



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
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509

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402.471.0788

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State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education

October 4, 2011

To the Citizens of the State of Nebraska:

On behalf of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), I am pleased to present the 2010-2011 Annual Report. This report reflects the efforts of the partnership between State Rehabilitation Council members and Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to offer quality services and advocate for Nebraska's individuals with disabilities.

During this past year, SRC members heard reports & Legislative updates from the Director of VR. Reports were also shared from the Client Assistance Program Director, as well as reports from the Statewide Independent Living Council, Assistive Technology Partnership and the NE Youth Leadership Council. This marked the fourth year the SRC hosted a Senator Luncheon at the State Capitol. It provided an opportunity to share information about VR with the Senators attending.

Other actions supported by the SRC:

- Changed the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) Booklet. These changes were based on the results of the Consumer Input Survey.
- Evaluated VR's Orientation process. The SRC forwarded these results to VR for consideration in a review of the orientation process.
- Approved a satisfaction survey for clients with unsuccessful closures.
- Evaluated the results of the of the Post Closure Survey submitted by the Employer Services Committee in an effort to evaluate VR's role in job placement.
- Presented the Entrepreneur of the Year award to four businesses.
- Recommended VR develop guidelines for working with temporary agencies to address the increased use of temp employment agencies by employers.

I would like to thank my fellow SRC Members for their hard work, input and dedication. Without them, this Council would not exist.

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 Association of Nebraska for thirty years. She serves on the Client 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.



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.



Gayle Hahn—Hastings

Gayle is the Community Work Incentive Coordinator at Easter Seals Nebraska. She is a member of the SRC's Transition Services Committee.

Client Services Committee

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

Don Crouch-VR Advisor

During the past year, members of the Client Services Committee focused on surveying various aspects of the Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program. The following is a synopsis of the survey results and recommendations to VR.

A selected group of consumers who had completed the Discover the Job that Works for You Work booklet were surveyed by a committee member using the Think Out Loud method. Consumers responded that they found completing the booklet was overwhelming, but they did see value in the results. As a result of the survey, Nebraska VR determined that the tools included in the booklet will be incorporated into a decision point and checklist process currently under development to allow for their use based on the individualized needs of the consumer.



Larry Niemeyer—Norfolk

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

Client Services Committee Chairperson

The VR Orientation process was evaluated by the Consumer Survey Work Group. Most consumers responding to the survey could not recall the VR Group Orientation. Consumers reacted more favorably to a one-to-one contact describing VR services. As a result of the responses, Nebraska VR offices will begin redesigning their VR Orientation process.

The Client Services Committee developed a series of survey questions focusing on the service satisfaction of VR consumers with an unsuccessful case closure. Easter Seals of Nebraska was contracted to follow up with these consumers and conduct a phone survey to obtain more information on the reasons behind the unsuccessful closure. The surveys are on-going with the results expected in the coming year.

Next year, this Committee will examine potential strategies to assist consumers with independent living-related job retention issues. Selected strategies will hopefully be included as part of the Career Planning activities offered by VR staff.

Employer Services Committee

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

Jim Coyle-VR Advisor

October was National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The SRC supported the efforts of the VR Marketing team to have all the offices across the state do a coordinated marketing campaign to promote the hiring of people with disabilities and the services VR has to assist businesses with their employment needs. This coordinated effort included press releases and success story videos. The Employer Services Committee also made marketing suggestions to expand VR reach by looking into promotion through speakers' bureaus, business journals, collegiate organizations, civic organizations, and community centers.

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

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.

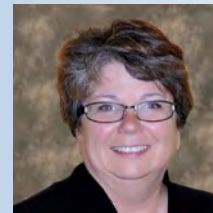


Jason Kerkman—Lincoln

Employer Services Committee
Chairperson

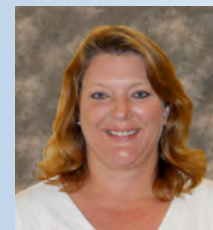
In July the SRC celebrated the Entrepreneurs of Distinction in the state of Nebraska. The award was given to four self-employed individuals that have worked with VR and the Abilities Fund to become self-employed. The four criteria for the award were profitability, contribution to the community, innovation of ideas and hiring/expansion. Governor Dave Heineman presented the awards to the recipients at a reception held in July. Statewide media exposure was given to the event. The Entrepreneurs of Distinction award will continue to be awarded annually by the SRC.

