



Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Consumer Satisfaction Survey Results

FFY 2011

Prepared in Collaboration with the
State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Methodology	3
Validity	3
Results	5
Graphs - Survey Results	
1. All Respondents – Grouped by Survey Categories	8
2. All Respondents	9
3. Respondents Exiting DVR Employed	10
4. Respondents Exiting DVR Unemployed	11
5. Respondents Living in a Non-Rural Area	12
6. Respondent Living on the Road System	13
7. Respondents Living in a Remote Area	14
8. Transfer Cases	15
Tables	
1. Disability Type	4
2. Gender	4
3. Age	4
4. Location	4
5. Employment Status	4
6. Responses – FY2007 through FY2011	5
7. What Participants Liked about DVR Experience	6
8. What Participants Disliked about DVR Experience	6
9. Comparison of All Responses for All Categories	16

The mission of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.

Executive Summary

To meet the requirement of 34 CFR § 361.17 (h) (4), the State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee (SVRC) in collaboration with DVR conducts an on-going Consumer Satisfaction Survey in an effort to ensure that DVR is meeting its programmatic responsibilities to the individuals receiving vocational rehabilitation (VR) services while providing the highest level of service possible. The survey contains a series of statements designed to measure the individual's attitudes and satisfaction levels.

A survey was either mailed or emailed to all individuals whose cases were closed during federal FY2011 after having received VR services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The information gathered from this process is used in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA), DVR's strategic plan and DVR's state plan. This report summarizes the results of those surveys.

The survey looks at four broad areas:

Program Satisfaction: How did DVR do in general?

- 83% of all respondents expressed overall satisfaction with DVR's services. The satisfaction rate was 93% for those individuals who were employed compared to a 63% satisfaction rate for those who were unemployed when exiting the program.
- 86% said they would refer a friend or relative to DVR.

Program Information: Was the individual provided adequate information about the VR program?

- 95% responded that they knew the purpose of DVR was to help them find a job.

Participant Involvement: Was the individual involved in selecting both VR services and the vocational goal?

- 94% indicated they helped choose their vocational goal.
- 90% indicated they helped plan the VR services they received.

Participant and Staff Interaction: How well did the DVR staff interact with the individual?

- 91% reported they were treated with courtesy and respect.
- 90% said DVR staff were available when needed.

968 individuals were surveyed, 117 surveys were returned as undeliverable and 129 individuals responded generating an overall response rate of 15.1%. The response rate for mailed surveys was 30.7% with 69 respondents. The response rate for emailed surveys was 9.4% with 60 respondents.

For those providing written comments, 19% indicated that the interaction with DVR staff was what respondents liked most about their DVR experience. 8% indicated what they disliked most about their DVR experience was the length of time it took for the VR process to work.

Methodology

- Surveys are mailed/emailed monthly to all participants whose cases were closed in the previous month and who received services under an IPE. Timely surveying helps to maximize the response rate. This group of participants was targeted as they have been through the entire VR process. DVR also surveys only those who have exited the program as we do not want to repeatedly resurvey active participants.
- The mail survey used during the first quarter of FFY2011 (October 2010 – December 2010) employed a Likert Scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree with a comments section. The scale was changed in the second quarter to an agree/disagree format with a comment section on each question.
- The mailed survey was sent from the SVRC and includes a postage paid return envelope, while the email was sent using the Survey Monkey website.
- Follow-up surveys are not sent to non-respondents due to staff time required for this activity.
- Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the results. The survey data will be kept and used for longitudinal comparisons and trend analysis.

Validity

Of the 968 surveys mailed or emailed 117 were returned as undeliverable leaving a base population of 851. From this group, 129 participants responded thus achieving a valid statistical sample size with a confidence level of 95%, plus or minus 7.95%.

Respondent Characteristics

Tables 1 through 5 provide a comparison of the surveys sent to those returned for five attributes (disability, gender, age, location and employment status) of DVR participants. These characteristics were selected for analysis as they are distinct populations groups and can be used to validate survey results.

Table 1 shows that behavioral health and the sensory disabilities of deafness and blindness are appropriately represented in the results. Those individuals with a physical disability are slightly over represented while those with a cognitive disability are slightly under represented.

Table 2 shows that both males and females returned surveys at a rate equal to their respective population groups.

Table 3 shows all age groups are fairly represented. It is interesting to note that proportionally, more participants in the >65 age group returned the email survey as compared to the other age groups. Both the SVRC and DVR thought an electronic survey might appeal to the younger age group.

Table 4 shows the return rate is consistent across regions of the state with rural Alaska returning surveys at a slightly higher percentage. It is also interesting to note that more individuals in the non-rural areas use email to communicate than do individuals in the other regions of the state. This could be due to lack of access to or the expense of email services in rural Alaska.

Table 5 shows that participants exiting employed responded at a higher rate than those who are exiting unemployed. This is consistent with previous years' results.

