



FOCUSED ON TRANSITION

Developed by and for the Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation in conjunction with the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation



2022 Annual Report

Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
Mayo-Underwood Building 500 Mero Street, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Table of Contents

- STATEWIDE COUNCIL FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION 1
 - Letter from the Chairperson – David Allgood* 1
 - Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation Members* 2
 - 2022 Arthur Campbell, Jr. Advocacy Award Winner*..... 2

- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S OFFICE..... 4
 - Letter from the Executive Director – Cora McNabb* 4
 - Training* 6
 - Employment First Council* 7
 - Program Policy and Support Branch*..... 7
 - New Case Management System* 8
 - Stats for the Fiscal Year*..... 8

- DIVISION OF FIELD SERVICES 12
 - Notable Events* 12
 - Employer Recognition (East Central Region)* 16
 - Consumer Recognition*..... 17

- DIVISION OF CARL D. PERKINS 28
 - Introducing the CDPVTC Student Government Association* 29
 - Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center Graduation* 30
 - Shelby - (Warren County – South Region)*..... 30
 - CDPVTC Students Assist with Flood Relief Efforts* 31

- DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES 32
 - McDowell Center Partnerships*..... 32
 - Cindy (Mercer County - East Central Region)*..... 34
 - Monica – (Oldham County – West Central Region)*..... 35
 - Logan (Warren County – South Region)* 36
 - Chandler (Todd County – West Region)*..... 37
 - Adam (Henderson County – West Region)*..... 37
 - Shirley (Barren County - South Region)* 38
 - Amy - (Oldham County – West Central Region)* 40
 - Picture Perfect Moments* 41

- KENTUCKY BUSINESS ENTERPRISE 42
 - KBE 2022 Review* 42
 - Kentucky Blind Enterprises Spotlight*..... 43
 - Kentucky Business Enterprise Opens New Micromarkets* 44

- 2022 COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES (CIEO) 45
 - CIEO’s by Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)* 47

Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation

Letter from the Chairperson – David Allgood

For the 2022 annual report, we chose the theme Focused on Transition for many reasons. One of the main reasons is our commitment to services for people with disabilities who are transitioning from one phase to the next. For this reason, our partnership and collaboration with OVR has and always will be important to us and the community we serve.



We recognize that transition plays a huge part in all our lives. Many of us have transitioned from elementary to middle school, and then from middle school to high school, and perhaps from high school on to college. Some of us will be transitioning into full-time employment and then, hopefully, into retirement and our golden years.

Transition has also been at the forefront of OVR services over the past several years. OVR staff have assisted clients in their transition from high school to postsecondary education or gainful competitive employment, or even self-employment. In addition, staff have assisted people transitioning from postsecondary education into gainful competitive full-time employment.

Many of you have transitioned from only working from home to working back in the office in a part-time or full-time capacity as well as meeting with clients face-to-face for the first time in quite a long period.

As we all know, transitions can be challenging and filled with barriers. At the same time, transitions can be promising and may also lead to some very positive aspects in our lives.

The SCVR would like to thank all OVR staff for their dedication and determination in ensuring that all clients have extensive opportunities to transition into the next stages of their working lives.

Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation Members

Council Member	Representing
David Allgood, Chairperson	Business, Industry and Labor
Joe Cowan, Vice Chairperson	Statewide Independent Living Council
Todd Stephens	Business, Industry and Labor
Riki Danielle Burton	National Federation of the Blind
Matthew Davis	Individual with a Disability
Jeffrey Edwards	Client Assistance Program
Kelly Knoop	Individual with a Disability
Tyler Levy	Consumer/Vocational Rehabilitation
Amy Luttrell	Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board
Kellie Smith	Parent Training and Information Center
Briana Sweatt	Bluegrass Council of the Blind
Mary Teresa Terlau	Kentucky Council for the Blind
Christopher White	Community Rehabilitation Program
Necholyia Wright	Business, Industry and Labor
Susan Farra	State Educational Agency
Lynn Florence	Committee of Blind Vendors
Kelly Bass	OVR Rehabilitation Counselor, Ex-Officio
Cora McNabb	OVR Ex-Officio
Vacant	Business, Industry and Labor

2022 Arthur Campbell, Jr. Advocacy Award Winner



Cameron Levis (Warren County – South Region)

The SCVR has given the 2022 Arthur Campbell, Jr. Advocacy Award to Cameron Levis. The award is given annually to a person who has passionately advocated for the rights and equitable treatment of individuals with disabilities, made a significant difference in the quality of life for all individuals with disabilities, and has championed independent living, full inclusion, and

employment for all. Cameron was presented the award at the virtual January SCVR meeting.

Cameron completed his bachelor's degree in 2015 and master's degree in 2017 from Western Kentucky University. Both degrees are in sport and recreation administration. He is currently working on his doctorate in education and leadership, with aspirations of becoming a parks and recreation director.

Cameron has always understood that the life of a person with a disability includes many parts that make up the whole individual. While in college, Cameron was involved in Inclusive Ministries, which sought inclusion for people with disabilities by providing friendship and community, and an outlet for spirituality and community for people with disabilities by hosting monthly activities. Cameron currently works for Parks and Recreation in Bowling Green and manages the adaptive recreation/sports program, a program he created.

Executive Director's Office



The Kentucky OVR central office is housed at the Mayo-Underwood Building in Frankfort, Kentucky. The agency is part of the Education and Labor Cabinet within the Department of Workforce Development. The office of the Executive Director oversees all the functions of the agency, but certain areas report directly to this position. The office consists of four division directors, an

administrator that oversees training, The Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network-Initiative (RETAIN) Administrator, Employment First Council Administrator and the Manager of the Program, Policy, and Support Branch.

Letter from the Executive Director – Cora McNabb

Transition can be defined as the process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another. Over the past year we have experienced “transition” in several different areas, making the theme selected by the Statewide Council for this year “Focused on Transition” an accurate description of our journey. The following items provide a highlight of the changes that have occurred.



- The Education and Workforce Development Cabinet and the Labor Cabinet became one and is now the Education and Labor Cabinet, strengthening our workforce services in Kentucky.
- OVR staff transitioned back to work in the offices with a hybrid schedule. This was not an easy transition after 14 months of full-time remote work from home during the pandemic. Staff had to rearrange schedules to allow for transit to and from work and lost some of the flexibility and ease of working from home. On the other hand, returning to offices reduced isolation, strengthened connections with others and assisted us in making a clear distinction between work and home life.

- OVR participated in formalized strategic planning focusing on the following six areas: 1) sound fiscal management; 2) quality assurance; 3) staff resources; 4) center operations; 5) consumer services; and 6) public awareness.
- OVR established the Transition Branch to provide enhanced services to students with disabilities to facilitate the transition from school to post-school life. The branch employs 11 staff members who engage with and provide Pre-Employment Transition Services and Transition Services to students with disabilities.
- OVR was selected for an off-site monitoring review with the Rehabilitation Services Administration and is currently making transitions in several programmatic and fiscal areas in response to the corrective action plan.
- OVR implemented an increase in wages for current employees and starting salaries for new employees to address inequities and increase staff recruitment and retention.

Though our path adjusts and changes with each transitional opportunity, the primary focus is always the provision of quality services to our consumers.

We would like to thank the State Rehabilitation Council for its ongoing support of the agency in these areas of transition over the year. OVR is looking forward to working with the State Rehabilitation Council in the upcoming year in implementing practices that result in higher employment outcomes in competitive integrated employment.

Training

OVR Virtual Statewide Conference 2022

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) held a virtual statewide conference from February 7-11 for the entire staff on various topics including mindfulness, customer service, the vendor process, the vendor program, services at both centers and quality management.

The Kentucky Employee Assistance Program (KEAP) opened the training by encouraging OVR employees to look at personal and work concerns in new ways. The presenter suggested organizing work by tackling one to two “big rocks” each day starting with the hard tasks.

During the conference, the staff became more familiar with various OVR programs such as the Kentucky Enterprise Program, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTC), and the Independent Living and Older Individuals who are Blind (IL/OIB) program. For example, to better understand the Kentucky Enterprise Program, OVR employees heard from blind vendors who discussed their challenges and philosophies on customer service.

The conference concluded with a presentation from the Technical Assistance Center for the agency on financial and fiscal management such as proper document and allowable costs. Counselors were reminded that they are fiscal agents and stewards of the taxpayer’s money.

OVR Executive Director Cora McNabb closed with words of wisdom about the importance of learning what other divisions in the agency do and respecting and valuing fellow co-workers for the jobs they perform.

