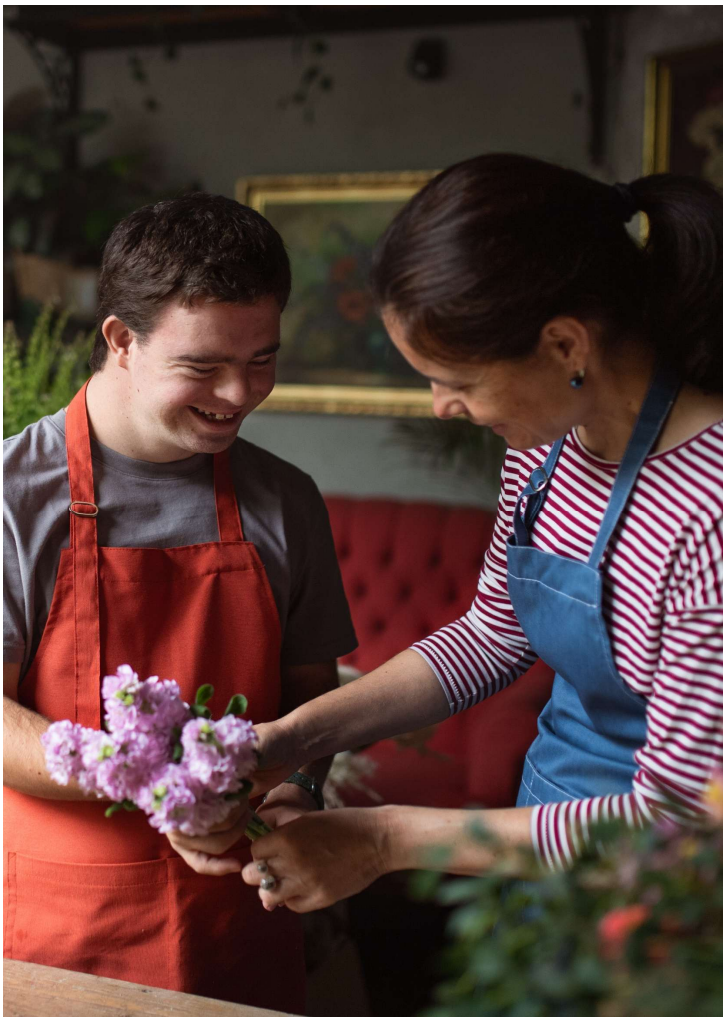






South Carolina
House of Representatives
Government Efficiency &
Legislative Oversight Committee

Study of the **South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department**

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South Carolina House of Representatives
GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY &
LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

AUTHORITY

The Legislative Oversight Committee, created in December 2014, is a vehicle for oversight used by the House of Representatives. The Committee's specific task is to conduct legislative oversight studies and investigations of state agencies at least once every seven years. The Committee has the authority to conduct studies at any time of state agencies within the Committee's jurisdiction, even outside of the seven-year cycle.

MISSION

Determine if agency laws and programs are being implemented and carried out in accordance with the intent of the General Assembly and whether they should be continued, curtailed, or eliminated. Inform the public about state agencies.

VISION

For South Carolina agencies to become, and continuously remain, the most effective state agencies in the country through processes which eliminate waste and efficiently deploy resources thereby creating greater confidence in state government.

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VR Vocational Rehabilitation
Let's go to work

MISSION

To prepare and assist eligible South Carolinians with disabilities to achieve and maintain competitive employment.

VISION

We will be the leader in quality employment outcomes for our consumers and business partners through our people, partnerships, and performance.

HISTORY

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has a long history of helping individuals with disabilities achieve and maintain employment. Established in 1927, it was one of the first agencies in the United States to deliver services under the federal Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1920. The department was housed within the SC Department of Education.

The program initially focused on serving veterans with disabilities but quickly expanded to include civilians. It provides job training, placement, and support to help individuals with disabilities enter and remain in the workforce

In 1957, South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVRD) became a stand-alone agency under Act No. 114 of the 1957 legislative session.

EMPLOYEES FY 25-26

1,371 AUTHORIZED FTE'S

TOTAL FUNDING FY 25-26

$169,342,546

GENERAL FUNDING: $20,157,088

COMMISSIONER

Felicia W. Johnson

27 years of service

WE VALUE

- Persons with disabilities who strive to achieve competitive employment
- A consumer-focused culture
- Quality service provision
- Highly qualified and committed employees
- Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry
- Professional, coordinated, results-driven relationships with other government agencies and organizations
- An environment of continuous improvement and learning
- Accountability to tax-payers



FINDINGS

During the study of the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, the Healthcare and Regulatory Subcommittee (Subcommittee) of the House Government Efficiency and Legislative Oversight Committee (Committee) adopts **14** findings.

Findings note information a member of the public or General Assembly may seek to know or on which they may desire to act.



Purpose and Mission

FINDING 1

The South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) is an employment-focused agency whose mission is to assist eligible individuals with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining, maintaining, or advancing in competitive integrated employment. Access to the agency's vocational rehabilitation services require consumers to desire and actively participate in obtaining employment.

Vocational rehabilitation in South Carolina traces its roots to the federal Smith-Fess Act of 1920, the first federally funded program to assist children with disabilities[1]. As the agency has reported, the program has adapted and expanded in scope to changing workforce needs, advances in disability rights, and a growing recognition of the importance of independence and economic participation for individuals with disabilities throughout its history[2]. SCVRD's mission is to prepare and assist eligible South Carolinians with disabilities in achieving and maintaining competitive employment[3]. According to the agency, disability does not mean inability**.** Its role is to identify appropriate accommodations and services to help individuals overcome barriers to employment, and to empower individuals with disabilities who want to work through services that support their rehabilitation and transition into the workforce[4].

Agency leadership explained that vocational rehabilitation is an eligibility program, not an entitlement program. Individuals requesting services must meet four criteria to establish eligibility: An individual must have a physical or mental disabling condition; the condition must result in a substantial impediment to obtaining or maintaining employment; the individual must be able to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in achieving an employment outcome; and the individual must have a goal of obtaining employment[5].

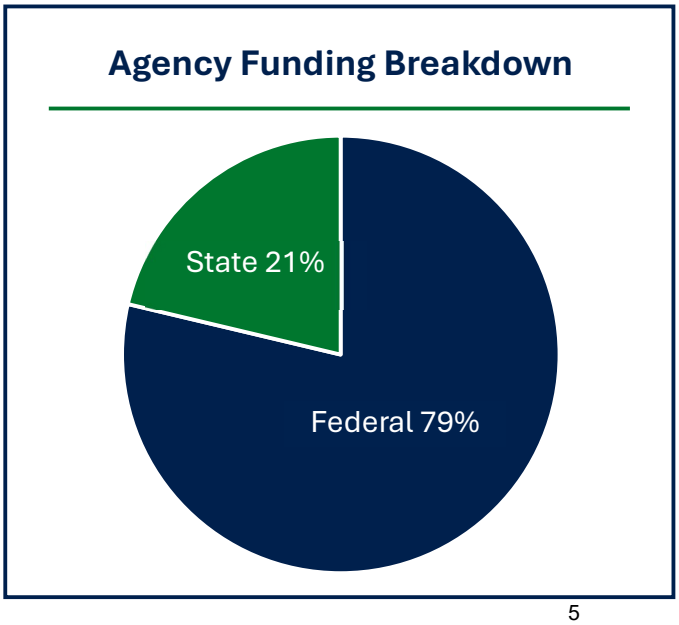
Going forward, SCVRD's ability to align its longstanding mission with evolving workforce demands, available resources, and measurable employment outcomes will be critical to ensuring the program remains effective and sustainable.

Budget and Funding

FINDING 2

SCVRD relies on a blended funding model consisting primarily of federal formula grants, supplemented by recurring state appropriations necessary to satisfy federal matching requirements. State investment, beyond the required matching funds, positions the agency to draw down additional federal matching funds.

The agency's primary funding sources include the federal Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Basic Support Grant, administered by the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)[6] and State appropriations. Agency leadership reported that SCVRD relies on a federal-state funding partnership in which federal grant dollars are supplemented by state funds that satisfy the non-federal matching requirement.[7] The agency



highlighted that approximately 78.7 percent of its funding came from federal sources, with the remaining 21.3 percent supported by state appropriations[8].

