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2003-2004 annual accountability report

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SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

2003-2004 ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Section I: Executive Summary

1. MISSION AND VALUES

MISSION

The mission of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind is to provide individualized vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services, services to children and prevention services to blind and visually impaired consumers leading to competitive employment and social and economic independence and improved quality of life.

VALUES

1. We value the abilities, dignity and potential of consumers who are blind and visually impaired.
2. We value compassionate, professional and committed staff.
3. We value progressive, effective leadership.
4. We value human, fiscal and information resources.
5. We value the support of the community, the Legislature, the Executive Branch and the Federal Partners.
6. We value employer partners who are receptive to training and employing our consumers.
7. We value collaboration with other organizations, training programs and community based programs.

2. Major achievements from past year

Our highest priority for fiscal year 2003-2004 was to maintain or increase direct services to our consumers and to retain the quality and quantity of services achieved in the previous year. Although achieving this priority was difficult because of severe budget cuts and threats of restructuring, there were increases in numbers of consumers served and in the quality of services provided with two exceptions. The two direct services programs that have state funding only, Children's Services and Prevention of Blindness, were so severely reduced in funding that the levels of quality and quantity of services could not be maintained. In the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, 312 individuals were placed in employment and closed successfully marking a small increase over the previous year.

3. Key Strategic Goals

- Maintain the number of competitive employment outcomes
- Maintain independence and quality of life in the home and in the community
- To prevent, stabilize or restore the loss of vision
- To provide the human resources leadership, guidance and tools necessary to accomplish the mission of the agency

- To provide the administrative leadership necessary to ensure accountability, effectiveness and efficiency
- To implement a comprehensive information system that encompasses the organizational knowledge, management and strategic levels

4. Opportunities and Barriers

Opportunities that will have a significant positive impact on the agency's ability to achieve our mission include partnerships with the private sector that will create greater opportunities for employment for the consumers we serve. Increased support from other state agencies, the public, the General Assembly and the Executive Branch of state government has improved communications and provided opportunities to exchange information and increase staff knowledge. Community services providers have contributed to the agency's ability to increase services and make referrals to other agencies. Our involvement with the One-Stop Centers has increased employment opportunities for our consumers. The continuous advances in the development of assistive technology also offer great opportunities for achieving the agency's mission.

Downsizing of staff has created a barrier to achieving some of the efficiency initiatives, and downsizing of the budget has created a similar barrier. Lack of staff training has also presented a staff morale concern as well as a concern for the lack of cutting edge knowledge in the field of rehabilitation.

5. How the accountability report is used to improve organizational performance

The Accountability Report is a snapshot of the agency that allows a close viewing of strengths and weaknesses. It is used as a guide for making modifications to the strategic management plan (i.e. performance measures,) that may need to be considered or made for the months to follow. The agency reviews progress toward achieving the goals of the strategic plan on a quarterly basis. These reviews are used to develop corrective action plans. The reviews can also be used to demonstrate achievement of goals and motivate staff.

Section II: Business Overview

Description of Organization

Section 43-25-10 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina creates the South Carolina Commission for the Blind and charges the Commission with the responsibility for providing a program of vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services, prevention program and children services program. The agency is funded through Federal funds from the Department of Education for its major program of vocational rehabilitation. In addition, Federal funds are also received for the independent living services program. The prevention and children services programs are state funded programs.

1. Number of employees

The agency has 155.5 authorized FTE positions. At the end of the year, the agency had a total of 114 of these authorized positions filled. The agency also had 14 grant and temporary positions as of the end of the year.

2. Operation Locations

The agency has headquartered offices in Columbia, S. C. along with a district office. There are district offices located in Aiken, Charleston, Conway, Florence, Greer, Greenville, Greenwood, Rock Hill, and Walterboro. The personnel in the district offices include counselor and counselor assistants for the Vocational Rehabilitation, Business Enterprise Program, Children Services and the Prevention/Older Blind programs. There are also Orientation and Mobility and Home Management instructors located in the district offices. There is not a counselor and instructor in each of the district offices for each of the programs but the counselors and instructors are assigned territories and all of the programs are covered statewide with a counselor and instructor. The district office personnel work directly with the consumers in their home and work environments.

3. Expenditures/Appropriations Chart

| Major Budget Categories | 02-03 Actual Expenditures | | 03-04 Actual Expenditures | | 04-05 Appropriations Act | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| | Total Funds | General Funds | Total Funds | General Funds | Total Funds | General Funds |
| Personal Service | \$5,014,669 | \$1,878,563 | \$3,795,465 | \$1,883,255 | \$3,913,392 | \$1,349,783 |
| Other Operating | \$1,776,494 | \$438,765 | \$1,193,545 | \$130,952 | \$1,770,080 | \$214,598 |
| Special Items | \$20,000 | \$20,000 | \$19,925 | \$19,925 | \$20,000 | \$20,000 |
| Permanent Improvements | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Case Services | \$2,514,523 | \$663,523 | \$1,869,550 | \$324,269 | \$2,423,589 | \$404,589 |
| Distributions to Subdivisions | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Fringe Benefits | \$1,225,983 | \$481,727 | \$1,203,999 | \$553,108 | \$1,278,599 | \$422,599 |
| Non-recurring | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total | \$10,551,669 | \$3,482,578 | \$8,079,484 | \$2,911,509 | \$9,405,660 | \$2,411,569 |

Other Expenditures

| Sources of Funds | 02-03 Actual Expenditures | 03-04 Actual Expenditures |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Supplemental Bills | \$0 | \$0 |
| Capital Reserve Funds | \$0 | \$0 |
| Bonds | \$0 | \$0 |

Interim Budget Reductions

| Total 02-03 Interim Budget Reduction | Total 03-04 Interim Budget Reduction |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| \$298,792 | \$30,142 |

Figure II-1

| Major Program Areas | | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|--------------|---------|-----------------------|----------------------|---|
| Program Number and Title | Major Program Area Purpose (Brief) | FY 02-03 | | | FY 03-04 | | Key Cross References for Financial Results* |
| | | Budget Expenditures | | | Budget Expenditures | | |
| II Rehabilitation Services | Provide training leading to competitive employment and independence | State: | 1,060,507.78 | State: | 973,663.00 | 7.3-1,7.3-5 7.3-2 | |
| | | Federal | 3,609,189.68 | Federal | 3,644,024.81 | | |
| | | Other: | 249,068.85 | Other: | 232,501.23 | | |
| | | Total: | 4,918,766.31 | Total: | 4,850,189.04 | | |
| | | % of Total Budget: 57 | | | % of Total Budget: 59 | | |
| III Prevention | Prevent, stabilize or restore loss of vision through medical services | State: | 735,863.56 | State: | 622,642.21 | 7.3-3 | |
| | | Federal | 314,135.01 | Federal | 325,568.99 | | |
| | | Other: | | Other: | | | |
| | | Total: | 1,049,998.57 | Total: | 948,211.20 | | |
| | | % of Total Budget: 12 | | | % of Total Budget: 11 | | |
| V Employee Benefits | | State: | 517,705.13 | State: | 553,108.47 | | |
| | | Federal | 769,663.00 | Federal | 646,825.95 | | |
| | | Other: | 5,496.74 | Other: | 4,065.00 | | |
| | | Total: | 1,292,864.87 | Total: | 1,203,999.42 | | |
| | | % of Total Budget: 15 | | | % of Total Budget: 15 | | |
| Below: List any programs not included above and show the remainder of expenditures by source of funds. | | | | | | | |
| I. Administration; IV Community Services ; Social Security Administration | | | | | | 7.3-4 | |
| | Remainder of Expenditures: | State: | 875,562.59 | State: | 762,097.16 | | |
| | | Federal | 466,813.92 | Federal | 493,289.24 | | |
| | | Other: | 157.85 | Other: | 4,065.00 | | |
| | | Total: | 1,322,534.36 | Total: | 1,259,451.40 | | |
| | | % of Total Budget: 16 | | | % of Total Budget: 15 | | |
| * Key Cross-References are a link to the Category 7 - Business Results. These References provide a Chart number that is included in the 7th section of this document. | | | | | | | |

5. Key customers segments linked to key products/services

As defined in section 43-25-20 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, the agency's key customers are those who meet the definition of blindness and severe visual disability as follows:

- (1) "Blindness" is defined as that level of central visual acuity, 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting glasses, or a disqualifying field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than twenty degrees and which is sufficient to incapacitate him for self-support, or an eighty per cent loss of visual efficiency resulting from visual impairment in more than one function of the eye, including visual acuity for distance and near, visual fields, ocular, mobility, and other ocular functions and disturbances;
- (2) "Severe visual disability" is defined as any progressive pathological condition of the eye or eyes supported by acceptable eye examination, which in the opinion of the examiner may or will result in legal blindness within twenty-four months.

In keeping with the mandate from the General Assembly, the Commission has developed and maintained programs for South Carolina's blind and severely visually impaired citizens. The programs offered by the agency are unique and include:

- 1) Rehabilitation services which lead to competitive employment;
- 2) Business Enterprise Program (BEP) which provides job training, stand development, consulting services, job placement and stand maintenance to carry out the mandates of the Randolph-Sheppard Act;
- 3) Prevention of Blindness which has a goal to prevent, stabilize or restore the loss of vision by providing appropriate medical services to detect eye diseases in their early stages;
- 4) Independent Living for Older Blind with a goal to increase independence and quality of life in the home and community by providing adjustment to blindness skills training for individuals age 55 and older;
- 5) Children Services which provides counseling and guidance to blind and visually impaired children, birth to age 14, and their families; establishes a plan of service and coordinate provision of services;
- 6) Rehabilitation Center where unique blindness skills are taught that will enhance blind and visually impaired adults' ability to become more independent and employable; curriculum includes Orientation and Mobility, Communication Skills, GED Preparation, Remedial Education, Home Management, Braille Literacy, Wood Shop and Physical Education;
- 7) Telecommunications Center which focuses on training consumers for the growing customer service industry; consumers receive training on general customer service skills as well as company specific skills;
- 8) Adaptive Technology Unit which focuses on training consumers on basic through advanced adaptive technology skills that are needed to be competitively employed.

There is a critical interaction between all programs/services of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind in order to achieve its mission.

The established programs allow the agency to service South Carolinians of all ages who meet these definitions.

6. Key stakeholders (other than customers)

In carrying out the provision of services for the programs the agency works closely with medical physicians, ophthalmologists and optometrists throughout the state. The professionals in the medical field refer several of the agency's customers. The agency is a resource for the medical community in helping their patients. Others who benefit from the services the agency provide are the family members of our customers. The training and services the agency provides establishes independence for the customer and therefore indirectly benefits their family. The agency also provides assistance to employers in setting up equipment/tools that may be necessary for the employment of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The agency also works closely with the school districts assisting them with the resources and tools for school age children.

7. Key suppliers

The business community is a key supplier in the agency carrying out its mission. The major goal of the agency is to provide competitive employment to the consumers. This requires a partnership with South Carolina industry. The agency works closely with employers in explaining and demonstrating the benefits and educating them concerning employing individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired. The optometrist and ophthalmologist in the state provide assistance to the agency by conducting low vision exams for clinics sponsored by the agency.

8. Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of the agency begins with the appointment of a Governing Board by the Governor with Senate confirmation. The Governing Board is a policy making board and is responsible for the appointment of the Agency Director who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the agency. The structure of the agency is divided into consumer services and administration divisions. The overall organizational chart follows on chart II.2(a). In addition, the organizational structure for the agency will change in the upcoming fiscal year and is indicated on chart II.2(b)

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

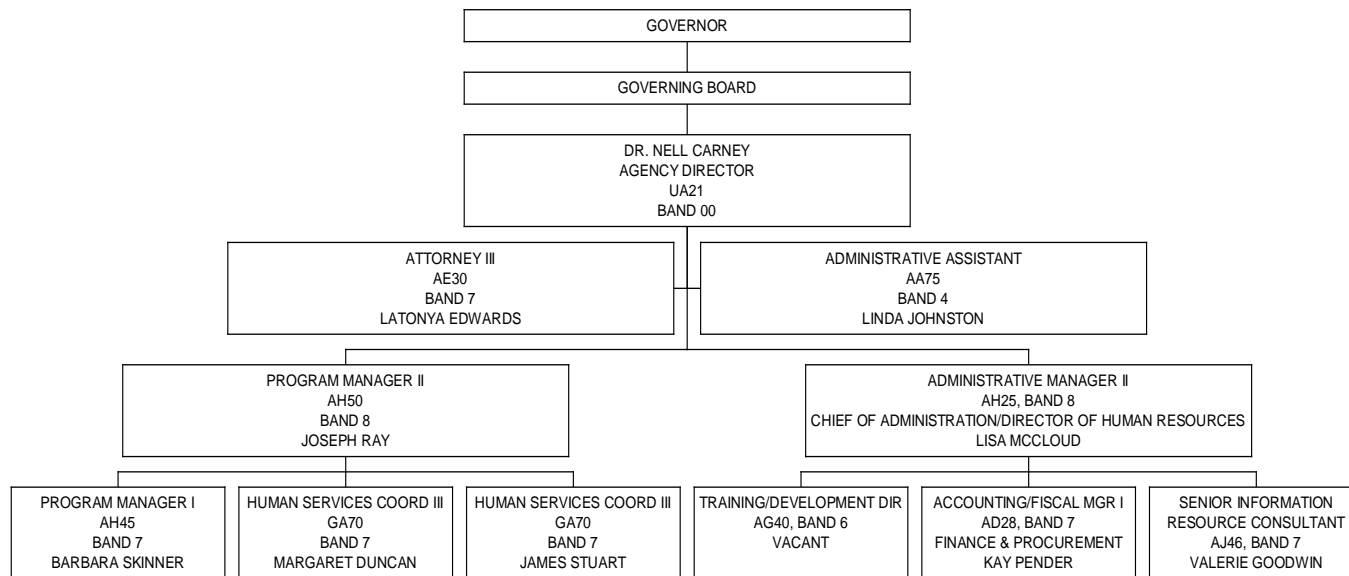


Figure II-2a

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

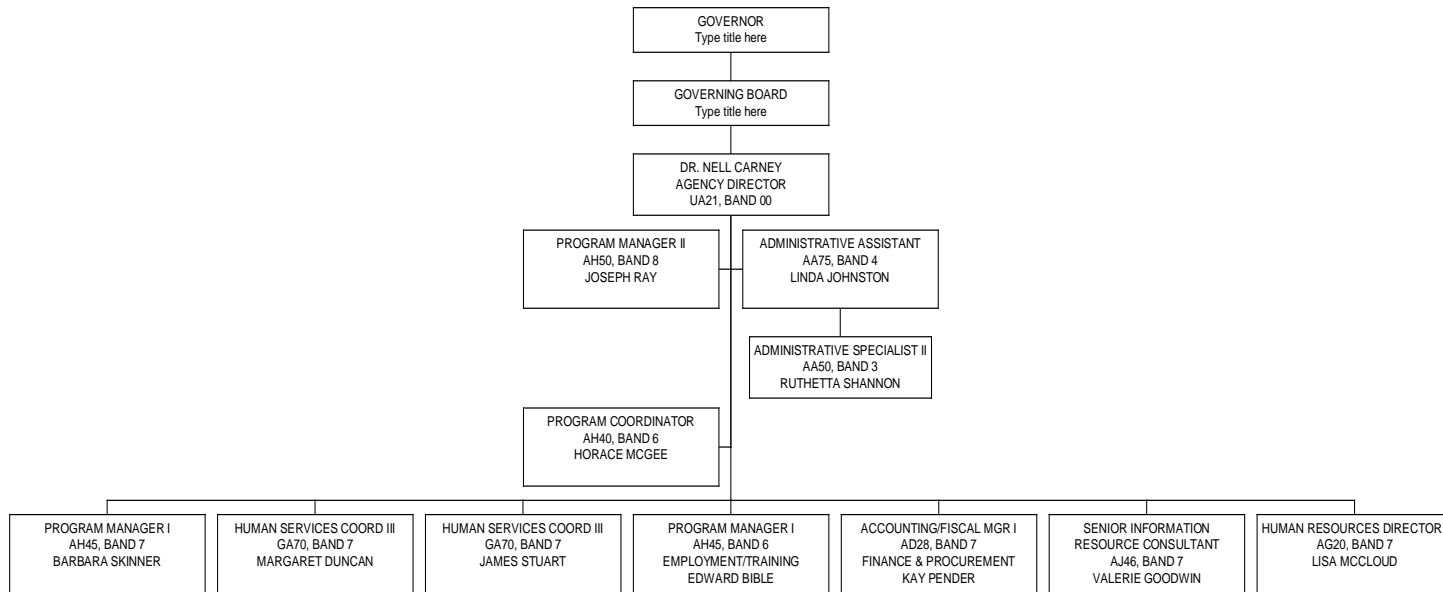


Figure II-2b

Section III: Elements of Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria

Category-1: Leadership

1.1 How do senior leaders set, deploy and ensure two-way communication for: a) short and long term direction, b) performance expectations, c) organizational values, d) empowerment and innovation, e) organizational and employee learning, and f) ethical behavior?

1.1a. The leadership of the organization consists of the Governing Board, the Commissioner and the Senior Management Team. The Governing Board sets policy and the Commissioner and Senior Management Team are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization. Leadership skills of the organizational leadership include: ability to communicate effectively, commitment to program goals, shared values, timely decision making, implementation of organizational policies, commitment to accountability and compassion for consumers and staff. A serious, no-nonsense approach to assuring compliance and improving programs is the current practice of the leadership of the organization.

1.1b. Performance expectations in the organization are established with full input of individual staff and communicated in writing in a planning document signed by both parties. The performance expectations for the total organization are set by the Board of Commissioners and communicated throughout the organization through the strategic management plan.

1.1c. Organizational values are communicated through policy dissemination and in face-to-face meetings with staff.

1.1d. Staff are empowered with budgeting that allows enough funding to accomplish the performance expectations. Empowerment of staff is also the result of the creation of a working environment that encourages innovation and creativity.

1.1e. Leadership advances organizational learning by involving all levels of staff in development of new policies, strategic planning, budget planning and preparation and involvement in community activities. Individual learning occurs as a result of leadership communicating opportunities for improvement and by encouraging full participation in relevant/available training.

1.1f. The leadership of the organization sets and deploys standards of ethical behavior by serving as role models for the organization maintaining the highest ethical standards of behavior. Standards of ethical behavior are also deployed through policy issuance.

1.2. How do senior leaders establish and promote focus on customers and other stakeholders?

A focus of customer services has been set by verbal communication from the Board of Commissioners. This same customer service focus has been further established with the mission and vision statements of the organization. The focus on customer services is maintained with individual performance standards, strategic plan, action plans and policies. The focus is maintained through evaluations and corrective action plans.

1.3. How do senior leaders maintain fiscal, legal and regulatory accountability?

Fiscal accountability is maintained with internal controls reviewed on a monthly basis by senior staff. The quarterly evaluation of the progress of the strategic plan also provides vital information about fiscal accountability. In addition, annual reviews by the state auditor and the Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration provide vital information regarding fiscal accountability.

Legal accountability is maintained through consultation with our attorney, the Budget and Control Board, other agencies and the Federal oversight agency. Regulatory accountability is maintained in much the same manner. We rely on the Federal oversight agency to provide changes in Federal regulations that have an impact on the agency's services delivery systems. We also rely heavily on various offices within the Budget and Control Board to provide guidance on state regulations.

1.4. What key performance measures are regularly reviewed by your senior leaders?

Key performance measures regularly reviewed for all programs include:

- Referrals
- Referrals processed
- Eligible for service
- Active status

Other key measures regularly reviewed, which may be program specific, include:

- Number of individuals competitively placed at or above minimum wage
- Number of individual plans of employment/service
- Individuals served by programs
- Percentage meeting case management standards
- Customer satisfaction
- Comparison of blind licensed vendor's earnings to state's average

1.5. How do senior leaders use organizational performance review findings and employee feedback to improve their own leadership effectiveness and the effectiveness of management throughout the organization?

An organizational performance review of the strategic management plan is used by senior leadership to determine what changes need to be made in the leadership to enhance organizational performance. Leadership asks the question: "What can the leadership do to improve organizational performance?" The answers to this question are developed into written communications in the form of procedures, policies, or other directives.

1.6. How does the organization address the current and potential impact on the public of its products, programs, services, facilities and operations, including associated risks?

When blind or severely visually impaired individuals are placed in competitive employment they are removed from public assistance roles. When adequate independent services are provided, these services often result in individuals remaining in the home instead of being placed in a nursing facility. The impact is financial. Positive financial impact is assessed with data. The associated risks are possibility of injury of consumers while in training. Such risk is examined at the time services are planned. Overall, the services provided to consumers have a positive impact on the community.

1.7. How does senior leadership set and communicate key organizational priorities for improvement?

Senior leadership sets priorities for improvement through organizational performance evaluation. Improvement needs are determined by quarterly evaluations of the strategic plan. For example, if competitive placements in employment are not equal to or greater than the previous quarter, increasing placements becomes a high priority. Priorities for improvement are communicated through clear policy and procedure issuances.

1.8 How does senior leadership actively support and strengthen the community? Include how you identify and determine areas of emphasis.

Areas of emphasis for community involvement are based on the mission of the organization, the need to collaborate with other organizations and the needs of the community. Community involvement is achieved through service on interagency committees, participation in community efforts such as United Way, Red Cross Blood Drive, Good Health Appeal, Prevention Partners, and Palmetto Health (i.e. flu shots). Collaboration with other state agencies reduces the risk of duplication of services, provides exchange of useful information and creates opportunities for joint endeavors such as grant funding. The agency also supports other community organization efforts by allowing employees to communicate and gather support from coworkers during non-work times.

Category-2: Strategic Planning

2.1. What is your Strategic Planning process, including KEY participants, and how does it account for:

- a. Customer needs and expectations
- b. Financial, regulatory, societal and other risks
- c. Human resource capabilities and needs
- d. Operational capabilities and needs
- e. Supplies/contractor/partner capabilities and needs

2.1.a. The strategic planning process began with the needs of the customers and prospective customers of the organization. Meetings with consumer groups and individuals provided valuable information about customer needs. The applications for services were carefully examined to determine the greatest services needs. With an open door policy customers were encouraged to communicate needs and concerns to organization staff.

