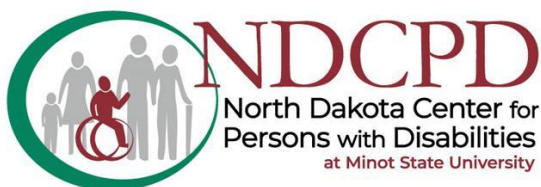




Health & Human Services

State of North Dakota
Vocational Rehabilitation
Comprehensive Statewide Needs
Assessment Report

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Executive Summary

North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (NDVR), in partnership with the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD), conducted a comprehensive assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing in North Dakota. A Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) is required every three years under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The CSNA provides critical information that guides the development of North Dakota's Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan and ensures that programs and services align with statewide needs and priorities.

This Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) reflects survey responses from 88 participants across multiple stakeholder groups, including NDVR consumers, transition-age youth, educators, community agencies, community rehabilitation programs (CRPs), employers, and NDVR staff.

Key findings indicate persisting barriers in transportation, mental health, job coaching availability, employer bias, inconsistent follow-through, and information gaps across all groups. Strong themes also emerged around the need for earlier engagement with youth, consistent service delivery, expanded community partnerships, and more robust support for consumers with the most significant disabilities.

Rationale for Needs Assessment

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA (2014), mandates that each state complete a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) to identify the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. This assessment uses both existing data and newly collected information to evaluate whether current vocational rehabilitation services effectively address the needs of North Dakotans with disabilities. The CSNA also supports the development of a state plan that reflects statewide goals, priorities, and service gaps.

To meet this federal requirement, NDVR and NDCPD jointly designed and implemented the CSNA to determine whether adequate efforts are being made to support the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities across the state. This process ensures that NDVR remains responsive to changing demographics, workforce demands, and emerging service needs.

Purpose of Needs Assessment

The purpose of North Dakota's triennial CSNA is to evaluate NDVR's performance in meeting the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities and to answer the following research questions:

- What are the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment?
- What are the needs of minorities and individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program?
- What are the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system?
- What are the needs for pre-transition and secondary transition services for youth with disabilities?
- What are the needs to establish, develop, or improve community partnerships, including community rehabilitation programs?
- What are the needs of businesses in recruiting, hiring, accommodating, and retaining individuals with disabilities?
- What do community members identify as gaps in services and barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities?

The findings from the CSNA will inform NDVR and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) as they develop the state plan, allocate resources, and design future programs and outreach efforts. Recommendations included in this report highlight opportunities for NDVR and partner agencies to collaborate in addressing identified needs.

Disability and Employment in North Dakota

North Dakota's workforce includes a significant and growing number of individuals with disabilities, making it essential for the state to understand their needs, barriers, and employment experiences.

Current demographic estimates show that approximately 99,000 North Dakotans—or 12.6% of the state's population—live with a disability. This means that roughly one in eight residents is directly impacted by disability-related support and services. Disability prevalence increases sharply with age, affecting 23% of adults ages 65–74 and 42% of adults 75 and older, underscoring the importance of long-term planning for an aging workforce.

Among working-age adults (18–64), 46,627 individuals in North Dakota have a disability. While the state's overall employment rate for people with disabilities is 55.1%, significant disparities remain.

County-level employment rates range widely—from 19.8% to 71.2%—and unemployment rates for people with disabilities (5.5%) remain higher than many local averages.

Certain disability groups face even greater challenges, with 55% of individuals with physical disabilities, 35.4% with cognitive disabilities, and 34.3% with visual disabilities not currently working. These figures highlight both progress and persistent inequities in access to competitive, integrated employment.

Despite ongoing efforts, many North Dakotans with disabilities continue to encounter substantial barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment.

These include:

- Lack of information about available support, leaving individuals and service providers unsure how to access accommodations or employment resources.
- Stereotypes and discrimination continue to influence hiring decisions and limit opportunities for advancement.
- Limited transportation options, particularly in rural areas, restrict reliable access to workplaces.

- Workplace accessibility gaps, including insufficient assistive technology and inadequate physical accommodations.
- Fear of losing essential benefits, which discourages some individuals from pursuing employment or increasing work hours.
- Limited access to legal support, making it difficult to address discrimination or enforce workplace rights.
- Insufficient training and job development opportunities, which can confine individuals to low-wage or low-skilled positions.

These challenges demonstrate the need for a deeper understanding of how NDVR services are being used, where gaps remain, and what additional supports individuals, families, educators, employers, and community partners require.

To address these questions, the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD) conducted comprehensive online surveys to gather firsthand feedback from stakeholders across the state. The surveys aim to identify service strengths, unmet needs, barriers to employment, and opportunities for improvement. The results can be used to guide NDVR in strengthening its programs, expanding partnerships, and ensuring that North Dakotans with disabilities have equitable access to meaningful, competitive employment.

Overview of North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (NDVR)

North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (NDVR) continues to play a central role in expanding employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and supporting businesses in meeting disability-related workforce needs.

Across the 2023–2025 reporting period, NDVR maintained a clear and consistent vision: to be the state’s leader in disability-related solutions. This commitment is reflected in the program’s strong service delivery model, strategic business partnerships, and sustained focus on helping individuals achieve meaningful, competitive employment.

Comprehensive Services for Individuals with Disabilities

NDVR provides a broad array of individualized services designed to help participants prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment. Core services include vocational counseling and guidance, employment preparation, workplace accommodations, training supports, and job placement assistance. The program places particular emphasis on helping individuals build skills and pursue education or credentials aligned with current labor market needs. This is also reflected in program spending patterns—training and skill development consistently accounted for the largest share of resources, comprising 60 percent of expenditures in 2023, 68 percent in 2024, and 67 percent in 2025.

The number of individuals receiving services grew steadily, from 4,505 in 2023 to over 5,150 by 2025. NDVR continues to serve a population with substantial barriers to employment: over 93 percent of participants across all years had a significant disability, underscoring the program’s focus on individuals with the greatest need for support.

Strong Business Engagement and Workforce Solutions

In addition to direct services for job seekers, NDVR offers a suite of no-cost services to employers aimed at addressing disability-related workforce challenges. These include consultation on workplace accommodations, recruitment assistance, information on disability

awareness, support for hiring and retention strategies, and guidance on tax incentives. NDVR's collaborative approach helps businesses expand their talent pipelines while promoting inclusive workplace practices.

Focus on Youth Through Pre-Employment Transition Services

NDVR continues to prioritize early workforce engagement for students with disabilities through Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). These services, available to students ages 14–21, emphasize job exploration, work-based learning, workplace readiness, postsecondary counseling, and self-advocacy. Participation in pre-ETS has steadily increased, with 2,406 students served in 2023, 2,424 in 2024, and 2,470 in 2025—reflecting strengthened outreach to schools and enhanced partnerships with education providers statewide.

Program Performance and Outcomes

Performance indicators show stable outcomes and growing economic impact. The number of individuals achieving employment each year remained consistent, with slight fluctuations (737 in 2023; 797 in 2024; 724 in 2025), while post-rehabilitation earnings continued to rise, reaching \$699.77 in average weekly wages in 2025. This steady increase demonstrates NDVR's effectiveness in helping individuals obtain jobs with higher earning potential.

NDVR also delivers strong economic returns. Program expenditures ranged from \$13.8 million to \$15.4 million during this period, while the economic impact far exceeded investment levels. Return on Investment (ROI) remained high, fluctuating from \$9.59 to \$10.82 for every dollar spent. In addition, tax return on investment ranged from \$1.92 to \$2.16, underscoring the program's value not only to individuals but also to the broader state economy.

Overall Trends and Key Observations

Across the past three years, several clear trends have emerged:

- The growing demand for services, particularly among youth, indicates increased awareness and access statewide.

- Stable employment outcomes, paired with noticeable growth in post-rehabilitation earnings.
- Consistent economic value, with strong ROI despite year-to-year fluctuations in employment numbers.
- Sustained emphasis on training, reflecting both participant needs and labor market demands for higher-skill employment.

Section One: Needs Assessment Procedure (Methodology)

The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) used a mixed-methods design to examine vocational rehabilitation needs throughout North Dakota. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to ensure a comprehensive understanding of needs across regions and stakeholder groups. The methodology incorporated multiple forms of triangulation to enhance the validity of the findings:

- Data triangulation: Using data collected across multiple times, locations, and stakeholder groups.
- Investigator triangulation: Engaging multiple researchers in data collection and analysis tasks.
- Methodological triangulation: Using multiple data-collection methods to explore key topics and research questions.

The following sections outline the survey design, recruitment procedures (including IRB approval and paid social-media boosting), data collection processes, and analysis strategies used in the CSNA.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

This study received Exempt Approval from the Minot State University Institutional Review Board under 45 CFR 46, Exemption Category 2 (surveys/interviews involving minimal risk).

- Protocol Number: 2624
- Conditional Approval: November 20, 2025
- Final Approval: November 21, 2025

All research procedures—including recruitment, distribution, and data collection—were conducted in accordance with the approved protocol.

Informed Consent

Because the surveys were anonymous, the IRB approved the use of implied electronic consent. At the start of each survey, participants viewed an online consent script describing:

- Study purpose and procedures,

- Voluntary participation,
- Estimated time commitment (10–15 minutes),
- Risks and benefits,
- Confidentiality protections, and
- Contact information for the Principal Investigator and the IRB.

Clicking “Next” indicated consent to participate.

Survey Instrument Development

The project team reviewed CSNA reports from other states and adapted them to North Dakota’s context. Surveys were developed using Microsoft Forms, an accessible, web-based platform. Each version was tailored to the intended respondent group:

- NDVR consumers with disabilities
- Transition-age youth (14–21)
- Professionals who support transition-age youth
- Community partner agencies and organizations
- North Dakota businesses
- NDVR staff
- Residents of North Dakota (the public)

Draft survey items were reviewed by NDVR staff to ensure clarity, accuracy, and relevance. All questions were written in plain language to support accessibility.

Survey Population

The CSNA targeted a diverse group of stakeholders connected to vocational rehabilitation services:

1. Individuals with disabilities who are current, former, or prospective NDVR consumers
2. Transition-age youth eligible for pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS)
3. Teachers and professionals who support transition-age youth
4. Staff from community partner agencies and service organizations

5. North Dakota businesses and employers
6. NDVR staff
7. Residents of North Dakota (the public)

Participation was voluntary for all groups.

Survey Distribution

Primary Distribution Methods

Surveys were distributed electronically using:

- Respondent-driven sampling,
- Targeted email lists for each respondent group,
- NDVR, NDCPD, and regional human service center networks,
- Chamber of Commerce contacts,
- Community partner organizations,
- Google-identified contacts, and
- Social media outreach through NDVR and NDCPD platforms.

Each invitation included:

- A brief description of the study,
- An electronic consent script, and
- A link or QR code to the appropriate survey.

Paid Advertising / Social-Media Boosting

To increase reach among hard-to-contact populations, selected surveys were boosted using paid advertising on social media (e.g., Facebook/Meta and Instagram). Paid promotion was used for:

- the Consumer Survey,
- the Business Survey, and
- the General Public Survey.

Ads were targeted geographically across North Dakota to maximize visibility and ensure broad participation. These procedures were included in the IRB-approved recruitment plan.

Follow-up Cycle

To maximize participation, the survey team sent:

- An initial invitation,
- A follow-up reminder two weeks later,
- Intermittent reminders throughout the data-collection period, and
- A final reminder shortly before survey closure.

Data Collection Procedures

Survey instruments included up to three content areas:

1. Demographics (e.g., region, role, disability status where appropriate)
2. Experiences with NDVR Services (service use, satisfaction, outcomes)
3. Access to NDVR Services (barriers, awareness, service availability)

Surveys for transition-age youth and related professionals also included items specific to pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS).

Participant Anonymity

No identifying information was collected. Surveys were submitted anonymously through Microsoft Forms, and data were aggregated during analysis to protect confidentiality.

Accessibility Features

Accessibility supports included:

- Plain-language question design,
- Compatibility with screen-readers,
- Permission for respondents to receive support (e.g., from a parent, teacher, guardian, or professional) when needed.

Survey Participation Totals

A total of 88 valid surveys were completed.

Survey Totals:

- Consumers/Individuals with Disabilities: 8
- Transition-Age Youth: 13
- Transition Professionals: 15
- Community Partner Agencies/Organizations: 17
- Businesses: 2
- NDVR Staff: 13
- Residents of North Dakota (General Public): 20

Overall Total: 88 surveys

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from Microsoft Forms were analyzed using:

- Frequency counts,
- Descriptive statistics, and
- Percentages (rounded to the nearest whole number).

Qualitative responses were analyzed thematically by multiple researchers. Themes were identified, coded, and compared across respondent groups to validate findings and identify cross-cutting needs and barriers.

Findings for each respondent group are presented in Section Two of this report.

Section Two: Individual Survey Results

The Individual Survey Results section includes general demographic information about each category of survey respondents, a summary of their responses to questions about the services and supports that NDVR provides, and how individuals with disabilities access them to meet their employment needs.

Using a variety of sources for contact information, approximately 8,149 individual surveys were disseminated to representatives from each category of respondents (e.g., NDVR consumers/individuals with disabilities, transition-age youth, transition teachers, community partner agencies/organizations, businesses, and NDVR staff). A total of 88 individual surveys were completed across the respondent groups.

NDVR Consumers or Individuals with Disabilities

This section summarizes the responses of NDVR consumers who completed the survey. Eight surveys were completed by consumer respondents. Of these respondents, 5 individuals with disabilities (63%) completed the survey themselves. Two of the respondents completed the survey with assistance from a professional. One respondent received assistance from his/her parents (or guardians) to complete the survey.

Demographics of Consumers

The first part of the consumer survey asked questions about the demographic characteristics of the consumer respondents who currently or formerly received NDVR services.

The respondents' ages are shown below. The highest number of individuals surveyed was in the age range of 27-64 years (63%). While 38% of the consumer respondents noted that they were enrolled in some type of school (e.g., high school, college or university, or an alternative type of school such as home school, Job Corps, etc.), 63% of the consumer respondents reported that they were not currently in school.

Age Categories of Consumer Respondents

Total Responses – 8

- 26 and under: 3 respondents (38%)
- 27–64: 5 respondents (63%)
- 65 or over: 0 respondents (0%)

School Enrollment of Consumer Respondents

Total Responses – 8

- Middle School: 1 respondent (13%)
- High School: 1 respondent (13%)
- College or University: 0 respondents (0%)
- Alternative Type of School (home school, Job Corps, etc.): 1 respondent (13%)
- Not Currently in School: 5 respondents (63%)

Survey responses were received from consumers who lived in every geographic region of North Dakota, as indicated below. The highest percentage of respondents lived in Bismarck (50%), followed by Minot (25%) and Grand Forks (25%).

Geographic Locations of Consumer Respondents

Total Responses – 8

- Region I – Williston: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region II – Minot: 2 respondents (25%)
- Region III – Devils Lake: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region IV – Grand Forks: 2 respondents (25%)
- Region V – Fargo: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region VI – Jamestown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region VII – Bismarck: 4 respondents (50%)
- Region VIII – Dickinson: 0 respondents (0%)

Consumers who responded to the survey also noted their disabling conditions, as seen below for this question. Respondents could choose more than one type of disability. Of the consumer respondents, the following types of disability conditions were most prevalent: Mental Health (21%), Physical (17%), Intellectual (13%), Developmental (13%), Learning (13%), Other (13%), Communication (8%), and Sensory (17%).

Disabling Conditions of Consumer Respondents

Total Responses – 27

The total number of responses (27) exceeds the number of consumer respondents because respondents could select more than one type of disability. Percentages, therefore, add up to more than 100.

- Intellectual: 3 respondents (13%)
- Learning: 3 respondents (13%)
- Developmental: 3 respondents (13%)
- Communication: 2 respondents (8%)
- Sensory: 4 respondents (17%)

- Mental Health: 5 respondents (21%)
- Substance Recovery: 0 respondents (0%)
- Physical: 4 respondents (17%)
- I don't know: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 3 respondents (13%)
- I prefer not to answer: 0 respondents (0%)

The racial and ethnic groups of the consumer respondents are below. Of the consumer respondents, 75% indicated that they were Caucasian/White. One respondent also selected American Indian or Alaska Native as his/her racial or ethnic group, and one respondent also selected Hispanic or Latino as his/her racial or ethnic group. For this question, consumer respondents could select more than one racial or ethnic group as applicable.

The languages that consumer respondents reported that they spoke are also shown below. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the respondents indicated that they spoke English, and one respondent indicated they spoke Spanish (11%).

Racial or Ethnic Groups of Consumer Respondents

Total Responses – 8

- African American/Black: 0 respondents (0%)
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 1 respondent (13%)
- Asian: 0 respondents (0%)
- Caucasian/White: 6 respondents (75%)
- Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 0 respondents (0%)
- Hispanic/Latino: 1 respondent (13%)
- Unknown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)
- Prefer not to answer: 0 respondents (0%)

Languages of Consumer Respondents

Total Responses – 9

The total number of responses (9) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, because respondents could choose more than one language.

- English: 8 respondents (89%)
- Spanish: 1 respondent (11%)
- American Sign Language: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unknown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

Consumer respondents were asked to identify the unserved or underserved population groups with which they identify. The population groups with which the respondents most identified are shown below. The unserved or underserved population groups with which the consumer respondents most identified include the transition age group (44%), racial minority (11%), and LGBTQIA+ (11%). Thirty-three percent of the respondents indicated that they preferred not to answer this question or that they did not know which population groups they identified. For this question, consumer respondents could select more than one unserved or underserved population group with which they identified.

Unserved or Underserved Population Groups of Consumer Respondents

Total Responses – 9

The total number of responses (9) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one group.