Pandemic Positive for Training

The transition from work to home was a huge undertaking. Lack of equipment, broadband service issues, answering phones remotely, staying connected, communicating effectively, mass use of Zoom and Teams with training needs from staff and consumers on how to use those resources. So many challenges throughout the pandemic. One of the bright spots is that we benefited from increased opportunities for participation in national and local training.

Professional associations learned how to provide their conferences online and more staff attended because they could participate without being away from their

schedules or being exposed to COVID strains. National organizations provided online options. Normally the travel out-of-state is restricted to only one or two participants, but the virtual content allowed for leadership to participate in trainings offered by the Council on State Agencies for Vocational Rehabilitation and National Council on State Agencies for the Blind. As we return to the offices and as more organizations return to in-person conferences, hopefully the planners will find a way to embrace the training options that the masses now have access to. Hybrid opportunities increase inclusion of staff for enhanced professional development opportunities and that benefit translates to the consumers that are served by a more knowledgeable staff.

Employment First Council signed into law and established under the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Employment First Council was signed into law and established under the OVR to strengthen Kentucky's commitment to increase and support meaningful employment of people with disabilities who desire to work in the general workforce regardless of the level of their disability. The law also assures that competitive and integrated employment in the community is the first and primary option for working-aged people with disabilities who desire employment, and that state policies and regulations are in line with that goal.

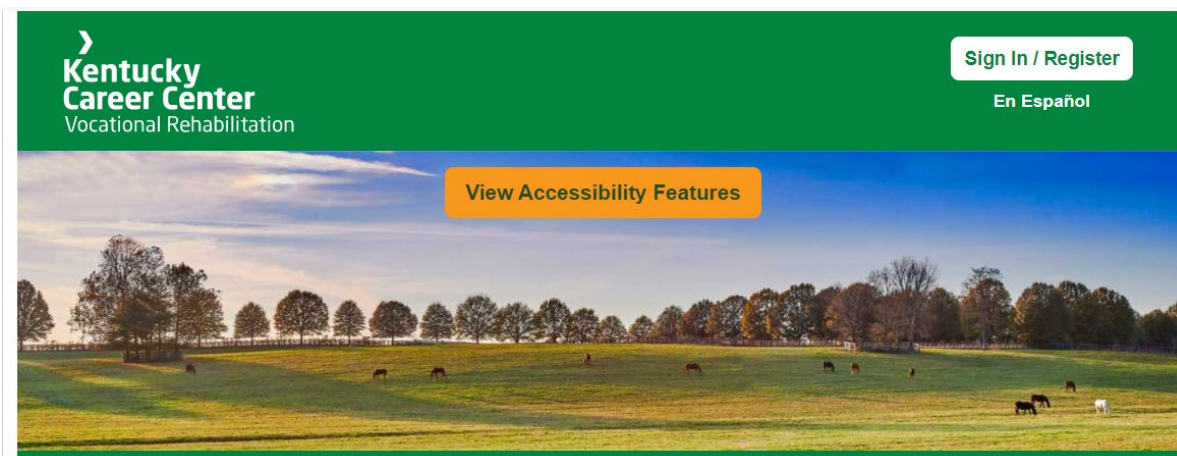
Kentucky's Employment First Council is a 28-member advisory group comprised of people with disabilities, family members, employers, providers, and state agency personnel. The council is administered and housed in the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) in the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet and acts as an advisory group to state government to fulfill the law.

Program Policy and Support Branch

The Program Policy and Support Branch (PPS) provides support to the OVR agency. Over the past year, the branch has expanded to include a System Support Section and a Grants Management Section. The System Support Section includes Resource Management Analysts who focus on data, the case management system, and federal reporting. The Grants Management Section includes Grants Specialists and a Grants Administrator, who focus on reimbursements, authorizations, contracts, and monitoring/audits. The remaining staff in the branch are program support administrative staff who focus on a variety

of programming from Benefits Counseling, the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, consumer financial counseling and support, policy and procedure development and maintenance, the mentor program, the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessments, the Statewide Council for Vocation Rehabilitation, the Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation, the state plan, annual plan, and more.

New Case Management System



After much dedicated time preparing and planning to purchase a new case management system, the Request for Proposal process resulted in the selection of Geographic Solutions. The kickoff meeting for the project was held in June 2022, and multiple meetings continue to involve various staff to begin to work on the logistics and conversion of data to the new system. Project completion is planned for November 2023.

Stats for the Fiscal Year

Agency Statistics

- 2022 Funding
 - 21.3% state funding 78.7% federal funding
 - For every 21.3 cents funded by the Commonwealth, 78.7 cents in federal funds are received
 - General Funds
 - Federal Funds
- Categories of Service and Cost Sharing

- OVR currently has all priority categories of service open and has suspended all cost sharing for individuals.

Based on Federal Fiscal Year (FFY)

- Demographics of Individuals Served
 - Gender
 - Male: 50.1%
 - Female: 49.6%
 - Not specified 0.3%
 - Race
 - White: 87.5%
 - Black: 10.0%
 - Others: 2.5%
 - Disability Type
 - Psychological/Mental: 29.5%
 - Cognitive: 24.5%
 - Sensory: 29.3%
 - Physical: 16.7%

Return on Investment / Financial Impact

3,246 individuals with disabilities obtained or maintained employment after receiving services from OVR in FFY 2022.

Facts about these individuals

- As a group, the 3,246 individuals increased their tax payments by an estimated \$11.07 million.
- Federal income tax payments increased by about \$4.11 million.
- State income tax payment increased by about \$1.71 million.
- Social Security/Medicare tax payments increased by about \$5.24 million (including employer contributions).

Personal Income and Insurance Benefits

When they applied for OVR services, 1,974 (60.8%) consumers reported that their primary source of support was their personal income with the rest depending upon family or government benefits. At closure, 2,919 (89.9%) individuals listed personal income as their primary source of support for an increase of 945 (29.1%).

Consumer's weekly income rose an average of 41% from \$499.92 at application to \$702.90 after employment, when their case was closed. This represents an average increase of \$202.98 in weekly income or \$10,554.80 per year. As a result, successful consumers increased their income by an average of about \$10,500.

At case closure, 1,795 consumers (55.3%) were receiving, or eligible to receive, private or employer-sponsored health insurance benefits.

Community Engagement

In FFY 2022, the OVR purchased \$26,339,589.86 in services for its consumers. These expenditures went to more than 11,500 individuals, businesses, agencies and organizations in communities all across the Commonwealth.

Type of Service	Amount Expended
Pre-ETS	\$1,490,044.63
Assessment	\$2,724,257.12
Diagnosis & Treatment	\$2,062,752.66
Training	\$11,771,059.52
Job Placement	\$469,000.00
Rehabilitation Technology	\$6,710,950.19
Maintenance	\$258,804.84
Transportation	\$66,316.47
Self-Employment	\$17,023.92
Assistive Services	\$137,626.73
Other Services	\$631,753.80
Sum	\$26,339,589.86

Social Security Reimbursement

For FFY 2022, 626 Social Security recipients obtained employment after receiving services from the OVR. Social Security reimbursed OVR for 280 claims totaling \$3,349,608.50.

Division of Field Services



The Division of Field Services is the first point of contact for clients receiving services from the agency. The division provides vocational rehabilitation counseling for general services, and specialized services for blind and visual disabilities, as well as deaf and hard of

hearing. In addition, this division provides oversight to rehabilitation technology, employer services, job placement, transition, and community rehabilitation programs.

Notable Events

Postsecondary Transition Experience Camp for High Schoolers has Sixth Successful Run at University of Kentucky

by Teresa Belluscio



Above: Campers for the Summer Leadership Experience Camp with Teresa Belluscio (Front Row in a blue cap)

The Human Development Institute (HDI) at the University of Kentucky welcomed high school upper-class students with disabilities onto campus in July for its annual four-day Summer Leadership Experience Camp. The camp is a Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation-sponsored Pre-Employment Transitions Services (pre-ETS) initiative designed for students seeking academic or vocational postsecondary education.

Teresa Belluscio, camp director, explained that the camp is perfect for students who are planning to continue their education after high school, whether through a university, community college, internship, apprenticeship or other kind of special program or training. The camp has both in-person and remote options. Remote students join information sessions virtually, while in-person students stay in a residence hall to experience what it's like to share space with a roommate and to navigate a college campus.

