

October 17, 2016 OKDRS Regular Commission Meeting
Submitted by Noel Tyler, DRS Interim Director

Agency Updates

Disability Determination Services (DDS)

- DDS completed federal FY 16 on 9/30/16. There were 53 weeks in the fiscal year due to leap year. They met their targeted goals as did the region. Their decisional accuracy through the first 8 months (most recent data available) is 99.1%, which is the highest in the region and 2nd in the Nation.
- DDS increased the presumptive disability rate from 10% in FY 15 to 16% in FY 16. This was above the regional average of 11.6%. Presumptive Disability is a process by which benefits are paid earlier to the claimant.
- DDS' initial processing time for FY 16 was 78.7 days which was 5 days lower than both the Regional and National averages

Oklahoma School for the Blind (OSB) Student Events

- Elementary Students - ninth Western Heritage Day at the Webb's Silver Spur Western Lodge and sponsored by The Oklahoma Quarter Horse Association
- High School Students toured the NewView Oklahoma's downtown manufacturing center on Manufacturing Day
- National White Cane Safety Day October 11 at Arrowhead Mall. This is an OSBPTO project. The vendors are from Tulsa, Muskogee and surrounding areas. Some of ones attending this year were Nanopac, Oklahoma Parents Center, VR/VS, Azalea Council of the Blind, Muskogee EMS, Older Blind Program, VA Blind Veterans Program, and the National Federation of the Blind Muskogee Chapter.

Oklahoma School for the Deaf (OSD)

- The Oklahoma School for the Deaf hosted the Great Plains Schools for the Deaf (GPSD) Volleyball Tournament October 7-8. Eight schools for the Deaf participated in the tournament including Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin. In addition, OSD celebrated football homecoming on October 8. The OSD football team played the Iowa School for the Deaf. In both volleyball and football, 112 students participated in sport competitions on the OSD campus.
- The dedication of the Galloway-Clerc Library took place at the Oklahoma school for the Deaf Library on October 13. The library was named for Sue Galloway who recently retired after 25 years as the OSD librarian. It is also named for Laurent Clerc, the first deaf teacher of the Deaf in America. Sue is Clerc's great, great, great granddaughter.

- The East Central University girls' volleyball team and the OSD girls' volleyball team have developed a special relationship. ECU coach, Melissa Anderson, and OSD coach, Angie Shelby, organized a special practice session of the two teams at OSD on October 3. The media showcased the friendship of the college students and the OSD students.

RSA – Technical Assistance On-Site Visit – September 20-22

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Act), as amended by title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), requires the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to provide technical assistance to State vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies to improve the quality of vocational rehabilitation services provided to, and promote the achievement of high quality employment outcomes by, individuals with disabilities. To fulfill, in part, this requirement, RSA has developed a protocol through which it will review the progress of VR agencies toward compliance with new requirements under the Act, as amended by WIOA, and provide technical assistance in Federal fiscal year 2016 to assist States in complying with those requirements. This protocol included three focus areas covering: Competitive integrated employment; Pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities, pre-employment transition services, and; Supported employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services, to youth with the most significant disabilities.

OKDRS is one of five VR agencies selected to receive technical assistance through this protocol. RSA on-site visit was September 20-22, 2016.

Visual Services (VS)

- VS will be participating in a White Cane Awareness Day along with several other partners on October 15, 2016 at Penn Square Mall. This is a public event from 11 AM to 1 PM, and everyone will be invited to participate.
- VS will also be having its ABLE (Adult Blind Living Experience) the week of October 24-28 at VS #90 in Shepherd Mall in Oklahoma City. We generally have about 8-10 consumers who participate in this program. This program focuses on newly blinded consumers gaining or regaining such skills as safety, healthy meal preparation, home management and other skills needed to prepare to reside independently or to enter the workforce.
- VS just completed its 2016 fiscal reporting year by successfully closing 245 cases on blind or severely visually impaired consumers, 208 of whom became gainfully employed due to the provision of services by our staff. The remainder acquired or relearned the skills necessary to manage their homes or help out in a family business.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

- OKDRS was a sponsor for the 11th annual Oklahoma Transition Institute (OTI). The event brought in approximately 500 participants involved in assisting Oklahoma youth with disabilities in preparing for post-secondary education and employment. The event featured over 30 breakout sessions and included keynote speakers featuring Joseph Siano, superintendent of Norman Public Schools, R. Michael Carter, superintendent of Rainer School District in Rainier, Oregon, Laurie Kash, student services and curriculum director for Rainer School District, as well as former Olympic Champion Bart Conner.
- OKDRS has been actively involved in collaboration with Veterans Affairs to assist homeless veterans with employment opportunities and services. On October 7, the Department of Veterans Affairs will honor OKDRS with an award for dedication and commitment to excellence in service to our Veterans.
- The federal production year has come to a close. The VR Division increased total applications, plans, and wages. The overall successful outcomes were 1873, which was 97 short of last year's total. VR increased its overall success rate to over 55%.

Cross-Agency or Community Partnerships

1. 14th Annual Oklahoma Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (OKTVR) Conference
2. ORC Strategic Planning Meeting
3. IDEA B State Advisory Panel
4. State Independent Living Centers (SILC) Board Meeting
5. Workforce Core Partners Meeting
6. IDEA B State Advisory Panel
7. Heartland Council of the Blind, NewView Oklahoma, and DRS VS' White Cane Day Event on October 11 at Penn Square Mall
8. Visual Services Consumer Advisory Committee (VSCAC)
9. 11th OK Transition Institute (OTI) 2016
10. Oklahoma Works Summit