

2022 Participant Survey Results

Executive Summary

Most respondents prefer to receive VRS services in a hybrid model, both online and in-person (41%). Close to 100 people would prefer only meeting in-person if Covid-19 were no longer a concern. Top locations for in-person services included at a VRS office or CareerForce location (420), followed by participant's home (369) and at a community location such as library or recreation center (245). Most respondents did not report barriers to online services; 3% identified technology or internet access as a "major" issue and 9% reported not having access to online services. The top issues affecting participation in services included: stress and anxiety, lack of transportation, and lack of jobs they want to apply for.

The survey had a strong response rate, indicating good attachment to VRS. The Net Promoter Score (NPS) was 20, indicating a positive response to the question of "How likely are you to recommend VR services to a friend or family?".

"I wish that the services VRS and DEED offered were more visible to the public. I figured that I would never be able to work because of my disability. But, since I got connected with VRS, I have found that is not true."

VRS Participant, 2022

Purpose and Methodology

- This survey was conducted to identify preferences and barriers to receiving VRS services, both online and in-person. We contacted individuals who are currently receiving VRS services and, in some cases, their parents or guardians. Current participants were selected because they have relevant insight into how they would like to see services provided in the near future.
- On March 30, the initial survey email was sent to 6,427 valid email addresses, along with two reminder emails in the following weeks. Respondents clicked on a link in the email to begin the web-based survey. The first question asked "Do you currently receive VRS employment services?" and a "No" response to that question ended the survey (N=102). The survey allowed one response per individual. There were 1,034 surveys completed, over a 16% response rate. Partial responses are included in this analysis when most questions were completed. 57% of respondents completed the survey using a smart phone, 38% on a computer, and 5% on a tablet. The survey closed on April 21.
- The survey included eight multiple choice questions and four open-ended questions. The median time to complete the survey was about 4 minutes.

Limitations

- We only contacted the participants for whom we had an email address. There is an inherent bias in conducting email surveys that favors responses from individuals who are comfortable with a basic level of computer, tablet, or smart phone technology. We are missing information from participants who have limited or no access to email and individuals who are not currently participants but may have preferences that would shape their future participation in VRS services.

Results

In-Person Services

- *How would you prefer to receive your VRS services at this time?*
 - o 41% hybrid
 - o 31% online only
 - o 18% in-person
 - o 6% phone
- *If COVID-19 were not a concern, would you change your preference of how you receive VRS services?*
 - o 51% No
 - o 21% Yes
 - o 21% Not sure
 - *If COVID-19 were not a concern, how would you prefer to receive your VRS services? Asked only the “Yes” or “Not sure” respondents from previous question (N=391).*
 - 61% In-person
 - 30% hybrid
 - 4% online
- *If you were meeting in person, where would you like to meet with VRS for employment services? (May choose multiple locations)*

Location Name	Percent of Respondents
VRS office or CareerForce center	45%
At my home	40%
At a community location (e.g. library or recreation center)	27%
Business (coffee shop, restaurant)	20%
At a school	20%
At a workplace (future or current)	11%
Don't know/unsure	11%
Outdoors (park, nature center)	10%
College or university	9%
I do not want to meet in person	6%

Other Location – several people indicated no preference, anywhere is fine. No additional locations other than one mention of a specific transitional program

Do you have any other comments about how or where you'd like to meet with VRS?

Many people value online meetings and/or in-person meetings and appreciate the flexibility that they have experienced. Some people mentioned not being able to get in touch with counselors.

- “I would have sought VRS employment services YEARS ago, if it had been available online as it is now.”
- “I’m a big fan of meeting virtually. It is effective and efficient.”
- “Transportation costs (especially with rising gas prices) are a significant barrier for me along with not having reliable vehicle access. I don’t have the best internet service, but 99% of the time it is sufficient for meetings. Right now I wouldn’t choose to meet at home, but if I had a different living, I would probably rank home meetings higher.”
- “I feel we lose some with all this remote stuff.”
- “Without in person miscommunication happens and one gets blown off more, forgotten about.”