Table 1: by Disability Type	
Disability	Sent / Returned
Behavioral Health	39% (377) / 40% (52)
Physical/Orthopedic	34% (329) / 39% (50)
Cognitive	17% (165) / 13% (17)
Deafness/Hearing Loss	7% (68) / 6% (8)
Blindness/Visual Impairments	3% (29) / 2% (2)

Table 2: by Gender	
Gender	Sent / Returned
Female	38% (368) / 38% (49)
Male	62% (600) / 62% (80)

Table 3: by Age	
Age Group	Sent / Returned
< 24	14% (135) / 6% (8)
24 – 65	85% (823) / 92% (118)
> 65	1% (10) / 2% (3)

Table 4: by Location	
Location	Sent / Returned
Non-Rural	66% (639) / 65% (83)
Road System	24% (232) / 22% (29)
Rural (Bush)	10% (97) / 13% (17)

Table 5: by Employment Status	
Employment Status	Sent / Returned
Employed	65% (629) / 74% (95)
Unemployed	35% (339) / 26% (34)

Results

5-Year Comparison

Table 6 compares survey data for a 5-year period, covering federal fiscal year 2007 to 2011. After applying the validity factor from each of the survey years to the outcomes, all responses fall within the overlapping area with the exception of two questions.

The first anomaly is, “I was aware of CAP and that it could help me with disputes.” CAP refers to the Client Assistance Program. Information about CAP is provided to all participants at orientation and application, at IPE development and at case closure. This dissemination process has not changed throughout the years. After the 2007 survey, DVR shared the low recognition of CAP with staff.

The second is, “VR services helped get my job”. DVR believes the reason for this increase in positive responses is due to a rewording of the survey statements to “DVR services helped me prepare for, get, or keep my job.”

Table 6: Respondents Agreeing with Survey Statements - FY2007 through FY2011					
Statements	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
I knew DVR services were to help me find a job.	95%	97%	96%	92%	95%
I would refer a friend or relative to DVR	91%	90%	93%	89%	86%
I was treated with courtesy and respect.	91%	96%	99%	88%	91%
DVR staff was available to help me when needed.	86%	89%	91%	87%	90%
My phone calls were returned.	80%	90%	91%	87%	88%
My counselor and I had a good working relationship.	86%	92%	92%	86%	87%
I was involved in choosing my vocational goal.	89%	92%	94%	86%	94%
I helped plan the services I received.	83%	92%	91%	86%	90%
I was able to see my counselor when I needed to.	81%	87%	89%	85%	84%
I was informed of my right to appeal DVR's decisions.	81%	91%	92%	84%	88%
Overall, I am satisfied with the services I received.	82%	85%	88%	82%	83%
I am satisfied with my job.	84%	86%	85%	82%	85%
I received enough information to make good choices.	80%	86%	92%	82%	83%
I feel my counselor explained all services available.	81%	86%	91%	81%	82%
I knew I could ask for help to settle disputes.	84%	88%	84%	80%	80%
Services provided in a reasonable amount of time.	84%	82%	90%	79%	80%
VR helped me reach my vocational goal.	70%	79%	84%	78%	83%
I was aware of CAP & it could help me with disputes.	64%	85%	86%	76%	80%
VR services helped get my job.	77%	77%	77%	72%	89%

Participant Comments

The participants' comments about experience with DVR are grouped by common themes and shown in Tables 7 and 8 shown below.

Forty-three percent (43%) of the individuals surveyed commented on what they liked about DVR while only 18% commented on what they disliked about their DVR experience. The most liked aspects of DVR were related to the participants' interactions and relationships with staff and counselors.

Table 7: What Participants Liked the Most About Their Experience with DVR		
Category	Responses	% of Total Respondents
Overall program	4	3%
Counselor relationship	5	4%
Employment assistance	9	7%
Help received	13	10%
Entire staff	25	19%
Total	56	43%

The most disliked aspect of the VR experience was the amount of time it took to progress through the program. Those who left unemployed generated the bulk of these staff related comments .

Table 8: What Participants Disliked the Most About Their Experience with DVR		
Category	Responses	% of Total Respondents
Services not provided	2	2%
Lack of good job choices	5	4%
Staff – phone calls not returned, not available, etc.	6	5%
Time required	10	8%
Total	23	18%

Survey Answers

The following series of graphs present the responses by broad program areas, all respondents, employment status, location and transfers allowing for comparisons between different groups.

Survey Categories

Graph 1 shows the results grouped by the four broad survey areas: program satisfaction, program information, participant involvement, and counselor/staff interaction. The strongest positive responses are in program information and consumer involvement.

All Respondents

Graph 2 presents the survey responses for all respondents. The results show that DVR is getting across the message that we are here to help individuals find and keep a job with 95% of respondents affirming they knew DVR services were to help find employment.

DVR believes that as a result of a wording change on the FY2011 surveys, there was a 17% increase in the positive responses to the statement regarding the purpose of DVR. The question, "DVR services helped me get my job" was replaced with the current statement, "VR services helped me prepare for, get or keep my job".

Name recognition of CAP continues to be an issue in this survey as we have seen in other surveys. As stated earlier in this report, information about CAP is disseminated throughout the VR process. The low percentage seen in the responses may be related to the fact that most individuals never have the need for CAP

Employment Status

Graphs 3 and 4 present the employment status related responses. As would be expected, a higher percentage of surveys were returned and the overall satisfaction scores were higher for those employed than those unemployed. Overall satisfaction with the DVR program was 12% higher for the employed group than the unemployed group.

