

CMRA 2021 Annual Report





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To Governor Bill Lee, the Tennessee General Assembly, and our valued customers, partners, supporters

by **Robert G. Rosenbaum, Ed.D., Chair**

Committee for Providing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Severe Disabilities



The Committee for Providing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Severe Disabilities is charged with providing oversight to the Community Rehabilitation

Agencies of Tennessee (CMRA), the central non-profit agency designated to implementing T.C.A. 71-4-701 – 71-4-705. This statute directs state and local governmental entities to purchase products and services provided by Tennesseans with disabilities when competitive standards are met in the areas of quality, availability, and price.

We are pleased to report during fiscal year 2021 that the program has again experienced tremendous success; 313 people were employed in this program, many of whom would not have had a job if it were not for this statute. Over \$11 million in gross revenue was generated that provided real jobs employing Tennesseans who otherwise, in most cases, would be dependent on public assistance in order to survive.

This statute has given our fellow citizens the opportunity to be employed and able to have developed the dignity and self-sufficiency that goes along with being a contributing member of our state and communities, rather than living off tax dollars in the form of public assistance. These jobs include occupations like grounds maintenance, janitorial services, operating car washes, vehicle inspections, commercial grease trap cleaning, and very significantly providing facility management to 19 rest areas across the

entire state of Tennessee. In addition to these services there are products sold to the state and local governments under this program such as drug testing kits, laboratory services, incontinent products, female hygiene products, uniforms and boots.

As we have previously noted every citizen of our state benefits from this program; first and foremost, providing our citizens with disabilities the deserved opportunity of meaningful, gainful employment. It also provides Tennesseans without disabilities the opportunity to work alongside them. Working together is extremely beneficial to everyone promoting growth and friendships that may not otherwise occur.

Employees working on government contracts has continued throughout the pandemic. COVID has not interrupted the services and products our program provides to government entities.

The dedication of the Committee, CMRA, and all of our enthusiastic stakeholders working with this program are all to be commended for their hard work each and every day to make this program successful.

Hopefully, as you carefully review this annual report, you will see what this program has accomplished for so many and with no real added cost to state government.

This is one of those unique programs that is a 'win/win' for everyone involved. It is cost effective, saves tax dollars, adds money back to local communities and provides employment opportunities assisting in nurturing self-sufficiency for our Tennessee family now and into the future. ❖

CMRA's Business Partners

ABM Industries Tennessee

AKC Janitorial, Inc., Ripley

Alere Toxicology Service, Inc., Gretna, LA

Axis7 Enterprises, LLC, Nashville

Bates, Division of Wolverine World Wide Inc., Chicago

Certified Maintenance Service, Inc., Chattanooga

Dawn of Hope, Inc., Johnson City

Easterseals Tennessee, Inc.

Excel Cleaning Services, Inc., Nashville

GH Solutions LLC, Mint Hill, NC

Goodwill Industries Knoxville, Inc.

Hilltoppers, Inc., Crossville

Liquid Environmental Solutions TN, LLC

Memphis Goodwill, Inc.

MHDS, Inc., Jackson

New Horizons Life Skills, Inc., Nashville

Progressive Directions, Inc., Clarksville

Stones of Faith, LLC, Murfreesboro

Taylor Communications, Inc., Murfreesboro

The Feichheimer Brothers Company, Cincinnati

TriStar Building Services, Inc., Nashville

Woodard Brothers Distributing, LLC, Nashville



CMRA Welcomes New Business Development Director

John Bissell

Greetings! I am delighted to be the newest employee of the CMRA team although I have been connected to CMRA for many years. I came to CMRA from 34 years with the state of Tennessee, Central Procurement Office having retired in June of 2021. I served for several years on the Committee for Providing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Severe Disabilities prior to leaving the state and served on the Certification Committee representing the Department of General Services (DGS) for several years prior to that.