The federal VR Basic Support Grant award has increased in recent years, from approximately $61.7 million in Federal Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024 to approximately $68.8 million in Federal Fiscal Year 2025 and $71.4 million in Federal Fiscal Year 2026[9]. SCVRD leadership estimated that approximately $19.3 million in State funding was needed to provide the required match for the $71.4 million Federal Fiscal Year 2026 grant[10]. State funding therefore serves not only as a direct source of support for agency operations, but also as the mechanism through which SCVRD qualifies for and draws down the federal funds available under the VR Basic Support Grant.

The agency emphasized the importance of maintaining sufficient state funding to meet the federal match and maximize the federal resources available to South Carolina[11]. SCVRD uses State appropriations to support personnel, consumer services, operating expenses, marketing and outreach, and capital projects. The agency specified that of the approximately $20.5 million State funds identified in testimony, approximately $17.5 million supports salaries and fringe benefits for State-funded positions[12]. Another $2.3 million is used for case service expenditures, specifically goods and services provided to consumers, while approximately $457,000 supports operating expenditures, including information technology upgrades[13]. The agency also noted that it receives $125,000 in recurring state funds for promotional and outreach measures[14]. However, these expenses are not allowable under the grant and cannot be used as a source of match[15].

In addition to recurring appropriations, SCVRD requests nonrecurring State funds for capital projects through its Comprehensive Permanent Improvement Plan (CPIP), primarily to maintain its State office complex and area offices. Recent requests have included reroofing and repaving projects[16]. Agency testimony indicated that these capital projects generally use a 75 percent federal and 25 percent State funding split, with the State portion eligible to serve as the federal match[17].

From the Committee's review, the agency's reliance on federal funding and the State's role in securing those federal resources make the effective management of SCVRD's available funds particularly important. Maintaining this funding structure while strategically directing resources toward agency priorities will be critical to sustaining services and maximizing the value of both state and federal investments.

Finding 3

A reduction in state funding can significantly impact SCVRD's ability to maximize federal resources, as a 3% reduction in state dollars ($604,713) could result in the loss of $2,234,315 in unmatched federal funds and reduce total program funding by $2,839,028.

Agency leadership reported its Form E- Cost Savings and General Fund Reduction Contingency Plan of their FY 2026-27 agency budget plan to the subcommittee[18]. SCVRD, estimated that a 3 percent reduction in State funding, or $604,713, could result in the loss of an additional $2,234,315 in unmatched federal funds, reducing total program funding by $2,839,028[19]. The agency further reported that such a reduction would affect funding available for direct consumer services including post-secondary education, on-the-job training, occupational and vocational training, customized employment, demand-driven training, and other services supporting credential attainment.[20]

The potential impact extends beyond the immediate reduction in State appropriations. SCVRD reported that reduced State funding could also affect its Maintenance of Effort requirements and potentially result in federal matching penalties in future fiscal years[21]. Based on the agency's reported average cost of $21,558 per successful rehabilitation in SFY 2025, SCVRD estimated that a combined funding reduction of $2,839,028 could correspond to approximately 132 fewer successful rehabilitations[22]. Accordingly, State appropriations represent a key component of SCVRD's ability to leverage federal funding[23].

As outlined in the cost savings plan in its Form E, SCVRD indicated that expenditure reductions exceeding $50,000 will focus primarily on salaries and benefits and operating expenses, while minimizing the impact on consumer services[24]. The agency plans to achieve savings primarily through employee attrition and reassignments. Each position that becomes vacant will be reviewed to determine whether and when it should be filled, restructured, or repurposed to support Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) performance measures and other agency goals. SCVRD's funding structure creates a significant financial multiplier effect, making relatively small changes in state appropriations capable of producing larger impacts on overall program resources. At the same time, the agency's approach to cost reductions demonstrates the importance of strategically managing staffing and operating expenditures to preserve resources for direct consumer services and maximize the employment outcomes supported by available funding.

Workforce Development

Finding 4

SCVRD is a workforce development partner. The agency works with employers to align consumers' individual job readiness training with workforce needs and connect qualified candidates toward employment placement. SCVRD also participates as a member of the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development (CCWD), helping incorporate the employment needs of individuals with disabilities into the State's broader workforce development efforts.

SCVRD's job readiness training (JRT) provides individuals with disabilities opportunities to develop the skills, experience, and work habits needed to enter or re-enter the workforce[25]. The process begins with assessments of a consumer's needs, strengths, interests, and abilities, which are used to develop an individualized plan rather than a one-size-fits-all approach[26]. Through the agency's training, the goal is for consumers to build both foundational workplace skills and the work habits needed to succeed in a competitive work environment, including attendance, punctuality, meeting deadlines, communication, quality, and productivity expectations. Consumers may receive occupational and vocational training, customized training, internships, apprenticeships, work-based learning, and on-the-job training. The agency also provides training in basic academic skills such as reading, writing, and math[27].

The agency reported to the Subcommittee that its Job Readiness Training Coordinators and Associates play an important role in preparing consumers for employment[28]. They provide training, supervision, and feedback to improve work traits, work tolerance, and stamina; monitor progress toward meeting employer expectations; and work with counselors to evaluate each consumer's readiness for employment and determine needed improvements and placement assistance. In FY 2025, 541 consumers were successfully employed following JRT services[29]. Beyond JRT services, agency leadership stated that they set internal goals of how many consumers they want to find successful employment program wide, with agency leadership reporting that it's about an average of 4,000 consumers a year[30]

To address regional employer needs, SCVRD maintains partnerships with local leadership teams, including Area Supervisors, and Business Development Specialists, communicating with employers and industry leaders to identify current and anticipated workforce needs[31]. The agency supports businesses through recruitment, task analysis, pre-screening, candidate referrals, interview scheduling, and talent fairs, giving employers access to an untapped labor pool while helping consumers find employment that aligns with their skills and interests[32]. SCVRD also provides follow-up services for up to 120 days after placement to support the consumer and employer during the transition into employment[33].

At the broader state level, SCVRD's employer and workforce development efforts connect the agency to South Carolina's larger workforce development system[34]. SCVRD is a statutorily designated member of the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development (CCWD), with the Commissioner of Vocational Rehabilitation or the Commissioner's designee serving as a member[35]. The CCWD brings together leaders from state government, education, higher education, technical colleges, economic development, workforce development, and the business community to coordinate efforts to prepare and train South Carolinians for current and future workforce needs[36]. Membership on the CCWD provides the agency with an important connection to South Carolina's broader workforce development system. Through this membership, SCVRD can bring its expertise in disability employment and its direct experience preparing individuals for employment through services such as Job Readiness Training to statewide workforce discussions.

Governance

FINDING 5

SCVRD is governed by a seven-member board appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. At the time of the Committee's review, three of the seven board seats were vacant, and the remaining members were serving after the expiration of their appointed terms. Two members have continued serving for more than 24 years since their original appointments.

According to agency leadership, the board is responsible for establishing the policy framework under which SCVRD operates, and it also provides oversight and accountability for the agency as well[37]. The Board is also consumer-driven with four of its seven members having disabling conditions themselves or being the immediate family member of an individual with a disabling condition[38].

The Board faces challenges with vacancies. According to SCVRD, this is mostly due to unforeseen circumstances, such as death and illness, but individuals have expressed interest in filling those vacancies and that current Board members are seeking re-appointment[39]. The agency testified that at the time of the review it was working with the Governor's Boards and Commissions staff to discuss

filling the vacant board seats[40]. S.C. Code Section 43-31-40 requires the Governor to appoint seven members, one from each congressional district, with the advice and consent of the Senate, to serve staggered seven-year terms[41]. The statute also provides for appointments to fill unexpired terms resulting from death, or resignation[42].

The Committee's review indicates, that the importance of maintaining a fully appointed and current SCVRD Board extends beyond simply filling vacant seats. The SCVRD Board ensures the agency has the governance, representation for consumers, and an oversight structure established by state law[43]. Vacancies and expired appointments can limit the perspectives represented on the Board. Timely appointments and reappointments help ensure the Board remains fully functional, representative, and able to effectively carry out its responsibilities.

