



# Vocational Rehabilitation & Oregon Commission for the Blind

Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Keith Ozols, VR Director

# Outline

- I. VR and OCB in the Workforce System
- II. Who we are
- III. VR Programs
- IV. Closing



# Oregon's Public Workforce System

Governor and Legislature

Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB)

Oregon Commissioner of Labor

Bureau of Labor and Industries

- Registered Apprenticeship

Oregon Employment Department (Agency)

- Employment Service for Job Seeker and Business
- Veterans
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker
- Unemployment Insurance (RESEA)

Higher Education Coordinating Commission (Commission and Agency)

- Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Workforce Development Services
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Services

Oregon Commission for the Blind

Department of Human Services (Agency)

- Vocational Rehabilitation Program
- Self-Sufficiency Programs (TANF and SNAP)
- Senior Employment Program (SCSEP)

Commission for the Blind

- Commission for the Blind Workforce Program

Local Workforce Development Boards

WorkSource Oregon (WSO) Centers

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# Who we are

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Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Oregon Commission for the Blind (OCB) provide services to Oregonians with disabilities so they can achieve and maintain employment and advance in their careers.



As we emerge from the pandemic, VR and OCB play a vital role in ensuring equitable recovery for people with disabilities, helping to address the unique barriers to employment that people with disabilities face.

# Why we do our work

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- Communities thrive when everyone who wants to work can find employment.
- Individuals thrive, too. They can pay their bills, be happier and healthier, and contribute to their communities.
- VR and OCB help people with all types of disabilities find jobs in supportive organizations, change careers as their abilities change and advance in their careers — so they can enjoy the dignity and independence that employment brings.



# Advancing economic opportunity for people with disabilities

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Across all age groups, people with disabilities are far less likely to be employed than those with no disability. Of those who are employed, they are less likely to earn a living wage.\*

VR provides access to training, education and employment supports to people with disabilities, helping bridge the gap in employment outcomes.

## Labor Force Participation in Oregon in 2019\*\*



\* From [Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation 2021 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Report](#)

\*\* Data from 2019 U.S. Census Bureau



# Outline

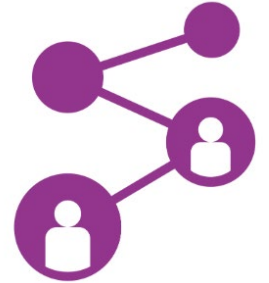
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# Our programs

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**Core  
Vocational  
Rehabilitation  
Services**

**Youth  
Transition  
Services**

**Inclusive  
Career  
Advanceme  
nt Program  
(ICAP)**

**Services to  
Businesses**

# Core Vocational Rehabilitation Services



# Core VR services: Why it matters

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- Everyone benefits from the independence, resilience and community engagement that employment brings.
- **People with disabilities face specific barriers to finding employment** that matches their abilities — such as stigmas about their disability and lack of understanding about the supports available to businesses.
- Vocational Rehabilitation helps people with all types of disabilities find jobs in supportive organizations so they can enjoy dignity and independence.



# Core Services: Overview

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Orientation

Intake and  
eligibility

Individualized  
Plan for  
Employment

Training, tools  
and skills

Job search

Get hired

# Core services: Key partners

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Coordination with organizations that serve people with disabilities is essential in reaching all Oregonians with disabilities.

- Private businesses
- State Rehabilitation Council
- Community-based organizations
- Local Workforce Development Boards
- Oregon Tribal Nations
- Oregon Commission for the Blind
- Higher Education Coordinating Commission
- Job Placement Services Contractors
- Non-profit organizations
- WorkSource Oregon



# Meet David

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“I tell others, don’t give up on the system. The system works.”

David had a good job with a computer company that allowed him to support his family.

After a serious car accident, he couldn’t fully use his left arm and hand. He wasn’t sure how he would keep working.

He met with a VR Counselor and set a goal to complete his degree. VR got him tools he would need while in school.

Through VR’s connection with WorkSource Lane, David accessed unemployment benefits and financial aid.

**David graduated with a Bachelor’s degree and got a job earning double the salary he made before the accident.**

# Youth Transition Services





# VR Youth Services: Overview

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- **Eligibility:** Anyone who is VR eligible or receiving services through their school district under an Individual Education Plan or 504 plan.
- VR funds **transition specialists in schools** who work directly with students in over 200 high schools. VR also has a **dedicated youth team** to serve students directly who do not have a transition specialist in their school or community.

## Services include:

Career exploration

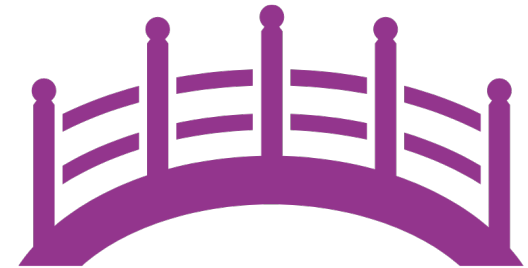
Interview practice

Workplace readiness

Self-advocacy

College guidance counseling

Paid work experiences



# Meet Kevin

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“My job is super good. They give me a lot of help.”

Kevin completed a paid summer internship at Sandy River Marketing.