2.1.b. The mandates of funding sources played a major role in the strategic planning process. For example, with more than 50% of the organization's funding coming from a federal source that restricted the use of the funding, risks associated with loss of the funding had to be considered. Societal and community economic impact were considered in the planning process, and it was determined that no risk existed and that certain strategies would have a positive impact on the community.

2.1.c The strategic planning process included an in-depth analysis of the existing human resources and needs for additional human resources. A significant result of the analysis was an indication that the organization needed to be reorganized to strategically utilize existing human resources. The reorganization did take place, and the strategic plan was developed accordingly. The organization's capabilities to provide services to customers is closely linked to the analysis of human resources since most of the services provided to customers are delivered by staff.

2.1.d. The operational capabilities of the organization were analyzed to determine capacity, and the outcome included changes in some operational policies and procedures.

2.1e Suppliers and contractors were examined to determine parameters. Public and private sector employers were identified as our partners, and it was determined that this pool of partners was limitless.

2.2.What are your key strategic objectives? 2.4 What are your key action plans/initiatives?

| Strategic Planning | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Program Number and Title | Supported Agency Strategic Planning Goal/Objective | Related FY 03-04 Key Agency Action Plan/Initiative(s) | Key Cross References for Performance Measures* |
| II. Rehabilitation Services | Maintain the number of competitive employment outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the number of consumers served Provide training that will enhance blind and visually impaired adults' ability to become more independent and employable | 7.2-1,7.2-2,7.2-3, 7.2-5,7.2-4,7.4-1 7.2-11 |
| IV. Community Services | Maintain independence and quality of life in the home and in the community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide adjustment to blindness skills training to older blind consumers Identify and serve blind and visually impaired children (birth to age 14) and their families | 7.1-7, 7.2-8, 7.3-4 |
| III. Prevention | To prevent, stabilize or restore the loss of vision | Provide appropriate medical services to detect eye diseases in their early stages | 7.2-7, 7.6-3 |
| I. Administration | To provide the human resources leadership, guidance and tools necessary to accomplish the mission of the agency | Develop and/or maintain employees' skills necessary to accomplish the agency mission | 7.4-3, 7.4-4 |
| I. Administration | To provide the administrative leadership necessary to ensure accountability, effectiveness and efficiency | <p>Assure compliance with state and federal regulations governing programs</p> <p>Maintain sound fiscal procedures and accountability levels that are acceptable by all funding sources</p> | 7.3-1, 7.3-2,7.3-3, 7.3-4,7.3-4,7.3-5,7.5-1, 7.5-2,7.5-3 |
| I. Administration | To implement a comprehensive information system that encompasses the organizational knowledge, management and strategic levels | <p>Develop a consumer tracking system that supports the agency data reporting requirements</p> <p>Develop a standardized information system that reflects and supports the agency infrastructure</p> | 7.2-13 |
| * Key Cross-References are a link to the Category 7 - Business Results. These References provide a Chart number that is included in the 7th section of this document. | | | |

2.3. How do you develop and track action plans that address your key strategic objectives?

The staff responsible for each specific services and operational area develops action plans. The action plans are reviewed and revised by the executive management team. Self-tracking takes place on a quarterly basis, and results in a written report. Senior managers review reports and discuss the agency's overall progress. When internal budgets are allocated, the progress of a particular program from the previous year is taken into consideration as well as plans for the upcoming year.

2.4 What are your key action plans/initiatives?

See Strategic Planning Chart.

2.5. How do you communicate and deploy your strategic objectives, action plans and performance measures?

On an annual basis, the Governing Board reviews the strategic management plan and the performance measures. If the review generates any revisions, they are done before it is released to staff and implemented. The objectives, action plans and organizational performance measures are communicated throughout the agency by the Intranet system and become the basis for setting individual performance standards for all employees of the agency. Objectives, action plans and performance measures are deployed through case service standards, employer relations, policies and procedures and clear statements of agency mission and values.

2.6. The agency's strategic management plan is not available to the public. It is available through the agency's Intranet system for staff.

Category-3: Customer Focus

3.1. How do you determine who your customers are and what their key requirements are?

There are between 11,000 and 14,000 individuals in South Carolina who are legally blind or severely visually impaired. Of these numbers, the agency serves approximately 40%. Not everyone who is blind or severely visually impaired wants or can benefit from the services of the agency. For example, the estimated population numbers include blind individuals who are employed and integrated into the social and economic mainstream of their communities.

Customers are determined by eligibility criteria that varies from program to program. In the programs funded with Federal revenue, the eligibility criteria is dictated through program regulations. In state funded programs, eligibility criteria is developed by the leadership of the Commission. Key requirements for our customers are determined by medical, skills, and psychological assessment and evaluation.

3.2. How do you keep your listening and learning methods current with changing customer/business needs?

All direct services delivery staff are provided training that is focused on services delivery in the specific areas relevant to the organization's programs. Certain staff also maintain contact with providers of services such as assistive technology, Braille products, current instructional methods and relevant research. Staff at all levels stay current with the literature in the field of rehabilitation for the blind and severely visually impaired. The information gathered through these activities is applied to program planning, expansion and improvement.

3.3. How do you use information from customers/stakeholders to keep services or programs relevant and provide for continuous improvement?

Information from customers is analyzed and given consideration in all services planning. Various staff, including the Commissioner, attend advocacy group meetings, consumer group meetings and meet with individual customers to listen to the issues, concerns and needs. This information is shared with the decision-making teams in the organization, and it becomes part of the planning process.

3.4. How do you measure customer/stakeholder satisfaction?

Customer satisfaction is measured with consumer satisfaction surveys, random telephone inquiries and communication with consumers at all staff levels. In addition, the increased level of referrals is used as a source of customer satisfaction.

3.5. How do you build positive relationships with customers and stakeholders? Indicate any key distinctions between different customer groups.

Positive relationships are built with customers through face-to-face communications. The Commissioner and other executive staff spend time with customers. Management and staff are invited and attend consumer group conventions and conferences. The agency also coordinates participation of the agency consumers with annual camps. The agency also provides assistance with camp operations if time permits. The nature of our services requires that direct services providers establish rapport with the customers as part of the services plan implementation.

Category-4: Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

4.1. How do you decide which operations, processes and systems to measure for tracking financial and operational performance?

The agency's strategic management plan identifies the key measurements used by the organization to analyze performance. The primary goal is to increase the competitive employment outcomes of blind and or severely visually impaired individuals in South Carolina. The established programs assisting in reaching this goal includes individualized training and development. This includes classes at the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center, Technical Services, Business Enterprise Program training and the Tele-communications Center. Each of these areas track internal referrals from the counselor. There is also follow-up from each division to identify the benefits and obstacles during the training. In addition, during the training period there is on-going follow-up to make any needed adjustments. Information is evaluated to identify any necessary adjustments in the curricula. On a quarterly basis these departments report data concerning activity.

4.2 What are your key measures?

The agency's key measures for all consumer programs include referrals, referrals processed, eligibility for service and active status consumers. In addition other measures which may be program specific include:

- Number of individuals competitively placed at or above minimum wage
- Number of individuals plans of employment/service
- Individuals served by programs
- Percentage meeting case management standards
- Customer satisfaction
- Comparison of blind licensed vendors earnings to state's average

4.3 How do you ensure data integrity, timeliness, accuracy, security and availability for decision making?

The Information Technology department of the agency ensures quality services by internally maintaining accessible and timely documentation. Annually, and as needed, database reporting systems requirements are updated. A communication continuum exists between management in agency programs and the Information Technology department. This process provides managers with data on how the system is used by staff, gives a current overview of service delivery and provides performance/production statistics. The data is also used for completing required Federal reports. Cross-functional planning, system backups and a stable controlled operating environment have provided nearly 95% system availability.

4.4 How do you use data/information analysis to provide effective support for decision making?

The senior managers report quarterly on activity concerning the strategic management plan. The data encompasses number of referrals, number of referrals processed and number determined to

be eligible for the Vocational Rehabilitation, Older Blind, Prevention and Children Services programs. The number of Individualized Plans for Employment written is also tracked for Vocational Rehabilitation and the Individualized Service Plans for the Children Services program. The Business Enterprise Program tracks the number of blind licensed vendors and the amount of money generated from the vending stands. The average earnings of the licensed vendors are compared to the average earnings for South Carolinians. The earnings information assists in evaluating the training program offered and implementing any modifications to assist the vendors to be more successful business people.

This ongoing monitoring assists in evaluation of services to the consumers. The quarterly review by managers can assist them in detecting any potential problems. For example, if the number of Individualized Plans for Employment is consistently down, there is a potential that services are not being provided efficiently to the consumers. All of the statistics play a major role in developing case closures with a successful outcome. A case is determined to be successfully closed after 90 days of employment. The Quality Control unit reviews cases to determine consistency of services provided throughout the state in addition to ensuring the federal regulations are being followed in accordance to the rules and regulations of the 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A sample of each counselor's cases is reviewed on a monthly basis. The data generated from the unit assists in determining training needs, policy directive and proper application of policy and regulation. Managers use the information generated from Quality Control to facilitate improvements needed for service delivery.

The Client Information System also provides detailed data on cases as they progress through the system from applicant to closure. There are assigned status numbers which indicate the stage of the cases. For example, status 02 indicates applicant status, status 10 certified eligible, status 18 training and status 26, successfully rehabilitated. Regional Directors and Senior Managers review information at least monthly. The data indicates if a case remains in status within the established timeframe.

4.5 How do you select and use comparative data and information?

The Vocational Rehabilitation department is audited on standards set through Rehabilitation Services Administration. These goals are incorporated into the agency goals for placements, referrals, etc. The wages of placements are compared against state averages. The agency also uses audit guidelines for comparative data such as processing time for financial information and EEO standings.

4.6 How do you manage organizational knowledge to accomplish the collection and transfer and maintenance of accumulated employee knowledge, and identification and sharing of best practices?

The agency has developed or is working on developing procedure manuals to cover procedures and tasks. This should ensure consistency as well as a road map of how tasks and projects are accomplished. In addition, the agency monitors the number of employees on the TERI program as well as those who are retirement eligible. The agency also uses cross-training as a tool to ensure tasks can be accomplished as the workforce changes.

Category 5- Human Resource Focus

5.1. How do you and your managers/supervisors encourage and motivate employees (formally and/or informally) to develop and utilize their full potential?

Since the inception of the strategic management plan in August of 2000, managers and supervisors have taken a more active role in explaining how an employee's position affects the overall mission of the agency. Employees have a better feel of their contribution to the overall operation of the agency if their individual contribution is linked to the big picture. As a small agency, the opportunity for cross training and involvement with all levels of employees and projects is greater. Managers use the team approach and cross train employees on different components of the operation of their department. This is a win-win approach in which the agency benefits from more staff being trained to handle more tasks. At the same time it gives the employees the opportunity to develop experience and skills. Managers also seek out pertinent training for their staff to assist them with their current responsibilities as well as develop additional relevant skills. Employees are also encouraged to submit training requests. The agency recognizes employees and thanks them for their work during Public Service Recognition Week. Employees are also recognized at staff meetings for meeting or exceeding goals. Service awards are also presented to staff at meetings.

5.2. How do you identify and address key developmental and training needs, including job skills training, performance excellence training, diversity training, management/leadership development, new employee orientation and safety training?