While I have worn many hats in the Central Procurement Office over the years, for the last seven years I was the Director of Compliance and Training where I led a team of course developers and instructors committed to educating state employees on how to properly procure goods and services. In addition, I served the last several years as the Emergency Services Coordinator for the DGS working with TEMA. In that role, I was the Vice Chair of the Tennessee Emergency Management Advisory Committee (TEMAC.)

I believe what I bring to the table as Business Development Director for CMRA is a keen understanding of state agencies and how procurement is handled at the government level. I have lasting relationships with many of the procurement directors in various departments throughout the state as most of them got their start in the Central Procurement Office.

I am excited about assisting people with disabilities in my role at CMRA. ❖

Thank You to Our Customers!

Alvin C. York Institute
Baddour Center
Bledsoe Co. Correctional Complex
Core Civic
Deberry Special Needs Facility
Dogwood Elementary School
Farmington Elementary School
Forest Hill Elementary
Houston High School
Houston Middle School
JLL
Mark Luttrell Correctional Center
Memphis Mental Health Institute
Metro Davidson Correctional
Metro Government of Nashville & Davidson County
Metropolitan Action Commission
Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools
Middle TN Mental Health Center
Military Department of Tennessee
Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute
Morgan County Correctional Complex
Motlow College
Nashville State Community College
Northeast Correctional Complex
Northwest Correctional Complex
Riverbend Maximum Security Facility
Riverdale Elementary School
Skills Development Services, Inc.
TDOT- Transportation/Central Services
Tennessee Air National Guard
Tennessee Rehabilitation Center
Tennessee State Veterans' Homes Board
TN College of Applied Technology Hartsville

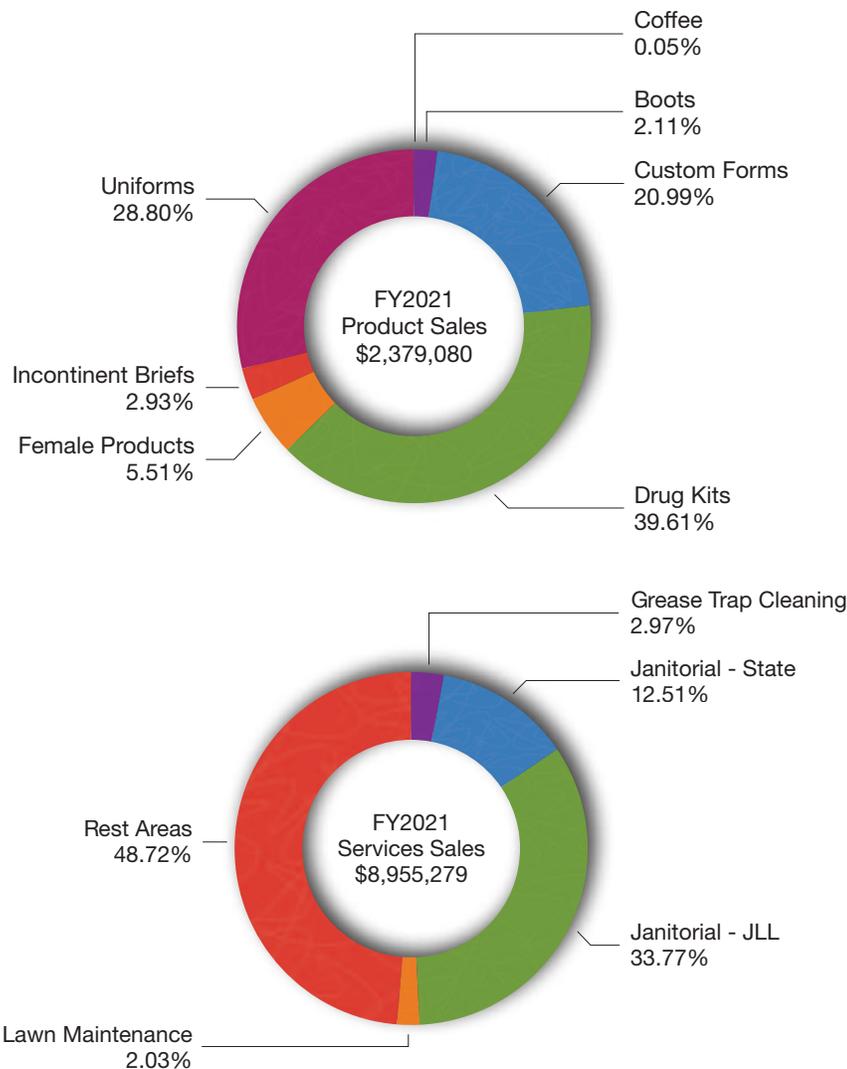
TN Correction Academy
TN Department of Children Services
TN Department of Correction
TN Department of Education
TN Department of Environment & Conservation
TN Department of Field Services
TN Department of General Services
TN Department of Health
TN Department of Human Services
TN Department of Revenue
TN Department of Safety
TN Department of Safety - Planning & Research
TN Department of Transportation - Beautification
TN Department of Transportation - Bldg C & E
TN Department of Transportation - Gallatin
TN Department of Transportation - Rest Areas
TN Department of Transportation Region II
TN Department of Transportation Region III
TN Department of Transportation Region IV
TN Dept Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities
TN Emergency Management Agency - Jackson
TN Emergency Management Agency - Knoxville
TN Prison for Women
TN School for the Blind
TN School for the Deaf
TN Volunteer Challenge Academy
Trousdale Turner Correctional Facility
Turney Center
Turney Center Industrial Complex
University of TN - Knoxville
West TN State Penitentiary
Western Mental Health Institute
Whiteville Correctional Facility



