



DIVISION of
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

State of Colorado

COLORADO STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Bridging Business and Ability

A full-page background image of a rugged mountain range. The peaks are covered in snow and partially obscured by a cloudy sky. The lower slopes are covered in dense, green and brown vegetation, suggesting a high-altitude meadow or tundra. The overall scene is dramatic and scenic.

2013 ANNUAL REPORT

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, 2013. 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.

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 2013

July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013



Economic Benefit to the State of Colorado

2,864 Coloradans with disabilities were successfully rehabilitated

66% of the competitively employed new workers were unemployed when they became involved with DVR

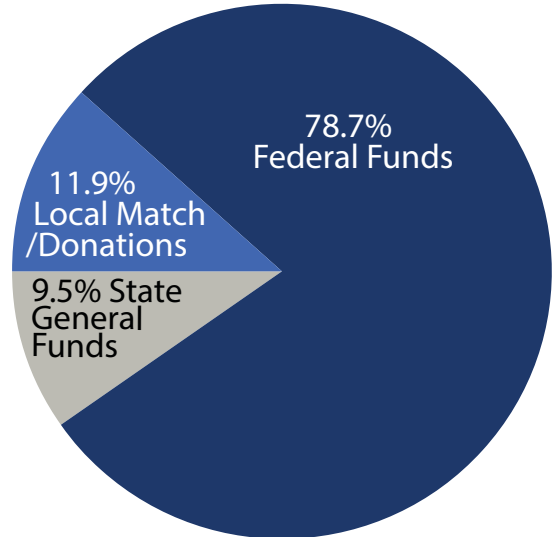
Average annual salary for these workers rose from **\$7,541** prior to DVR's involvement to **\$18,787** after rehabilitation

These new workers will add **\$29.4 million** to Colorado's tax base in the first twelve months following rehabilitation

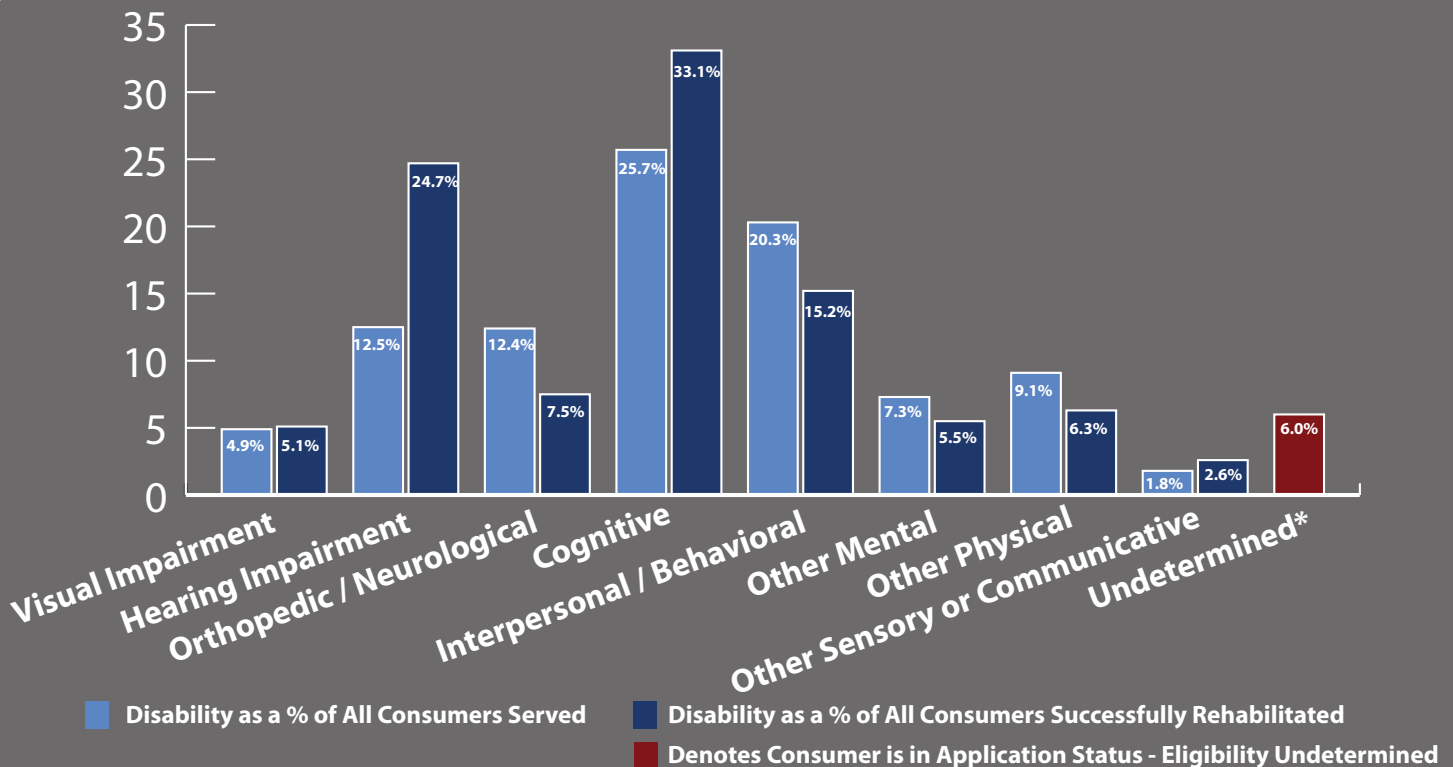
Facts at a Glance

Total Clients Served	19,835
Clients Successfully Closed Rehabilitated	2,864
Average Hourly Wage (of Competitively Employed Clients)	\$11.80
Average Hours Worked Per Week	28.4
Total Earnings of These Employees in the First Year	\$49 million
Average Weekly Salary	\$361
Average Annual Salary	\$18,787
Additional Dollars to Colorado's Tax Base	\$29.4 million
Additional Federal and State Taxes Paid in First Year (estimated)	\$1.93 million

DVR Sources of Funding



Disabilities of Customers Served and Successfully Rehabilitated





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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

Josh Winkler
Co-Chair
State Rehabilitation Council
Representative of Developmental
Disabilities Council

Debra Peterson
Co-Chair Elect
State Rehabilitation Council
Representative At-Large

Buna Dahal
Representative of State Independent
Living Council

Claudia Folska
Representative of VR Consumers

Jacqueline Geib (ex-officio)
Representative of Vocational Rehabilitation
Counselor

Karla Grazier
Representative of Workforce Development
Council

Todd Jorgensen (ex-officio)
Acting Director of Vocational Rehabilitation
Designated State Unit

Liz King (ex-officio)
SRC Administrative Staff

Penny Ray (ex-officio)
SRC Administrative Staff

Beth Schaffner
Representative of PEAK Parent Center

CONTACT INFORMATION:

The Colorado State Rehabilitation Council
1575 Sherman St., 4th Floor
Denver, Colorado 80203

Telephone: (303) 866-4887
FAX: (303) 866-4905
Email: cdhs_voc.rehab@state.co.us
Web: 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, 2013.





SRC Recommendations and DVR Strategies

Goal #1: Increase Rehabilitation Counselor retention

Strategies:

- a) Explore strategies for retaining DVR's recently hired staff
 - DVR continues to explore options for incentives or pay adjustment for hard to fill locales/positions and/or areas with higher costs of living. The proposal for hard to fill stipend has moved up to CDHS (Colorado Department of Human Services) upper management for further review.