Geographic Areas

Graphs 5, 6 and 7 present the results by geographic area. DVR has an obligation to provide services statewide. This is a challenge given the size of the state and the itinerant nature of VR services provided in some areas. The 2009 CSNA identified rural Alaska as being under-served. For the purposes of this survey, non-rural includes the larger cities of primarily Anchorage, Juneau and Fairbanks.

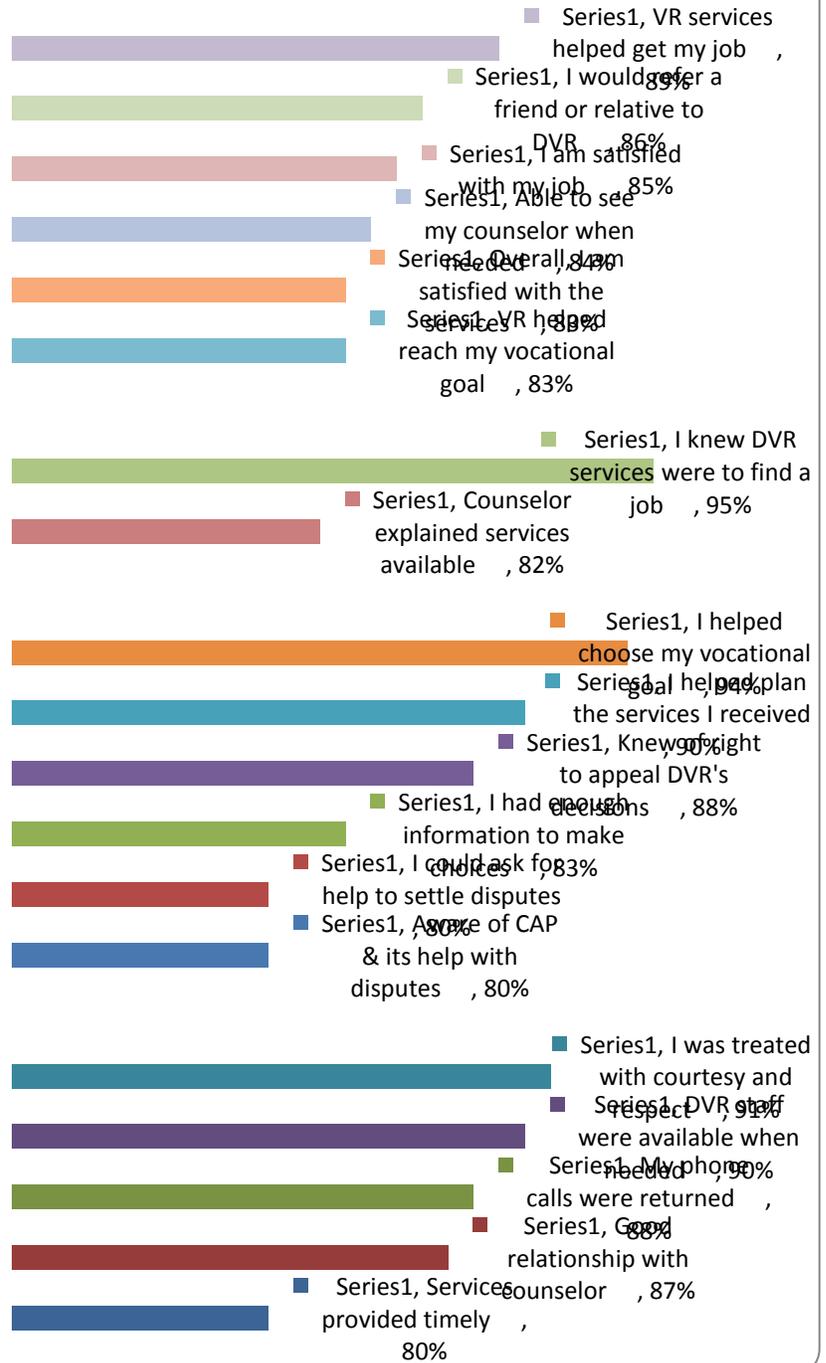
Respondents living in remote areas tend to have higher satisfaction levels than those living in non-rural areas. Those whom receive the least services are the most satisfied; and those whom receive the most services are the least satisfied. Respondents living on the road system are somewhere in the middle.

Transfer Cases

Graph 8 presents the data on cases that have been transferred. Over the years, transfer cases have proven problematic as the service delivery is interrupted and a relationship must be developed with a new VR counselor.

