



The year 2007 presented various challenges for Hired Hands & Associates as an Employment Service Organization. As with any challenge or changing environment, organizations must adapt and seek ways to alter current practices in order to be successful. HHA has taken a leadership role in introducing new insights and procedures that other organizations are now also utilizing in continuing a partnership with the Department of Rehabilitative Services.

As Order of Selection was enacted in the beginning of 2007, and DRS and ESO's needed a communication tool of greater efficacy regarding Requests for Authorizations and the dissemination of authorized hours, HHA developed the monthly Proposed Hours form which allows DRS counselors ample time to staff cases and the requested hours with their managers, and then communicate the outcome of the approved hours to

HHA. This accommodates employment specialists and consumers in alerting them when services can again begin, since hours are zero balanced at the end of each month and services cannot occur without written authorization. This process has been so successful that other ESO's have adopted this form and system to use for their monthly requested hours.

Another HHA innovation currently being piloted in the Hampton DRS office is the creation of an "expediter." This also relates to the dissemination of authorized hours. A DRS representative is identified as the "expediter" of all RFA's that are submitted intermittently to that office during the month, and is accountable for ensuring an answer is promptly returned to HHA as to whether the hours can be approved or not. Although this is still in the testing phase, there is every indication that it is increasing the productivity of our staff and DRS staff by streamlining the current practice of RFA submission.

These changes are exciting and significant to note because the bottom line translates into a more expedient service delivery to our consumers. Lag time is lessened while waiting for approval and productivity improves all around. During this period of Order of Selection, the use of service hours must carefully be reviewed and monitored. Facilitated by advances in technology, these innovations are easy to implement and provide accurate information to all parties.

## Who We Served:

**Male: 85**

**Female: 91**

**Age:**

18-21 = 55

22-36 = 79

37-49 = 26

50 + = 16

Physical Disabilities	1
Learning Disabilities	27
Cardiovascular	1
Cerebral Palsy	5
Spinal Cord	2
Traumatic Brain Injury	7
Diabetes	1
Orthopedic Impairment	3
Substance Abuse	0
Deafness	9
Visual Impairments	23
Autism	7
Mental Health	36
Mental Retardation	53
Other	1

**Ethnicity:**

Caucasian: 54

African American: 113

Asian: 3

Hispanic: 3

Other: 3

### Services Provided:

Independent Living Skills	Situational Assessment	Job Development
Job Coaching	Follow Along	



## Effectiveness

HHA often receives exemplary ratings from CARF in the area of job placement. It is an integral part of our credo to provide strong job placements in the community for those we serve. With Order of Selection, HHA has been challenged to work with those who are considered most severe in terms of barriers faced in obtaining and retaining successful employment. HHA, through creative and resourceful job development, has achieved placement and retention goals that surpassed the successes of 2006. In 2006, 67% of all consumers serviced were placed. In 2007, 75% of all consumers serviced were placed. Of all consumers referred for services, 43% were placed competitively in the community. From the consumers who were placed, 57% were successfully closed. The year prior, 28% of all consumers referred for service were closed, and 42% of the placed consumers reached successful closure. The increase in the successful placements from 2006 to 2007 are especially significant in consideration that employment specialists are challenged to bring successful placements to a higher level with the increased severity in disabilities of those served.

## Efficiency

HHA implemented an expeditious method for all employment specialists to know the balance of authorized hours they have on a respective consumer during any given time in the month. Staff are able to learn this balance of hours by simply selecting the consumer and service on the staff web site. In the past, staff would rely upon the HHA administration to alert them if they were low on service hours, or staff would tediously keep track of the time they used on an individual by using a manual tracking method. These were the only methods available through the years, but unfortunately, were not the most efficient. Now, staff are empowered with information of knowing how many hours they have to work with, and can

better plan their services to consumers. They have greater control over their schedules and are able to alert HHA administration if additional hours will be needed before the month is complete. Productivity has been increased as staff no longer need to wait for information from the HHA's office on balances of consumers on their caseloads; they no longer need to manually track time they have used on a consumer; and, they can better plan their time and schedules.

## Service Access

During 2007, as all DRS offices in Hampton Roads adopted the practice of zero balancing authorizations with unused hours at the end of every month, HHA devised a streamlined process to allow the approval of new authorized hours to be in place by the first day of the new month. In the past, the problem was that there was a delay or gap in services, sometimes as much as 15 days, from when an authorization was canceled and from when a new one was authorized. This lag time was detrimental to services because services are not able to occur unless there is an authorization in place to permit services to begin or continue. HHA developed a Proposed Hours form which is submitted to DRS by the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month, allowing counselors 5 days to review cases, the proposed hours needed and the justifications for why those hours are needed. This communication tool expedites the authorization approval process so that counselors can alert HHA in written form as to whether or not hours are approved for each consumer for the new month. This information is, in most cases, delivered to HHA by the first day of the new month, which increases the consumers' access to services. In the past, the average lag time in receipt of approval to begin services was 10 days into the new month. Currently, with the Proposed Hours form being utilized, the average

lag time is 4 days into the new month. Service access has now been increased by 60% from what it had been. HHA is still, however, working on other innovative methods to reach 100% into 2008.