DVR's Employee Council (EC) work group completed two surveys directed at obtaining information about Supervisor I's strengths, possible areas of needed improvement and areas in which additional training would be helpful. The Employee Council along with the Field Management Team (FMT) will begin reviewing the report to further explore possible recommendations, training topics, etc. in order to proactively strengthen supervisory skills statewide.
- b) Analyze survey data from exit surveys to better identify reasons for staff departures
 - DVR began collecting data from staff departing the agency via exit surveys in October 2012. Since then, only a handful of staff has left the agency, thus far there have not been enough data points to look at statistical trends. In addition, the staff person devoted to this task has left the agency and this duty will need to be reassigned. This strategy will continue as more information is gathered, with the hope that there will eventually be quarterly data to review.
- c) Build better relationships between vendors and counselors
 - DVR has a fee schedule committee that meets to discuss areas of concerns identified by staff, clients, vendors, etc. Currently, this committee is working on the following:
 - finalizing a job placement pilot that explored the concepts of 1) milestone payment structure for job placement services and b) increased quality of job placement services
 - researching the feasibility of electronic funds transfer to allow vendors to be paid in a timely manner
 - examining the possibility of a "vendor portal" in which all tasks related to vendors would be available at one site, such as vendor registration, code of ethics, email blast, etc.
- d) Decrease caseload sizes
 - A new position (rehabilitation technician - RT) was created within DVR this year and seven and one half of these positions have been filled across the state. These staff will assist DVR counselors in completing intakes, assisting with gathering of medical documentation, assisting with completion of various paper work, and other duties. The hope is that this will allow counselors to spend more direct one-on-one time with clients in activities related to helping them achieve their employment goals.
- e) Assist counselors in reducing stress levels; ways to deal with stress
 - CDHS is looking at creating an employee recognition toolkit for use by local offices with tips on simple ways to acknowledge staff for their hard work, jobs well done, as well as tips on stress reduction.





- f) Utilize a current list of universities with rehabilitation counseling programs to recruit and hire staff; add a list of other accepted degrees that meet the minimum qualifications to the list and reach out to these schools as well
- A letter of introduction was sent out to all CORE accredited universities that offer rehabilitation counseling degrees to open the lines of communication between CO DVR and these schools. Responses were received from a couple of educational institutions as well as individual students asking questions about Colorado DVR, employment opportunities within the state, etc. DVR staff will continue to engage in outreach efforts to effectively recruit and hire graduates of these universities.
- g) Look at/offer professional development opportunities
- DVR's Organization and Planning Development unit continues to search for and offer staff professional development opportunities through organizations such as the TACE centers nationwide, CTAT/Rocky Mountain Mental Health Services, The Human Services Network of Colorado, JAN (Job Accommodation Network), Colorado's Department of Personnel Administrations training unit, Skillpath and others.
- h) Continue use of state residency waiver
- DVR intends to continue to use/renew the state residency waiver on an on-going basis.

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

Strategies:

- a) Explore options to conduct a longitudinal study of why customers "exit" programming.
- DVR and SRC staff have discussed reviewing the customer satisfaction surveys completed as part of last year's CSNA to look for any trends and/or themes as to why clients may depart DVR services prior to successful employment. In addition, SRC has discussed looking into creating a survey specifically designed to seek clarification from clients as to why they exit programming when they do and what might be able to be done to keep them engaged, as well as determining ways to have more direct contact with clients to discuss this issue.
- b) Review customer satisfaction surveys from SRC perspective as well as examine results from CSNA customer satisfaction survey to explore why clients exit services
- SRC members have been provided with a copy of all CSNA surveys for further review and recommendation.
- c) Implement use of motivational interviewing strategies; tracking how often these strategies are used and results of using these strategies
- Three DVR staff have completed the Motivational Interviewing "train the trainer" and will begin having meetings with supervisors to discuss how to implement and roll out this training to field staff.





- d) Administer statewide skill development around the foundations of conducting strong intakes and keeping clients engaged in the DVR process
- In addition, staffs across the state have been exploring ways to keep clients engaged and this is an on-going process. (See Attachment 4.11 (d) State's Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities.)
- e) Improve education to clients and referral sources about the DVR process and what it involves
- DVR has created an on-line orientation video that interested parties can watch to learn more about what the DVR process involves. Many DVR offices are also taking a look at how they currently do business in regards to orientation and intake and are examining and piloting ways to do this in a manner that will improve communication and understanding.
- f) DVR will explore ways to use its quality assurance process to find effective ways to keep clients engaged in the DVR process
- Supervisory staff conducted an intense quality assurance review on 150 files indicated as being clients who were determined eligible but whose DVR case was closed prior to the IPE being written. The findings from this review are being discussed at field services meetings to determine various avenues for keeping clients moving through the DVR process.
- g) Continue to educate schools and students about DVR services and process
- DVR and the Department of Education continue to work collaboratively. Colorado's transition team continues to outreach to schools across the state to inform teachers, counselors and other school staff about DVR's mission. The transition team has updated the technical assistance modules and continues to work on having a designated DVR staff member and designated school staff member assigned to each school.
- h) Inform prospective clients of documentation required prior to intake
- DVR will continue to look at ways to educate and inform potential clients and others interested in DVR about the vocational rehabilitation process, required documentation, referral and intake processes, etc. to try and improve the overall understanding and experience of DVR from a client perspective.
- i) DVR will conduct focus groups and key informant interviews in addition to traditional surveys to find out what does and does not keep clients engaged
- DVR will explore and discuss options to determine the best ways to collect data from DVR clients in regards to what does and does not keep them engaged in DVR services. Discussions will be held with the rehabilitation leadership team, the field management team and SRC to determine how best to conduct and coordinate this information gathering.





j) DVR will review the new 2013 Quality Assurance (QA) “reflective” tool statistics targeted at measuring client engagement.

- DVR will review these statistics to look for patterns in files where clients are strongly engaged in the rehabilitation process. Efforts will be made to try and replicate these strategies with other clients by developing tips and tools for counselors.

k) DVR will utilize the SRC engagement survey to verify or support DVR’s internal QA process/information gathering

- DVR will contact a percentage of clients whose files have been part of the QA process to survey their satisfaction with the rehabilitation experience.





Goal #3: Increase successful employment outcomes

Strategies:

- a) Review and capitalize on information received from
 - CSNA survey to clients actively seeking employment and
 - CSNA survey to counselors with high production/high quality outcomes, sharing ideas and providing training on common themes found within these surveys

As a result of reviewing survey answers and talking to high performing staff, DVR has created a “counselor toolbox” which is located on the DVR Intranet for staff to access as needed. The toolbox consists of five categories, each with various tools included:

1) *Assessment Tools:*

- Assessment of Client Need for Job Placement Services (Excel)
- Assessment of Client Need for Job Placement Services (Word)
- CHOICES PLANNER
- ONET desk aid
- What is a Situational Assessment
- Work Experience and Situational Assessment

2) *Counselor Tools*

- Action Plan
- Agenda Setting Tool
- Appointment Summary Sheet
- Comprehensive Assessment Flow
- Decisional Balance
- Disability Handbook
- DVR Experience/Road Map
- Employment Timeline
- Resources
- Supervisory Consultation Form
- What is an Informational Interview
- What is Job Shadowing
- What is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

3) *Intake Forms*

- Additional Intake Questions
- DVR Demographic Information and Application
- Intake packet

4) *Participant Readiness*

- Readiness Ruler
- Participant Readiness Tips

5) *Self-Assessments*

- Vocational Skills Self-Assessment
- When Thinking About Work Have You Considered
- Assessing Social Thinking Skills





- In addition, SRC members have been provided all CSNA survey results for their review to provide further recommendations of tools, tips, and strategies they feel will help increase the number and quality of employment outcomes for DVR clients.

b) Continue to be forward thinking to effectively identify current and future employment trends across Colorado to educate counselor and clients about these trends

- DVR's program assistant in the Work Supports and Employer Engagement Unit has begun studying various websites to review and analyze current labor market trends in the area. Findings are shared with field staff to use while discussing potential employment goals during the comprehensive assessment.

