

**SOUTH CAROLINA
COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2001-2002**

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SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

2001-2002 ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Section I: Executive Summary

With 16.5% less funding in 2001-2002, the Commission for the Blind managed to remain focused on services to consumers and maintain levels of established and improved quality and quantity of services to the blind and visually impaired citizens of South Carolina. During this reporting period it was necessary to implement a reduction in force which had a significant negative impact on staff morale. However, this downward trend in staff morale has not been reflected in services to consumers. The same dedication and hard work by staff was evident throughout the year.

The major accomplishments for the 2001-2002 year were to maintain an acceptable level of quality services to the consumers and at the same time, achieve levels of accountability that were acceptable to our funding sources. We partnered with private industry and established a Telecommunications center for vocational training and placement. Private industry provided not only technical assistance and placement but financial support as well. The result of the partnership has been increased vocational placement for our blind consumers. Our other services programs including: Prevention of Blindness, Independent Living for Older Blind and services to Children have also maintained quality services although the impact of budget cuts can be seen in our charted progress.

The mission of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind is to provide quality individualized vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services, prevention services and children's services, competitive employment, social and economic independence and increased quality of life for blind and visually impaired South Carolinians. The pursuit of this mission is driven by the value placed in the skills, abilities, potential and dignity of the population served by the agency. It is also driven by other values including talented and committed staff, progressive, effective leadership, fiscal and human resources, support of the community and the Legislature, employers receptive to employing our consumers and collaboration with other organizations.

There are six (6) strategic goals that also drive the pursuit of the agency mission. Because the goal of vocational rehabilitation is competitive employment, the number one goal of the agency is to increase the number of competitive placements for consumers. The second strategic goal is to increase independence of consumers in the home and in the community. The third goal is to prevent blindness and stabilize and/or restore vision. This goal crosses program and age lines. The fourth strategic goal is to provide the human resource leadership, guidance and tools necessary to accomplish the mission of the agency. The fifth strategic goal is to provide the administrative leadership necessary to ensure accountability, effectiveness and efficiency. And the sixth goal is to implement a comprehensive information system that encompasses the organizational knowledge, management and strategic levels.

Opportunities that will have a significant positive impact on the agency's ability to achieve our mission include partnerships with the private sector that will create greater opportunities for employment for the consumers we serve. Increased support from other state agencies, the public, the General Assembly and the Executive Branch of state government has improved communications and provided opportunities to exchange information and increase staff knowledge. Community services providers have contributed to the agency's ability to increase services and make referrals to other agencies. Our involvement with the One-Stop Centers has increased employment opportunities for our consumers. The continuous advances in the development of assistive technology also offer great opportunities for achieving the agency's mission.

Downsizing of staff has created a barrier to achieving some of the efficiency initiatives, and downsizing of the budget has created a similar barrier. Lack of staff training has also presented a staff morale concern as well as a concern for the lack of cutting edge knowledge in the field of rehabilitation.

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Section II: Business Overview

Section 43-25-10 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina creates the South Carolina Commission for the Blind and charges the Commission with the responsibility for providing a program of vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services, prevention program and children services program. In keeping with this mandate from the General Assembly, the Commission has developed and maintained these programs for South Carolina's blind and severely visually impaired citizens. The programs offered by the agency are unique and include:

- 1) Rehabilitation services which lead to competitive employment;
- 2) Business Enterprise Program (BEP) which provides job training, stand development, consulting services, job placement and stand maintenance to carry out the mandates of the Randolph-Sheppard Act;
- 3) Prevention of Blindness which has a goal to prevent, stabilize or restore the loss of vision by providing appropriate medical services to detect eye diseases in their early stages;
- 4) Independent Living for Older Blind with a goal to increase independence and quality of life in the home and community by providing adjustment to blindness skills training;
- 5) Children Services which provides counseling and guidance to blind and visually impaired children, birth to age 14, and their families; establishes a plan of service and coordinate provision of services;
- 6) Rehabilitation Center where unique blindness skills are taught that will enhance blind and visually impaired adults' ability to become more independent and employable; curriculum includes Orientation and Mobility, Communication Skills, GED Preparation, Remedial Education, Home Management, Braille Literacy, Wood Shop and Physical Education;
- 7) Telecommunications Center which focuses on training consumers for the growing customer service industry; consumers receive training on general customer service skills as well as company specific skills;
- 8) Adaptive Technology Unit which focuses on training consumers on basic through advanced adaptive technology skills that are needed to be competitively employed.

There is a critical interaction between all programs of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind in order to achieve its mission.

As defined in section 43-25-20 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, the agency's key customers are those who meet the definition of blindness and severe visual disability as follows:

- (1) "Blindness" is defined as that level of central visual acuity, 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting glasses, or a disqualifying field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than twenty degrees and which is sufficient to incapacitate him for self-support, or an eighty per cent loss of visual efficiency resulting from visual impairment in

more than one function of the eye, including visual acuity for distance and near, visual fields, ocular, mobility, and other ocular functions and disturbances;

- (2) "Severe visual disability" is defined as any progressive pathological condition of the eye or eyes supported by acceptable eye examination, which in the opinion of the examiner may or will result in legal blindness within twenty-four month.

The established programs allow the agency to service South Carolinians of all ages who meet these definitions.

In carrying out the provision of services for the programs the agency works closely with medical physicians, ophthalmologists and optometrists throughout the state. The professionals in the medical field refer several of the agency's customers. In addition, several of the services offered to eligible consumers are coordinated with the medical profession. The business community is also considered a key supplier in the agency carrying out its mission. The major goal of the agency is to provide competitive employment to the consumers. This requires a partnership with South Carolina industry. The agency works closely with employers in explaining and demonstrating the benefits and educating them concerning employing individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired.

The agency ended the year with a total of 164 employees including grant and temporary positions. The agency has headquartered offices in Columbia, S. C. along with a district office. There are district offices located in Aiken, Charleston, Conway, Florence, Greer, Greenville, Greenwood, Orangeburg, Rock Hill, Spartanburg and Walterboro. The personnel in the district offices include counselor and counselor assistants for the Vocational Rehabilitation, Business Enterprise Program, Children Services and the Prevention/Older Blind programs. There are also Orientation and Mobility and Home Management instructors located in the district offices. There is not a counselor and instructor in each of the district offices for each of the programs but the counselors and instructors are assigned territories and all of the programs are covered statewide with a counselor and instructor. The district office personnel work directly with the consumers in their home and work environments.

The agency receives State and Federal funds to carryout the provision of established services. Attached is a chart detailing the appropriations and expenditures for the agency.

