



DVR

DIVISION of
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
State of Colorado

Qualified applicants.
Outstanding employers.
We bring you together.

www.dvrcolorado.com

| | | |
|--|-----------|--|
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DVR

DIVISION of
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
State of Colorado

COLORADO STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL



2011 Annual Report

Bridging business and ability.

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). Our report covers the year that ended June 30, 2011. The State Rehabilitation Council and the staff of DVR are proud of the accomplishments reflected herein. The SRC works in partnership with DVR to accomplish goals that are vital to achieving success for our customers.

RSA Relationship

DVR completed its federal monitoring process during the last half of 2009. A report was issued by Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) that indicated DVR had five items that required corrective action. DVR created a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for them and it was approved by RSA. Following the approval of the CAP, DVR met with the SRC to get their feedback on how items mentioned in the CAP could be incorporated into the update of the State Plan. Those recommendations will appear in the 2012 Annual Report.

SRC Recommendations

Concrete recommendations were created by the SRC for inclusion in the State Plan last year. You will read about the recommendations and results in a subsequent section of this Annual Report. The partnership between the SRC and DVR results in a sharing of the goals needed to move the program to the next level.

Recovery

DVR has continued to recover from economic downturn that began in 2008. Not only did DVR staff need to serve the many people who had been on the wait list, but they had to re-initiate relationships with vendors or locate new ones. Vendors are a vital part of the picture when it comes to serving customers. DVR cannot do or provide all of the things a customer may need to find employment in a particular field, so we must rely on various kinds of vendors. Vendors can range from training programs and colleges, to retail outlets for work clothes and tools. In the more remote parts of our state it is very difficult to secure the services of many types of vendors.

The MIG and Medicaid Buy-In Program

Through the year DVR has been involved in some special projects and partnerships that are enhancing our ability to provide service to our customers. One of them is the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG). The MIG has allowed DVR and several partners to promote the win-win of hiring people with disabilities through direct contact with groups of employers throughout the state. DVR thinks that if employers know that there are supports out there for qualified candidates with disabilities, then they may be more likely to hire someone. Another goal of the MIG is to promote awareness of the Medicaid Buy-In Program for Working Adults with Disabilities. Slated to roll out in spring 2012, this Colorado Buy-In will allow adults to receive Medicaid who would not otherwise qualify due to earning too much income or having too many resources.

The BOND Project

Another path DVR has gone down this year is with the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND) study. The goal of the study is to help Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries return to work. DVR, in collaboration with Cerebral Palsy of Colorado, competed for and was awarded one of the study sites for this seven year endeavor. We are the only VR agency in the country to be a host site for BOND. Our territory includes Colorado and Wyoming. DVR's portion of BOND employs a part-time supervisor and two Enhanced Work Incentives Counselors (EWICs). Our portion of the study will help SSA determine if providing enhanced counseling and a benefit offset to SSDI beneficiaries who are working will increase the number of people who return to work after being on benefits. DVR is looking forward to determining whether EWIC services, if successful, could provide a new hybrid model for vocational rehabilitation counseling.

Rebuilding Management Team

The last six months of this year was one of many transitions for DVR. Five of our senior managers decided to retire effective July 1, 2011. That means DVR is rebuilding its senior management team. The start of that rebuild has been to hire a new Deputy of Field Services and a Chief Financial Officer and Deputy of Operations Management. The two people selected for those positions, Krista Dann and Kelley Hartman, have begun work and we ask you to give them your wholehearted support in this year of change and rebuilding. Both women have years of relevant experience and a passion for dealing with change and transition. We feel extremely fortunate to have them with us. The coming year will bring numerous other changes to DVR's management structure, so stay tuned!

ARRA

DVR's use of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds is nearly ending. This welcome infusion of federal funding allowed Colorado to eliminate its large wait list and serve people much more quickly than would have been possible without ARRA funds. ARRA dollars also made it possible for DVR to invest in a case management software system that allows staff to serve customers much more effectively and efficiently. DVR is also able to analyze data from the system and create detailed reports. A Business Outreach Specialist who works only with placements in federal jobs was very successfully piloted and DVR has made that position a permanent part of its staff.

The SRC and DVR are grateful for all of the partnerships that make our successes with customers possible. Whether it is a vendor; a referring agency; employers; advocates; our federal partners at RSA; our parent agency, the Colorado Department of Human Services and our sister divisions within it; community organizations; workforce and education department partners; school districts; or our outstanding staff, we could not do what we do without you. DVR and the SRC salute the commitment of all of these partners to achieving employment success for people with disabilities. Thank you for staying with us on our journey to give people with disabilities the tools they need to be successful in the world of work and full members in their communities.



Nancy Smith

Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation



Lynne Neese

Co-Chair, State Rehabilitation Council



Joyce Schlose

Co-Chair, State Rehabilitation Council

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Field Services

Colorado's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provides individualized services leading to employment for people with all types of physical and mental disabilities. Professional staff and extensively trained Rehabilitation Counselors are located in numerous field offices and satellite locations throughout Colorado.

DVR's staff is highly committed to assisting individuals with disabilities to obtain vocational success and independence through evaluation, planning, and provision of services necessary to be successful in employment. Approximately 130 vocational rehabilitation counselors across the state provide one-on-one comprehensive support during this process and assist individuals in addressing barriers and realizing their employment and career goals and dreams. To meet the needs of a diverse population, DVR has ensured that there are counselors who "specialize" in a variety of disabilities and employment types throughout the state. There are also counselors who are fluent in Spanish and American Sign Language in each region.

Each of DVR's field offices has a supervisor who, in addition to providing leadership and guidance to the staff, takes the lead in developing partnerships with area employers, workforce centers, schools, and other public and private service agencies within the community. DVR works in partnership with the business community to provide services to employers such as disability awareness training, on-site job assessments, referral and support of qualified employees, and professional consultation.

When working with individuals across the state who are seeking successful employment, DVR staff continually strive to provide an environment that is welcoming, respectful, and responsive to the needs of Colorado's consumers.



VISION

Individuals with disabilities are essential to the success of Colorado's workforce and communities.

MISSION

DVR assists persons with disabilities to succeed at work and to live independently.

DVR's GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- DVR is
 - Welcoming
 - Responsive
 - Effective
 - Proactive
 - Continually growing and improving
- DVR believes that treating all persons with dignity and respect results in services and outcomes of the highest quality.
- DVR promotes a diverse community and workforce.
- DVR believes that the quality of our staff is essential to the success of our clients.
- Any action taken by our employees has a direct impact on the successful accomplishment of our mission.



Colorado Department of Human Services

people who help people



The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has had a State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for over twenty-four years.

The SRC mission statement is:

SRC provides individuals with disabilities a strong substantive role in shaping the programs and services established to support their employment goals and aspirations, and to provide consumers of vocational rehabilitation services a mechanism to influence at the systemic and policy level the direction of vocational rehabilitation programming.



CONTACT INFORMATION:

The Colorado State Rehabilitation Council

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Denver, Colorado 80203

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FAX: (303) 866-4905
Email: voc.rehab@state.co.us
Web:

http://www.dvrcolorado.com/councils_boards.php

SRC Staff Member: **Rebecca Johnson**

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Joyce Schlose

Co-Chair
State Rehabilitation Council
Representative of Community Rehab Program

Lynne Neese

Co-Chair
State Rehabilitation Council
Rep. Business, Industry, and Labor

Todd Nielsen

Co-Chair Elect
State Rehabilitation Council
Representative At-Large

David Thomas

Treasurer
State Rehabilitation Council
Representative of VR Counselors

Jim Crowe

Secretary
State Rehabilitation Council
Representative of VR Counselors

Gavin Attwood

Representative of Disability Advocacy Groups

Steve Bell

Representative of Mental Health Planning Council

Todd Coffey

Representative of Developmental Disability Council

Dave DeLay

Mental Health Representative

Joe Garrity

Representative of VR Consumers

Rebecca Johnson (ex-officio)

SRC Coordinator

Mary Leonard

Towaoc, Colorado
Representative of 121 Project

Barbara Palmer

Representative of State Education Agency

Debra Petersen

Representative State Independent Living Center

Geoff Peterson

Representative of Client Assistant Program

Beth Schaffner

Representative of PEAK Parent Center

Nancy Smith (ex-officio)

Director of Vocational Rehabilitation
Designated State Unit

Judi Stein Stutman

Representative of Public At-Large

Larry Williams

Representative of Individuals with Disabilities

Committees and Accomplishments

Colorado's SRC uses standing committees, as well as ad hoc committees, to conduct most of the detailed work on various issues. They use this committee structure to ensure that their goals are met through active participation of all SRC members. The standing committees include:

1. CONSUMER SATISFACTION COMMITTEE addresses direct access issues of the DVR consumer of vocational rehabilitation services. The committee presents reports and recommendations to the entire SRC for review and confirmation. The committee is responsible for the Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

- Completed Satisfaction Survey with Educators and Transition Coordinators.
- Compiled Survey Data and Reported to the Full Council.

