



CPPSR

Center for Public Policy and Social Research

Governor William A. O'Neill Endowed Chair in Public Policy and Practical Politics



**Connecticut Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
Vocational Rehabilitation Program**

Survey Report: Fiscal Year 2015

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ABOUT

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) administers the Title I Vocational Rehabilitation and Title VI Supported Employment (SE) programs of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

BRS receives federal funding from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) at the US Department of Education. The obligations for the use of this federal funding are defined in the BRS State Plan (see State Plan on the BRS website: <http://www.ct.gov/brs/>).

The Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) is the designated state agency that oversees BRS and the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs in Connecticut.¹

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM

The goal of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program is to assist individuals with non-significant and significant physical and mental disabilities to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. Through the provision of individualized services, persons with disabilities who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation are supported in planning for and achieving their job goals.

To be eligible for the VR program, an individual must have a physical or mental condition which poses a substantial barrier to employment, and must require VR services in order to prepare for, find and succeed in employment.

The VR program serves persons with all disabilities except legal blindness. Individuals with legal blindness are served by the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB), also under DORS, and their website is located at www.besb.state.ct.us.²

THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) includes consumers, family members and VR professionals who are appointed by the Governor to provide assessment, advice and recommendations to BRS regarding coordination and effectiveness of programs and strategies which promote competitive employment for persons with disabilities.

SURVEY OBJECTIVES

In response to the SRC's goal to assess the effectiveness and delivery of VR services provided by BRS, the SRC collaborated with BRS to commission the Center for Public Policy and Social Research (CPPSR) at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) to conduct a customer satisfaction survey of VR recipients for fiscal year 2015. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the job search services that consumers/participants received from the VR program at BRS.

¹Language sourced from the BRS website: <http://www.ct.gov/brs/cwp/view.asp?a=3890&q=456864>

² Language sourced from the BRS website: <http://www.ct.gov/brs/cwp/view.asp?a=3890&q=461416>





METHODOLOGY

Two-hundred and three consumer interviews were conducted from August 10th through September 24th, 2015. The construction of the survey instrument was a collaborative effort between the SRC, BRS and CPPSR. The list of consumers from which this survey data is drawn was provided by BRS. That list of 600 individuals represents a small sampling of the 8,672 current and former VR consumers that BRS served in fiscal year 2015. Consumer names were pulled from all regions.

Of the 600 consumer names provided for the survey, 75 individuals chose not to respond to the survey and 88 individuals could not be reached due to an out-of-service number, an inaccurate number, or use of a privacy device. Three individuals were either deceased or incarcerated, while six others had language barriers. The remaining 225 consumers did not answer the phone following numerous attempts, throughout multiple days and evenings. CPPSR called each consumer a minimum of seven times, though in most cases, attempts reached upwards of ten calls.

Out of the respondents who CPPSR was able to reach, this survey has a 6% margin of error at the 95% confidence interval. This means that statistical differences outside of the +/- 6% margin of error will only exist approximately 5% of the time.

CPPSR conducted the survey over the phone and recorded consumer answers exactly as stated. Please see the Annotated Questionnaire beginning on page 18 to see the survey instrument utilized in the interviews.

DATA COLLECTED

The Center for Public Policy and Social Research collected two forms of data:

- *Qualitative*: Participant comments, recorded and reported verbatim.
- *Quantitative*: Participant responses utilizing one of the provided answer options.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Demographics

The strong majority (71%) of consumers surveyed came to BRS primarily to seek help in finding a job. Consumers also sought assistance from BRS for a hearing aid (16%), education services, and job training services (7%). Of the sample names provided, the survey participants were predominantly young, with ages 17 through 29 years old totaling to 42% of those surveyed. Most participants lived in the New Haven (40%) and Hartford (29.5%) Counties, which coincides with the New Haven (19%) and Hartford (15.5%) BRS offices being the most frequently visited locations. Collectively, these locations total to over one-third (34.5%) of the offices cited for receiving of services. Nearly four-in-ten (38%) of BRS survey participants identified as having a mental and/or emotional





limitation. In combination with thinking (17%) and hearing (18%) limitations, these disabilities were identified by more than seven-in-ten (73%) of those surveyed.

Satisfaction

The data retrieved from those surveyed demonstrates a relationship between satisfaction and three primary factors: fulfillment of needs and/or expectations, knowledgeable and/or caring counselors, and timely service.

Of the consumers offering a “very satisfied” (8-10) overall rating of BRS, half (50%) of them identified that his/her needs and/or expectations were met. One consumer commented that “they [BRS] were very helpful and helped me develop skills for me to find a job.” Another emphasized that “they [BRS] pointed me in a direction in a time where I had none.”

Over three-quarters (76.5%) of consumers issued a “very satisfied” (8-10) rating regarding his/her overall satisfaction working with his/her counselor. Consumers enjoyed the “personal flexibility” of his/her counselor and the thoughtfulness of his/her counselor. One consumer further commented that “I wasn’t judged or looked down upon.”

Although timely service was only sporadically cited as the reasoning for a consumer’s “very satisfied” (8-10) rating, with a small percentage of consumers indicating such, it was the third most popular citation. Nearly one-in-ten (8%) consumers identified timely service as the main reasoning for satisfaction with the services received. One consumer stated that “it was fast, they cared a lot, and they helped me find a job AND keep it.”

Dissatisfaction

The data collected from those interviewed demonstrates a relationship between dissatisfaction and three primary factors: unsuccessful job outcomes, outcomes achieved in an unreasonable timeframe, and miscommunication.

The majority of consumers surveyed were/are receiving job search assistance from BRS; thus, it is not surprising that unsuccessful job outcomes were largely cited as a reason for overall consumer dissatisfaction. One consumer stated that “I would rather just leave BRS,” while an older woman emphasized the impact of age and disability in the hiring process. “They [hiring managers] were not interested in hiring an older woman. I am not the norm and as an older person, I believe that placement services need to be available.”

