ANNUAL REPORT 2013

Oregon State Rehabilitation Council

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

OREGON STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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All scenic photography by **Ed Ruttledge**
Front cover: Little Blitzen Canyon
Inside: top; Smith Rock, left; Little Blitzen Canyon, right; Anne Amie Vineyard

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December 2013

Honorable Governor John Kitzhaber and Janet LaBreck, RSA Commissioner:

On behalf of the members of the Oregon State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), we present to you the 2013 Annual Report. This report documents the status of the Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program and a summary of the SRC's activities.

The SRC continued to work closely with VR Administration and Executive Team throughout the year. The SRC partnered with VR in developing the state plan that RSA approved October 1. The SRC is fully engaged with the Oregon Office of Developmental Disabilities, the Oregon Department of Education and the Department of Human Services in implementing Employment First goals for people with developmental disabilities in Oregon.

The Oregon SRC participated in discussions with the National Coalition of SRCs (NCSRC) regarding the Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act, and the potential move of Vocational Rehabilitation from the U.S. Department of Education to the Department of Labor. We fully support VR remaining within the Department of Education.

The SRC provided input to Governor Kitzhaber's executive order directing state workforce development programs to mutually plan to better align state services. The Governor's Office, Department of Administrative Services and workforce agencies contracted with experts in organizational design and business processes. This Public Financial Management team analyzed and recommended structural and process changes. The SRC commented on the recommendations to the Oregon Workforce Investment Board, noting issues that conflict with federal law.

VR celebrated many successes throughout the year including a 5 percent increase in the rehabilitation rate, the anticipation of a 13.9 percent increase in employment outcomes, and serving all individuals applying for services without the need for a waitlist. On behalf of the full council, we would like to thank you for your ongoing support of Oregonians with disabilities. We appreciate the opportunity to serve and provide leadership to the council and to partner with Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation.

Sincerely,

Tom Giles, SRC Chair
Laurie Brooks, SRC Vice-chair

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SUCCESS STORIES

DUSTY ENGINEERS A DEGREE

Dusty is a young man with a rare progressive central nervous system condition called hereditary spastic paraplegia (HSP). This condition affects his physical ability, but not his mental aptitude. As his condition progressed through his 20s he realized that manual labor, as he had done, was not a sustainable career option.

He lost his job and was living on Social Security Disability Insurance. Dusty wanted to go to school and earn a degree in engineering, where he felt he could have a long-lasting career using his mental strengths and not be limited by his physical progressive condition. He came to VR in Bend in 2009 with an associate of arts degree and some upper division course credits, but he needed two years of schooling to finish a compacted engineering degree. Bend's OSU Cascades' degree in energy systems engineering (ESE) fit well with Dusty's ideals. Bend VR partnered with Dusty. Together, they made a plan for him to earn a degree in ESE and obtain a suitable long-term engineering job.

During school Dusty and his VR counselor, Heather Lynch, made other goals to meet his main two objectives — to earn good grades and have quality internships. Dusty, with the support of VR, achieved a 3.9 GPA.

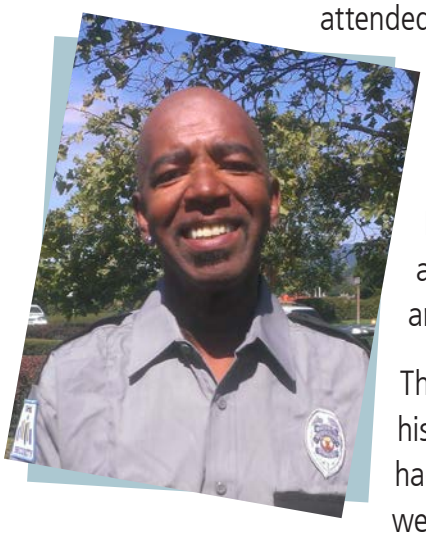
He also completed two quality engineering internships. Bend VR helped Dusty pay for the tuition, books and supplies not covered by his Pell Grant and other scholarships. Bend VR also purchased some assistive technology to support his plan. Dusty's internships included six months with Daimler Corporation in Portland as an industrial engineer and six months as a mechanical engineer in an OSU research project funded by the Oregon Department of Energy. Both internships gave Dusty invaluable experience while earning his bachelor's degree. Once Dusty graduated and finished his second internship, he obtained a job with the Army Corps of Engineers in Seattle, Wash.

Dusty feels he is now in a great position in his life. He is on his way to a rewarding career and much happier about his life's outlook than he was in 2009. The assistance and support Bend VR and Heather provided played a critical role in achieving these milestones. The investment made in the future of this capable young man will be paying Oregon and the nation back with dividends for the rest of his career.

~ Submitted by Heather Lynch,
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

ERNIE'S PRIDE COMES FULL CIRCLE

Ernie is from a very proud family in Eugene. It was one of the first black families to move to Eugene. His father established the first black church here. Ernie's father was a prominent member of the community; a street in Eugene is named after him. His 11 siblings attended Eugene schools and graduated. Ernie is the only one who didn't graduate. He could not read or write.



Ernie had a difficult time getting work. His sisters helped him complete job applications. He mostly did dishwashing and manual labor work.

The first thing I noticed about Ernie was his upbeat attitude and family pride. He had a great smile; however, upper teeth were missing. We identified the job of security guard. We tutored him through the licensure process. The employer who hired him saw his potential for working with the public, if he could improve his appearance. Upper dentures made his smile shine. Ernie now patrols downtown Eugene, keeping the streets safe.

His job requires completing daily reports. An iPad with speech recognition software provides the accommodation. His file is successfully closed, but Ernie still calls me just to say how happy he is. We truly put a beautiful smile on his face and a spring in his step.

~ Submitted by Melita Green,
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

" It's important to maintain a balance of consumer perspective with the SRC providing vocational rehabilitation with the consumer voice. The SRC provides this perspective through cooperative work on the state plan, consumer survey, needs assessment and public input."

~ Jesse Kappel

ESTACADA'S JAMES AND JAHMALL CLEAN UP AS A TEAM

James started in the Estacada Youth Transition Program in October 2008. Cheryl Renton was his YTP transition specialist at Estacada and Stephen Sanders was his VR counselor. During high school he participated in two work experiences through the Estacada YTP. The first was a summer program with Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism (SOLV) and the Estacada School District where he helped improve the high school grounds. The second was with the high school custodial staff.

After graduation in June 2009, James successfully exited from the YTP and VR programs. YTP arranged for James to substitute in the district's custodial and grounds department. Because he was on time, worked hard, followed directions and was a team player — James worked regularly for approximately one-and-a-half years. When a full-time custodian position opened, his co-workers urged him to apply. James, who was one of six candidates, was awarded the position. He now has a full-time job with benefits and a future.

After leaving Job Corps, Jahmall had a hard time landing a job. He remembered the support he had received through the YTP at Estacada and made an appointment to meet with Cheryl Renton.

Estacada's YTP referred him to a temporary agency and he had a position within the week. He worked five months for the company and was released.

Jahmall returned to YTP. Cheryl asked Estacada School District's facilities manager if she could refer another YTP youth to the custodian substitute list. Because James had been such a success, the manager agreed.

Jahmall is now out of YTP and on the custodian substitute list at Estacada. He has worked with James, who is teaching him skills. Jahmall is still looking for a full-time custodial job but, at present, he is learning valuable work skills.

~ Submitted by Cheryl Renton, Transition Specialist

MARK THANKS VR

Teresa,

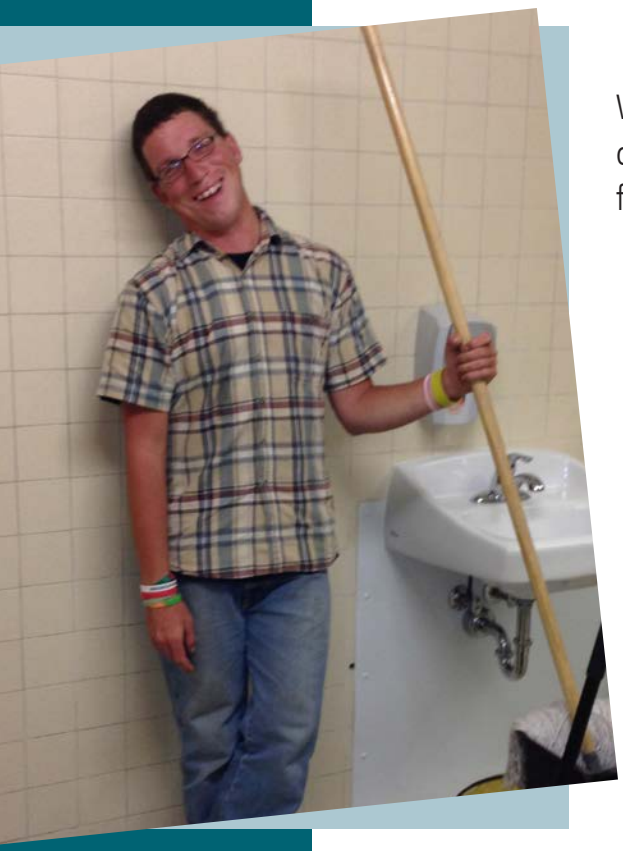
Thank you, thank you, thank you for all of your help and the great assistance from Barb [Meyer]! I cannot say enough of how much her support and your approval of the extended help that will continue to help me for a very long time. I now have many tools to even compete for the next possible job if not be picked by Bend [as music director for a large church] and succeed for a long time. I came into VR with the hopes of just finding a job for now and you have now finished the job by giving me tools to help in every job I am given from here on.

I am so confident of the work of all VR that I have sent two young men that were in my high school youth group at Molalla and I know they will be helped by VR's assistance. I hope that they are able to find good jobs while going to college even with the large challenges they face.

~ Written by Mark Hazen
~ Submitted by Teresa Findley, VR Counselor

Anne Amie Vineyard

WALLOWA COUNTY YOUTH TRANSITION PROGRAM COLLABORATES TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MATTHEW



Matthew, a YTP student and VR client, had dreamed of the chance to work for the school district when he graduated. With the current unemployment rate in his home town being in the double digits, job prospects were out of sight. Without school district funding, the idea of creating a janitorial job grew dim.

Then the Dream Team emerged and new life for the idea took hold. The Wallowa YTP gathered a small group of people together who had provided supports for Matthew throughout his school years. Retired teachers, disability services coordinators, his senior project mentors and previous school aides joined forces to help him. They discussed how to develop funding for the position, how to create a part-time job, and how to maintain the position. YTP suggested they first secure the funding.

The local school foundation had provided both scholarship and curriculum funds to the Wallowa School District. The Dream Team thought, "Why not include the Foundation in the equation?" Discussions between the YTP specialist and the Friends of the Wallowa School Foundation led to a letter-writing campaign. Matthew's Dream Team members contributed names of friends and community members who might be interested in supporting a part-time janitorial job for a youth with a disability. With the school's foundation on board, donations could also be tax-deductible charitable. It was a win-win for all donors to the cause.

By August the goal to raise start-up funds was in place. Vocational Rehabilitation worked with the school district to develop an on-the-job-training program. YTP worked closely with the school district to outline the duties and responsibilities of the part-time position and soon Matthew became a member of the school's janitorial staff. Community members who believe in Matthew have donated $4,000 to date.

Matthew loves his job and the school is very pleased with the work he is doing. Through collaboration between Vocational Rehabilitation, YTP, the greater Wallowa community, the school's foundation and the school district, a life has been changed with a resounding YES!

~ Submitted by Saralyn Johnson, Transition Specialist

REMOVING EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS LEADS TO MATT'S SUCCESS

Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation worked alongside Matt to help him get back to work after his accident. Prior to his employment with the Oregon Department of Forestry, Matt attended the Oregon Green Tech Certificate Program through a collaborative partnership with Worksource Klamath and Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council. At the Department of Forestry, VR provided Matt with adaptive devices such as an electric winch and a one-handed pocket wind meter. These devices removed barriers that could have prevented him from fully functioning as a forest fire lookout.

When Matt was ready to move forward in his career, Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation was ready to move with him. After he was offered a job as Klamath Basin Equipment's parts manager, VR coordinated an ergonomic review of his duties and work environment to find out what services could help Matt be successful. Working with Matt's ergonomic and adaptive needs met with resounding success thanks to a collaboration between VR and Archie Linman and his team at KBE.

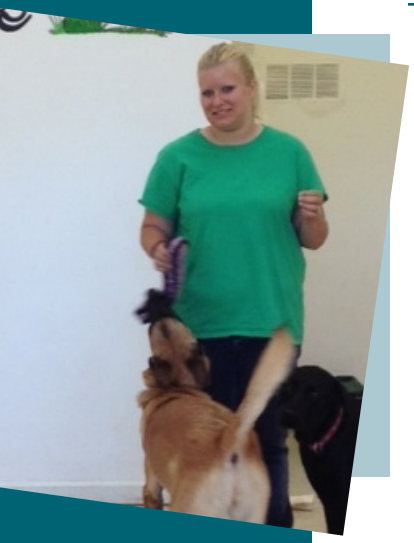
Matt Baker's story typifies what can be accomplished by using the collaborative resources of Worksource Oregon, Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation and — most importantly — the employer to address barriers to employment for people with disabilities.

~ Submitted by Matt Balkwill,
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

For the past 22 years I have had the pleasure of assisting Oregonians with accessing and acquiring the correct assistive technology solutions designed to increase their daily independence. As an SRC member I have had the honor of strengthening the professional relationship between our agency, Access Technologies Inc., and VR as we partner to assist individuals with disabilities in gaining and maintaining employment. But equally important is the ongoing strengthening of the partnership between the SRC and VR. I eagerly look forward to the opportunity for the SRC to work more closely alongside VR as one unit with the same goal in mind – increasing the independence of Oregonians with disabilities.