Staff will continue to use these resources as well as utilizing related websites, attending business association meetings, and accessing other options to become more educated about Colorado's employment trends.

c) DVR will strengthen their Business Outreach Specialist program and utilize DVR's newly established Work Supports and Employer Engagement Unit to effectively increase employment outcomes statewide

- Colorado DVR created a job placement steering committee who worked diligently this past year to examine various tools and systems that could capture employer contacts and be readily accessible to all staff. The Business Outreach Specialists had previously been using "Sugar" for this, but found that it was not accessible to all staff. Consequently, the committee wanted to look at other options to find what would be most functional. Through their work, it was determined that DVR could increase the usefulness of the employer module within its case management system. The Employer module within AWARE is DVR's new data tool for capturing business contacts, job openings, job openings with DVR applicants and job openings filled by DVR clients. Because protocol for using AWARE has been set and performance expectations are in effect, job openings are now available in a growing number each month. Besides resulting in employment matches of DVR clients and posted job openings, when searched by DVR counselors, the employer module provides real-time occupational trends based on job orders provided to our business outreach staff. A counselor is able to look at open or open and closed jobs to get an idea of current hiring trends.

d) Continue use of core competency as a part of each DVR staff member's performance plan targeted to increase employment outcomes for DVR participants.

- This continues to be an on-going performance measure for DVR staff at all levels as Colorado DVR continues to emphasize successful employment outcomes for DVR clients and looking at ways each staff member can impact this goal.





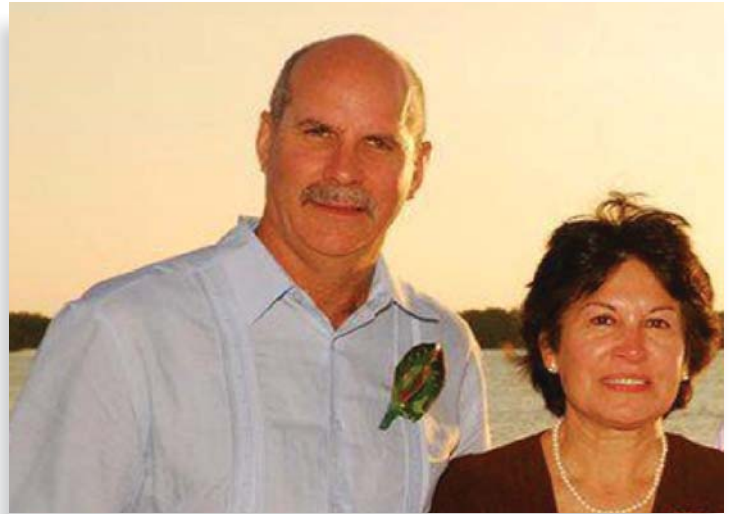
- e) Explore the option of utilizing SRC's employment committee to work with the Work Supports and Employer Engagement unit.
- SRC experienced changes to its employment advisory council in the last few months and is working to rebuild. DVR will continue to outreach to this group to work together once SRC staffing issues have been resolved.
- f) Explore option of utilizing the Governor's State Workforce Council
- DVR's director used to be an appointed member of The Governor's State Workforce Council, but DVR's director position is currently vacant. DVR will work with SRC members to identify other Governor's state workforce council members to begin collaborating and networking with.
- g) Continue to build relationships with employers and community resources
- DVR is currently focused on increasing the visibility and public awareness of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and is continuing to explore options for staff to provide outreach and educational activities to employers, community partners, clients, vendors and Colorado citizens.





Randall Crosby

Randall Crosby, with his wife Patty, son Chris and daughter Stephanie moved to Colorado in May of 2012 to further his career in the Business Enterprise Program (BEP). He successfully completed required training through DVR and was awarded the bid to operate the prestigious Capitol Complex location, which consists of a full cafeteria at the State Services Building and a coffee shop in the State Capitol Building!



With the transition of management at the location, Randall, with the help of his wife Patty, completely revamped the business by making many improvements to menu offerings and customer service. His keen business acumen has also helped him reduce his cost of goods and run the locations with a more efficient payroll. Randall is also building positive relationships with building management and government officials. In addition to all these improvements, the Crosby's are creating an atmosphere in both locations that is inviting to customers and makes them feel as though they are part of the family.

Along with the personal freedom and financial security that comes with running a business, Randall is now a positive example and source of encouragement to his peers. Randall is an avid runner, outdoorsman and advocate to many issues dealing with his blindness.

As a result of Randall's hard work, sales have more than doubled from the previous operator and the location has achieved a new record sales month. With a complete renovation and repopulation at the State Services Building we only anticipate that the business, Crosby's Café, will continue to thrive. Randall attributes his success to his ability to establish relationships and on the power of positive thinking. One of Randall's favorite quotes is... "The miracle isn't that I finished the race; the miracle is that I had the courage to start it." John Bingham—marathoner and author.





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





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Youth Services and Transition Unit

DVR's Youth Services and Transition Unit ensure that services are provided to Colorado's youth with disabilities through coordination at the local level with education. The unit provides training and technical assistance to all VR staff in an effort to promote a smooth transition for students leaving the school setting and beginning to participate in activities leading to successful employment. This includes collaborating with our community partners as well as young adults and their family members to guide them through the application process, eligibility requirements, purpose of vocational rehabilitation and our scope of services.

Colorado VR Counselors provide consultation and technical assistance to educators early in the transition process. Staff also facilitates referrals, determines eligibility, assists students with the selection of suitable employment outcomes, and provides 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 the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and 138 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 with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 26 with mild to moderate needs in employment. Efforts through SWAP account for an average of 23% of the overall DVR successful closures annually.



Jenny Siegle



Jenny Siegle acquired a virus just after her birth which attacked her spinal column leaving her a C4/C5 quadriplegic. She started her journey with DVR through the School to Work Alliance Program when she started college. Jenny needed to attend a special driving class, but there were only three programs and they were all out of state. She decided to first attend UNC and obtain her Bachelor's Degree in Journalism and Mass Communications. Jenny received a scholarship for tuition, but DVR was able to assist with books and supplies.

She then took a year off between school and work to tour as Ms. Wheelchair Colorado. After her reign was over, Jenny then went on to attend the special driving school. DVR helped her attend the driving program and to obtain a specially equipped vehicle that allowed her to truly be independent and mobile for her job. Jenny went on to work for Altitude Sports and as her responsibilities increased, the need for her to travel to various events increased which was often on short notice.

