



DELAWARE ASSOCIATION OF REHABILITATION FACILITIES

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Connie Hughes
Executive Director

Member Agencies

AHEDD

AIDS Delaware

Autism Delaware

Bancroft Neurohealth

Benedictine OCP

Brandywine Counseling, Inc.

Center for Disabilities Studies, UD

Chimes of Delaware

Choices for Community Living

Cleanworks Janitorial Services

Client Assistance Program

Community Integrated Services

Community Interactions, Inc.

Connections CSP, Inc.

DE Council on Gambling Problems

Delaware Mentor Healthcare

Delmarva Community Services

Dove Pointe

Easter Seals Delaware and
Maryland's Eastern Shore

Elwyn Delaware

Freedom Center for Independent
Living

Gaudenzia Fresh Start

Goodwill Delaware

Homeless Planning Council of DE

Horizon House Delaware

Independent Resources, Inc.

KenCrest Services

Kent Sussex Counseling Services

Keystone Services MidAtlantic

MOSAIC Delaware

NAMI Delaware

NHS Human Services

Open Door, Inc.

Opportunity Center, Inc.

Psychotherapeutic Services, Inc.

Salvation Army

ResCare / VOCA DE

The Arc of Delaware

To: Members of the Joint Finance Committee

From: Regina Jones

DelARF Vocational Services Commission

Date: February 24, 2010

Re: Department of Labor Budget Hearing

Good afternoon. My name is Regina Jones. I am the Director of Career and Workforce Development for Goodwill of Delaware. I am speaking today as the Chairperson of the Vocational Services Commission of the Delaware Association of Rehabilitation Facilities.

The community-based member agencies of DELARF work closely with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to generate opportunities for people with disabilities and other disadvantages to achieve economic stability. Our services help build strong families and vibrant communities by offering job-training, employment placement services, and other community-based programs for people with barriers to employment. Many of these efforts are being implemented in partnership with employers throughout the state. The Opportunity Center, Inc. has developed an effective partnership with Embassy Suites to provide on-site, specialized training to people with disabilities who express interest in the hospitality field. At Goodwill, a partnership to train front-end customer service cashiers was developed with The Kenny Family ShopRite stores. Additional programs working with Christiana Care are also being identified to provide skill development and employment support services needed for successful employment.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation also supports programs aimed at transitioning youth with disabilities from schools into jobs through the Early Start to Supported Employment Program. DELARF member agencies forge partnerships and collaborations in the community to give Delaware residents such as Anwar Palmer the skills needed to be successful when transitioning out of educational services. Through the creation of a pilot program with Brandywine School District, Opportunity Center, Inc. serves students with disabilities in their last year of school. Anwar was the first successful "graduate" of FrameWORK for Success where he was provided an environment to adjust to a work schedule and to learn routine custodial and maintenance skills. These skills were further honed in community-based work experiences. Anwar brought to the table the willingness to learn and work hard. Anwar secured a full-time, paid position at the Community Services Building in Wilmington with Buvera Building Services before his high school graduation.

Having a disability has and continues to be a significant employment barrier. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title I State Grants, provide a significant majority of funding for Vocational Rehabilitation agencies.

Under this Act, vocational rehabilitation agencies like our own Division of Vocational Rehabilitation receive an annual cost of living adjustment based on the Consumer Price Index. In order for Delaware to receive the full projected federal grant for FY 11 of over \$8.8 million, the state will need a contribution of \$2,390,594. Most of that is in the Governor's Recommended Budget but an additional \$179,936 will need to be added to the vocational rehabilitation basic support budget for this full federal contribution to be received. **One hundred percent of these dollars support direct service to individuals with disabilities.**

By recognizing the full federal match, Delaware will serve an additional 212 people with disabilities in our community. The demand for services from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has been increasing rapidly over the past few years. There are currently 700 – 800 individuals on a waiting list for vocational rehabilitation services. At the full funding level, the waiting list can be reduced by 26.5% - 30%.

We understand the pressures of this year's budget and ask that consideration be given to provide the \$179,136 in vocational rehabilitation basic support services to meet the full state eligibility of federal funds, reaching 212 additional people with disabilities in the state of Delaware.