



A CONSUMER CONTROLLED COUNCIL COMMITTED TO
ENSURING QUALITY REHABILITATION SERVICES

REPORT OF THE NEBRASKA

State Rehabilitation Council

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CONTACT INFORMATION:

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) values the input and involvement of all citizens in Nebraska regarding rehabilitation services. All SRC meetings are open to the public and are a great opportunity for the public to voice concerns and opinions.

MEETINGS:

Meeting dates, times and locations are posted on the Vocational Rehabilitation web site at www.vr.ne.gov

WRITE:

State Rehabilitation Council Chairperson
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South
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Lincoln, NE 68509

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State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education

November 3, 2010

To the Citizens of the State of Nebraska:

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is pleased to present to you the 2009-2010 Annual Report.

During the past year, the SRC has been working with Vocational Rehabilitation to improve and expand services for individuals with disabilities. This close working relationship has allowed the SRC to provide input in numerous areas that affect all people with disabilities.

As this report indicates, the council has been involved in many areas of VR this year. Areas are as follows:

- Streamlining the survey process by reducing the number from five surveys to three. By doing this the SRC can obtain more detailed responses in a more efficient manner;
- A Consumer Input Committee was formed. The purpose of this Committee is to gather input on VR;
- Supporting National Disability Awareness Month. Employers with a history of hiring those with disabilities were recognized by the SRC in communities across the State;
- Showing support to the Legislature for their continued full funding of the Vocational Rehabilitation program despite the financial challenges the State of Nebraska is encountering;
- Recognizing those that have demonstrated success in Self-Employment with The Entrepreneur of Distinction award. The awards were given on July 14 in Lincoln;
- Provided guidance regarding VR's policy on working with consumers that have substance addiction/abuse;
- Hosting a Senatorial Luncheon. Thirty Senators were present to hear from the SRC about the services VR provides;
- Supporting VR's effort to reach more consumers via social media outlets (facebook & YouTube);

This Council is committed to working in partnership with Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation to identify how services can be improved to better meet the needs of its clients—those individuals with disabilities who are interested in achieving employment.

Sincerely,

Kipp Ransom

Kipp Ransom, Chairperson
Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council

SRC Committee Reports



Mitch Arnold—Omaha

Mitch is the President of Preferred Partners, LLC, an Omaha based recruiting company. He is a member of the SRC's Employer Services Committee.



Sharon Bloechle—Omaha

Sharon is the parent of an adult son with disabilities and has been a member of Learning Disabilities of Nebraska for thirty years. She serves on the Client Services Committee.



Katie Durfee—Fairbury

Katie works at the Fairbury Youth Involvement Center in an after-school program. She is a member of the SRC's Transition Services Committee.



Teri Effle—Lincoln

Teri is employed at the Lincoln Council on Alcoholism and Drugs. She serves on the Transition Services Committee.



Alvin Fox—McCool Junction

In addition to farming, Alvin has an in-home business making greeting cards. He is a member of the Transition Services Committee.

Client Services Committee

Members: Sharon Bloechle, Tim Kolb, Leslie Novacek, Debra Osentowski, Kipp Ransom, Vicki Rasmussen, and Larry Niemeyer (Chair)

Don Crouch-VR Advisor

Members of the Consumer Services Committee focused this last year on gathering data to determine whether VR services, including the process of service delivery, resulted in consumers being successfully employed. A survey was the primary tool used in gathering data from VR consumers.

The Employment Warranty® Program survey data (started in October of 2009) continues to accurately reflect consumer opinion regarding the VR services they received while in the VR Program. The data will continue to be monitored.

Members of the Consumer Services Committee have continued to monitor data results from the Employment Discussion, Career Planning, and Job Search Strategy surveys. VR Office Directors have

shared the data results with the Council throughout the past two years and concluded the results were not helpful in evaluating services and service delivery processes. A motion was made by the Council to discontinue the surveys and their decision is under consideration by Mark Schultz, Director of VR.

During the year, Kristen Lucas from UNL spoke with committee members about focus groups. As a result of this session, a Consumer Input Committee was created. The Consumer Input Committee includes several Consumer Service Committee members and seventeen consumers from across the state. Members respond to questions by email or phone. The initial data from the Consumer Input Committee is proving to be very helpful in improving VR Process.

Mark has requested that the Consumer Services Committee gather consumer feedback after using the *Discover the Job that Works for You* notebook during career planning. The committee will work on this in the upcoming year.



