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Annual Report

Nevada State Rehabilitation Council

Nevada State Rehabilitation Council



2015 Annual Report

Mission

The Mission of the Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) is to help ensure the Vocational Rehabilitation Programs (Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and Bureau of Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired) are consumer oriented, consumer driven and the programs' services and resources result in employment outcomes for Nevadans with disabilities.



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Council Members

Lisa Bonie

Independent Living Council Chair
No. NV Center for Independent Living

Mathew Dorangricchia

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
Dept. of Employment, Training and
Rehabilitation

Jane Gruner

Disability Advocate
Dept. of Health and Human Services

Ernest Hall-Chair

Community Rehabilitation Program
Easter Seals Nevada

Shelley Hendren

Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator
Dept. of Employment, Training and
Rehabilitation

Mark Hinson

Department of Education/IDEA
NV Dept. of Education

Kevin Hull

Business, Industry, & Labor
Vision Rehabilitation Services

Robin Kincaid

Parent Training and Information
Center-Nevada PEP

Jack Mayes-Vice Chair

Business, Industry, & Labor
NV Disability Advocacy & Law
Center

Maxie Miller-Hooks

Business, Industry, & Labor
ART Homes

Katie Osti

Client Assistance Program
NV Disability Advocacy & Law
Center

Jean Peyton

Past Vocational Rehabilitation
Client

Sherry Ramsey

Community Rehabilitation Program
Goodwill Industries of Southern NV

Roles and Responsibilities

The Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) is a citizen advisory council appointed by the Governor to serve both as a partner and to provide guidance to the state's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program.

The council includes people with disabilities, community rehabilitation program employees, vocational rehabilitation counselors, advocates, VR consumers and business leaders.

The council assists in shaping policy, by guiding and assisting in making thoughtful, participant-focused decisions through needs assessments, consumer satisfaction surveys, and ongoing program evaluations.

Members engage in strategic planning and provide guidance to promote increased employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Letter from the Administrator

2015 was a historically relevant year for states' vocational rehabilitation programs, with passage in July 2014 of the bipartisan, bicameral House of Representatives bill H.R. 803, which reauthorized and amended the Rehabilitation Act. This piece of legislation also included amendments to the Workforce Investment Act, Wagner-Peyser Act, and Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. The conglomerated bill, called the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), in its totality, very clearly outlines for states the federal intent that states must align all their workforce/employment-related programs in order to offer seamless service delivery including a common intake, and achieve improved outcomes for all Nevadans seeking to obtain or maintain employment.

WIOA mandates that to accomplish this, states must establish a common system of data collection and reporting, create a unified or combined state plan, and report on 12 common performance measures. Although vocational rehabilitation programs and their oversight agency, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), remained under the federal Department of Education, there is a very distinct re-alignment with the federal Department of Labor and its workforce programs. Indeed, WIOA suggests that vocational rehabilitation is a workforce program. Whether we agree or not, or whether this statement is oversimplifying what we do in VR, this is the federal vision for states, and it is now mandated in law.

WIOA also illustrates that employers are a second and equally important consumer of vocational rehabilitation (which has also been echoed by RSA). We must change our perceptions and perhaps some long-held beliefs about vocational rehabilitation services and service delivery in order to successfully transition to the new vision mandated within WIOA. That is not to say that we will no longer be "person-centered" or offer "informed choice." In fact, those tenets remain strongly supported within WIOA and the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. What we do need to change is how we view employers as we ultimately prepare our consumers for employment. There is not one without the other.

Shelley Hendren



It has been an eye-opening experience working with our partners in the state on the new unified state plan, the cornerstone of which is a strategic vision for Nevada:

“Nevada’s renewed focus on the development of a knowledge-based and technologically-advanced economy presents great promise for good and sustainable jobs that will raise our fellow Nevadans to their highest level of self-sufficiency. To prepare our workforce for that future, educational institutions and workforce development agencies must work in tandem with state and local economic development planning efforts in order to develop demand-driven curriculum, certificate programs, programs of study, and internship opportunities that will best prepare students and potential employees to work and succeed in Nevada’s most promising sectors and clusters. To deliver this vision, Nevada will establish a unified, flexible, and accountable workforce system through the collaboration of business, industry, education, labor, and citizens. The workforce system must consist of a responsive network of core programs and community partnerships that increase access to and opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services, especially for individuals with the greatest barriers to employment.”

I realize change is difficult and often uncomfortable. We’ve had a lot of change in 2015 due to WIOA, and more is yet to come. I commend the Council and the staff of Vocational Rehabilitation for their dedication to our consumers and resilience in the face of constant and continual change. But we must remember that change always brings about growth, and with that, better outcomes will be assured for people with disabilities in Nevada.

Letter from the Chair

Since being appointed to the Council, I have had the honor to work with a group of individuals who are committed to bridging gaps for individuals with disabilities and creating opportunities for employment and self-sufficiency.

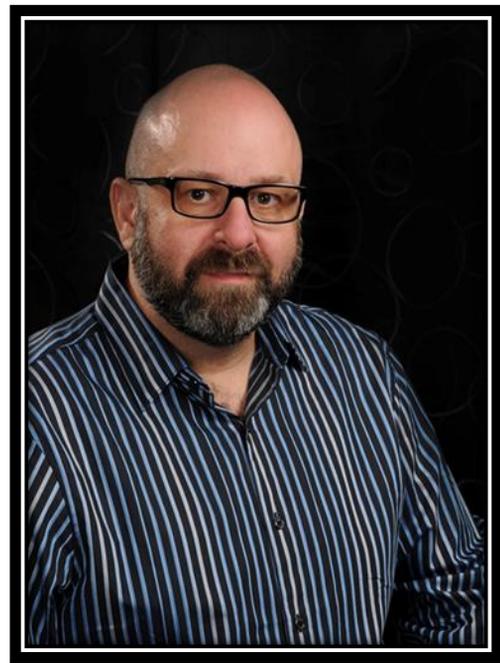


I want to thank the members of the council for their willingness to provide frank and honest feedback and the staff of the Rehabilitation Division for their continued commitment to providing quality services that effectively help Nevadans with disabilities to get jobs.

In the past year, the Division has undertaken the monumental task of implementing the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. We have all been hearing about “WIOA” – and while there is much left to do, I am proud of the work already done by the staff and the Council’s willingness to ask questions and provide essential feedback in this process. One of the first steps in this process was the quality assurance team’s revision of the Policies and Procedures to conform to the new standards in WIOA and make adjustments to the process to improve service effectiveness.

In January, the State Plan Committee met and drafted the revised goals for the next year and this draft will serve as the basis for the State Rehabilitation Plan which will be incorporated into the Unified State Plan that is required by WIOA. The focus of the plan remains on getting more jobs for more people and identifying goals that are measurable and achievable.

Ernest Hall



“The focus of the plan remains on getting more jobs for more people...”

WIOA has also changed the way in which our State Rehabilitation Plan needs to be written. The Council has also worked to revise the customer satisfaction survey to incorporate service milestones as data points in addition to collecting satisfaction data after case closure. The resulting data will help in ensuring quality and effectiveness throughout the rehabilitation process.

The partnership between the Council and the rehabilitation professionals in the Division continues to be a dynamic exchange of ideas all striving to provide the best experience for those seeking employment.

Respectfully,

Ernest J. Hall II

Ernest J. Hall II

NSRC State Plan Goals

Goal #1 Increase the Number of Successful Employment Outcomes

Federal Fiscal Year	(A) Clients Closed After Service With No Employment	(B) Clients Closed With An Employment Outcome	A + B = C	B ÷ C = %	Goal = 5% Increase
2013	778	749	1,527	49%	
2014	730	938	1,668	56%	51%
2015	768	886	1,654	54%	59%

Goal #2 Increase Enrollment in Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Services

Federal Fiscal Year	(A) Total Transition Student Applications	Goal = 5% Increase From Previous Year
2013	478	
2014	500	502
2015	644	525

Federal Fiscal Year	(A) Total Transition Student Applications	(B) Open Transition Students With Post Secondary Education	B ÷ A = %	Goal = 3% Increase From Previous Year
2013	478	94	20%	
2014	500	73	15%	20%
2015	644	128	20%	15%

Federal Fiscal Year	(A) Transition Students Closed After Service With No Employment	(B) Transition Students Closed With an Employment Outcome	A + B = C	B ÷ C = %	Goal = 5% Increase
2013	201	115	316	36%	
2014	160	156	316	49%	38%
2015	124	141	265	53%	51%

NSRC State Plan Goals

Goal #3 Increase Participation of Underserved Disability Groups

Federal Fiscal Year	(A) Clients Closed After Service	(B) Clients Closed After Service With Mental Health Disabilities	$B \div A = \%$	Goal = 3% Increase From Previous Year
2013	1,527	967	63%	
2014	1,668	1,064	64%	65%
2015	1,654	1,239	75%	66%

Goal #4 Increase Participation of Underserved Ethnic Populations through Increased Outreach Efforts

Federal Fiscal Year 2015	(A) Clients Closed After Service	(B) Percent
Hispanic	299	18%
Non-Hispanic	1,355	82%
TOTAL	1,654	100%

Nevada State Demographer: 2010 US Census reports a statewide rate of 27% Hispanic and 73% Non-Hispanic.