~ Laurie Brooks

MIRANDA HAD A DREAM



Miranda M. had a dream to work with animals when she came to VR in her last year of high school. She was placed with a boarding and dog day care business. Miranda has since gone to another business and upped her game with additional on-the-job training. She washes, brushes and pre-shaves dogs, memorizes products, answers phones, greets customers and supervises up to 15 dogs. The new owner, Julia Durandeu, of Lucky Dog Day Care in Lincoln City, is happy to have her and to help her advance her skills.

~ Submitted by John Anderson, VR Counselor

SANDY SETS AND MEETS SOLID GOALS

When Sandy first signed up with the Youth Transition Program, she didn't have her birth certificate or State ID Card. She wanted to work, but didn't know how to start. She applied for a job at YTP's coffee cart business at her high school and was hired to work as a hot drinks barista. Sandy was a great employee! She worked as part of a team, was always there on time, and even worked late to make sure everything was cleaned up and put away. When things were slow, Sandy looked for things to do and helped out with whatever needed to be done. YTP helped Sandy get her birth certificate, her State ID Card and her Food Handlers Permit.

Sandy's living situation was challenging. She was staying with her grandmother and they had to move twice during the spring of her senior year. She was acting as a partial caregiver for her grandmother, and did a lot of work for the moves.

Sandy joined YTP for the annual field trip to Clatsop Community College (CCC) to meet the disabilities specialist, take the COMPASS test and tour the campus. She talked with the disabilities specialist to learn how to best advocate for necessary accommodations. Sandy decided she wanted to go to CCC after high school. Sandy's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) career goal is to work with the visually impaired.

Sandy really wanted a paying job during her senior year in high school. YTP helped her put together a resume and look through the local job ads. We learned that Safeway was hiring, and Sandy filled out the online application. Since she had experience as a hot drinks barista, Sandy applied to work at the Safeway Starbucks. This all happened while she was finishing her senior project, applying for scholarships to go to college, and finishing her high school academic requirements.

Sandy got the job at Starbucks two weeks before she graduated from high school and is doing great. She loves her job. Sandy completed the admissions requirements for CCC and received an award letter for the 2013–14 school year. This fall, YTP took Sandy to visit an advisor at CCC who helped her to pick her classes for fall term. Because she is working and doesn't drive, the advisor suggested that Sandy start with a part-time schedule. Sandy signed up for psychology and math. YTP gave Sandy a bus pass and figured out how she could get to and from classes between where she lives in Seaside and the college in Astoria, about 20 miles away.

Sandy's living situation has changed again. She is staying with friends. Sandy stays in touch with another YTP student who worked with her at the Seaside High School coffee cart. The two hope to afford an apartment together by the beginning of 2014. YTP continues to help both young women work toward living on their own.

Sandy's story is about meeting life's challenges with a positive attitude. It is about making the best of things and taking care of the people in her life that need her help and support, including herself.

YTP helped to show Sandy how to put her dreams and plans into realistic goals that become a life-changing reality. Sandy learned that, with YTP supports, she didn't have to figure it out all by herself. YTP is here to help!

~ Submitted by Catherine Anderson, Transition Specialist

STEPHANIE SHINES AT FRED MEYER

Stephanie came into the Sandy Youth Transition Program (YTP) in December 2009. She was living with her grandmother and was responsible for most of the home's physical upkeep. Sandy YTP Transition Specialist Diane Johnson immediately enrolled Stephanie in the Environmental Youth Corp's Winter Saturdays' crew. Her final evaluation from the crew leader was nothing less than great.

In May 2011, Stephanie was hired for a full-time summer internship at Camp Kiwanis starting in June 2011.

Stephanie then started to train at Mt. Hood Athletic Club (one of our Sandy YTP's work experience sites). In November 2011, Stephanie applied at the local Fred Meyer. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Roxanne Nakamura arranged for VR to buy her some nice clothes for interviews. She had two interviews and was hired to start in December 2011.

I've always admired and advocated for VR, but never more so than in the past year. The positive and fast changes in Oregon's work assistance environment have placed VR in a position to assist more people than ever before. They are proving up to the challenge. However, with the possible changes at the federal level, we all remain in a state of wonder as to the outcome. "Impressive" is a word I use when describing VR services in my local area. The same word could be used throughout Oregon.

~ Tom Giles

Stephanie started as a Health and Beauty Aids Section merchandise stocker. Over the next several months, she trained in the Deli, Seafood and Health Foods sections. Stephanie has worked primarily in the Health Foods Section since July 2012. She works full-time with benefits and is taking a class at Mt. Hood Community College to help her in her job.

Stephanie has since moved out of her grandmother's house and is enjoying a life she never thought she would. Christine Sturdy, human resources manager at the Sandy Fred Meyer, says, "Stephanie is such a good worker and they are all so proud of her." It is obvious the staff are all very protective of Stephanie.

None of this would have been possible if not for the partnership between VR and the Sandy YTP.

~ Submitted by Diane Johnson, Transition Specialist

NICK IMPRESSES EMPLOYER

When he was ready for a transition in employment, Nick hired UCP Employment Solutions to help him find a job that met his passion for the outdoors and being physically active. After a discovery process, Nick decided to look for work on a farm.

Nick used the Oregon State University Extension Office in Oregon City to start a targeted vocational assessment. He located the OSU Extension Farm in Southeast Portland. The farm manager, Jen, was really impressed with Nick's work ethic, attention to detail and willingness to learn. She asked Nick to work as a farm hand.

Nick is very proud of the job he does and loves the benefits of being outdoors and harvesting delicious foods.

This placement was made possible by a collaboration between Xochil Springer at United Cerebral Palsy's Employment Solutions and Juanita Fornier, Milwaukie branch VR counselor.

~ Submitted by Xochil Springer, Employment Specialist

2013 EMPLOYER RECOGNITION AWARDS

ABC WINDOWS

Todd is very much the ship's captain and president for his company, ABC Windows. He describes himself as the one who steers and charts the future of his ship. His business provides janitorial and window cleaning to both commercial and residential customers and has been in operation for more than 11 years. The company has 26 employees.

Vocational Rehabilitation presented ABC Windows with an employer award at this year's in-service.

For the last 10 years Todd has worked with the Vocational Rehabilitation program to hire a variety of individuals with disabilities. Todd is well aware that disabilities can be both visible and invisible. He knows there are probably more employees with invisible disabilities who choose not to disclose than employees whose disabilities are obvious.

ABC Windows is a desirable company to work for because Todd gives everyone a chance at a job and provides an inclusive work environment. Employee retention is fairly high. Some employees have been with the company between five and seven years. Todd says most of the employees who left went on to other opportunities.

He gives his employees the chance to work with or without accommodations. VR counselors have sometimes helped with accommodations. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit assists small businesses like his company.

Todd also contributes many hours each month to networking meetings that help develop program services for people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups. Todd spearheaded the Oregon Business Leadership Network in Salem in 2007. He facilitated discussions with the Salem Chamber of Commerce of how best to recruit and promote people with disabilities. Those talks became the springboard to the VR program's services in the Salem area.

Todd currently adds his small business expertise to the Governor's Office's Closing the Employment Gap work group. VR and Department of Human Services leaders are part of the work group.

Todd's contribution has been very valuable and appreciated. Todd continues his dedication to serving Oregonians by providing job opportunities to the disability community.

Once again, I can gladly report that being a member of the SRC has been informative, challenging and fun. In my second year as an SRC member, I became more involved. During my first year I felt I had a lot to learn and wanted to build my knowledge in the way the council performs its duties. Having done so, I decided to take on a new challenge. I assisted in the state plan review. This consisted of attending meetings and reviewing and revising the draft of the 2014 VR State Plan. I met some new people and attained a better understanding of how the state plan is written and what its components were supposed to do. This will help me immensely when I have to reapply for funding next year.

~ Leslie Riggs

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCILS

The 1992 amendments to the federal Rehabilitation Act required the formation of state rehabilitation advisory councils (SRACs) and identified their functions. Oregon's Governor Barbara Roberts appointed the Oregon SRAC on September 1, 1993.

The 1998 amendments to the federal Rehabilitation Act **removed "advisory" from the name** and empowered the council to be **active policy partners** with state VR programs. The name was officially changed in 1998 to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

HISTORY

People with disabilities who were committed to the publicly funded Vocational Rehabilitation program's success formed the original state rehabilitation councils (SRCs). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was the first disability civil rights law to be enacted in the United States. **During the reauthorization process of the Rehabilitation Act of 1993, disability advocates persuaded Congress to create state rehabilitation councils (under Title 1, Section 105) to help people with disabilities who receive vocational rehabilitation services take an active role in shaping those services.** The majority of council members must be persons with disabilities, thus providing a powerful venue for the consumer voice in the public vocational rehabilitation program.

SRCs were originally established to **advise** designated state agencies about providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. The passage of the 1998 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act shifted the focus from a State Rehabilitation **Advisory** Council to its current role of **policy partner.** This significantly changed the role of the State Rehabilitation Council, giving the council independence, autonomy and a stronger advocacy role. SRCs now work in **partnership** with the public vocational rehabilitation program on the effectiveness of its policies, programs and services in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities.

OREGON STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

COUNCIL PURPOSE

The Oregon State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is established in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The SRC gives advice to and works in partnership with the Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. The council gives VR an external consumer-oriented perspective when discussing program and policy.

The council also provides VR consumers a formal mechanism to influence the direction of rehabilitation programs in Oregon at the systemic and policy levels.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY AND INITIATIVE

The State Rehabilitation Council is authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. This federal legislation identifies the council's required functions, which include:

- Work in partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation regarding essential planning and service delivery intended to result in meeting the employment potential of Oregonians with disabilities.
- Review and analyze program effectiveness, create and analyze consumer satisfaction materials, render concerns and recommendations to VR derived from performance standards and measurements of rehabilitation services.
- Advise the Governor and state agencies on the performance of vocational rehabilitation in Oregon regarding eligibility, program effectiveness and effect on individuals with disabilities. This includes preparation and distribution of this annual report.
- Coordinate the work of the State Rehabilitation Council with the activities of other disability-related councils in the state. This includes establishing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the State Independent Living Council (SILC).

COUNCIL STRUCTURE

The full council meets four times per year. These sessions occur throughout the state and are structured in order to:

- **Listen** to and hear from consumers and others;
- **Learn** about programs, activities and needs specific to each region of the state;
- **Build/support** collaborations with public and private partners involved in rehabilitation and employment in Oregon; and
- **Conduct** the business of the council in a public setting.

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Bold indicates primary representation.

NAME	TERM	REPRESENTATION/COMMUNITY
David Abramowitz	02/12–11/15	**Advocate**/Developmental Disabilities/Eugene
Jeanne Barter	10/13–09/16	**Advocate**/Consumer/Eugene
Renata Beck	05/10–11/15	**Voc Rehab Counselor**/Statewide (non-voting)
Laurie Brooks	03/11–11/13	**Business**/Salem
Anne Burns	05/10–11/15	**Youth Transition**/West Linn
Jeri Cohen	01/13–01/16	**Advocate**/Brain Injury Association/Creswell
Heidi Dirkse-Graw	10/13–09/16	**Business**/Lake Oswego
Roberta Dunn	01/13–11/13	**Parent and Training Information Center**/Statewide
Mark Foster	07/12–11/14	**Advocate**/Consumer/Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Portland
Liz Fox	07/08–11/13	**Community Rehab Provider**/Eugene
Tom Giles	06/11–11/14	**Business**/Community Rehab Provider/North Bend
Ryan Green	06/13–06/16	**Consumer**/Advocate/Wilsonville
Jesse Kappel	12/07–11/13	**Advocate**/Gladstone
Linda Keller	05/09–11/13	**Advocate**/Family Member/Salem
Toney Marx	12/10–04/13	**Consumer**/Advocate/Salem
Chungfan Ni	07/12–11/14	**Advocate**/Family Member/Salem
Clayton Rees	12/13–11/16	**Advocate**/Cloverdale
Sandy Reese	05/09–11/14	**Advocate**/Mental Health Employment/Tigard
Leslie Riggs	02/12–11/13	**121 Representative**/Statewide
Sally Simich	01/13–01/15	**Education**/Statewide
Sherry Stock	10/10–11/15	**SILC**/Business/Molalla
Stephaine Taylor		**VR Administrator**/Statewide (non-voting)
Patti Tom-Martin	07/06–11/13	**Business**/Advocate/Salem
Norm Underwood	12/13–11/16	**Business**/Cloverdale
Ted Wenk	07/06–11/15	**Client Assistance Program**/Statewide

SRC COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

BUSINESS/EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Chair: Liz Fox.

Members: Anne Burns, Heidi Dirkse-Graw, Tom Giles, Sherry Stock, Patti Tom-Martin, Norm Underwood (VR: Dan Haun).

This committee works with VR to ensure that the business and employer community is informed and more fully engaged with the disability community and its consumers.

Committee responsibilities:

- Educate employers/businesses about the skills and value of employing people with disabilities. Learn about employer/business needs and expectations of workers. A former SRC Business Committee worked diligently to establish the Oregon Business Leadership Network (OBLN). As the OBLN flourished and became independent, the SRC Business Committee disbanded. The committee is seeking ways for the SRC to contribute in this area.
- Collaborate with/support VR's employment engagement strategies and activities.
- Sponsor Employer Awards Program.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair: Tom Giles.

Vice Chair: Laurie Brooks.

Members: Renata Beck, Jeri Cohen, Liz Fox, Jesse Kappel, Sherry Stock, Ted Wenk, Rhoda Hunter (VR: Stephaine Taylor).