Larry Niemeyer—Norfolk

Larry has been employed with VR for over thirty-five years. He is the Chairperson of the Client Services Committee.

Client Services Committee
Chairperson

Transition Services Committee

Members: Katie Durfee, Teri Effle, Alvin Fox, Seamus Kelly, Vicky Obrecht, Terry Wilson, and Angela Smith (Chair)

Jack Shepard-VR Advisor

The Transition Services Committee met five times in the past year. The Committee provided information to the members of the SRC on the Transition Summit held November 12, 2009 in Kearney and the Autism Conference held in Kearney on April 8-9, 2010.

The Committee received updates on the implementation of the transition blogs and the VR grant to the Autism Center of Nebraska for the development of supports and services for youth and other individuals with autism.

Project SEARCH was a frequent topic and Committee members were kept up-to-date on the current programs in Kearney and Grand Island. Also discussed was

the expansion of the program in Norfolk, Lincoln, and other locations. Project SEARCH provides training and employment opportunities to high school students with disabilities.

The Committee was informed of the hiring of Mark Mason as the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers (YRTC) Liaison and his progress in development of a program to assist youth as they leave the YRTC and return to their community, enroll in school, or access VR and other services to assist with reintegration.

Based on data provided to the Committee, they recommended further research of ways to get and keep youth in the VR Transition Program.

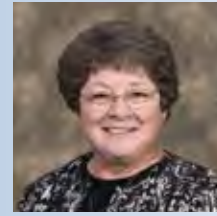
The Committee would like to explore VR outreach to college students with disabilities who were in the VR Transition Program, but did not sign up with VR upon graduation from high school.

Angela works for Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska. She is the Chairperson of the Transition Services Committee.



Angela Smith—Kearney

Transition Services Committee
Chairperson



Susan Gieschen—Brule

Susan (Sue) has a son who experiences a learning disability. Sue is on the Employer Services Committee. In addition, she is Vice Chairperson for the Council.



Seamus Kelly—Omaha

Seamus is employed at PTI Nebraska (Parent Training and Information for Families of Children with Disabilities). He is a member of the Transition Services Committee.



Tim Kolb—Franklin

Tim was born with Werdnig-Hoffman Syndrome or spinal muscular atrophy. He serves on the SRC's Client Services Committee.



Leslie Novacek—Lincoln

Leslie is the Director of Assistive Technology Partnership. She is a member of the Client Services Committee.



Vicki Obrecht—Lincoln

Vicki is the Special Education Coordinator for Lincoln Southeast High School with Lincoln Public Schools. She serves on the Transition Services Committee.

SRC Committee Reports



Debra Osentowski—Geneva

Debra joined the SRC as a parent of a son who has learning disabilities resulting from Epilepsy. She is a member of the Client Services Committee.



Kipp Ransom—Lincoln

Kipp is the Lead Counselor on the Spinal Cord Injury Unit at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. He is the SRC Chairperson and serves on the Client Services Committee.



Vicki Rasmussen—Lincoln

Vicki is the Director of the Nebraska Client Assistance Program (CAP). She is a member of the Client Services Committee.



Terry L. Wilson—Indianola

Complications from a transplant left Terry unable to continue working. Terry contacted VR and successfully received services. He serves on the Transition Services Committee.



Pearl Van Zandt—Lincoln

Pearl is the Executive Director of the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCVBI). She is a member of the Employer Services Committee.

Employer Services Committee

Members: Mitch Arnold, Sue Gieschen, Pearl Van Zandt, and Jason Kerkman (Chair)

Jim Coyle-VR Advisor

October 2009 was National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The SRC supported the revised strategic statewide plan implemented by VR to advocate for the employment of individuals with disabilities.

In February 2010, the SRC held its annual luncheon for State Senators. The luncheon educated the attendees about the services offered by VR and the positive impact VR is having on the citizens of Nebraska.

In July the SRC celebrated the Entrepreneurs of Distinction in the State of Nebraska. The award was given to individuals that have worked with VR and the Abilities Fund to become self-employed. The four criteria for the award were profitability, contribution to the community, innovation of ideas and hiring/expansion. Governor Dave Heineman presented the awards to

the recipients at the July reception. Statewide media exposure was given to the event. The Entrepreneurs of Distinction award will continue to be awarded annually by the SRC.

This year the Employer Services Committee drafted the following mission statement: To increase the employment of people with disabilities by strengthening the relationship between VR, employers, and job seekers.