The SRC supported VR's efforts to expand services to minority individuals with disabilities, minority businesses, and temporary employment agencies. The SRC Employment Committee developed guidelines for VR staff to use when they are working with temporary employment agencies. In addition, the Committee is looking at how VR can use 503 Compliance as a tool to market to firms that are subject to this compliance. They are considering how VR can target these firms and be a service to them.



April Isaacs—Lincoln

April is a Human Resource Business Partner and Recruitment Specialist with Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center. She is a member of the SRC's Employer Services Committee.



Sherri Kelley—Omaha

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



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 a rare form of Muscular Dystrophy known as Werdnig-Hoffman Syndrome. He has been a long time activist on disability issues. Tim serves on the SRC's Client Services Committee.



Leslie Novacek—Lincoln

Leslie is the Director of the Assistive Technology Partnership. She is a member of the Client 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 (NCBVI). She is a member of the Employer Services Committee.

Transition Services Committee

Members: Sharon Bloechle, Alvin Fox, Gayle Hahn, Sherri Kelley, Seamus Kelly, Terry Wilson and Vicki Obrecht (Chair)

Jack Shepard-VR Advisor

One of the focus areas this year for the Transition Services Committee was how to increase the number of eligible youth applying for VR services. Currently only 40% of eligible youth apply and 37% of students with disabilities move from high school to VR adult programs. The committee looked at promoting transition services for students through the use of technology, for example, posting videos about the transition process on school websites. Partnering with post secondary institutions to determine if students need assistance from VR is another tool to improve transition services.

The committee received results from a transition survey sent to all

Special Education Directors in the state of Nebraska to determine use of VR services. School staff identified the top three most helpful services provided by VR as being testing, career counseling and college planning.

Related to transition services for students was the information shared with the committee about potential revisions to the Rehabilitation Act. In the future, it is likely the Act will be emphasizing work experience and paid employment for students.

The VR offices continue their discussions with each other regarding the transition process and share the strategies used in each office. This group also examined the process now in place to determine if transition services are functioning as they were originally intended.

The Transition Services Committee continues to find ways to help families and students understand the purpose and role of Nebraska VR.



Vicki Obrecht—Lincoln

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

Transition Services Committee Chairperson

Message from the VR Director



Mark Schultz, Director

This last year was *unprecedented* in many ways. Not only did the economy continue to provide a challenge, but our field offices experienced flooding, leaking roofs, mold, and a small fire. Four of our offices are in the process of relocating due to these *unprecedented* events. In the midst of all that turmoil, Nebraska VR had an increase in outcomes of more than 7% for an *unprecedented* second year in

a row! I'm sure the SRC has heard me use the word *unprecedented* an *unprecedented* number of times over the last year.

During the last year, the SRC was instrumental in the development of initiatives to help Nebraska VR reach out to individuals with disabilities who could benefit from our services. They established a pilot to survey individuals for whom VR had an unsuccessful closure to obtain feedback on what might have been done differently. The SRC supported a refinement of transition-focused activities to place more of an emphasis on work experience for students with disabilities. This helped to clarify our role in the schools and the services we provide.

And because there are more people than ever who could benefit from the services of Nebraska VR, the SRC provided input on marketing strategies that could improve our outreach efforts. One suggestion built off our evolving use of social media. While reviewing a number of choices for the agency's new logo, a Council member suggested we put the top four choices on the Nebraska VR Facebook website and let the "people" vote! What a perfect way to demonstrate the value we as an agency place on consumer input and involvement! The new Nebraska VR logo was the clear choice of the people.

The ongoing partnership with consumers and businesses through the SRC makes VR unique. You might even say it's *unprecedented!*

*Mark Schultz, Director
Nebraska VR*

Annual Program Costs

	Cost of Program
Administration	\$3,237,146.00
CLIENT SERVICES	
	Cost of Program
Provided by VR Staff	\$11,362,393.00
Purchased from Community Rehab Programs	\$2,110,176.00
Purchased from Other Vendors	\$4,838,407.00
Total	\$18,310,976.00
PURCHASED FOR CLIENTS	
	Cost of Program
Assessment	\$672,734.00
Higher Education	\$1,528,003.00
Miscellaneous Training	\$2,210,076.00
Maintenance	\$146,535.00
Personal Assistance Services	\$38,496.00
Transportation	\$262,575.00
Rehabilitation Technology Services	\$1,530,583.00
Small Business Enterprise	\$307,833.00
All Other Services	\$251,749.00
Total	\$6,948,584.00