2. EMPLOYMENT LINKAGE COMMITTEE contacted members of the legislature to educate them on the importance of fully funding the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. Also, the Employment Committee contacted Senators and Representatives on the State Joint Budget Committee.

Each committee member contacted business owners who employed DVR consumers. These businesses were asked in turn to contact their own Senators and Representatives to discuss DVR programs and the employer perspective.

The goal was more than attained as there were over 50 legislators who were contacted.

3. MEMBERSHIP/RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE recognized that recruiting and retaining business members is a difficult challenge. To develop some possibilities, the committee requested a list of all employers who hired a DVR client in the last year. That list of employers was contacted and they were encouraged to consider becoming a member of the SRC. The mailing resulted in a good response rate of employers who thought they might be interested in becoming an SRC member. They were invited to attend a meeting and several did attend. No appointments have resulted from the mailing as of the end of the fiscal year, but the committee will continue to follow-up with the people who respond.

The recruitment focus is on employers who have hired individuals with disabilities (especially DVR consumers) so that they have an understanding of the challenges and joys. The biggest problem in recruiting them is the time commitment and the earlier start time of SRC meetings. The committee would like to develop a pool of applicants from which they could fill vacancies on the Council.

4. LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE created a focused plan to educate key legislators about the financial benefits of the work of DVR. A major piece of this effort was to craft a short but significant message that could be contained within a small factsheet. This was accomplished, printed and used by all members of the SRC to educate legislators and others.

The Legislative Committee hosted an educational session during one of the SRC's full council meetings that featured a seasoned legislative liaison discussing the impact of the recent election. The Legislative Committee also provided all SRC members with a list of key legislators and asked them to agree to meet with at least one and their own legislator.

Difficulties were encountered in meeting with member of the Legislature. Council members were informed repeatedly that legislators would not meet with members of councils. The education process was successful in some instances and will be repeated in the upcoming session.

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY: Bertha Guerero



In today's job market, people are having to make the difficult decision to take a job in a different city or state, relocating in an unfamiliar place and leaving behind their support system and sometimes even their families.

Bertha Guerrero knows this situation all too well. In July 2010, she packed up her belongings from her home just outside of Dallas, Texas and left her husband and family behind to take a teaching position in Colorado Springs.

New surroundings, no family and a new job would be a difficult adjustment for just about anyone, but for the new teacher at the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind it proved to be even more of a challenge as Bertha is blind.

A teacher for 25 years, Bertha's position at her old school in North Dallas became a victim of budget cuts. When she finally got back on her feet and landed the job at CSDB her husband had a few months until retirement and her youngest daughter had one more year of school before graduation. Not wanting to disrupt their lives and plans, Bertha took the leap and moved to Colorado Springs alone.

"It was frightening," Bertha said of the move. "As my vision problems progressed and got worse, I had always had family around, but coming here I had no support system. But I had to make it work because I needed the job."

Bertha's daughter had spent the first several weeks with her in Colorado Springs helping her to get adjusted, but after she left Bertha realized she still needed some support. Her new co-workers suggested she seek some assistance from Colorado DVR, specifically mobility specialist Patty Wagner in the Colorado Springs office. Together she and Wagner started working on Bertha's caning skills, practicing routes around her house.

"The first few days I was afraid to walk out the door," she said. "Then it was a walk to the corner, then to the pharmacy and further and further."

Around the same time she applied for DVR services, Bertha also applied for a guide dog. In June she flew to New Jersey to pick out her chocolate lab, Godiva, who had just graduated from training.

Bertha said she and Godiva connected right away, and slowly she started gaining more confidence to explore her new home town.

"When we started working on crossing streets I was scared to death to cross Platte Avenue. Now I cross Platte every day," she said.

Bertha's husband will move to Colorado Springs in June of 2012 after their daughter graduates from high school, but until then Bertha said she is comfortable and confident to work, play and live successfully in her surroundings.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Colorado Traumatic Brain Injury Program

The Traumatic Brain Injury Program, housed within the DVR, strives to develop a system of care in the state of Colorado to address the needs of individuals with brain injury. The TBI Program is meeting this challenge through three primary programmatic areas: grant funds from the Health and Rehabilitation Services Administration (HRSA), the Colorado Traumatic Brain Injury Trust Fund program (CTBITF) and an Executive Order on TBI signed by the Governor in 2008.

The TBI Program has obtained HRSA funding which started November 2010. This is a four year grant with three major initiatives: Increase appropriate and effective identification, assessment, interventions, transitions and successful outcomes of school-aged individuals with TBI; develop community based behavioral health provider expertise regarding deployment-related traumatic brain injury screening, assessment, and treatment; and to encourage individuals with brain injuries and their family members to become effective leaders at the individual, community and statewide levels. To achieve these goals the TBI Program is contracting with the Colorado Department of Education, the Denver Veterans Administration, and partnering with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment respectively.

The CTBITF was created by Colorado statute in 2002. The TBI Trust Fund strives to support all people in Colorado affected by TBI through services, research and education. Revenue is generated from surcharges assessed for DUI, DWAI, speeding convictions and convictions of those individuals 18 and under riding a motorcycle without a helmet. By statute the funds are divided in the following three areas: a minimum of 55% for services, 25% for research and 5% for education. For more information, please visit our website at www.tbicolorado.org.

Finally, the TBI Program was responsible for implementing an Executive Order on TBI signed by Governor Ritter in December 2008. As a result of the Executive Order, a work group was convened comprised of representatives from 13 different State Departments. This work group was responsible for developing a comprehensive report to the governor outlining recommendations related to the effective care and treatment of individuals with TBI and their family members. This report is available on our website at www.tbicolorado.org. The Executive Order report has provided the TBI Program with a blueprint for addressing issues facing individuals with TBI and their family members.