To support this mission the Committee developed and implemented an employer satisfaction survey to businesses across the state that have worked with VR. The Committee is also learning the role of temporary employment agencies in the business world and intends to develop guidelines for VR to strengthen their relationship with this group.

The Committee made the recommendation that Project SEARCH be the focus of the October 2010 National Disability Employment Awareness Month media outreach.



Jason Kerkman—Lincoln

Jason is a Community Health Educator with Nebraska's Department of Health and Human Services. He is the Chairperson of the SRC's Employer Services Committee.

Employer Services Committee Chairperson

Annual Program Costs

	Cost of Program
Administration	\$3,322,848.00

CLIENT SERVICES

	Cost of Program
Provided by VR Staff	\$11,278,426.00
Purchased from Community Rehab Programs	\$2,071,050.00
Purchased from Other Vendors	\$5,809,207.00
Total	\$19,158,683.00

PURCHASED FOR CLIENTS

	Cost of Program
Assessment	\$556,954.00
Higher Education	\$1,844,083.00
Miscellaneous Training	\$2,546,908.00
Maintenance	\$186,727.00
Personal Assistance Services	\$22,832.00
Transportation	\$334,175.00
Rehabilitation Technology Services	\$1,791,586.00
Small Business Enterprise	\$318,990.00
All Other Services	\$278,002.00
Total	\$7,880,257.00

Message from the Director



Mark Schultz, Director

As a new Director, I've appreciated the guidance and support of the State Rehabilitation Council during the last year.

SRC members have provided input on several fundamental changes for Nebraska VR. Their contribution is reflected in a new mission statement that provides for a dual customer focus of individuals with disabilities and businesses. Values have been adopted that will assist us as we make decisions about services and priorities. Guiding Principles were developed and will be integrated into our day to day work so that we can demonstrate our values as we provide services to individuals with disabilities and businesses.

I thank each of the SRC members for their commitment to helping us improve our services. It's been an exciting year and I look forward to more of the same in the year to come!

*Mark Schultz, Director
Vocational Rehabilitation*

Nebraskans Served by Vocational Rehabilitation

CONSUMERS SERVED BY LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

District	Total	Percent
1	115	1.8
2	79	1.2
3	51	0.8
4	47	0.7
5	152	2.4
6	60	0.9
7	126	2.0
8	107	1.7
9	124	1.9
10	110	1.7
11	219	3.4
12	58	0.9
13	106	1.7
14	47	0.7
15	152	2.4
16	98	1.5
17	210	3.3
18	177	2.8
19	324	5.1
20	61	0.9
21	90	1.4
22	245	3.8
23	118	1.8
24	131	2.1
25	98	1.5
26	111	1.7
27	89	1.4
28	350	5.5
29	147	2.3
30	89	1.4
31	48	0.8
32	120	1.9
33	278	4.4
34	85	1.3
35	257	4.0
36	193	3.0
37	198	3.1
38	75	1.2
39	41	0.6
40	122	1.9
41	138	2.2
42	195	3.1
43	122	1.9
44	82	1.3
45	52	0.8
46	103	1.6
47	103	1.6
48	190	3.0
49	104	1.6

Total Served 6397

NOTE: This does not include 4,832 served in the Transition Program or 6,114 served in the Employment Warranty® Program.

FUNDING

Every \$1.00 appropriated for Vocational Rehabilitation by the Unicameral earns \$3.69 Federal funding and yields \$4.69 in services to Nebraskans with disabilities.

THE AVERAGE WAGE FOR SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED VR CLIENTS

Average wage for 2010 **\$10.33**
61% of clients are employed full-time

2010 NEBRASKA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
Applied for Services	5,069
Eligible for Services	4,513
Started Services	3,030
Received Services	6,397
Successfully Employed	1,677
Continuing in Services	3,642

2010 PROGRAM CATEGORIES

Employment Program	6,397
Transition Program	4,832
Employment Warranty® Program	6,114

2010 OCCUPATION & EARNINGS FOR COMPETITIVELY EMPLOYED CONSUMERS

Occupations	Percent	Average Hourly Earnings
Services	34.3%	\$8.71
Office Support	13.8%	\$9.50
Professional	12.9%	\$14.04
Sales	11.8%	\$8.89
Transportation & Material Moving	7.5%	\$10.11
Production	6.9%	\$11.06
Installation, Maintenance, & Repairs	4.1%	\$11.79
Management, Business, & Finance	3.5%	\$15.22
Construction & Extraction	3.0%	\$12.73
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	2.0%	\$11.04
Military	0.1%	\$7.50