The assessment of training needs from an individual as well as an organizational perspective is handled in partnership with Human Resources and program managers. In addition, the agency reviews workers compensation cases as well as workforce planning statistics to assess training and development needs. A more formalized needs assessment was initiated to help identify staff training needs. This included a review of previous needs assessments conducted, prior training sessions held, training evaluation forms, position descriptions and employee performance appraisals. As a result of this process, courses were developed or identified to meet the agency and employee needs. The training sessions were either job specific or group training determined through noted deficiencies in performance or updates for particular areas. New employee orientation is handled one on one as employees are handled. A review of the agency policies as well as benefits is conducted. Each department continues the orientation on the job within the department or unit. Evaluations are done on each training session held to solicit feedback on the presentation and benefits in addition to other training needs and requests.

5.3. How does your employee performance management system, including feedback to and from employees, support high performance?

The agency administers the Employee Performance Management System in regard to employee performance. The importance of the process and the impact on the employee and the agency has been a goal during the year. Training was conducted with supervisors and managers explaining the importance of appraisals and the technical mechanics on the established system. Communication throughout the year on an employee's performance was stressed. Once again the

employee's understanding of how their particular job and their activities have on the overall operation of the agency was stressed. The Human Resources department also does monthly follow-up in regard to timely submission of planning documents and evaluation documents. One-on-one technical assistance is also offered with the preparation of the documents. Challenging goals and high achievements can result in merit pay and performance pay increases

5.4. What formal and/or informal assessment methods and measures do you use to determine employee well being, satisfaction, and motivation?

Managers meet regularly with employees to keep them abreast of what is going on in and with the agency. The agency uses the intragency e-mail system on a regular basis to keep information current. All managers of the agency practice an open door policy so employees can feel free to ask questions or express concerns. On an annual basis, an employee staff meeting is held to address the accomplishments and issues of the agency and employees. During the meeting, employees are recognized for outstanding performance and years of service with the State. The agency also participates with the annual Public Service Recognition Week. Employees have been given Appreciation Certificates and were also honored at a drop in hosted by the Agency Director. Exit interviews are held with employees who decide to leave the agency. The information received from the interviews is evaluated in order to make improvements at the agency.

5.5. How do you maintain a safe, secure, and healthy work environment?

The Facilities Management unit is responsible for the administration of the safety and health issues concerning the agency. During the year, the agency's Emergency Action Plan was updated and an annual review conducted. The agency's main facility has a lock system in which employees are assigned an entry card for access to the building. The district offices are located in facilities in which visitors come to a main entrance before visiting any staff. The safety and health area works closely with other departments such as the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Construction and Planning of the Budget and Control Board assessing any potential problems and evaluating recommendations for improvement.

5.6. What activities are employees involved with that make positive contributions to the community?

The agency's employees are involved with making positive contributions to the community through the United Way campaign, Good Health Appeal program, professional organizations, local churches as members, officers and organizations, fraternal organizations, and Habitat for Humanity.

Category 6-Process Management

6.1. What are your key processes that produce, create or add value for your customers and your organization, and how do they contribute to success?

Key Delivery Processes

- Determine Eligibility
- Develop Individualized Plan of Employment or Service
- Provide Training
- Competitive Placement

The consumer is a collaborating partner with the development, monitoring, implementation and evaluation of the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). Opportunity is given to exercise informed choice in the selection of the IPE's employment goal, services, service providers and procurement methods. Greater emphasis is placed on the fact that services must be provided in the most integrated setting that is both appropriate to the service being provided and reflects the informed choice of the individual. An IPE is amended only when substantive changes in the employment goal, services provided or in service providers are evident. Once determining the specific training the consumer needs based on the vocational objective, the Counselor completes a referral package for the appropriate units. The units include the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center, Technical Services, Business Enterprise Program, and Telecommunications center. The Ellen Beach Rehabilitation Center curriculum includes Orientation and Mobility, GED Preparatory, Braille Literacy, Home and Personal Management and Communications. In the Technical Services unit, curriculum includes Braille Terminals, Speech Software, Magnification Software, Closed Circuit Television, Scanners/Reading Software and Notetakers. Specific training within the units is also determined based on the need of the consumer. Once the consumer is admitted into the unit for training, the appropriate staff makes additional assessments. During the assessment phase or training, the particular unit may determine additional training needs. These needs are referred to the Counselor who then makes additional referrals as deemed appropriate. The service units provide regular updates on the consumers' progress to the Counselor. As the consumer progresses through training and is ready for employment, the Counselor works with the Employment Consultant to develop potential job opportunities for the consumer. Once again, the Counselor is the key person in making provision of services to the consumers. There are established reports generated weekly and monthly electronically to assist the Counselors and managers to monitor the progression of the caseloads.

6.2 How do you incorporate organizational knowledge, new technology, changing customer and mission-related requirements, cost controls and other efficiency and effectiveness factors into process design and delivery?

The counselors utilize the client information system to assist them in managing a consumer's caseload. There has been an increased emphasis on the use of the system as a management tool. The system provides status reports that assist the counselors and managers in monitoring the progress of meeting required standards. The agency is also responsible for conducting inventories on vendor stands during the year. A bar coding system has been implemented to assist with this process. The new system assists with the accuracy and speed of the inventories.

Both of these systems also serve as documentation tools and techniques in transferring pertinent information necessary in serving the agency's consumers and customers.

6.3. How does your day-to-day operation of these processes ensure meeting key performance requirements?

There are established standards in regard to managing a caseload, which include determining eligibility within 60 days of application and developing a plan within 60 days of determining eligibility. Each unit providing services have standard curricula developed and completion time frame for the program. However, the time of completion can be modified based on the consumer needs and progress. Regional Directors perform case reviews to assess the progress on the Counselor's activities on the consumer cases. To assist with meeting service and training goals, the agency has an established transportation unit. Transportation drivers are located throughout the state to provide this service. If the agency's Transportation unit cannot provide the service as scheduled, the Counselor makes arrangements through local transportation systems or consumer family or friends. The Counselor makes purchase requisitions to provide any equipment or services (i.e. medical) for the consumer. The Procurement department has established timeframes on processing and providing approval within 5 days of receipt.

6.4 What are your key support processes, and how do you improve and update these processes to achieve better performance?

- Information Technology
- Finance
- Human Resources

Administrative support processes related to key service include the information technology unit, finance and budgeting and human resources. The information technology unit is responsible for administering and maintaining the client information system. The information technology unit updated and modified reports to make them more user- friendly. The Counselors and Vocational Rehabilitation managers have access to these reports electronically and can assess them when needed. Training has been provided to the Counselors as well as their assistance on the use and importance of the information inputted into the client information system. The finance and budgeting unit provides at least monthly reports of the financial status of individual regions. The Regional Directors and Counselors can manage and budget their funds while making decisions on services provided. Finance works closely with the managers in making sure the cases are being managed within the provided budget. The Human Resources unit works with the Counselors on meeting the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development requirement of having a Masters degree in Rehabilitation Counseling which is a national standard. In addition, the recruitment process for personnel vacancies are handled as expeditiously as possible so the continued smooth services to consumers can be provided.

6.5. How do you manage and support your key supplier/contractor/partner interactions and processes to improve performance?

Employers are a key supplier of employment opportunities for the agency's customers. Counselors and Employment Consultants maintain direct contact with potential employers on a regular basis. The agency partners with the employers by assisting them with establishing worksites for the employees who are blind and visually impaired. The agency offers the knowledge and access to tools and equipment for the blind to work efficiently. The agency also continues to serve as a technical resource for employers for issues that may arise concerning staff who are blind. In addition to equipment assistance, the agency provides an overview of blindness and orientation and mobility for employers. These services not only provide employment opportunities for the agency's clients but assists employers with meeting American with Disability Act requirements. In addition to working with employers, Counselors are also responsible for contacting physicians in their territories to explain the comprehensive services the agency offers. A large portion of the referrals to the agency is received from doctors.

Category-7: Business Results

7.1. What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of customer satisfaction?

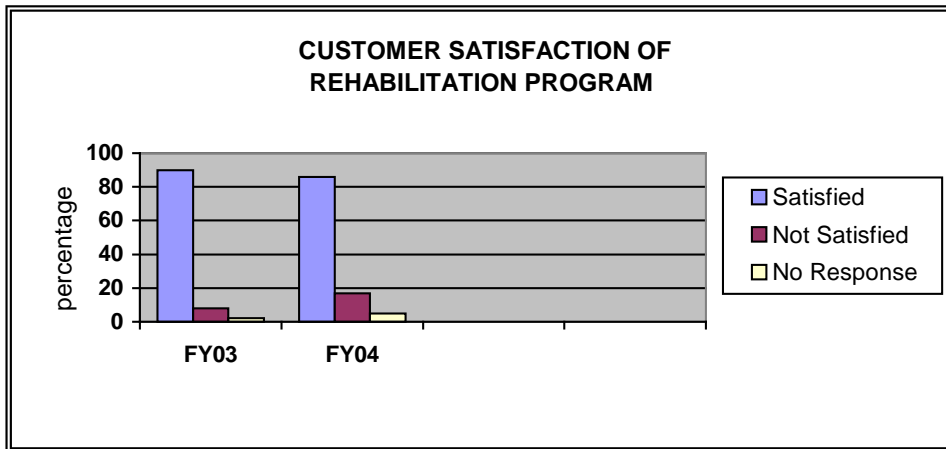


Figure 7.1-1

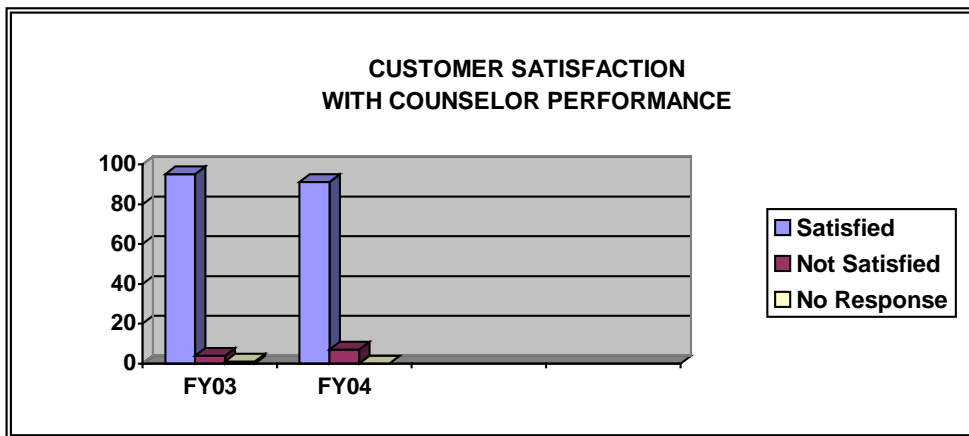


Figure 7.1-2

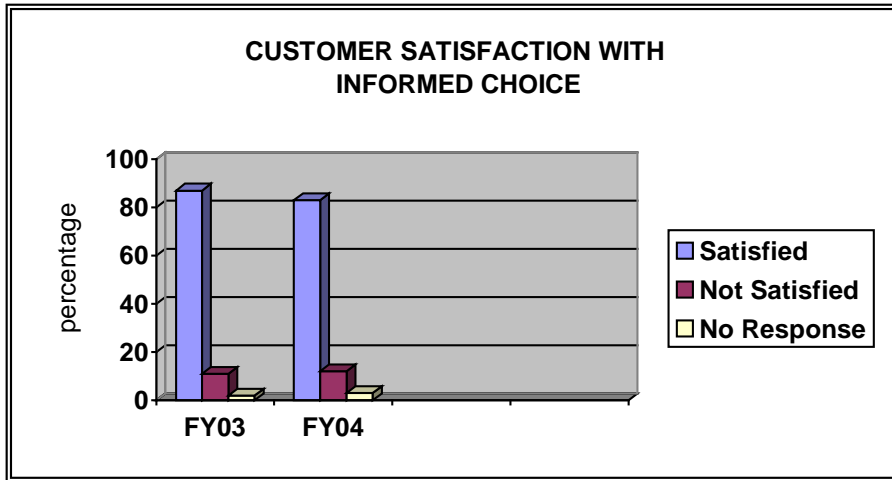


Figure 7.1-3

Consumer Satisfaction-Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Training Center

- Survey results from consumers attending training at the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center indicate that consumers are overall satisfied with the components of the training program. The current design of the survey resulted in affirmative or negative responses or text responses. The surveys for FY04 and FY03 indicated positive responses on all questions asked therefore a rating of 5 was applied.