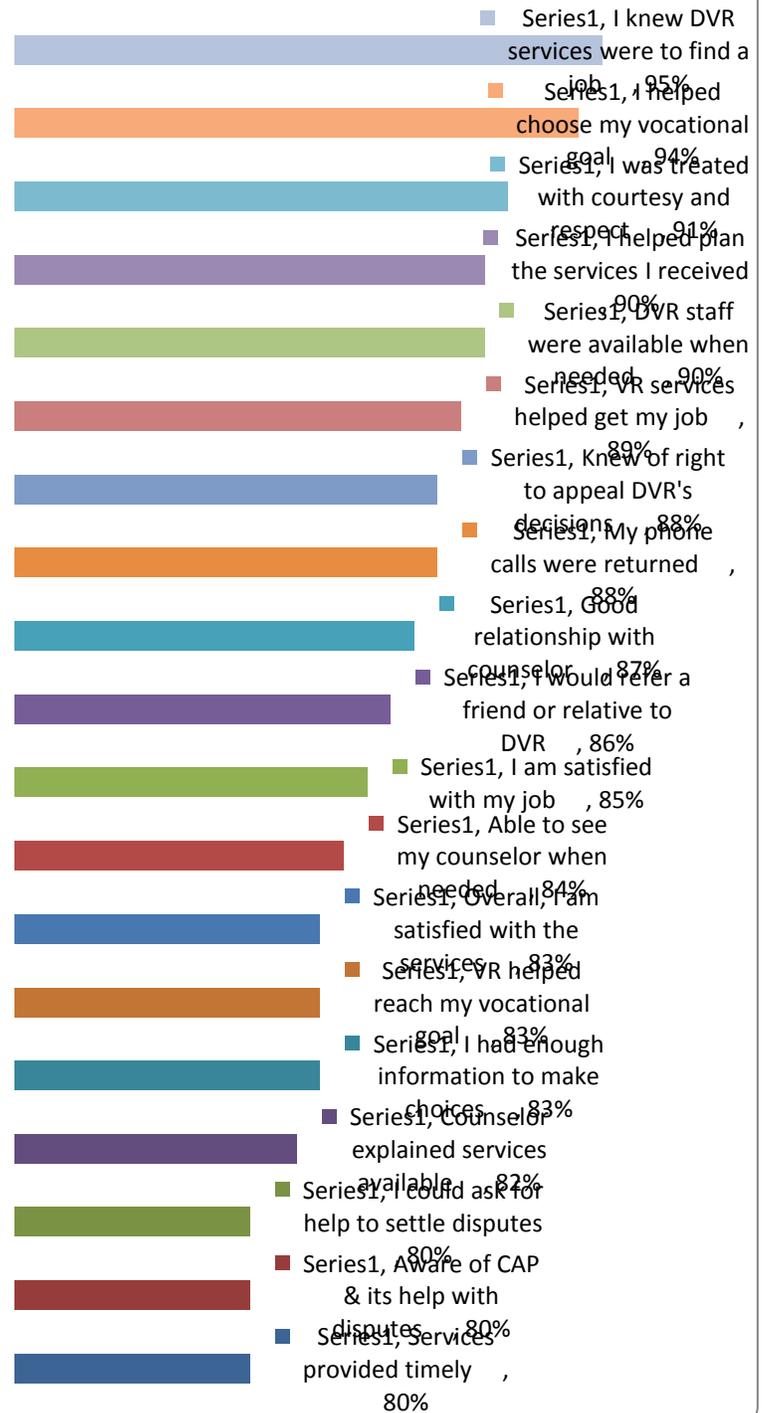
Thirty-one percent (31%) of those surveyed during FY2011 reported their case had been transferred at sometime during life of the case which is an increase from 21% in FY2010. Of those cases transferred, 67% were initiated by DVR due to staff turnover and 19% were due to participants moving. The overall satisfaction with VR services was actually higher for those whose cases had been transferred than it was for all respondents combined, 87% compared to 83%.