Partnerships with Employers & Vocational Rehabilitation

SOME OF THE COMPANIES WORKING WITH NEBRASKA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

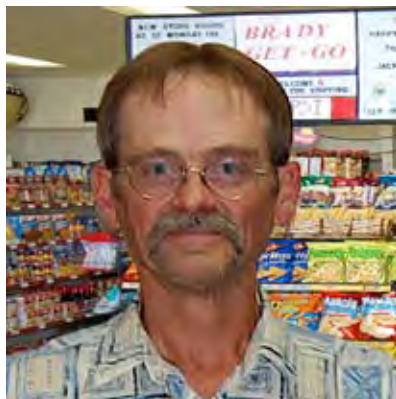
Affiliated Foods Midwest	Husqvarna	University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Alegent Health	Hy-Vee	Vishay Dale
Allmand Brothers, Inc.	InfoUSA	Vulcraft Group
Ameritas Group	Kawasaki	Walgreens
Amcon Distributing Co.	Lincoln Journal Star	Wal-Mart Distribution Center
Apogee Retail, LLC	Lindsay Manufacturing Co.	Wal-Mart Stores
Associated Staffing Inc.	Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital	Werner Enterprises, Inc.
Behlen Mfg. Co.	Methodist Hospital	West Corporation
Blue Ox	Nebraska Game & Parks Commission	Western Nebraska Community College
Broyhill	Nebraska Machine Products	Wimmer’s Meat Products Inc.
Bosselman Travel Centers	New Holland North America, Inc	
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway	Norfolk Iron & Metal Co.	
Cabela’s	Omaha Tribe of Nebraska	2010 Successful Self-Employment Businesses
Chief Industries, Inc.	Pamida	Artist (2)
CVS Pharmacy	Pay Pal	Barber Shop
EGS Electrical Group	Reinke Manufacturing, Inc.	Butter Maker
Faith Regional Health Services	Russell Speeder’s Car Wash	Custom Home Theatre
First National Bank	Safeway	Delivery Service
First Tier Bank	Saint Elizabeth Regional Health Center	Gas Station/Convenience Store Owner
Fremont Area Medical Center	Saint Francis Medical Center	Gunsmith
General Excavating	Samuelson Equipment Co.	Lawn Service
Godfather’s Pizza	Sehnert’s Bakery & Bieroc Cafe	Massage Therapist
Good Samaritan Hospital	Spherion	Photographer
Great Plains Regional Medical Center	Tabitha Health Care Services	Singer/Songwriter
Hamilton Communication	Target	Taxidermist
Heritage Homes of Nebraska, Inc.	Torin Products, Inc.	
Home Depot	TravelCenters of America	
Hughes Brothers, Inc.	University of Nebraska–Kearney	

Return on Investment for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program

On average, a successfully employed person returns **\$9.80** to the taxpayers for every **\$1 spent** through Vocational Rehabilitation services.

Average cost of vocational rehabilitation services per person:	\$15,387.23
Average Annual Earnings after vocational rehabilitation services:	\$18,200.54
Estimated Annual Taxes on earnings:	
Federal Income Tax	\$1,412.32
State Income Tax	\$526.76
State/Local Sales Tax	\$303.46
Social Security Tax	\$2,784.79
Average Total Taxes per Year	\$5,027.33
Average Return to Taxpayers over 30 remaining years of employment	\$150,819.95

Vocational Rehabilitation Client Success Stories



JACK MANN

Growing up in a small town in western Nebraska, Jack Mann was used to working twelve hours a day, seven days a week in the hay mills.

But, as time went on, Jack found himself turning to alcohol and spent many years battling the addiction.

With the help of Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation and the Abilities Fund, Jack has now turned his life around. Sober for several years, every day is an adventure for Jack as he owns and operates Brady Get-N-Go in Brady, Nebraska.

Jack's business includes a fuel station, tire shop, deli market, grocery store, convenience store and a liquor store all in one building. VR and the Abilities Fund helped him create a business plan for the store and provided financial assistance to get started.

"God picked me up out of the gutter of alcoholism and between Voc Rehab and the Abilities Fund, I got a new start," Mann said. "It's been quite the ride."



SUSAN KUIPERS

Susan Kuipers prefers to think of her short stature as "vertically challenged." This type of thinking is nothing new for her because she was born with a type of dwarfism called Achondroplasia.