Federal Fiscal Year 2015	(A) Clients Closed After Service	(B) Percent
Asian	64	3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	31	2%
Native American or Alaskan Native	74	4%
White	1,476	75%
Black or African American	327	17%
TOTAL	1,972	100%

In some instances, clients have indicated more than one race so they may be counted multiple times.

NSRC State Plan Goals

Goal #5 Work With Eligible Government and Community Partners to Maximize the Utilization of Resources and Federal Dollars

Federal Fiscal Year	Federal Funds Expended	Federal Funds Relinquished	Percent Relinquished
2013	\$14,295,674	\$6,000,000	30%
2014	\$15,900,000	\$5,200,000	25%
2015	\$14,500,000	\$8,900,000	37%

Federal Fiscal Year	Third Party Cooperative Arrangements	Federal Funds Expended
2013	0	\$0
2014	1	\$829,179
2015	4	\$905,997

Goal #6 Increase Participation in Supported Employment.

Federal Fiscal Year	(A) Total Open Supported Employment Clients	Goal = To Meet or Exceed The Previous Year
2012	285	
2013	331	285
2014	361	331
2015	483	361

Federal Standards

Evaluation Standard 1	Target	Actual	Met / Unmet
<i>Indicator 1.1:</i>			
The number of individuals achieving employment outcomes during the current performance period compared to the previous performance period.	938	886	Unmet
<i>Indicator 1.2:</i>			
The percentage of individuals receiving services under an individualized plan for employment who achieve employment outcomes.	55.8%	53.63%	Unmet
<i>Indicator 1.3:</i>			
Competitive employment outcomes as a percentage of all employment outcomes.	72.6%	98.76%	Met
<i>Indicator 1.4:</i>			
Competitive employment outcomes for individuals with Significant Disabilities as a percentage of all individuals with employment outcomes.	62.4%	93.71%	Met
<i>Indicator 1.5:</i>			
The ratio of the Average VR Hourly Wage to the Average State Hourly Wage.	.52	.57	Met
<i>Indicator 1.6:</i>			
The percent of individuals achieving Competitive Employment Outcomes who report their own income as Primary Source of Support at Closure as compared to at Application.	53%	67.49%	Met
<i>Indicator 2.1:</i>			
Access to services for Minorities as measured by the ratio of the Minority Service Rate to the Non-Minority Service Rate.	.80	.96	Met

Statistics FFY 15

\$ 3,424

**Average Cost per Closure
without an Employment
Outcome**

(After receiving services.)

\$ 4,414

**Average Cost per Closure
with an Employment
Outcome**

\$ 11.77

**Average hourly earnings for
competitive employment
outcomes.**

Source of Revenue

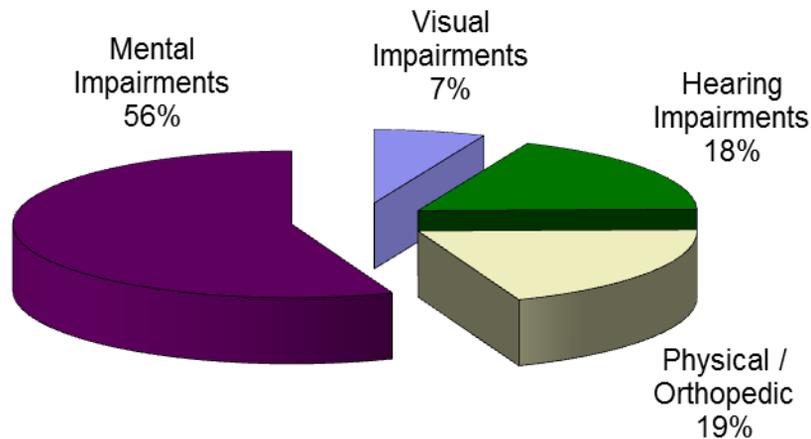
\$ 14.5 Million

Federal Funds

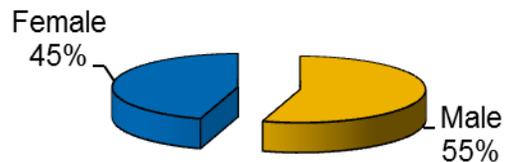
\$ 3.9 Million

State Funds

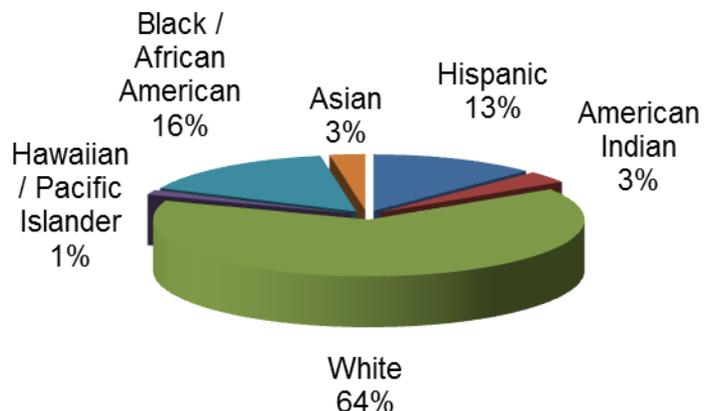
Primary Disabilities of Those Who Went to Work



