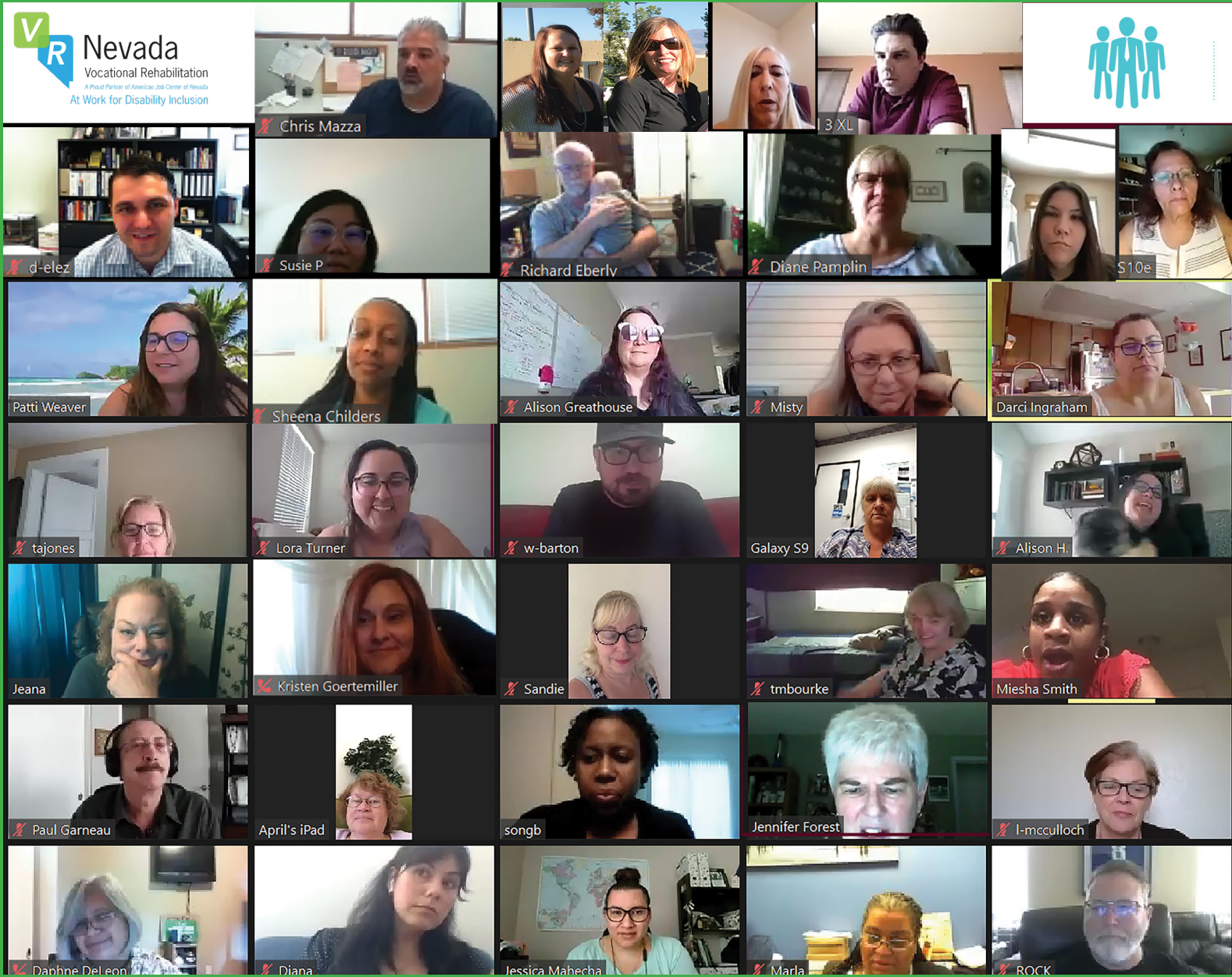


# 2020



# NEVADA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

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A NOTE OF

# THANKS

As we navigate through this unprecedented time, we want to acknowledge and thank all our great partners as we move forward on our path towards assisting our fellow Nevadans.

It is only with the assistance of others that we have been able to supercede obstacles and assist our clients during these trying times.

We thank you for your compassion, understand and partnership and look forward to many years of collaboration.

Appreciatively,

Vocational Rehabilitation  
Staff

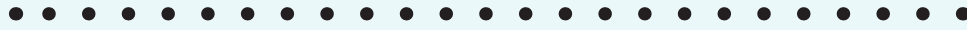






# VISION

A skilled and inclusive Nevada workforce.



## COUNCIL MEMBERS

Kacy Curry – Chair  
Statewide Independent Living Council

Allison Stephens  
Parent Training & Info

David Nuestro - Vice Chair  
Disability Advocate  
Capability Health & Human Services

Mary Brabant  
Business, Industry & Labor  
Goodwill of Southern Nevada

Judith Swain  
Rehab. Program Rep.  
Opportunity Village

Raquel O'Neill  
Former VR Client  
Blindconnect

Rebecca Rogers  
Disability Advocate

Shelley Hendren  
Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator  
Dept. of Employment, Training and  
Rehabilitation



# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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The Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) is a citizen advisory council appointed by the Governor to serve both as a partner and to provide guidance to the state's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program.



## COUNCIL MEMBERS

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The Council includes people with disabilities, community rehabilitation program staff, vocational rehabilitation counselors, advocates, VR clients and business leaders.



## ASSISTANCE

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The Council assists in shaping policy, by guiding and assisting in making thoughtful, participant-focused decisions through needs assessments, consumer satisfaction surveys, and ongoing program evaluations.



## PROGRAM PLANNING

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Members engage in strategic planning and provide guidance to promote competitive and integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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For more information on becoming a council member, contact the Rehabilitation Division Administration office at 775-687-6860, or visit our website at <https://detr.nv.gov>. Applications for Gubernatorial appointment to the Council may be found at <http://gov.nv.gov/boards/application-information>.