The organizational structure of the agency begins with the appointment of a Governing Board by the Governor with Senate confirmation. The Governing Board is a policy making board and is responsible for the appointment of the Agency Director who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the agency. The structure of the agency is divided into consumer services and administration divisions. The organizational chart is attached.

Accountability Report Appropriations/Expenditures Chart

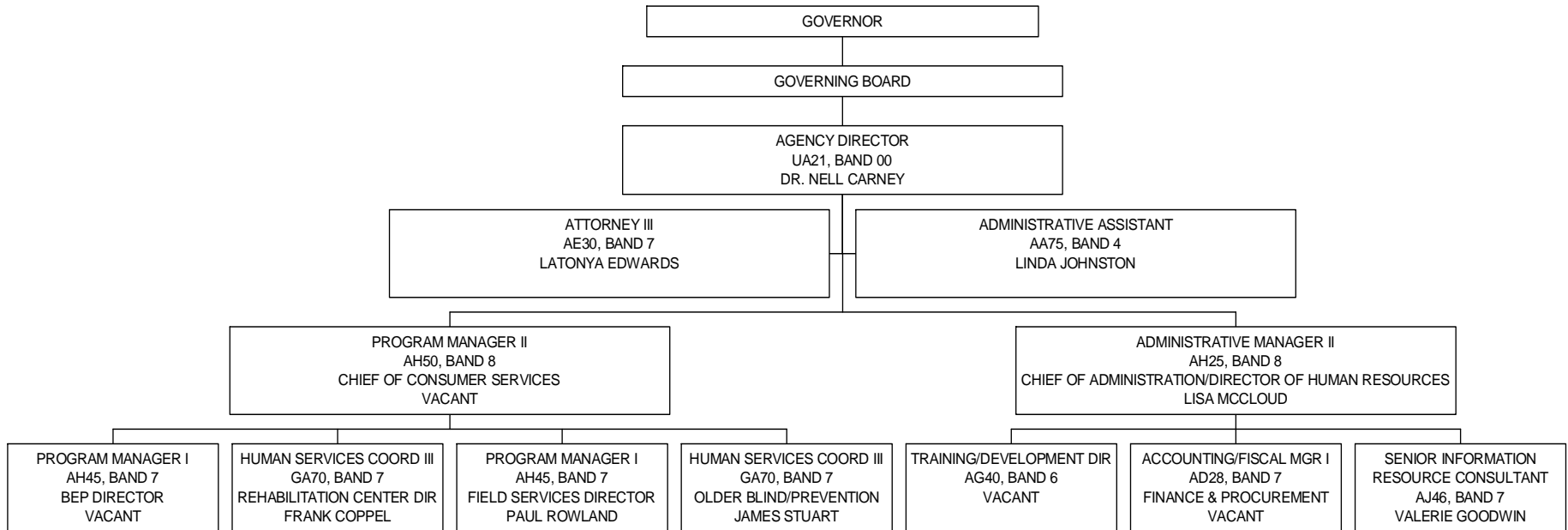
Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations

| | 00-01 Actual Expenditures | | 01-02 Actual Expenditures | | 02-03 Appropriations Act | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Major Budget Categories | Total Funds | General Funds | Total Funds | General Funds | Total Funds | General Funds |
| Personal Service | \$5,010,087 | \$2,113,682 | \$4,699,969 | \$1,812,120 | \$5,014,669 | \$1,878,563 |
| Other Operating | \$1,635,355 | \$ 763,950 | \$1,384,118 | \$ 582,939 | \$1,776,494 | \$ 438,765 |
| Special Items | \$ 147,953 | \$ 146,196 | \$ 32,690 | \$ 20,000 | \$ 20,000 | \$20,000 |
| Permanent Improvements | \$ 0 | \$0 | \$ 43,678 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Case Services | \$2,269,397 | \$ 1,022,683 | \$1,965,118 | \$713,523 | \$2,514,523 | \$ 663,523 |
| Distributions to Subdivisions | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Fringe Benefits | \$1,378,888 | \$ 581,649 | \$1,379,511 | \$ 511,014 | \$1,225,983 | \$ 481,727 |
| Non-recurring | \$ 126,196 | \$ 126,196 | \$ 34,829 | \$ 34,829 | \$ 0 | \$ 0 |
| Total | \$10,567,876 | \$4,754,356 | \$ 9,539,912 | \$3,674,426 | \$10,551,669 | \$3,482,578 |

Other Expenditures

| Sources of Funds | 00-01 Actual Expenditures | 01-02 Actual Expenditures |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Supplemental Bills | \$126,196 | \$34,829 |
| Capital Reserve Funds | \$9,095 | \$0 |
| Bonds | \$0 | \$0 |

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Section III: Elements of Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria

Category-1: Leadership

The leadership of the organization consists of the Governing Board, the Commissioner and the Senior Management Team. The Governing Board sets policy and the Commissioner and Senior Management Team are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization. Leadership skills of the organizational leadership include: ability to communicate effectively, commitment to program goals, shared values, timely decision making, implementation of organizational policies, commitment to accountability and compassion for consumers and staff. A serious, no-nonsense approach to assuring compliance and improving programs is the current practice of the leadership of the organization.

Performance expectations in the organization are established with full input of individual staff and communicated in writing in a planning document signed by both parties. The performance expectations for the total organization are set by the Board of Commissioners and communicated throughout the organization through the strategic management plan.

Organizational values are communicated through policy dissemination and in face-to-face meetings with staff. Staff are empowered with budgeting that allows enough funding to accomplish the performance expectations. Empowerment of staff is also the result of the creation of a working environment that encourages innovation and creativity.

Leadership advances organizational learning by involving all levels of staff in development of new policies, strategic planning, budget planning and preparation and involvement in community activities. Individual learning occurs as a result of leadership communicating opportunities for improvement and by encouraging full participation in relevant/available training.

The leadership of the organization sets and deploys standards of ethical behavior by serving as role models for the organization maintaining the highest ethical standards of behavior. Standards of ethical behavior are also deployed through policy issuances.

A focus of customer services has been set by verbal communication from the Board of Commissioners. This same customer service focus has been further established with the mission and vision statements of the organization. The focus on customer services is maintained with individual performance standards, strategic plan, action plans and policies. The focus is maintained through evaluations and corrective action plans.

Key performance measures include: number of referrals to programs, number of individuals served by programs, case management standards, number of competitive placements and

customer satisfaction. Organizational performance review findings are used by senior leadership to determine what changes need to be made in the leadership to enhance organizational performance. Leadership asks the question: “What can the leadership do to improve organizational performance?” The answers to this question are developed into written communications in the form of procedures, policies, or other directives.