Figure 7.1-4

PROGRAM REFERRALS

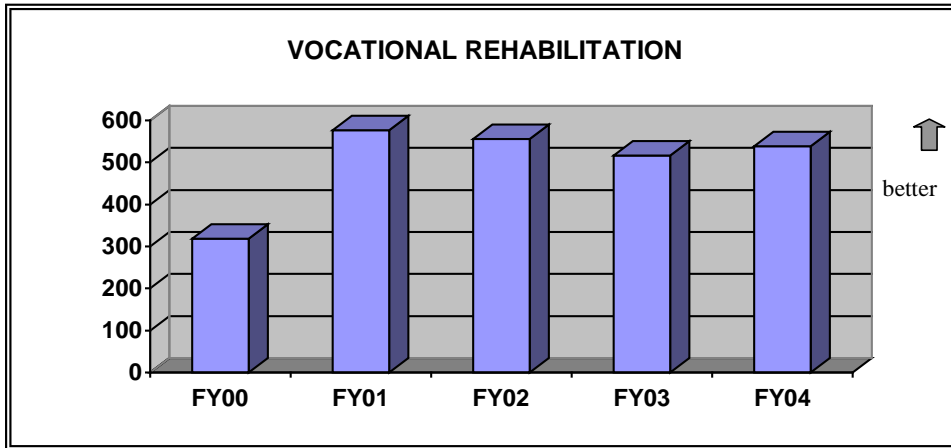


Figure 7.1-5

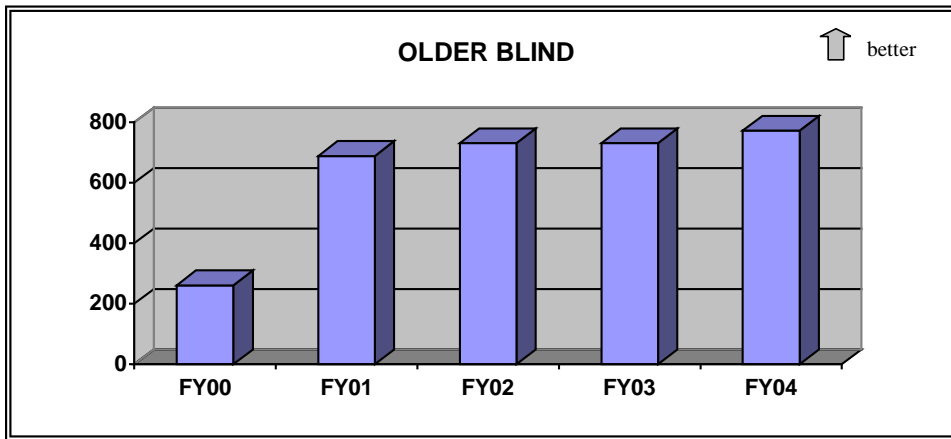


Figure 7.1-6

PROGRAM REFERRALS

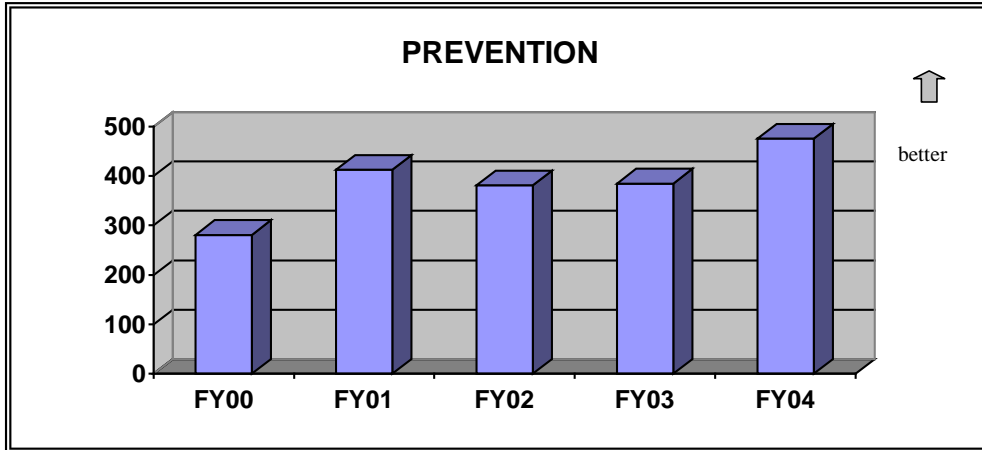


Figure 7.1-7

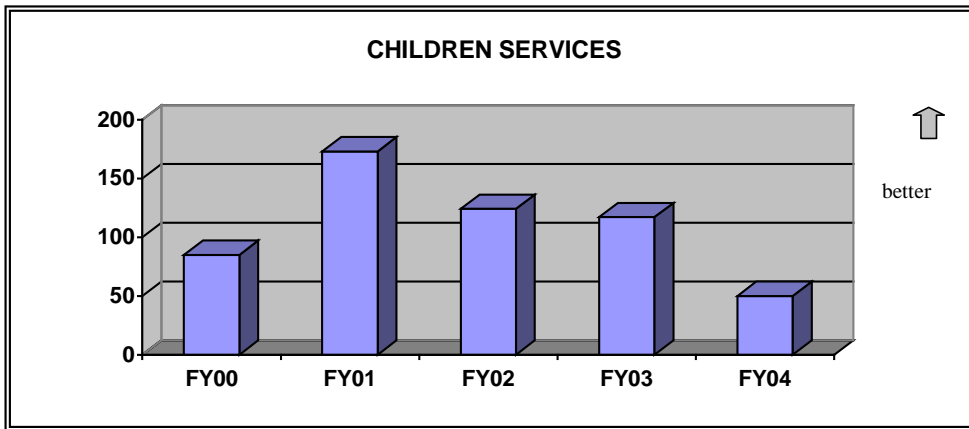


Figure 7.1-8

7.2. What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of mission accomplishment and organizational effectiveness?