Possible Issues

- *Have you ever used online services, such as services provided through a computer, tablet, or smart phone, from VRS or another organization?*
 - 78% Yes
 - 12% I choose not to participate in online services
 - 9% I do not have access to online services
- *How easy or difficult is it for you to use online services provided through a computer, tablet or smart phone?*
 - 55% Easy
 - 34% Somewhat easy
 - 9% Somewhat difficult
 - 3% Difficult
- *How much do the issues listed below affect your ability to receive VRS services, whether online or in person?*

	<i>Not an Issue</i>	<i>Somewhat of an Issue</i>	<i>Major Issue</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
<i>Access to technology (computer, tablet, or smart phone)</i>	83%	12%	3%	2%
<i>Access to Internet</i>	83%	12%	3%	2%
<i>Lack of time</i>	56%	37%	5%	3%
<i>Lack of transportation</i>	59%	25%	12%	4%
<i>Lack of support from Parent or Guardian</i>	79%	6%	1%	14%
<i>Childcare</i>	65%	3%	1%	32%
<i>Health or medical issues</i>	61%	25%	7%	7%
<i>Stress or anxiety</i>	41%	41%	14%	3%
<i>Concern over COVID-19 exposure</i>	66%	23%	8%	3%
<i>Lack of jobs that I want to apply for</i>	45%	34%	12%	9%
<i>Concern about loss of SSDI or other public benefits</i>	52%	25%	10%	13%

Do you have any other comments to share about issues you face that prevent you from receiving VRS services?

VRS staff changes, or understaffing were mentioned several times. Transportation as a barrier was mentioned a few times. Some parents have a negative perception based on not receiving communications.

- “My struggle is that the VRS staff turnover and lack of continuity have made it very frustrating and hard to get a job.”
- “Increase staffing for job coach services very much needed”
- “Do wish we had more options of employment places to work with. Also paid temporary work experiences to see what jobs would be like and learn new things to help us get jobs in future.”
- “Searching and getting a job is stressful and difficult but VRS services make it easier and more productive.”
- “Would like the process to move ahead faster.”
- “Nothing has occurred except phone meetings, signing documents, transferring my ticket to work through which I was ignored when I had questions and concerns. I just want to move on to receiving job search and coach services. What is the hold up?”

Share your Thoughts

How can we make it easier for you to access VRS employment services?

Communication and increased frequency of meetings were common themes. More information about different service options for both participants and parents/guardians. Large caseloads were also mentioned as a concern.

- “I would like to see more communication to ensure me and the counselor or on the same page”
- “Would prefer to spend more time with my VRS counselor. When we meet it sometimes feels rushed because they have to see so many people.”
- “Provide a clearer introductory meeting / class as to what the services entail and how they can best be researched and utilized.”
- “Asking me what time we can meet. My schedule is busy, and I can't always meet at the same time.”
- “Provide parent support on how I can navigate in getting my daughter some help.”
- “Come into high schools, talk to parents directly, schools are not doing a good job letting us know what's available.”
- “It is currently very easy, so not sure. Making it well known to parents with individuals that have disabilities, especially during transition plus years.”
- “Continue doing exactly what VRS is doing for clients”

"You guys have done a wonderful job in finding different jobs and job shadows for my son to gain job experience that will further his ability to find jobs in the future."

Parent of VRS Participant,
2022

How likely are you to recommend VRS employment services to a friend or family member?

The most frequent response to this question was "10 Extremely Likely" (40%). The Net Promoter Score is calculated by taking the "promoters" (9 or 10) minus the "detractors" (0-6). The resulting score of 20 is a good indicator of positive experiences overall.

- "I have been very happy with the VRS services I've received. I have found the counselors very helpful, supportive, encouraging, and they've helped me achieve my goals of becoming a therapist!"
- "The quality of our VRS person makes all the difference."
- "Not much gets accomplished counselors unavailable."
- "It's taking a very long time with large gaps in between steps."
- "I believe that a lot of people with disabilities are not aware of this service."
- "I didn't know this service existed before, and I've already told a couple people about the service because its super helpful."
- "Everyone I have dealt with has been beyond my expectations."