

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS)

Executive Director FY'26- Quarter Three Report

A brief overview of DVRS operations, performance and progress.

From the Director

Welcome to the SRC Executive Director's Third Quarter Report, where we delve into the dynamic landscape of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) daily operations, performance, and progress over the past fiscal year. Our commitment to strengthening operational oversight has been unwavering, and we are proud to report significant strides in several key areas.

Firstly, our focus on improved reporting mechanisms has enhanced transparency and accountability, enabling more informed decision-making processes across all levels of our organization. This has been a cornerstone in driving stronger performance, allowing us to develop a Rehabilitation/Successful Outcomes Strategy with specific factors to improving our rehabilitation goals.

Additionally, through strategic foresight, we are working on developing innovative ways to improve service delivery that will contribute to our ability to meet the evolving needs of our consumers while focusing on growth and sustainability.

Our progress is a testament to the dedication of our team and our partners, who continue to push the boundaries of what we can achieve together. As we move forward, we remain committed to building on this momentum, fostering an environment of continuous improvement, and delivering tangible results that empower individuals with disabilities that are vital to strengthening our communities.

Thank you for your continued support and collaboration in our journey towards excellence.

Felicia Hopson

Dr. Felicia Hopson
Executive Director

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation- Executive Directors Report

FY'26-Qtr. 3- April 1, 2026 - June 30, 2026

Quarterly Updates

All DVRS teams/units continue to deliver consistent results managing multiple programs and projects while remaining committed to deliver quality service to our consumers. The teams continue to work on improving key performance indicators across various initiatives, demonstrating their ability to adapt and thrive in a dynamic environment. Their dedication to continuous improvement has also led to the implementation of innovative strategies that enhance consumer satisfaction. Moving forward, we remain focused on fostering collaboration and leveraging best practices to maintain our high standards of service delivery.

Community Rehabilitation Programs Unit (CRPU)

Spring Trainings

February 26, 2026 - Supported Employment & Long-Term Follow-Along

- 158 Attendees

March 4, 2026 - Extended Employment Hybrid Training

- 73 Attendees

March 11, 2026 - Trial Work Experience

- 138 Attendees

March 18, 2026 - Community Based Work Evaluation

- 105 Attendees

March 30th, 2026- Extended Employment Documentation Training

- 73 Attendees

April 15, 2026 - Provider Forum

- 113 Attendees

Policy Manuals

Supported Employment & Specialized Services and Extended Employment/Hybrid Program are being completed.

Quality Assurance Unit

- Created, supported, participated and conducted agency training for:
 - Three (3) MSG/CA sessions
 - Two (2) CIE Sessions for DVRS staff
- Participated in the *Career Network Intervention* professional development research study
- Participated as panelist for the 2027 Paid Work Based Learning Experience (WBLE) NCO
- Participated in on-site compliance review team of the Center for Independent Living of South Jersey, Inc. (CILSJ)

Contract Unit

- The Unit has completed preparations for contracts aligned with the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2027 cycle and have been submitted for Executive level approval:
 - SFY 2027 Long-Term Follow-Along (LTFA) Contracts
 - Contracts for the SFY 2027 LTFA program were signed by the providers and submitted Executive Leadership approval on 6/9/26. A total of 58 contracts has been issued for this program with 51 contracts managed in SAGE and 7 in IGX.
 - SFY 2027 Extended Employment Contracts
 - Contracts for the 2027 Extended Employment program were signed by the providers and submitted Executive Leadership approval on 6/30/26. This program includes 27 contracts.
 - SFY 2027 Innovation and Expansion / Employment First Contracts
- Contracts for the 2027 Innovation and Expansion Employment First contracts were signed by the providers and submitted for Executive Leadership approval. Four contracts have been awarded for SFY 2027, all of which will be managed in IGX.
- The Programs Unit and the Contract Unit completed the Notice of Contract Opportunity (NCO) for the Pre-ETS Paid Work Based Learning program (formally Paid Internship). Technical Assistance workshops were held in July. The review panel consisted of 7 members including individuals outside

of DVRS. This contract will follow the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) cycle; 25 contracts were awarded.

