



COLORADO

Office of Community Access & Independence

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Colorado State Rehabilitation Council

**2014 ANNUAL
REPORT**



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, 2014. 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 2014

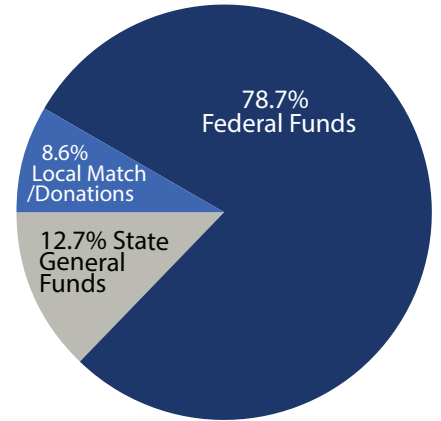
July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014



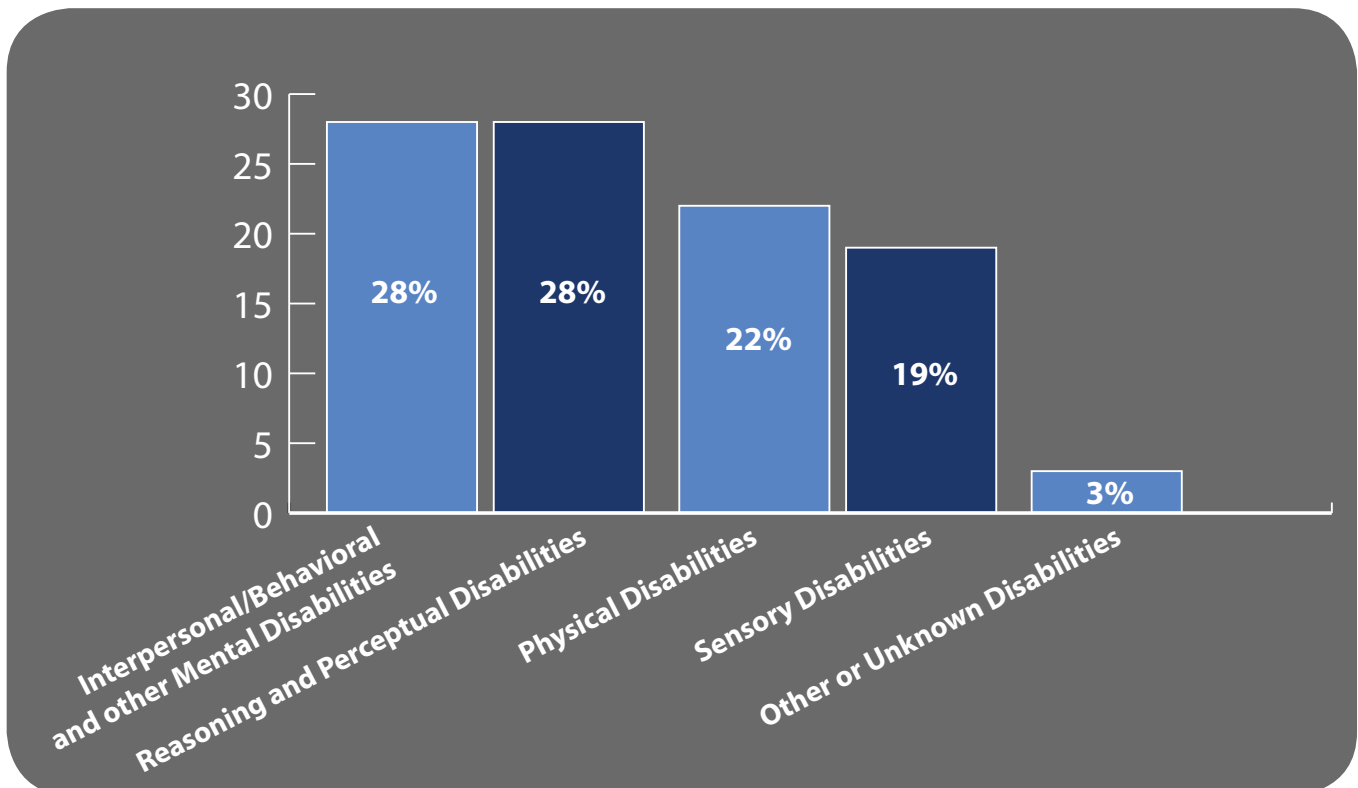
Facts at a Glance

Total Clients Served	17,403
Clients Successfully Closed Rehabilitated	2,198
Average Hourly Wage (of Competitively Employed Clients)	\$11.61
Average Hours Worked Per Week	28.2
Total Earnings of These Employees in the First Year	\$36.6 million
Average Weekly Salary	\$347
Average Annual Salary	\$18,055
Additional Dollars to Colorado's Tax Base	\$26.5 million
Additional Federal and State Taxes Paid in First Year (estimated)	\$1.61 million

