

# DVR

DIVISION of  
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

*State of Colorado*

COLORADO STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Bridging Business and Ability



2012  
ANNUAL REPORT

[WWW.DVRCOLORADO.COM](http://WWW.DVRCOLORADO.COM)





# 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, 2012. 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.**

## **In Memory**

DVR staff provide education and support to Coloradans with disabilities that are determined to learn the skills they need to succeed in employment and life. To accomplish this requires strong leadership. The SRC and DVR would like to take this opportunity to recognize two long time managers who worked tirelessly for individuals with disabilities and who recently passed away. Dr. Ken Schmidt worked for DVR for 35 years, many of them as DVR's field administrator. He mentored countless staff members and helped to create and implement innovative programs to help our customers succeed.

Michael Wilson, a supervisor at the Greenwood Village and Aurora offices, will be remembered as a mentor and guide to VR Counselors and other DVR staff who are the community faces and hands of DVR. Both of these men had a significant impact on the Division's work in not only preparing people with disabilities to re-enter the world of work but connecting them with employers who are looking for employees who bring new energy and creativity to the workplace. The SRC and DVR are grateful for the outstanding contributions Ken and Mike made to DVR and all its customers.

## **New Management Structure**

The past year has been a rebuilding year for the DVR management team. In addition to the two deputies who were on board by the time of this report last year, DVR has hired managers to oversee our *Organizational Planning and Development, Programs and Program Development, and Work Supports and Employer Engagement* units. We have also hired five new field office/district supervisors. The structure is one that responds to the functional needs of the whole organization and its stakeholders, rather than being unfocused and slow to respond. The new managers and supervisors, many of whom have years of experience as Colorado VR Counselors, continue to learn their jobs and build skills and relationships. Together they are a dynamic group.

## **SRC Recommendations and Working Relationships**

This was also a year of transition for the SRC. Longtime members have moved on after many years of service on the Council, while new people have taken their places. In fact, new members now make up the majority. They bring us new ideas and ways of doing things. The relationship between DVR and the SRC is one of the best working relationships the two entities have had in many years. This partnership has produced some outstanding recommendations that demonstrate a strong desire and commitment to support one another in serving our customers.

## **C-Stat - Measuring DVR's Successes**

The Colorado Department of Human Services has embraced a new process for managing and improving performance of all of its divisions. The process, called C-Stat, is a data-driven tool to provide senior leadership and staff with more precise information to support our goals. DVR has four goals that are monitored and measured monthly. These goals are to: increase the total number of customers successfully employed during the year; reduce the number of customers who choose to leave before they get a plan in place and begin receiving services toward their employment goal; improve timeliness of eligibility determinations; and increase the average hourly wage paid to our employed customers. These goals have also been embraced by the SRC as the focus of their attention as they keep DVR stretching for constant improvement in the service we deliver to our customers.



## **AWARE Case Management System**

DVR had attempted to build a case management system several times before they realized an excellent system already existed. Our contract with Alliance Enterprises has resulted in a state-of-the-art case management system called AWARE that provides VR Counselors with a way to accurately capture and manage customer data while allowing them to spend more time with customers. We made the transition to AWARE in May of 2011 and throughout the past year we have been learning what the system can do and how to use it to maximum benefit.

Our Business Enterprise Program will be piggybacking on AWARE to create its own data management system that should be completed by the end of the next fiscal year. DVR recently decided to make full use of the Employer Module as a matching site. All “Employment Ready” customers will be listed in this status within AWARE. Business Outreach Specialists will also load information on employers and vacancies into the system. With these two groups of information, DVR can better match potential employees to employment opportunities. Eventually this database will be linked to a national system being created through the Council for State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation’s (CSAVR) National Employment Team (the NET).

## **Project SEARCH**

DVR has developed a new site in Colorado for this nationally known job training and skill building program by joining with people from the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) both in Washington, D.C. as well as with the CO Bureau of Reclamation, the Jefferson County School District and Project SEARCH to start a program in Colorado that is solely within federal agencies. Our Federal Business Outreach Specialist established communication with the national Project SEARCH and DOI representatives to start the conversation in Colorado. A meeting was held at the Federal Center with all of the partners. Everyone is excited about the opportunities this will provide for youth to learn about different types of jobs found within DOI agencies in Colorado. The first class started in the Fall. DVR looks forward to the opportunities for skills building and job placement that this project will provide for our young customers.

## **Hands On Hyatt**

Thanks to CSAVR’s NET, Colorado DVR is working with the three Hyatt hotels in the downtown Denver and Denver Technology Center areas to send customers to a training program that will prepare them for employment in the hospitality industry. Since 1998, Hands On Educational Services, Inc., in association with state VR programs and school-based transition teams, has partnered with Hyatt hotels in Florida, Texas, the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia on two-week training programs in the areas of culinary arts, housekeeping, laundry, PBX, storeroom, engineering, banquet services and other aspects of the hospitality industry. Students are considered temporary employees of Hyatt and are paid for all hours of the training. Hyatt is not obligated to hire any trainees following the training, but each participating Hyatt has hired at least one program graduate. The Colorado program has graduated a number of students already and several have obtained employment at a Hyatt property or elsewhere in the hospitality industry.



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*

**Todd Nielsen**

*Co-Chair, State Rehabilitation Council*

## **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

- o Welcoming
  - o Responsive
  - o Effective
  - o Proactive
  - o 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 customers.
  - Any action taken by our employees has a direct impact on the successful accomplishment of our mission.



# STATE FISCAL YEAR 2012

July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012

## Economic Benefit to the State of Colorado

**2,446** Coloradans with disabilities were successfully employed in a competitive job

**67%** of these customers were unemployed when they became involved with DVR

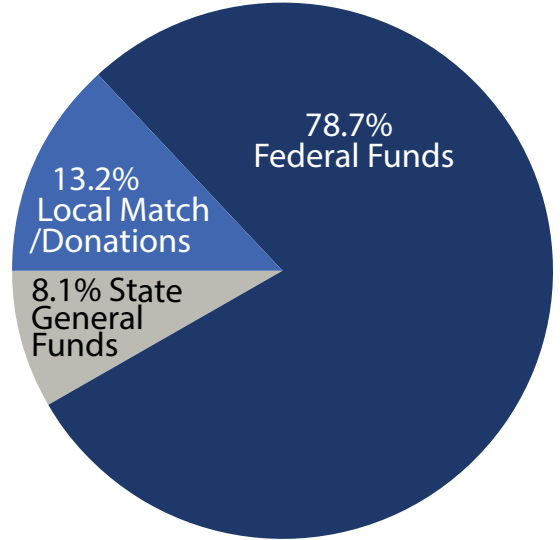
Average annual salary for these workers rose from **\$7,367** prior to DVR's involvement to **\$18,896** after rehabilitation

These new workers will add **\$25.9 million** to Colorado's tax base in the first twelve months following rehabilitation