Then on July 10, 2011, the adaptive equipment on her van failed and she ran head-first into a wall at 63 mph. Jenny was then out of work for eight weeks due to her back being broken at the T10 vertebrae. Her van had been totaled in the accident and when she was recuperated enough to go back to work, she and her family rented a wheel-chair accessible van to get her to and from work as well as her intensive physical therapy appointments. Even though the van allowed her to continue working, she was not able to drive it. Jenny became eligible for DVR services again based on transportation being a substantial barrier to employment. She worked hard with her VR counselor, Joe Fiorini, to justify a van modification by exploring all forms of transportation which just would not accommodate the flexibility she needed to continue employment with Altitude Sports. Her supervisor wrote a letter stating the need for Jenny to be independent and available for assignments throughout the city on a moment's notice.

The process to get a new van took longer than normal as an investigation of the equipment was done by the insurance company. However, in May of 2012, Jenny received her new van, a Honda Odyssey. Jenny continues her work as an Associate Producer that has her producing and editing various local sport videos and shows for teams including the Colorado Mammoth, Denver Broncos, Avalanche, and Denver Nuggets. She also works as a Video Production Specialist for the Colorado Rockies during baseball season.

Jenny's advice to others going through the DVR process is to stay motivated and follow through with telephone calls and interviews. She recommends to always live up to your expectations and go after what you want. She says that DVR will live up to their end of the bargain, but it is important to put forth effort of your own to make it a true partnership. Jenny is very thankful to all of DVR and appreciates that everyone she met through the process wanted to see her succeed. And thank you, Jenny, for being such an inspiration!



Colorado DVR has offices all over the state

REGION I: ●

Lindsey Pacheco, *Supervisor*
719.482.7976

1. Cañon City
2. Colorado Springs
3. Lamar
4. Limon
5. Pueblo
6. Trinidad

REGION II: ●

Jim Crowe, *Supervisor*
303.866.3559

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

REGION III: ●

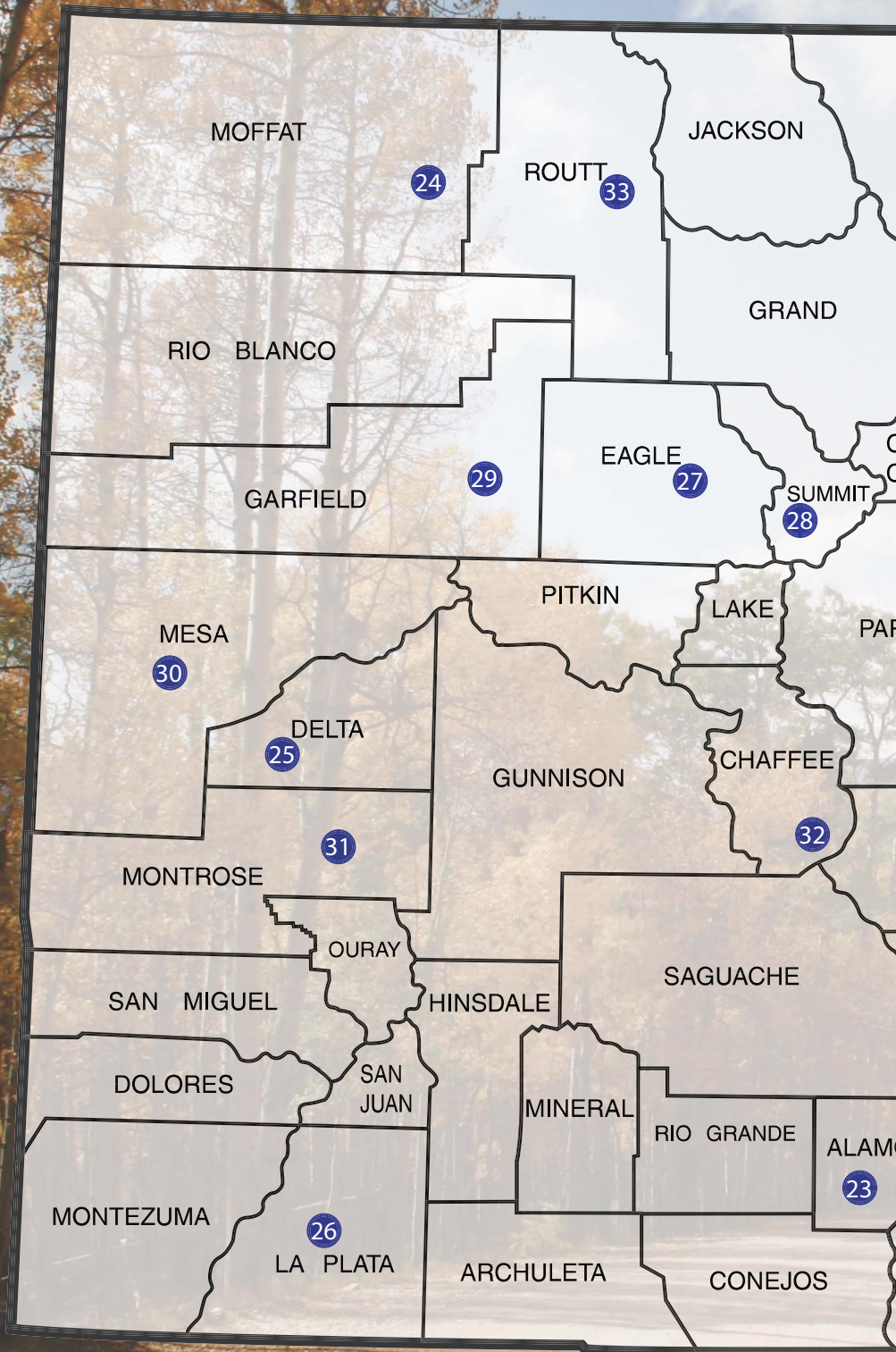
Pablo Sandoval, *Supervisor*
970.225.3892

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

REGION IV: ●

Jennifer Scilacci, *Supervisor*
970.623.3246

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





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 individual that are Deaf or Hard of Hearing 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



It has been a busy year for Colorado's Independent Living (IL) partners. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in partnership with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), utilizing input from the State's network of Independent Living Centers created a new three year State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). The SPIL provides direction for the provision of independent living services to Colorado's citizens living with significant disability and is federally mandated for the receipt of federal independent living funds.

The mission of this SPIL includes "... re-establishing our grassroots perspective, building the capacity of our IL centers, and improving statewide access to independent living services. We will seek greater involvement of the people we serve, exploring natural supports for community living. With our stakeholders, we will help shape communities that recognize full inclusion and diversity as a necessary part of community success and well-being." This will be accomplished through the identification of disability population hubs in frontier, rural, and urban areas, which will result in more targeted outreach and efficient use of independent living resources; increasing the collaboration between the IL partners to increase the capacity of centers to provide services throughout their catchment areas; and with an eye to the future, increasing the involvement of youth in independent living programs, creating a natural succession plan for independent living in the state. Accomplishing these goals in three years will take the dedication of all three partners. The SPIL can be found on the SILC's website at www.coloradosilc.org.

The IL Centers continue to adjust to the new cost reimbursement contracts that have been enacted in response to guidance from the program's Federal agency—two opportunities for fiscal management training for directors and boards were made available this year. The IL Centers continue to play an important role in the development of outcomes and performance measures for the contracts. In addition to the regular IL services the IL Centers provided to consumers, this past year they also played an important role in providing support to consumers whose lives were impacted by Colorado's natural disasters. The network of Centers received additional funding from the State Legislature to provide supports and services for consumers who wished to transition out of institutional care and return to living in their communities. The professional association of IL Centers (the Association of Colorado Centers for Independent Living) maintains a website which can be found at www.accil.net.