Program Sales

**64% of the work hours
on our government contracts are performed
by Tennesseans with disabilities**

**Total Audited FY2021 Sales
\$11,334,359**



Our Products & Services

- Boots
- Custom Forms
- Drug Kits
- Feminine Hygiene
- Incontinent Briefs
- Uniforms
- Car Wash and Vehicle Inspections
- Commercial Grease Trap Cleaning
- Custodial/Janitorial
- Lawn/Grounds Maintenance
- Parks Maintenance
- 19 Rest Areas/Facility Management

Employment Demographics

**313 employed
225 people with disabilities**

of those employed...

- 101 Females
- 212 Males
- 218 < 60 years old
- 95 > 60+ years old
- 89 African American
- 211 Caucasian
- 12 Hispanic
- 1 Other



Benefits of Employing Tennesseans with Disabilities on Government Contracts & CMRA's Role

While CMRA is committed primarily to the employment of people with disabilities, a paycheck isn't the only benefit for employees. *Integration*, in the field of disability services, means providing opportunities for interaction with non-disabled people at work and in their communities.

In *Olmstead v. L.C.* (1999), the U.S. Supreme Court held that Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits unreasonable segregation of individuals with disabilities, and both policies and legal decisions since then have supported the idea that, in work environments, it is inappropriate to segregate people with disabilities. CMRA makes it a priority to work with business partners to integrate all contracts as much as possible, with a goal of ensuring that an employee with disabilities will have the same level of interaction with non-disabled people as would an employee without disabilities.

CMRA's Roles & Responsibilities

Community Rehabilitation Agencies of Tennessee (CMRA), is the designated Central Non-profit Agency (CNA) managing operations according to the program's statute. CMRA's staff of five works with both nonprofit and for-profit businesses to provide products and services to government purchasers, while ensuring that at least 50% of the labor hours are provided by employees with disabilities.

CMRA staff members seek contracting opportunities, negotiate with prospective partners, seek competitive bids from vendors, assist in staffing contracts, create certification proposals, and implement the contracts once certified by the state. In addition, CMRA inspects work sites, handles invoicing and payment distribution, ensures compliance with the program statute and all

other applicable regulations and mediates any questions or differences between business partners and customers. As employment-related concerns and expectations for people with disabilities change, CMRA will continue to work with other agencies and advocates to help provide increased opportunities for employment and advancement.