Of those found eligible for services, over one-third (35%) of consumers surveyed indicated that it took 3-5 weeks to determine eligibility. Furthermore, over one-tenth (14%) of consumers believed that the initial meeting with BRS and the steps taken afterwards were not done in a reasonable amount of time. A participant commented that “it took over a month for each step [to be completed]” and another frustrated consumer said “I felt like they were too busy for me.”





Over nine-in-ten (90.5%) consumers confirmed that his/her rights and responsibilities were read to him/her. However, nearly three-in-ten (29%) did not know what to do if they were unhappy or disagreed with a decision. This notion of miscommunication is emphasized with a consumer's following comment: "my needs were ignored. I asked about trade school and some other things, but they just brushed it off. I brought a couple of different things to my counselor's attention but they did nothing to help me." Another survey participant offered insight into how BRS operations affect communication by stating that "it was hard to get paper through the many levels of bureaucracy."

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)/Counselor

Across the board, BRS trended towards "very satisfied" (8-10) ratings; however, IPE ratings and counselor ratings saw some negative feedback.

Slightly less than one-in-four (24.5%) consumers indicated that he/she did not participate in the development of his/her IPE. One consumer indicated that "physical therapy held this process up," while another was frustrated that BRS could only provide help with landing a job rather than volunteer work. Furthermore, a consumer found that his/her IPE did not fit his/her circumstances by adding that "I am not sure that BRS has very much experience working with people with my skill set and education level."

Roughly one-in-twenty (6.5%) consumers issued a "very dissatisfied" (1-3) rating of their counselor, for which a number of reasons were cited. One consumer stated that "my counselor insisted that despite my education that I do clerical work — I have two Master's Degrees." Likewise, low satisfaction ("very dissatisfied") ratings of counselors' professionalism and cultural sensitivity were evenly cited 3% of the time. A participant commented that "some programs were helpful and some were so unprofessional that they were actually offensive." Another consumer said that "my counselor would say, 'come on, you're from the Caribbean, you should know how to work hard.'"

Referrals

Nine-in-ten (90%) consumers would recommend BRS to a family and/or friend; however, nearly one-tenth (8.5%) of consumers would not make such a recommendation (1.5% of those surveyed did not know or chose not to comment). Among the reasons cited for not recommending BRS to a friend, timeframe for an outcome was the primary factor. "I haven't had an interview and it was a waste of time. There was no support" declared one individual. Another consumer believed that the case load for BRS employees was too much: "I don't feel like they really have time to help everyone."





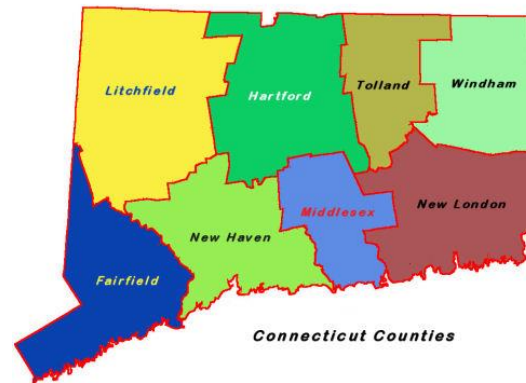
FINDINGS

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

- Most of the surveyed consumers (40%) reside in New Haven County. Nearly three-in-ten (29.5%) reside in Hartford County, while just shy of one-fifth (19%) call Fairfield County home.

n=199

County	Percentage
New Haven	40%
Hartford	28%
Fairfield	20%
Litchfield	4%
Tolland	2.50%
New London	2.50%
Middlesex	1%
Windham	1%
No response (volunteered)	1%



- The New Haven BRS Office was the most visited location with roughly one-in-five consumers (19%) using this location. Hartford (15.5%), Bridgeport (13.5%), Waterbury (9.5%), and Ansonia (6.5%) round out the top five most frequently visited offices.

n=199

AGE GROUP	BREAKDOWN
17 - 29 years old	42%
30 - 39 years old	8%
40 - 49 years old	14%
50- 59 years old	17%
60 - 69 years old	14%
No response (volunteered)	5%

- VR consumers are trending towards a younger age. Most of the surveyed consumers (42%) fall between the age of 17 and 29 years. Slightly more than three-in-ten individuals (31%) are over the age of 50.



n=199

PRIMARY DISABILITY?	BREAKDOWN
Mental and/or Emotional Limitations	38%
Hearing Limitations	18%
Limitations with Thinking	17%
Physical Limitations	14%
Communication Limitations	7.5%
Vision Limitations	1.5%
Don't know (volunteered)	1.5%
No response (volunteered)	2.5%

- The most commonly cited primary disability was mental and/or emotional limitations (38%). Hearing limitations (18%) and thinking limitations (17%) were nearly equally cited as the next two primary disabilities.

SERVICES RECEIVED

- A strong majority of consumers came to BRS to receive help finding a job (71%). As a distant second response, consumers reported coming to BRS to receive hearing aids (16%). Furthermore, a small minority came to receive education and/or training to get a job (7%).
- More than nine-in-ten consumers (95%) reported being able to find the BRS office, while the remainder (4%) indicated that they could not find the office or did not comment (1%).
- More than nine-in-ten consumers (94%) indicated that the BRS office was accessible, while less than one-in-ten (5.5%) felt that the office was inaccessible. Among that group, one person indicated that “the elevator was always malfunctioning.” Another offered that “there was a lot of trouble with the intercom system.”
- Over eight-in-ten (85%) reported receiving an explanation of the services available to them. More than one-in-ten consumers (14%) felt that such an explanation was not given.

n=202

BRS STATUS?	BREAKDOWN
Applied for services & currently receiving services	47%
Applied for services, but not yet receiving them	23%
No longer receiving services & case closed successfully	21%
No longer receiving services & case closed unsuccessfully	8%
Don't now (volunteered)	1%
No response (volunteered)	0%