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department Seven-Member Board

District	Member	Initial Appointment	Initial Appointment made by	Current Term Expires/Expired
1st	Ira Banks	2011	Governor Haley	Expired
2nd	Rhonda Presha	2001	Governor Hodges	Expired
3rd	Sheila Ford*	2026	Governor McMaster	2033
4th	Dr. Roxanne Breland	2002	Governor Hodges	Expired
5th	**VACANT**			
6th	Lori Bell	2018	Governor McMaster	Expired
7th	**VACANT**			

*Sheila Ford was added to the board during the Committee's review.

Statewide Service

FINDING 6

SCVRD maintains a statewide service network designed to support individuals with disabilities, with locations extending from the Upstate to the Lowcountry and including 31 offices, 27 training centers, two evaluation centers, and one recovery center.

Although SCVRD does not maintain a standalone VR office in every county, agency leadership reported that every county has access to VR services through its field offices, itinerant service locations, and partnerships with other community organizations[44]. The geographic distribution of these locations allows consumers to access vocational rehabilitation services through regional offices rather than relying on a centralized location[45]. SCVRD directs individuals to the area office most convenient to them as the first step in accessing services, with offices generally assigned to specific counties[46]. Many local offices also operate Job Readiness Training centers, providing consumers with access to both vocational rehabilitation services and hands-on employment preparation.

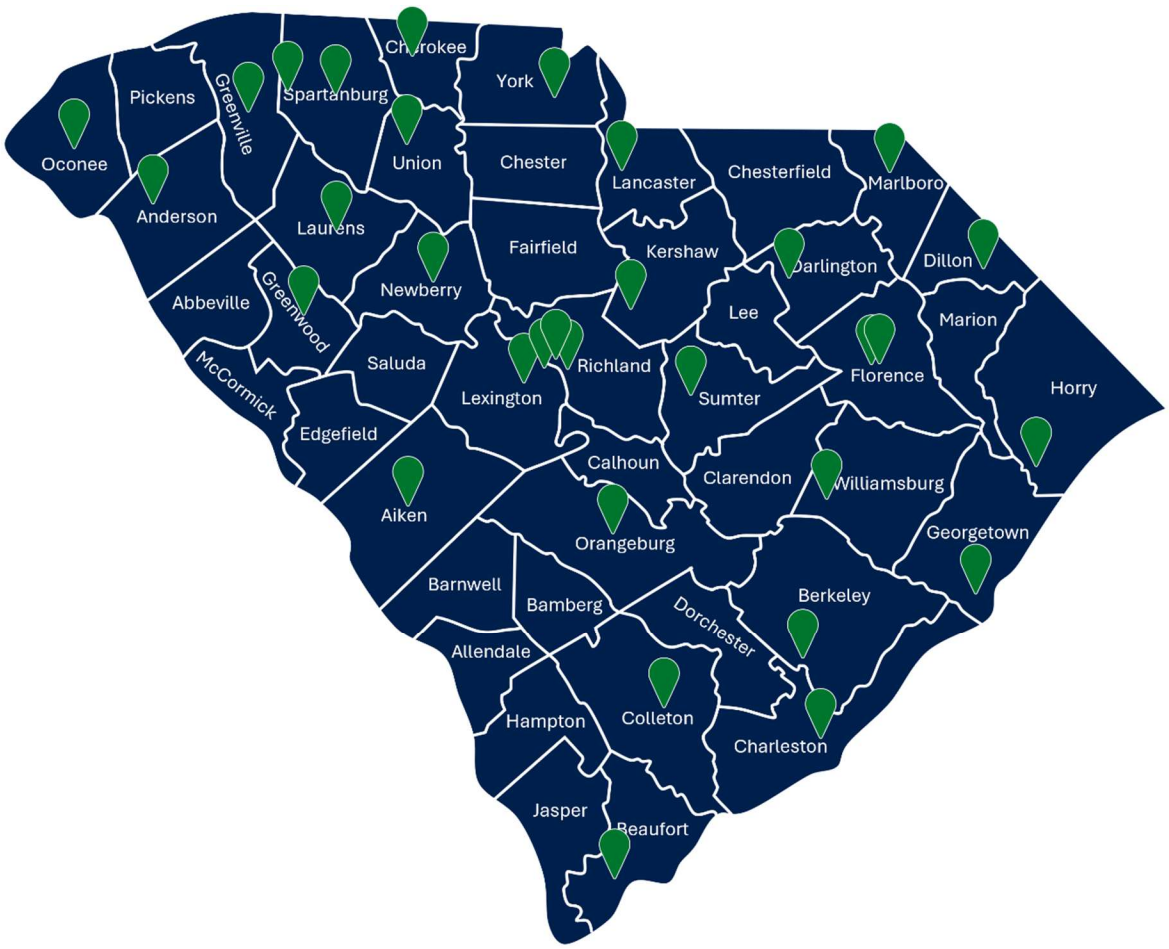
According to agency leadership, the locations are selected based on geographic accessibility, economic and regional growth needs, and service demands throughout the state[47]. The agency has reported that its regional and area office structure was most recently comprehensively reviewed in 2024[48]. It is also key to note that SCVRD has not established a new area office or significantly relocated an existing office since opening the Bryant Center, located in Lyman, in 2010[49]. Instead, in response to continued population growth and changes in consumer demand, the agency has adapted its existing service footprint. SCVRD leadership identified Spartanburg, Conway, Oconee-Pickens, and Berkeley-Dorchester as areas experiencing increased growth and demand[50]. For example, the agency reported

that the continued growth in the Conway area has required additional positions and use of multiple community locations, while the Oconee-Pickens office underwent a 2020 renovation to meet demand[51]. In Berkeley-Dorchester, increased demand has resulted in additional staff and modifications to existing space[52].

At the same time, SCVRD acknowledged that it has some geographic gaps when it comes to office locations[53]. SCVRD's geographic model appears designed to balance the need for a physical presence with the practical realities of serving a geographically diverse state. Rather than maintaining a permanent office in every county, the Department uses regional assignments based on proximity, allowing consumers to receive services through the location best positioned to serve them. This is supplemented by itinerant locations and shared space at SC Works offices, libraries, municipal facilities, and other community locations[54].

For consumers in rural and outlying areas, these arrangements may work to reduce the distance and transportation barriers associated with accessing a permanent office. For example, consumers in Kershaw County may be served through the Lancaster Area Office, those in McCormick and Saluda counties through the Greenwood Area Office, and consumers in St. George, located in Dorchester County, through the Walterboro Area Office or at the St. George Library[55]. Transportation is another service that SCVRD arranges to address geographic barriers. Agency leadership reported that some training centers provide and coordinate van transportation for consumers from surrounding areas, helping individuals access training and rehabilitation services when transportation or distance may otherwise limit their ability to participate[56]. The discussion regarding the number and location of SCVRD offices is ultimately less about the number of facilities and more about whether the Department's physical footprint remains aligned with where consumers live, where service demand is growing, and where workforce opportunities are developing.

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department Office Locations



FINDING 7

SCVRD's Rehabilitation Technology Department provides specialized engineering and assistive technology services that remove workplace barriers, improve accessibility, and support individuals with disabilities in achieving and maintaining employment.

The Rehabilitation Technology Department's approach is individualized, with engineers assessing the consumer, the work environment, and essential job functions before developing recommendations[57]. Assessments are generally conducted on site and in person for consumers, allowing staff to evaluate the specific circumstances in which a barrier occurs and determine whether the solution involves equipment, a workplace modification, technology, or a change to the environment[58]. When a solution is approved for a consumer, Rehabilitation Technology staff may assist with fabrication, assembly, delivery, installation, setup, and training to ensure the accommodation functions as intended in the consumer's actual environment[59]. According to agency leadership, services include workplace and home accommodations, vehicle modifications, mobility services, assistive technology, and accommodations for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have low vision[60].

In testimony, agency leadership provided several examples of how the Department's specialized work from the Rehabilitation Technology Department translates into practical employment solutions for consumers[61]. These services include designing or reconfiguring equipment to accommodate physical limitations, providing accessible technology to support computer use, and modifying workplace equipment or workstations to improve accessibility[62]. Examples included adapting a tractor to allow a consumer to enter the equipment more safely, providing an accessible workstation and speech recognition technology to reduce the physical demands of computer use, and repositioning workplace equipment to allow a wheelchair user to access it independently[63]. These examples demonstrate that Rehabilitation Technology solutions are tailored to the individual and do not necessarily require expensive or complex equipment. In some cases, a relatively simple modification can address an accessibility barrier and allow an individual to work or participate in education more independently.

