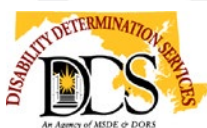




# ANNUAL REPORT

2021



## adaptation

\ ,a-ˈdāp-ˈtā-shən , -dəp- \

A change in structure, function, or behavior by which a species or individual improves its chance of survival in a specific environment... a change or adjustment to improve something, or to make it suitable to a different situation



Scott Dennis  
Assistant State Superintendent

In adapting to our new COVID-19 normal, we understand that the pandemic has affected us all in many ways. Our professional and personal lives have been forever changed. All this change has affected societal mental health, which has repercussions for us as individuals, as well as for our family and friends, colleagues and work partners, and the clients we serve.

For the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), Program Year '21 was a year of adapting to the new COVID-19 normal. Fluctuating infection rates, evolving safety guidance, and shifting workplace and school schedules affected DORS staff, consumers, the provider community, and service delivery.

As DORS and service providers learned more about and implemented COVID-19 safety protocols, in-person services gradually increased. In July, DORS staff returned full time to the offices. By the fall, consumers could choose between receiving most services in person or virtually. Overwhelmingly, consumers chose virtual services. Virtual-service options remove obstacles around access to transportation, scheduling limitations, and the ability to include a support person or family member in an appointment.

I want to thank the hard-working and dedicated DORS staff who have given it their all, adapting despite daunting challenges over this past year and continuing to provide excellent services to Marylanders with disabilities. They exemplify the DORS' **Vision**: to make Maryland the best place in our nation for persons with disabilities to live and work. As we move forward, as we **adapt**, DORS renews its commitment to this vision; recognizing that in order to do this, we must start by supporting each other.

Scott Dennis  
Assistant State Superintendent

## WTC

As it continued to adjust to the new COVID-19 normal, DORS' **Workforce & Technology Center (WTC)** resumed full operations in 2021 by offering in-person, virtual and hybrid services to DORS consumers. These services were provided by the following WTC departments: Academics, Assistive Technology, Autism, Blind & Low Vision, Career Assessment, Career & Technology Training, Driving & Vehicle Modifications, Employment/Job Placement, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Home Modifications, Occupational & Physical Therapies, Work Readiness, and Worksite Services.

With strict COVID-19 safety protocols in place, the WTC dormitory, enrichment activities, and cafeteria reopened in the fall, which enabled participants from all areas of Maryland to receive services at WTC.

One in-person program that continued to have successful outcomes is the Sephora Customized Training. This collaboration with Sephora's Aberdeen, Maryland, Distribution Center and the Community College of Baltimore County began in September of 2020, during the height of the pandemic. Each Sephora training consists of a cohort of students who begin the program simultaneously, first completing a week of classroom training, and then moving on to several weeks of paid on-the-job training at Sephora.

To help ensure the safety of the trainees, Sephora created detailed scheduling strategies to limit contact between the cohorts and other staff.



Workforce & Technology Center's Automotive Detailing career training class, December 2021  
BACK, L - R: Antonio, Nicholas, Gurkirt, & Joseph; FRONT: Alexander

By the end of 2021, six training Sephora cohorts had been completed, which included 15 graduates, 14 of whom became Sephora employees, and one who was hired to work at another warehouse.

During this time, Sephora increased their starting wage from \$15/hour to \$17.30/hour with full benefits, including health, 401K and tuition reimbursement available. Four Sephora cohorts are scheduled for 2022.

Despite the challenges that the pandemic continues to present, WTC was successful in graduating consumers from the following WTC job training programs throughout 2021: Automotive Detailing/Refinishing, Automotive General Service Technician, Environmental Services, GED, Office Technology, and general Warehouse training. WTC held class graduation celebrations following social distancing guidelines in order to honor the accomplishments of the training program graduates.



## SOURCE OF FUNDS

### STATE FUNDS

State Matching Funds .....	\$14,549,871
State Non-matching Funds .....	655,583
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$15,205,454</b>

### FEDERAL FUNDS MATCHING FUNDS

Basic Program .....	\$33,557,004
Independent Living (Older Blind) .....	562,569
State Independent Living Services .....	381,277
<b>SUB TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$34,500,850</b>

### FEDERAL NON-MATCHING FUNDS

Social Security Administration / DDS .....	\$26,464,119
Social Security Reimbursement .....	6,081,822
Supported Employment State Grants .....	460,005
Client Assistance Program .....	144,114
<b>SUB TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$33,150,060</b>
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$82,856,363</b>

### SPECIAL FUNDS

Business Enterprise Program for the Blind.....	\$1,526,953
Third Party.....	58,315
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$1,585,267</b>
<b>TOTAL COMBINED FUNDS AVAILABLE.....</b>	<b>\$84,441,631</b>

### EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS

Disability Determination Services.....	\$26,464,119
VR Client Services Program .....	23,251,032
Case Services (CS) .....	11,865,708
Workforce & Technology Center .....	7,998,694
Administration.....	9,558,051
Business Enterprise Program for the Blind.....	1,619,237
Pre-Employment Transition Services .....	3,684,790
<b>TOTAL FUNDS EXPENDED .....</b>	<b>\$84,441,631</b>

## REHABILITATION OUTCOMES

### TOP TEN OCCUPATIONS

Office and Administrative Support	
Building & Grounds Cleaning/Maintenance	
Sales and Related	
Food Preparation and Serving Related	
Transportation and Material Moving	
Production	
Community and Social Service	
Personal Care and Service	
Education, Training, and Library	
Computer and Mathematical	
<b>GRAND TOTAL.....</b>	<b>925</b>

## YOUTH

### *Services to Youth Remain a Focus for DORS in 2021*

- 45% of DORS consumers were between 14 and 24 years of age.
- 6,693 youth received DORS services.
- 1,326 students received Pre-Employment Transition Services (services for students with disabilities).
- DORS spent \$6,290,488 on services for youth.