DVR Sources of Funding



Disabilities of Customers





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:

Josh Winkler

Chair
State Rehabilitation Council
Representative of Colorado
Developmental Disabilities Council

Julie Farrar

Vice-Chair
State Rehabilitation Council
Representative of Disability
Advocacy Groups

Debra Peterson

Vice-Chair
State Rehabilitation Council
Representative At-Large

Buna Dahal

Representative of the State
Independent Living Council

Julie Deden

Representative of Community
Rehabilitation Services Provider

Claudia Folska

Representative of Vocational
Rehabilitation Clients

Karla Grazier

Representative of the Workforce
Development Council

Brandon Hill

Representative of Individuals with
Disabilities

Robert Lawhead

Representative of Business, Industry and
Labor

Travis Morgan

Representative of 121 Project

Katie Oliver

Representative of State Education Agency

Geoffrey Peterson

State Rehabilitation Council
Representative of Client Assistance
Program

Sue Richardson

State Rehabilitation Council
Representative of Business, industry
and Labor

Beth Schaffner

Representative of PEAK Parent Center

Steve Anton (ex-officio)

Interim Director of Vocational Rehabilitation

Liz King (ex-officio)

SRC Administrative Staff

CONTACT INFORMATION:

**The Colorado State
Rehabilitation Council**

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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, 2014.





SRC Recommendations and DVR Strategies

Goal #1: DVR will provide excellent guidance and counseling to DVR clients.

Strategies:

- DVR will have 30 day contact with all clients to increase client engagement and enhance the client-counselor partnership.
- DVR will improve case file documentation reflecting personalized and meaningful contact with clients.
- DVR supervisors will meet regularly with counselors and staff to model excellent guidance and counseling skills as well as motivational interviewing so that counselors and staff can in turn use these skills with clients.
- DVR will explore training options to improve consistent and excellent client service to all clients, focusing on methods for dealing with difficult situations and creating welcoming client focused environments in all DVR locations.

Goal #2: DVR will build public trust by demonstrating stewardship, sound operational practices and positive internal dynamics.

Strategies:

- DVR will implement new procedures for external job placement vendors that will establish reasonable timelines for services and a greater focus on successful closures.
- DVR will generate, monitor and use information to make sound fiscal decisions to ensure the ability to provide effective individualized services to clients.
- DVR will utilize the Waitlist Management process to project and manage the removal of clients from the waitlist effectively and efficiently.
- DVR will invest resources as available to improve the data collection and reporting capabilities of its electronic case management system and other mechanisms to enable management to make data driven decisions and better gauge program performance.





Goal #3: DVR will engage in effective partnerships, teamwork and collaboration.

Strategies:

- The DVR Business Outreach Program will increase business partnerships with Federal contractors for the purposes of employment.
- DVR will outreach to other state agencies, state departments, other VR agencies, and other entities regarding best practices and ways to work more efficiently and effectively together.

Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has had a State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for more than twenty-five years. The SRC mission statement is:

“The State Rehabilitation Council (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 clients of vocational rehabilitation services a mechanism to influence at the systemic and policy level the direction of vocational rehabilitation programming.”

The SRC meets every other month and has a yearly retreat. Minutes are maintained of all SRC meetings and retreats which summarize the advice and recommendations provided to DVR. DVR has continued to work closely with SRC this year, providing them with on-going reports in regards to finances, personnel, client services, Standards and Indicators, and wait list. DVR continues to regularly seek the advice of the SRC on various issues, including the state plan, client satisfaction, DVR policies, order of selection and wait list.

SRC members participated in a number of DVR workgroups this year in an effort to work jointly towards improving DVR processes and policies as well as to revise and update the client satisfaction survey.

In addition, the SRC and DVR worked in collaboration to hold four public hearings across the state to obtain public comment on state plan topics and possible policy changes. Flyers were posted in all DVR offices and on the DVR website and DVR partners were notified electronically. Clients, their families, stakeholders, partners and others were invited to share their feedback regarding seven targeted questions as well as provide general comments. In addition to providing comments at the meetings, anyone who could not attend but wanted to share their feedback or ask a question could do so by email, fax or phone. As a result of the information received from these sources, SRC has made the following recommendations they would like to see Colorado DVR focus on in the upcoming year.





RECOMMENDATION #1

In order to provide effective and excellent customer service to all clients, the SRC recommends that DVR provide training to all staff that covers methods for dealing with difficult situations, answers to most frequently asked questions, and ideas for making clients feel welcome. Consistency across offices is needed. The development of specific checklists may be helpful for staff.

DVR RESPONSE

During the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, DVR was able to provide substantial work incentives training at the DVR Statewide Conference with a keynote and breakout sessions specifically focused on work incentives to include 1619(b) and the Medicaid Buy-In Program for Working Adults with Disabilities (in May 2012) and at numerous regional training events around the state focused on self-employment, supported employment, and work incentives in general.

