SCHMIEG CONSULTING

BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

NATIONAL VR STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

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SECTION 1: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

452 individuals responded to this survey. Of these, the majority currently work for a state VR agency, primarily a general agency, have worked for the agency between 11-20 years, and are program/department staff. Demographically, the majority of survey participants are between the ages of 36-45 years old, female, predominantly White/Caucasian, and have a master's degree. The actual demographic data is summarized below, with each question and its results on the following pages.

Agency Demographics:

Of these, 440 participants (97.3%) currently work for a state vocational rehabilitation agency, 11 participants (2.4%) formerly worked for a state vocational rehabilitation agency, and only 1 participant has never worked for a state vocational rehabilitation agency. Of the 440 participants who currently work for a state vocational rehabilitation agency, 248 participants (56.4%) work for a general agency, 47 participants (10.7%) work for a blind agency, 120 participants (27.3%) work for a combined agency, and 25 participants (5.7%) are unsure of the type of agency where they currently work. With respect to agency tenure, 54 participants (12.3%) have worked at the agency for less than 1 year, 67 participants (15.2%) for 1 - 2 years, 67 participants (15.2%) for 3 - 5 years, 95 participants (21.6%) for 6 - 10 years, 101 participants (23.6%) for 11 - 20 years, and 56 participants (12.7%) for more than 20 years. Regarding participants' current position at the agency, 18 participants (4.1%) are members of the agency executive leadership team, 66 participants (15.7%) are program manager/department manager/supervisors, 220 participants (50%) are program/department staff, 93 participants (21.1%) are administrative/support staff, and 43 participants(9.8%) are other.

Participant Demographics:

Of these, 5 participants (1.1%) are between 18 – 25 years old, 57 participants (13%) are between 26 – 35 years old, 130 participants (29.5%) are between 36 – 45 years old, 119 participants (27%) are between 46 – 55 years old, 110 participants (25%) are between 56 – 65 years old, and 19 participants (4.3%) are over the age of 65. Regarding gender, 345 participants (78.4%) are female, 66 participants (15%) are male, 3 participants (.07%) are other, and 26 participants (5.9) preferred not to say. Regarding race/ethnicity, 2 participants (.004%) are Asian , 20 participants (4.5%) are Black/African American, 37 participants (8.4%) are Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx, 1 participant (.002%) is Middle Eastern/North African, 10 participants (2.2%) are Multiracial/Two or More Races, 7 participants (1.5%) are Native American/Alaska Native, 1 participant (.002%) is Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, 323 participants (73.2%) are White/Caucasian, 35 participants (7.9%) preferred not to say, and 5 participants (1.1%) are other. Finally, regarding the participants' level of education, 0 participants (0%) have less than a high school education, 12 participants (2.7%) have a high school diploma/GED, 45 participants (10.2%) have some college, 3 participants (0.7%) have a technical college certificate, 26 participants (5.9%) have an Associate's degree, 88 participants (20%) have a Bachelor's degree, 257 participants (58.4%) have a Master's degree, 5 participants (1.1%) have a Doctoral degree, and 4 participants (.09%) have a Professional degree (MD, JD, etc.).

Q1 Which of the following best describes your current work situation with a state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency?
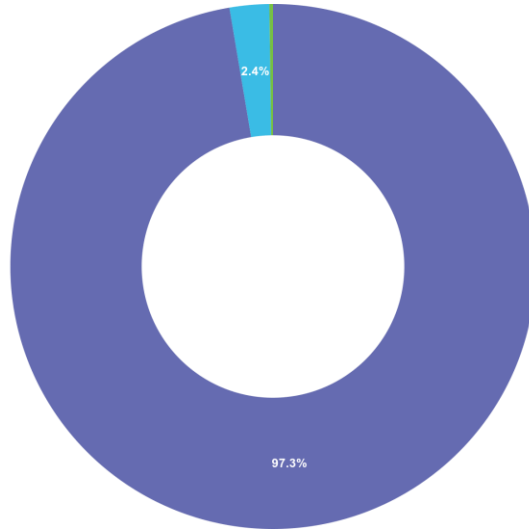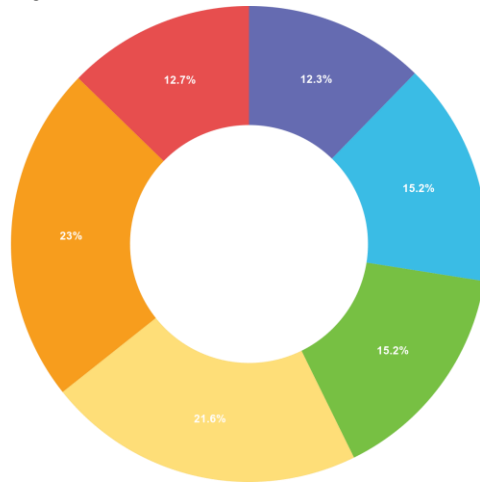

Choice	Totals
I currently work for a state VR agency.	440
I do not currently work for a state VR agency, but I did in the past.	11
I have never worked for a state VR agency.	1

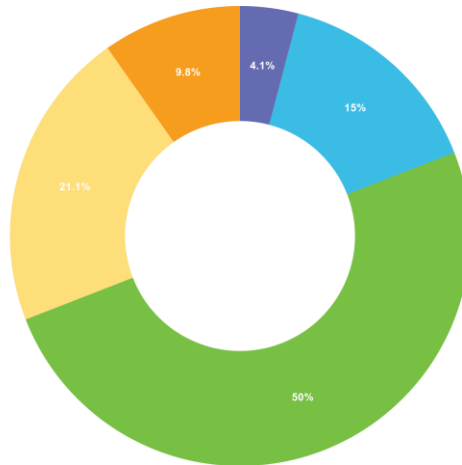**Q2** Which of the following best describes the state VR agency where you currently work?
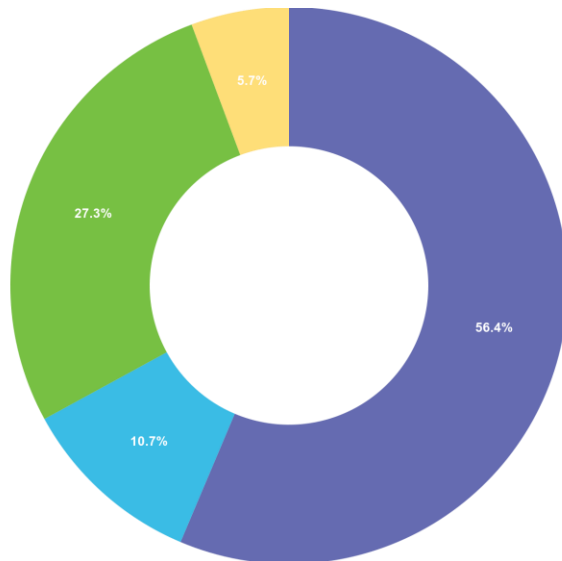
Choice	Totals
General state VR agency	248
Blind state VR agency	47
Combined state VR agency	120
I'm not sure	25

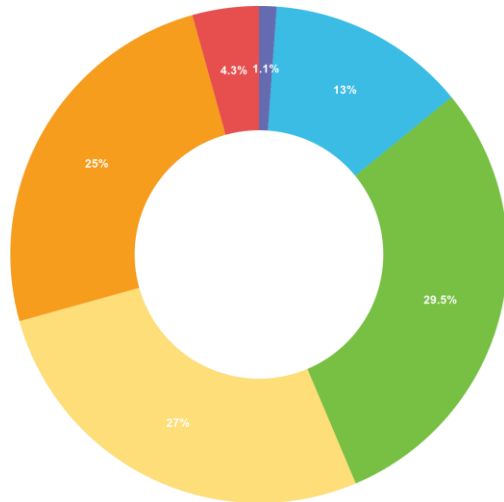**Q3** **Which of the following best describes how long you have worked at the state VR agency where you currently work?**

	Choice	Totals
•	Less than 1 year	54
•	1 - 2 years	67
•	3 - 5 years	67
•	6 - 10 years	95
•	11 - 20 years	101
•	More than 20 years	56

Q4 **Which of the following best describes your current role at the state VR agency where you currently work?**

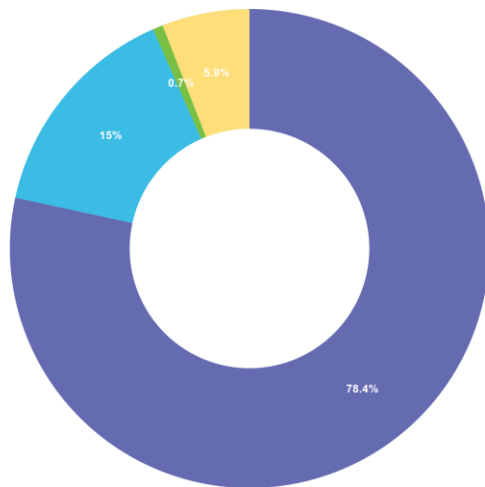|	Choice	Totals
•	Agency Executive Leadership Team	18
•	Program Manager/Department Manager/Supervisor	66
•	Program Staff/Department Staff	220
•	Administrative Staff/Support Staff	93
•	Other	43