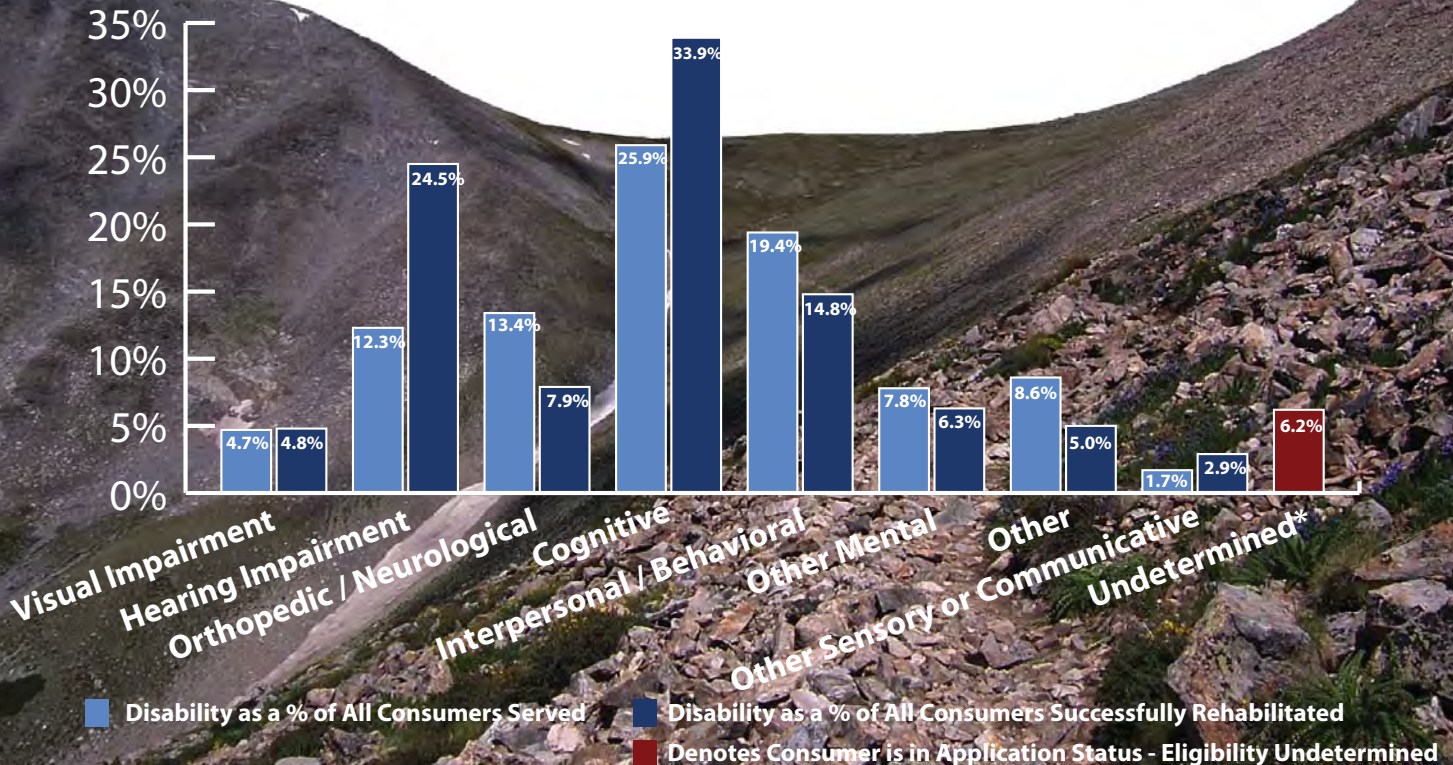
### Facts at a Glance

Total Customers Served	19,313
Average Hourly Wage	\$11.91
Average Hours Worked Per Week	28.2
Total Earnings of These Employees in the First Year	\$42.5 million
Additional Dollars to Colorado's Tax Base	\$25.9 million
Additional Federal and State Taxes Paid in First Year (estimated)	\$1.8 million

## DVR Sources of Funding



## Disabilities of Customers Served and Successfully Rehabilitated



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

## **Mission Statement:**

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.

## **COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

### **Todd Nielsen**

Co-Chair  
State Rehabilitation Council  
Representative At-Large

### **Lynne Neese**

Co-Chair  
State Rehabilitation Council  
Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

### **Steve Bell**

Co-Chair Elect  
State Rehabilitation Council  
Representative of Mental Health Planning

### **Gavin Attwood**

Representative of Disability Advocacy Groups

### **Claudia Folska**

Representative of VR Consumers

### **Rebecca Johnson (ex-officio)**

SRC Coordinator

### **William Kennedy**

Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

### **Mary Leonard**

Towaoc, Colorado  
Representative of 121 Project

### **Christopher O'Conner**

Representative of Community Rehabilitation Services Provider

### **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

## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

### **The Colorado State Rehabilitation Council**

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Denver, Colorado 80203

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Email: [cdhs\\_voc.rehab@state.co.us](mailto:cdhs_voc.rehab@state.co.us)

Web:

[http://www.dvrcolorado.com/councils\\_boards.php](http://www.dvrcolorado.com/councils_boards.php)



The SRC has four (4) standing committees: Consumer Satisfaction, Employment, Membership, and Legislative/Public Policy. Through these four committees, the SRC has developed recommendations to DVR. Each year, through extensive partnership, the SRC and DVR develop strategies to attempt to fully accomplish goals with the mind-set of becoming a national leader in services for individuals with disabilities. The following recommendations were used through June 30, 2012.





## SRC Recommendations and DVR Strategies

### Goal #1: Increase VR Counselor retention

#### Strategies:

- a) Explore strategies for retaining DVR's recently hired staff
  - DVR has been examining options for incentives or pay adjustment for hard-to-fill locales/positions and areas with higher costs of living. The State of Colorado completed an Employee Engagement Survey and DVR is looking at these survey results to determine how the information can be useful as it pertains to DVR staff. In addition, DVR is creating its own Employee Engagement work group to identify why staff leave DVR, what might encourage them to stay, etc.
- b) Explore use of exit surveys to better identify reasons for staff departures
  - Although DVR was not able to implement exit surveys last year, DVR recently hired an HR liaison and one of the main functions of this position will be to conduct interviews of all staff departing DVR to look for trends, patterns, and reasons for departures so that strategies can then be discussed to address any issues identified.
- c) Build better relationships between vendors and VR Counselors
  - A vendor committee was formed in August 2011 with the purpose of looking at both DVR's Fee Schedule and all vendor issues that DVR incurs. The goal is to be proactive, address staff and vendor concerns, and improve the overall quality of vendors for DVR. Information obtained from the customer surveys, staff surveys, and vendors surveys completed as part of this year's Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) show that this goal is important to all parties involved within the DVR process in helping customers reach their goals. DVR will continue to identify methods to build and foster relationships between vendors and counselors.
- d) Decrease caseload sizes
  - This is a new goal in which DVR will examine ways to decrease caseload sizes or workloads to allow VR Counselors to spend more one-on-one time with each customer.
- e) Assist counselors in reducing stress levels; ways to deal with stress
  - This is also a new goal in which DVR will explore different types of stress experienced and approaches to decrease stress to employees.
- f) Reach out to universities with rehabilitation counseling programs to recruit and hire staff; add list of other accepted degrees that meet the minimum qualifications to the list and reach out to these schools as well
  - DVR's employee council created a list of all universities with rehabilitation counseling programs across the nation, including contact names and numbers. The contacts at these colleges have been provided with information on where students can find State of Colorado job postings and have been encouraged to share this information with their students. SRC has recommended that DVR explore the option of expanding this list to include other types of degree programs that meet Colorado DVR's minimum hiring qualifications, such as counseling majors. DVR's HR liaison will engage in outreach efforts to effectively recruit and hire graduates of nationally core-accredited universities.