All Respondents - Percent Agreeing by Survey Categories



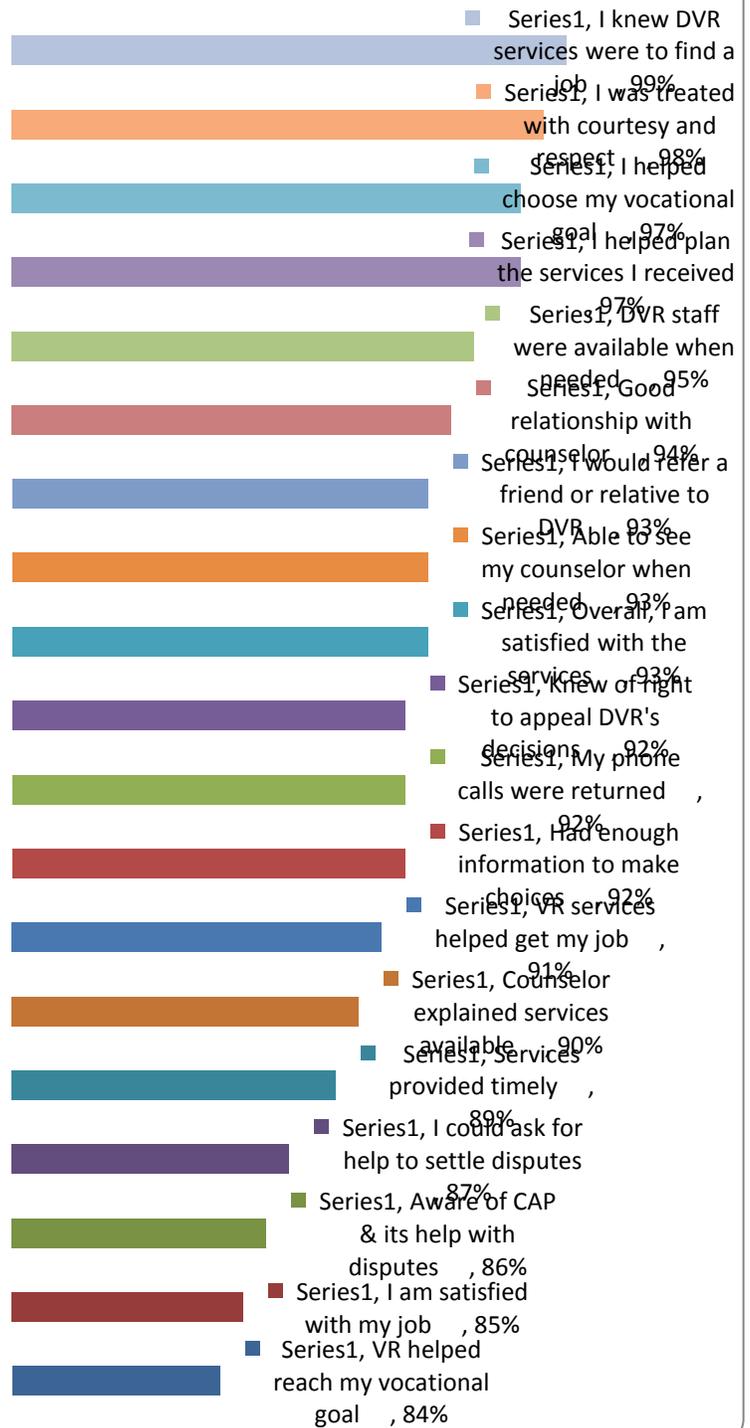
Graph 2

All Respondents Percent Agreeing Ranked in Order Highest to Lowest



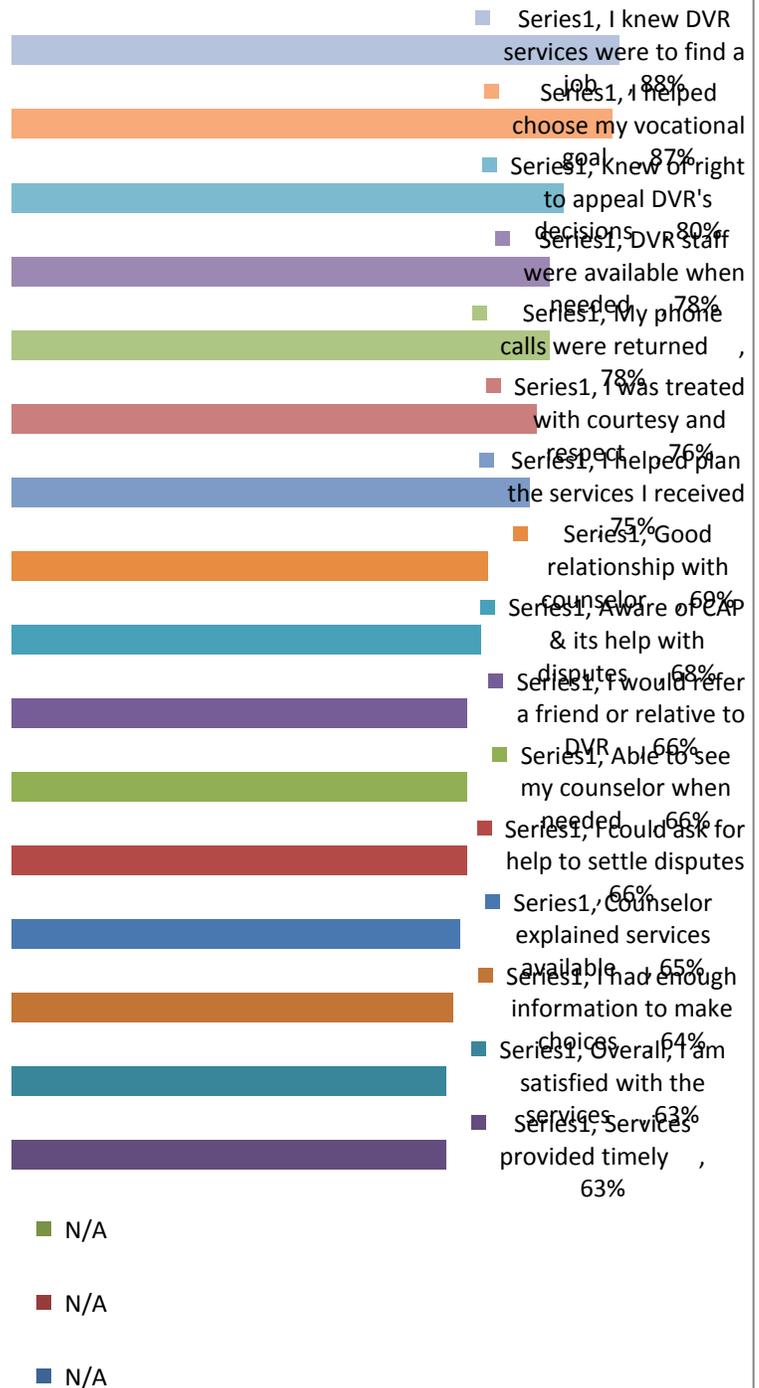
Graph 3

Respondents Exiting DVR Employed Percent Agreeing Ranked in Order Highest to Lowest



