

# Empowering People with Disabilities

Erik Hanson, MA LCPC

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**



# Illinois Department of Human Services

- Division of Substance Abuse Prevention and Recovery
- Division of Developmental Disabilities
- Division of Family and Community Services
- Division of Mental Health
- Division of Rehabilitation Services

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**



# Our Mission

IDHS's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is the state's lead agency serving individuals with disabilities.

DRS works in partnership with people with disabilities and their families to assist them in making informed choices to achieve full community participation through employment, education, and independent living opportunities.

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**



# Our Vision

Improving the independence of our customers is our only reason for existing. We realize that the skills and abilities of our front-line staff are the keys to our success. Embracing, listening to and collaborating with our community partners will sustain our success.

DRS will be a customer-driven organization, with all major decisions based on the needs of our customers. Our staff will be informed and valued, pursuing lifelong learning and striving to improve their professional skills. We will create an environment where customers and staff work in partnership, where customers enjoy working with staff, and staff look forward to coming to work. Finally, we envision an agency where customers feel confident that their goals will be reached.

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**



# Our Services

- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Home Services
- Educational Services
- Specialized Services
- Independent Living Services
- Disability Determination Services
- Client Assistant Program
- Information and Referral Services

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**



# Community Partnership Initiative Video

Illinois Department of Human Services  
Division of Rehabilitation Services



# Vocational Rehabilitation

- DRS helps people with disabilities find and keep jobs. Our goal is to help our customers find quality employment that pays a living wage and offers a chance for advancement.
- Our staff work closely with state, regional, and local employers, offering individualized placement services that bring employers and qualified employees together.
- Our staff talk to people about their employment needs and help them find a job or get ready to go to work. They also make sure that people have the supports they need to stay on the job.
- Many people with disabilities of working age (16-64 years old) are eligible for VR services. To be eligible, they need to have a significant physical or mental impairment that makes it difficult to go to work.

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**



# Vocational Rehabilitation

- Services
  - Vocational Assessment
  - Job Development and Placement
  - Job Coaching
  - Job Stability
  - Job Training
  - Career Development Services

# Overview of (VR) Process

- Application - referral made, initial interview conducted, gather documentation to determine eligibility.
- Certification - determine that applicant meets eligibility requirements and continue with services.
- Services - provide counseling and guidance, information and referral, training, restorative and placement.
- Placement - applicant achieves stability in employment a minimum of 90 days.

# Eligibility for VR Services

- Individual has a physical or mental impairment that constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to any employment
- Individual requires VR Services to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment
- Individual is presumed to be able to benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome
- Individual must want to go to work

# Vocational Rehabilitation

- Supported Employment Program (SEP)
  - The SEP program works to provide individuals with the most significant disabilities employment opportunities in competitive, integrated employment settings that are consistent with the individual's unique strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice.
  - Ongoing support services are provided throughout an individual's involvement with the program.

# Vocational Rehabilitation

- Business Enterprise Program for the Blind
  - This program offers management opportunities in the food service industry to individuals who are legally blind.
  - After completing a six-month training course, certified graduates operate vending facilities throughout the state and average more than \$40,000 a year in earnings.

# Vocational Rehabilitation

- Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education-Wood (Chicago)
  - is a rehabilitation center which provides services to individuals who are blind, deafblind, or severely visually impaired. These services include a full-time comprehensive rehabilitation training program. Special training in identified skill areas (e.g., computer skills, activities of daily living, job retention skills) is also provided to meet the specific rehabilitation needs of each customer.

# Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

- Passed in 2014. First legislative reform to public workforce system in 15 yrs.
- Goal is to improve job and career options for jobseekers, specifically for those most in need, through an integrated, job-driven public workforce system.
- WIOA authorizes the one-stop career center (also known as American Job Center) service delivery system, which is comprised of several required programs, including services related (but not limited) to:
  - Employment/career
  - Adult Education and Literacy
  - Career and Technical Education
  - Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Unemployment Insurance
  - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
  - Job Corps
  - Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**



# Home Services

- The Home Services Program provides services to individuals with the most significant disabilities so they can remain in their homes and live as independently as possible. Our customers are empowered to live self-directed lives, be actively involved in their communities
- We also provide specialized services for people with HIV/AIDS and/or traumatic brain injuries (TBI).
- And our Community Reintegration Program helps individuals with disabilities who live in nursing homes move into community with the supports they need to live as independently as possible.