The Department's work has grown in scale as well. Rehabilitation Technology reported that since 2019, it has received more than 4,300 referrals, completed more than 2,000 custom work orders, and facilitated more than $4 million in accommodations and modifications[64]. The Department noted that many additional consultations and assessments occur at little or no cost and are not fully reflected in these figures[65].

FINDING 8

SCVRD conducts a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) every three years, as required by federal law, to identify the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities and inform the agency's goals and priorities.

SCVRD conducts a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) every three years as required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The assessment identifies the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities throughout South Carolina and evaluates whether existing services are adequately addressing those needs[66]. Agency leadership testified that the CSNA serves as more than a federal compliance requirement, providing data to identify who SCVRD is serving, who it may not be reaching, barriers to employment, and areas where services may need improvement[67]. The CSNA also informs the Department's strategic planning, resource allocation, outreach, and service-delivery priorities.

According to SCVRD, the most recent CSNA is still being finalized, though preliminary results show job placement as the most frequently cited service need, reported by 38.23% of respondents, followed by vocational guidance, counseling, and career exploration at 32.70%, and on-the-job support and job coaching at 30.17%[68]. The most frequently identified barriers were lack of dependable transportation to and from work at 30.00%, employer concerns about hiring individuals with disabilities at 23.67%, and misconceptions about disability or disability employment among professionals at 22.88%[69]. Once CSNA is finalized, SCVRD reported that the findings and its formal response will be incorporated into the State Plan and used to guide outreach, service-delivery priorities, employer engagement, and resource development[70]. The assessment also identified populations that continue to experience barriers to accessing vocational rehabilitation services. Individuals experiencing homelessness were most frequently identified as underserved at 27.50%, followed by individuals with mental illness and individuals with intellectual disabilities, both at 26.33%, and individuals living in rural areas at 24.33%[71]. SCVRD reported that stakeholder responses identified individuals experiencing homelessness as having the greatest barriers to accessing services. To address these barriers, the agency has developed and maintained partnerships with emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, hospitals, and other organizations serving individuals experiencing homelessness[72]. SCVRD also reported plans to strengthen these relationships, work with hospital case managers and housing program staff to identify potential referrals, explore additional service locations, and monitor referral and participant data by disability, geography, and referral source[73].

The CSNA process has also resulted in changes to SCVRD policies, procedures, staffing, and service delivery, the agency reported expanding employer engagement and business services, strengthening partnerships with employers and workforce partners, and enhancing Pre-Employment Transition Services through increased coordination and staffing with school districts and the South Carolina Department of Education[74]. Overall, continued comparison of CSNA findings with performance data will allow SCVRD to determine whether actions taken in response to identified needs are improving access, reducing service barriers, and supporting employment outcomes.

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) Preliminary Results

Most Frequently Identified Service Needs

- Job placement
- Vocational guidance, counseling, and career exploration
- On-the-job support and job coaching

Most Frequently Identified Barriers

- Lack of dependable transportation to and from work
- Employer concerns about hiring a person with a disability
- Misconceptions about disability or disability employment among professionals

Most Frequently Identified Underserved

- Individuals experiencing homelessness
- Individuals with mental illness
- Individuals with intellectual disabilities
- Individuals living in rural areas

Disability Determination Services

FINDING 9

The Social Security Administration (SSA) holds accountability, statutory authority, and contractual responsibility to provide the resources necessary for state Disability Determination Services (DDS) agencies, such as SCVRD's DDS, to perform disability determinations on SSA's behalf. However, SSA cannot simply provide additional funding whenever a state requests it. Its administrative budget, including funding for all state DDS offices, is determined annually by Congress.

Disability Determination Services (DDS) operates within a federal framework. Although DDS is housed within SCVRD and its employees are state employees, the program performs disability determinations on behalf of the Social Security Administration (SSA) and is subject to federal requirements. Agency leadership has stated that SSA establishes the standards governing disability determinations, provides the funding, and maintains federal oversight of the program[75].

Federal law establishes SSA's authority over DDS operations. Under 42 U.S.C. § 421, states that perform disability determinations must comply with federal standards established by SSA, including requirements related to accuracy, timeliness, reporting, and administrative operations[76]. SSA also reviews state determinations to monitor accuracy and compliance and has authority to assume responsibility for making disability determinations if a state substantially fails to meet federal requirements[77]. It is important to note that, during the Committee's study, SSA had not identified any substantial failure by South Carolina DDS to comply with federal requirements or taken action to assume responsibility for the State's disability determination function.

Under federal law, states performing DDS functions are reimbursed for the costs associated with making disability determinations[78]. This structure is particularly significant given the staffing and processing challenges facing South Carolina DDS. DDS leadership reported that the Department has consistently communicated with SSA regarding staffing shortages, workload, hiring needs, and

processing delays[79]. While DDS leadership can identify staffing and resource needs and communicate those needs to SSA, SSA cannot independently provide unlimited additional funding to a state DDS outside the resources made available through the federal budget and appropriations process[80]. Likewise, even when a funding need is apparent, the General Assembly is not authorized to appropriate state funds to bolster DDS resources.

FINDING 10

DDS does not have sufficient disability examiner capacity to meet its current workload and address the existing backlog, with the agency reporting a need for approximately 100 to 150 additional trained examiners.

Disability Determination Services (DDS) does not currently have sufficient disability examiner capacity to meet its workload requirements while also addressing its existing backlog. According to DDS leadership, the department needs approximately 100 to 150 additional trained disability examiners to meet its current workload requirements and eliminate the existing backlog[81]. This represents a significant increase from DDS's reported current workforce of 76 examiners[82]. DDS leadership also reported that the department previously employed between 150 and 200 examiners during periods when it was not experiencing a substantial backlog, providing additional context for the current staffing gap[83].

The backlog is not a recent development. DDS leadership reported that, in 2024, more than 42,000 cases were waiting to be assigned to an examiner and that approximately 100 additional examiners would have been needed at that time to meet the workload established by the Social Security Administration (SSA)[84]. Leadership emphasized that the primary issue was not the ability of examiners to process cases once assigned, but whether there were enough examiners to assign and process the volume of cases entering the system[85]. The backlog has since declined, with DDS reporting fewer than 19,000 cases in staging at the time of the Committee's review[86]. However, the remaining backlog continues to reflect a gap between the volume of work and the department's available examiner capacity. The workload DDS must manage is also affected by priorities established by SSA disability determination initiatives.

DDS's workload is also shaped by SSA's priorities. DDS leadership explained that SSA establishes workload expectations and may shift priorities among initial disability claims, reconsiderations, and continuing disability reviews, which has led to continuing capacity challenges when examiners are redirected toward one category of cases while other cases continue to accumulate in staging[87].

DDS reported a 25% attrition rate among disability examiners, and leadership testified that an experienced examiner who typically produces hundreds of cases annually, cannot be immediately replaced[88]. According to the Legislative Audit Council's Disability Determination Services audit report, DDS disability examiners generally expressed positive views of agency leadership and management, indicating that leadership is not a significant contributing factor to employee turnover[89].

New examiners require approximately two years of training, supervision, and practical experience before reaching full proficiency[90]. As a result, even when hiring authority is available, increasing examiner capacity is a long-term process rather than an immediate solution to the backlog. DDS's ability to increase its examiner capacity also depends on SSA's staffing authority. DDS leadership testified that the department has requested additional hiring authority from SSA and that SSA determines the workload and staffing allotments available to state DDS offices[91]. Consequently, identifying a need for additional examiners does not by itself allow DDS to immediately establish and fill those positions. DDS must operate within the staffing authority SSA makes available, adding another constraint to its ability to respond quickly to changes in workload and examiner attrition[92].

The agency has taken steps to increase its ability to recruit disability examiners, but recruitment has remained a challenge. Telework has been an important consideration in DDS's recruitment and retention efforts. In 2025, Governor McMaster issued Executive Order 2025-31, prohibiting previous forms of teleworking for state employees[93]. DDS leadership highlighted that the loss of previous telework flexibility resulted in employees leaving and noted that the department had successfully operated remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic[94]. Less restrictive telework options could allow DDS to recruit qualified examiners from a broader geographic area rather than limiting recruitment primarily to areas surrounding its existing offices. According to DDS leadership, the SSA fully supports more flexible options for telework[95].