- When consumers were asked about their current status with BRS, most (47%) reported that they applied for services and were currently receiving them. Slightly less than one-quarter (23%) indicated that they applied for services, but were not yet receiving them. More than one-fifth (21%) of consumers reported that they were no longer receiving services and that their case was closed successfully. The remaining consumers were no longer receiving services and their cases were closed unsuccessfully (8%).
- Slightly less than nine-in-ten consumers (87%) felt that they were found eligible for services within a reasonable time. Just shy of one-in-ten (8%) indicated that this timeframe was unreasonable, with one consumer commenting that “it was really hard to get an appointment and then I had to see several people.” Another individual offered that, “I was frustrated with the person assigned to me. I wasn’t getting a response within a reasonable time.”

n=180

HOW MANY WEEKS FOR ELIGIBILITY?	PERCENTAGE
2 weeks or less	23%
3-5 weeks	35%
6-8 weeks	12%
More than 9 weeks	8%
Don’t know (volunteered)	21%
No response (volunteered)	1%

- Slightly more than one-third (35%) of consumers indicated that it took 3-5 weeks to determine eligibility, which represents the most commonly cited timeframe for eligibility determination.
- Over four-in-five consumers (81%) indicated that there was a reasonable amount of time between the initial meeting with BRS and the next step taken. Roughly three-in-twenty (14%) felt that this wait was unreasonable. One such consumer indicated that he/she “fell through the cracks while someone was changing their position.” Another felt that BRS had a high caseload that impacted the quality of services. A third individual referenced the flexibility of BRS by stating that “working around my schedule and the BRS schedule was really hard.”
- Over nine-in-ten (90.5%) consumers indicated that their VR program rights and responsibilities were explained to them. Roughly one-in-twenty (5.5%) indicated that these rights and responsibilities were not explained. One individual, citing that his/her rights and responsibilities were not explained, stated the following: “I asked questions and they never explained anything.” Another consumer echoed this theme by claiming that “they never explained much to me, [they] just said ‘sign here.’”





- Just shy of nine-in-ten (88.5%) felt that they fully understood VR program rights. A very small minority (4.5%) indicated that they did not fully understand these rights. One such consumer explained that “my disability gives me a hard time understanding things.” Another person felt that “it was just all complicated.”
- Roughly two-thirds (64%) indicated that they knew what to do if they were unhappy with services or if they disagreed with a decision from BRS. Nearly three-in-ten (29%) mentioned that they did not know what do in such a situation. The remainder of consumers (7%) did not know how to answer the question. One consumer mentioned that he/she “qualified and met some opportunities, but they did not meet my needs. After the last opportunity, BRS called and just closed my case. I didn’t know what to do.”

INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT (IPE) RATINGS

- Over seven-in-ten (71%) reported participating in the development of their IPE. Nearly one-quarter of consumers (24.5%) did not participate in development of the IPE. The remaining participants (4.5%) were unable to answer the question. One consumer, who did not participate in the development of his/her IPE, attributed it to missing the meeting that covered this process. Another echoed this idea by saying that he/she “laid down in bed for five months. I have basically been immobile since my condition developed, so there’s nothing I can do.”
- The majority of consumers (55%) issued a high satisfaction rating (“very satisfied”) regarding the extent to which their counselor helped them develop their IPE. About one-quarter of survey participants (26%) offered a neutral rating, while slightly more than one-in-twenty (7%) issued a low satisfaction rating (“very dissatisfied”).
- Slightly more than half (52%) of all consumers reported high satisfaction (“very satisfied”) with the extent to which BRS met their IPE. One-in-five individuals (20%) offered a neutral rating, while slightly more than one-in-ten (12%) cited low satisfaction (“very dissatisfied”). Slightly more than three-in-twenty (16%) were unable or unwilling to answer the question.

n=21

REASONING FOR LOW SATISFACTION?	BREAKDOWN
The service did not meet my needs and/or expectations	24%
There was no follow-up	24%
Other (volunteered)	19%
My needs were ignored	14%
The service was not timely	9%
The quality of the service was poor	5%
Don’t know (volunteered)	5%





- Of those reporting dissatisfaction with BRS meeting their IPE, there were two equally cited responses. Nearly one-quarter (24%) claimed that there was no follow-up or that service did not meet their needs and/or expectations (24%). One consumer commented “I am not sure that the BRS has very much experience working with people with my skill set and education level.” Another stated “I asked about trade school and some other things, but they just brushed it off.”

n=90

REASONING FOR HIGH SATISFACTION?	BREAKDOWN
The service met my needs and/or expectations	49%
The counselor was knowledgeable and/or caring	35%
The service was timely	8%
Other (volunteered)	4%
Access to the service was coordinated effectively	2%
Follow-up after the service was good	2%

- Of those reporting high satisfaction with BRS meeting their IPE, about half (49%) of participants cited that the service met their needs and/or expectations. Over one-third (35%) of consumers surveyed said that the counselor was knowledgeable and/or caring, while the remainder were divided between a number of reasons. One consumer thanked BRS in saying that “they pointed me in a direction in a time where I had none.” Another added “I wasn’t judged or looked down upon.”

COUNSELORS RATINGS

- Over three-quarters (76.5%) of respondents reported high satisfaction (“very satisfied”) with their counselor. Over three-in-twenty (15.5%) offered neutral ratings regarding their counselor, while one-in-twenty (6.5%) issued a low satisfaction rating (“very dissatisfied”).
- A variety of reasons were cited for dissatisfaction with counselors, with the majority (55%) of these respondents providing an alternative response. One consumer commented that “my counselor would miss meetings entirely or show up very late.” Another added that “my counselor insisted that despite my education that I do clerical work and I have two Master’s Degrees.”





n=13

REASONING FOR LOW SATISFACTION?	BREAKDOWN
Other (volunteered)	55%
The quality of the service was poor	7.5%
My needs were ignored	7.5%
The service was not timely	7.5%
The service did not meet needs and/or expectations	7.5%
There was no follow-up	7.5%
No response (volunteered)	7.5%