The Statewide Independent Living Council wrapped up the previous SPIL and worked diligently to recruit statewide representation to meet the federal requirement of full constitution; it also educated itself on issues of importance to the disability community including housing, emergency planning, and the concerns of unserved and underserved consumers. The SILC continues to educate its members about their roles and responsibilities through the provision of training at many of the six meetings throughout the year.

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".





Blind Program

In Colorado, The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation offers a range of services, and choices on the provider of those services, for individuals who are blind/visually impaired. The services DVR offers are geared towards the individual obtaining or maintaining employment. DVR staff understand that a key component to an individual's success is his/her ability to perform tasks independently; therefore, blindness related skills are the foundation to obtain independence in employment and in the community. Blindness related skills may include: the ability to travel independently, access printed information, read braille, access the community, maintain personal records, manage medical needs, cook, clean, do laundry, utilize residual vision for task completion, and utilize assistive technology.

DVR has staff designated and trained to work with individuals who are blind/visually impaired. The staff includes: a Statewide Coordinator for the Blind, Rehabilitation Counselors for the Blind/Visually impaired, a Lead Teacher for the visually impaired, Client Services Coordinator, Vision Rehabilitation Therapists, Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Low Vision Specialists and Assistive Technology Specialists.

Colorado DVR has both a center based training program and a field (itinerate) based training program for individuals who are blind/visually impaired. The center based program is located in Denver. The field teachers are located in district offices across the state including in the metro Denver office. There is also the option for private/nonprofit training for those who are blind/visually impaired. This includes a center based program located in Littleton, a suburb of Denver. Another option is to contract teaching services with vendors working with DVR. Additionally, there are limited services provided by the independent living centers throughout the State to individuals who are blind/visually impaired.

To meet the changing needs of DVR participants and the community, across the state, DVR has brought together a workgroup to identify gaps in services to 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.

Some highlights regarding addressing changing needs:

All of the teachers have been trained on the various uses of the iPhone and the applications that enhance accessibility. DVR has filled the second teacher position for the northern region to meet the needs of those living on the north eastern plains.

Due to the geographical nature of Colorado, there are a number of individuals who live in communities that don't have public transportation. This impacts their ability to access and to participate in VR services. To address this issue, DVR has established a remote training program for certain skill areas. This provides an opportunity for an individual who lives in a rural community to access training via the phone or internet. This remote training is primarily in the assistive technology area, and is provided by teachers based in the Denver Metro Office.

Ongoing efforts continue in the employer relations area, where DVR is working with employers to make worksites and computer systems accessible for potential and current employees with a visual impairment. DVR also has a Randolph Shepard Program, which trains and licenses blind operators to manage food service/convenient stores that are located in government buildings.



Business Enterprise Program



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

As of September 2013, 165 business enterprises were operating on Federal and State properties in Colorado in various capacities, with the possibility of 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's newest ventures are incorporating "Proudly Serving Starbucks" in the Ralph Carr Judicial building as well as an additional 2-3 locations within the next year. BEP is currently partnering with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on "Healthy Vending" initiatives and "Healthy Choices" in BEP operated State cafeterias.

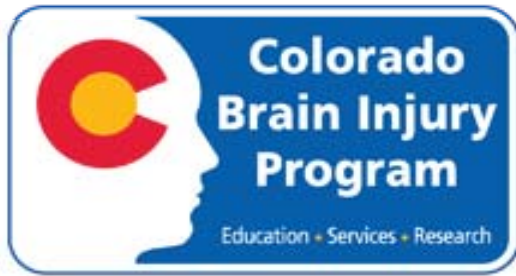
The program receives excellent support and assistance from General Services Administration (GSA), the Federal Government's building managers, who recognize the value of the BEP Program and the program's blind and visually impaired operators. Through a revamped training curriculum, the program has placed three trainees into successful operating locations within the last year. Currently the program has the possibility of placing 3-4 blind vendors into successful enterprises. 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, utilizing profits earned as their livelihood and income.





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

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), the Colorado Traumatic Brain Injury Trust fund program (CTBITF), and an Executive Order on TBI signed by the Governor in 2008.

The Brain Injury Program obtained HRSA funding which started November 2010. This four-year grant has three major initiatives: increase capacity of schools to support students with TBI; increase capacity of community mental health providers to conduct screening, assessment, and treatment of co-occurring TBI and behavioral health; 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 will be contracting with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), the Denver Veterans Administration (VA), and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment respectively. Accomplishments to date of this grant include; policy change at CDE to change eligibility criteria for special education from requiring medical documentation of TBI to medical documentation of and/or educational identification of TBI. Additionally, the VA has produced a consensus document on screening/identification, assessment and intervention of TBI for community mental health centers. This is evolving into a toolkit for community mental health providers. Finally, the program has been able to train many individuals with brain injury and/or family members through the Family Leadership Training Institute (FLTI). FLTI focuses on developing leadership and civic engagement skills.

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. The Brain Injury Program has recently made significant changes to both the children and adult programs funded via the Trust Fund. These changes include more comprehensive case management support for adults and education consultation for the youth program.

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 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 the program website at www.tbicolorado.org. A key recommendation of this report was to develop and implement screening/identification and assessment protocols across state agencies. As a result of this recommendation, the Brain Injury Program has engaged in piloting such a protocol within DVR. This has been done in partnership with a Brain Injury workgroup comprised of representatives from each of the DVR regions. The results of this pilot are being compiled with further recommendations to come.



Self-Employment Program



During FY 2013, DVR's self-employment program raised awareness of the program among community partners and Colorado legislators, delivered self-employment training to groups of self-employed individuals with disabilities throughout the state, created uniform training materials for Rehabilitation Counselors for Entrepreneurship (RCE) and expanded options for service delivery – particularly in rural settings.

Increased Awareness

In November and December of 2012, DVR held Legislative/Employer open houses in Greeley, Greenwood Village, Boulder, and Northglenn. DVR partnered with the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) to hold the events, which attracted many City, County, State and Federal level officials. Attendees received information and technical assistance about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), assistive technology, employer incentives, DVR's business services and self-employment programs.

Each event highlighted one or more self-employed individuals who have utilized the DVR self-employment program on their path to business ownership. Featured guests included a hair stylist, a coffee shop owner, a photographer, a caterer, and a durable medical equipment supplier. All were assisted by DVR counselors to plan and open their businesses and most of them brought or demonstrated their craft during the events.

Self-Employment Training

DVR, with MIG funds, sponsored five events around Colorado in November 2012 allowing entrepreneurs to come together, network, learn networking strategies from a small business development expert, and receive information about the Medicaid Buy-In for Working Adults with Disabilities and Social Security Administration work incentives. Events were held in Lamar, Colorado Springs, Loveland, Grand Junction, and Frisco.

Training Materials

DVR's self-employment program includes six mentor-level staff who provide training and coaching to RCEs in addition to reviewing business plans throughout the year. These RCEIs recognized the need for greater consistency – particularly for training new RCEs. The RCEI group and the state office manager for self-employment designed a new training manual covering a range of topics including DVR self-employment procedures, understanding financial spreadsheets, marketing, AgrAbility, etc.