## Goal #2: Increase customer engagement to reduce customer attrition as evidenced by increased number of implemented IPEs

### Strategies:

- Explore options to conduct a longitudinal study of why customers “exit”.
- Review customer satisfaction surveys from SRC perspective as well as examine results from CSNA customer satisfaction survey to focus in on this issue.
- Continue to explore and implement use of motivational interviewing strategies; tracking how often these strategies are used and results of using these strategies.
- Administer statewide skill development around the foundations of conducting strong intakes and keeping customers engaged in the DVR process.
- Improve education to customers and referral sources about the DVR process and what it involves.
- DVR will explore ways to use its quality assurance process to find effective ways to keep customers engaged in the DVR process.
- Continue to educate schools and students about the DVR process and services.
- Inform prospective customers of documentation required prior to intake.
- DVR will explore the use of focus groups and key informant interviews in addition to traditional surveys to identify strategies to keep customers engaged.
- As recommended last year, DVR is working with a national consultant to examine internal processes and improve approaches to handling barriers.

## Goal #3: Increase successful employment outcomes

### Strategies:

- Review and capitalize on information received from a CSNA survey to customers actively seeking employment and a CSNA survey to VR Counselors with high production/high quality outcomes, sharing ideas and providing training on common themes found within these surveys.
- Continue to be forward thinking to effectively identify current and future employment trends across Colorado to educate VR Counselors and customers about these trends.
- As recommended by SRC last year, DVR will strengthen the Business Outreach Specialist program and utilize DVR's newly established Work Supports and Employer Engagement Unit to effectively increase employment outcomes statewide.
- DVR has implemented a statewide core competency as a part of each staff member's performance plan targeted to increase employment outcomes for DVR customers.





# Robin Wallace



On July 1st of 2006, Robin Wallace was riding her bicycle and was involved in a big truck versus bicycle accident. After the stitches and staples came out of her head, she was told that her life would get back to normal, but it never did. Robin knew there was something wrong, but did not know what it was. She kept getting fired from jobs that she had 20 years of experience doing. Frustration and depression started getting the better of her, so she started using alcohol to self-medicate. When that stopped working, Robin added drugs into the mix.

Robin was in denial about having a problem even though she was having suicidal thoughts, physically ill, and about to lose her husband, Brian. Her Traumatic Brain Injury care coordinator, Beth Burnett, and her husband got her to go to Denver Health's intensive outpatient program. Robin feels this saved her life.

Robin has always loved animals and plants. Her VR Counselor, Dee Maas, told Robin that her eyes lit up when they talked about animals, and vocational testing showed that she would do well working with either plants or animals. She started training to become a professional dog trainer and worked in her garden at home. Unfortunately she was still struggling with a lot of anger issues. Dee got her in to see a psychiatrist as soon as Robin told her she needed help, and her psychiatrist helped her understand that her anger was related to her feelings of anxiety.

Robin and her husband are best friends again and she is happier than she has ever been in her entire life. She volunteers at the Denver Municipal Animal Shelter on Saturdays and helps the dogs there find forever-homes. She is qualified to do something that she feels very strongly about and her externship trainer for Animal Behavior College gave Robin a class to instruct in mid-September.

The training provided to Robin through DVR has helped her raise her self-esteem enough that she adopted Pearl from the shelter. Pearl is a cattle dog that gets her out walking every day. Having Pearl in her life helps Robin remember what is important and what to let go. Pearl helps her feel safe in public, lose weight by walking every day, and calms her down during an occasional panic attack.

Robin believes because of the assistance provided through DVR, she was able to finish her studies and become the person she is now. Because of the medical treatment provided and coping skills she is learning from her therapist, she can now help others. In fact, her co-workers now comment on her infectious positivity. Robin's ultimate goal is to train shelter dogs to become service animals and to educate people on the importance of spaying and neutering their pets. Robin gives a great big thank you to DVR and a special thank you to Dee for helping her on the road to her life's work.



# Blind Program

The Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) offers a range of services and service providers for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The services DVR offers are geared towards obtaining or maintaining employment. Teaching blindness-related skills are the foundation for independence in employment and full community participation since a key component to an individual's success is the ability to perform tasks independently.

DVR has specially-trained staff designated to work with individuals who are blind or visually impaired. These positions include: Statewide Coordinator for the Blind, Lead Teacher for the visually impaired, Client Services Coordinator, Vision Rehabilitation Therapists, Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Low Vision Specialists, and Assistive Technology Specialists. In addition, generalized services may be provided by a variety of DVR staff and DVR programs to help each individual reach their employment goals.

Colorado DVR has a center-based training program located in Denver. DVR also has a field-based (itinerate) training program with field teachers located in district offices across the state who travel to work with participants. There are private/nonprofit training options for individuals who are blind or visually impaired that include a center-based program in Littleton, teaching services through vendors who work with DVR, and limited services offered by independent living centers.

To meet the changing needs of DVR participants and the community, across the state, DVR formed a workgroup to identify gaps in services for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, identify service provision that has proven to be successful, and to develop and implement an action plan to address gaps in services.

Areas identified by the Changing Needs Workgroup:

- DVR teachers are being trained on the various uses of the iPhone and the applications that enhance accessibility.
- DVR is in the process of hiring a second teacher for the northern region to meet the needs of those living on the northeastern plains.
- The Aurora DVR office is developing a dedicated position as a VR Counselor for the Blind.
- There are a number of individuals in Colorado who live in communities that don't have public transportation. This impacts their ability to access and participate in VR services. To address this issue, DVR is working on a remote-training program primarily in the use of assistive technology.
- On-going efforts continue in the employer-relations area. DVR is working with employers to make worksites and computer systems accessible for potential and current employees who are blind or visually impaired.



# Field Services



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

DVR's staff is highly committed to excellent customer service and assists individuals with disabilities to obtain vocational success and independence through evaluation, planning, and provision of services necessary to be successful in employment. Approximately 125 VR Counselors across the state provide one-to-one comprehensive support during this process and assist customers to address barriers and realize their employment and career goals and dreams. To meet the needs of a diverse population, DVR has ensured that there are VR Counselors who specialize in a variety of disabilities and employment types throughout the state. There are also staff members 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 cultivating 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 customers 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 citizens.



**Colorado Department of Human Services**

*people who help people*

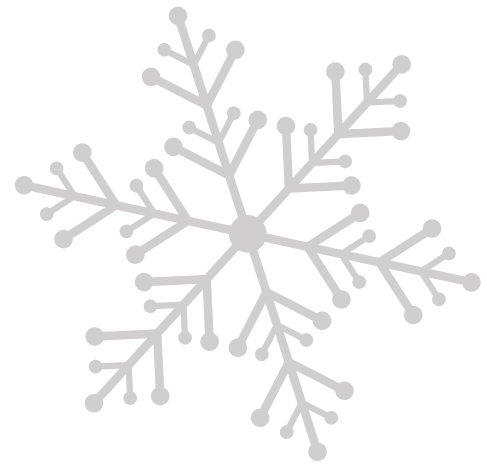


# Youth Services and Transition Unit

DVR's Youth Services and Transition Unit ensures that quality transition services are provided to Colorado's youth and emerging adults with disabilities. The unit also ensures that VR 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. To this end, the Youth Services and Transition Unit created a series of training modules for VR Counselors to expand their awareness and enhance understanding of their roles and responsibilities to transitioning youth as well as legislation which impacts youth exiting the k-12 education system.

Colorado VR 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. The unit strives to ensure partnering takes place at the local level between education and DVR through consistent representation of DVR in the schools. Cohesion is promoted in these local partnerships using existing service continuums and linkages to the workforce system for greater positive employment outcomes for the youth served.