*Shelley Hendren*



As I write this, over 2,022 Nevadans have died as a result of the COVID-19 virus; over 257,072 have died nationwide; and 1.39 million worldwide. In Nevada, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) service delivery came to a grinding halt on March 17, 2020 after Governor Sisolak's Declaration of Emergency on March 12, and subsequent closure of all non-essential businesses starting around March 17. Fortunately, due to our skilled and dedicated colleagues in the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), IT Division, a cloud solution was implemented allowing staff access to DETR's network from their homes. With the ability to telework, VR staff resumed service delivery, of a limited scope, in early April. Emergency, priority services offered by VR at that time included: counseling and guidance, online Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) curriculums, pre-paid phones, internet access, assistive technology, goods (like work clothing), virtual assistance

with on-line trainings and/or assessments, telehealth mental health counseling and assessments, and medical remediation when there was imminent need. Additionally, for clients who deemed it necessary to seek work, VR provided job development including leads on hot jobs, and assistance with advocacy, applications, resumes and mock interviews.

As time marched on, and there was no imminent end to the pandemic, nor to the office and business closures, Nevada determined to serve individuals with disabilities in the state using all the technology and tools at its disposal. We were able to purchase and launch DocuSign, which streamlined the signature process on service contracts and on client documents like IPEs. The process to fully execute documents dropped from weeks to mere days, and 74% of documents sent through DocuSign were signed and returned the same day. Nevada VR also created an online application process allowing potential clients to fully apply to the program using technology. Our orientation video is available online, and we instituted a shared, interactive calendar for scheduling of all intakes statewide. While a variety of platforms exist to connect us to our clients, the addition of ODIN as part of the ever-expanding SARA virtual assistant will revolutionize our ability to meet clients where they are and deliver counseling and guidance and other services virtually. SARA's expansion during the pandemic also included the ability to share information between partner agencies. A release of information was created, and The Career Index (architects of SARA), programmed the product to give the partners the ability to opt-in to information sharing if a release of information was on file with any partner entity. We now may add the release into SARA and attach it to notifications to partners when we have a client in common.

We are now, as I write this, providing the full array of services to our clients in a virtual environment. For those services or employment that require clients to leave their homes and participate publicly, Nevada VR created a checklist for both our counselors and our clients to ensure they have a purposeful, in-depth conversation about the pandemic and what it means, the risks and how to mitigate them. The client then can make an informed choice whether or not to receive the service or go to work out in the public. We want to serve individuals with disabilities in Nevada in the best and safest way possible. We want to support their employment goals and their achievement of self-sufficiency while ensuring their safety to the greatest extent possible.

I would like to end with recognizing the loss of one of our Blind Business Enterprise of Nevada (BEN), Blind Licensees who passed away due to the COVID-19 virus in April. This individual had been an active member and advocate of the BEN program for more than 44 years! He ran a very successful enterprise. We are deeply saddened by this loss, and the incredible loss of life throughout the world due to this pandemic.

Respectfully,  
Shelley Hendren

## Letter from the CHAIR

# Kacy Curry

As the Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC), I share my enthusiasm with other Council members in expressing our excitement about the work being done to improve and enhance employment outcomes for Nevadans with disabilities in our great Silver State. The NSRC plays an important role in helping provide guidance to Nevada Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) leadership and community about the employment needs of Nevadans with disabilities. Along with new board member appointments, the passion and enthusiasm of all members is notable, specifically as we strive to address the challenges of our aging and at-risk youth amongst other populations. Now, especially more than ever, we need to address these challenges through efficient and accountable service delivery. Employment can be the greatest cure to many challenges Nevadans with disabilities face.



The Council is a group of volunteers appointed by the Governor from throughout Nevada who meet quarterly. NSRC membership is representative of people with disabilities, community rehabilitation providers, representatives from independent living, special education, Tribal VR programs, advocates, VR participants and business leaders. The State Plan Subcommittee meets annually. At these meetings consideration is given to the concerns and items presented by people with disabilities, partner agencies, business owners and those involved with regional economic development. The information presented and addressed by the subcommittee targets the challenges and solutions for employment of people with disabilities throughout Nevada. Collected information from consumer surveys are reviewed and analyzed for VR program effectiveness and consumer satisfaction. This process provides the necessary information to advise on policies and procedures regarding VR service. The subcommittee presents its findings to the NSRC, who in turn reviews the performance indicators and provides information and direction to resolve key challenges with the opportunities for individuals with disabilities to obtain employment.

Additionally, the Council works with other councils and partners in Nevada, including the Governor's Workforce Development Board, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Special Education. These focused efforts ensure programs and services under the Council's purview are current, effective and meeting the employment needs present within the State. Subsequently, the Council's Annual Report illustrates the status and effectiveness of the VR program and showcases individuals with disabilities who meet and surpass expectations of employment through using their personal potential, skills and abilities in reaching self-sufficiency.

It has been an honor to serve as the Chair of the Council this past year, and I look forward to continuing my service with great confidence alongside my fellow Council members. The NSRC is eager and strives toward great achievements for our fellow Nevadans, as we tackle new challenges and opportunities awaiting in the next year.

Respectfully,  
Kacy Curry



# *Nevada Vocational Rehabilitation Goes Virtual!*

On March 17, 2020, when all State of Nevada non-essential employees were sent home to shelter in place due to COVID-19, Nevada Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) came to a halt. Nevada had no ability to provide any virtual services to its 3700+ participants. There was no ability for any counselor to work from home and no remote access. The Division's highest priority was to establish a communication network for staff. All counselors were provided lists of phone numbers for all participants on their caseloads. The initial directive for staff was to make contact and be a lifeline for program participants - listen to their fears, and be a resource for mental health outreach services, and food and utility resources. Administration reacted expeditiously, working cooperatively with the agency's IT Department and established remote connection for staff to access case management and email systems from their home computers. Staff who didn't have computer at home were loaned state equipment. This was a huge milestone, as the Division was able to help maintain services for established clients through email and phone calls. The only item lacking was a way to accept program applications for any new participants. Prior to the COVID shut down, all applications were completed and processed via lengthy paper applications. Moving quickly, VR spearheaded and coordinated a collaborative effort to bring on DocuSign and the SARA virtual assistant through The Career Index (TCI). VR and the IT team and public information officer launched a new, 2-page application process. The new digital application could be completed online, submitted electronically on the DETR/Vocational Rehabilitation website and signed via DocuSign from the applicant's computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone.

