



# DARS

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR AGING  
AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

*Supporting Virginians' efforts  
to secure independence and employment*



# Opportunities and Challenges in Research on Vocational Rehabilitation

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# Promising Research Findings for VR

- Services for Transition-Age Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders:
  - Project Search
  - Handheld Technology
- Return on Investment of State VR Programs
- Disability Employment Initiative



# Opportunities for Research on VR

- Increased VR focus on transition-age youth
- Expanded VR access to new data sources (State- and Federal-level employment data)
- Heightened emphasis on competitive integrated employment
- Increased alignment of VR with other workforce programs



# Challenges in Research on VR

- Dynamic tension between researchers' and VR agencies' priorities
- Need both evidence-based models and information on how to maintain fidelity in implementing the models widely
- VR agencies' acceptance of controlled research methods



# Strategies for Enhanced Collaboration

- Ongoing partnerships between researchers and VR agencies, not just grant-specific collaborations
- Engage VR agencies' "enlightened self-interest"
  - Match research opportunities to agency needs/priorities
  - Include support for agencies' time and effort
- Offer incentives for researchers and VR agencies to collaborate