Given the specialized nature of disability examiner positions, and competition for qualified employees, flexible telework options may provide the department with an additional tool to broaden its recruitment pool and retain experienced staff. Compensation is another consideration in DDS's ability to recruit and retain qualified examiners. A viable pay band structure is needed to ensure compensation is competitive enough to attract and retain qualified examiners while remaining sustainable within the resources available to support DDS's authorized positions. DDS leadership reported difficulty competing with federal examiner positions offering substantially higher compensation, with a current examiner salary set by the State at roughly $39,000[96].

Workforce Sustainability

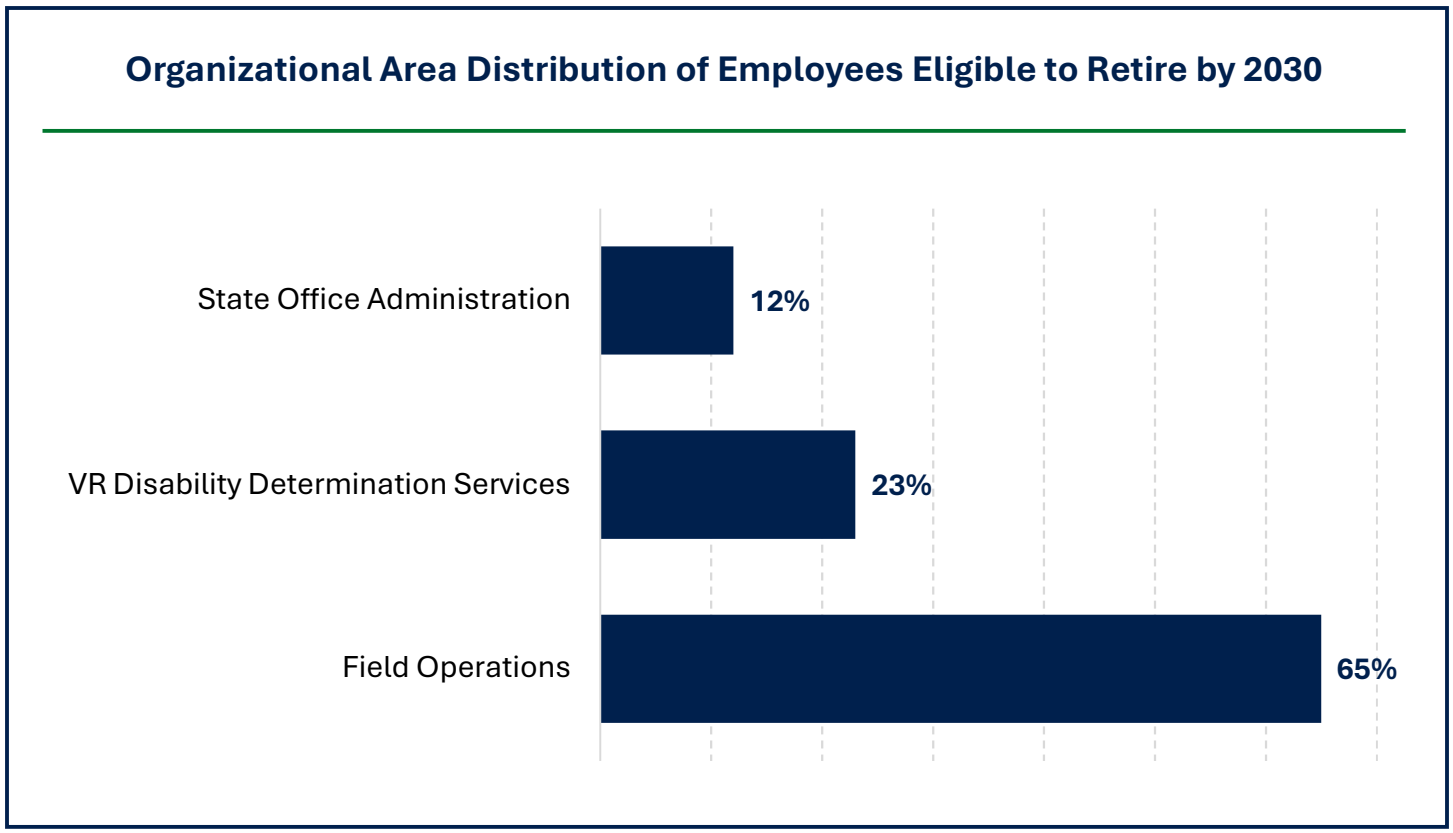
FINDING 11

The Department is approaching a significant workforce transition. According to the agency, 317 employees across all agency programs, Disability Determination Services, and State Office are either currently eligible to retire or will become eligible for retirement within the next five years.

Retirement eligibility does not mean that an employee will retire, but the number represents a substantial portion of the workforce that could become eligible to leave within a relatively short period. SCVRD reported that, as of July 24, 2026, the Department employed 902 full-time and 194 temporary employees, meaning that the number of employees approaching retirement eligibility represents a significant workforce planning consideration[97]. The Department also reported that 52% of its workforce belongs to Generation X or Baby Boomer generations and projects that 27.6% of its workforce will be eligible for retirement by 2030[98]. These figures underscore the importance of succession planning, knowledge transfer, recruitment, and development of employees who can assume responsibilities as experienced employees leave the Department. Employees who have been with the agency for many years may possess specialized knowledge of programs, processes, casework, and agency operations that can take significant time for newer employees to develop. This is particularly relevant in positions that require extensive training or specialized expertise. SCVRD acknowledged this risk in its testimony and identified succession planning, recruitment, internal talent development, and leadership development as areas of focus[99].

The agency reported that it is working to identify positions requiring succession planning, develop internal talent pipelines, expand leadership opportunities, and establish career pathways for employees[100]. The Department's ability to replace employees who leave will also depend on how efficiently it can recruit and hire qualified applicants. As of August 7, 2026, SCVRD reported an average time to hire of 48 days, compared with a statewide goal of 45 days[101]. The Department has established scheduled posting dates on the second and seventeenth of each month to provide greater predictability for managers and supervisors. According to SCVRD, the scheduled posting process has helped supervisors anticipate when positions will be released and reserve interview dates in advance. However, the testimony did not establish that this change has reduced the Department's overall 48-day average time to hire[102].

As discussed in Finding 10, the hiring process is particularly complex for Disability Determination Service (DDS) positions. As a result, proactive workforce planning will be important to maintaining DDS's workforce as employees become eligible for retirement. At the same time, the Department has demonstrated that there is interest in



available positions. SCVRD reported that a recent DDS posting for five authorized positions received 274 applications, indicating that the Department's challenge is not necessarily a lack of applicants, but a lengthy hiring process due to federal requirements[103]. SCVRD leadership explained that DDS employee candidates must undergo an extensive federal Homeland Security background investigation because their positions provide access to Social Security systems and information[104]. According to the agency, these investigations have, at times, taken long enough for candidates to accept other employment while waiting for clearance, SCVRD's Human Resources team has attempted to address this issue by providing contingent salary offers to DDS candidates so that applicants understand the compensation associated with the position while the background investigation is completed[105]. Agency leadership also reported that the background check process currently takes approximately two to three months in many instances[106].

SCVRD is also evaluating compensation as part of its broader workforce strategy. The Department reported that compensation was identified as a concern through employee exit interviews and that it is developing a new salary structure intended to improve recruitment and retention while remaining within available budget resources[107]. These efforts are intended to make positions more competitive while providing opportunities for career progression. The Department has also identified employee development as an important component of its workforce strategy, by providing onboarding, training and development, internships, and practicums, and reported that it is working to create career pathways and prepare employees for future leadership positions[108]. The Department stated that its goal is to use workforce data to anticipate staffing needs rather than respond only after vacancies occur[109].

Procurement Audit

FINDING 12

The State Fiscal Accountability Authority's (SFAA) Division of Procurement Services published an audit of SCVRD's procurement processes on June 29, 2026, covering the period from October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2024. The audit identified seven findings with 25 instances related to noncompliance with the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code and purchasing-card requirements. While the audit identified numerous procedural and internal-control deficiencies, it found no evidence of fraud, theft, or criminal misconduct and did not recommend referral to the State Inspector General.