- Transition-age youth with disability: 4 respondents (44%)
- Racial or ethnic minority: 1 respondent (11%)
- Immigrant/refugee: 0 respondents (0%)
- Non-English speaker: 0 respondents (0%)
- Veteran: 0 respondents (0%)
- Homeless: 0 respondents (0%)
- LGBTQIA+: 1 respondent (11%)
- Previously incarcerated or transitioning back into the community: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other (None of the above or N/A): 3 respondents (33%)

North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (NDVR) Services and Supports

The second part of the consumer survey included questions about the services and support that consumers receive from NDVR to get and keep the job that they want.

How Consumer Respondents Connected to NDVR

While 38% of respondents were currently receiving services from NDVR, 25% of the respondents had formerly received NDVR services. 25% of respondents indicated that they had never heard of NDVR, and 13% indicated other.

Below are the most common ways in which individuals with disabilities were referred for NDVR services. How most consumer respondents were referred to NDVR includes teachers (27%), others (27%), self (9%), family (9%), friend (9%), disability provider (9%), and mental health programs (9%).

Connection to NDVR

Total Responses – 9

The total number of responses (9) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, because respondents could choose more than one group.

- Currently receive services from NDVR: 3 respondents (38%)
- Used to receive services from NDVR, but my case is closed: 2 respondents (25%)
- Heard of NDVR but haven't received their services: 0 respondents (0%)
- Never heard of NDVR: 2 respondents (25%)
- Other: 1 respondent (13%)

Source of Referral to NDVR

Total Responses – 11

The total number of responses (11) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, because respondents could choose more than one group.

- Self: 1 respondent (9%)
- Family: 1 respondent (9%)
- Friend: 1 respondent (9%)
- Teacher: 3 respondents (27%)
- Disability Provider: 1 respondent (9%)
- Social Security: 0 respondents (0%)
- Job Service: 0 respondents (0%)
- Mental Health Program: 1 respondent (9%)
- Healthcare Provider: 0 respondents (0%)
- College/Training Staff: 0 respondents (0%)
- Court/Parole Officer: 0 respondents (0%)
- I don't know: 0 respondent (0%)
- Other: 2 respondents (27%)

Current consumers with disabilities in North Dakota (as well as consumers who were formerly supported by NDVR) reported receiving several types of services from NDVR. These are depicted below with career exploration (24%) and education support (14%) as the most received services by the NDVR consumer respondents. Fourteen percent (14%) of the consumer respondents indicated that they received other services and supports.

Types of Services Received by Consumer Respondents

Total Responses – 21

The total number of responses (21) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, because respondents could choose more than one response.

- Career exploration: 5 respondents (24%)
- Education support: 3 respondents (14%)
- Resume/interview training: 2 respondents (10%)
- Job skill training: 2 respondents (10%)
- Job coaching: 2 respondents (10%)
- Accommodations: 1 respondent (5%)
- Assistive technology: 1 respondent (5%)
- Communication/social skills training: 0 respondents (0%)

- Mental health or substance use support: 0 respondents (0%)
- Transportation or childcare assistance: 1 respondent (5%)
- Benefits planning: 1 respondent (5%)
- Employer education: 0 respondents (0%)
- I don't know: 0 respondent (0%)
- Other: 3 respondents (14%)

Below are the findings of the barriers to getting and keeping the job that they want, as cited by the consumer respondents.

Of these barriers to employment, the four that were most noted by consumer respondents include: communication or social skill gaps (18%), lack of job opportunities (14%), health or mental health challenges (14%), and employer bias (14%).

Other reported barriers were as follows: lack of accommodation or assistive technology (11%), limited education or training (7%), other unidentified barriers (7%), and fear of losing benefits (4%).

Barriers to Employment for Consumer Respondents

Total Responses – 28

The total number of responses (28) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, because respondents could choose more than one response.

- Lack of job opportunities: 4 respondents (14%)
- Limited education or training: 2 respondents (7%)
- Health or mental health challenges: 4 respondents (14%)
- Transportation or childcare issues: 3 respondents (11%)
- Criminal record concerns: 0 respondents (0%)
- Communication or social skill gaps: 5 respondents (18%)
- Lack of accommodations or assistive technology: 3 respondents (11%)
- Fear of losing benefits: 1 respondent (4%)
- Employer Bias: 4 respondents (14%)
- I don't know: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 2 respondents (7%)

Consumers were asked to identify the three biggest barriers that they face. The findings are noted below.

Biggest Barriers that Consumers Face

- *“Bias, lack of accommodations.”*
- *“There is a large gap between high school support and VR regarding job support. Students with intellectual disabilities need more support than VR can provide, but they still advertise that they can support this, which leaves families feeling abandoned and confused as to why they are putting in effort with no benefit.”*
- *“Social skills, transportation.”*
- *“Health/Mental Health Challenges Lack of flexibility from employers Employer Bias.”*
- *“Learning Reading Math.”*
- *“1. Lack of job opportunities 2. Childcare issues 3. Mental health”*
- *“Employer bias, Lack of understanding, Lack of accommodation.”*
- *“Limited education, health problems, lack of accommodations.”*

Related to how NDVR could help individuals with disabilities to overcome barriers to getting and keeping the job that they want, consumer respondents identified the following types of services.

Of these NDVR services, resume or interview support (15%), education and training (15%), benefits and planning (15%), accommodations or assistive technology (10%), communication and social skill development (10%), benefits planning (10%), and employer engagement (10%) as being the most beneficial for helping them to get and keep the job that they wanted.

Helpful NDVR Services for Consumer Respondents

Total Responses – 43

The total number of responses (43) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could choose more than one response.

- Career matching: 2 respondents (5%)

- Education training: 5 respondents (12%)
- Resume/interview support: 6 respondents (15%)
- Job coaching: 5 respondents (12%)
- Accommodations or assistive technology: 4 respondents (10%)
- Communication/social skill development: 4 respondents (10%)
- Transportation or childcare support: 3 respondents (7%)
- Mental health or substance support: 2 respondents (5%)
- Benefits planning: 4 respondents (10%)
- Employer engagement: 4 respondents (10%)
- I don't know: 1 respondent (2%)
- Other: 1 respondent (2%)

Two open-ended questions were asked of consumer respondents to gather more information on which NDVR services are most important to them and any additional thoughts on how NDVR could better support consumers.

Services that Are the Most Important to Consumers

- *“Counseling and guidance.”*
- *“Job coaching. Job carving. Accommodations.”*
- *“Job coaching, social skill development, employer engagement.”*
- *“Resume Accommodation Support Employer Engagement.”*
- *“Communication Assistance Program Community.”*
- *“1. Career matches 2. Education 3. Transportation assistance”*
- *“Employer engagement Accommodations.”*
- *“Help finding job interviews, help with accommodations, support in finishing my education.”*

Additional Thoughts on how NDVR could Support Consumers Better

- *“I cannot stress this enough. Something has got to change! There is no follow-through from the VR counselors, and the procedures for families are so unclear due to disorganization. Families wait months for support with a job to the point that they either give up or go seeking the job/support themselves. There must be*

accountability — or families are going to stop using the service altogether.”

- *“Better monitoring of the job coach (which is through a contracted agency).”*
- *“Better programs for older adults/seniors having to try and return to work.”*
- *“Have never heard of it.”*
- *“Why were benefits cut for helping with vehicle repair? I didn’t get much support for travel and transportation for my state exam. I barely afforded the trip.”*
- *“When you have a client, please see them instead of doing an intake and disappearing until you discharge them.”*
- *“No”*

Access to North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (NDVR) Services and Supports

The final part of the consumer survey included questions about how individuals with disabilities access NDVR services and support.

The locations in which the most consumer respondents usually met their NDVR counselor included school (25%) and at an NDVR office (25%). The meeting locations are summarized below.

Locations for Meetings of NDVR Counselor and Consumer Respondents

Total Responses – 8

- At school: 2 respondents (25%)
- In the community: 0 respondents (0%)
- At an NDVR office: 2 respondents (25%)
- Does not currently have an NDVR counselor: 2 respondents (25%)
- Unknown: 1 respondent (13%)
- Other (at the workplace; phone): 1 respondent (13%)

Among the barriers related to accessing NDVR services, the following were noted by consumer respondents:

The barriers to accessing services that were most frequently cited by consumer respondents were lack of information about available NDVR services (19%), scheduling conflicts (13%), and no virtual meeting options (13%).

Barriers to Accessing NDVR Services for Consumer Respondents

Total Responses – 16

The total number of responses (16) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Lack of information: 3 respondents (19%)
- Difficult application process: 1 respondent (6%)
- Inaccessible meeting location: 1 respondent (6%)
- No transportation or childcare: 1 respondent (6%)
- No translator or accommodations: 0 respondents (0%)
- Scheduling conflicts: 2 respondents (13%)
- No virtual meeting options: 2 respondents (13%)
- Unknown: 3 respondents (19%)
- Other: 3 respondents (19%)

A follow-up question to the barriers experienced by consumer respondents asked what types of support these individuals needed to access NDVR services. Their responses are shown below:

Of these responses, the two top types of support that consumer respondents believed would help them the most to access NDVR services included: clear information about available NDVR services (17%) and help with applications (17%).

Supports Needed to Access NDVR Services

Total Responses – 24

The total number of responses (24) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Clear service information: 4 respondents (17%)
- Help with applications: 4 respondents (17%)

- Flexible scheduling: 3 respondents (13%)
- Local or virtual meetings: 3 respondents (13%)
- Accessible locations: 1 respondent (4%)
- Transportation or childcare: 1 respondent (4%)
- Accommodations or translation: 1 respondent (4%)
- Support with employment plans: 3 respondents (13%)
- Unknown: 3 respondents (13%)
- Other: 1 respondent (4%)

The final two open-ended questions that were asked to consumer respondents were to get more information on what three supports would help you the most in accessing NDVR services, and any additional feedback about accessing NDVR services.

Supports that would help you the most in accessing NDVR Services

- “NA”
- *“Clear service information, follow-through and effort from counselors and VR directors.”*
- *“See above.”*
- *“Knowledge of NDVR services.”*
- *“Everything”*
- *“1. Help with applications 2. Transportation 3. Childcare”*
- *“Show up.”*
- *“I don't know.”*

Additional Feedback about Consumers Accessing NDVR Services

- “NA”
- *“Something has got to change! A clear process for families to follow and engaging support! Why should I go through all this paperwork for my child if they aren't even gaining anything from this? It's an unnecessary hassle for families that already have a lot on their plates, and so unfortunate.”*
- *“There is a large gap in services for our transition-age students. They have good job support at the high school level from SPED*

school staff as well as grant-funded school staff who provide pre-ETS in the high school and 18–21-year-old program. The problem comes when students transition from school support for job skills to VR support. VR counselors meet with students and do a lot of talking, but not a lot get done in the way of getting or keeping a job. Work experiences are promised and very rarely happen. Families and students become frustrated and end VR services. People with disabilities are falling through the cracks and not receiving the services that they deserve. School staff must repeatedly reach out to VR and support services to help things progress, or students get forgotten. I feel one of the biggest problems is that ND VR does not employ its own job coaches. Some states do. Until ND VR starts employing its own job coaches (with competitive pay and benefits), the problem of lack of follow-through for people with disabilities will continue. If VR had its own job coaches, they could monitor that things are being completed and hold them accountable for providing services that are federally funded and supposed to be guaranteed to people with disabilities. Currently, VR contracts with a community agency to provide job search and job coach services for students with disabilities. However, there is high turnover in those job coach positions at community agencies due to low pay and other reasons. Oftentimes times the community agency takes the case from VR and says they will provide job coaching, and it doesn't happen. Other times, there are no agencies that take the case, as they know they don't have enough coaches. The coaches that I have met through these community agencies are lacking training and understanding of people with disabilities. This is a big problem.”

- *“Better advertising probably would be a good start for this program. I've never heard of it until I saw this survey.”*
- *“NO”*
- *“Better assistance from a specialist.”*

Transition-Age Youth

This section summarizes the responses of transition-age youth who completed the survey. Thirteen (13) surveys were completed by transition-age youth respondents. Of these respondents, all thirteen of the surveys were completed by the transition age-youth independently.

Demographics of Transition-Age Youth

The first part of the survey asked questions about the demographic characteristics of the transition-age youth/student respondents who currently or formerly received NDVR services, or who are receiving pre-employment services.

The ages of the seven transition-age youth/students who responded to the survey are shown below. All the respondents were in the 18–21-year-old age category (100%). It was noted that one hundred percent of the transition-age youth respondents were enrolled in some type of school (e.g., high school, college, or university). Most of the transition-age youth respondents were in college (92%).

Respondents

Total Responses – 13

- I am a transition-age student with disabilities (ages 18-21): 13 Respondents (100%)
- I am a parent/guardian completing this on behalf of a student (ages 14-21): 0 Respondents (0%)
- I am a professional completing this on behalf of a student (ages 14-21): 0 Respondents (0%)

Survey responses were received from transition students who lived in each geographic region of North Dakota, as indicated below. The highest percentage of respondents lived in Minot (54%), followed by Bismarck (31%). The fewest number of respondents reported that they lived in the Devils Lake area (15% each).

Geographic Locations of Consumer Respondents

Total Responses – 13

- Region I – Williston: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region II – Minot: 7 respondents (54%)
- Region III – Devils Lake: 2 respondents (15%)
- Region IV – Grand Forks: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region V – Fargo: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region VI – Jamestown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region VII – Bismarck: 4 respondents (31%)
- Region VIII – Dickinson: 0 respondents (0%)

School Enrollment of Transition-Age Youth Respondents

Total Responses – 13

- Middle School 0 respondents (0%)
- High School: 1 respondent (8%)
- College or University: 12 respondents (92%)
- Does not currently attend school: 0 respondents (0%)

This section helps us learn how familiar transition-age students are with NDVR and whether they are currently involved with the program, and to identify what NDVR services transition-age youth are using the most.

Current Status with NDVR

Total Responses – 13

- I am actively receiving services: 7 respondents (54%)
- I previously received services: 2 respondents (15%)
- I have heard of NDVR but never received services: 0 respondents (0%)
- I am unfamiliar with NDVR: 4 respondents (31%)

NDVR Services Received

Total Responses – 17

The total number of responses (17) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Job placement support: 9 respondents (53%)
- Education or training assistance: 2 respondents (12%)
- Resume/interview preparation: 1 respondent (6%)
- Career exploration: 3 respondents (18%)
- Assistance technology: 0 respondents (0%)
- Mental health or substance use support: 1 respondent (6%)
- Transportation or childcare assistance: 1 respondent (6%)

The next part of the survey helps us understand what outcomes NDVR services are creating for participants. Transition-age youth responses will show whether the services are helping people reach their goals and the satisfaction with the support they receive.

Outcomes Experienced from NDVR

Total Responses – 21

The total number of responses (21) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- I got a job I like: 6 respondents (29%)
- I enrolled in education/ training: 3 respondents (14%)
- I improved job readiness: 4 respondents (19%)
- I feel more confident about my future: 5 respondents (24%)
- No outcomes yet: 3 respondents (14%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

Satisfaction of NDVR Support

Total Responses – 13

- Very satisfied: 8 respondents (62%)
- Somewhat satisfied: 3 respondents (23%)
- Neutral: 2 respondents (15%)
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 0 respondents (0%)
- Very dissatisfied: 0 respondents (0%)

In the following part of the survey, transition-age youth were asked an open-ended question to identify which NDVR services have had the greatest positive impact. Then, conversely, asked transition-age youth what services they still need to reach their goals.

NDVR Services that are the Most Helpful

Total Responses – 13

- *“Unsure” – 6 Respondents*
- *“Helping people.”*
- *“Job placement and job search.”*
- *“Job placement support, Career exploration, Mental health.”*
- *“Job Placement, Education or training assistance, Career exploration.”*
- *“Money College Student Loans.”*
- *“Training, job searching, and guidance.”*
- *“Paying for my classes. Is all I have.”*

Services you Need to Reach your Goals

Total Responses – 13

- *“Unsure” – 8 Respondents*
- *“Have a great day.”*
- *“Job placement and job search Assistive technology.”*
- *“Get help with homework.”*
- *“Resume/interview preparation, Assistance technology, and Transportation or childcare assistance.”*
- *“I have no service to reach any of my goals.”*

The next section indicates which pre-ETS activities transition-age youth have participated in and the impacts pre-ETS activities have on students and education planning. Responses will show how widely these services are being used.

Pre-ETS Activities Participated In

Total Responses – 17

The total number of responses (17) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Job exploration counseling: 5 respondents (23%)
- Work-based learning experiences: 7 respondents (32%)
- Workplace readiness training: 1 respondent (5%)
- Postsecondary education counseling: 1 respondent (5%)
- Self-advocacy instruction: 4 respondents (18%)
- None: 1 respondent (5%)
- Unaware: 3 respondents (14%)

Impacts of Pre-ETS Activities

Total Responses – 25

The total number of responses (25) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Helped me decide on a career path: 7 respondents (28%)
- Helped me prepare for work: 7 respondents (28%)
- Helped me plan for college or training: 4 respondents (16%)
- Improved my confidence: 6 respondents (24%)
- No impact: 1 respondent (4%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

The final question of this survey gives input on suggestions or concerns on how NDVR could better support transition-age youth in getting and keeping the job they want.

Additional thoughts about how NDVR could Support in Getting and Keeping the Job they Want

- *“Unsure” – 9 Respondents*
- *“In my opinion, I think it’s good to be interested in NDVR because those who wish to use this is good to know.”*
- *“Providing me transportation.”*
- *“Keep the job that I have”*

- *“Help me pay for my college. So, I can take more classes and graduate.”*

Professionals Who Support Transition-Age Youth

This section summarizes the responses of professionals who support transition-age youth. Fifteen (15) surveys were completed by transition professionals.

Demographics of Professionals who Support Transition-Age Youth

The first part of the survey asked questions about the demographic characteristics of the professional respondents who support transition-age youth, who currently or formerly received NDVR services, what their job title or role in supporting transition-age students with disabilities is, and who are receiving pre-employment services.

