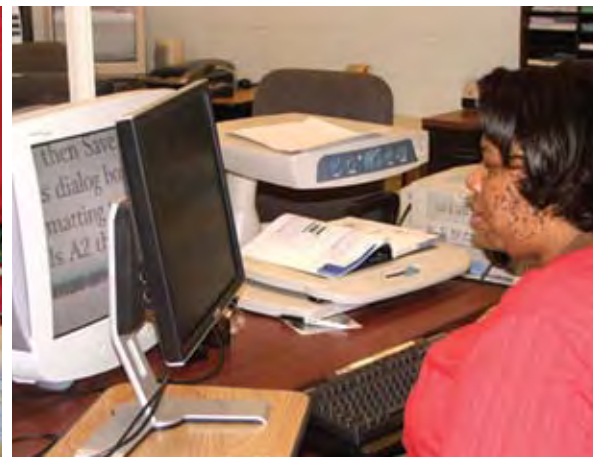




MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Division of Rehabilitation Services



2008 ANNUAL REPORT

This past year, 2,290 people who participated in DORS programs went to work – many for the first time.

Based on what we know about retention rates from previous years, 84% of them will still be working 12 months from now. This is the highest retention rate in Maryland's workforce system.

These new workers no longer rely on public benefits and family for economic support. Instead, they will have contributed over \$35.6 million to the state's economy during their first year of employment. They will have brought new skills, as well as diversity, to businesses all over the state.

- "DORS helped me to hold my head up!"
- "DORS helped me see that I can succeed in life."
- "My DORS counselor never let me give up and helped me 100%."

In good economic times and in bad, public vocational rehabilitation programs are a sound investment in the most important component of Maryland's workforce—its people.

Visit www.md-dors.org/report for a multi-media presentation that spotlights DORS 2008 success stories.



Cheryl Golden (l) was one of 23 individuals who recently completed the Governor's QUEST Internship Program for Persons with Disabilities. This nationally recognized program, now in its eighth year, provides three-month paid internships to individuals with disabilities in a variety of state government offices. Gail Meekins (r), of the Maryland Parole Commission, was so impressed with Cheryl's performance that she hired her. DORS also provided Cheryl, who has a significant vision loss, with a CCTV (pictured) that enlarges printed documents. The Maryland Parole Commission has hired two previous QUEST interns as well.

Tim Wolfe (l) meets with local merchants as part of his new job as a civilian community liaison for the Howard County Police Department.

Pfc. Jason Kindel (center) and Judy Madgar, owner of Rita's in Harper's Choice Village Center, say that Tim provides a reassuring presence and a great line of communication to the Police Department.



Tim Wolfe says that the Howard County police officers who interviewed him for the position of civilian community liaison were not terribly fazed by the fact that he is legally blind.

"They saw me for who I was," said Tim. "Sometimes, when you have a dog or a cane, they become the center of attention."

The Department hired Tim, according to Lt. Bob Castor, Deputy Commander of the County's Southern District, for his record of volunteer community involvement, his job experience as a loss prevention manager and for his communication abilities. Pfc. Jason Kindel, with whom Tim now frequently works, says Tim brings a certain credibility to his job, which is based out of the Police Satellite office in Columbia's Harper's Choice Village Center.

As a civilian, Tim creates a bridge between the Department and the public, sometimes when a uniformed officer cannot. His low-key style makes him a good listener. Tim's service dog, four-year-old Wyatt, is a conversation starter.

Six years ago, diabetes began to affect Tim's vision and he was unable to work. Four years of unemployment followed, when Tim worked to stabilize his health, cope with legal blindness and figure out what to do next.

Then he saw the ad in the newspaper for the community liaison position. He won out over dozens of other applicants.

"Tim was very clearly the best qualified person for the job," said Lieutenant Castor.

There were 899 Social Security disability beneficiaries who took part in DORS programs and became employed in FY 2008.

The average cost per person rehabilitated was \$4,431.22. This cost to the State is paid back, through taxes and reduced reliance on public benefits, in 2 to 4 years.

Average hourly earning at case record closure: \$10.69

The average wage for individuals who participated in OBVS services was \$15.37.

When needed, DORS provides support to both employers and consumers who participate in internships and on-the-job training. Pictured (left to right) are Dave Wilmoth, Bai Ni, Ron Collins, WTC Director of Workforce Services Jim Evans and DORS Germantown counselor Tracey Wyant.



DORS served 1,500 individuals who listed deafness or hearing loss as a primary disability.