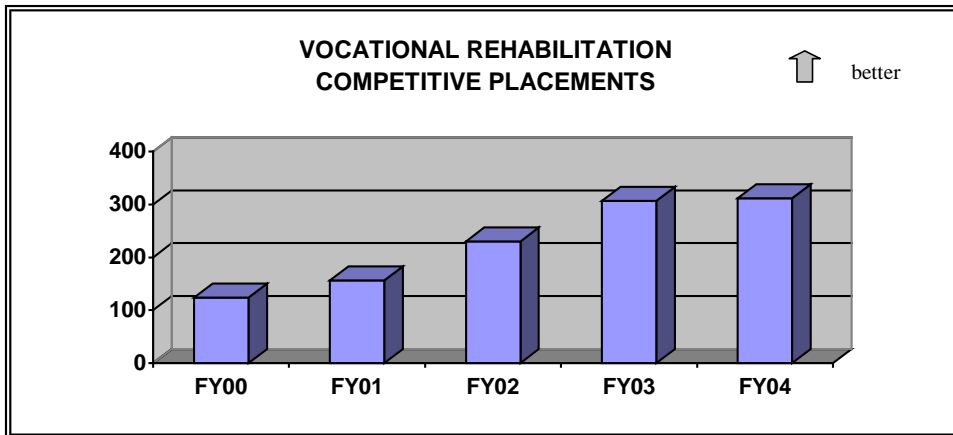


Figure 7.2-1

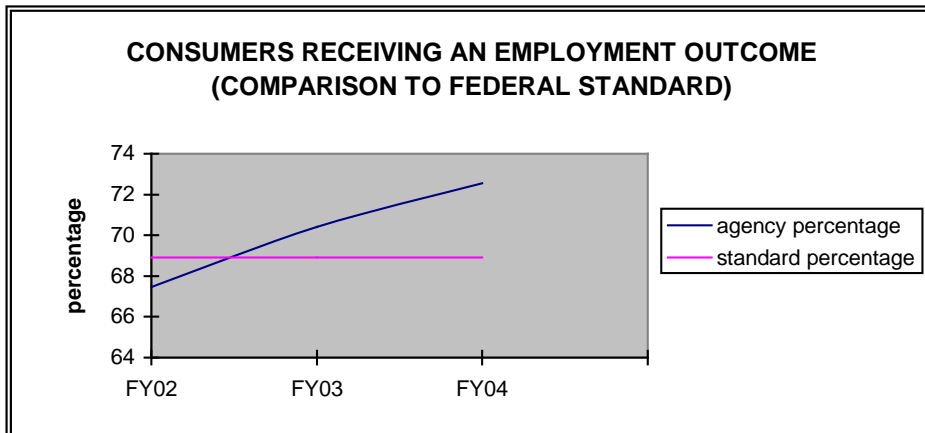


Figure 7.2-2

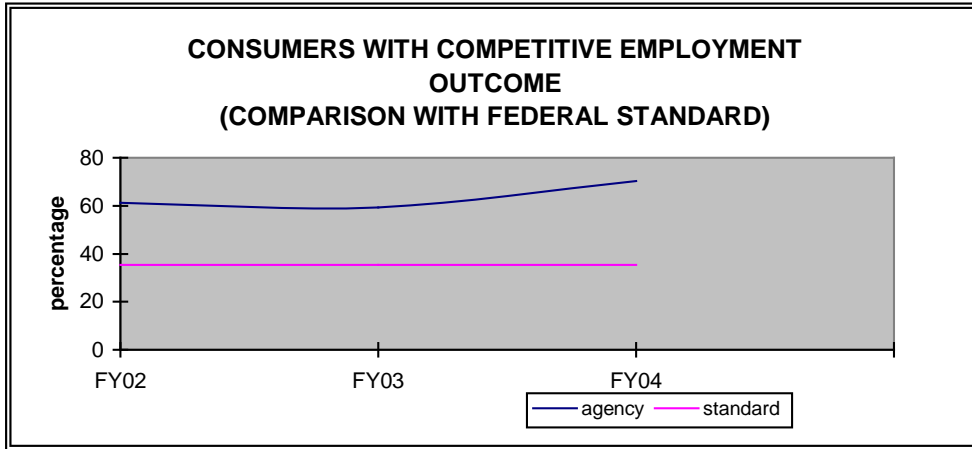


Figure 7.2-3

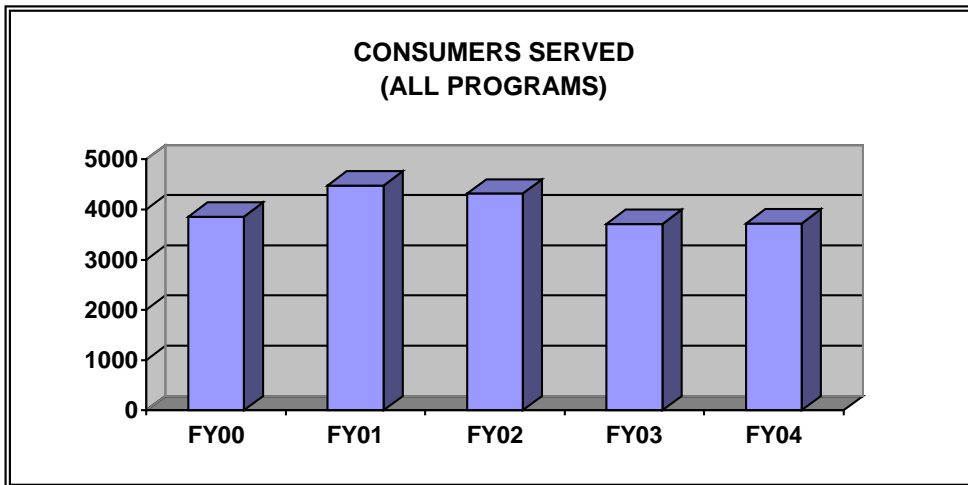


Figure 7.2-4

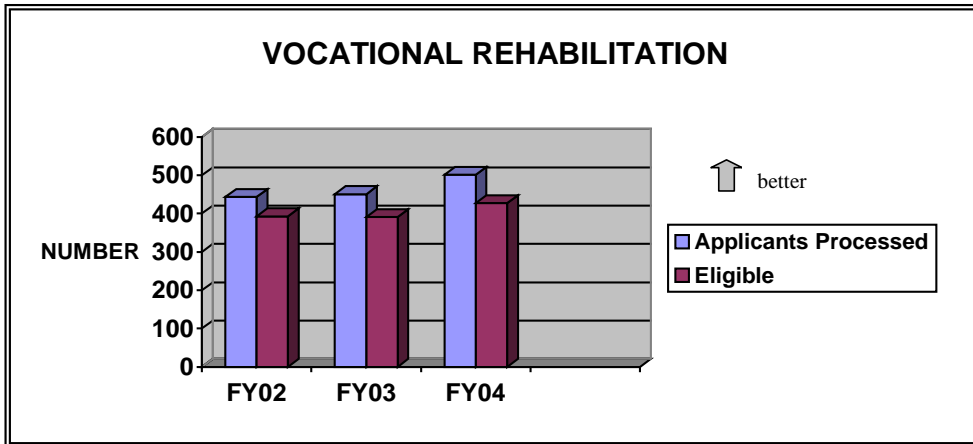


Figure 7.2- 5

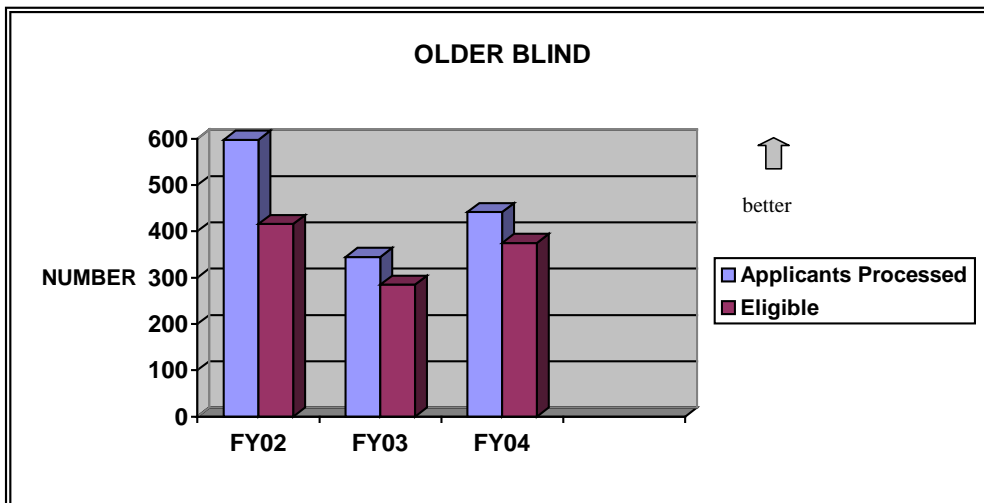


Figure 7.2-6

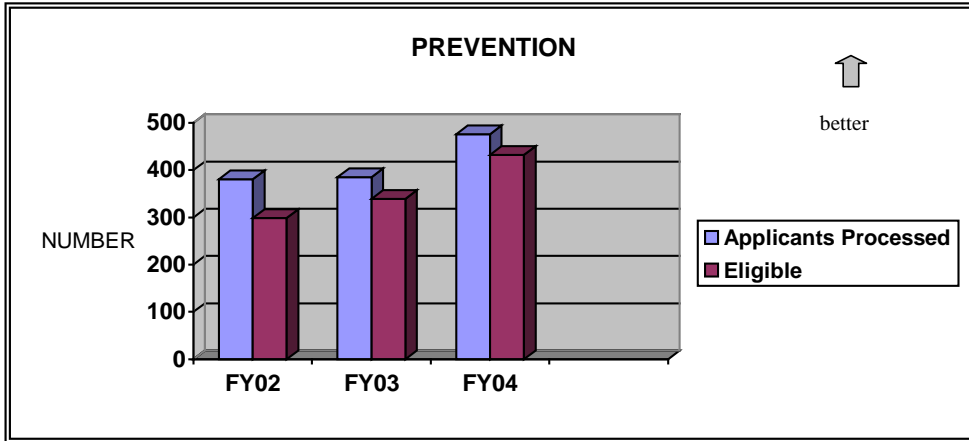


Figure 7.2-7

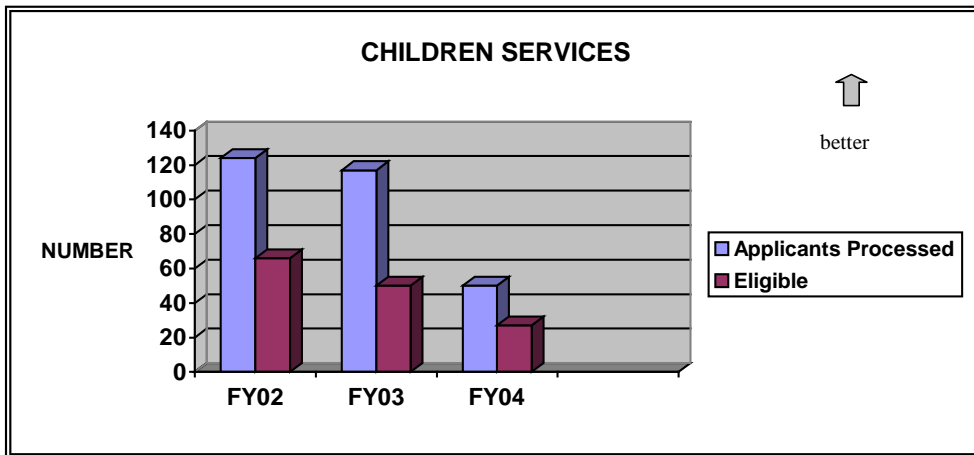


Figure 7.2-8

SPECIAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

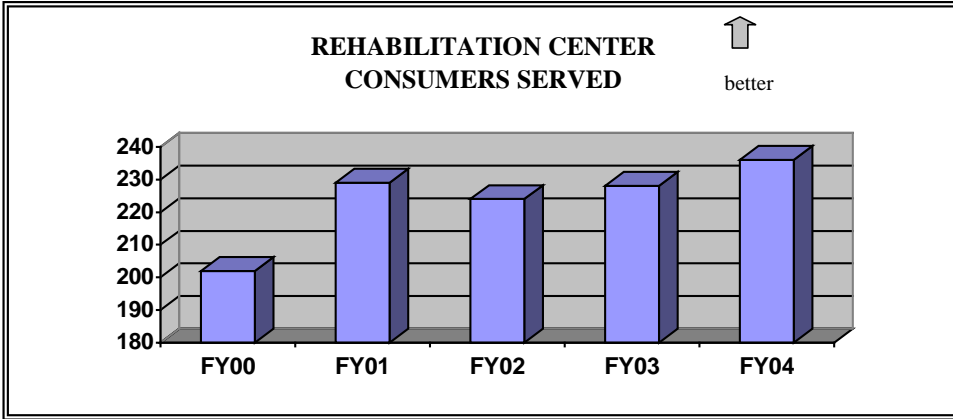


Figure 7.2- 9

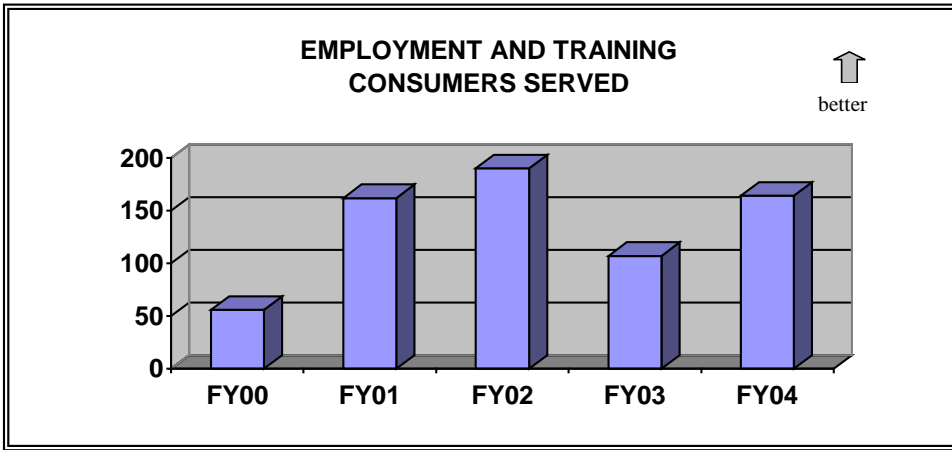


Figure 7.2- 10 (Division expanded to included technical services and call center)

