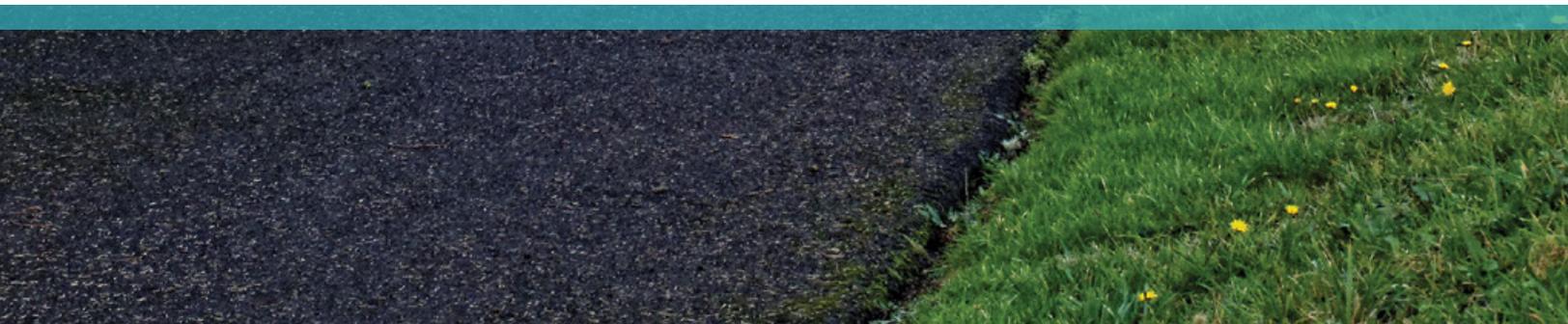
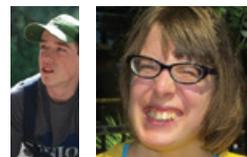




2014 Annual Report

OREGON STATE
REHABILITATION
COUNCIL





2014 Annual Report

Oregon State Rehabilitation Council

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All scenic photography by Ed Rutledge

Front cover: Oregon Coast at Tierra Del Mar

Back Cover: Hood River Valley

Inside: Historic Columbia Highway

December 2014

Honorable Governor John Kitzhaber and Janet LaBreck, RSA Commissioner:

It is our pleasure, on behalf of the members of the Oregon State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), to present the 2014 Annual Report. This report documents the status of the Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program and a summary of the SRC's activities.

During Federal Fiscal Year 2014, 15,589 Oregonians with disabilities received services; 79 percent had significant disabilities; and 2,377 with disabilities completed individual plans for employment and successfully rehabilitated. Based on a Return on Investment study conducted by Portland State University in 2013, the Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation program (VR) returns \$4.30 in tax revenue to Oregon for every \$1 spent in the VR program.

The Oregon SRC worked closely with the VR Executive Team on policy issues including supported employment, WIOA, hearing technology, self-employment and transition services. Additionally, the Executive Order issued by Governor Kitzhaber necessitated the task of revising VR policy to expand services to those with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities. Moving forward, with recent passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reauthorizing the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998, the council will continue to work with the VR Executive Team to address how the new WIOA bill will affect the public VR program in Oregon.

The SRC continues to participate in and support all activities of the National Coalition of SRCs. This organization is a strong advocate for the public Vocational Rehabilitation program and provides council members from across the country the opportunity to share best practices and participate in trainings that enhance their advocacy roles.

VR celebrated many successes throughout the year including a 3.6 percent increase in the rehabilitation rate, the anticipation of a 13.8 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 selfless work and ongoing support of Oregonians with disabilities. We appreciate the opportunity to serve, to provide leadership to the council and to partner with Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation.

Sincerely,



Laurie Brooks, SRC Co-chair



Tom Giles, SRC Co-chair

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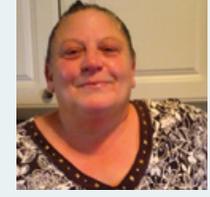
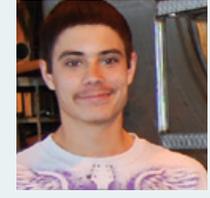
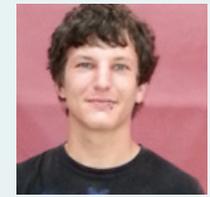
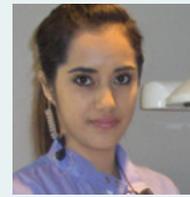
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Success stories

Taking the Vocational Rehabilitation journey has been a life-changing experience for the people profiled here. Most have found jobs that suit them. Some have received essential training. All have gained independence.



Wildhorse Lake, The Steens Mountain

YTP helps Andrew translate his energy into a job



Debra Harper, owner of Wagner's Market IGA in Prineville, describes her employee, Andrew Lindberg, as someone who brings "energy and eagerness to the workplace."

Andrew brought that quality to his entire job search, which he started as a high school senior. However, it was hard for him to find employment. "I walked around every day in the hot sun ... filling out applications," he said.

Then he connected with the Youth Transition Program. YTP works with students that have a disability that could affect their ability to get and keep employment. The program also helps students connect to the community in order to gain job skills while still enrolled in high school. YTP helped him learn valuable interview skills such as looking people in the eye. His YTP counselor also helped improve his resume and taught him to have confidence in himself and his skills. "YTP gave me a better chance of getting a job," he says.

Andrew graduated from Crook County High School in 2014 and continued to work at the

IGA preparing food and cleaning equipment in the deli. He provided great customer service.

Andrew's employer flexed his hours so he could attend the local community college through his high school's advanced diploma program. His long-term goal is to get into law enforcement. The YTP specialist helped him connect to the ASPIRE program to set up his college classes. She also helped him apply for his Social Security card and birth certificate. Vocational Rehabilitation helped Andrew with work boots and work clothes.

"YTP gave me a better chance of getting a job."

Before hiring Andrew, Harper had employed another YTP student. That student's success made her willing to give Andrew a chance. She has been pleased with the results and credits the students as well as YTP for the success. "It's challenging as an employer to find qualified kids that have any job skills coming into the marketplace. It is very time-consuming to train them. I'm excited that there is a program out there [YTP] that is helping to get kids trained for their first job, and to improve the quality that is out there in the job pool."

In October, Andrew moved with his family to Washington state and immediately secured a good-paying job in the construction industry.

*Submitted by Ramona McCallister,
Youth Transition Specialist*

Icela realizes her vocational dream

Icela Torres has always wanted to be a dental assistant. However, she could not apply to VR for help until she received her Employment Authorization Card. This card would make it legal for her to work in the United States.

During her senior year at Hood River Valley High School, her family learned that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services was processing her application. She continued to work hard in hopes of graduating with a regular diploma in June. In March of 2013, she finally got the letter that would enable her to fulfill her dream.

Icela's Youth Transition counselor placed her in an internship at The Hood River Dental Office. She knew that, due to her learning disability and her college placement scores, Icela would struggle in a regular dental assistant program that would require her to get an associate degree. Not having a driver's license would also make attending school very hard. Icela continued to work hard and got her license just in time for high school graduation. A local retail store hired her to do maintenance. She and her counselor continued to meet regularly to research programs for dental assistant training. However, none seemed to suit her.

In November 2013, they found a program called Practical Dental Assisting of Oregon, located in Corvallis. The students meet every Friday for 15 weeks. This was the answer to her prayers. There was only one problem: it was 147 miles each way from her home.



Icela was able to buy a reliable car and insurance with the money she made at the retail store. VR provided funds for books and tuition. VR also paid for Icela's stay in the Corvallis Comfort Suites every Thursday night, which was just a couple of blocks from the dental school. She received a food and gas allotment, which allowed her to focus on her schoolwork. In order to complete the dental program graduation requirements, Icela needed to put in 20 observation hours at a dental office. The dental office where she originally interned offered her a part-time job and scheduled her around her school hours. Icela had a paying job while she trained. The first week of August 2014, Icela completed her Practical Dental Assisting Program. She also completed a first aid and CPR class. She is working full-time for Dr. Haynie at Hood River Dental. Icela is currently studying for her Oregon Radiologic Proficiency Certificate so she can x-ray dental patients.

*Submitted by Cindy Posey,
Youth Transition Specialist*

James' motivation accelerates with mentor's help

James was in the Southern Oregon Education Service District Transition Program at Eagle Point Vocational Center. He was disenchanted and did not see any value in the services. The training included various work experience sites. He only lasted at these sites two or three visits before he said they were boring and he did not like the work.



The key for James was having a mentor to work alongside him so James could feel free to be himself. James and Kris hit it off at Kids Unlimited. James began to be

more motivated to go to work. As he began to demonstrate motivation, reliability and dependability, it seemed time to sign him up for Vocational Rehabilitation.

James was eager to get a job. He receives Social Security and the money left over after paying for room and board was not enough to meet his needs. He wanted to save up to buy new skateboards, wear trendy clothes and be able to go out to eat. James continued to show he was helpful at Kids Unlimited and we were able to show them the benefit to customizing a job for James. Kids Unlimited hired James last year as a maintenance person.

Since that time, a charter school opened up and James rose to the occasion. He found himself working in all sorts of situations — from his job as maintenance person to assisting with the children that attend the charter school. This past summer the school needed more classrooms, which required a major demolition. James stepped up and went from working three days per week to working five days per week to get the job done. James works whenever his employer needs him in any job Kids Unlimited asks him to do.

James is working on moving out of foster care and into his own apartment. He is saving money and hoping to move in early 2015.

James works close to full time and loves his job. He earns above minimum wage commensurate with wages others make in his field.

*Submitted by Gwen Lema,
Youth Transition Specialist*

Karl's attitude leads to award, culinary career



Karl Manchester has been in the culinary program for four years. His dream is to own a restaurant someday. Karl has worked very, very hard at school and is now going to graduate this year with a regular diploma.

Because Karl struggled in math, we started him in the culinary room applying the math to allow him to make math 3D. It has worked. He has passed all his required math applications.

Karl has been able to overcome so many things, including losing his sister in an auto accident this year. Throughout all, YTP, West Lane Tech and his family have supported him. Karl has his driving permit and is getting ready to go to driving school. He has done many culinary events in the community, honing his skills.

The community responded to Karl. The Fern Ridge School District gave him a Community Builder Award. At the ceremony, Karl was described as follows:

Karl is a model positive team builder. He is always willing to include others in a project. He is a great leader in community events over the last four years. When working at community events such as the Fire Department Open House, the distinguished service awards, or community retirement dinners, he is almost always the first one there and the last one to leave, helping others when needed and making sure that he gives praise to others on his team. His leadership skills and teamwork are outstanding. He is already an outstanding community builder.

Karl received a job offer and is currently getting ready to attend Lane Community College's culinary/hospitality program.

*Submitted by Kathy Davis,
Youth Transition Specialist*

Kendra gains confidence, culinary skills

Many know Kendra as a determined young woman. She has overcome numerous neurological challenges from birth on, including being profoundly deaf, autistic, visually impaired and developmentally delayed. And she dreams very big. Ever since her older siblings went to college, Kendra has wanted to attend college one day. Her parents were not sure how that was going to happen given her challenges, but they have had faith that something would come along to help her realize that dream.

Kendra finished her high school studies with a certificate of completion from the Oregon School for the Deaf (OSD). During her first year in the Adult Transition Program (ATP), Kendra was part of a VR summer work experience for deaf students at OSD. A person-centered plan had already identified Kendra's desire to attend the Culinary Assistant training program at Portland Community College (PCC), though no specific plans had come together for that. Job developers with the VR program that specialize in working with deaf and hard of hearing students and are ASL-fluent created a student placement opportunity working in the same school cafeteria kitchen used by the PCC Culinary Assistant program. This was just the setting and supports that Kendra's parents were hoping for, and the instructor who directed the program during the school year was able to be Kendra's manager during that experience. It was an amazing thing to see Kendra fit into that work setting. The accommodations were extremely well suited to her, and they forced Kendra to stretch beyond her current limits. It was the best

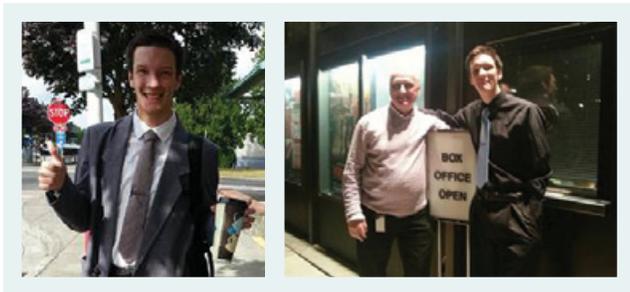
of several worlds at once. Kendra gained valuable work experience, confidence in herself, and familiarity with the kitchen she would ultimately work in as part of her formal training at PCC. She also earned her own money through her hard work and was able to experience a very special man who ran the Culinary Assistant program just before he retired that same summer. Though he did not speak Kendra's native language (ASL), he was able to communicate many other deeper lessons to Kendra about believing in what she can do and pushing beyond her limits in tough and unfamiliar situations. She learned that having a job has many responsibilities.

Though Kendra received many fantastic supports during that time from many sides, her enthusiasm for her own work and her determination to excel pushed her on to both another off-campus work experience throughout her last year in the ATP at OSD (supported by VR and OSD ATP). With VR's support, she enrolled in Portland Community College's Culinary Assistant program for the 2014–15 academic year. Her independence is blossoming as she gains confidence and experience through the dedicated, creative and caring people that seem drawn together to help Kendra succeed and continually grow. Kendra has inspired her family and those that know her. Her off-campus work experience manager this last year gave strong testimony to enjoying her work with Kendra — for her infectious enthusiasm. Kendra will likely inspire those she encounters in her work future.

Submitted by Kendra Liebe; her parents, Mark and Marcia Liebe; and VR Counselor Kathy Eckert-Mason



Outgoing Matthew gains job, independence



When Matthew first started with YTP, he was classified as a homeless youth. Matthew struggled with math at New Urban High School. Despite a difficult home and school situation, Matthew had a knack for dressing smart and looking his best. He also had a positive attitude and a way of making those around him feel welcome.

These personality traits allowed Matthew to have great success as an intern at Portland Opera. He dressed snappy with clothes provided by Milwaukie Vocational Rehabilitation and the North Clackamas clothes closet. Portland Opera is a lively team environment. Matthew provided a vital front-of-the-house service by working the will-call window. As guests arrived, he was the face of the Portland Opera. He greeted patrons and tactfully verified their photo IDs before handing them their tickets. He answered patrons' questions about the opera center, the show and the city of Portland. He sent patrons to the correct ticket agent for resolution of ticketing problems. This internship taught him vital job skills that landed him his first job.

Last October, a men's clothing store in Clackamas hired Matthew and promoted him almost instantly to opening and closing the store on his own. Most months he earned commission on sales he made that surpassed his wages.

However, Matthew's home situation did not improve as quickly as his work situation. He worked in Clackamas and lived in Sandy with his mother. His commute is a little over two hours; still, Matthew has never been late or missed a day of work in his 10 months at the store.