As a direct result of this achievement, Nevada became the first state to be able to fully accept online applications for Vocational Rehabilitation services, forever changing VR's service delivery model. Utilizing the SARA Global Calendar, all intakes are now handled through one statewide scheduler instead of regional schedulers, an additional first for the Nevada nationwide. Furthermore, all staff are equipped with webcams provided by VR on their home computers to ensure they can conduct intakes and participant meetings in a virtual face-to-face format.

Although no one could have predicted COVID-19 and the adversity it would bring, it did inspire the Division to take action and completely change its service model and provide virtual services faster and more efficiently than ever before. VR is also changing its regional perspective and becoming more of a singular state unit, now that location is no longer a barrier as services are provided 100% virtually. Feedback received from program participants continues to reflect their appreciation for all the quick action taken by staff and concern and compassion expressed by counselors. We are extremely proud of our staff and all they have achieved during this very challenging time.



## EMPLOYEE PROFILE

# MICHAEL ADRAGNA

Michael Adragna received his Bachelor of Arts Degree and Master of Arts Degree in Sociology from the University of Nevada, Reno. His focus was in economic and social justice, political sociology and media studies. After completing his graduate degree in 2014, he taught Introduction to Sociology and Social Stratification at the local community college and university.

In 2016, he began working as a Case Manager at the Volunteers of America Men's Shelter in Reno, Nevada. During this time, he learned how to build case plans and identify resources to assist homeless individuals with employment, healthcare, sobriety and housing. Working with this population taught him how to set goals and expectations for individuals in crisis to overcome the daunting challenges of homelessness. While this was often difficult due to a lack of available resources, he found the work incredibly rewarding and meaningful. It was during this time he was first exposed to Vocational Rehabilitation through client referrals and witnessing outreach efforts at the shelter.

In 2017, Michael obtained employment with the State of Nevada as a Long-Term Care Ombudsman as part of Aging and Disability Services Division. In this role, he performed advocacy and outreach for elderly and disabled individuals living in long term care institutions such as Group Homes, Assisted Living Facilities and Skilled Nursing Centers. This position taught him how to advocate for individuals in a person-centered approach to ensure they were treated with dignity and respect while they received care.

Michael began working with Vocational Rehabilitation as a rural outreach Rehabilitation Counselor in 2018. Having never been to the cities of Winnemucca, Battle Mountain, Lovelock and McDermitt, he was initially skeptical of the travel involved, and concerned he would be ill-equipped to deal with the unique challenges of a rural caseload in unfamiliar cities. His concerns were addressed over time through continued outreach efforts and getting results for his clients.

Michael has built relationships with the high schools and community colleges in each rural city, partnered closely with local agencies such as the Battle Mountain Band Shoshone Paiute Tribe and Rural Regional Center, developed relationships with local employers for job placement and work assessment sites and worked closely in a person-centered manner with each client to ensure his/her case moves efficiently towards employment. While at times difficult to develop, he found each successful case helped strengthen the relationship with proven results. Over the last 20 months with the agency, he has increased his caseload size, the rate of successful employments and client retention for both his rural and Reno caseloads. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he has worked with his clients remotely to provide guidance and counseling, discuss the challenges of balancing employment and health-risks, and set up clients with online job training.

"While each case is always a new challenge, it is incredibly rewarding to be able to work with an individual in need to help them realize their goals and to provide services to get them there. When I was working at the shelter, it was often difficult to provide something as simple as a bus pass. At Vocational Rehabilitation, we have the tools, resources and dedicated staff needed to truly transform lives, and I consider myself lucky to be a part of it."



# TRINA BOURKE

Trina Bourke is a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Supervisor in the state's Southern District. Growing up she has always had a passion for assisting people with disabilities, especially the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and spent most of her childhood training to be an American Sign Language Interpreter. Her plans changed once she attended college. As



an undergraduate, she found herself in an American Sign Language (ASL) Class with students from the Master's in Vocational Rehabilitation program. That class introduced her to the world of VR, and she found it was a perfect fit for her career goals.

She completed her undergraduate degree at Western Oregon University in Psychology. During her senior year, she was chosen for an internship to work for the Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Program. In this placement, she interned with a counselor who worked with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population. She attended weekly meetings at the Oregon School for the Deaf and they hired her to be a Dormitory Counselor for middle school girls. During the four years she was there, she completed her master's degree in Vocational Rehabilitation with an emphasis in Deafness from Western Oregon University.

In 2002, Trina was hired by the State of Wisconsin's Vocational Rehabilitation program and was there for 10 years covering general cases, sensory cases, Supported Employment (MH/DD) and transition students. Besides counseling, Trina was also on several statewide and local teams and trained and supervised interns for the local office.

In 2013, Nevada VR hired Trina on as a Rehabilitation Counselor (RC) III at the Maryland Parkway JobConnect. She immediately felt that this position helped her grow as a counselor and leader because of the opportunities the position provided. As a RC III, she served as a counselor but also supervised a staff consisting of a Rehabilitation Counselor II and Rehabilitation Technician. Trina shined in this position, accomplishing professional milestones in areas in which she is passionate. These include helping clients become successfully employed and self-sufficient, being a lead counselor for the Pathway to Work Supported Employment Training Program at Centennial Hills hospital site and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas; participating on many internal teams to improve policies, create resources, develop meaningful training and mentoring interns to become successful Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors.