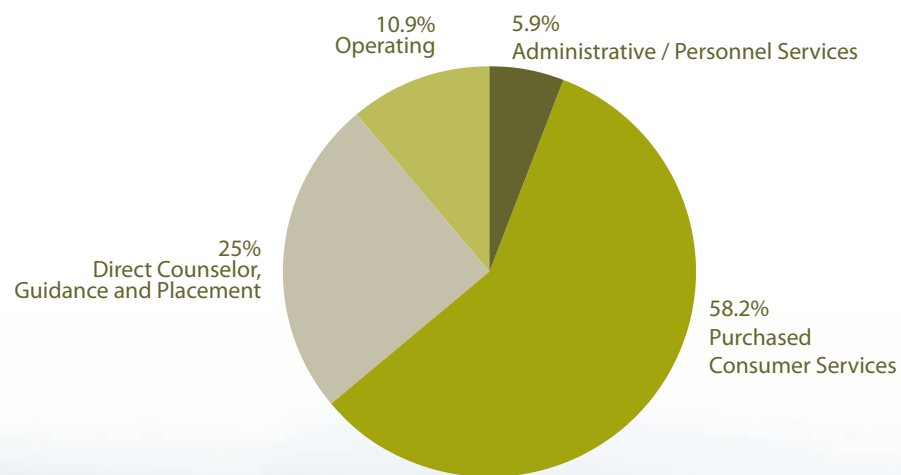


STATE FISCAL YEAR 2011

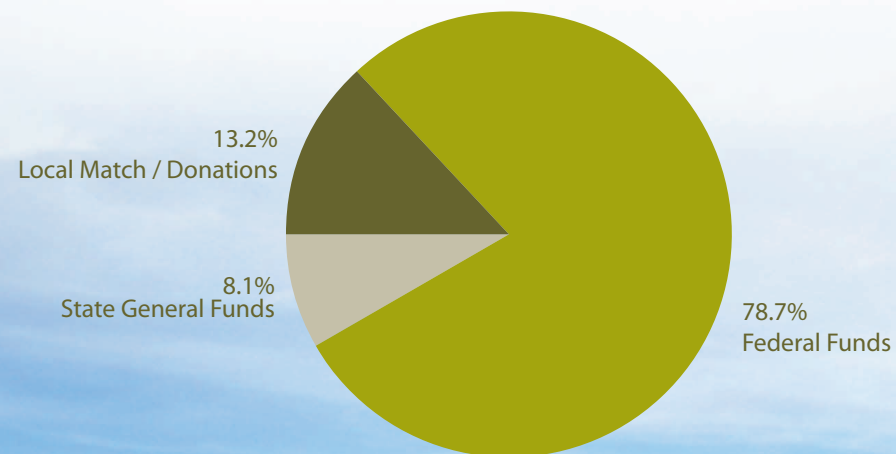
FACTS at a GLANCE

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Total Individuals Served | 20,012 |
| Successful Employment Outcomes Achieved | 2,116 |
| Average Hourly Wage | \$12.17 |
| Average Hours Worked Per Week | 28.1 |
| Total Earnings of These Employees in the First Year | \$37.4 million |
| Average Weekly Salary | \$366 |
| Average Annual Salary | \$19,057 |
| Additional Dollars to Colorado's Tax Base | \$25.4 million |
| Additional Federal and State Taxes Paid in First Year (estimated) | \$1.8 million |

DVR Expenditures by Type

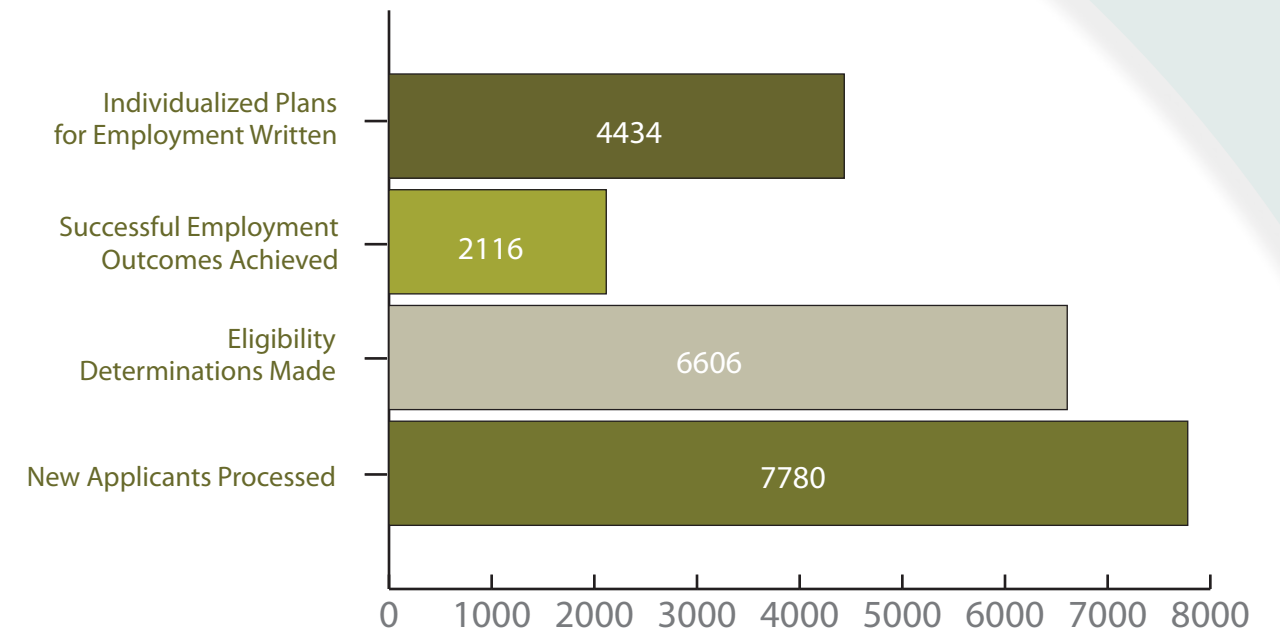


DVR Sources of Funding

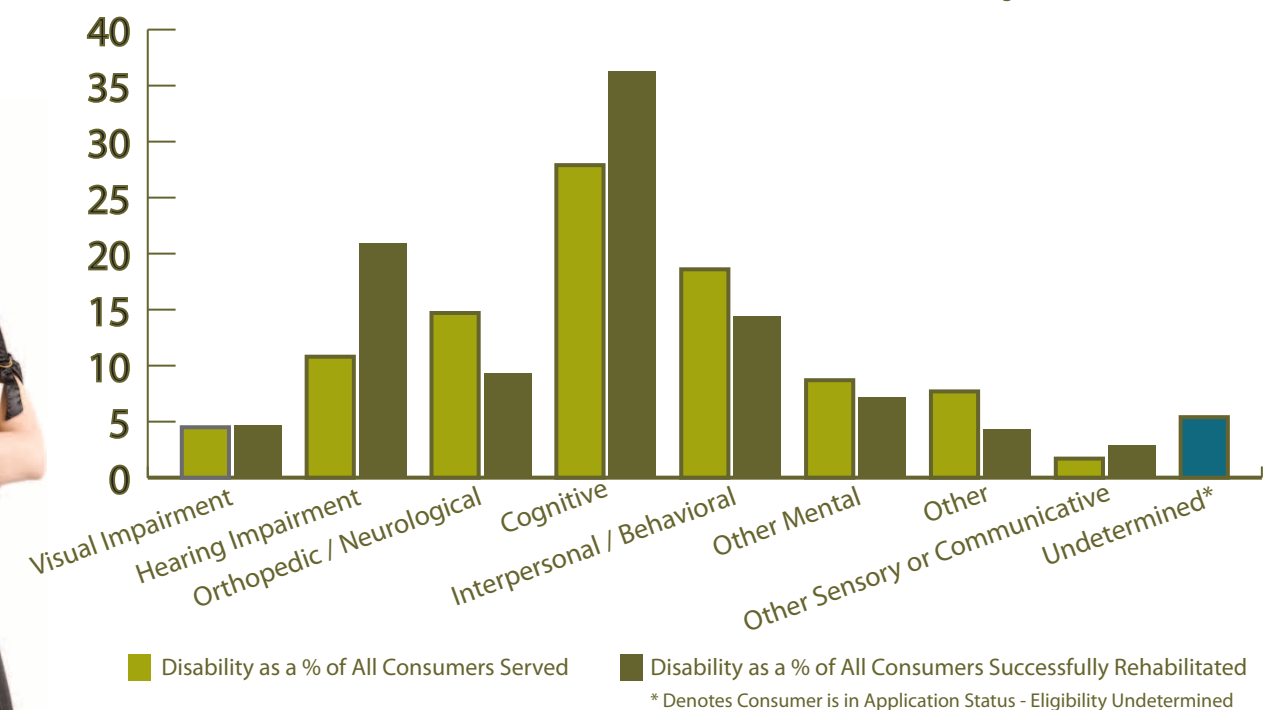


STATE FISCAL YEAR 2011

What we accomplished



Disabilities of Consumers Served and Successfully Rehabilitated



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:
Youth Unit

The DVR Youth Unit assures that quality transition services are provided to Colorado's youth and young adults with disabilities. The Youth Unit ensures that DVR counselors understand and successfully implement transition services so students with disabilities do not encounter gaps as they leave the school setting and begin participating in activities leading to successful employment. Through our partnership with the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, we will soon add a page to the DVR website targeting youth and the resources they need to make a successful transition to the adult world.