The Executive Committee works to oversee council activities in response to the mandated function. It manages all council operations and ensures council decisions and recommendations are implemented. The committee serves as the primary point of contact for the council.

Committee responsibilities:

- Develop state plan (also under the Program Strategies and Budget Committee).
- Implement Order of Selection as needed (with input from all committees). Under federal law, if Oregon does not have enough money to provide vocational rehabilitation services to all eligible persons, VR must set priorities to serve those with the most significant disabilities.
- Develop SRC bylaws (ad-hoc – Executive Committee). Draft and develop SRC bylaws, monitor effectiveness and annually recommend necessary revisions.
- Write SRC Annual Report (with input from all committees). The Rehab Act requires the SRC to prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the RSA commissioner on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the state. The reports must be made available to the public. Report is due by Dec. 31 each year.
- Partner with other councils within the state. To avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served, coordinate activities with other councils including the Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB), State Independent Living Council (SILC), Client Assistance Program (CAP), advisory panel of IDEA, Oregon Disabilities Commission (ODC) and Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities (OCDD).
- Monitor VR's placement. Council monitors the effectiveness of VR being housed with the Department of Human Services and whether an employment program belongs in a social service agency. Meets with VR administration and DHS leadership to discuss pros and cons of placement. Monitors confidentiality issues and whether integration allows it.
- Support the National Coalition of SRCs (NCSRC). The council strongly supports the NCSRC. It provides the opportunity to share in a strong national advocacy voice and benefit from sharing best practices. The SRC will continue to advocate for chair and staff representation at national conferences and trainings.
- Support the RSA 107 monitoring reviews. The Rehab Act requires the RSA commissioner to conduct annual reviews and periodic onsite monitoring of programs authorized under Title 1 of the Act, to determine whether a state VR agency is complying substantially with the provisions of its state plan under Section 101 of the Act and with the evaluation standards and performance indicators established under Section 106.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Chair: Sherry Stock.

Members: Ryan Green (VR: Stephaine Taylor, Travis Wall — staffing depends on subject matter).

In 2013, members of the Legislative Committee met with legislators and provided public testimony regarding the Vocational Rehabilitation program, and participated in Disability Awareness Day at the state capitol.

The purpose of this committee is to educate, inform and influence the state and federal legislative agenda as it relates to the public vocational rehabilitation program and disability employment policies.

Committee responsibilities:

- Visit Oregon legislators and congressional delegation. Meet with state and federal legislators to advocate for the public VR program. Respond to state and federal legislation. Draft response to legislation that affects the public vocational rehabilitation program.
- Review and provide input on public policy (state, federal) as it affects employment of people with disabilities.
- Draft SRC position papers related to public policy.
- Help VR develop policy packages. (Work with Policy Committee when needed.)
- Provide training for VR consumers to testify before the Oregon Legislature. Meet with consumers who have signed up to testify; encourage them and share tips on testifying before Ways and Means Committee. SRC provides travel reimbursement for those needing assistance.
- Advocate for improved work incentives and reduced disincentives for employers who hire persons with disabilities.
- Create template [guidelines] for legislative response.
- Advocate for the state to be a model employer in hiring persons with disabilities (Employer Awards Program with the Business Committee).

The State Rehabilitation Council provides a unique opportunity for me as a consumer and professional to lend my voice for consumers with hearing loss and to play a part in ensuring quality rehabilitation delivery services for Oregonians with disabilities. We're all in this together!

~ Mark Foster

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chair: Jeri Cohen.

Members: Patti Tom-Martin (Rhoda Hunter).

The Governor appointed the following new members in 2013: Jeanne Barter (past consumer), Jeri Cohen (past consumer), Heidi Dirkse-Graw (business), Roberta Dunn (Parent Training and Information Center), Ryan Green (consumer), Clayton Rees (advocate), Sally Simich (Department of Education) and Norm Underwood (business). The Workforce Investment Board position remains vacant. The Membership Committee continues to work on recruitment to ensure the federally mandated membership requirements are met. Four SRC members were recognized at the November quarterly meeting for their terms of service and contributions to the council: Liz Fox, Jesse Kappel, Linda Keller and Patti Tom-Martin.

The Membership Committee recruits, screens and recommends new applicants to fill vacancies on the council.

Committee responsibilities:

- Recruit, train and mentor members. Monitor council membership to ensure all positions mandated in the Rehab Act are filled. Recruit new members, secure reappointment of existing members where eligible, assist in orientation of new members and identify SRC members' training needs.

Anne Amie Vineyard

POLICY COMMITTEE

Chair: Renata Beck.

Members: David Abramowitz, Heidi Dirkse-Graw, Roberta Dunn, Ted Wenk (VR: Travis Wall, Robin Brandt).

This committee works closely with VR to develop and/or revise policies that affect the operation of the agency, the delivery of services and/or the quality of services to the consumer.

Committee responsibilities:

- Work with VR to review Oregon Revised Statues (ORS). Review Oregon Revised Statues relating to VR to bring the language into compliance with the Rehabilitation Act.
- Review and comment on VR policy issues. Examples include personnel, client travel, client vendors, Pell Grant, vehicle modification, vehicle insurance, qualified personnel, closure as other than rehabilitated, written hearing notices, analysis of application process and certification of rehabilitation providers. (Committee has input from the Program Effectiveness and other committees as appropriate.)
- Monitor VR IPE Standard. Policy requires VR write a plan within 180 days of finding the consumer eligible or provide documentation for an extension. Even though the standard for Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) is currently 180 days, VR agreed to partner with the SRC to establish an incremental timeline to achieve an internal agency standard of 90 days as an indicator of effective practice.
- Provide input on proposed changes to administrative rules.
- Advocate for confidentiality. Certified Rehabilitation Counselors must practice confidentiality or risk losing their national certification. The SRC has a history of advocating for confidential office space for counselors during DHS reorganization.
- Review VR application process. Review with VR its current application process/forms.
- Work with VR on policy option packages (POPs).

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS COMMITTEE

Chair: Ted Wenk.

Members: David Abramowitz, Jeanne Barter, Renata Beck, Mark Foster, Linda Keller, Chungfan Ni, Sandy Reese, Leslie Riggs, Sally Simich (VR: Ron Barcikowski; comprehensive needs assessment: Travis Wall).

This committee partners with VR to ensure that program strategies produce the highest quality results for and with consumers.

Committee responsibilities:

- Conduct comprehensive needs assessment (ad-hoc committee). The Rehab Act mandates that the SRC work in partnership with VR on a statewide needs assessment (every three years) to assess the rehabilitation needs of Oregonians with disabilities. The assessment provides information relevant to improving VR processes and practices, understanding the training needs of staff, and identifying methods for ongoing communication and continuous improvement.
- Review VR case file findings.
- Provide input on proposed financial needs test.
- Participate on selection committee to select new independent hearing officers (IHOs).
- Review the appeals process and independent hearing officers' decisions with VR.
- Make SRC field visits. Meet with each VR office to give field staff the opportunity to share their successes, issues or concerns with the council. Get feedback from VR staff to improve services and outcomes for VR consumers.
- Conduct consumer satisfaction survey (ad-hoc committee). The Rehab Act mandates the SRC perform a consumer satisfaction survey. The SRC is responsible for monitoring VR performance and policies. VR consumers are surveyed about their experiences with VR and the SRC uses this information to develop the state plan with VR. Information is also reported to the Governor and RSA about consumer satisfaction with VR services in Oregon. Efforts need to be consumer-focused and include input from consumers and former consumers.
- Conduct VR staff survey. Get feedback from VR field staff to partner with VR Administration to improve services and outcomes for VR consumers.
- Review Client Assistance Program (CAP). Receive regular updates from the Client Assistance Program and discuss any issues or challenges with VR Administration.
- Foster partnerships with tribal VR (121 programs) and SILC.
- Review secretary of state audits and other internal audits.
- Review VR case file findings.

PROGRAM STRATEGIES AND BUDGET COMMITTEE

Chair: Laurie Brooks.

Members: Jeanne Barter, Clayton Rees, Sherry Stock (VR: Joe Miller, Judy Barker; state plan development: Travis Wall). This committee partners with VR to ensure alignment between program delivery strategies and the resources necessary to implement those strategies.

Committee responsibilities:

- Monitor the VR budget. Get regular updates from VR Administration on status of VR budget and its effect on consumers.
- Develop the state plan (with Executive Committee). The Rehab Act mandates that the SRC work in partnership with VR to develop the state plan and the SRC is responsible for submitting input in Section 4.2(c) of the state plan.
- Monitor cost allocation of both actual funds and policy within the department.

The SRC is a federally mandated advocacy council for people with disabilities. The majority of its members must be individuals with disabilities. The Rehabilitation Act affirms the fundamental truths that disability is a natural part of the human experience and that people with disabilities can find their own way. These simple ideas, included in the 1992 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, are transforming the manner in which vocational rehabilitation services are provided to individuals with disabilities.

Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act portion of the Workforce Investment Act strengthened the role of the SRC. These amendments state that the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program is a partnership between consumers of VR services and the people who plan and deliver VR services. The voice of people with disabilities, their advocates and their families spoke loudly for these changes. The message was clear: There must be increased participation.

The Oregon SRC stands for a philosophy of consumer control, self-help, self-determination, equal access and independence for individuals with disabilities. I am proud to have served on the SRC for several years in partnership with VR and consumers in promoting meaningful employment and independence among Oregonians with disabilities.

~ Linda Keller

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

- Partnered with VR to develop the 2014 State Plan.
- Reviewed the VR budget and received regular updates from VR.
- Worked with VR to develop and revise policies.
- Participated in the NW Regional Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Advisory Committee meetings.
- Participated in bimonthly conference calls with the National Coalition of SRCs and the NCSRC Steering Committee.
- Represented the SRC at the Spring NCSRC Training in Bethesda, Md., April 20–21, 2013.
- Met with members of Oregon's congressional delegation regarding the public vocational rehabilitation program. Gave testimony on behalf of VR.
- Staffed the SRC booth during Disability Awareness Day at the state capitol.
- Represented the SRC at the 2013 Pacific Northwest Brain Injury Conference.
- The following council members attended the VR In-service Conference, Aug. 14–15, 2013: David Abramowitz, Renata Beck, Laurie Brooks, Anne Burns, Mark Foster, Tom Giles, Leslie Riggs, Sally Simich, Sherry Stock and Ted Wenk.
- Represented the SRC at the 2013 Oregon Disability MegaConference.
- Participated on the interview panel for VR field service manager.
- Represented the SRC on the Oregon Disabilities Council.
- Partnered with the State Independent Living Council, Client Assistance Program, Workforce Investment Board, Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Oregon Disabilities Commission.
- Served as a member of the Department of Human Services Consumer Satisfaction Stakeholder Group.
- Partnered with VR and the Oregon Commission for the Blind in statewide employer trainings.
- Held quarterly meetings in Portland, Keizer and Roseburg.

  February meeting, in Keizer, included these topics: VR director's report, Developmental Disabilities update, VR/AMH Early Assessment Screening Pilot Project, job developer status report, comprehensive needs assessment, state plan, public input and local office update.

  May meeting, in Portland, included these topics: return on investment, Developmental Disabilities update, VR director's report, state plan, public input and local office update.

  August meeting, in Roseburg, included these topics: VR director's report, VR budget, Project ACCESS, state plan, SRC committee structure, Oregon Workforce, needs assessment, public input and local office update.

  November meeting, in Portland, included these topics: VR director's report, Developmental Disabilities update, needs assessment final report, committee reports, public input and local office update.

2013 EMPLOYER RECOGNITION AWARDS

KLAMATH BASIN EQUIPMENT

Klamath Basin Equipment was recognized as an outstanding employer at the 2013 VR In-service Conference.

Archie Linman is the president/CEO of Klamath Basin Equipment, a family-operated business since 1982. Linman hired a young man, who had been partially paralyzed in a car accident, as a coffee kiosk supervisor in the Klamath Falls retail facility. He offered a second position as a parts coordinator to another VR client. Linman has worked closely with the VR office to modify the building to maximize his newest employees' potential.

Linman is the past-president of the Klamath/Lake Regional Workforce Investment Board where he tirelessly advocated for the fullest inclusion of the disabled workforce population. He has served as a model employer who shared with other employers the benefits of a diverse workforce.

PARTNERSHIP REPORTS

CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) has had a challenging year. In 2012, the number of hearing requests nearly doubled from prior years while clients continued to feel the effects of a slow job market. CAP lost one long-time staff advocate in Rosemary DiSiervi due to budget constraints at Disability Rights of Oregon (DRO). We wish Rosemary success in her other endeavors. CAP is also losing veteran staff attorney representative Neisha Saxena. Neisha is returning to graduate school to pursue her Ph.D. in urban studies. We also wish Neisha success.

Fortunately, as 2013 has rolled along, CAP and DRO have been able to engage VR clients earlier in the dispute resolution process and come up with effective solutions. As a result, the number of hearing requests has been significantly reduced, while the number of individuals contacting CAP for advice and assistance has increased. The job market has seemed to improve and clients generally seem more optimistic about their opportunities. CAP also looks forward to finding a new staff advocate to fill the void left by Rosemary and Neisha.

CAP has continued to partner on policy matters with Vocational Rehabilitation. CAP has participated with the state plan review and consumer needs assessment teams. CAP has had several other discussions and meetings with VR administration on policy issues affecting the implementation of VR services in Oregon. Current and former CAP staff appreciate VR's open and considerate reception of input about how best to deliver VR services.