## DEAF/HARD OF HEARING SERVICES UPDATE

In July, DORS welcomed **Noe Turcios** (pronounced No-ee) as the new **Statewide Coordinator for Deaf Services**.

Noe obtained a BS at Rochester Institute of Technology and earned a MA degree in Sign Language Education at Gallaudet University. Currently, he is in the Doctor of Education program, in Higher Education and Adult Learning, at Walden University.

He is interested in inclusive practices and the intersectionality of Deaf and multiple identities. Among his goals in the Statewide Coordinator role are to provide accessibility and resources for all Deaf plus multiple identities, and contribute back to the Deaf community.

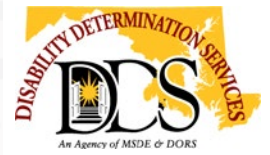
Since joining DORS, Noe has been working on improving DORS online presence for Deaf/Hard of Hearing consumers, including working on the development of several new **ASL videos**.

Contact Noe at [noe.turcios@maryland.gov](mailto:noe.turcios@maryland.gov), or videophone 410-405-7054.



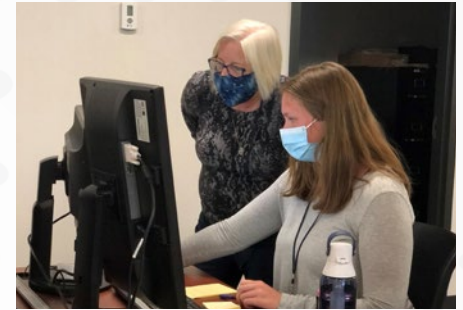
# MARYLAND DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES (DDS)

2021 found the **Maryland Disability Determination Services (DDS)**, like the rest of DORS, continuing to adjust operations in the new COVID-19 normal.



While DDS staff returned to the office full time in July, some functions remained primarily virtual, including community outreach. The DDS Medical Relations Office 2021 outreach included:

- Focusing on collaborative efforts with the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) Early Intervention and Special Education Services, and working with MSDE to identify school jurisdictions with centralized locations for psychological assessments.
- Promoting the Electronic Records Express Initiatives by reaching out to individual school jurisdictions to establish contacts and streamline school records process. These efforts are designed to help DDS adjudicate claims in a timely manner.
- Conducting presentations with the Social Security Administration (SSA) Public Affairs Specialist to Montgomery County School Transition Support Staff, and with Charles County Public Schools as part of their Transition Support Expo.
- Presenting at NAMI Maryland's Annual Conference at Sheppard Pratt Hospital on the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) program.



DDS Cheryl Hann Training Director Working with a Disability Examiner Trainee

DDS also worked with the SSA's **Components** to present webinars to third-party groups/advocates that assist individuals who are facing barriers and access to services and benefits, during the COVID-19 pandemic. More info at **Outreach Materials** for People Facing Barriers.

Sixteen new DDS staff were hired and the new Disability Examiners completed two training classes during 2021.

DDS transitioned to the new SSA Disability Case Processing System (DCPS). Staff training for this system was completed virtually. Benefits of DCPS include:

- Ease of sharing disability processing workload across state and federal disability processing sites.
- More case analysis tools to support disability examiners in making consistent decisions based on SSA Disability Policy.
- Reduced maintenance and infrastructure costs.
- Reduction in the technological complexity of system support.
- Ability to implement software enhancements and modifications as required by changing laws, regulations, and policy more efficiently and consistently.



Disability Examiner Training Class  
November 2021

Larry Hogan, Governor

Clarence C. Crawford, President, Maryland State Board of Education

Mohammed Choudhury, State Superintendent of Schools

Scott Dennis, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Rehabilitation Services  
Maryland State Department of Education



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network

DORS Administrative Office & Headquarters, Office of Field Services, Office for Blindness & Vision Services and the Workforce & Technology Center are located at: 2301 Argonne Drive, Baltimore, Maryland 21218-1696  
Phone: 410-554-9442 • Toll-free: 1-888-554-0334  
Video Phone: 1-866-371-3614 / 410-405-7054 • dors@maryland.gov

DORS field and OBVS counselors are located in over 20 field offices throughout Maryland. To find the nearest one, contact DORS headquarters or visit [dors.maryland.gov](https://dors.maryland.gov)

Disability Determination Services P.O. Box 1810, Cockeysville, MD 21030-1810, Phone: 410-308-4500 • Toll-free: 1-800-492-4283  
[md.dd.timonium.dds@ssa.gov](mailto:md.dd.timonium.dds@ssa.gov)

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*The Vocational Rehabilitation program receives 78.7% of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For Federal fiscal year 2021, the total amount of grant funds awarded was \$46,881,489. The remaining 21.3% percent of the costs (\$12,668,382) were funded by State appropriations.*