CMRA's Contracting Process

Every certification proposal includes a detailed budget for review by the state Certification Committee ensuring that every product or service will meet the standards for quality, availability, and fair market price. The Certification Committee then sends its recommendation to the state Procurement Commission before the contract is finalized. This can take longer than a conventional bid process, but it ensures that state government purchases will be competitively priced, which benefits everyone involved, including employees, purchasers, and ultimately Tennessee taxpayers.

About the Program

Since 1991, the state of Tennessee, and CMRA, as the designated central non-profit agency (CNA) selected to administer the program, have worked diligently to identify opportunities for workers with disabilities in local communities across the state.

Created by T.C.A. 71-4-701 – 71-4-705, the program seeks to employ Tennesseans with disabilities in providing goods and services to state and local government agencies. People with disabilities often face unemployment levels of 60 percent or more. Through this program, there are, at any given time, more than 300 people with and without disabilities employed on CMRA's government contracts. ❖

Inspiring Stories from the Frontline



Mary Grizzard

A Story of Growth

Mary had a friend tell her about New Horizons. “So I called Rusty and filled out an application. He hired me, and I began in janitorial services at TPS,” Mary said.

That was 10 years ago. Now, Mary oversees about 10 employees in janitorial services as a supervisor at TPS

(Tennessee Preparatory School).

TPS is one of CMRA’s site locations via a contract with JLL, an agent for the state of Tennessee Real Estate Asset Management division. CMRA has subcontracted the janitorial services to New Horizons Life Skills (NHLS), the nonprofit organization that employs Mary.

“I love working alongside people with disabilities. I train them and help them learn their tasks. All of the individuals refer to me as Miss Mary,” she explained.

Mary worked hard for eight years at TPS before taking on a leadership role with NHLS. “I used to work part-time, now I work 40 hours per week. When the supervisor role opened, I was nervous,” Mary added.

“That is when I jumped in and told her, ‘you got this. I know you can do it.’” said Rusty Roberts, Director of New Horizons CMRA contracts.

The last two years have provided Mary with some challenges, but she always felt supported by her NHLS team. “Some days I have to be strict and explain to my team that it is the same tasks as other days. But, I really just enjoy coming in and seeing everyone each morning.”

Working with the CMRA program for over a decade has had a positive impact on Mary. “Taking this job changed my life.”

JLL Appreciates Mary, Too - “I recently joined the JLL facility team at the TPS Campus,” said Amy Tedford, JLL Facility Manager. “From my first day on, Ms. Mary has made sure to check in with me and keep me informed of things happening on campus. She provides great customer service and ensures all of our tenants are taken care of and happy.”

Tedford added, “She actively supervises her team to make sure and keep them all on track. Miss Mary also makes sure to keep me and my staff informed of any possible issues she sees inside our buildings and that helps JLL to stay ahead of repair needs,” Tedford said. “She is a great asset to our account!” ❖



Tommy

Easterseals Tennessee member Tommy, openly greets visitors and takes pride in his daily work at the Benton County Rest Area. Whether a visitor needs directions, a snack, a bathroom break, or just to stretch their legs,

Tommy makes the Rest Area visitors feel welcome.

Interestingly, Tommy was considered quiet and more of an introvert before being employed at the Rest Area. Staff reported initially Tommy had a hard time communicating with others and was not very social. Over the past year and a half, Tommy’s disposition has changed drastically, and he’s become quite outgoing.

Now, Tommy gives input, listens to others, and enjoys conversing with the visitors and staff. On several occasions, when truck drivers have inadvertently blocked the entrance to the Rest Area, Tommy has no qualm in reaching out to redirect the truck drivers to another parking place for safety’s sake. Tommy’s response exemplifies the positive effect of his job and community integration.

The equity, inclusion, and access that Tommy experienced made him more confident and independent.

When Tommy’s employment began at the Rest Area, he was only hired for a few hours a week. His supervisor quickly recognized Tommy’s punctuality, excellent work ethic, and attitude, offering Tommy additional hours and days per week.