Recently, Matthew was top salesperson for the entire division. Because of his continued success, Matthew has moved into a full-time benefited position. He has moved into his own first house, closer to work. For the first time in his life, he is on no public assistance. Matthew says his next goal is college.

*Submitted by Lisa Farmer,
Youth Transition Specialist*

Myron's determination leads to his own contracting business

Myron Menge is a man with great determination who made his dream of becoming a licensed contractor come true. He is the proud owner/operator of M3 Maintenance, doing home repairs and maintenance in residential and commercial use properties for homeowners and property management companies.

Myron came to VR in 2009 with his Ticket to Work. Due to stamina and medical issues from a head injury as a teenager, he had difficulty with employment production requirements. Despite having solid skills in welding and plumbing, Myron was unable to maintain jobs after a period of time. This was challenging and distressing for him because of his good work ethic and work values.

Myron started to think outside the box. He wanted to obtain his contractor's license and have his own business so that he could have the flexibility to plan and control his work and time, and be able to move at his own pace to accommodate his stamina issues. Myron has always liked to fix and repair things and found he was very good at home repairs; he also received positive feedback about his work.

Once this idea emerged, Myron willingly enrolled himself in our local Entrepreneurial Development (eDev), a Lane County nonprofit that provided business development services and classes for microbusinesses, as well as IDA grants. He took classes and really involved himself in doing what it took to

research, plan and develop a good business plan. Myron doggedly pressed forward despite having difficulties with studying for the contractor's license exam. He repeated the contractor's preparation class twice and then took the exam and passed on his first try. Myron met with his Vocational Rehabilitation counselor monthly, as well his eDev case manager, to build his business. He showed great tenacity in doing whatever he needed to do to be successful. His Voc Rehab case closed successfully in 2014 and, with the support of his family, Myron is doing work he enjoys.

You can go to his website, www.m3maintenance.org, where he advertises, "We have the skills and experience to handle your home and business maintenance requirements." He also advertises in our local paper, the Register Guard, as well as with the Chamber of Commerce, and Craig's list. He is open to referrals if you want to contact him!

*Submitted by Rosalie Galliher,
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor*



Noel uses her experience to excel in early childhood education

When Noel Williams began with the West Linn High School Youth Transition Program, Anne Burns was her transition specialist and Clackamas Vocational Rehabilitation supported her. Noel had always wanted to work with children, so YTP set her up with a senior year internship as a teacher's assistant at a local primary school. Noel graduated with a modified diploma and continued her education with the help of Vocational Rehabilitation. She obtained her associate degree in Early Childhood Education at Clackamas Community College with a cumulative 3.65 GPA.

*Submitted by Teresa Findley,
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor*

My disability has made learning difficult for me throughout my education. I believe my own struggles with school have made me a better teacher. Specific teachers have inspired me and made learning fun. They were patient and willing to try different techniques and approaches. I feel I can help the children in my care and that I will never give up on helping a child until they truly decide to give up. I am able to recognize the signs of a child that may need more one-on-one help to be successful because of what I was taught through the early childhood education classes



at Clackamas Community College and my own experience.

I was able to tell parents and teachers to watch two different children because they may have trouble in school. Due to my ECE classes, I was able to pick up autism in one child and a speech and learning disability, dyslexia, in the other child. No other teacher was able to pick up on either disability. When checked by a specialist, both cases were confirmed.

“I believe my own struggles with school have made me a better teacher.”

The day that I don't enjoy what I am doing or feel I'm not giving 100 percent to the children or am unwilling to be flexible is the day I walk away. That is my personal philosophy.

— Noel Williams

Nick's work ethic earns valuable skills

A Prineville employer wanted to hire a student, but the environment in question required special attention to safety. Ochoco Manufacturing produces water trucks. They hire workers who have specialized skills in fabrication and welding. The fact that they were willing to hire one of the YTP students was a big opportunity, but it required that the program provide the right student for the job.



Crook County High School work crew leader Karen Johnson referred Nick, a high school senior, for the new YTP program. She indicated that Nick had a tremendous work ethic. YTP Specialist Ramona McCallister knew she had the right person for the Ochoco Manufacturing (OMCO) job. She immediately set up an interview and worked with Nick to update his resume and hone his interview skills. Johnson put together a glowing letter of recommendation. However, Nick wasn't too sure of himself and was afraid to be interviewed. McCallister convinced him to give it a try and accompanied him to the interview. The prospective supervisor immediately put him at ease and showed him around the plant. It seemed like Nick fit in immediately.

Nick's first job at OMCO was sweeping floors. His supervisor watched him closely and gave good weekly reports. Nick did whatever his supervisor asked him to do, always with a smile. His work ethic was noted, and he was soon given more tasks — even some simple welding. He showed a real interest in welding, so his supervisor let him practice the last 10 to 15 minutes of every shift. Nick stayed on his own time to get better. Before long, he was given more hours and tasks. His supervisor reported that he was doing enough to justify having his own tools. Vocational Rehabilitation bought Nick his first tools — including a welding helmet — which he still wears proudly.

By February, Nick had worked regularly for at least three months and had met his Voc Rehab employment goals. He became the first Crook County YTP student to get a job. His success

story doesn't stop there, however. In April, Nick received his first raise, and when he graduated from high school in June, he began working full-time. Nick recently received his packet to sign up for benefits. He now has his own insurance and recently announced his engagement. He will be able to support his family while making a good wage with benefits, and he is learning a good trade that he can take with him if he ever leaves OMCO.

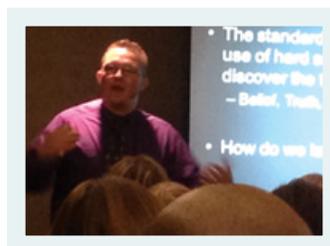
Nick's employer said he would not have hired Nick if he had applied for a job off the street. He hired him (reluctantly at first) because of the YTP program. He added that he would hire another student from the program if the company had another opening. OMCO was very impressed with the partnership between Vocational Rehabilitation and YTP, and the model that they have initiated has provided a springboard for many other employment opportunities for the program.

McAllister recently visited Nick at the end of his shift when he was cleaning up. She says, "Nick was sweeping, broom in hand. He stood tall — with a gleam in his eye."

"This is why this program is so important," McCallister says. "It truly impacts lives and makes a difference. It provides these young people with not just a job, but also the skills to be contributing members of society. It gives them the skills to make a difference in their community."

*Submitted by Ramona McAllister,
Youth Transition Specialist*

Rehabilitation counseling and a bright future starts with higher education for Steven "Pv" Jantz



Sometimes it takes time to figure out what you really want to do in life. In 2002, Pv came to Vocational

Rehabilitation as an 18-year-old high school graduate with several ideas of what he wanted to do in life. They ranged from web design, to computer networking, to auto body.

Pv explored his career options with his VR counselor and took some initial college classes at Chemeketa Community College. He was also fully independent, working two part-time jobs to try to make ends meet.

By the end of that year, Pv decided he could not afford to attend college and explore career options while working two part-time jobs. To remain independent, he closed his Vocational Rehabilitation file and found a full-time job at a local manufacturing plant. After two years of working, Pv decided it was time to pursue his passion, computers, and moved to Arizona to attend school.

Fast-forward five years. Pv returned to Oregon to be closer to family. In Arizona, he had discovered what he wanted to do.

As an active part of the deaf culture and deaf community in Arizona, Pv came to realize his talents and skills in advocating for persons with disabilities. However, Pv had hit a glass ceiling with blue-collar jobs. One company denied him three different promotions due to his deafness, despite his qualifications and experiences. He decided he wanted to become an advocate within the deaf community.

Pv returned to his previous VR counselor for help to pursue his goals. However, many of his previous college classes did not count toward a degree that would help him move forward in his plan. He was really starting from scratch. Pv started with a summer intensive “quick start” program at Portland State University that would allow him to enter PSU the following fall with sophomore standing. Pv earned 21 college credits, which was exactly the amount of credits he needed to apply as a transfer student. PSU accepted him as a transfer student in fall 2008.

Pv always put his best effort into things at PSU. He also took on various student advocacy roles within the campus disability community. Pv successfully lobbied PSU to relocate the Disability Resource Center from the fourth floor of a major building, which had minimal visibility, to the first floor of the same building, which maximized visibility. He also intensively lobbied PSU for two years to move the American Sign Language (ASL) program from the Speech and Language Program to the World Languages Program. This enabled ASL to expand and become equivalent to other language programs.

Pv successfully completed a double bachelor’s degree in sociology and philosophy. He

realized the job potential of gaining his graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling and the impact it would have on his mission of advocacy for persons with disabilities. The Rehabilitation Counseling for the Deaf Program at Western Oregon University accepted Pv into the program. He put his heart and soul into the program for the past two years. During that time, he met and married his girlfriend, provided care when she was diagnosed with breast cancer, and supported her through her master’s program in elementary education while pursuing his own goals.

Pv concluded his program with a six-month internship at Arizona Rehab Services Administration (Arizona’s version of VR) while obtaining his certification as a rehabilitation counselor. This gave Pv a chance to return to Arizona where his dream had started. Arizona state government saw great potential in Pv and recently hired him as an entry-level rehabilitation counselor of the deaf. Even before Pv completed his internship, he wrote a national conference proposal that was accepted. He made his first conference presentation at Arizona’s 14th annual transition conference, with resounding success.

Though Pv is only starting out in the VR profession, it’s clear he is aiming very high. Pv intends to get his Ph.D. after a few years of working. Pv has become very self-empowered. With the right resources and support system, he will continue to achieve his high standards.

*Submitted by Cindy Posey,
Youth Transition Specialist*

Sean's persistence and YTP's collaborations lead to job

I began working with Sean when he was 17 years old. He had many difficulties as he pursued a modified diploma.

Sean is now 19 years old. His challenges include disrupted routines, social and spacial awareness, anxiety over loud noises (fire alarms, thunderstorms), answering open-ended interview questions and dealing with transportation.

We started by seeking out what Sean likes: the entertainment industry, movies, Broadway, music, Disney, electronics.

We assessed his strengths, skills and areas of needed support through various work experiences in our district and community.

We spent hours coaching Sean on workplace communication, interview and social awareness skills, as well as safety in the workplace.

I worked with Sean's family to access Developmental Disabilities and brokerage services for Sean and helped them apply for RideWise training and Social Security, which Sean now receives.

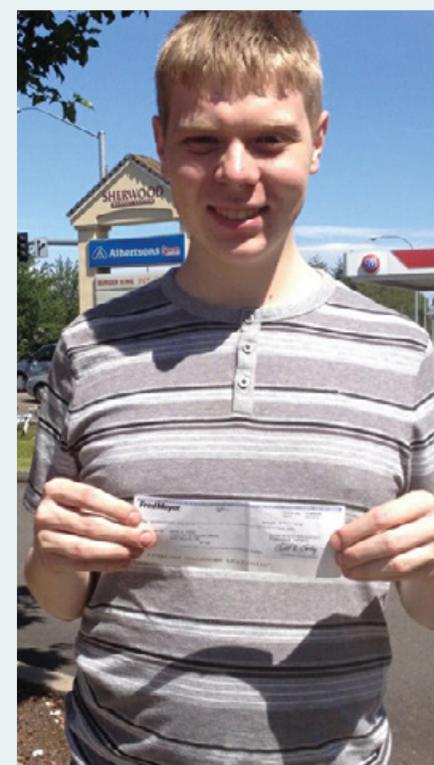
Sean had a burning desire to work in home electronics at the Newberg Fred Meyer. We attempted to apply several times before a

conversation with the HR manager found that the company fills most home electronics positions from within. We applied to several positions at the Newberg Fred Meyer outside of home electronics. Sean followed up with the HR manager (Deb) in person and on the phone. Deb "fell in love" with Sean's persistence and desire to work. She wanted to hire him, but Deb was transferred to the Wilsonville Fred Meyer.

Once Deb settled in at Wilsonville, she scheduled an interview for Sean with the front-end manager and a coworker. Sean did well in the group interview. All parties agreed he would be a great fit for the front-end parcel clerk position.

Sean was hired. He attended 10 hours of orientation with me as his job coach. In the meantime, Self-Determination Resources, Inc. (SDRI brokerage) worked on transportation for Sean to get to and from his home in Sherwood and his work in Wilsonville (public transit nightmare).

Sean's consistent schedule (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) allowed him to get to and from work on the WES (train). RideWise taught Sean to travel independently and safely on public transportation. He now has that down. Sean's parents worked out how to get him home through family and friends.

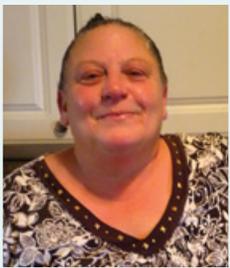


Sean now works 20+ hours/week making \$9.20/hour (10 cents over minimum wage) as a front-end parcel clerk. Recently, thunderstorms caused Sean to build up a lot of anxiety from spending a lot of time outside during work with the unpredictable thunderclaps. I met with Deb (HR manager), and she made her office available if he needs a place to calm down when he is anxious. Fred Meyer also has a store policy that all employees remain inside during storms. As a result, his anxiety is now at ease.

Sean is a perfect example of how YTP collaborated with a school district and various agencies to find a successful outcome for this young man.

*Submitted by Jim Winkler,
Youth Transition Program Transition Specialist*

Wendy thanks VR for helping her succeed



My name is Wendy Igo. I moved to The Dalles in 2004 in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. I knew I also needed mental as well as physical help. I went to

Mid-Columbia Center for Living to Dr. Ferber who helped me through many breakdowns.

I did not realize the road ahead of me was going to be the biggest test of my life. I lost my mother in 2008, then my father in 2012. In 2013 I became homeless. I was broke,

had no job and nowhere to go. I started the Supported Employment program with Cheryl Rhodes and Kim Plummer in July 2012.

Cheryl and Kim bent over backward to help me in every way possible. I went through eight jobs without being able to stay centered. I had another mental breakdown, chronic COPD, bronchitis, a broken leg, a broken rib, total knee replacement and fractured fibula.

Cheryl (SEP) helped me get into services with Vocational Rehabilitation counselor Andrea Rogers. Andrea made it possible for me to have knee replacement surgery by referring me to charity care at the hospital and helping me find the resources to pay for the surgery. VR also worked with the MCCFL Supported Employment Program to provide job placement services.

I wanted to be a care provider to help others. I tried but was only denied because of my past criminal record. I felt helpless once more. With great persistence and encouragement from Cheryl, Kim and Andrea, I now have a steady income. I work for Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage as a qualified personal support worker. I have been working since Aug. 1. I have my own apartment and am able to have my dog Dakota with me.

My life has changed in so many ways. I could not ask for a better life. I am a survivor!

Nothing is impossible.

— Wendy Igo

*Submitted by Andrea Rogers,
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor*

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 Sept. 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 council's name 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 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' mission was originally 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.