Trina was promoted into a supervisor position in March 2019, overseeing 3 outreach teams (Maryland Parkway, Ely and North Las Vegas), a team at our main office, and the Vocational Evaluator. She really enjoys being a supervisor because it allows her to mentor staff, continue to assist clients, and find new and innovative ways of reaching VR's closure goals.

Trina graduated from the DETR Management Academy in 2019 and has recently won DETR's Outstanding Employee of the Quarter for Fourth Quarter also in 2019. A recent, personal milestone includes the adoption of a teenager about which she and her husband are thrilled. The family enjoys doing activities together such as spending time with their animals, cooking together, 4x4'ing and traveling around the state.



# COLLABORATIONS

*“It is the collaborative effort that paves the path to overwhelming success. Simply, we are just better together.”*

The Vocational Opportunities for Inclusive Career Education (VOICE) collaborative between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the State of Nevada, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program has served over 150 students during the 2018-2019 school year and focused on pre-employment transition services, work readiness skills training and specialized job development for the achievement of competitive, integrated employment for these students and youth.



Nevada is proud of the two CareerConnect collaborations between VR, Western Nevada College and the Truckee Meadows Community College. The program focuses on VR youth transitioning from high school to college and it provides guidance to students to acquire the academic preparation, work readiness skills, internship opportunities, and job development necessary to successfully complete college and obtain competitive integrated employment.



TheNextStep, is a collaboration with the Carson City School District and VR. The Next Step serves students from 18-22 who are interested in exploring work, having work-based learning experiences and developing their vocational skills in preparation for employment.

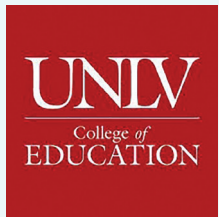


Nevada VR’s ongoing partnership with the Lyon County School District braids funding to improve post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities in Lyon County by providing them with support, resources and access to college and career pathways.

In order to meet the expressed needs of business, VR has partnered with University of Nevada Reno, the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) and Professional Institute of Technology and Accounting (PITA) to develop soft skills classes. These classes prepare VR clients to meet the rigors of today’s employment and include resume development, submitting online applications, reporting to work on time, work attire and hygiene, employee relationships/social skills, chain of command, employer workplace culture and culminates with a reverse job fair.







The Careers, Recreation and Vocational Education (CRAVE) camps held in Southern and Northern Nevada are geared for high school students with disabilities and provide students with hands-on experience with college life, living in the dorms, learning how to navigate the college system, communicating with professors, learning about budgeting for college, time management and job readiness skills.



Job Exploration and Expectation Program (JEEP) is a collaboration between VR and the Clark County School District (CCSD). JEEP provides pre-employment transition services to students and has a focus to prepare, train, and assist students in achieving competitive integrated employment. Students participate in 4 work rotations in various departments within their high school with the final rotation being a work experience opportunity with a local employer in the community.

VR has embraced the legislatively-enhanced 700 - Hour Program, which creates employment pathways for individuals with disabilities. These employment opportunities are with state agencies, and afford the employer and employee 700 hours to determine if the individual is a good fit for the job. This program has been highly successful, having placed over 100 individuals in the last year and a half.



There are several Project SEARCH collaborations in Nevada. The first collaboration is with Clark County School District (CCSD), Sunrise Hospital, and Mountain View Hospital and Regional Transportation Commission. In the north, the collaboration is with the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and Atlantis Casino Resort Spa. In both collaborations, high school students are assigned to worksites at locations where they can complete several work rotations with support from their teachers and VR work-based trainers.



# COLLABORATIONS

The Sephora Training program is a collaborative training program between VR, Capability Health and Human Services and the Sephora Distribution Center in North Las Vegas. The training lasts 9 weeks, and clients learn soft skills as well as rotate between 3 warehouse/stocking positions in the warehouse. Once successful, the clients become permanent employees of Sephora. This collaborative program has served 27 clients in the last state fiscal year (7/1/19 – 6/30/20). Of those 27 clients, 24 continue to be employed.

The Starbucks Roasting Plant “Inclusion Academy” started in October 2015 by our Business Services Manager. Selected Vocational Rehabilitation clients are given the opportunity to join a customized pre-employment training program in the Starbucks Roasting Plant in Minden, NV. Clients learn in a classroom setting and hands-on in the workplace. Many are offered positions upon completion of the work-readiness training program. All program completers receive a certificate of completion of their bona fide training from this recognized industry leader. Over 40 individuals with disabilities have been hired out of this program, for a 77% success rate.



Pathway to Work is a collaboration with Opportunity Village, Desert Regional Center, and VR. With a placement rate of 96%, Pathway to Work is a work-based learning program offering job coaching support and an extended training for individuals located in the community with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD).



## VR'S TOP TEN BUSINESSES

We would like to give a shout-out to the Top Ten Businesses including private employers, the State, and County Agencies who have made a difference by hiring qualified individuals from Vocational Rehabilitation. These businesses respect and value diversity and inclusion. They recognize and appreciate the variety of backgrounds and characteristics that make individuals unique, while providing a work environment that promotes and celebrates individual and collective achievement.

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 1. State of Nevada                              | 35 |
| 2. Walmart                                      | 35 |
| 3. Nevada City and County Employers             | 27 |
| 4. Sephora Distribution Center                  | 23 |
| 5. Amazon                                       | 15 |
| 6. Goodwill Industries                          | 12 |
| 7. Medical (Hospitals and Allied Professionals) | 11 |
| 8. Smith's Food and Drug                        | 10 |
| 9. TJ Maxx                                      | 10 |
| 10. Nevada Board of Regents                     | 7  |

