

**PROTECTION and ADVOCACY for BENEFICIARIES of SOCIAL SECURITY (PABSS)**

**SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT**

**REPORTING PERIOD: From 10/1/2010 To 2/28/2011**

**GRANT AWARD NUMBER: 17-B-20056-3-05**

**STATE: WV**

**AGENCY NAME: WEST VIRGINIA - West Virginia Advocates, inc.**

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**DATE SUBMITTED: 4/8/2011**

**Part I - Quantitative Statistics****Section A: Information and Referral**

How many individuals received Information and Referral under the PABSS program during the Report Period? (Do not count individuals more than once for this response.)

<b>Individuals Receiving I&amp;R</b>	<b>23</b>
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How many Information and Referral requests were made under the PABSS program during the report period? (Include all I&R requests, even if more than one for some individuals. This number should equal or exceed Section A. 1.)

<b>Information and Referral Requests</b>	<b>23</b>
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**Section B: Individuals and Issue Area Service Requests/Workload Statistics****Individuals**

<b>a. How many individuals had open PABSS issue area service requests at the start of the report period?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>b. How many new PABSS individuals were added during the report period?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Total Individuals Served</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>c. Total number of individuals with all issue area service requests that were closed during the report period under the PABSS program</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Total Individuals Still Being Served</b>	<b>16</b>

**Services**

<b>a. Total PABSS issue area service requests open at the start of the report period.</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>b. Number of new PABSS issue area service requests added during the report period?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Total Services</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>c. Total number of issue area service requests closed during the report period?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Total Services Still Open</b>	<b>18</b>

**Section C: Individual Demographics**

1. Please provide counts of individuals served by Gender:

<b>a. Male</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>b. Female</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total individuals receipted</b>	<b>18</b>

**2. Please provide counts of individuals served by Ethnicity:**

a. Alaskan Native	0
b. American Indian	0
c. Arab American (Middle Eastern)	0
d. Asian	0
e. Black (Not Hispanic/Latino Origin)	1
f. Hispanic/Latino	2
g. Multi Racial / Multi Cultural	0
h. Pacific Islander	0
i. White (Not Hispanic/Latino Origin)	15
j. Unknown	0
Other (IF SELECTED MUST SPECIFY)	0
<b>Total individuals received</b>	<b>18</b>

**3. Please provide counts of individuals received by Age Bracket:**

a. 14 to 18	2
b. 19 to 21	0
c. 22 to 40	8
d. 41 to 59	6
e. 60 to 64	2
<b>Total individuals received</b>	<b>18</b>

**Please provide counts of individuals received by Beneficiary Status.**

a. SSI eligible	8
b. SSDI eligible	9
c. Dually eligible	1
<b>Total individuals received</b>	<b>18</b>

**Please provide counts of individuals received by Primary Disability:**

a. Absence of extremities	0
b. Autism	0
c. Auto-immune (lupus, thyroid, ALS, etc.)	0
d. Blindness (both eyes)	1
e. Cancer	0
f. Cerebral palsy	0
g. Deaf-blind	0
h. Deafness	1

<b>i. Diabetes</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>j. Digestive disorders (chronic pancreatitis, esophageal stricture, fistulae, chronic liver, etc.)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>k. Epilepsy</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>l. Genitourinary conditions (kidney, prostate, etc.)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>m. Hard of Hearing (not deaf)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>n. Heart and other circulatory problems including cardiovascular</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>o. HIV/AIDS</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>p. Mental illness (diagnosis according to DSM-IV)</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>q. Mental retardation</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>r. Multiple sclerosis</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>s. Muscular dystrophy</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>t. Muscular / Skeletal impairment (arthritis, fibromyalgia, osteogenesis imperfecta, osteomyelitis, etc.)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>u. Neurological disorders (brain tumors, convulsive disorders, Parkinson, etc.)</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>v. Other emotional/behavioral (Provide detail)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>w. Other intellectual such as ADD/ADHD (Provide detail)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>x. Physical / orthopedic including spinal cord injuries, paraplegia, quadriplegia, back problems, etc.</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>y. Respiratory disorders (emphysema, asthma, pulmonary hypertension, cystic fibrosis, etc.)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>z. Specific learning disabilities (SLD)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>aa. Speech impairment</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>bb. Spina bifida</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>cc. Substance abuse (alcohol or drugs)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>dd. Tourette syndrome</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>ee. Traumatic brain injury (TBI)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ff. Visual Impairment (not blind)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>gg. Disability not known/Other than Above (Specify)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total individuals receipted</b>	<b>18</b>

