



Restoration of Employment Support Services for Virginians with Disabilities

Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

Item 325 #2 (Hanger); Item 325 #8s (Colgan); Item 325 #11s (Vogel)

Funding for the employment of Virginians with disabilities helps meet the Employment First requirement under Virginia’s DOJ Settlement Agreement.

Restoration of employment services budget cuts is supported by the VA Disability Commission.

Previous budget cuts of \$989,737 between FY07-14 have had a dire impact on jobs and essential income for 990 Virginians with disabilities. Additional cuts of \$302,666 in FY15 and a proposed cut of \$364,943 in FY16 will impact an additional 360 individuals. Cuts total over 20% since FY07 while the need for services increases each year. Total past and proposed cuts total **\$1,354,680**.

Previous and Current Budget Cuts					
FY07	LTESS EES	\$5,446,220. \$3,361,944.	\$8,828,164.		
FY14	LTESS EES	\$5,180,229 2,658,198	\$7,838,427		
Previous Cuts				(\$989,737.)	
FY15	Cuts			(\$302,666.)	(\$1,292,403.)
FY16	Proposed & Total Cuts			(\$364,943.)	(\$1,354,680.)

Return on Investment (ROI)

Return on Investment (ROI) for the Commonwealth - Research Findings: A ten-year study by the University of Richmond has found that the LTESS program is a great investment and Return on Investment (ROI) is sound. The study found that for every \$1 invested in LTESS – the program returns over \$3.50 in wages earned which benefits both localities and the Commonwealth.

Using the University of Richmond findings, previous and current budget reductions of \$1,354,680 have resulted in approximately \$4.7M in lost wages. These lost wages also result in over \$143,000 in lost state individual income tax revenue.

Private Not-for-Profit Providers and Community Services Boards (CSBs) have subsidized employment support services for Virginians with disabilities for years – so that individuals keep their jobs.

Shortage of program funding for services already provided and invoiced totals **\$3,357,302** between FY11-FY14 (where documentation exists at DARS). Invoices authorized and approved by DARS for services provided by Employment Services Organizations (ESOs), have not been paid because of the lack of sufficient funding in the LTESS and EES programs.

Program Shortage and Subsidized (Unpaid Invoices)			
	LTESS	EES	TOTAL
FY11	(\$ 670,288.)	(\$377,272.)	(\$1,047,560.)
FY12	(\$ 721,264.)	(\$ 207,045.)	(\$ 928,309.)
FY13	(\$ 610,057.)	(\$150,955.)	(\$ 761,012.)
FY14	(\$ 561,694.)	(\$ 58,727.)	(\$ 620,421.)
Total	(\$2,563,303.)	(\$ 793,999.)	(\$3,357,302.)

Background – Employment & Virginians with Disabilities

Despite the positive impact of employment, individuals with disabilities have the highest unemployment rate in the Commonwealth – and this rate continues to rise.

- Seventy-five (75%) of Virginians with disabilities are without jobs compared to 5.3% of all Virginians.
- Only 5.6% of 335,410 Virginians with disabilities that receive SSI and SSDI work.

Having a job is the foundation of attaining the American Dream. It’s a fundamental value and aspiration in America and in Virginia. We all agree that jobs should be a priority in Virginia. But, it must be a priority for all Virginians – including Virginians with disabilities.

Virginians with disabilities have the ability and desire to seek employment that provide opportunities to earn competitive wages and benefits, to reach his/her maximum potential, to achieve economic self-sufficiency, to contribute to the sustainability of our communities, and to have the opportunity to be treated as equal members of the Commonwealth workforce.

Virginians with disabilities, like other citizens who are employed, have a positive impact on the economy by earning wages, paying taxes, and purchasing consumable goods and services in their communities – definitely part of Virginia’s economic engine.

vaACCSES

Established in 1977, vaACCSES is a not-for-profit association of community-based organizations that provide quality services including employment, day support, residential, sponsored placement, benefits assistance and work incentives, and other community-based support services to Virginians with all types of disabilities. Our members include providers and our CSB partners that provide day & employment services. Currently, our 39 member organizations serve over 16,800 Virginians with disabilities on an annual basis.

Karen Tefelski, Executive Director, Ktefelski@vaaccses.org, (703) 200-7660 cell