



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 Nebraska VR website at [vr.nebraska.gov](http://vr.nebraska.gov)

**WRITE:**

State Rehabilitation Council Chairperson  
Nebraska Department of Education  
301 Centennial Mall South  
P.O. Box 94987  
Lincoln, NE 68509

**CALL:**

Angela Fujan  
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877.637.3422

**FAX:**

402.471.0788

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## State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education

October 1, 2017

As Chair of the Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), I'm honored to present this report that summarizes the accomplishments the SRC made in fiscal year 2017.

During this past year's quarterly meetings, SRC members heard reports and legislative updates from Nebraska VR's Director. Reports were also shared by the Client Assistance Program Director, the Statewide Independent Living Council, Assistive Technology Partnership and the Nebraska Youth Leadership Council. These reports provide the council with opportunities to provide feedback to Nebraska VR.

Other actions supported by the SRC:

- Presented the Entrepreneurs of Distinction Award in October.
- Focused on the success of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's provision to reserve 15% of allotted funds for the delivery of pre-employment transition services.
- Engaged in Senator outreach at the Nebraska State Capital in March.
- Reviewed feedback from summer transition programs.
- Added new members to the SRC including business partners.

This year was a time for growth and change. It could not have been successful without the collaboration, advocacy, and support from the dedicated members of the Nebraska SRC and Nebraska VR Staff. As the chair of the SRC, I would like to recognize the work of the SRC and the commitment the members have in working to ensure Nebraskans with disabilities have access to meaningful employment opportunities.

Sincerely,

*Kipp Ransom*

Kipp Ransom, Chairperson  
Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council

# SRC Committees and Accomplishments



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

Shari Bahensky—Lincoln



Michael, Executive Director of the Arc of Nebraska, is a member of the Employer Services Committee.

Michael Chittenden—Lincoln



Rita, Special Populations Office of the Nebraska Department of Education, is a member of the Transition Services Committee.

Rita Hammitt—Omaha



John, received Nebraska VR services, is a member of the Client Services Committee.

John Hogue—Falls City



JaToya, SILC representative, is a member of the Employer Services Committee.

JaToya McIntosh—Omaha

## Transition Services Committee

Members: Gina Geiger (Chair), Rita Hammitt, Sandy Peterson, JD Simmons and Carly Weyers.

Brigid Griffin, Nebraska VR Advisor.

The Transition Services Committee, consisting of 5 members, focused on the success of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's provision for Nebraska VR to reserve at least 15% of allotted funds for the delivery of pre-employment transition services. The committee reviewed feedback from the 23 summer transition programs funded through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Funded programs provided job exploration, work-based learning, work place readiness, self-advocacy, and included exposure to post-secondary training options. The committee was encouraged to hear about the innovative ideas that were implemented and recommended starting the RFP process earlier in the year to allow more time for the requests to be completed.

The committee also reviewed feedback from staff members who were invited to attend Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings with students, parents, teachers, and other partners. The intent is to encourage successful collaboration and input from all parties to help the student be successful.



Gina Geiger—York

Transition Services Committee  
Chairperson — Gina Geiger

Gina received Nebraska VR services.



## Client Services Committee

Members: Shari Bahensky, John Hogue, Jonathan Moeller (chair), Kipp Ransom, and Joni Thomas.

Angela Fujan, Nebraska VR Advisor.

The Client Services Committee continued discussions on the client satisfaction survey. With increases in the number of surveys completed and the number of overall satisfaction results, they have plans to broaden the scope of the survey. The plan is to add additional questions for individuals who quit their jobs and who reported the job was not a good fit. With the addition of Omaha Tribal VR representation on the committee, there are also plans to survey the tribal population.



Jonathan Moeller—Grand Island

### Client Services Committee Chairperson — Jonathan Moeller

Jonathan received Nebraska VR services.

## Employer Services Committee

Members: Michael Chittenden, John McNally (chair), Vicki Newman, Tobias Orr, Mark Schultz, and David Scott.

Mary Matusiak, Nebraska VR Advisor.

