



DVR

**Colorado State Rehabilitation Council
Bridging Business and Ability**

2015 Annual Report

WWW.DVRCOLORADO.COM

Message from the Director

It would be a challenge to find any program in state government with a more compelling purpose than the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). DVR supports eligible people with disabilities, residing in communities across the state to secure, retain, or regain employment. Most participants who become employed do so in established private, public, or non-profit organizations. Some pursue self-employment. A small number of participants work in agriculture as farmers or ranchers.

DVR provides program participants one-on-one vocational guidance and counseling for each individual. This core service assists each person to develop a specific employment goal and a step by step plan for accomplishing it. Each goal and plan is created after assessment of the ways a participant disabilities affect his or her ability to perform job functions and succeed in a work environment. The plan and goal must also reflect the participant's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Between July 1, 2014, and June 30, 2015, 1,339 participants in the vocational rehabilitation program became employed and retained their position for at least 90 days (which is the definition of a *successful rehabilitation* established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (the federal entity that administers the vocational rehabilitation program nationally)). Participants who succeeded during the reporting period earned an average hourly wage of \$11.62 (\$3.62 above our state's minimum wage), working an average of 27.2 hours a week. DVR served 15,428 people within the reporting period. That number does not represent plans created; it represents all participants in the process from application to case closure. As the reporting period began, 4,917 people were on a waiting list to receive vocational rehabilitation services. Our proudest achievement of the year was putting an end to their wait. Because of the diligence and dedication of our staff that provide direct service in the field, we made ongoing efforts to reach every person on the waiting list. Anyone who expressed interest in receiving services in spite of the delay was re-engaged.

This year presented significant change and many expectations. Joelle Brouner concluded one year of service as the Director of the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in October 2014, at which time she transitioned into a new role, Director of Community Access. After years of executive level leadership in corporate America and several years of service with Disability Determination Services for the State of Colorado, Steve Anton became Acting Director. Beyond changes in leadership, DVR undertook major operational changes. We increased oversight; enhanced fiscal controls; improved our capacity to gather, store and use data to make decisions; and revised internal policies, and state rules. The General Assembly acted to provide DVR a new organizational home.

Message from the Director

Cont'd

By July 1, 2016, DVR will be fully integrated into the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment rather than the Department of Human Services. In addition to the ambitious scale of change happening locally, the federal law that defines how vocational rehabilitation programs operate was reconsidered by Congress for the first time since 1998. Rather than supporting the previous legal framework, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, was enacted. We are proud of the work we have accomplished to improve services and operations within the division. The cumulative impact of these developments has led everyone associated with DVR to examine why and how we approach our work.

Our focus is employment. Employment outcomes are what we measure but they are not all that we hope for. The moment that each participant discovers that he or she can contribute talents to an employer is almost as important as securing the employment itself.

Think about the relationship between employment and confidence. Do you remember the moment you were hired for the first time? Have you celebrated after accepting a position you could have once only dreamed of? Have you transformed an entrepreneurial idea into an actionable plan and started a successful business? Have you been able to say “No, I’ve got this one, you can pick the check up next time” because you can, at last, afford to treat? Everyone who makes the effort to develop marketable skills and is willing to work deserves moments like these. The Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is certain that more people can employ their talents. The people who receive DVR services prove that point each day.

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for taking the time to learn about the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). Our report covers the year that ended June 30, 2015. 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.

Guiding Principles

DVR is:

Welcoming
Responsive
Effective
Proactive
Continually growing and improving



DVR believes that treating all persons with dignity and respect results in services and outcomes of the highest quality.

DVR promotes a diverse community and workforce.

DVR believes that the quality of our staff is essential to the success of our customers.

Any action taken by our employees has a direct impact on the successful accomplishment of our mission.

STATE FISCAL YEAR 2015

July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015

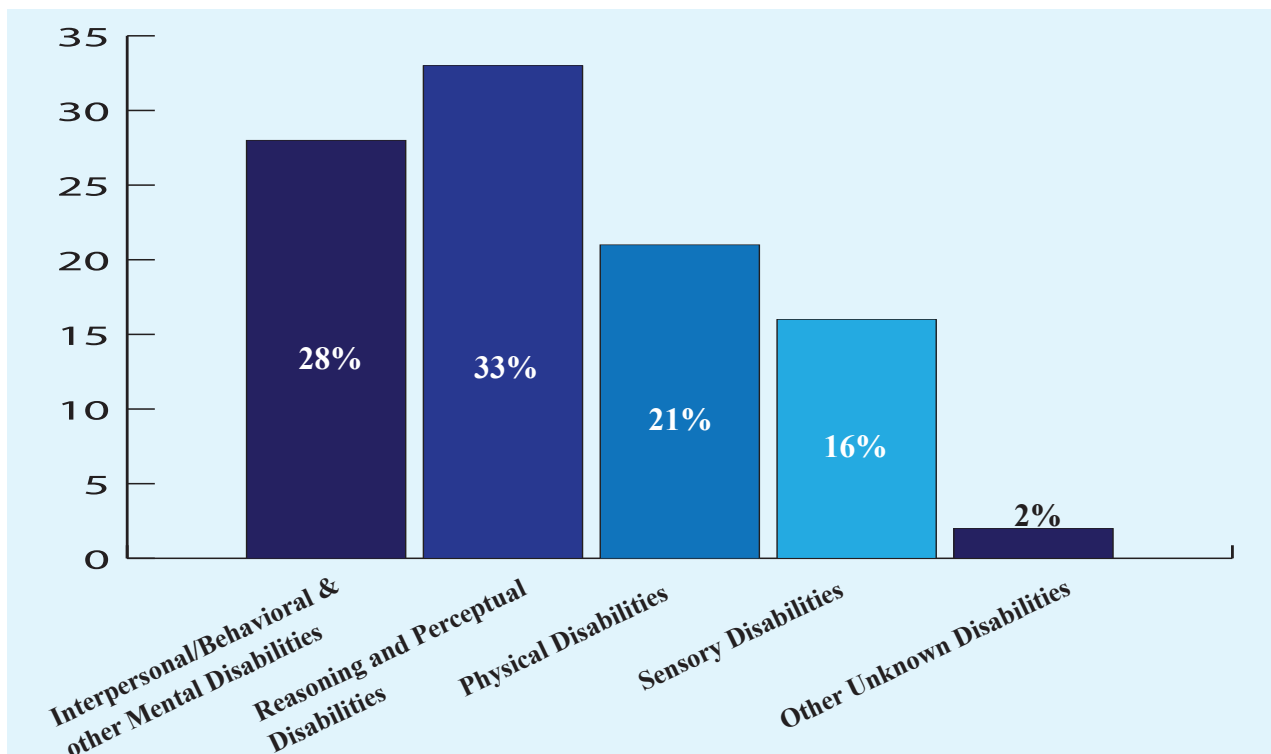
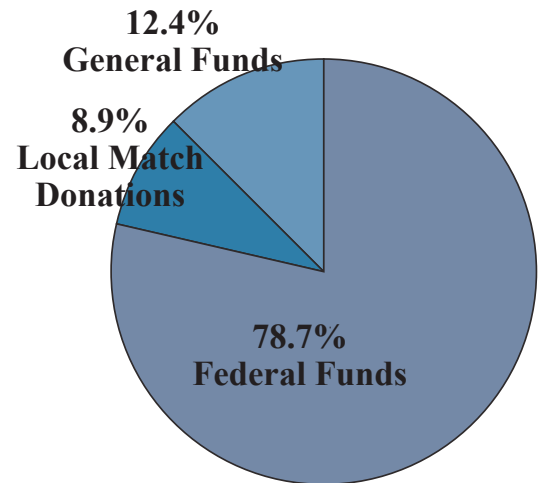
Federal Funds	\$15,428
Clients Closed Successfully Rehabilitated	\$1,339
Average Hourly Wage (of Competitively Employed Clients)	\$11.62
Average Hours Worked Per Week	27.26
Total Earnings of These Employees in the First Year	\$22.5 million
Average Weekly Salary	\$336
Average Annual Salary	\$17,456