November 2014 Quarterly Meeting, in Portland

Oregon State Rehabilitation Council

Council purpose

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

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

Council authority and initiative

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, authorizes the State Rehabilitation Council. 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 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

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	03/11–11/16	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	01/13–11/16	Parent and Training Information Center/Statewide
Mark Foster	07/12–11/17	Voc Rehab Counselor/Deaf and Hard of Hearing/ Portland (non-voting)
Tom Giles	06/11–11/17	Business/Community Rehab Provider/North Bend
Ryan Green	06/13-06/16	Advocate/Consumer/Wilsonville
Tammy Guest	12/14–11/17	Advocate/Mental Health Employment/Stayton
Chungfan Ni	07/12–11/17	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	02/12–11/16	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)
Norm Underwood	12/13–11/16	Business/Medford
Ted Wenk	07/06–11/15	Client Assistance Program/Statewide

SRC committee structure

Business/ Employment Committee

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

This committee works with VR to ensure that the business and employer community gets information about and more fully engages 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

Co-chairs: Laurie Brooks and Tom Giles.

Members: Renata Beck, Jeri Cohen, Heidi Dirkse-Graw, Sherry Stock, Norm Underwood, 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 implementation of council decisions and recommendations. 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 public must have access to the reports. The 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 within the state 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).
- 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.



“The SRC works in partnership with VR and reviews and analyzes program effectiveness and consumer satisfaction. The SRC advises the Governor and state agencies as well as coordinating the work of the State Rehabilitation Council. The professionalism and expertise that members bring is of the highest quality. I have never seen a more dedicated group of board members who truly care about serving Oregonians with disabilities. The SRC is not afraid to address difficult issues and they also keep planning for the future. This is my second term, and it is an honor to be able to serve on the SRC.”

— Anne Burns

Legislative Advocacy Committee

Chair: Sherry Stock. Members: Ryan Green, Tammy Guest (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).

Membership Committee

Chair: Jeri Cohen. Tammy Guest (Rhoda Hunter).

In 2014, the Governor appointed Tammy Guest (mental health advocate) to the council. The council recognized Sandy Reese at the November quarterly meeting for her terms of service and contributions to the council. The council continues to recruit for the Workforce Investment Board position. The Membership Committee recruitment process ensures that the council meets the federally mandated membership requirements. The committee recruits, screens and recommends new applicants to fill council vacancies.

Committee responsibilities:

- Recruit, train and mentor members. Monitor council membership to ensure it fills all positions mandated in the Rehab

Act. Recruit new members, secure reappointment of existing members where eligible, assist in orientation of new members and identify SRC members' training needs.

Policy Committee

Chair: Renata Beck. Members: David Abramowitz, Heidi Dirkse-Graw, Roberta Dunn, Ted Wenk (VR: Robin Brandt, Robert Costello and Travis Wall).

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.

Due to the many changes to review, the Policy Committee scheduled monthly meetings in 2014. Some meetings were in person in Salem and others attended via conference call. The meetings are open format and anyone interested is welcome to join us.

Some of the policies we reviewed and revised included:

- Supported employment;
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act reauthorization;
- Hearing technology;
- Self-employment;
- Transition services.

Supported employment — Governor Kitzhaber's executive order — required revision of the VR policy to expand services to those with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities. Supported employment focuses on serving those individuals when they are interested in community-based employment. Steps include identifying an appropriate vocational goal, developing a plan, providing services and long-term support to help individuals secure and retain suitable employment. Our committee partnered with VR staff to craft policies and procedures that align with the executive order's mandates.



Near Pacific City, Cape Kiwanda

Features of supported employment:

- Assessments;
- Discovery;
- Collaboration;
- Competitive employment;
- Integration;
- Extended supports;
- Ongoing support services.

The Policy Committee will also work on a WIOA reauthorization policy.

The Senate and House of Representatives passed the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and President Obama signed it.

VR provided the following summary:

WIOA is a very large and far-reaching bill. It does many things, including reauthorizing the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998. Below is a brief list of what we believe to be the significant changes for our program and the people that we serve:

- New performance standards;
- Ninety days to plan;
- Extension of provision of supported employment from 18 to 24 months;
- Requirement that assessments be done in integrated settings;
- Clarification of what counts for a self-employment VR case closure;
- Inclusion of customized employment;
- Many significant changes related to transition;
- Imposition of a 15 percent set-aside for transition services;

- Definitions provided for youth and students with disabilities;
- Definition and required provision of pre-employment transition services;
- Imposition of various requirements on the use of sheltered settings;
- Development of a unified state plan;
- No additional funding;
- Additional memoranda of understanding;
- Changes to the workforce boards;
- Requirement omitted for regional technical assistance and continuing education centers (TACEs);
- Requirement omitted for state training grants;
- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development standard decreased;
- Imposition of additional reporting requirements;
- Limit on contributions to one-stop centers;
- Two-year phase-in period.

Hearing Technology Policy Pilot Committee: Robin Brandt, policy analyst; Renata Beck, SRC and staff counselor; Sheila Hoover, hearing specialist; and Tracy Schaffer, field tech.

Final review of the 6.4 Services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing policy was completed in July.

- Self-employment. VR has reviewed the self-employment policy and is considering where and how to refine it as a foundation for development of a supported self-employment policy. VR will get input from the SRC Policy Committee on various issues related to refining the policy.

- Transition. Just as the Employment First policy and Executive Order 13-04 prompted review and refinement of our supported employment policy, these and other developments have prompted us to identify transition policy that exists in other policies and consolidate them into a transition-specific policy that aligns with the executive order and the DHS Employment First policy and guides our transition work.

Committee responsibilities:

- Work with VR to review Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS). Review Oregon Revised Statutes 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, 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. The Governor and the RSA receive reports 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: Norm Underwood. Members: Jeanne Barter, Laurie Brooks, 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.

SRC activities

2014 State Rehabilitation Council activities

- Partnered with VR in developing the 2015 State Plan.
- Reviewed the VR budget and received regular updates from VR.
- Worked with VR to develop and revise policies such as state plan development, supported employment, transition, hearing technology and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- Participated in the NW Regional Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Advisory Committee meetings.
- Participated in bimonthly conference calls of the National Coalition of SRCs and the NCSRC Steering Committee.
- Represented the SRC at the Spring NCSRC Training in Bethesda, Maryland, April 5–9, 2014.
- Met with members of Oregon’s congressional delegation regarding the public vocational rehabilitation program.
- Represented SRC at the 2014 Pacific Northwest Brain Injury Conference.
- Conference call discussion with RSA regarding the fall 2014 monitoring visit.
- Thirteen council members attended the VR In-service Conference, Aug. 13–14,

2014: David Abramowitz, Jeanne Barter, Renata Beck, Laurie Brooks, Anne Burns, Mark Foster, Tom Giles, Chungfan Ni, Clayton Reese, Leslie Riggs, Sally Simich, Sherry Stock and Ted Wenk.

- Attended the Regional TACE-VR meeting in Vancouver, Washington, Sept. 10–12, 2014.
- Partnered with the State Independent Living Council, Client Assistance Program, Workforce Investment Board, Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Oregon Disabilities Commission.
- Represented SRC at the Second Annual Pacific Northwest Employment Forum in Vancouver, Washington, Nov. 3–4, 2014.



May 2014 Quarterly Meeting, Bend

Represented SRC at the Fall NCSRC Training in Miami, Florida, Nov. 8–9, and the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Conference, Nov. 8–12, 2014.

- Member of the Department of Human Services Consumer Satisfaction Stakeholder Group.
- Partnered with VR and OCB in statewide employer trainings.
- Quarterly meetings held in Salem, Bend, Hermiston and Portland.

March meeting, in Salem, included these topics: introduction to State Plan planning process, resources for the State Plan, public input.

May meeting, in Bend, included these topics: State Plan review, NCSRC/CSAVR Conference

update, VR director’s report, VR budget update, public input and local office update, cost reimbursement and Ticket to Work, Youth Transition.

August meeting, in Hermiston, included these topics: Top 10 trends in America: implications for VR, VR budget update, VR director’s report, Center for Independent Living report, Confederated Tribes of Umatilla update, SRC Policy Committee report, public input and local office update.

November meeting, in Portland, included these topics: VR director’s report, VR budget report, changes to Section 503 of Rehab Act and Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act, principles of disability advocacy, blending VR client services with DD services, Client Assistance Program report, public input.



“I worked from 1975 until my retirement in 2008 as a special educator focused on successful transitions from school to adult living for my students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our local vocational rehabilitation counselors played an essential role in helping plan and implement successful employment outcomes for many of my students. Being on the SRC the past few years has given me the added opportunity to see how the local and statewide perspectives mesh. I have grown to appreciate the complexities our VR administrators are challenged with while, with SRC input, they strive to create the most optimal environment for the VR counselor to successfully serve each client.”

— David Abramowitz

Employer recognition awards

Employer of the Year

Eid Passport, Inc. *Hillsboro, Oregon*

Eid Passport, Inc. has received Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Employer of the Year Award for being an active and engaging partner with the Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Service Team.

Jim Robell, president and chief operating officer of the identity solutions firm, said, “We accept this award on behalf of all companies that support Vocational Rehabilitation and recognize the genius in each person by employing people with disabilities and making accommodations for people with disabilities.”

Hillsboro is headquarters for Eid Passport, Inc. (www.eidpassport.com). The company is a market leader in high-assurance identity solutions in the United States. The company integrates leading-edge products and services into solutions that combine identity

authentication, background screening and access management. Eid Passport’s flagship product, the RAPIDGate® solution, provides highly secure gate-access-based facilities with increased security and streamlined access for a variety of authorized personnel.

Eid Passport has worked with VR and Incight-sponsored programs to recruit qualified individuals with disabilities or the growing company. Eid Passport, Inc. has sponsored and participated in Live Resume and Meet Business/Industry events, and Tapping Fresh Talent career fairs and other community diversity events.

As a federal contractor, Eid Passport reaches out to veterans’ programs and agencies serving individuals with disabilities. The company has employed more people with disabilities through its partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation, Incight and veterans’ organizations. Eid Passport currently has more than 300 employees; 11 percent are veterans and 18 percent self-identify as having a disability.



Business Employer Award ***Eid Passport, Inc.***

Left to right:

Jim Robell, president; Lynda Van Doran, diversity inclusion manager; Cathy Sturtevant, vice-president, Human Resources.



Partner of the Year

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Federal Contractor Compliance Program (OFCCP) *Portland Area Office*

The U.S. Department of Labor OFCCP Portland Area Office is recognized as a working partner with Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation. Over the past two years, OFCCP has proposed and implemented plans and policy to increase its contractors’ employment of people with disabilities and veterans in concert with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 503.

“Vocational Rehabilitation has been an important part of meeting our outreach goals for employing people with disabilities at the local, regional and national levels,” said Mary Sneed-Royston, Portland area office director. “We’re honored to be partnering with them.”

OFCCP staff initiated a partnership with VR in 2012 to help fulfill OFCCP’s obligation to enforce affirmative action and equal employment opportunity in companies doing business with the federal government.

The partnership began in 2013 prior to the final regulations. OFCCP hosted two sessions where 80 federal contractors met staff and participated in disability awareness training. OFCCP continues to refer individual contractors to VR as they monitor them during the year. This ongoing partnership between VR and OFCCP staff continues to nurture improved employment and training opportunities with these federal contractors.

Partner Award

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Federal Contractor Compliance Program, Portland Area Office

Left to right:

Aleksandra Snyder, compliance officer;
Mary Sneed-Royston, area office director;
Wil Gobert, compliance officer



Near Estacada

2014 partner awards

In spring 2014, the SRC Business Committee suggested partnering with the local VR office quarterly meeting site to recognize outstanding community partnerships with the public VR program.

At the May quarterly meeting, Tom Giles, SRC chair, and Gary Daniele, Bend branch manager, presented awards to the following:

- Job developers;
- Jill Duncan (independent contractor);
- Cortney Gibson (VR counselor);
- Tim Johnson and Claire Smith (Abilitree);
- Rebecca Hanson (Full Circle Outreach);
- Victoria Young (Good-2-Go Oregon).

The following Youth Transition Program partners were also recognized:

- Ramona McCallister (Crook County School District, Prineville);
- Diana Barrett (Jefferson County School District, Madras); and
- Dan Saraceno and Morgan Davis (Sisters School District).



Left to right: Gary Daniele, VR branch manager; Ramona McCallister, YTP Crook County School District. May 2014 Quarterly Meeting, Bend



Left to right: Gary Daniele, VR branch manager; Dianna Barrett, YTP Madras High School



Left to right: Gary Daniele, VR branch manager; Morgan Davis and Dan Saraceno, YTP Sisters School District. May 2014 Quarterly Meeting, Bend



Left to right: Tom Giles, SRC chair; Gary Daniele, VR branch manager; Jill Duncan, independent job developer. May 2014 Quarterly Meeting, Bend



Left to right: Tom Giles, SRC chair; Gary Daniele, VR branch manager; Claire Smith, job developer; and Tim Johnson, executive director, Abilitree. May 2014 Quarterly Meeting, Bend



Left to right: Laurie Brooks, SRC vice-chair; Trina Taylor and Kendra Duby, Clackamas County Behavioral Health; Franklin, VR branch manager; and Rose Murillo, Clackamas County Behavioral Health. November 2014 Quarterly Meeting, Portland



Left to right: Tom Giles, SRC chair; Gary Daniele, VR branch manager; Becca Hanson, executive director, Full Circle Outreach. May 2014 Quarterly Meeting, Bend

Tom Giles, SRC chair, and Susan Hughes, VR Eastern Oregon Branch manager, presented these awards at the August Quarterly Meeting:

- Ed Cortez, for organizing the Employment First Team in Pendleton;
- Susie Calhoun, 121 director, for providing valuable training and placement opportunities for VR consumers; and
- Kathleen McCauliffe, M.D., for providing timely and thorough medical reviews.



Left to right: Tom Giles, SRC chair; Gary Daniele, VR branch manager; Victoria Young, job developer, Good 2 Go. May 2014 Quarterly Meeting, Bend



Left to right: Jorge Martinez, Latino Connection; Robert Costello, VR field services manager; Cynthia Ramirez, VR counselor. November 2014 Quarterly Meeting, Portland

SRC member partner reports

121 Program

It is with pleasure that I write this for the 2014 SRC annual partner's report. It is my duty as the 121 representative to respond to the needs of my fellow Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation directors and staff. While doing so, I must maintain a positive, constructive relationship with the council, Vocational Rehabilitation staff and our partners. The work we do and the individuals we serve are incredibly important. I am happy to say the partnerships are growing and bridges are building thanks to the efforts of all these partners. Although I manage a Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation program, I feel that the needs of all individuals living with disability should be met and, if employment is their goal, they should have equal access to it.

I attended my second disability in-service this year. I love this conference. It exposes me to so many new ideas and other professionals whose experience and commitment to disability services inspire me to no end. I come away invigorated and brimming with excitement for putting the new information to use in our program.

My membership on SRC has taught me so much about policy and procedure. However, it has taught me so much more about the humanity and dedication people in this field possess. This also excites and invigorates me. I look forward to another year.

— *Leslie Riggs*
Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center

It is a new day in Oregon for families raising children experiencing disabilities. 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. Oregon Department of Education (ODE) followed suit in 2014, making FACT the state's PTI center for special education. The center highlights an emphasis on supporting the transition to adulthood. A new full-time FACT staff position works on strengthening the partnership between Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Oregon Developmental Disability Services, the Oregon Department of Education and families.