- Preparations for the FFY 2027 contracts have begun. The FFY 2027 contracts managed in IGX include:
 - Innovative Pre-ETS (5 contracts)
 - ATAC
 - Spinal Cord Injury
 - DAWN Step-Up
 - Regional Career Centers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Paper Contracts for FFY'27 are:
 - Centers for Independent Living (5 contracts)
 - NJ SILC
 - ACCSES
 - Adult Paid Internship (2 contracts)

Programs Unit

Employment First Grant – Providers and Outcomes

- Four (4) providers awarded the Employment First FY 2026 contracts - **Community Options, Waters & Sims, Avenues to Independent Living, and Jewish Vocational Service of Metro West.**
- All the providers achieved the contract deliverables. Providers have provided excellent services to DVRS clients.
- Program Manager implemented monthly check-in meetings.
- The Employment First Grant FY 2027 has been awarded, and providers are working in their service areas.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- DVRS will be represented at the 2026 Autism NJ Conference in October 2026.
- Program Manager provided Autism related information and webinar to DVRS Field Offices.
- DVRS has collaborated with School Organizations and partners involved in Project SEARCH program and provided Autism resources.

Pre-ETS Pre-Employment Updates

DVRS financially sponsored 45 students with disabilities to attend the TCNJ and Georgian Court University (GCU) Pre-College Summer Programs. These are 10-day residential college exploration programs. This is DVRS's third year having this program with TCNJ and GCU.

DVRS announced its revised Pre-ETS Paid Work-Based Learning (WBLE) Notice of Contract Opportunity for FY27. The revision includes an expansion for 25 contract awards.

Field Updates

New Partnerships & Program Development

Statewide Highlights

- Multiple offices expanded partnerships with **One Stop Operators, school districts, county agencies, and community organizations** to strengthen employment pathways and transition services.
- Several offices deepened collaborations with **Project Search, Workforce Development Boards, training providers, and specialized disability service organizations.**

Regional/Office Contributions

- **New Brunswick & Trenton:** Cross-training with One Stop staff; collaboration with Middlesex Probation; DIF Grant partnership with DOE; expanded Deaf/HOH partnerships including Bergen County Special Services, Winston Salem State University Deaf VR Program, Employment Horizons, and DDHH Equipment Distribution Programs.
- **Jersey City/Hudson County:** Hudson Community Enterprises agreement to include Project Search interns in Summer Pre-ETS programming.
- **Bridgeton:** Reconnected partnerships with Salem & Cumberland Drug Court, Office on Aging & Disability, and One Stop Operator.
- **Randolph:** Easter Seals expanded Supported Employment into Northern NJ/Morris County.

- **Cherry Hill:** New collaboration with *Ehired* (Mental Health Technician Certificate) and Pathways to Recovery Program (opioid-impacted individuals).
- **Pleasantville & Rio Grande:** Atlantic WDB pilot program for OJT and employer outreach.
- **Phillipsburg:** New vendor partnership with US Computers for assistive technology.
- **Neptune:** Partnerships with Monmouth County WDB, MOCEANS, Family Resource Associates, and Project Search Steering Committee.

Community Engagement & Outreach

Statewide Highlights

DVRS offices participated in **over 60 community events**, including job fairs, transition fairs, resource fairs, school presentations, and county-level workforce initiatives.