Q5 **Which of the following best describes your current age?**

Choice	Totals
18 - 25 years old	5
26 - 35 years old	57
36 - 45 years old	130
46 - 55 years old	119
56 - 65 years old	110
Older than 65 years	19

**Q6** **Which of the following best describes how you identify?**

Choice	Totals
Female	345
Male	66
Other	3
Prefer Not to Say	26

Q7 **Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?**
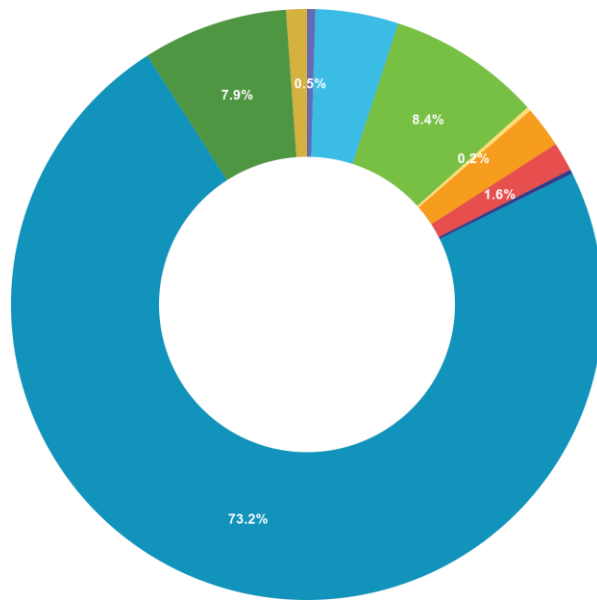
Choice	Totals
Asian	2
Black/African American	20
Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx	37
Middle Eastern/North African	1
Multiracial/Two or More Races	10
Native American/Alaska Native	7
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1
White/Caucasian	323
Prefer Not to Say	35
Other	5

Q8 Which of the following best describes your highest level of education?
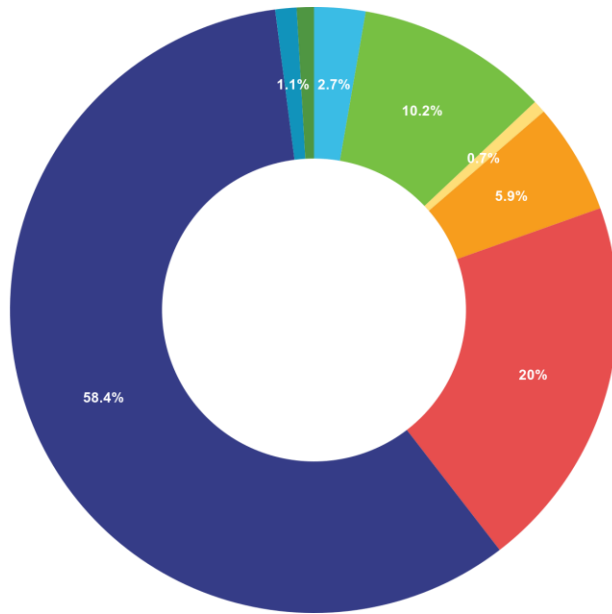
Choice	Totals
Less than High School	0
High School Diploma/GED	12
Some College (No Degree)	45
Technical College Certificate	3
Associate's Degree	26
Bachelor's Degree	88
Master's Degree	257
Doctorate Degree	5
Professional Degree (MD, JD, etc.)	4

440 Individuals who currently work at a state vocational rehabilitation agency responded to the specific section of the survey that asked about their current level of satisfaction with a variety of questions. The questions asked each survey participant to rate the following on a scale of 1 - 10, with 1 being the worst and 10 being the best:

- ☐ Satisfaction with their current job
- ☐ Meaningfulness of their current job
- ☐ Happiness with their work-life balance
- ☐ Satisfaction with the agency where they currently work
- ☐ Satisfaction with overall work environment
- ☐ How manageable their current workload is
- ☐ How effective communication is within the agency where they work
- ☐ How effective their colleagues are working as a team
- ☐ How respected and appreciated they feel at work
- ☐ Opportunities for professional growth at the agency where they work
- ☐ Potential career path at the agency where they work
- ☐ Effectiveness of their immediate supervisor
- ☐ Satisfaction with the tools and resources provided by the agency to do their job
- ☐ Trust with the leadership of the agency where they work
- ☐ Agency where they work openness to change
- ☐ Level of frustration about their current job

The participants were also asked how much longer they pictured themselves working at the agency where they currently work.

The results of the rating questions are presented on pages 3 - 5. For each rating question, the exact question is presented with the average rating response from all survey respondents. The actual results of the question regarding how much longer they picture themselves working for the agency is presented on page 6.

The participants were also asked open-ended questions about the following:

- ☐ What the agency could do to improve staff satisfaction
- ☐ What the agency could do to improve consumer satisfaction
- ☐ What the agency could do to improve its reputation
- ☐ Any additional comments

An analysis of the participants' responses to these open-ended questions is presented on pages 7 – 12, as well as general recommendations based on the survey responses. There is also a summary of agency suggestions and recommendations on page 13.

In conclusion, the responses provide a clear picture of the challenges faced by employees at the state VR agency. While there are positive aspects, particularly within certain units, there are also significant issues related to compensation, workload, management practices, and communication that need to be addressed. By focusing on these areas, the agency can create a more supportive, efficient, and satisfying work environment for its employees.
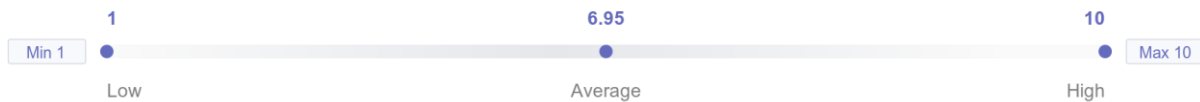
Q9 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = totally dissatisfied and 10 = totally satisfied), please rate how satisfied you are with your current job.

1	7.1	10
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High
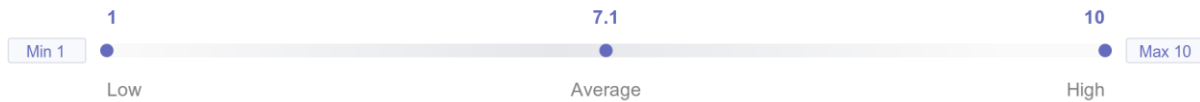
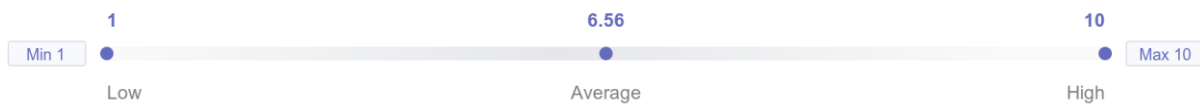**Q10** On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = totally unmeaningful and 10 = totally meaningful), please rate how meaningful and fulfilling you find your job.

1	7.9	10
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High
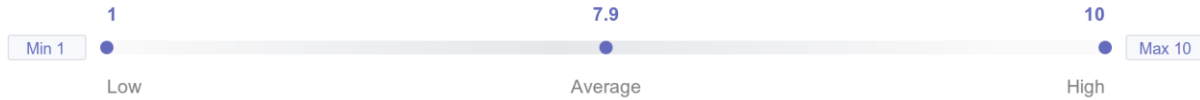
Q11 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = totally unhappy and 10 = totally happy), please rate how happy you are with your work-life balance.

1	6.95	10
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High

Q12 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = totally dissatisfied and 10 = totally satisfied), please rate how satisfied you are with the state VR agency where you work.

| 1	6.56	10
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High

Q13 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = totally dissatisfied and 10 = totally satisfied), please rate how satisfied you are with your overall work environment.