The Employer Services Committee provided feedback about Nebraska VR's partnerships with businesses and Project SEARCH sites. Discussions included the March 2017 Project SEARCH Pre-Employment Transition Services Job Fair. 200 students and 40 employers participated. Students attended dressing for success, self-advocacy, social media, and job application sessions. The sessions with the skills assessment, job fair, and mock interview activities were found to be positive in building practical skills for finding and keeping jobs.



John McNally—Lincoln

### Employer Services Committee Chairperson — John McNally

John, Deputy Director for the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs, is a member of the Nebraska Workforce Investment Board.



Vicki Newman — Lincoln

Vicki, received Nebraska VR services, is a member of the Employer Services Committee.



Tobias Orr—Lincoln

Tobias, Director of the Assistive Technology Partnership, is a member of the Employer Services Committee.



Sandy Peterson—Omaha

Sandy, PTI Nebraska (Parent Training and Information for Families of Children with Disabilities), is a member of the Transition Services Committee.



Kipp Ransom—Lincoln

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



Mark Schultz—Lincoln

Mark, Director of Nebraska VR, is a required member of the SRC and a member of the Employer Services Committee.

# Director's Message



David Scott—LaVista

David is the Director of Sales for Embassy Suites LaVista, a Project SEARCH site. He is a member of the Employer Services Committee.



J.D. Simmons—Doniphan

J.D., Nebraska VR Employment Specialist in the Grand Island field office, is a member of the Transition Services Committee.



Joni Thomas—Lincoln

Joni, Executive Director of the Center for Independent Living of Central Nebraska, is a member of the Client Services Committee.



Carly Weyers—Lincoln

Carly, Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, is a member of the Transition Services Committee.

In the past I've quoted Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill in regards to changes brought about by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). I'm going with a more current philosopher this year, Frank Zappa, who said, "Without deviation from the norm, progress is not possible." Whether, intentional on our part or the result of external influences, we have definitely moved beyond the "norm." We continue to look for opportunities created with every challenge along the way and build our work upon the VR program foundational principles outlined in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation's (CSAVR) Vision 2020:

- VR is mission driven and customer focused;
- VR leads change through innovative and cutting edge practice;
- VR customizes services to meet the needs of individuals and business customers; and
- VR creates partnerships to maximize resources and opportunities.

With the support and guidance of the SRC over the last year we have:

- Affirmed our mission and improved the level of customer satisfaction with VR services by taking the time to listen to and understand their needs;
- Created innovative opportunities for work-based learning experiences for students and continued our one-of-a-kind approach using an upskill/backfill model to advance individuals with disabilities into better paying jobs by meeting the higher skilled worker needs of businesses;
- Expanded the use of Business Account Managers to address the needs of businesses and worked with community colleges to provide short term training opportunities; and
- Partnered with the Developmental Disabilities System, Special Education, and schools to implement the requirements of Section 511 to move more individuals into competitive integrated employment across Nebraska.

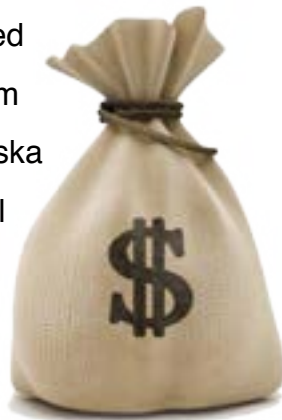
Deviation from the norm can be a good thing and by leading change with innovation and creativity we continue to make progress in providing the best possible services and supports to our customers. My thanks to the members of the SRC for your guidance and understanding that doing things in a different way can lead to great and positive changes!

*Mark Schultz*

*Deputy Commissioner Nebraska VR*

# Nebraska VR Funding

Every \$1.00 appropriated to Nebraska VR from the State of Nebraska earns \$3.69 in Federal Funding for services to Nebraskans with disabilities.



# Return on Investment for the Nebraska VR Program

Average Cost of Nebraska VR Services per Person:	\$ 17,298.66
Average Annual Earnings after Nebraska VR Services:	\$21,925.52
Estimated Annual Taxes on Earnings:	
Federal Income Tax	\$1263.00
State Income Tax	\$516.00
State/Local Sales Tax	\$452.00
Social Security Tax	\$1677.00
Average Total Taxes per Year	\$3908.00
Average Return to Taxpayers over 30 Remaining Years of Employment	\$117,240.00

On average, a successfully employed person returns \$6.78 to the taxpayers for every \$1 spent through Nebraska VR services.