Colorado DVR counselors provide consultation and technical assistance to educators early in the transition process. Staff also facilitate referrals, determine eligibility, assist students with the selection of suitable employment outcomes, and provide services appropriate to the individual needs of students. We strive to ensure partnering takes place at the local level between education and DVR through consistent representation of DVR in the schools. To this end, the Youth Unit is collaborating with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to develop a process that assures regular connection between local DVR offices and local school districts, for the purpose of connecting students with their local DVR counselor well before exit from school occurs.

Additionally, the Youth Unit is responsible for the implementation of Colorado's School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP). SWAP is a partnership with more than 140 local school districts and CDE. Each year, SWAP provides year-round transition services including assessment, career exploration, career development, work experiences, and job placement to more than 2,500 youth between the ages of 16 and 25. Efforts through SWAP account for an average of 23% of the overall DVR successful closures annually.

"It has been my pleasure to support our youth and your program. After all, they are the future of this country and the world." - Dennis Morrison, Assistant Director Road and Bridge, Larimer County Road and Bridge



CLIENT SUCCESS STORY: Arlandis Jordan

Few people ever find what they would consider the "perfect job," but DVR client Arlandis Jordan just may have done it. He works right across the street from his house in the school he is familiar with, working as a custodian with co-workers he thinks of more as great friends.

Jordan landed the custodial position at Rocky Mountain High School in Fort Collins in September 2010 working as a part time employee. He worked hard and was promoted to full time in May of 2011.

He came to DVR through the School to Work Alliance Program offered through the Poudre Valley School District. DVR Counselor Tiffany Link helped him identify an employment goal and began working on applications and practicing interviews.

"My first couple of practice interviews I was nervous," said Jordan. "Actually doing the interview was so nerve-wracking."

His skills improved, and when it came time to interview for the custodial position his practice paid off and he was offered the position.

Getting hired was not only a great personal accomplishment but it also meant that Jordan, who lives with his mom and two siblings, could finally start helping to support his family financially.

"Whenever I get a paycheck, I give as much as I can to my mom," said Jordan. "With my income we don't struggle as much."

Link said she is thrilled that Jordan is doing so well and has found such a great situation, and although she said she was happy to have helped and been a part of the process, she credits Jordan's hard work and determination for getting him where he is today.

"He has a job he loves, which of course is very motivational. He is very proud of his job and happy to be able to help support his family. He is very motivated and just has done a great job in transitioning from high school to work. His employer has given him great feedback on his job performance. Of course, we always want the employment of our clients to be a win/win situation for the client and the employer and this story is a great example of this mission."



DVR was pleased to enter into a seven-year partnership with Abt Associates and CP of Colorado (CPCO) to implement the Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND) project throughout Colorado and Wyoming. Funded by the Social Security Administration, BOND operates in ten areas of the country. The goal of BOND is to help Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) recipients return to work. BOND uses a rigorous study design, which includes a financial benefit offset and enhanced work incentives counseling, to help SSDI recipients who return to work earn more and keep more of their SSDI benefits. The BOND study results will be used to determine if the provision of financial incentives such as the gradual reduction of Social Security benefits \$1 for every \$2 of earnings combined with enhanced benefits counseling and guidance will lead to increased earnings and employment, as well as a better quality of life, for the beneficiaries.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Personal Adjustment Training Program

The Personal Adjustment Training (PAT) Program of the Colorado Rehabilitation Center, Metro Rehabilitation Office, is a program of services designed to meet the personal and vocational needs of those individuals who are blind or visually-impaired.

To be eligible for services, a person must: have a severe visual impairment; be a rehabilitation client in “applicant status” or above; be in need of two or more instructional services; be able to manage personal needs with or without a personal attendant; have limitations in performing everyday tasks; and have a need for training. The PAT program is designed to address a broad spectrum of needs and concerns of those who are visually-impaired and who are planning to return to work or to be independent homemakers.

The PAT program for “Blind and Visually-Impaired” individuals edges closer to filling all instructor vacancies. In the past year, the PAT program has hired one new vision rehabilitation therapist (VRT), Karen Klein. Together with the entire PAT team, Karen spearheaded a creative training program, which prepares Business Enterprise Program (BEP) candidates. Over the past quarter, the program augmented the Business Enterprise Program’s (BEP) curriculum by developing and implementing a training tailored to provide skill building for individuals seeking to become BEP operators. The program fully expects to enhance this role in the BEP process, and assist even a greater number of individuals to become successful operators.

Tina Ektermanis, Jim Pilkington, Ken Neve and Jackie Geib continue to operate an efficient center-based program, which is responsive to student’s needs. DVR participants have expressed a desire for a streamlined personal adjustment training program, which maximizes one-on-one skill building and allows students time to job search. The PAT program met these requests through skillful scheduling, as well as instructors dedicated to meeting the challenges of demanding competitive times.

The DVR itinerant program, which typically serves 50 – 60 individuals annually, is supported by Jadwiga Brown. Ms. Brown sustains services to an inordinately high volume of individuals, while the PAT program and DVR recruit additional top-notch staff.

As the PAT program looks towards the upcoming year, the high-quality services will be provided on a greater scope with the additional staff. The PAT program remains optimistic and prepared to tackle challenges that are a by-product of the current economy. The teachers continue to assist individuals who are blind or visually-impaired, as well as individuals with orthopedic impairments, traumatic brain injuries, and organic brain conditions resulting in significant limitations, to achieve greater independence and meaningful employment.

Colorado DVR has offices all over the state to better serve our consumers.