1	7.06	10
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High
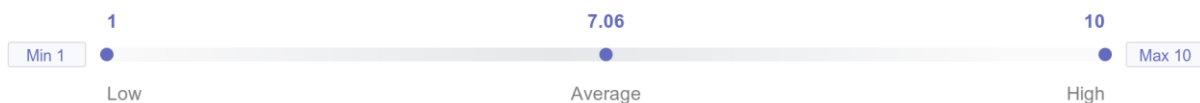
Q14 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = totally unmanageable and 10 = totally manageable), please rate how manageable you feel your workload is.

| 1	6.22	10
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High
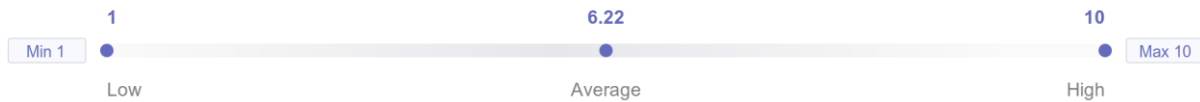
Q15 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = totally ineffective and 10 = totally effective), please rate how effective communication is within the state VR agency where you work.
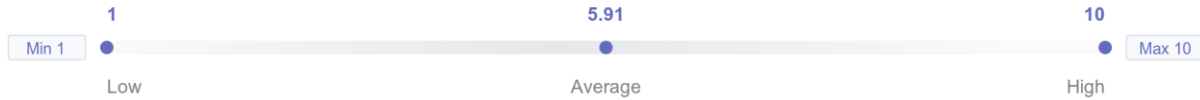
1	5.91	10
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High

Q16 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = totally ineffective and 10 = totally effective), please rate how effective your colleagues are working as a team.

1	7.37	10
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High
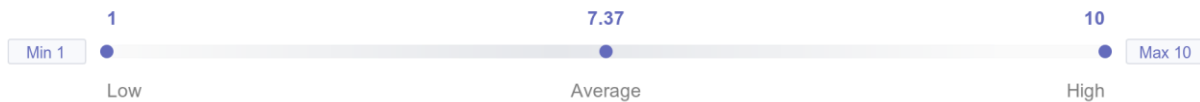
Q17 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = totally disrespected and 10 = totally respected), please rate how respected and appreciated you feel at work.
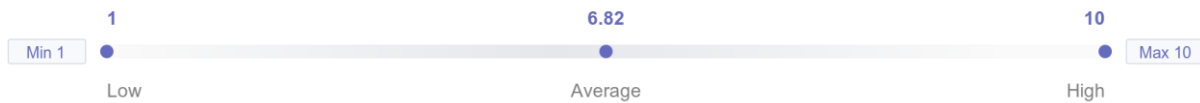
1	6.82	10
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High

Q18 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = none and 10 = tremendous amount), please rate the opportunities for your professional growth at the state VR agency where you work.

1	5.92	10
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High
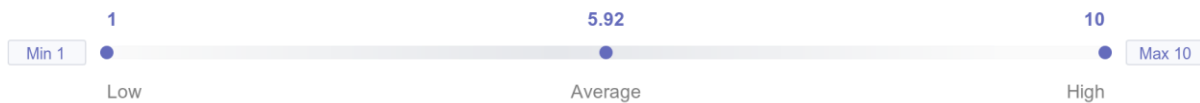
Q19 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = non-existent and 10 = tremendous career path potential), please rate your potential career path at the state VR agency where you work.

1	5.42	10
Min 1 ●	●	● Max 10
Low	Average	High
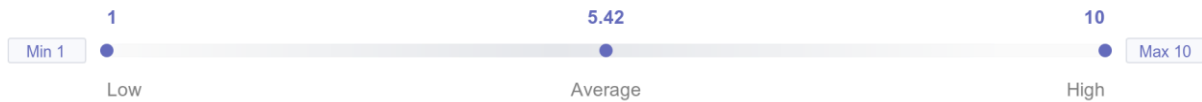
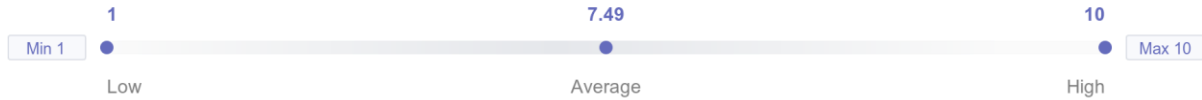**Q20** On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = ineffective and 10 = totally effective), please rate the effectiveness of your immediate supervisor.

1	7.49	10
Min 1 ●	●	● Max 10
Low	Average	High

Q21 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 =totally dissatisfied and 10 = totally satisfied), please rate how satisfied you are with the tools and resources provided by the state VR agency needed to do your job.

1	6.6	10
Min 1 ●	●	● Max 10
Low	Average	High
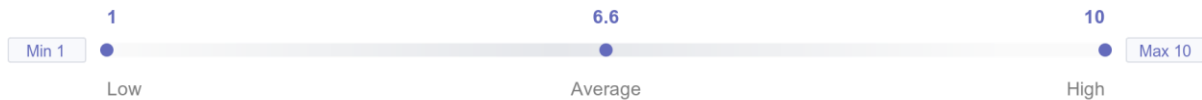
Q22 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = total distrust and 10 = total trust), please rate your level of trust with the state VR agency's leadership.

1	5.92	10
Min 1 ●	●	● Max 10
Low	Average	High
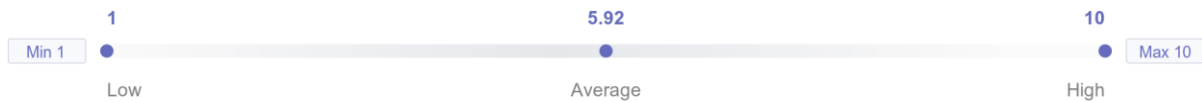
Q23 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = totally closed and 10 = totally open), please rate your state VR agency's openness to change.

1	5.81	10
Min 1 ●	●	● Max 10
Low	Average	High
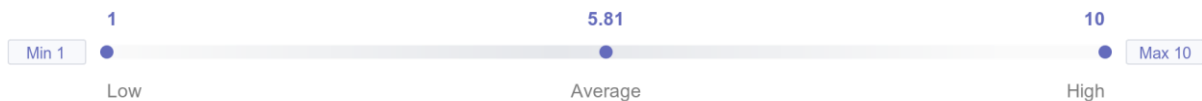
Q24 **On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = totally frustrated and 10 = not frustrated at all), please rate the level of frustration you feel about your job today.**

1	5.8	10
Min 1 ●	●	● Max 10
Low	Average	High
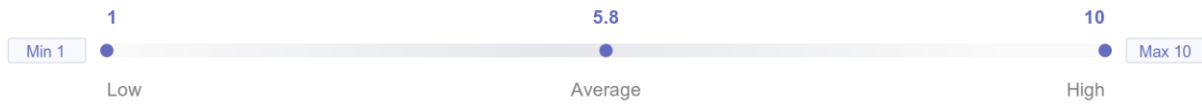
Q25 **Which of the following best describes how much longer you picture yourself working for the state VR agency where you currently work?**
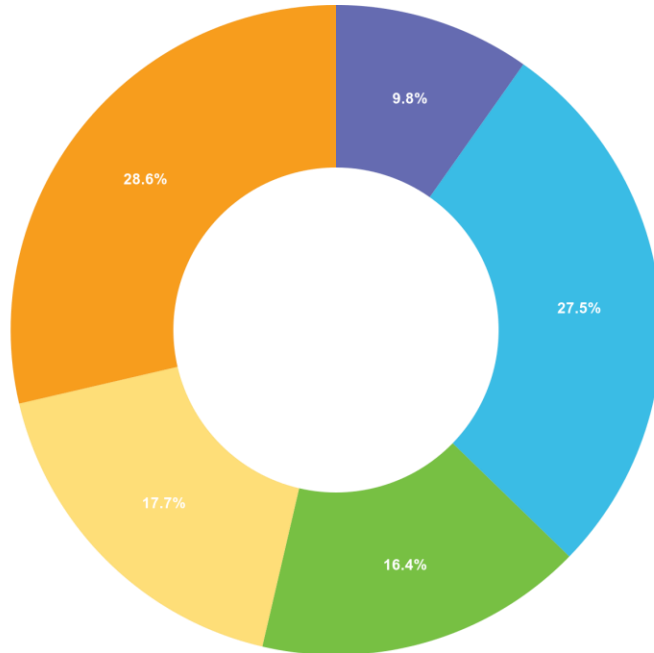
	Choice	Totals
●	less than 1 year	43
●	1 - 3 years	121
●	4 - 5 years	72
●	6 - 10 years	78
●	10 or more years	126

Q26 **What one thing would you like to see the state VR agency where you work do differently to improve staff satisfaction?**

1. Compensation and Benefits
- Increased Pay: A significant number of responses emphasize the need for higher wages. Many staff feel that their current pay is insufficient, particularly when compared to the rising cost of living, workload, and the pay scales in other regions or similar positions.
- Cost of Living Adjustments: There's a call for regular, dependable cost-of-living increases to keep up with inflation.
- Merit-based Raises: Staff seek opportunities for performance-based compensation and recognition, which they feel are currently lacking.