~ Ted Wenk

OREGON PARENT TRAINING AND INFORMATION (FAMILY AND COMMUNITY TOGETHER)

It's a new day in Oregon for families raising children who have a disability. In October 2012, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) awarded Family and Community Together (FACT) the contract to serve as Oregon's Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center. With regional, state and federal funding, FACT empowers Oregon families raising a child from birth through 26 years of age who experiences a disability. Helping families secure a free appropriate public education that prepares their children for life after school is at the heart of FACT's work. Trainings urge families

to remember that the special education children receive today ultimately prepares them for continued education, employment and increased independence after school.

FACT is excited to bring new energy to the State Rehabilitation Council at a time when improving transition to adulthood and increasing employment outcomes is the focal point of numerous SRC partners. FACT is working collaboratively with many partners, ensuring that the perspective and experience of families is present at the policy and decision-making tables. In addition to its position on the SRC, FACT provides parent representation to the following entities:

- The Governor's Employment First Policy group (developed out of the Governor's Executive Order in which the PTI is identified as a partner in implementation);
- Oregon Department of Education Office of Student Learning and Partnerships Transition Advisory Council;
- Oregon's Employment First Initiative through the DHS Developmental Disabilities program;
- Think College! Oregon stakeholder group that pursues post-secondary opportunities for students experiencing an intellectual or developmental disability.

FACT provides parent training opportunities across the state; nearly 400 families participated in trainings in 2012. Another opportunity to connect with collaborative partners, community members and families is the annual Oregon Disability MegaConference. FACT, a founding member of the planning team, believes the conference demonstrates the commitment of numerous stakeholders (including Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Education, FACT, The Arc Oregon, Oregon Council of Developmental Disabilities, and many others) to accomplish great things together. At the end of the 2012 MegaConference, it was announced that the theme of 2013 would be transitions, with an emphasis on transition to adulthood. Timely, to say the least.

~ Roberta Dunn, Executive Director, FACT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) collaborate with local school districts and VR field offices to coordinate transitions from free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities. Outreach to these students occurs as early as possible during the transition planning process and includes, at minimum, a description of the VR program and purpose, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be available to eligible individuals.

The ODE and VR also work together to plan, develop and implement systems change through grants, legislative initiatives and other activities. Where appropriate, the partnerships are expanded to include the Oregon Commission for the Blind, Centers for Independent Living, Department of Human Services Office of Developmental Disability Services, Oregon Health Authority Division of Addictions and Mental Health, tribal vocational rehabilitation services, parent advocacy organizations, universities and community colleges, and other community-based organizations.

STATE TRANSITION RESOURCES

ODE's Office of Student Learning and Partnerships supports, monitors and develops strategies and programs that provide services to diverse student populations. This work incorporates multiple teaching and learning practices and is sensitive to socio-economic, social emotional, linguistic, cultural, ethnic and other differences. Effective transition planning allows learners to demonstrate performance skills with the goal of becoming contributing members of the adult community.

Transition services are fundamental and address the unique needs of each student. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) requires that planning for students' transition from school begin no later than the first Individualized Education Program (IEP) when the student is 16, and be updated annually thereafter. Successful transition planning allows students with disabilities to pursue future endeavors in education, employment and independent living. For more information on secondary transition for students with disabilities, go to www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?is=266.

The Transition Community Network (TCN) website houses information for students, administrators, parents, teachers and employers as well as provides up-to-date information for indicators 1, 2, 13 and 14. The website showcases a cooperative effort between Western Oregon University Teaching Research Institute and the Oregon Department of Education Office of Student Learning and Partnerships. A new TCN tool will go live this fall. To access this information, please visit http://tcntransition.org/.

SPECIAL EDUCATION POST-SCHOOL OUTCOMES

Oregon's application to join the National Post-School Outcomes (NPSO) project was approved and work began Jan. 1, 2013. This is a federally funded, five-year project that began in 2010. The NPSO's mission is to help state education agencies establish practical and rigorous data collection systems to measure and profile the post-school experiences of youth with disabilities. We will focus on maintaining reliable, online data collection and reporting systems for this purpose. These young adults may be employed or enrolled in school. In addition, support will also focus on building quality transition programs and relationships with adult agencies through evidence-based practices.

The State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Review (SPP/APR) requires all states to report the percentage of youth enrolled in higher education or other post-secondary school, or who are competitively employed or working in other employment within one year of leaving high school. School districts collect information from exiting students, interview the students to determine what they want to do in the next 12 months, and collect contact information on family and friends that will help locate the students for the required interview the following year.

Each school district will collect follow-up, post-school outcome data between June and September each year. Students are selected to participate in follow-up interviews based on the Special Education Exit Collection from the prior year. The data collection provides ODE with the distribution of exited students by school/program, race/ethnicity, disability, gender and method of exit. The number of district students to be interviewed is based on a combination of district and school/program size. All districts are required to complete the follow-up interviews. For more information, go to www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2078.

~ Sally Simich

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR

The composition of the State Rehabilitation Council is defined in the Rehab Act Title 1 Section 105. It states that at least one qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor, with knowledge of and experience with vocational rehabilitation programs, shall serve as an ex-officio, nonvoting member of the council.

Governor John Kitzhaber appointed me to serve in this role for my second term between Dec. 1, 2012, and Nov. 30, 2015. As a liaison between field staff and the council, I am able to provide a counselor's perspective on topics such as the implementation of policies, procedures and practices. I have had the privilege to serve on the Program Effectiveness Committee and to chair the Policy Committee. I have enjoyed the experience and am grateful to the members of the council for their dedication and commitment to serve Oregonians with disabilities.

~ Renata M Beck, MS, CRC

STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC), VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION, AND THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL (SRC)

The relationship between these three entities remains very positive and supportive. Under the Rehabilitation Act, Title I program, Oregon's Vocational Rehabilitation program (VR) funds the State Independent Living Council (SILC) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) as innovation and expansion activities. A written agreement between VR and the SILC establishes the nature of this support, which includes both funding for the SILC's Resource Plan and in-kind support such as shared office space and various business services.

The VR program also functions as the Designated State Unit for the Title VII Independent Living program. VR receives, disburses and accounts for these program funds as directed by the State Plan for Independent Living. The VR director serves as a co-signatory on the state plan along with the SILC chairperson and Oregon Commission for the Blind executive erector. The state plan guides program funding, including grants to Oregon's network of Centers for Independent Living (CILs), which deliver Oregon's Independent Living program services to consumers. These grants are administered by Independent Living program staff under the authority of the VR directors and are funded through the Title VII program.

The SILC, as a partner to VR's Title VII program, is responsible for monitoring implementation of the State Plan for Independent Living and evaluating its effectiveness. SILC also works with other programs and councils serving people with disabilities (including the SRC) to coordinate services that support the independence of people with disabilities, which reduces service duplication and fills service gaps. The Rehabilitation Act specifically emphasizes that the SILC work with the State Rehabilitation Council in this endeavor.

To carry out these duties, the SILC maintains a seat on the SRC. This allows the SILC to remain informed about VR program service policies and facilitates the flow of information about the SILC's work to both councils. When needed, the SILC works with the SRC to address policies that may be needed to improve coordination of independent living and vocational rehabilitation services into a seamless partnership.

~ Sherry Stock

121 PROGRAM

Once again, I can gladly report that being a member of the SRC has been informative, challenging and fun. In my second year as an SRC member, I became more involved. During my first year I felt I had a lot to learn and wanted to build my knowledge in the way the council performs its duties. Having done so, I decided to take on a new challenge. I assisted in the state plan review. This consisted of attending meetings and reviewing and revising the draft of the 2014 VR State Plan. I met some new people and attained a better understanding of how the state plan is written and what its components were supposed to do. This will help me immensely when I have to reapply for funding next year.

As the 121 representative, I felt I had a duty to my colleagues in Indian Country. Before every SRC meeting I correspond with the other four Oregon tribal VR directors and ask them if they have anything they want represented at the meeting. Two of my colleagues have gone beyond this and attended a meeting to experience it for themselves. This has led to much discussion.

One of the aspects of providing vocational rehabilitation on or near an Indian reservation is the challenge of consumers trusting a government agency. It might come as a surprise to some, but Native Americans have not always seen the U.S. government as an ally. There is generational trauma being played out and the reverberations are still being felt. There is another layer to this in regards to the TVR directors and caseworkers. I know from conversations with my colleagues that they want to work with state VR. However, they feel they are not always seen as equals and that the state counselors are either unaware of the memoranda of understanding that exist between us, or they are not being acknowledged. Neither of these situations is preferable.

I write this to raise awareness of a situation through which we can all learn. I am certain that both state VR and tribal VR counselors share the same goal, which is for employment opportunities for people living with a disability. Working together can only enhance our outcomes.

I hope this information is taken in the spirit in which it is given, which is openness. Personally speaking, my program has had a very good relationship with the counselors who work in the offices represented in the counties we serve. I would like to see that relationship continue and become even more effective than it has been in the past.

~ Leslie Riggs, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

NATIONAL COALITION OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCILS

The National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) continues to be a strong national advocate for the public vocational rehabilitation program. All SRCs across the nation can participate in trainings and share best practices.

The Oregon SRC continues to strongly support the national organization by participating on the NCSRC Steering Committee. Steering committee members develop resource materials for trainings held twice each year; they are also available to mentor other SRCs.

We have found that NCSRC membership has strengthened our council's effectiveness. We encourage all SRCs to participate and benefit from NCSRC membership.

www.ncsrc.net

NCSRC MISSION

On behalf of people with disabilities, our national membership coalition advocates for and works in partnership with the national public vocational rehabilitation system's continual quest for excellence.

NCSRC VISION

NCSRC will be the premiere national organization of the consumer voice to enhance the employment opportunities of persons with disabilities through the public vocational rehabilitation system.

NCSRC CORE VALUES

Integrity — We are honest and straightforward in all that we do. We treat everyone with dignity and respect. We act responsibly with resources entrusted to us. We are accountable and act in accordance with these values.

Commitment — We support the full implementation and enforcement of disability non-discrimination laws, particularly the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Excellence — We trust that customers of public vocational rehabilitation will be empowered to make choices that lead to ultimate independence.

Advocacy — We will work to educate and inform the public and government policy makers regarding issues affecting people with disabilities.

Diversity — We will uphold a broad definition of diversity that honors and appreciates disability alongside race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion as an integral part of the human experience.

Leadership — We will foster leadership among people with disabilities that upholds excellence, quality and inclusive opportunities.

Partnership — We will promote a positive collaboration with state and non-governmental agencies to enhance meaningful and sustainable employment for people with disabilities.

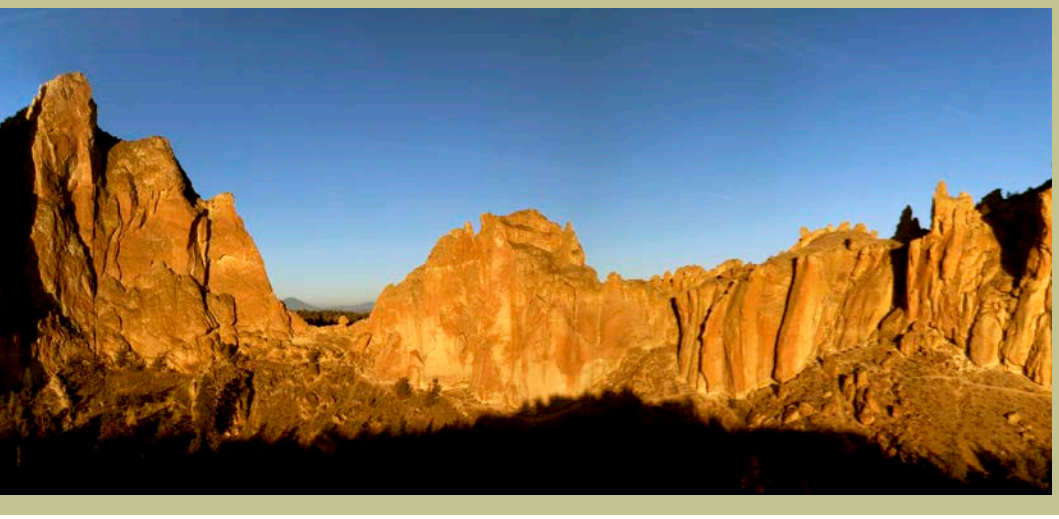
Teamwork — We are committed to a partnership based on a spirit of trust and cooperation with Vocational Rehabilitation administrators and staff so that collaborative efforts will benefit from the NCSRC customer voice.

Culture — We support a public vocational rehabilitation service system that is structured in a manner that reflects the social, political, historic and economic experience of disability.

Communication — We value effective communication through appropriate formats.