Gender Breakdown by Closures

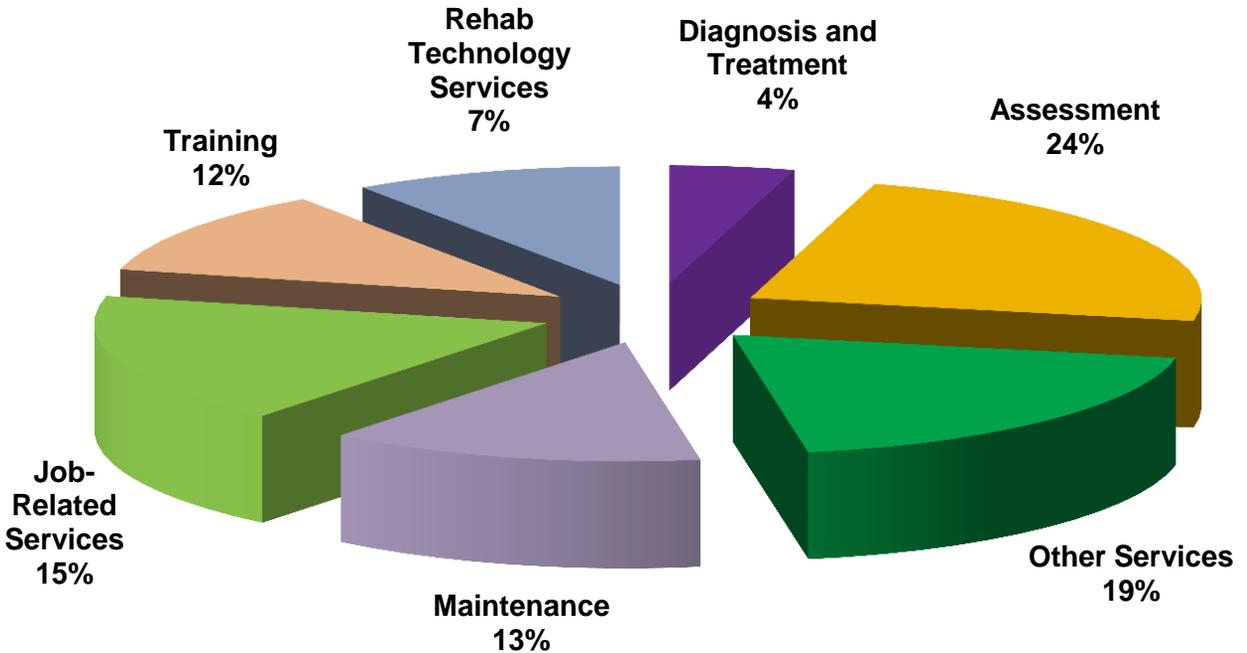


Ethnicity Breakdown by Closures

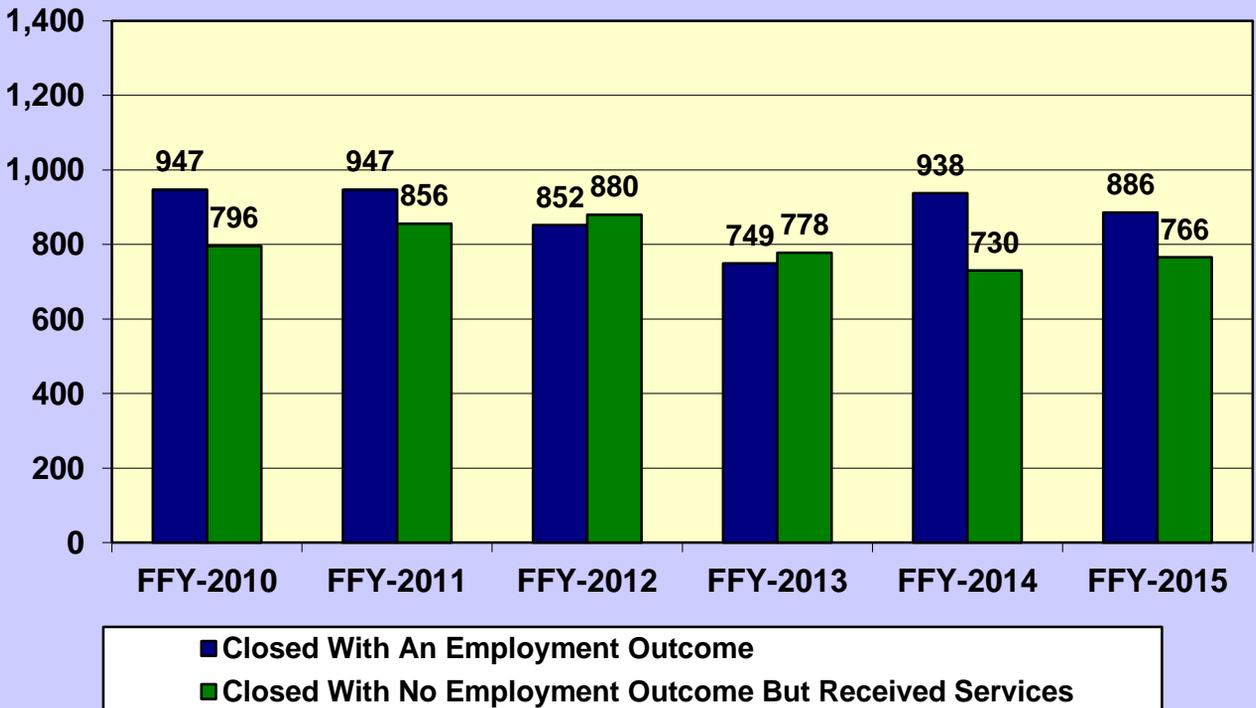


Statistics FFY 15

Services Provided



CLOSURE BREAKDOWN



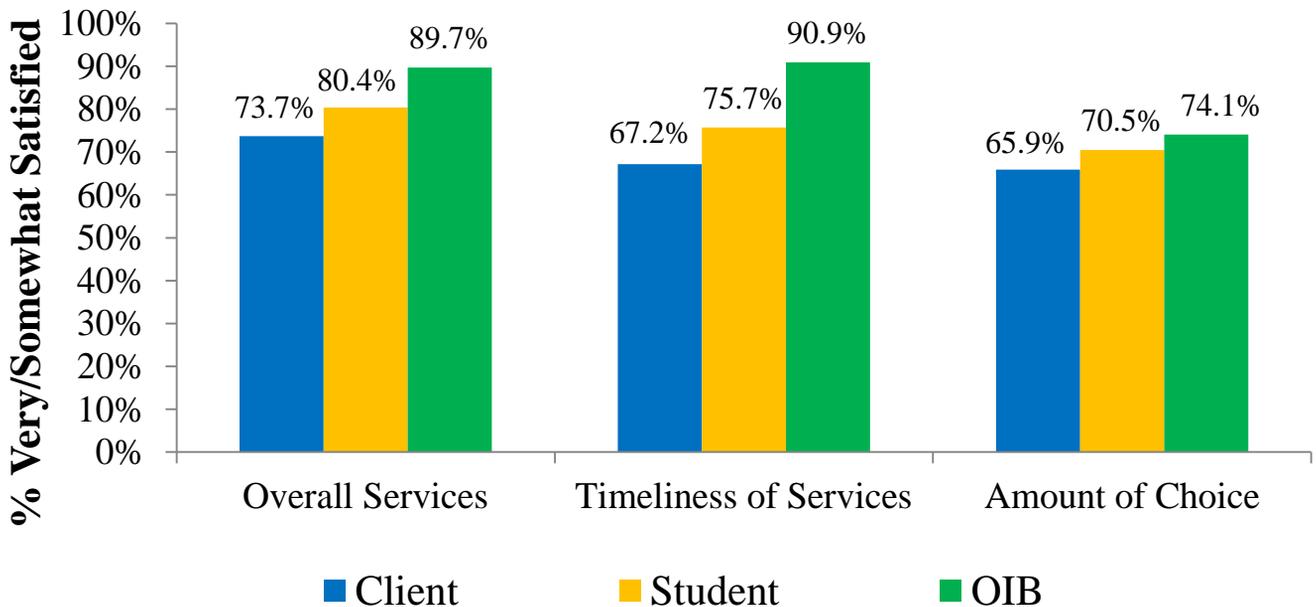
Satisfaction Survey

Satisfaction with the Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Each year, the Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC), in conjunction with the Rehabilitation Division, contracts with a vendor to perform participant satisfaction surveys to glean information on the quality of services provided to vocational rehabilitation participants. The University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), Center for Research, Design and Analysis (CRDA) and Nevada Center for Health Statistics and Informatics (CHSI) performed three surveys on behalf of the NSRC: the General Client, the Transition Student, and the Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) Satisfaction Surveys. The surveys are taken by participants who have exited the program.