REGION I: ●
Jane Berry, Supervisor
719.482.7976

1. Cañon City
2. Colorado Springs
3. Lamar
4. Limon
5. Pueblo
6. The Resource Exchange (CCB)
7. Rocky Ford
8. Trinidad

REGION II: ●
Jim Crowe, Supervisor
303.866.3559

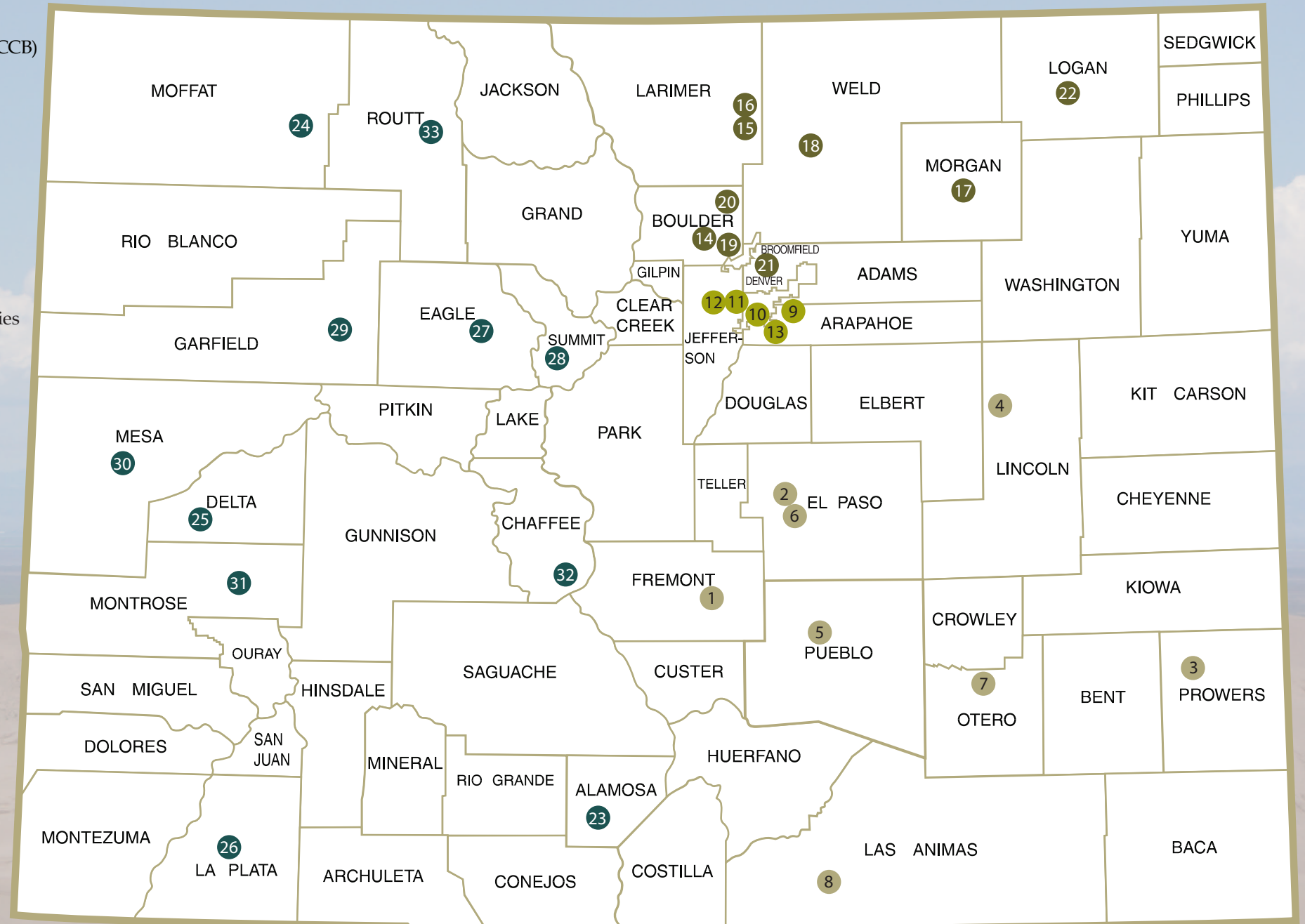
9. Aurora
10. Denver Metro
11. Developmental Disabilities Resource Center (CCB)
12. Golden
13. Greenwood Village

REGION III: ●
Pablo Sandoval, Supervisor
970.225.3892

14. Boulder
15. Foothills Gateway (CCB)
16. Fort Collins
17. Fort Morgan
18. Greeley
19. Imagine (CCB)
20. Longmont
21. Northglenn
22. Sterling

REGION IV: ●
Jennifer Scilacci, Supervisor
970.623.3246

23. Alamosa
24. Craig
25. Delta
26. Durango
27. Edwards
28. Frisco
29. Glenwood Springs
30. Grand Junction
31. Montrose
32. Salida
33. Steamboat Springs



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Self-Employment

For the entrepreneurs among us, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) offers a wealth of resources through a group of well trained and talented staff known as Rehabilitation Counselors for Entrepreneurship (RCEs). These "RCEs" apply specialized self-employment skills, critical thinking and knowledge designed to assist our diverse consumers to succeed in the challenging and exciting business world.

Partnering with the RCEs, consumers benefit from a professional vendor network of subject matter and seasoned business experts. They are united for the purpose of offering their collective expertise to aid and assist our new entrepreneurs with "real-world" knowledge and training.

For our consumers already fortunate enough to be experienced business owners, DVR offers existing business intervention assistance with professional advice and resources that will propel our entrepreneurs to new levels of business success. Business success and associated rewards for outstanding business achievement offer our entrepreneurs the opportunity to excel well beyond the barriers related to any disability.

This approach is well illustrated by our collaborative work with the Colorado AgrAbility Project, a partnership between Colorado State University Cooperative Extension and Good Will. AgrAbility locates farmers and ranchers at risk of losing their careers in agriculture due to injury or disability. Through DVR financial assistance and support, farmers and ranchers obtain equipment modifications or other adaptive devices that help them sustain their work.

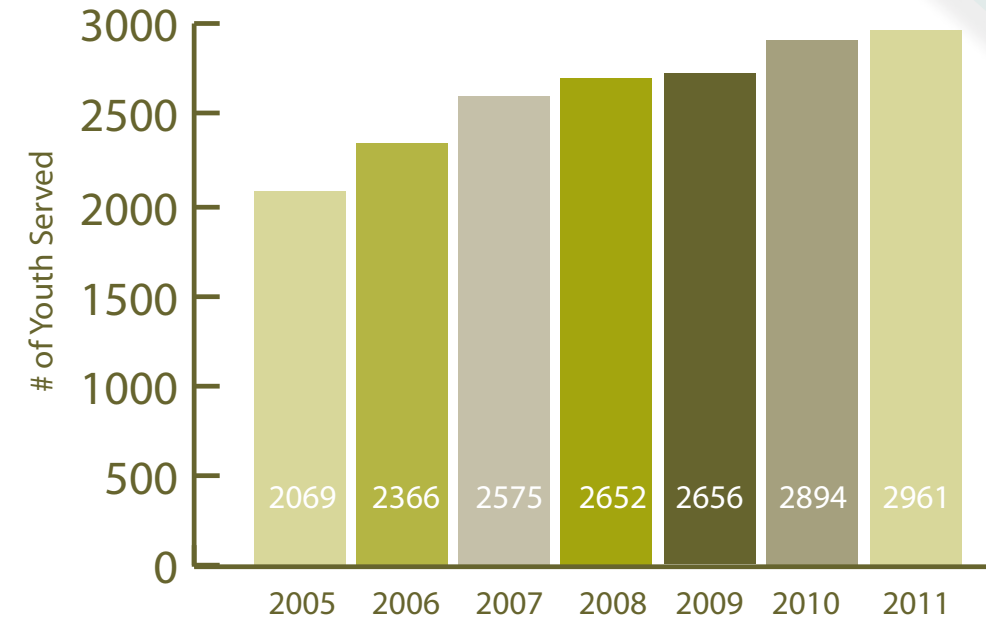
The Division's Self-Employment Program partners with the Colorado Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade and a myriad of other similarly charged organizations, each of whom are dedicated to the goal of preparing entrepreneurs to succeed in today's tricky and unpredictable business environment.

After all is said and done, the "bottom line" is individuals with a disability can succeed in a competitive business world. To this end each person will have the benefit of creating their own job.



STATE FISCAL YEAR 2011

School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP): Youth Served by State FY

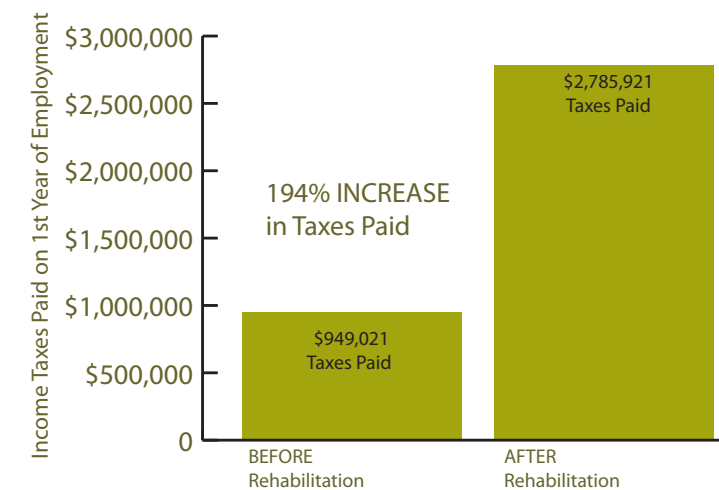
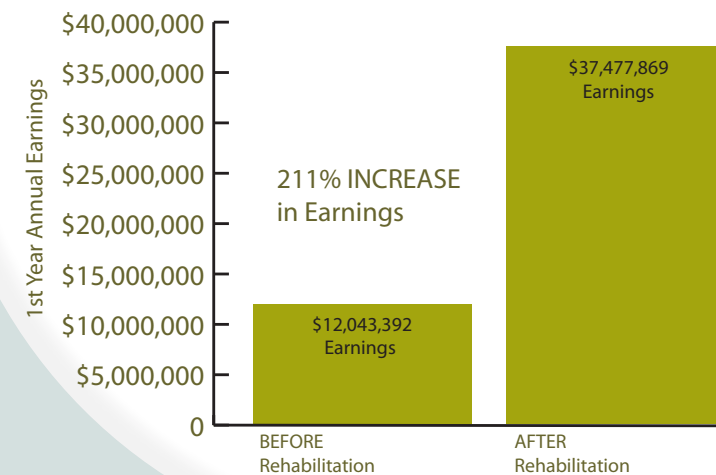


Economic Benefit to the State of Colorado IN SFY 2011:

2,116 Coloradans with disabilities were successfully employed in a competitive job

68% of these new workers were unemployed when they became involved with DVR

Average annual salary for these workers rose from **\$6,129** prior to DVR's involvement to **\$19,057** after rehabilitation



Business Enterprise Program

Business Enterprise Program (BEP), mandated by the Federal Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1936, trains legally blind individuals and helps them establish, maintain, and manage food service locations in State and Federal government buildings and other facilities.