Regional/Office Contributions

- **New Brunswick & Trenton:** Career fairs, DDHH Advisory Council, NJPRA work group, Transition Nights, Abilities Expo, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce event, Consulate of Mexico Labor Rights Week.
- **Bridgeton:** HVAC & Apprenticeship Launch, multiple school graduations, CARF vendor evaluation, Recovery Center Resource Fair, judiciary job fairs, and county interagency councils.
- **Elizabeth:** Three transition fairs; Project Search interviews; reentry job fair at Kean University; Urban League Resource Fair; mental health resource fair; Rutgers/ARC/Goode Education Group trainings.
- **Randolph:** Multiple Step-Up presentations and transition fairs across Morris County.
- **Cherry Hill:** Planning for October Transition Fair and DEAM event.
- **Pleasantville & Rio Grande:** Stockton University events; Recovery Court recognition for DVRS staff; Dare to Dream bilingual presentations.

- **Phillipsburg:** DAWN CIL Resource Fair; Project Self Sufficiency Career Fair.
- **Somerville:** Manville HS presentation; Somerset County Disability Fair; North Plainfield Transition Fair; Hunterdon Chamber recruitment event; BIANJ seminar; Greater Raritan Job Fair.
- **Newark:** Extensive outreach including ECC Resource Fair, DAWN/SPAN Transition Conference, multiple school fairs, Central Ward Day, and district-wide DVR presentations.
- **Neptune:** Hosted DVRS tables at multiple county job fairs; 511 counseling; LTC participation in Ramapo Transition Conference and Bell Works Career Fair.

New Initiatives & Workflow Improvements

Statewide Themes

- Expansion of **paperless pilot** and digital workflows
- Increased **orientation frequency** and streamlined intake
- Development of **infographics, plain-language guides, and resource folders**
- Strengthened **Customized Employment** promotion

Regional/Office Contributions

- **New Brunswick & Trenton:** New DVR infographics; PE folders; weekly orientations; streamlined eligibility using digital forms; “What to Expect” guides.
- **Bridgeton:** Monthly counselor trainings; paperless pilot participation; Aira interpreter service for DLS communication.
- **Phillipsburg:** Paperless Pilot and SARA Works; clerical support for rapid engagement and documentation.
- **Paterson:** Customized Employment promotion; BOT job leads routed directly to providers; improved referral organization system.
- **Sewell:** Paperless Pilot implementation guidelines; statewide coordination with pilot offices.

- **Neptune:** DVRS Resource Newsletter; One-Stop Team Building Committee initiatives.

Vocational Rehabilitation, Potentially Eligible, and Paid Internships Data

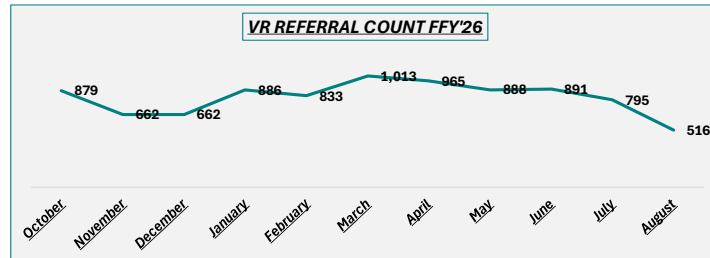
The FFY'26 rehabilitation/successful outcomes goal is **1925**. We implemented a Rehabilitation/Successful Outcomes Strategy that was and continues to be monitored weekly and requires regional check-in meetings to identify and discuss strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats. **We are currently at 96% of our FFY'26 Rehabilitation Goal with 1,857 rehabs as of September 11th.** Each week, we conduct a detailed review of a different office to assess their specific challenges and successes. This approach allows us to track trends and resolutions across the organization, ensuring that best practices are shared and implemented. By analyzing these trends, we can make informed decisions to optimize our strategies and improve overall outcomes.