DVR agrees that there needs to be continued training and focus on work incentives for DVR staff. DVR values having counselors who are well-versed and knowledgeable of work incentives and recognizes these are a critical component to successful employment for clients with significant disabilities. DVR also recognizes the importance of partnering with Community Work Incentive Coordinators to ensure SSI/SSDI beneficiaries who are interested in pursuing employment have access to the level of support and expertise necessary to develop a clear understanding of the impact of work on their benefits, their responsibilities in communicating earnings to SSA, and the incentives that may be available to them to support their employment. DVR counselors can benefit from additional training to increase their knowledge of available work incentives. DVR will seek training opportunities to enhance understanding of work incentives. DVR will also strive to ensure the best possible working relationship between DVR counselors and the Community Work Incentive Coordinators in order to ensure clients have access to the appropriate service providers who are best equipped to aid clients in arranging available work incentives.





RECOMMENDATION #2

The SRC recommends that all counselors receive training in the area of work incentives including 1619(b), impairment related work expenses, and the Medicaid Buy-In program. Along with training, an easily understood handout would be helpful. This training will allow counselors to assist their clients when preparing for employment and will propel clients towards obtaining jobs.

DVR RESPONSE

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RECOMMENDATION #3

As a result of a great deal of comments from the public hearings, the SRC recommends that DVR focuses on transition and considers serving youth by age 16.

As a result of comments from the public hearings, SRC recommends that the Youth Services and Transition Unit work to improve partnerships at the local level between DVR and education to increase appropriate referrals of all transitioning youth and to increase successful employment outcomes for those youth. By collaborating with education officials, DVR can provide consultation and technical assistance to assist education agencies in the planning and provision of services to students with disabilities as early as possible from school to post-school activities while conducting outreach and identification of students with disabilities.

DVR RESPONSE

DVR agrees it is vital for all young people with disabilities to engage early in the process of transitioning from education to post-secondary employment goals and that success in this area is dependent upon the effectiveness of the local partnership. DVR's Youth Services and Transition Unit will take the lead in implementing technical assistance, training, and support to increase DVR's presence and participation in schools to accomplish this.

As DVR's existing policy, jointly decided with CDE, does not have any age parameters on it, it does not require definition of a specific age. As stated in the Cooperative Services Handbook, "The optimum timing for DVR to begin working with a student with a disability is when he or she is ready, and available, to engage in the activities necessary to establish an employment goal, develop an employment plan, and participate in vocational services in order to become employed. The time at which this occurs is unique to each individual, and does not necessarily correspond to a specific age or a specific event such as graduation. Rather, it should occur at a time when the youth's emphasis shifts from an academic focus to an employment focus, and the youth becomes available for vocational programming. DVR requires that the employment plan for a DVR transition participant (not on a deferred services waiting list) must be developed and approved before the student leaves the school setting."

DVR commits to exploring policy to ensure we are in keeping with best practices and current trends.





RECOMMENDATION #4

The SRC recommends that DVR shall remove all clients from the wait list in the next year.

DVR RESPONSE

DVR agrees that it is vital to remove clients from the wait list in as timely a manner as possible, while also recognizing the need for fiscal responsibility and planning in order to be able to serve clients in an on-going manner. DVR has developed tools to help estimate timeframes to serve the three disability severity categories. These include monitoring financial resources and available funds, attrition rates, staffing levels and future Individualized Plan for Employment options. The timeframes to release individuals will vary depending on these criteria. DVR has increased emphasis on monitoring case costs and will monitor the budget on a monthly basis and make adjustments, as needed, to determine the appropriate number of individuals that can be removed from the wait list and ensure sufficient fiscal and personnel resources are available.

RECOMMENDATION #5

In order to receive on-going and effective feedback and recommendations from clients, partners, stakeholders, and vendors, etc. the SRC recommends that DVR continues to review the methodologies for distributing and administering satisfaction surveys. DVR should explore expanding sample size, reaching under-represented groups, possible use of web based surveys, follow up phone calls and other response methods while maintaining anonymity, as well as considering the possible use of incentives to encourage people to fill out surveys.

DVR RESPONSE

DVR agrees and will continue to review and implement, as appropriate, all available options for obtaining accurate, reliable and anonymous feedback about client satisfaction.





RECOMMENDATION #6

The SRC recommends that DVR work closely with the executive and legislative branches of Colorado government to fully utilize Colorado's share of Rehabilitation Services Administration matching funds. Colorado cannot afford to leave \$4.16 million in federal funds on the table for every dollar in state General Fund invested. This is particularly true when Colorado citizens with disabilities have been on a DVR wait list since early 2013.

DVR RESPONSE

DVR agrees that sustaining funding is essential to continuity of service. DVR will undertake a two pronged strategy to achieve this by modeling the accountability and sound operation necessary to secure public trust and by following all state and departmental protocol required to educate decision makers about the mechanics of federal match and the impact of those funds on the lives of Coloradoan job seekers with disabilities.

