Intro to DRS

OKLAHOMA
Rehabilitation
Services

Do Something!



About DRS

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services is a state agency that expands employment opportunities and independence for Oklahomans with disabilities.



Success Story:

> I want to be a productive member of society, and that's what DRS has given me. They're bringing me back into the workforce and helping me regain my self-worth. That's something I lost for a while.

- David Joy

Commission for Rehabilitation Services



Commissioner
Janet C. Barresi, DDS



Commissioner
Kelsey Lee



Commissioner
Lindsay Hanna



Commissioner
Kevin Wallace



Commissioner
Lance Robertson



Commissioner
Noel Tyler



Commissioner
Wanda Felty

Executive Director Sterling Zearley

Sterling Zearley was named DRS Executive Director in August 2026.



Vocational Rehabilitation

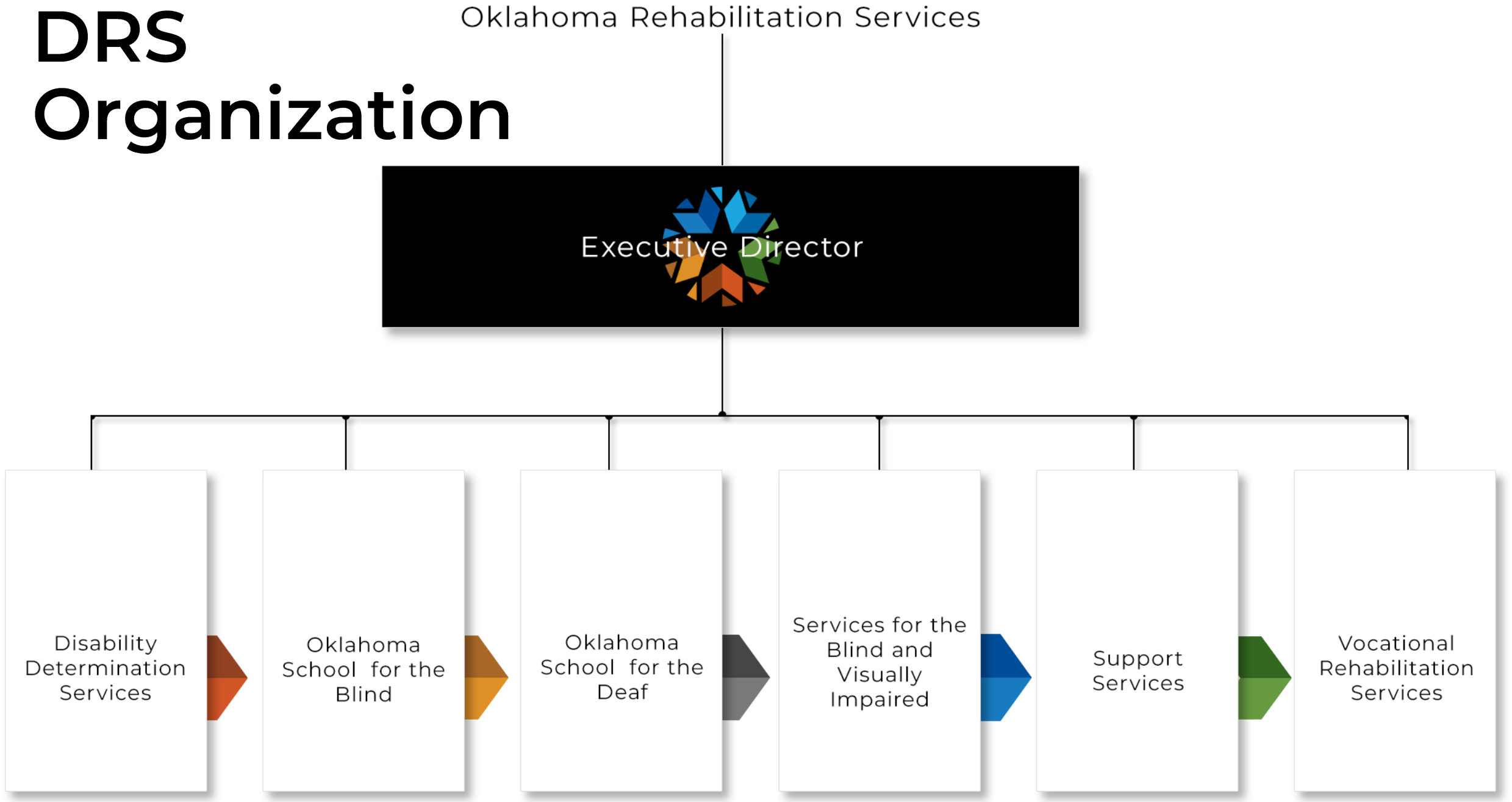
Success Story:



They (DRS) helped me prepare for college and eventually for employment. That support made it possible for me to pursue an education and a career I'm proud of.