Additional Dollars to Colorado's Tax Base	\$22.5 million
Additional Taxes Paid in First Year (estimated)	\$1.04 million

Who Are We Assisting?

Persons With:

Interpersonal/Behavioral and other Mental Disabilities	28%
Reasoning and Perceptual Disabilities	33%
Physical Disabilities	21%
Sensory Disabilities	16%
Other Disabilities	2%



Program Highlights:

State Rehabilitation Council

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has had a State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for more than 25 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 clients of vocational rehabilitation services a mechanism to influence at the systemic and policy level the direction of vocational rehabilitation programming.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Julie Deden

Chair

Representative of Community Rehabilitation Services Provider

Julie Farrar

Vice-Chair

*State Rehabilitation Council
Representative of Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council*

Debra Peterson

Vice-Chair

*State Rehabilitation Council
Representative At-Large*

Steve Anton (ex-officio)

Interim Director

Vocational Rehabilitation Designated State Unit

Katherine Carol

Parent or Guardian of a Person with a Disability

Buna Dahal

Representative of the State Independent Living Council

Claudia Folska

Representative of Vocational Rehabilitation Clients

Anna French

Representative of Client Assistance Program

Liz King (ex-officio)

SRC Administrative Staff

Larry Krause

Representative of Behavioral Health Planning & Advisory Council

Robert Lawhead

Representative of Business, Industry and Labor

Katie Oliver

Representative of State Education Agency

Geoffrey Peterson

Associate Member

Susan Richardson

Representative of Business Industry and Labor

Beth Schaffner

Representative of PEAK Parent Center

Stephanie Veck

Representative of the Workforce Development Council

Bing Walker

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

CONTACT INFORMATION:

The Colorado State Rehabilitation Council
1575 Sherman St., 4th Floor
Denver, CO 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 three (3) standing committees: Quality Assurance, Membership, Policy Procedure and State Plan. Through these 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 mindset of becoming a national leader in providing services for individuals with disabilities.

Program Highlights:

State Rehabilitation Council cont'd

Evaluation and Report of Progress on Achieving Goals and Priorities

The Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), is confident that DVR achieved or made progress toward all of the identified goals and priorities, including innovation and expansion activities, established within the FFY 2015 State Plan.

GOAL 1 – DVR WILL PROVIDE EXCELLENT COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE TO DVR CLIENTS

Strategy - DVR will have 30 day contact with all clients to increase client engagement and enhance the client-counselor partnership.

Progress: DVR collaborated with the SRC to formalize this strategy into a state regulatory requirement through placement into state rule and into DVR policy. The requirement for 30 day contact with clients is tracked and monitored within DVR's quality assurance data collection instrument. DVR's direct service delivery staff have this requirement placed into their annual performance plans. SRC-driven quarterly customer satisfaction surveys appear to indicate that for most clients, contact with DVR staff at least every 30 days has resulted in increased rapport, improved client-counselor partnership and communication and increased opportunities for counseling and guidance to occur. DVR will maintain this strategy.

Strategy - DVR will improve case file documentation to reflect personalized and meaningful contact with clients.

Progress: DVR formalized this strategy through the placement of specific questions on client engagement and meaningful contacts within DVR's monthly case record supervisory review document. Additionally, DVR requires the inclusion of annual individual performance objectives related to personalized and meaningful client contact within the annual review plans of all DVR counselors and supervisors. Measures are based on feedback from customer satisfaction survey, and review of case note documentation to assure that meaningful contact with a vocational focus has taken place. Beginning in October 2014, all DVR counselors and supervisors participated in professional development related to meaningful, purposeful, and personalized contact between client and counselor, supporting the development of a successful working alliance. At this time, all DVR counselors and support staff have received training addressing expected case file documentation of such contact. DVR continues to provide training to all new counselors emphasizing the importance of the working alliance, highlighting strategies to ensure ongoing focus on meaningful contact and the related documentation of such efforts.

Program Highlights:

State Rehabilitation Council cont'd

Strategy - 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.

Progress: First introduced in August 2014, DVR supervisors received ongoing coaching from Dr. Jared Schultz of Utah State University to support the development of their clinical supervision skills. Additionally, DVR's lead counselors received training in clinical supervision with Dr. Schultz in June 2015 to further expand DVR's ability to provide clinical supervision to all counselors. Supervisors participated in an advanced training during this same period. The clinical supervision training helped supervisors and lead counselors to think through case conceptualization strategies, as well as identify and apply appropriate counseling theory, including Motivational Interviewing, to support client progress. They continue to receive ongoing coaching from Dr. Schultz and are regularly implementing these skills with their counseling staff. In particular, many supervisors have begun reviewing theory during unit meetings and regularly practice case conceptualization strategies during case consultations to assist counselors to move forward with clients who present with challenges. In addition, all counselors participated in training specifically to build skill in the use of Motivational Interviewing within their counseling practice during the summer and fall of 2015 and continue to practice these skills within their units. DVR continues to explore mechanisms for further supporting the development of these skills among all counselors.

Strategy - DVR will explore training options to improve consistency of excellent client service to all clients, focusing on methods for dealing with difficult situations and creating welcoming client-focused environments in all DVR locations.