Nebraskans Served by VR

CONSUMERS SERVED BY LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

District	Total	Percent
1	116	1.8
2	79	1.2
3	65	1.0
4	46	0.7
5	124	1.9
6	54	0.8
7	137	2.1
8	98	1.5
9	121	1.9
10	113	1.7
11	223	3.4
12	62	1.0
13	116	1.8
14	52	0.8
15	174	2.7
16	110	1.7
17	210	3.2
18	173	2.7
19	324	5.0
20	58	0.9
21	79	1.2
22	258	4.0
23	135	2.1
24	134	2.1
25	101	1.5
26	109	1.7
27	82	1.3
28	375	5.8
29	154	2.4
30	97	1.5
31	51	0.8
32	121	1.9
33	264	4.0
34	93	1.4
35	281	4.3
36	211	3.2
37	210	3.2
38	69	1.1
39	39	0.6
40	101	1.5
41	146	2.2
42	243	3.7
43	99	1.5
44	99	1.5
45	52	0.8
46	101	1.5
47	109	1.7
48	176	2.7
49	75	1.2

Total Served 6519

NOTE: This does not include 4,922 served in the Transition Program or 6,617 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 2011 \$10.21

64% of clients are employed full-time

2011 NEBRASKA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
Applied for Services	4,812
Eligible for Services	4,237
Started Services	2,877
Received Services	6,519
Successfully Employed	1,799
Continuing in Services	3,519

2011 PROGRAM CATEGORIES

Employment Program	6,519
Transition Program	4,922
Employment Warranty Program	6,617

2011 OCCUPATION & EARNINGS FOR COMPETITIVELY EMPLOYED CONSUMERS

Occupations	Percent	Average Hourly Earnings
Services	33.5%	\$8.75
Office Support	13.3%	\$9.45
Professional	12.0%	\$14.49
Sales	11.3%	\$8.63
Production	10.1%	\$10.45
Transportation & Material Moving	7.2%	\$10.21
Installation, Maintenance, & Repairs	4.2%	\$11.62
Construction & Extraction	3.6%	\$12.07
Management, Business, & Finance	3.0%	\$14.02
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	1.8%	\$9.63
Military	0.1%	\$9.62

Partnerships with Employers & VR

SOME OF THE COMPANIES WORKING WITH NEBRASKA VR

21st Century Equipment	FBG Service Corporation	Marianna Industries	St Elizabeth Regional Medical Cntr
AbilityOne	Firestone	Marsden Maintenance	Saint Francis Medical Center
Access Electric	First National Bank	Mary Lanning Mem HealthCare	Sodexo
ADM	Five Guys Burgers & Fries	Menards	Spherion
Affordable Electric	Flexcon	Methodist Hospital	Standard Parking
Amcon Distributing Co.	Fremont Area Medical Center	Mid City Recycling	State of NE
American Red Cross	Good Samaritan Hospital	Middleton Electric	T & L Irrigation
American Security	Goodwill Ind. of Greater NE, Inc.	Mt. Carmel Nursing Home	Tabitha Health Care Services
Apogee Retail, LLC	Great Plains Regional Medical Cntr	Mutual of Omaha	Taco Johns
Associated Staffing Inc.	Hamilton Communication	Neapco	Target
Behlen Mfg. Co.	Heartland Electric	NE Game & Parks Commission	NE Com/Blind & Visually Impaired
Best Buy	Home Depot	NE Machine Products	The Lexington
Bosselman Travel Centers	Home Instead Senior Care	NE Home Builders Assoc.	Tires Plus
Cabelas Inc.	Hormel	Norfolk Iron & Metal Co.	TO Haase
Camaco	Hy-Vee	Novartis	Torin Products, Inc.
Cargill	InfoUSA	NPPD	TravelCenters of America
Cargill Meat Solutions	Integrated Electrical Services	Omaha Steel	Treat America Food Services
Chief Industries, Inc.	Jackson Services	Omaha Tribe of NE	University of NE–Kearney
City of Lincoln/Lancaster County	Jensen Tire and Auto	Oriental Trading Company	University of NE–Lincoln
City of Kearney-Recycling Center	Jeri's Cleaning Service	Pamida	Walgreens
CJ Foods	Katanna Summit	Pizza Hut	Walker Tire
Columbus Community Hospital	Kearney Area Children's Museum	Prairie View Gardens	Walmart Distribution Center
Columbus Hydraulics	Kearney Yamaha	ProPax Corp.	Walmart Stores
Community Action Partnership	Kmart	Rail Crew Xpress	West Corporation
Commonwealth Electric	Lincoln Downtown Association	Ratigan-Schottler	West Pharmaceuticals
Creative Dining Services	Lincoln Journal Star	Regional West Medical Center	Western NE Community College
Days Inn & Suites	Lincoln Public Schools	Reinke Manufacturing, Inc.	Wimmer's Meat Products Inc.
Faith Regional Health Services	Lindsay Manufacturing Co.	Russ's Market	
Farmland Foods/Cooks Ham	Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital	Safeway	