Regional, state and federal funding supports parents with children aged birth through 26 who experience disability. Supporting families' participation in securing 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 also worked in partnership with ODE to educate teachers this summer through

its Educator Institute on Networking and Transition. These trainings aimed to provide an overview on the Governor's Executive Order 13-04, the Employment First initiative, and related-employment services for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. FACT was able to introduce its services and programming to educators, VR providers and brokerage representatives in seven sites across the state.

FACT is excited to bring new energy to the State Rehabilitation Council at a time when improving transition to adulthood and increasing employment outcomes are the focal points of numerous SRC partners. FACT is working collaboratively with many partners, ensuring that the perspective and experience of families are present at 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 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 Oregon Department of Developmental Services;
- Think College! Oregon stakeholder group that pursues post-secondary opportunities for students experiencing intellectual/developmental disability.

In the nearly two years since FACT became the state's PTI, it has served families from 29 of Oregon's 36 counties, and has had a physical presence in 18 of those counties. Indeed, 909 family members participated in 59 trainings in 2013 on many topics, including but not limited to the IEP process, person-centered planning, mediation, diploma options, transition services and preparing for adulthood. As of September 2014, FACT has 8,451 contacts in its database.

— *Roberta Dunn,*
Parent Training and Information Center

State Independent Living Council

The relationship between Oregon's VR program, the State Rehabilitation Council and the SILC continues to be positive and supportive. The Rehabilitation Act's Title I program provides funds to support the operation of the State Independent Living Council (SILC) as an innovation and expansion activity. 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.

Oregon's VR program functions as the designated state unit for the Title VII, Independent Living (IL) 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 plan along with the SILC chairperson and Oregon Commission for the Blind executive director. The state plan guides Independent Living program funding; this includes grants to Oregon's network of Centers for Independent Living (CILs), which deliver Oregon's Independent Living program services to consumers. Independent Living program staff, under the authority of the VR director, administer these Title VII grants.

Oregon's CILs often serve as VR vendors, providing employment-related IL services to VR program consumers. In addition, VR counselors often refer consumers to the IL program when they may need employment-connected IL services. In this case, the IL program funds the services.

The SILC is directed to work with other programs and councils serving people with disabilities (including the SRC). The SILC's role is to coordinate services that support the independence of people with disabilities, reduce service duplication and fill service gaps.

To carry out this function, the SILC monitors working relationships between CILs and VR program offices. Maintaining a seat on the SRC informs the SILC about VR program service policies and facilitates the flow of information to both councils. When needed, the SILC works with the SRC to address policies to improve coordination of IL and VR services into a seamless partnership.

— *Sherry Stock,*
State Independent Living Council



Clay Myers State Natural Area

Client Assistance Program (CAP)

The Client Assistance Program has maintained its role on the State Rehabilitation Council and as a policy partner with Vocational Rehabilitation in 2014. CAP participated in numerous state plan review and revision meetings. Specific policy proposals discussed with VR included those regarding supported employment and self-employment. The CAP representative to SRC also chairs the SRC Program Effectiveness Committee. This committee reviews fair hearing decisions and provides input regarding the selection process and appointment of impartial fair hearing officers.

Near the end of 2013, CAP was able to find and hire a welcome new staff person. Anne Marie King worked as a federal judicial law clerk for seven years, primarily addressing Social Security disability determinations and administrative law. Following that, she practiced commercial litigation at a Portland law firm before joining DRO in November 2013. Anne Marie was born and raised in Portland, Oregon, and was a VR customer at the Southeast Portland branch office following her graduation from Portland Public Schools. Anne Marie has completed training on CAP-specific topics through the Training and Advocacy Support Center (TASC) at the National Disability Rights Network. She also completed training on Title I of the Americans with Disabilities

Act and on disability-related employment legal issues, which TASC also conducts.

Oregon CAP looks forward to the challenges and exciting possibilities presented for the upcoming year by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act signed into law by President Obama on July 22, 2014. Particularly, the SRC, CAP and VR (as well as many other policy partners) will need to work together to identify the advantages and difficulties specific to Oregon under the new law; then we must formulate and implement policy that best supports meaningful and worthwhile employment outcomes for Oregonians with disabilities.

— *Ted Wenk, Client Assistance Program*

VR Counselor

The Rehab Act Title 1 Section 105 defines the composition of the State Rehabilitation Council. 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 from Dec. 1, 2012, to 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 I currently chair the Policy Committee. We have a shared vision of supporting Oregonians with disabilities in order to secure their place in the workforce as we focus on integrated and competitive employment. This past year the Policy Committee has been actively addressing many areas of service including the following:

- Supported employment
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act reauthorization
- Hearing technology
- Self-employment
- Transition services

I anticipate that in 2015 we will be active as we transform our policies and procedures to align with the Governor's executive order. All our meetings are open to the public and we welcome anyone who is interested in contributing to the guiding principles, policies, practices and procedures of Vocational Rehabilitation services. I appreciate the opportunity to serve in this role.

I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the State Rehabilitation Council for their dedication and commitment to serve. With our collective efforts, we can enhance the employment opportunities for all Oregonians that experience disabilities.

— *Renata M. Beck, M.S., C.R.C.,
VR Counselor*



“It’s hard for me to believe that my second term serving on the State Rehabilitation Council will end this November. Participating as a member of the council has been an amazing experience, and it’s been rewarding to work side by side with this dedicated group of individuals. Most importantly, I have been privileged to witness the crucial role the council takes in providing VR with an external consumer perspective that helps promote meaningful competitive employment for all people with disabilities.”

— Sandy Reese

Department of Education

The Oregon Department of Education believes in the power of partnerships. Through partnerships, we are able to extend the reach and resources of agencies to serve more transition students in Oregon schools. Together, ODE and VR coordinate transition for students with disabilities from public education to vocational rehabilitation services. When the transition process begins at an early age, students and families can get information about the VR program and the array of services available to eligible individuals. They can also learn about rehabilitation services that can help the student achieve and maintain employment and continue being independent after they exit the school system.

This has been a wonderful year of changes, alignment, opportunities for growth and continued collaborative efforts between ODE and VR to improve post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities. This work has expanded to incorporate other partners including the Department of Human Services Office of Disability Services, Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities, Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and parent training and information organizations. We have worked on developing strategies, changing policies, designing and implementing professional development and executing system change so that transition services for students with disabilities are a coordinated set of activities that create successful post-school outcomes.

State transition resources

Transition services are fundamental to the long-term success of students with disabilities and should address each one's needs. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires the consideration of transition needs for students to begin no later than the first individualized education program (IEP) when the student is 16. The IEP is updated annually. 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 Technical Assistance Network is a newly developed team created to support the work of the Governor's Executive Order 13-04 and Employment First at both the state and local level. The network includes the secondary transition liaison and transition network facilitators. Eight part-time staff around the state provide outreach, technical assistance and training opportunities for school districts that work with transition-age students (16–21). The Transition Technical Assistance Network supports school districts by:

- Providing guidance around the outcomes identified in the executive order;
- Implementing training and professional development for educators on policy and systems change from all partnering agencies; and

- Providing technical assistance as school districts establish relationships with community partners.

ODE held 10 full-day Educator Institute on Networking and Transition trainings throughout the state. These trainings taught middle and high school special education teachers more about adult service agencies and effective strategies to assist students with disabilities in the transition process. Topic sessions in these trainings included an introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation, introduction to Developmental Disability Services, benefits planning resources, sample curriculum, local Employment First groups, family advocacy groups and training opportunities for families. These trainings provided an exciting opportunity for educators to network with agency representatives within their regions.

ODE also established the Transition Community Network (TCN) website that houses information for students, administrators, parents, teachers and employers about transition and transition services, as well as providing up-to-date information for federal reporting 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. TCN information is at <http://tcntransition>.

There is now a new online group for secondary educators. The Secondary Transition Users Group facilitates information

sharing in post-secondary transition. It is a collaborative workspace for educators dealing with issues relating to secondary transition from school to adult life for students.

More information is available at <http://teachingresearchinstitute.org/pages/show/secondary-transition-group?site=tims>.

Special education post-school outcomes

The State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Review (SPP/APR) requires all states to report the percentage of youth that, within one year of leaving high school, are enrolled in higher education, other post-secondary school, competitive employment, or other employment. Oregon requires all districts to collect post-school outcome data between June and September each year.

Oregon has been able to report a response rate of approximately 70 percent for each of the last three years. Oregon's overall engagement rate has met the state target in each of these years. The outcome data shows that approximately 70 percent of students that leave on an IEP are successfully employed or attending school one year after leaving high school or a transition program.

More information is at www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2078.

— *Sally Simich, Department of Education*

Community partner reports

Crook County Youth Transition Program

The Crook County Youth Transition Program marked its first anniversary serving local eligible youth. Youth Transition Specialist Ramona McCallister thanked those that made the first year a success. These partners included Vocational Rehabilitation, University of Oregon, Oregon Department of Education, the Jefferson County YTP Program, and the many businesses and programs that work alongside the program,

The partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation has been an especially key component of the YTP program. The Bend staff exhibit such a high level of professionalism and go out of their way to work with Crook County youth. This alliance provides a strong support for the eligible students who come into the program for services. As of July 31, 22 students

had joined the program, and 19 of those had individualized plans for employment. As of that date, 12 had jobs — with 10 of those earning at least minimum wage. As of Aug. 11, five students have had successful rehabilitations with Vocational Rehabilitation. Four of those students are still successfully working in the same job.

In the 2014–2015 school year, YTP will work closely with the Crook County High School (CCHS) Transition Program to offer job readiness courses, as well as a new course on point-of-sale (POS) training and customer service. Some new transition curricula is available to YTP students. YTP also works closely with the ASPIRE (Access to Student Assistance Programs In Reach of Everyone) Program, which provides college guidance. The CCHS special education staff work very closely with YTP, providing important insights and information.



“As a former client I know firsthand the success and freedom VR has helped to provide me! With VR’s help and guidance I was able to maintain my employment and advance in my career. My VR counselor was much more than a professional getting paid to do a job. She was a mentor, advocate and caring friend. I choose to serve on the SRC to help spread the word about the great things this agency does and to help reach individuals that have barriers to education/employment.”

— Ryan Green

McCallister of the Crook County YTP received a grant through Facebook for the POS training, as well as a grant from Washington Federal community support program, which will provide funding for wages for YTP students to work at the local Habitat Restore. This collaboration will benefit the community, as YTP students will also help with neighborhood cleanups through the local police department. Crook County YTP has also applied for a grant through the Oregon Community Foundation to carry on this work for the next two years, hiring two additional youth.

*Ramona McCallister,
YTP Crook County School District*

Jefferson County Youth Transition Program

The Youth Transition Program supports and guides youth toward employment goals while helping them make informed career choices, prepare for future employment opportunities, and maintain positive employment outcomes.

The highest value I place upon my partnership with VR is having a respectful, trusting, positive and innovative working relationship with my vocational rehabilitation counselor. I value having a mutual understanding of the VRC and Youth Transition Program's roles, strengths and weaknesses to work together effectively for the benefit of the student, and having mutual respect and regard for all parties as equal partners in the process. These values allow us, as partners, to increase rehabs and improve outcomes by

streamlining referrals, developing creative partnerships, and providing YTP and VR services to the fullest extent within the rules and regulations of our systems.

Dianna Barrett, YTP Madras High School

Deschutes County Youth Transition Program

I am entering my third year as a Youth Transition Program specialist at Sisters High School. In that time, Renata Beck and Vocational Rehab have provided invaluable opportunities for our students. Voc Rehab has supported our students with on-the-job training and clothing vouchers. VR has even purchased tools in order for our students to be successful in the work environment. Students who struggle in the school setting can often form a negative concept about themselves that can lead to greater at-risk behaviors. I have been able to witness the pride on a student's face when the student earned a job, and I watched that transition into success in the classroom. Students who are in the Youth Transition Program at Sisters High School speak fondly of their meetings with Renata as she has always been able to make them feel comfortable and supported. With fewer vocational classes offered at high school, our partnership with VR provides opportunities and hands on learning experiences that would otherwise not exist.

Morgan Davis, YTP Sisters School District

National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils

National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils



The National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) continues to grow and be a strong

national advocate for the public Vocational Rehabilitation Program. There are now 50 coalition members. Coalition members benefit by participating in bimonthly conference calls that include RSA staff, access to member-only information on the coalition website, and attendance at the spring and fall NCSRC training sessions held just before the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation conferences.

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; members also mentor other SRCs.

The NCSRC Steering Committee's goal is to assure the organizational development and direction of the NCSRC. Steering Committee membership represents each of the 17 historic RSA regions. A simple majority are those members appointed to their respective state

SRC, while the minority population is staff that work specifically for their council.

NCSRC's current officers include the following: Marlene Malloy, chair (Michigan SRC staff); Sherry Taylor, vice-chair (West Virginia combined staff); Theresa Hamrick, secretary/treasurer (Oklahoma general staff).

At-large members, are Joan Holleran (New Hampshire general VR staff); Rhoda Hunter (Oregon general staff); Claire Reeve (Minnesota general SRC chair); Graham Sisson (Alabama VR); Karen Stanfill (Texas SRC member); Kara Tucker (Florida general SRC chair) and Linda Vegoe (Wisconsin general chair).

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.



Wallowa Mountains

Vocational Rehabilitation



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Introduction and overview

2014 was a productive and rewarding year for Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation. VR is Oregon's general vocational rehabilitation program for people with disabilities. VR served 15,589 persons in federal year 2014. The program substantially exceeded most of the current federal standards.

A major VR activity has been implementing the Governor's Executive Order 13-04 and Employment First policy. Employment First is the Department of Human Services (DHS) policy to increase competitive integrated employment of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). In carrying out Employment First, VR and allied DHS and Oregon Department of Education (ODE) programs have jointly planned and built capacity; revised rules, policies and procedures; and increased staff. VR and other DHS and ODE programs have also extensively trained staff, external providers and vendors. This effort will continue.

2014 heralded big changes for VR in other respects. On July 22, President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) into law. It supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. WIOA helps job seekers, including those with disabilities, access employment, education, training and support services to succeed in the labor market. Congress passed WIOA by a bipartisan majority.

WIOA amends and reauthorizes the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This federal law directs how VR operates and delivers vocational rehabilitation services. The Rehabilitation Act was last amended in 1998.

WIOA also amends the Wagner-Peyser Act and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

WIOA presents many opportunities and challenges for VR and the other state and local programs that comprise Oregon's workforce system. A more complete description of WIOA and its effects on VR can be found below in a section dedicated to the new law.

State plan and goals

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is VR's policy and planning partner. In the winter and spring of 2014, the SRC and VR completed a comprehensive review and update of VR's state plan for services. This involved a series of planning events where SRC members, VR staff, stakeholders and the public gave input. The planning process also included review of VR's most recent comprehensive needs assessment. These planning events and processes resulted in a refined plan.