- Over three-quarters (76.5%) of surveyed consumers attributed their high satisfaction of counselors to working with an individual that was knowledgeable and/or caring. Four other reasons were cited: service met my needs and/or expectations (13%), timely service (4%), good follow-up after service (4%), and effective coordination of access to service (2.5%).

n=153

REASONING FOR HIGH SATISFACTION?	BREAKDOWN
The counselor was knowledgeable and/or caring	76.5%
The service met my needs and/or expectations	13%
The service was timely	4%
Follow-up after the service was good	4%
Access to the service was coordinated effectively	2.5%

- A majority of surveyed consumers (78%) reported high satisfaction (“very satisfied”) regarding counselors’ knowledge of services and resources available. Slightly more than one-in-ten (13%) offered a neutral rating, while the remainder (5%) expressed low satisfaction (“very dissatisfied”) or did not provide feedback (4%).
- A majority (80%) of surveyed consumers were “very satisfied” (8-10 rating) with the professionalism of their counselor. Three-in-twenty offered neutral satisfaction (4-7 rating), while only three-in-a-hundred (3%) expressed low satisfaction (“very dissatisfied”). The remainder (2%) did not provide feedback.
- Roughly eight-in-ten (81%) consumers were “very satisfied” with counselors’ sensitivity to cultural identity. Less than one-in-ten (7.5%) issued a neutral rating, while low satisfaction (“very dissatisfied”) registered at 3%. A consumer issuing a low satisfaction rating elaborated that “I had to give my counselor a list of things I was capable of and he told me that wasn’t what he was here for.” Another voiced that “my counselor would say, ‘come on, you’re from the Caribbean, you know should know how to work hard.’” The remainder (8.5%) of consumers cited that they did not know how to answer the question (6.5%) or chose not to provide a response (2%).





OVERALL RATINGS

- Over two-thirds (67.5%) of all consumers issued a high satisfaction (“very satisfied”) rating in relation to their overall experience with BRS services. Slightly less than one-quarter (23%) provided a neutral rating, while less than one-in-ten (8.5%) issued a low satisfaction (“very dissatisfied”) rating. The remaining 1% of consumers were divided between deciding not to answer and feeling unable to provide a response.
- Of those issuing a low satisfaction rating (“very dissatisfied”) of their overall experience with BRS services, nearly one-third (32%) of consumers believe that the service did not meet their needs and/or expectations. Furthermore, over one-in-five (21%) of respondents chose to provide a comment rather than select an answer choice. One such consumer reported, “I had a nightmarish experience where I needed training and for no reason I could fathom, they were withholding it from me.” Another added that “it took a second counselor to help me and it took way too long to receive quality for the service.”

n=19

REASONING FOR LOW SATISFACTION?	BREAKDOWN
The service did not meet my needs and/or expectations	32%
Other (volunteered)	21%
My needs were ignored	16%
The service was not timely	10.5%
There was no follow-up	10.5%
The quality of the service was poor	5%
Don't know (volunteered)	1%

- Of those issuing a “very satisfied” response towards overall experience with BRS service, half (50%) of them attributed satisfaction to a service that met their needs and/or expectations. Slightly more than one-quarter (26%) cited that the counselor was knowledgeable and/or caring, while just under one-in-ten (9%) opted to comment instead. One consumer enjoyed that “the place is quiet, calm, and business orientated.” Another added that, “when I left, I knew exactly what was going to happen next instead of knowing what MIGHT happen.” Consumer satisfaction was greatly impacted by successful job outcomes.





n=137

REASONING FOR HIGH SATISFACTION?	BREAKDOWN
The service met my needs and/or expectations	50%
The counselor was knowledgeable and/or caring	26%
Other (volunteered)	9%
The service was timely	6%
Follow-up after the service was good	6%
Access to the service was coordinated effectively	1.5%
Don't know (volunteered)	1.5%

- Of the primary services offered by BRS, over half (56%) of respondents identified job search assistance as the service they receive. Over three-in-twenty (16.5%) consumers reported using the vocational counseling, while assistive technology services (14%) rounded out the top-three. One consumer opting to provide an alternate response remarked that he/she was seeking “college help, attaching computer to wheelchair, and securing a summer job.” Another consumer was seeking job search assistance, but no longer is because his/her disability [Diabetes] makes it impossible to “find work in the regular workforce.”
- Over three-quarters (76%) of those surveyed stated that their needs were met with these services, while slightly more than one-in-five (21.5%) do not believe their needs were met. One dissatisfied consumer commented that “I was being connected with people that aren’t helpful.” Another voiced frustration when saying “I shouldn’t have to convince them that my disability is valid.” Overall, most of the consumers who were dissatisfied had yet to or failed to receive a job.
- Survey participants were asked how they heard about BRS, with over one-third (34%) citing referral through a health care provider. The other two major sources of referrals are a family member or a friend (24%) and school (21.5%). Participants electing the “other” option primarily cited “word of mouth” as the referral source.

n=153

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT BRS?	BREAKDOWN
From a healthcare provider	34%
From a family member or friend	24%
From school	21.5%
From another state agency	8%
From the internet or other media source	6%
Other (volunteered)	5.5%
From an Independent Living Associate	1%





- Of the participants that received services from BRS, nine-in-ten (90%) consumers would recommend BRS to family and/or a friend. Less than one-in-ten (8.5%) would not recommend BRS to a family and/or a friend, with one consumer explaining “I don’t feel like they really have the time to help everyone. The case load is definitely an issue and I feel like I’ve been left on my own.” Another added to this point by stating “I haven’t received an interview and it is a waste of time. There was no support.”

UNSUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

n = 11

WHY CASE CLOSED UNSUCCESSFULLY?	PERCENTAGE
Other (volunteered)	55%
BRS lost communication with me	18%
I was no longer interested in receiving services	9%
I transferred to another agency	9%
Transportation issues	9%

- Over half (55%) of those asked why their case was closed unsuccessfully opted to vocalize a comment instead of selecting one of the options provided. An older woman had difficulty finding a job due to the combination of her age and illness, remarking “I was interviewed by a young woman old enough to be my daughter and they were not interested in hiring an older women [...] They were looking for their peers and people who could stay with them a long time.” Out of the remaining consumers, nearly one-in-five (18%) believe that BRS lost communication with them. The remainder equally reported each of the following: losing interest in receiving services (9%), transferring to another agency (9%), or having transportation issues (9%).
- Most (46%) of the unsuccessful outcome participants did not believe that BRS tried all resources and options before closing their case. Three-in-twenty (15.5%) felt that BRS did try all resources and options before closing their case. The remainder either did not know how to answer the question (23%) or chose not to provide a response (15.5%). Notably, when further probed to provide specifics on what resources or options BRS should have pursued prior to closing their case, consumers were universally unable to cite specific suggestions.
- Of the consumers experiencing an unsuccessful outcome, over two-thirds (69%) believed that BRS should have taken additional steps before closing their case, while the remainder either did not think any other steps could be taken (23%) or did not know how to answer the question (8%). One consumer commented that BRS “could have provided help to find a new job if the first one didn’t hire.” Another participant hoped that BRS “could have looked into issues with people’s eyes and counselors that deal with that.” The latter comment emphasizes the need for BRS employees to inform and refer consumers to the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB).





COMPARISONS/CONNECTIONS

A series of cross-tabulations were performed to determine correlations between variables. Numerous trends emerged when breaking down the data by the BRS office that consumers attended. When comparing current BRS status across BRS offices, Torrington (50%) and Enfield (40%) featured the highest percentage of consumers who were no longer receiving services and had their case closed successfully. Looking across the sample, New Britain (18.2%) and Stamford (14.3%) had the highest percentage of unsuccessful closures.

Consumers were also asked to report on their overall satisfaction of their BRS office. Offices receiving the highest percentage of “very satisfied” ratings included Manchester (100%), New London (100%), Danielson (100%), and Middletown (91.7%). Offices receiving the highest percentage of “very dissatisfied” ratings included East Hartford (20%), Stamford (16.7%), and Waterbury (10.5%). Torrington (50%), New Haven (29.7%) and Ansonia (23.1%) received the highest percentage of neutral ratings. When looking across BRS offices, a clear correlation exists between the percentage of active cases and the overall satisfaction ratings of the location. The larger the percentage of consumers reporting that they “applied for services and were currently receiving them,” the higher the satisfaction rating for that particular office.

Correlations exist when comparing consumers’ current BRS status across a variety of dimensions of their counselors. First, consumers were asked to report on their satisfaction of counselors’ knowledge. Those who had their case closed successfully were most likely to report “high satisfaction” of counselors’ knowledge (86.7%). Those currently receiving services also overwhelmingly reported “high satisfaction” of this measure (86.5%). Of those who were no longer receiving services and had their case closed unsuccessfully, less than two-in-ten (38.5%) reported “high satisfaction” of counselor knowledge. Reports of overall satisfaction with counselors followed a similar trend. Nearly nine-in-ten (89.4%) of those who had their case closed successfully reported high overall satisfaction of their counselors. Over four-in-five (83.7%) of those currently receiving services issued a “high satisfaction” rating. In contrast, slightly more than one-third (35.7%) of those who had their case closed unsuccessfully reported “high satisfaction” on the measure. Over two-in-five (42.9%) of consumers in this status category issued a “very dissatisfied” rating of their overall satisfaction of their counselor.

A strong correlation also exists between current BRS status and satisfaction with counselors’ professionalism. Over nine-in-ten (93.5%) of those who had their case closed successfully reported “high satisfaction” with the professionalism of their counselor. Consumers currently receiving services also rated counselors highly in this regard, with just under nine-in-ten (89%) shared a “high satisfaction” rating. By contrast, slightly less than one-quarter (23.1%) of those who had their case closed unsuccessfully reported “high satisfaction” on this measure.





There were a few areas where statistical relationships were expected, but ultimately did not occur or did not reveal themselves as strongly as anticipated. Consumers were asked to rate their satisfaction on the extent to which BRS met their IPE. Consumers currently receiving services (72.3%) and those who had their case closed successfully (70.6%) were most likely to report high levels of satisfaction on the extent to which BRS met their IPE. Those consumers who had their case closed unsuccessfully were least likely to issue a high satisfaction rating on the question (23.1%). However, the relationship between successful case closure and overall satisfaction on the extent to which BRS met their IPE is not as strong as originally anticipated. Despite having their case closed successfully, roughly three-in-ten (29.4%) consumers with this case status reported neutral or dissatisfied ratings on the question. This suggests that while a case may be closed successfully, this does not necessarily mean that the consumer's IPE was followed.

Another unexpected finding was evident when asking consumers if they participated in the development of their IPE. Those who had their cases closed unsuccessfully reported the highest participation rates in the development of their IPE (78.6%). This suggests that there is no correlation between case success and participation in IPE development.

Those consumers who had their case closed successfully were most likely to report the highest levels of satisfaction with their overall experience with BRS. Over four-in-five (82.6%) consumers in this status category issued a "high satisfaction" on the measure, with individuals currently receiving services following closely behind (78.3% issuing "high satisfaction"). Only 15.4% of those who had their case closed unsuccessfully issued a "very satisfied" rating of their overall experience with BRS. Finally, consumers who had their case closed successfully were the most likely to recommend BRS to a friend, with over nine-in-ten (95.6%) issuing this opinion. Those currently receiving services were also extremely likely to recommend BRS to a friend (93.4%). Roughly three-quarters (76.9%) of those who had their case closed unsuccessfully would recommend BRS to a friend.





ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE

Hello. May I please speak with [insert consumer’s name]? My name is [insert caller’s name]. I am calling on behalf of the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, otherwise known as “BRS.” We are conducting a survey to evaluate the job search services you applied for recently and we need your opinions. Your answers will be kept confidential and will only be used in an effort to improve the BRS program. Your name will not be connected with any information in the final report. You are free to skip questions you do not want to answer or stop your participation at any time. The survey will take less than fifteen minutes of your time. May I have permission to continue with the survey?

