

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Human Services

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

Empower Oklahomans with Disabilities

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

Noel Tyler
Interim Director
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GOVERNANCE:

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.

Jack Tucker, Chair 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.

April Danahy, Vice Chair Appointed by Speaker of the House of Representatives
Commissioner Danahy is active in the Enid community and holds positions on numerous nonprofit boards including United Way of Enid and Northwest Oklahoma, Loaves and Fishes, Northwest Oklahoma Blood Institute Board of Directors, Enid Police Civil Service Commission and the Community Development Support Association. She earned a bachelor's of science degree in mass communications from Phillips University in Enid. Her current professional certificates include Professional in Human Resources and Society for Human Resource Management Certified Professional. Danahy's recognitions include Enid YWCA Woman of the Year, Enid News and Eagle Pillar of the Plains, Journal Record Woman of the Year "50 Making a Difference" honoree, Greater Enid Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year, Greater Enid Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the Year.

Lynda Collins, Member 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

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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.

GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

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

<http://www.okrehab.org/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.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

What steps has the agency taken to cut costs and/or eliminate waste?

- DRS staff continue to build upon and utilize new and existing services to maximize the economic impact of the programs. Much of what the agency provides is not easily translated into short term savings. DRS partners with other entities to reduce redundancy of services to consumers.
- Oklahoma School for the Blind (OSB) and Oklahoma School for the Deaf (OSD) participate in the e-rate program to provide technology for the schools at a reduced rate.
- DRS takes advantage of the p-card program to maximize rebate incentives. When savings are realized within the programs it means those savings can provide services to more individuals with disabilities. The savings from DRS come in the form of moving people off of social supports and into productive competitive employment. The true value of the DRS programs is that we don't just get people jobs, we give them opportunities to change their lives.
- DRS continues to be an active partner in the OMES DISCUSS initiative. To date, the agency has not realized any specific savings, but the agency believes it will have an expanded opportunity to capitalize on technology at a reduced cost.
- The DRS client management software, AWARE, partnered with a business intelligence software company, Tableau. Tableau uses cutting edge technology to increase the speed at which voluminous data sets can be accessed, analyzed and shared. DRS is working to adapt AWARE to the new WIOA required data elements, expand the usage of Tableau beyond the client service data sets and increase accessibility to the information for all staff.

CORE MISSION:

The Vocational Rehabilitation programs and other associated employment programs administered by the Divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation and Visual Services assist persons with disabilities to enter or remain in the work force, reducing or eliminating their dependence on disability benefits and other social assistance programs (Medicaid, etc.). Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (OLBPH) provides thousands of books, periodicals, textbooks and other

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instructional materials in recorded, large print and braille formats to library patrons. OSB and OSD are the only residential and/or day programs serving the needs of Oklahoma students pre-school through 12th grade who are blind/visually impaired or deaf/hearing impaired. Without these programs, students would not receive specialized instruction at the level provided historically. The Disability Determination Division continues to serve as a Regional Processing Center, providing determination of medical eligibility for Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income programs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- DRS was able to keep all priority groups open this year which has allowed DRS to provide services to all consumers.
- DRS has maintained 100% graduation rates at Oklahoma School for the Blind and Oklahoma School for the Deaf.
- DRS's Disability Determination Division continues to excel nationally in all standards and was recently granted authority to hire additional FTE to expand the Regional Services Center.
- DRS recognizes that the continuity of services is critical to success. DRS has maintained a wide array of partnerships to maximize opportunities to bridge gaps and improve opportunities.

PRIVATE SECTOR 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.