#### **Section D: Major Source of Concern**

Please Provide counts of all PABSS issue are service request receipts by major source of individual's concern for the current report period:

<b>1. State Vocational Rehab Agency (public VR program)</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2. Employment Networks (SSA contractor)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>3. Agencies other than 1. or 2. above</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>4. Employment discrimination – hire, fire, promotion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>5. Employment wages and benefits</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>6. Housing</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>7. Healthcare (not 5 above)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>8. Insufficient/improper benefits planning</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>9. Transition services (Student beneficiary between 14-18 (or under age 22) engaging/needing a transition plan)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>10. Post Secondary accommodation</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>11. Transportation</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>12. Social Security benefits cessation based on SGA (including CDR's) – not Overpayment</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>13. Benefits Questions/Work Incentives – Not 12 or 14</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>14. Work Related Overpayment</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>15. Other (IF SELECTED MUST SPECIFY)</b>	<b>1</b>
Randolph Sheppard services administered by the WV Division of Rehabilitation Services	1
<b>Total issues/service requests of individuals receipted.</b>	<b>20</b>

#### **Section E: Closed Issue Area Service Requests**

What was the problem/sub-problem area?

<b>a. [AT] Assistive Technology</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>b. [Education] Transition school to work</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>c. [Employment] Discrimination in employment benefits</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>d. [Employment] Discrimination in hiring</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>e. [Employment] Unlawful termination / firing</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>f. [Employment] Other employment discrimination</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>g. [Employment] Reasonable accommodation – not d, e, or f from above</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>h. [Employment] Service provider issues – not c-g above</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>i. [Employment] Wage and hour issues</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>j. [Financial Entitlements] SSI: Overpayments based on work issues</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>k. [Financial Entitlements] SSDI: Overpayments based on work issues</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>l. [Financial Entitlements] (other) – Specify</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>m. [Healthcare] Medicaid only issues</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>n. [Healthcare] Medicare/Medicaid issues</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>o. [Healthcare] Medicare only issues</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>p. [Healthcare] Private Insurance Issues</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>q. [Housing] Accommodations in housing</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>r. [Housing] Subsidized housing/Section 8</b>	<b>0</b>

s. [Housing] Rental termination – not q .	0
t. [Housing] Other – Specify	0
u. [Childcare]	0
v. [Rehab Services] Related to State VR	1
w. [Rehab Services] Related to Employment Network (EN)	1
x. [Rehab Services] Related to Agencies other than State VR or Employment Network (EN)	0
y. [Post-Secondary Ed] Accessibility	0
z. [Post-Secondary Ed] Funding issues	1
aa. [Post-Secondary Ed] Grievance Against College – Not y or z above	0
bb. [Post-Secondary Ed] Other – Specify	0
cc. [Services] Personal assistance – not Employment	0
dd. [Transportation]	0
ee. [Benefits Planning] referral / access to BPAO services	0
ff. [Other] (IF SELECTED MUST SPECIFY)	1
client requested detailed information toward gaining employment and becoming more independent	1
<b>Total closed issue area service requests.</b>	<b>6</b>

**What was the reason for closing the individual's issue area service request?**

a. Issue Resolved in Individual's Favor	5
b. Issue Partially Resolved in Individual's Favor	0
c. Issue Lacked Legal Merit	0
d. Individual decided not to pursue resolution or Individual Withdrew Complaint (Not e-g below)	0
e. Other Representation Obtained (Individual found other representation)	0
f. Individual Not Responsive to Agency / Individual refused to cooperate with P&A	0
g. Services Not Needed Due to lost contact, Death, Relocation, etc.	0
h. Advocacy efforts/appeals were unsuccessful (Issue not resolved in Individual's Favor)	0
i. Other (IF SELECTED MUST SPECIFY)	1
WV Human Rights Commission is investigating complaint	1
<b>Total closed issue area service requests.</b>	<b>6</b>

**What was the highest intervention strategy used?**

a. Short Term/Technical assistance	6
b. Informal Resolution	0
c. Investigation/Monitoring	0

<b>d. Negotiation</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>e. Mediation / Alternative Dispute Resolution</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>f. Administrative Remedies</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>g. Legal remedy / Litigation</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>h. Class Action Suits</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>i. Systemic / Policy activities</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total closed issue area service requests.</b>	<b>6</b>

As a result of P&A intervention, the following major outcome was achieved:

<b>a. Individual gained / maintained access to services including those of VR, EN or other agency</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>b. Individual obtained employment</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>c. Individual regained employment</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>d. Individual maintained employment</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>e. Individual advanced in employment</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>f. Individual's employment opportunities increased</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>g. Individual obtained an increase in salary and/or benefits</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>h. Validity of discrimination complaint was upheld</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>i. Overpayment situation addressed (it doesn't matter if it was waived or the efforts weren't successful)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>j. Individual acquired knowledge concerning his/her rights</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>k. Outcome information is not available</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>l. Other outcome (IF SELECTED MUST SPECIFY)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total outcomes of closed issue area service requests.</b>	<b>6</b>

## **Part II - Narrative Reporting**

### **Section A: Description of Progress and Status Update**

Please provide a brief overview of overall project status, staff changes, staff training or other major developments with regard to the PABSS program. This could include information about boards and committees where decisions are made concerning disability service delivery and local policy.

As reported in the previous PPR, West Virginia Advocates, Inc. (WVA) had explored the use of social media on the Internet for many purposes. In January 2011, WVA launched its FaceBook page. Prior to the launch, policies and procedures were put into place to guide the use of social media. A social media team is active in monitoring the FaceBook page and posting items of interest to people with disabilities. All staff have been trained on the process for submitting items to be posted. Work Incentive Seminar Events (WISE) are posted on both our FaceBook page and our website.

**WVA has made a concerted effort to go beyond Information and Referral to provide**

more technical assistance to clients by offering detailed guidance in the process of applying for services under the Rehabilitation Act, filing complaints with the West Virginia Human Rights Commission, and fully understanding the Ticket to Work Program.

WVA continues to be a member of the Fair Shake Network (FSN). The FSN is a grass roots organization of people with disabilities and other interested parties who are concerned with systems change to ensure people with disabilities get a "fair shake". The activities of the organization include education on disability issues and legislative activities. During this year's legislative session, WVA attended weekly meetings with the FSN at the WV state capitol building to discuss disability related legislation that was being proposed. WVA attended FSN's Disability Advocacy Training Day. The event was designed to advise attendees of several policy and legislative updates. WVA staff facilitated an informational session. WVA staff also set up our outreach display at the annual Disability Advocacy Day at the Legislature. FSN members including the WVA representative gathered various groups of consumers who attended the event and took them to meet with individual legislators in a meeting arranged by WVA staff.

As reported in the previous PPR, WVA made a plan to network with all Employment Networks (EN's) based in West Virginia as well as other SSA Ticket to Work partners. The goal was to share information about our individual programs to expand the use of the Ticket and increase the number of Ticket programs within West Virginia. While WVA organized this collaboration, other partners have shared in hosting the meetings. Other attendees included: Medicaid Work Incentives Network (M-WIN); Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA); and West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (WVDRS). The M-WIN representative stated she had worked with Maximus and that the West Virginia Mental Health Consumer's Association (WVMHCA) is now in the EN directory. The number of EN's available in WV has increased over the last year and additional agencies are interested in applying or already in the process of applying.

WVA created a new employment brochure at the end of FY 2010. It is now in print and being distributed. This brochure takes the place of our previous Client Assistance Program (CAP) and PABSS brochures. It includes details about the PABSS and CAP programs as well as examples of ways in which WVA may help an individual with a disability obtain, re-gain or maintain employment. It can be found on our website at: <http://wvadvocates.org/resources/publications/brochures/employment-programs/>.

WVA has devoted even more staff time toward work on the PABSS program. We have two (2) advocates and an attorney who are PABSS trained. The advocate who was trained in July 2010 is now being assigned more PABSS work.

WVA staff participated in the following trainings from October 1, 2010, through February 28, 2011, funded in part by PABSS:

- webinar titled "Top 10 ADA Cases";
- WVA listened to a White House Disability call: Host - Kareem Dale, Special Assistant to the President on Disability Policy, Domestic Policy Council, Office of Public Engagement;
- an archived webinar titled "Service Animals and the ADA";

- Leadership Plenty Conference - Learning leadership capabilities and community organizing techniques; and
- webcast titled "Social Media 101 for Behavioral Health Professionals".

**Section B: Detail of Actions Taken on the Project**

**Issue Area Service Requests Summaries:** [Please provide summaries of three Issues/Service Requests undertaken as part of the PABSS project. Indicate clearly the issue or problem, the PABSS intervention, and the results if known]

A client requested assistance with having the overpayment from the Social Security Administration of over \$41,000 reversed. The Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC) had initially referred the client to WVA in the event that there was a need to appeal. WVA met with the CWIC to review the client's records concerning the overpayment and discussed WVA's potential role. After our meeting with the CWIC, the CWIC was able to resolve the issue without the need for appeal. No further action was needed by WVA. The client's overpayment was reduced from over \$41,000 to approximately \$4,000. The client was satisfied with this amount of repayment.