Camp activities are designed to satisfy the five pre-ETS components: job exploration, work-based learning, post-secondary enrollment, workplace readiness, and opportunities to enhance self-advocacy. Activities included motivational speaking, illusions from magician Cody Clark, an adventure excursion to the university recreation center's rock-climbing wall, presentations given by the university disability resource centers, presentations on various trades and occupations, and a scavenger hunt at the university bookstore followed by a conversation on the various options for procuring college textbooks. Parents were invited to join information sessions via video stream, to help students' postsecondary transitions.

Candy Rollins, camp chaperone and experienced special educator, said the most exciting part of camp for her each year is watching students shift out of the nervous discomfort they feel on arrival into being social and confident. "It is scary for many to be away from home but taking a step out of our comfort zone is where the magic happens," Rollins said. She added that watching the students at the climbing wall was "transforming and eye-opening." Rollins recalled one student who did not seem to have much confidence, but with encouragement from fellow campers, he made it to the top three times. Then there was another student who just would not give up, and although she didn't make it far, she went a step further each attempt. It was truly amazing to see her determination and [her] unwillingness to give up."

Jonathan Drummond, camp chaperone and HDI research assistant, said his favorite moments of camp were seeing campers, despite initial trepidation, come to fully embrace the climbing wall. Drummond noticed mood elevation, excitement, increased confidence, and expressions of self-efficacy in some campers during and following the climbing wall.

"For those that had limited success, there was still some of this payoff, and I can think of [some] campers that I believe could master some basic climbing skills given a few more attempts infused with encouragement," Drummond said.

Another valuable component of the camp is its peer mentorship. Former campers can return as peer mentor for future camps. Peer mentorship offers an opportunity to gain leadership experience and training. Peer mentors look out for other campers, serving as go-to points of contact for questions, concerns, and

friendship. They also give their own information presentations. One of this year's three peer mentors, for example, returned to camp after finishing his first year of college and gave a presentation on what it is like to be a college student.

Drummond relayed advice for campers: "Arrive, be open to the experience, embrace the experience, make new friends, and realistically imagine (and then consider and embrace) your possible future(s). Know where to look for assistance and help. Don't be afraid to ask for that assistance and help. Seek to understand the vehicles of your future progress (FAFSA and transportation independence, for example). Discuss and craft a plan(s) with loved ones and parents. Execute the plan(s). Stay with those plan(s). Don't underestimate the value of persistence and grit."

Applications for next year's Summer Leadership Experience Camp will open late spring, 2023. Active clients of the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation are eligible to apply. For more information, email Teresa Belluscio at teresa.belluscio@uky.edu.

The Hispanic Fair



From L to R: Rebeca and Jason at the Hispanic Fair

On October 28, 2021, the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) participated in the Hispanic Fair organized by South Central Kentucky Community & Technical College in Bowling Green. Prior to the event, OVR and the Education and Workforce Development communications staff worked diligently to ensure materials were available, accessible, and translated in Spanish.

Jason Herron, VR Counselor in Bowling Green, and Rebecca Mayrand, Accipio Language Services Spanish Interpreter, worked the event providing information about OVR as well as the resources and services available to individuals with disabilities. Jason summed it up as a "great event with great signage and quite a few vendors, a food truck (tacos and burritos – which were awesome), giveaways, popcorns, and more!"

OVR appreciates being able to work alongside partners within the community to reach more individuals who may be unaware of the resources and opportunities available. The event resulted in new referrals to the agency.

The agency is excited about increasing awareness of OVR services and enhancing diversity as highlighted in the current strategic plan. OVR continues to seek out opportunities to work with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

DEAFESTIVAL 2022 Featuring the Julie Beth Hayden Job Fair

By Beth Potter, HDI



(L to R) HDI employees Tara Eversole, Lisa Amstutz, Tina Vice and Sarah Grubb, were members of the interpreting team who provided services to allow hearing people to fully participate in the Julie Beth Hayden Job Fair at DeaFestival 2022 in Danville, KY



(L to R) Glenda Groenewold (Admin Asst), Christina Vice (OVR Interpreter), Lisa Amstutz (OVR Interpreter), Tara Eversole (Statewide Interpreter Coord), Virginia Silvestri (Counselor), Sarah Grubb (OVR Interpreter), Bryan Grubb (volunteer interpreter)

Interpreters from Kentucky's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) Branch, in partnership with the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH), hosted the inaugural Julie Beth Hayden Job Fair at DeaFestival 2022 on September 3 at the Norton Center for the Arts at Centre College in Danville, KY.

DeaFestival is a biennial, one-day event where Deaf people from all areas of Kentucky come together in a fully accessible environment to meet and enjoy artists, performers, and exhibitors who are Deaf. Tara Eversole, Lisa Amstutz, Sarah Grubb, and Tina Vice, HDI employees, were members of the interpreting team who provided services to allow hearing people to fully participate in the event.

Approximately 7,000 people attended DeaFestival and were given an opportunity to meet DHHS staff, learn about their services, receive assistance with job fair activities, and network with employers. The job fair will be part of DeaFestival in years to come! In addition to meeting the needs of the community, the event will honor the memory of Julie Beth Hayden.

Julie Beth Hayden is remembered for serving the students at Kentucky School for the Deaf and the Deaf community at large. She was an advocate, counselor and, role model to anyone who met her. If you want to learn more about services available to people who are Hard of Hearing, Deaf, and Deaf/Blind, visit <http://bit.ly/3AuyFy1> or 800-372-7172 (V/TTY).

Employer Recognition (East Central Region)



Pictured left to right: Ryan Henson, VR East Central Regional Branch Manager; Mike Osbourne, DHL-CVG Representative; and Cheryl Martinez, VR Employer Services Branch.

In October 2021, in conjunction with National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Ryan Henson, Central Regional program manager, and Cheryl Martinez, with the Employer Services Branch, presented Mike Osbourne, DHL, Northern Kentucky representative, with recognition and appreciation of DHL's work in providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities.

Cheryl said, "We presented our annual Employer Recognition Awards in conjunction

with National Disability Employment Awareness Month that began in 1944 with President Harry Truman. The mission of the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is to assist Kentuckians with disabilities to achieve suitable employment and independence. We could not achieve this mission without committed employer partners.

"This year we are pleased to present our recognition of DHL-CVG Hub in Northern Kentucky – the human resources recruitment and training teams, as well as the management and staff. Your willingness to work with us to provide accommodations for job seekers through the hiring, onboarding, and training process in 2020, which resulted in the hiring of at least three individuals with disabilities through 2020-2021. Your commitment to including candidates and

employees was exceptional especially considering the challenging times we all have experienced through the global pandemic and required creativity and determination to find solutions.

“We applaud DHL-CVG Hub for the opportunities that individuals are provided and contribute to your workplace.”

Consumer Recognition

Jaiya (Fayette County – East Central Region)



Jaiya, a rising Senior at Tates Creek High School, lost her vision as the result of a brain tumor during the pandemic. It left her with significant vision loss. Because of the timing of her vision loss, she had not had a chance to connect with her blind and visually impaired peers. She came to the Insight Post-Secondary Preparation Program at Morehead State in June. She blossomed, and her mother said that she talked about the program the whole way home. She is coming to another program in a couple of weeks.

I thought this would be a great way to start the new program year as well as the state fiscal year. Never think that what we do does not impact the lives of the students with disabilities that we serve. This young lady’s family will not let her fail by continuing to hold her to the high expectations that they had for her before her vision loss.

She wrote this poem two days into the program. I find that it was very powerful, and honestly, almost made me bust out in tears. This is an example of why we do what we do. Through the support of OVR and her family, she WILL succeed. The small but mighty programs that are done for students with sensory disabilities are very impactful.

The Rock by Jaiya

Bright blue bird swimming through
the sky

Big green tree stretched so tall and
high

Both these things I observe with my
eye

But, they are so unclear

Please tell me why

Looking at these things used to be so
nice

Now I can't help but close my eyes

Dark

Black

Cold

Don't know where I am

Don't know where to go

Don't know where to stand

What do I say?

Apologize?