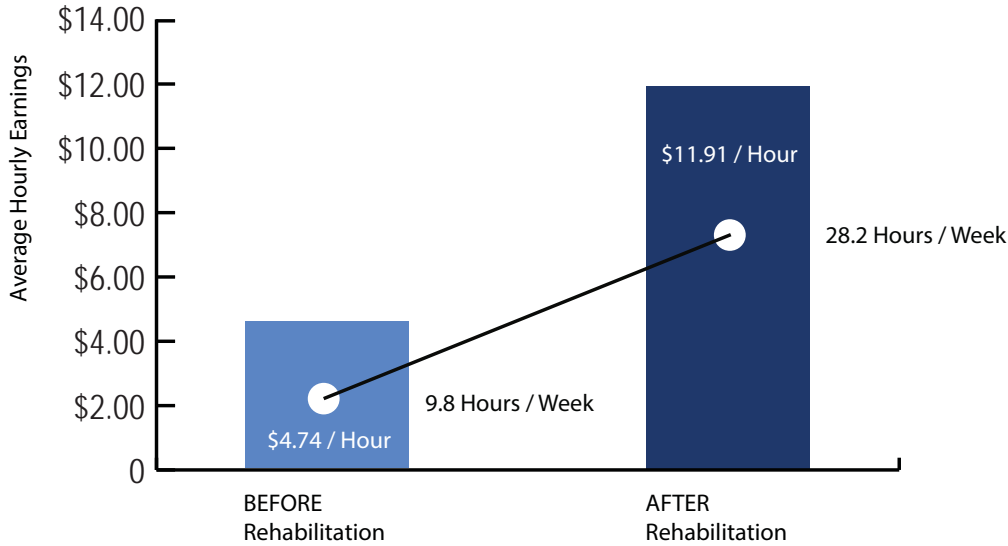
Additionally, the Youth Services and Transition Unit is responsible for the implementation of Colorado's School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP). SWAP is a partnership with Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and 135 school districts statewide. Each year, SWAP provides year-round transition services 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.



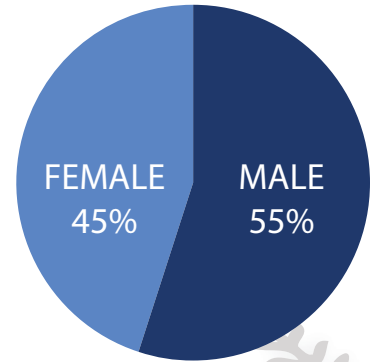
# STATE FISCAL YEAR 2012

July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012

## Increased Earnings and Hours Worked for Competitively Employed Customers



### Customers



## Occupations of our Customers

Administrative Support	495
Building & Maintenance	302
Transportation	265
Food Services	244
Sales	205
Personal Care & Social Services	165
Production	128
Healthcare	114
Business Management & Financial	102
Construction	72
Education & Training	71
Computer, Architecture, & Engineering	36
Military & Protective Services	32
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media	29
Agricultural	16
Other	170



## Steven Blakely\*

It is Tuesday night and Steven Blakely is carefully preparing vegetarian scaloppini with capers, Spanish rice, broccoli and carrots. Steven enjoys cooking healthy dishes several times a week now that his job as a librarian allows him great hours where he is home early each evening.

Six years ago this would not have been possible because, as a flight attendant, he regularly spent four straight days flying from one destination to another. That not only meant long, arduous hours in the air and checking in and out of hotels, but also four days of chain restaurants or fast food. All of this took a toll on Steven's already-diminishing health. Steven was diagnosed with HIV in the early 1980s when health officials were still learning about the disease and how to treat it. Although his symptoms were minimal compared to friends who also had the disease, his T-cells were decreasing rapidly, and the prognosis was dire.



Steven had only been working as a flight attendant a few years when his T-cells got so low that he was officially diagnosed with AIDS. However, because he had few symptoms, he continued to work. Over the next decade he benefited from advances in treatment, first with the drug AZT in the late 1980s and then with the introduction of protease inhibitors in the 1990s. But by late 1990s the rigors of constant travel were starting to have an effect on Steven. Other flight attendants started to ask if Steven was okay, noticing his diminishing physical condition. All the travelling was taking its toll on him and he would come home tired and exhausted.

In 2005, a co-worker, who had been battling multiple sclerosis, suggested he look into Colorado DVR. He applied for services and started working with VR Counselor Samantha (Sam) Mankin out of the Denver Metro office. Steven had looked into library sciences because he wanted something intellectually stimulating with regular hours. DVR helped Steven get enrolled in the Library Information Sciences Master's Program at Denver University, and Steven did his part by getting straight A's over the next five semesters. He was especially proud of his grades because it reduced tuition which was less money DVR had to spend on his education. Steven was so appreciative of everything Sam and DVR did that he wanted to do his part, too. Steven graduated in 2008, landed a part-time job with a public library, and was eventually promoted to a full-time senior position.

For the purposes of this story, Steven chose not to use his real name as he has not disclosed his disability to his employer. He explains that he is confident the staff would be supportive, and he does not fear discrimination. However, he simply decided not to disclose that he has AIDS because his health has only improved since he started and, so far, his disease has not affected him in his nearly three years at the library. Because it has yet to interfere with his job, he does not see a need to disclose.

Steven is in a really good place with a high sick leave bank. He attributes it to being home every night, regular hours, and taking care of his health. Plus, he loves his job and that has made a huge difference.

\*Name changed to protect identity.



# Medicaid Infrastructure Grant



The Colorado Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) has been a tremendous resource for employment of people with disabilities. In March 2012, the Medicaid Buy-In Program for Working Adults with Disabilities (Adult Buy-In) rolled out providing an important insurance option. Individuals earning up to 450% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) who have a disability and are working are potentially eligible for State Plan Medicaid. MIG provided funds for the outreach, training, and education about the Adult Buy-In. Within the first seven months of the program, enrollment grew to over 300 participants.

MIG has also provided Colorado with funds for various initiatives to strengthen employment for individuals with disabilities. Over the course of the year, the Colorado DVR MIG team has:

- Trained service providers throughout the state on work incentives
- Educated employers on the business case for hiring individuals with disabilities, including Federal contractors
- Strengthened Employment Networks (ENs) through training, technical assistance, and a case management tool pilot
- Developed video vignettes highlighting the importance of work for individuals with disabilities

MIG also has numerous initiatives in progress including video vignettes that highlight individuals with disabilities utilizing fixed route or public transportation systems, workshops for entrepreneurs with disabilities, and a web resource for youth with disabilities.