As a result, Tommy has worked more hours at the Rest Area in 2021, than he worked in all his previous jobs combined. Tommy has gained more independence and has learned the value of hard work as his earnings have increased in his savings account. ❖

Inspiring Stories from the Frontline



Kelly

Kelly began Buddy Ball when she was eight years old. In the beginning, she

would stay right next to her mother and not interact with other athletes. That was the first year.

As her confidence grew, she began to make friends and no longer wanted her mother on the field. Kelly looked forward to Buddy Ball nights and even talked her father into coaching. That was not a hard sell. As the years went by, Kelly became so self-assured, she requested to participate in Buddy Ball's Pageant. She laughed and giggled with her friends backstage. She proudly walked the stage on her own, answering the interview questions.

Kelly's participation in Buddy Ball has made such a huge difference in her life. It helped her learn to advocate for herself.

And when she was ready to begin looking for a job, she was able to get the one she always wanted. She loves to clean and accepted a position cleaning state buildings.

This opened the door to more independence and friends. When Kelly learned about the Employment and Community First Program (ECF) through her friends at work, she wanted to participate. She began services resulting in even more independence.

This is a marked change for the once quiet and shy Kelly.

The past year has been difficult for Kelly as she was diagnosed with a condition that is deadly without proper treatment. Kelly underwent multiple tests and a life-saving surgery. She has now made a full recovery from her surgery but has a lifetime of follow-up with her doctor. She was so brave and strong through it all. Her mother credited Kelly's time with Progressive Directions Inc. and Buddy Ball in having helped Kelly learn how to handle anything that comes her way.

We are very pleased to report that Kelly is now back at work and building the strength to again participate in her favorite Buddy Ball sports. She has also resumed ECF Services allowing her time to shop and plan outings with her new boyfriend. ❖



Jarvis

Jarvis always knew he wanted a job. He was just unsure what he wanted to do. When he

was in high school, he participated in Project SEARCH, a program that is a joint venture between Clarksville-Montgomery County School System, State Vocational Rehabilitation, and Progressive Directions, Inc. (PDI). Jarvis also attended PDI's Montgomery County Adult Day Center. Both programs assisted him in preparing for employment. After several months, Jarvis took advantage of Supported Employment to gain employment on a janitorial crew

cleaning state office buildings. He developed even more skills like getting along with co-workers, following multiple step instructions and self-starting tasks.

The janitorial crew was only a stepping stone for Jarvis. Within a year, he was ready to look for employment at a new location. Jarvis used the skills of interviewing he had learned to gain employment in the cafeteria at Tennova Healthcare in Clarksville. Jarvis started as a lobby technician but quickly added responsibilities to include inventory, stocking, and assisting the chef.

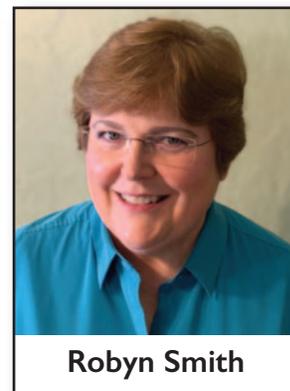
When Project SEARCH moved its base location to Tennova, Jarvis became a mentor to its interns. He was a guest speaker at their graduation ceremonies giving him the confidence to accept an invitation to be a presenter during a nationwide webinar about employment for people with disabilities. He was nervous at first, but once he answered his first question you would think he had done it all his life. Jarvis was a natural.

When he finished the webinar, Jarvis said, "It was easier than I thought it would be. I just told them about me!" During COVID-19, Jarvis has continued to work every shift and has taken additional shifts to help when needed. He takes his job very seriously and takes great pride in being an essential worker.

Jarvis says, "When I was just 18 years old, I started working with the CMRA Crew at PDI. I started with no experience and now I have a job that I love at Tennova Medical Center. I love where I work at now and will not give it up for anything." ❖



Consultant's Reports



Robyn Smith

COVID Report

CMRA provides a COVID Consultant who is available as a resource for business partners to call with questions about COVID and to seek guidance when a Covid incident occurs. CMRA tracks incidents of COVID among employees of its business partners who work on CMRA contracts. CMRA's law firm, Hubbard & Smith, provide the COVID consulting services. Robyn Smith, a partner in the law firm, serves as CMRA's COVID consultant.