Sorry I didn't see you. Aha what a
joke

Didn't realize I had to explain this
blind kid trope

Dim the lights, cry your tears

I can't see, but trust me there's
nothing to fear

Though spotted, I see the future so
bright

Don't be scared, turn on the light

This darkness won't overthrow my
dreams

Even though I felt so deep in sorrow

In 2020 I went blind

But trust me now, I WILL be great

Just give it some time

Sebastian (Jefferson County - West Central Region)

By Dan Trabue, Supported Employment Specialist



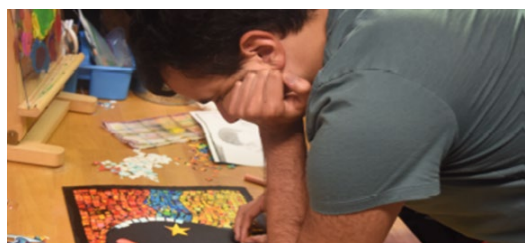
Above: Sebastian Duverge working on a piece of artwork

Sebastian is a young adult, Latinx (a gender-neutral alternative to the male and female Latin designations) artist living in Louisville, Kentucky. Throughout his childhood and school years, his family recognized his interest and raw talent in creating art. They nurtured that interest and ensured he had support as well as access to great art teachers. After he finished high school, he started taking ceramics classes under the mentorship of a local ceramic artist. He took a couple of college courses in art, as well.

As a young man with a disability, Sebastian had a team of supporters from Louisville's Mattingly Edge, a certified rehabilitation program that provides supported employment and job coaching, and others who helped him guide his career choices and growth. This team continued to nurture Sebastian in his growth as an artist. His team continued to help him think about what makes for a successful artist. Artists learn from other artists and are influenced by other artists. Artists collaborate and associate with other artists. Artists work on their art. Regularly. Modern artists have websites and social media sites where they promote and demonstrate their art. Artists join with other professional artists groups.



Above: Sebastian utilizing the printer that the agency helped purchase



Above: Sebastian putting the finishing touches on a piece

Sebastian also had an interest in studying art from Dominican Republic artists, where his family was from. It was at this time he learned about Dominican artist, Candido Bido. Sebastian studied Bido and with the help of his supporters, Sebastian decided what he liked and didn't like about Bido's art and all

that influenced Sebastian. Sebastian then developed a website (<https://www.sebastianduvergestudios.com>), showed his art on social media, started working regularly at a shared studio space in Louisville. Sebastian joined other artist groups around Louisville that promote Kentucky artists. Sebastian was accepted into these different groups. This, in turn, led to other opportunities and media coverage, including a radio story and a newspaper article. The tourism department for Kentucky even created a video about Sebastian and his art.

Sebastian then created and submitted a business plan to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), which helped him and gave him resources to hone and nurture that plan, which eventually was accepted by OVR. This led to OVR investing towards some resources, including a color printer, into Sebastian's business, which expanded to include printing high-quality art prints, calendars, and cards of his art.

Due to Sebastian's innate talent, all of this thoughtful planning and collaboration, Sebastian's support system, including his Latinx community, his artist community, Louisville Visual Art, Kentucky Crafted, Art Sanctuary, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), and Mattingly Edge, along with his wonderful art and steady work ethic, Sebastian is on his way to being a professional artist who makes a living as an artist and as a printer of high-quality art products.

Carl (Harlan County - East Region)



The hearing aids and assistive devices that OVR bought for Harlan County resident Carl (pictured left) has improved his life at home, work, church and in the community.

The veteran of the U.S. Army and the Kentucky National Guard said that he has struggled with hearing loss since he was 25 years old and thinks it is connected to his military service where he was a tank and heavy-wheeled-vehicle mechanic. Over the years, he has constantly asked people to repeat themselves and in extreme cases, spell words because of his hearing loss. During the COVID pandemic, the mask mandate interfered with his ability to read lips and he became frustrated with himself, he said.

Carl is a husband and father of two children ages 17 and 6 years old and has worked as an independent commercial construction contractor for 24 years. He also is very active in his community as a volunteer fireman and chaplain at the Clover Fork Volunteer Fire Department, and as an associate pastor of the Louellen Pentecostal Church. The hearing aids and assistive devices including an alarm clock with a bed shaker, remote doorbell and smoke detector for the hearing impaired purchased by OVR have changed his life and helped him feel safer at home and work, he said.

Carl did not know all the sounds he was missing until the first time he wore his hearing aids at home. He describes walking around the yard with his wife and discovering new sounds. "What's that sound?" he asked her. She would reply, a cricket chirping or a bird singing or children laughing, Carl said. He even heard his baby breathing for the first time after receiving his hearing aids.

Although he plays the guitar at church, he had not heard the lyrics of the songs before getting hearing aids from OVR. Carl said that now the words sound beautiful and are life changing.

Carl's experience with OVR is even making a positive ripple effect in his community. The fire community and Red Cross are starting a local campaign to make smoke detectors, like the one Carl received, available to people with hearing impairment in the community.

Terri Jo and Vader (Madison, KY - East Central Region)



A 2014 graduate of Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), Terri Jo has held many titles in her life: single mother, family life educator, certificate holder in Post Graduate Veterans Studies, and a former Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) consumer.

She became a single mother to two children after their father was arrested and imprisoned for five DUI felony charges in another state. She had to learn to navigate SNAP, Medicaid, and eventually KTAP. Terri Jo was told by her children's father constantly that she was not smart enough to go to college, but

her SNAP worker encouraged her to enroll at EKU. She was accepted and referred to OVR for additional supportive services. Through her interactions with OVR and SNAP, Terri Jo felt encouraged and supported. During her college career, she had a neurological episode (mini strokes) which ended up causing several learning disabilities and 45% hearing loss in her right ear. OVR worked with Terri Jo to ensure she would succeed in school and provided the services and tools she needed to be successful. Terri Jo attributes part of her success to OVR for encouraging supporting and checking in on her when she needed it most. Terri Jo said it was “life changing” and that the kindness extended to her will never be forgotten.

She is currently a Crisis Counselor/Resource Navigator for the Kentucky Career Center of the Bluegrass where she helps individuals navigate through their crisis, connecting them to resources in their areas, and creating an action plan for each consumer’s needs. She encourages each consumer to utilize self-advocacy and critical thinking to make their own decisions. Terri Jo aids the 17 counties in the Bluegrass region.

Terri Jo’s golden doodle, Vader, helps her provide crisis support services. He currently is being trained for his Canine Good Citizen certification. Vader visits the four Kentucky Career Centers each week and has done everything from playing with the child of a consumer to laying on the consumer’s lap to help calm them down to avoid an anxiety attack by providing deep--pressure therapy.

Terri Jo is an inspiration not only to the agency, but also to other consumers. She expressed that she is a witness that OVR change lives and wants the consumers to believe in that too.

Austin (Franklin County- East Central Region)



Austin was a student at Frankfort High School (FHS). During his time at FHS, he worked with a Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) specialist through the Community Work Transition Program (CWTP). During his senior year, Austin was approved for Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) services. This allows him to review his options for employment services with his counselor, Elizabeth Theisen. Together they established his Individual Plan for Employment to work toward

becoming an electrician's apprentice. Austin wanted to work for AE Electrical Solutions. Austin and Elizabeth reached out to Travis McConathy, an employee at AE Electrical Solutions, and he agreed to allow Austin to job shadow him. Austin was hired before he graduated!

Christopher (Union County - West Region)



Christopher, a native of Morganfield, KY, was diagnosed at an early age with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Mild Mental Disability (MMD). His family, especially his mother, always has been there to support him to ensure he would become a successful young man.

While attending high school, Christopher participated in the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program where he expressed appreciation for the valuable lessons, he learned around all five (5) Pre-ETS services: education counseling, job exploration, workplace readiness training, self-advocacy instruction, and work-based learning experience. He particularly enjoyed the job exploration and work readiness training. During these trainings, Christopher worked alongside the school Pre-ETS specialist to help identify career options, recognize the relevance of an education, any training he would need, as well as work on his social skills.

In preparation of graduating from high school, Christopher began to work with the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to establish long-term goals for successful employment. OVR, with the Center for Accessible Living, worked with Christopher and his family as he transitioned into working adulthood.

In 2020, Christopher was referred to the Supported Employment Provider, Assisted Endeavors, and gained employment at his local Walmart. Christopher started a new job with various duties during the height of the pandemic and was crucial in ensuring safety protocols were followed by any individual in the building. Customers have expressed their appreciation for Christopher's helpfulness and bright smile.

Christopher has gone on to work with the University of Kentucky's Driver's Training Program to obtain his driver's license and his family has helped him

purchase a car. This has given Christopher a new sense of independence and self-confidence.