Table 1/Chart 1

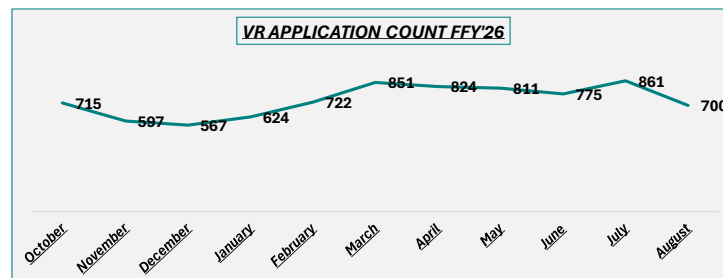
Note: The VR data displayed below is FFY'26

VR MONTHLY STATISTICS FFY'26

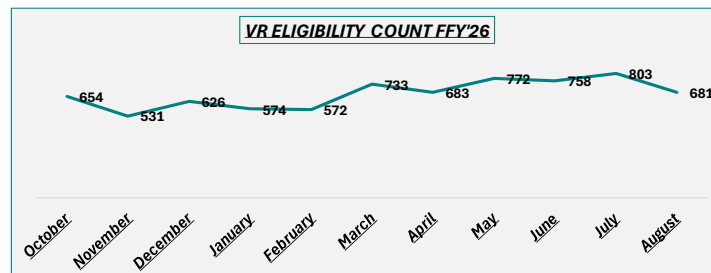
VR Referral Count Monthly FFY'26	
October	879
November	662
December	662
January	886
February	833
March	1,013
April	965
May	888
June	891
July	795
August	516
Grand Total	8,990



VR Application Count Monthly FFY '26	
October	715
November	597
December	567
January	624
February	722
March	851
April	824
May	811
June	775
July	861
August	700
Grand Total	8,047



VR Eligibility Count Monthly FFY'26	
October	654
November	531
December	626
January	574
February	572
March	733
April	683
May	772
June	758
July	803
August	681
Grand Total	7,387



VR Monthly Statistics Narrative – Federal Fiscal Year 2026

DVRS processed 8,990 referrals during FFY'26, with 8,047 applications submitted and 7,387 individuals determined eligible for services. This represents strong conversion rates throughout the intake pipeline, with approximately 89.5% of referrals converting to applications and 91.8% of applications resulting in eligibility determinations

Monthly Performance Trends

VR referrals showed significant monthly variation throughout the fiscal year:

- **Peak Performance:** March recorded the highest referral volume at 1,013 referrals, representing a notable 22% increase over the monthly average (816 referrals)
- **Strong Months:** January (886), May (888), and June (891) also demonstrated above-average activity
- **November and December** both recorded 662 referrals, suggesting potential holiday-season impacts
- **August** showed only 516 referrals, a 35% drop from July, which may indicate end-of-fiscal-year processing delays

Application submissions demonstrated more stability than referrals:

- **Consistent Range:** Monthly applications remained relatively steady between 567-861, with less volatility than referrals
- **Strong Finish:** July achieved the highest application count at 861 applications, followed by April (824) and March (851)
- **Q2 Momentum:** The February-March-April period showed consistent strength with 722, 851, and 824 applications respectively
- **End-of-Year Slowdown:** August applications (700) decreased but remained proportionally stronger than referrals

Eligibility decisions showed an upward trajectory in the latter half of the fiscal year:

- **Peak Months:** July recorded the highest eligibility determinations at 803, followed closely by May (772) and June (758)
- **Q3-Q4 Strength:** The April-July period demonstrated sustained high performance, each month exceeding 680 eligibility determinations
- **Early Year Challenges:** November showed the lowest activity at 531 determinations, potentially reflecting holiday impacts or staffing constraints

- Strong Close: Despite lower referrals, August maintained 681 eligibility determinations, suggesting efficient case processing

Key Performance Indicators

Conversion Rate Analysis

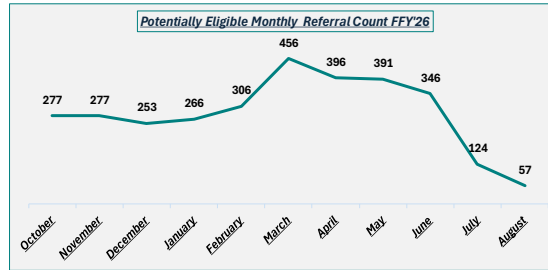
Metric	Volume	Conversion Rate
Referrals	8,990	Baseline (100%)
Applications	8,047	89.5% of referrals
Eligibility Determinations	7,387	91.8% of applications / 82.2% of referrals