DVR looks forward to continuing to use the SRC members' expertise, skills and creativity as a valuable resource for achieving its goals and objectives, resulting in increased quality and quantity of successful employment outcomes for DVR clients.

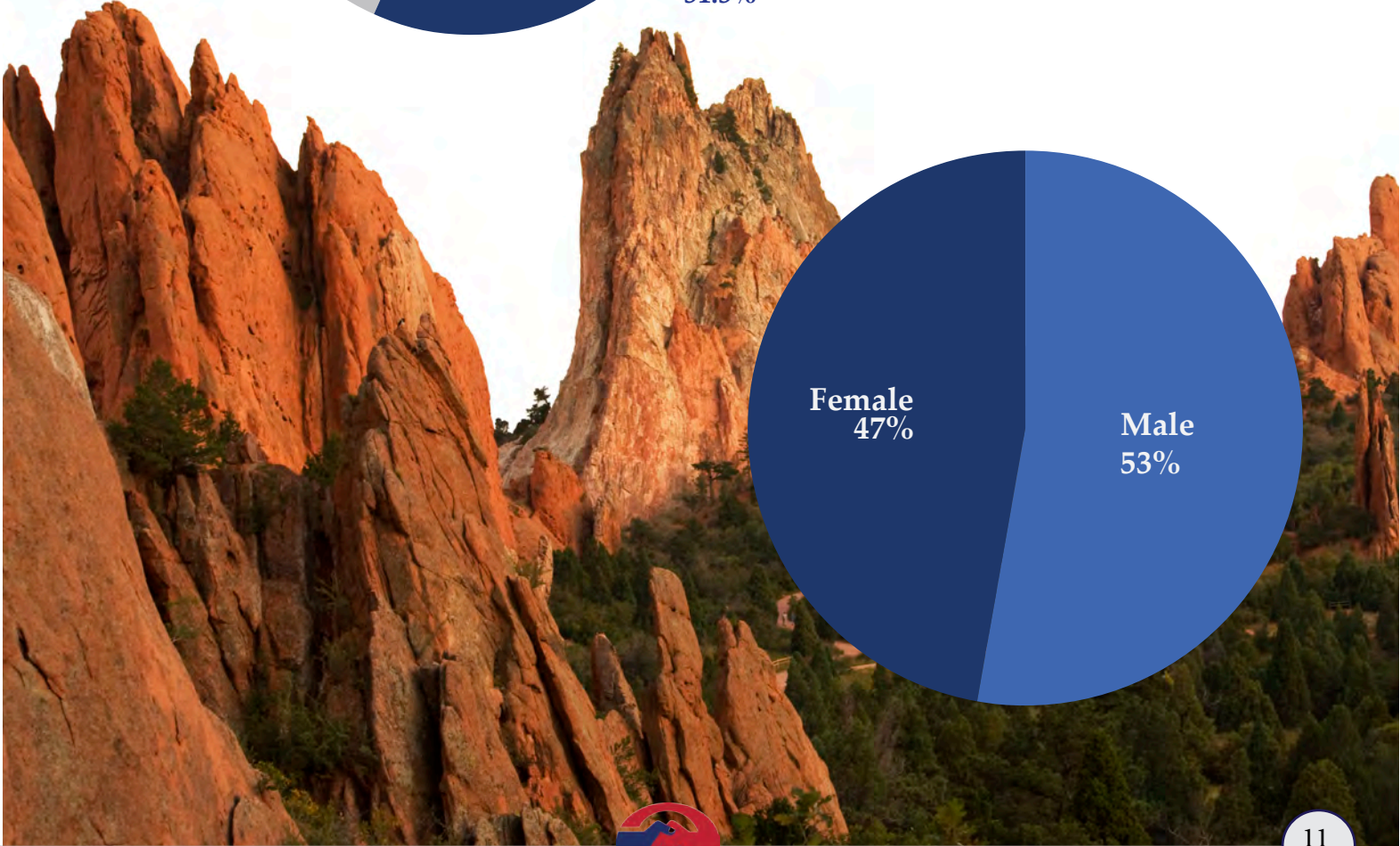
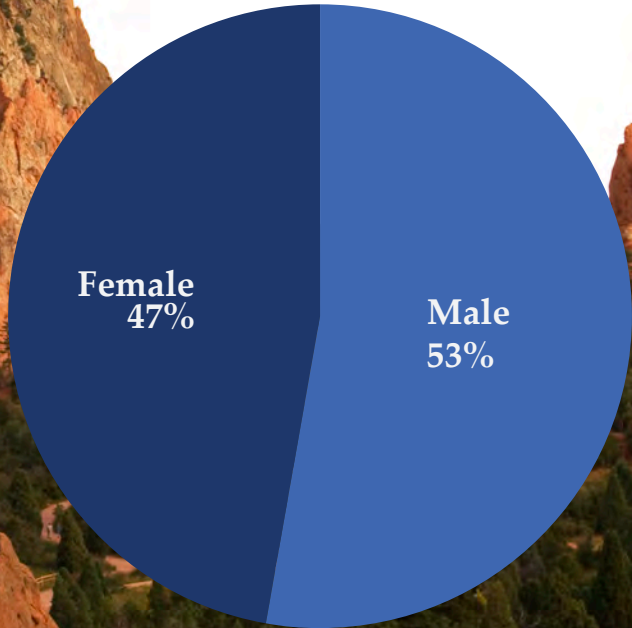
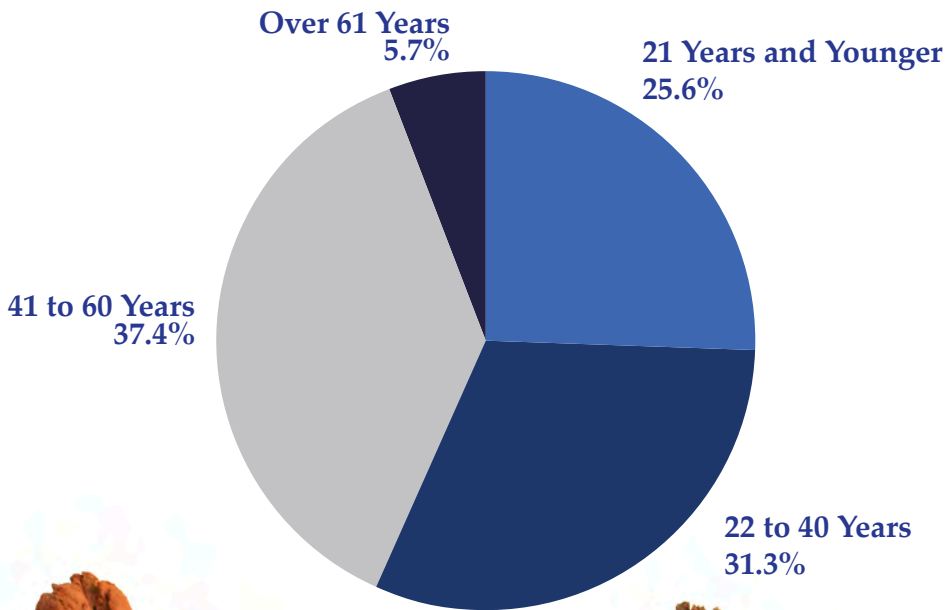