MaQuela (Henderson County - West Region)



MaQuela (pictured below) reached out to the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to help her review possible employment options. She was only working approximately six (6) hours per week as a housekeeper at her local YMCA and was interested in obtaining and maintaining more successful employment to ensure financial stability for her future. MaQuela began to work with VR Counselor Jessica Johnson, who helped navigate her learning disabilities and mental health issues. Together they established two (2) goals: gain successful employment and obtain a driver's license.

Goal 1: Gain Successful Employment

MaQuela really enjoyed her employment at the YMCA but wanted to gain financial stability. Jessica discussed with MaQuela the option of gaining a second job to help her reach this goal. MaQuela agreed this would be the best option. Jessica made referrals to Assisted Endeavors for assistance with obtaining and maintaining employment. MaQuela soon obtained a job at the Boys and Girls club for 17.5 hours per week which allowed her to keep her other job at the YMCA. She also worked with an Employment Specialist to ensure she was successful.

Goal 2: Obtain a Driver's License

Another one of MaQuela's goals was to obtain her driver's license so she could become self-sufficient and independent. Jessica referred MaQuela to the Driver's Rehabilitation and Training Program with Easter Seals. MaQuela participated in virtual learning services, overcame her challenges, and successfully obtained her driver's license.

MaQuela's Success

After MaQuela obtained her driver's license, she was able to maintain both part-time positions and purchased her own vehicle. OVR was then able to close out her case due to her success. MaQuela has continued to work and currently is working with other providers for long-term support.

Ellie (Jefferson County – West Central Region)



Ellie (pictured to the left) is a motivated and inspiring woman. She does not allow her disabilities, which include addictions (in remission), PTSD, osteoarthritis, heart problems, asthma, headaches & degenerative disc lumbar disease to interfere with her life. Ellie has experienced homelessness in the past. She has lost family members, partially because of choices she made earlier in life.

Ellie is working for Facilities Management Services (FMS) as a Janitor where she has been employed since the end of May. She is exploring options to obtain her GED. She has worked closely with Uniting Partners (UP) for Women & Children to obtain copies of her birth certificate, Social Security card & ID, which was not an easy task, because Ellie has lived in multiple states.

Ellie has participated in a treatment & recovery program as well as served as an instructor for others in recovery. Whatever it takes to improve her quality of life, Ellie is willing to do it. Ellie is now in transitional housing.

She is dedicated to researching available resources in the community & committed to self-advocacy. From guidance & counseling, connecting to a job coach as well as obtaining & maintaining employment, Ellie, her Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor & her job coach have taught one another so much. From the time of application until her case was closed successfully & beyond, Ellie was adamant that she is empowered to move forward & shine.

Sandy (Warren County - South Region)



By Ricky Wooten, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

I would like to take this opportunity to praise and celebrate a consumer/student that has embodied the meaning of independence and determination through Vocational Rehabilitation services and the Allen County Scottsville High School Community Work Transition Program (CWTP). Some background on Sandy Adkins: Sandy is diagnosed with ADHD and Specific Learning Disability. Sandy also has a prosthesis due to her foot amputation but refused to allow that to be part of her

limitations. Sandy was raised in foster care until she turned 18 and then she was asked to leave. Sandy has overcome many barriers to attend school. She wanted to be a welder and with the help of her Employment Specialist, Lisa Copass, she will graduate in May. They have helped her get her own apartment and she works 40 hours a week at Halton's as a welder! Sandy personifies the mission of Vocational Rehabilitation by enduring all the barriers and focusing on her goal. She is a product of her own determination and self-worth and is a positive influence on the lives of people she encounters. She has begun a positive journey on a life-changing course toward independence and a contributing citizen of Allen County.

Barbara (Rowan County - East Region)

By: Melissa Arthurs, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor



Barbara at her workstation

On Oct. 1, 2020, Barbara suffered a life-changing stroke. She underwent extensive inpatient rehabilitation treatment at Cardinal Hill in Lexington, followed by outpatient treatment at St. Claire Regional Medical Center in Morehead.

When Barbara returned to work as an administrative assistant at Morehead State University (MSU), she unfortunately still experienced significant deficits such as left-

side weakness, reduction in fine motor skills, mobility issues, and required assistance with activities of daily living. Barbara's employer provided multiple accommodations, including modifying her workstation, but she still struggled to perform her work tasks. Barbara applied for OVR services in the hopes that OVR could help her perform tasks as independently and effectively as possible so she could maintain her employment.

Barbara met with VR counselor Melissa Arthurs, and they immediately started working together. Melissa provided extensive guidance and counseling to determine the scope of Barbara's limitations, work tasks she is required to perform, and solutions that would allow her to work more efficiently at her job. Melissa ensured that Barbara continued to receive proper treatment and over time through extensive therapeutic services, she has continuously gained strength.

Melissa also referred Barbara to a rehabilitation specialist who evaluated her place of employment and made recommendations for assistive technology. A specialized mouse and keyboard were purchased, as well as a scooter so she could move more freely and efficiently around the MSU campus. These purchases made work tasks achievable and allowed her to maintain employment.

Barbara also wanted to drive independently again and was evaluated by a specialist. Unfortunately, the specialist recommended additional therapy services to further increase her strength before driving assistance could be provided. If Barbara continues to make improvements in her strength, which is highly likely, a new case will be opened and a re-evaluation for driver's assistance will be made to further increase her independence.

Division of Carl D. Perkins

Operating since 1973, the mission of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center is to help persons with disabilities achieve sustainable, competitive, integrated employment; maximize independence; and gain self-respect through comprehensive services. The center serves individuals with many types of disabilities and operates several programs and services that enable consumers to achieve their vocational goals. One of the main reasons for creating the center was to enable Kentuckians with disabilities to obtain all the services they would need in one location to become employed.



The vast majority of our consumers are referred by OVR counselors located in several cities and towns across the Commonwealth. Consumers may live on campus in dormitories or can commute to the center in Thelma, Kentucky, each day they are scheduled for classes and/or therapy. An Assisted Living Unit staffed by nurses is available for persons with physical disabilities who need help with activities of daily living to participate in their programs. Transportation is available for consumers to get to the center to begin their program or to return home at the end.

The Perkins Center's Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), a private, non-profit organization that promotes quality rehabilitation services through a consultative accreditation process.

Introducing the CDPVTC Student Government Association

Tim Jones – SGA President (Shelby County – West Central Region)



Tim Jones, a Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center Academic and Life Skills Program of Higher Achievement (ALPHA) program participant, is pursuing an associate degree at Big Sandy Community and Technical College (BSCTC). A traumatic brain injury survivor, he plans to continue his education as an occupational therapy assistant to work with other individuals who have brain injuries. Tim recently was elected as the school's Student Government Association (SGA) president and is on the Dean's List. Tim is a resident of Shelbyville, KY.

Madison Price – SGA Vice-President (Pike County – East Region)



Madison Price is from Elkhorn City, Kentucky pursuing an associate degree in Applied Science, Medical Information Technology, Office Management Track. My career goal is to become a healthcare information manager using the administrative skills and technology background I have that will help me to become a dedicated professional in this field.

My objective as Student Government Association Vice President is to create community and school service opportunities. I want to open service opportunities for students to get involved in our school and community to allow us to be active and a part of something great.

Ethan Scott Smith (Madison County – East Central Region)



Kentucky Rehabilitation Association – Outstanding Individual

Ethan Scott Smith, a student at the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTC), currently is participating in the Academic and Life Skills Program of Higher Achievement (ALPHA). Recently, he was recognized by the Kentucky Rehabilitation Association (KRA) as an outstanding individual pursuing his dreams and awarded a \$1,000.00 KRA scholarship.

Ethan is pursuing an associate degree in Applied Science with a dual career path of Welding Technology and Civil Engineering and Technology at Sandy Community and Technical College. He has been part of the Dean's list and volunteers some of his free time to several organizations. Ethan's biggest philanthropic focus is to promote awareness and advocacy for childhood cancer research. His instructors commented that Ethan is "a great student and amazing young man."

Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center Graduation



The Carl D Perkins Vocational Training Center was thrilled to be able to host their commencement ceremony in person this year! On June 10, 2022, 48 consumers were recognized for their achievements for completing all requirements of their training programs. Programs include Job-Readiness Training, Academic Enrichment,

in addition to the vocational training program. The theme to "Follow Your Dreams."

Consumers who graduated from Big Sandy Community and Technical College (part of KCTCS) with their degrees as part of the ALPHA program were also recognized. Students also were recognized with Citizenship and Most Improved awards. Another student sang two inspiring songs during the ceremony that did not leave a dry eye in the room. Secretary Link addressed the graduates, and we appreciate that he was able to attend! Thank you, Secretary Link!