The Workforce & Technology Center served 1829 individuals. Of these, 877 were transitioning students.

Maryland WorkTech provided on-the-job worksite consultations to 76 individuals and their employers.

With an independent auto body shop to run and no technical schools in Maryland that teach auto body repair, Ron Collins sifts through a lot of job applications to find a skilled employee for his business, Collins Collision and Auto Repair.

With a lifelong interest in cars, Bai Ni, who has been deaf since birth, thought about a number of careers but was unsure how he could make a living working with cars.

DORS brought Ron Collins and Bai Ni together. Each may have found what he was looking for.

Bai, a Germantown resident, came to DORS with a desire to work instead of collecting disability benefits. Since childhood, he has loved cars (“model Lamborghinis”) and fixing household items. Over the years, he says, teachers and guidance counselors told him that his interest in cars would not lead to a good career.

“I went to DORS,” said Bai through an interpreter. “I said ‘What should I be?’” He said he was surprised and happy when his DORS counselor in Germantown, Tracey Wyant, asked him about his interests. “She encouraged me to see if I could do what I always dreamed about,” he says.

Bai came to DORS Workforce & Technology Center (WTC) in northeast Baltimore after taking part in career assessments to find out if he had the spatial, mechanical and mathematical abilities needed to train and work in auto body repair. In an unusual set of circumstances, WTC not only found Collins Collision and Auto Repair was willing to take him on as an intern, but the shop also already employed a deaf auto body worker willing to teach Bai what he knows.

Now, Bai is learning auto body skills with an experienced auto body technician. Each week, he leaves home in Montgomery County, resides in the WTC dorm and commutes from there to his internship at Collins Collision and Auto Repair. DORS is providing on-the-job training funds to the employer.

The Maryland Disability Determination Services (DDS) is ever mindful of its charge to bring accurate, timely answers to Maryland citizens who apply for the Social Security Administration's (SSA) two disability programs. These are Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), which provides cash benefits to insured workers who meet the definition of disability and to their dependents, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which provides monthly cash benefits to children and adults who meet the definition of disability as well as certain income and resource guidelines.

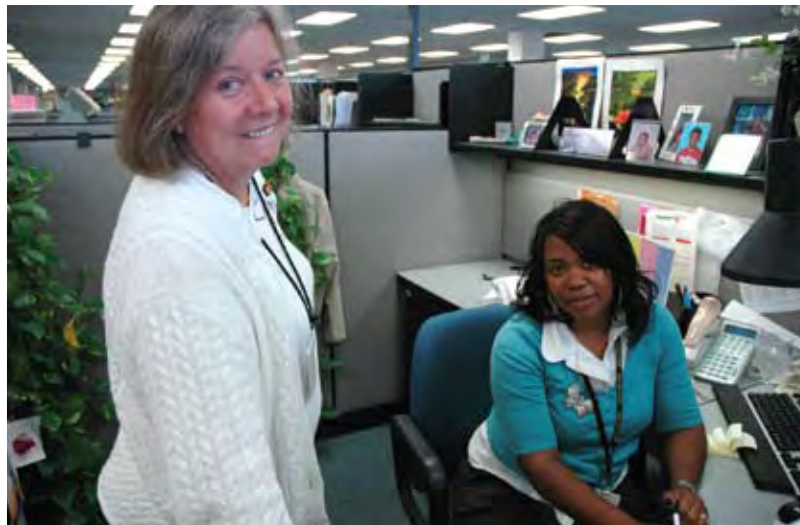
This year, DDS implemented the Quick Disability Determination (QDD) process. A computer module identifies cases most likely to be allowed and flags them as QDD claims. SSA field offices and the DDSs have specific instructions for expediting QDD case processing. The average processing time is about 5-6 days.

DDS's claims examiners and physicians communicate constantly with Maryland's medical providers and contractors to gather medical records to make these decisions. The DDS continues to expand the use of electronic record transmission options, thus cutting down on mail and processing time.

DDS adjudicated 58,763 claims, an increase of 4% from last year.

The net accuracy rate was 96.5%.

The average processing time was 78.8 days (Title 2) and 82.2 days (Title 16). These processing times are lower than the six-state regional performance of 85.6 days and 87.2 days, respectively.



The Social Security Administration (SSA) awarded the prestigious Commissioner's Citation to Dr. Carla Sarno (left), Chief Psychiatric Medical Consultant at the Maryland DDS. SSA recognized Dr. Sarno for her leadership in training DDS claims examiners and physicians all over the country about the unique medical conditions of armed service personnel who return from overseas. She is pictured consulting with DDS examiner Denise McCormick.