Vocational Rehabilitation and the SRC set the following goals for delivery of services and operations in 2015:

- Goal I.** Increase the number and quality of employment outcomes for all VR clients.
- Goal II.** Increase the number of youth (aged 14–24) with disabilities 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.

- Goal IV.** Through partnerships and collaboration, achieve better service coordination and resource utilization to increase employment outcomes.
- Goal V.** Continually improve the program's management while ensuring compliance with appropriate laws, rules and policy.
- Goal VI.** Ensure a highly trained workforce at every level of the organization.

In developing VR's next state plan, VR and SRC will revisit these goals and other sections of VR's present state plan. Given the numerous amendments made to the Rehabilitation Act, it is likely the new plan will have many refinements, possibly including new or revised goals.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act

WIOA makes far-reaching changes to state workforce programs. Many of WIOA's provisions take effect July 1, 2015, and some take effect in 2016, two years after passage of the new law. However, most Rehabilitation Act revisions went into effect immediately. Notice of proposed rulemaking is scheduled for release Jan. 18, 2015. Final rules are scheduled for publication Jan. 21, 2016. WIOA provides no additional funds for VR services. Subject to the terms of the new law, the most significant WIOA changes for VR include:

- A new and standardized set of performance measures will apply to all workforce programs. The measures will focus on the skills gained by program participants and their long-term employment success.

- VR participants will need to enter into individualized plans for employment within 90 days of being determined eligible for VR services.
- VR will take a much larger role in aiding youth with disabilities' transition from school to work. VR must spend at least 15 percent of its federal funding on specific transition services.
- The use of subminimum wages will be limited, and new requirements regarding informed choice will take effect.
- Agreements will be required between state VR systems and state Medicaid systems, as well as VR systems and state developmental disability programs, to better facilitate and deliver vocational services.
- Specific definitions for different kinds of employment services and supports for individuals with disabilities are expected to result in competitive integrated employment.
- Roles and responsibilities will be enhanced for the general workforce system and one-stop centers to meet persons with disabilities' needs.
- The federal Independent Living Program will be relocated from the U.S. Department of Education to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

VR and other agencies and programs affected by WIOA are continuing to review the new law, which is long and complex. It will take some time to fully understand and apply WIOA. Oregon's workforce partners, including VR and

SRC, will use the next 18 months to develop a new unified plan for delivery of services and activities under the new law. VR's state plan for services will need to align with the larger, unified plan. VR has begun to take other steps, including revising its policies and procedures, in order to implement WIOA.

Vocational Rehabilitation coordinates with state and local education officials to help students with disabilities pursue employment. VR aids students in their transition from school

to employment, higher education or vocational training. At a local level, VR works to establish and maintain relationships with school officials. This promotes eligible students' referral to VR. In turn, VR delivers and coordinates delivery of vocational rehabilitation services. In addition, VR operates several programs and carries out numerous activities to help youth with disabilities successfully transition from school to work.



Oceanside

Transition activities

Youth Transition Program

YTP is VR's enhanced transition program for youth with disabilities. In 2013, the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities recognized YTP as one of the world's model programs for youth.

YTP is present in 99 school districts across Oregon. VR, the Department of Education (ODE), the University of Oregon (UO) and local school districts jointly implement it. YTP has two objectives:

- The first is to improve post-school transition outcomes for youth with disabilities. This prepares them for competitive community employment or career-related post-secondary education or training. School transition specialists and VR counselors provide YTP services to help youth obtain and maintain successful post-school outcomes. Services include career exploration, transition planning, job placement and follow-up.
- The second objective is to increase Oregon schools' capacity to provide transition services and supports. This includes helping schools refine and expand these services and supports. VR contracts with a University of Oregon technical assistance team to provide training and expert advice to school transition specialists and VR counseling staff.

Beginning in 2013, VR developed and implemented YTP 2.0, the newest version of the program. Under YTP 2.0, participating school districts have added the following elements to increase their YTP's effectiveness:

- Motivational interviewing. YTP students learn to better understand what motivates them and how to make informed choices as they plan and engage in activities related to their future employment and education. VR uses a collaborative, goal-oriented communication style to strengthen personal motivation.
- Summary of performance. School districts use a student performance summary to provide VR with refined information about students. This helps VR better identify and address students' vocational goals and supports.
- Benefits planning. School districts are encouraged to refer YTP students to VR's Work Incentives Network (WIN). WIN is a benefits counseling program. WIN helps people with disabilities plan and use their public benefits to obtain and maintain employment, and make informed financial decisions

Over federal year 2014, YTP served 1,244 students with disabilities in more than 150 urban and rural high schools. Of these students:

- 498 developed individualized plans for employment.
- 80 percent of those exiting school were either employed and/or enrolled in a post-secondary school.
- 65 percent of those who exited the program were employed upon exit. They were working an average of 28 hours per week at an average wage of \$9.20 an hour.
- 60 percent were employed 12 months after completing YTP. They were working an average of 30 hours per week at an average wage of \$10 an hour.
- 19 percent were in post-secondary training or education. They were enrolled an average of 24 hours per week 12 months after leaving YTP.

Project ACCESS

In 2007, five Lane County high schools, the University of Oregon and VR began to implement Project ACCESS. This U.S. Department of Education demonstration project's goal has been to improve transition outcomes for youth with disabilities. Vocational counselors were placed in three high schools and two alternative schools. The counselors work with students in ninth and 10th grades, which is earlier than other transition programs.

ACCESS tested two premises. First, ACCESS tested the premise that students with disabilities benefit from starting transition activities earlier than usual. Second, ACCESS also tested the premise that vocational counselors in schools and classrooms will:

- Strengthen the partnerships between school special education staff and VR counselors;
- Enhance the counselors' contact with students; and
- Lead to better outcomes.

To date, ACCESS data supports the model. The final report on ACCESS in the Lane County high schools was submitted late in 2014. This occurred after VR received a grant extension to continue ACCESS-related activities.

As part of the extension, VR contracted with two experts on Native American tribal youth and education to tailor and refine the ACCESS curriculum for use by each of Oregon's Native American tribal vocational rehabilitation programs. The goal is to help tribal youth with disabilities. Oregon tribal VR directors served as curriculum advisors. Other tribal VR staff and tribal members, ODE and DHS tribal liaisons and UO also gave input. The tribal VR programs and VR are now exploring how best to implement and build on the completed curriculum.

Other youth transition activities

Outreach to deaf and hard-of-hearing youth

VR and Oregon's School for the Deaf are jointly sponsoring regional outreach activities to connect with special education teachers in public schools across the state. The mission is to identify and engage deaf and hard-of-hearing students in transition activities at a younger age.

Early Assessment and Support Alliance (EASA)

Oregon VR continued its partnership with the EASA program to identify and support youth (aged 18–30) experiencing the first symptoms of psychosis. The goal is to minimize these episodes' long-term effects. EASA provides participating youth with needed skills training, case management and treatment. EASA also offers wraparound services, such as housing assistance and medication management. These services help these younger adults pursue education and employment.

Adult initiatives

Latino Project

VR and Easter Seals sponsor the Latino Project. The program seeks to overcome employment barriers in a culturally sensitive manner. It provides VR participants with adult education on culture and English as a second language, skills training, peer-to-peer mentoring, job preparation and placement. The Latino Project has expanded from Multnomah County. It now encompasses the Gresham, Beaverton, Clackamas, Salem and Woodburn areas.

Evidence-based supported employment

VR continued to partner with the Oregon Supported Employment Center for Excellence (OSECE) and the Oregon Health Authority Addictions and Mental Health Division to provide the Individual Placement and Supports (IPS) Program. This is an evidence-

based supported employment program for individuals with serious and persistent mental illness. The program has expanded its presence to 32 of Oregon's 36 counties. As a part of health care transformation, Oregon's coordinated care organizations recognize the benefits of working as a means to recovery for individuals with mental illness.

Tribal programs

VR has partnerships and cooperative agreements with all five Oregon tribal Vocational Rehabilitation 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.

This past year, the Oregon tribes hosted a national conference to enhance tribal/state service delivery to federally recognized Native Americans with disabilities who face barriers to employment. VR also continued to provide technical assistance and staff training to the tribal programs. Numerous tribal VR staff attended VR's Counselor Training Program and VR's 2014 In-service Training Conference.

Employment First

Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) is Oregon's rights protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities. In January 2012, DRO and other law firms filed suit in United States District Court against the state. Plaintiffs alleged in that suit that the state violated the

ADA rights of a group of individuals working in sheltered workshops by not giving them access to supported employment services. The U.S. Department of Justice joined the lawsuit against the state. The lawsuit is pending.

On April 10, 2013, Governor John Kitzhaber issued Executive Order 13-04. The order supports the DHS Employment First policy, which was issued in 2008. That policy commits the department and its programs to making employment the first and preferred option in serving persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Employment First partners include:

- The Oregon Department of Education;
- The Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities;
- The DHS Employment First Unit;
- The DHS Developmental Disabilities Program; and
- VR.

In 2014, the partners continued implementing the Employment First policy and Executive Order 13-04. Noteworthy accomplishments and activities include:

- A major increase in the number of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities seeking employment between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014. During this period:
 - 2,238 individuals with I/DD used VR services, a 17 percent increase over the preceding 12 months.

- 11,373 individuals with I/DD used ODDS employment services, a 24.6 percent increase over the preceding period.
- Development and adoption of policy and procedures to facilitate implementation of Executive Order 13-04. This included a new supported employment policy for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Increased capacity to deliver supported employment services to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities through:
 - Hiring eight vocational rehabilitation counselors to exclusively serve this population and give technical assistance to other VR staff to provide I/DD supported employment. Resources targeted to implement the Employment First policy funded the additional positions.
 - Providing staff training and support. This included holding eight regional supported employment trainings for VR field staff. More than 175 staff attended the trainings. VR, the Developmental Disabilities Program and the Employment First Unit have since developed a second round of training. This training is scheduled for delivery in 2015.

Training and conferences

Rehabilitation training

VR maintains a comprehensive system of personnel development and training. The system ensures that VR's staff has the skills, knowledge and abilities to best address Oregonians with disabilities' vocational needs. A variety of staff development and training approaches meet the complex needs of those we serve.

New staff, new responsibilities and implementation of the Oregon Employment First initiative increased both the amount and variety of VR training in 2014. This trend will undoubtedly continue.

Over the past year, development and training activities included:

- VR's annual statewide in-service conference — Looking Ahead: Strategies for Better Outcomes. Nearly 500 people attended the 2014 in-service. This is the highest number and greatest variety of attendees in the conference's history. More than 30 presentations were made on a variety of issues and topics.

The 2014 Annual In-service continued the use of topic tracks first used in 2013. These included dedicated tracks of training for managers, counselors and support staff. It also included tracks of training on specific issues, including youth transition and working with individuals with personality disorders. The in-service featured national-level presenters, including Scott Stossel and Michael Beers.

- The Youth Transition Program 2.0 Access Summer Academy, a YTP Fall Regional Training and a YTP Statewide Conference last winter.
- Targeted trainings on autism spectrum disorder, motivational interviewing skill development, working with specific populations, and supported employment.
- VR job vendor trainings on job placement, job creation and carving.
- Peer-to-peer case management as well as clinical supervision and practice management for VR managers.

Conferences

VR supported many conferences and other events in line with our 2014 goals.

These included:

- Oregon Disability Mega Conference. This cross-disability event brought 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.
- Oregon Supported Employment Center for Excellence.
- Annual YTP Conference. This statewide event focused on youth transition issues and best practice sharing.
- Northwest Symposium on Rehabilitation and Deafness.

General

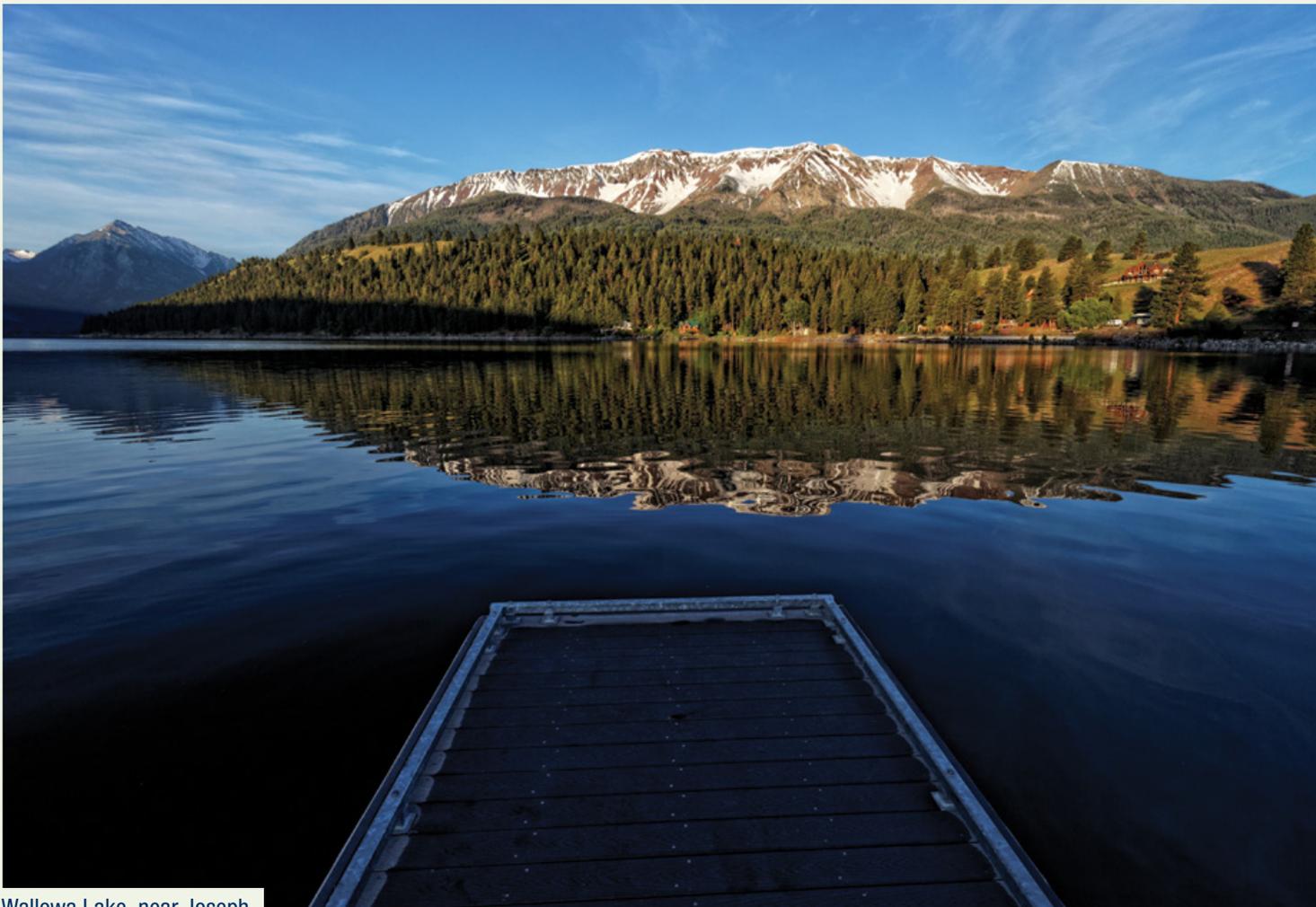
The primary emphasis in Oregon VR training for 2014 has been supporting the execution of the Governor's Executive Order and the Employment First policy. This is being done through training programs designed to support a more collaborative approach to employment for persons with disabilities.