When blind or severely visually impaired individuals are placed in competitive employment they are removed from public assistance roles. When adequate independent services are provided, these services often result in individuals remaining in the home instead of being placed in a nursing facility. The impact is financial. Positive financial impact is assessed with data. The associated risks are possibility of injury of consumers while in training. Such risk is examined at the time services are planned. Overall, the services provided to consumers have a positive impact on the community.

Senior leadership sets priorities for improvement through organizational performance evaluation. Improvement needs are determined by quarterly evaluations of the strategic plan. For example, if competitive placements in employment are not equal to or greater than the previous quarter, increasing placements becomes a high priority. Priorities for improvement are communicated through clear policy and procedure issuances.

Areas of emphasis for community involvement are based on: the mission of the organization, the need to collaborate with other organizations and the needs of the community. Community involvement is achieved through service on interagency committees, participation in community efforts such as United Way and the Red Cross Blood Drive. Collaboration with other state agencies reduces the risk of duplication of services, provides exchange of useful information and creates opportunities for joint endeavors such as grant funding.

Category-2: Strategic Planning

The strategic planning process began with the needs of the customers and prospective customers of the organization. Meetings with consumer groups and individuals provided valuable information about customer needs. The applications for services were carefully examined to determine what the greatest services needs were. With an open door policy customers were encouraged to communicate needs and concerns to organization staff.

The mandates of funding sources played a major role in the strategic planning process. For example, with more than 50% of the organization's funding coming from a federal source that restricted the use of the funding, risks associated with loss of the funding had to be considered. Societal and community economic impact were considered in the planning process, and it was determined that no risk existed and that certain strategies would have a positive impact on the community.

The strategic planning process included an in-depth analysis of the existing human resources and needs for additional human resources. A significant result of the analysis was an indication that the organization needed to be reorganized to strategically utilize existing human resources. The reorganization did take place, and the strategic plan was developed accordingly. The organization's capabilities to provide services to customers is closely linked to the analysis of human resources since most of the services provided to customers are delivered by staff.

The operational capabilities of the organization were analyzed to determine capacity, and the outcome included changes in some operational policies and procedures. Suppliers and contractors were examined to determine parameters. Public and private sector employers were identified as our partners, and it was determined that this pool of partners was limitless.

Action plans are developed by the staff responsible for each specific services and operational area. The action plans are reviewed and revised by the executive management team. Self-tracking takes place on a quarterly basis, and results in a written report. Reports are reviewed by senior managers.

The strategic management plan is reviewed by the Governing Board before it is released to staff and implemented. Feedback from the Governing Board is incorporated into the final draft of the plan.

The objectives, action plans and organizational performance measures are communicated throughout the agency in writing and become the basis for setting individual performance standards for all employees of the agency. Objectives, action plans and performance measures are deployed through case services standards, employer relations, policies and procedures and clear statements of agency mission and values.

Category-3: Customer Focus

There are between 11,000 and 14,000 individuals in South Carolina who are legally blind or severely visually impaired. Of these numbers, the agency serves approximately 40%. Not everyone who is blind or severely visually impaired wants or can benefit from the services of the agency. For example, the estimated population numbers include blind individuals who are employed and integrated into the social and economic mainstream of their communities.

Customers are determined by eligibility criteria that varies from program to program. In the programs funded with Federal revenue, the eligibility criteria is dictated through program regulations. In state funded programs eligibility criteria is developed by the leadership of the Commission. Key requirements for our customers are determined by medical, skills, and psychological assessment and evaluation.

All direct services delivery staff are provided training that is focused on services delivery in the specific areas relevant to the organization's programs. Certain staff also maintain contact with providers of services such as assistive technology, Braille products, current instructional methods and relevant research. Staff at all levels stay current with the literature in the field of rehabilitation for the blind and severely visually impaired. The information gathered through these activities is applied to program planning, expansion and improvement.

Information from customers is analyzed and given consideration in all services planning. Various staff, including the Commissioner, attend advocacy group meetings, consumer group meetings and meet with individual customers to listen to the issues, concerns and needs. This information is shared with the decision-making teams in the organization, and it becomes part of the planning process.

Customer satisfaction is measured with consumer satisfaction surveys, random telephone inquiries and communication with consumers at all staff levels.

Positive relationships are built with customers through face-to-face communications. The Commissioner and other executive staff spend time with customers. The nature of our services requires that direct services providers establish rapport with the customers as part of the services plan implementation.

Category-4: Information and Analysis

The agency's strategic management plan identifies the key measurements used by the organization to analyze performance. The primary objective is to increase the competitive employment outcomes of blind and or severely visually impaired individuals in South Carolina. The established programs assisting in reaching this goal includes individualized training and development. This includes classes at the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center, Technical Services, Business Enterprise Program training and the Tele-communications Center. Each of these areas track internal referrals from the counselor. There is also follow-up from each division to identify the benefits and obstacles during the training. In addition, during the training period there is on-going follow-up to make any needed adjustments. Information is evaluated to identify any necessary adjustments in the curricula. On a quarterly basis these departments report data concerning activity.

The senior managers report quarterly on activity concerning the strategic management plan. The data encompasses number of referrals, number of referrals processed and number determined to be eligible for the Vocational Rehabilitation, Older Blind, Prevention and Children Services programs. The number of Individualized Plans for Employment written is also tracked for Vocational Rehabilitation and the Individualized Service Plans for the Children Services program. The Business Enterprise Program tracks the number of blind licensed vendors and the amount of money generated from the vending stands. The average earnings of the licensed vendors are compared to the average earnings for South Carolinians. The earnings information assists in evaluating the training program offered and implementing any modifications to assist the vendors to be more successful business people.

This ongoing monitoring assists in evaluation of services to the consumers. The quarterly review by managers can assist them in detecting any potential problems. For example, if the number of Individualized Plans for Employment is consistently down, there is a potential that services are not being provided efficiently to the consumers. All of the statistics play a major role in developing case closures with a successful outcome. A case is determined to be successfully closed after 90 days of employment. The Quality Control unit reviews cases to determine consistency of services provided throughout the state in addition to ensuring the federal regulations are being followed in accordance to the rules and regulations of the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A sample of each counselor's cases is reviewed on a monthly basis. The data generated from the unit assists in determining training needs, policy directive and proper application of policy and regulation. Managers use the information generated from Quality Control to facilitate improvements needed for service delivery.

The Client Information System also provides detailed data on cases as they progress through the system from applicant to closure. There are assigned status numbers which indicate the stage of the cases. For example, status 02 indicates applicant status, status 10 certified eligible, status 18 training and status 26, successfully rehabilitated. Regional Directors and Senior Managers review information at least monthly. The data indicates if a case remains in status within the established timeframe.