Gresham High School’s youth transition coordinator helped Kevin prepare by:

- Learning to use the bus to get to work
- Preparing for his interview
- Completing hiring paperwork
- Hiring a job coach to accompany Kevin at work to help him stay on task.

The Youth Transition Program will support Kevin through age 24. If he wants to pursue post-secondary education, training or a certification program, we will be there to support him.

# Inclusive Career Advancement Program



# ICAP: Key partners

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Strong partnerships make ICAP a success. ICAP's four core partners are:

- **Vocational Rehabilitation**
- **Oregon Commission for the Blind**
- **Portland Community College** and all of Oregon's 17 community colleges
- **Cornell University** provides training, evaluation and technical support

We also partner with schools, businesses, organizations and government agencies who have relationships with people with disabilities who are interested in training and gaining employment.

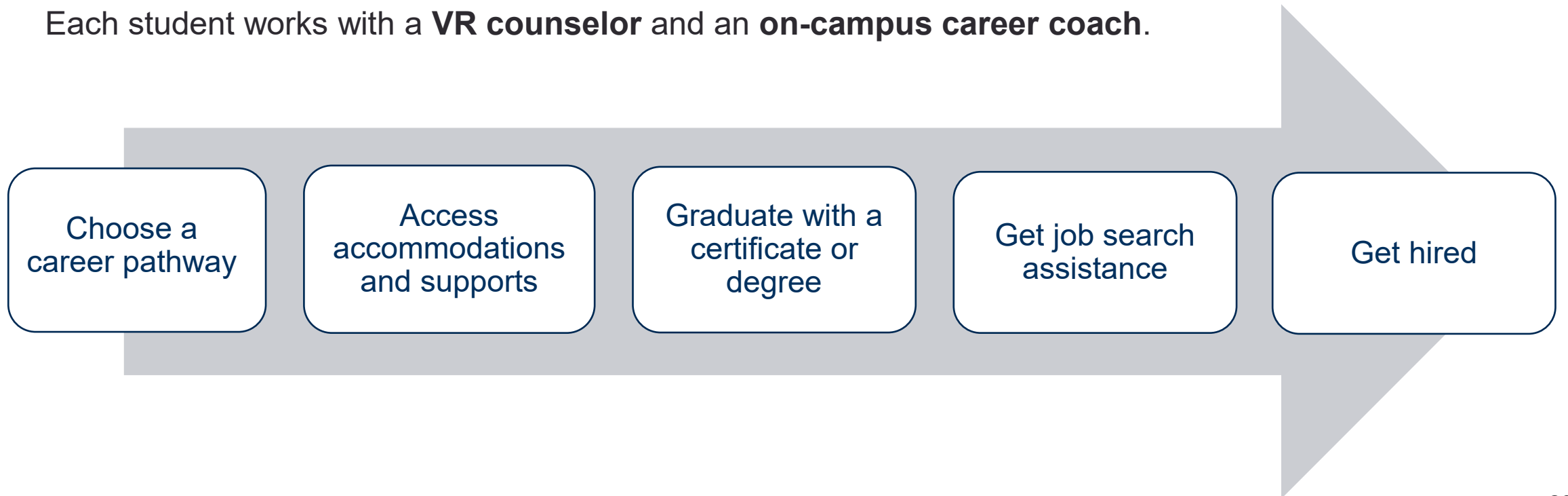


# ICAP: Overview

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**ICAP is available for eligible VR clients** who set a career goal to complete a short-term, credentialed training program at one of Oregon's participating community colleges.

Each student works with a **VR counselor** and an **on-campus career coach**.



# Meet Jayda

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“If you think you can't do it,  
you can!”

Jayda is a 19-year-old ICAP student from John Day, and the first in her family to go to college.

She is working on a credential in Early Childhood Education at Treasure Valley Community College. “I just really like working with kids.”

Dyslexia, she says, “makes me a slow reader.” Text-to-speech assistive technology helps her write her college papers.

She is proud of her first quarter grades and excited about the future.

# Services to Businesses





# Services to businesses: Why it matters

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Oregon businesses need reliable employees, and Oregonians with disabilities want opportunities to work and earn a living. VR is a resource and we have a dual-customer model.

- Connecting businesses with skilled workers.
- Partnering with businesses to spread the word about all-abilities hiring events.
- Providing training on cultivating an inclusive culture that attracts and retains diverse talent.
- Offering tips, tools, information and resources to promote disability inclusion in the workforce.



# Services to businesses: Overview

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Make referrals and introductions to workforce partners



Recruit and refer qualified applicants to your business



Provide help with accommodation requests



Provide long-term partnerships and supports



Provide candidates for on-the-job training and internship opportunities



Give information about assistive technology in the workplace



Deliver customized in-person and virtual disability awareness training for Oregon businesses of any size

# Meet Don

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“I knew I would affect the life of a student who needed employment, but I never expected Kevin to change my life and the lives of our employees by his presence this summer.”

- Don DeVore, owner, Sandy River Marketing

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# Thank you



“Never in my life has anything like this happened to me. I am so thankful.”

– Marty Norton, after receiving a modified truck he can control with his hands

# Questions?