Progress: During DVR's October 2014 Academy for Excellence in Rehabilitation, staff received training in strategies for providing excellent customer service and dealing with difficult situations. Training sessions targeted both support staff and counselors. Support staff learned strategies for creating a positive impression and a welcoming environment for all clients, including an introduction to basic sign language and strategies for communicating with deaf or hard of hearing clients. Counselors participated in sessions addressing key components of a successful intake, highlighting strategies for ensuring the intake creates a sense of welcome to DVR and supports the establishment of a positive working alliance. Support staff and counselors also received training on effective caseload and time management, catered to their roles within the agency. These skills are critical to ensuring consistently positive experiences for all clients. DVR continues to provide training in these areas to new staff. As DVR merges with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, effective July 1, 2016, customer service will also be a core value of the Division, and additional training will be provided to all DVR staff as part of the integration into the Department.

State Rehabilitation Council cont'd

GOAL 2 - DVR WILL BUILD PUBLIC TRUST BY DEMONSTRATING STEWARDSHIP, SOUND OPERATIONAL PRACTICES AND POSITIVE INTERNAL DYNAMICS

Strategy - DVR will implement new procedures for external job placement vendors that will establish reasonable timelines for services and a greater focus on successful closures.

Progress: DVR's fee schedule was reworked to incorporate new procedures and fees for purchase of employment placement services, which are structured around milestones to encourage more effective service delivery. As DVR moved to the new milestone fee structure for job placement services, all vendors were required to attend training prior to moving to the new fee schedule. The training addressed roles and responsibilities, explained the fee structure, and provided guidance to job search and placement providers related to agency expectations. As new job search and placement providers are registered, they also complete the training available online from DVR. The expectations of the job search and placement service provider, client, and counselor are clearly outlined, and an agreement is put into place between this team for each client to ensure common understanding of how the client will best be supported in his or her job search. Progress is closely monitored and lack of progress is carefully considered by the team to determine appropriate resolution. All DVR counselors and supervisors also received training in this change to the fee structure for job search and placement services to ensure compliance and effective monitoring of related services.

Strategy - DVR will generate, monitor, and use information to make sound fiscal decisions to ensure the ability to provide effective individualized services to clients.

Progress: DVR hired administrative staff within the last 12 months to be responsible for developing the program's budget and monitoring expenditures and revenues and have extensive experience, expertise and training in state and federal budgeting processes and in proper accounting and fiscal procedures. Led by this expertise, DVR continues to regularly monitor data collected through the electronic case management system, through the state's fiscal and accounting system, and through the agency's personnel data system to make sound fiscal decisions and ensure the ability to provide effective individualized services to clients.

Strategy - DVR will utilize the Wait list Management process to project and manage the removal of clients from the waitlist effectively and efficiently.

Progress: On March 1, 2013, DVR implemented a wait list for all individuals whose disabilities were not most significant or significant. DVR and the Colorado Department of Human Services developed and implemented a policy and strategy for managing the wait list. This included estimating time frame targets for serving wait listed participants within the priority categories, supervisory reviews to ensure staff followed wait list policies, and comprehensive methods for projecting DVR expenditures and available funding needed to serve individuals on the wait list. DVR regularly generated and monitored fiscal and human resource information to assist the agency in determining how to effectively provide vocational rehabilitation services to clients. Based on continued increases in case service expenditures, DVR determined the need to establish wait lists for all priority categories. As a result, on April 22, 2013, DVR established wait lists for all three of DVR's priority categories.

Program Highlights:

State Rehabilitation Council cont'd

During the next two years, DVR used the strategies and policies to carefully monitor and manage staff resources, fiscal resources, and the wait list, which consisted of 9,891 individuals during the period of March 1, 2013 through April 30, 2015. Through a series of 11 discrete releases of eligible individuals from the wait list into active status, DVR eliminated the wait list on April 30, 2015. Since that date, no wait list has been in place. Based on the number of individuals anticipated to be served in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016 and FFY 2017, and based on the fiscal and staff resources projected to be available to serve these individuals, DVR anticipates the ability to serve all eligible individuals without the need for a wait list.

Strategy - DVR will invest available resources to improve data collection and reporting capabilities of its electronic case management system and other mechanisms to improve data driven decisions and better gauge program performance.

Progress: DVR invested significant resources in working with the electronic case management system vendor to determine the capabilities needed to implement a system project plan that included methods to extract historical data. As a result, data is collected through the electronic case management system to make sound, data driven decisions to improve program performance. Specifically, the case management system vendor added the ability to report on case status history and to add a database snapshot server. This allows DVR to report point-in-time data. DVR hired a data analyst who is trained in MS SQL and able to collect data directly from the case management database that is more complex than what is readily available through the case management reporting programs and tools. DVR created a performance management report that is shared through supervisory channels with all direct service delivery staff. All direct service delivery staff now have performance management goals within their annual performance improvement plans, and data from the performance management report is used to measure, monitor and improve performance at the individual, office, regional and state levels. Along these lines, DVR instituted monthly performance management meetings to review data, discuss trends, and drive performance improvement throughout the agency. Additionally, DVR developed and implemented a “self-serve” dashboard reporting system that is used by DVR management and leadership to observe performance on key measures in real time, eliminating the lag-time previously experienced within the agency’s data collection and reporting systems. Finally, DVR continues to work closely with our electronic case management system vendor as the vendor develops and modifies the program to collect WIOA-mandated post-secondary and employment outcome data. The roll out of this program is anticipated to occur in two phases during 2016.

State Rehabilitation Council cont'd

GOAL 3 – DVR WILL ENGAGE IN EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS, TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION

Strategy - The DVR Business Outreach Program will increase business partnerships with Federal contractors for the purposes of employment.

Progress: DVR has 10 Business Outreach Specialist (BOS) positions throughout Colorado. The BOS positions create and sustain important employer relationships with DVR's small, medium, large, Federal and Federal contracting employers. BOS staff work with DVR's pool of "ready" job seekers and partner with private job developers and job development programs to increase opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act creates an ongoing opportunity for collaboration, and BOS staff are connecting with many Federal Contractors to provide information and develop employment opportunities for DVR clients. BOS staff received training on the 503 changes, met with the Office of Federal Contractor Compliance Programs, and responded to Federal contractor inquiries for information on compliance and Affirmative Action planning. BOS staff regularly conduct Disability Awareness Training for Federal Contractors and present information on how these Federal Contractors can best meet the requirements of the 503 changes within their companies.

Strategy -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.