2. Workload and Staffing
- High Caseloads: Overwhelmingly, respondents mention that caseloads are too high, leading to burnout and reduced quality of services. There is a consistent call for more staff to better distribute the workload.
- Administrative Support: There's a strong desire for more administrative staff to handle paperwork and other non-counseling duties, allowing counselors to focus on their primary roles.
- Better Resource Allocation: Some responses suggest that resources, including staff, need to be allocated more equitably across different offices and regions to ensure that workloads are manageable everywhere.

3. Training and Professional Development
- Improved Training: Many staff feel that current training programs are inadequate, particularly for new hires. There's a call for more comprehensive, ongoing training, including real-life scenario training and mentorship programs.
- Career Advancement: There is a desire for more opportunities for professional growth and advancement within the agency, beyond the traditional management track.

4. Communication and Leadership
- Improved Communication: Many responses highlight the need for better communication between leadership and field staff. Staff feel that decisions are often made without sufficient input from those on the ground, leading to a disconnect and lack of buy-in.
- Transparency and Trust: There is a recurring theme of mistrust in leadership, with many staff feeling that decisions are made behind closed doors without adequate explanation or rationale. Transparency in decision-making is frequently requested.
- Leadership Accountability: Some staff feel that leadership does not fully understand or appreciate the challenges faced by field staff and suggest that leadership should be more engaged and accountable.

5. Work-Life Balance and Flexibility
- Remote Work and Flexible Schedules: There is a strong push for more flexible work arrangements, including the ability to work remotely more frequently. Many respondents feel that this flexibility is essential for maintaining a healthy work-life balance.
- Burnout and Stress Management: Responses indicate a need for more efforts to manage staff burnout, including workload adjustments, better mental health support, and more recognition of the stresses faced by employees.

6. Organizational Culture and Recognition

- <u>Recognition and Appreciation</u>: Many staff express a desire for more genuine recognition and appreciation for their work. They feel that positive feedback is rare and that their contributions are often overlooked.
- <u>Workplace Culture</u>: There is concern about a toxic work environment in some areas, with calls for more team-building activities, better interpersonal relationships, and a more supportive workplace culture.

7. Operational Efficiency

- <u>Process Improvements</u>: Several responses call for streamlined processes, particularly in case management and administrative tasks, to reduce redundant or overly complex procedures that add to the workload.
- <u>Technology Upgrades</u>: Some staff suggest that the agency needs to embrace more modern technology to improve efficiency and reduce the burden of manual processes.

These insights point to a need for comprehensive reforms that address pay, workload, communication, training, and workplace culture to improve staff satisfaction and overall agency effectiveness.

Q27 **What one thing would you like to see the state VR agency where you work do differently to improve consumer satisfaction?**

1. Workload and Caseload Management:
- High Caseloads: A significant number of respondents highlighted the issue of high caseloads, indicating that reducing caseloads would allow counselors to provide more individualized and attentive service to clients.
- Additional Staffing: There is a recurring call for more VR counselors and support staff. This would help manage the growing demand and reduce the burden on existing staff.

2. Efficiency in Service Delivery:
- Quicker Processing Times: Many respondents pointed out the need to streamline processes to reduce the time clients wait for services, from eligibility determination to service delivery.
- Reducing Paperwork: Excessive documentation and bureaucratic processes are seen as major barriers to effective service delivery. Simplifying these processes would free up time for direct client interaction.

3. Employee Satisfaction and Retention:
- Employee Appreciation and Satisfaction: Several comments suggest that improving employee satisfaction, including meaningful recognition and reducing overwork, would directly enhance consumer satisfaction. Happy and motivated employees are more likely to provide better service.
- Retention and Training: Reducing staff turnover and ensuring consistent training across the board were mentioned as critical to maintaining a high standard of service and reducing disruptions to client care.

4. Quality of Counseling and Engagement:
- Focus on Counseling: Respondents expressed a desire to return to more meaningful counseling and guidance, rather than focusing solely on administrative tasks or meeting numeric targets.
- Improved Communication: Consistent and effective communication with clients is crucial. This includes quicker responses to client inquiries and more proactive engagement.

5. Consistency and Standards:
- Consistency Across Offices: There are concerns about the inconsistency in services offered across different offices and counselors. Implementing standardized procedures and expectations could help ensure that all clients receive a similar level of service.

6. Technological and Process Improvements:
- Embracing Technology: Many respondents mentioned the need for the agency to adopt more modern technological solutions, such as online applications, automated appointment reminders, and streamlined electronic documentation.

7. Client Expectations and Education:
- Setting Realistic Expectations: There is a need to better manage client expectations regarding the services VR can provide and the timeline for receiving those services. This includes educating clients upfront to avoid misunderstandings later in the process.

8. Service Provider Capacity:

- Expanding Service Provider Networks: The need for more qualified and responsive service providers was highlighted, particularly in rural areas and for specialized services like job coaching.

These insights suggest that while there are structural and process-related challenges, there is also a strong desire among staff to improve the quality of services through better management of workloads, enhanced employee satisfaction, and more efficient and consistent processes. Addressing these areas could lead to significant improvements in both employee and consumer satisfaction.

Q28 **What one thing would you like to see the state VR agency where you work do differently to improve its reputation?**

1. Staffing and Workload Management:
- Staff Retention and Recruitment: High turnover rates are a significant concern, affecting both the agency's reputation and service delivery. Employees believe that improving retention through better pay, career advancement opportunities, and a supportive work environment would enhance the agency's reputation.
- Lowering Caseloads: Many respondents emphasized the need to reduce caseload sizes to allow counselors to provide more personalized and effective services. This would improve the agency's reputation by ensuring clients receive the attention they need in a timely manner.

2. Community Engagement and Marketing:
- Increased Outreach: There is a strong desire for the agency to engage more with the community through outreach programs, public service announcements, and participation in local events. Many employees feel that the agency is still a "best kept secret" and that more visibility would improve its reputation.
- Sharing Success Stories: Highlighting the agency's successes through various media, including social media, local news, and community events, would help build a positive image and make the public more aware of the agency's impact.

3. Internal Communication and Leadership:
- Improved Communication: Better communication between leadership and frontline staff is seen as crucial. Employees want more transparency, timely information, and inclusion in decision-making processes, which they believe would lead to better service delivery and a stronger reputation.
- Leadership Accountability: There is a call for leadership to be more accountable, knowledgeable, and supportive of staff. Employees feel that leadership needs to be more in touch with the day-to-day challenges faced by frontline staff.

4. Consistency and Professional Standards:
- Consistency Across Offices: Employees highlighted the need for consistent service delivery across different offices and regions. Inconsistent practices can harm the agency's reputation, so standardizing procedures and expectations is seen as a way to improve this.
- Professional Development: There is a desire for better training and professional development opportunities for staff, particularly in areas like disability awareness and current best practices. This would ensure that employees are well-equipped to serve clients effectively, thus improving the agency's reputation.

5. Client-Centered Approach:
- Focus on Client Needs: Employees believe that focusing more on client needs rather than bureaucratic processes would significantly improve the agency's reputation. This includes providing more direct services, reducing unnecessary paperwork, and being more responsive to client inquiries.
- Transparency with Clients: Ensuring that clients have a clear understanding of what services are available and what they can expect from the agency is seen as vital. This transparency would help manage client expectations and reduce dissatisfaction.

6. Marketing and Rebranding:

- <u>Rebranding Efforts</u>: Some employees suggested rebranding the agency to better reflect its mission and services. This could involve changing the agency's name and modernizing its image to make it more appealing and relevant to the public.
- <u>Better Marketing Materials</u>: There is a need for more effective marketing materials that clearly communicate the agency's services. This includes updating brochures, creating promotional items, and ensuring that materials are visually appealing and informative.

These insights suggest that improving the agency's reputation will require a multifaceted approach, focusing on staff well-being, consistent service delivery, effective communication, and proactive community engagement. By addressing these areas, the agency can enhance its public image and better serve its clients.

There were only 11 Individuals who completed the section of the survey designed for former staff of state vocational rehabilitation agencies. Of the 11 participants, only 5 individuals stated that the reason they left was due to something about the agency, and the other 6 individuals stated that the reason they left had nothing to do with the agency. Because of this, the remainer of the survey questions designed for former staff was only available to the 5 individuals who left due to something about the agency.

Former Staff Agency Demographics:

Of these 5 former staff participants, 4 participants (80%) had worked for a general state vocational rehabilitation agency and 1 participant (20%) had worked for a combined state vocational rehabilitation agency. Of those, 1 participant (20%) worked for the agency less than 1 year, 1 participant (20%) had worked for the agency for 1 - 3 years, 2 participants (40%) had worked for the agency for 6 - 10 years, and 1 participant (20%) had worked for the agency for 11 - 20 years. Of those, 3 participants (60%) were program/department staff, and 2 (40%) were other.

