

**Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation**

**OOD Council Briefing- August 18, 2021**

**Program Performance:** The following table summarizes Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021 performance for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. Due to COVID-19 new applications, eligibility decisions, and plans all remain below pre-pandemic levels, however, March through May witnessed the highest numbers within all three of these performance measures since the start of FFY 2021. New placements and closures with employment are currently at or exceeding FFY 2019 (pre-pandemic) levels. Average wage and hours worked have increased.

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| **Metric** | **6/30/2020** | **6/30/2021** | **Percent Change** |
| **Eligibility Decisions**  | 13,147 | 10,823 | -17.7% |
| **Plans Written**  | 10,553 | 8,440 | -20.0% |
| **Eligible + Served**  | 32,499 | 31,093 | -4.3% |
| **Closed with Employment** | 3,858 | 4,051 | 5.0% |
| **Average Wage**  | $11.90 | $12.24 | 2.9% |
| **Average Hours** | 26.3 | 26.9 | 2.3% |

**Programmatic Updates:**

* Vocational Rehabilitation field staff are gradually returning to the office and the community. OOD’s focus is on maintaining efficiencies and customer service improvements associated with remote service delivery while resuming in-person availability when needed due to the individual’s disability related needs and/or personal preferences. Priorities for the return to the community also include outreach and support of local partnerships.
* In June, OOD implemented a new service, Start Up (Setup for Technology Access Readiness Training), to teach individuals to use technology so that they can effectively participate remotely in OOD’s VR Fee Schedule services. The service includes hardware setup, registration of devices, and installation and use of applications and/or programs required for remote services (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom).
* OOD worked with 86 providers to deliver Summer Youth Work Experiences to approximately 2,425 students with disabilities across the state this summer. Pre-ETS services were all available to students to meet their individual needs and preferences.
* OOD will be implementing a Participant Portal in late August that will allow participants a better online experience in interacting with OOD, including two-way communication with their counselor.
* OOD will also be implementing a Vendor Portal using a phased-in approach beginning in September, allowing vendors to submit and correct invoices and reports in a modernized environment with increased functionality and transparency.