SFAA's Division of Procurement Services (DPS) testified before the Committee that while the types of deficiencies identified are not unique to SCVRD, the number of instances were higher than what it would typically expect to see in an audit[110]. The deficiencies identified included weaknesses in procurement documentation and authorization, failures to follow competitive bidding and sole-source procurement procedures, improper use of procurement exemptions, and weaknesses in purchasing card administration[111]. The audit also identified instances involving purchases that were not properly supported or authorized and P-card activity that did not comply with state requirements[112]. Collectively, the findings demonstrated weaknesses in the Department's procurement controls and oversight that required corrective action. However, SFAA's DPS testified that its audit did not identify fraud, theft, or criminal misconduct, and SFAA did not recommend referral to the State Inspector General[113]. SFAA also noted that staffing limitations, training needs, and procurement expertise can contribute to procurement deficiencies, but continued monitoring will be important to determine whether the corrective actions implemented by SCVRD result in sustained compliance with state procurement requirements[114].

According to agency leadership, the audit period coincided with significant turnover within SCVRD's procurement function, with a reported 90.9% turnover among procurement staff during the audit period, including periods of four to six months in which the procurement function operated with only one employee[115]. SCVRD also reported that it sought assistance from the state procurement office during this period, but that additional assistance was not available because of limited staff capacity[116]. These staffing conditions provide context for the deficiencies identified in the audit, but do not eliminate the Department's responsibility to maintain appropriate procurement controls and comply with state requirements[117].

Since the audit period ended, SCVRD has taken steps to strengthen its procurement function. In April 2026, the Department hired a new procurement manager with extensive procurement experience and added another experienced procurement employee[118]. The new procurement manager reported reviewing each audit finding and working with SFAA through multiple revisions to the Department's corrective responses and has also strengthened its P-card controls by requiring prior approval for P-card purchases, reducing the number of active cards, providing additional training to cardholders, and developing a revised P-card manual[119]. While SCVRD has taken steps to address the deficiencies identified by SFAA, the effectiveness of those changes will depend on consistent implementation and continued oversight.

Referral Services

FINDING 13

SCVRD's strongest referral sources are individuals and organizations already familiar with the agency, including self-referrals, former clients, family and friends, and established state-agency partners. However, healthcare providers, hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, physicians, employers, workforce organizations, and community-service providers were not among the agency's 10 largest referral sources, indicating opportunities to expand referral partnerships and reach individuals who may not already be familiar with SCVRD.

According to SCVRD's statistics, self-referrals accounted for the largest share of referrals at 16.55%, followed by former consumers at 12.43% and regular and special education programs at 13.67% combined[120]. Other significant referral sources included Probation, Pardon, and Parole (7.38%), alcohol and drug treatment programs (6.52%), and referrals from friends or family members (5.94%)[121]. The remaining sources among the top 10 included Job Retention Services self-referrals, cardiac rehabilitation programs, audiologists, and regular education programs. Healthcare providers, hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, physicians, employers, workforce organizations, and community-service providers outside of SCVRD's established partners, were not among the Department's 10 largest referral sources[122]. This is significant because these organizations routinely interact with individuals who may have disabilities or employment barriers and are well positioned to identify individuals who could benefit from vocational rehabilitation services. These interactions may occur before an individual recognizes a need for vocational rehabilitation or is familiar with SCVRD and its services. Referrals from these organizations could provide an additional connection between individuals receiving other services and SCVRD's employment-focused services. Expanding these referral pathways may also provide SCVRD with opportunities to reach individuals who may be less likely to independently seek vocational rehabilitation services.

SCVRD has reported continued referrals from several established state and community partners, with referrals from the Office of Mental Health remaining in the 300s annually during the period reviewed[123]. The Department also reported an increase in referrals from the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD) as more individuals became interested in competitive integrated employment following changes related to subminimum wage employment[124]. SCVRD currently has an MOU with OIDD that includes quarterly meetings focused on maintaining communication and referrals[125]. The agency stated that it recently established an MOU with the Department of Veterans Affairs that allows SCVRD to participate in the South Carolina Veteran Coalition Partner Portal and receive information on veterans seeking employment[126]. SCVRD is also working with adult education agencies to increase referrals, while local education agencies remain one of the Department's highest referral sources[127]. SCVRD also maintains referral, service, expenditure, and consumer information through its data warehouse and VR reporting system, which agency leadership reported allows management and staff to access reports and dashboards to support decision-making[128].

The agency has reported established strategic goals to increase referrals among specific priority populations, including individuals with autism or intellectual disabilities, Hispanic consumers, individuals with traumatic brain or spinal cord injuries, and veterans[129]. The Department measures progress toward these goals through the referral data. In SFY 2026, referrals involving individuals with brain or spinal cord injuries accounted for 0.95% of referrals, below the statewide target of 1.4%[130]. Individuals with intellectual disabilities or autism accounted for 13.14%, slightly exceeding the 13.0% target[131]. These goals demonstrate that SCVRD has identified specific populations for increased outreach and referral activity and has established measures to track progress.

Consumer Profile

FINDING 14

Mental health and substance-use disorders, including depressive and other mood disorders, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, and drug abuse or dependence, accounted for 64% of SCVRD's 10 most frequently served disability categories. Neurodevelopmental disorders, including autism, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, intellectual disability, and specific learning disabilities, accounted for 28%. Hearing loss, the only remaining category, accounted for 8%.

SCVRD's service data provides important context for understanding who utilizes the Department's vocational rehabilitation services. While disability is often associated with physical or intellectual limitations, the individuals served by SCVRD reflect a broader range of conditions. In SFY 2025, the Department's 10 most frequently served disability categories were concentrated in mental health, substance-use, and neurodevelopmental conditions, led

by drug abuse or dependence, depressive and other mood disorders, and autism[132].

The types of disabilities represented in the data illustrate that SCVRD serves individuals whose barriers to employment may not always be readily apparent, which is important to note, as consumers may be managing a mental health or substance-use condition, or navigating autism, intellectual disabilities, ADHD, or learning disabilities[133]. These conditions can affect areas relevant to employment, such as learning, concentration, communication, social interaction, emotional regulation, and the ability to maintain consistent participation in the workplace. The composition of the consumer population also illustrates the range of circumstances that SCVRD staff may encounter when providing vocational rehabilitation services. A consumer may require assistance addressing the employment effects of a behavioral health condition, support navigating a developmental or learning disability, or coordination with other organizations already providing treatment, education, or community-based services. While the disability category alone does not indicate the severity of an individual's condition or the specific services they require, the overall distribution provides context for the types of needs represented among the Department's consumers. Understanding this population is relevant to how SCVRD plans and delivers its services. This information can help inform the Department's approach to staff expertise, training, service delivery, and partnerships with organizations that serve these populations.

Top 10 Disabilities Served by SCVRD in 2025 and 2024

Disability Causes 2025	Individuals Served
Drug abuse or dependence, excluding alcohol	1,042
Depressive and other mood disorders	887
Autism	667
Anxiety disorders	643
Specific learning disabilities	639
Personality disorders	616
Hearing loss—primary communication auditory	494
Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	446
Intellectual disability	405
Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders	365

Disability Causes 2024	Individuals Served
Depressive and other mood disorders	900
Drug abuse or dependence, excluding alcohol	857
Specific learning disabilities	624
Personality disorders	570
Autism	568
Anxiety disorders	556
Intellectual disability	438
Cause unknown	431
Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	395
Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders	358



RECOMMENDATIONS

During the study of the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, the Healthcare and Regulatory Subcommittee (Subcommittee) of the House Government Efficiency and Legislative Oversight Committee (Committee) adopts **9** recommendations.

With any study, the Committee recognizes these recommendations (e.g., continue, curtail, improve areas potentially, and/or eliminate agency programs, etc.) will not satisfy everyone nor address every issue or potential area of improvement at the agency. Recommendations are based on the agency's self-analysis requested by the Committee, discussions with agency personnel during multiple meetings, and analysis of the information obtained by the Committee. This information, including, but not limited to, the Initial Request for Information, Accountability Report, Restructuring Report, and videos of meetings with agency personnel, is available on the Committee's website.