STATE FISCAL YEAR 2014

July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014



Our Clients Are



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
Alamosa – 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>

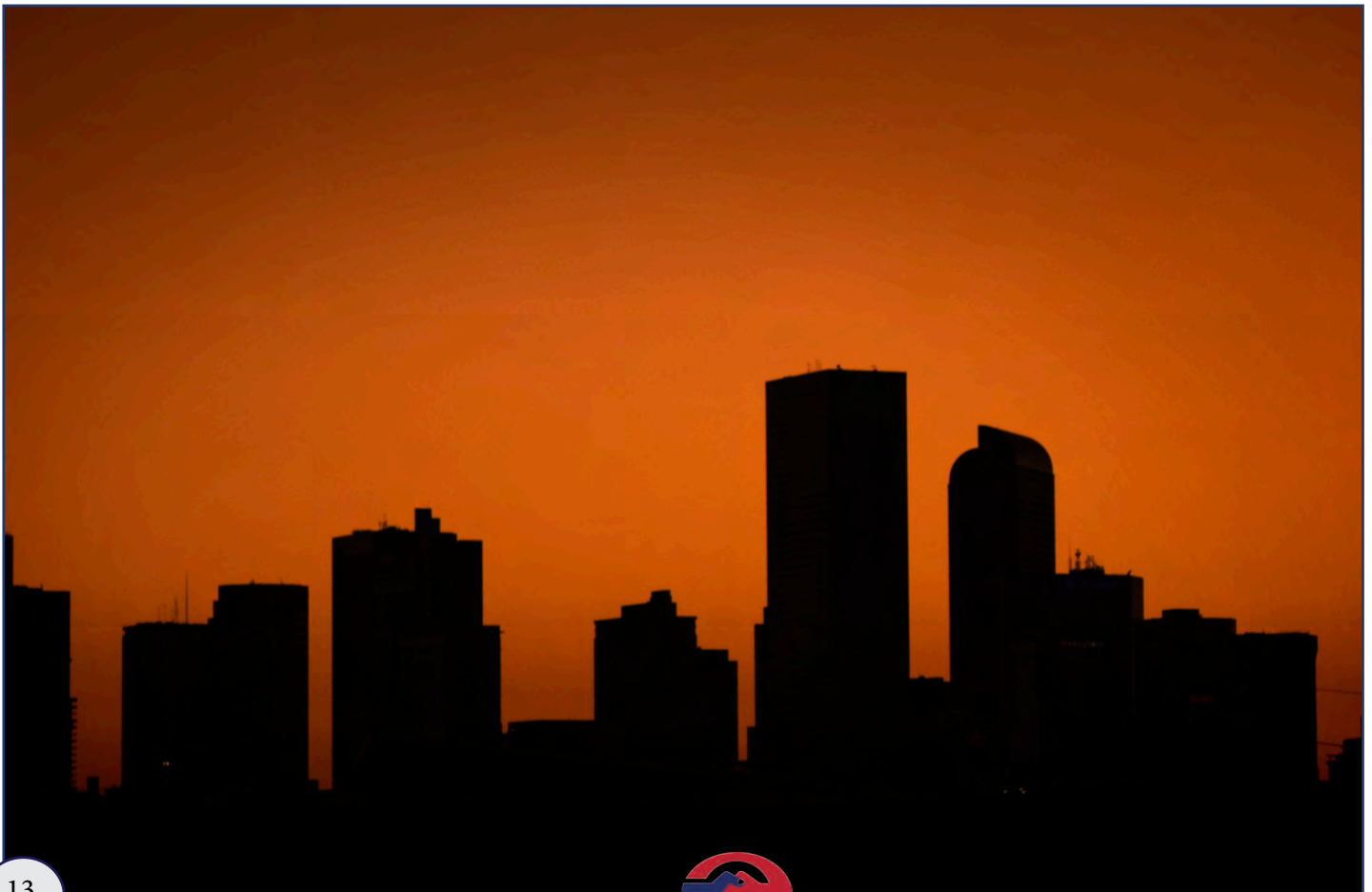




PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

Benefit Offset National Demonstration Project

DVR is in its fourth 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.



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.





ASPIRE

Colorado is one of six states participating in a western consortium implementing the Department of Education's PROMISE Initiative. ASPIRE stands for Achieving Success by Promoting Readiness in Education and Employment. Colorado, Arizona, Montanan North Dakota, South Dakota and Utah are partnering to recruit 2000 youth ages 14 to 16 who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to this experimental design. One half of the youth (1,000) will receive a variety of interventions to improve their educational and employment outcomes.

Colorado will recruit 400 youth and their families. 200 will be randomly assigned to Usual Services, those which are currently available to youth. 200 will be randomly assigned to ASPIRE services and receive enhanced services such as

- Parent Education and Training
- Benefits Planning
- Paid Employment during High School
- Youth Self Determination training
- Family Financial Education
- Comprehensive Case Management.

ASPIRE began October 1, 2013 and continues until September 30, 2018, with recruitment and enrollment occurring before March 30, 2016. For further information, see www.aspirewest.org or contact Robin Bauknecht at:

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Denver, CO 80203
303-866-3364
Robin.Bauknecht@state.co.us



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 2014, 174 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 1-2 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:

Blind/Visually Impaired Program

The services DVR offers are geared towards the individual obtaining or maintaining employment. However, 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 area. 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.

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.
- 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.



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.





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.



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".





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 individuals 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.