A client contacted WVA because he felt that he was discriminated against by his former employer due to his disability. WVA communicated with the client's former employer's attorney. WVA then obtained and reviewed records from the client's former employer concerning the efforts they made to accommodate his disability. On WVA's recommendation, the client filed a complaint with the West Virginia Human Rights Commission (WVHRC). The client was provided with the complaint forms and offered assistance in completing them. The client opted to file the complaint with the WVHRC himself. It is currently under investigation and the client has been asked to call WVA back when he receives a Letter of Determination from the WVHRC. WVA has plans to follow up with the client regularly in regard to the outcome of the WVHRC investigation.

A client requested assistance with finding resources to buy clothing, equipment and travel expenses so he can possibly return to work in the coal mine. The client was in the process of contacting EN's. The client had previously been served by WVDRS and contacted them again but was told they would not provide those services because of the possibility of re-injury. WVDRS did indicate they would consider re-training. He had not yet applied in writing. WVA recommended the client re-apply in writing for services from WVDRS in order for WVA to be able to investigate their reason for denying him the services he requested. The client decided not to pursue services from WVDRS because he had located an EN that would provide those services should he decide he definitely wanted to return to the coal mine. WVA also provided guidance to the client about requesting reasonable accommodations and other available resources should he return to the coal mine or obtain other employment.

**Outreach Statistics:**

<b>Total Number of Outreach/Presentations</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Total Number of Persons Reached by Outreach/ Presentation Events</b>	<b>756</b>

**Other Information Dissemination Activities: (Number of Instances)**

<b>1. Radio/TV appearances by PABSS staff</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>2. Newspaper/Magazine/Journal articles prepared by staff</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>3. PSAs/videos/films aired by the Agency</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>4. Reports disseminated</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>5. Publications/Booklets/Brochures disseminated</b>	<b>2607</b>
<b>6. Number of Website hits</b>	<b>213188</b>
<b>7. Other media activities (IF SELECTED MUST SPECIFY)</b>	<b>0</b>

**Outreach Narrative: [Describe the agency's outreach efforts. Describe the trainings presented by the staff including information about the topics covered, the purpose of the training, and a description of the attendees. Describe media events, informational materials developed or other activities undertaken as part of the PABSS project.]**

**WVA has made a commitment to conduct outreach and presentations when possible at transition fairs being held throughout the state. We have set up our display at six (6) of these fairs and provided presentations about WVA as well as employment rights of people with disabilities at two (2) of them.**

**WVA provided training on employment rights of people with disabilities to fifteen (15) individuals at the WV Leadership Academy Conference. The WV Leadership Academy is a self-help program implemented by the West Virginia Mental Health Consumers' Association (WVMHCA). From the WVMHCA website, "The Leadership Academy provides a foundation for enhancing consumer skills for effective speaking and civic advocacy and is an evidence-based program with significant outcomes." During that presentation, WVA also provided information about services from Employment Networks (EN's) including WVDRS.**

**WVA has been providing employment rights training to a Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Work Experience (CWT/TWE) Job Club run by one of the veterans centers in WV. The CWT/TWE provides temporary paid work opportunities for veterans for up to six (6) months. They have Life Skills Group and Job Club weekly. We provide information on employment rights as well as services from the WVDRS. We include a WVA publication called "Your Guide to Services from the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services" along with other handouts. In the reporting period, WVA provided training on employment rights to approximately twenty-five (25) veterans who are members of the Job Club. WVA also provided basic information about what we do and our intake process.**

**WVA provided training to students, parents and other interested parties to increase their knowledge of self-advocacy related to student's rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) with a focus on transition services. Another event is planned later in the fiscal year.**

**As described in the last PPR, one of the West Virginia Workforce Investment Boards received a grant to provide one (1) week training programs for youth with disabilities**

called Build-It, Keep-It, Share-It (BIKISI). During the week the Workforce Investment Board invited service organizations in to provide information to the students on what services and programs are available to them as they transition from school to adult life. WVA provided training about employment rights of people with disabilities and provided information on WVA employment advocacy programs at one (1) BIKISI class during this reporting period.