**The Mission of Hired Hands & Associates is to empower individuals challenged by disabilities to establish independence through person-centered planning enhanced by self-esteem, supported employment and successful integration into the workplace.**

### Testimonials:

#### Counselors

*"I enjoy your professionalism and how you treat clients."*

*"The dedication and determination that you and your staff exhibit in assisting people with disabilities is inspirational."*

#### Consumers

*"You worked very hard for me."*

*"My job coach (treating me with respect. Not making me feel slow. No question I have is dumb even if asked many times)."*

#### **What did you like best about our services?**

*"When I need them they're there."*

#### Employers

*"I have hired several good workers from Hired Hands."*

*"When issues and concerns arise the coaching staff assist in all areas..."*

#### **What did you like best about our services?**

*"The immediate response to questions or concerns."*

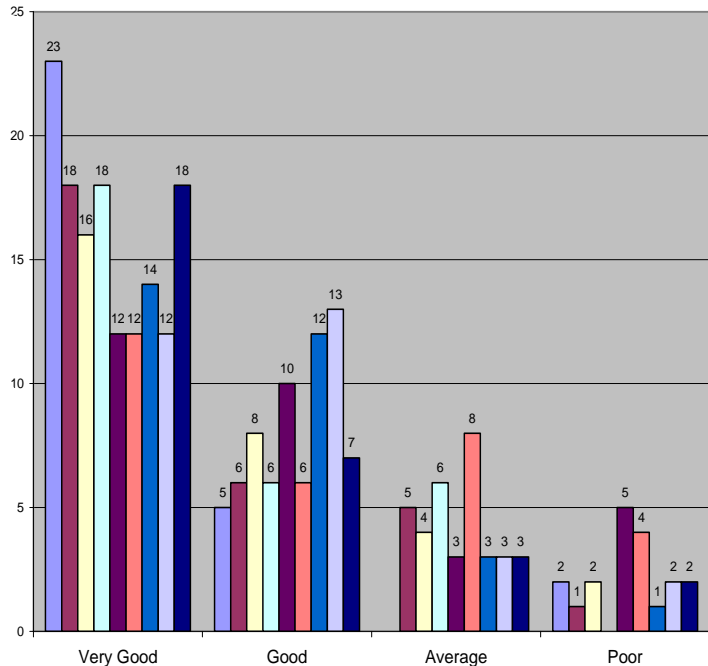
*"The one-on-one training provided to associates."*

# SATISFACTION

## Overall Rating of Hired Hands Services:

**Overall How would you rate our services?**  
25 out of 30 responses were “Good” or “Very Good” (84%) - Up from 78% in 2006.

Consumer Graph

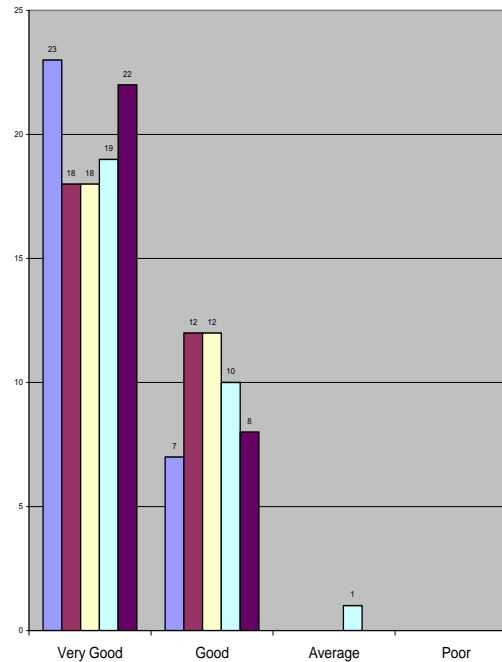


- 1 How would you rate HH Staff in terms of being friendly, courteous and attentive ?
- 2 How well did the job coach listen to your needs and concerns?
- 3 How prompt was the job coach in returning your phone calls?
- 4 How would you rate your training for the job?
- 5 How closely does the job match your vocational goal?
- 6 How do you feel about your wages?
- 7 How comfortable are you in your work environment?
- 8 Overall, how do you feel about your job?
- 9 Overall, how would you rate our services?

**What is your overall rating of Hired Hands?**

30 out of 30 responses were “Good” or “Very Good” (100%) - Up from 96% in 2006.

Employer Graph

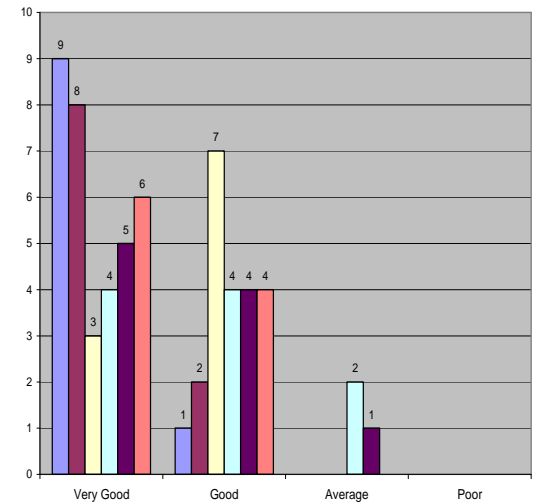


- 1 How would you rate HH Staff in terms of being friendly, courteous and attentive?
- 2 How timely was the response to your questions and concerns?
- 3 How would you rate our responsiveness to your needs?
- 4 How would you rate your level of satisfaction with our services?
- 5 What is your overall rating of Hired Hands?

**What is your overall rating of Hired Hands?**

10 out of 10 responses were “Good” or “Very Good” (100%) - Up from 94% in 2006.

Counselor Graph



- 1 How would you rate Hired Hands' staff in terms of being friendly, courteous and attentive?
- 2 How timely was the response to your questions and concerns?
- 3 How would you rate the cost-effectiveness of our services?
- 4 How would you rate our responsiveness to your consumer's needs?
- 5 How would you rate Hired Hands' staff in terms of quality and performance?
- 6 What is your overall rating of Hired Hands?