Outreach and Marketing

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Committee recommends SCVRD develop and implement a statewide Clinical Outreach and Referral Integration Strategy to ensure healthcare providers (e.g., hospitals, inpatient rehabilitation facilities, physicians, outpatient therapy providers, other rehabilitation professionals, etc.) are aware of vocational rehabilitation services and have a clear, standardized process for referring eligible individuals. The agency shall submit the strategy to the Committee within six months of approval of the Committee's study report. (See Finding 13)

As discussed in Finding 13, SCVRD has established referral relationships and targeted goals for increasing referrals among specific populations. However, the Committee's review identified an opportunity to further expand the Department's referral network by strengthening connections with healthcare and rehabilitation providers. These providers regularly interact with individuals who may benefit from vocational rehabilitation services, including individuals who may not otherwise be familiar with or seek services from SCVRD. Development and implementation of a statewide Clinical Outreach and Referral Integration Strategy may strengthen connections with healthcare and rehabilitation providers, increase awareness of SCVRD services, and create additional pathways for individuals to access vocational rehabilitation services. The agency shall submit the strategy to the Committee within six months of the Committee's approval of the study report.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Committee recommends SCVRD develop and implement a comprehensive statewide marketing and communications strategy. The strategy should identify target customers, establish measurable objectives and performance metrics, incorporate market research and periodic evaluation, and utilize professional marketing resources through existing state communications services or competitively procured contractual services, as appropriate.

South Carolinians with disabilities may not be receiving vocational rehabilitation services because they are unaware of the Department or are not being connected to its services. The Department estimates that approximately 63,921 individuals could potentially benefit from SCVRD services, including individuals who may need assistance obtaining or maintaining employment and students who may benefit from Pre-Employment Transition Services[134]. SCVRD notes that this estimate does not establish that all of these individuals are interested in vocational rehabilitation services or employment. The Department also identified misconceptions about SCVRD services, transportation concerns, and a lack of understanding about how employment may affect benefits as barriers affecting access[135]. SCVRD currently works to increase its visibility through community events, partner presentations, conferences, school outreach, and targeted referral relationships, but SCVRD's existing outreach efforts could be strengthened through a coordinated statewide marketing and communications strategy. A comprehensive approach would allow SCVRD to more clearly identify the populations it seeks to reach, tailor its messaging to their needs, and measure whether its outreach is increasing awareness and connections to services. Incorporating market research and periodic evaluation would allow the Department to identify which approaches are effective and adjust its outreach as the needs of its consumer population change. SCVRD should complete and implement the strategy within one year of the Committee's approval of the study report.

Disability Determination Service

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Committee recommends that SCVRD annually provide the General Assembly and South Carolina's congressional delegation with a formal report on challenges affecting Disability Determination Services (DDS). At a minimum, the report should include processing times, pending claims and their age, clearance-to-receipt ratios, performance and accuracy rates, and the number and attrition rate of fully trained disability examiners. (See Findings 9-10)

As identified in Findings 9 and 10, DDS faces significant staffing and workload challenges while operating within a federal framework in which SSA establishes workload requirements, staffing authority, and performance standards, and funding for state DDS operations is subject to the federal budget and appropriations process. DDS has reported a need for approximately 100 additional trained disability examiners while managing an existing backlog, and examiner attrition and the lengthy training period for new examiners further limit the division's ability to increase capacity quickly.

Because these challenges involve both state operational factors and decisions made at the federal level, continued communication with state and federal policymakers is important. Committee members noted that the General Assembly was not given an opportunity to assist the agency with its federal outreach efforts due to insufficient

communication from agency leadership. Limited communication from DDS regarding the factors contributing to significant delays in disability determinations may have hindered efforts to fully address the existing determination backlog.

Regular reporting would provide the General Assembly and South Carolina's congressional delegation with consistent information on DDS workload, staffing capacity, processing performance, and emerging challenges. This information would allow policymakers to better understand changes in DDS performance and staffing needs over time and provide a basis for discussions with SSA regarding the resources and authority necessary for South Carolina DDS to meet its workload requirements. SCVRD shall annually provide the General Assembly and South Carolina's congressional delegation with a formal report on challenges affecting Disability Determination Services (DDS).

Employee Engagement Survey

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Committee recommends SCVRD request the State Inspector General (SIG) conduct a biennial employee engagement survey beginning in 2027. The commissioner shall report the findings to the Committee and the agency's governing board. Subsequent surveys should be reported to the governing board.

Employee engagement is an important component of maintaining an effective workforce and identifying issues that may affect employee retention, morale, and organizational performance. While SCVRD can gather employee feedback internally, an independently administered survey would provide an outside perspective on the experiences and concerns of the Department's workforce. Using the State Inspector General, which conducts employee engagement surveys for other state agencies, would also provide a consistent and impartial approach to collecting and evaluating employee feedback.

A biennial survey would allow SCVRD to establish a baseline and monitor changes in employee engagement over time. Reporting the findings to the Committee and the agency's governing board would provide leadership with an independent assessment of workforce concerns and help inform efforts to address identified issues. Subsequent surveys reported to the governing board would allow the agency to monitor progress and determine whether actions taken in response to employee feedback are having the intended effect.

Workforce Modernization

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Committee recommends SCVRD develop a comprehensive Strategic Workforce Modernization Plan to address current and future workforce challenges while maintaining the capacity to effectively fulfill its mission. The Department should complete the plan and submit it to the Committee within one year of the Committee's approval of this study report. (See Finding 11)

As mentioned in Finding 11, SCVRD is approaching a significant workforce transition that will require the Department to plan for the loss of experienced employees while maintaining the capacity necessary to fulfill its mission. The Department has identified succession planning, recruitment, internal talent development, leadership development, compensation, and career pathways as areas of focus. However, the number of employees approaching retirement eligibility, combined with challenges in recruiting and hiring for certain positions, highlights the need for a coordinated approach to workforce planning.

A comprehensive workforce plan would allow SCVRD to assess its current and future workforce needs, identify positions and areas of the Department most vulnerable to workforce disruptions, and establish strategies to recruit, retain, develop, and prepare employees for future roles. This is particularly important for positions requiring specialized knowledge or extensive training, where the departure of experienced employees can create longer-term impacts on the Department's ability to maintain operations. Establishing a plan that uses workforce data to anticipate these needs would help SCVRD move from addressing vacancies as they occur to proactively preparing for future workforce changes. SCVRD should complete the plan and submit it to the Committee within one year of the Committee's approval of the study report.

Procurement

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Committee recommends that SCVRD provide written updates on its implementation of the recommendations contained in the SFAA Division of Procurement Services audit of the agency's procurement processes six months and twelve months after the Committee report is approved. (See Finding 12)

As discussed in Finding 12, the SFAA Division of Procurement Services identified multiple deficiencies in SCVRD's procurement processes and internal controls. While the audit found no evidence of fraud, theft, or criminal misconduct, the number of instances identified was higher than SFAA would typically expect and demonstrated a need for corrective action. SCVRD has since taken steps to address the audit findings, including strengthening purchasing-card controls, providing additional training, and making changes to its procurement operations.

Because the effectiveness of these changes will depend on consistent implementation, continued oversight is necessary to determine whether the Department's corrective actions have addressed the deficiencies identified by SFAA and resulted in sustained compliance with state procurement requirements. Requiring written updates at six and twelve months after the report is approved would provide the Committee with a measurable opportunity to monitor SCVRD's progress and identify any areas requiring additional attention.

Artificial Intelligence

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Committee recommends the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, in collaboration with the Department of Administration's Artificial Intelligence Center of Excellence, develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to leverage artificial intelligence, automation, and business process redesign to enhance service delivery, improve operational efficiency, and prepare the Department to meet future workforce challenges.

The Department should identify opportunities to use technology to improve how work is performed and delivered. Artificial intelligence, automation, and business process redesign may allow SCVRD to streamline routine processes, reduce administrative burdens, improve the use of staff resources, and support more efficient service delivery. The Department of Administration is positioned to help agencies evaluate and implement these technologies through its Artificial Intelligence Center of Excellence[136].

Collaborating with the Center would allow SCVRD to leverage statewide expertise and resources when identifying processes that may be appropriate for automation or other technological improvements. A comprehensive strategy would provide SCVRD with a structured approach to identifying opportunities, evaluating potential benefits and risks, and preparing employees for changes in how work is performed.