- Evan Dozier

DRS Organization



SSA

Reimbursement

DRS is fully reimbursed by the federal government for all case costs for any client who was previously reliant on Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance. The reimbursement comes when Social Security determines the client has met its Substantial Gainful Activity earnings level.

These services build both people's self-respect and strengthen the state's available workforce.



Business Services Program



Employer Services: How we help

- Employers who work with DRS to recruit qualified employees save time and money.
- When a company hires people with disabilities, it receives dependability, commitment and lower employee turnover.
- 84% of Oklahomans served through DRS are still working two years after the program. This is the highest job retention of any workforce program.
- Many employers are finding great resources when they hire people with disabilities.

OKLAHOMA Rehabilitation Services



BUSINESS CONCIERGE

Ready to serve your business



- Business engagement resulting in desired outcomes for employers and people with disabilities
- Access to a new talent pool of qualified candidates for employment
- Consultation about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 503 compliance, tax incentives accommodations, and accessibility
- Awareness and other training related to disabilities
- Creation and funding of work experiences including on-the-job training and internships
- Collaboration with a variety of organizations responsive to the workforce needs of businesses

Employer Services

Ticket to Work



Transition: School-to-Work
Dream Big





Transition Success Story:

> “I feel inspired coming to work. I really enjoy my job.

- Jacob Fehr

Fehr took advantage of DRS’ Transition services while in high school and received work adjustment training.

Transition: School-to-Work



Helps students with disabilities who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services prepare for employment and life after high school.

Services provided may include:

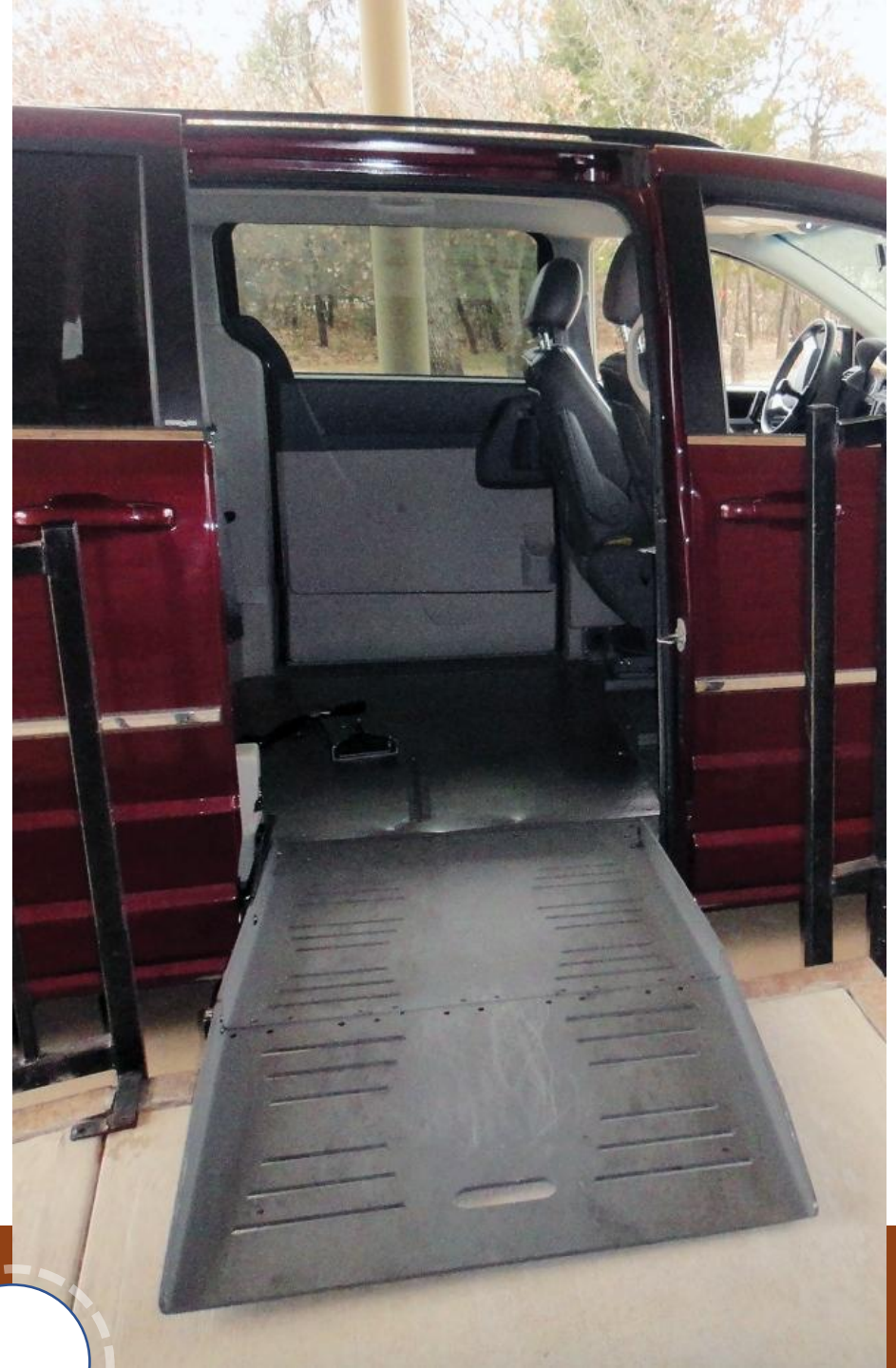
- Vocational counseling and guidance
- Vocational assessment and evaluation
- Work study and on-the-job training
- Post-graduation work continues toward higher education or employment goals