WVA presented a training entitled "Rights and Responsibilities of Adults with Disabilities: Employment, Education and Voting" at the annual Families Conference. The Families Conference was established out of the West Virginia Family Support Program (WVFSP). The WVFSP was established in the WV Code and is funded by the Legislature. The intent of the program is to provide families who have an individual with developmental disabilities living in their home with assistance in obtaining resources needed to maintain that person in their home. The Families Conference is an annual conference held for children and adults with disabilities as well as their families.

WVA was invited to present at the "IEP's from Start to Finish" training sponsored by the WV Family Leadership First, FSN and WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED). WVA presented a session on IEP Development including transition planning.

### **Section C: Problems Encountered and Steps Taken to Resolve Problems**

Problems encountered and steps taken to resolve problems: [Please provide detail information about problems encountered in implementing or administering the PABSS program and actions you have taken to resolve the problems you encountered.]

**As reported in the previous PPR, WVA requested technical assistance from National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) near the end of fiscal year 2010 due to the low number of service requests including Information and Referrals being received under the PABSS program. Although we did not yet have the formal written recommendations from the review team, WVA began to implement some of the suggestions mentioned in their exit presentation. We have provided further training to all staff to recognize potential employment related issues during the course of working on other types of service requests such as those related to special education for transition age youth, Title XIX MR/DD Waiver, and state psychiatric hospital discharge planning. We now have an experienced PABSS advocate conducting employment related intakes. We have continued to emphasize questions related to the desire to gain, maintain or regain employment during our intake process.**

**During all outreach and training events, WVA staff now makes available a form for participants to fill out in order to have someone contact them to complete an intake. If time and location permits, staff are encouraged to conduct the intakes at such events.**

**WVA requested clarification from our SSA Project Officer about when we need to obtain proof of beneficiary status in order to serve clients under PABSS. We were advised that we do not need to obtain such proof if the level of service we provide does not go beyond technical assistance unless the issue is specific to which type of benefit the client receives. We are now able to provide more technical assistance in self-advocacy to our clients without delay. We have also taken steps to obtain proof of beneficiary status when required in a manner as not to hold up providing services to our clients.**

**WVA has always conducted in-person intakes at our state psychiatric hospitals. In recent months, the advocates conducting these intakes have put even more emphasis on questions surrounding the person's interest in employment. A plan has been implemented in which WVA assists those clients from the state hospital who want to work in applying for services from WVDRS. WVA has educated clients and hospital social workers of the right of the client to apply for these services. WVA intends to monitor this since in the past WVDRS often refused to accept applications for services from individuals in the state hospitals.**

**Section D: Planned Future Activities**

**Planned activities: [Please provide activities you plan to undertake to further the objectives of the PABSS project.]**

**WVA is again planning and sponsoring a special education "boot camp" by Wrightslaw for parents of children with disabilities in the school system and other interested parties. Attendees will be trained by experienced special education law attorney Pete Wright and psychotherapist Pam Wright on the rights of students with disabilities. This training will include transition planning. Social work and educator Continuing Education Units as well as attorney Continuing Legal Education hours have been approved.**

**WVA plans to increase the presence of our employment advocacy programs at the WorkForce WV Centers. We communicated with an NDRN moderated listserv to request suggestions and ideas for outreach to the WorkForce Centers. From the responses that we received, we decided that visiting each center in the state would give WVA the opportunity to increase public knowledge of our employment advocacy programs and distribute our publications to each center. We plan to have staff visit each of the WorkForce WV Centers by the end of this fiscal year.**

**WVA plans to attend each WISE event scheduled in WV this year. During these events, WVA staff are provided an opportunity to talk briefly to participants about PABSS. They also explain how to access WVA's services. Informational packets are provided to each person in attendance.**

**WVA is in communication with one of the state's two psychiatric hospitals to offer employment rights training to patients and staff in their Patient Employment Program. Training is being tentatively scheduled for later in the fiscal year.**

**Section E: Diversification Activities**

**Diversification activities: [Please provide a description of activities undertaken to address the needs of individuals with disabilities from diverse ethnic and racial communities.]**

**According to the 2010 U.S. Census (<http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data/>), the non-Caucasian population in West Virginia is 6.1% compared to the national average of 27.6%. People of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds are dispersed throughout the state and not concentrated in specific areas. We believe that our general outreach activities are adequate in reaching people of all ethnic and racial communities represented in our state. We also believe that we are serving the diverse ethnic and racial communities given that during the reporting period, the percentage of non-Caucasian people we served was 16.66%.**