Shelby - (Warren County – South Region)



Submitted by Traci Spencer, Assistant Director of Training Services

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTC) applauds 2019 graduate Shelby for her continued success! When Shelby graduated, she was named the 2019 student speaker of the year and she has continued to achieve great things.

Recently, Shelby accomplished a major career goal by sitting for – and passing – the national Child Development Associate Credential exam! This is a national credential that requires an academic component as well as hands-on paid learning.

CDPVTC (and all of OVR!) loves when consumers let us know how they are doing since completing their time with OVR.

CDPVTC Students Assist with Flood Relief Efforts



Between July 25 and July 30, 2022, eastern Kentucky was impacted by heavy rain and flooding. The commonwealth quickly pulled together to help the area, including our own Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (CDPVTC) staff and students. On August 4 and 5, a group of students from CDPVTC participated in flood relief efforts. CDPVTC staff members took the group of student

volunteers to a relief effort area in Floyd County to help assemble sandwiches, prepare full meal bags, and help with the overall organization and distribution of various supplies.

Division of Blind Services



The mission of OVR's Blind Services Division is to provide opportunities for employment and independence to individuals with visual disabilities. We serve Kentuckians in all 120 counties who are visually impaired or blind and assist individuals in obtaining and maintaining employment, economic self-sufficiency, and independence. Our goal is to provide myriad resources and high-quality services to enhance

the lives of Kentuckians with visual disabilities.

Our programs and services provide individuals with visual disabilities the tools they need to become more independent in their homes, schools, workplaces and communities. These programs include the Charles W. McDowell Rehabilitation Center (training in low vision and blindness skills), Independent Living and Older Blind Program, Orientation and Mobility Services, Deaf Blind Program, and Bioptic Driving Program. Services are consistent with an individual's strengths, abilities and interests.

We are committed to helping business partners find highly qualified job seekers and providing a variety of resources and supports to both the employer and the employee.

Our administrative operations are in our central office in Frankfort. There are 10 field offices located throughout Kentucky in Ashland, Bowling Green, Covington, Elizabethtown, Lexington, Louisville, Owensboro, Paducah, Prestonsburg and Somerset.



McDowell Center Partnerships

Right: Abby Hodge and Jessica Elliott, instructors at the McDowell Center for the Blind, demonstrate JAWS, a screen reader software to Zakiyyah Raymore, Tanisha Jamieson, and Alecia Johnson from the Kentucky Career Center at the Nia Center

through KentuckianaWorks. These types of collaborations with workforce partners and businesses help strengthen OVR's Progressive Employment Program and lead to work experiences, internships and jobs for individuals who are blind, DeafBlind or have visual impairments.

Job readiness training has been taken to a whole new level – that's one way to describe the new Progressive Employment (PE) model at the McDowell Center. Eighteen individuals are currently participating in the program, which began in October 2021. The McDowell Center aims to have 75% of their referrals complete a work experience, and to see a 25% increase in competitive, integrated employment for center graduates. Progressive Employment is a tool to help achieve these goals.

Participating McDowell consumers receive training on topics that promote career exploration, including self-efficacy and advocacy, informational interviewing, and networking. In addition, they participate in out-of-the-classroom experiences including business tours, job shadows, mock interviews, and paid work experiences. The program instructors, Jessica Elliott and Leora Jackson, are expanding the McDowell Center's employer relationships with the following businesses and partners: Best Buy/Geeksquad, UPS, Seed to Oaks, the American Printing House, American Red Cross, and KCC workforce partners. In addition, the Coalition for Workforce Diversity gives the McDowell Center a platform to share information with employers and providers at their monthly meetings.

By using this model to support VR consumers with vision impairments through intentional and progressive steps into the world of work, we hope we will continue to see a more immediate rise in consumer confidence and self-efficacy relative to a change in vision, and growth in employer and community partner engagement with VR. The goal is an increase in competitive employment outcomes that meet higher wage expectations and are a better match to consumer abilities, experiences, and desires.

As participants complete volunteer-based work experiences and mock interviews, they will begin working with their VR counselor for additional exposure and experience opportunities through a Community Rehab Program (CRP). This early link back to the counselor and early involvement with a CRP can promote better

collaboration and lead to a more effective match in long-term or pathway employment.

Other key staff and partners supporting McDowell's Progressive Employment program through their attendance at bimonthly planning meetings with Jessica and Leora are Angela Becker, Rehabilitation Counselors of the Blind (RCB) manager; Gina Stephen, employment specialist; Eric Barth, CRP coordinator; Mary Harrod, instructor; Heidi Kesterson, McDowell facility administrator; Kitty Zachary, executive director of Coalition for Workforce Diversity; Helga Gilbert, director of Blind Services.

Cindy (Mercer County - East Central Region)



Cindy, a resident of Harrodsburg, KY, was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP) in 2013 and was declared legally blind in early 2019. Due to her vision impairment, Cindy is unable to see central vision. Her peripheral vision has been affected greatly, leaving her unable to see anything in her field view.

Cindy was an avid traveler before her blindness and was concerned about navigating places like airports. In 2020, Cindy came to the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Independent Living (IL) services to look for assistance in navigating the world and maintaining her independence. Cindy began to work with IL Counselor Jenny Ward to locate an available orientation and mobility (O&M) specialist in her area. Covid created some logistical delays, but now Cindy is working with O&M specialist Jennifer Roark in white cane training.

Recently, Cindy has traveled to the Caribbean and utilized her cane. She expressed gratitude for O&M training. She said that Without [my] cane, [I] would have run right into a wall on [my] way to the restroom. Cindy explained that her cane gives her a sense of independence along with providing her with the ability to move about safely.

Cindy continues to work with her O&M trainer and IL Counselor. She utilizes magnification, better lighting, and updating her home to have tactile buttons for appliances. Also, she painted rooms within her home to ensure the best light and contrast is available to her.

Cindy was determined to maintain her independence and continues her love of traveling. Cindy is an advocate for IL services!

Monica – (Oldham County – West Central Region)

In September 2021, Monica began her work experience with the Coalition for the Homeless. Prior to this job, Monica did not utilize technology, such as Google Meet, or was able to navigate between more than one (1) application at a time (i.e., email, the case system, Excel.) After starting her job, Monica began to learn how to use virtual platforms and move quickly between multiple applications. Her supervisor, George Eklund, commented about her progress,

"I am in awe with the amount of resilience that Monica has shown in her time with us. Together, we have navigated Covid-19, working remotely, learning a new subject matter, and navigating a multitude of technological issues all while being visually impaired. There were many chances that Monica could have given up, but she took ownership and leaned into the work. Her drive and resilience to negotiate the obstacles that we faced speaks to the human drive to succeed. Working with Monica has made me reflect on how we can become a more inclusive and responsive workplace for those that need modest accommodations. "

Monica utilized all six (6) weeks at the Coalition for the Homeless not only to improve her employment skills, but also assisted in other ways at the Coalition for the Homeless. She expressed how much she enjoyed her time there and stated,

"Looking back on my past experiences with the McDowell Center, I found that this time was the most rewarding. For the most part technology has improved tremendously, and my computer skills are better because of the latest versions of all applications, Zoom, Google Meets, and other virtual sites that allow you to communicate with people around the world. It has really been a wonderful experience and I can truly say that I'm proud of myself. I would like to personally thank the entire staff here at the McDowell Center for making this a very productive learning experience."

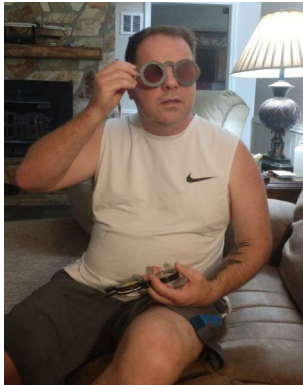
Leora Jackson, Monica's work experience coordinator, said that Monica shows concern and compassion for customers. She is able to provide information over

the phone clearly to help people avoid evictions. Many staff have expressed that Monica is very kind and understanding. Leora explained:

“Overall, [her] journey has been wonderful. We had some challenges here and there, but I met her where she was and was able to make it work from there. It has been a pleasure working with her. I am hopeful [she] will be a great asset to her future job, no matter where she ends up. She is someone that you would want on your team to be engaged and to be vocal about issues that would help the company move forward. I see nothing but success for her.”