# Colorado DVR has offices all over the state

## 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: ●

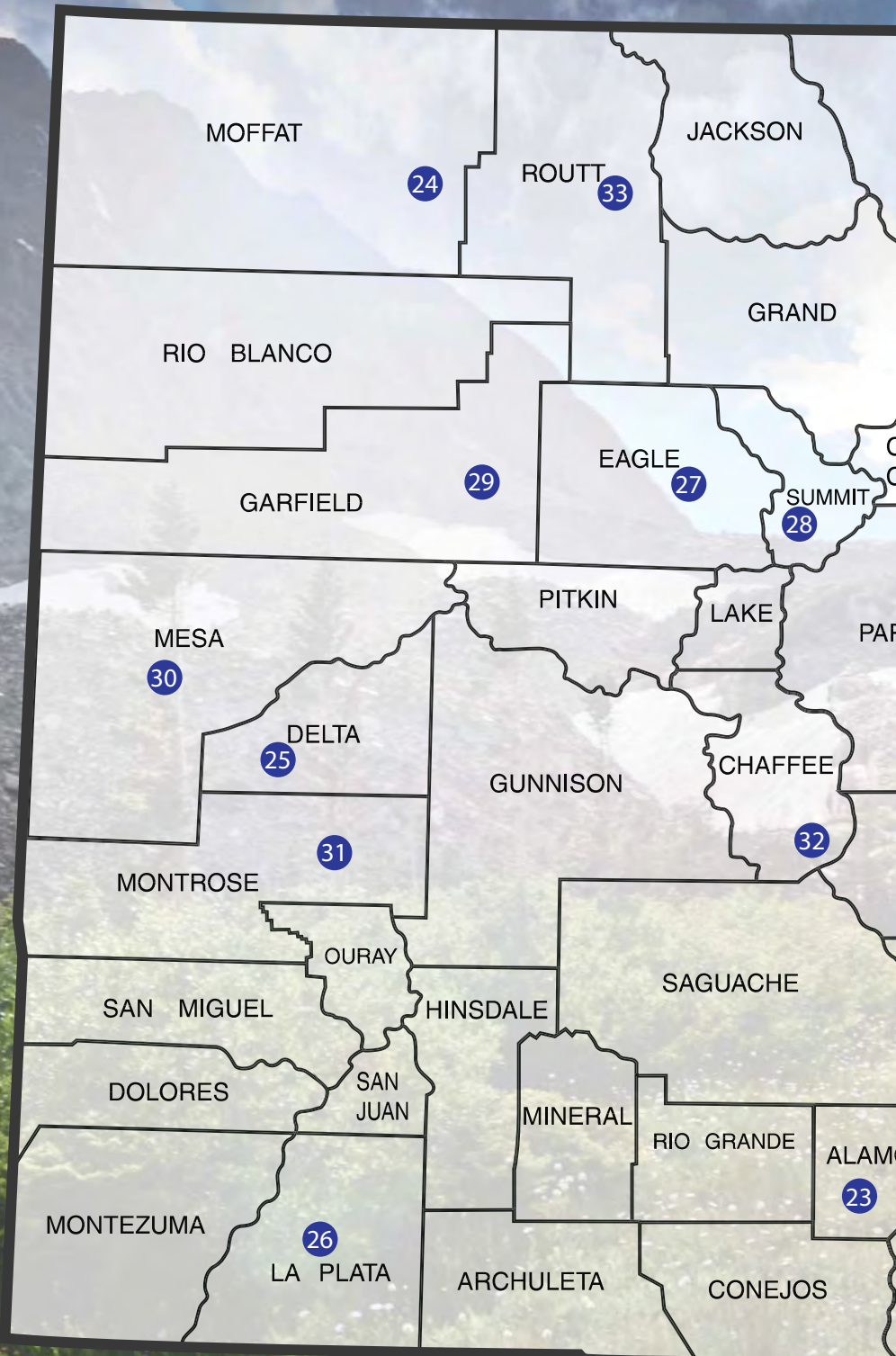
Pablo Sandoval, Supervisor  
970.225.3892

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: ●

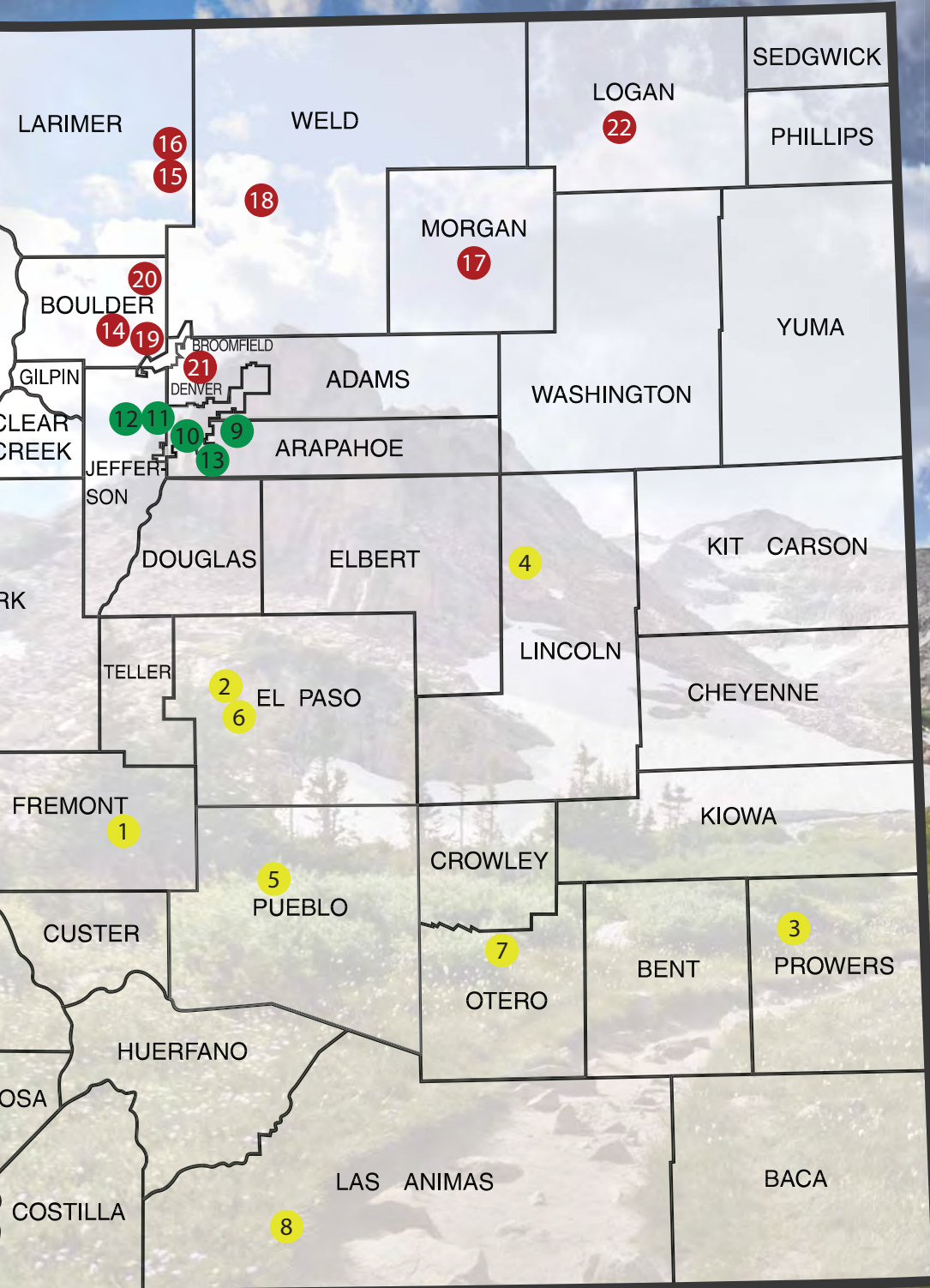
Jennifer Scilacci, Supervisor  
970.623.3246

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





the state to better serve our customers.





**PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:**

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

DVR offices throughout Colorado have VR Counselors dedicated to serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population. Their goal is to provide services that will enable Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals to obtain employment and to advance in their careers. To accomplish this goal, VR Counselors dedicated to serving this population operate under the guiding principles established through the CSAVR-supported Model State Plan for the Deaf. These principles include treating all individuals with courtesy and respect, recognizing the unique characteristics, cultural diversity and varied needs of this population, ensuring easy access to services in preferred communication modes, and recognizing that individuals with hearing loss are viable members of the workforce.

Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCD) and for the Hard of Hearing (RCHH) focus on developing community partnerships that will maximize services, employment opportunities, and self-sufficiency for this population. These counselors continuously support efforts to recruit, hire, retain, and advance employees with hearing loss.

Technological advancements in recent years have had a significant effect on the employment of people with hearing loss. DVR's Counselors for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing participate in training sessions that will improve their knowledge of how to use recently developed technology in the work place.