As of August 2011, 52 business enterprises were operating on Federal and State properties in Colorado, with 2-3 additional enterprises opening in the next year. The operations include the nation's first BEP-operated Einstein's Brothers Bagel franchise, large and small cafeterias, military dining halls, snack bars, postal facilities, federal prisons, convenience stores, and vending machine concessions, as well as concessions in State parks, rest areas, ports of entry, welcome centers, and youth corrections facilities. The program receives excellent support and assistance from General Services Administration (GSA), the Federal Government's building managers, who recognize the value of the BEP and the program's blind and visually impaired operators. The program recently updated its training curriculum, which is generating positive comments and excellent results. The program receives no State general fund money and is funded from an allotment of Federal funds authorized by Title I of the United States Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 110), cash funds, and cash funds exempt. A primary source of the program's cash fund is derived from the blind operators and their profits. The BEP's licensed blind operators act as independent contractors to the BEP. Blind operators are individual business entrepreneurs, using profits earned as their livelihood income.



Taking over the reins of an existing - but struggling - business is never easy. Trying to find the right spark that makes the business profitable sometimes never happens.

Scott Marcotte faced such a challenge taking over a failing cafeteria and vending operation at Peterson Air Force Base. Gross sales were down, the menu was small and the staff wasn't meeting the needs of the customer.

Marcotte was awarded the bid to run the cafeteria and 10 vending machines at Peterson through Colorado DVR's Business Enterprise Program in June 2011. BEP places qualified legally blind business entrepreneurs to manage food service operations in government buildings plus some privately owned facilities.

He immediately started putting his stamp on things based on knowledge he had gained from more than 25 years in the food industry and vending business.

"Right away I saw the potential of what we could do," said Marcotte. "It really comes down to just giving the people what they want."

One thing people wanted was a bigger menu with more choices. Marcotte said that under previous management customers were only offered four or five standard items that never changed. Today, he offers a full breakfast and a lunch menu serving everything from breakfast burritos and pancakes to salads, homemade french-fries, hamburgers and "any grilled sandwich you can imagine."

The second change Marcotte made was the staff. He said he had to make the difficult decision and let two employees go after one month because they were reluctant to go along with the new ideas being implemented.

"I tried to make it work, but they really didn't want any changes," he said. "After trying for 30 days, I really wasn't left with much of a choice."

Marcotte hired two new staff including "a dynamite cook," but convincing customers to give the new guys a try took some work. He said in the beginning he lost a few of the regular customers who also were not excited about the change. That's when he fell back on what he considers key to running a successful business in the food industry - customer service.

"My new staff and I just kept on smiling and treating people right," he said. "Then, little by little we started winning people over."

Just four months later, Marcotte said he has more than doubled gross sales and serves 450 to 500 people every day.

He is thankful he was given the opportunity and credits the BEP for his current success. "As a blind entrepreneur, the program has given me the greatest opportunity," he said. "It's a hand up, not a hand out, and if it wasn't for this program I wouldn't know where I would be today."



DVR Business Outreach Initiative

Bridging business and ability

The DVR Business Outreach Initiative was launched in July 2007. The vision of the initiative was and continues to be to build long-term working relationships with private businesses and public organizations that result in successful employment outcomes for DVR participants.

This is accomplished by the team focusing on our business customer needs, identifying their priority hiring needs, and then connecting qualified DVR participants to those employment opportunities, in effect providing a bridge between employers and dependable DVR participants. In addition to assisting our business customers with recruitment, the team can deliver disability awareness training to organizations who desire to learn more about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Reasonable Accommodations, the Benefits of Hiring People with Disabilities, DVR 101, Disability Etiquette, and many other topics customized to the audience needs.

We are DVR. The best candidates. The best support. We strive to make the best match so our employer partners get the right candidate for the job.

- *Our employer partners receive recruitment services and access to an untapped labor source at zero-cost. As a result, they are able to recruit qualified, dependable, and diverse employees and reduce their recruitment costs.*
- *Our employer partners receive disability awareness training that increases their knowledge about people with disabilities. As a result, they are more effectively able to recruit and ensure they operate within the requirements of the ADA. In addition, they are more effectively able to provide customer service to this large and growing segment of our population.*
- *Our employer partners receive on-going support from DVR about any disability management issue, including specialized knowledge about disabilities and job retention issues. As a result, they are often able to solve these issues and be as profitable and efficient as possible.*

The business outreach team is proud of the growth we've achieved in the last four years, increasing our staff from 10 to 15 professionals. We look forward to continuing to serve DVR participants, our colleagues, partners, and business customers. When people are employed and businesses are profitable, it helps all Colorado citizens!

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Colorado provides specialized services to participants who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened.

Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCD) who are fluent in American Sign Language are located in offices throughout Colorado. Rehabilitation Counselors for the Hard of Hearing (RCHH) who have been trained to communicate effectively with non-signing individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing are also located throughout the State. Together, this group of professionals model DVR service provision while recognizing cultural diversity and unique communication needs.

Service provision for participants who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing and qualifications of their vocational rehabilitation counselors are outlined in the Model State Plan for Rehabilitation of Persons who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing or Late-Deafened. The Fifth Edition of the Model State Plan was prepared by the University of Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center with the cooperation of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). This group was charged with identifying strategies to impact participants with hearing loss and to "keep pace with legislation, technology, and service innovations." This year, Colorado RCDs and RCHHs have received training, as recommended by the Model State Plan and by internal survey results. This training included improving communication with non-signing participants who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and advancing service provision to individuals who are Deaf-Blind.

Colorado's RCDs and RCHHs focus on a set of values which includes ensuring that participants with a broad spectrum of hearing loss have easy access to DVR services in their preferred mode of communication. These counselors will continue to advocate for the recruitment, hiring and advancement of employees with deafness or hearing loss.



CLIENT SUCCESS STORY: Jeff Greene



Not every recovering addict gets a second chance. Companies screen out applicants who have backgrounds with drug-related offenses, and programs aimed at helping people find jobs are less sympathetic to people who have a history of addiction.

Jeff Greene got his second chance and has made the most of it. A methamphetamine addict for 10 years, Jeff landed in jail on a possession charge and was down to his last strike. He was faced with the long and difficult road of kicking a habit that was slowly killing him, or spending a good part of his life behind bars.

“The turning point for me wasn’t a decision made by me,” said Greene. “It was made for me. This was the last chance they were giving me.”

That’s when Greene was referred to the Stout Street Clinic in Denver for a long-term rehabilitation program. There he not only got the intense care he needed to start getting clean, but eventually he was given the opportunity to work as a laborer in the warehouse at Mile High Specialty Foods.

“One of the owners of Mile High had a friend in the program at Stout Street, and they really believe in second chances,” said Greene. “If it wasn’t for them I don’t know where I would be.”

Although Jeff was thankful for the job, he knew he would not be able to handle the rigors of physical work long term. Years of drug abuse and neglect of his health had caused damage to his body including a degenerative disc in his back.