Staffing and Office Locations

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Committee recommends that SCVRD, with outside expertise as needed, evaluate whether objective measures (e.g., population, disability prevalence, referral volume, counselor caseloads and complexity, service accessibility, etc.) support its existing regional staffing and office structure and implement appropriate changes based on the results. (See Finding 6)

As identified in Finding 6, factors such as population growth, disability prevalence, referral volume, counselor caseloads and complexity, service utilization, transportation barriers, geographic accessibility, workforce demand, and the availability of partner locations could provide an objective basis for evaluating whether existing regional staffing and office structures continue to meet consumer needs. A comprehensive evaluation would allow SCVRD to further distinguish between areas where additional permanent resources may be warranted and areas where alternative service delivery models may provide a more efficient means of improving access. Rather than relying solely on existing office boundaries or historical staffing patterns, SCVRD could use objective measures to identify regions where demand, workload, or access barriers warrant changes to staffing levels, office locations, satellite or co-located services, itinerant coverage, or mobile service delivery. The evaluation should also consider the geographic distribution of specialized training and whether consumers can reasonably access those opportunities through existing or alternative resources. SCVRD should complete the evaluation and provide the Committee with a written report of its findings and any

resulting changes within one year of the Committee's approval of the study report.

Law Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 9

The Committee recommends the General Assembly amend Sections 43-31-20, 43-31-30, 43-31-60, 43-31-145, and 43-31-160 of the South Carolina Code of Laws to modernize terminology related to individuals with disabilities and vocational rehabilitation. Specifically, the General Assembly should replace references to "handicapped" and "handicap" with "individual with a disability," "individuals with disabilities," "severe disabilities," "impediment to employment," or other appropriate terminology consistent with current vocational rehabilitation practice and federal terminology.

Chapter 31 of the South Carolina Code contains terminology that reflects the language used when many of its provisions were enacted[137]. Some of this terminology is no longer consistent with the language used in contemporary vocational rehabilitation practice or by SCVRD and its federal partners. Updating the statutory language would help ensure that the Code reflects the terminology used in the administration and delivery of vocational rehabilitation services.

The proposed changes are intended to modernize the language of Chapter 31 without changing the underlying purpose or substantive requirements of the law. The existing statutory framework would remain in place while bringing the terminology used in the Code into greater alignment with current vocational rehabilitation practice.

ENDNOTES

[1] History | South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, SC
[2] April 14, 2026 Video Presentation (00:30:13 – 00:32:35)
[3] Online Meeting Packet-4.14.2026.pdf (Pg. 34)
[4] April 14,2026 Video Presentation (00:34:28- 00:34:58)
[5] April 14, 2026 Video Presentation (00:35:26- 00:36:26)
[6] April 14, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:00:08-01:01:00
[7] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation (00:13:44- 00:13:54)
[8] Online Meeting Packet-6.24.2026.pdf (Pg, 13)
[9] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation (00:14:02-00:14:35)
[10] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation (00:19:45-00:20:05)
[11] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 00:09:25-00:11:29
[12] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 00:20:07-00:20:16
[13] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation (00:20:07-00:20:49)
[14] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 00:20:36-00:20:44
[15] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation (00:20:36-00:20:49)
[16] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation (00:20:50-00:21:08)
[17] June 24, 2025 Video Presentation (00:21:10-00:21:27)
[18] FY27 H730 - Vocational Rehabilitation.pdf (Pg. 9)
[19] Online Meeting Packet-6.24.2026.pdf (Pg. 16)
[20] FY27 H730 - Vocational Rehabilitation.pdf (Pg. 9)
[21] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 00:19:13- 00:19:55
[22] FY27 H730 - Vocational Rehabilitation.pdf (Pg.9)
[23] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 00:22:28- 00:24:00
[24] FY27 H730 - Vocational Rehabilitation.pdf (Pg. 10)
[25] April 14, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:16:44- 01:17:11
[26] Job Training & Placement | South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, SC
[27] Job Training & Placement | South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, SC
[28] Online Meeting Packet-6.24.2026.pdf (Pg. 125)
[29] Online Meeting Packet-6.24.2026.pdf (Pg. 125)
[30] April 14, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:17:52-01:18:04
[31] CSP 1.30 Business Services
[32] For Businesses | South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, SC
[33] For Businesses | South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, SC
[34] April 14, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:22:40- 01:23:01
[35] Code of Laws - Title 41 - Chapter 30- - LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
[36] Coordinating Council for Workforce Development | SC Department of Employment and Workforce
[37] April 14,2026 Video Presentation, 00:08:24- 00:08:51
[38] April 14, 2026 Video Presentation, 00:09:02-00:10:08
[39] April 14, 2026 Video Presentation, 00:10:22-00:12:48
[40] April 14, 2026 Video Presentation, 00:10:32-00:10:45
[41] Code of Laws - Title 43 - Chapter 31- - SOCIAL SERVICES
[42] Code of Laws - Title 43 - Chapter 31- - SOCIAL SERVICES
[43] Code of Laws - Title 43 - Chapter 31- - SOCIAL SERVICES
[44] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 03:22:55-03:24:16
[45] April 14, 2026 Video Presentation, 00:17:46-00:18:00
[46] Find My Area Office | South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, SC
[47] House Oversight Committee Questions July 2026 Response.pdf (Pg. 19)
[48] House Oversight Committee Questions July 2026 Response.pdf (Pg. 18-19)
[49] House Oversight Committee Questions July 2026 Response.pdf (Pg. 19)
[50] House Oversight Committee Questions July 2026 Response.pdf (Pg. 19)
[51] House Oversight Committee Questions July 2026 Response.pdf (Pg. 19)
[52] House Oversight Committee Questions July 2026 Response.pdf (Pg.19)
[53] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 03:24:34-03:24:55
[54] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 03:23:32-03:23:51
[55] House Oversight Committee Questions July 2026 Response.pdf (Pg 11-12)
[56] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 05:10:57-05:12:31
[57] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 05:25:48-05:25:59
[58] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 05:25:48-05:25:59
[59] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 05:26:47-05:26:59
[60] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 05:27:52-05:28:19
[61] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 05:24:19-05:35:53
[62] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 05:24:19-05:35:53

[63] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 05:24:19-05:35:53
[64] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 05:29:39-05:29:51
[65] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 05:29:51-05:30:09
[66] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 03:03:43-03:04:24
[67] June 24, 2026 Video Presentation, 03:04:25-03:05:13
[68] House Oversight Committee Questions July 2026 Response.pdf (Pg. 3)
[69] House Oversight Committee Questions July 2026 Response.pdf (Pg. 3)
[70] House Oversight Committee Questions July 2026 Response.pdf (Pg. 3)
[71] House Oversight Committee Questions July 2026 Response.pdf (Pg. 3-4)
[72] House Oversight Committee Questions July 2026 Response.pdf (Pg. 3-4)
[73] House Oversight Committee Questions July 2026 Response.pdf (Pg. 3-4)
[74] House Oversight Committee Questions July 2026 Response.pdf (Pg. 4)
[75] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:11:02-01:12:17
[76] 42 USC 421: Disability determinations
[77] Code of Federal Regulations § 416.1070
[78] 42 USC 421: Disability determinations
[79] August 13, 2026, Video Presentation 01:33:32-01:34:31
[80] 01 - FY 2027 President's Budget Overview
[81] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:40:07-01:40:20
[82] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:39:21-01:39:33
[83] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:40:29-01:41:20
[84] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:23:38-01:24:53
[85] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:24:22-01:24:53
[86] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:34:58-01:35:26
[87] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:25:58-01:26:33
[88] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 02:29:17-02:33:52
[89] SCVRD-2026.pdf LAC DDS Report (Pg. 48)
[90] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:15:15-01:15:57
[91] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:12:51-01:13:18
[92] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:26:34-01:26:56
[93] 2025-09-11 FILED Executive Order No. 2025-31 - Adoption of Updated Telecommuting & Remote Work Policies & Procedures.pdf
[94] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 01:29:25-01:29:45
[95] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 02:08:00-02:08:07
[96] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 02:25:56-02:27:26
[97] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 03:31:56-03:32:22
[98] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 03:33:21-03:33:31
[99] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 03:33:41-03:34:04
[100] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 03:34:11-03:34:43
[101] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 03:34:39-03:35:15
[102] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 03:36:27-03:37:08
[103] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 03:36:53-03:37:08
[104] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 03:35:25-03:36:00
[105] August 13, 2026 Video Presentation, 03:36:08-03:40:01
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