The job titles of the fifteen transition-age youth supported included twelve high school professionals (80%), two middle school professionals (13%), and one elementary professional (7%). The ages of the transition-age youth supported by the 15 transition professionals who responded to the survey are shown below.

Most of the transition-age youth/students were in the 14–17-year-old age category (59%). For this question, professionals who support transition-age youth in both age groups could select both responses.

Also noted below are the settings in which the professional respondents supported young adults with disabilities. It was noted that most of the professionals who support transition-age youth respondents were in some type of school setting (e.g., high school and college or university).

Most of the professionals who support transition-age youth/student respondents were in the high school setting (54%). Transition professionals could select more than one setting in which they support young adults with disabilities.

Age Categories of Students Supported

Total Responses – 22

The total number of responses (22) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, because respondents could choose more than one response.

- Age 14–17: 13 respondents (59%)
- Age 18–21: 9 respondents (41%)

Settings in Which Professionals Provide Support to Transition-Age Youth

Total Responses – 21

The total number of responses (21) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Middle School: 3 respondents (14%)
- High School: 12 respondents (57%)
- College or University: 3 respondents (14%)
- Other (career and technology center): 3 respondents (14%)

The regional settings in which transition professionals supported young adults with disabilities are shown below. For this question, transition professionals could select all the regions in which they provide services.

Geographic Locations of Transition Professional Respondents

Total Responses – 16

The total number of responses (16) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Region I: Williston: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region II: Minot: 4 respondents (25%)
- Region III: Devils Lake: 1 respondent (6%)
- Region IV: Grand Forks: 1 respondent (6%)
- Region V: Fargo: 4 respondents (25%)
- Region VI: Jamestown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region VII: Bismarck: 6 respondents (38%)
- Region VIII: Dickinson: 0 respondents (0%)

The disabling conditions of the transition-age youth who are supported by the 15 professionals who responded to the survey are noted below.

Predominantly, the professional respondents support transition-age youth with developmental disabilities (14%), learning disabilities (13%),

intellectual disabilities (13%), communication disorders (12%), mental health challenges (11%), most significant disabilities (11%), and physical disabilities (11%). Other disabling conditions were also represented at lower percentages. For this question, respondents could choose more than one type of disabling condition.

Disabling Conditions of Transition-Age Youth Supported by Transition Professionals

Total Responses – 101

The total number of responses (101) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Intellectual Disability: 13 respondents (13%)
- Learning Disability: 13 respondents (13%)
- Developmental Disability: 14 respondents (14%)
- Most Significant Disability: 11 respondents (11%)
- Communication Disorder: 4 respondents (4%)
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing: 5 respondents (5%)
- Blindness or Visually Impaired: 4 respondents (4%)
- Deaf and Blind: 2 respondents (2%)
- Mental Health Challenges: 11 respondents (11%)
- History of Substance Abuse: 11 respondents (24%)
- Physical Disability: 11 respondents (11%)
- I don't know: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other (not specified): 1 respondent (1%)

The racial and ethnic groups of the transition-age youth who were supported by the 15 professionals who responded to the survey are designated below.

Of the young adults who were supported by the transition professionals, their most prevalent racial or ethnic groups included the following: Caucasian/White (28%), African American/Black (24%), American Indian or Alaska Native (22%), Hispanic/Latino (13%), Asian (9%), and Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (4%). Transition professional respondents could select

more than one racial or ethnic group for the young adults whom they support as relevant.

The languages that were spoken by the transition-age youth/students who were supported by the transition professionals who responded to the survey are also shown below:

For this question, transition professionals could select more than one language that was spoken by the young adults whom they support. Seventy-one percent (71%) of the transition-age youth/students who were supported by the professional respondents speak English. Spanish (24%) and Other Languages (5%) were also reported by the professional respondents as languages spoken by the transition-age youth/students whom they support.

Racial or Ethnic Groups of Transition-Age Youth Supported by Transition Professionals

Total Responses – 54

The total number of responses (54) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- African American/Black: 13 respondents (24%)
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 12 respondents (22%)
- Asian: 5 respondents (9%)
- Caucasian/White: 15 respondents (28%)
- Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 2 respondents (4%)
- Hispanic/Latino: 7 respondents (13%)
- Unknown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

Languages of Transition-Age Youth Supported by Transition Professionals

Total Responses – 21

The total number of responses (21) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- English: 15 respondents (71%)

- Spanish: 5 respondents (24%)
- American Sign Language: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unknown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other (communication device): 1 respondent (5%)

The professional respondents were asked to select all the unserved or underserved population groups of transition-age youth with whom they support.

Information below shows the unserved or underserved population groups of transition-age youth most identified, as reported by the transition professional respondents.

The professional respondents indicated that the three unserved or underserved population groups of transition-age youth whom they support primarily identified included: Most Significant Disability (a physical, intellectual, or sensory disability or combination of these disability conditions that impacts two or more functional areas of daily living and/or work) (24%), Racial or Ethnic Minorities (21%), and Mental Health Challenges (16%).

Identification with some other unserved or underserved population groups among the transition-age youth whom they support was also noted by the professional respondents at lower percentages.

Unserved or Underserved Population Groups of Transition-Age Youth Supported by Transition Professionals

Total Responses – 38

The total number of responses (38) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Most significant disability: 9 respondents (24%)
- Racial or ethnic minority: 8 respondents (21%)
- Immigrant/refugee: 2 respondents (5%)
- Non-English speaker: 1 respondent (3%)
- Transient: 0 respondents (0%)
- Mental health challenges: 6 respondents (16%)

- History of alcohol or drug abuse: 2 respondents (5%)
- Homeless: 2 respondents (5%)
- LGBTQIA+: 4 respondents (11%)
- Unknown: 4 respondents (11%)
- Other (not specified): 0 respondents (0%)

North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (NDVR) Services and Outcomes

The second part of the survey for transition professionals included questions about the NDVR services and outcomes that their transition-age youth received to get and keep the job that they want.

How the transition-age youth/students (who are supported by the transition professionals who responded to the survey) were connected to NDVR varied. Transition professionals could indicate more than one way in which the young adults whom they support were connected to NDVR.

Many of the transition professionals who responded to the survey (41%) were supporting transition-age youth who were currently receiving services from NDVR.

Information below also shows the most common ways in which the transition-age youth/students were referred to for NDVR services, as noted by the transition professionals who completed the survey.

Many of the transition professionals (50%) noted that the transition-age youth whom they support were referred to NDVR services by a teacher. For this question, respondents could select more than one answer.

Connection to NDVR of Transition-Age Youth Supported by Transition Professionals

Total Responses – 29

The total number of responses (29) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Currently receive services from NDVR: 12 respondents (41%)
- Used to receive services from NDVR, but the case is closed: 5 respondents (17%)

- Heard of NDVR but haven't received their services: 7 respondents (24%)
- Never heard of NDVR: 2 respondents (7%)
- Unknown: 1 respondent (3%)
- Other: 2 respondents (7%)

Source of Referral to NDVR for Transition-Age Youth Supported by Transition Professionals

Total Responses – 22

The total number of responses (22) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Self: 2 respondents (9%)
- Family member: 1 respondent (5%)
- Friend: 0 respondents (0%)
- Teacher: 11 respondents (50%)
- Disability support provider: 3 respondents (14%)
- Social Security Administration: 0 respondents (0%)
- Job Service: 1 respondent (5%)
- Mental health program: 0 respondents (0%)
- Healthcare professional: 0 respondents (0%)
- Staff member at a college or vocational training program: 2 respondents (9%)
- Parole officer or other court official: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unknown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other (contacted by NDVR representative or transition coordinator): 2 respondents (9%)

The transition professionals who completed the survey reported that the transition-age students in North Dakota whom they supported are currently receiving (or formerly received) several types of services from NDVR. These are depicted below:

The three most common services received by the transition-age youth who were supported by the professional respondents were: strength and interest assessments (18%), assistance to find (or develop) a job that

matches their interests and strengths (13%), and information about options for more education (12%).

This question allowed the respondents to select all the types of services that their transition-age youth were receiving.

Types of Services Received by Transition-Age Youth Supported by Transition Professionals

Total Responses – 68

The total number of responses (68) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Finding a job that matches interests and strengths: 9 respondents (13%)
- Helping to get more education: 8 respondents (12%)
- Learning about strengths and interests: 12 respondents (18%)
- Training to write a resume, apply, and interview for a job: 7 respondents (10%)
- Training to get the right job skills: 5 respondents (7%)
- Job coaching: 6 respondents (9%)
- Connecting to natural supports: 1 respondent (1%)
- Accommodations: 4 respondents (6%)
- Assistive technology: 3 respondents (4%)
- Training on communication skills: 1 respondent (1%)
- Providing a language translator: 0 respondents (0%)
- Training on social/interpersonal skills: 3 respondents (4%)
- Support for mental health challenges: 0 respondents (0%)
- Support for substance abuse issues: 1 respondent (1%)
- Support for health issues: 3 respondents (4%)
- Transportation assistance: 0 respondents (0%)
- Childcare for their own children: 0 respondents (0%)
- Benefits planning: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unknown (not yet receiving services, have not been able to get NDVR involved in the transition process): 2 respondents (3%)
- Other (workplace adaptations): 2 respondents (3%)

The next part of the survey indicates what measurable progress students have experienced with NDVR services and the overall satisfaction with how well NDVR services supported students.

Measurable Outcomes that Students Experienced from NDVR Services

Total Responses – 31

The total number of responses (31) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Secured employment: 7 respondents (23%)
- Enrolled in education or training: 6 respondents (19%)
- Improved job readiness skills: 6 respondents (19%)
- Increased confidence or self-advocacy: 5 respondents (16%)
- No measurable outcomes yet: 5 respondents (16%)
- Other: 2 respondents (6%)

Satisfaction with the Effectiveness of NDVR Services for Students

Total Responses – 15

- Very satisfied: 8 respondents (53%)
- Somewhat satisfied: 4 respondents (27%)
- Neutral: 0 respondents (0%)
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 2 respondents (13%)
- Very dissatisfied: 1 respondent (7%)

The next section evaluates the effectiveness of NDVR services to better understand which NDVR services have made the biggest difference in transition teachers' students' success and what services students may still need to reach their employment or education goals, asking what three NDVR services have had the greatest positive impact, and what services do their students still need to reach their goals in employment and education.

NDVR Services that have had the Greatest Positive Impact on Students

- *“Pre-employment skills for students, including resume writing, communication, etc. Interest inventories and job skill*

inventories/Transition assessment support financial support for post-secondary training opportunities.”

- *“Help them.”*
- *“Financial support, job coach/training, work/job experience.”*
- *“Consistently coming to the school to meet with students.”*
- *“Job skills/readiness, post-secondary education/training programs, mental health support.”*
- *“Assistance to find a job, job support, and coaching.”*
- *“Work Experience Job Shadowing Job Match.”*
- *“Job readiness training, interviewing skills, job placements.”*
- *“Help finding jobs, assistance with the hiring process, and job coaching.”*
- *“Matching interests to career options, Financial assistance, navigating finding and keeping first jobs.”*
- *“Our previous counselor had a great impact on securing employment, accommodations at college, support services at college/work, etc.”*
- *“VR counselor really getting to know the student (but then it changes too much), financial support for employment needs (transportation, clothes, shoes...etc.)”*
- *“I have heard that VR supports local businesses in job carving for students with higher needs, but I have yet to see this happen. Many of the ID/DD students who go through BPS need that specific support, and what we provide them as a district through our community-based employment education program, and what VR provides them once they are done, is horribly imbalanced. Families need support in this area, and the school does too. In many of almost all my experiences with VR, I have had to continuously remind the VR counselor of a student's need. There is no follow-through from the VR office. At times, I have had to set up these meetings for them, which is so ridiculous. It is their whole job to support adults with disabilities to gain employment, yet I am the one building my students' resumes with them, applying for jobs, supporting transportation needs. It is such a complicated situation that families are choosing to opt out of this service completely rather than deal with the headache.”*

- *“Job coaching, career assessments, financial assistance with In-Demand jobs.”*
- *“Money College Jobs”*

Services that students still need to reach their Employment and Education Goals

- *“Job coaching and/or job coaching training for school staff to better support school-to-work post-secondary follow-up on education and/or work, and more mental health supports.”*
- *“Unknown”*
- *“Exposure to more/different job opportunities, otherwise I’m not sure.”*
- *“social/communication skills, mental health support, job skills training.”*
- *“Help with job skills and applying for a job. Understanding what it takes to keep a job.”*
- *“Job Development, Job Placement, Job Coaching.”*
- *“Soft skills” like communicating with co-workers, problem-solving, and workplace expectations.”*
- *“Better information about educational options, more creativity in accommodations, and better information for employers.”*
- *“More consistent job coaching. It seems to be hard to find reliable resources in the community, but the students really benefit from having someone help them when starting a new job.”*
- *“Help with narrowing interests, applying to respective programs, ensuring accommodations at work/post-secondary education program.”*
- *“Job Coaching including searching for a job, completing the application, interview support, onboarding or training support, grooming and dress code support, and social skill support.”*
- *“Job finding/application/interview support - Job coaching - Transportation and SSI support (once employed).”*
- *“Job coaching, career assessments, job placement.”*
- *“Speed money good Going to college Getting a job.”*

In the next section of the survey, the barriers to getting and keeping a job that were cited most frequently by transition professionals related to the transition-age youth whom they support.

Of these barriers to employment, the ones that were most noted by transition professionals included other barriers (27%), training for employers about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities (13%), training of social/interpersonal skills (13%), and job coaching at the workplace (13%).

Other barriers were also identified at lower percentages. On this question, the transition professional respondents were instructed to select all the barriers that were relevant for the transition-age youth whom they support.

Barriers to Employment for Transition-Age Youth Supported by Transition Professionals

Total Responses – 15

- Assistance to find (or develop) a job that matches their interest and strengths: 1 respondent (7%)
- Information about options for more education: 1 respondent (7%)
- Strength and interest assessments: 0 respondents (0%)
- Training to write a resume, apply, and interview for a job: 0 respondents (0%)
- Job skills training: 1 respondent (7%)
- Job coaching at the workplace: 2 respondents (13%)
- Finding natural supports at the workplace: 0 respondents (0%)
- Accommodations: 0 respondents (0%)
- Assistive technology: 0 respondents (0%)
- Training on communication skills: 0 respondents (0%)
- Providing a language translator: 0 respondents (0%)
- Training on social/interpersonal skills: 2 respondents (13%)
- Mental health support: 0 respondents (0%)
- Substance abuse support: 0 respondents (0%)
- Support for health issues: 0 respondents (0%)
- Transportation assistance: 0 respondents (0%)

- Childcare assistance: 0 respondents (0%)
- Benefits planning: 0 respondents (0%)
- Training for employers about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities: 1 respondent (7%)
- Unaware: 1 respondent (7%)
- Other: 4 respondents (27%)

Compared to traditional students with disabilities who are transition-age, 13% of the transition professionals who responded to the survey believed that their transition-age youth who identified as being from an unserved or underserved population group encountered the same barriers to getting and keeping the job that they want.

Sixty percent (60%) of these same respondents believed their students from an unserved or underserved population group experienced the same barriers plus additional ones, for getting and keeping the job that they want.

Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the professional respondents did not know if transition-age youth from non-traditional population groups experienced the same, additional, or completely different barriers.

For those respondents who indicated that transition-age youth who identify as being from an unserved or underserved population group experienced different or additional barriers to getting and keeping the job that they want, those that were noted included:

- *“Lack of employers/businesses and/or employers who are willing to support students with disabilities.”*
- *“Accessibility to getting to and from the job, stamina to do a job, support doing the job.”*
- *“Unknown”*
- *“They have additional needs such as needing work tasks presented in a simplified manner, greater need for guidance on job performance, and increased need for communication supports.”*
- *“Some of our students experience racism and, at times, a lack of understanding of disability and mental health needs.”*

- *“Sometimes they may be judged on their looks before they even get a chance to prove what kind of worker they are.”*
- *“Access and funding issues and I'm sure more I am unaware of”*
- *“Families or individuals really understanding the difference between SSI vs. an actual paycheck for those who can work, transportation in Bismarck, and they need consistency with support (someone to get to know them rather than a job coach stopping in for a few minutes here and there without really understanding their needs).”*
- *“Just need a different level of support. More hands-on and involved.”*
- *“Language, financial, mental position”*

Related to how NDVR could help transition-age youth (including those from unserved or underserved groups of the population) to overcome barriers to getting and keeping the job that they want, transition professionals who responded to the survey identified the types of services that are shown below as being the most helpful:

Of these services, respondents noted that training to write a resume, apply, and interview for a job (11%), assistance to find (or develop) a job that matches their interests and strengths (9%), and job coaching at the workplace (9%).

Like other questions related to services, respondents were invited to select all the choices that were applicable.