Smith drafted CMRA's COVID Guidelines and COVID Incident Report Form in 2020. The Guidelines set forth the minimum standards for business partners based upon recommendations from the Tennessee Pledge, the CDC, and the Tennessee Department of Health (the "Official Guidance"). As Official Guidance evolves, the Guidelines and the Incident Report Form are updated to capture new information and recommendations applicable to the work business partners perform under their contracts with CMRA. The most current version of the Guidelines is posted on CMRA's website at cmraonline.org.

The number of individuals with disabilities employed through CMRA contracts usually varies between 200 and 225. COVID incident reports are shown in Table 1.

Creation of Online Catalogue

In late 2021, CMRA contracted with Greenwing Technologies to develop an online catalog, called a "punchout catalog", for state procurement officers to use when ordering products under CMRA's state contracts. The punchout catalog initially will offer products under CMRA's contracts for uniforms and boots for the Tennessee Department of Correction (TDOC), its highest sales-volume contracts. Products under other contracts will be added over time. The general public will not have access to the punchout catalog.

The punchout catalog will provide state procurement officers with easier access to items provided by CMRA and reduce the number of potential keying errors. State procurement officers will order products by logging into the State's procurement system, Edison, and clicking to punch

Table 1

Dates	Positive Test Results	Negative test results	Assumed COVID per Symptoms, No Test	Isolation due to exposure	Total Incident Reports
Jan 2021 – Dec 13, 2021	23	5	0	8	35
Aug 15, 2020 – Dec 31, 2020	24	5	3	4	36
Grand Total 8/15/2020 – 12/13/2021	47	10	3	12	71

CMRA's business partners are required to submit to CMRA a COVID Incident Report anytime the business partner learns an employee who works on a CMRA contract has symptoms of COVID, received a positive COVID test result, or has been in close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID. Before submitting the report, business partners call Smith. She assists in interpreting the Guidelines and answers any questions the caller has. She sends the person who reported the incident an email describing how to handle the incident based upon CMRA's COVID Guidelines, and she forwards the incident report and her communication with the business partner to the entity for whom the business partner and employee perform work, such as TDOT or JLL.

through to CMRA's catalog. Searching for products and building an order in a shopping cart will look and operate much like a retail merchant's online store. State users will search products using key words, click on color selections, sizes and quantities by clicking on drop-down options, and click to add items to a shopping cart. After all items are added to the cart, the procurement officer will click to initiate an interface that will build a state purchase order and enable approvals from state officials prior to notifying CMRA that an order has been created.

CMRA is excited to be implementing this technology, as it will open the door for adding more products and for creating opportunities to employ more Tennesseans with disabilities. ♦



Committee for Providing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Severe Disabilities



Robert G. Rosenbaum, Ed.D.
Chair



Karen Conway
TN Department
of General Services



Tim Drown
TN Department
of Finance and
Administration



Louis Galbreath
Representing Blind
Industries



Meghann Galland
TN Department
of Human Service



Mark Liverman
TN Department
of Mental Health and
Substance Abuse



Conya Mull
Representing the
business community



Doria Panvini
Representing the
disability community



CMRA Board of Directors



Evelyn Robertson, Jr.
Chair



Rep. Johnny Shaw
Vice Chair



Jennifer Krahenbill
Secretary

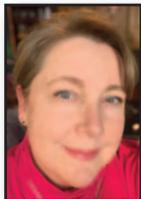


Tonya Copeland
Treasurer



Parke Pepper
Board Member

CMRA Staff, Legal Counsel & Consultant



Robin Atwood
Executive Director



John Bissell
Business
Development
Director



Amanda Dean
Finance Director



Reggie Parkerson
TDOT Contracts
Manager



Tara Lawson
Contracts
Coordinator



Bill Hubbard
Legal Counsel



Robyn Smith
Consultant