Former Staff Participant Demographics:

Of these 5 participants, 1 participant (20%) was between 25 - 35 years old, 3 participants (60%) were between 36 - 45 years old, and 1 participant (20%) was between 56 - 65 years old. Regarding gender, 5 participants (100%) are female. Regarding race/ethnicity, 1 participant (20%) are Black/African American, 3 participants (60%) are White/Caucasian, and 1 participant (20%) preferred not to say. Regarding education level, 2 participants (40%) had some college, and 3 participants (60%) had a Master's degree.

The results of several rating questions are presented on the following pages. For each rating question, the exact question is presented with the average rating response from all survey respondents.

The participants were also asked open-ended questions about the following:
- ☐ Why they left the state agency
- ☐ What prompted them to look for another job
- ☐ How would they describe the culture of the agency where they worked
- ☐ How would they describe the management style of their direct supervisor
- ☐ What one thing could the agency have done to keep them from leaving
- ☐ What one thing could the agency do to make it a better place to work
- ☐ Is there anything else they would like to add

In conclusion, it is impossible to draw any objective insights on former VR agency staff due to the low number of former staff survey respondents; however, the responses of those former staff who did participate are presented on the following pages.
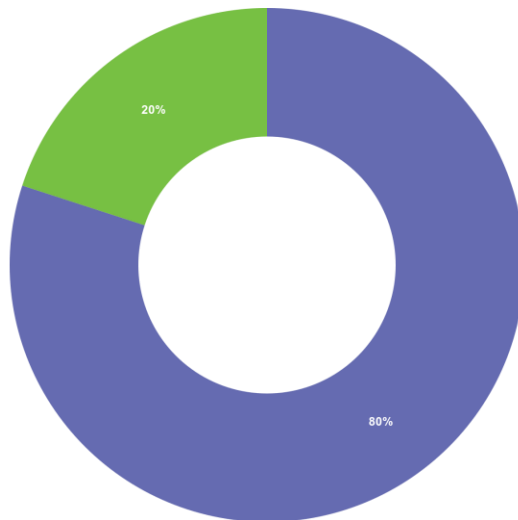
Note: any identify information has been redacted.

Q29 **Which of the following best describes why you left the state VR agency where you worked?**
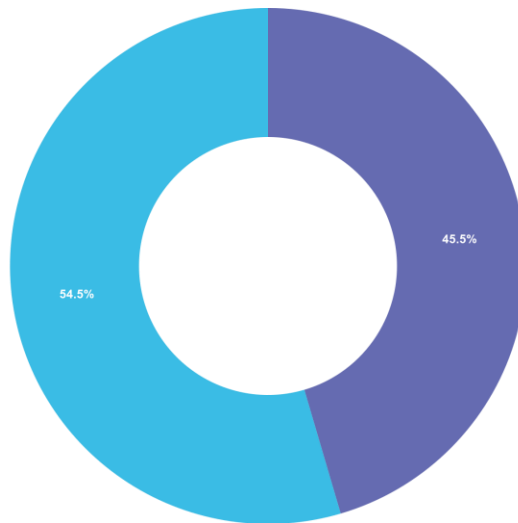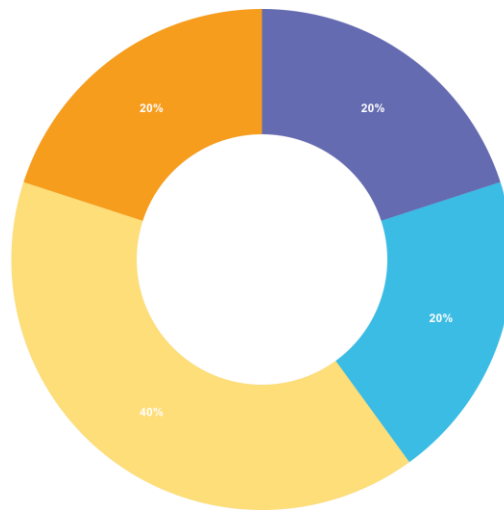

Choice	Totals
My leaving was due to things about the state VR agency.	5
My leaving had nothing to do with the state VR agency.	6

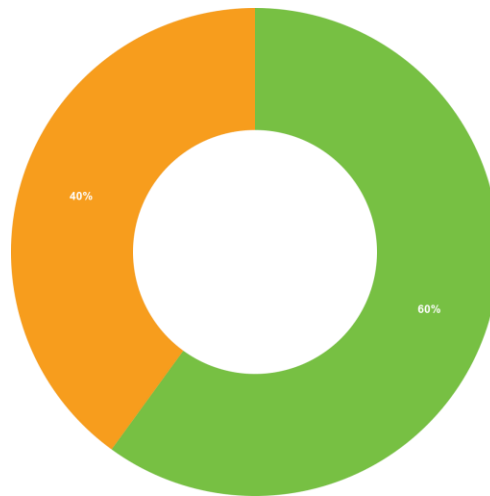**Q30** **Which of the following best describes the state VR agency where you formerly worked?**

Choice	Totals
General Agency	4
Blind Agency	0
Combined Agency	1
I'm not sure	0

Q31 **Which of the following best describes how long you worked at the state VR agency?**
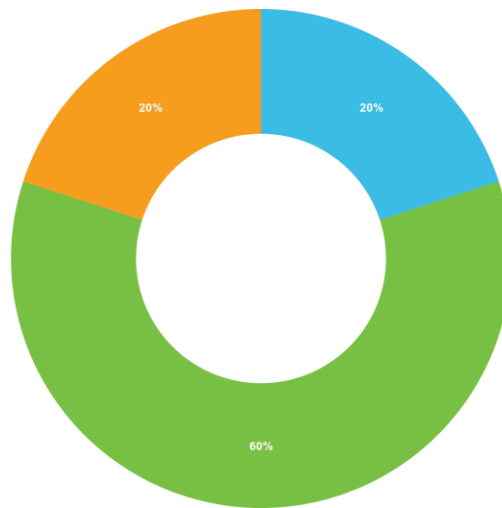
Choice	Totals
Less than 1 year	1
1 - 3 years	1
3 - 5 years	0
6 - 10 years	2
11 - 20 years	1
More than 20 years	0

Q32 **Which of the following best describes your role at the state VR agency where you worked?**
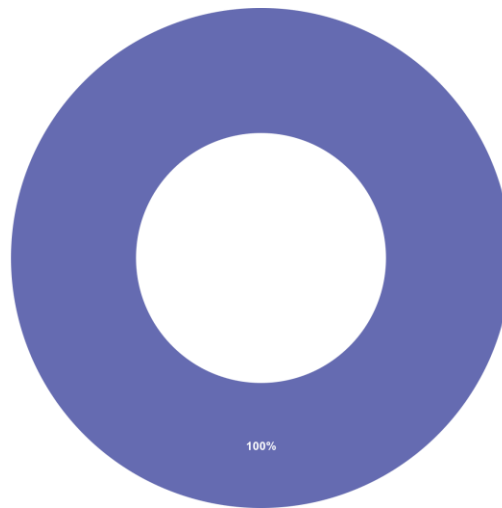
Choice	Totals
Agency Executive Leadership Team	0
Program Manager/Department Manager/Supervisor	0
Program Staff/Department Staff	3
Administrative Staff/Support Staff	0
Other	2

**Q33 Which of the following best describes your age when you left the state VR agency?**

	Choice	Totals
•	18 - 25 years old	0
•	26 - 35 years old	1
•	36 - 45 years old`	3
•	46 - 55 years old	0
•	56 - 65 years old	1
•	Older than 65 years	0

Q34 Which of the following best describes how you identify?