Progress: In November, 2013 DVR learned the outcome of a performance audit that was conducted by the Colorado Office of the State Auditor. In response DVR staff reached out to state agencies and vocational rehabilitation programs in more than 10 states to learn about best practices and how these agencies worked together efficiently and effectively. Specifically, DVR gathered information pertaining to: implementation of a supervisory review process that assures staff are implementing services effectively and efficiently; creation of policy and procedures for documenting the comprehensive assessment; effective use of comparable benefits; and development of a highly accurate process for determining significance of disability. DVR used information gathered from these entities outside of Colorado to develop policy, procedures, and rules that both responded to audit findings and improved the delivery of services to clients. Additionally, Colorado's DVR leadership meets annually with the leadership from vocational rehabilitation agencies in Montana, Wyoming, Utah, South Dakota and North Dakota to share

Program Highlights:

State Rehabilitation Council cont'd

best practices, learn from one another, network, as well as discuss new research findings, legislation and cutting edge practices. The subject matter experts from these states have met and communicate regularly to share information that can be used to improve vocational rehabilitation policies and practices within all states. Subject matter experts meet regularly to discuss transition, human resource development, supported employment, services to individuals who are blind, field services, quality assurance, fiscal management and program evaluation and more. Colorado's DVR director participates as an active member of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). CSAVR is composed of the chief administrators of the public rehabilitation agencies serving individuals with disabilities in the States, District of Columbia, and the territories. Through this Council, DVR's director stays abreast of legislation, research, business partnerships and other areas of importance to DVR's ability to work effectively and efficiently in the provision of services to clients. On the state level, VR works closely with other state agencies including the agencies involved in the development of Colorado's WIOA Combined State Plan to develop the cross-agency policies, procedures and working agreements that will result in effective realization of the vision of Colorado's workforce development system and excellent services to individuals with disabilities.



Success Story: Elizabeth Silvers



My experience with DVR was great - it took about two years to find a job, I had three counselors. One was really new and just learning and one moved away, then the last one worked really hard to help me. His name is Estevan, and he helped me with interviews and clothes for the interview. He checks on me once in a while to make sure things are still okay, and says he is very proud of me and so happy about what I have done. I am working for Alamosa Bridge and I started in February. I work at a convenient care center, doing the food service - waitress, take orders, deliver food, reset tables, washing dishes. I work 4 or 5 days per week for 2 hours during supper time, I love my job and really enjoy it! The secretary Bea was always helpful too!

REGION I:

Rob Buzogany, Regional Manager

719.482.7976

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

REGION II:

Lindsey Pacheco, Regional Manager

303.866.3319

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

REGION III:

Stacy Evans, Regional Manager

303.866.2187

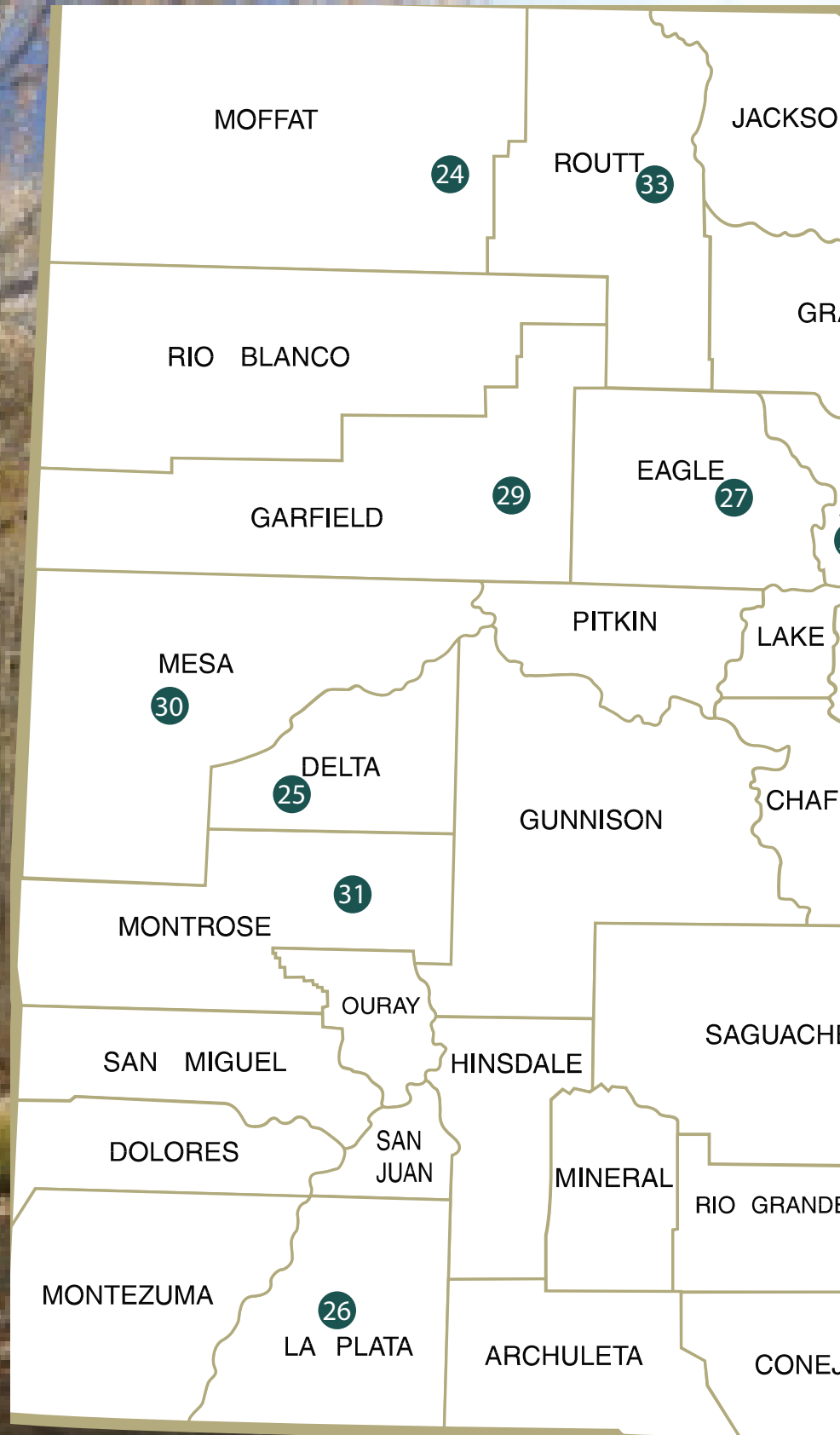
12. Boulder
13. Foothills Gateway (CCB)
14. Fort Collins
15. Fort Morgan
16. Greeley
17. Imagine (CCB)
18. Longmont
19. Northglenn
20. Sterling

REGION IV:

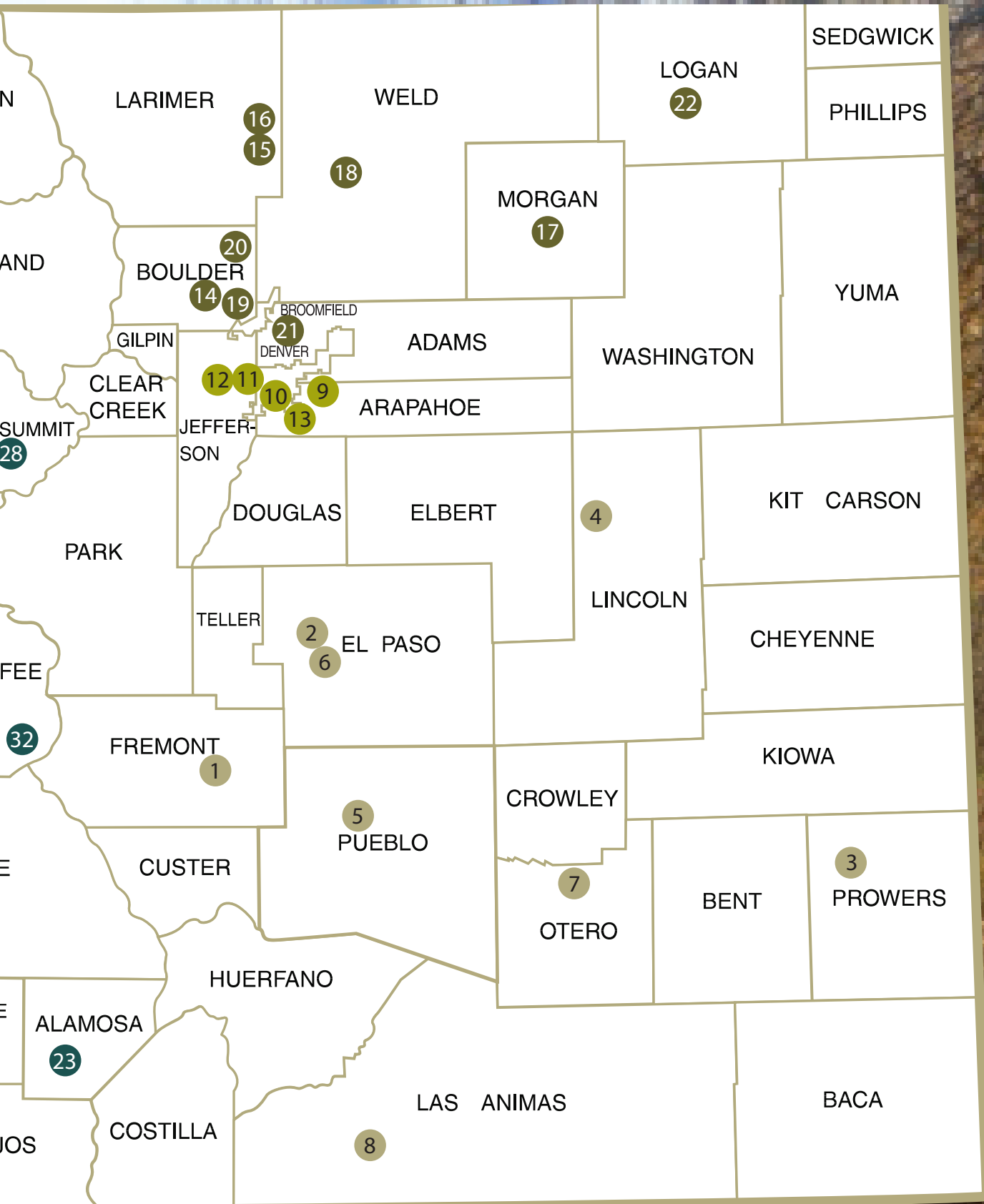
Andrea Messick, Regional Manager

970.945.1042

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



er the state to better serve our customers.



Program Highlights:

Business Outreach Program

Business Outreach Specialist (BOS) are DVR's linkage to Colorado's small, medium, and large employers including Federal and Federal contracting employers.

Staffing changes have taken place over the last year and our current Program is as follows:

Denver Metro - Joy Caine

Boulder - Jeff Sidders

Golden - Steven Allen

Northglenn - Cathy Kohl

Greeley/Northeast CO - Dean Vincent

Fort Collins - Alan Cohen

Frisco/Glenwood Springs/Edward/Salida - Amelia Anderson

Steamboat Springs/Craig - Brooke Lightner

Pueblo - Jason Crowe

Colorado Springs - Tom Martinez Jr.

Southeast CO/Alamosa - David Atkinson

Manager Work Supports & Employer Engagement, Jennifer Scilacci

BOS staff primary responsibilities are 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 field offices 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 for employers, share local and national labor market information with DVR counselors, and look at opportunities to partner with other community job developers to increase placement capacity. The BOS Team created over 2,624 job leads for DVR participants and developed and maintained 1,706 employer relationships. In addition, more than 200 participants were successfully closed in their employment outcomes after being placed with assistance from our BOS Team.

Also, the team continues to recommend Colorado's vignette initiative, "It's Different" to employers and participants. Housed on YouTube, this video 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> DVRCOLORADO.COM

Program Highlights:

Field Services

Colorado's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) works in partnership with Coloradans to provide highly individualized services leading to employment for people with all types of physical and mental disabilities. Professional staff, including extensively trained Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors, are strategically located in offices and local communities throughout Colorado and travel when necessary to serve the entire state.

DVR's staff is highly committed to excellent customer service and assists individuals with disabilities to obtain vocational success and increased self-sufficiency through individual assessment, vocational counseling and guidance, holistic planning, and provision of services necessary to become successful in employment. Approximately 100 VR Counselors across the state provide one-to-one comprehensive support during this process and assist customers to address barriers and realize their employment goals. To meet the needs of a diverse population, DVR has ensured that there are VR Counselors who are knowledgeable about a variety of disabilities and employment industries throughout the state. DVR also has several staff around the state who are fluent in American Sign Language and Spanish.

Each of DVR's field offices has a supervisor who, in addition to providing leadership 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 Highlights:

Youth Services and Transition Unit

DVR's Youth Services and Transition Unit ensures 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, determine eligibility, assist students with selection of suitable employment outcomes, and provide services appropriate to the individual needs of students. The unit strives to ensure partnering takes place at the local level between education and DVR through consistent representation of DVR in the schools. Cohesion is promoted in these local partnerships using existing service continuums and linkages to the workforce system for greater positive employment outcomes for the youth served.