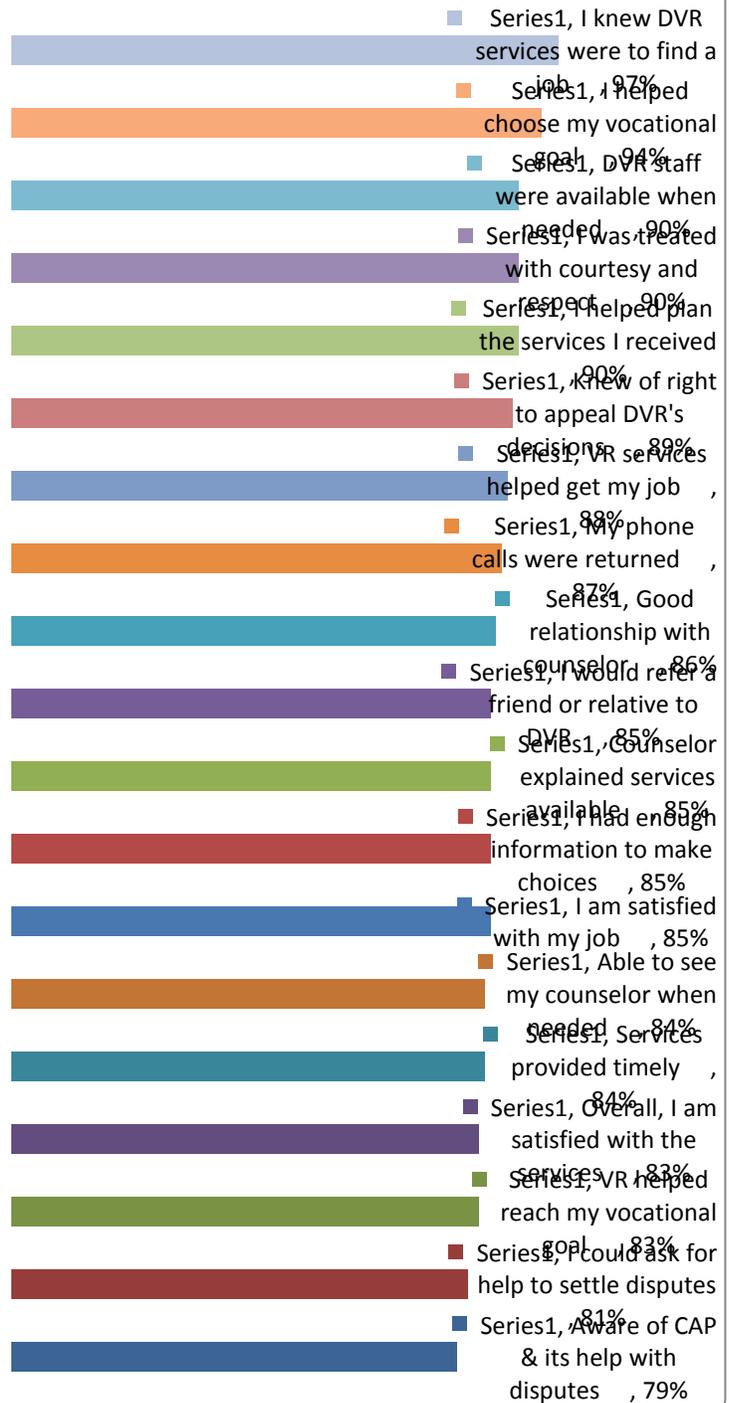
Graph 4

Respondents Exiting DVR Unemployed Percent Agreeing Ranked in Order Highest to Lowest