The Board of Commissioners and Agency Director reviews the monthly financial documents. Managers are also given a monthly report of their department's financial status. Financial documents were examined more closely during the fiscal year due to the budget shortfall. Careful planning was done to ensure as many services as possible could be provided to the consumer during the budget shortfall. Quarterly budget forecasts are prepared and the Agency Director approves high dollar purchase requisitions on a regular basis.

Category 5- Human Resource Focus

One of the established goals in the agency's strategic management plan is to provide the human resources leadership, guidance and tools necessary to accomplish the mission of the agency. The Human Resources department takes the lead in initial screening of applications for managers and supervisors. With a great understanding of the importance of having staff to fill positions once they are vacant, applications are initially qualified within seven days of the closing date of a position. The hiring manager then receives applications to be considered for interviewing. The department is also involved with the interview process and reference checks for potential employees.

Since the inception of the strategic management plan in August of 2000, managers and supervisors have taken a more active role in explaining how an employee's position affects the overall mission of the agency. Employees have a better feel of their contribution to the overall operation of the agency if their individual contribution is linked to the big picture. As a small agency, the opportunity for cross training and involvement with all levels of employees and projects is greater. The agency has a Training and Development Director who works closely with managers and staff to assess training needs from an individual as well as an organizational perspective. A more formalized needs assessment was initiated during the year to help identify staff training needs. This included a review of previous needs assessments conducted, prior training sessions held, training evaluation forms, position descriptions and employee performance appraisals. As a result of this process, courses were developed or identified to meet the agency and employee needs. During the year, the agency was able to offer training on the Personnel Policies and Procedures, Business Writing, Communication, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Outlook, Home and Personal Management, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Peak Performance, Disability and Death Claims Service, Waste Prevention and Recycling, Money Plus, Microsoft PowerPoint, Internet Searching, Performance Management and HR Inner Workings. The training sessions were either job specific or group training determined through noted deficiencies in performance or updates for particular areas. A revised new employee orientation was conducted which included discussions on the importance of orientation, the agency's mission statement, organizational structure, personnel policies and an overview of blindness and orientation and mobility. In the upcoming year, the new employee orientation process will continue to be reviewed with the goal of making the employee feel comfortable and welcomed from day one. Evaluations are done on each training session held to solicit feedback on the presentation and benefits in addition to other training needs and requests.

The agency administers the Employee Performance Management System in regard to employee performance. The importance of the process and the impact on the employee and the agency has been a goal during the year. Training was conducted with supervisors and managers explaining the importance of appraisals and the technical mechanics on the established system. Communication throughout the year on an employee's performance was stressed. Once again the employee's understanding of how their particular job and their activities have on the overall operation of the agency was stressed. The Human Resources department also does monthly follow-up in regard to timely submission of planning documents and evaluation documents.

One-on-one technical assistance is also offered with the preparation of the documents. Challenging goals and high achievements can result in merit pay and performance pay increases.

Managers meet regularly with employees to keep them abreast of what is going on in and with the agency. The agency uses the intragency e-mail system on a regular basis to keep information current. All managers of the agency practice an open door policy so employees can feel free to ask questions or express concerns. On an annual basis, an employee staff meeting is held to address the accomplishments and issues of the agency and employees. During the meeting, employees are recognized for outstanding performance and years of service with the State. The agency also participated with Public Service Recognition Week during May 2002. Employees were given Appreciation Certificates and were also honored at a drop in hosted by the Agency Director. Exit interviews are held with employees who decide to leave the agency. The information received from the interviews is evaluated in order to make improvements at the agency.

The Facilities Management unit is responsible for the administration of the safety and health issues concerning the agency. During the year, the agency's Emergency Action Plan was updated and approved. The corresponding training was also conducted. The updates and training will continue throughout all office locations during the upcoming year. The safety and health area works closely with other departments such as the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Construction and Planning of the Budget and Control Board assessing any potential problems and evaluating recommendations for improvement.

Category 6-Process Management

The mission of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind is to provide individualized vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services, services to children and prevention services to blind and visually impaired consumers leading to competitive employment and social and economic independence and quality of life. The Counselor is the key person who authorizes and coordinates training and other needs for the consumer. A potential consumer completes an application for rehabilitative services and the Counselor makes a determination of eligibility. Once the determination for eligibility is made, the Counselor assesses the rehabilitative needs of the individual and formulate an Individualized Plan for Employment; provide counseling and guidance to prepare the consumer for employment; provide or arrange for any physical or mental restoration services; provide or arrange for many different kinds of training such as college/university, business, vocational, on-the-job, or personal and vocational adjustment training; or provide or arrange for the delivery of job-seeking skills and placement into suitable employment.

The consumer is a collaborating partner with the development, monitoring, implementation and evaluation of the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). Opportunity is given to exercise informed choice in the selection of the IPE's employment goal, services, service providers and procurement methods. Greater emphasis is placed on the fact that services must be provided in the most integrated setting that is both appropriate to the service being provided and reflects the informed choice of the individual. An IPE is amended only when substantive changes in the employment goal, services provided or in service providers are evident. Once determining the specific training the consumer needs based on the vocational objective, the Counselor completes a referral package for the appropriate units. The units include the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center, Technical Services, Business Enterprise Program, and Telecommunications center. The Ellen Beach Rehabilitation Center curriculum includes Orientation and Mobility, GED Preparatory, Braille Literacy, Home and Personal Management and Communications. In the Technical Services unit, curriculum includes Braille Terminals, Speech Software, Magnification Software, Closed Circuit Television, Scanners/Reading Software and Notetakers. Specific training within the units is also determined based on the need of the consumer. Once the consumer is admitted into the unit for training, the appropriate staff makes additional assessments. During the assessment phase or training the particular unit may determine additional training needs. These needs are referred to the Counselor who then makes additional referrals as deemed appropriate. The service units provide regular updates on the consumers' progress to the Counselor. As the consumer progresses through training and is ready for employment, the Counselor works with the Employment Consultant to develop potential job opportunities for the consumer. Once again, the Counselor is the key person in making provision of services to the consumers.