## OTHER PARTNERS AND COLLABORATIONS WE WOULD LIKE TO GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE:

American Council for the Blind  
Amplify Life  
Blind Center  
BlindConnect  
Capability Health & Human Services  
CART- Churchill Area Regional  
Transportation  
Commission on Services for Persons  
with Disabilities (CSPD)  
Community Services Agency  
Deaf Centers of Nevada  
Desert, Sierra and Rural Regional  
Centers  
Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe  
Fort Mojave Tribe  
Goodwill of Southern Nevada  
Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-  
Blind Youths and Adults  
Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)  
Nevada  
JOIN Inc.  
Marshall B. Ketchum University (dba  
Southern California College of  
Optometry Low Vision Clinic  
Moapa Band of Paiutes  
National Federation of the Blind  
National Technical Assistance Center  
for Transition (NTACT)  
Nevada Aging and Disability Services  
Division (ADSD)  
Nevada Blind Children's Foundation  
Nevada Department of Education,  
Career and Technical Education

Nevada Disability Advocacy and Law  
Center  
Nevada Governor's Council on  
Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD)  
Nevada JobConnect/DETR  
Nevada System of Higher Education  
(NSHE) member colleges and  
universities  
Nevada Youth Training Center (NYTC)  
NevadaWorks  
Opportunity Village  
Pride Industries  
Regional Transportation Commission  
(RTC)  
Ruby Mountain Resource Center  
Sephora  
Shoshone Paiute Tribes of the Duck  
Valley  
School Districts Statewide  
Starbucks Roasting Plant  
The Sho-Pi Tribe in Owyhee  
United Cerebral Palsy  
University of Nevada, Reno, Center for  
Excellence in Disabilities  
Workforce Connections  
Workforce Innovation Technical  
Assistance Center (WINTAC)  
Youth Technical Assistance Center  
(YTAC)





# Nevada's Emergency Response

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**Declaration of Emergency on March 12th.** (There have been several extensions of this Declaration).

- Schools shut down effective March 16th. Gaming shuts down.
- Non-essential businesses close, effective March 20th.
- Restaurants may offer food for drive-up or delivery only.
- DMV closed. Licensing requirements suspended (multiple extensions).

**Directive 6/March 22nd:**

Suspended many requirements under Open Meeting Law, including no requirement for a physical location for the meeting (multiple extensions).

**Directive 7/March 24th:**

The Nevada general public shall not gather in groups of ten or more in any indoor or outdoor area. Except for persons residing in the same household, the Nevada general public shall abide by social distancing practices.

**Directive 8/March 29th:**

No evictions or foreclosures allowed.

**Directive 13/April 8th:**

- Public sports venues close. Showrooms, churches, real estate showings, salons all close.
- Essential licensed businesses providing services or selling goods to the public shall ensure social distancing standards are maintained.

**Directive 16/April 29th:**

Public can leave home for non-essential businesses.

Golf and Tennis can resume. Only drive-up church allowed.

**Directive 18/May 7th:**

Retail stores open at 50% capacity. Drive-in theaters open. Auto show rooms and restaurants open at 50% capacity. Nevada parks open for day use.

Declaration of Fiscal State of Emergency on May 11th - Projected \$900 Million budget shortfall.

**Directive 21/May 28th:**

- General public shall not gather in groups of more than fifty in any indoor or outdoor area.
- Churches and businesses can open at 50% capacity, including retail, restaurants, theme parks, nail and hair salons, bars, gyms, museums, galleries, trade and technical schools, massage parlors, dispensaries, gaming.
- Government agencies to adopt protective measures.



**Directive 24/June 24th:**

Requires the public to wear face coverings at all times in public.

**Legislative Special Session:**

*July 8th-19th wherein budget reductions and staff furloughs were approved.*

*VR required to cut state general funds by 19%. With the loss of the associated federal funds due to the loss of match, VR's overall budget was cut by about 12%, or \$2.8 million. 18 positions to be held vacant for 6-12 months as part of these budget reductions.*

*Staff required to furlough 48 hours between January-June 2021, which is equivalent to a 2.3% salary cut.*

**Directive 27/July 10th:**

Reopening authority delegated to county and local governments, which may impose additional COVID-19-related restrictions that may exceed the standards imposed by Declaration of Emergency. County and local governments authorized to investigate and enforce this Directive. The Nevada Gaming Control Board authorized to investigate and to enforce this Directive with casinos.

**Directive 28/July 15th:**

- Secondary school staff and students must wear cloth face coverings while on school buses, in school buildings, or on school campuses unless approved for an exemption.
- Secondary schools may reopen school athletic fields and facilities.
- Authority delegated to secondary schools to implement hybrid learning models including in-person instruction and distance education to accommodate social distancing requirements, and in consideration of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 Plans.

**Nevada Statewide 'Pause'/November 22nd - Effective November 24th for 3 weeks**

- Face coverings required to be worn at all times in public or in private, if around people not in your household. Face coverings required at all business venues and gathering spaces.
- Private gatherings limited to 10 people and no more than 2 households
- Public gatherings limited to 50 people or 25% capacity, whichever is less.
- Food and drink establishments and Gaming establishments limited to 25% capacity.
- Libraries, museums, art galleries, aquariums, zoos, arcades, racetracks, bowling alleys, amusement and theme parks and other similar establishments limited to 25% capacity.
- No change to current restrictions for retail, shopping malls, personal services such as hair and nail salons, barber shops and spas, community and recreation centers, and K-12 schools.



# Success Stories



**Brenden Hockett**

Brenden Hockett really wanted a job that met his needs but wasn't boring. Brenden was born with Ataxia-telangiectasia and uses a wheelchair. He has several significant physical barriers to employment. Brenden has a great sense of humor and was seeking work that met his needs but also desired something he would really enjoy. Brenden understood that many people in his position often end up with subminimum wage employment or jobs that offer very little fulfillment.

Brenden loves games and sports, and as part of his Customized Employment "Discovery" he began exploring different activities at a local indoor archery range called Wasting Arrows, that his job developer had approached. The business owners loved Brenden as he came in for several weeks to explore the business and see what he could do. After seeing Brenden in action and getting to know him, the business owners reached out to Brenden with a job offer to be a "Range Master." They were open to Brenden's need for an accommodated work schedule and use of different tools to get the job done. Brenden uses a hand-operated buzzer rather than a whistle to instruct archers with the task of collecting their bows, shooting their arrows, and retrieving their arrows after shooting.