# Annual Program Costs

	Cost of Program
<b>Administration</b>	<b>\$3,881,788</b>

## CLIENT SERVICES

	Cost of Program
Provided by VR Staff	\$12,835,194
Purchased from Community Rehab Programs	\$1,142,206
Purchased from Other Vendors	\$5,964,305
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,941,704</b>

## PURCHASED FOR CLIENTS

	Cost of Program
Assessment	\$1,017,504
Diagnosis & Treatment of Impairments	\$41,665
Graduate College or University Training	\$41,046
Four-Year College or University Training	\$905,301
Junior or Community College Training	\$581,685
Occupational or Vocational Training	\$150,954
On-the-Job Training	\$100,152
Basic Academic Remedial/Literacy Training	\$1,365
Apprenticeship Training	\$167,367
Job Readiness Training	\$1,740
Disability Related Skills Training	\$11,798
Miscellaneous Training	\$16,719
On-the-Job Supports-Time Limited	\$260,748
On-the-Job Supports-Supp. Employment	\$1,430,650
Transportation	\$282,616
Maintenance	\$129,602
Rehabilitation Technology	\$1,334,312
Reader	\$708
Interpreter	\$37,551
Technical Assistance	\$6,620
Benefits Counseling	\$155,373
All Other Services	\$431,038
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,106,511</b>

# Nebraskans Served by Nebraska VR

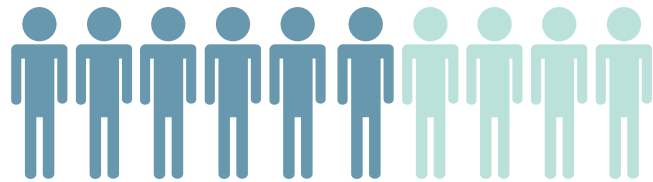
## CONSUMERS SERVED BY COUNTY

County	Total	County	Total
Adams.....	280	Johnson .....	4
Antelope.....	13	Kearney.....	15
Arthur.....	2	Keith .....	14
Banner .....	1	Keya Paha .....	0
Blaine.....	2	Kimball .....	7
Boone .....	14	Knox .....	18
Box Butte.....	11	Lancaster .....	935
Boyd .....	4	Lincoln.....	199
Brown .....	3	Logan.....	0
Buffalo .....	202	Loup .....	2
Burt.....	17	Madison.....	310
Butler.....	43	McPherson.....	5
Cass .....	34	Merrick.....	30
Cedar .....	18	Morrill .....	7
Chase.....	1	Nance.....	16
Cherry .....	5	Nemaha .....	8
Cheyenne.....	30	Nuckolls.....	13
Clay.....	28	Otoe.....	42
Colfax.....	22	Pawnee.....	6
Cuming .....	17	Perkins.....	3
Custer .....	24	Phelps.....	26
Dakota .....	23	Pierce.....	25
Dawes.....	12	Platte .....	212
Dawson.....	87	Polk .....	16
Deuel .....	6	Red Willow .....	33
Dixon .....	15	Richardson.....	9
Dodge.....	103	Rock.....	2
Douglas .....	930	Saline.....	33
Dundy .....	3	Sarpy .....	186
Fillmore.....	14	Saunders .....	29
Franklin.....	9	Scotts Bluff.....	174
Frontier.....	8	Seward.....	33
Furnas.....	7	Sheridan .....	1
Gage .....	41	Sherman .....	10
Garden .....	2	Sioux.....	0
Garfield.....	4	Stanton.....	15
Gosper .....	6	Thayer.....	19
Grant.....	1	Thomas.....	0
Greeley.....	3	Thurston .....	14
Hall .....	288	Valley.....	8
Hamilton.....	24	Washington .....	28
Harlan .....	3	Wayne.....	34
Hayes.....	0	Webster .....	13
Hitchcock.....	12	Wheeler .....	2
Holt.....	32	York .....	56
Hooker.....	1	Out of State.....	47
Howard .....	18		
Jefferson .....	20		
		<b>Total Served</b>	<b>5102</b>