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION



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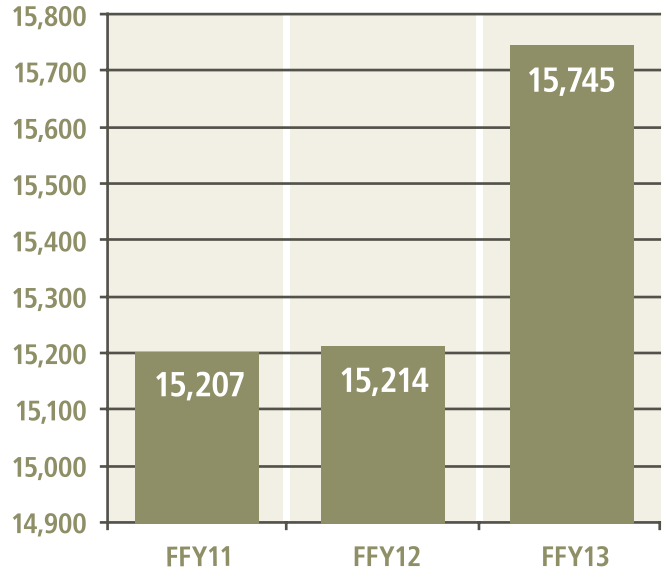
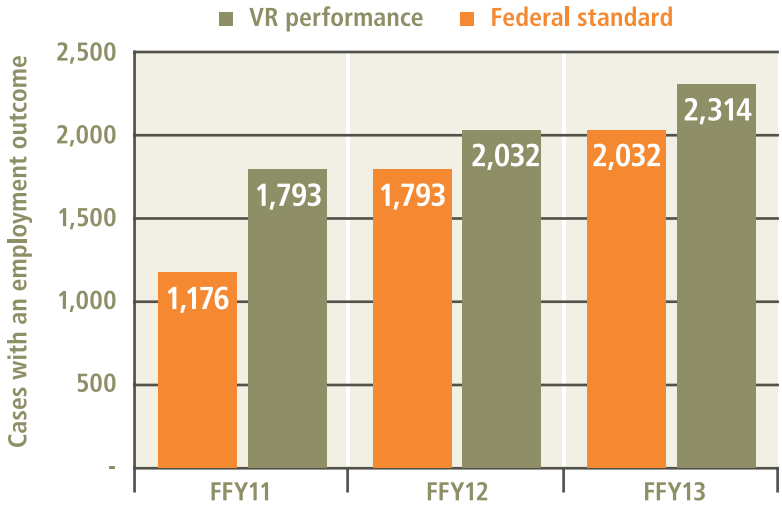
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2013 PERFORMANCE

Total number served, by federal fiscal year



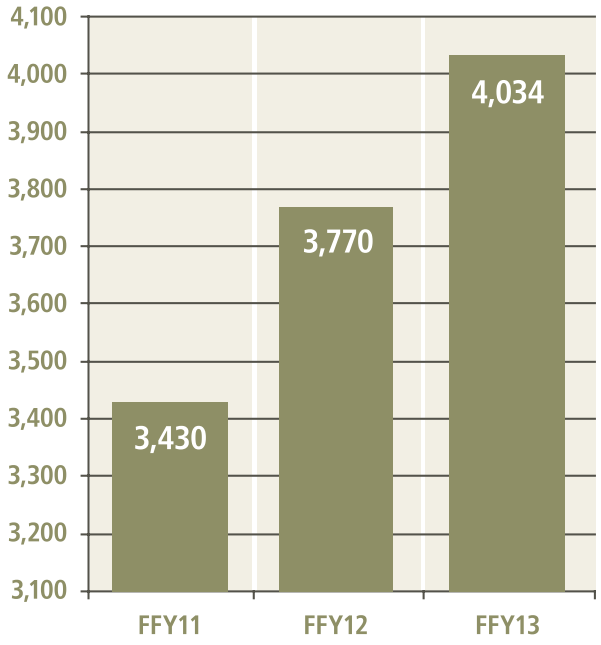
Federal standard: cases with an employment outcome



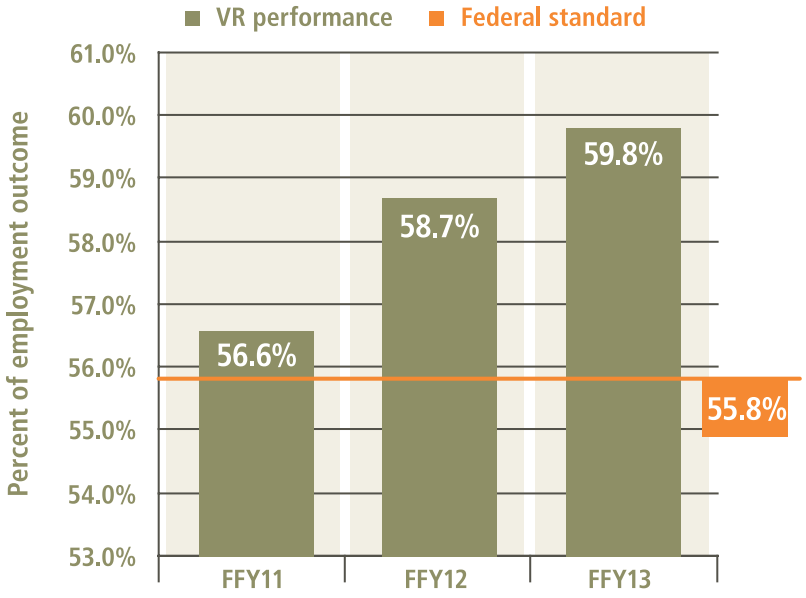
Federal standards:

One of the expectations VR must meet every year is a series of outcome measures. The federal Department of Education sets these standards. Some change yearly based on past performance and some stay the same every year.

Number entering plan, by federal fiscal year



Federal standard: percent with employment outcome

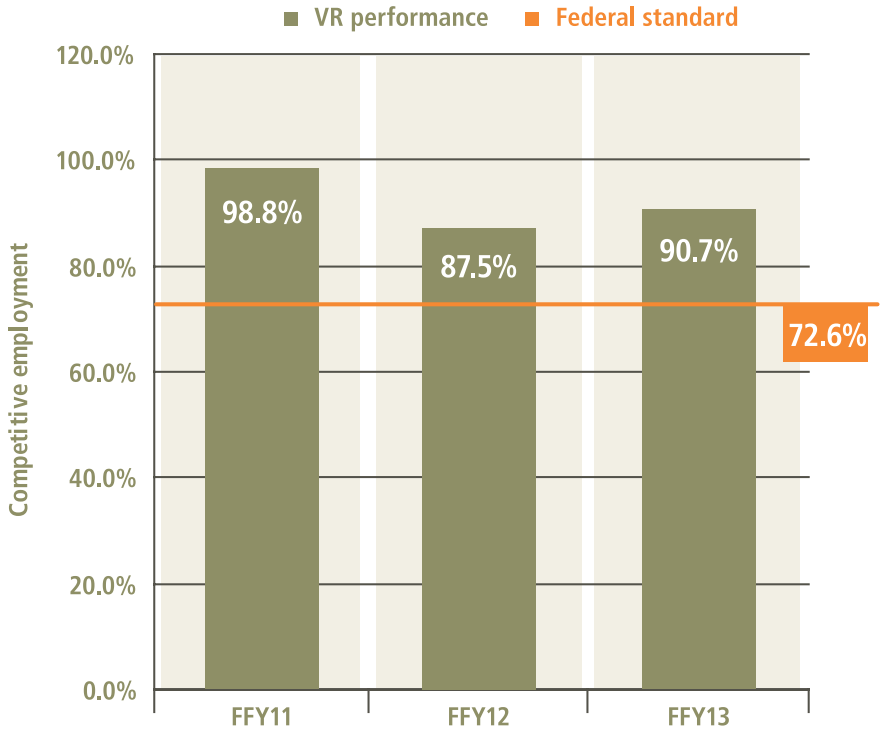


FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2013 PERFORMANCE *(continued)*

Competitive employment:

The percentage of people who exit the VR program and are employed in integrated settings making minimum wage or better compared to the total number in the VR program who left the program for any type of employment after receiving services.

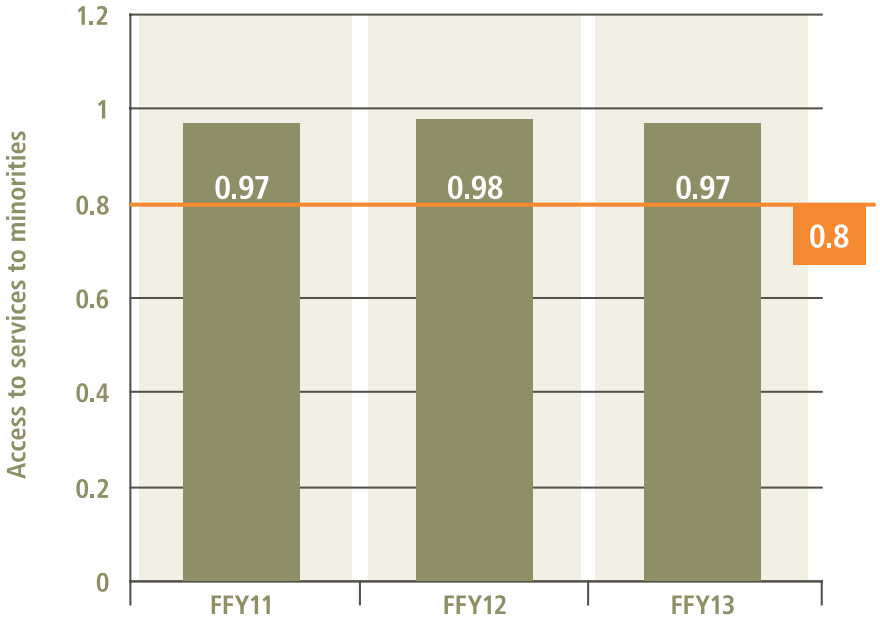
Federal standard: percent with competitive employment



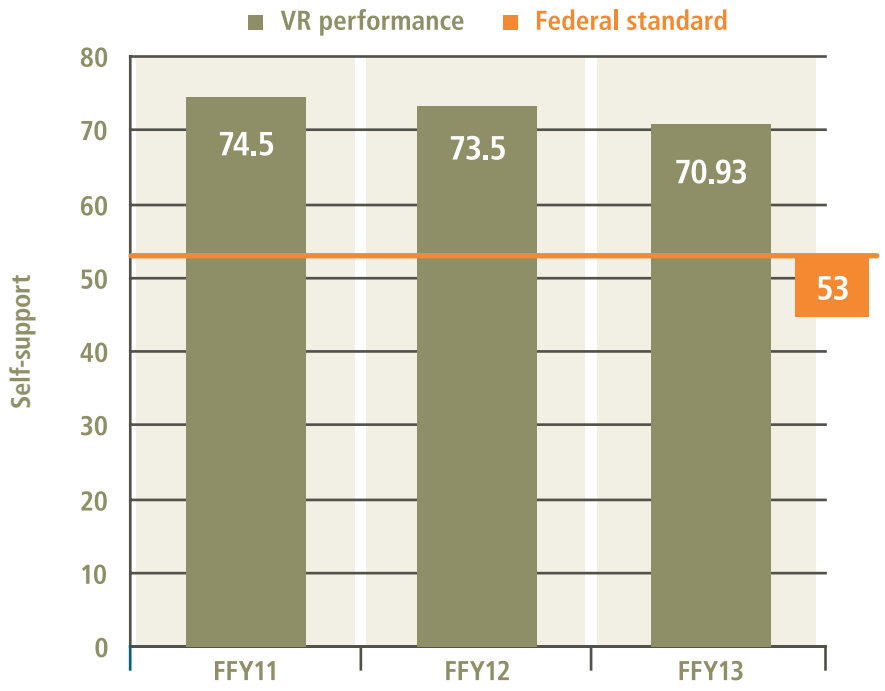
Performance minority background service rate:

The percent of individuals with a minority background compared to individuals without a minority background who exited the VR program.

Federal standard: access to services for minorities



Federal standard: self-support

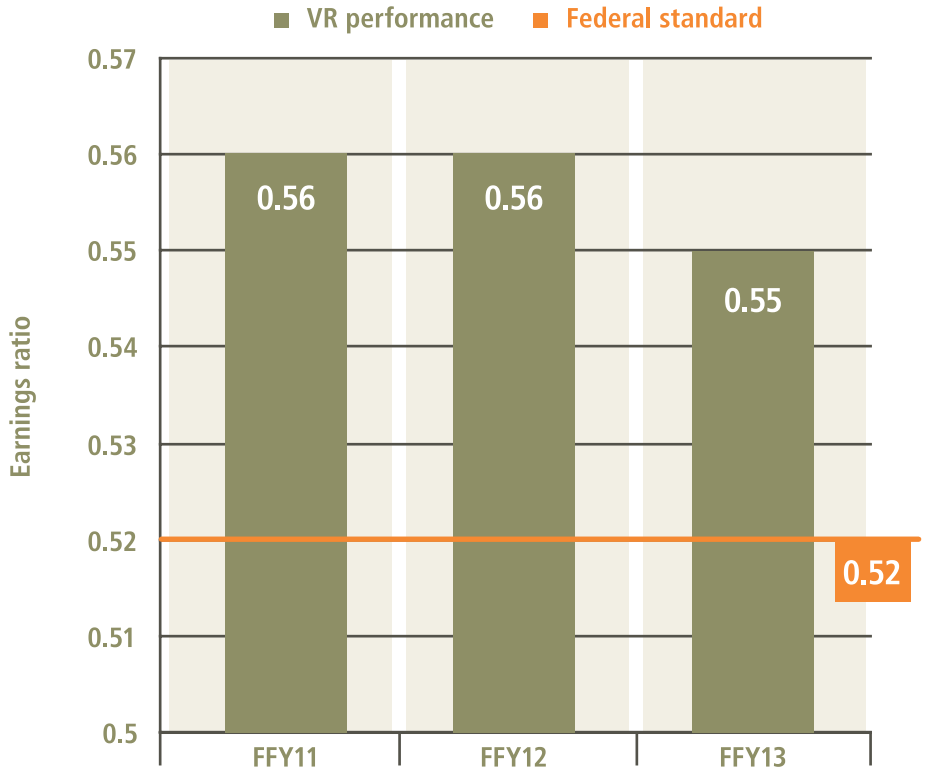


Performance — self-support:

The change in the percentage of individuals who

- On entering the VR program reported their personal income as the largest single source of support; and
- On exiting the VR program, reported their personal income as the largest single source of support.