The Counselors have established timeframes to develop the IPE as well as make provision for the services for the consumers. Each unit providing services have standard curricula developed and completion time frame for the program. However, the time of completion can be modified based on the consumer needs and progress. Counselors develop weekly itineraries of their work activities. Regional Directors perform case reviews to assess the progress on the Counselor's activities on the consumer cases. The Transportation unit provides support to the Counselors in

making sure the consumers are at doctor's appointments and training facilities as scheduled. The Counselor makes transportation requests in advance to ensure the Transportation unit can coordinate the services for all requests received. Transportation drivers are located throughout the state to provide this service. If the agency's Transportation unit cannot provide the service as scheduled the Counselor makes arrangements through local transportation systems or consumer family or friends. The Counselor makes purchase requisitions to provide any equipment or services (i.e. medical) for the consumer. The Procurement department has established timeframes on processing and providing approval within 5 days of receipt. The agency is currently updating the Procurement process so that requisitions can be made electronically and expedite the process.

Other administrative support processes related to key service include the information technology unit, finance and budgeting and human resources. The information technology unit is responsible for administering and maintaining the client information system. During the year, the unit updated and modified reports to make them more user- friendly. The Counselors and Vocational Rehabilitation managers have access to these reports electronically and can assess them when needed. Training has been provided to the Counselors as well as their assistance on the use and importance of the information inputted into the client information system. The finance and budgeting unit provides at least monthly reports of the financial status of individual regions. The Regional Directors and Counselors can manage and budget their funds while making decisions on services provided. Finance works closely with the managers in making sure the cases are being managed within the provided budget. The Human Resources unit works with the Counselors on meeting the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development requirement of having a Masters degree in Rehabilitation Counseling which is a national standard. In addition, the recruitment process for personnel vacancies are handled as expeditiously as possible so the continued smooth services to consumers can be provided.

During the year the agency modified the Projects With Industries program based on the growing industry trend in the customer service field and the decline in the growth of the manufacturing industry. The agency partnered with ANC Car Rental to provide a training center for the consumers. ANC assists the agency with providing on the job training for this particular employer. The agency is able to assist ANC with actual production for the company and the agency is also able to offer a competitive employment opportunity to consumers. The staff of SCCB and ANC worked together in developing and setting up this center. The agency is also pursuing other similar partnerships within the telecommunications industry. The Counselors also work closely with medical and insurance (i.e. Medicaid) personnel within their communities to provide expeditious services as needed for the consumers.

Category-7: Results

A summary of performance results for the South Carolina Commission for the Blind for fiscal year 2002 include:

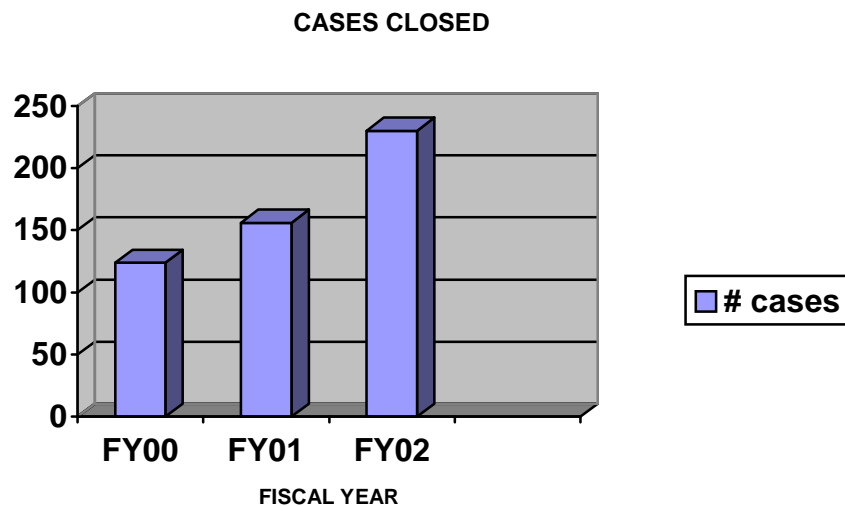
- 230 consumers were rehabilitated and 61% were placed in employment at or above minimum wage
- Follow-up surveys from consumers indicate a satisfaction with services received from the agency
- The Business Enterprise Program generated \$4,490,851 through the work of blind licensed vendors
- The Vocational Rehabilitation program had 556 referrals and served 1567 consumers
- The Older Blind program had 1893 referrals and served 834 consumers
- The Prevention program had 955 referrals and served 1412 consumers
- The Children Services program had 124 referrals and served 502 consumers. The counselors for the program began working with 14 year olds transitioning them into the Vocational Rehabilitation program
- The Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center served 224 consumers
- The Technical Services unit served 190 consumers
- The new Telecommunications Center trained 31 consumers and graduated 19
- 435 training opportunities were offered to employees; the overall employment level decreased by approximately 8% during the year
- All financial reports were completed timely with 44% completed early
- Overall favorable audits conducted by Rehabilitation Services Administration and State Auditors. Internal control procedures strengthen to correct any findings
- Implemented a reduction in force January 2002 affecting 6 positions of an administrative capacity
- Information Technology department instrumental in improving reporting procedures for consumer data

The performance for the year is shown graphically with comparative data and information on the following pages.

Mission Accomplishment

The key measures for mission accomplishment are increases in the economic social independence of blind and severely visually impaired population of the state. Based on the performance levels for the key measures for customer satisfaction, the performance levels for mission accomplishment are at acceptable levels. For example, in vocational rehabilitation, the number of competitive placements rose from 156 to 230 indicating a growth of approximately 48% in the competitive placements. It is a valid assumption that the increased competitive placements led to increased economic and social independence. Following is the competitive placement graph.

COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT



There was a 48% increase in cases closed for the year and an 86% increase since FY00.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

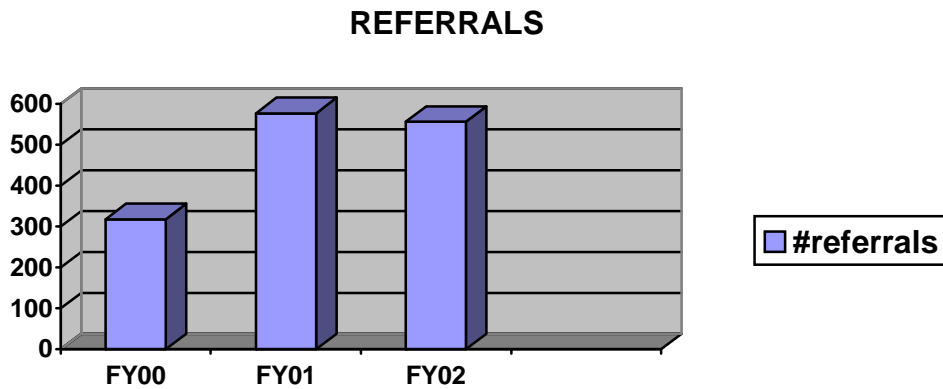


Figure 1. There was a 4% decrease in referrals during the year and an 75% increase since FY00.