Most Helpful NDVR Employment Services for Transition-Age Youth Supported by Transition Professionals

Total Responses – 82

The total number of responses (82) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Finding a job that matches interests and strengths: 7 respondents (9%)
- Helping to get more education: 3 respondents (4%)
- Learning about strengths and interests: 3 respondents (4%)

- Training to write a resume, apply, and interview for a job: 9 respondents (11%)
- Training to get the right job skills: 5 respondents (6%)
- Job coaching: 7 respondents (9%)
- Connecting to natural supports: 6 respondents (7%)
- Accommodations: 3 respondents (4%)
- Assistive technology: 2 respondents (2%)
- Training on communication skills: 7 respondents (9%)
- Providing a language translator: 0 respondents (0%)
- Training on social/interpersonal skills: 6 respondents (7%)
- Support for mental health challenges: 5 respondents (6%)
- Support for substance abuse issues: 1 respondent (1%)
- Support for health issues: 1 respondent (1%)
- Transportation assistance: 6 respondents (7%)
- Childcare for their own children: 0 respondents (0%)
- Benefits planning: 2 respondents (2%)
- Teaching employers about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities: 6 respondents (7%)
- Unknown: 2 respondents (2%)
- Other (not specified): 1 respondent (1%)

Of the NDVR employment services that the transition professionals who responded to the survey thought would be the three services that are the most critical for the transition-age youth they support, are as follows:

- *“Job coaching Employer training Mental Health services”*
- *“Help then talk”*
- *“Job skills training, transportation, finding a job to match abilities/strengths”*
- *“Training to write a resume/cover letter/job application, education information, job skills training”*
- *“Job skills training, job coaching, interview support.”*
- *“Training on social skills”*
- *“Job Coaching, accommodations, and social skills training.”*
- *“Training for employers, assistance in finding jobs, and job skills training.”*

- *“Helping them understand their interests and how it can relate to a career -helping with financial or other barriers if needing continuing education -helping secure reliable transportation”*
- *“Overcoming barriers, knowledge of career that fits them and how to achieve that goal, access to supports in post-secondary education/work.”*
- *“Transportation, job coaching, and social/communication skills.”*
- *“Training to write a resume, apply, and interview for a job. Job coaching at the workplace Finding natural supports at the workplace”*
- *“Job experience, job training/coaching, transportation”*
- *“Work College Money”*

Transition professionals were also asked to share their additional thoughts about gaps in the services that NDVR provides to support transition-age youth.

Whereas 13% of the respondents do not believe that there are gaps in the services provided by NDVR, 60% of the respondents indicated that they do believe that these gaps exist. Some of the respondents (27%) were unsure if there were gaps in NDVR services. The types of gaps that were noted by the transition professionals were varied, as were their suggestions for addressing these gaps.

Additional Thoughts on Gaps in NDVR Services and Suggestions to Address the Gaps for Transition-Age Youth Supported by Transition Professionals

Gaps in NDVR Services for Transition-Age Youth

- *“Consistent staffing/turnover.”*
- *“ Not Sure”*
- *“Poor provider response to job coaching request Lack of quality staff More VR counselors”*
- *“I think there is a lack of knowledge of post-secondary options, education for community employers, and overall information provided to families.”*

- *“The lack of job coaching, at least in our region. It is contracted through outside agencies, and that can be a barrier to receiving services. There seems to be a shortage of staff at these agencies. We had several students who wanted to work over the summer but none of them were able to because the outside agencies didn't have staff to provide the job coaching and assistance.”*
- *“Getting students signed up, meeting with them consistently, making progress on goals.”*
- *“The time it takes to develop a final plan and actually get them on a job from when they exit school and get into the workforce, lack of job coaches, lack of connection with community businesses.”*
- *“Support in applying and interviewing for jobs, consistent support on the job through coaching, and communication with parents/families about benefits planning and transportation arrangements.”*
- *“Connection with VR advisor and students, limited services available to high school students, CHANGE THE VR NAME or change the website material. I have SO many students that simply have a reading or math goal for the IEP and by showing them the VR website video is a huge turn off. It implies that VR is strictly for those with physical disabilities and students want nothing to do with VR. The informational video (which I would like to show to my classes) have a blind person with a cane and a wheelchair individual. While I work with students in both of those situations, I have over 150 students that do not have a physical disability. Just the name "rehabilitation" turns off a lot of parents and is confusing to students. It's so misleading and I must preface it and do a lot of explaining on the back side for parents to even have any interest.”*

Respondents were then asked what could be done to close the gaps to improve outcomes.

Their responses are as follows:

- *“Not sure I think Cory does a great job inviting parents and students to look into the program and fill out the application to start VR services”*

- *“Better follow up with teachers when working with students. Better communication to help align transition IEPs. This goes both ways as teachers could reach out for information too.”*
- *“Hire more counselors”*
- *“I think there should be a focus on community relations and education.”*
- *“If they could provide their own job coaches, they would maybe have better success at having consistent people available for the students.”*
- *“Promote services, follow through, meet with students consistently”*
- *“Hire their own job coaches instead of contracting with agencies, loosen up or just be clearer about the rules regarding timelines and assessments.”*
- *“Hire their own job coaches. Provide closer supervision of the workers they do have in making sure that their time is being used wisely and in a way that is truly benefiting the population they are working with.”*
- *“Better communication between school and VR advisor. I don't have this problem, but work with several other high schools and it's a huge problem.”*

Access to North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (NDVR) Services and Supports

The final part of the survey for professionals who support transition-age youth included questions about how NDVR services are accessed by these young adults with disabilities whom they support.

The locations in which the transition-age youth (who are supported by the transition professionals who completed the survey) usually met their NDVR counselor are summarized below.

The most common location was at the students' schools (63%). In addition, eleven percent (11%) of the transition professionals indicated that the students they support met with their NDVR counselor somewhere in the community, at the NDVR office, or that they do not have an established counselor. Five percent (5%) of respondents did not know.

Locations for Meetings of NDVR Counselor and Transition-Age Youth Supported by Transition Professionals

Total Responses – 19

The total number of responses (19) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- At school: 12 respondents (63%)
- In the community: 2 respondents (11%)
- At an NDVR office: 2 respondents (11%)
- No NDVR counselor: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unknown: 2 respondents (11%)
- Other (virtually or by phone): 1 respondent (5%)

Among the barriers related to accessing NDVR services that are encountered by the transition-age youth whom they support, the following were most noted by the transition professional respondents: lack of information about available NDVR services (27%), the application for NDVR services through NDVR (10%), and NDVR meetings being scheduled at a time or place that they can't attend (10%).

Other barriers are represented at lower percentages. For this question, transition professionals could select all the applicable barriers that are encountered by the young adults whom they support. These access barriers are below:

Barriers to Accessing NDVR Services for Transition-Age Youth Supported by Transition Professionals

Total Responses – 30

The total number of responses (30) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, because respondents could choose more than one response.

- No barriers to accessing NDVR services: 2 respondents (7%)
- Lack of information about available NDVR services: 8 respondents (27%)
- Difficulty completing the NDVR application: 3 respondents (10%)

- Scheduling meetings and trainings at inconvenient times/places: 3 respondents (10%)
- Inaccessible locations for meetings and trainings: 0 respondents (0%)
- Lack of transportation for NDVR meetings and trainings: 3 respondents (10%)
- Lack of childcare to attend meetings and trainings: 0 respondents (0%)
- Lack of support to attend meetings and trainings: 2 respondents (7%)
- Lack of accommodations during meetings and trainings: 1 respondent (3%)
- Lack of a language translator: 0 respondents (0%)
- Difficulty completing the individualized employment plan: 2 respondents (7%)
- Lack of options to attend meetings and trainings virtually: 1 respondent (3%)
- Unknown: 3 respondents (10%)
- Other: 2 respondents (7%)

Compared to traditional students with disabilities who are transition-age, 47% of the transition professionals who responded to the survey believed that their transition-age youth who identify as being from an unserved or underserved population group encountered the same barriers to accessing NDVR services and supports.

Seven percent (7%) of these same respondents believed their students from an unserved or underserved population group experienced the same access barriers plus additional ones. None of the respondents believed that transition-age youth from traditionally unserved or underserved population groups experienced completely different barriers to access NDVR services and supports but did not specify what they were.

Forty-seven percent (47%) of the professional respondents did not know if transition-age youth from non-traditional population groups experienced different or additional access barriers.

For those respondents who indicated that transition-age youth who identified as being from an unserved or underserved population group

experienced different or additional access barriers, those that were noted included:

- *“Transportation”*
- *“Just needing more support as there are more players involved in their life, and so it needs to be more hands-on. Honestly, the whole approach to their services could be altered to be more meaningful for them. A student with an ID or DD doesn't gain anything from an interest inventory. They gain meaning from experience and hands-on exposure.”*

The respondents were then asked about the three access barriers that are the most significant for their students who identified as being from an unserved or underserved population group, experienced different or additional access barriers; those that were noted included:

- *“Lack of family support.”*
- *“Talking”*
- *“Time to meet with advisors that competes with services and getting homework done.”*
- *“Waiting for Job Coaching Wait times are long for staff Waiting for Job Coaching”*
- *“Lack of transportation, information, and availability to meet.”*
- *“Completing forms, time/place to meet.”*
- *“For majority of our students, we keep this in our control as a school... we schedule the students in our building and when it is convenient for them, we make sure the student makes it to their appointment. The counselors take no responsibility for this and if they did, the students wouldn't ever meet with their counselors... (i.e. if a student is a few minutes late for their meeting the counselor tells them that they can't meet anymore). Student we don't schedule don't usually meet with their counselor because they of location... time and transportation.”*
- *“Lack of follow through from VR staff - Difficulties connecting parents, school, and all other service providers together to be on the same page. Communication difficulties. - lack of information from VR”*

- *“Most of these questions are redundant. I feel like I’ve answered this multiple times. Job training/coaching, financial assistance with In-Demand jobs, transportation to jobsite.”*

A follow-up question to the accessibility barriers experienced by transition-age youth asked the transition professionals what types of supports these individuals would need to access NDVR services. Respondents could select more than one type of support for this question. Their responses are listed below:

Of these responses, the top four types of support that transition professionals believed would help transition-age youth the most to access NDVR services included: information about available NDVR services (16%), assistance completing the NDVR application (14%), having an accessible meeting location (11%), and support in scheduling meetings at a time and place they can attend (11%).

Most Helpful Supports for Accessing NDVR Services for Transition-Age Youth Supported by Transition Professionals

Total Responses – 57

The total number of responses (57) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Information about available NDVR services: 9 respondents (16%)
- Assistance completing the NDVR application: 8 respondents (14%)
- Scheduling meetings and trainings at convenient times/places: 6 respondents (11%)
- Meetings with individuals in their own communities: 4 respondents (7%)
- Accessible locations for meetings and trainings: 6 respondents (11%)
- Transportation for meetings and trainings: 4 respondents (7%)
- Childcare to attend meetings and trainings: 0 respondents (0%)
- Support to attend meetings and trainings: 5 respondents (9%)
- Accommodations during meetings and trainings: 3 respondents (5%)
- A language translator: 0 respondents (0%)

- Assistance completing the individualized employment plan: 4 respondents (7%)
- Options to attend meetings and trainings virtually: 4 respondents (7%)
- Unknown: 3 respondents (5%)
- Other: 1 respondent (2%)

Respondents were then asked to identify what are the three supports that would make the biggest difference. Their responses are noted below:

- *“Frequent and ongoing communication with students.”*
- *“Assistance to complete the application, Assistance to complete their individualized plan for employment, Information about available services through NDVR.”*
- *“Information on NDVR services, attending meetings virtually, assistance in completing the application.”*
- *“Information about VR.”*
- *“Make meetings easier to schedule. Get started with youth earlier. Teachers more knowledgeable about VR and Adult services.”*
- *“Application assistance, virtual trainings, and accommodations during meetings.”*
- *“Transportation, alternative locations for meetings, and assistance in the process.”*
- *“Right now, the school is taking all the responsibility; they wouldn't be meeting with their counselor if it weren't for us because the counselor doesn't go out of their way to meet with the students.”*
- *“More follow-through from VR staff - Efforts to connect with parents, school, and all other service providers together to be on the same page. Bridge communication deficits. - not just information from VR but follow through and guidance on those options.”*
- *“A better brochure to hand out to parents/students/case managers explaining services. A brochure that is not biased against disabilities. Again, I have 150 students who are not intellectually or physically disabled but have a reading/math goal.”*
- *“College Job Money.”*

Pre-Employment Transition Services

The survey for transition professionals also included questions on pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS). Their responses to the types of pre-employment transition services that the young adults they support are receiving during their school years are shown below.

For the most part, the transition professionals who responded to the survey believed that these types of pre-employment transition services were being provided by their school, district, or special education staff, as well as by NDVR staff.

Pre-ETS Activities Offered in School or District

Total Responses – 20

The total number of responses (20) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Provided by school, district, or special education staff: 9 respondents (45%)
- Provided through an online or electronic application: 0 respondents (0%)
- Provided by NDVR staff: 6 respondents (30%)
- This is not offered: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unknown: 4 respondents (20%)
- Other: 1 respondent (5%)

Impacts Pre-ETS Have on Students

Total Responses – 15

- Helped students identify career goals: 2 respondents (13%)
- Improved job readiness: 7 respondents (47%)
- Increased Confidence: 1 respondent (7%)
- No Impact: 1 respondent (7%)
- Other: 4 respondents (27%)

Another open-ended question asked respondents if there were any additional pre-ETS supports that would benefit their students. Their responses are noted below:

- *“Community access for job exploration.”*
- *“More work experience.”*
- *“Midterm job experiences”*
- *“Social skills training”*
- *“Skill labs”*
- *“Having a curriculum to work from would be beneficial.”*
- *“Getting students who would benefit to sign up”*
- *“Allowing job exploration work experiences with VR during school hours if the student has shortened days, be more prepared to offer these experiences during the summer - had a few students do a summer work experience but only ended up completing a couple applications and doing one interview... no job. Job coaches are only available to meet the students once a week... it would be better if some partnerships were made and work experiences were established with some businesses.”*
- *“Biggest thing: HANDS ON EXPERIENCES!! (They learn and comprehend from doing, not just talking about it. Observational data is much more meaningful than an interest assessment where they don't even know what you are asking them) Soft Skills, problem solving, conflict resolution, application/resume/interview support, benefits, transportation practice, asking for time off, so many things.”*
- *“No suggestions.”*

The final open-ended question on the survey for transition professionals asked respondents to share additional thoughts about how transition-age youth could be better supported to access NDVR services. Their responses are indicated below:

Additional Thoughts from Transition Professional on Ways to Better Support Transition-Age Youth to Access NDVR Services and Supports

- *“Just more accountability on what services are being provided by VR staff. We do not see or feel the benefits of the service in the ID/DD world.”*
- *“It seems like VR is a little set back in times. Maybe the paper application can be online or a QR code. It just seems like a paper folder with lots of papers is behind the times. Just a suggestion.”*

Community Partner Agencies or Disability-Related Organizations

This section summarizes the responses of professionals who support individuals with disabilities at community partner agencies or disability-related organizations. Seventeen surveys were completed by professionals from these partner agencies/organizations. Of these respondents, there were a variety of positions held by the community partner agency/organizations.

Demographics of Professionals from Partner Agencies/Organizations

The first part of the survey asked questions about the demographic characteristics of the respondents who professionals at community agencies/organizations are that partner with NDVR to provide employment services and supports.

A breakdown of the types of community partner agencies/organizations is provided below. The community partner respondents described their agencies/organizations as private nonprofits (41%), individual service providers (24%), or local/state/federal government (18%). The survey was completed by respondents from community partner agencies/organizations in all eight regions of the state. Some of the community partner agencies/organizations provided services to individuals with disabilities in more than one region of the state.

The number of individuals supported by each community partner agency/organization is also shown below.

Types of Community Partner Agencies/Organizations

Total Responses – 17

- Secondary Education: 0 respondents (0%)
- Postsecondary Education: 0 respondents (0%)
- Department of Public Instruction: 1 respondent (6%)
- Regional Human Service Center: 0 respondents (0%)
- Client Advocacy Organization: 0 respondents (0%)
- Veteran's Administration: 0 respondents (0%)
- Workforce Development Agency: 0 respondents (0%)

- City, County, or State Government: 3 respondents (18%)
- Other State or Federal Agency: 1 respondent (6%)
- Other Private Nonprofit: 7 respondents (41%)
- Individual Service Provider: 4 respondents (24%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

Geographic Locations of Community Partner Agencies/Organizations

Total Responses – 66

The total number of responses (66) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Region I: Williston: 8 respondents (12%)
- Region II: Minot: 8 respondents (12%)
- Region III: Devils Lake: 8 respondents (12%)
- Region IV: Grand Forks: 11 respondents (17%)
- Region V: Fargo: 7 respondents (11%)
- Region VI: Jamestown: 7 respondents (11%)
- Region VII: Bismarck: 8 respondents (12%)
- Region VIII: Dickinson: 9 respondents (14%)

Number of Individuals with Disabilities Supported by Community Partner Agencies

Total Responses – 17

- 1–15 individuals: 1 respondent (15%)
- 16–50 individuals: 2 respondents (12%)
- 51–250 individuals: 6 respondents (35%)
- 251–999 individuals: 5 respondents (29%)
- 1000 or more individuals: 3 respondents (18%)

The disabling conditions of the consumers who are supported by the seventeen (17) partner agency/organization professionals who responded to the survey are noted below. The three most common disability conditions of the consumers whom the respondents supported included physical disabilities (15%), intellectual disabilities (15%), and developmental

disabilities (14%). For this question, respondents could choose more than one type of disability condition.

Disabling Conditions of Consumers Supported by Community Partner Agencies/Organizations

Total Responses – 113

The total number of responses (113) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Physical: 17 respondents (15%)
- Intellectual: 17 respondents (15%)
- Developmental: 16 respondents (14%)
- Sensory: 14 respondents (12%)
- Mental Health: 15 respondents (13%)
- Communication: 14 respondents (12%)
- Learning: 13 respondents (12%)
- Substance recovery: 5 respondents (4%)
- I don't know: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 2 respondents (2%)

The racial and ethnic groups of the consumers who are supported by the seventeen (17) professionals from community partner agencies and organizations who responded to the survey are designated below.

Of the consumers who are supported by these professionals, the primary racial or ethnic groups included the following: Caucasian/White (21%), American Indian or Alaska Native (19%), Hispanic/Latino (17%), and African American or Black (16%). Respondents from community partner agencies/organizations could select multiple racial or ethnic groups as applicable for the consumers whom they support.