Federal standard: earnings ratio

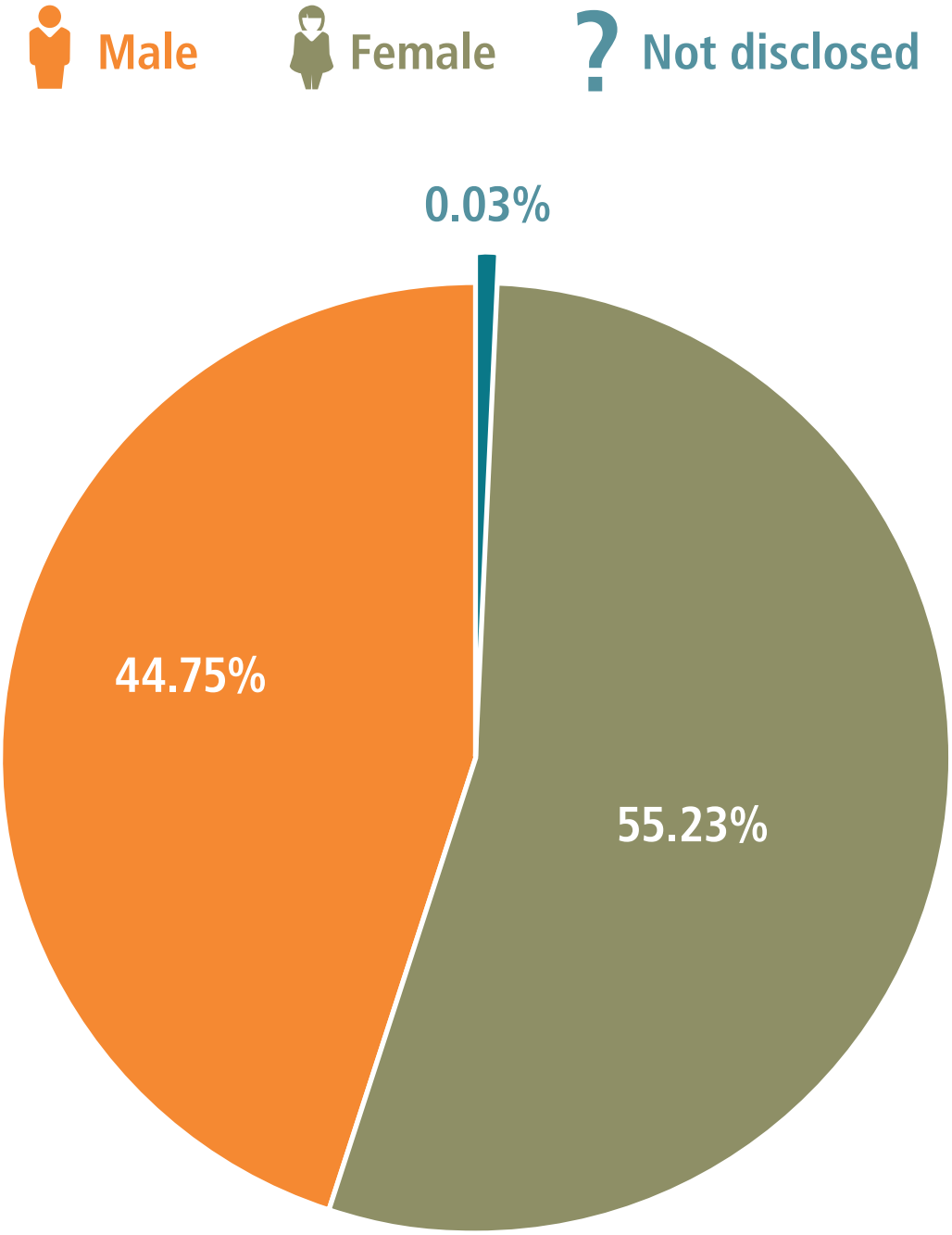


Performance earnings ratio

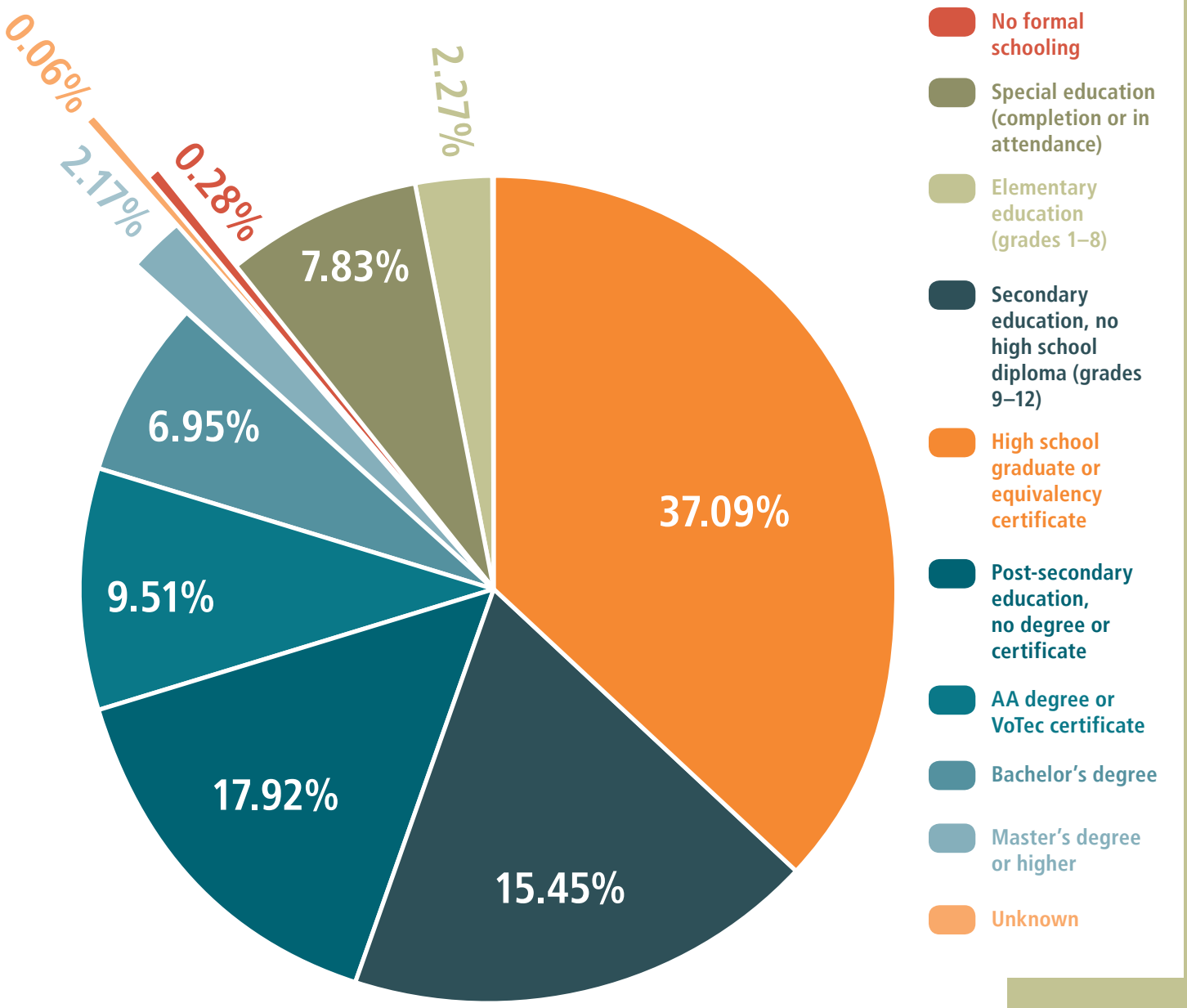
The percent of average hourly earnings of all individuals in competitive employment compared to average hourly earnings of all employed individuals in the state.

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Percent of clients served, by gender — FFY13

