



EDUCATION AND  
LABOR CABINET

## **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation**

**Interim Joint Committee on Families & Children**

**August 28, 2024**

# Presenters

- **Cora McNabb**, Executive Director
- **Nanci Howard**, Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator
- **Katie Wolf-Whaley**, Chair, Employment First Council
- **Jessica Williamson**, General Counsel, Education & Labor Cabinet

# Topics to Discuss

- Programs & Services
- Funding
- Employment First

# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

- Helps people with disabilities prepare for, enter, engage in or advance in **competitive integrated employment**.
- Assists businesses and employers recruit, retain and accommodate employees with disabilities.

# Service to Kentuckians in 2023

**43,501**

Individuals Served

**4,169**

Exited in Employment

**\$21.51**

Average Wage

**33.91**

Average Hours Worked

# Service Eligibility

- Individuals must have a disability (physical, mental or sensory) that results in a significant barrier to employment.
- Individuals must require Vocational Rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or advance in competitive integrated employment.
- Individuals with the most significant disabilities receive priority services.

# 2023 Overall Funding

<b>Program</b>	<b>Grant Award Amount</b>	<b>Non-Federal Share (State Match)</b>
<b>State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services program</b>	<b>\$ 67,261,278</b>	<b>\$18,204,132</b>

**78.7%**  
Federal

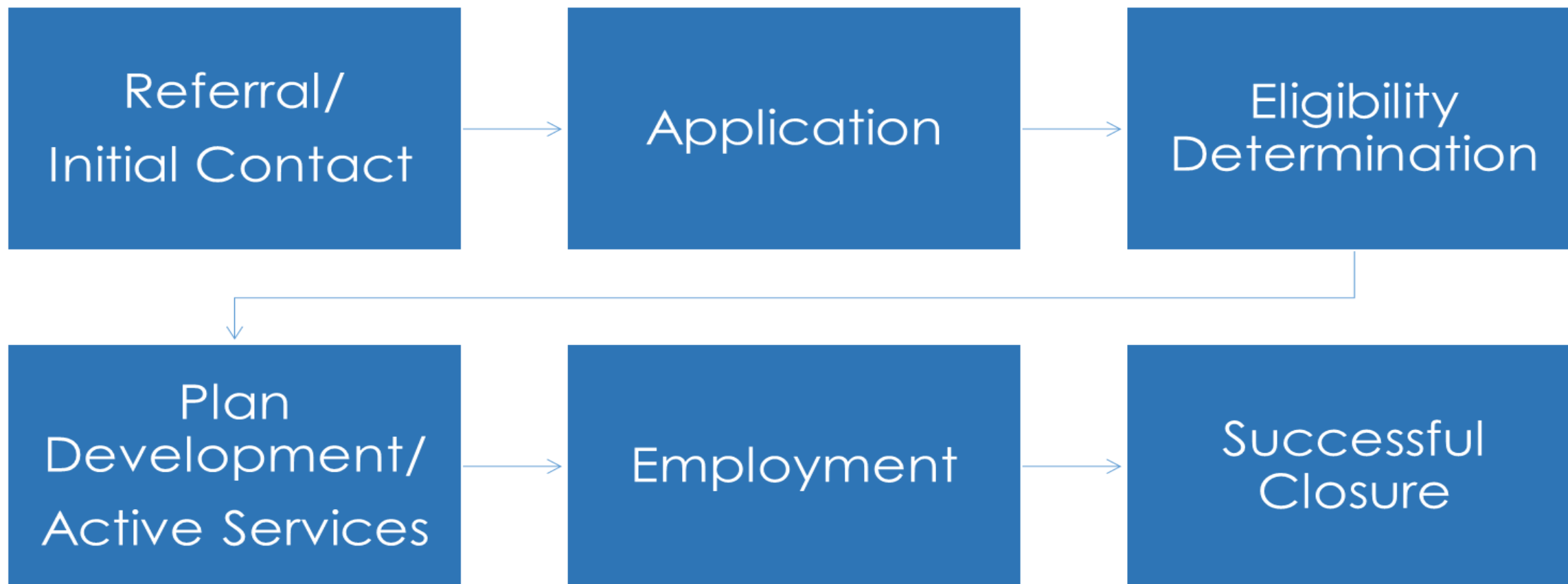
**21.3%**  
State

# Services

- Vocational Guidance & Counseling
- Job Placement Assistance
- Job Readiness Training
- College or Vocational Training
- Supported Employment Services
- Benefits Counseling
- Transition Services
- Skills Training & On-the-Job Training
- Job Coaching or Tutoring
- Transportation
- Interpreter & Translator Services
- Assistive Rehabilitation Technology
- Referral Services



# Process Overview



# Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center (est. 1973)

- ***Mission: Persons with disabilities will achieve sustainable competitive integrated employment, maximize independence, and gain self-respect through the provision of comprehensive services.***
- Enables Kentuckians with disabilities to obtain all the services they need to become employed in one location.
- Consumers may live on campus in dormitory housing or can commute each day they are scheduled for classes and/or therapy.
- Currently operates several programs and services that enable consumers to achieve their vocational goals.

# Charles W. McDowell Center (est. 1994)

- The McDowell Center supports individuals with visual disabilities by providing the tools they need to become more independent in their homes, schools, workplaces and communities.
- The center provides training in low-vision and blindness skills.
- The center is a 44,000 square foot facility located in Northeast Jefferson County, and includes a dormitory wing, classrooms, computer lab, cafeteria, auditorium and recreation and exercise areas.

# Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

- Pre-ETS are the earliest set of services for students with disabilities to explore careers and gain experience in work related activities, for youth 14 to 21 years old.
- Provided to students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for future Vocational Rehabilitation services.
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is required to expend 15% of the total award for Pre-ETS (approximately \$10M). OVR served **3,532** students across the state this past year.

# Pre-Employment Transition Services

- Develops "504 Plans" for students through accommodation services (Section 504 in the Rehabilitation Act).
- Services include:
  - Job exploration counseling
  - Work-based learning experiences
  - Post-secondary opportunities
  - Work readiness training
  - Self-advocacy instruction

# Pre-ETS Providers

- Special Education Cooperatives & School Staff
- Jobs for American Graduates
- Community Rehabilitation Providers
- Everybody Counts
- OVR Staff

# Transition Services under WIOA

- Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student or youth with a disability.
- Promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, competitive integrated employment, supported employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation.

# Transition Services – Community Work Transition Program (CWTP)

- The CWTP provides vocational services individually to students with significant disabilities statewide.
- Funding for this program is provided jointly with the Kentucky Department of Education and OVR.
- Provides community work exploration and assists students in gaining competitive integrated employment prior to high school exit.
- **1,751** individuals were served in the program in 2023.



# Supported Employment

- Provides supported employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.
- Provides up to 24 months of support and supplements other needs necessary to help individuals with the most significant disabilities find work in the integrated labor market.

# Supported Employment Funding

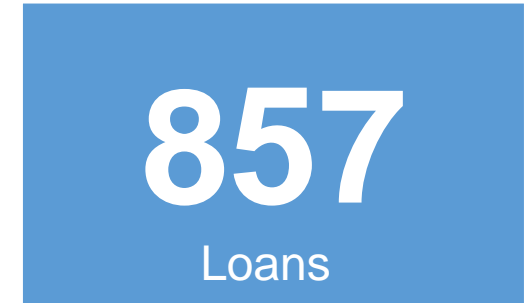
<b>Program</b>	<b>Grant Award Amount</b>	<b>Non-Federal Share (State Match)</b>
<b>State Vocational Rehabilitation Supported Employment (SE) Program</b>	Part A - \$150,000 Part B- \$150,000 (Youth)	Part A - 0 Part B - \$16,667.67

- OVR expended an additional \$2 million in basic support funds during the program year above this award.*

# Kentucky Assistive Technology Act Program

- Supports efforts to improve the provision of assistive technology to all ages through comprehensive statewide programs that are consumer responsive.
- Amount of each state's annual award is based largely on state population.
- Makes assistive technology more accessible to Kentuckians with disabilities through:
  - Device demonstration
  - Device loan
  - Device giveaway

In FY2023:



# Kentucky Assistive Technology Act Funding

Program	Grant Award Amount	Non-Federal Share (State Match)
<b>KATS State Grants for Assistive Technology Health and Human Services Administration for Community Living</b>	<b>\$ 555,523</b>	<b>\$0</b>

- *Locations include: Louisville (Center for Accessible Living), Lexington (HDI CATS), Ft. Mitchell (Easterseals Redwood), Owensboro (Wendell Foster), Hazard (ACAT)*

# Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation (KATLC)

- KATLC is 'an independent *de jure* municipal corporation and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.'
- Improves the quality of life for individuals with disabilities by providing the ability to obtain low interest loans to qualified borrowers for the acquisition of assistive technology.
- \$11M has been awarded since 2000.

# KATLC Types of Loans

- KATLC is currently able to offer loans for assistive technology from \$100 to \$7,000 at zero percent interest.
- KATLC is actively seeking a lending partner for loans above the \$7,000 amount.
- Traditional Items Requested:
  - Hearing aids
  - Closed Captioning Televisions (CCTVs)
  - Mobility devices, such as wheelchairs and scooters

# Independent Living & Older Blind

- Provides support services for individuals age 55+ and those younger than 55 whose severe visual impairment makes competitive employment difficult to obtain but for whom independent living goals are feasible.
- Provides independent living services to individuals who are blind to conduct activities to improve or expand services and conduct activities to improve public understanding of the problems facing these individuals.

# Independent Living and Older Blind – Funding

<b>Program</b>	<b>Grant Award Amount</b>	<b>Non-Federal Share (State Match)</b>
<b>Independent Living/Older Blind Services program</b>	\$415,313	\$47,115

- *Services to individuals 55 and under is funded through Program Income.*



# Employment First Council

- 28-member council, appointed by the Governor, representing people with disabilities, their support systems, employers and employees.
- Council activities include:
  - Reviewing policy & regulation
  - Sharing recommendations
  - Creating resources
  - Sponsoring events
  - Sharing information
  - Collaborating with others

# Employment First Council

- **6 out of 10** students with moderate to severe disabilities are unemployed one year after high school
- **29%** of those receiving state-funded mental health services are employed
- **11%** of adults receiving publicly funded IDD services are employed
- **44%** of those unemployed say they would like a job
- **15%** of those who desire to work have it included on their plan

The Council works with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and its partners to address these areas and develop competitive integrated employment opportunities as the first and primary option for persons with disabilities.

# Contact Information

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**Thank You!**