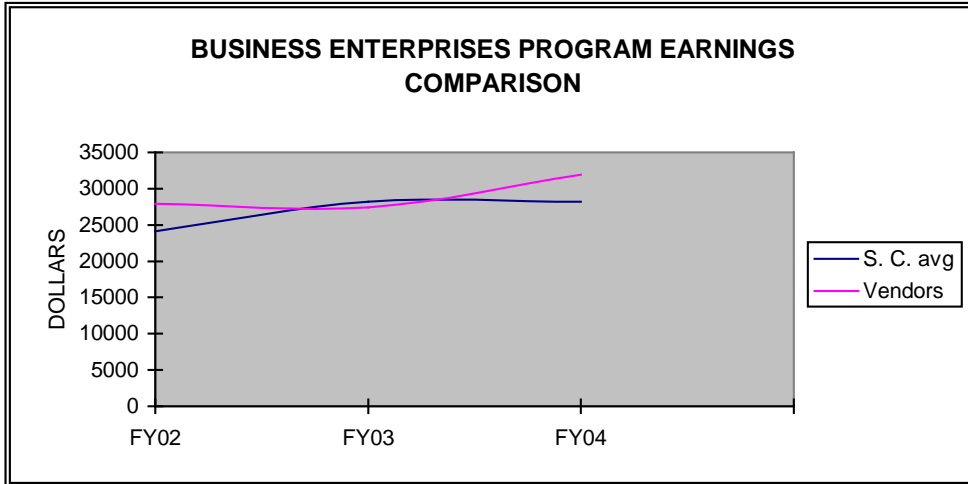


Figure 7.2-11

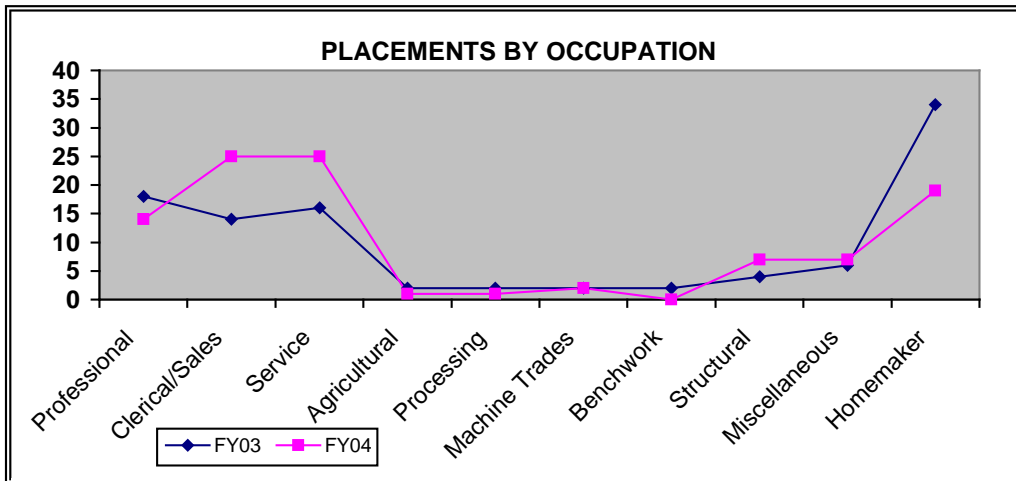


Figure 7.2-12

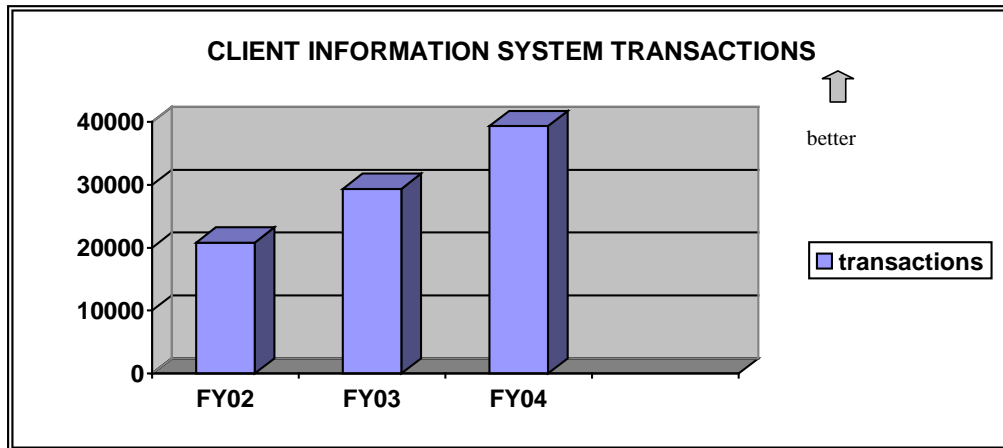


Figure 7.2-13

The obvious trends from the performance levels in measures to accomplish the mission of the agency are: an increased willingness by employers to hire blind and severely visually impaired individuals, greater opportunities for disabled populations to remain in the community and to integrate socially and greater coordination between organizations serving the population of individuals with disabilities. These trends imply that in the years ahead the agency mission may be modified to include an initiative to increase efforts to identify additional individuals who want and can benefit from the services provided by the Commission.

Within the key measures for accomplishing the agency mission there exists the hidden value of increased quality of life for the population served by the Commission. Increased quality of life necessarily enhances the economic and social independence of each individual served by the services programs.