The languages that are spoken by the consumers who are supported by the community partner professionals who responded to the survey are also shown below. Forty-two percent (42%) of the professional respondents from the community partner agencies/organizations noted that English was the main language spoken by their consumers. Other languages were also

identified as the professional respondents could select all that apply to the individuals whom they support.

Racial or Ethnic Groups of Consumers Supported by Community Partner Agencies/Organizations

Total Responses – 70

The total number of responses (70) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- African American/Black: 11 respondents (16%)
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 13 respondents (19%)
- Asian: 8 respondents (11%)
- Caucasian/White: 15 respondents (21%)
- Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 8 respondents (11%)
- Hispanic/Latino: 12 respondents (17%)
- Unknown: 2 respondents (3%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

Languages of Consumers Supported by Community Partner Agencies or Disability-Related Organizations

Total Respondents – 38

The total number of responses (38) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- English: 16 respondents (42%)
- Spanish: 8 respondents (21%)
- American Sign Language (ASL): 10 respondents (26%)
- Unknown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other (Somali, Nepali, Arabic, Dari, Pashto): 4 respondents (11%)

The professional respondents were asked to select all the traditionally unserved or underserved population groups with which the consumers whom they support most identified, as shown below. The professional respondents noted that the top three unserved or underserved population

groups to which their consumers identified included LGBTQIA+ (17%), racial or ethnic minorities (16%), and transition-age youth (16%).

Unserved or Underserved Population Groups of Consumers Supported by Community Partner Agencies/Organizations

Total Responses – 56

The total number of responses (56) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Transition-age student with disabilities: 10 respondents (16%)
- Racial or ethnic minority: 10 respondents (16%)
- Immigrant/refugee: 4 respondents (6%)
- Transient: 2 respondents (3%)
- Veterans: 6 respondents (9%)
- Homeless: 5 respondents (8%)
- LGBTQIA+: 11 respondents (17%)
- Previously incarcerated or transitioning back into their community: 8 respondents (13%)
- Other: 1 respondent (2%)

North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (NDVR) Service Awareness and Collaboration

The next part of the survey for professionals at community partner agencies/organizations included questions about NDVR service awareness and collaboration for individuals with disabilities to get and keep the job that they want.

Of the individuals with disabilities who are supported by community partner agencies/organizations, there are several ways in which they are referred for NDVR services. The information below also shows the most common ways in which individuals with disabilities were referred for NDVR services, as noted by the partner agency/organization professionals who completed the survey. These professional respondents identified disability service providers (24%), family members (13%), and self-referrals (13%) as the three most common referral sources for their consumers. For this question,

respondents could select more than one answer for their consumers who are referred via multiple referral sources.

Source of Referral to NDVR for Consumers Supported by Community Partner Agencies/Organizations

Total Responses – 38

The total number of responses (38) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Self: 5 respondents (13%)
- Family member: 5 respondents (13%)
- Teacher: 5 respondents (13%)
- Disability support provider: 9 respondents (24%)
- Job Service: 1 respondent (3%)
- Mental health program: 5 respondents (13%)
- Healthcare professional: 3 respondents (8%)
- Staff member at a college or vocational training program: 2 respondents (5%)
- Parole officer or other court official: 1 respondent (3%)
- Unknown: 2 respondents (5%)
- Other (not specified): 2 respondents (5%)

Professionals from community partner agencies/organizations who completed the survey rated their knowledge of NDVR and its services to support the employment needs of individuals with disabilities. Most of the respondents were either somewhat (59%) or very knowledgeable (24%) about NDVR services. Eighteen percent (18%) of the respondents indicated that they were very knowledgeable of NDVR services. Their responses are shown below:

Knowledge of NDVR and Its Services to Support Employment Needs of Individuals with Disabilities

Total Responses – 24

The total number of responses (24) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Very knowledgeable: 4 respondents (24%)
- Somewhat knowledgeable: 10 respondents (59%)
- A little bit knowledgeable: 3 respondents (18%)
- Not knowledgeable at all: 7 respondents (13%)

Respondents from this category also indicated whether their community partner agency/organization had utilized the services that NDVR provides to support individuals with disabilities to get and keep the jobs that they want.

Many of the respondents (88%) reported that their agency/organization had utilized NDVR services to support the employment of individuals with disabilities. Responses to this question are captured below:

Utilization of NDVR Employment Services by Consumers Supported by Community Partner Agencies/Organizations

Total Responses – 17

- Yes: 15 respondents (88%)
- No: 1 respondent (6%)
- I don't know: 1 respondent (6%)

Professional respondents from community partner agencies/organizations also noted the types of services that are readily available through NDVR for the individuals with disabilities whom they support. These are shown below:

The four types of services that are most readily available for the consumers who are supported by the professional respondents from community partner agencies/organizations included job coaching (15%), accommodations (11%), assistive technology (11%), and resume/interview preparation (11%). For this question, respondents could select more than one type of service.

Readily Available NDVR Services for Consumers with Disabilities Supported by Community Partner Agencies/Organizations

Total Responses – 89

The total number of responses (89) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Finding a job that matches interests and strengths: 7 respondents (8%)
- Helping to get more education: 9 respondents (10%)
- Training to write a resume, apply, and interview for a job: 10 respondents (11%)
- Job coaching: 13 respondents (15%)
- Accommodations: 10 respondents (11%)
- Assistive technology: 10 respondents (11%)
- Training on communication skills: 7 respondents (8%)
- Support for mental health challenges: 1 respondent (1%)
- Support for health issues: 6 respondents (7%)
- Transportation or childcare assistance: 3 respondents (3%)
- Benefits planning: 4 respondents (4%)
- Teaching employers about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities: 6 respondents (7%)
- Unknown: 2 respondents (2%)
- Other (not specified): 1 respondent (1%)

Conversely, professionals also selected services that are not readily available through NDVR for the individuals who are supported by their community partner agency/organization. Their responses are shown below:

The least readily available services that were noted by the professional respondents included are that they are not aware of what services are currently unavailable or limited for the individuals they support.

NDVR Services That Are Currently Unavailable or Limited for Individuals They Support

Total Responses – 34

The total number of responses (34) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Finding a job that matches interests and strengths: 0 respondents (0%)
- Helping to get more education: 1 respondent (3%)
- Training to write a resume, apply, and interview for a job: 0 respondents (0%)
- Job coaching: 2 respondents (6%)
- Accommodations: 1 respondent (3%)
- Assistive technology: 2 respondents (6%)
- Training on communication skills: 3 respondents (9%)
- Support for mental health or substance challenges: 6 respondents (18%)
- Transportation or childcare assistance: 5 respondents (15%)
- Benefits planning: 3 respondents (9%)
- Teaching employers about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unknown: 10 respondents (29%)
- Other (not specified): 1 respondent (3%)

Related to the question *“How frequently is NDVR able to meet the employment needs of individuals with disabilities?”* respondents’ answers are shown below:

Frequency of NDVR Meeting Employment Needs of Consumers Supported by Community Partner Agencies/Organizations

Total Responses – 17

- Always: 0 respondents (0%)
- Often: 5 respondents (29%)
- Sometimes: 4 respondents (24%)
- Rarely: 2 respondents (12%)
- None of the time: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unknown: 6 respondents (35%)

The professionals from community partner agencies/organizations who completed the survey reported that the individuals with disabilities whom

they support face a variety of barriers to getting and keeping the jobs that they want. These are depicted below:

Among these barriers, professional respondents from the community partner agencies/organizations indicated that health or mental health challenges (18%), communication and social skill gaps (16%), transportation or childcare issues (15%), and limited job opportunities (15%) were most prevalent for the consumers they support. This question allowed the respondents to select all the types of barriers that were applicable.

Barriers to Employment for Consumers Supported by Community Partner Agencies or Disability-Related Organizations

Total Responses – 68

The total number of responses (68) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Limited job opportunities: 10 respondents (15%)
- Lack of education/ training: 8 respondents (12%)
- Health or mental health challenges: 12 respondents (18%)
- Transportation or childcare issues: 10 respondents (15%)
- Communication or social skill gaps: 11 respondents (16%)
- Lack of accommodations or assistive technology: 5 respondents (7%)
- Employer bias: 8 respondents (12%)
- I don't know: 4 respondents (6%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

Professionals from community partner agencies/organizations also identified barriers encountered by individuals with disabilities who identified as being a member of an unserved or underserved group of people. The distribution of responses highlights how organizations view equity and access to employment opportunities, as seen below:

Barriers to Employment for Consumers Who Are Members of Unserved or Underserved Population Groups

Total Responses – 18

The total number of responses (18) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Same barriers: 7 respondents (39%)
- Same barriers plus more: 7 respondents (39%)
- Completely different barriers: 0 respondents (0%)
- I don't know: 3 respondents (17%)
- Other: 1 respondent (6%)

For all these unserved or underserved categories (as well as individuals with disabilities who do not identify as a member of one of these groups), professional respondents from community partner agencies/organizations answered more of the different above-identified additional barriers noted below:

- *“People with disabilities get lumped into one group. So, if an employer hired someone with a disability and they did not work out, then they will not hire a different person because 'they are all the same'”*
- *“There are stigmas of the individuals that we serve that are many times in the workplace. There are more/differing adaptations need to be made for the individuals we serve that may not be typical for other employees.”*
- *“I don't know what underserved groups means, outside of the individuals I support.”*
- *“The people I support benefit from small shifts like 1-2 hours with breaks between. They do not usually have the stamina to do a full day. Many have a limited ability to focus on one task and to do it consistently. Some people also have physical difficulties and if supports fade, the manager at Shopmart will not provide those supports - like helping with incontinence.”*
- *“Knowledge and experience.”*
- *“The basic ability to function as a normal individual. Lack of what is available to the disabled population in general. Lack of access to*

*legal services because of the lack of funding to support legal aid services. Failure of the Department of Human Services to provide equal rights in hearings to families of disabled individuals. ** I would be more than happy to share my family's case file with you and how they were treated."*

- *"Transportation, nonslip shoes, business clothing"*

The final open-ended question on this part of the survey asked respondents from community partner agencies and disability-related organizations to share their additional thoughts about how their consumers could be better supported by NDVR to get and keep the job that they want. Their responses are captured below:

Additional Thoughts on NDVR Services and Supports from Professional Respondents at Community Partner Agencies or Disability-Related Organizations

What NDVR Could Do to Better Support Consumers and Professional Respondents, and Additional Feedback

- *"Be consistent across regions with who will be taken in underneath vocational rehabilitation."*
- *"Could provide family and agency trainings on the supports that are available and the process they follow."*
- *"Have more accommodations and education/job training."*
- *"I think that the individuals are not always know very well thus not setting up the individual for success. I think it is important to have feedback from the people that know the person well to ensure the person has the tools for success."*
- *"Feel that we are already starting those conversations but both VR and DPI can keep inviting each other to the table and sharing information to break down silos"*
- *"Speed up service delivery. Far too often, people come to us because VR takes forever and the juice is not worth the squeeze."*

- *“She is a student in high school; they find employment like cleaning the cafeteria at the college. They lose that job when they graduate and there is no plan. That area could use some help.”*
- *“Provide information statewide on what you help with and then support that information. Not just to call your office and be told "or sorry but we do not work with that" or refer you out to another agency who tells you the same thing.”*
- *“Act faster to determine eligibility & come up with a plan. It has poor customer service. They don't explore Job Sharing with emotes anymore, tell people they cannot find Job Coaches anymore, ^ generally don't help people get work anymore. Pitiful. & their assessment for assistive devices is pitiful, even within the government worker system. They don't really have anything good for you to try out anymore. Most work at home most of the time & cannot seem to fit their individuals into an office visit or community visit.”*

Residents of North Dakota (General Public)

This section summarizes the responses of residents of North Dakota. Twenty surveys were completed by members of the public.

Demographics of Members of the General Public (ND Residents)

The first part of the survey asked questions about the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Residents from North Dakota who completed the survey live in six geographic regions of North Dakota, as indicated below. The highest percentage of respondents lives in the Minot Region (60%), followed by Fargo (15%), and Williston(10%).

Geographic Locations of the General Public

Total Responses – 20

- Region I: Williston: 2 respondents (10%)
- Region II: Minot: 12 respondents (60%)
- Region III: Devils Lake: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region IV: Grand Forks: 1 respondent (5%)
- Region V: Fargo: 2 respondents (15%)
- Region VI: Jamestown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region VII: Bismarck: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region VIII: Dickinson: 1 respondent (5%)

The disabling conditions of the consumers who are supported by ND residents who responded to the survey are noted below. The three most common disability conditions of the consumers who are supported by ND residents support included physical disabilities (17%), developmental disabilities (15%), and intellectual disabilities (14%). For this question, respondents could choose more than one type of disability condition.

Disability Conditions of Consumers Supported by Community Rehabilitation Programs

Total Responses – 106

The total number of responses (106) exceeds the number of respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Physical: 18 respondents (17%)
- Intellectual: 15 respondents (14%)
- Developmental: 16 respondents (15%)
- Sensor: 11 respondents (10%)
- Mental Health: 13 respondents (12%)
- Communication: 14 respondents (13%)
- Learning: 10 respondents (9%)
- Substance Recovery: 9 respondents (8%)
- I don't know: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

Respondents were also asked if they interact with or support individuals with disabilities in their community.

Interacted with or Supported Individuals with Disabilities in the Community

Total Responses – 20

- Yes: 19 respondents (95%)
- No: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unsure: 1 respondent (5%)

The racial and ethnic groups of the consumers who are supported by the twenty ND residents who responded to the survey are designated below.

Of the consumers who are supported by members of the public, their racial or ethnic groups included the following: Caucasian/White (40%), American Indian or Alaska Native (18%), and African American/Black (16%).

For this respondent group, it was reported that 77% of the consumers supported by ND residents spoke English, as also shown below.

Racial or Ethnic Groups of Consumers Supported by ND Residents

Total Responses – 47

The total number of responses (47) exceeds the number of resident respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- African American/Black: 7 respondents (16%)
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 8 respondents (18%)
- Asian: 3 respondents (7%)
- Caucasian/White: 18 respondents (40%)
- Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 2 respondents (4%)
- Hispanic/Latino: 4 respondents (9%)
- Unknown: 3 respondents (7%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

Languages of Consumers Supported by ND Residents

Total Responses – 26

The total number of responses (26) exceeds the number of resident respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- English: 20 respondents (77%)
- Spanish: 3 respondents (12%)
- American Sign Language: 3 respondents (12%)
- Unknown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

The members of the public were asked to select the unserved or underserved population groups with which the consumers whom they support most commonly identify, as shown below. Respondents could select all the applicable population groups with which their consumers identify for this question.

Unserved or Underserved Population Groups of Consumers Supported by ND Residents

Total Responses – 42

The total number of responses (42) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Transition-age student with disabilities: 10 respondents (24%)
- Racial or ethnic minority: 6 respondents (14%)
- Immigrant/refugee: 1 respondent (2%)
- Transient: 0 respondents (0%)
- Veterans: 5 respondents (12%)
- Homeless: 2 respondents (5%)
- LGBTQIA+: 7 respondents (17%)
- Previously incarcerated or transitioning back into their community: 3 respondents (7%)
- Other: 6 respondents (14%)

North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (NDVR) Awareness of Services and Supports

The second part of the survey for members of the public included questions about NDVR services and support for consumers with disabilities to get and keep the job that they want.

The ND residents who completed the survey rated their knowledge of NDVR and its services to support the employment needs of individuals with disabilities. Most respondents (50%) said that they were somewhat familiar with NDVR and its services. Their responses are shown below:

Knowledge of NDVR and Its Services by ND Residents

Total Responses – 20

- Very knowledgeable: 4 respondents (20%)
- Somewhat knowledgeable: 10 respondents (50%)
- A little bit knowledgeable: 1 respondent (5%)
- Not knowledgeable at all: 5 respondents (25%)

The information below shows that most ND residents (50%) are somewhat knowledgeable of NDVR and its services.

NDVR Authorization for Individuals Associated with Community Rehabilitation Programs to Provide Employment Services

Total Responses – 20

- Yes (authorized to help consumers get and keep jobs): 10 respondents (50%)
- No: 10 respondents (50%)
- Unknown: 0 respondents (0%)

Individual respondents also noted the types of services that are readily available by NDVR authorization for the consumers with disabilities whom they support. The types of readily available services are shown below:

Of the services that are readily available for consumers with disabilities, according to ND residents, education, training, and support (12%), job coaching (10%), and accommodations (10%) were most frequently cited. For this question, respondents could select more than one type of service that was readily available.

Readily Available NDVR Services for Consumers with Disabilities Supported by ND Residents

Total Responses – 100

The total number of responses (100) exceeds the number of resident respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Career exploration: 9 respondents (9%)
- Education/training support: 12 respondents (12%)
- Resume/interview preparation: 9 respondents (9%)
- Job coaching: 10 respondents (10%)
- Accommodations: 10 respondents (10%)
- Assistive technology: 8 respondents (8%)
- Communication/social skill development: 8 respondents (8%)
- Transportation or childcare assistance: 5 respondents (5%)
- Mental health or substance use support: 6 respondents (6%)
- Benefits planning: 6 respondents (6%)
- Employer education: 7 respondents (7%)
- I don't know: 6 respondents (6%)
- Other: 4 respondents (4%)

The ND residents who completed the survey reported that consumers with disabilities faced a variety of barriers to getting and keeping the jobs that they want. These are depicted below and include limited job opportunities (23%), employer bias (16%), health or mental health challenges(13%), and lack of education or training (13%) as the most cited barriers. This question allowed the respondents to select all the types of barriers that were applicable.

Barriers to Employment for Consumers According to ND Residents

Total Responses – 70

The total number of responses (70) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Limited job opportunities: 16 respondents (23%)
- Lack of education/training: 9 respondents (13%)
- Health or mental health challenges: 9 respondents (13%)
- Transportation or childcare issues: 8 respondents (11%)
- Communication or social skill gaps: 8 respondents (11%)
- Lack of accommodations or assistive technology: 6 respondents (9%)
- Employer bias: 11 respondents (16%)
- I don't know: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 3 respondents (4%)

The next question that ND residents were asked was if they believed that the underserved groups (e.g., youth, minorities, refugees) face additional or different barriers. Their responses are noted below, with the same barriers plus more being the most common response.