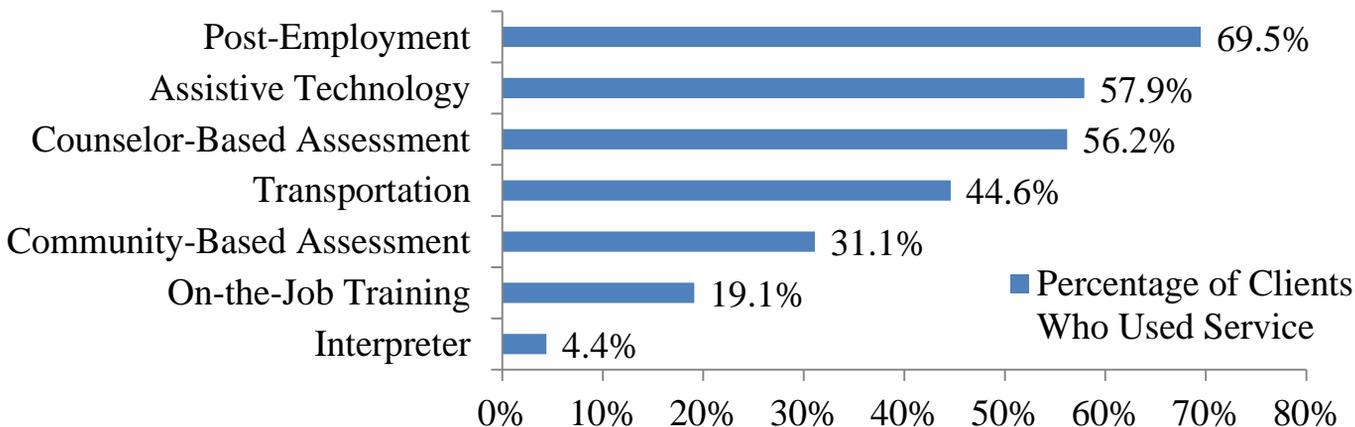
Cooperation Rate

Client: 83% Student: 72% Older Individuals Who Are Blind: 85%

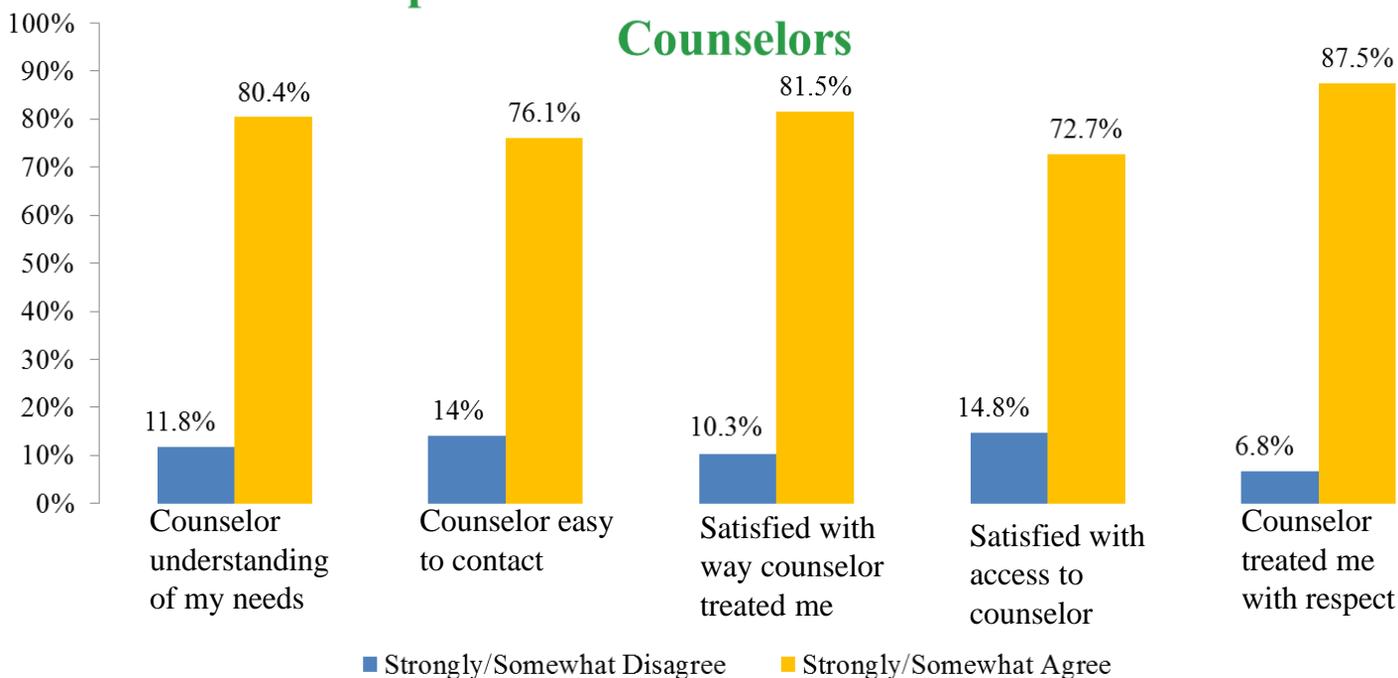


Satisfaction Survey

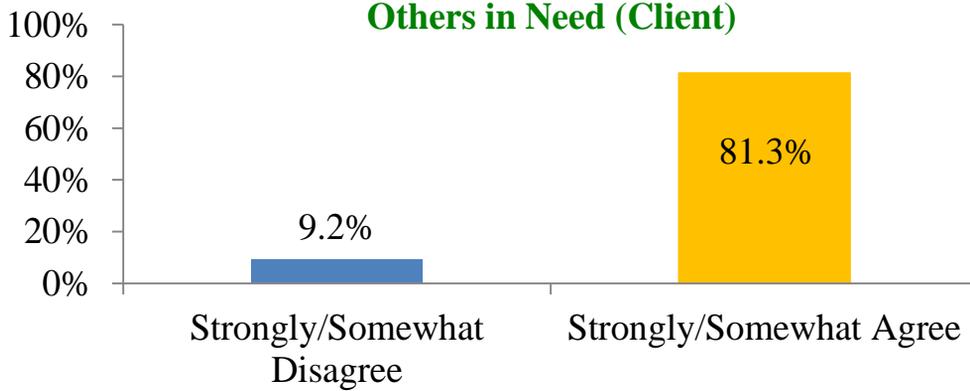
Vocational Rehabilitation Services used by Clients



Client Experiences with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors



Would Recommend Vocational Rehabilitation Services to Others in Need (Client)



Governor's Taskforce on Integrated Employment

The Governor's Taskforce on Integrated Employment was formed in late 2014 as a result of Executive Order 2014-16 to examine and evaluate current employment programs, resources, training and employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD), and to report to the Governor by July 1, 2015, those findings as well as 3-, 5- and 10-year strategic plans for creating more integrated employment opportunities for individuals with I/DD.

The Nevada State Rehabilitation Council was well-represented on the Taskforce with the following gubernatorial appointments: Administrator of the Rehabilitation Division, Shelley Hendren; Administrator of the Aging and Disabilities Services Division, Jane Gruner; and the Nevada Disability Advocacy and Law Center Executive Director, Jack Mayes. Additionally, the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Chief, Mechelle Merrill, was one of only 17 appointments.

The Taskforce established its mission statement in December 2014: To develop and implement a sustainable system for individuals with I/DD to achieve competitive, integrated employment in the setting of their choice. The prevailing philosophy that guided all aspects of the work of the Taskforce and its resultant strategic plans was that Nevada would be strengthened by promoting competitive, integrated employment where people with I/DD are employed at or above the state minimum wage.

The Taskforce believed its mandate was to increase opportunities and decrease barriers for people with I/DD; that individuals, schools, families and businesses must raise their expectations; that people will be hired because of their ability, not their disability; that employment is a win/win for everybody; and that people are healthier, safer and happiest with meaningful work of their choosing.

After intensive research and outreach, which included 12 key informant interviews, 8 focus groups conducted statewide with 87 total participants, and 356 consumer survey responses, the Taskforce completed a report of their findings, and 3-, 5- and 10-year strategic plans. These were submitted to the Governor's office on July 1, 2015.



Critical areas identified in the research and outreach included:

- 1) Resource Development and Sustainability;
- 2) Collaboration and Coordination;
- 3) Professional Development;
- 4) Transportation;
- 5) Employer Engagement;
- 6) Government as a Leader and Model Employer; and
- 7) Early and Timely School Assessment and Planning.

The research report, supplemental data book, outreach report, final report and strategic plans may be reviewed on the Aging and Disabilities Services Division (ADSD) website at <http://adsd.nv.gov/>.

Governor Brian Sandoval praised the Taskforce for its collaboration efforts and leadership, stating, ***"...I am pleased and encouraged to see that this was such a collaborative effort across so many agencies and disciplines..."*** "...I believe that the State should continue to act as a leader in efforts to implement a competitive and integrated workforce..." Governor Sandoval assigned oversight for implementation of the strategic plans to the Commission on Services for Persons with Disabilities (CSPD), which is a statutorily mandated commission within the Aging and Disabilities Services Division (ADSD), whose mission it is to "facilitate and enhance the quality of life and services for children and adults with disabilities in Nevada."

Employee Highlight



Vivian Turner

Originally from Southfield, Michigan, Vivian Turner lived in the Lansing, Michigan area for 20 years before moving to Nevada in 2008.

Vivian received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology and Master of Arts Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. She began working with individuals with disabilities at Clinton-Eaton-Ingham County Community Mental Health (CEI-CMH) as a Direct Care Staff Person. While working with this population in the day programs and group homes, Vivian was surprised by how much she truly enjoyed working with individuals with disabilities and investigated how she could increase her education to become an advocate.

When she read the description of the Rehabilitation Counseling Master of Arts program, she knew she had found her career. The first line stated and expressed her desire: “Rehabilitation counseling is a profession devoted to enhancing the quality of life of individuals who have physical, mental, or emotional disabilities.” This was exactly what she wanted to do: have a job that allowed her to work toward enhancing the quality of life of individuals who have disabilities.

Rehabilitation counseling is a profession devoted to enhancing the quality of life of individuals who have physical, mental, or emotional disabilities.

Vivian served as a Case Manager for persons with disabilities working in a sheltered workshop and as a Case Manager for the Custodial Training Program at Peckham Industries in Lansing, Michigan. She then became a Rehabilitation Counselor working as one of the three job developers with CEI-CMH providing job development services for individuals living in the tri-county (Clinton, Eaton and Ingham) area of Michigan.

The job developers at CEI-CMH were Masters Degree Rehabilitation Counselors. They provided job development including: work place assessment, sensitivity training for employers, liaisons for the school system, job carving, case management, and vocational rehabilitation counseling, to ensure the best job fit, as well as to educate and promote community employment for persons with intellectual developmental disabilities (I/DD).

When Vivian moved to Nevada, she tried something different and started working with the State of Nevada in 2008 as a Service Coordinator at Desert Regional Center. After working in this capacity and also a brief time with Behavioral Health, she realized her true calling and passion is Vocational Rehabilitation. She has been working with VR since 2012 and is very happy to be back in her chosen vocation. As a Rehabilitation Counselor for VR, Vivian's goals have not changed. She still strives to promote and advocate for enhanced quality of life through employment opportunities that will bring dignity, self-satisfaction, and sometimes the realization of acquiring that dream job for the individuals she serves. At the end of the day she may be tired, frustrated, and still pondering the next step, but it is not a burden or just another job, it is Vivian's calling.



Client Success

Nicholas Becerra

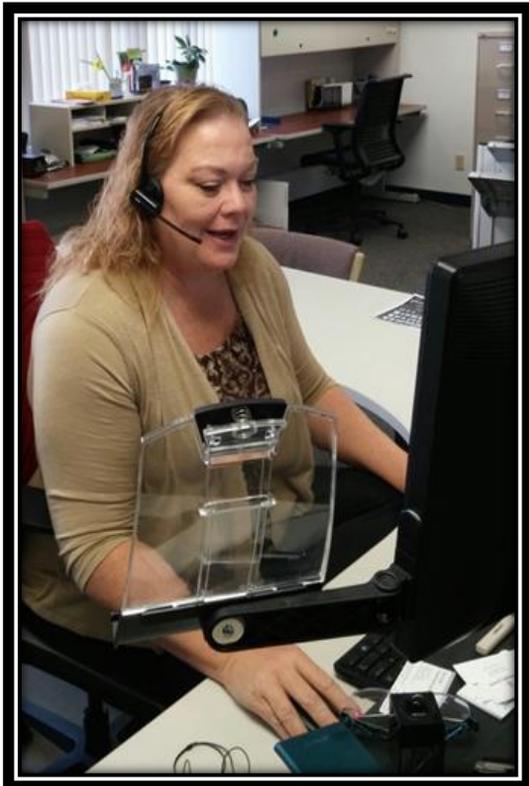
Nicholas Becerra applied for services on October 1, 2013, for assistance with finding employment. At the time, he was working as a sign waver for 3 hours a week and hated the job, but would not quit until he found something else.