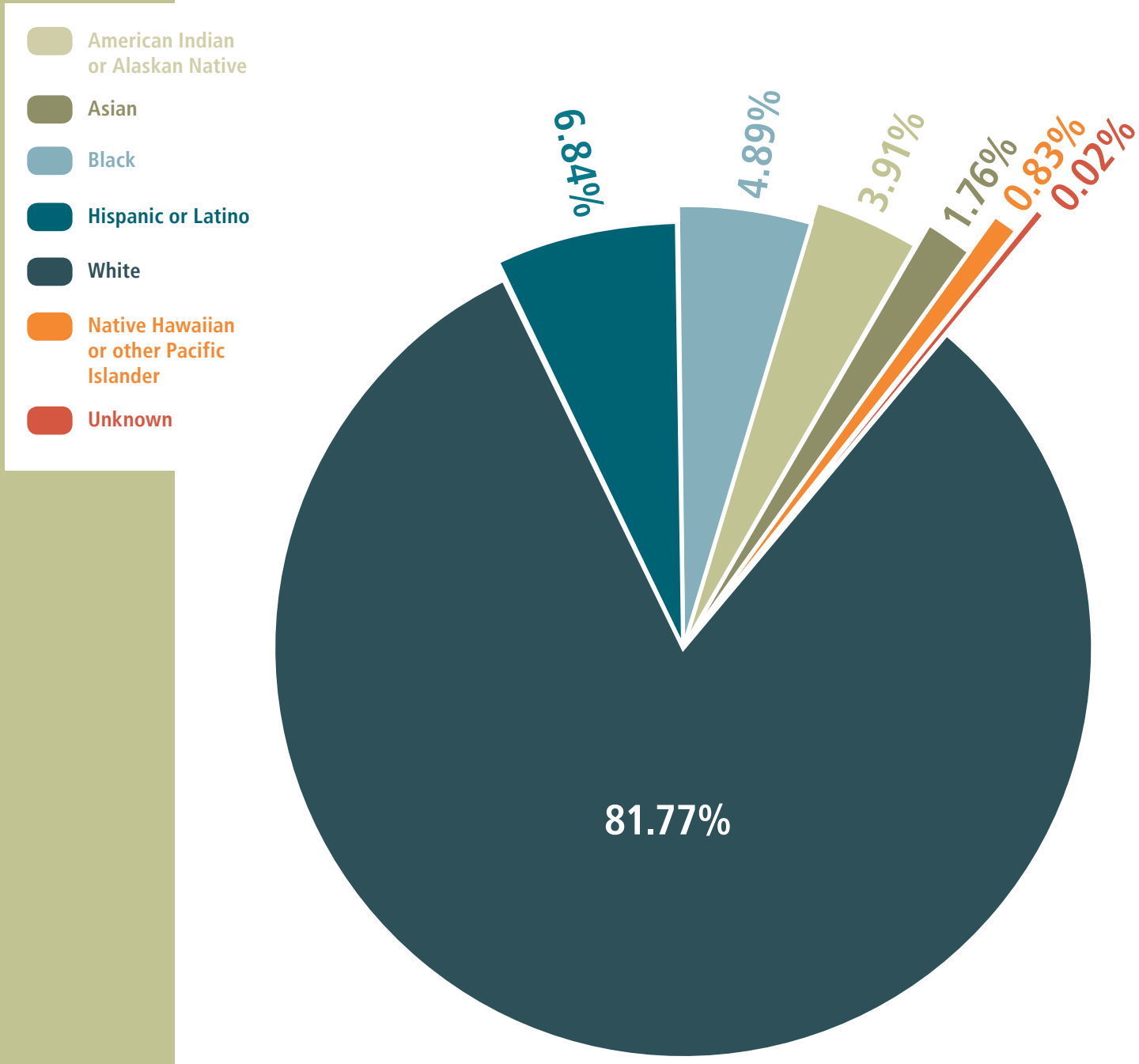


Percent of clients served, by educational status at application — FFY13

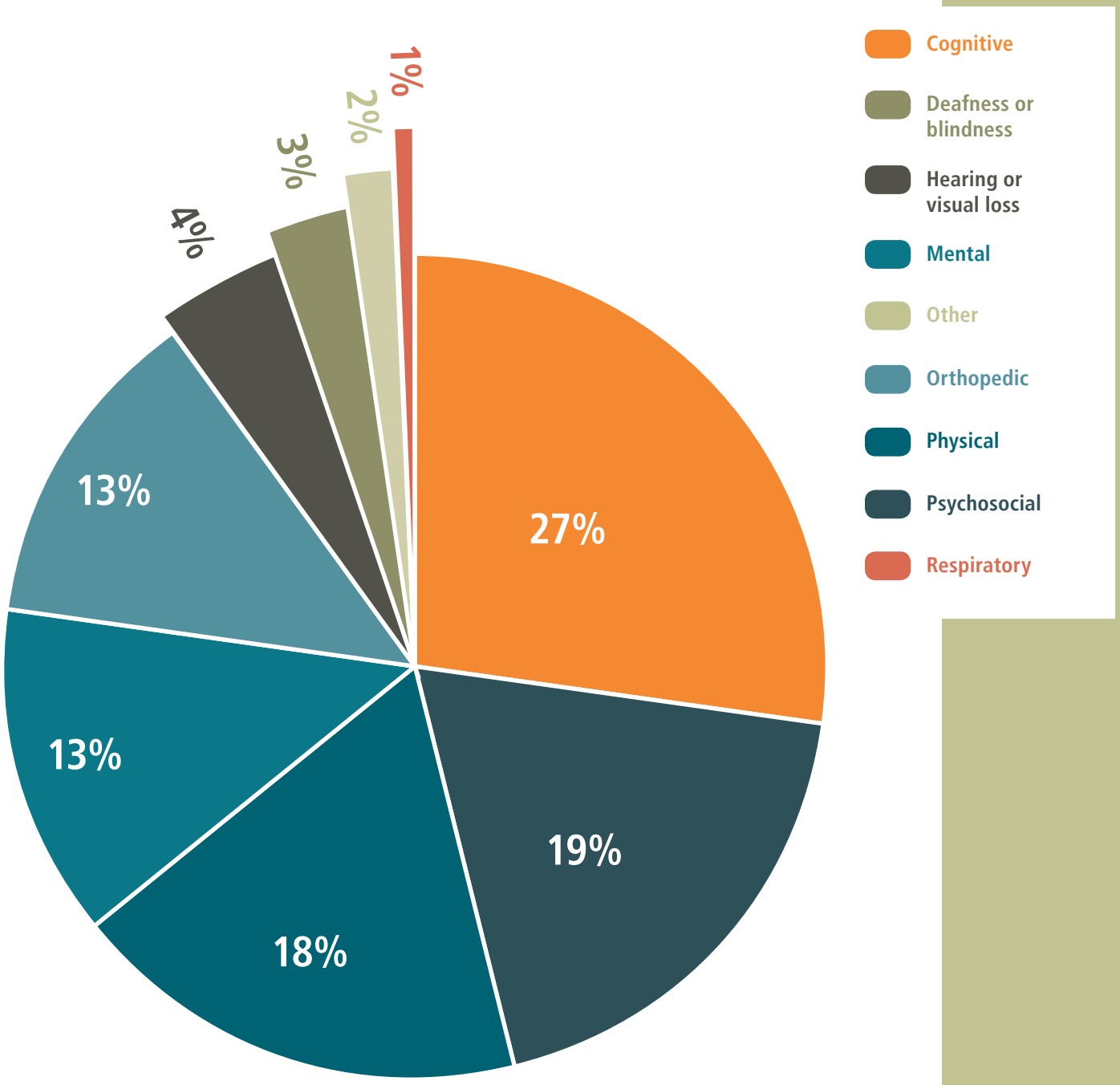


CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS *(continued)*

Percent of clients served, by ethnicity/race — FFY13

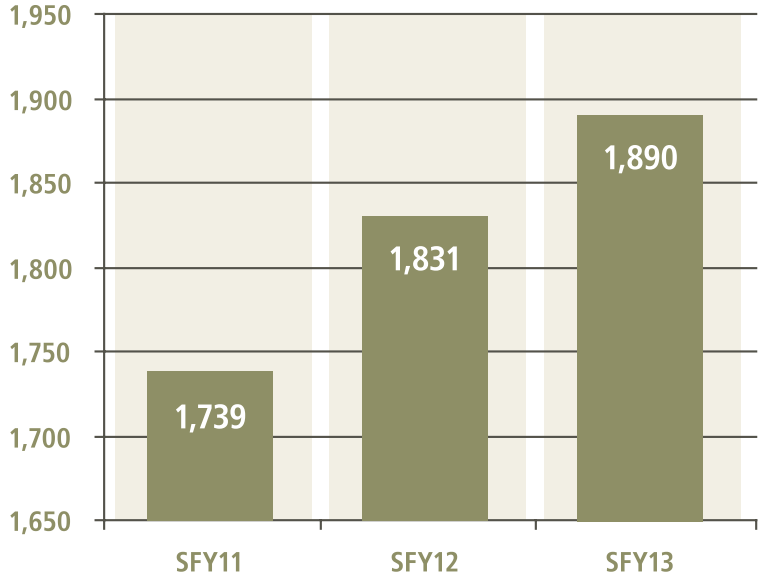


Percent of clients served, by primary disability — FFY13

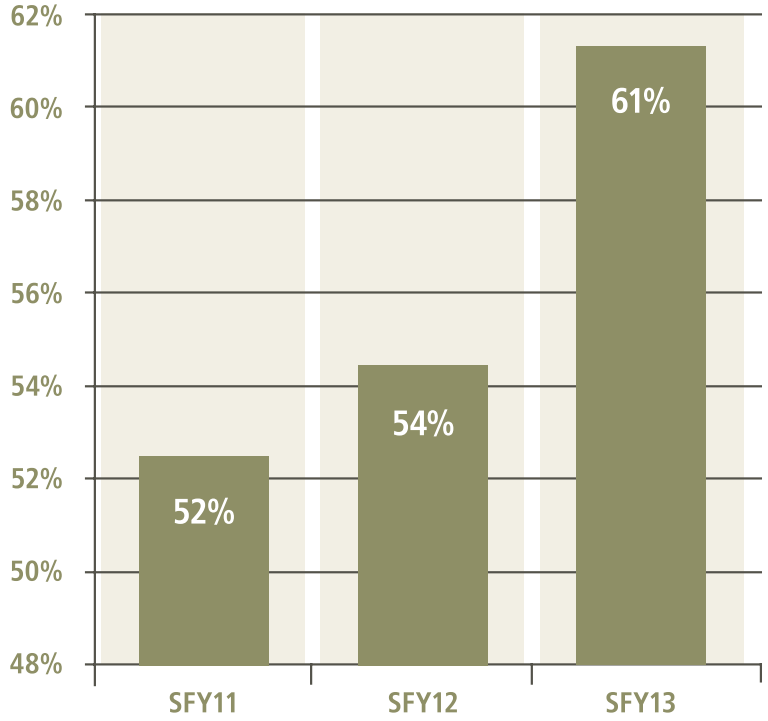


SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

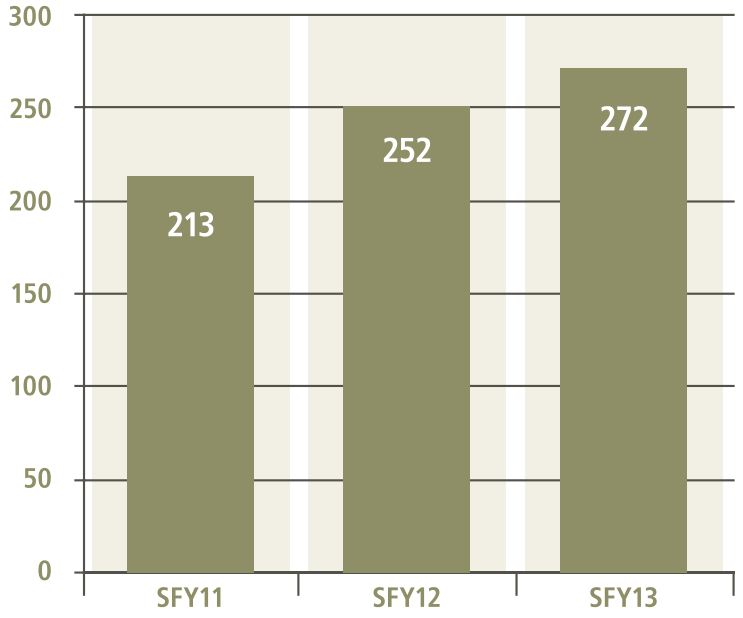
Clients with intellectual disabilities/ developmental disabilities (ID/DD) served, by state fiscal year



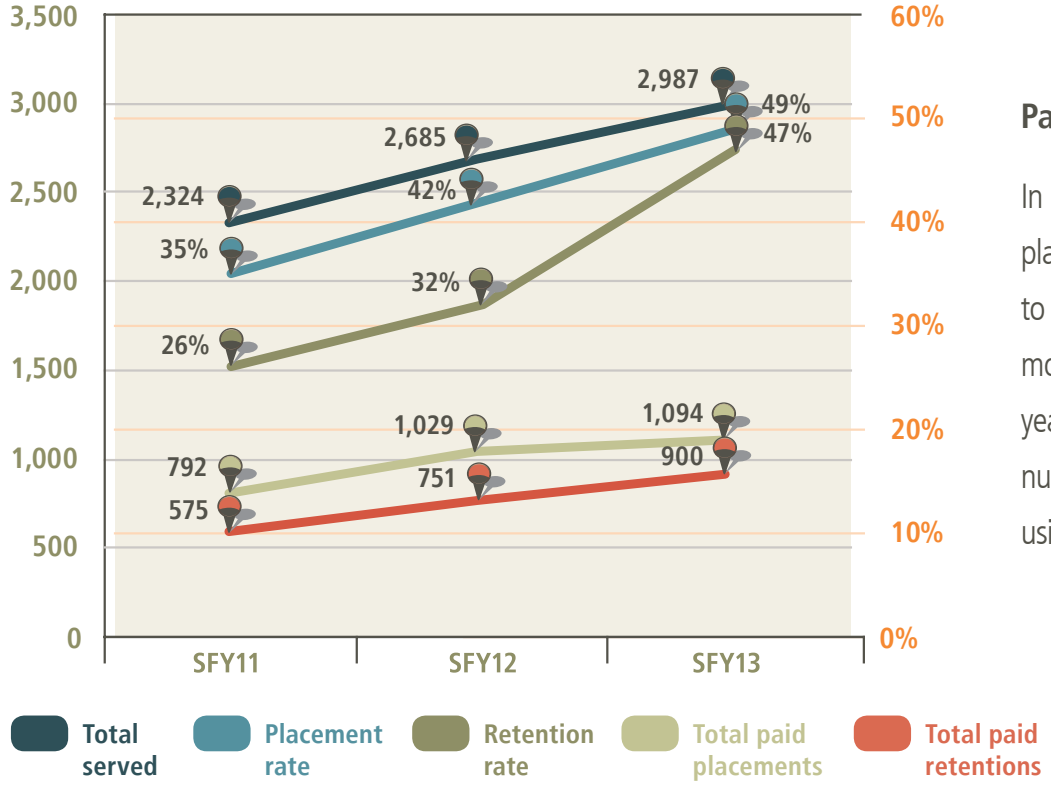
Percent of clients with ID/DD rehabilitated, by state fiscal year



Number of clients with ID/DD rehabilitated, by state fiscal year



Job placement: pay for performance



Pay for performance

In 2010 VR updated its job placement payment structure to a pay-for-performance model. Over the last three years VR has seen outcome numbers steadily increase using this system.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

In 2012, Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the State Rehabilitation Council set the following goals for 2013. They guide VR's service delivery to individuals with disabilities:

GOAL I: Increase the number and quality of employment outcomes for all VR clients. This is measured by wages, availability of benefits, number of hours worked and client satisfaction.

GOAL II: Increase the number of youth who seek VR services and the number and quality of employment outcomes for this population.

GOAL III: Engage employers to increase the number and quality of employment outcomes for persons with disabilities. This includes those with the most significant disabilities.

GOAL IV: Continually improve the program's management while complying with appropriate laws, rules and policy.

GOAL V: Ensure a highly trained workforce at every level of the organization.

Rowena Crest

TRANSITION ACTIVITIES

YOUTH TRANSITION PROGRAM

YTP is a comprehensive transition program for youth with disabilities. Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation, Oregon Department of Education, the University of Oregon and local school districts across the state jointly implement YTP.

YTP has two objectives. The first is to improve post-school transition outcomes for youth with disabilities. This is done by preparing them for competitive community employment or career-related post-secondary education or training. School transition specialists and VR vocational rehabilitation counselors provide YTP services at the local level. This includes career exploration, transition planning, job placement and follow-up services to help youth obtain and maintain successful post-school outcomes.

The second objective is to increase Oregon's transition services and supports' overall capacity. This includes aiding systems change in schools and other agencies that serve students with disabilities in transition from school to work. A state-level YTP management team trains and gives technical assistance to school transition specialists and other school and VR counseling staff to meet this objective.

Over the course of 2013, YTP served 1,371 students with disabilities in 135 urban and rural high schools. Of these students:

- 632 developed individualized plans for employment.
- 81 percent of those exiting school were either employed and/or enrolled in a post-secondary school.
- 57 percent of those who exited the program were employed upon exit. They were working an average of 26 hours per week at an average wage of $9 an hour.
- 59 percent were employed 12 months after completing YTP. They were working an average of 28 hours per week at an average wage of $9 an hour.

29 percent were in post-secondary training or education. They were enrolled an average of 18 hours per week 12 months after leaving YTP.

YTP PARTNERSHIP RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

In early 2013, The European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) surveyed worldwide programs that help people with disabilities find and maintain employment. EASPD awarded 10 programs its Employment for All Award for international "best practices." Oregon's Youth Transition Program was one of these programs. YTP was the only transition program chosen that prepares students for competitive employment or career-related post-secondary education. The award and the best practices help EASPD promote implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The convention recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others. This includes earning a living by freely choosing work and accepting it in an open, inclusive and accessible labor market.

PROJECT ACCESS

In 2007, five Lane County high schools, the University of Oregon and Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation began to implement Project ACCESS. This U.S. Department of Education model demonstration project's goal is to improve transition outcomes for youth with disabilities. The model involves placing vocational counselors in three high schools and two alternative schools. The counselors start working with ninth- and 10th-graders to plan their transition from school.

The model is built on and tests two propositions. First, research results show that students with disabilities benefit from starting transition activities earlier than usual. Second, vocational counselors in schools and classrooms strengthen partnerships between school special education staff and counselors. This enhances the counselors' contact with the students and likely leads to better transition results for students.

Outcome information on Project ACCESS to date supports this model's use. The final report on ACCESS in the Lane County high schools will be done by the end of 2013 and available early 2014.

Oregon VR, the University of Oregon, the Oregon Department of Education and five local school districts seek to introduce Project ACCESS's curriculum and practices over this and the next academic year.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Education recently extended VR's Project ACCESS grant. VR plans to use this extension to expand Project ACCESS to Oregon's nine confederated Native American tribes' youth with disabilities. Project ACCESS staff plan to partner with tribal staff and University of Oregon College of Education, Oregon Department of Education and Oregon Department of Human Services liaisons.

OTHER YOUTH TRANSITION ACTIVITIES

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT POLICY GRANT

Oregon VR continues to partner with the Office of Developmental Disability Services, the Department of Education and Oregon's workforce system to enact the state's Employment First Policy.

PROJECT EMPLOY

VR continues to contract with the Arc of Oregon to implement Project Employ. This program supports youth in transition and their families. Its goal is for the youth to access and use resources that increase their job prospects.