## 2017 NEBRASKA VR EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Applied for Services	4500
Received Services	5102
Successfully Employed	1788

## SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED NEBRASKA VR CLIENTS



**59.7%** of clients are employed full-time.

Average hourly wage for 2017 is **\$12.58**

## 2017 OCCUPATION & EARNINGS FOR COMPETITIVELY EMPLOYED CONSUMERS

Occupations	Percent	Average Hourly Earnings
Service	29.4%	\$10.22
Professional	16.5%	\$16.43
Office Support	12.7%	\$11.89
Sales	10.5%	\$10.78
Production	9.9%	\$14.51
Transportation & Material Moving	7.4%	\$12.84
Construction & Extraction	5.3%	\$13.26
Installation, Maintenance, & Repairs	3.1%	\$13.94
Management, Business, & Finance	3%	\$18.16
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	2.1%	\$14.56



# Partnerships with Employers & Nebraska VR

## YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE BUSINESS AWARD RECIPIENTS

Presented to partners who provided real-life skills and experiences to develop employability for students with disabilities.

Alliance Recycling Center	Graham Tire Company	Nebraska Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
Applebee's	GI Lakeview Care & Rehabilitation Center	Nebraska Department of Roads
Archbishop Bergan Catholic School & Education Center	H & M Electric	Nebraska Department of Transportation
Assistive Technology Partnership	Head Start Child & Family Development Program, Inc.	New Beginnings Thrift Store - Crete
Baxter Auto	Heart Hope Mission	Norfolk GM
Blush Boutique	Heartland Family Services	North Fork Farm Service
Callaway Good Life Center	Heartland Hope Mission	Old Chicago
Cambridge Supermarket	Hemingford Community Care Center	Olive Garden Italian Restaurant
Camp Augustine	Hilltop Mall Office	Pac N Save - Seward
City of West Point	Holdrege Memorial Home	Panera Bread
Community Action Partnership - Lincoln	Holiday Inn Express-Lexington	Panhandle Coop Main Street Market
Community Action Partnership/HeadStart	Hy-Vee - Fremont	Papa Murphy's
Computer Medics	Hy-Vee - Kearney	Premier Estates of Pawnee
Country Market	Hy-Vee Lenox Village	Pro Sanctity Retreat Center
Cozad Child Care	Hy-Vee Williamsburg	Sack Lumber Company - Auburn
Crossroads Center	Immanuel Lutheran Daycare & Preschool	SASA Crisis Center
David Place	Janssen Auto	Seward Public Schools
Dodge County Humane Society	JJs Café	Sonn's Super Foods
Earl May Garden Center - Hastings	Lincoln Children's Museum	Star Tran Maintenance
Earl May Nursery & Garden Center - Kearney	Lincoln City Libraries - Bennet Martin	Talk One Radio
Earl May Nursery & Garden Center - GI	Lincoln City Libraries - Eiseley	TJ Maxx
Fairbury Public Schools	Lincoln City Libraries - Gere	Total Images
Five Star Flooring	Lincoln City Libraries - Walt	Tractor Supply Co
Food Bank of Lincoln	Lincoln Parks and Recreation - NW District	Trotter's Garden Shoppe & Learning Center
Fremont Area Habitat for Humanity	Lincoln Parks and Recreation - Greenways	Twin River Elementary School
Fremont Public Schools Maintenance Dept.	Lincoln Parks and Recreation - NE District	University of Nebraska State Museum of Natural History
Fresh Ideas Food Service Management	Lincoln Parks and Recreation - SE District	Valentino's - Hastings
Full Circle Irrigation	Lincoln Parks and Recreation - SW District	Valentino's - Seward
Garrett Tires, Treads & Appliance	M.O.N.A	Walgreens - Store 12538
Good Neighbor Community Center	Marshalls	Waterford at Miracle Hills
Good Samaritan Center - Albion	Middleton Electric Inc	YMCA - Fallbrook
Good Samaritan Society - Syracuse	Mythic Affinity	York Adopt a Pet
Good Samaritan Society - Omaha		

## PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT VIDEO SERIES

Nebraska VR's Pathway to Employment Video Series was expanded this year with six more videos featuring clients at their jobsites with business partners. Staff members in each of the videos share the services provided to meet the needs of both. See all the videos at: <http://vr.nebraska.gov/videos/>

## ENTREPRENEUR OF DISTINCTION AWARDS OCTOBER 2016



The State Rehabilitation Council recognized a Nebraska business owner who received services from Nebraska VR with the 2016 Entrepreneur of Distinction Award.