William Schandel



William Schandel applied for a job at King Soopers at the age of sixteen and received no response. William was very frustrated and didn't understand why he had not heard back. Displeased with his job search, he spoke with his case manager Alisa Kramer at Highlands Ranch High School. Alisa shared information about the School to Work Alliance Program and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation with the State of Colorado. William applied for SWAP because he was interested in obtaining and maintaining employment as he was exiting high school. He stated he applied for SWAP/DVR because "I really wanted to earn an honest living and wanted to talk to people who could understand me better." After his case was opened with the program on December 10, 2012, he began working with SWAP Specialist Lisa Anderson and DVR Counselor Sheela Linn. Lisa began working with William on interview skills and job applications. William applied to King Soopers again. With SWAP's help he was granted an interview and was offered a Courtesy Clerk position at the Highlands Ranch King Soopers. His first day of work was March 27th, 2013! Lisa offered extensive support to William in his



early days on the job. She spent hours completing online training modules and ensuring that he was prepared to perform his job duties to the very best of his ability. William began working as a courtesy clerk and found the job to be very fulfilling. About two months after William began working his managers mentioned to SWAP that he was having a hard time maintaining focus on his work. SWAP Specialist Anna Moriarity supported William with job coaching to ensure that William had the skills necessary to do his job well and stay focused on the job.

Soon after his successful closure with SWAP on July 9, 2013, William was offered a position as a full-time Maintenance Clerk. This promotion included a pay raise of ten cents per hour. He explained that the promotion made him "overwhelmed, excited, and surprised". When asked about his favorite part of work, William explained that he most enjoyed the people at his store. William has offered excellent customer service since his date of hire. Managers have spoken highly of William and his work. His former manager, Santia Anaya, stated that William was one of the best employees she had ever had. He explained to SWAP that he had been recognized for his hard work recently through a productivity report conducted by his current manager. This report indicated that he had done stellar work.