Monica is now completing her post-work experience and is learning how to use job search engines, write cover letters, and is updating her resume. One thing we know for sure; she is adding her job duties from the Coalition for the Homeless to her resume.

Logan (Warren County – South Region)



In the spring of 2021, Logan began to experience rapid vision loss due to vitreous hemorrhaging in both eyes and diabetic retinopathy. He struggled with feeling isolated because of losing the ability to be involved with things he enjoyed. Facing the uncertainty of how Logan would perform everyday tasks, his wife Sandra reached out to the Kentucky Independent Living and Older Individuals Who are Blind (IL/OIB) program for assistance. Together, they learned about resources and programs to assist Logan with his changing vision and maintaining his independence.

Prior to their first meeting with a vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor, Logan and Sandra started to adapt his needs by purchasing a pair of Envision Glasses, assistive technology that allows Logan to read, decipher colors and recognize individuals. When they met the counselor for the first time, Logan asked if he could take their picture on his new glasses, so he would recognize the counselor in the future. The counselor was honored to be included in Logan’s glasses memory.

Just like with the Envision Glasses, Logan is eager to embrace the opportunities and resources that IL/OIB can offer. He has mastered preparing meals and utilizing locator dots for appliances and daily medications. His counselor is working with Logan to find the right type of sunshields to manage painful light glares and exploring orientation and mobility training to reduce his feelings of isolation.

With help from his wife and OVR, Logan is working towards increasing his confidence, ability to self-advocate and returning to his active life. Logan, who is returning to an active independent lifestyle, said, “I hate asking for help, but I know this is good for me.”

Chandler (Todd County – West Region)



Chandler, 17, is an OVR consumer who wants to pursue a degree in the culinary field and has been working with Merideth Wheeler on vocational rehabilitation and Chance Groves on independent living skills and devices to be safe and successful in the kitchen. For example, because Chandler lacks depth perception, she would often burn herself when reaching into the oven to remove the food. To assist, OVR purchased long oven mitts (pictured) to help eliminate burns. Chandler has already used these new skills to help others. After the tornadoes hit Western Kentucky in December 2021, she baked 300 cookies to give to the disaster survivors. Chandler’s actions embody the vision of OVR.

Adam (Henderson County – West Region)



Adam has received services at the McDowell Center since the Fall of 2020. His instructors, Leora Jackson and Jessica Elliott, presented Adam with short courses including Professional Self-Presentation, Networking Toward Success, Using the Internet Like a Professional, as well as counseling on taking initiative, critical thinking, and planning. His instructors also used their business relationships to give Adam practice with informational and mock interviews, and have his job applications, resume,

and cover letters reviewed by companies such as Seed to Oaks, United Way, Goodwill and American Printing House.

Because of the supports, Adam secured work experience with the American Red Cross where he served as a fundraiser administration volunteer. His job duties consisted of calling donors and volunteers and researching donor demographic information to update records and add computer skills to his resume.

Adam said, “The American Red Cross (ARC) personnel I have had the amazing privilege to work under and learn from are phenomenal. These individuals are Mr. Garrett Messer and Ms. Stacy Taylor-Bernard. They explain everything in the easiest format possible. The assignments are not hard to learn. They are very patient and understanding. They are easy to work with and make sure you have everything possible to be able to complete the assigned task. They are always available when you need them. They are incredible people. Lastly, this partnership with ARC and McDowell OVR is amazing. I want to encourage the ARC and McDowell OVR to continue this partnership. This partnership is helpful to anyone who has an eagerness to learn. I would like to personally thank the McDowell Center OVR program and the American Red Cross personnel for this wonderful opportunity.”

Shirley (Barren County - South Region)

By Derrick Cox, Independent Living Counselor

After moving to various states and rearing a family with a husband whose career was in the US Army, Shirley and her family settled in rural Barren County. Although natives of Pennsylvania, Shirley’s husband was quite impressed with the area on a hunting trip, and the family took up farming after his retirement from the military. After developing a severe visual impairment due to macular degeneration, she was referred to the Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) program. Services were planned during Shirley’s remote initial assessment and provided with in-person training, which was her preference. She received training in adaptive techniques and aids/devices in communications, daily living, recreation, and low vision/magnifiers.

Her OVR/Blind Services Division Independent Living Counselor, Derrick Cox, assisted her. Additionally, Briana Goldsmith, an OVR VR Counselor and Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) practicum student, participated in Shirley’s

training. Briana said: “I enjoyed getting to meet with Shirley at an in-home training while completing my internship with the Blind Services Division. Shirley discussed during the meeting how cooking was one of her favorite things to do and that since developing macular degeneration she had been presented with a few challenges while in the kitchen. Shirley reported that it was very important for her to be able to read her recipe cards and cookbooks because she enjoyed cooking for her family regularly. Shirley was ecstatic when she was provided a magnifier that worked for her during the training. Shirley tested the magnifier out to read her recipe for Jambalaya, which is a meal that she had been wanting to prepare for her son that week. Shirley also learned adaptive techniques to help her while cooking in the kitchen such as working with plugging appliances into outlets and discussing best practices for safety when in the kitchen. It was a pleasure to see Shirley be able to achieve greater independence in her home through training provided by my practicum supervisor, Derrick Cox. I have really enjoyed getting to meet consumers like Shirley and am grateful for the educational opportunities that have been provided to me through completing my internship with Derrick in the Blind Services Division.”

Shirley usually cooks dinner for her son and daughter-in-law as her son works the farm and daughter-in-law works a public job in town. She was pleased that the magnifier provided by OVR enabled her to read a recipe from a magazine. Shirley is also a big fan of a provided talking clock, reporting that she carries it with her all day, and sets it on her bed stand at night for easy access. Shirley also finds it easier to dial her cordless telephone using an adaptive technique for which she received training, and a small, raised dot applied to this telephone to help her locate the “0” key. She also enjoys using provided television glasses to help her view television, especially the print crawls at the screen’s bottom.

We are so pleased to hear great achievements from your independence!

Amy - (Oldham County – West Central Region)



I Could Have Danced All Night....

Submitted by Heidi Kesterson

Amy has been a student for approximately five months at the McDowell Center. In addition to learning independent living skills like Braille, Home/Financial Management, Assistive Technology and O&M, she has gone through and benefitted from our Recreation Therapy Program. Field trips are a natural place to practice these newly learned independent living and self-advocacy skills. In the Recreation Assessment, Amy had shared that learning to Waltz was something she had always wanted to do. When an opportunity to try a free 30-minute introductory dance lesson at Dance Louisville was presented to her, she excitedly agreed and even went out and bought a new pair of shoes.

It was wonderful to see Amy's self-confidence grow in the Dance Studio. She learned the basic steps for a Waltz, how to dance backwards, turn, do a switch move and then combine them with music. She described herself as a novice, so her instructor cued her with light pressure on her back, or a nudge to one foot. He told her that in dance, you communicate through your body.

Her teacher complimented her several times, saying "Look at you go! That was so good!" Amy was grinning the whole time. She loved that we also captured a video, so that she could share this special moment with her family. She said "I had a lot of fun today! I'm tickled."

Picture Perfect Moments



Students with Gov. Beshear at the Kentucky State Fair, from left to right: Kim Orr (McDowell student from Crittenden County), Hope LaVertu (McDowell staff), Safira Bibi (McDowell student from Jefferson County), and Lenora Jackson (McDowell staff)



Orientation and Mobility Instructor (right) and her student Safira Bibi (left from Jefferson County) training at the McDowell Center

Kentucky Business Enterprise



Service programs operated by individuals who are visually impaired or blind.

KBE trains and certifies Kentuckians who are legally blind in food services and licenses them to operate snack bars, dining facilities and automated vending facilities in public and private locations. The program provides full-time employment and career opportunities for

Kentuckians who are legally blind while providing high-quality vending and food services for government and business.

Qualified consumers receive specialized training in food services and are certified by KBE as licensed vendors to operate their facilities as their own businesses, receiving income from the net profits. Costs of initial stock and equipment are provided by the OVR, and title for these items remain with Kentucky.

Each facility is stocked from the first day of operation, offering a large selection of quality products at competitive prices. When possible, products are purchased from local wholesalers, allowing the vendor to secure each customer's product preferences.

Dedication to customer satisfaction is one of the main reasons for KBE's success. Each service location is designed to provide the products customers want in an attractive setting.