OREGON SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

VR continues its transition partnership with Oregon School for the Deaf. In 2013, VR began to engage younger students in job club and individual planning activities. VR also launched a successful summer work experience program.

EARLY ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT ALLIANCE (EASA)

Oregon VR continues its partnership with the EASA program to identify and support young people starting to experience psychosis. The goal is to minimize the long-term effects of such episodes. EASA provides participating youth with needed skills training, case management and treatment. EASA also supports their education and employment goals.

ADULT INITIATIVES

LATINO PROJECT

VR and Easter Seals mutually run and fund the Latino Project. The program seeks to overcome employment barriers in a culturally sensitive manner. It provides adult education on culture and ESL, skills training, peer-to-peer mentoring, job preparation and job placement. The Latino Project has expanded from Central and North Portland to Clackamas County, Salem and Woodburn. The program is now spreading to Washington County and the Gresham area.

INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT (IPS)

VR continues to partner with Oregon Supported Employment Center for Excellence (OSECE) and Oregon Addictions and Mental Health. The use of IPS expanded from 18 programs in 2011 to nearly 30 in 2013. IPS services will be offered statewide through the new OHA coordinated care organization (CCO) structure that started in 2013.

TRIBAL PROGRAMS

Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation has partnerships and cooperative agreements to provide joint services to all five Oregon tribal VR programs:

- Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde;
- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs;
- Confederated Tribes of the Siletz;
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation; and
- Klamath Tribes.

During 2013, VR provided technical assistance and staff training to the tribal programs. The tribes invited VR to sponsor and participate in the October 2013 Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation Conference in Portland.

EMPLOYMENT FIRST

Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) is Oregon's protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities. In January 2012, DRO) filed suit in United States District Court against the state. DRO alleged the state violated the ADA rights of a group of individuals working in sheltered workshops by not giving them access to supported employment services. This suit followed an earlier court finding that people with disabilities cannot be unjustly segregated in their jobs. The U.S. Department of Justice joined the lawsuit against the state. On April 10, 2013, Governor John Kitzhaber issued Executive Order #13-04. The order affirmed the Department of Human Services Developmental Disabilities Services Employment First policy.

Employment First partners include DHS Developmental Disabilities Services, the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities. VR continues to work with these partners to help implement the executive order. Recently, VR added a program and policy analyst to help lead the Employment First efforts.

TRAINING AND CONFERENCES

REHABILITATION TRAINING

Oregon VR maintains a comprehensive and evolving system of personnel development and training. It ensures that staff have the skills, knowledge and abilities to best address Oregonians with disabilities' vocational needs. A variety of staff development and training approaches are necessary to meet the complex needs of those we serve. Over the past year, development and training activities have included:

- VR's annual statewide in-service training conference — Equity and Inclusion: Serving Oregon's Diverse Population. This year's in-service drew more than 325 attendees.
- The Youth Transition Program 2.0 Access Summer Academy, a YTP Fall Regional Training and a YTP Statewide Conference last winter.
- Targeted trainings on counseling, autism spectrum disorder, motivational interviewing skill development, working with specific populations, supported employment, and ethics.
- VR job vendor trainings on job placement and job creation and carving.
- Peer-to-peer case management as well as clinical supervision and practice management for VR managers.

In 2013, the RSA training grant award was renewed for an additional year. It helps fund VR training efforts.

CONFERENCES

VR supported multiple conferences and other events in line with our 2013 goals. These included:

- Oregon Disability MegaConference — a cross-disability event bringing together people with disabilities, families, organizations, agencies, professionals and service providers to learn from each other and encourage a statewide dialogue on important shared issues;
- Options Conference — a conference and career fair in Southern Oregon that promotes independence for people with disabilities through empowerment, equality and employment;
- Portland Public Schools Transition Fair for Young Adults with Disabilities — a fair on disability issues and transition from high school;
- Oregon Supported Employment Center for Excellence;
- Annual YTP Conference — a conference on youth transition issues and best practice sharing;
- Northwest Symposium on Rehabilitation and Deafness.

COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT PROJECT/CLOSING THE EMPLOYMENT GAP

About a year ago, VR's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant was extended to address people with disabilities' employment barriers. The Governor's Office, the Department of Human Services and VR began a statewide initiative to increase employment of historically disadvantaged Oregonians. Groups include people with disabilities, low-income people of color, TANF recipients, returning veterans and ex-offenders. This effort was named the Closing the Employment Gap or CEG Initiative.

Work on the CEG Initiative began in 2012. A work group of state agency, community and business leaders identified and studied the challenges that contribute to disadvantaged Oregonians' unemployment and underemployment. The group also recommended solutions. The work group and CEG consultants reviewed and analyzed input from stakeholders around the state. It also studied data and other information about employment, trends, programs and services and programs that increase employment. The group submitted a report of results and recommendations to the Governor last December. The Governor praised the work group for its efforts and authorized the Governor's Office, DHS and VR to implement the recommended strategies.

Over the past year, CEG's leadership, work groups and consultants have developed and begun to implement the following strategies:

- Engaging and supporting employers in hiring members of the target groups. Streamlining the processes for employers to obtain financial incentives for hiring target group members helped achieve this. In addition, a plan is being created to make Oregon government into a model employer of people with disabilities.
- Identifying and fostering the use of employment best practices by state and local human services and workforce programs.
- Partnering with the Oregon Health Authority and community care organizations in making employment a priority and helping the target groups get employment help. Research shows that being employed helps people get and stay healthy.
- Fostering a "common customer" approach by human service and workforce programs. This approach will help keep customers from falling through the cracks as they receive multiple services from multiple agencies.

Work on the CEG strategies continues.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT STUDY

In 2013, Portland State University's Northwest Economic Research Center conducted a program on VR's return on investment.

The study determined that:

- Every dollar spent in the program during this time period returned $4.30 in tax revenues.
- Comparing VR participants' benefits with what Oregon pays for the program results in a 24:1 return.
- Every dollar spent on an additional VR counselor results in$10.80 in benefits due to decreases in public assistance and increases in tax revenue from participants' earnings.

The study demonstrated that VR creates positive outcomes for our clients. VR also benefits the state by creating tax revenue and reducing state-paid benefits. The findings from this study were presented at the national 6th Annual Summit on Vocational Rehabilitation Program Evaluation & Quality Assurance.

BENEFITS COUNSELING

The Work Incentives Network (WIN) is VR's work incentives and benefits planning program. In 2013, WIN transitioned from being grant-funded to being solely funded by VR. Over the year:

- A total of 11.5 WIN coordinators delivered work incentives and planning services. VR contracts with six Centers for Independent Living throughout Oregon for the coordinators.
- More than 2,290 people were served.
- More than 280 VR partners and providers attended 10 one-day Understanding SSA Benefits and Employment training Sessions.

The Social Security Administration resumed funding for the Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WIPA) Program in 2013. Disability Rights Oregon, which administers WIPA in Oregon, and VR signed a new memorandum of understanding to coordinate work incentives and benefits planning services statewide.

TICKET TO WORK

Oregon VR continued to participate in the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work and Cost Reimbursement programs. These programs are jointly referred to as the TTW Program. Vocational programs such as VR can be reimbursed for a portion of their costs in helping Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities get jobs.

Oregon Addictions and Mental Health and VR started the DHS as an Employment Network Initiative in 2010. Through this initiative VR developed and began a Ticket-related pilot with 10 community mental health programs. These programs have evidence-based support employment services. VR assists the community programs in processing TTW reimbursement claims. In 2013, the cost-sharing partnerships that VR has with the programs converted to biennial contracts; 16 participating programs were added.

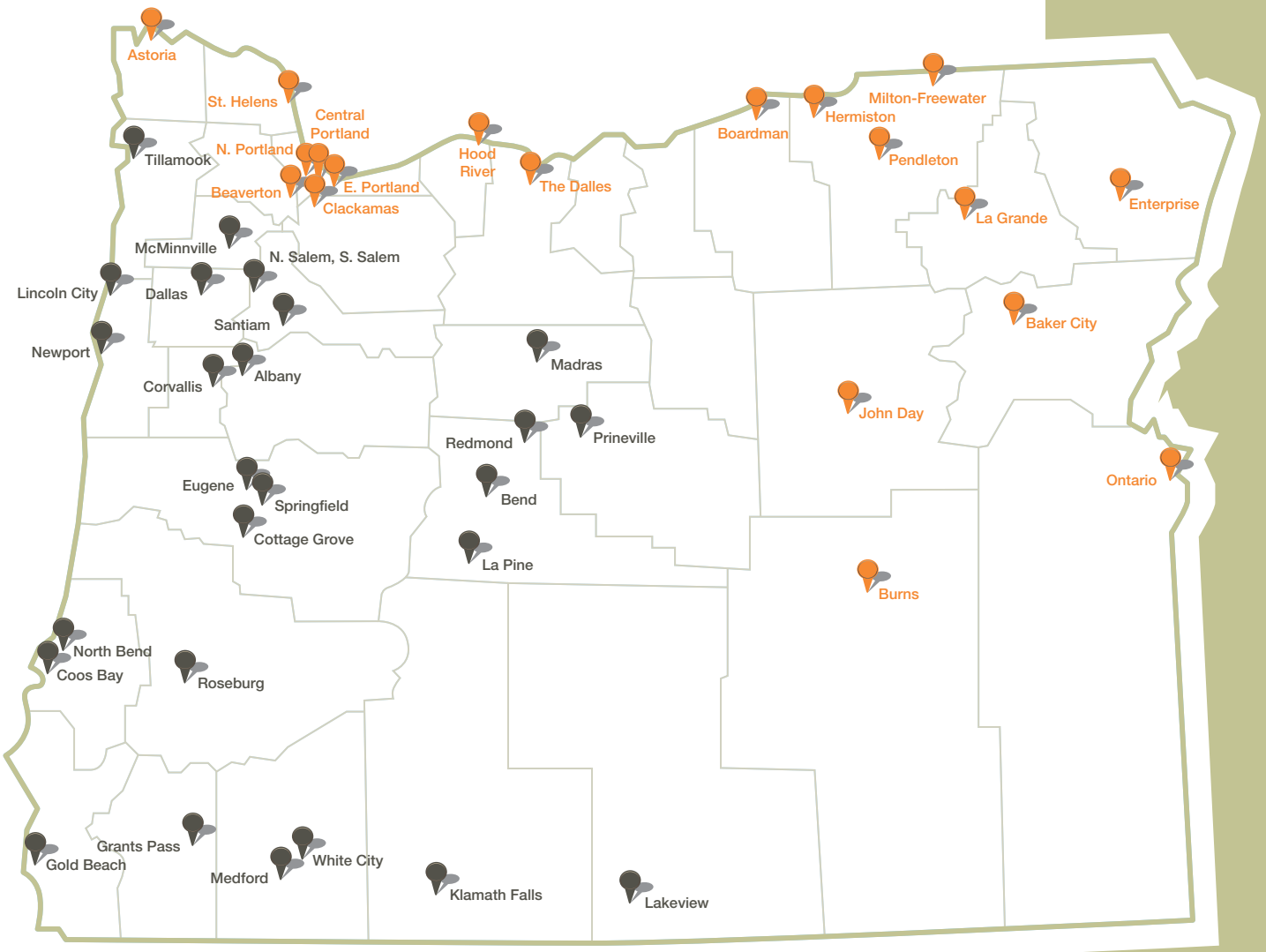
Also in 2013, VR collected more than $1.4 million in reimbursements. These funds came mainly from the TTW claims identified and submitted for the people it served. The TTW funds are reinvested in VR's client services.

WORKFORCE COORDINATION

Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation continues to partner with state workforce agencies. In 2013, all local work force boards partnered with VR and other work force partners to update local memoranda of understanding and resource sharing agreements. VR also continued to support the Oregon Workforce Investment Board Strategic Plan's goals by incorporating them into our state plan, working with vendors and delivering services.

VR staffs the Workforce Policy Cabinet as an active partner in the workforce system. VR and workforce partners have worked together over the last year to explore ways to restructure Oregon's workforce system. The goal is to find ways to better align all of out workforce systems and structures to better serve Oregonians.

VR BRANCHES AND FIELD SERVICE MANAGERS 2013



Field service managers

Robert Costello

Joe Miller

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The council would like to thank the following people for their outstanding service:

- Outgoing members Liz Fox, Jesse Kappel, Linda Keller and Patti Tom-Martin for their dedication and outstanding service;
- Tom Giles, Chair, and Laurie Brooks, Vice Chair, for their excellent leadership;
- Vocational Rehabilitation consumers who agreed to share their success stories for this report and to VR staff who submitted stories and take pride in their consumers' success;
- Ed Ruttledge for the use of his outstanding Oregon scenic photographs throughout this report.

2014
STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

QUARTERLY MEETINGS

FEBRUARY 7, 2014– **SALEM**

MAY 2, 2014– **BEND**

AUGUST 1, 2014– **HERMISTON**

NOVEMBER 7, 2014– **PORTLAND**

Rowena

OREGON STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Front row, left to right: Heidi Dirkse-Graw, Renata Beck, Jeri Cohen, Jeanne Barter, Chungfan Ni, Jesse Kappel. **Middle row, left to right:** Roberta Dunn, Rhoda Hunter, Linda Keller, Patti Tom-Martin, Sherry Stock, Sandy Reese, Stephaine Taylor, Anne Burns, Mark Foster. **Back row, left to right:** Ted Wenk, Norm Underwood, Clayton Rees, Leslie Riggs, David Abramowitz, Liz Fox, Tom Giles. Absent: Laurie Brooks, Ryan Green, Sally Simich.

Little Blitzen Canyon

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

OREGON STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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DHS 9859 (01/2014)