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Welcome to the 2025 Disability Owned Convening

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From Idea to Impact: How VR Agencies Support Disability-owned Businesses

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Greetings from
DELAWARE

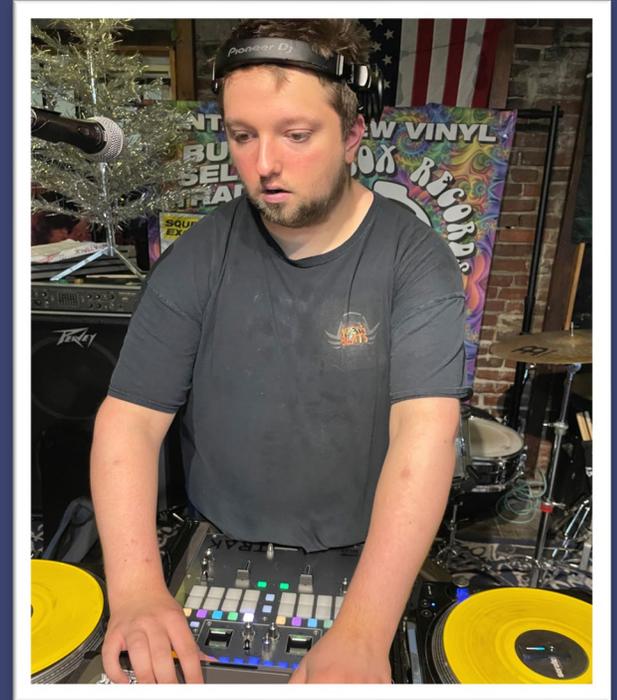
Self Employment in The First State



Background

- Overview and purpose of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
- Delaware's Journey

Delaware's Highlights



Program Success

DELAWARE DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

SELF-EMPLOYMENT PROCESS



STEP 1

SELF- EMPLOYMENT EXPLORATION

In the first step, you find out what you're good at, what you enjoy, what people might need or want, and if running your own business could work well for you.



STEP 2

BUSINESS CONCEPT & FEASIBILITY

The second step has you look at your business idea, see if people will want it, check if it can make money, and decide if it's a good match for you so it has the best chance to succeed.



STEP 3

BUSINESS PLAN & FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

During step three, you plan how your business will run, how it will make money, and what it needs. You also make money forecasts to guide decisions.



STEP 4

DETERMINE IF APPROVED

In step 4, all needed materials and documents are checked to see if the business plan meets approval standards, and the process depends on the business level.



STEP 5

BUSINESS LAUNCH

Step 5 is when you officially start your business, put your plans into action, and begin offering your products or services to customers.



Thank
you!



Division of Vocational Rehabilitation



Counseling for Impact: Supporting Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Through VR Services