Insert consumer’s name (Last, First).

- I. First, I would like to ask you some general questions about the types of services you received from the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), as well as your opinions regarding your first visit at the BRS office.

- 1. Why did you come to BRS?

n=203

REASON FOR COMING TO BRS	BREAKDOWN
To get help finding a job	71%
To receive a hearing aid	16%
To receive education or training to get a job	7%
To get help keeping a job	4%
To receive home or motor vehicle modifications	1%
Don't know (volunteered)	1%
No response (volunteered)	--

- 2. Were you able to find the BRS Office?

n=203

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NO RESPONSE
95%	4%	.5%	.5%

- 3. Was the BRS Office accessible?

n=203

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NO RESPONSE
94%	5.5%	.5%	--





- A. If “NO” was chosen, why did you find the BRS Office inaccessible?
- “The elevator is always malfunctioning.”
 - “Having to use the automated security system was a pain.”
 - “There was a lot of trouble with the intercom system.”
 - “It was confusing that the parking area and the way into the building were two different entities.”

4. Please reflect on your current status with BRS. Which category describes your case now?

n=202

CURRENT BRS STATUS	BREAKDOWN
Applied for services & currently receiving services	47%
No longer receiving services & case closed successfully	23%
Applied for services, but not yet receiving them	21%
No longer receiving services & case closed unsuccessfully	8%
Don't know (volunteered)	1%
No response (volunteered)	--

5. Did you get an explanation of what services were available?

n=202

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NO RESPONSE
85%	14%	1%	--

6. Were you found eligible for services within a reasonable time?

n=201

YES	NO	STILL WAITING	DON'T KNOW	NO RESPONSE
87%	9%	3.5%	.5%	--

- A. If “NO” was chosen, why was the timeframe unreasonable?
- “I was frustrated with the person assigned to me. I wasn’t getting a response within a reasonable time.”
 - “It took months.”
 - “It took months and I needed help.”
 - “It was really hard to get an appointment, and then I had to see several people.”
 - “Too much red tape.”
 - “It took over a month for each step.”
 - “It took three months to determine eligibility.”





B. If eligibility has been determined, approximately how many weeks did it take to determine your eligibility for services?

n=180

HOW MANY WEEKS FOR ELIGIBILITY?	PERCENTAGE
2 weeks or less	23%
3-5 weeks	35%
6-8 weeks	12%
More than 9 weeks	8%
Don't know (volunteered response)	21%
No response (volunteered response)	1%

7. Was there a reasonable amount of time between the initial meeting with BRS and your next steps?

n=201

YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	DON'T KNOW
81%	14%	3%	2%

A. If “NO” was chosen, why was the timeframe unreasonable?

- “I fell through the cracks while someone was changing their position.”
- “Working around my schedule and the BRS schedule was really hard.”
- “It was ridiculously long. My friend told me they would help, so I signed up, but then we both ended up leaving.”
- “I felt like they were too busy for me.”

8. Were your rights and responsibilities related to the Vocational Rehabilitation program explained to you?

n=199

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NO RESPONSE
90.5%	5.5%	4%	--

A. If “NO” was chosen, to the best of your understanding, why were your rights and responsibilities not explained?

- “I asked questions and they never explained anything.”
- “Never explained much to me, just said sign here.”





9. Did you fully understand these rights?

n=199

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NO RESPONSE
88.5%	4.5%	5.5%	1.5%

A. If “NO” was chosen, what did you not understand with these rights?

- “My disability gives me a hard time understanding things.”
- “It was just all complicated.”
- “In some areas, it was hard to comprehend.”

10. Do you know what to do if you are unhappy with services or if you disagree with a decision from BRS?

n=199

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NO RESPONSE
64%	29%	7%	--

A. If “NO” was chosen, do you have anything else to share on this topic?

- “I would rather just leave BRS.”
- “I don’t know where to start.”
- “I don’t see that they are trying to help me so much.”
- “I still didn’t find a job. BRS is a waste of time.”
- “I was qualified and met some opportunities but they did not meet my needs. After the last opportunity, BRS called and just closed my case. I didn’t know what to do.”

II. I am now going to ask you some questions about your Individualized Plan for Employment, or IPE, including some ratings of this service. We will use a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means “very dissatisfied” and 10 means “very satisfied.” With that scale in mind, please rate the following questions:

11. Did you participate in the development of your IPE?

n=195

YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	DON'T KNOW
71%	24.5%	4.5%	--





- A. If “NO” was chosen, why did you not participate in the development of your IPE?
- “All I wanted was some volunteer work, 10-15 hours a week, but they told me that’s not what they do. Then they started cancelling my appointments and never following up.”
 - “I laid down in bed for five months. I have basically been immobile since my condition developed, so there’s nothing I can do.”
 - “I already knew what to do. There was no need for a plan.”
 - “I missed the meeting where that was done.”
 - “I recently had surgery, so I couldn’t.”
 - “Physical therapy held this process up.”

12. On a scale from 1 to 10, how satisfied were you with the extent to which your counselor helped you develop your IPE?

n=166

RATING	BREAKDOWN
1-3 (Very Dissatisfied)	7%
4-7 (Neutral)	26%
8-10 (Very Satisfied)	55%
Don’t know/No response	12%

13. Again using the 1 to 10 scale, how satisfied were you with the extent to which BRS met your IPE?

n=165

RATING	BREAKDOWN
1-3 (Very Dissatisfied)	12%
4-7 (Neutral)	20%
8-10 (Very Satisfied)	52%
Don’t know/No response	16%





A. We are interested in improving the services that are offered. You mentioned that overall you were “very dissatisfied.” What was the main reason you were not satisfied with the services you received?

n=21

REASONING FOR LOW SATISFACTION?	BREAKDOWN
The service did not meet my needs and/or expectations	24%
There was no follow-up	24%
Other (volunteered)	19%
My needs were ignored	14%
The service was not timely	9%
The quality of the service was poor	5%
Don't know (volunteered)	5%
No response (volunteered)	--

B. If "OTHER" was selected or a consumer further elaborated:

- “I am not sure that BRS has very much experience working with people with my skill set and education level. I felt that sometimes they didn't even know what to do with me. I felt that I had no one to go to to advocate for me.”
- “My needs were ignored. I asked about trade school and some other things, but they just brushed it off. I brought a couple of different things to my counselor's attention but they did nothing to help me.”