Additionally, the Youth Services and Transition Unit are 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 approximately 135 school districts statewide. Each year, SWAP provides year-round transition services including assessment, technical assistance, work based community development and direct job placement services to those young adults in a plan for employment with DVR. SWAP's hard work and dedication resulted in a reported 1,312 new DVR applicants in fiscal year 2015 contributing to the 2,858 young adults this service provider worked with. Efforts through SWAP accounted for 29% of DVR's overall successful closures in fiscal year 2015. We are excited for the opportunity to expand district collaboration and establish new SWAP sites for 2017.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2016, DVR will work to better prepare students with disabilities for transition from secondary education to employment and post-secondary education through the new legislation, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). DVR will strengthen their role with local education partners to ensure both the students and youth with disabilities have the skills necessary to succeed in competitive, integrated employment.

Program Highlights:

Business Enterprise Program (BEP)

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

As of September 2014, 100 business enterprises were operating on Federal and State properties in Colorado in various capacities, with the possibility of 1-2 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 ports of entry, wordsmith, welcome centers, and youth corrections facilities. BEP's newest ventures are incorporation "Proudly Serving Starbucks" in the Ralph Carr Judicial building as well as an additional 1-2 locations within the next year. Our experience is vast and varied. We serve many thousands of customers and are proud to do business with the US Air Force, US Postal Service, State Parks and rest areas as well as other State and Federal locations.

- National Renewable Energy Labs; *Cafeteria, Coffee and Vending* (Golden)
- Schriever Air Force Base; *Dining Hall, snack shop and vending* (Colorado Springs)
- Peters Air Force Base; *Base snack bars and micro markets* (Colorado Springs)
- Buckley Air Force Base; *Cafeteria and vending* (Aurora)
- US Postal Service; *Extensive 24-hour vending* (Denver)

BEP is currently partnering with the General Services Administration as well as Denver area hospitals under the "Healthy Hospital Compact," 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 Federal Government Services Administration (GSA), and the Federal Government's building managers who recognize the value of the BEP Program. 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 funds 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 Highlights:

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 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors dedicated to serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population. Their goal is to provide services that will enable individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing to obtain employment and to advance in their careers. To accomplish this goal, these VR Counselors operate under the guiding principles established through the CSAVR-endorsed Model State Plan for the Deaf. These principles include ensuring that people with all levels of hearing loss have an even playing field commensurate with their abilities and skill, modeling communication access and work place and community integration, and providing quality services to consumers.

To align with the broader youth vision of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and with the Department of Education's enhancement of post school outcomes, Colorado's Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing are involved in the planning and execution of a pilot project. Participants in the project include DVR staff, as well as other stakeholders (Department of Education, Jefferson County Special Education, Colorado Hand and Voices and a private advocate.) The focus of the pilot is to increase engagement of stakeholders in the school-to-work transition process and to increase student leadership and self-determination. The Colorado team and four other states were awarded exemplary status by PEPNET (PN2), the organizer of this nationwide initiative. PN2 funds activities and provides technical and statistical support for the project.

Program Highlights:

Personal Adjustment Training (PAT)

The Services DVR offers are geared towards the individuals 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 Blind/Visually Impaired, Client Services Coordinator for the center based program, 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 Denver metro 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.

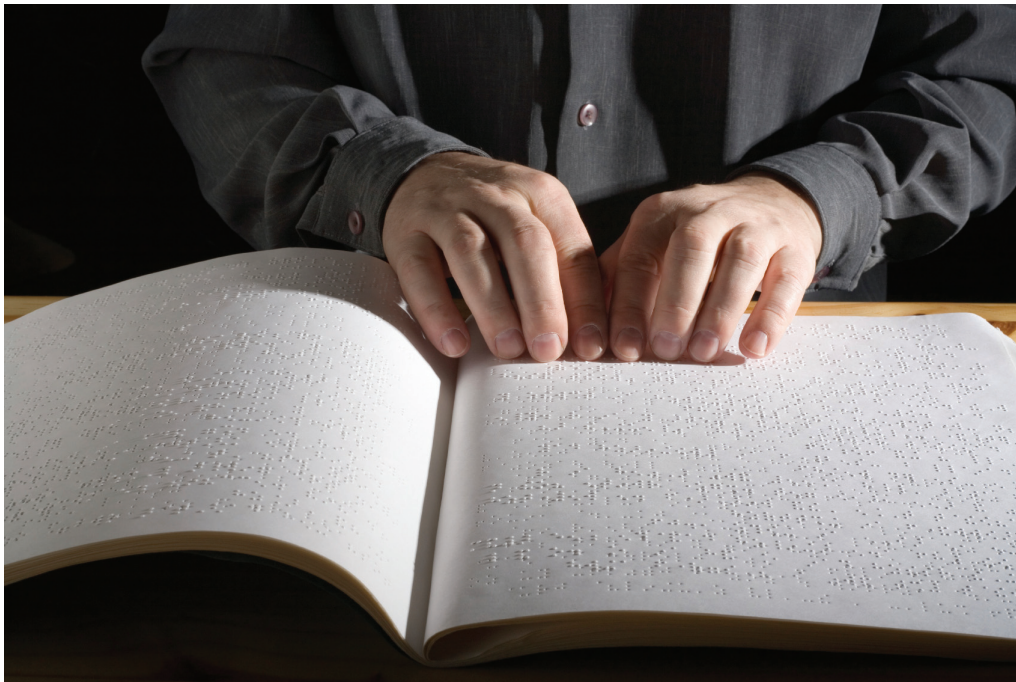
Some program highlights include:

- The explosive growth of smartphones and accessibility of them has led to the development of an iPhone curriculum along with training on other iDevices.
- Clients are now offered a specialized self-defense training as part of their individualized training program. A DVR staff member is certified to provide instruction in 1Touch Self-Defense, which is specifically designed for the blind/visually impaired.

Program Highlights:

Personal Adjustment Training (PAT) cont'd

- Due to the geographical nature of Colorado, there are a number of individuals who live in communities that don't have public transportation. To address this issue, DVR has established a remote training program for certain skill areas via the phone or internet. This remote training is primarily in the assistive technology area and is provided by Assistive Technology specialist 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.
- The Personal Adjustment Training (PAT) program was recently featured on Denver-based 9News highlighting a collaborative effort with the Denver Art Museum. The Denver Art Museum offers exhibits that are accessible to the blind/visually impaired, along with trained staff to assist in audio description. Clients participating in the PAT program experienced a community event that they didn't think possible before.



Program Highlights:

Older Individuals Who are Blind Program (OIB)

The Federal government's Title VII Chapter 2 describes the Older Individuals Who are Blind (OIB) program. The federal government, through the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), provides grants to support services for individuals age 55 and older whose severe visual impairment makes competitive employment difficult to obtain, but for whom independent living goals are feasible. The OIB funds independent living skills training services, conducts activities that will improve or expand services, and conducts activities to improve public understanding of the problems facing older severely visually impaired persons. The OIB program provides many of the same core services as the IL programs with a focus on Independent Living skills.