After working at First National Bank for 13 years, Susan was laid off due to budget cuts. As she looked for a new job, she knew she would need some help from VR with worksite accommodations in order to be successful on the job.

Susan is now the front desk receptionist at an Omaha law firm. VR and Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) have provided step stools, tables, and a custom-built keyboard tray among other things to help her be productive and comfortable.

"They (VR) have come up with more ideas than I would have thought of," Kuipers said. "They are super people that will bend over backwards to help you get back into the real world and working and being a productive citizen so that you feel good about yourself."



ANDY FRAIRE

In high school, classes were difficult for Andy Fraire because of a learning disability.

After working with VR, Andy, along with several other students, was referred to a new training program called Project SEARCH starting up in the Grand Island community.

SEARCH is a program to teach vocational skills to students with disabilities. Andy and the other selected students received on-the-job training at Saint Francis Medical Center in Grand Island.

"I really learned in Project SEARCH how to stay on task, show up to work on time, come into work when they need me and don't call in sick that much, and be respectful and do what the boss says," Andy said.

Andy successfully completed the Project SEARCH program and is now employed full-time at Saint Francis Medical Center.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Columbus serves counties:

Butler, Colfax, Nance, Platte and Polk
3020 18th Street, Ste 2, Columbus, NE 68601
(402) 562-8065 V/TTY, (877) 505-0866 V/TTY
VR.Info.Columbus@nebraska.gov

Fremont serves counties:

Dodge
2951 North Clarkson Street, Fremont, NE 68025
(402) 727-2900 V, (888) 585-5439 V
VR.Info.Fremont@nebraska.gov

Grand Island serves counties:

Adams, Clay, Fillmore, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton,
Howard, Merrick, Nuckolls, Thayer, Webster, York
3335 West Capital Avenue, Grand Island, NE 68803
(308) 385-6200 V/TTY, (800) 862-3382 V/TTY
VR.Info.GrandIsland@nebraska.gov

Kearney serves counties:

Blaine, Buffalo, Custer, Franklin, Furnas, Garfield,
Harlan, Kearney, Loup, Phelps, Sherman, Valley
315 W 60th Street, Ste 400, Kearney, NE 68845
(308) 865-5343 V/TTY, (800) 262-3382 V/TTY
VR.Info.Kearney@nebraska.gov

Lincoln serves counties:

Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Lancaster, Nemaha, Otoe,
Pawnee, Richardson, Saline, Saunders, Seward
3901 N 27th Street, Ste 6, Lincoln, NE 68521
(402) 471-3231 V/TTY
(800) 472-3382 V/TTY
VR.Info.Lincoln@nebraska.gov

Norfolk serves counties:

Antelope, Boone, Boyd, Brown, Burt, Cedar, Cuming,
Dixon, Holt, Keya Paha, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Rock,
Stanton, Wayne, Wheeler
1212 Benjamin Avenue, Norfolk, NE 68701
(402) 370-3200 V/TTY, (800) 442-3382 V/TTY
VR.Info.Norfolk@nebraska.gov

North Platte serves counties:

Arthur, Chase, Cherry, Dawson, Dundy,
Frontier, Gosper, Grant, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith,
Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Perkins, Red Willow, Thomas
200 South Silber, Bldg. #2, North Platte, NE 69101
(308) 535-8100 V/TTY, (800) 272-3382 V/TTY
VR.Info.NorthPlatte@nebraska.gov

Omaha-Downtown serves counties:

Cass, Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy, Washington
1313 Farnam on the Mall, Omaha, NE 68102
(402) 595-2100 V, (402) 595-2107 TTY
(800) 554-3382
VR.Info.OmahaDowntown@nebraska.gov

Omaha-West serves counties:

Dodge, Douglas
12011 Q Street, Omaha, NE 68137
(402) 595-1212 V/TTY, (877) 240-4445 V/TTY
VR.Info.OmahaWest@nebraska.gov

Scottsbluff serves counties:

Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden,
Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, Sioux
1517 Broadway, Ste 131, Scottsbluff, NE 69361
(308) 632-1321 V/TTY, (800) 292-3382 V/TTY
VR.Info.Scottsbluff@nebraska.gov

South Sioux City serves counties:

Dakota, Thurston
901 West 21st Street, Ste 1,
South Sioux City, NE 68776
(402) 494-2265 V/TTY, (877) 659-7899 V/TTY
VR.Info.SouthSiouxCity@nebraska.gov

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