He was accompanied by his father who did a lot of the talking, as Nicholas is on the autism spectrum and does not talk much. During this time VR was working with High Sierra Industries piloting a program called Pathways. Nicholas was very excited about the program, he was referred and accepted. Pathways is a 90-day job readiness program to assist with preparing clients for employment, assessing for strengths, interests, and matching them with careers.



Renown™

Nicholas was tested for typing and found he had an aptitude for office skills. At that time, High Sierra was working on an employment program with Renown Health, one of Reno's top hospitals. His skills were assessed through Renown and he was found to be a good fit for a Clerk 1 position. Recently he was promoted and received a raise. His VR counselor is fortunate to see Nicholas every day as he gets off the bus to go to work with a big smile on his face. His father recently told the counselor that when Nicholas goes past his last job as a sign waver, he expresses how grateful he is to have his current job.



Jeana Webb



Jeana Webb, 49, has overcome multiple disabilities to become a successful member of the state of Nevada Rehabilitation Division team.

Jeana applied for services more than a year ago and became eligible for services due to visual impairments, specifically Retinitis Pigmentosa and a history of strokes that affected her speech and memory.

With counseling, guidance, low vision aids and other assistance, Jeana was hired as a Rehabilitation Technician II with the state. This occupation is consistent with her vocational goal and prior experience. Jeana has expressed satisfaction with her job and has become integral part of the VR team.

Client Success

Charles Watkins

Charles Watkins, 64, was enjoying a career as a taxi cab driver and personal care assistant driver when he had to give up his trade due to a diagnosis of macular degeneration in 2007. This illness affected his ability to utilize his central vision, requiring him to depend on his peripheral vision, which also makes it difficult for him to read and use a computer.

Because he was unable to work, he found himself homeless, living at the Las Vegas Rescue Mission. A former chef, Charles learned to work in a kitchen dish room at the Mission.

Charles was initially a client in the Bureau of Services to the Blind (BSB) Older Blind Program before he was referred for vocational rehabilitation services in July 2014. VR helped Charles attend a low vision clinic, and provided him with assistive technology, independent living, and orientation and mobility services.

When a job came available at the Business Enterprises of Nevada's Department of Energy location for a kitchen steward, Charles' VR caseworker immediately recommended him for the position.

The manager of the location suggested Charles do a four-day Community Based Assessment /trial work experience. Charles was hired for the job after just two days of working. When he called his caseworker to report the good news, he said he felt very comfortable with the staff and knew he could do the job. He expressed his gratitude towards BSB for helping him get the job.

What is very unique about this placement is having a BEN site where the BEN Operator is himself or herself visually impaired and/or blind and having an employee who is also visually impaired. A true win-win situation!

After the first three weeks on the job, Charles' manager reported how independent he is and how well he is performing. She added that Charles has even come up with new ideas for the dish room operation.

Her last statement was,

“I wish all my employees could be like Charles!”



Client Success

Gretchen Caldwell

When a customer sits across from Gretchen Caldwell as she sculpts a new set of nails or soaks their feet during a relaxing pedicure, they would never guess she has dealt with a mental illness for the past couple of decades. It's not apparent that her diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder forced her out of a 20-year career in human resources or that she had been hospitalized nearly a dozen times for treatment due to this mental illness, which on many occasions threatened her own existence. They also would not believe Gretchen had spent nearly three years homeless because she could no longer continue in the workforce.



Upon the realization that her work environments contributed to her mental health issues in a negative way, Gretchen sought help in applying for Social Security benefits and won her claim, which had a two-fold impact on her life. She would now have resources to provide for herself and stabilize her life, but had to acknowledge that she truly suffered from a mental illness.

One of the benefits from the Social Security was the opportunity to participate in the Ticket to Work program. This program would allow Gretchen to find a career that would supplement her income, but in an environment that didn't have negative triggers that could jeopardize her mental stability. Today Gretchen is the proud owner of a business that puts her creative skill set to use and provides her with a less demanding work environment. Her business would not have come into existence had it not been for VR.

In April of 2012, Gretchen came to VR knowing that a position as a nail technician would fit her interest and abilities as she had been doing her friend's nails and her own for many years, just for the fun of it. This type of work was not in conflict with her disability because she enjoyed using her people skills along with her creative skills to do stellar nail work.

Prior to writing the plan, Gretchen was asked to provide information about the job market for nail techs to ensure it was a viable vocational plan and would provide the income she was seeking. She was able to do so successfully. Along with Gretchen's tenacity and dedication to her chosen career, VR was able to assist her with her goals by providing help with school tuition and supplies, related licensing and fees, transportation, and glasses.

She now owns her own business, called Goddess to Goddess Nail Designs. She has learned to navigate her way through social media sites, and on-line market places to promote her business. Over the past year, she has brought in over 170 customers using these skills and has established a growing clientele. Today, she continues to work successfully out of a salon, A Plus Hair and Nails.

Client Success

Roberto Duran



Roberto Duran came to VR in 2010 in search of a job. At that time, he had recently completed a Bachelor's degree in History and Political Science and was eager to put this knowledge to use in the working world.

Roberto was made eligible for services based on a spinal cord injury. This injury made many tasks very difficult for Roberto. He had no use of his left hand and minimal use of his right. He used a power chair for mobility, but relied on family members for many activities of daily living. Roberto was seeking more than just a job, he was seeking independence.

Roberto's parents wanted him to be independent and help him find the right working environment where all of his needs could be met and he could be successful. They were sometimes hesitant about the idea of him going to a working environment alone, unsure of how his basic needs would be met and how he would do.

When Roberto came to VR, he had never worked before. Despite his educational background, his many skills, including the fact that he is bilingual in English and Spanish, Roberto's lack of work history made his job search very difficult. Many employers were hesitant to take a chance on someone without experience. For five long years, Roberto worked with VR to complete assessments for assistive technology and assessments in the community to try to help Roberto find the best job fit for him and his family.

Through the VR program, Roberto was able to complete a community-based assessment (CBA) at Senator Harry Reid's office, which allowed him to further build his resume and work skills. This assessment provided Roberto the opportunity to enter the working world for the first time and to begin to interact with other professionals on a daily basis. Additionally, VR provided Roberto with job readiness training, assistive technology training and equipment for employment, job development, and guidance counseling to help him in his journey to obtain employment.

Finally, after much patience and searching, an opportunity came along through a connection between an employer and Roberto's VR counselor. Today, Roberto is working for Best Buddies. He works part-time, which allows him to continue other volunteer activities and his physical therapy. His parents are welcomed to the office to help him with daily activities when needed. This makes both Roberto and his family more comfortable and allows Roberto to be more successful.

Roberto is an essential part of the Best Buddies team. He helps with research on assisting persons with disabilities in the workplace. He assists with job searches to help other consumers be successful in their employment goals. Roberto also attends team meetings and works as a team player to complete assignments. Roberto reports that this new job is very important to him because it is an environment he and his family feel comfortable with. He states that he feels he is not only gaining great experience, but independence that he will value for a lifetime. Roberto is a wonderful example of someone who did not just obtain a job, but a career path and a path to independence.

Client Success

Nery Martinez

Nery Martinez was introduced to Bureau of Services for the Blind (BSB) in October 2012 by Dr. Alyssa Nagel, Low Vision Clinic Optometrist. Nery was 17 years old with a condition known as Usher's Syndrome, which causes both hearing and vision loss. She was born deaf but began developing vision problems that could lead to total blindness later in life. Dr. Nagel recommended a program at the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) in New York that specializes in training individuals who are deaf-blind in learning how to live and function effectively independently in the world.



Upon Nery's completion of the evaluation it was recommended she return to HKNC for further training. The HKNC Vocational and Rehabilitation Training Program included focal points in job training and employment; vocational services; adaptive technology; independent living; communication and orientation and mobility. Nery was accepted into the program, supported by BSB, for a year.

Nery returned to Las Vegas excited about having met other individuals like her who were also deaf-blind and even admitted for the first time proud to be deaf-blind. She completed her senior year of high school and received an Option 2 diploma.

BSB sent her for a second time to the HKNC training program in October 2013 and she finished in December 2014. Highlights included her working part-time as a stocker at Hot Topic, a trendy store in a busy suburban shopping mall in Long Island, New York; improving her ASL skills; learning to cook, clean, budget, write checks, arrange her own transportation and even live in an independent apartment for a few months. She also traveled with fellow students by train from Long Island into New York City and went on a group trip to Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., the University for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students.