The staff at Stout Street told him about Colorado DVR and he started getting services from counselor Mikki Rowe from the Denver Metro Office. She said he was very motivated right from the start and they worked on a plan for him to study computer networking at Arapahoe Community College.

“DVR has been awesome for me getting back in the swing of school,” he said. “I didn’t even know DVR existed before this and it has truly been a godsend.”

Before he graduated in the fall of 2011 with his associate’s degree in Computer Networking from Arapahoe Community College, Jeff worked his way out of the warehouse at Mile High Specialty Foods to be promoted to Purchasing Agent, using his new education to convert the warehouse physical data into computer data. He also received the Math, Business and Technology Graduate Award for his high achievement in computer networking studies in the Fall of 2010.

He now plans to pursue his bachelor’s degree in business at either Metro State or Regis University, and is thankful to all who have helped him turn his life around.

“Everything is just sort of falling into place for me right now and I owe that to a lot of people,” he said. “My parents are thrilled to have their son back.”



Jeff pictured with DVR Counselor Linda McVoy

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Independent Living Programs

The Independent Living Programs have spent the past year using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to increase outreach to underserved populations and to build capacity to address the growing needs of people with disabilities. The new State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) was implemented in October 2010 and has provided a guide for bringing our partners together to create a shared vision of independent living in Colorado.

The Association of Colorado Centers for Independent Living (ACCIL) has hired a coordinator who is helping the centers coalesce around common goals and shared information. With the coordinator’s guidance, the ACCIL has begun to take an active role in partnering with DVR and the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) to present a unified message about independent living philosophy and services. A major project of the ACCIL has been to find agreement, across all ten centers, on the definitions of independent living services. All ten independent living centers are now using the same data collection system and are invested in providing uniform and accurate reports.

The Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) program has been able to expand significantly through the use of ARRA funds. Funding three OIB ARRA vendors outside of the independent living program has created new partnerships and inspired a self-directed network of providers of low-vision services. All participants in the OIB program shared the accomplishments and insights gained through ARRA funds at a statewide conference in September 2011.

The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) has concentrated its efforts on implementation of the goals of the new SPIL. In May, the SILC hosted ACCIL, DVR, and SILC in a joint meeting to clarify their roles and establish collaborations that will move the SPIL agenda forward. The SILC also redesigned their website to provide a better platform for providing information about emerging disability issues, and to direct readers to our Colorado Independent Living Centers.

Together, our IL partners have developed the following unified message:

“Colorado’s Independent Living network facilitates services and peer support for people with disabilities to make quality life choices, promoting equal and full participation in community living.”

As we move into the second year of the SPIL, our IL partners are preparing to publish a “best practices” document using information gathered from recent compliance reviews, and to build more opportunities for collaboration.

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY: Jackie Weimer



The thoroughbred horses Jackie Weimer has bred, raised and trained have won countless races throughout her 25 years in the business. However, her favorite animal on her Bennett ranch might just be a mule.

Diagnosed with scoliosis as a child, Weimer's curved spine has rendered one lung non-functional and turned her heart, making it nearly impossible for her to do any physical activity without oxygen.

As it became more difficult to meet the daily requirements of running a ranch, her husband Jim tried to take over the duties. However, making sure all the chores got done so he could make it to his job at Sears at 5:30 am was nearly impossible.



That's when he read an advertisement for an upcoming workshop held by AgrAbility. They attended the workshop where they learned about the organization's mission to enable farmers and ranchers who have disabilities so they can continue to be successful and productive.

Representatives from AgrAbility partnered with Goodwill Industries and Colorado DVR counselor Ed Hodenpel to assess Jackie's situation and work together to find a solution that would allow her to continue raising her thoroughbreds.

They found that given Jackie's challenges, it would be nearly impossible for her to tend to her 12 horses in three different barns on a daily basis without assistance. That is when they suggested Jackie get a mule – a Kawasaki Mule Utility Vehicle that would allow her to get from one place to another in all weather. Jackie has impressed the presence of the UTV on new foals so they are comfortable as she uses it throughout their training.

"It has changed my whole life," Jackie said. "I taught them to go with the mule, so I can drive around the racetrack with the rope in my hand and they just go with me."

The vehicle was also fitted with a special vacuum powerful enough to clean the horse stalls. "It's like a shop vac, except it's huge," Jackie said. "Once it's full, my husband can take the manure and spread it around the pasture."

Looking back, Jackie said she doesn't know how much longer she would have been able to run the operation if it wasn't for her mule and the assistance given to her by the partnering organizations.

"I really didn't know how bad it was at the time, but now I wonder how I managed to do it," she said. "Attending that one workshop changed my whole life."

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

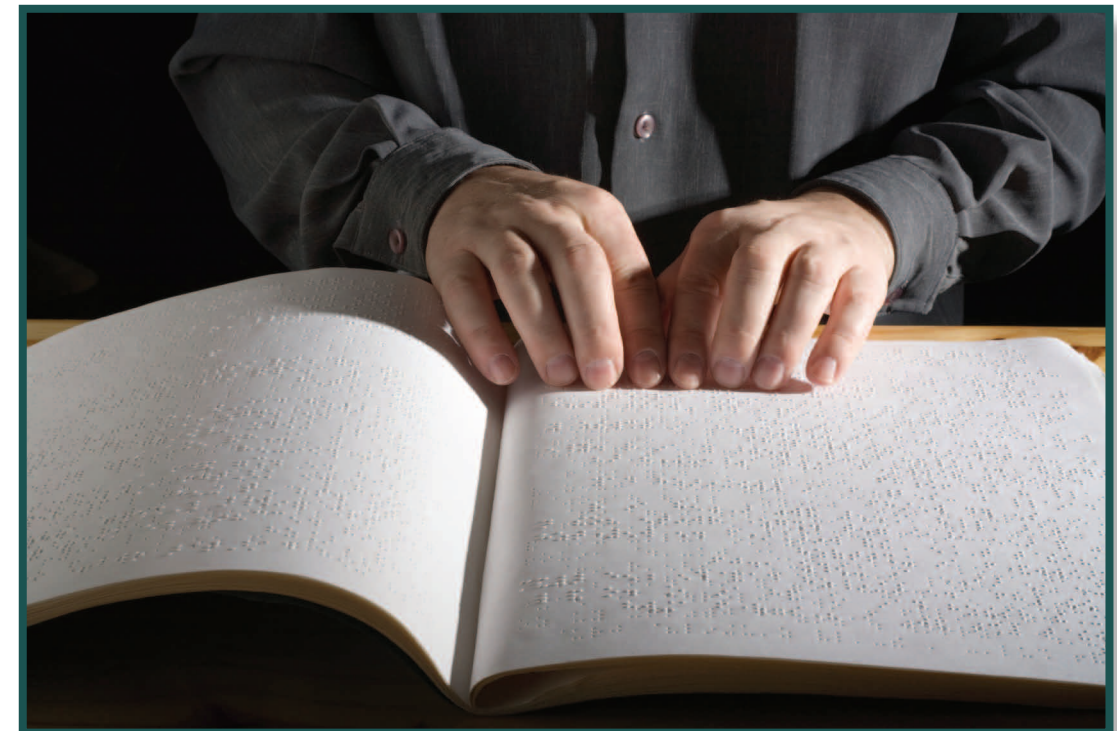
Blind Program

In reference to services for individuals who are blind/visually impaired, there continues to be efforts made towards collaborating with our partners in an effort to increase independence and employment opportunities for individuals who are blind/visually impaired.

One program that has been restructured is the Business Enterprise Program (Randolph Shepard program.) The restructuring includes intensive training, both hands-on and classroom time. This has resulted in an increase in interested candidates and an increase in referrals to this program from Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. Candidates will complete the training program with a well rounded foundation in business practices and food handling skills.

We have also collaborated with the Colorado Center for the Blind on an annual Federal employers' job fair. This includes training Federal Hiring Managers about blindness and accommodations for employees. There is also a time for mock interviews for a limited number of job seekers who are blind/visually impaired who went through a rigorous selection process.