Because of his autism, 22-year-old Andrew Pegg has not spoken a single word since he was two years old. Yet, Andrew owns Andilla Designs & Graphics, a home-based business that personalizes gifts and advertising products.

DORS, with initial consultation from the agency's Reach Independence through Self-Employment (RISE) program, helped Andrew and his family plan a business that will make Andrew an active member of his community. Listen to Andrew's story on a podcast at www.md-dors.org/report.



Antjuan Dean, a summer YouthWorks student on the street cleaning crew at the Charles Village Community Benefits District, quickly learned one of the perks of getting to work earlier than everyone else: "I get the good broom," he smiled.

The value of punctuality is just one of the work behaviors that youths with disabilities learn in the summer employment programs that DORS supports throughout the state. DORS typically joins with local workforce agencies so that students with disabilities can obtain real work experiences.



Brittany Thomas (2nd from right) made the transition from Paint Branch High School to Bowie State College with the help of DORS Counselor Allen Sullivan (l), her long-time vision teacher Joanie Reinfeld and her mother Tas Simmons (right).

To get her ready to attend college level classes, Allen worked with Montgomery County Public Schools to provide Brittany with a portable CCTV well before graduation, so that she could become comfortable with it in a classroom.

Students served by Disability

Number

Psychiatric Disability	1,512
Cognitive Disability	3,426
Orthopedic	278
Deaf & Hard of Hearing	407
Other Physical Disabilities	373
Blind & Vision Impairments	180
Communication Disabilities	128
Respiratory Impairments	26
Total	6,330

Daniel Grieves, who lives in Cockeysville, can talk about his first year at a local private college, but it is painful. The campus was large and buildings were scattered. The teacher aide who always helped him jump-start assignments in high school was gone. His parents wanted to help, but learned that colleges frown upon much communication between teachers and parents.

This rocky start eventually lead Daniel to a second chance in the Pathways Program, an initiative between the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) and the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), that helps college students with autism spectrum disorders find success.

This year, Daniel and his parents can tick off his successes: He has completed three semesters at the CCBC, Essex. He worked as a summer intern in a federal agency. According to his parents, he is much more inclined to join classmates at a lunch table, after so many years of eating alone. Daniel is completing his last year at CCBC, Essex. He hopes to combine his writing and computer skills into a career that will allow him to live independently.

The Pathways Program serves students this year in the CCBC, Essex and Catonsville. The program assists students who have autism spectrum disorders to prepare for careers that will support a lifetime of independence.



Above, left: Since coming to college, Daniel has learned more about his interests and strengths. He changed his intended major from accounting to a more creative field.

Above, right: Sue Howarth, WTC case manager, meets with Daniel weekly to help him maneuver the challenges of college. He also takes part in weekly peer group sessions. DORS expects to serve increasing numbers of transitioning students with autism spectrum disorders and is training staff to meet this need.

BUDGET FY 2008

SOURCE OF FUNDS

STATE FUNDS

State Matching Funds	11,918,622
State Non-matching Funds	1,132,473
TOTAL	13,051,095

FEDERAL FUNDS

Federal Matching Funds Basic Program	34,147,743
Independent Living (Older Blind)	654,456
State Independent Living Services	357,834
Training	191,835
SUB TOTAL	35,351,868

FEDERAL NON-MATCHING FUNDS

Social Security Administration/DDS	25,984,530
Social Security Reimbursement	2,519,708
TCA Disabled Consumers	196,901
Seamless Transition Collaborative	574,479
Supported Employment State Grants	480,000
Literacy	392,823
High School / High Tech	225,000
Client Assistance Program	210,420
Adult Basic Education	56,677
SUB TOTAL	30,640,538
TOTAL	65,992,406

SPECIAL FUNDS

Business Enterprise Program for the Blind	2,896,436
Third Party	151,928
TOTAL	3,048,364
TOTAL COMBINED FUNDS AVAILABLE	82,091,865



One of the most important ingredients in DORS strategic planning is input received from the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council. Council members are appointed by the Governor and include representatives from education, rehabilitation, employment, industry and consumer advocacy groups. Last year, the Council helped facilitate public meetings, advised on policy changes and met with state and federal representatives to advocate for public vocational rehabilitation programs. They were successful in advocating for additional state funding for the public vocational rehabilitation program.