# Independent Living Programs



Colorado's network of Independent Living (IL) Centers have spent the past year adjusting to a great deal of change. They continue to provide services to Colorado's citizens with disabilities to address barriers they face to live independently in the community.

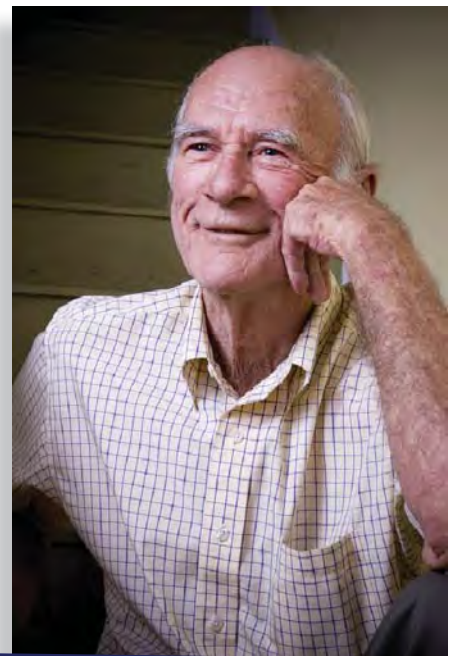
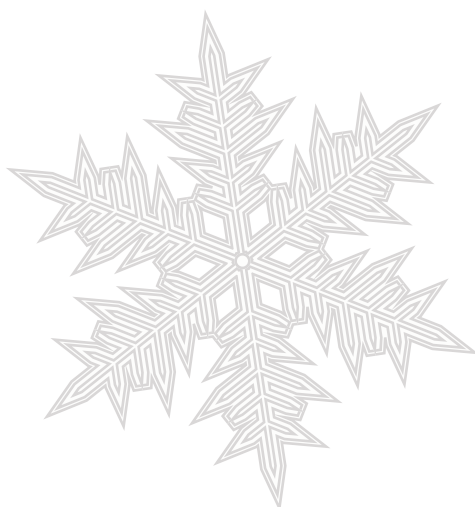
The new contract year began with a switch to cost-reimbursement as well as performance measures and outcomes contracts. The State Independent Living rules were also updated. A new program coordinator came on board in January along with a new unit manager in April. The IL program believes that these changes represent opportunities for program improvement that better meet the needs of the disability community.

Compliance reviews were completed for all 10 centers in the state last year; nine of the centers were recertified.

The Association of Colorado Centers for Independent Living (ACCIL) has been working collaboratively with the IL program in the development of new contracts and performance measures; they are also close to completing a desk manual for IL staff that will guide the development and documentation of services at the staff level. This desk manual was developed from information gathered from the compliance reviews.

The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) has concentrated its efforts on monitoring the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) in its 3rd year. The SILC has also begun laying the groundwork for the development of the next SPIL. SILC staff continued work on the website ([www.coloradosilc.org](http://www.coloradosilc.org)) with the goal of becoming an important source of information for the disability community about emerging issues and to direct readers to Colorado's network of Independent Living Centers.

Colorado's IL partners continue to develop collaborative efforts to implement this 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."



# William "Pat" Slocum

In 2007 William "Pat" Slocum's life came to a crossroads. His addiction to alcohol had gotten to the point where he could no longer hold down a job as a truck driver and heavy equipment operator. He realized it was time to make some changes, and it was out of complete desperation that he decided to change his life.

Slocum sought help through the Salvation Army Men's Rehabilitation Program in Grand Junction where he got the counseling, direction, and resources he needed to start putting his life back together. Pat tried to get sober by himself and failed every time. He realized that it was just not working and checked himself in to the program.

One of the changes Slocum had to make was to find a new career path. He realized he was not happy driving trucks and equipment, so he started doing some career exploration as part of his rehabilitation program. A nature lover and outdoorsman all his life, Slocum started talking in a group session about how he would love to do something in that field when a fellow participant came up with an idea. Someone in the group actually suggested taxidermy and it sounded interesting.

Deciding what he wanted to do was one thing, but getting the education and tools to do it was a different story. That's when he found out about DVR and started working with Self-Employment Counselor, Edith Johnston. Since there were no schools that taught the art of taxidermy near Pat's home in Cedaredge, just north of Delta, he and Johnston started looking for how-to DVD's and books. DVR also helped to purchase his tools and materials. Soon, he was honing his skills on turkeys, badgers, elk, deer and bear, but his favorite wildlife to work on was fish. Trout fishing has been a passion of Slocum's since he was a young child, and eventually he would like to just specialize in fish taxidermy.

Slocum's business, Fin and Furs Taxidermy, continues to grow and he stays busy, especially during hunting season. He added that right now he is striving to improve and perfect his technique to eliminate as many flaws as possible. He wants to get faster but refuses to compromise on quality as he describes himself as kind of a perfectionist.

As for the help he received from Johnston and DVR, Slocum said he doesn't know how he would have done it on his own. He added that he connected with Johnston and that he could tell she sincerely wanted him to succeed. Slocum says that Edith is passionate about her work and that makes a difference. Although Slocum wishes he could fish more as opposed to working on them for others, he is happy his business is thriving. Taxidermy taps into his creativity, and he is thankful his new vocation has pulled him from a place of addiction and depression to one of sobriety and focus.



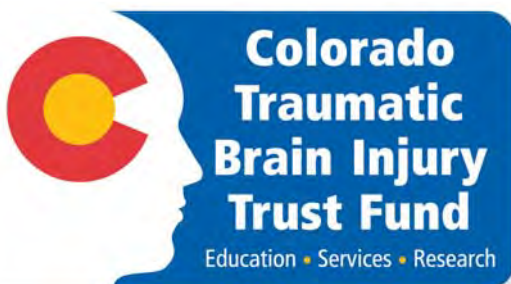
# Traumatic Brain Injury Program

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

The Brain Injury 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 level. To achieve these goals the TBI Program contracts and partners with the Colorado Department of Education, the Denver Veterans Administration, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

The CTBITF was created by Colorado statute in 2002. With funds from the TBI Trust fund, the Brain Injury Program 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. Individuals wishing to apply for services can do so through the Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado ([www.biacolorado.org](http://www.biacolorado.org)). The Brain Injury Program has recently changed the names of services from the TBI Trust Fund Services to Colorado Adult TBI Connections and Colorado Youth Brain Injury Connections. This name change better reflects the service offered to individuals with brain injury which is care coordination and connection to resources.

Finally, the Brain Injury 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 workgroup was convened comprised of representatives from 13 different State Departments. This workgroup 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 at [www.tbicolorado.org](http://www.tbicolorado.org). The Executive Order report has provided the Brain Injury Program with a blueprint for addressing issues facing individuals with TBI and their family members. As a result of the Executive Order, the Brain Injury Program is partnering with two DVR offices (Boulder/Longmont and Colorado Springs) to pilot a TBI Screening and Identification Protocol. If it is determined that the pilot was successful, DVR leadership will consider expanding this to other offices in the state. Additionally, the Brain Injury Program is partnering with different state agencies and divisions to implement a brain injury screening and identification protocol.



# Benefit Offset National Demonstration



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.



# Personal Adjustment Training

The Personal Adjustment Training (PAT) center-based program of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation located at the Denver Metro Rehabilitation Office (DMRO) remediates an eligible customer's vocational and independent living impediments. Upon successful completion of the program, a blind or visually-impaired student is equipped with a full array of skills, which remove or circumvent accessibility barriers.