Hib Doe, Field Services Manager, HireAbility Vermont

Jamie Blondin, Founder, Mind Hive Consulting



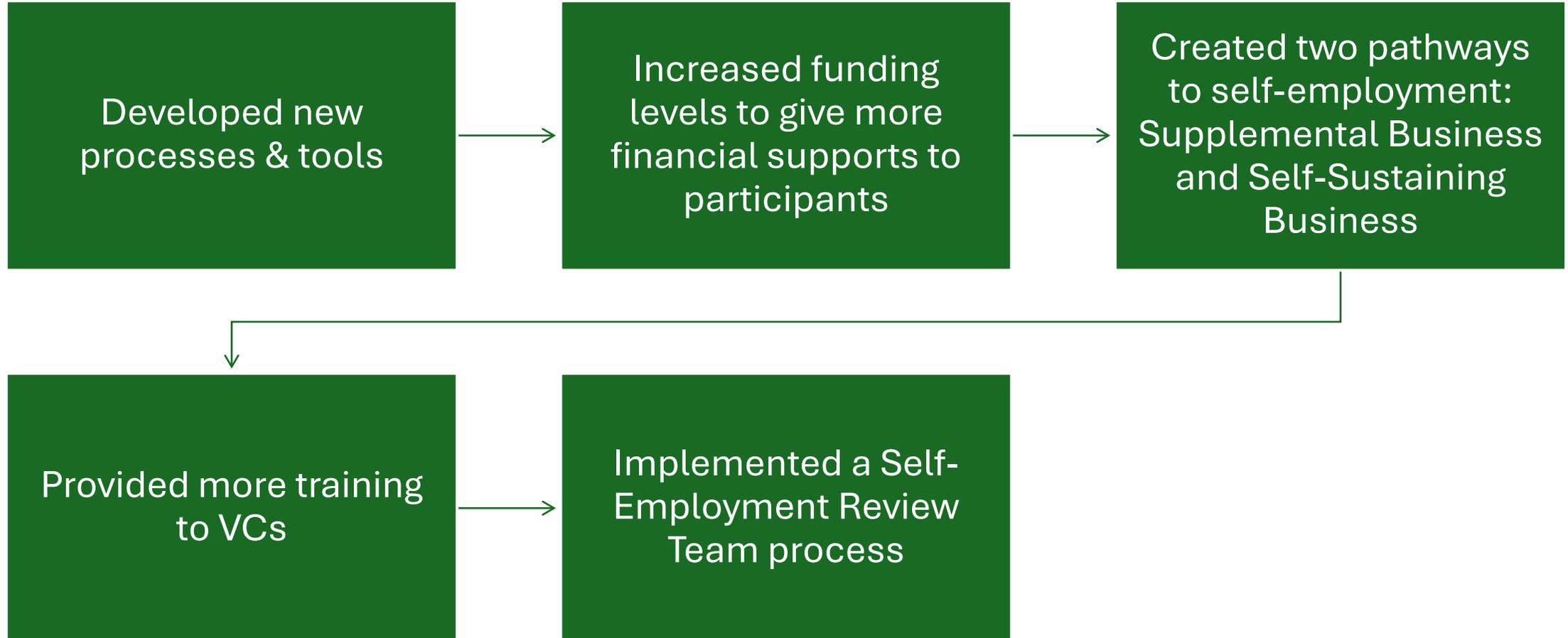
HireAbility Vermont's Background

Recognized there was a need for both Vocational Counselors and participants to increase support and training around Self-Employment.

Created an internal team made of a variety of HAVT staff and others from outside organizations to make it a holistic perspective

Worked with Griffin-Hammis originally in a group setting with other states and then to individual support that has been ongoing

Policy & Program Changes



Staff Support and Training



More training for staff



Leadership and promotional opportunity for staff to become Self-Employment Specialists in every district across the state



Self-Employment Guidebook for VCs



Community of Practice for SE Specialists



Resources for all steps of the process



Community resources

Support for Participants



New tools for each step

Discovery and Exploration

Business Concept

Business Feasibility

Business Plan Development

Financial Tools



Two Paths to Self-Employment

Supplemental Business

- Additional income to other work or SSI/SSDI benefits

Self-Sustaining

- Primary Income Source

Funding Levels

Two paths to Self-Employment

- Supplemental Business
 - \$2,500
 - Decisions made at local level with VRC & district manager

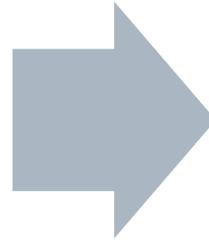
Self-Sustaining Business

- \$10,000
- Decisions made with Self-Employment Review Team including rotating Executive Leadership, Regional Managers, Self-Employment Specialist VRCs, and community experts as needed and available.

Success Stories

Dog grooming business –

\$10k funded for equipment that was ergonomically correct allowing them to function better physically. This increased their capacity for number of daily clients and options for expansion including more staff and eventually a different space.



Driving Instructor –

\$10K funded for modifications to driver's education vehicle and for classroom instructional materials. Business launched this Fall and all scheduled classes are full.

Future Plans

Continue

Continue to increase support and training for staff.

Develop

Develop more tools for participants such as a guidebook and other fillable documents.

Deepen

Deepen community connections in local districts to expand capacity and meet more needs.