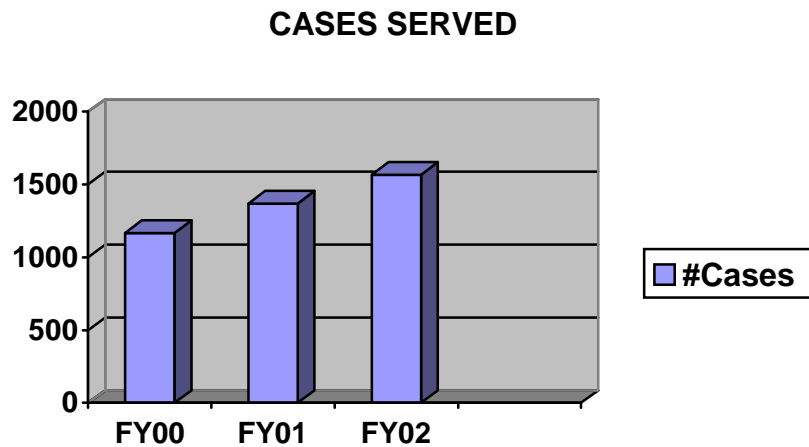


Figure 2. There is an increase of 14% in consumers served for the year and a 35% increase since FY00.

OLDER BLIND-INDEPENDENT LIVING

REFERRALS

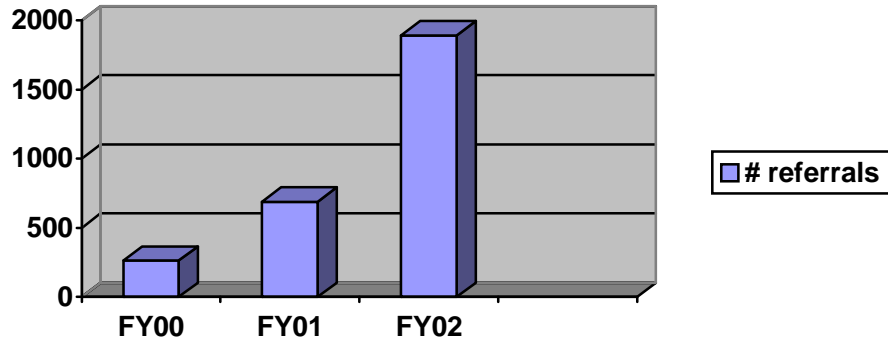


Figure 1. There was a 174% increase in referrals. Referrals increased from 261 in FY00 to 1893 for FY02.

CASES SERVED

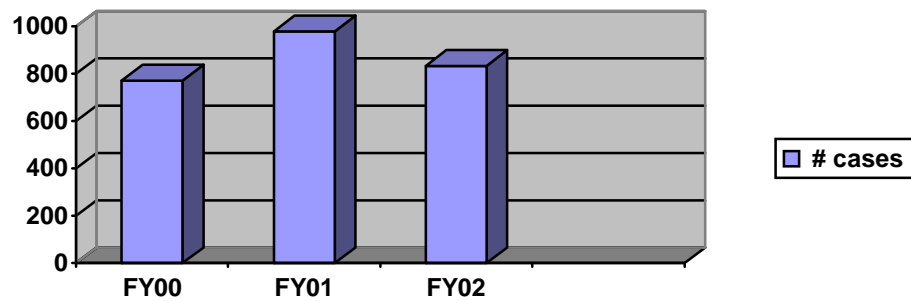


Figure 2. There was a 14% decrease in cases served for the year and an 8% increase since FY00.

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

REFERRALS

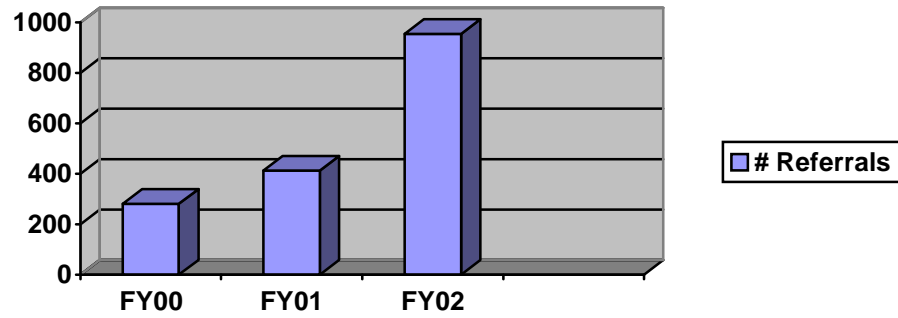


Figure 1. There is a 131% increase in referrals to the program for the year and an increase from 281 for FY00 to 955 for FY02.

CASES SERVED

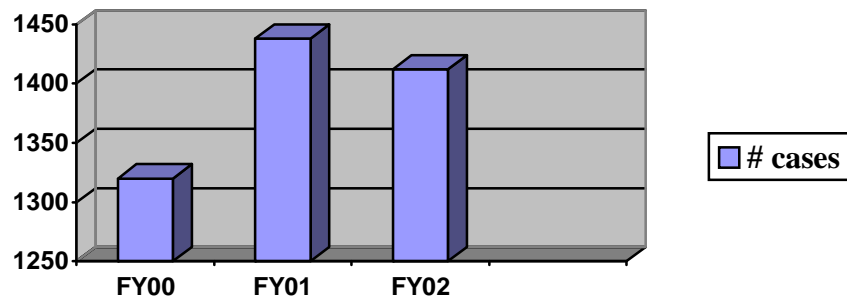


Figure 2. There is a decrease of 1% in cases served and 7% since FY00.

CHILDREN SERVICES

REFERRALS

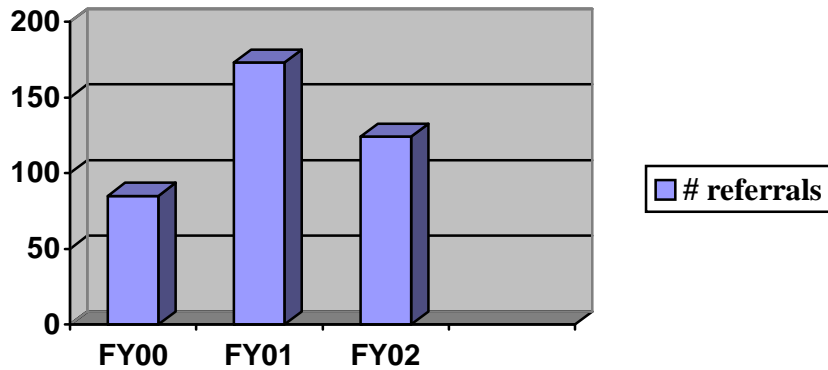


Figure 1. Referrals decreased by 28% for the year but there has been a 46% increase since FY00.