C. What was the main reason that you were “very satisfied” with the services that you received?

n=90

REASONING FOR HIGH SATISFACTION?	BREAKDOWN
The service met my needs and/or expectations	49%
The counselor was knowledgeable and/or caring	35%
The service was timely	8%
Other (volunteered)	4%
Access to the service was coordinated effectively	2%
Follow-up after the service was good	2%
Don't know (volunteered)	--
No response (volunteered)	--





D. If "OTHER" was selected or a consumer further elaborated:

- “They pointed me in a direction in a time where I had none.”
- “I wasn’t judged or looked down upon.”
- “It was fast, they cared a lot, and they helped me find a job AND keep it.”

III. I am now going to ask you to rate your experience with your BRS counselor. Again, we will use a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means “very dissatisfied” and 10 means “very satisfied.” With that scale in mind, please rate the following questions:

14. Overall, how satisfied were you working with your counselor?

n=200

RATING	BREAKDOWN
1-3 (Very Dissatisfied)	6.5%
4-7 (Neutral)	15.5%
8-10 (Very Satisfied)	76.5%
Don’t know/No Response	1.5%

A. We are interested in improving the services that are offered. You mentioned that overall you were “very dissatisfied.” What was the main reason you were not satisfied working with your counselor?

n=13

REASONING FOR LOW SATISFACTION?	BREAKDOWN
Other (volunteered)	55%
The quality of the service was poor	7.5%
My needs were ignored	7.5%
The service was not timely	7.5%
The service did not meet needs and/or expectations	7.5%
There was no follow-up	7.5%
No response (volunteered)	7.5%
Don’t know	--





B. If "OTHER" was selected or consumer further elaborated:

- “He doesn’t like me...he’s treating me like dirt.”
- “She set me up with a vendor who has not kept in contact with me at all.”
- “Counselor would miss meetings entirely or show up very late.”
- “My counselor insisted that despite my education that I do clerical work and I have two Master’s Degrees.”
- “Things aren’t just going well. I feel ignored, I’m not getting answers, and it’s becoming less obvious what BRS can actually do for me.”
- “I keep being switched counselors.”

C. What was the main reason you were “very satisfied” working with your counselor?

n=153

REASONING FOR HIGH SATISFACTION?	BREAKDOWN
The counselor was knowledgeable and/or caring	76.5%
The service met my needs and/or expectations	13%
The service was timely	4%
Follow-up after the service was good	4%
Access to the service was coordinated effectively	2.5%
Other (volunteered)	--
Don’t know (volunteered)	--
No response	--

15. How satisfied were you/are you with your counselor’s knowledge of services and resources to help you?

n=199

RATING	BREAKDOWN
1-3 (Very Dissatisfied)	5%
4-7 (Neutral)	13%
8-10 (Very Satisfied)	78%
Don’t know/No response	4%





16. How satisfied were you/are you with the professionalism of your counselor?

n=199

RATING	BREAKDOWN
1-3 (Very Dissatisfied)	3%
4-7 (Neutral)	15%
8-10 (Very Satisfied)	80%
Don't know/No response	2%

17. How satisfied were you/are you that your counselor was sensitive to your cultural identity?

n=199

RATING	BREAKDOWN
1-3 (Very Dissatisfied)	3%
4-7 (Neutral)	7.5%
8-10 (Very Satisfied)	81%
Don't know/No response	8.5%

A. If “very dissatisfied,” what could your counselor have done to be more sensitive to your cultural identity?

- “I had to give him a list of things I was capable of and he told me that wasn't what he was here for.”
- “She looked at me funny.”
- “Counselor would say, ‘come on, you're from the Caribbean, you know should know how to work hard.’”
- “I don't know, just be more tolerant.”

IV. I am now going to ask you some general questions about your experience with BRS.

18. How would you rate your overall experience with BRS?

n=199

RATING	BREAKDOWN
1-3 (Very Dissatisfied)	8.5%
4-7 (Neutral)	23%
8-10 (Very Satisfied)	67.5%
Don't know/No response	1%





A. We are interested in improving the services that are offered. You mentioned that overall you were “very dissatisfied. What was the main reason you were not satisfied with your overall experience with BRS?

n=19

REASONING FOR LOW SATISFACTION?	BREAKDOWN
The service did not meet my needs and/or expectations	32%
Other (volunteered)	21%
My needs were ignored	16%
The service was not timely	10.5%
There was no follow-up	10.5%
The quality of the service was poor	5%
Don't know (volunteered)	1%
No response (volunteered)	--

B. If "OTHER" was selected or consumer further elaborated:

- “I had a nightmarish experience where I needed training and for no reason I could fathom, they were withholding it from me.”
- “It took a second counselor to help me and it took way too long to receive quality for the service.”
- “I have no belief that my counselor is doing much to contact me because things take months.”
- “No one wanted to help me. I’ve been through every counselor in that office.”

C. What was the main reason you were “very satisfied” with your overall experience with BRS?

n=137

REASONING FOR HIGH SATISFACTION?	BREAKDOWN
The service met my needs and/or expectations	50%
The counselor was knowledgeable and/or caring	26%
Other (volunteered)	9%
The service was timely	6%
Follow-up after the service was good	6%
Access to the service was coordinated effectively	1.5%
Don't know (volunteered)	1.5%
No response (volunteered)	--





- D. If "OTHER" was selected or consumer further elaborated:
- “The place is quiet, calm, and business orientated.”
 - “I was pleased with the patience of BRS.”
 - “BRS offers options, counseling, and personal flexibility.”
 - “They were very helpful and helped me develop skills for me to find a job.”