Just a few months after her return to Nevada in December 2014, she began working with a job developer. Her vocational goal was retail stocker. She went on two interviews accompanied by her job developer and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters. She was hired by Forever 21 in the Fashion Show Mall as a retail stocker and began her job in July 2015. This is the largest Forever 21 store in the United States. ASL interpreters were needed throughout the job search and placement process. After having ASL interpreters with Nery on her first three days of the job, she said she didn't need them anymore. She also didn't require job coaching.

The store management said, **“She's the best employee in the store.”**

Client Success

Pepito Ilar



In 2005, Pepito (Peter) Ilar was working on a high-rise structure when he suffered a gunshot wound that left him paralyzed from the chest down. He woke up three (3) months later from a coma, remembering nothing. “I couldn’t speak or walk. I had to learn how to do a lot of things again, including how to work.”

Peter, a native Hawaiian Islander, had grown up working in his family’s construction business, so for him it seemed inconceivable to even consider doing anything besides construction for employment. “That’s who we are ... what we do. Plus, I was making good money.”

Ten years passed. “I slipped into a really dark place. It wasn’t good.” Peter tried to find work through Vocational Rehabilitation in Hawaii and Las Vegas, but was unsuccessful. “Nothing stuck. I wasn’t ready.” Then Peter reapplied for services at the Las Vegas office on April 1, 2014, “This time I’m ready to work,” he told his counselor, and he wasn’t kidding.

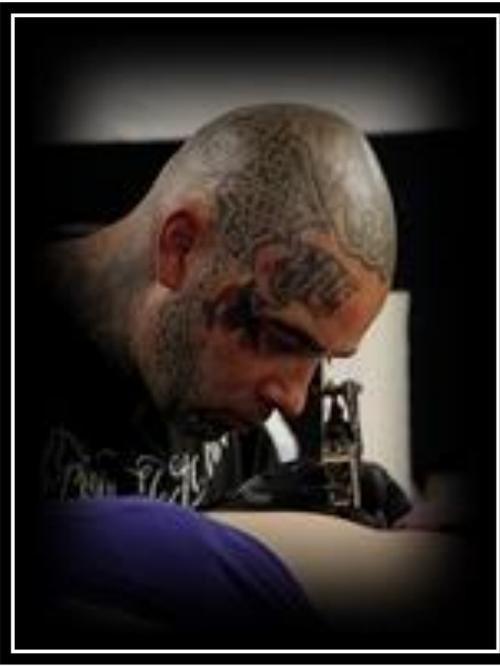
Peter confided in his counselor that he needed assistance overcoming a fear of what employers might think of him now that he was in a wheelchair. “When I roll in, I’m concerned they wonder what I can do for their company. I can’t even stand like a man. I just want to be a productive part of society. I want to work full time and buy a home . . . I want to get back into life. That’s what made me give up before. I want this time to be different.”

And that time was very different for Peter. “I kept coming to our end-of-the-month meetings and kept learning. I kept watching people get hired and go to work and I started believing that there was something out there for me too. I started believing that I could do it to, so I did. I didn’t give up!”

Peter also had the advantage of having a modified vehicle and was certified by an adaptive instructor and licensed to drive himself so a team effort ensued between Peter and Vocational Rehabilitation. With the help of his counselor, his rehabilitation technician, and the job developer, he received intensive coaching on how to apply for, and interview for jobs. A resume was created for Peter highlighting his unique strengths. His job developer helped him find the right interview clothes and he practiced (and practiced), and role-played until he felt comfortable and confident that he could interview. Vocational Rehabilitation replaced his wheelchair so he could safely and confidently navigate in any environment. The interviews started and kept coming.

On January 20, 2015, Peter was hired for part-time employment at the Southern Nevada Center for Independent Living (SNCIL). “I am a Telecommunication Equipment Outreach Coordinator. I love my job. I get to help people instead of helping myself.” Peter moved into an apartment with family that was close to his job location. He is saving to buy his first home.

On October 5, 2015 Peter transitioned to full time employment at the Nevada Disability Advocacy and Law Center (NDALC) as the Reception and Front Desk Coordinator. He continues to help others – both those coming into the agency for assistance, as well as his co-workers. He is a self-advocate, mobile, independent, and well on his new path to a full and rich life.



Client Success

Christopher Hampton

Chris Hampton came to Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation on August 25, 2014. He was born in Las Vegas, Nevada, one of three children, and lived in other places before moving back to Las Vegas in 2012.

He quit school in the 9th grade; however, he obtained a GED in 1996. His disabilities include anxiety, PTSD, and substance abuse, with 4 felony convictions. He has not used drugs since 8/13/13, and was incarcerated for approximately 20 years. He reported that for most of his life, he was filled with rage and anger and would get into fights regularly. He has always been interested in art, and while in prison he started tattooing himself and other inmates. As a matter of fact, he is covered from head to toe with tattoos, which could also be noted as a detriment in his ability to obtain gainful employment, due to prejudices. While investing time in perfecting his tattoo artwork, he was less likely to engage in brawls and fighting.

Chris was referred to VR by the Department of Corrections with no previous work skills and/or direction of what type of job he would like to pursue. During his VR Intake, a reality check was discussed in trying to identify what types of jobs he might be able to obtain, bearing in mind no work skills, no academic trade skills, his felony convictions, and his body covered with tattoos. Chris stated he might be able to get a fast food job, at best, which would not likely financially support him, his girlfriend, her son, and their new baby girl. Discussion ensued regarding obtaining a tattoo license and going into business as a tattoo artist. Chris lost it! He broke down and stated that no one had ever offered to help and/or invest in him. He was so appreciative and excited about the future's possibilities.

VR assisted him in obtaining the necessary and required licenses, certifications, and equipment he would need to pursue his "dream job" as a tattoo artist. He did everything the VR suggested with enthusiasm and determination, including designing business cards, marketing techniques, a notebook tattoo display, a marketing portfolio, and discounts for referred and repeat customers.

He reports his business is booming and he couldn't be happier. He now talks about positive short-and-long-term goals he has for his business, himself, and his family. Chris has been one of the most enjoyable and positive vocational transformations his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor has had the pleasure to witness and experience.

Client Success

Catherine Wright

For over 25 years, Catherine Wright enjoyed a career as a pre-school teacher in university-based child development programs. She was the Lead Teacher and Assistant Director at the Arizona State University, Child Development Center, and most recently was Lead Teacher at the University of Nevada, Child and Family Research Center. Her official job title was Childcare Worker II. At UNR, she taught and cared for children ages 0 to 3 years in the Early Head Start Program.



Cathy was very happy in her job and loved working with the children. She had no desire to leave the University. However, her life and career would soon change dramatically.

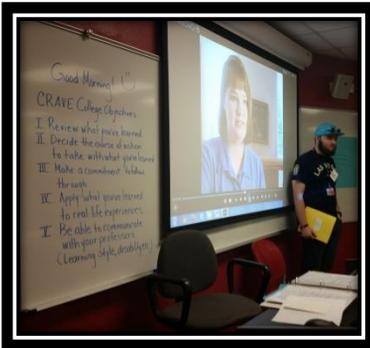
Cathy was diagnosed with Sjogren's Syndrome, an immune system disorder often associated with other progressive immune system disorders, such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. The neck pain, low back pain and pain in multiple peripheral joints secondary to Sjogren's, along with inflammatory arthritis, resulted in total replacements of both of Cathy's knees. The unfortunate impact on Cathy was that she became permanently unable to meet the physical demands of caring for small children and could no longer perform the full range of essential functions required of a Childcare Worker II.

Cathy was placed on medical leave and looked to the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation for help finding work she could do. She had been approved for medical retirement, but she wanted to keep working if at all possible, either with the State of Nevada or in the private sector. It was her desire to work long enough for the State to retire comfortably, and she saw that slipping away. In order to upgrade her office, administrative and computer skills, and to help qualify her for an administrative assistant position with the State, VR assisted Cathy with a short-term clerical & administrative skills training program. VR also helped Cathy with a computer for practicing her skills, a comfortable chair, job placement services, clothing for job interviews and transportation expenses.

Cathy was certified for the 700 Hour Law Program, which was established to provide a path to State employment for people with disabilities. She successfully completed her training, and, after many job interviews in both the public and private sectors, Cathy was hired through the 700 Hour Law. Her new job was an Administrative Assistant II with the Nevada Department of Health & Human Services (HHS). Although she loved working at HHS, Cathy noticed that she had a great deal of difficulty hearing people on the job. She often joked that she always thought she couldn't hear people at work, because of all the noise that the kids were making at her old job. Following an audiological evaluation, it was found that Cathy had permanent sensorineural hearing loss in both ears, which could be corrected with hearing aids. VR helped Cathy with obtaining her hearing aids, and she is still working at HHS and enjoying her new career and her ability to hear clearly and communicate with others on the job. And it wasn't the kids after all.

Collaboration

The 7th annual **Careers, Recreation and Vocational Education (CRAVE) Summer Camp** took place June 21-26, 2015, on the UNLV Campus in Las Vegas. Transition youth from across the state participated in one of two career paths:



1. The employment path, which included job seeking skills, travel training, job readiness and work experience.
2. The college path, which included learning to register for classes, assessing the Disability Resource Center and looking for financial assistance.