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**



# Primary Home Services

- Our program offers numerous options for independence, including:
  - Personal Assistant (PA), Homemaker and Maintenance Home Health services
  - Electronic Home Response
  - Home Delivered Meals
  - Adult Day Care services
  - Assistive Equipment
  - Environmental Modification
  - Respite Services

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**



# Eligibility for Home Services

- Imminent risk of health care facility placement
- Severe disability lasting at least 12 months or life
- Requires services with cost the same or less than nursing home services
- Under age of 60 at the time of application
- Resident of Illinois and U.S. citizen or legal resident
- Physician's approval of initial care plan
- Less than **\$17,500** in non-exempt assets for customers 18 or older or **\$35,000** in family assets for customers under age 18
- Apply and cooperate with the Medicaid process

Illinois Department of Human Services  
Division of Rehabilitation Services



# Educational Services

- DRS operates three residential schools for children with disabilities:
  - Illinois School for the Deaf (Jacksonville)
  - Illinois School for the Visually Impaired (Jacksonville)
  - Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education-Roosevelt (Chicago)
- Our staff work closely with high school students with disabilities, empowering them to successfully transition from high school to post-secondary education and/or employment.

# Specialized Services

- Our specialized services are designed for:
  - Persons who are Blind or Visually Impaired. We empower adults who are blind or visually impaired to rediscover their independence and freedom. Our customers find and maintain employment and achieve their education, training, and independent living goals. The Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education-Wood in Chicago also offers a 12-week residential vocational and independent skills training program.
  - Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. We help people who are deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened, or deaf/blind find employment, attend education and training programs, and learn about other community resources.
  - Persons with disabilities who are Hispanic/Latino. Our bilingual staff assist Hispanic/Latino people with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining employment, applying for DHS/DRS programs, and connecting with community services.

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**



# Independent Living

- Through the Independent Living Unit, DRS assists 22 state and federally funded Centers for Independent Living throughout the state in their provision of five core services:
  - Independent Living Skills
  - Advocacy
  - Peer counseling and support
  - Information and referral services
  - Transition services

# Disability Determination Services

- The Social Security Administration (SSA) disability program provides benefits to persons with severe disabilities whose impairments prevent them from performing gainful work.
- In Illinois, the evaluation of claims for the federal disability program is administered through the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services, Bureau of Disability Determination Services (IDHS/DRS' DDS).
- The Bureau of Disability Determination Services, which is responsible for disability determinations, is 100% federally funded and makes its decisions according to SSA rules and regulations.

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**



# Client Assistance Program

- CAP helps people with disabilities receive quality services by advocating for their interests and helping them identify resources, understand procedures, resolve problems, and protect their rights in the rehabilitation process.
- For more information, call:
  - 1-800-641-3929 (Voice)
  - 1-888-460-5111 (TTY)

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**



# Information and Referral Services

- Our staff share information about programs and services available through DHS as well as other federal, state and local agencies. We also connect individuals and their families with services they need in the community.
- DRS is one of four core partners represented at local WIOA one-stop centers (also known as American Job Centers) throughout the state.

# Stats

- In FY2017 the DRS vocational rehabilitation program assisted 4,990 people with disabilities in achieving competitive employment. These individuals earned an average of \$15,673 at case closure.
- A total of 2,240 of these employment outcomes were achieved by individuals who began receiving services prior to age 21, or 44.9 percent of all outcomes. This demonstrates the continuing emphasis of the DRS VR program on serving transition age youth with disabilities.
- A total of 34,777 persons were served by HSP in FY2017
- A total of 54 individuals were moved from nursing homes into the community through reintegration efforts of DRS contractors

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**



# For more information:

If you have questions about any Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) program, call or visit your local IDHS office. We will answer your questions. If you do not know where your local IDHS office is or if you are unable to go there, you may call the automated helpline 24 hours a day at:

1-800-843-6154

(866) 324-5553 TTY/Nextalk

or 711 TTY Relay

You may speak to a representative between: 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Monday - Friday (except state holidays).

Or, visit our website at: [www.dhs.state.il.us](http://www.dhs.state.il.us)

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**



# Questions?

**Illinois Department of Human Services**  
**Division of Rehabilitation Services**