Table 2/Chart 2

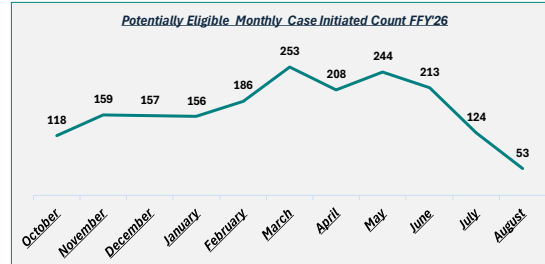
Note: The Potentially Eligible (PE) data displayed below is FFY'26

Potentially Eligible MONTHLY AND QUARTERLY STATISTICS FFY'26

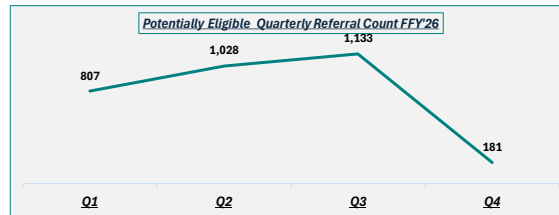
Potentially Eligible Monthly Referral Count FFY'26	
October	277
November	277
December	253
January	266
February	306
March	456
April	396
May	391
June	346
July	124
August	57
Grand Total	3,149



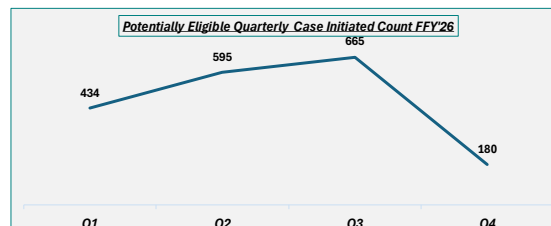
Potentially Eligible Monthly Application Count FFY'26	
October	118
November	159
December	157
January	156
February	186
March	253
April	208
May	244
June	213
July	124
August	53
Grand Total	1,871



Potentially Eligible Quarterly Referral Count FFY'26	
Q1	807
Q2	1,028
Q3	1,133
Q4	181
Grand Total	3,149



PE Quarterly Application Count FFY'26	
Q1	434
Q2	595
Q3	665
Q4	180
Grand Total	1,874



DVRS received **3,149** Potentially Eligible (PE) referrals during Federal Fiscal Year 2026, with 1,871 applications submitted.

Monthly Performance Analysis

(February-June):

- March recorded the highest volume at 456 PE referrals, representing 14.5% of the entire year's PE referrals
- February through June sustained strong activity with an average of 379 referrals per month
- This five-month stretch accounted for 1,895 referrals (60% of annual total)

(October-January):

- Maintained consistent baseline activity between 253-277 referrals monthly
- Average of 268 referrals per month during this period

(July-August):

- July dropped to 124 referrals (45% decrease from June)
- August plummeted to just 57 referrals (54% decrease from July; 87.5% decrease from March peak)
- Combined July-August total of 181 referrals equals just 5.7% of annual volume

(October-March):

- Applications steadily increased from 118 in October to 253 in March (114% growth)
- March applications represented 13.5% of all annual PE applications

(February-June):

- Maintained strong performance averaging 221 applications per month
- May peaked at 244 applications, second only to March

Quarterly Performance Trends**PE Referrals by Quarter**

<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Referrals</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Growth Rate</u>
<u>Q1 (Oct-Dec)</u>	<u>807</u>	<u>25.6%</u>	<u>Baseline</u>
<u>Q2 (Jan-Mar)</u>	<u>1,028</u>	<u>32.7%</u>	<u>+27.4%</u>
<u>Q3 (Apr-Jun)</u>	<u>1,133</u>	<u>36.0%</u>	<u>+10.2%</u>