7.3. What are your performance levels and trends of financial performance?

AVERAGE CASE SERVICE DOLLARS SPENT PER CONSUMER SERVED

* Includes expenditures for direct services to consumers

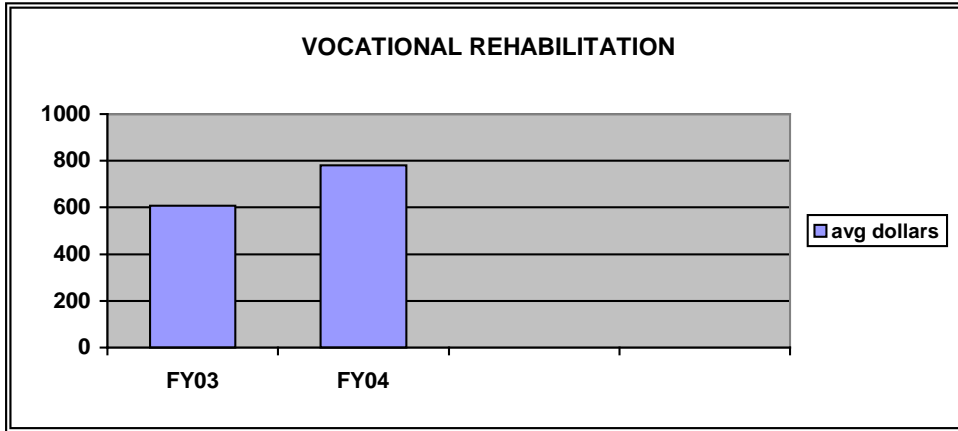


Figure 7.3- 1

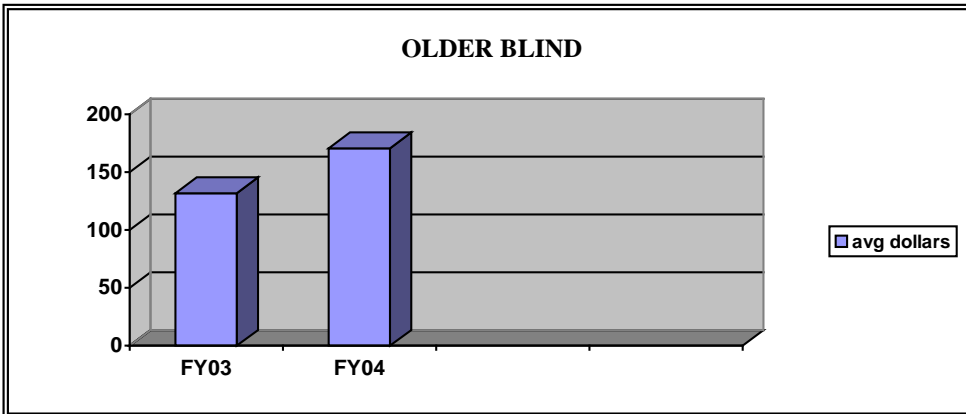


Figure 7.3 2

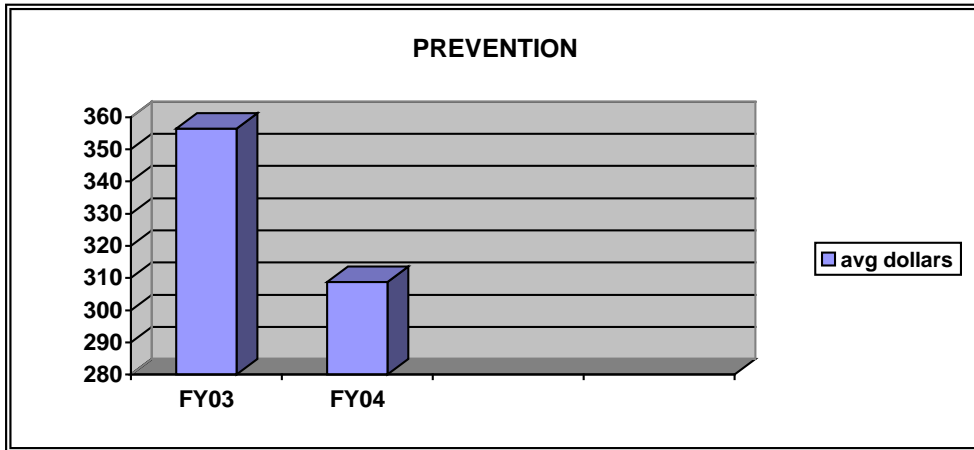


Figure 7.3 3

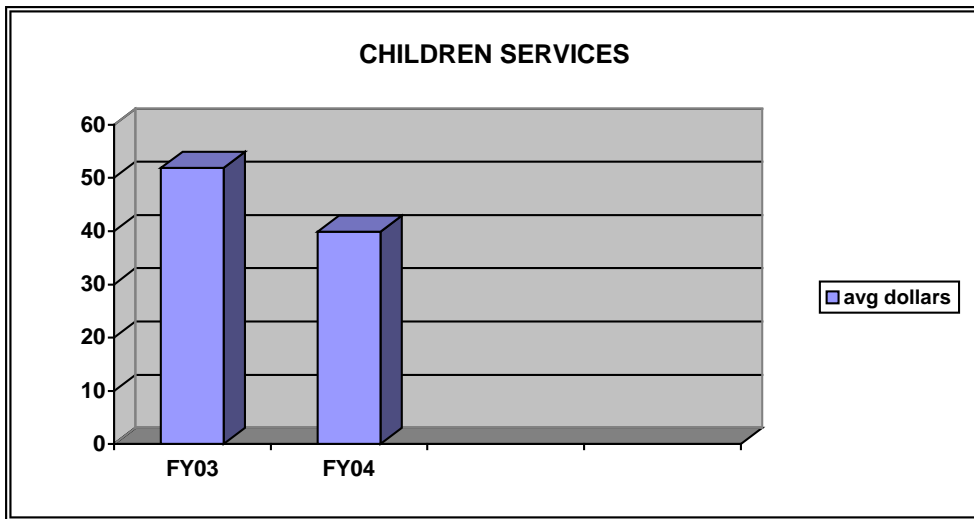


Figure 7.3 4

AVERAGE CASE SERVICE DOLLARS SPENT PER VENDOR/STAND SERVED

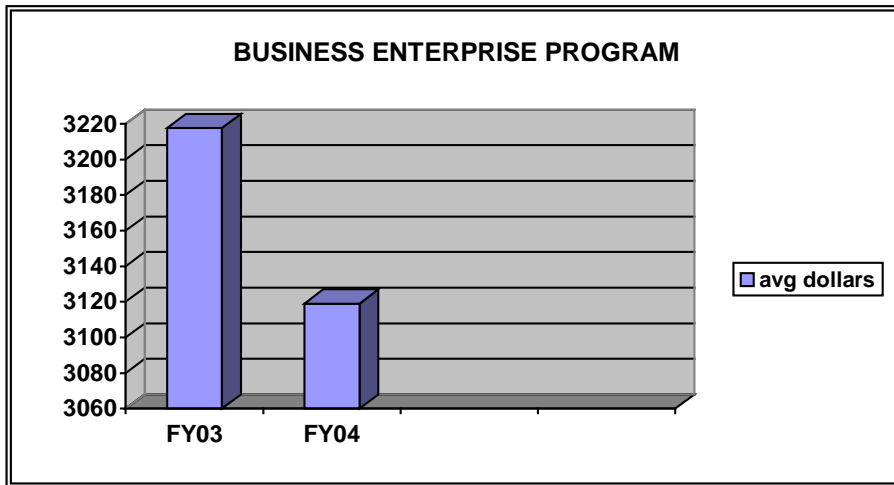


Figure 7.3- 5

7.4. What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of Human Resource Results?

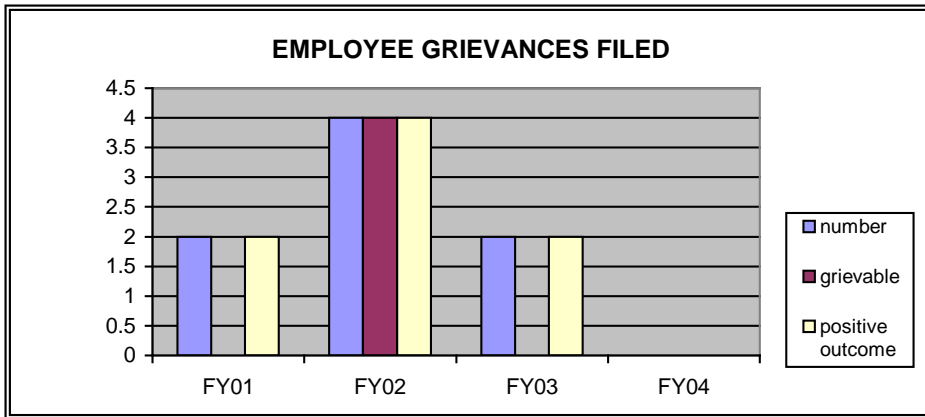


Figure 7.4 -1

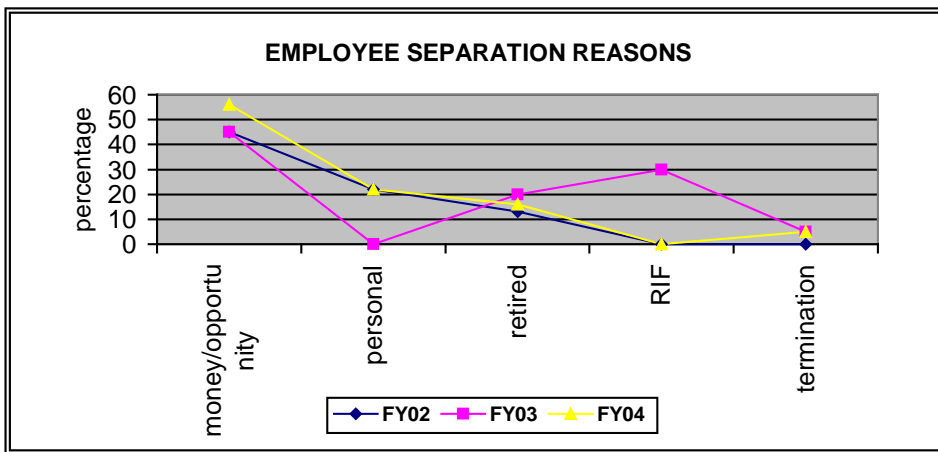
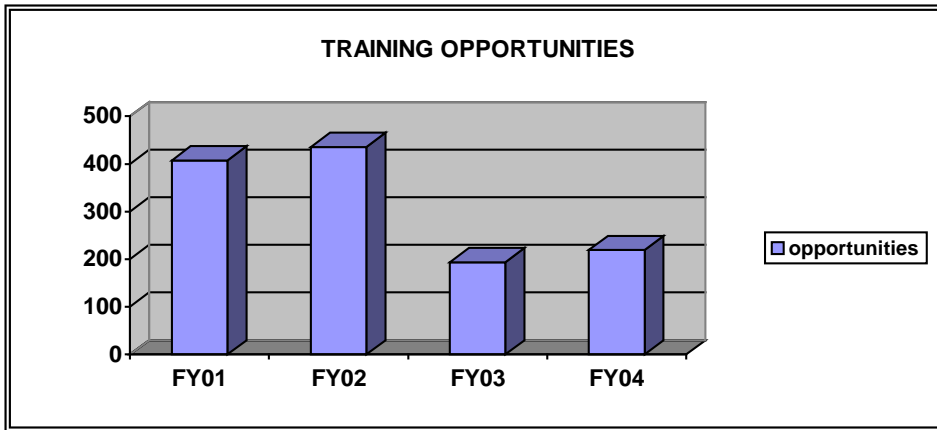


Figure 7.4-2

Figure 7.4-3



Section 101 (a) (7) of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 required state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to establish qualified personnel standards for rehabilitation personnel that conforms with national or state approved certification, licensing or registration that apply to rehabilitation. The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) has established the national standard for vocational rehabilitation counselors' educational background to include a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a Master's degree in a related field and to be eligible to be a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.

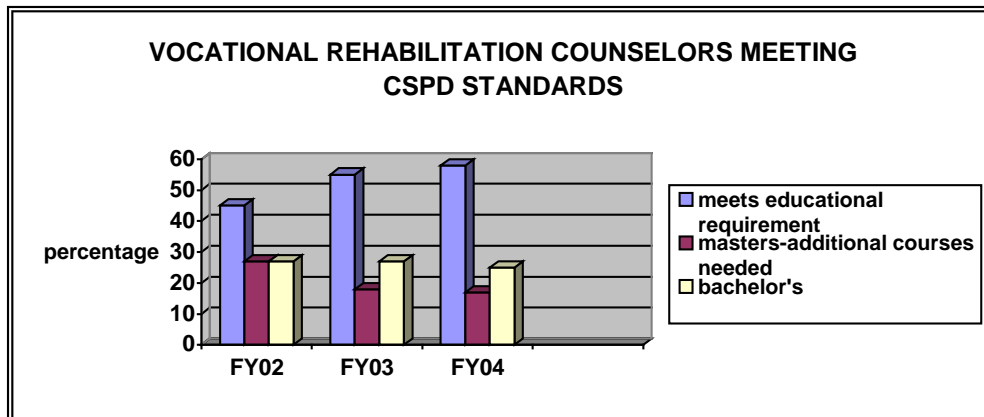


Figure 7.4- 4

7.5. What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of regulatory/legal compliance and community support?

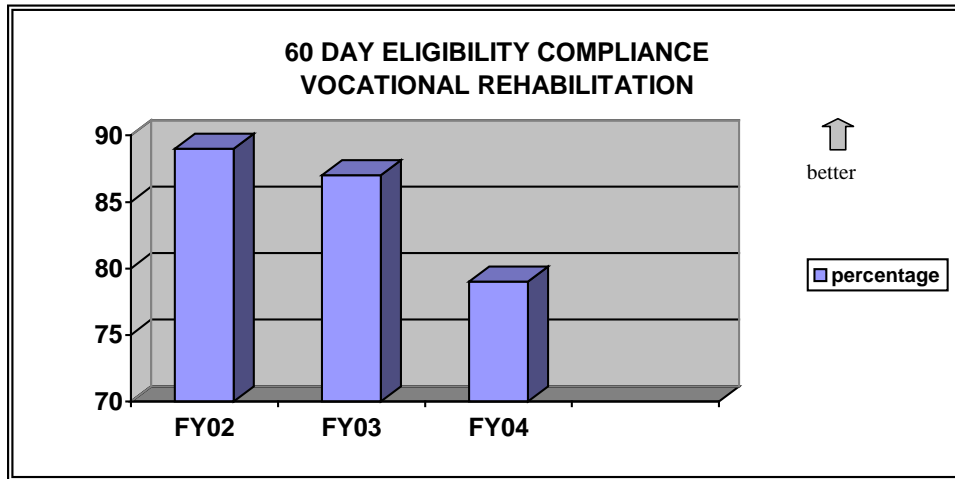


Figure 7.5- 1

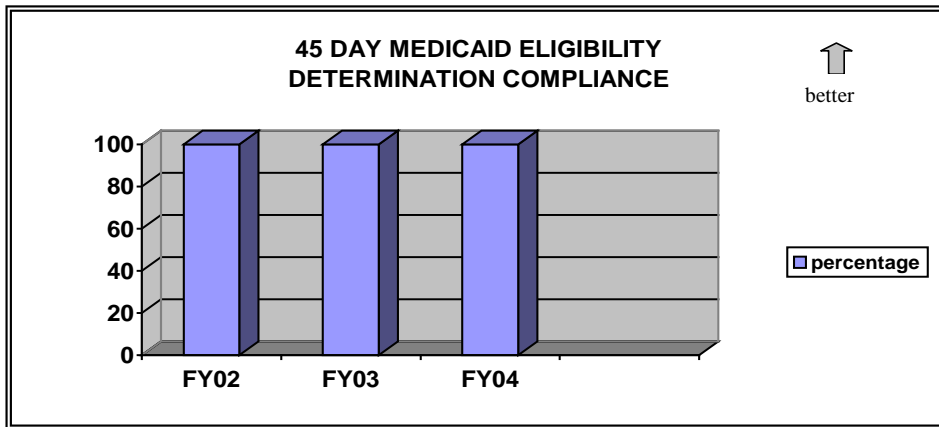


Figure 7.5- 2

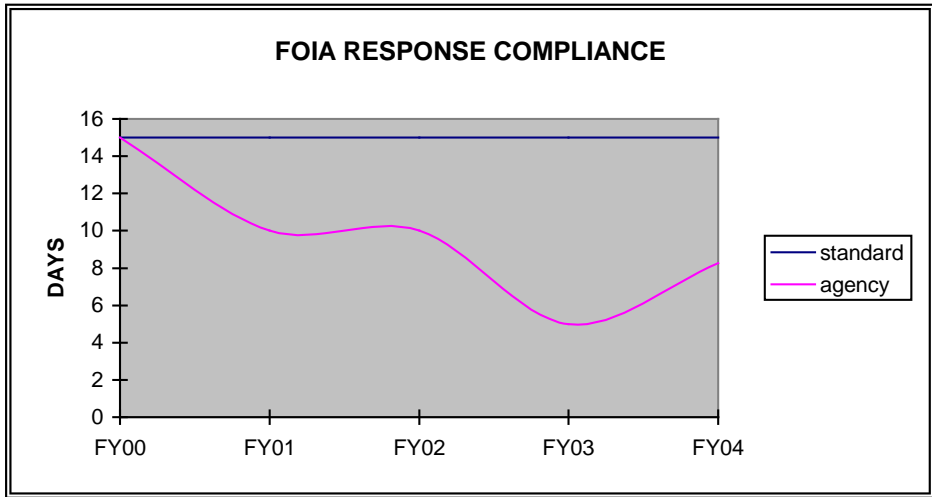


Figure 7.5- 3