BUDGET FY 2008

EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS

Disability Determination Services	25,984,557
Case Services	18,002,051
VR Client Services Program	17,606,105
Workforce & Technology Center	11,928,648
Administration	4,399,587
Business Enterprise Program for the Blind	2,888,020
Seamless Transition Collaborative	591,415
Literacy	489,733
TCA Disabled Consumers	196,901
High School/High Tech	4,848
TOTAL FUNDS EXPENDED	82,091,865

Persons Rehabilitated by Primary Disability

Primary Disability	Number Rehabilitated
Psychiatric Disability	765
Cognitive Disability	631
Orthopedic	227
Deaf & Hard of Hearing	205
Other Physical Disabilities	275
Blind & Visual Impairments	150
Communication Disabilities	19
Respiratory Impairments	18

Persons Rehabilitated by Occupation at Case Closure

Occupation	Number Rehabilitated
Service	991
Clerical, Sales	514
Professional, Technical, Managerial	367
Production, Construction, Operating, Materials Handling	234
Homemaker	152
Farming, Fishery & Forestry	23
Unpaid Family Worker	6
Vending Operator/Worker	3
Miscellaneous, NEC	0
TOTAL	2,290



Last year, Sharon Moore (l) was receiving Social Services benefits. This year, thanks to DORS and her counselor Dusty Rhodes (Germantown), she is collecting a higher paycheck than she ever dreamed. She is employed full-time for a NASA sub-contractor and provides administrative support, including arranging business travel details.

To DORS colleagues and partners:

During this past year, DORS leadership set out to realign resources to become a more focused public vocational rehabilitation agency. With resourcefulness, courage and dedication from our staff and partners, we have met that goal.

This was an urgent undertaking due to several realities. Demand for vocational rehabilitation services has grown, particularly because of our increased focus on serving transitioning students with disabilities. At the same time, Federal funding has not kept pace with program costs and consumer needs.

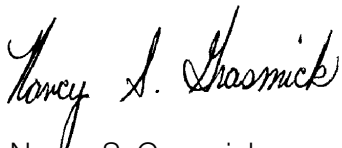
To continue to bring the best public vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities in Maryland, we evaluated, redesigned and, in some cases, eliminated programs. We requested and were grateful to receive an additional \$2 million in state funding to help individuals with significant disabilities move off our waiting list more quickly.

Despite these challenges, our staff still helped 2,290 individuals with disabilities go to work. The average hourly beginning wage of these new workers improved. We served an increased number of high school students who are transitioning to higher education, job training and employment.

In addition, the Disability Determination Services staff adjudicated 4% more claims than the previous year, increased accuracy scores and reduced processing time. For the people who are applying for these benefits, this means accurate, timely answers about eligibility for this very important social support program.

This year, and in those to come, we will continue to match prepared and qualified individuals with disabilities to job openings in the business community. We pledge to use our resources wisely and to continue the important mandate that established a public vocational rehabilitation program in Maryland in 1929.

Sincerely,



Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools



Robert A. Burns
Assistant State Superintendent in Rehabilitation Services



Ian Kidd and Beverly Brown were among the first students to participate in the new GED group instruction preparation program at DORS Workforce & Technology Center. GED instruction is available to DORS consumers who need a high school diploma in order to successfully complete a training program or reach their job goal.

When Beverly obtained her GED, she was able to start on another long-time dream—the Maryland Transit Administration hired her as a bus driver trainee.



About 400 Maryland high school students with disabilities are participating in enhanced career assessments, paid job experiences, support services and leadership activities thanks to a \$2.9 million, five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education to the Maryland State Department of Education.

The Governor's Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities provides ongoing oversight and guidance. The Council is co-chaired by Catherine Raggio, Secretary, Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD), and Robert Burns, Assistant State Superintendent, Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS). TransCen, Inc., a Silver-Spring-based community rehabilitation program, is providing project management.

Pictured above are (front, left to right) Cathy Raggio (MDOD), Richard Leucking and Christy Stuart (TransCen, Inc.); (standing, left to right) Robert Burns, Berenda Riedl (DORS Transitioning Staff Specialist) and Debra Leucking (TransCen, Inc.).

Martin O'Malley

Governor

James H. DeGraffenreidt, Jr., President

Maryland State Board of Education

Nancy S. Grasmick

State Superintendent of Schools

Robert A. Burns

Assistant State Superintendent in Rehabilitation Services

Maryland State Department of Education

Division of Rehabilitation Services

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Annual Report: *www.md-dors.org/report*

DORS field and OBVS counselors are located in 22 field offices throughout Maryland.

To find the nearest one, contact DORS headquarters or visit *www.dors.state.md.us*

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