Expanded Service Delivery

The RCEIs led training throughout the state for existing RCEs along with recruiting new rehabilitation counselors creating a much larger pool of trained specialists who can now work with individuals with disabilities interested in entrepreneurship. Some larger offices now have two rather than one RCE, and there are also now trained RCEs available to provide services in smaller offices to include Alamosa, Durango, Ft. Morgan, Salida and Longmont.





CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY:

Patricia Clymer & Jenny Barker

Achieving self-sufficiency can be difficult, but it is complicated when you have a disability and even more challenging when you are just starting out on the road to adult life. It is easy to envision how Colorado's young adults who struggle with reading and math skills, or who are challenged to comprehend appropriate social skills and their application to an environment for work can go from job to job and/or fall through the cracks and never even gain employment. In response to this need, local school districts and DVR have stepped up to provide those services these youth need to obtain and maintain employment through the School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP).

Patricia Clymer

Twenty-four-year-old Patricia Clymer has enjoyed every day of her first year as a home health aide for Comfort Keepers, a company that is an industry leader for in-home care for seniors and other adults, in Grand Junction.



That joy would not have been possible without the help of the local SWAP, a collaborative program between Mesa School District 51 and DVR. This partnership assists young adults with mild to moderate needs in employment with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.

Patricia was one of 150 clients who went through the local program which is based year-around at the Career Center. She practiced interviewing skills, learned how to make a personal budget, and received job-placement help from SWAP. After a couple interviews, she landed her job at Comfort Keepers. Patricia said that she wouldn't have been able to do this if she had not been able to obtain the confidence and abilities these programs gave her.

Jenny Barker

Jenny Barker went through the program between October 2011 and March 2013. She has worked as a courtesy clerk at Safeway since December and continues to hear from SWAP through follow-along services. One thing Jenny liked about the program is that her Specialist wouldn't give up on her even though Jenny wanted to. Her Specialist helped her get appropriate clothes, a bus pass, and look for a job.

Mike Sidanycz, manager at Safeway on Horizon Drive, said he tries to hire clients from SWAP whenever possible as they appreciate the job and opportunity. The job expectations are the same for SWAP clients as they are for any other employee. Employers are not allowed to ask what disability a client has and it is often hard to tell they have one. Their appreciation, though, is obvious. "They show up on a continual basis, they're reliable, they do the best they can," said Deanne Elliott, Safeway District Coordinator

Through the Mesa SWAP partnership, an average of 28 cases for young adults are closed successfully rehabilitated annually.

**Portions of this article are courtesy of Grand Junction's The Daily Sentinel, by Emily Shockley 6/06/13.*

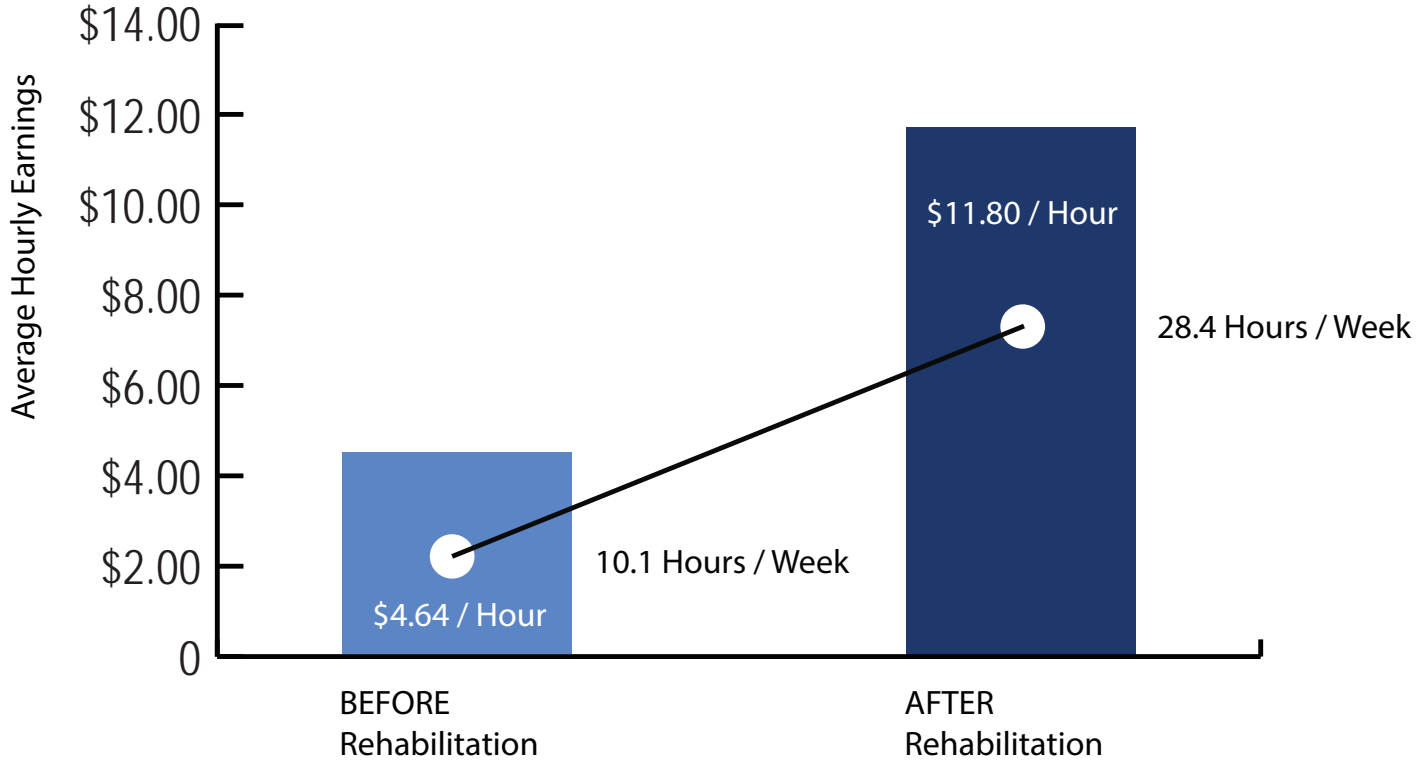


STATE FISCAL YEAR 2013

July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013



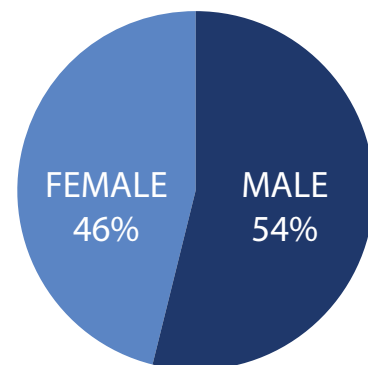
Increased Earnings and Hours Worked for Competitively Employed Clients



Occupations of our Clients

Administrative Support	583
Building, Repair & Maintenance	376
Transportation	367
Food Services	297
Personal Care & Social Services	205
Sales	175
Production	146
Healthcare	146
Business Management & Financial	117
Construction	77
Education & Training	76
Computer, Architecture, & Engineering	40
Military & Protective Services	36
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media	28
Agricultural	13
Other	182