Assistive Technology

VR and SBVI Assistive Technology Specialists complete a variety of assessments based on the counselor's referral and the client's need. All assessments are focused on how the accommodation or AT will assist the individual in overcoming obstacles that interfere with obtaining employment or keeping a job.

Assessments include the following areas:

- Home or vehicle modifications
- Personal mobility needs, such as wheelchairs
- Computer access
- Worksite access or modification needs
- Activities of daily living needs



VR and SBVI Clients Served

Vocational Rehabilitation

- 12,435 Clients Served
- 4,385 Program Applications
- 3,414 Employment Plans Completed

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

- 1,330 Clients Served
- 455 Program Applications
- 339 Employment Plans Completed

VR and SBVI Clients Employed

Vocational Rehabilitation

- 997 Employment Outcomes
- $30,730 Average Yearly Earnings
- $ 4,609 Average Taxes Paid

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

- 115 Employment Outcomes
- $31,915 Average Yearly Earnings
- $4,787 Average Taxes Paid

DRS helps with new hires for maximum success



Myths

I don't know if their wheelchair will be able to go everywhere in the office? I can't hire a person who is in a wheelchair.
— **Employer**

I don't know anything about special software? I can't hire a person who is blind. — **Employer**

They require dictation software? They want a dragon? I can't hire a person who has mobility issues. — **Employer**

Fact! Through on-the-job training and on-job-evaluation and job coaching, we help the employer and the client gain the needed tools to succeed.

On-the-Job Training and On-Job-Experience

- On-the-Job Training is a training period for our clients.
- While the employer gives the client a paycheck during the OJT, we will reimburse the employer for wages and benefits paid during that time. At the end of the OJT, employers generally hire the client permanently.
- DRS will do a follow-up consultation at a determined time from the employer, client and counselor to ensure a successful fit for all parties.



On-the-Job Training and On-Job-Experience

- On-Job-Experience is a partnership with DRS and a business that gives valuable work experience to clients. DRS will reimburse businesses for wages and benefits expended in this partnership.

- Services are provided by assistive technology specialists, rehabilitation technicians, and orientation mobility specialists and job coaches to help the client learn their new employment surroundings and equipment, especially if the employer installs software like JAWS or ZoomText for our client.



DRS and Vocational Rehabilitation



Vocational Rehabilitation

Who we serve.