In the State of Colorado, vendors to the OIB program compete for the award on the 3 year cycle. Federal Fiscal Year 2014 (October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014) was the first year of the award cycle. Federal Fiscal Year 2015 is the second year and coincides with the State Fiscal Year for this report. Federal Fiscal Year 2016 is the final year for the awards and a new competitive process will be initiated in the spring of 2016.

Currently there are eight (8) vendors for the OIB program; Seven (7) are Centers for Independent Living (CIL) and one additional vendor.



Program Highlights:

Independent Living (IL) Program

The Centers for Independent Living (CIL) located in the State of Colorado have worked extensively to provide services to individuals of the State who have a disability and need assistance to live independently. The ten (10) CILs located in the State provide services statewide and are nonprofit agencies authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1979. The CILs focus on providing the Core Services of the Independent Living (IL) movement and philosophy. There five (5) Core Services:

- Information and Referral: gives people access to the information and resources they need to make informed choices and get what they need to live independently;
- Individual and Systems Advocacy: works to remove the barriers to independent living and full inclusion in all aspects of community life;
- Peer Support: provides the opportunity for people to learn and grow by discussing their needs, concerns, and issues with people who have had similar experiences;
- IL Skills Instruction: helps individuals acquire the skills they need to live in their community;
- Transitions: the newest Core Service authorized by the Workforce Investment Opportunities Act of 2014, assists individuals to move into an IL setting and leave nursing transition homes. Also helps adolescents to transition to living on their own, moving from high school class to college, and any other area an adolescent encounters as they become independent adults.

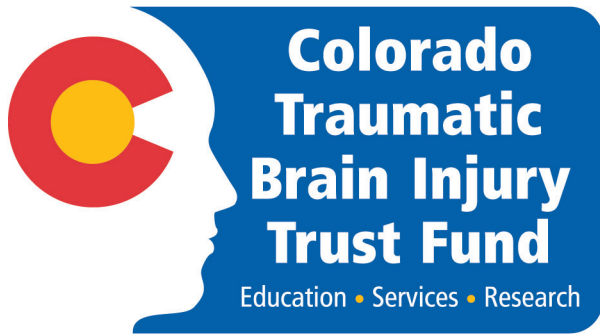
The CILs received additional funding from the State of Colorado Legislature to be able to provide enhanced and expanded services to individuals with disabilities beginning in State Fiscal Year 2016. The professional association of CILs (the Association of Colorado Centers for Independent Living) maintains a website which can be found at www.accil.net.

To help the CILs complete their work and receive funding from the Federal Government, a State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) is created tri-annually. The SPIL is in the 2nd year of the 3 year cycle for State Fiscal Year 2014. The SPIL is created in conjunction with the CILs, the Designated State Agency (which is the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation), and the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). The SILC is a fifteen (15) member Governor-appointed group of individuals with disabilities, individuals with an interest in improving the living situation and community experiences of individuals with disabilities, and other State agencies that provide services.

In the first year of the SPIL, there was a project to create a map of Colorado that identified where individuals with disabilities lived in the State to increase efforts in areas that are historically underserved. In the second year, the SILC completed a survey of individuals with disabilities to determine needed services. In the third year, the SPIL will focus on increasing services for youth and will start the process of creating a new SPIL to begin October 1, 2016 for the next three year cycle. The SILC is also working to achieve full constitution and compliance with Federal regulations to ensure a majority of individuals on the SILC have a disability and do not work for the State agency of CIL. The SILC is also working towards statewide representation. The SILC and information about SILC can be found on the SILC website at: www.coloradosilc.org.

Program Highlights:

Brain Injury Program



The Brain Injury Program strives to develop a system of care in the state of Colorado to address the needs of individuals with brain injury. Brain Injury Program is meeting this challenge through two primary programmatic areas: the Colorado Traumatic Brain Injury Trust Fund program (CTBITF) and grant funds from the Health and Rehabilitation Services Administration (HRSA) and CO Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health (CDHS/OBH).

Colorado Traumatic Brain Injury Trust Fund

The Colorado TBI Trust Fund was created by Colorado statute in 2002. The TBI Trust fund strives to support all people in Colorado affected by TBI through services, research and education. Revenue is generated from surcharges assessed for DUI, DWAI, speeding convictions and convictions of those individuals 18 and under riding a motorcycle without a helmet. By statute the funds are divided in the following three areas: a minimum of 55% for services, 25% for research and 5% for education. For services, the Colorado Brain Injury Program provides comprehensive case management support for adults and education consultation and case management for our children/youth.

Grant Initiatives

The Brain Injury Program obtained HRSA funding beginning in June 2014. Through the following goals, this project will address these complex issues:

1. Develop, implement, evaluate and disseminate a best practice protocol for screening, identification and assessment of brain injury specific to the adult and youth corrections populations.
2. Develop a well-informed brain injury workforce across corrections and judicial personnel within the state of Colorado.
3. Develop, implement and evaluate a timely, streamlined system of support whereby the corrections populations are connected to support, informed about brain injury, and referred to appropriate services.
4. Develop, implement and evaluate a comprehensive, statewide method of delivering resource facilitation to the corrections population.

Additionally, the Program received CDHS/OBH funding which started July 2014. These funds are being used to screen for brain injury in one adult jail and one juvenile probation setting. In addition, screening funds are being used to develop mechanisms to improve self-advocacy skills of inmates/probationers and to build the capacity of criminal justice personnel.

Program Highlights:

ASPIRE Program

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, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Utah are partnering to recruit 2,000 youth ages 14-16 who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to participate. One-half of the youth (1,000) will receive a variety of interventions to improve their educational and employment outcomes.

Colorado enrolled the target number of 400 youth and their families into the ASPIRE Colorado project by September 2015. Of these 400 youth and families 199 youth and families were randomly assigned to Usual Services, services that are currently available to youth. And 201 were randomly assigned to ASPIRE services and will be receiving enhanced services, to include:

- Parent education and training
- Benefits counseling and planning
- Paid employment during high school
- Youth Self Determination Training
- Family financial education
- Comprehensive case Management

Currently, DVR is re-tooling the work we do with youth and using the ASPIRE Colorado project as a study to begin working with youths ages 14-16 to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services.

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:

1575 Sherman St 4th Floor

Denver, CO 80203

303-866-3364

Robin.Bauknecht@state.co.us



Program Highlights:

Benefit Offset National Demonstration (BOND) Project

DVR is in its fifth 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 10 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 of \$1 for every \$2 of earnings combined with enhanced benefits counseling and guidance will lead to increased earning and employment, as well as a better quality of life, for the beneficiaries.