Clients

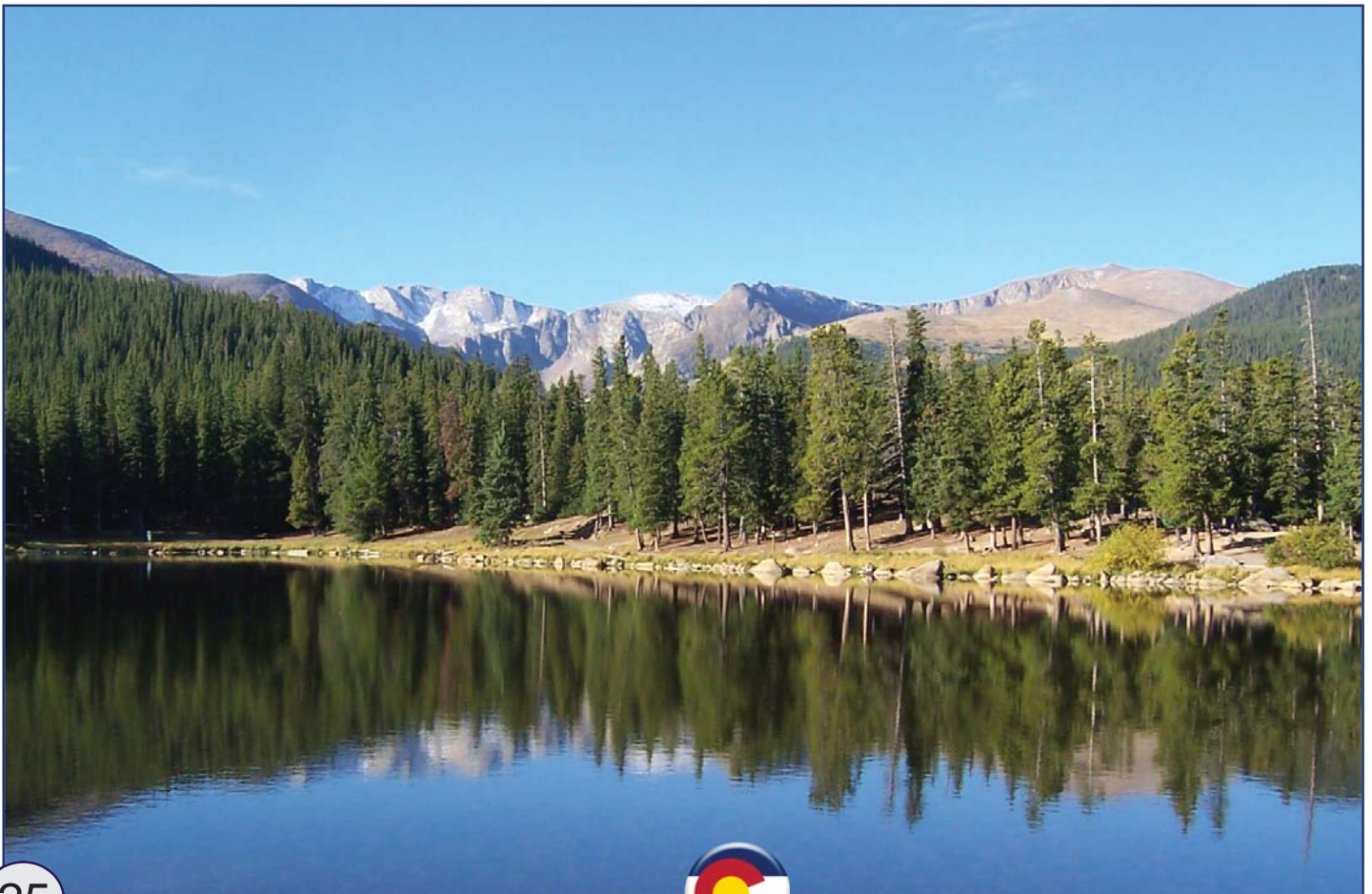




PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Benefit Offset National Demonstration Project

DVR is in its third year of partnership with Abt Associates and Ability Connection Colorado (formerly CP of Colorado) 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.



Business Outreach Program



Business Outreach Specialists (BOS) are DVR's linkage to Colorado's small, medium, large, Federal and Federal contracting employers. Staffing changes have taken place over the last year, and new specialists have joined the program to further DVR's reach with employers throughout the state.

Denver Metro – Joy Caine
Greenwood Village/Aurora – David Atkinson
Golden – Steven Allen
Northglenn – Cathy Kohl
Greeley/Northeast CO – Dean Vincent
Fort Collins – Alan Cohen
Frisco/Glenwood Springs/Edward/Salida – Amelia Anderson
Steamboat/Craig – Brooke Lightner
Grand Junction/Montrose – Kristi Courter
Durango/Alamosa – Lacy Anderson
Pueblo – Jason Crowe
Southeast CO – Melody Babbitt
Colorado Springs – Tom Martinez, Jr.

BOS staff have primary responsibility for analyzing job seeker needs by local area, strategizing employer outreach, prospecting for job leads, conducting needs analysis sessions with business representatives, and returning to DVR with job openings to match up with qualified candidates in the job seeker pool. When not job developing and facilitating placements, BOS staff assist with job fairs, conduct complimentary disability awareness training, share labor market information with DVR counselors, and look at opportunities to partner with other community job developers to increase placement capacity.

BOS staff members were instrumental in the planning of DVR's 2012 Legislative/Employer open houses in Greeley, Northglenn, Boulder, and Greenwood Village. The events drew 175 attendees and information was shared about the national Think Beyond the Label campaign and Colorado's vignette initiative, "It's Different". This set of products, housed on YouTube, emphasizes the value of work from the perspectives of successfully employed individuals with disabilities.

The channel is located at:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/DVRDifferent>





Work Incentives can be key in the employment of individuals with disabilities eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Utilizing them, however, requires a solid understanding of their application, potential risks, and necessary reporting requirements – with the help of Certified Work Incentive Coordinators (CWICs) when appropriate. This year, DVR supported awareness and utilization of work incentives service delivery by supporting the program costs of the CWIC program, facilitating training for service providers around the state, and widely disseminating the 2013 work incentives calendar.

CWIC Program

DVR has supported work incentives coordination through CP of Colorado for a number of years to assure analysis of the impact of work earnings on cash benefits, health insurance, and other state and federal benefits for individuals with disabilities planning to engage in employment. When CP of Colorado lost Social Security Administration (SSA) funding in July 2012, DVR covered the costs of the program through a contract so that this important service was not lost -- which would have potentially jeopardized SSA beneficiaries in the process of return to work. In August of 2013, SSA funding was resumed for the program, and the program remains available statewide for SSA beneficiaries.

Training

DVR, with resources from the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, planned training sessions throughout the year to increase awareness about often-underutilized work incentives. Training was delivered to many audiences including:

- Service providers who specialize in the area of youth, developmental disabilities, mental health disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), etc.
- Advocates
- DVR staff
- Clients

Calendar

DVR staff produced a 2013 calendar focused on work incentives, featuring images of youth with disabilities navigating in their communities using fixed-route transportation options. The calendar featured monthly SSA work incentives topics and a tool to track earnings reported to SSA. The calendars were widely disseminated throughout CO via community-based agencies and service providers.



Victor Plawski



As a young boy in Brazil, Victor Plawski's love and appreciation for water plants started early as he played among the exotic species growing in and along the Amazon River.

"I grew up in the jungles of the Amazon and we used to cut the stem off of huge lilies and lay on top of them to float across the river," Victor said.