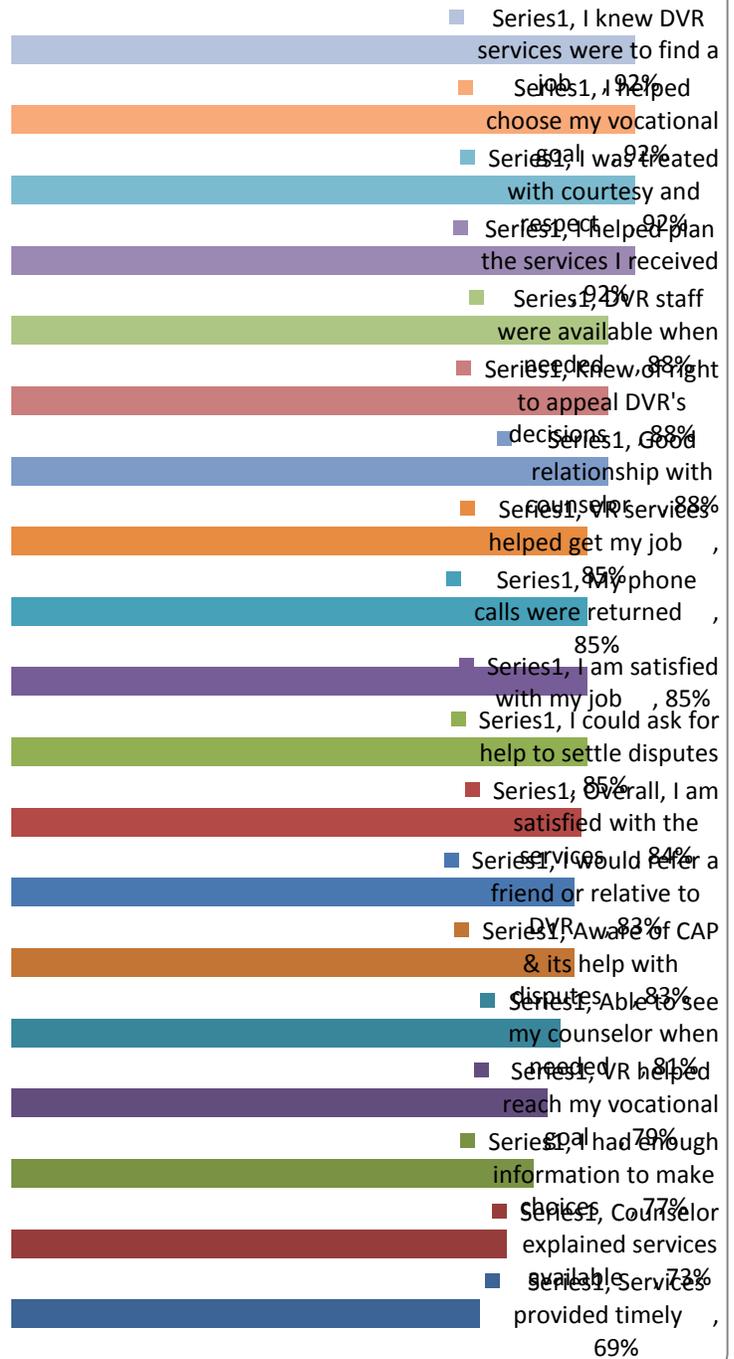
Graph 5

Non-Rural Respondents Percent Agreeing Ranked in Order Highest to Lowest



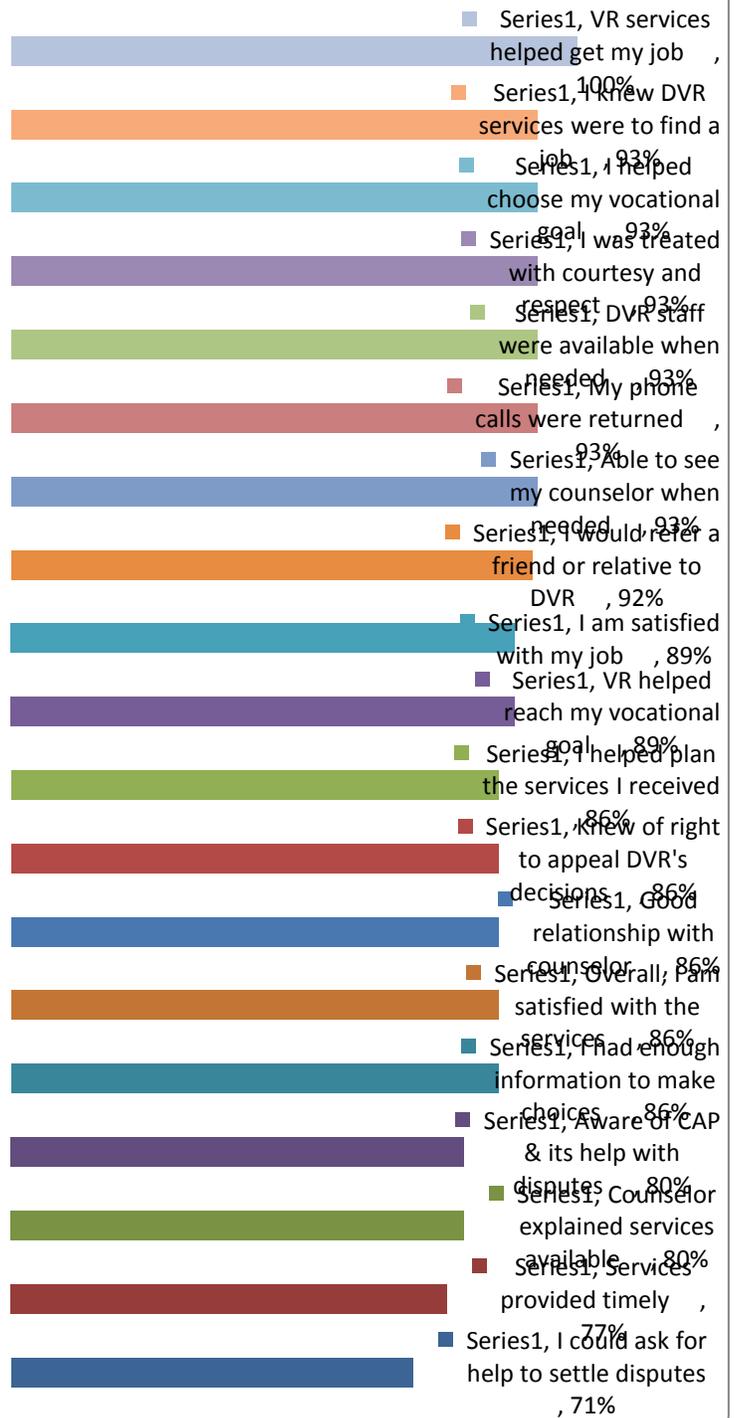
Graph 6

Respondents Living Along the Road System Percent Agreeing Ranked in Order Highest to Lowest



Graph 7

Respondents Living in Remote Areas Percent Agreeing Ranked in Order Highest to Lowest



Graph 8

Respondents Whose Cases Were Transferred Percent Agreeing Ranked in Order Highest to Lowest

