

**Virginia Department of
Rehabilitative Services**

Employment & Disability

Presented by:

Commissioner James A. Rothrock



The DRS Task

- Develop Action Steps to enhance employment opportunities for people with significant disabilities utilizing the states purchasing power to create jobs in Employment Service Organizations (ESOs), these ESOs were historically known as “Sheltered Workshops”

Services to People with Disabilities

- Virginia is fortunate to have a broad continuum of Employment Services to Virginians with disabilities.
- DRS served over 23,000 in FFY 2007 with a success rate of 60.6%
- Resulting with 4,278 being successfully employed

Employment Services Organizations

- Employment Services Organizations (ESOs) in Virginia have been an invaluable asset that add to the array both ***rehabilitation services*** and ***employment opportunities*** for people with significant disabilities.

Employment Services Organizations

- These ESOs produce a wide menu of products and services that employ people with the most significant disabilities.

Examples include:

- products like the production of corrugated boxes, sewing of uniforms and product assembly; and
- services, such as, mass mailings, grounds maintenance, document destruction and packaging.

Missed Opportunity

Purchasing Power of the State

+

ESO Capabilities

=

Jobs for People with the Most Significant
Disabilities

Current Unemployment in Virginia

- Currently for Virginia - 3% or less
- For Virginians with a disability 62%
- For Virginians with a Significant Disability 74%
- African American with a Significant Disability 85%

US Census Bureau

- 12% of Virginia population has a significant disability - 850,000 people
- Only 13% work full –time, year round

Key Findings

- 94 ESOs Approved to provide DRS Services
- 58 of these ESOs meet the criteria for a “sheltered workshop”
- 23 of these ESOs have contracted with the state at one time or another
- On average \$1 million in sales annually to ESOs
- 4 ESOs represent 85% of these sales

Importance of State Sales

- Ability—One Study
(Federal Purchasing Program to ESOs)
 - 92% on Federal Contracts reduce or eliminate welfare benefits
 - 74% on Federal Contracts reduce or eliminate SSI benefits
 - 54% on Federal Contracts reduce or eliminate public housing benefits
 - federal and state governments save between \$3,052 - \$6,084 per person, per year in benefits when someone with severe disabilities is employed.

State Use

- Virginia currently has language on State Use in the Code of Virginia that:
 - Allows purchases from ESOs without competition (Code of Virginia 2.2-4344) ; if
 - (i) can be purchased within ten percent of their fair market value, (ii) will be of acceptable quality, and (iii) can be produced in sufficient quantities within the time required. (Code of Virginia 2.2-1118)

Action Steps

1. DGS and DRS are collaborating on an effort to ensure that all ESOs are properly registered in the eVA system.

Action Steps

2. Once all ESOs are registered, DGS will work with individual ESOs to develop catalogs for eVA.

Action Steps

3. DGS has committed to working with DRS to negotiate state contracts for a variety of appropriate products and services that could be purchased from ESOs.

Action Steps

4. A variety of ideas are being discussed to help encourage buyers to consider purchasing from ESOs and to promote available products and services. These include written materials for distribution to buyers, a newsletter promoting ESOs, additional training for buyers and participation in events attended by buyers.

Action Steps

5. DRS has begun to recognize state agencies that purchases from ESOs.

On October 23, 2007, DRS recognized both the Department of Social Services and the Department of Game & Inland Fisheries as “Disability Employment Champions” for their work with Goodwill of Central Virginia at an awards luncheon.

Action Steps

6. On the eVA Buyer's Home Page there is a direct link to the DRS ESO Directory. This link is currently being revamped to enable buyers to search more quickly and easily for products and services using names or commodity codes.