Unserved Groups Face Additional or Different Barriers

Total Responses – 20

- Same barriers: 3 respondents (15%)
- Same barriers plus more: 10 respondents (50%)
- Completely different barriers: 0 respondents (0%)

- I don't know: 6 respondents (30%)
- Other: 1 respondent (5%)

For all these unserved or underserved categories (as well as individuals with disabilities who do not identify as a member of one of these groups), ND residents are answering more of the different above-identified additional barriers noted below.

- *“Lack of professionals to help the person learn the skills they need to be successful. There is a huge workforce shortage in the disability professions.”*
- *“Language, ICE”*
- *“Racism”*
- *“Public bias against them, meaning employers may not hire them for client-facing/front-end positions because they don't want to be seen as 'politically divisive”*
- *“North Dakota employers don't give TWO (sic) if someone is hearing impaired. I've interviewed for jobs, tell them that I am hearing impaired, and then they expect me to chatter away on a phone all day or use a walkie talkie. IF I CAN NOT hear well, then why would they expect me to do this? And then they get mad when I tell them, "Okay, but I can't hear well on the phone, as I mentioned, when I interviewed for this job" Retail/ service jobs are the worst for this, with the least understanding managers.”*
- *“Prejudice”*
- *“Added challenges”*
- *“Minorities and refugees face a different prejudice on top of their disabilities.”*
- *“Integration is sometimes harder while respecting diversity. Having safe supports to bridge any gaps in understanding makes this possible. Advocates.”*
- *“People parking in handicapped places and landlords doing nothing about it.”*
- *“One person I know is deaf and there are no translators at all in Minot”*

- *“The understanding of community members of supports can be provided to employee individuals with disabilities”*
- *“Communication barriers and understanding what jobs entail would prove to be difficult.”*
- *For instance, a youth or minority or refugee may not have any barriers with health/mental health, whereas all three would probably encounter employer or limited job opportunities”*

ND residents most identified the following types of services to help consumers with disabilities (including those who are members of an underserved or unserved population group) to get and keep the job that they want: education and training (14%), job coaching (14%), employer engagement (13%), and accommodations and assistive technology (13%). All the responses from the public who completed the survey are shown below.

Helpful NDVR Employment Services for Consumers According to ND Residents

Total Responses – 100

The total number of responses (100) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Career matching: 12 respondents (12%)
- Education/training: 14 respondents (14%)
- Resume/interview support: 11 respondents (11%)
- Job coaching: 14 respondents (14%)
- Accommodations or assistive technology: 13 respondents (13%)
- Communication/social skill development: 10 respondents (10%)
- Language translation: 0 respondents (0%)
- Transportation or childcare support: 3 respondents (3%)
- Employer engagement: 13 respondents (13%)
- I don't know: 1 respondent (1%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

Of the services noted in the previous question, the residents' respondents indicated the services that they believed would be most critical for the consumers with disabilities (including members of unserved or underserved population groups) in an open-ended question with responses listed below:

- *“Employer engagement, job coaching, Interview support”*
- *“Job coaching, Career matching, and education”*
- *“Employer Engagement!”*
- *“Transportation, Career Matching, Educational training”*
- *“Diagnosis of disabilities, support of disabilities, options for jobs”*
- *“Transportation and childcare, accommodations/assistive tech, employer engagement/public perception changes around disabilities”*
- *“1) North Dakotan employers with more open minds 2) Less judging for those who are different 3) Some kind of compassion when you tell them that you can't hear/ are autistic/ don't like to drive due to hearing issues, etc.”*
- *“Employers willing to work with disabled, transportation, education”*
- *“Training”*
- *“Transportation”*
- *“Education, support, accountability, and advocacy. They all look different for everyone. All services are needed.”*
- *“Employer knowledge”*
- *“Career matching job coaching Employer engagement”*
- *“Employer engagement, accommodations, transportation”*
- *“Transportation, interview skills, employer training”*
- *“Accommodation, social skill development, employer engagement”*

The last part of the survey determines if individuals with disabilities within ND regions are lacking important services or supports and identifies which specific services or supports are missing or insufficient. Then the survey gathers ideas for improving what actions NDVR could take to better meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Gaps in Services or Supports for Individuals with Disabilities in ND Communities

Total Responses – 20

- Yes: 11 respondents (55%)
- No: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unaware: 9 respondents (45%)

Biggest Gaps in Services or Supports for Individuals with Disabilities in ND Communities

- *“Employer bias, communication skills, transportation”*
- *“Education, career matching, job exploration”*
- *“Matching people with disabilities to appropriate jobs, employer bias against hiring a person with a disability, lack of professionals to teach people to be good employees, lack of time and money to provide services to people with disabilities.”*
- *“Transportation, consistency, job opportunities”*
- *“Students who are not citizens can't get diagnosed, wait time for diagnosis.”*
- *“Transportation, accommodations/assistive tech, public perception changes around disabilities/limitations on the federal benefits they can receive and the income they can earn/save up”*
- *“A lot of North Dakota businesses will not conduct business via email or text message. They will say "Give us a call if you have a question or a concern". Well, I can't "give them a call" when I am hearing impaired. They have no other option for communication other than "give us a call!". I'd like to point out that I've lived in the United Kingdom and Poland where it was perfectly acceptable to contact a business via text message or email. But in North Dakota? Oh (sic) no.”*
- *“Transportation, assisted living options, employment opportunities.”*
- *“Lack of services, providers, knowledge of referral resources”*

- *“People don’t know that these services are out there, or they do, but they don’t think they would qualify, so they never seek any help. The stigma around the words. Also, employers don’t understand what this means for them, to employ someone who may be receiving support services, I think it scares or intimidates them.”*
- *“Parking, landlords, and parking and access to some buildings in Minot.”*
- *“18-21 to support employment goals Job coaching Post secondary planning.”*
- *“Employer engagement, accommodations, transportation”*
- *“Unless the person stays relevant and keeps up with their support, it's far too easy to fall through the cracks because nobody knows that anything is wrong.”*

Ideas that NDVR Could Take to Better Meet the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities

- *“Educate employers, educate individuals on how to interview/retain positions with the right accommodations, provide currency and training for transportation needs”*
- *“Help students find education resources and career matching”*
- *“Be aware of the gaps and help to overcome them to provide services to people with disabilities.”*
- *“Help with transportation, keep employees, create more customized employment opportunities,”*
- *“In the ideal world hire more staff but I know that's challenging”*
- *“The biggest change I think is needed is the hardest one, which is advocating for change at a systemic level. Letting people who need federal assistance save their income so that they can potentially not NEED any or as much federal assistance would be an amazing step. It would allow for people to have more autonomy and control over their own lives rather than depending on aid that is used as a political tug of war.”*
- *“Educate providers and families”*

- *“Unsure. A lot of our persons don't work because they are unable to afford it.”*
- *“End the stigma. Keep talking.”*
- *“Maybe get the word out”*
- *“Meet at the same table to plan services, i.e., collaborating as advisory boards to meet the needs”*
- *“I am not sure what can be done to address transportation needs. Individuals who have limited income are already at a disadvantage when it comes to getting to and from a job when transportation costs money. I also think of individuals with disabilities who still live at home. If a parent or caregiver is trying to get an individual with disabilities to and from a job site while also trying to get themselves to and from their own job further limits the disabled individual to pursue employment. I am not sure what can be done to address the other gaps. I have a personal unique situation as a disabled person. As a family nurse practitioner, there are no jobs available that could accommodate for my deficits due to a traumatic brain injury. I'll give an example. I don't have any issues with seeing, assessing, and providing care to patients as a nurse practitioner. However, I would struggle with juggling between seeing patients and being interrupted multiple times in a shift. I would have a hard time with background noise. I would have a hard time with the fast pace expected of nurse practitioners. Practitioners are expected to see as many patients as possible each hour. There would be no time for brain breaks and neuro-fatigue would be inevitable. A healthcare employer could argue that time-based and sensory accommodations would be detrimental to the ability to see as many patients as possible to make them money. Hiring an additional healthcare provider to make up for my deficits would further increase the employer's costs. When I was working with vocational rehab, there were no employment opportunities available that would also accommodate my needs to work a reduced number of hours each shift. If I could only work four hours three days a week, an employer would not be*

willing to take me on as an employee. An employer would also likely not be willing to work with me to gradually increase the number of hours I work to improve my stamina. I wouldn't truly be given the chance to become gainfully employed. This has prevented me from working as a nurse practitioner. I have also had to find places to volunteer as a nurse practitioner as there was no assistance to do so. Many employers, including Sanford and Essentia, were unwilling to work with me or my rehab team at Sanford. I need to volunteer a certain number of hours each year so I can maintain my license. I continue to pay for my license because I love my career. I worked hard to become a nurse practitioner, yet I am not being helped."

- *"Better services"*
- *"Routine Wellness checks, just reaching out on a regular basis, weekly, etc. Especially if they haven't been in contact."*

Additional Thoughts on NDVR Services and Supports from ND Residents

- *"Faster intake processes, more communication with schools"*
- *"Create more CE, be consistent with employment"*
- *"You are doing an amazing job by even attempting help, so thank you!"*
- *"With so much of North Dakota's population aging/ older than 50, that means many of us cannot hear. We don't feel safe driving after dark. We can't hear in noisy places. Phone calls are awful. We might be slower to walk out of a place of business. We might be slower at a self-checkout. But there does not seem to be many accommodations in North Dakota for those of us who need more help/ more time/ more patience."*
- *"More job coaches, more social interaction opportunities, educate employers on the benefits of hiring disabled"*
- *"Educate"*
- *"Job training"*

- *“Making sure rental agencies know that people with disabilities just want to be able to get out of their vehicles without others parking and obstructing the handicap spots.”*
- *“Connect individuals to supports to access community more independently”*
- *“Better education”*

North Dakota Businesses

This section summarizes the responses of business representatives who completed the survey. Two surveys were completed by representatives of North Dakota businesses.

Demographics of North Dakota Businesses

The first part of the survey asks questions about the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their North Dakota businesses.

Of the two respondents from North Dakota businesses, each held a position in the other category of the survey options. For these two questions, respondents could choose more than one job title/role and type of business.

Types of Businesses Represented

Total Responses – 2

- Agriculture and Natural Resources: 0 respondents (0%)
- Banking/Finance : 0 respondents (0%)
- Technology: 0 respondents (0%)
- Construction: 0 respondents (0%)
- Education: 0 respondents (0%)
- Food and Beverage: 0 respondents (0%)
- Government: 0 respondents (0%)
- Health Care: 0 respondents (0%)
- Hospitality: 0 respondents (0%)
- Manufacturing: 0 respondents (0%)
- Media: 0 respondents (0%)
- Service: 0 respondents (0%)
- Retail: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 2 respondents (100%)

Geographic Locations of Businesses

Total Responses – 2

Of the two respondents from North Dakota businesses, one respondent was a representative of a business in Minot (50%), and one respondent was a representative of a business in Bismarck (50%).

- Region I: Williston: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region II: Minot: 1 respondent (50%)
- Region III: Devils Lake: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region IV: Grand Forks: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region V: Fargo: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region VI: Jamestown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region VII: Bismarck: 1 respondent (50%)
- Region VIII: Dickinson: 0 respondents (0%)

Size of Businesses

Total Responses – 2

- 1–15 employees: 0 respondents (0%)
- 16–50 employees: 2 respondents (100%)
- 51–250 employees: 0 respondents (0%)
- 251–999 employees: 0 respondents (0%)
- 1000 or more employees: 0 respondents (0%)

Of the two respondents from North Dakota businesses, both respondents indicated the size of the businesses was 16-50 employees (100%).

Related to whether their business employs individuals with disabilities, one respondent (50%) indicated that their business employed people with disabilities, and the other (50%) said that they did not.

Employment of People with Disabilities by Businesses

Total Responses – 2

- Yes (employ people with disabilities): 1 respondent (50%)
- No (do not employ people with disabilities): 1 respondent (50%)
- Unknown: 0 respondents (0%)

The disabling conditions of the individuals who are employed by the businesses that responded to the survey are noted below.

Related to the individuals with disabilities whom they employ, the most common conditions that were equally noted by the business respondents were physical disabilities (14%), intellectual disabilities (14%), sensory disabilities (14%), mental health(14%), substance recovery (14%), and history of substance abuse (14%), and other (14%). Fourteen percent (14%) of the business respondents also indicated that they were unaware of the conditions of their employees with disabilities. For this question, respondents from the businesses could choose more than one type of disabling condition.

Disabling Conditions of Individuals Employed by Businesses

Total Responses – 7

The total number of responses (7) exceeds the number of consumer respondents, as respondents could select more than one response.

- Physical: 1 respondent (14%)
- Intellectual: 1 respondent (14%)
- Developmental: 0 respondents (0%)
- Sensory: 1 respondent (14%)
- Mental Health: 1 respondent (14%)
- Communication: 0 respondents (0%)
- Learning: 0 respondents (0%)
- Substance Recovery: 1 respondent (14%)
- History of Substance Abuse: 1 respondent (14%)
- I don't know: 1 respondent (14%)
- Other (Never hired a person with disabilities): 0 respondents (0%)

The business respondents were asked to select the unserved or underserved population groups with which the individuals with disabilities whom they employ are most identified, as shown below.

The identified unserved or underserved population groups to which the business respondents' employees with disabilities belonged are: 1)

racial/ethnic minority (40%), 2) immigrant/refugee (20%), 3) LGBTQIA+ (20%), and previously incarcerated (20%).

Unserved or Underserved Population Groups of Individuals with Disabilities Employed by Businesses

Total Responses – 5

The total number of responses (5) exceeds the number of business respondents, as respondents could choose more than one response.

- Transition-age student with disabilities: 0 respondents (0%)
- Racial or ethnic minority: 2 respondents (40%)
- Immigrant/refugee: 1 respondent (20%)
- Non-English speaker: 0 respondents (0%)
- Veterans: 0 respondents (0%)
- Homeless: 0 respondents (0%)
- LGBTQIA+: 1 respondent (20%)
- Previously incarcerated or transitioning back into their community: 1 respondent (20%)
- Other (Never hired a person with a disability): 0 respondents (0%)

For those businesses that have not hired individuals with disabilities (including those who also identify as being from one or more unserved or underserved population groups), respondents were asked to select reasons from a list. On this question, respondents could check all the reasons that apply. Their responses are recorded below:

The two equally cited reasons for not hiring individuals with disabilities were: 1) no applicants with disabilities (50%); 2) and other (We consider all applicants regardless of disabilities, or any other factor. We are an EOE.) (50%)

Reasons Businesses Haven't Hired Individuals with Disabilities

Total Responses – 2

- Lack of awareness of inclusive hiring practices: 0 respondents (0%)

- Concerns about performance or accommodations: 0 respondents (0%)
- No applicants with disabilities: 1 respondent (50%)
- Unfamiliar with NDVR services: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 1 respondent (50%)

Business representatives who completed the survey rated their knowledge of NDVR and its services to support the employment needs of individuals with disabilities. The two responses indicated that one respondent (50%) was somewhat familiar with NDVR, and one respondent (50%) was slightly familiar with NDVR.

Knowledge of NDVR and Its Services to Support Employment Needs of Individuals with Disabilities

Total Responses – 2

- Very knowledgeable: 0 respondents (0%)
- Somewhat knowledgeable: 1 respondent (50%)
- A little bit knowledgeable: 1 respondent (50%)
- Not knowledgeable at all: 0 respondents (0%)

North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (NDVR) Services and Supports

The second part of the business survey included questions about the respondents' experiences with NDVR services and support related to employing individuals with disabilities.

As shown below, all the business respondents (100%) had not utilized any NDVR services to support recruiting, interviewing, employing, or retaining individuals with disabilities.

Businesses' Utilization of NDVR Services to Support Employment of Individuals with Disabilities

Total Responses – 2

- Yes (utilize NDVR services): 0 respondents (0%)
- No (do not utilize NDVR services): 2 respondents (100%)
- Unknown: 0 respondents (0%)

Respondents were then asked what areas their business currently could use support from NDVR in. Their responses are compiled below:

Types of NDVR Services Businesses Thought Consumers Could Use to Support Employment of Individuals with Disabilities

Total Responses – 2

- Inclusive hiring training: 0 respondents (0%)
- Disability etiquette guidance: 0 respondents (0%)
- Job coaching support: 0 respondents (0%)
- Reasonable accommodation assistance: 0 respondents (0%)
- Incentives for hiring: 0 respondents (0%)
- Job skill assessments: 0 respondents (0%)
- Technical assistance: 0 respondents (0%)
- I don't know: 2 respondents (100%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

Support that Businesses Could Use From NDVR

- Recruiting qualified applicants with disabilities: 0 respondents (0%)
- Interviewing and assessing candidates: 0 respondents (0%)
- Understanding disability-related laws: 0 respondents (0%)
- Implementing accommodations: 1 respondent (50%)
- Supporting employee retention: 0 respondents (0%)
- Connecting with job coaches or training programs: 1 respondent (50%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

Retention and Workplace Support

In the next part of the survey, the business representatives who completed the survey were asked about challenges their business has faced and additional support needed to help retain employees with disabilities.

Challenges that Your Business has Faced in Retaining Employees with Disabilities

Total Responses – 2

- Attendance issues: 0 respondents (0%)
- Difficulty learning job tasks: 0 respondents (0%)
- Slow work speed or stamina: 0 respondents (0%)
- Communication or interpersonal challenges: 0 respondents (0%)
- Mental health or substance use concerns: 0 respondents (0%)
- Physical health limitations: 0 respondents (0%)
- Inadequate accommodations: 0 respondents (0%)
- Transportation barriers: 0 respondents (0%)
- Language barriers: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other (Nothing glaring, it would be a case-by-case basis, question is too general to really provide good insight): 2 respondents (100%)

The next open-ended question indicates what resources, tools, and services would make it easier for businesses to successfully retain employees with disabilities.