To be eligible for services, a person must: have a visual impairment; be a VR customer in "applicant status" or above; be in need of three or more instructional services; be able to manage personal care needs with or without an attendant; have limitations in performing daily tasks; and have a need for training. The PAT program provides a broad range of skill training to individuals, whom are preparing for, returning to, or maintaining employment.

The PAT program touts, for the first time in seven years, a full complement of instructional staff. The Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (VRT), Orientation and Mobility Specialists (O&M), and Assistive Technology Specialist (ATS) for Blind and Visually-impaired provide a comprehensive set of specific adaptive services. The eclectic, diverse, and talented PAT staff is poised to serve the highest volume of Colorado citizens with vision disabilities in years, and prepare these customers to enter the competitive workforce.

The newest members of the team Brook Yates (O&M), Lila Papadaki (VRT), and Kristy Penk join experienced members Ken Neve (O&M), Jim Pilkington (ATS), and Tina Ektermanis (VRT) to round out the professional core. In the coming months, several of these staff will complete supplementary training, which will further enhance the program's ability to meet the ever-changing needs of Colorado citizens with disabilities. Tracy Rushing, an internal DVR transfer, is the new Client Services Coordinator. For a program tour or information, please call Tracy at 303-866-3153.

For various reasons, individuals are occasionally unable to participate in the center-based program. In these instances, DVR offers itinerant services. Jadwiga Brown (VRT/O&M) and Karen Klein (VRT/LV) spearhead services to individuals in the field or home. Additionally, Ms. Klein collaborates with the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) in preparing blind individuals to operate food concessions in state and federal facilities.

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



# Anthony Murray

Anthony Murray's experience with DVR is truly a story of determination and personal transformation. Anthony spent 17 years in and out of rehab and prison, and made the choice to live differently his last time in prison. He was doing time for a drug-related offense stemming from another relapse with cocaine. At that time, Anthony's wife had finally left him, his relationship with his daughter was strained, and his future prospects appeared bleak. This is when Anthony started to identify the pattern in his life of addiction, incarceration, release, and a relapse back into addiction. He decided that something had to change. He realized that to make a permanent change in the cycle, his street mentality had to change.



Anthony credits the beginning of his transformation to a spiritual awakening while locked up. He says he realized God had a different purpose for him and that he needed to do things differently this time upon his release. Anthony says that finding God has been a big part of his success, because he realized that God did not want him in prison and to be an addict. Anthony found and clung onto the hope this gave him.

Upon his release in 2009, Anthony found DVR. He applied and started working with VR Counselor Anne Boyd Wein in the Aurora office. Support and guidance were monumental for him at this stage after he had successfully completed treatment. Together Anthony and Anne developed an employment plan with clear steps that started Anthony on the journey towards his goal of becoming an Addiction Counselor. He decided he wanted to help others who faced the same challenges he faced for 17 years. He completed his Certified Addiction Counseling classes, but then encountered another hurdle because he could not get certified because of his background. Anthony appealed and took it all the way to the State Attorney General's Office. Through this process Anthony found the determination to pursue his dreams, and his license to become a Certified Addiction Counselor was approved.

Anthony is now continuing to work towards his goal of becoming a counselor at a treatment facility. He is being equipped with tools and experience so he can help other addicts. Anthony is currently pursuing a degree in Human Services Management at the Community College of Denver. He is currently employed as a carpet cleaning technician for Coit Cleaners to pay the every-day bills while he is finishing school.

Anthony's transition has extended to his personal life as well. Although his first marriage ended because of his problems with addiction, he credits his first wife with pushing him to get sober. Because Anthony has maintained his sobriety for four years, he met someone new, became engaged, and will get married in February. Anthony also reunited with his daughter who is attending school at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Anthony feels that his new life is nothing short of a miracle. His life is good and he is thankful for DVR in helping him set and achieve his goals. Anthony now has his feet on a firm and rewarding path, and for Anthony, there is no turning back now.





# Self-Employment Program

In this changing economy those individuals with an entrepreneurial spirit bring a very special challenge and exciting dimension to the vocational program. Very plainly, they are truly job creators and job developers. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) offers a myriad of services with the guidance and expertise of the Rehabilitation Counselor for Entrepreneurship (RCE). The RCE, like the entrepreneur, take the initiative in applying serious business methods, analysis, and continual learning in the current business arena.

Partnering with the RCEs, customers will benefit from a professional vendor network of subject matter and seasoned business experts. These experts are dedicated to offer their collective expertise to assist our new entrepreneurs with “real-world” knowledge and training.

DVR customers already fortunate enough to be experienced business owners will have available resources to grow and expand their business by incorporating the services and professional expertise offered through consultation with the RCE and subject matter experts. Business success and associated rewards for outstanding business achievement offer DVR entrepreneurs the opportunity to excel well beyond barriers related to any disability.

This approach is well illustrated by DVR’s collaborative work with the Colorado AgrAbility Project, a partnership between Colorado State University Cooperative Extension and Goodwill Industries. 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), Chamber of Commerce, various business incubator services and a myriad of other similarly charged organizations, each of whom are dedicated to the goal of preparing entrepreneurs to succeed in today’s business environment. The private sector provides added credibility by filling gaps of expertise not available in the public sector. This could include marketing, legal consultation, or training to support the business.

As in business, DVR looks to the bottom line that will show that individuals with a disability have proven to be competitive and successful in the ever-changing business arena.



# Brian Algien

Most people know that eating right and exercising can not only prevent a variety of health problems over a lifetime, but can also result in more energy and a positive attitude. For many people with disabilities, leading a healthy lifestyle is absolutely critical to slowing the progression of their condition, and in some cases, eliminating a condition all together.

Brian Algien knows the importance of working out and watching what he eats, but it was not always that way. Brian came to DVR for help purchasing hearing aids as well as assistance to find a custodial job. In addition to being hard of hearing, he also has hypertension, and Kallmann's syndrome which is a genetic condition causing slow bone and muscle development that causes several physical ailments along with fatigue.



When Brian first started working with VR Counselor, Anna Cisneros, in the Pueblo office, he was overweight, constantly tired, and had a variety of physical ailments that played a factor in losing or quitting jobs. But at the start of 2012, Brian had a conversation with a preacher at his church that changed everything. Brian told him that he was tired of being tired. His preacher regularly worked out with the P90X® program so he showed it to Brian, and they started working out together. Over the next couple of months, Brian battled through the sore muscles of the workout regimen, started taking yoga classes, and maintained a healthy diet. Physically, Brian lost 20 pounds and gained muscle. More importantly, his blood pressure returned to normal, he was more energized, and his attitude became more positive.

During this time, Brian began to work with Business Outreach Specialist, Jason Crowe, to find a job. With Jason's help, Brian was able to land a part-time position as a janitor at the Pueblo Mall. Brian said for the first time in a long time, he was actually excited to get to work and was confident that he finally had the stamina to stick with it. He believes if he had not started exercising, he would have quit the first month.

Brian hopes to lose 15 more pounds and is working to reach his ultimate goal: securing a full-time job with medical benefits. He wants to rely on his own skills and abilities without relying on public assistance. Brian feels he is now able to take care of himself, thanks to DVR, and has the tools he needs to succeed.



# Business Outreach Program



DVR's Business Outreach Program provides the bridge to Colorado businesses for individuals with disabilities. Thirteen Business Outreach Specialists (BOS) create local level business relationships with small, medium, large, and Federal employers leading to job matches for qualified DVR customers.