As stated by William, "It feels good to work hard. I like to work hard so that I have the opportunity to move up and...get raises". This kind of ambition is a characteristic that extends to a variety of other areas in William's life. He explained his desire to pursue a music career. William loves his job at King Soopers but knows that he would someday like to move forward with a different career path. He spoke of his desire to further his career in music. When he encounters difficulties at work, William knows he can call on his SWAP providers to support him during the follow-along process. When SWAP asked him what he has learned while working for King Soopers, William said, "Well new life lessons. Like never be afraid of anybody and be aware of the environment around you. But a favorite lesson is that life is like a jack-o-lantern, hanging over swamps and graveyards. If you take your hard work and will make it, it becomes a lighthouse that leads you into safe harbors, a town and to all the people who know and love you." He explained that he has developed a variety of skills for dealing with challenges on the job, stating that he benefits from stopping to think about what he is being asked to do and taking the time to remember all details of the assigned task. These and many others are skills that SWAP has assisted William in acquiring.

All of these supports have been hugely helpful for William, and he states that he would "absolutely" utilize SWAP services again. Perhaps the success of this story can be best summed up in his own words: "I have become more responsible and more mature. I used to be very bull-headed but having this job has made me more of a man. My family is proud of what I have done. They are glad I am so successful. The money is great, but the experience and the job are way more important than money". Douglas County SWAP is glad to have had the opportunity to work with a young man like William and looks forward to offering support to many more individuals seeking competitive employment in the community.



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: ●

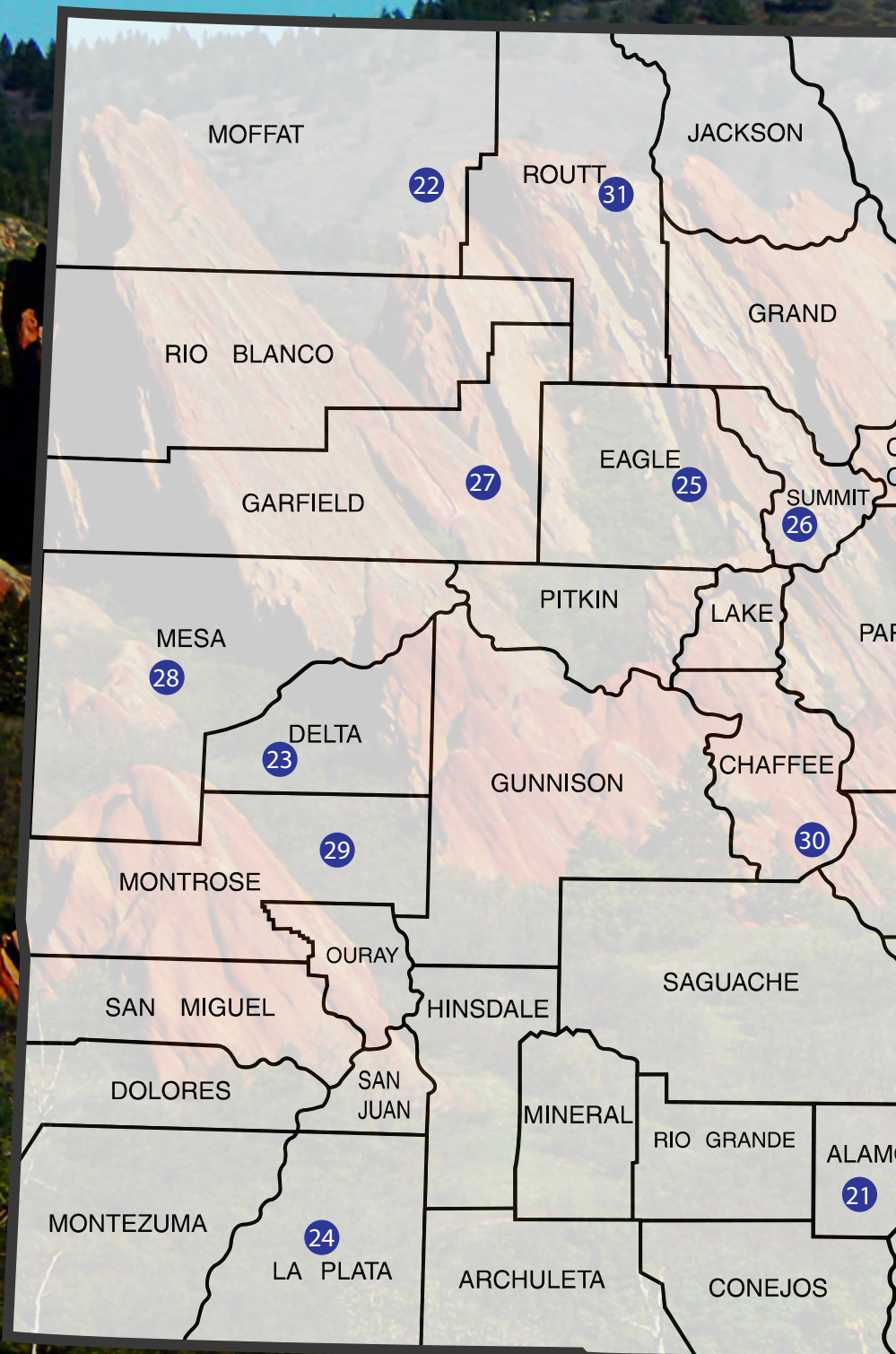
Pablo Sandoval, *Supervisor*
970.225.3892