Additional Supports that Would Help Businesses Retain Employees with Disabilities

- *“None at this time.”*
- *“NA”*

Access and Collaboration

In the last part of the survey, the business representatives who completed the survey were asked about whether their business is aware of how to use NDVR services, what barriers their business has experienced, and suggestions and additional feedback on improving NDVR services and supports.

Does your business know how to access NDVR services?

Total Responses – 2

- Yes: 0 respondents (0%)
- No: 2 respondents (100%)

- Unsure: 0 respondents (0%)

Barriers that Your Business has Experienced when Accessing NDVR Services

Total Responses – 2

- Lack of awareness of available services: 1 respondent (50%)
- Limited-service availability: 0 respondents (0%)
- Rural location challenges: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unclear contact or referral process: 0 respondents (0%)
- No perceived need: 1 respondent (50%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

One of the open-ended questions in this part of the survey asked respondents to share additional suggestions for improving access to NDVR services for their business. Their responses are summarized below:

Additional Suggestions on Improving NDVR Services and Supports from Business Respondents

- *“I can't offer suggestions on improving access with NDVR, realistically, we follow very strict best practices on being EOE and being inclusive.”*
- *“Unsure”*

The final open-ended question in this part of the survey asked respondents for any additional feedback or ideas on how NDVR can better support businesses in inclusive hiring and retention for individuals with disabilities.

Additional Feedback on How NDVR Can Improve Support for Staff and Consumers

- *“Not at this time.”*
- *“We appreciate that you are providing these services even though we are not utilizing them at this time.”*

North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation Staff

This section summarizes the responses of North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation staff who completed the survey. Thirteen (13) surveys were completed by NDVR staff. Of these respondents, nine (9) vocational rehabilitation counselors completed the survey. The other respondents were as follows: one (1) support staff, one (1) business service specialist, one (1) regional administrator, and one (1) administrative assistant/intake tech.

Demographics of NDVR Staff

The first part of the survey asked questions about the job titles/roles of the NDVR staff respondents.

The length of time that these staff members have worked at NDVR is included below:

Most of the respondents (54%) were employed at NDVR for between one and five years.

Length of Employment of NDVR Staff Respondents

Total Responses – 13

- Less than one year: 2 respondents (15%)
- 1–5 years: 7 respondents (54%)
- 6–10 years: 0 respondents (0%)
- 11–20 years: 3 respondents (23%)
- 21 or more years: 1 respondent (8%)

The geographical locations, as well as the number of individuals with disabilities that their NDVR offices support, are shown below. NDVR staff from six out of the eight regions in North Dakota were represented in the survey responses, with most of their offices supporting 51-250 consumers with disabilities.

Geographic Locations and Number of Consumers Supported by NDVR

Total Responses – 17

The total number of responses (17) exceeds the number of staff respondents because some staff provide services in more than one region.

- Region I: Williston: 2 respondents (12%)
- Region II: Minot: 5 respondents (29%)
- Region III: Devils Lake: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region IV: Grand Forks: 1 respondent (6%)
- Region V: Fargo: 1 respondent (6%)
- Region VI: Jamestown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Region VII: Bismarck: 3 respondents (14%)
- Region VIII: Dickinson: 2 respondents (12%)

Number of Consumers with Disabilities Supported by NDVR Regional Offices

Total Responses – 13

- 1–15 consumers: 1 respondent (8%)
- 16–50 consumers: 1 respondent (8%)
- 51–250 consumers: 10 respondents (77%)
- 251–999 consumers: 1 respondent (8%)
- 1000 or more consumers: 0 respondents (0%)

The disabling conditions of the consumers who were supported by the 13 professionals from NDVR who responded to the survey are noted below:

Among the disability conditions of the consumers supported by NDVR staff, the most common that they reported are physical, intellectual, learning disabilities, and mental health (all at 13%).

Disability Conditions of Individuals Supported by NDVR

Total Responses – 100

The total number of responses (100) exceeds the number of staff respondents because each staff member could indicate more than one disabling condition.

- Physical: 13 respondents (13%)
- Intellectual: 13 respondents (13%)

- Developmental: 12 respondents (12%)
- Sensory: 12 respondents (12%)
- Mental Health: 13 respondents (13%)
- Communication: 10 respondents (10%)
- Learning: 13 respondents (13%)
- Substance Abuse or Recovery: 12 respondents (12%)
- I don't know: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 1 respondent (1%)

The racial and ethnic groups of the consumers who are supported by the 13 staff from NDVR who responded to the survey are designated below:

Of the consumers who are supported by these professionals, the majority of their racial or ethnic groups included the following: Caucasian/White (26%), African American/Black (24%), and American Indian/Alaska Native (24%).

The languages that are spoken by the consumers who are supported by the NDVR staff who responded to the survey are also shown below:

The primary language of the consumers who are supported by the NDVR staff is English (46%), followed by Spanish (29%), and then American Sign Language (18%). NDVR staff could select all applicable languages spoken by their consumers for this question.

Racial or Ethnic Group of Consumers Supported by NDVR Staff

Total Responses – 50

The total number of responses (50) exceeds the number of staff respondents because each staff member could indicate more than one racial or ethnic group.

- African American/Black: 12 respondents (24%)
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 12 respondents (24%)
- Asian: 2 respondents (4%)
- Caucasian/White: 13 respondents (26%)
- Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 1 respondent (2%)
- Hispanic/Latino: 10 respondents (20%)

- I don't know: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

Languages Spoken by Consumers Supported by NDVR Staff

Total Responses – 28

The total number of responses (28) exceeds the number of staff respondents because each staff member could indicate more than one language.

- English: 13 respondents (46%)
- Spanish: 8 respondents (29%)
- American Sign Language: 5 respondents (18%)
- I don't know: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other (Arabic, Mandarin): 2 respondents (7%)

The NDVR staff respondents were asked to select the unserved or underserved population groups with which the consumers whom they support most identified, as shown below:

Most of the NDVR staff respondents indicated that they supported consumers who identify in the following groups: racial/ethnic minority, transition-age youth, previously incarcerated, LGBTQIA+, veterans, and homeless.

Unserved or Underserved Population Groups of Consumers Supported by NDVR

Total Responses – 80

The total number of responses (80) exceeds the number of staff respondents because each staff member could indicate more than one unserved or underserved population group.

- Transition-age student with disabilities: 12 respondents (15%)
- Racial or ethnic minority: 13 respondents (16%)
- Immigrant or refugee: 3 respondents (4%)
- Non-English speaker: 3 respondents (4%)
- Transient: 7 respondents (9%)

- Veterans: 10 respondents (13%)
- Homeless: 10 respondents (13%)
- LGBTQIA+: 10 respondents (13%)
- Previously incarcerated or transitioning back into their community: 12 respondents (15%)
- Unknown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

NDVR Services and Support

Of the consumers who are supported by the NDVR staff who responded to the survey, there are several ways in which they were referred for services. These are highlighted below:

The three most common referral sources for their NDVR consumers included a mental health program (15%), a teacher (14%), and a healthcare provider (13%).

Sources of Referral for Consumers Supported by NDVR

Total Responses – 78

The total number of responses (78) is greater than the number of staff respondents because each staff member could indicate more than one referral source.

- Self: 7 respondents (9%)
- Family member: 7 respondents (7%)
- Teacher: 11 respondents (14%)
- Disability support provider: 6 respondents (8%)
- Mental Health Program: 12 respondents (15%)
- Job Service: 8 respondents (10%)
- Healthcare professional: 10 respondents (13%)
- Staff member at a college or vocational training program: 6 respondents (8%)
- Parole officer or other court official: 7 respondents (9%)
- Unknown: 1 respondent (1%)
- Other: 3 respondents (4%)

The next survey question asked about the types of services that the NDVR staff respondents provided to their consumers. Among the types of services that NDVR staff provided, the most common were career matching (9%), accommodations (8%), resume/interview training (8%), communication/social skills development (8%), and employer education (8%). For this question, the respondents could choose all the applicable types of services that they provide from the list. Responses to this question are below:

Types of Services Provided to Consumers by NDVR

Total Responses – 143

The total number of responses (143) exceeds the number of staff respondents, because each staff member could indicate more than one type of service.

- Career matching: 13 respondents (9%)
- Helping to get more education: 10 respondents (7%)
- Training to write a resume, apply, and interview for a job: 11 respondents (8%)
- Job skills training: 10 respondents (7%)
- Job coaching: 8 respondents (6%)
- Accommodations: 11 respondents (8%)
- Assistive technology: 10 respondents (7%)
- Training on communication/social skills: 12 respondents (8%)
- Support for mental health/substance abuse challenges: 9 respondents (6%)
- Transportation or childcare assistance: 10 respondents (7%)
- Benefits planning: 8 respondents (6%)
- Employer Education: 11 respondents (8%)
- Unknown: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 2 respondents (1%)

NDVR staff respondents also indicated all the types of services that they do not provide to their consumers, as listed below. The two top-rated types of

services that NDVR staff respondents did not provide to their consumers were job coaching (21%) and transportation or childcare assistance (17%).

Types of Services Not Provided to Consumers by NDVR

Total Responses – 24

The total number of responses (24) exceeds the number of staff respondents, because each staff member could indicate more than one type of service not provided.

- Career matching: 0 respondents (0%)
- Helping to get more education: 0 respondents (0%)
- Training to write a resume, apply, and interview for a job: 1 respondent (4%)
- Job skills training: 3 respondents (13%)
- Job coaching: 5 respondents (21%)
- Accommodations: 0 respondents (0%)
- Assistive technology: 0 respondents (0%)
- Training on communication skills/social skills: 3 respondents (13%)
- Support for mental health or substance abuse challenges: 0 respondents (0%)
- Transportation or childcare assistance: 4 respondents (17%)
- Benefits planning: 0 respondents (0%)
- Employer education: 0 respondents (0%)
- I don't know: 4 respondents (17%)
- Other: 4 respondents (17%)

Related to the services that the NDVR staff provided, the next question asked the respondents to indicate how frequently they believed they were meeting the employment needs of the consumers they support based on their experience. Responses to this question are reported below:

Most respondents (62%) indicated that they meet the needs of their consumers often.

Frequency of Meeting the Employment Needs of People with Disabilities

Total Responses – 13

- All the time: 0 respondents (0%)
- Often: 8 respondents (62%)
- Some of the time: 5 respondents (38%)
- Rarely: 0 respondents (0%)
- None of the time: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unknown: 0 respondents (0%)

Barriers to Employment

The next part of the survey asked the NDVR staff about the most common barriers that their consumers with disabilities encountered related to getting and keeping the job that they want. The NDVR staff respondents indicated that mental health challenges (11%) are the primary barrier that is faced by their consumers. This is followed by barriers to transportation or childcare challenges (8%) and limited social/interpersonal or communication skills (7%).

Listed below are the responses of the NDVR staff regarding all the barriers that they believed their consumers encounter when they are trying to get and keep a job that they want.

Barriers to Getting and Keeping a Job

Total Responses – 121

The total number of responses (121) exceeds the number of staff respondents, because each staff member could indicate more than one barrier.

- Limited job opportunities: 8 respondents (7%)
- Not having enough education: 5 respondents (4%)
- Transportation or childcare issues: 10 respondents (8%)
- Communication/social skill gaps: 8 respondents (7%)
- Lack of accommodations or assistive technology: 2 respondents (2%)
- Employer bias: 8 respondents (7%)
- Language barriers: 1 respondent (1%)
- Limited social/interpersonal skills: 9 respondents (7%)
- Mental health challenges: 13 respondents (11%)

- Health issues: 3 respondents (2%)
- Impact of job benefits: 7 respondents (6%)
- Employers concerned about hiring and supporting individuals with disabilities: 6 respondents (5%)
- I don't know: 0 respondents (0%)
- Other: 2 respondents (2%)

Staff from NDVR noted barriers encountered by individuals with disabilities who also identified as being a member of an unserved or underserved group of people. For this question, it was asked if NDVR staff believe that underserved consumers face additional or different barriers. The responses are listed below:

Underserved Consumers Facing Additional or Different Barriers

Total Responses – 13

- Same barriers: 3 respondents (23%)
- Same barriers plus more: 8 respondents (62%)
- Completely different barriers: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unaware: 2 respondents (15%)

NDVR staff respondents were also asked to identify what those additional barriers are.

Additional Barriers for Underserved Consumers

- *“They are at the mercy of the system to meet their needs. Additionally, needs are becoming more complex, which requires multiple interdisciplinary teams (stakeholders). Mental health, justice systems, and healthcare systems may be overloaded and offer limited care.”*
- *“Criminal history, homelessness, lack of health care, transportation issues”*
- *“Limited access to technology such as internet, phone service, as well as limited access to transportation. Homelessness”*
- *“Inability to manage work/life balance”*
- *“Having an additional barrier seems to set off a snowball effect. The barriers vary from client to client. For example, when someone doesn't*

understand they may not do something correctly. The reason they may not understand could be due to literal communication associated with autism and the employer used a metaphor; it could be due to a hearing impairment, language barrier or it could be anxiety or lacking social skills that causes the client/employee to turn away and not capture all the language and body language communication that is sent.”

- *“My underserved clientele often does not have access to the resources in the Minot community, as they are in rural areas with limited transportation. Local service providers largely do not support the rural population, leading to a breakdown in services possible for them.”*
- *“Rural locations do not have adequate transportation as well as limited to no availability for job coaching services.”*
- *“Homelessness, no health insurance.”*

Service Priorities and System Improvements

This section of the survey highlights which services are the most critical to helping consumers succeed and the top three changes that would help NDVR staff support consumers.

Services that are most Critical in helping Consumers Succeed in Employment

Total Responses – 55

The total number of responses (55) exceeds the number of staff respondents because each staff member could indicate more than one answer.

- Career matching: 6 respondents (11%)
- Education training: 6 respondents (11%)
- Resume/interview support: 5 respondents (9%)
- Job coaching: 9 respondents (16%)
- Accommodations or assistive technology: 4 respondents (7%)
- Communication/social skills development: 5 respondents (9%)
- Transportation or childcare support: 7 respondents (13%)

- Mental health or substance use support: 8 respondents (15%)
- Benefit planning: 1 respondent (2%)
- Employer engagement: 4 respondents (7%)
- Other: 0 respondents (0%)

The next part of the survey asked respondents two open-ended questions on what the top three changes would be that would help them better support their consumers, and any additional feedback on how NDVR could improve staff support.

Top Three Changes that would Help you Better Support Consumers

- *“On the job supports”*
- *“Increase provider services/more CRPs (this is very hard though but would be so helpful!) -Support for justice involvement clients/substance use (engagement can be challenging for these populations; therefore, training, support is appreciated) - Updated/more robust resources for adults (students are being addressed, but adults may require slightly different content). Specifically addressing skill development for clients. (social skill worksheets, etc.)”*
- *“Better transportation options”*
- *“Transportation options, affordable and accessible housing, more community providers doing job coaching/situational assessments/customized employment opportunities.”*
- *“Mental health and transportation services and employer engagement”*
- *“Easier access to reliable transportation. Access to affordable housing. Access to communication such as having a cell phone, internet access. Significant education for counselors on how to work with persons who are attempting recovery from substance abuse, as well as training on how to assist a person with a significant criminal hx in conducting an effective job search.”*
- *“Counselors need less people on caseload (50)”*
- *“More available providers to work with clients who need on-the-job supports, more vocational rehabilitation counselors so caseloads could be lower to allow better services for clients, and more*

administrative support so counselors can do counseling instead of filing and other paperwork”

- *“1. Changes to payment policies (likely at the federal level) to allow service providers to better-justify services to our rural population. Especially with SEP cases, when providers aren't able to be paid for things like windshield time, it makes them less likely to agree to take those cases. 2. All of us having CRCs. 3. Uniformity in how some services are delivered.”*
- *“I think we are doing well with what we are doing, we serve a diverse demographic, and our area job opportunities are almost as diverse as our population.”*
- *“A new purchasing system. I can't think of any others.”*
- *“Increased transportation in rural areas. Job coaches available for rural areas.”*
- *“More public transportation, more affordable housing options, more services for mental health”*

Additional Feedback on How NDVR Can Improve Support for Staff and Consumers

- *“Having our own Job Coach.”*
- *“I would like more clinical mental health training/supervision. A lot of trainings are focused more on the employment side; however, I am seeing more mental health challenges that we could be exploring more as counselors (within our scope of course).”*
- *“So much time is spent on paperwork. There has to be a better and faster way to document.”*
- *“We need more counselors in higher-populated cities. Caseloads are becoming increasingly large, which does not align well with the severity of many cases.”*
- *“Reasonable sized caseloads for the tasks VR counselors need to perform. The counselor needs to be a social worker, employment therapist, medical professional, employment specialist, office clerk, accountant, disability specialist. And the job is becoming more complicated as we are seeing more homeless people with significant legal issues as well as housing issues. We are seeing more people*

who are not ready to participate in the rehabilitation process. Who are actively using and have no intention of abstinence.”

- *“Additional administrative support staff and more VR counselors to lower caseloads”*
- *“More opportunities to provide direct feedback in a way that will not be treated as punitive for specific offices. I believe that many of us live with a small amount of fear that voicing our opinions will result in more work, closer oversight, and additional problems for the regional offices. Punitive measures destroy morale, degrade trust, and lead to higher turnover in some areas.”*
- *“I think NDVR is doing a great job, we care, we communicate, we document and do our best to help eligible clients.”*
- *“I am not sure.”*

Access to North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (NDVR) Services and Supports

In the final section of the survey, it asked where NDVR staff typically meet with their consumers, the barriers consumers face in accessing NDVR services, if underserved consumers face any additional or different barriers, the most significant barriers, and what supports consumers need to access NDVR services more easily.