	Choice	Totals
•	Female	5
•	Male	0
•	Other	0
•	Prefer Not to Say	0

Q35 **Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?**
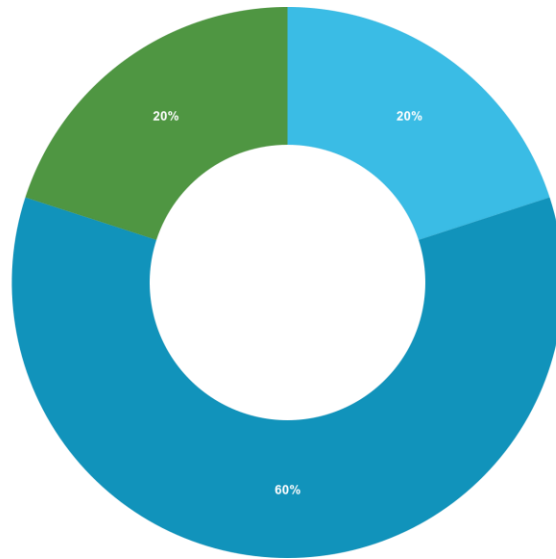
	Choice	Totals
•	Asian	0
•	Black/African American	1
•	Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx	0
•	Middle Eastern/North African	0
•	Multiracial/Two or More Races	0
•	Native American/Alaska Native	0
•	Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0
•	White/Caucasian	3
•	Prefer Not to Say	1
•	Other	0

Q36 Which of the following best describes your highest level of education?
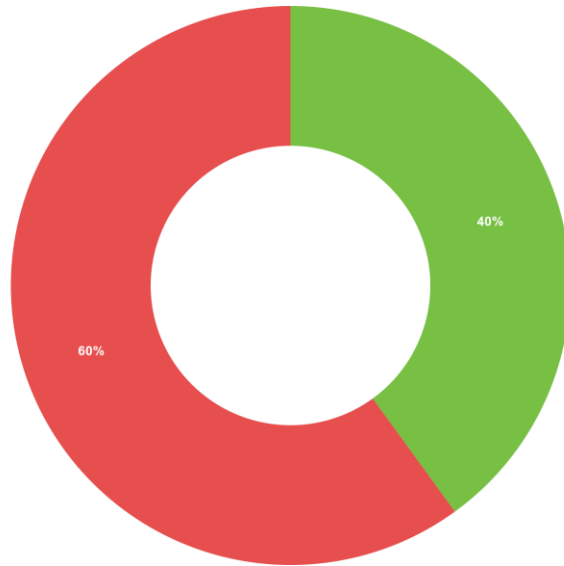
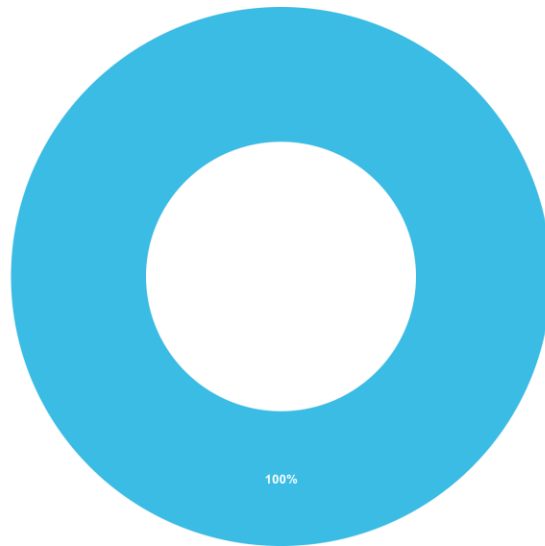| Choice	Totals
Less than High School	0
High School Diploma/GED	0
Some College (No Degree)	2
Associate's Degree	0
Bachelor's Degree	0
Master's Degree	3
Doctorate	0
Professional Degree (MD, JD, etc.)	0

Q37 **Why did you leave the state VR agency?**

- I wanted a new challenge but more importantly the salary fell short of what I needed in order to support my family and justify my master's level training. Pay raises were so difficult to get, and took lobbying, years of fighting and negotiating by our agency execs. They wanted regular pay raises for us but struggled to get folks in government to approve them. I now work for the Federal Govt as a VRC and annual raises are attainable. In December '24, I will get a 14k pay raise & COLAs yearly.

- My district manager in ████████████████ was the most toxic person I have ever worked with. She threatened us, insulted us, and harassed us. She would set unrealistic expectations, far beyond the standards set by the state and when those weren't met she would threaten to remove hybrid/alternative work schedules or place us on corrective action plans. An example is ███████ ████████████████████████

- Was recruited by the Dept of VA to work in Voc Rehab Higher salary, better benefits

- I was with the state VR agency for just over a year when I had my daughter. My role is a hybrid role where the majority of my work was done from my home office. Childcare costs are expensive, and I tried to get an accommodation to put my child in childcare part time and have her home with me the other half. This was denied so I found another job in the same line of work that allowed me to do so.

- Salary was not adequate.

**Q38** **What prompted you to start looking for a different job?**

- I was beginning to feel stagnant and restless. I also saw a job posting on LinkedIn for a VRC position with VA VR and E and the starting salary sucked me in. I began to research the position and realized that I could make more money and have similar benefits with the Feds. I also loved the fact that pay raises could likely happen on a yearly basis.

- The treatment I received from my district manager. I was written up for informing my clients of an upcoming vacation so I could address their client concerns prior to my leave. I was threatened with removal of my hybrid/alternative work schedule daily. I was yelled at and insulted weekly. She was reported to upper management, but nothing was done. I had increased anxiety, stress, depression and was suicidal at one point. I had the highest case load and made my successful closure goal every year.

- No opportunity for advancement at state Voc rehab

- Child Care costs. The state agency did not allow me to have my child home with me when I worked out of my home office.

- Salary was not adequate.

Q39 Did you receive a better offer elsewhere?

100%

| Choice	Totals
No	0
Yes, please describe.	5

Q40 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 =totally dissatisfied and 10 = totally satisfied), please rate how satisfied you were with your job at the state VR agency.

| 3	7.2	10
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High
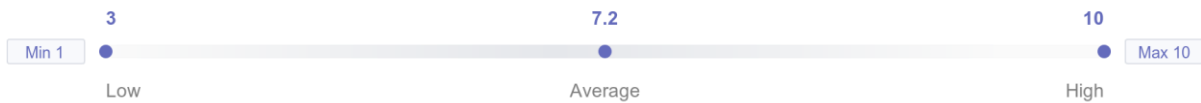
Q41 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 =totally unmeaningful and 10 = totally meaningful), please rate how meaningful and fulfilling you found your job at the state VR agency.

| 5	8	10
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High
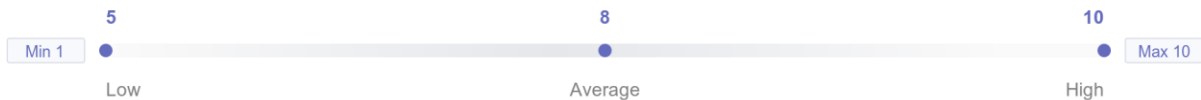
Q42 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 =totally unmanageable and 10 = totally manageable), please rate how manageable you felt your workload was at the state VR agency.

1	6.2	9
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High
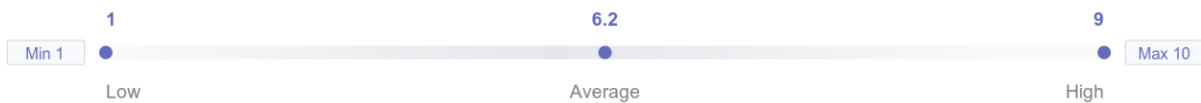
Q43 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 =totally unhappy and 10 = totally happy), please rate how happy you were with your work-life balance when you worked at the state VR agency.

1	6.6	10
Min 1 ●	●	● Max 10
Low	Average	High
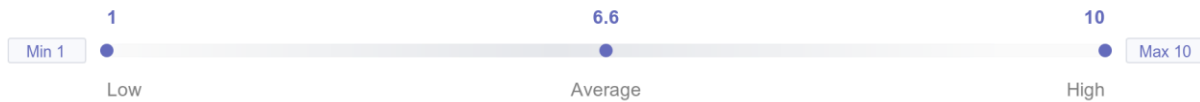
Q44 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 =totally unmatched and 10 = totally matched), please rate how you felt your job responsibilities matched what you expected when you were hired at the state VR agency.

5	8.2	10
Min 1 ●	●	● Max 10
Low	Average	High
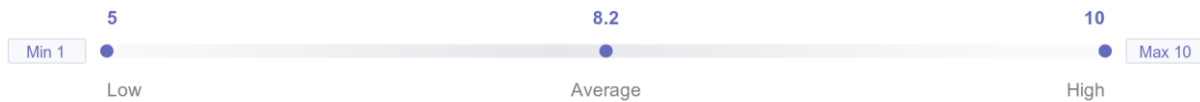
Q45 How would you describe the agency culture of the state VR agency where you worked?

- I liked the agency culture. It didn't feel toxic, and my chain of command was supportive and encouraging. Other units across the state had issues but our Unit was known for its cohesiveness and healthy teamwork attitude. We supported each other a lot.

- TOXIC. In the 5 years our district manager was in place she drove away 3 site managers and close to a dozen other staff. No one ever protected the staff that stayed and most of them are looking for other work currently.

- Positive Took years to create a career ladder. Couldn't wait any longer

- Everyone was friendly. There were some employees that have been with the agency for years who seemed to have "clicks" and mingled mostly with their own. Sometimes it felt you had to work extra hard to please them.

Q46 On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = totally ineffective and 10 = totally effective), please rate the effectiveness of your supervisor at the state VR agency when you worked there.