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

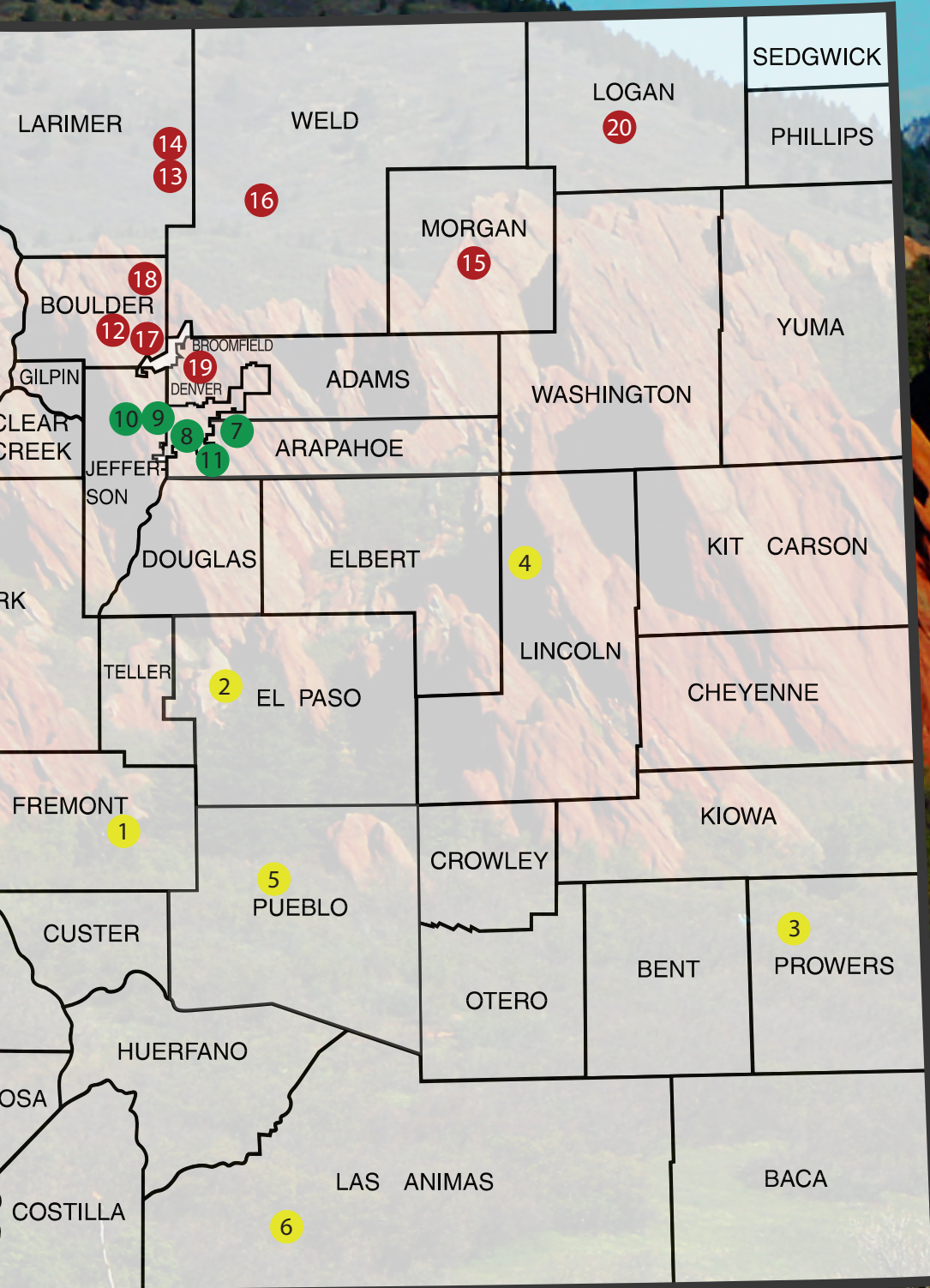
REGION IV: ●

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



the state to better serve our customers.



DVR Offices and Contact Information

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Manager, Work Supports and Employer Engagement

Carol Feuerbacher

Manager, Organizational Planning and Development

Barbara Casey

Deputy, Operations Management

Robin Bauknecht

Manager, ASPIRE Grant

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	719.530.2585
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





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**Office of Community
Access & Independence**

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation



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