Many of the NDVR staff respondents (38%) met their consumers with disabilities at the NDVR office. Other meeting locations included virtual meetings (26%), at school (21%), in the community (12%), and other locations (3%).

Related to the barriers that their consumers experienced when trying to access NDVR services, NDVR staff respondents delineated those listed below:

The top three barriers that the NDVR staff respondents believed their consumers encountered when trying to access NDVR services included: lack of transportation or childcare (43%), lack of information (21%), and scheduling conflicts (18%).

Barriers to Accessing NDVR Services Experienced by Consumers

Total Responses - 28

The total number of responses (28) exceeds the number of staff respondents because each staff member could indicate more than one barrier.

- Lack of information: 6 respondents (21%)
- Difficult application: 0 respondents (0%)
- Inaccessible meeting location: 0 respondents (0%)
- No transportation or childcare: 12 respondents (43%)
- No translator or accommodations: 1 respondent (3%)
- Scheduling conflicts: 5 respondents (18%)
- No virtual meeting options: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unaware: 1 respondent (4%)
- Other: 3 respondents (11%)

Related to access barriers, the next question asked NDVR staff about the barriers that are encountered by individuals with disabilities who also identified as a member of an unserved or underserved population group (compared to consumers with disabilities who do not also identify as a member of one of the unserved or underserved population groups). Responses for this question are shown below:

Access Barriers Encountered by Consumers with Disabilities in Unserved/Underserved Population Groups

Total Responses – 13

- The same barriers are encountered: 7 respondents (54%)
- The same plus additional barriers are encountered: 2 respondents (15%)
- Completely different barriers are encountered: 0 respondents (0%)
- Unknown: 4 respondents (31%)

The NDVR staff identified the types of additional access barriers faced by individuals who are from one or more of the unserved/underserved populations when they are trying to access NDVR services to meet their employment needs. These are highlighted below:

Types of Additional Access Barriers Encountered by Consumers in Unserved/Underserved Population Groups

- *“Unsure- I would assume more given the population and data about those with disabilities.”*
- *“Many do not have access or the skills to meet virtually.”*
- *“More barriers due to rural location and a lack of services in rural communities.”*

Three Access Barriers that are the Most Significant for Consumers

- *“Transportation changes, being referred for services without knowing what VR does, childcare for job search clients.”*
- *“Transportation is huge Remembering the appointments can be challenging Those are the two most common”*
- *“Transportation is the biggest. Some justice involved face challenges, especially sex offenders.”*
- *“Transportation, technology skills, time constraints”*
- *“Lack of info, limited transportation and scheduling conflicts.”*
- *“Housing, phone, transportation.”*
- *“transportation”*
- *“They get confused about why they are referred to VR and what services VR provides. Today someone said she wanted suboxone and glasses, and she isn't allowed to work. Clearly, she doesn't understand the purpose of VR.”*
- *“Transportation, Scheduling Conflicts, and Misunderstanding of what VR is able to provide.”*
- *“Transportation is a problem in our area. We only have NW Public Transit, and they require two weeks ahead of schedule, we do not have a bus system.”*
- *“Transportation and Rural Services are the largest current barriers.”*
- *“Transportation, housing and health insurance”*

To help consumers overcome these access barriers, the NDVR staff respondents noted several types of support that would be necessary. These are displayed below:

The two most helpful supports that were identified by the NDVR respondents for their consumers to overcome access barriers included: access to transportation and childcare (38%) and clear service information (21%).

Supports to Overcome Access Barriers

Total Responses – 29

The total number of responses (29) exceeds the number of staff respondents because each staff member could indicate more than one support.

- Clear service information: 6 respondents (21%)
- Help with applications: 2 respondents (7%)
- Flexible scheduling: 3 respondents (10%)
- Local or virtual meetings: 2 respondents (7%)
- Accessible locations: 0 respondents (0%)
- Transportation or childcare: 11 respondents (38%)
- Accommodations or translation: 2 respondents (7%)
- Support with employment plans: 1 respondent (3%)
- Unaware: 2 respondents (7%)
- Other : 0 respondents (0%)

The final open-ended questions on this part of the survey asked NDVR staff respondents for any additional feedback on improving access to NDVR services and any additional thoughts on how consumers could be better supported to get and keep a job they want. Responses are listed below:

Additional Feedback on Improving Access to NDVR Services

- *“Clearer information on services provided”*
- *“None at this time.”*

Additional Thoughts on how to Better Support Consumers in Getting and Keeping a Job they Want

- *“More time to work with each client before having to rush on to the next one. Some clients could use several appointments prior to being*

ready to apply for work but due to the continual flow of clients, there isn't always time to give each client the support they need."

- *"If caseloads were smaller (by having more counselors); it would eliminate a lot of stress."*
- *"No additional thoughts"*
- *"Better engagement with employers and schools to advocate for clients."*
- *"I think we are doing a great job."*
- *I will need rural services in order to provide better support for my clients."*

Section Three: Discussion of Assessment Findings

The survey findings from seven stakeholder groups, including NDVR consumers, transition-age youth, transition professionals, community partner agencies, North Dakota residents, businesses, and NDVR staff, collectively illustrate a consistent picture of both strengths and critical service gaps within North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (NDVR).

What are the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment?

Survey responses across stakeholder groups point to a clear set of needs for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Many require steady, hands-on support to prepare for and maintain employment, particularly through reliable job coaching. Respondents frequently noted shortages and turnover in job-coaching staff, which disrupts progress and limits access to consistent skill development. Individuals with significant disabilities often benefit from structured, real-world work experiences and customized employment strategies that reflect their strengths and support needs.

Communication and social-skill development emerged as a recurring theme, especially for individuals with intellectual, developmental, or mental health disabilities. Beyond employment-specific supports, respondents emphasized the importance of dependable transportation, mental health services, and assistance navigating workplace accommodations. Several individuals also need help understanding available services and completing the steps required to access them, underscoring the importance of clear guidance and ongoing support.

What are the needs of minorities and individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program?

The assessment highlighted additional barriers experienced by racial and ethnic minorities, individuals with limited English proficiency, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and others who have historically been underserved.

These groups often face discrimination, communication challenges, limited access to technology, and inconsistent transportation. Some respondents also described barriers related to housing instability, reentry after incarceration, or limited familiarity with U.S. workplace expectations.

To address these disparities, respondents identified the need for culturally responsive outreach, translated materials, and stronger partnerships with agencies that address housing, mental health, and justice-system involvement. Many individuals in these groups require more intensive, hands-on support to navigate employment systems and maintain stability while pursuing work.

What are the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system?

Individuals who interact with multiple workforce programs often experience gaps in communication and coordination. Respondents described confusion about agency roles, delays in referrals, and inconsistent follow-through during transitions between systems such as Job Service, schools, and human service centers. These gaps can leave individuals without the support they need at critical points in their employment journey.

Stakeholders emphasized the need for clearer communication pathways, shared planning across agencies, and more consistent availability of job coaching and transportation. Strengthening coordination within the workforce system would help ensure that individuals receive timely, uninterrupted support.

What are the needs for pre-transition and secondary transition services for youth with disabilities?

Youth with disabilities and the professionals who support them identified several priorities for improving transition services. Many emphasized the importance of earlier engagement from NDVR, noting that students benefit when career exploration and skill development begin well

before graduation. Respondents also highlighted the need for more work-based learning opportunities, including job shadows, paid work experiences, and community placements.

Skill development—particularly in communication, social behavior, and workplace readiness—was another major theme. Youth and families also need clearer information about NDVR services and a smoother transition from school-based supports to adult services. Support navigating postsecondary education, including accommodations and financial planning, was also identified as a key need.

What are the needs to establish, develop, or improve community partnerships, including community rehabilitation programs?

Community partners and NDVR staff described a need for stronger, more coordinated partnerships across agencies. Many pointed to shortages of job coaches and other direct-support professionals, especially in rural areas. Turnover and inconsistent training among community rehabilitation program staff were also noted as challenges that affect service quality and continuity.

Respondents expressed interest in more joint training opportunities, clearer expectations for contracted providers, and improved communication between NDVR and partner organizations. Expanding mental health and substance-use supports within the community was also identified as a priority, as these needs frequently intersect with employment barriers.

What are the needs of businesses in recruiting, hiring, accommodating, and retaining individuals with disabilities?

Although business participation in the survey was limited, the broader data set provides insight into employer needs. Many employers are unsure how to connect with NDVR or what services are available to support hiring and retention. Respondents described a need for practical guidance on accommodations, help identifying qualified applicants, and support during onboarding and early employment.

Employers also expressed interest in disability awareness training to address misconceptions and improve workplace inclusion. Rural businesses, in particular, may benefit from more targeted outreach and quicker access to support when challenges arise.

What do community members identify as gaps in services and barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities?

Community members consistently pointed to several systemic barriers that affect individuals with disabilities across the state. Transportation remains one of the most significant challenges, especially in rural areas where options are limited or nonexistent. Respondents also noted a shortage of job opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities and persistent employer bias.

Gaps in mental health services, the availability of job coaching, and access to assistive technology were also frequently mentioned. Many community members expressed concern about the general lack of awareness of NDVR services and the need for more public education. Additional needs included more accessible communication options for individuals who cannot use phones and stronger coordination among agencies to reduce fragmentation in service delivery.

While the total number of responses (88) is modest, the fact that similar themes emerged across such a wide range of participants suggests broader needs that warrant thoughtful attention.

Section Four: Overall Themes

The surveys gathered from 88 participants across a wide range of groups, including consumers, youth, educators, community partners, residents, businesses, and NDVR staff, point to several themes that are present throughout the survey. Even with a relatively small sample, the fact that these patterns appear across different regions and stakeholder groups points to broader issues that would benefit from thoughtful attention at both the program and policy levels.

Theme 1: Awareness, Navigation, and Communication Gaps

Many people across different groups said they still do not have clear, easy-to-understand information about NDVR, including what the program offers, how to get started, what the process looks like, and typical timelines. A notable share of consumers (25%) and transition-age youth (31%) said they were unfamiliar with NDVR, and members of the public and business community also reported not knowing how to access services. Professionals added that families often feel unsure about where to begin and would benefit from consistent, plain-language materials, and more proactive follow-through.

Theme 2: Transportation and Rural Access as Foundational Barriers

Transportation came up repeatedly as one of the most significant challenges, both for finding and keeping employment and for accessing NDVR services. This was especially true in rural areas where transit options are limited and distances are long. Staff, partners, educators, residents, and consumers all emphasized that transportation, and for some families, childcare as well, remains a major constraint and an essential factor in being able to reach services and maintain employment.

Theme 3: Mental Health and Social and Communication Skills Influence Employment Stability

Many respondents noted that mental health challenges and difficulties with social and communication skills often make it harder for individuals to prepare for work, get hired, and stay employed. Participants emphasized the value of structured training in areas such as workplace behavior, conflict resolution, and self-advocacy, along with stronger coordination with mental health supports to help people build more stable employment paths.

Theme 4: Employer Bias and Limited Inclusive Practices

Many survey respondents noted that some employers remain hesitant to hire people with disabilities, often because of lingering stereotypes or uncertainty about how to provide accommodations. Several groups observed that opportunities in customer-facing roles can feel limited and that employers vary in their willingness to adjust tasks when needed. Participants also highlighted the value of more focused employer education and engagement, particularly with small and rural businesses, to help expand inclusive hiring practices.

Theme 5: Additional and Compounded Barriers for Underserved Populations

Most groups noted that individuals from underserved populations experience the same challenges as others, along with additional barriers such as discrimination, language and technology gaps, rural isolation, housing instability, and involvement with the justice system. Participants emphasized that these layered challenges call for more tailored, culturally-responsive, and coordinated support across agencies.

Section Five: Recommendations

The recommendations below translate the findings from Section Two into practical steps for NDVR and its partners. Each recommendation outlines the underlying need and potential actions to address it.

Recommendation #1: Improve NDVR's Visibility and Ease of Use

Rationale: Many stakeholders were unfamiliar with NDVR, unsure about eligibility and processes, or confused about timelines and expectations. Employers also reported not knowing how to access services.

Examples of Suggested Action Items:

- Develop clear, plain-language communication materials tailored for students and families, adults, employers, and partners. Include step-by-step visuals, basic eligibility information, and timelines, and translate materials into commonly spoken languages.
- Provide navigation supports, such as virtual information sessions, office hours, short explainer videos, and chat/text assistance. Offer application support statewide.
- Update outreach tools by using mobile-accessible formats, text-based sign-up options, and accessible print resources, and distribute them through schools, human service centers, CRPs, tribal partners, and workforce centers.

Recommendation #2: Strengthen Transportation and Other Access Supports

Rationale: Transportation and childcare remain major barriers to accessing services and securing employment, particularly in rural communities.

Examples of Suggested Action Items:

- Expand transportation supports, including subsidies, mileage reimbursement, or ride-share vouchers. Explore micro-transit partnerships with local providers, with a focus on rural areas.
- Increase virtual service options—such as remote intake, IPE development, and coaching check-ins—and offer extended hours to better accommodate students and working adults.
- Pilot childcare stipends or coordinated scheduling with family support programs during key steps like applications, interviews, and onboarding.

Recommendation #3: Expand Mental Health, Including Social and Communication Skill Supports

Rationale: Mental health challenges and gaps in social and communication skills were frequently identified as barriers to job readiness and long-term employment success.

Examples of Suggested Action Items:

- Incorporate short, evidence-based modules on workplace social skills, conflict management, and self-advocacy into counseling and pre-ETS, in collaboration with schools and CRPs.
- Strengthen referral pathways and shared planning with mental health providers when appropriate.
- Equip counselors and job coaches with training and tools that support mental health-informed practices and on-the-job stabilization.

Recommendation #4: Engage Employers Through Practical, Local Solutions

Rationale: Employer bias, inconsistent accommodations, and limited inclusive practices restrict opportunities, especially in small or rural labor markets. Many employers also reported not knowing how NDVR works.

Examples of Suggested Action Items:

- Develop regional employer engagement plans focused on high-demand industries. Offer brief trainings on accommodations and provide on-call technical assistance for new hires.
- Provide customized employment toolkits and rapid response coaching during the first 90 days of employment. Publicly recognize employers who demonstrate inclusive practices.
- Establish a single point-of-contact for employers in each region and streamline the intake process for businesses.

Recommendation #5: Strengthen Early and Coordinated Support for Transition-Age Youth

Rationale: Schools play a key role in connecting students to NDVR, yet stakeholders reported delays, limited work experiences, and inconsistent coordination during the transition out of school.

Examples of Suggested Action Items:

- Standardize school-to-work pathways, including pre-ETS, work-based learning, paid community experiences, and post-school job placement with shared milestones and timelines.
- Hold joint case reviews each semester with schools, families, and NDVR. Prioritize summer work experiences and ensure job-coach capacity is reserved in advance.
- Update outreach materials to reflect a broader range of disabilities, including learning, developmental, and mental health disabilities, to increase relevance and participation.

Recommendation #6: Advance Equity for Underserved Populations

Rationale: Many consumers face multiple, overlapping barriers such as language, rural isolation, homelessness, or justice involvement. Stakeholders emphasized the need for culturally-responsive approaches.

Examples of Suggested Action Items:

- Provide targeted navigation supports, including bilingual materials, interpreter access, and technology assistance. Host enrollment events with trusted community partners such as tribal programs, shelters, and re-entry services.
- Offer benefits counseling and connections to legal resources when and if appropriate to address concerns about losing benefits or understanding workplace rights.

Recommendation #7: Measure What Matters and Share Results

Rationale: Stakeholders expressed a desire for clearer expectations and consistent follow-through. Transparent metrics can help drive statewide consistency and improvement.

Examples of Suggested Action Items:

- Track and publish key operational metrics—such as time from referral to eligibility, IPE completion, service start, job-coaching timelines, and 90-day retention by region. Use the data to guide continuous improvement.
- Establish feedback loops with consumers and employers to identify challenges and highlight successes.

Implementation Considerations

- Prioritization: Begin with low-cost, high-impact improvements such as plain-language materials, extended virtual hours, an employer single-point-of-contact, and application assistance.

- Pilots in High-Need Regions: Test approaches such as NDVR employing job coaches, micro-transit partnerships, and semester-based transition initiatives, then evaluate and scale successful models.
- Partnerships: Strengthen coordination with schools, human service centers, CRPs, tribal partners, and workforce agencies to align timelines and clarify shared responsibilities.

Conclusion

This Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) represents a critical step in understanding the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities across North Dakota. Conducted by the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD), the assessment gathered data from 88 respondents representing consumers, youth, educators, community partners, residents, businesses, and NDVR staff. While the sample size is modest, the consistency of themes across diverse stakeholder groups provides meaningful insight into both the strengths of North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation (NDVR) and the systemic challenges that impact access, service delivery, and employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

The CSNA findings highlight clear, statewide needs: improved communication and awareness of NDVR services; expanded transportation and rural access supports; strengthened coordination with schools and community partners; and enhanced employer engagement to reduce bias and expand inclusive hiring. The assessment also underscores the importance of addressing layered barriers experienced by underserved populations and building NDVR's internal capacity to meet rising service demands.

These findings form the foundation for the overall themes and recommendations presented in this report. Together, they offer actionable, data-driven direction for strategic planning, resource allocation, and continuous improvement within NDVR. Moving forward, NDCPD will collaborate closely with NDVR leadership and staff to share the results with stakeholders, support implementation of improvement strategies, and ensure the report is accessible to the public. The insights gathered through this CSNA will help guide North Dakota's efforts to strengthen vocational rehabilitation services and to expand equitable, meaningful employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities statewide.