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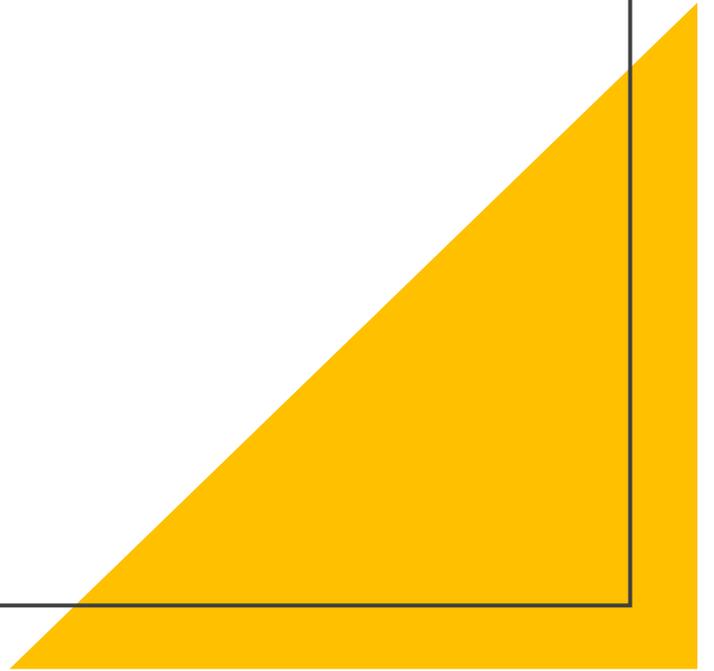
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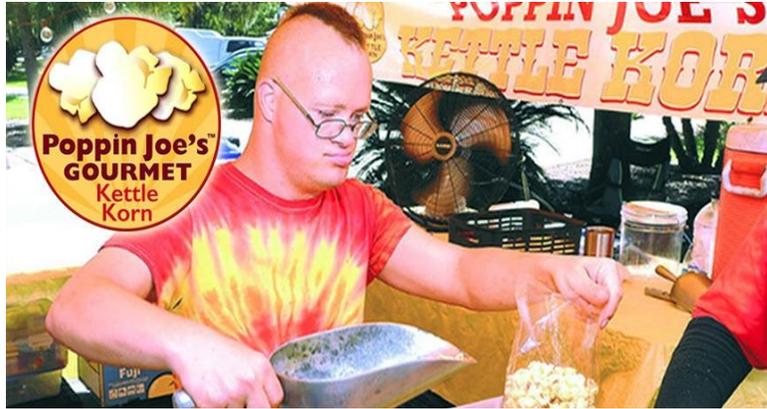
Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

- Autism
- Down Syndrome
- Cerebral Palsy

- Spina Bifida
- Fragile X Syndrome
- Williams Syndrome

16 million Americans – up to 5% of the population

Meet Some Entrepreneurs



[Poppin Joe's Kettle Corn](#)



[Keegan's Art Korner](#)



Grace Key – [Candidly Kind](#)



[Doggy Delights by Allison](#)



[Purely Patrick](#)



Tania - [SpecialTTeas](#)



Arturo's Famous Bakery

What Can VR Do to Support People with IDD in Self-Employment



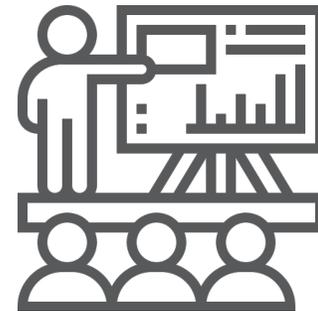
Tailored
Education

[Celebrate EDU](#)

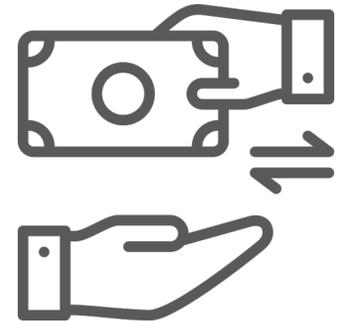


Accessible
Learning

[CAST](#)



Counselor
Training



Community
Support

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