This year, the BOS program has undergone enhancements to increase effectiveness. These include:

- Adopting a set of job placement guiding principles to achieve consistency in job development strategies and assuring strong job matches with employers
- Aligning BOS efforts throughout the state to focus on business services
- Initiating an employer module within the existing DVR case management tool to capture employer information, contacts, and job listings
- Utilizing options within the DVR case management tool to electronically search for job candidates
- Training on advanced techniques for improved job development with corporate as well as rural employers

The BOS program has partnered with the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant to hold educational events with many employer groups. DVR will soon see three BOS positions be filled which will increase capacity in the mountain region as well as in the San Luis Valley.



# Alan Moss

Alan Moss moved to Colorado specifically to enroll in a unique program called the Business Enterprise Program (BEP). Over the years, he received training including braille and computer skills. However, as far back as he can remember, Alan wanted to be a part of BEP which would combine those valuable skills with his experience in the food service industry to become a Blind Operator.



BEP is an incredible opportunity for an eligible customer. Newly licensed Blind Operator, Alan Moss, now knows just how remarkable it is. In April of 2012, Alan was awarded the bid to operate the convenience store and vending route at Space Command on Peterson Air Force Base (AFB) after he successfully completed the self-paced BEP training course.

With the transition of management at that location, Alan completely revamped the business by making several improvements that include reorganizing the overall space and making other necessary business decisions like streamlining his offerings by analyzing viability and cost of goods. Alan is also fostering a new sense of teamwork with building management by creating a well-established working relationship, and is providing exceptional customer service. Through these vital changes, the atmosphere has evolved from a standard convenience store to an establishment which invites the loyalty of its patrons. In fact, the change is so profound that a customer entering this convenience store would have a hard time recognizing it from previous visits.

Along with personal freedom and financial security, Alan has a heightened sense of self-esteem and is now a positive example and source of encouragement to his peers. Alan frequently contacts other Blind Operators within Colorado Springs to be a part of this community. He has shown tremendous initiative by sponsoring and facilitating the attendance of other operators and trainees at a local motivational event specifically designed to boost morale and foster excitement and camaraderie.

As a result of Alan's hard work, sales have more than doubled from the previous operator. Business is going so well, that he is looking to expand this business to include another snack area at Peterson AFB within the next few months. Alan attributes his success to his focus on strong interpersonal skills in building relationships, as well as the training provided by the DVR Business Enterprise Program. This young man is off to a soaring start to his new career and continues to encourage and support others to strive toward their goals.



# 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 October 2012, 160 business enterprises were operating on Federal and State properties in Colorado in various capacities, 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. BEP will soon be operating in the Ralph L. Carr Judicial building, as well as a Cafe Fresh franchise in the Cesar Chavez building in downtown Denver.

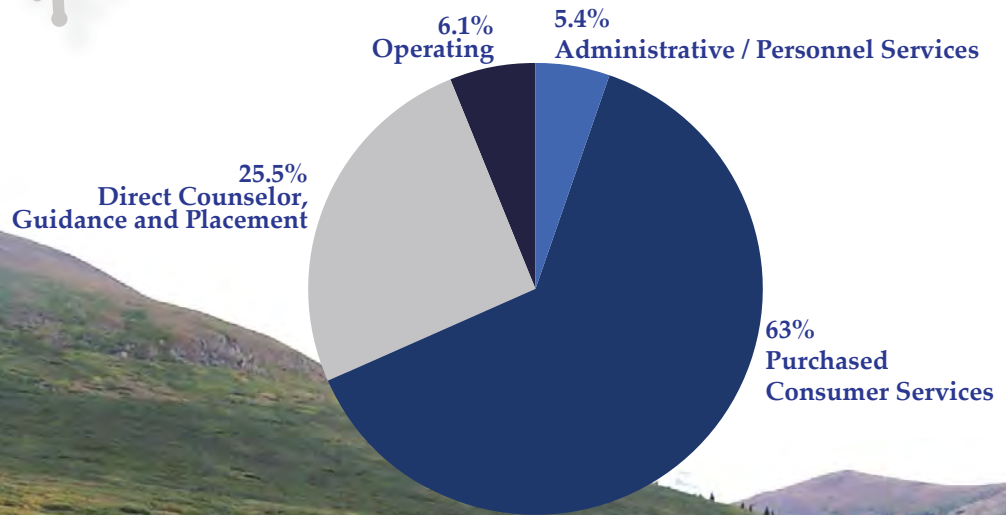
The program receives excellent support and assistance from General Services Administration (GSA), the Federal Government's building managers, who recognize the value of the BEP and the program's blind and visually impaired operators. Through newly revamped training curriculum, the program has 3 trainees successfully operating locations. 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.



# STATE FISCAL YEAR 2012

July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012

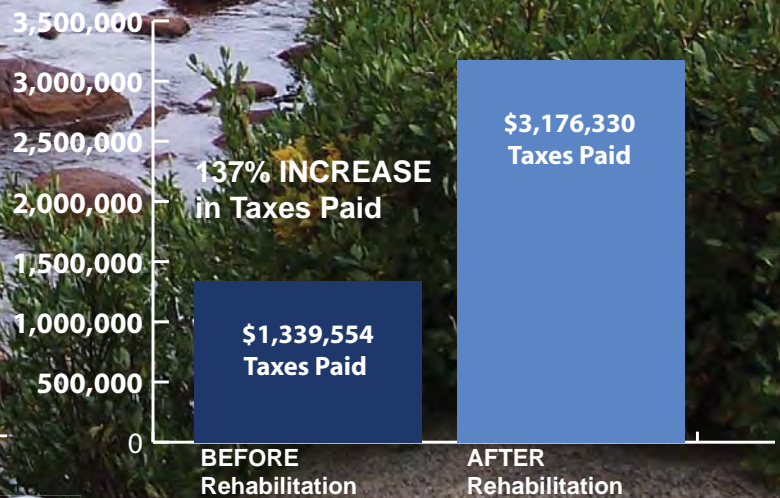
## DVR Expenditures by Type



## Annual Earnings on 1st Year of Employment



## Income Taxes Paid on 1st Year of Employment



# DVR Offices and Contact Information



## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Colorado Department of Human Services  
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Denver, Colorado 80203

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FAX: 303.866.4905  
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*Deputy, Field Services Management*

### **Karen Ferrington**

*Manager, Work Supports and Employer Engagement*

### **Carol Feuerbacher**

*Manager, Organizational Planning and Development*

### **Kelley Hartman**

*Deputy, Operations Management*

### **Joel Pavelis**

*Manager, Provider Relations*

### **Mary Waterhouse**

*Manager, Finance*

### **Justin Wit**

*Manager, Information Management and Reporting Unit*



## OFFICES:

<b>Office</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Alamosa	719.589.5158
Aurora	303.337.4610
Boulder	303.444.2816
Colorado Springs	719.635.3585
Craig	970.824.9671
Denver Metro	303.866.2500
	303.866.3100
Durango	970.247.3161
Edwards	970.926.1515
Fort Collins	970.223.9823
Frisco	970.668.0234
Glenwood Springs	970.945.9174
Golden	303.866.4121
Grand Junction	970.248.7103
Greeley	970.353.5409
Greenwood Village	303.221.2089
Lamar	719.336.7712
Limon	719.775.8819
Longmont	303.776.6878
Montrose	970.249.4468
Northglenn	303.866.2110
Pueblo	719.544.1406
Salida	719.539.9670
Steamboat Springs	970.871.4853
Sterling	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	303.926.6497
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, Manager	303.866.2075
Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG)	
Karen Ferrington, Manager	303.866.3779






DIVISION of  
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

*State of Colorado*

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A photograph of a snow-covered landscape. In the foreground, there are several dead, bleached trees and shrubs. The ground is covered in a layer of snow. In the background, there are more trees and a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The overall scene is a winter landscape.

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