Key Insights:

- Consistent quarterly growth through Q1-Q3, with Q3 representing the strongest performance
- Q3 referrals (1,133) represented 36% of annual volume in just three months

PE Applications by Quarter

<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Applications</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Conversion Rate from Referrals</u>
<u>Q1</u>	<u>434</u>	<u>23.2%</u>	<u>53.8%</u>
<u>Q2</u>	<u>595</u>	<u>31.8%</u>	<u>57.9%</u>
<u>Q3</u>	<u>665</u>	<u>35.5%</u>	<u>58.7%</u>

Key Insights:

- Progressive improvement in conversion rates from Q1 (53.8%) through Q3 (58.7%)
- Q3 represented peak performance with 665 applications and the strongest conversion efficiency

Key Findings

Strengths:

1. Strong mid-year momentum - Q2 and Q3 demonstrated consistent growth and improvement
2. March breakthrough - The spike to 456 referrals shows capacity for high-volume intake
3. Improving conversion rates - Q1 to Q3 showed steady improvement in referral-to-application conversion

Monitoring, Assessment and Planning

- FFY2024 Final Monitoring Report Update- Corrective Action Plan (CAP) Response has been submitted to RSA for 9 findings. We have received feedback from RSA. We submitted our most recent updates to RSA on July 30, 2026.
- Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)- is underway, with several listening sessions scheduled. Over 10,000 consumers (present and former) have received surveys, and we are partnering with other State agencies (DDD, DOE & DMHAS). The complete CSNA is expected August'27.
- VR-TAC-QM- Technical Assistance- Technical assistance is available and will be scheduled, after the most recent review RSA CAP submissions.
- DVRS Policy and Procedure Development is underway. We have a dedicated team member that is working on the policy, and we have begun with the Case Services Manual. We have established an Internal Policy Review Committee to provide feedback on all new policy updates. Our goals and objectives remain focused on improving overall efficiency and effectiveness.

Staffing Update

The staffing update represents the timeframe May 1, 2026 through September 1, 2026

Current Approved Positions, in process of hiring:

Field Staff:

- Program, Planning Development Specialist (PPDS) for the Business Outreach Team (BOT)
- 2 Supervising VRC Field Positions
- 7 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors 1 (VRC)
- 1 VRC-1 bilingual variant
- 3 VRC-1 DLS variants
- 1 DEO 1 Position
- 3 Clerk Positions

Administrative Office:

- 1 Assistant Director of Quality Control, Performance Management, and Strategic Improvement
- 3 PPDS positions for Program Unit/CRP Unit
- 1 Secretarial Assistant 2 Position
- 1 Contract Administrator 2 position
- 1 Contract Administrator 3 position (Supervisory position)
- 3 Administrative Analyst 3 positions
- 1 Administrative Analyst 4 position

New Employees Hired or Promoted: (**April 1, 2026 through August 31, 2026**)

- 1 Assistant Director of Field Services Promotion
- 9 VRC-1 Positions
- 1 VRC-1 Bilingual Position
- 5 Senior Clerk Promotions
- 8 Clerk Positions
- 1 DEO-2 Promotion
- 1 DEO-3 Promotion
- 1 Administrative Analyst 2, Info Systems Promotion
- 1 Manager Promotion (Neptune Office)
- 1 Rehabilitation Aide Promotion
- 1 Supervising VRC Promotion

Selected Thank you Notes (Kudos) to DVRS

ALL DVRS SUPPORT STAFF,

We wanted to take a moment to recognize and express our sincere appreciation for our head clerks and support staff who are truly the backbone of DVRS operations. Your unwavering support and remarkable responsiveness never go unnoticed. Day after day, you handle requests with efficiency and professionalism, ensuring that everything runs smoothly behind the scenes. Whether it's processing urgent paperwork, coordinating schedules, managing communications, or troubleshooting unexpected challenges, you consistently step up with a positive attitude and solution-focused approach. You are absolutely critical to our day-to-day operations,

and quite frankly, we couldn't function effectively without you. Your dedication ensures that our team can focus on serving our clients, knowing that the essential infrastructure of our work is in capable and caring hands. Please know that your hard work, reliability, and commitment to excellence make a real difference every single day. You exemplify what it means to be an essential part of our DVRS team.