His supervisor reports that Brenden is the best Range Master they have, and his job was guaranteed secure for him to come back to when the pandemic resulted in the temporary closure of the business. Brenden is very satisfied with his work and appreciated the willingness of the business to give him a chance to do work that he loves.



**James Altman, PhD.**

When you and your mother both work on the campus of the University of Nevada Las Vegas, carpooling to work really makes sense. But when James Altman's mother began having difficulties lifting him in the vehicle on a daily basis, James decided to apply to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to see what services he could get to help him be safely transported back and forth to work and keep his job.

With his PhD. in English, James is employed at the University of Las Vegas as an Academic Support Specialist. James loves his job but as time went on, transporting James was getting difficult because the family car was not equipped to handle his wheelchair and his mother was having difficulties lifting him. This experience inspired James to make a move. James applied for VR services in late 2017 and became eligible based upon limitations in mobility due to Cerebral Palsy. James is unable to walk and depends on a wheelchair to get around the community. He and his VR counselor met and discussed options available to help him get to and from work. It was determined that the best option for James was to get him a vehicle with modifications. This would allow his mother to continue carpooling him to and from work in a safe manner. Per VR policy, he was sent to a passenger vehicle assessment to get a report on what kind of vehicle and accommodations would work best for him. After the assessment, he and his mom did their research and found a vendor that could provide both the van and accommodations.

Since vehicles with modifications are quite expensive, it was agreed that James would pay for the van and VR would assist with the vehicle modifications. This helped



## James Altman Cont.

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James keep his costs down and still be able to buy a vehicle like any other person. After the modifications were completed, James and his mom can now safely drive to and from work without any issues. James is very happy with his services and has been able to maintain his job which he loves.

## Joey Reed

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Joey applied for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services while still a student at Liberty High School in Las Vegas in 2018. Joey had been diagnosed with Autism and Specific Learning Disability and required significant reinforcement and praise to be successful. His disability meant he was also highly distractible, impulsive, and restless. He was unsure what career would be the best option for him, but he knew he really wanted to help people. Not only did Joey want to help people, but he wanted to make them SMILE every day. Through discussions during his transition planning meetings, Joey was recommended for the Project SEARCH Program.

The Project SEARCH program at Sunrise Hospital is a partnership with the Clark County School District (CCSD) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). It is a job training site for Project SEARCH - a national organization that provides people with disabilities an opportunity to learn skills necessary to become employed.

The program provides real-life work experience combined with training in

employability and independent-living skills to help young people with significant disabilities make successful transitions to productive adult lives. The Project SEARCH model involves an extensive period of skills training and career exploration, innovative adaptations, long-term job coaching, and continuous feedback from teachers, skills trainers, and employers. As a result, at the completion of the training program, students with significant intellectual disabilities are employed in nontraditional, complex and rewarding jobs. In addition, the presence of a Project SEARCH program can bring about long-term changes in business culture that have far-reaching positive effects on attitudes about hiring people with disabilities and the range of jobs in which they can be successful.

In this program, Joey was able to explore his skills and interests. Joey is often misunderstood as he is sometimes overly friendly. He did make a few mistakes along the way as not all patients and family members understood his humor. Nonetheless, through extensive Pre-Employment Transition Services, Joey developed excellent coping mechanisms as he faced the challenge of disclosing his disability to receive the appropriate accommodations in the classroom and workplace. Joey learned to advocate for his needs and show how really motivated he is to make his employment goals a reality.

He was able to learn various trades at the hospital and make an informed choice to receive extra training in the Transport Department. He decided to volunteer beyond his scheduled hours - late in the evening and even on weekends - to work with experienced staff and develop further. His size and stature made him the perfect candidate to transport patients around all day - all over the hospital. His Project SEARCH internship host, Sunrise Hospital, recognized his skill and talent and offered him a full-time position in the Transport Department. Every day, Joey makes patients SMILE as they are on their way to their next procedure, testing, or discharged from the hospital. He is doing meaningful work at a living wage due to his determination and VR Transition Services.

# Success Stories

## Megan Jones

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Megan enjoys assisting her co-workers in doing their jobs correctly.

On 3/19/20, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Megan was placed on Paid Time Off along with her Co-workers to minimize the spread of this Virus. On 5/18/20 her employer asked her to come back and she has continued to enjoy her job, utilizing personal protective equipment and personal safety training ever since.

Megan Jones has several impediments to employment having been diagnosed with autism, an anxiety disorder, atrial flutter, ankle reconstruction, and a seizure disorder. Megan applied to Vocational Rehabilitation to receive assistance with obtaining and maintaining a job that would not require her to perform the prolonged standing & walking that had been required in her previous jobs. At the time Megan applied, she was working at Sprouts Grocery Store. Megan needed a more sedentary job to coincide with her functional limitations.

Vocational Rehabilitation delivered what Megan came for. In order to evaluate her clerical work strengths and weaknesses, Megan participated in a Clerical Work Assessment at Opportunity Village. When she was getting ready to exit this assessment, Crystal Kamber, her rehabilitation counselor was notified that Opportunity Village wanted to extend Megan's assessment a few more weeks so they could assess if they wanted to hire her. Crystal approved this additional time in the assessment for further evaluation.

As a result of the additional evaluation time, Megan was able to prove her professionalism and ability to work at a productive rate. On 2/10/20, Opportunity Village hired Megan to work as a Prep Specialist, having the clerical duties of getting documents prepared for scanning. She was such great worker that her supervisor asked her to assist her co-workers with quality control, assisting them to work error-free.

