

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2015-16 Performance Report

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

Here a simple statement of the adopted mission of the agency should be provided, along with the entity or person(s) who adopted the mission statement and when it was adopted.

**The mission of the Department of Rehabilitation Services is to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to achieve productivity, independence and an enriched quality of life.**

**GREAT PURPOSE: Opening doors to Independence and Quality Jobs with Benefits for People with Disabilities.**

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

Here the name, title and contact information for the lead administrative person should be listed.

**Joe Cordova**  
**Executive Director**  
[jcordova@okdrs.gov](mailto:jcordova@okdrs.gov)  
**405.951.3400**

GOVERNANCE:

Here a brief description of the agency's governance structure should be provided. Is the agency headed by a Governor appointee? An appointee of an independent board? Who selects the board, and who are the current members of the board.

**Title 74, Section 166.1 et seq. of the Oklahoma Statutes provides that the Department of Rehabilitation Services** is under the control of the Oklahoma Commission for Rehabilitation Services, composed of three members: one member appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate, one member appointed by the Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives, and one member appointed by the Governor. Terms of office of the Commission members are for three years, with the term of one Commission member expiring each year. The Commission has the legal authority and responsibility to govern the Department of Rehabilitation Services, appoint and remove the Director of the Department of Rehabilitation Services.

**Lynda Collins, Chair      Appointed by Governor**

Commissioner Collins was a teenager facing cancer treatment and barriers to employment because of her disability. With help from the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, she got career counseling, encouragement and her first job. She worked her way up through the ranks to Vocational Rehabilitation administrator, retiring after 33 years in 2005. Collins earned a bachelor's of science in psychology and sociology from East Central University and a master's degree in psychology with an emphasis in vocational rehabilitation from Oklahoma State University. She holds a national Certified Rehabilitation Counselor license and is recognized by the state as a Certified Public Manager. Commissioner Collins is the first woman and first Native American ever appointed to the three-person governing board for the agency. Her first three-year term began in August 2011.

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#### **Jack Tucker, Member      Appointed by Senate President Pro Tempore**

Commissioner Tucker is a retired principal with 40 years' experience at the Oklahoma School for the Deaf. Tucker, who is blind in one eye, was a client of DRS's vocational rehabilitation program, which assisted him with college tuition and books. He began his OSD career at age 22 as a science and driver education instructor and advanced to positions of progressive responsibility, including secondary supervisor, assistant principal and assistant director of education. Tucker served as kindergarten through 12 grade principal from 1985 until his retirement in 2009. Tucker earned an associate's degree from Connors State College, a bachelor's degree from Southeastern State University, a Master's in Public School Administration from East Central University and a Master's in Special Education from the University of Oklahoma.

#### **Steve Shelton, Vice-Chair      Appointed by Speaker of the House of Representatives**

Commissioner Shelton, a senior application programmer and consultant with Fidelity National Information Services, has never allowed blindness to become a barrier to achieving his goals. He began his career in 1977 after graduating from East Central University with a bachelor's of science degree in mathematics and minors in computer science and accounting. He was a client of the Department of Rehabilitation Services' Visual Services and Vocational Rehabilitation program, which assisted him with his education and job placement. He currently resides in Edmond.

Does the Board have any committees or subgroups? **No.**

#### GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

Please provide copies of the minutes for any Commission/Board meetings the agency has had since July 1, 2010 in electronic format (Only in PDF format) Is there an attendance policy for board members/commissioners?

DRS Commission meeting minutes can be found at the following link:

<http://www.okdrs.org/drupal/comm/home>

The Commission meets a minimum of ten (10) times per calendar year and holds a regular annual meeting at which it elects from among its membership a chairperson and a vice-chairperson. The Commission may also hold special sessions at such times as deemed necessary or advisable by a majority of Commission members.

If so, is it being followed? **Yes**

#### MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

Please provide a listing of all government modernization efforts undertaken by the agency since July 1, 2010. Additionally, please provide any authorizing statutory changes that prompted the modernization efforts and whether those efforts have led to cost savings or additional cost burden.

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What steps has the agency taken to cut costs and/or eliminate waste? Are there efforts that have been successful which you believe could serve as a model for other state agencies seeking to keep costs minimal?

- **DRS has effectively partnered and coordinated services with other State Agencies to provide comprehensive services for individuals with disabilities. DRS is taking that success into the business community. The participation with the Regional Workforce Boards and the development of a Business Advisory Council have allowed for DRS to work with employers from targeted areas to open more doors of opportunity for the disabled. The participating businesses have gained a better understanding regarding people with disabilities and are able to see beyond the disability to the qualifications the individual possesses. By working with the businesses and understanding the needs, DRS can better prepare and train individuals to fill the needs in the community.**
- **Cold Case Unit received 408 referrals from VR/VS counselors and obtained resolution on 241 of those for a 59% success rate. This is first Unit of its kind in the country and serves as “promising practice” for other rehabilitation programs. This Unit had a direct impact on Social Security Reimbursement revenues.**
- **DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Social Security Reimbursement Program earned just over \$3.1 million by removing 254 social security recipients from SSA rolls. Each recipient is an individual who maintained wages high enough to permanently leave the Social Security Administration disability and Supplemental Security Income programs. DRS is reimbursed by SSA when vocational rehabilitation services result in someone reaching this level of sustained employment success.**
- **DRS continues to partner with Office of Juvenile Affairs, the Oklahoma Commission for Children and Youth, Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, State Independent Living Council, Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council and Local Workforce Boards. DRS actively works to form partnerships that will improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.**
- **DRS partners with all 9 Tribal VRs in Oklahoma. The partnership allows for the provision of the most beneficial and appropriate services for Native Americans with disabilities in the most efficient and cost effective manner.**

CORE MISSION:

What services are you required to provide which are outside of your core mission? Are any services you provide duplicated or replicated by another agency? **No.** Are there services which are core to your mission which you are unable to perform because of requirements to perform non-core services elsewhere? **No**

PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES:

Are any of the services which are performed by the agency also performed in the private sector in Oklahoma? In other states? Has the agency been approached by any foundation, for-profit or not-for-profit corporation with efforts to privatize some of the functions of the agency?

**The agency purchases services from private sector providers for a broad array of services. This outsourcing maximizes efficiencies and compliance with the federal requirement for clients to have informed choice regarding service options. As needs and service providers change, new providers and partnerships are developed to continue providing excellent services and opportunities for DRS clients.**