In conjunction with the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disability, UNLV, Nevada Department of Education, Clark County School District, Goodwill Industries of Southern Nevada and the City of Las Vegas-Adaptive Recreation Program, 22 transition youth with disabilities from across the state participated in the 5 day residential experience to learn vocational and career planning skills.



The 6th annual **Community Based Career Exploration Camp**, a collective effort of Washoe County School District, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, and the University of Nevada, Reno – Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities was held June 22-26, 2015. This year, 20 transition youth from Northern Nevada participated in travel training instruction, meal preparation, classroom-based independent living instruction, and hands-on learning at over 7 different businesses in Northern Nevada. The work experiences included floral design, automotive, retail, warehousing, and assembly. Each year this program grows larger and more students are able to experience work for the first time.

Collaboration

Career Development Academy: For the 3rd year, Vocational Rehabilitation continues its relationship with High Sierra Industries (HSI) and the **Sierra Regional Center** to provide an intensive prevocational program for supported employment-eligible clients who are interested in competitive employment. HSI provides the prevocational training and job development with blended funding from VR and Medicaid, and the Regional Center provides ongoing support (past 90 days) via use of their Jobs and Day Training Medicaid waiver funds. This collaboration has been very successful, with over an 85% successful placement rate.



Customized Employment Project: VR collaborates with the **Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living** (NNCIL) to identify and serve those individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) who seek competitive, integrated employment. Through intensive interest-based career exploration, video resumes, job carving and solid identification of long-term supports, individuals who had been un-served or working in JDT (Jobs and Day Training) Medicaid waiver worksites are achieving competitive employment.

Vocational Opportunities for Inclusive Career Education (VOICE) was the first Third-Party Cooperative Arrangement in Nevada. VOICE is now in its third year, and to date has served over 175 students. VOICE is collaboration between VR and the **Washoe County School District**, which provides hands on vocational exploration and job search curriculum to 77 currently co-enrolled high school transition students to assist them in achieving integrated and competitive employment outcomes. Services often begin when students are still in high school, receiving unique and non-customary pre-employment skills training. This phase is called Pre-VOICE. After graduation and before they turn 22 years old, students may apply to VOICE for program admission and guidance to competitive employment.



**Washoe County
School District**

Collaboration

Clark County School District and VR continue to partner with the **Project SEARCH** Program. Project SEARCH is a highly successful national program. In following the model, the school district funds the teacher who provides vocational instruction and VR funds the job coach who assists the students in learning the various job duties.

Project SEARCH is a one year high school transition program for students with significant disabilities offered

during their last year of high school. It is geared toward transition students whose main goal is competitive integrated employment. This year, the Project SEARCH program was expanded to include three new sites in the Las Vegas area; **Sunrise Hospital**, the **Regional Transportation Center** and the **University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV)** campus where immersion in the workplace facilitates the teaching and learning process through continuous feedback and application of new skills. Each site offers the training opportunity for 10 students.



Additional programs working with youth with significant intellectual disabilities exist in southern Nevada through a collaboration between the **Clark County School District**, **Opportunity Village**, the **Desert Regional Center** and the **Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation**. The school district funds students ages 18-21 to participate in soft skills and vocational training in a program called Job Discovery I and II offered by Opportunity Village. When the students

Graduate into Phase II, they are referred to Vocational Rehabilitation to begin more formal career exploration, training and placement activities. During Job Discovery II the students have an opportunity to work in several community job sites where they are exposed to different types of job duties and work environments. As the school year ends VR continues their efforts towards job development activities leading toward competitive integrated employment.

Collaboration



The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) continues to collaborate with the **Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE)** and its member colleges and universities to explore the potential of third-party cooperative arrangements (TPCAs). VR has established TPCA's with **Western Nevada College, Truckee Meadows Community College** and we are in continued negotiations with the **College of Southern Nevada, and University of Nevada, Las Vegas.**

The formal name of these TPCA's is the **CareerConnect program**. Through the CareerConnect program, each college will provide services to VR clients that are new and unique, or an expanded pattern of services with a vocational focus. Each program throughout the state will be unique, and they are encouraged to be customized to the climate of the community college. An example of the overall universal services that may be offered include Career Exploration, Vocational Counseling, Employment Preparation, Vocational Training Support, and Worksite monitoring. There will be a strong emphasis to work with VR youth transitioning from high school to college, providing intensive tutoring for VR clients, assessment and instruction to VR clients on the use of assistive technology, internships programs, job coaching, and job development services.



Collaboration



JEEP (Job Exploration and Expectation Program) is a third party cooperative arrangement written and implemented in collaboration with the **Clark County School District** and **VR**. JEEP implemented in August 2015 with six designated pilot high schools.

Each high school has 6 students participating in work rotations in various departments of the school with the final site being a work experience opportunity with a local employer. The students rotate every 9 weeks through the sites they are interested in and they finish the program with the community work experience. Part of this JEEP training includes activities under the Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) category to ensure compliance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, WIOA. The goal of this program is to train, prepare and assist students in achieving competitive integrated employment. To reach this goal the school district has hired two job developers who are designed to work with the students, job coaches and the VR counselors with job development activities and placement. The program will expand next year to include six additional new high school sites.



VR, Opportunity Village and the **Desert Regional Center** are all collaborating in a program called **Pathway to Work**. This collaboration offers individuals with intellectual disabilities who have been working in Opportunity Village's Resource Center the opportunity to experience job exploration and training at community sites. The pre-vocational training and coaching offered through this program affords the participants the opportunity for transition into competitive employment opportunities. The Pathway to Work program begins with comprehensive soft skills classroom training then transitions to hands on work experience opportunities performed at **Boulder Station Casino** and also at **Centennial Hills Hospital**. Last year 30 individuals benefitted from this program.

Collaboration

The Rehabilitation Division Administrator has a seat on the **Nevada Commission on Services for Persons with Disabilities (CSPD)**, an **Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD)** legislatively mandated commission. VR collaborates with members of the Commission on services for individuals with disabilities. The Administrator co-chairs the new subcommittee tasked with implementing the strategic plans for integrated employment, as established by the Governor's Taskforce on Integrated Employment.



VR staff and NSRC members attend the **National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC)** and the **Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)** spring and fall conferences. The conferences provide many sessions that inform and energize participants and lend to development of best practices such as motivational interviewing, social media and learning, and self-advocacy training.

Vocational Rehabilitation Southern District staff attend the bi-annual "**Students Talking about the Real World**" (**STAR**) Conference with Las Vegas area school district special education staff. STAR is a program that is designed to educate families, students and professionals about transition services available in Clark County. VR transition counselors offer facility tours and provide orientation about VR services. Students are given the opportunity to meet with agencies, vendors, and colleges to learn what services and supports are available to assist them in meeting their vocational goals.



Collaboration

Independent Living Skills: VR collaborates and refers individuals seeking independent living services and skills to the **Aging and Disability Services Division's (ADSD) Independent Living (IL)** program for supportive services and assistance in acquiring/mastering activities of daily living. Many of these cases are a financial collaboration between IL and VR, allowing for greater outcomes through collaboration. To further the agency's commitment to ADSD and IL, the **Bureau Chief is a member of the State Independent Living Council.**



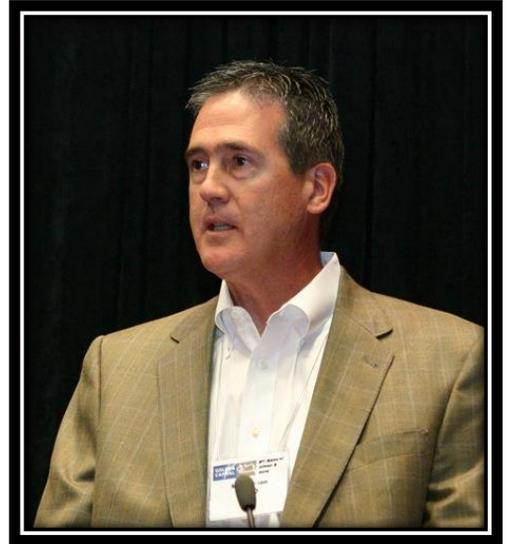
The VR Bureau Chief is a voting member of the **University of Nevada Reno / Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities (NCED) Community Advisory Council**, which helps develop the 5-year plan for the NCED and works to identify the recipients of the Community Advisory Council (CAC) mini-grant awards in the community.

Assistive Technology: VR receives grant funding from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), to provide statewide assistive technology services to clients seeking employment. Services include assessments, evaluation, devices and training. VR collaborated with the **Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities (NCED)** and **Easter Seals** to provide these important services.



Employer Engagement

Ken Pierson is the Business Development Manager for VR, responsible to develop and generate relationships with employers resulting in new employment opportunities for VR clients. Ken is also responsible for creating and supporting new and existing work-readiness programs, job seeking services, and incentive programs for employers. Ken is a board member of Nevadaworks, the northern Nevada Workforce Development Board. Ken participates and presents at many conferences and events to promote hiring people with disabilities and to connect Nevada employers with VR and its talent pool of skilled job seekers.