## Aleisha Geiss

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Aleisha Geiss applied for services in November of 2014. She had suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury resulting from a drowning event at age three. As a result, Aleisha developed a learning disability impacting reading comprehension, writing skills, and her general walking ability was impacted. Aleisha wore wrist braces to strengthen the weakness in her wrists and hands. Although Aleisha was successful in raising her daughter, she had been unable to begin a career due to the impacts of her disabilities. Once her daughter reached an age that Aleisha could again consider employment, her treating physician encouraged her to be a Certified Nursing Assistant. Working with her VR counselor, a rehabilitation plan was developed, and she successfully completed the training required for employment. Unfortunately, she was unable to complete that plan due to an unexpected foot surgery which ultimately kept her from doing the extensive walking as is required for a CNA.



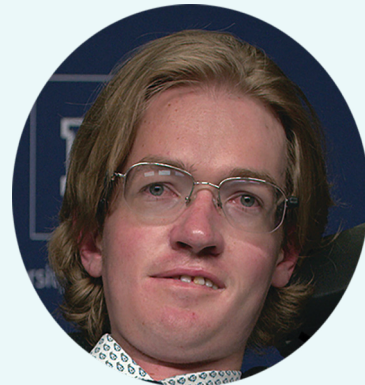
Guidance and counseling provided by her rehabilitation counselor helped Aleisha choose work as an administrative assistant which was a job she could physically perform. She completed a clerical training program preparing her for work with needed accommodations. While seeking employment, Aleisha and her counselor determined she lacked sufficient work experiences for some jobs, so her counselor suggested she volunteer. Aleisha developed a volunteer job and soon met the experience requirements for her desired administrative employment. During this time, VR was also able to pay for driver's training which resulted in Aleisha getting her driver's license and improving her level of travel independence. Support services for gas, interview and work clothing were also provided as needed.

Aleisha received significant assistance from the Job Development staff preparing her for jobs specifically within the 700-Hour Program. This would include resume and interview assistance which allowed her to obtain quality employment.

Aleisha obtained employment in February through the 700-Hour Program working for a state agency as an Administrative Assistant. Her progress has been monitored regularly since then and she continues to enjoy her full-time employment allowing her to get off Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. Aleisha is very happy with her new job and her new life.



## Will Carrasco



Will Carrasco is a graduate from rural Yerington High School. Will was born with Spinal Muscular Atrophy, which has necessitated him using a wheelchair since birth. Even so, Will has never let his disability get in the way of what he wants to do, whether it is hunting, fishing or skiing. Will signed up for VR services with the goal of getting his degree in Computer Information Systems from the University of Nevada Reno (UNR). Will did exceptionally well in all his classes and was on track to graduate as planned. Over the course of his undergraduate career, it became apparent that a Bachelor's in CIS would not be sufficient for him to participate in employment in his chosen field; mainly because he requires a wheelchair and assistive technology to function optimally, and the duties of entry level positions in CIS cannot be completed from a wheelchair (running cable, crawling through ductwork, etc.).

Through counseling and guidance, both with his VR counselor and his professors, it was determined that the best course of action would be for Will to continue through school to get his master's degree. VR provided tuition assistance, as well as an updated wheelchair which supported his continuing education. As expected, Will excelled in his program, and obtained his master's degree—all while running the university computer lab. He completed a paid internship with a financial management firm, where he used analytics he developed to chart investments. He was offered a permanent position but decided to use his skills to assist others with disabilities and apply his education to the medical field.

After graduating, Will began an IT position at the Disability Resource Office (DRO) at UNR. He also branched out and began assisting students directly, something for which he has developed

# Success Stories

## Will Carrasco Cont.

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a passion. Will is even considering returning to school and getting an advanced degree in Psychology or related field. Will is clear that he is not seeking VR assistance in this endeavor, as he believes that he is self-sufficient and wants to achieve this on his own. To that end, he ran for President of the Graduate Student Body, which he won! This is a paid position, which is in addition to his position in IT with the DRO.

Will has gone above and beyond in his achievements, and VR was instrumental in providing him with the support and services he needed to reach his (very high) level of self-sufficiency and professional satisfaction.

## Justin Wicker

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Before Justin Wicker arrived at Vocational Rehabilitation in April of 2019, he was struggling to continue to work in unsupportive and physically demanding fields. Justin's prior work history was varied, including some commercial truck driving and customer service related fields. At the time of his intake appointment, he was most recently working in freight and manufacturing/warehouse positions. After being diagnosed with cancer in 2018, Justin completed surgery and subsequent treatment to remove the tumor and keep his cancer in remission. Despite this triumph, the

cancer, combined with his chronic condition of ulcerative colitis, left Justin with physical limitations that made it impossible for him to keep up with the demands of warehouse work. He experienced fatigue and exhaustion when he returned to this field; culminating in collapsing six hours into his last shift.

Initially, Justin felt he needed a bachelor's degree in order to find comparable employment that supported his disabilities. When he faced challenges that disrupted this initial plan, Justin did not give up and persevered to work with his rehabilitation counselor to develop a new plan that not only satisfied his vocational needs but did so in about a quarter of the time. Justin and his counselor explored the 700-hour program and short-term vocational training through Job Opportunities in Nevada (JOIN). After completing his program with flying colors and enrolling in the 700-hour program, Justin quickly obtained employment as an Administrative Assistant II with the Bureau of Disability Adjudication in March. This job was in line with his physical limitations and one in which he could be successful. In addition to receiving job placement assistance and job training assistance, Justin also received monthly guidance and counseling appointments, a gas card, work/interview clothing and assistance with medical supplies to help him overcome the added expenses and stresses of an active job search.

Even during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Justin has not only been able to maintain his position but expand it by taking on new responsibilities and training opportunities. He enjoys his job and is a valuable colleague in the state's continued work to assist individuals with disabilities.





# VR Provides Support in Time of Need

When the pandemic officially started in Nevada on March 12th, no one could have foretold it would endure this long. In the beginning, Rehabilitation Division discussions for the near future were not concrete citing May or June as a return to a normal workplace scenario. What did become clear very early, was the overwhelming impact the pandemic was having on jobs here in Nevada and the loss of revenue from closures. The other reality was the state of Nevada's economy prior to the Governor's Declaration of Emergency and shutting down all industry. Prior to the shutdown, Nevada was experiencing a record low 3.6% unemployment rate. As a direct result of this and ongoing low unemployment, the Employment Security Division (ESD) had a very small team working statewide to handle unemployment claims at that time. When the pandemic struck on March 12th everything closed and hundreds of thousands of people lost their jobs within weeks. ESD was not prepared for the monumental impacts resulting from the pandemic.