CASES SERVED

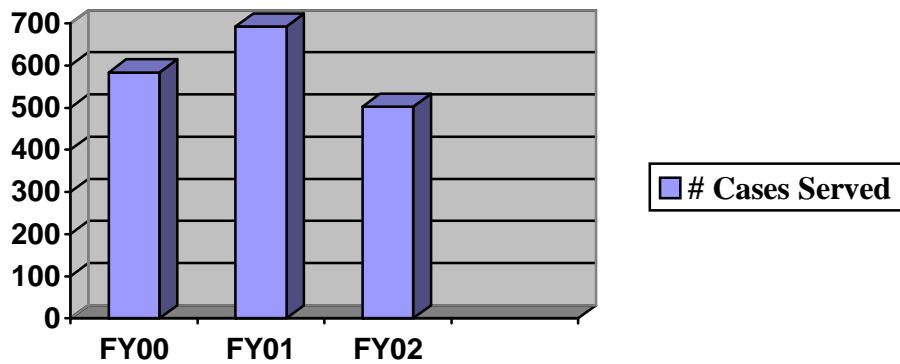


Figure 2. The number of cases served decreased by 27% for the year and a 14% decrease since FY00.

SPECIAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

REHABILITATION CENTER

CONSUMERS SERVED

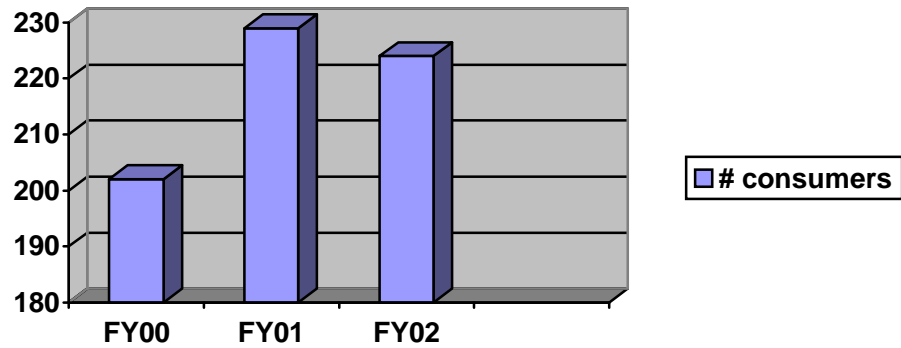


Figure 1. There was a decrease of 2% in consumers served for the year and a 11% increase since FY00.

TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION

CONSUMERS SERVED

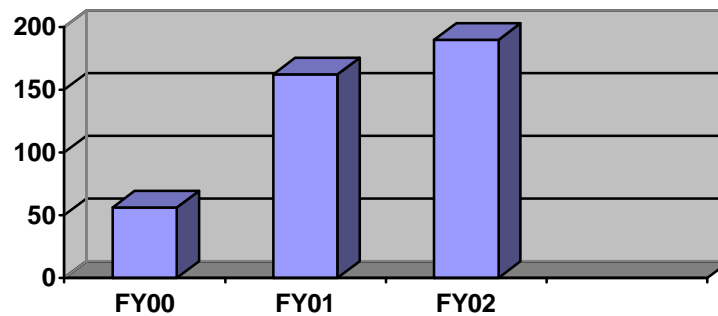


Figure 2. There was an increase of 17% for FY02 in consumers served.

The obvious trends from the performance levels in measures to accomplish the mission of the agency are: an increased willingness by employers to hire blind and severely visually impaired individuals, greater opportunities for disabled populations to remain in the community and to integrate socially and greater coordination between organizations serving the population of individuals with disabilities. These trends imply that in the years ahead the agency mission may be modified to include an initiative to increase efforts to identify additional individuals who want and can benefit from the services provided by the Commission.

Within the key measures for accomplishing the agency mission there exists the hidden value of increased quality of life for the population served by the Commission. Increased quality of life necessarily enhances the economic and social independence of each individual served by the services programs.

Human Resource Results

The agency hired a total of 18 employees in full time positions with permanent status during fiscal year 2002 which is a decrease of 33% from last fiscal year. The total applicant pool for FY01 was 597 and 372 for FY02 which is a decrease of 37%. Of the applications received 50% were minority and 66% were female for FY01 and 54% and 75% respectively for FY02. The chart below indicates an increase of female applicants and hires and a decrease in minority hires to applicant pool from last year.

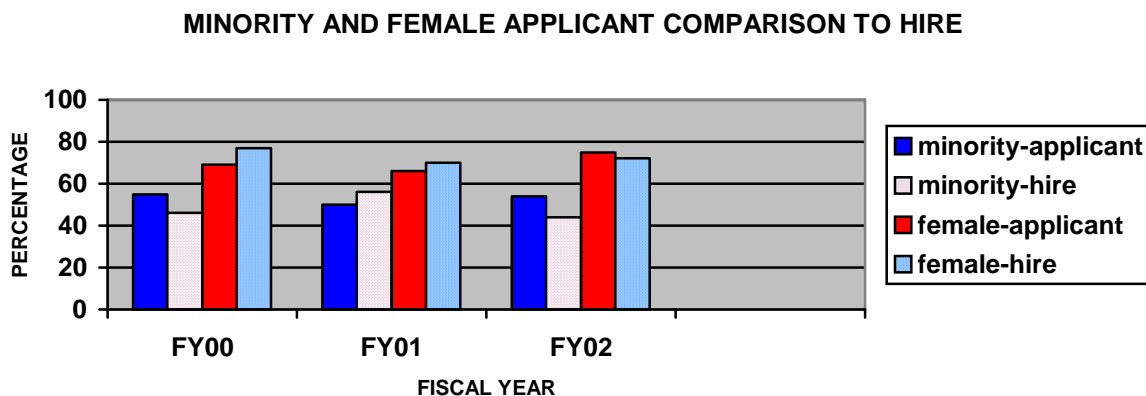


Figure 1

There were two (2) grievances files internally and appealed with the State Human Resources Director for FY 01 and four (4) for FY02. For FY01, the two (2) issues were not grievable under the Greivance Act. For FY02 all of the grievances filed were considered grievable. The agency's initial decisions were upheld in all four cases. Two (2) of the appeals actually were heard before the grievance panel

The agency was able to provide 407 training opportunities, both internally and externally, for staff members for FY01. During FY02 the agency provided 435 training opportunities, both internally and externally. Due to budget restrictions, the agency maximized the use of several training opportunities at minimal to no costs. Training participants indicated the training would help with performing job duties assigned. In addition, presenters were effective in providing information and responding to questions.