19. What primary service did you receive from BRS (select one)?

n=199

PRIMARY SERVICE RECEIVED	BREAKDOWN
Job search assistance	56%
Vocational counseling	16.5%
Assistive technology services	14%
Other (volunteered)	7.5%
Skills training or career education	5.5%
Benefits counseling	.5%
Don't know (volunteered)	--
No response (volunteered)	--

- A. If “NO” was selected or consumer further elaborated:
- “Hearing aids” (repeated multiple times)
 - “Permanently mounted hand controls for a vehicle.”

20. Were your needs met?

n=199

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NO RESPONSE
76%	21.5%	2%	.5%

- B. If “NO” was selected, how were your needs not met?
- “No one is getting back to me.”
 - “I don't have a job yet.” (repeated numerous times)
 - “I shouldn't have to convince them that my disability is valid.”
 - “Some programs were helpful, some were so unprofessional that they were actually offensive.”
 - “They didn't do much for me.”
 - “They didn't talk to me about what was going on. When expressing what I wanted, I felt dejected and not empowered.”
 - “They had no idea what they were doing. I went a whole year without a job.”





21. How did you hear about BRS (select one)?

n=199

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT BRS?	BREAKDOWN
From a healthcare provider	34%
From a family member or friend	24%
From school	21.5%
From another state agency	8%
From the internet or other media source	6%
Other (volunteered)	5.5%
From an Independent Living Associate	1%
No response	--

A. If “OTHER” was selected or consumer further elaborated:

- “Word of mouth” (referenced numerous times)
- “Outreach Ministry”

22. Based on your experience, would you recommend BRS to family and/or friend?

n=199

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NO RESPONSE
90%	8.5%	1%	.5%

A. If “NO” was chosen, why would you not recommend BRS to a family and/or friend?

- “I don’t feel like they really have time to help everyone. The case load is definitely an issue and I feel like I’ve been left on my own.”
- “I haven’t had an interview and it was a waste of time. There was no support.”
- “It takes so long.”
- “Not to anyone with proper education.”
- “Not unless I hated them.”
- “Not unless they have months to wait around.”
- “They might run through the same trouble of multiple trial periods like me.”
- “Unprofessional, ill-suited staff.”

V. I am now going to ask you about your case being closed unsuccessfully (this section only pertains to consumers that received services and had their case closed unsuccessfully – skip to question 26 if case was closed successfully).





23. Why was your case closed unsuccessfully?

n=11

WHY CASE CLOSED?	BREAKDOWN
Other (volunteered)	55%
BRS lost communication with me	18%
I was no longer interested in receiving services	9%
I transferred to another agency	9%
Transportation issues	9%

A. If "OTHER" was selected or consumer further elaborated:

- “I am an older worker. When I went through an illness and was left with permanent issues, a disability from the illness. When I was well enough, I felt I was able to return to work on a part-time basis, and I felt I was able to pursue it. I was in my late 50s when I started the process, and the bottom line is that no matter how well trained I was, I was an old woman with a disability. There has to be a program specifically designed for people like me. I was being interviewed by women young enough to be my daughters. They were not interested in hiring an older woman. I am not the norm, and as an older person, I believe that placement services need to be available.”
- “My counselor did not do her part.”
- “I was trying for years with no luck, so I got fed up.”
- “They didn’t find me a job, but they felt they were giving me opportunities.”
- “I withdrew. After a year and a half of doing everything that was asked of me, I didn’t even get a single interview.”

24. Did BRS try all resources and options before closing your case?

n=13

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NO RESPONSE
15.5%	46%	23%	15.5%

A. If "NO" was chosen, what additional resources should BRS have looked to?

- “I feel that they could be better invested. They had no contacts with upper Connecticut.”





25. Were there any additional steps that BRS should have taken before closing your case?

n=13

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NO RESPONSE
69%	23%	8%	--

A. If "YES" was chosen, what additional steps do you think BRS could have taken?

- “I should have been brought in, shown deadlines, and given extra attention.”
- “BRS could have looked into my issues with people with eyes and counselors that deal with it.”
- “I should have been given the courtesy of a phone call to have a conversation about it.”
- “There should have been a final meeting about my options.”

VI. I am now going to ask a final questions for demographic purposes.

26. In what county do you currently reside?

n=199

COUNTY	BREAKDOWN
New Haven	40%
Hartford	28%
Fairfield	20%
Litchfield	4%
Tolland	2.5%
New London	2.5%
Middlesex	1%
Windham	1%
Don't Know (volunteered)	--
No Response (volunteered)	1%





27. Which BRS office did you go to for service?

n=199

RESPONSE	BREAKDOWN
Ansonia	6.5%
Bridgeport	13.5%
Danbury	4%
Danielson	1.5%
Enfield	5%
Hartford (Central)	15.5%
Manchester	2.5%
East Hartford	2.5%
Middletown	6%
New Britain	5.5%
New Haven	19%
New London	1%
Norwich	--
Stamford	3.5%
Torrington	1%
Waterbury	9.5%
Don't know/ don't recall (volunteered)	2.5%
No response (volunteered)	1%

28. What is your age?

n=199

RESPONSE	BREAKDOWN
17 - 29 years old	42%
30 - 39 years old	8%
40 - 49 years old	14%
50- 59 years old	17%
60 - 69 years old	14%
No response (volunteered)	5%





29. How would you best describe your primary disability (select one)?

n=199

RESPONSE	BREAKDOWN
Mental and/or Emotional Limitations	38%
Hearing Limitations	18%
Limitations with Thinking	17%
Physical Limitations	14%
Communication Limitations	7.5%
Vision Limitations	1.5%
Don't know (volunteered response)	1.5%
No response (volunteered response)	2.5%

VII. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. Your answers are important and will help BRS improve future services. If you need to contact someone from BRS about this survey or services, please call Evelyn Oliver Knight at (860) 424-4871. Have a wonderful day!