Now almost 60 years later, Victor and his wife Sandy own and operate Springtime Nursery, one of the four largest water plant suppliers in the nation featuring hundreds of varieties of lilies, lotus, shallow water and other floating plants.

They currently grow in seven greenhouses on their Sugar City farm and sell their plants all over the world from their website, www.waterplants.com.

However, all that they had worked so hard for was in danger when both Victor and Sandy's eyesight started to fail due to cataracts.



"It was hard to identify the colors," Victor said, referring to the flowering lilies that range from peach to pink, violet and purple and even "changeables" that will vary in color throughout the year. "I couldn't tell between a peach and a changeable, and when they were small, I couldn't even see them at all."

At the same time Sandy was having trouble reading orders, and between the two of them the wrong plants were being sent to customers.

"I thought I was looking at one kind of lily but it was another, and then we sent the wrong lily," Victor said. "The customer gets upset, and we have to make it right. When you ship to China, Japan and Turkey and you make a mistake, it's a big mistake."

The couple had heard that Colorado DVR might be able to help, but Victor felt some reservations about receiving assistance.

When Victor came to the United States as a teenager in 1969, the U.S. consulate made him sign an agreement saying he would not take any government assistance for 10 years.

"And I didn't until DVR," said Victor who described how he joined the Navy upon arrival to the U.S. then worked as a machinist and a jeweler before he and Sandy started the water plant business in 1989. "I felt bad about asking for help, but I did pay 40 years worth of income taxes during that time."

Victor and Sandy worked with counselor Todd Fahlstrom out of the Pueblo office. Victor was able to get cataract surgery on both eyes in 2010, and Sandy had her surgery the following year.

"It's like day and night," Victor said, referring to his eyesight before and after surgery. "You don't know how awesome it is to be able to see again."

With their new and improved vision, the Plawskis have cut down those costly shipping mistakes and are back growing their exotic water plants to be shipped all over the globe. Last year alone they spent nearly \$20,000 in shipping at their local post office.

Victor is preparing to write his second book on water plants and said he will be forever grateful for the help he received from DVR and for the opportunities he has had since leaving the jungles of Brazil 43 years ago.

"When I came here in May of 1969 I couldn't speak a word of English and had \$20 in my pocket," Victor said. "Nothing was easy, but I had fun doing it. That's the beauty of America. If you can dream it you can do it - if you are willing and able."

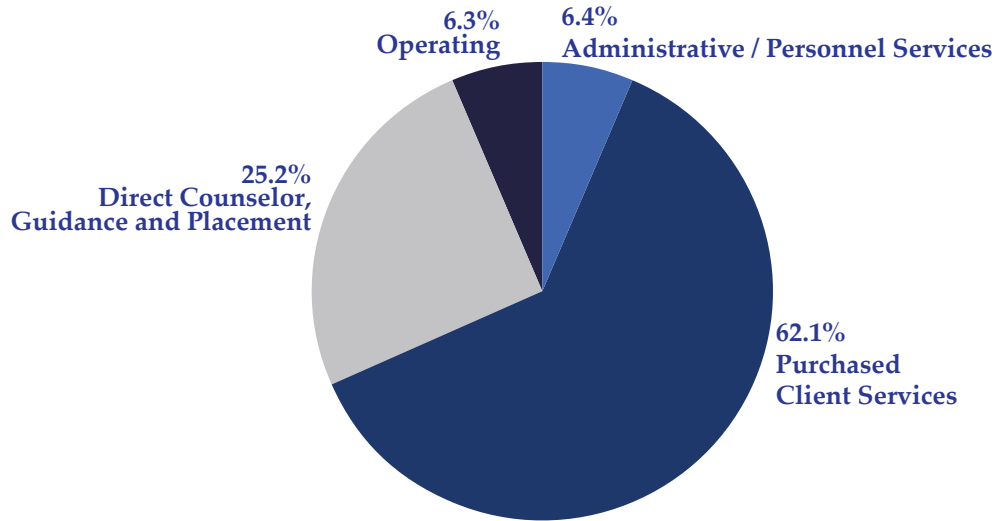




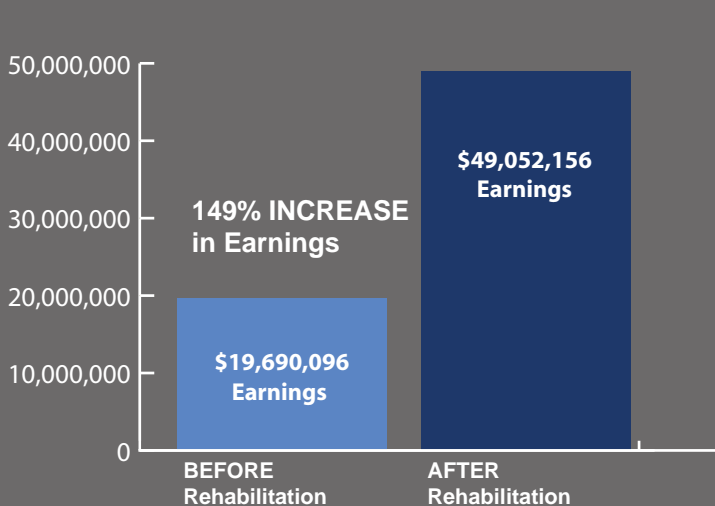
STATE FISCAL YEAR 2013

July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

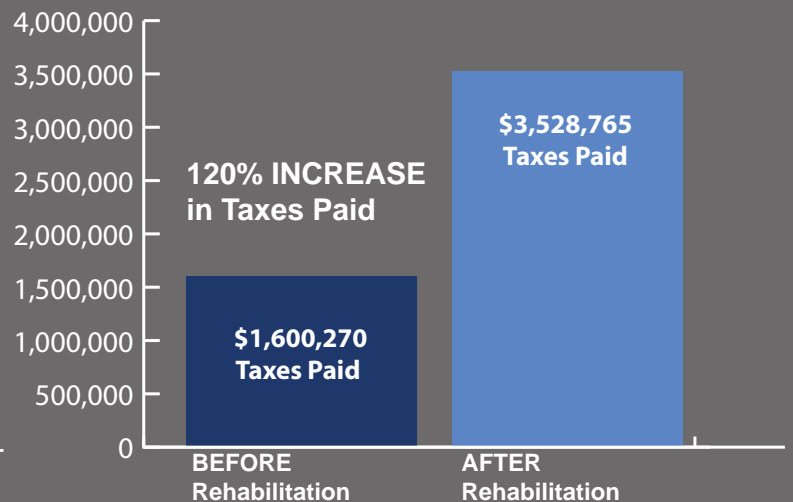
DVR Expenditures by Type



Annual Earnings on 1st Year of Employment



Income Taxes Paid on 1st Year of Employment



* Taxes paid are estimated



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: cdhs_voc.rehab@state.co.us

STAFF

Joelle Brouner

Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Rob Buzogany

Manager, Programs and Program Development Unit

Krista Dann

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:

Office	Phone
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
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





DIVISION of
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

State of Colorado



Qualified applicants.
Outstanding employers.
We bring you together.

1575 Sherman Street
4th Floor
Denver, Colorado 80203
www.dvrcolorado.com

Voice: 303.866.4150
Toll Free: 1.866.870.4595
Fax: 303.866.4905
Email: cdhs_voc.rehab@state.co.us