We are building greater capacity in a variety of programs such as customized employment, the Employment Outcomes Professionals (EOP) II training, and Youth Transition Program (YTP) conference and trainings. This effort will increase in scope and quantity as we develop and institute the changes and refinements needed to fulfill the Workforce

Innovation and Opportunities Act and reauthorized Rehabilitation Act.

In 2014, the RSA Training Grant award was renewed for an additional year. The grant helps fund the annual in-service and other VR training efforts. The grant will end Sept. 30, 2015.

Continued training support from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) will undergo major changes under the newly reauthorized Rehabilitation Act. We hope to increase our collaboration with other VR programs in the region to offset the anticipated decline in federal training resources.



Wallowa Lake, near Joseph

Other major VR initiatives and activities

Workforce coordination

Before WIOA passed, the Governor and the Oregon legislature called for better alignment and streamlining of Oregon's workforce system. The Governor's office and the Oregon Workforce Investment Board led this effort. The Oregon workforce system has made progress in its redesign efforts over the past year. WIOA's passage has bolstered these efforts.

Moving forward, VR will collaborate with its workforce partners to ensure that people with disabilities have better and more meaningful access to the workforce system to obtain and maintain employment. VR is currently working with its workforce partners on several initiatives, including Certified Work Ready Communities, Sector Strategies and WIOA implementation.

Benefits counseling

The Work Incentives Network (WIN) is VR's work incentives and benefits planning program. Through WIN, individuals get information and help using work incentives to obtain, maintain or increase employment. WIN also helps them apply for and receive critical services and benefits, including health care. Loss and fear of loss of needed benefits and services is a significant barrier to employment for people with disabilities.

VR contracts with six Centers for Independent Living for 11 work incentives counselors (WICs) to provide benefits counseling to VR-eligible individuals throughout Oregon. WIN Central trains, certifies and supports the WICs. WIN Central is a small administrative and technical assistance unit that is part of VR administration.

Over the year, WIN:

- Delivered benefits counseling services to more than 1,800 persons with disabilities;
- Held four one-day Understanding SSA Benefits and Employment trainings attended by more than 125 VR partners and providers;
- Partnered with the Oregon Supported Employment Center for Excellence (OSECE) to provide three two-day benefits counseling training sessions to 38 mental health services providers. The Oregon Employment Learning Network (OELN) and WIN provided four two-day training sessions to 49 developmental disability service providers.
- Co-presented with the DHS Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) Program at the Third Annual Conference for Service Coordinators and Personal Agents. WIN made four presentations at the two-day conference to disability service providers about benefits planning and work incentives.

Closing the Employment Gap

VR's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant ended in December 2013. Over the preceding eight years, the grant funded two major projects and many initiatives and strategies. These efforts addressed barriers to employment of people with disabilities. In 2014, the Governor's Office, the Department of Human Services and VR continued to implement strategies developed as part of the grant's last initiative, "Closing the Employment Gap."

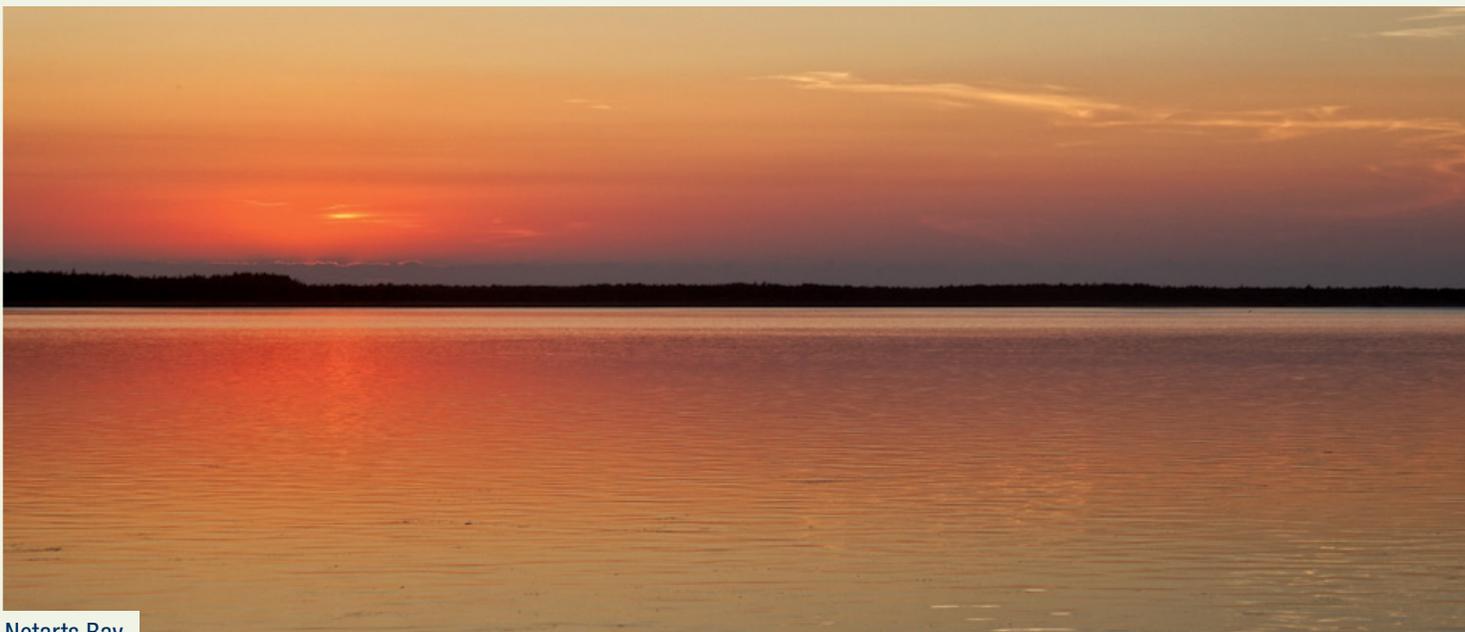
- The state is continuing to explore becoming a model employer of people with disabilities. Several other states have become model employers.
- The HIRE Gauge was completed. This online tool informs employers about the incentives available to them to hire individuals with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups. The HIRE Gauge will be used to increase hiring of the target populations.
- Demographic profiles on the populations served by each of Oregon's community care organizations were completed. The results were shared with the Oregon Health

Authority and regional workforce officials. This information's goal is to help community care organizations and workforce programs plan and deliver a more integrated approach to employment and health.

Ticket to Work

Oregon VR continued to participate in the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work (TTW) and Cost Reimbursement (CR) programs. Both programs reimburse VR and other qualified agencies and organizations for costs in helping Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities get jobs.

The Oregon Health Authority Addictions and Mental Health Division and VR started the DHS as an Employment Network Initiative in 2010. VR developed a pilot with 10 community mental health programs. The programs provide evidence-based supported employment services. VR helps the community programs process TTW payment claims. The pilot has since become a continuing effort. There are now 15 participating community mental health

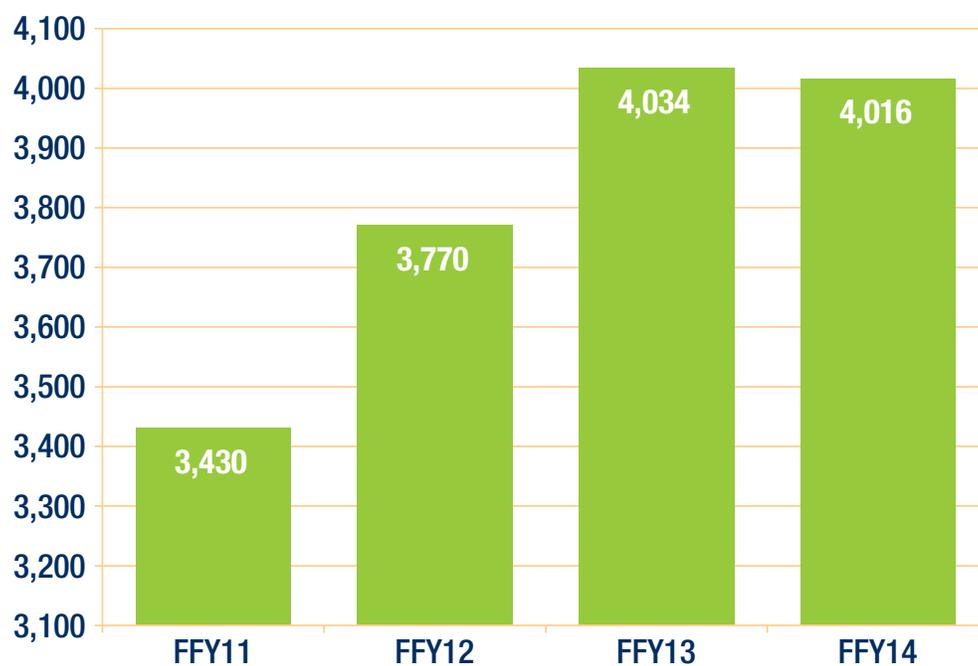


Netarts Bay

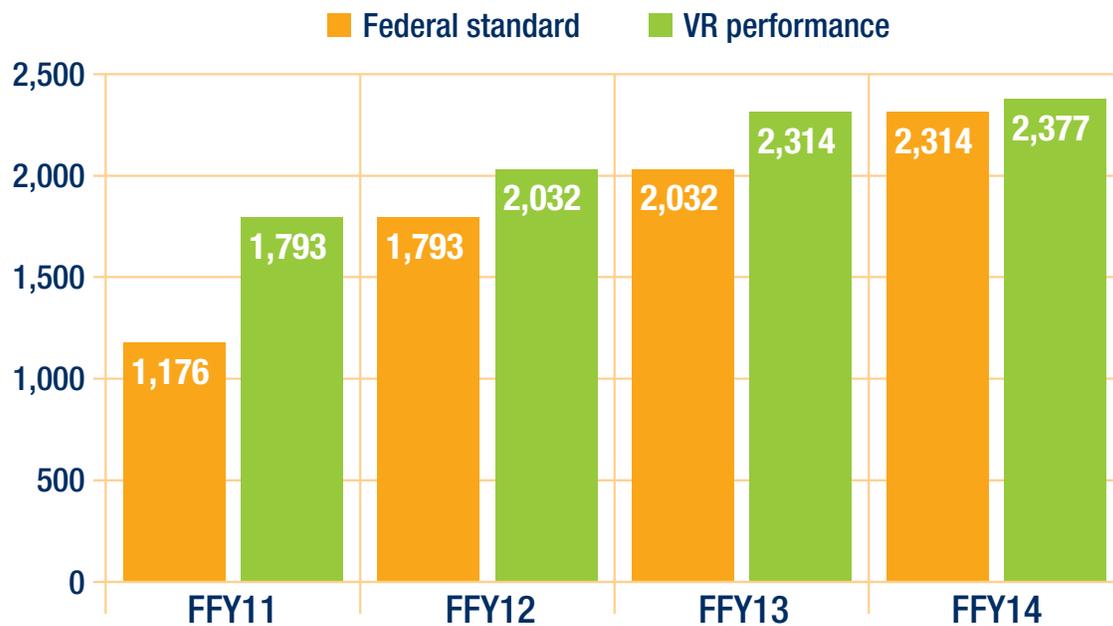
VR outcomes, measures and demographic graphs

Federal fiscal year 2014 performance

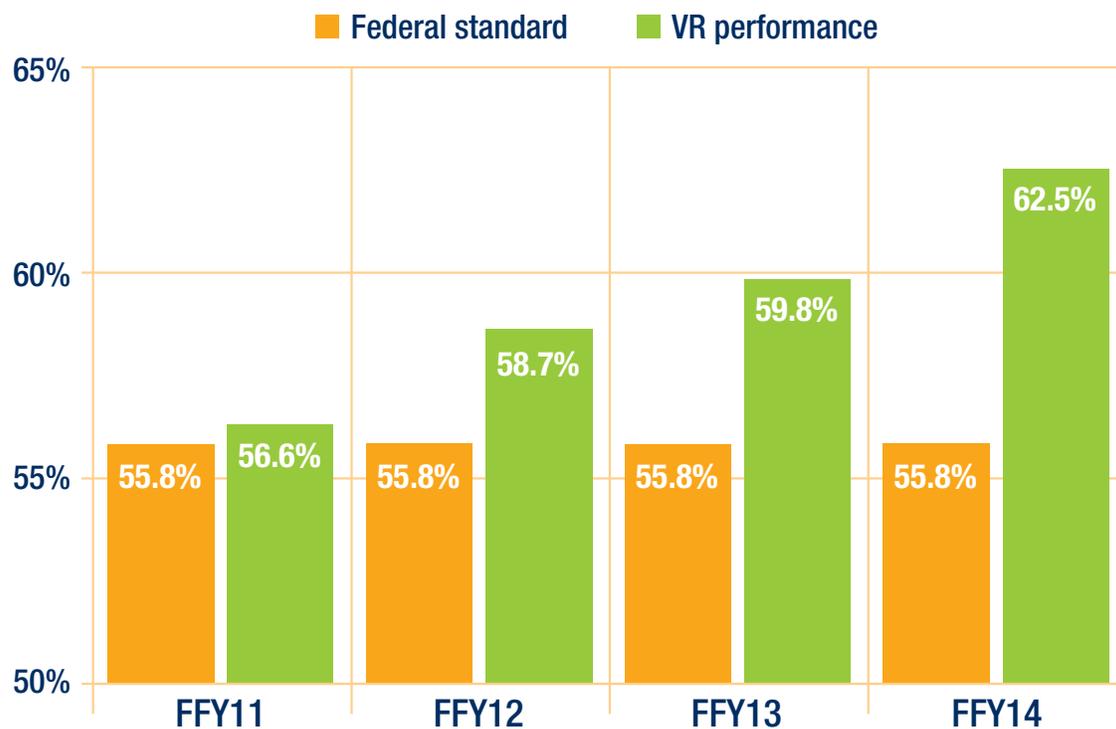
Number entering plan, by federal fiscal year