Ken was integral in the development of a new certificate program with the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). The University of Nevada, Reno, College of Business developed a classroom-based job search skills program comprised of 3 courses that culminate in a certificate of completion for the VR client. Topics covered in this class include writing a resume, on-line job search and mock interviews with human resource professionals from the community.

Office DEPOT.
OfficeMax



ARROW
ARROW ELECTRONICS, INC.

The business development outreach from Ken and his team also resulted in 4 unique work-readiness training programs with large retail partners. Partnerships began with Office Depot/OfficeMax and PepsiCo and expanded to include Starbucks and Arrow Electronics, which just launched in October 2015. Selected Vocational Rehabilitation clients are given the opportunity to join a customized pre-employment training program in one of these large companies. Clients learn in a classroom setting and hands-on in the workplace. Many are offered positions upon completion of the work-readiness training program. All program completers receive a certificate of completion of their bona fide training from one of these recognized industry leaders. To date, 19 candidates have completed the Office Depot/OfficeMax 6-week training program, and 12 have successfully become employed. Twenty-one candidates have completed the Starbucks 6-week training program, and 18 have become employed. Seven candidates have completed the PepsiCo 2-week training program and 6 have become employed. Wages range from \$11.60-\$23.00/hour.

New Brand

This year, Vocational Rehabilitation launched an advertising campaign through various outlets including TV, radio, print and social media, in order to educate and inspire employers to embrace persons with disabilities as employees and customers.



The new brand is “VR Nevada, At Work for Disability Inclusion.” It includes a new employer focused website that highlights employer/VR consumer success stories, describes incentive programs, services available to employers, and provides tools and links regarding hiring people with disabilities. VR also developed its own social media outlets including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, as well as a dedicated YouTube channel with all VR Nevada content. The VR Nevada television commercials featured local talent and focused on successful employment outcomes, as described by local employers.

The new website for employers may be found at www.vrnevada.org

You may search Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube by using
“VR-Nevada.”



Media Campaign

The overall marketing and advertising campaign was designed on the feedback and input gained during pre-campaign research, and it was targeted to key decision makers in Nevada companies, including CEOs, human resource professionals, and state department directors. The research included one-to-one interviews, an on-line survey, and focus groups. The research resulted in the opinions of individuals across private companies, nonprofit organizations, and governmental agencies.

Following the new style and brand direction, a series of ads were created that conveyed different, but relevant, intertwined messages. Each ad provided a different facet of what VR Nevada offers and the benefits of utilizing the services of VR Nevada, as well as why hiring a person with disabilities makes good business sense.

Employees with disabilities bring great value to business.

We connect you with talented employees to help drive business success.

702.486.0372 Southern Nevada
775.823.8110 Northern Nevada

VR Nevada
Vocational Rehabilitation
At Work for Disability Inclusion

VRNevada.org

A culture of diversity and inclusion is important for every business.

We connect you with talented employees to help drive business success.

702.486.0372 Southern Nevada
775.823.8110 Northern Nevada

VR Nevada
Vocational Rehabilitation
At Work for Disability Inclusion

VRNevada.org

Business can profit from a disability talent pool.

We connect you with talented employees to help drive business success.

702.486.0372 Southern Nevada
775.823.8110 Northern Nevada

VR Nevada
Vocational Rehabilitation
At Work for Disability Inclusion

VRNevada.org

VR placed print, digital, television and radio advertising in appropriate media throughout the state targeting our demographic audiences. The campaign and media placement was very successful.

Rehabilitation Division

Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Locations

Northern Nevada

1933 North Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701 (Carson)
(775) 684-0400

1325 Corporate Boulevard
Reno, NV 89502 (Washoe)
(775) 823-8100

4001 South Virginia Street, Suite H-1
Reno, NV 89509 (Washoe)
(775) 284-9600

2281 Pyramid Way
Sparks, NV 89431 (Washoe)
(775) 284-9520

Rural Nevada

172 6th Street
Elko, NV 89801 (Elko)
(775) 753-1931

1500 Avenue F, Suite 1
Ely, NV 89301 (White Pine)
(775) 289-1675

475 West Haskell Street, Suite 2
Winnemucca, NV 89445 (Humboldt)
(775) 623-6544

121 Industrial Way
Fallon, NV 89406 (Churchill)
(775) 423-6568

Southern Nevada

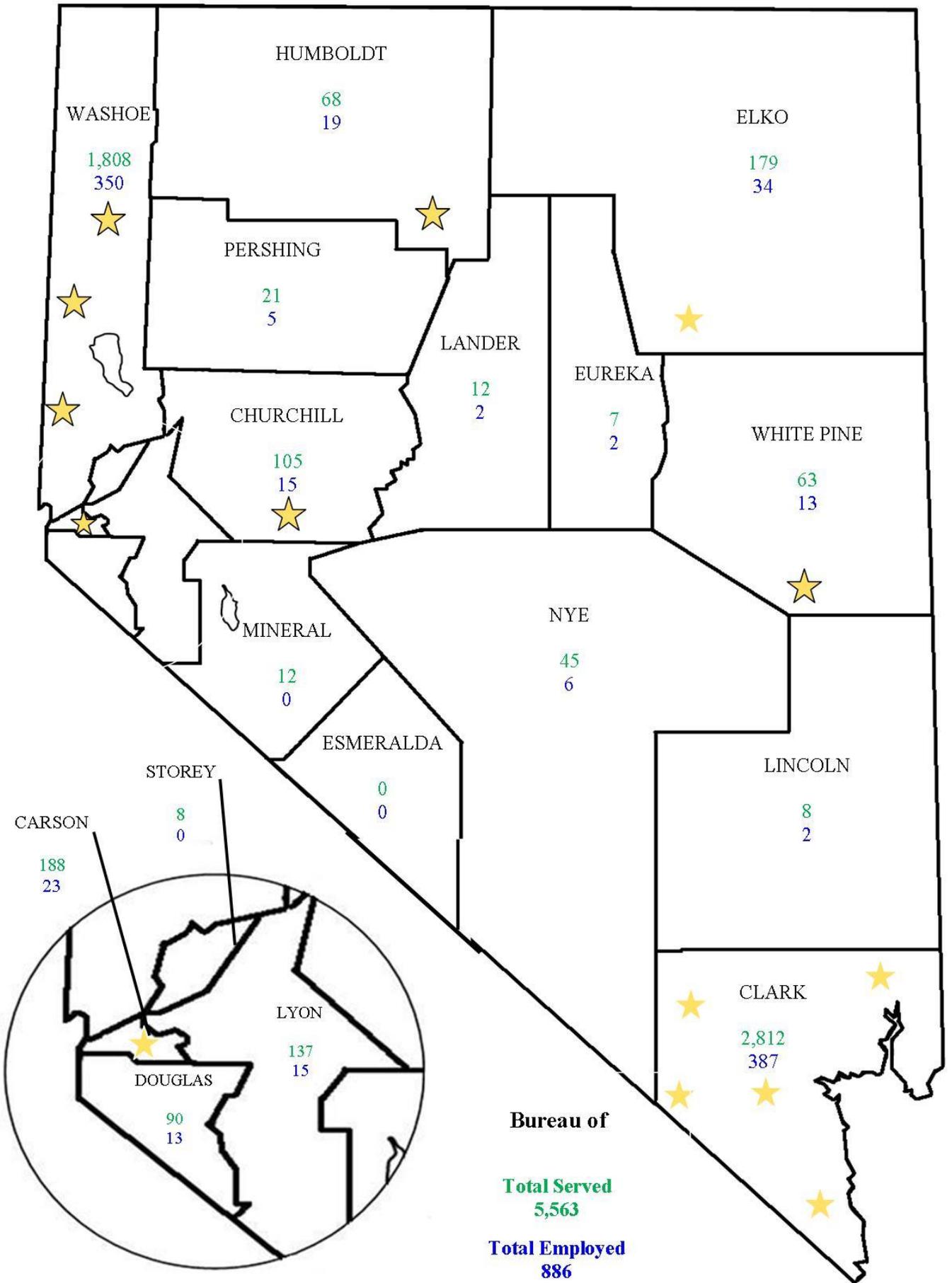
3405 South Maryland Parkway
Las Vegas, NV 89169 (Clark)
(702) 486-0100

4500 E. Sunset Road
Henderson, NV 89014 (Clark)
(702) 486-0300

3016 West Charleston, Suite 200
Las Vegas, NV 89102 (Clark)
(702) 486-5230

2827 Las Vegas Boulevard North
North Las Vegas, NV 89030 (Clark)
(702) 486-0200

6330 West Charleston Boulevard, Suite 190
Las Vegas, NV 89146 (Clark)
(702) 822-4214



The Nevada Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

Administration Office
751 Basque Way, Carson City, Nevada 89706
(775) 687-6860



Mission

To bring Nevadans together to promote barrier-free communities in which individuals with disabilities have access to opportunities for quality work and self-sufficiency.

Vision

To bridge the gap between disability and self-sufficiency.