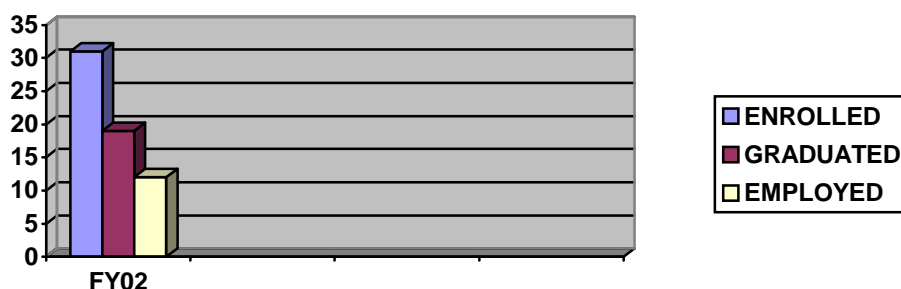
Section 101 (a) (7) of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 required state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to establish qualified personnel standards for rehabilitation personnel that conforms with national or state approved certification, licensing or registration that apply to

rehabilitation. The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) has established the national standard for vocational rehabilitation counselors' educational background to include a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a Master's degree in a related field and to be eligible to be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. The agency has 11 counselors and 3 of them meet educational requirements for CSPD; 2 have a Master's degree and would require supervision by a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor; 2 have a Master's degree and need additional coursework; 1 has a Master's degree but is a TERI participant; 2 are currently pursuing a Master's degree and 1 has a Bachelor's degree but is a TERI participant. The agency has federal funding to assist the employees to obtain the degrees in order to meet national standards.

There were 22 employees in FTE positions who left the agency during the year. Of the total, 45% left to take another position making more money; 22% retired and 13% voluntarily quit for personal reasons. Exit interviews are encouraged from employees who choose to leave the agency. The employees have indicated in addition to their primary reason for leaving that increased communication and consistency of actions would improve the working environment.

Suppliers/Contracts/Partners

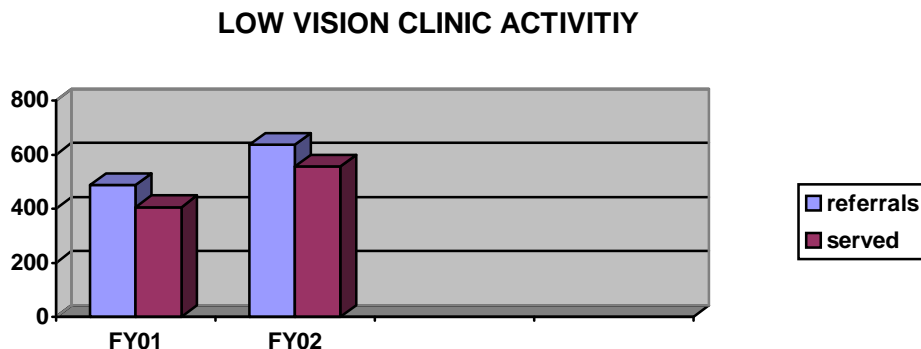
TELECOMMUNICATIONS CENTER



In October 2001, SCCB began the first Telecommunications center training with ANC Car Rental as its primary partner. The training is designed around a 12 week curriculum. The first 4 weeks is spend in the classroom; the 2nd 4 weeks is a combination of classroom work and live calls from ANC; the 3rd 4 weeks are spent on live calls from the company and gives the consumer the opportunity to build up their speed. 19% of the students enrolled in the program graduated during the year and 63% of the graduates are employed. The majority of the consumers who completed the program went to work for ANC. The skills taught in the program are transferable to other customer service companies. During the upcoming year, additional partners will be added to this program to expand employment opportunities for the consumer.

The Low Vision clinics provide examinations to consumers to assess devices that will assist them with their vision. Devices issues include various magnifiers, telescopes and sun filters. Ophthalmologists throughout the state perform the examinations. The agency sponsors clinics

on site or the consumers can have individual appointments in the doctor's office. There was a 30% increase in the number of referrals and a 36% increase in consumers served in the Low Vision clinics during the year.



Regulatory Compliance

As a result of a Life Safety study, inspection by the Fire Marshal and Construction and Planning of the Budget and Control Board, the following projects were completed. As a result of consumer and staff complaints concerning the air quality of the classroom and dorm building, the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation conducted a sample survey. The results were negative. Upgrades for the elevators, electrical panel and installation of a sprinkler system and fire hydrants were done to be in compliance with current codes and regulations. Funding specifically designated for construction and building upgrades were used to complete these projects. The completion of the projects has made the buildings safer for the consumers and employees.

Financial Management

The agency had both a state and federal financial audit conducted during the year. These audits resulted in only one exception for the state audit concerning untimely deposits. The federal audit indicated the agency to be in compliance concerning maintenance of effort of non-Federal and Federal expenditures. SCCB also was in compliance in regard to the Basic Support Program matching requirements.

The benchmark for budget forecast/analysis reports is less than a 5% variance. For fiscal year 2001 and 2002, forecasted expenditures were within 1% of actual expenditures.

The percent of errors in reconciliation of accounts is less than 10% for FY01 and 2% for FY02.

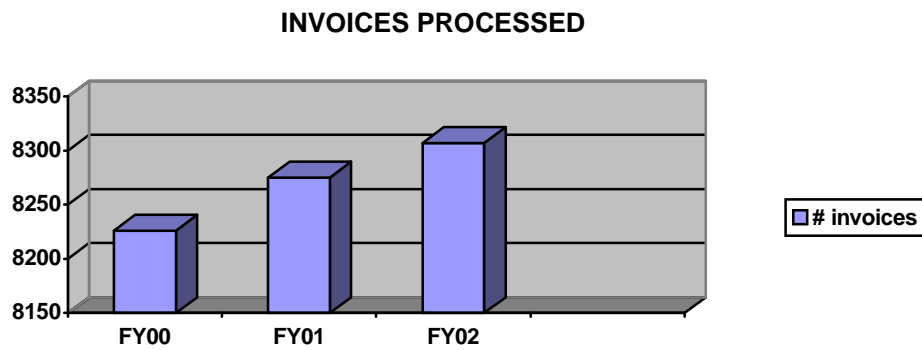


Figure 1. 99% of invoices processed were done within 30 days.

With satisfactory performance levels in financial management and a declining appropriation, trends will necessarily be greater accountability and greater efficiency