Return on Investment for the VR Program

On average, a
successfully employed
person **returns \$12.07**
to the taxpayers
for every **\$1 spent**
through Nebraska VR
services.

Average Cost of Vocational Rehabilitation Services per Person:	\$11,977.83
Average Annual Earnings after Vocational Rehabilitation Services:	\$18,552.41
Estimated Annual Taxes on Earnings:	
Federal Income Tax	\$1,439.63
State Income Tax	\$536.95
State/Local Sales Tax	\$309.32
Social Security Tax	\$2,838.63
Average Total Taxes per Year	\$5,124.52
Average Return to Taxpayers over 28.2 Remaining Years of Employment	\$144,562.85

Vocational Rehabilitation Client Success Stories



JAKE VAN HORN

Jake Van Horn had worked as a cowboy for much of his adult life. He had numerous accidents related to his work with horses. Jake sought out assistance from Nebraska VR when his injuries forced him to consider other employment options.

Jake's goal was to start a saddlery business and be self-employed. He worked with staff from Nebraska VR to make this goal a reality. A business consultant with the Abilities Fund was brought in to help Jake develop a business plan.

Van Horn Saddlery opened in May of 2009. The business grew to the point that an Ogallala storefront was opened in May of 2011. Jake and his wife sell his custom made leather products via their website, on Facebook, and from their store. They take orders from all over the US and other countries.

The Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) recognized Jake's business success and contribution to his community by presenting him with a 2011 Entrepreneur of Distinction award.



CALYNN GOWIN

Calynn Gowin was active in sports, theater, and the band while attending Waverly High School. She felt these activities helped her overcome shyness and get involved with other people.

Calynn is a young woman who was born with Asperger's Syndrome. Asperger's is part of the autism spectrum of neurological disorders marked by difficulties in communication and social interaction.

In her final year of high school, Calynn had an opportunity to be part of an on-the-job training program called Project SEARCH. The statewide program is a partnership with Nebraska VR, local business, local schools, NE Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Assistive Technology Partnership, and the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD services).

Calynn trained at St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center in several different areas of the hospital. She found the job as a Linen Tech to be a great fit. After graduation she accepted a full time position, with benefits, at the medical center.



RYAN WOLF

One minute Ryan Wolf and his younger brother were driving to a store to do some Christmas shopping and the next minute he was fighting for his life. Another car crashed into Ryan's vehicle resulting in devastating injuries. The most significant was a brain injury. After his body healed Ryan still had ongoing issues with the effects of the brain injury (e.g. memory retention).

Ryan turned to Omaha West VR staff seeking help with his employment planning. His VR counselor suggested the Career Solutions Program at the Ollie Webb Center. The program was called the Acquired Brain Injury Job Club. The Job Club was funded by a grant by Nebraska VR using federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act money (ARRA).

It was a turning point for Ryan. The Job Club helped him build his confidence, improve interviewing skills, and see future job opportunities. After completing the Job Club program Ryan was employed at a Target store.

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.InfoColumbus@nebraska.gov

Fremont serves counties:

Dodge
*2951 North Clarkson Street, Fremont, NE 68025
(402) 727-2900 V, (888) 585-5439 V
VR.InfoFremont@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.InfoGrandIsland@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.InfoKearney@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.InfoLincoln@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.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, Thomas
200 South Silber, Bldg. #2, North Platte, NE 69101
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Omaha-Downtown serves counties:

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

Omaha-West serves counties:

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

South Sioux City serves counties:

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

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301 Centennial Mall South, PO Box 94987,
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987
(402) 471-3644 V/TTY, (877) 637-3422 V/TTY
VR.InfoStateOffice@nebraska.gov

*Addresses listed are as of 12-2011. The office locations indicated will move in 2012. For an up-to-date address list check the website at <http://www.vr.ne.gov/offices/index.html>.



State Rehabilitation Council

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