1	7.2	10
Min 1 ●	●	● Max 10
Low	Average	High
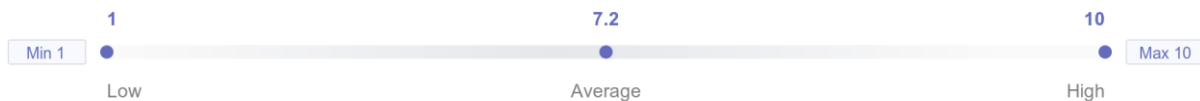
Q47 **On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = totally ineffective and 10 = totally effective), please rate how effective your colleagues at the state VR agency were working as a team when you worked there.**
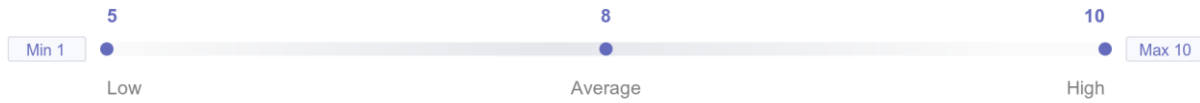
	5		8		10	
Min 1	●		●		●	Max 10
	Low		Average		High	

Q48 **On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 = none and 10 = tremendous amount), please rate the opportunities for your professional growth at the state VR agency when you worked there.**
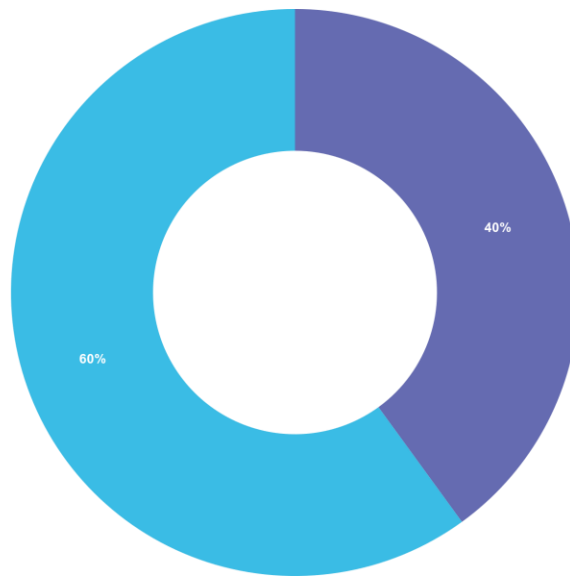
	1		5.2		8	
Min 1	●		●		●	Max 10
	Low		Average		High	
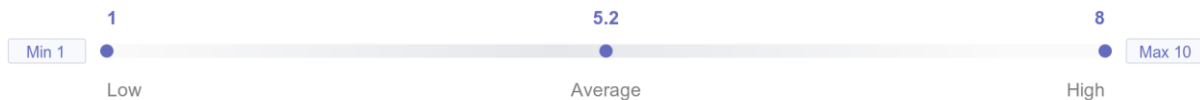
Q49 **On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 =totally dissatisfied and 10 = totally satisfied), please rate how satisfied you were with the tools and resources provided by the state VR agency needed to do your job.**

	3		6.8		10	
Min 1	●		●		●	Max 10
	Low		Average		High	
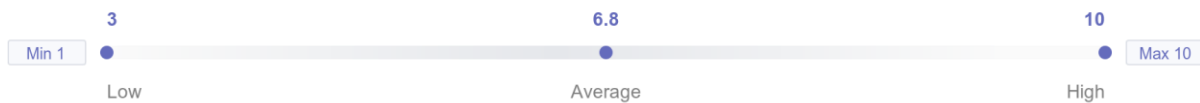
Q50 **How would you describe the management style of your direct supervisor at the state VR agency?**

- I absolutely loved my Program Manager. She always advocated for us and held us to a high standard of excellence. Her expectations were realistic, and she believed in us. She was honest, wise, experienced and always willing to help us get what we needed. I appreciated her directness and felt accepted by her. She respected, trusted and valued all the staff in the unit. I trusted her and could talk to her about any professional issue without fear of judgment. She helped me grow as a VRC.

- She was horrible! I was a broken person while working there and it has taken months of being away from her to rebuild myself. While looking for other work I had to convince myself that I was still someone of worth. I still struggle with having any professional self-esteem.

- Positive and transparent

- She was very hands off and allowed us to do our job but was always available to chat, answer questions, and advocate. We had weekly 1:1 meetings, which were great.

- Kind, thoughtful, effective

Q51 **Were there any state VR agency management practices or policies that were problematic?**


Choice	Totals
No	2
Yes, please describe.	3

Q52 **On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 =totally dissatisfied and 10 = totally satisfied), please rate how satisfied you were with the state VR agency's leadership.**

1	6.2	10
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High
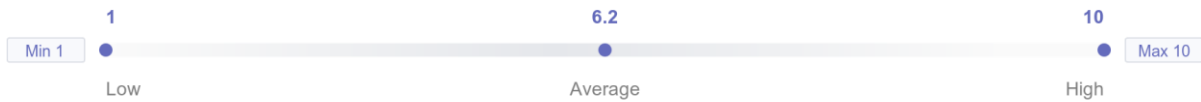
Q53 **On a scale of 1 - 10 (with 1 =totally dissatisfied and 10 = totally satisfied), please rate how satisfied you were with your compensation and benefits at the state VR agency.**

4	5.4	8
Min 1		Max 10
Low	Average	High
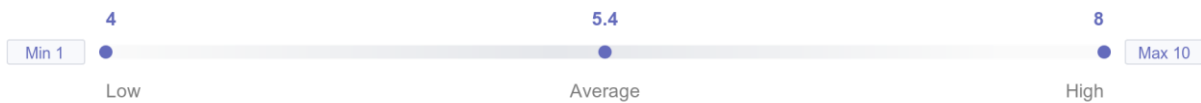
Q54 What one thing could the state VR agency have done to prevent you from leaving?

- If they had given me more money, I would probably still be working for them. I loved my co-workers and the mission of State VR. I miss it a lot.

- Upper management taking into consideration the way staff was being treated when it was brought to their attention. They chose to protect her at the expense of dozens of other staff.

- Put a career ladder in place by promised timelines

- Allow me to work from my home office with my child at home and only place her in childcare when I worked out of my home.

- Better salary structure

Q55 What one thing do you think the state VR agency could do to make it a better place to work?

- Encourage more self-care. In our unit, we were pretty healthy but when I interacted with colleagues from other units I could sense that they were jaded and burnt out.

- Deal with toxic expectations and management.

- More accountability across the agency

**Q56 Would you consider returning to the state VR agency in the future?**
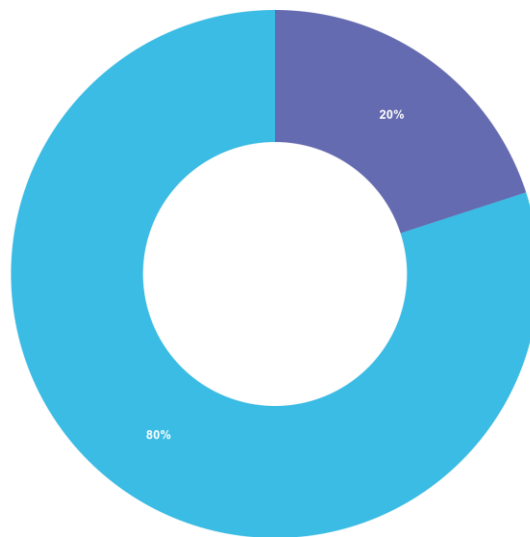
Choice	Totals
No	1
Yes	4