Cases with an employment outcome

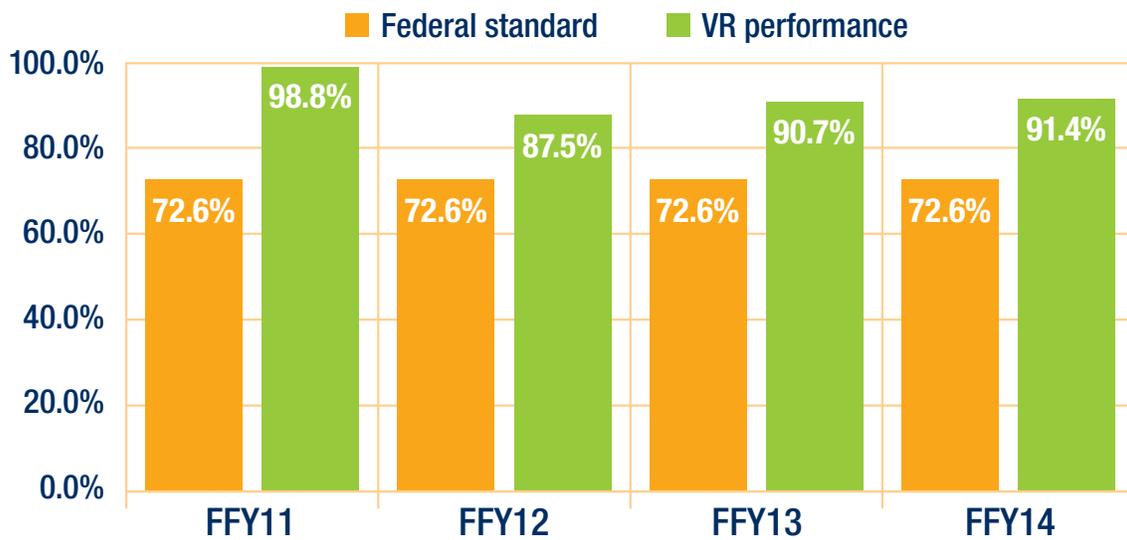


Federal standard: percent of employment outcome

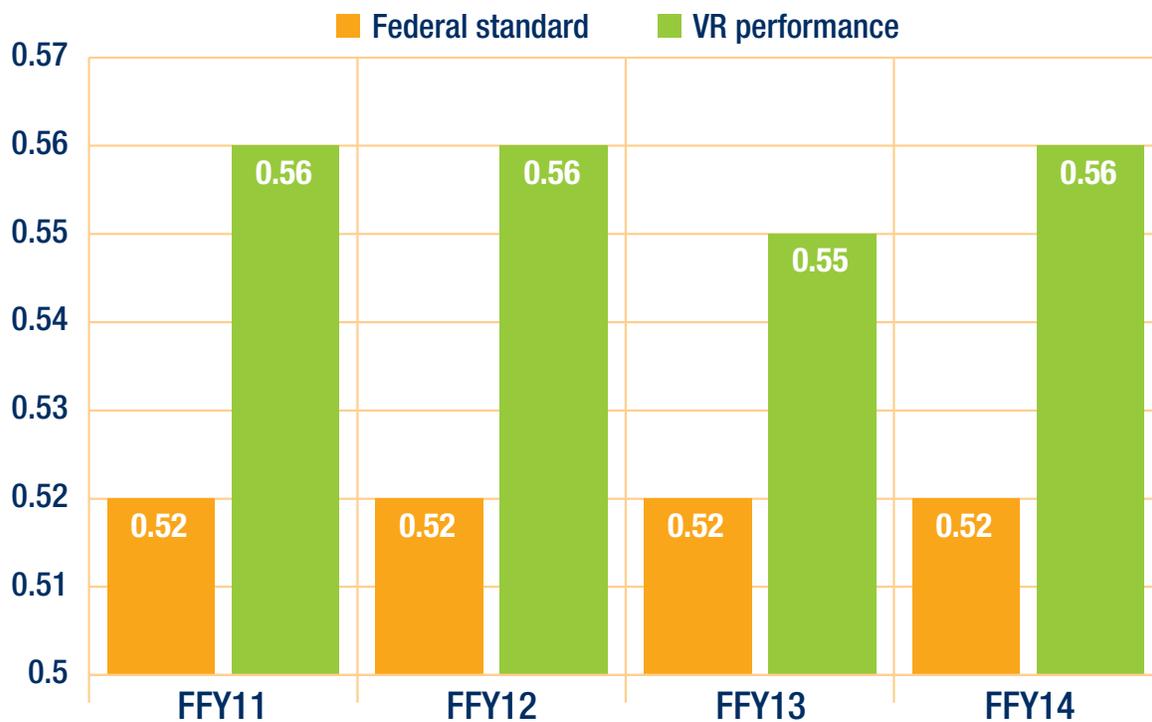


Federal fiscal year 2014 performance (continued)

Federal standard: percent with competitive employment

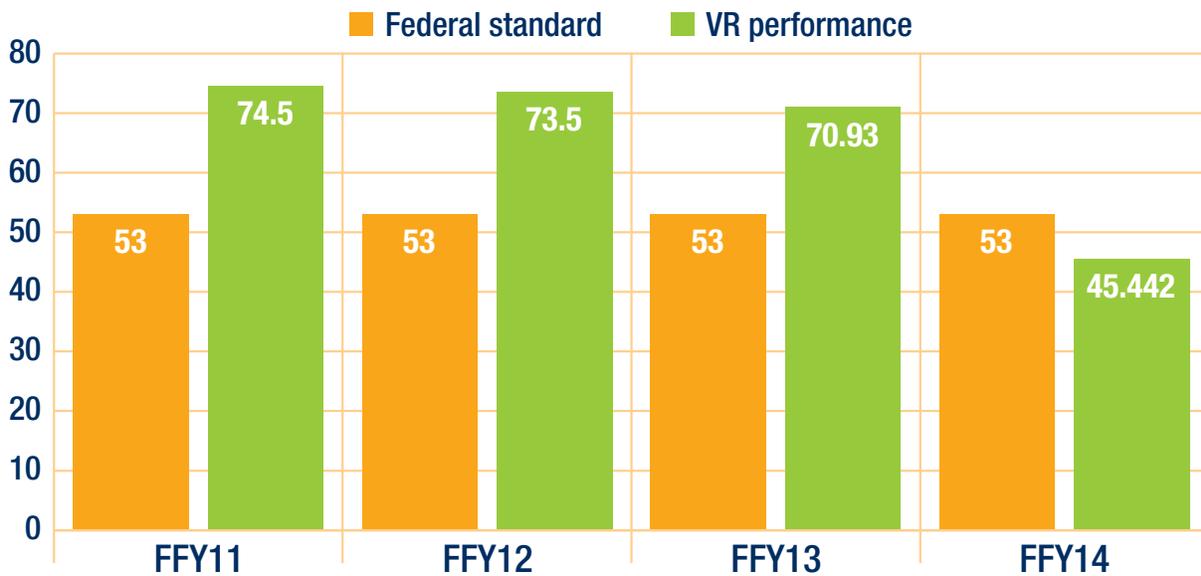


Earnings ratio*



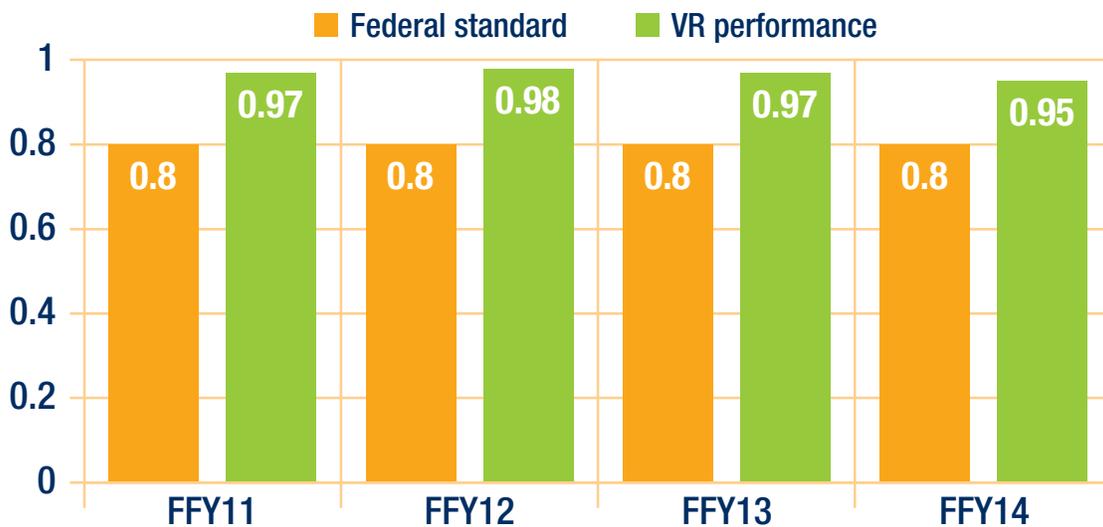
* Ratio of average state wage compared to average wage of closed cases with employment outcome greater than or equal to minimum wage

Federal standard: self-support*



* The percent of clients who leave VR with income as the primary source of self-support minus the percent of clients who enter VR with self-support as the primary source of income

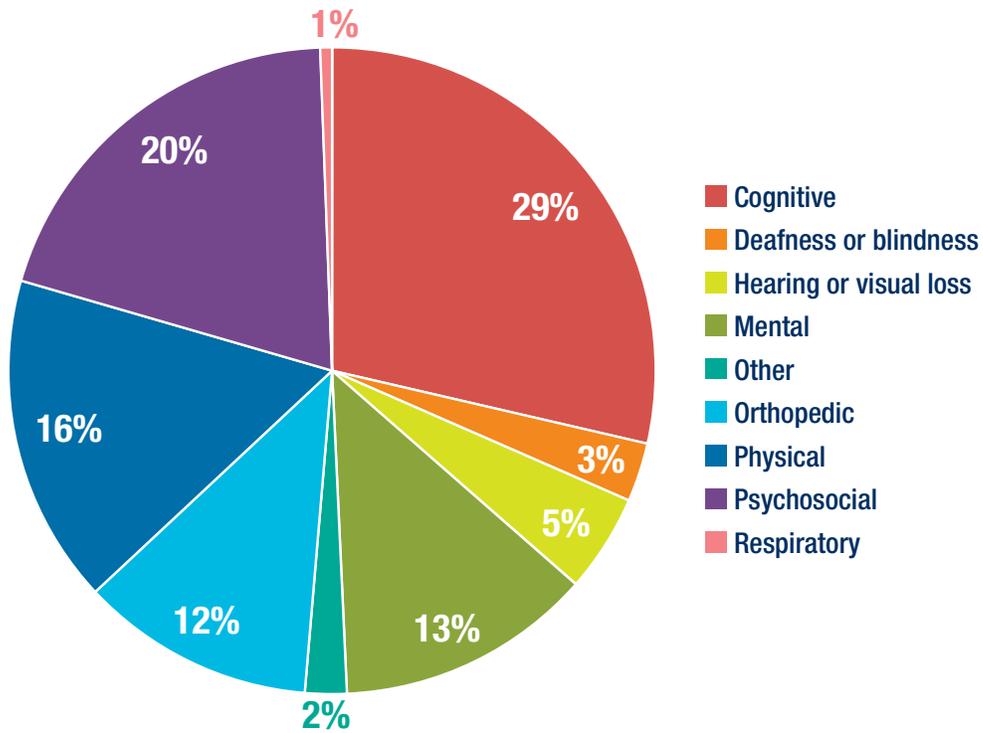
Federal standard: access to services to minorities*



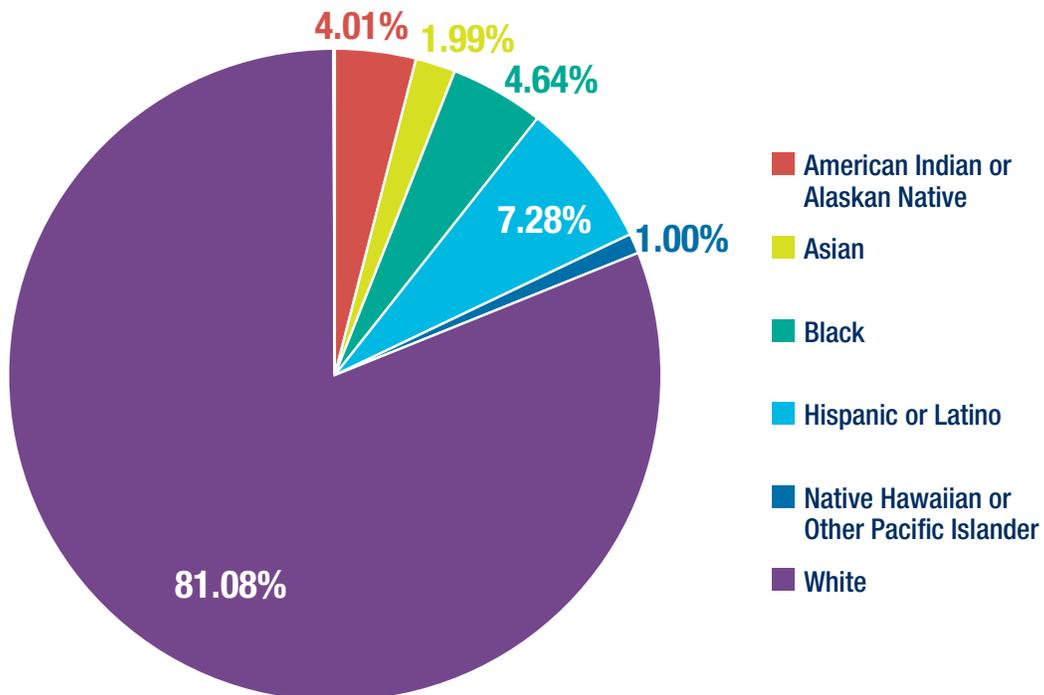
* Ratio of minority service rate compared to non-minority service rate

Client demographics

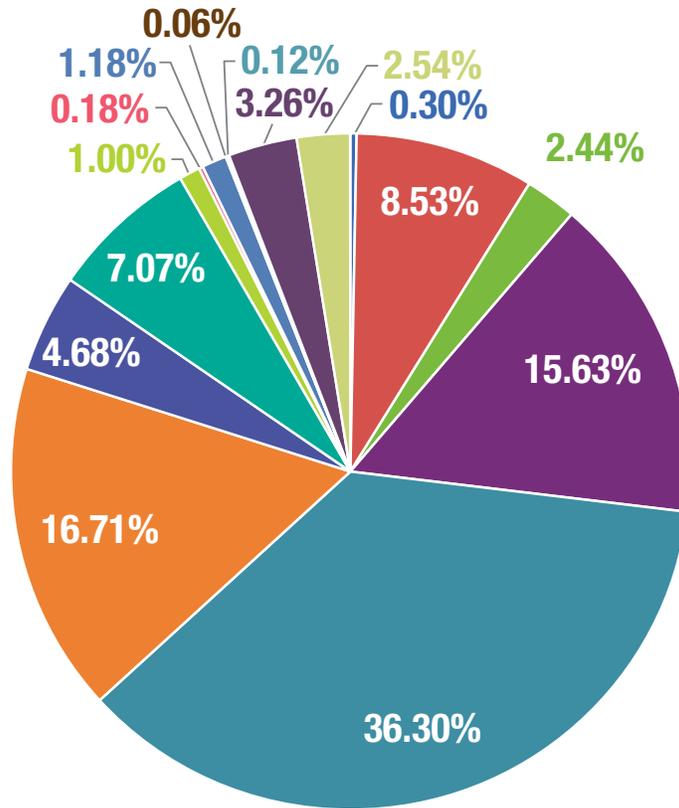
Percent of clients served, by primary disability, FFY14