KBE 2022 Review

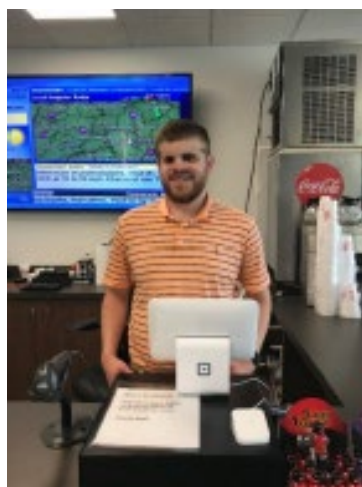
The Kentucky Business Enterprise (KBE) blind vendor program continued to recover in FFY22 but has not returned to pre-Covid status. Supply chain and staffing issues have plagued the 23 working vendors this year but are slowly getting better. As state and federal employees gradually return to their buildings, KBE vendor businesses have picked up.

The agency has obtained, and continues to pursue, new locations and opportunities to build up vendors' incomes and help offset Covid losses. KBE chose a new statewide teaming partner this year, which will allow the program to

take advantage of many additional opportunities. New machines that take credit cards were also purchased and installed, which has helped boost vendor income.

KBE installed three new micro markets, which as unmanned locations requiring no employee salaries, has increased vendor revenues.

Kentucky Blind Enterprises Spotlight



Cramer Schneider – Stamping Ground, KY

By Jennifer Wright, KBE Assistant Director

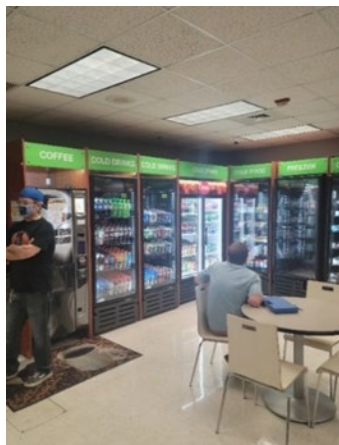
Kentucky Business Enterprise's (KBE) blind vendor, Cramer Schneider, 26, is the youngest licensed blind vendor in the KBE program. He began in early 2019 when he was appointed as the manager of the Kentucky State Office Building's snack stand and small vending route in Frankfort. He recently won the bid to add the vending and sundry shop at the Mayo-Underwood Building, home of OVR Central Office, to his business.

Cramer graduated summa cum laude from Morehead State University in 2017 with a degree in Animal Science and a minor in Strategic Communications and Leadership. He is an active member of the federally mandated Kentucky Committee of Blind Vendors, where he recently represented KBE on another panel to explain the Business Enterprise program to the entire Office of Vocational Rehabilitation staff in a statewide training.

Cramer recently was asked to speak at the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) conference in May. He participated in a panel discussion about the recruitment and retention of vendors in the Randolph-Sheppard blind vending program. There were nearly 300 attendees tuned in from across the nation to hear the panel. Cramer represented our state and program well and received many compliments from those in attendance.

Cramer lives in Stamping Ground, Kentucky where he and his family raise Simmental cattle on their small farm. He attends Cedar Grove Baptist Church.

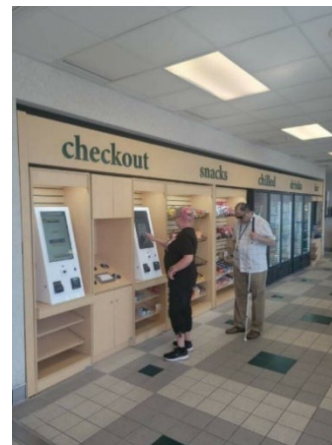
Kentucky Business Enterprise Opens New Micromarkets



The Kentucky Business Enterprise (KBE) blind vendor program continued to recover in FFY22 but has not returned to pre-COVID pandemic status. Supply chain and staffing issues have plagued the 23 working vendors this year, but these issues are slowly getting better. As state and federal employees gradually return to their buildings, KBE vendor businesses have picked up.

As one of the nation's leading vending and food service programs operated by people who are visually impaired or blind, KBE is committed to meeting their customers' needs and expectations by continually improving services and using innovative ideas such as micromarkets. The program trains and places individuals as self-employed operators of snack bars, dining facilities and automated vending facilities in public and private buildings across the state.

The agency has obtained, and continues to pursue, new locations and opportunities to build up vendors' incomes and help offset COVID losses. KBE chose a new statewide teaming partner this year, which will allow the program to take advantage of many additional opportunities. New machines that take credit cards were also purchased and installed, which has helped boost vendor income.



Following on the heels of its first successful micromarket in Louisville, KBE installed three more of the easy-to-use alternatives to traditional vending machines this year. In addition to expanding the original micromarket, KBE has installed a second one in Louisville and two in Covington.

The self-service markets in employee break areas provide users with a convenience-store experience with a wide variety of prices and food and beverage options such as fresh fruits, salads and frozen food. The custom designed micromarkets have a self-checkout kiosk that accepts various payment options and have increased vendor revenues because they do not require employees to operate. This new trend is meeting customer needs and helping KBE vendors succeed.

2022 Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes (CIEO) for Kentucky by County

Consumer County	Number of CIEO's
ADAIR	35
ALLEN	15
ANDERSON	26
BALLARD	2
BARREN	60
BATH	16
BELL	19
BOONE	37
BOURBON	20
BOYD	59
BOYLE	29
BRACKEN	7
BREATHITT	12
BRECKINRIDGE	12
BULLITT	23
BUTLER	4
CALDWELL	3
CALLOWAY	9
CAMPBELL	41
CARLISLE	2
CARROLL	2
CARTER	38

Consumer County	Number of CIEO's
CASEY	17
CHRISTIAN	25
CLARK	44
CLAY	8
CLINTON	7
CRITTENDEN	4
DAVIESS	104
EDMONSON	8
ELLIOTT	2
ESTILL	9
FAYETTE	406
FLEMING	30
FLOYD	65
FRANKLIN	56
GALLATIN	2
GARRARD	12
GRANT	10
GRAVES	8
GRAYSON	15
GREEN	16
GREENUP	32
HANCOCK	9

Consumer County	Number of CIEO's
HARDIN	57
HARLAN	29
HARRISON	25
HART	9
HENDERSON	27
HENRY	4
HICKMAN	2
HOPKINS	20
JACKSON	6
JEFFERSON	278
JESSAMINE	74
JOHNSON	47
KENTON	74
KNOTT	19
KNOX	9
LARUE	8
LAUREL	52
LAWRENCE	18
LEE	10
LESLIE	8
LETCHER	35
LEWIS	7

Consumer County	Number of CIEO's
LINCOLN	15
LIVINGSTON	2
LOGAN	13
LYON	1
MADISON	58
MAGOFFIN	18
MARION	21
MARSHALL	9
MARTIN	14
MASON	14
MCCRACKEN	30
MCCREARY	4
MCLEAN	5
MEADE	15
MENIFEE	18
MERCER	15
METCALFE	21
MONROE	8

Consumer County	Number of CIEO's
MONTGOMERY	32
MORGAN	34
MUHLENBERG	5
NELSON	30
NICHOLAS	2
OHIO	16
OLDHAM	23
OWEN	3
OWSLEY	2
PENDLETON	6
PERRY	36
PIKE	111
POWELL	31
PULASKI	63
ROBERTSON	3
ROCKCASTLE	14
ROWAN	17
RUSSELL	42

Consumer County	Number of CIEO's
SCOTT	58
SHELBY	10
SIMPSON	4
SPENCER	6
TAYLOR	41
TODD	13
TRIGG	3
UNION	3
WARREN	69
WASHINGTON	15
WAYNE	10
WEBSTER	5
WHITLEY	33
WOLFE	4
WOODFORD	27
Out of state	16
Total	3246

CIEO's by Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)

Occupational Group	Number of Cases	Median Hourly Wage
Management Occupations	286	\$20.00
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	91	\$23.08
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	47	\$26.44
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	32	\$35.00
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	33	\$20.83
Community and Social Service Occupations	170	\$17.98
Legal Occupations	28	\$26.68
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	210	\$18.00
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	43	\$12.00
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	274	\$25.00
Healthcare Support Occupations	109	\$13.58
Protective Service Occupations	68	\$13.00
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	178	\$10.00
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	130	\$10.60
Personal Care and Service Occupations	105	\$11.00
Sales and Related Occupations	212	\$11.00
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	395	\$14.00
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	17	\$12.02
Construction and Extraction Occupations	111	\$17.00
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	133	\$18.00
Production Occupations	198	\$14.00
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	374	\$12.75
Military Specific Occupations	1	\$28.94
Other	1	\$12.50