Success Story: Rosetta (Zetta) Stevenson



Rosetta (Zetta) Stevenson is a professional pastry chef who always had the dream of becoming a chef and eventually owning her own business. In high school, a teacher asked the class what each student would do after high school. She said, “I want to be a chef.” The teacher replied, “Impossible, you’re deaf!” Believing in the power of possibility, the comment propelled Zetta to pursue her dream.

Zetta went on to earn an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Culinary Art, a Certificate in Professional Baking and Pastry, and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Hospitality Management from the Illinois Institute of Art in Chicago. Zetta moved to Colorado with her mother in 2012, and as luck would have it, she found a home with a commercial kitchen in Loveland.

When Zetta applied to the Fort Collins DVR office, she had already prepared a business plan for a previous class and had begun her initial research into demographics and statistics. Zetta went on to work with DVR counselors, business consultants and self-employment vendors to streamline and execute her business plan.

Once approved, DVR provided support and resources to help Zetta launch her French pastry shop and track her progress. There were times when Zetta was discouraged and the journey seemed arduous, but the DVR Counselors and office support staff were always helpful, very encouraging and supported her to see her successfully cross the proverbial “finish line.” She was closed successfully in 2015 after landing multiple orders from civic groups, nonprofits and people who love pastry. Zetta continues to whip up European-inspired baked goods every day (her hazelnut swirl cookies are to die for) and she recently perfected her mother’s cornbread.

Program Highlights:

Self-Employment Program

Self-Employment Program

In Colorado, more than 86% of businesses have fewer than 20 workers, making CO DVR's Self-Employment Program a critical and vital employment option for our participants. This past year, our Rehabilitation Counselors for Entrepreneurship (RCEs) helped clients write a variety of exciting business plans including: hypnosis, fly fishing, disability training consulting, and a dog treats company.

Specialized Training

DVR's self-employment program includes mentor-level staff called RCEIIs who provide training and coaching to RCEs in addition to reviewing the business plans twice a month. The RCEII group and the supervisor for self-employment continually update the training manual covering a range of topics including DVR self-employment procedures, understanding financial spreadsheets, marketing, and AgrAbility. The RCE IIs ensure that quarterly training is provided to the RCE group, bringing in specialists in self-employment to each meeting to train on specific topics such as accounting procedures, how to incorporate a business, microloans and more.

Expanded Service Delivery

Our RCEs span the state, and we are proud to have over 25 RCEs in rural and metro offices providing this very specialized service to DVR clients. The RCEs are always available to consult with participants and their counselors about self-employment, providing detailed information about this vital employment outcome.



COLORADO

**Office of Community
Access & Independence**

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

STATE FISCAL YEAR 2015

July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015

DVR is:

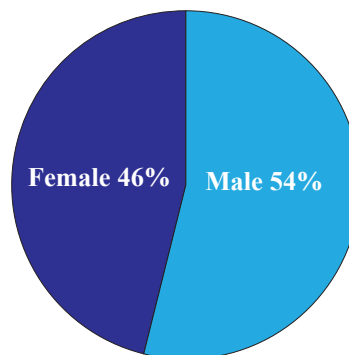
The best resource for enhancing and building the diversity of the Colorado labor force, and an integral part of any employer's search for qualified and skilled career employees

Occupations of Successfully Rehabilitated Clients

Administrative Support Workers	303
Craft Workers	56
Executive/Managerial	33
Laborer & Helpers	171
Operatives	112
Other	1
Professionals	147
Sales Workers	74
Service Workers	370
Technicians	20

DVR Supports Employers:

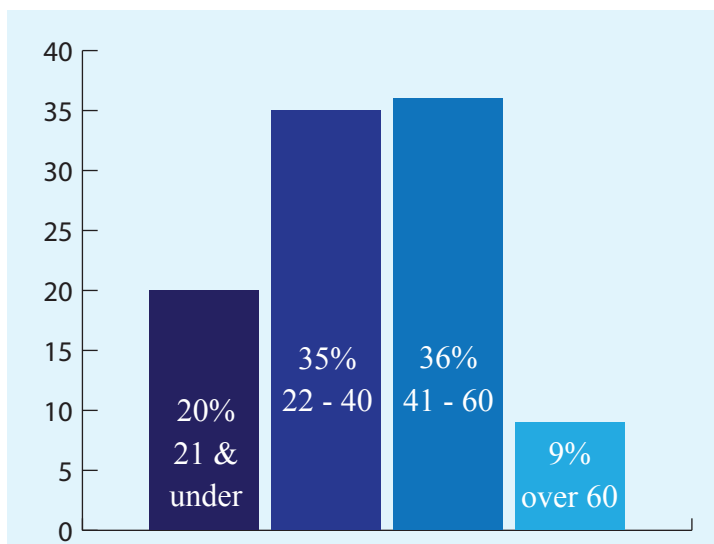
With a seasoned professional team and by specializing in matching the best talent with the right jobs.



Male	54%
Female	46%

Our Clients Are

21 Years and Under	20%
22 to 40 Years	35%
41 to 60 Years	36%
Over 60 Years	9%



DVR Offices and Contact Information

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:

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

Development Unit
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

OFFICES:

	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	970.945.1042
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	970.522.3737
Walsenburg	719.220.4354

STAFF

Steve Anton
Interim Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Barbara Casey
Deputy, Operations Management

Joelle Brouner
Director of Community Outreach

Rob Buzogany
Manager, Programs and Program Development Unit

Krista Dann
Deputy, Field Services Management

Carol Feuerbacher
Manager, Organizational Planning and Development

Jennifer Scilacci
Manager, Work Supports and Employer Engagement

Satellite Offices:

Canon City	719.269.2076
Delta	970.874.5781 x12
Developmental Disabilities Res. Ctr.	303.462.6688
Fort Morgan	970.542.9376
Foothills Gateway	970.266.5436
Imagine	303.926.6497
The Resource Exchange	719.785.6405
Trinidad	888.734.2211

Additional Programs:

<i>Personal Adjustment Training Blind Program</i>	
Karen Klein	303.866.3562
<i>ASPIRE</i>	
Robin Bauknecht, Manager	303.866.3364
<i>Business Enterprise Program</i>	
Dan Whalen, Manager	303.866.3484
<i>Traumatic Brain Injury Program</i>	
Judy Dettmer, Director	303.866.4085
<i>BOND Project</i>	
Ken Reynolds	303.866.3349

Front cover photo provided by Robin Adams, Greeley Office



COLORADO

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Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

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1575 Sherman Street, 4th Floor

Denver, Colorado 80203

303.866.4150

Web: <http://www.dvrcolorado.com>