A person may be eligible for VR services if he or she has a physical or mental disability that is a barrier to employment and requires services to prepare for, find, keep or return to work. There must be a chance the person can benefit by going to work.

Other VR programs

- Vocational Rehabilitation for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing
- Vocational Rehabilitation for youth with disabilities who are incarcerated at Central Oklahoma Juvenile Center (COJC).

DRS and Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired



Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired Success Story



I believe they (DRS) completely changed my life… they didn't give up on me. They gently encouraged me.

— **Stefany Folger**

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

- Instructional services for people who are blind
- Rehabilitation teaching
- Orientation and mobility
- Services for people Who are DeafBlind
- Adult Blind Living Evaluation
- Older Blind Independent Living
- Business Enterprise Program
- Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Who we serve.

A person may be eligible for SBVI services if he or she is blind, or has a visual disability that is a barrier to employment and requires services to prepare for, find, keep or return to work. There must be a chance the person can benefit by going to work.

Disability Determination Service

Who we serve

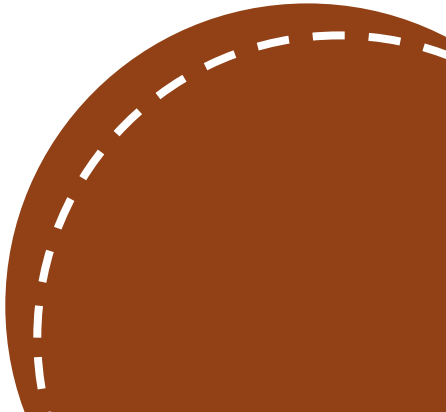
Disability Determination Services makes medical eligibility determinations on applications for Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income.

DDS personnel understand each Social Security claim is a person needing benefits to live.

Timeliness and accuracy are crucial. This division routinely finds itself ranked at the top of the nation in accuracy and productivity for Social Security claims.

Disability Determination Service CDI unit

Cooperative Disability Investigations Unit is a joint effort among federal and state agencies to effectively pool resources to prevent fraud in Social Security Administration’s disability benefit programs and related federal and state programs. CDI obtains evidence sufficient to resolve questions of fraud and/or similar fault in SSA disability programs.



OSB and OSD:

Who we serve

The Oklahoma School for the Blind and the Oklahoma School for the Deaf serve:

- Oklahoma's youth who need specialized education
- Residential and day school education
- Students from infancy through 12th grade
- Statewide (residents live there Monday through Thursday)
- Student's education and room and board are free of charge
- Transportation to selected sites around the state for family or guardians to meet and pick up
- Fully accredited academic program

OK School for the Blind



Oklahoma School for the Blind School Census

- 100% graduation rate
- 81 total number of students enrolled (day and residential).
- 11 students with multiple disabilities
- 60 counties served
- 1 to 6 teacher-to-student ratio
- 1 to 5 direct-care-specialist-to-student ratio





Oklahoma School for the Blind

Located in Muskogee

Specialized instruction includes:

- Braille
- Orientation and mobility
- Optimum use of low vision
- Adaptive equipment and technology
- Tactile graphic skills
- Outreach

Oklahoma School for the Blind Outreach Program

11,642 Direct services

511 Outreach services to families and schools

All data based on school year 2024-2025

OK School for the Deaf



Oklahoma School for the Deaf School Census

- 100% graduation rate
- 101 total students attending all or part of the year
- 75 counties served
- 6 students with multiple disabilities
- 1 to 4 teacher-to-student ratio
- 1 to 4 direct-care-specialist-to-student ratio





Oklahoma School for the Deaf Outreach Program

- 53,179 Individuals taking part in online American Sign Language classes
- Provide evaluations to children from age 2 to 21 years old
- In-service training programs
- Recommendations for adaptations and modifications to the child's educational environment

OSD also provides preschool programs for children who are Deaf at regional sites in Chickasha and Sulphur.





Oklahoma School for the Deaf

Located in Sulphur

Specialized instruction includes:

- OSD educators communicate directly with students using sign language
- Specialized courses designed to meet the students' unique communications needs

Thank You

OKLAHOMA
Rehabilitation
Services

800-845-8476

www.okdrs.gov

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Empowering Oklahomans with Disabilities