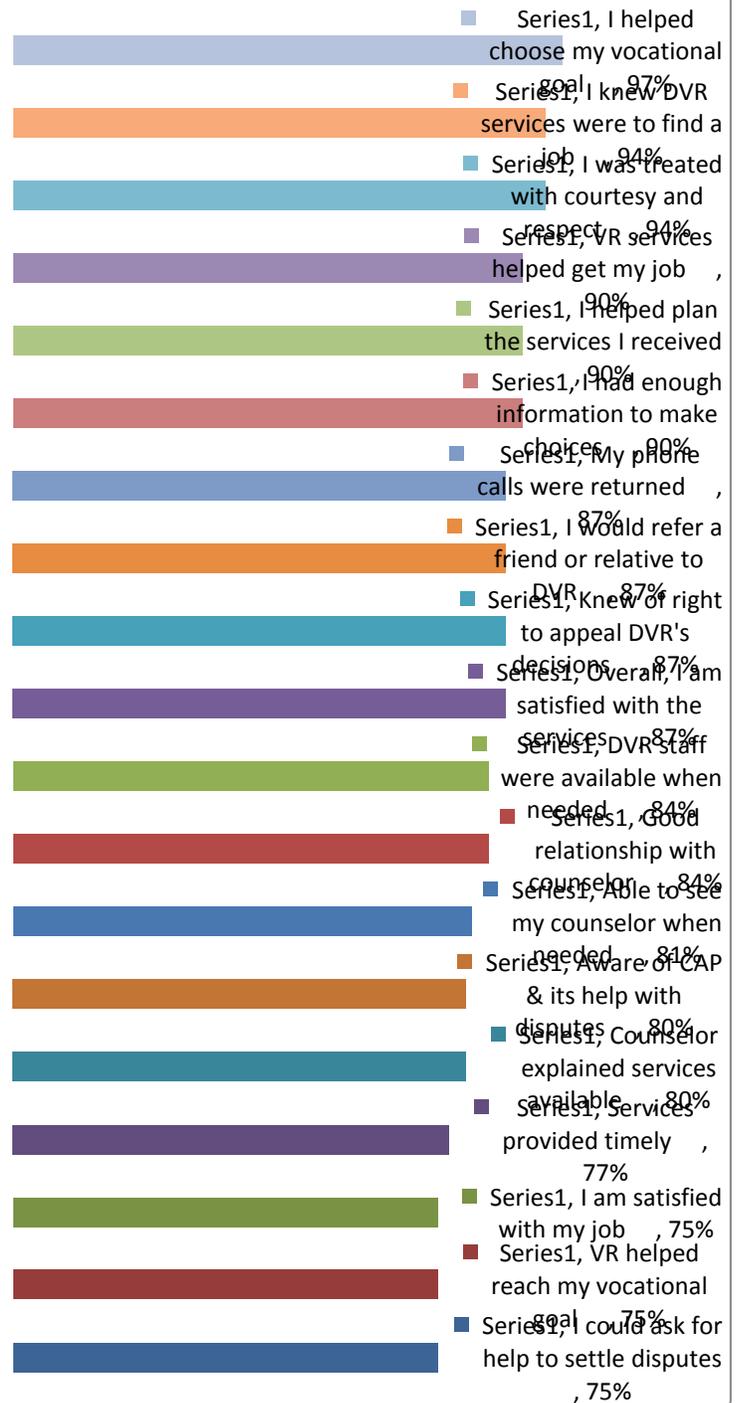


Table 9 provides an opportunity to compare all the categories of data.

Table 9: Comparison of All Responses for All Categories Analyzed							
	All Respondents	Employed	Unemployed	Non-Rural	Road	Remote	Transfers
Number of Respondents	129	95	34	83	29	17	31
I was treated with courtesy and respect	91%	98%	76%	90%	92%	93%	94%
I knew DVR services were to find a job	95%	99%	88%	97%	92%	93%	94%
I helped choose my vocational goal	94%	97%	87%	94%	92%	93%	97%
I would refer a friend or relative to DVR	86%	93%	66%	85%	83%	92%	87%
Good relationship with counselor	87%	94%	69%	86%	88%	86%	84%
Knew of right to appeal DVR's decisions	88%	92%	80%	89%	88%	86%	87%
I had enough information to make choices	83%	92%	64%	85%	77%	86%	90%
DVR staff were available when needed	90%	95%	78%	90%	88%	93%	84%
My phone calls were returned	88%	92%	78%	87%	85%	93%	87%
I helped plan the services I received	90%	97%	75%	90%	92%	86%	90%
Counselor explained services available	82%	90%	65%	85%	73%	80%	80%
Services provided timely	80%	89%	63%	84%	69%	77%	77%
Able to see my counselor when needed	84%	93%	66%	84%	81%	93%	81%
Overall, I am satisfied with the services	83%	93%	63%	83%	84%	86%	87%
Aware of CAP & its help with disputes	80%	86%	68%	79%	83%	80%	80%
I am satisfied with my job	85%	85%		85%	85%	89%	75%
I could ask for help to settle disputes	80%	87%	66%	81%	85%	71%	75%
VR helped reach vocational goal	83%	84%		83%	79%	89%	75%
VR services helped get my job	89%	91%		88%	85%	100%	90%
Case was transferred	25%	28%	15%	22%	18%	57%	