645	60%
Looking for work	127,938	4%	12,549	6%
Unable to work due to disability	100,051	3%	100,051	45%
Other	506,947	17%	21,045	9%
Totals	3,054,048	100%	223,565	100%

Extent To Which Counselors Do Not Meet The Personnel Standard

Of the 210 vocational rehabilitation counselors currently employed by the DSU, 62 do not meet the personnel standard. Of these 62 counselors, 12 do not have a bachelors degree and 50 do not have a masters degree. The plan detailed later in this attachment outlines the DSU's approach and timetable to bring these counselors up to the personnel standard.

Ability To Hire Qualified Staff

The major factor in Wisconsin that may inhibit the DSU from hiring qualified counseling staff is low pay compared to the private sector. Both DSU and DSA management support increasing counselor pay scales. As noted previously, vocational rehabilitation counselors are covered by the collective bargaining provisions of the WSEU contract. Pay scales are one of the bargaining provisions included in this contract (as noted, the current contract runs through June 30, 1999).

With the support of top management in both the DSU and DSA, the next step is to encourage vocational rehabilitation counselors to become more involved with the WSEU to promote increased pay scales for professional counselors. That process will continue through the duration of this state plan. Management in the DSA and DSU will also consult with the state Department of Employment Relations (DER) to promote higher pay scales for professional vocational rehabilitation counselors.

Plan To Meet The Personnel Standards Of The CSPD

Based upon state personnel rules and the provisions of the WSEU contract, the DSU's plan to bring grandfathered counselors up to the personnel standard is as follows.

The first step will be to work with the three major rehabilitation counselor education programs in the state (University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and University of Wisconsin-Stout) and the Region V RCEP to develop alternative formats for providing academic coursework in rehabilitation counselor training in addition to the on-campus programs, for staff currently employed by the DSU. Completion date is targeted for February 28, 1999.

The second step will be to require all 62 grandfathered vocational rehabilitation counselor staff to attend the following academic core rehabilitation courses:

PETITION: TO DELIVER CONSISTENT, QUALITY VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES TO THE DISABLED CITIZENS OF WISCONSIN.

Dear Legislator:

Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are requesting your support in helping us to deliver consistent, quality vocational rehabilitation services to the disabled citizens of Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is a leader in providing employment services for persons with disabilities. However, the **disabled citizens of Wisconsin are not being provided with consistent, quality vocational rehabilitation services**. Per DVR administration statistics, the surveyed unemployment rate for persons prevented from working due to disabilities is **45%**.

There is a **serious problem with recruiting and retaining** qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors as the result of low salaries. **DVR COUNSELORS HAVE NOT RECEIVED A REALLOCATION (PAY INCREASE) IN 31 YEARS.** The **required minimum qualifications** for the DVR Counselor position include; 1) Master's degree, 2) two years of clinical supervised experience, and 3) professional counselor certification in the State of Wisconsin. The starting salary for entry level counselors is \$11.04/hour = \$23,051/year. The salary for veteran DVR counselors with twenty years of experience is \$18.51/hour = \$38,648/year. Other public and private sector employers are paying **starting** wages of about \$13,000 more and **career** salaries of about **\$17,000** more than the state is paying VR Counselors.

DVR Counselors have been actively working with their respective legislators, the Department of Employment Relations (DER) and AFSCME Union officials to bring about a reasonable salary increase which is commensurate with the qualifications and responsibilities of the DVR Counselor position.

DER has made a recent proposal to AFSCME on March 23, 1999 regarding salary increases. DVR Counselors believe that this current proposal will not go far enough to address the inequities of our current salary structure.

DER and AFSCME have both indicated the existence of a **compensation reserve** which may be used in the next biennium budget to resolve employee salary inequities.

DVR Counselors are requesting your support in:

- 1) Voting to retain a compensation reserve in the proposed budget.
- 2) Specifically appropriating compensation reserve funds to bring DVR Counselor salaries in line with comparable professions which annually pay \$13,000 to \$17,000 more.

Enclosed are petitions signed by DVR counselors statewide. These petitions illustrate the critical need to correct salary inequities for DVR Counselors. These petitions illustrate our commitment to provide consistent, quality vocational rehabilitation services to the disabled citizens of Wisconsin. We are requesting your intervention by appropriating compensation reserve funds to resolve the problem of recruitment and retention of qualified DVR Counselors.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Wisconsin DVR Counselors by,

Joel Wolfgram, M.S.
2142 Lakeland Avenue
Madison, WI 53704 Phone: 608/242-7679

TO PROVIDE CONSISTENT, QUALITY VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES TO DISABLED CITIZENS OF WISCONSIN WE THE UNDERSIGNED ARE REQUESTING OUR LEGISLATORS TO CONSIDER TAKING THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

- 1) Contact the Secretary's Office of the of the Department of Employee Relations (DER) and request that DER make a reallocation of funds in order to bring DVR counselor salaries in line with comparable salaries being paid by other employer in the state.
- 2) Contact Secretary Linda Stewart of the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and ask that, at minimum, the salary line surplus from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation be used now as a partial reallocation for DVR Counselors.

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Jacqueline Nordbo	1517 Mayfield Lane Madison WI 53704	(608) 245-1095
John Schick	4906 Comanche Way Madison, WI	(608) 244-1861
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William J. Gath	26 Westend Circle Madison, WI 53704	608/241-5097
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DVR = MADISON

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DVR - Janesville

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MARY BRAEM	15944 Wolf River Rd	526-2894

DVR - Green Bay

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DVR - Madison west

DUR Milwaukee NE office 3/1/99

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