Q57 **Using the following scale of 1 - 10 (1 = No Impact and 10 = Very Impactful) please indicate the impact each of the following had on your decision to leave the state VR agency.**
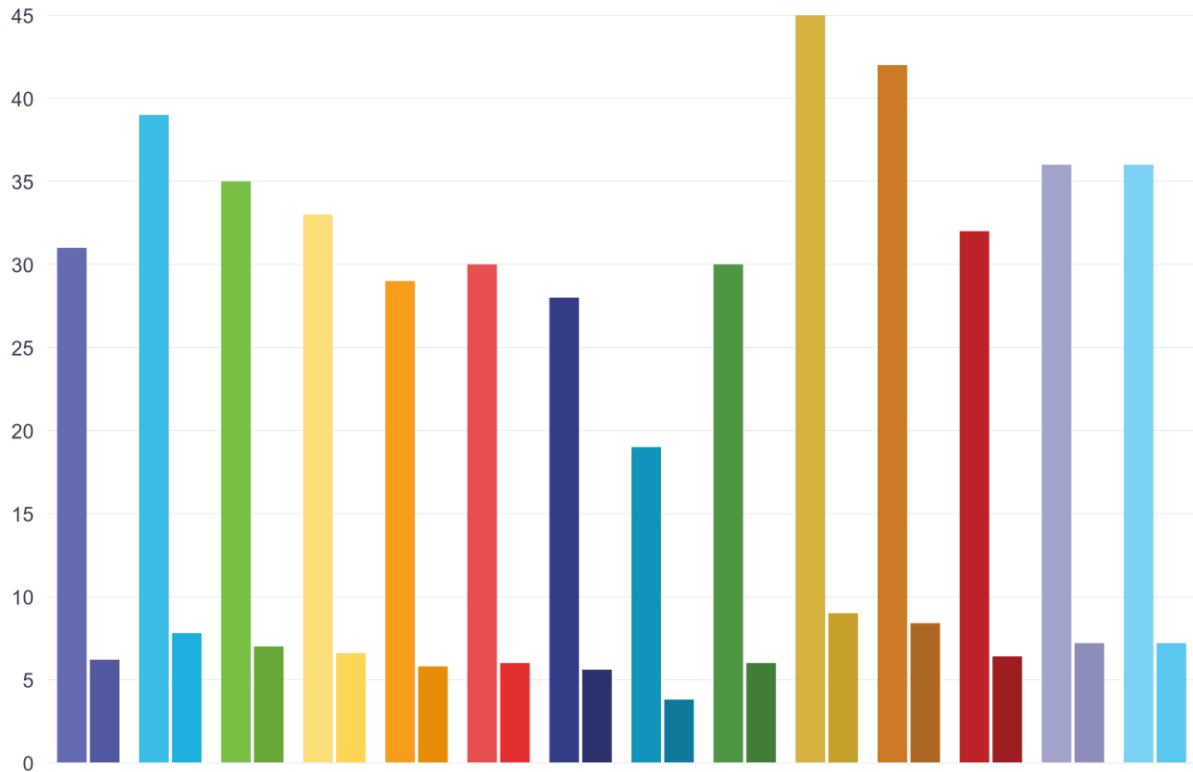
Choice	Score	Average
Your Work - Life Balance	31	6.2
Your Day-to-Day Job Duties	39	7.8
Your Workload	35	7
Value of Your Work	33	6.6
Respect and Recognition for Your Work	29	5.8
Your Work Environment	30	6
Your Supervisor(s)	28	5.6
Your Colleagues	19	3.8
Your Professional Growth Opportunities	30	6
Your Potential Career Path	45	9
Your Compensation and Benefits	42	8.4
Agency Communication	32	6.4
Agency Direction	36	7.2
Agency's Openness to Change	36	7.2

Q58 **Using the following scale of 1 - 10 (1 = Not Concerned At All and 10 = Extremely Concerned) please indicate your level of concern for each of the following:**
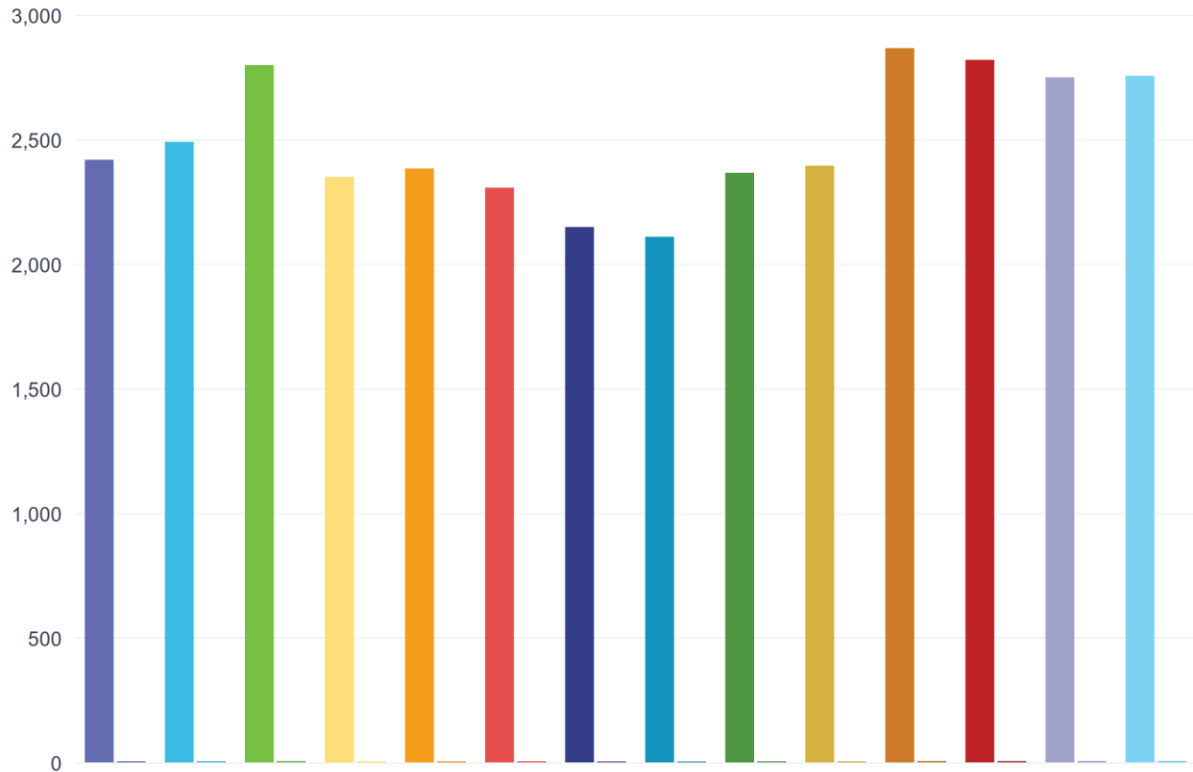
Choice	Score	Average
Your Work - Life Balance	2420	5.5
Your Day-to-Day Job Duties	2492	5.66
Your Workload	2800	6.36
Value of Your Work	2351	5.34
Respect and Recognition for Your Work	2385	5.42
Your Work Environment	2308	5.25
Your Supervisor(s)	2150	4.89
Your Colleagues	2111	4.8
Your Professional Growth Opportunities	2368	5.38
Your Potential Career Path	2396	5.45
Your Compensation and Benefits	2868	6.52
Agency Communication	2821	6.41
Agency Direction	2751	6.25
Agency's Openness to Change	2757	6.27

Q59 Is there anything else you would like to add?

- I am grateful for the opportunity to share my experiences as a former State VR Employee. I truly enjoy working as a VRC. I hope that one day the State can offer greater compensation without having to lose staff, hire a lobbyist or jump through so many hoops. I would happily return to working for them if they paid a better wage.

- Pay staff more. as ████ staff we are making less for the amount of education that we have considering that other staff working for other ████ agencies who require only a bachelor's degree are making $4 more than us requiring a master's degree. and agencies requiring AA are making more than us as well. Even it out this is not fair or equitable. -- this may be one of the reasons we can't keep qualified staff.. when staff leave that creates more work training new staff.

Suggestions for Improvement:

1. **Improve Compensation:** The most common suggestion was to increase salaries and provide more meaningful financial rewards. This includes regular cost-of-living adjustments, performance-based raises, and better bonuses.

2. **Address Workload Issues:** Employees recommended hiring more staff to help manage caseloads and providing better administrative support. They also suggested streamlining processes to reduce the administrative burden on counselors.

3. **Enhance Leadership Accountability & Communication:** Many respondents called for better leadership practices, including holding managers accountable for their behavior, improving communication, and ensuring transparency in decision-making processes.

4. **Focus on Employee Well-Being:** Encouraging self-care, reducing burnout, and creating a more supportive work environment were also suggested. This could involve implementing wellness programs, offering flexible work arrangements, and fostering a culture that values work-life balance.

Recommendations for the Agency:

1. **Review Compensation Policies:**
Conduct a comprehensive review of the agency's compensation structure to ensure it is competitive with the private sector and other public agencies. Consider implementing regular cost-of-living adjustments and performance-based raises.

2. **Address Workload & Support Issues:**
Increase staffing levels where necessary to reduce caseloads and prevent burnout. Provide additional administrative support and invest in technology to streamline paperwork and other administrative tasks.

3. **Improve Management Practices:**
Implement management training programs focused on leadership, communication, and employee engagement. Establish clear accountability measures for managers and ensure that all staff are treated fairly and equitably.

4. **Enhance Communication & Transparency:**
Develop a communication strategy that ensures all employees are informed about policy changes, agency goals, and decisions that impact their work. Regular updates from leadership can help bridge the gap between management and staff.

5. **Prioritize Employee Well-Being:**
Introduce initiatives aimed at improving work-life balance, such as flexible work arrangements, wellness programs, and opportunities for professional development. Recognize and reward employees for their contributions to improve morale.