With gratitude and appreciation,

DVRS Leadership Team

Yigal Falk, VRC 2 - Trenton Field DVRS Office

Dear Mr. Falk, Thank you so much for investing in my education. I sincerely appreciate your generosity and support. Your investment in my future means more than words can express, and I am truly grateful for your kindness and belief in me.

Thank you again. -Consumer

Jennifer Colmenares, VRC 2- Newark DVRS Office

I am going to forward you the email that I received regarding the position and when I should be expected to start. Thank you again Ms. Colmenares for sending me that application because you have helped me open a new chapter in my life.

-Consumer

Barbara Stockton, PPDS/BOT- Central DVRS Office

Hi Barbara, I wanted to take a moment to thank you for all you do as our BOT representative for New Brunswick DVRS to assist our consumers with job placement. Below are some highlights of your work with our office. Recent job placements with InspiriTec have been great matches for our consumers seeking remote customer service jobs, which are not easy to secure. With the OJT contracts you developed with this employer, typically 6 weeks in duration, our consumers receive the necessary employer training with company provided laptops to ensure successful retention of their jobs. Your availability to troubleshoot as needed with hiring and job retention is much appreciated. Your job development efforts for other types of jobs have included Restaurant Depot for warehouse work, Ferraro Foods for CDL A drivers, ACE for plumbing assistant, Garnet Graphic Solutions for FT office assistant/customer service, United Sanitizing for janitorial work, New Brunswick Parking Authority (NBPA) for parking services assistant/supervisor, maintenance

custodian, and parking enforcement offices is very much appreciated. I love seeing the collaboration with our VRCs, employers, consumers and the BOT for successful job placements and REHABS!! I appreciate your collaboration for hiring events such as local job fairs and the upcoming Northeast Hispanic Business Expo as well as serving as the Chair of our Middlesex County Abilities Committee, assisting with developing/planning employer training and hiring events and overall increasing disability awareness in our community. Lastly, I thank you for your support and collaboration with reviewing necessary documents for consumers seeking self employment. We have several in the works and I am very excited to see these small businesses come to fruition in the near future with your continued guidance and support. Thanks again for all you do! Keep up the great work, Barbara!

-Amy Hoehman, Supervisor

Rosemarie Rudderow, VRC 2- Neptune DVRS Office

Hi Rosemarie, I wanted to take a moment to sincerely thank you for the support and effort that made this possible. We are happy to share that my son now has a confirmed accommodations CDL knowledge test scheduled. This would not have happened without your help, Rosemarie, for guiding the process and arranging the psychological evaluation. We truly appreciate the time, patience, and teamwork that got us to this point. My son is looking forward to the test and to continuing his path toward the CDL and a career as a Heavy Equipment Operator.

Thank you again! -Consumer's father

Brittany Nagle, VRC 1 - Phillipsburg DVRS Office

Good morning, I've struggled for so long it's nice to have proof. I met with Mary and we sent my resume out to a few places, and someone reached out and I have an interview on Thursday. It's close to home and it's much slower pace.

Thanks for everything Brittany, I really appreciate all you've done for me.

Have a nice day. -Consumer

Sadma Ramcharan, VRC2 – Jersey City DVRS Office

Hi Sadma Just wanted to know that client is doing very well in Physical Therapy and I deeply appreciate your ability to get her on a vocational track. This has made a great

change in her life and future so thank you. Please call if I can help anyway with this case, I'll continue a physical therapy as per her doctor's prescription.

-Physical Therapy Provider