Tanna Skarniak started her business, Grand Island, Nebraska based TS Preservation Specialists, in 2014. She specializes in lawn mowing, winterization, debris removal, and minor repairs to properties. Tanna doubled her projected income in the first year of operation and went on to double that figure in the second year. Now, in her third year of operation she is on track to do it again! When she started out she wanted to work full-time and own her own home. Not only has she achieved those goals, she has partnered with Nebraska VR to provide opportunities for on-the-job evaluations for other Nebraska VR clients. Tanna worked with Nebraska VR Service Specialist Felipe Cruz who coordinated the feasibility study and business plan that was a critical support to Tanna's talents, abilities, and self-determination.



Tanna and SRC Chairperson Kipp Ransom



Pictured left to right: Nebraska VR Counselor Felipe Cruz, Nebraska Department of Education Deputy Commissioner/VR Director Mark Schultz, Tanna Skarniak - TS Preservation Specialists, SRC Chairperson Kipp Ransom and Nebraska Department of Education Commissioner of Education Matt Blomstedt

## OFFICE LOCATIONS

### Columbus serves counties:

Butler, Colfax, Nance, Platte and Polk  
3100 23rd Street, Ste. 5, Columbus, NE 68601  
(402) 562-8065, (877) 505-0866  
VR.InfoColumbus@nebraska.gov

### Fremont serves counties:

Dodge and Washington  
827 North D St , Fremont, NE 68025  
(402) 727-2900, (888) 585-5439  
VR.InfoFremont@nebraska.gov

### Grand Island serves counties:

Fillmore, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Howard, Merrick,  
Nuckolls, Thayer and York  
203 E Stolley Park Rd, Ste. B  
Grand Island, NE 68801  
(308) 385-6200, (800) 862-3382  
VR.InfoGrandIsland@nebraska.gov

### Hastings serves counties:

Adams, Clay and Webster  
2727 W. 2nd Street, Ste 326  
Hastings, NE 68901-4683  
402-462-0160, 800-852-3382  
VR.InfoHastings@nebraska.gov

### Kearney serves counties:

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

### Lincoln serves counties:

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

### Norfolk serves counties:

Antelope, Boone, Boyd, Brown, Burt, Cedar, Cuming,  
Dixon, Holt, Keya Paha, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Rock,

### Stanton, Wayne and Wheeler

1212 W. Benjamin Avenue, Norfolk, NE 68701  
(402) 370-3200, (800) 442-3382  
VR.InfoNorfolk@nebraska.gov

### North Platte serves counties:

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

### Omaha-Downtown serves counties:

Cass, Douglas and Sarpy  
1313 Farnam on the Mall, Omaha, NE 68102  
(402) 595-2100, (402) 595-2107  
(800) 554-3382  
VR.InfoOmahaDowntown@nebraska.gov

### Omaha-West serves counties:

Douglas  
12011 Q Street, Omaha, NE 68137  
(402) 595-1212, (877) 240-4445  
VR.InfoOmahaWest@nebraska.gov

### Scottsbluff serves counties:

Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden,  
Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan and Sioux  
505A Broadway, Ste 500, Scottsbluff, NE 69361  
(308) 632-1321, (800) 292-3382  
VR.InfoScottsbluff@nebraska.gov

### South Sioux City serves counties:

Dakota and Thurston  
510 W. 13th Street, Suite C  
South Sioux City, NE 68776  
(402) 494-2265, (877) 659-7899  
VR.InfoSouthSiouxCity@nebraska.gov

### State Office (located in Lincoln):

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## State Rehabilitation Council

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