There have been a number of projects involving call centers and addressing access issues. The call centers are newly established employment opportunities for individuals who are blind/visually impaired. The job duties and technical skills needed by the employer vary depending on the call center. The call centers range from scheduling transportation for individuals or providing transportation options to passengers while other call centers are information and referral centers.





Lost.

That is how Judy Rotunda felt in 2006 when she found herself divorced after 30 years of marriage. She had four children to take care of, no work history and a back injury that restricted her lifting and mobility.

Rotunda said she didn't even know where to start and figured her only option was to find a minimum wage job somewhere – or worse.

"I was in a very dark place," she said. "I contemplated suicide a couple of times and at one point they even put me on a 72 hour watch."

Around that time her divorce lawyer suggested she look into a program through Arapahoe Community College that helped disadvantaged students attend college. Unfortunately, that program had just recently expired, however, she was then referred to the Department of Human Services who told her about Colorado DVR.

She and her DVR counselor first looked into her starting a business teaching pilates, but after researching it, they decided it probably would not be her best path – it would not provide health insurance for her and her family, and the outlook for financial success did not look too favorable.

That's when she discovered a program at Pima Medical Institute offering coursework in the growing field of Ophthalmic Medical Technology. Partnering with the Colorado Department of Labor's Workforce Investment Act, Colorado DVR helped Rotunda attend the 20-week program. It had been decades since she had been in school so it was difficult at first.

"I started when I was 50," she said. "Learning how to learn again wasn't easy. It was really the hardest thing I have ever done in my life."

She said she made it through the old fashioned way - working hard and studying harder. And in the end she graduated with honors and perfect attendance in June of 2011.

But she still had to find a job. Once again her hard work paid off. The staff of a glaucoma and cornea specialist at which she was doing her student training recognized her abilities and great work habits and hired her upon graduating.

With the job came income and health benefits that she so desperately needed to support her family. However, the new job came with some anxiety that she had not expected.

"I had been a stay-at-home mom most of my life and finally getting the job took some adjusting to," she said. "I thought I was going to be so excited, I mean I was relieved but there was suddenly this huge feeling of responsibility."

She has now settled into her job and continues to learn in hopes of advancing in the field. Rotunda said she is grateful for the programs that are available to help people like herself.

"Once I got through the DVR system and saw that it really could work for me, it was truly a miracle," she said. "I am so fortunate that I bumped into it."



Medicaid Infrastructure Grant

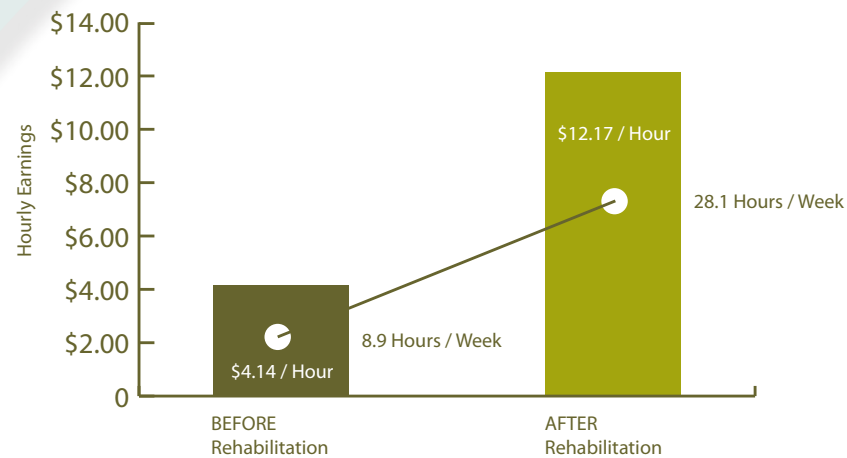
The greatest barrier to employment reported by individuals with disabilities is the fear of lost health care and other Medicaid-related services. Many Coloradans with disabilities will have a new option to engage in work without risking health care coverage when the Medicaid Buy-In Program for Working Adults with Disabilities (Buy-In) is made available in 2012. DVR staff assists the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) with planning and outreach for the Buy-In through a partnership made possible by the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG). The MIG grant provides resources to assure a strong Buy-In program implementation. In addition, it creates funding to develop and/or strengthen general employment infrastructure for individuals with disabilities. With wide stakeholder engagement and input, the MIG has established initiatives in the following areas:

- Education of employers on the business case for hiring individuals with disabilities utilizing the Think Beyond the Label national campaign as well as locally-produced video vignettes
- Establishment of a network of individuals trained to provide general-to-intermediate-level information about employment and the impact of earnings on state and federal benefits
- Production and dissemination of calendars featuring information on work incentives and art work of individuals with disabilities
- Information dissemination on the benefits of paid work experience through the AmeriCorps program
- Development of a website for youth with disabilities highlighting resources for employment
- Resource mapping and information dissemination on options for transportation training with a focus on encouraging use of regular bus systems whenever possible minimizing employment barriers associated with door-to-door, "para-transit" systems

If you would like more information on the Buy-In program, check out <http://www.colorado.gov/hcpf>.

STATE FISCAL YEAR 2011

Increased Earnings and Hours Worked for Competitively Employed Consumers



DVR Offices and Contact Information

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
 Colorado Department of Human Services
 1575 Sherman Street, 4th Floor
 Denver, Colorado 80203

Voice: 303.866.4150
 Toll Free: 1.866.870.4595
 FAX: 303.866.4905
 Web: <http://www.dvrcolorado.com>
 Email: Voc.Rehab@state.co.us

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Kelley Hartman
 Deputy, Operations Management

Joel Pavelis
 Manager, Provider Relations

Sue Schierkolk
 Manager, Program Development Unit

Mary Waterhouse
 Manager, Finance

Justin Wit
 Manager, Information Management and Reporting Unit



OFFICES:

| Office | Phone | Video Phone & TTY |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Alamosa | 719.589.5158 | |
| Aurora | 303.337.4610 | |
| Boulder | 303.444.2816 | |
| Colorado Springs | 719.635.3585 | 719.635.0529 |
| Craig | 970.824.9671 | |
| Denver Metro | 303.866.2500 | |
| | 303.866.3100 | |
| Durango | 970.247.3161 | 970.247.7940 |
| Edwards | 970.926.1515 | |
| Fort Collins | 970.223.9823 | 970.223.9823 |
| Frisco | 970.668.0234 | |
| Glenwood Springs | 970.945.9174 | 970.945.9174 |
| Golden | 303.866.4121 | 303.866.4125 |
| Grand Junction | 970.248.7103 | |
| Greeley | 970.353.5409 | |
| Greenwood Village | 303.221.2089 | |
| Lamar | 719.336.7712 | 719.336.7712 |
| Limon | 719.775.8819 | 719.775.8819 |
| Longmont | 303.776.6878 | |
| Montrose | 970.249.4468 | 970.249.4468 |
| Northglenn | 303.866.2110 | 303.866.2120 |
| Pueblo | 719.544.1406 | 719.546.0968 |
| Salida | 719.539.9670 | 719.539.9670 |
| Steamboat Springs | 970.620.0418 | 970.871.4853 |
| Sterling | 970.522.3737 | 970.522.3737 |

Satellite Offices:

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Cañon City | 719.275.2318 x3076 |
| Delta | 970.874.5781 x12 |
| Development Disabilities Resource Center | 303.462.6688 |
| Fort Morgan | 970.542.9376 |
| Foothills Gateway | 970.266.5436 |
| Imagine | 303.665.7789 |
| The Resource Exchange | 719.785.6405 |
| Rocky Ford | 719.254.3358 |
| Trinidad | 888.734.2211 |

Additional Programs:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Statewide Teacher for the Blind Program | 303.866.2500 |
| Business Enterprise Program | |
| Dan Whalen, Manager | 303.866.3425 |
| Traumatic Brain Injury Program | |
| Judy Dettmer, Director | 303.866.4085 |
| BOND Project | |
| Ken Reynolds | 303.866.2075 |
| Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) | |
| Karen Ferrington | 303.866.3779 |