Percent of clients served, by ethnicity/race, FFY14



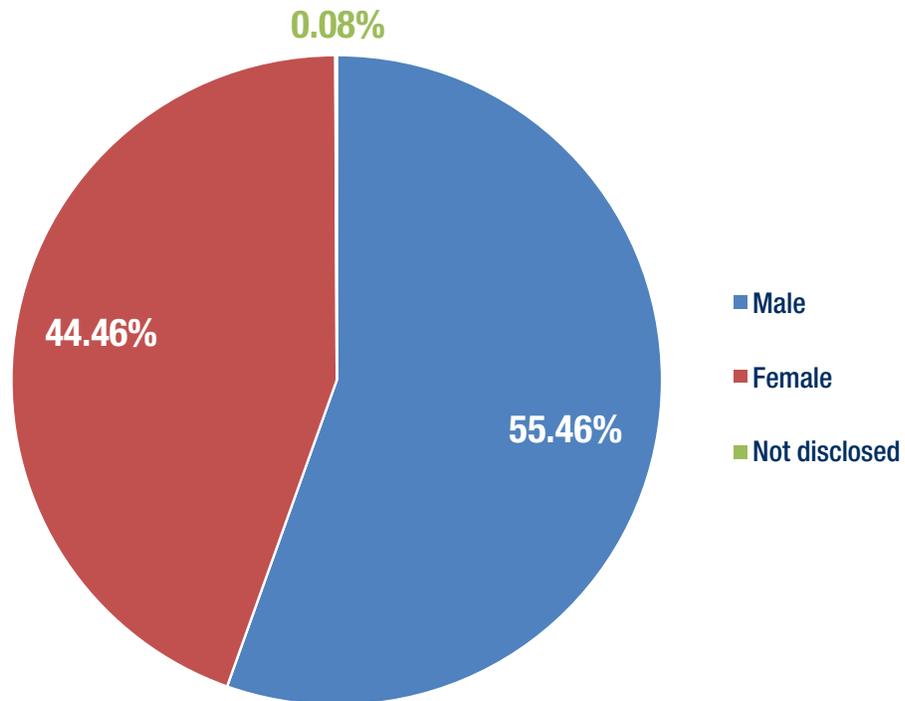
Percent of clients served, by primary disability, FFY14



- No formal schooling
- Special ed (completion or in attendance)
- Elementary education (grades 1-8)
- Secondary education, no HS diploma (grades 9-12)
- High school graduate or equivalency certificate
- Post-secondary education, no degree or cert
- AA degree or VoTec certificate
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Degree above master's (Ph.D, Ed.D, J.D)
- Master's degree or higher
- Occupational credential beyond grad degree work
- Occupational credential beyond undergrad degree
- Post-secondary academic degree, AA degree
- Vocational/technical certificate

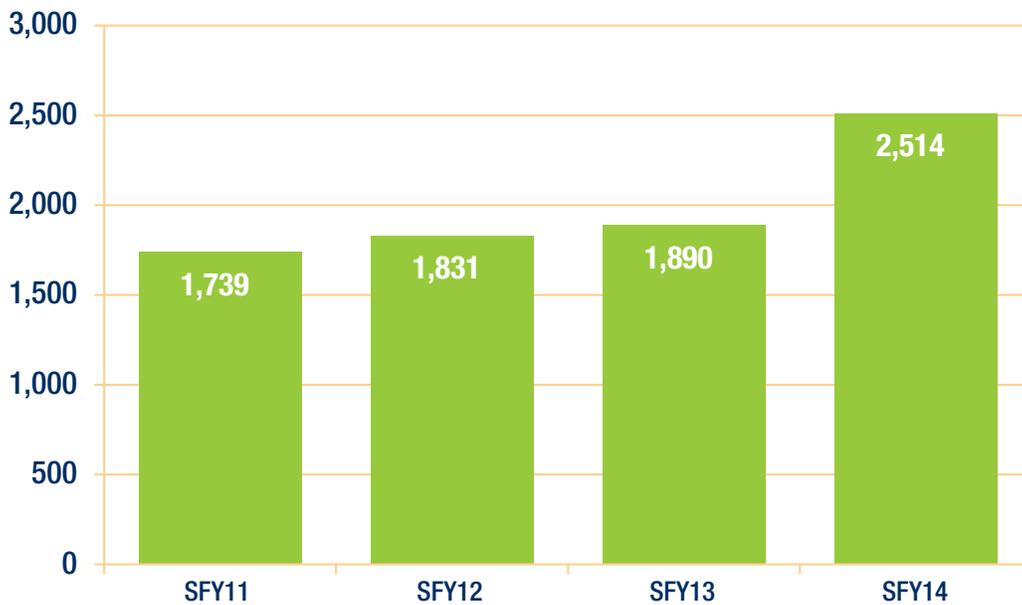
Client demographics (continued)

Percent of clients served, by ethnicity/race, FFY14

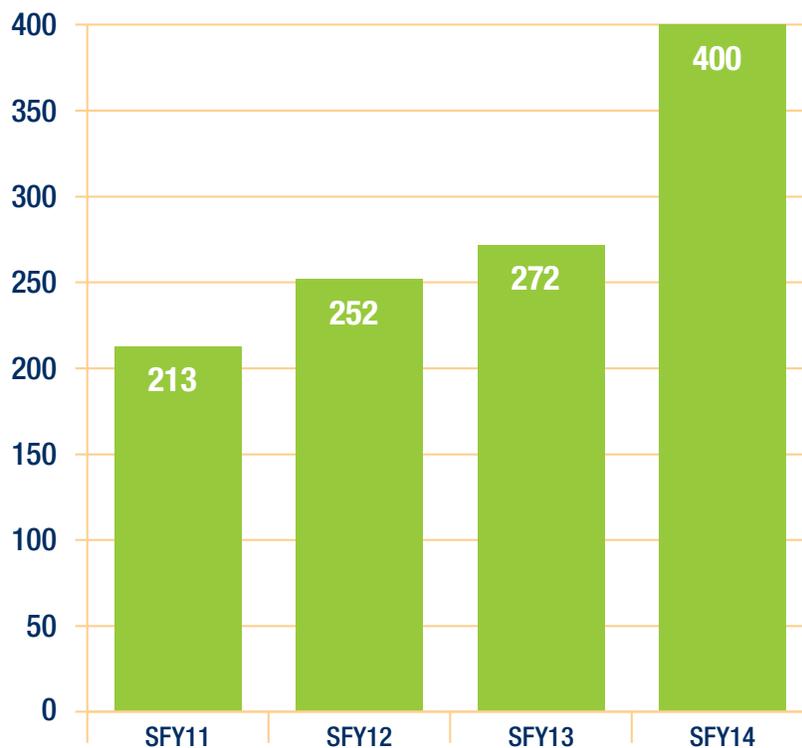


IDD employment

Number of clients with intellectual and developmental disabilities served, by state fiscal year

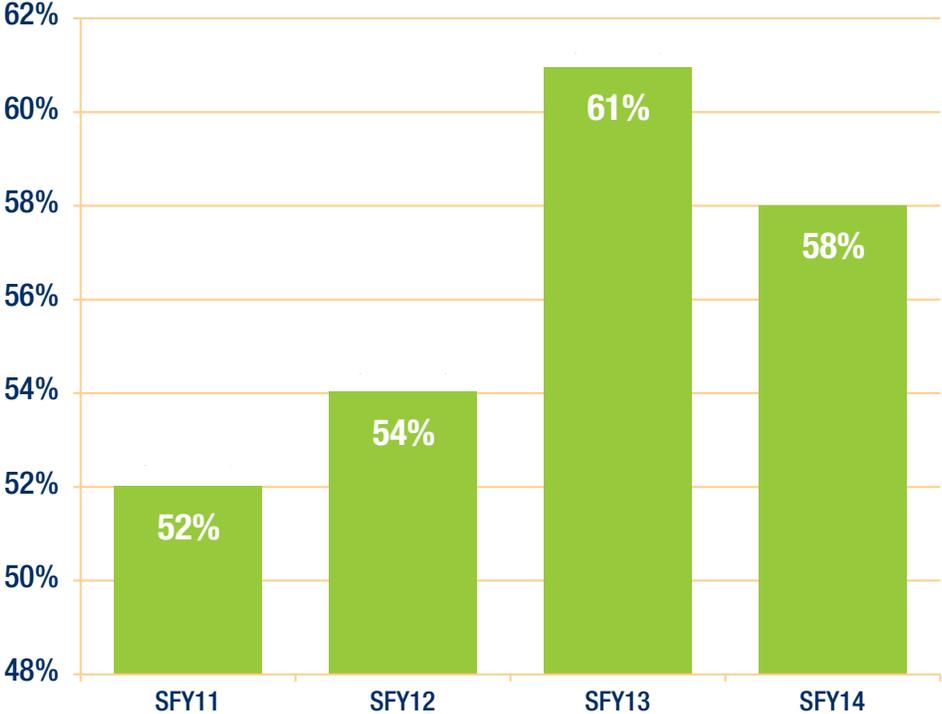


Number of individuals with IDD closed with a rehabilitation, by state fiscal year

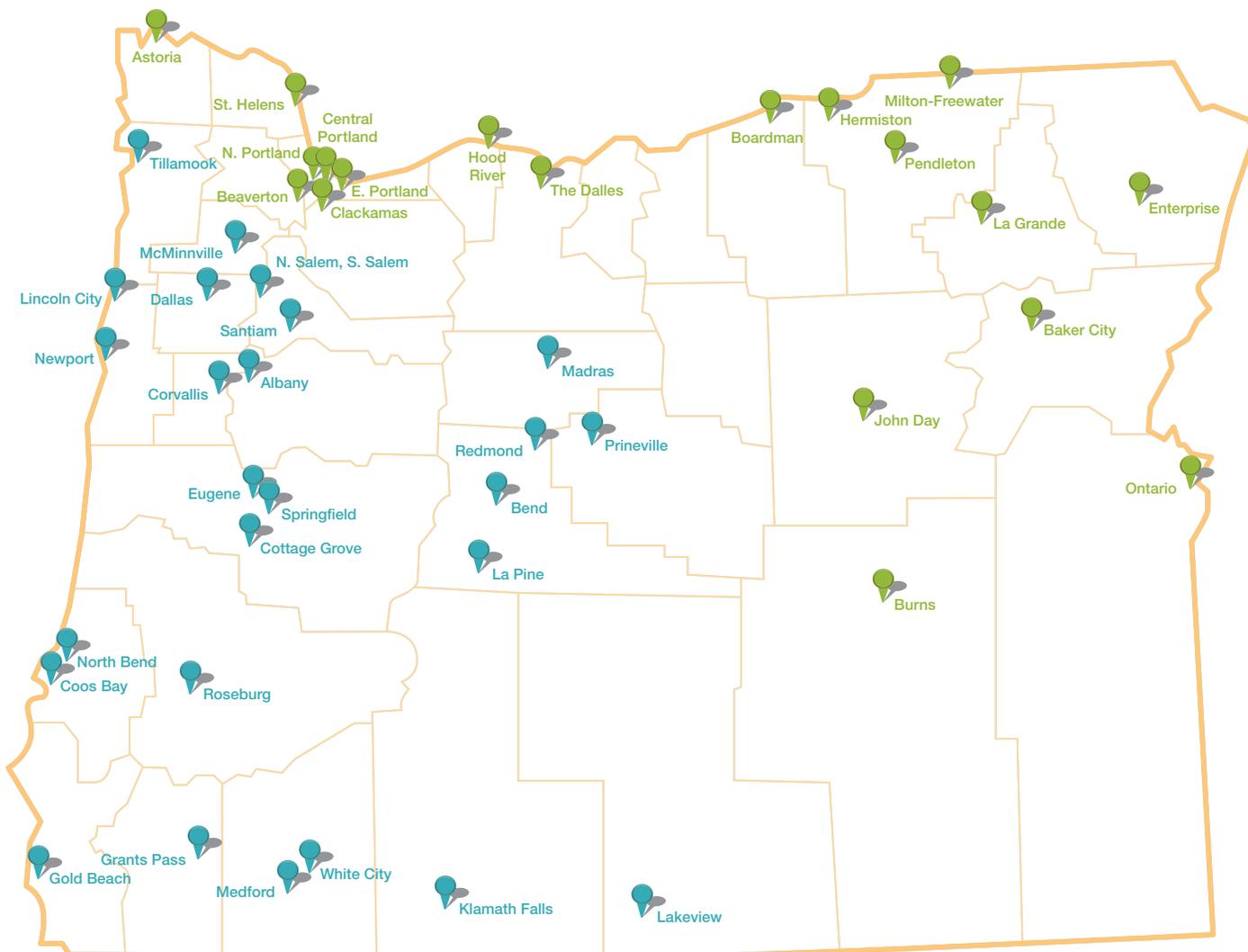


IDD employment (continued)

Percent of IDD clients rehabilitated, by state fiscal year



VR branches and field service managers 2014



Field service managers



Robert Costello



Joe Miller

Field offices

ALBANY Peter Norman 1400 Queen Ave SE Suite 107 Albany, OR 97322 541-967-2022 (voice); 541-967-2154 (fax)	CORVALLIS Peter Norman 545 SW 2nd St Suite G Corvallis, OR 97333-4466 541-757-4131 (voice); 541-757-4241 (fax)
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Acknowledgements

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

- Stephaine Parrish Taylor for her passionate advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities and the VR program and her contributions to the SRC over the past 10 years. The council wishes her the very best in retirement.
- Sandy Reese for her dedication and outstanding service during two terms of service.
- VR consumers who agreed to share their success stories and VR and Transition partners who submitted stories and take pride in their consumers' success.
- The Technical Assistance Continuing Education (TACE) Center for outstanding support and partnership for many years.
- The Executive Committee for its excellent leadership.
- Ed Ruttledge for his generosity in sharing his outstanding scenic photographs in this report.

Quarterly meetings

2015 | OREGON STATE
REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Feb. 6, 2015 Salem

May 1, 2015 Portland

Aug. 7, 2015 Medford

Nov. 6, 2015 Newport



Front row, left to right: Ryan Green, Anne Burns, Renata Beck, Chungfan Ni, Sandy Reese, Jeanne Barter

Middle row, left to right: David Abramowitz, Jeri Cohen, Sherry Stock, Laurie Brooks, Leslie Riggs, Roberta Dunn

Back row, left to right: Rhoda Hunter, Tammy Guest, Ted Wenk, Norm Underwood, Tom Giles

Absent: Mark Foster, Heidi Dirkse-Graw, Clayton Rees, Sally Simich, Stephaine Taylor



2014 Annual Report

**OREGON STATE
REHABILITATION
COUNCIL**

*To request additional copies
of this report or for more
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Salem, OR 97301-1120
503-945-6256
1-877-277-0513
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www.orsrc.org

Those who are deaf, hard-of-hearing
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VR and SRC staff by relay.

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DHS 9859 (12/2014)