In an effort to help our sister division, Nevada Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) quickly developed a list of staff who would be qualified and available to go work for ESD to help process unemployment claims, handle incoming paperwork, answer calls/questions and any other required service. On April 8th, VR sent a list of Vocational Rehabilitation staff who could provide support to ESD. These individuals were not considered vulnerable nor were they living with or caring for someone who was vulnerable. Soon thereafter, other VR staff received training so that they could be a resource to the blind and visually impaired and deaf/hard of hearing communities if they had challenges applying for unemployment or had questions about their claims.

Vocational Rehabilitation would like to formally thank and recognize the 11 staff members who ultimately served and those who continue to support ESD. In respect to their personal safety and privacy, we simply acknowledge them and thank them for their courage in a time of uncertainty and for answering the call to serve their fellow Nevadans.

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## Special Spotlight: Deaf & Hard of Hearing

It was impossible to know at the pandemic's onset in March 2020, the extent of the impact of the COVID-19 virus and subsequent declaration of emergency on Nevada's workforce and its Unemployment Insurance (UI) program. With hundreds of thousands of Nevadans out of work, countless individuals needed assistance in this unprecedented time to file their UI claims – their lifelines - on an already overloaded computer system. Of those countless individuals, nearly 15% were unable to communicate on the phone due to hearing difficulties. The Deaf/Hard of hearing community in Nevada needed disability accommodations to access essential UI services.

As part of DETR's collaborative approach to serving Nevadans, this internal partnership was significantly strengthened when several Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) disability experts trained in UI to assist claimants through the process for UI benefits. In response to the letter from Nevada's Commission for Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH), former DETR Director Korbucic designated all D/HH needs for access to UI services be referred to VR's D/HH counselor for further assistance. To ensure this official point of contact reached the intended community, Deaf Centers of Nevada included a flyer in their semi-weekly emailed newsletter and hosted multiple educational webinars in American Sign Language. Through these coordinated efforts, nearly 100 D/HH community members have been assisted to date in an accessible modality to successfully complete UI program requirements.

A special thanks to VR's Laura Fink and to Lynn Baird, Kate Cimmino, Ciara Hughes and Eli Schwartz for all their assistance!

**DETR**  
Nevada Department of Employment,  
Training and Rehabilitation

### UI Claim Help

**Laura Fink**  
702-381-4993 VP  
[lefink@detr.nv.gov](mailto:lefink@detr.nv.gov)




Need help filing a claim?  
Not sure if you qualify?  
Have a question on payments?





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# Statistics



## Key Successes in FFY20

-  **453 Clients Achieved Employment**
-  **\$13.69 Average Wage**
-  **5,265 Clients Served**

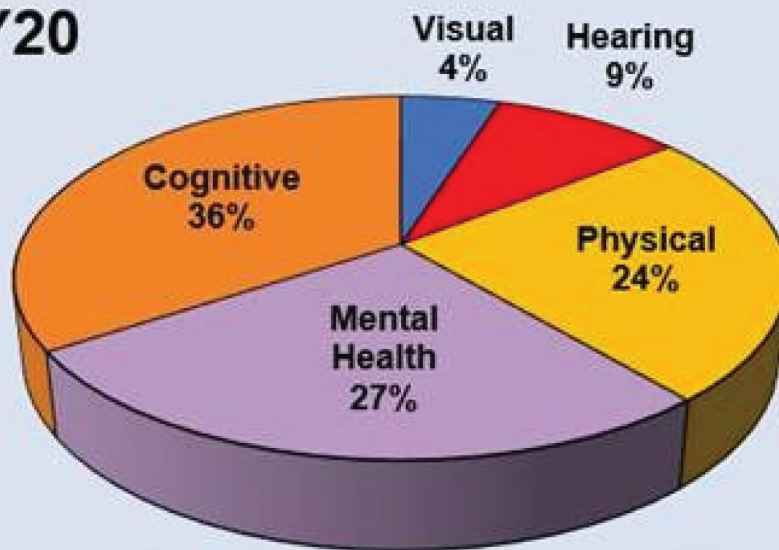
## Average Cost Per Case in FFY20

-  **\$3,342 Vocational Rehabilitation**
-  **\$3,902 Supported Employment**

## Average Cost Per Closed Case in FFY20

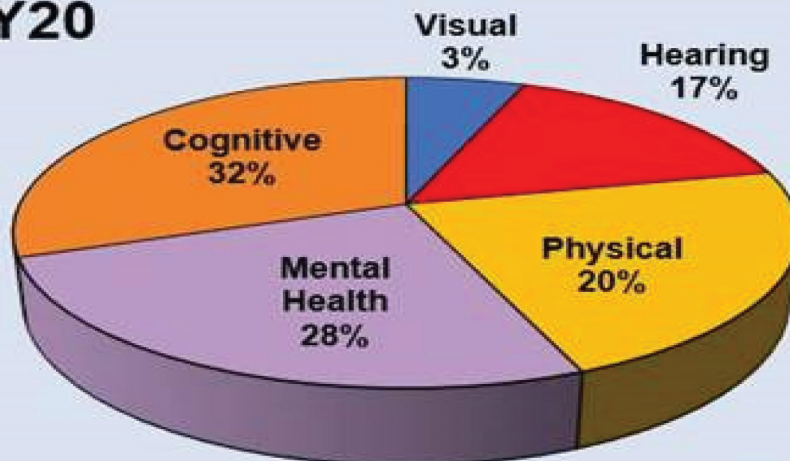
-  **\$3,085 Vocational Rehabilitation**
-  **\$4,441 Supported Employment**

**FFY20**



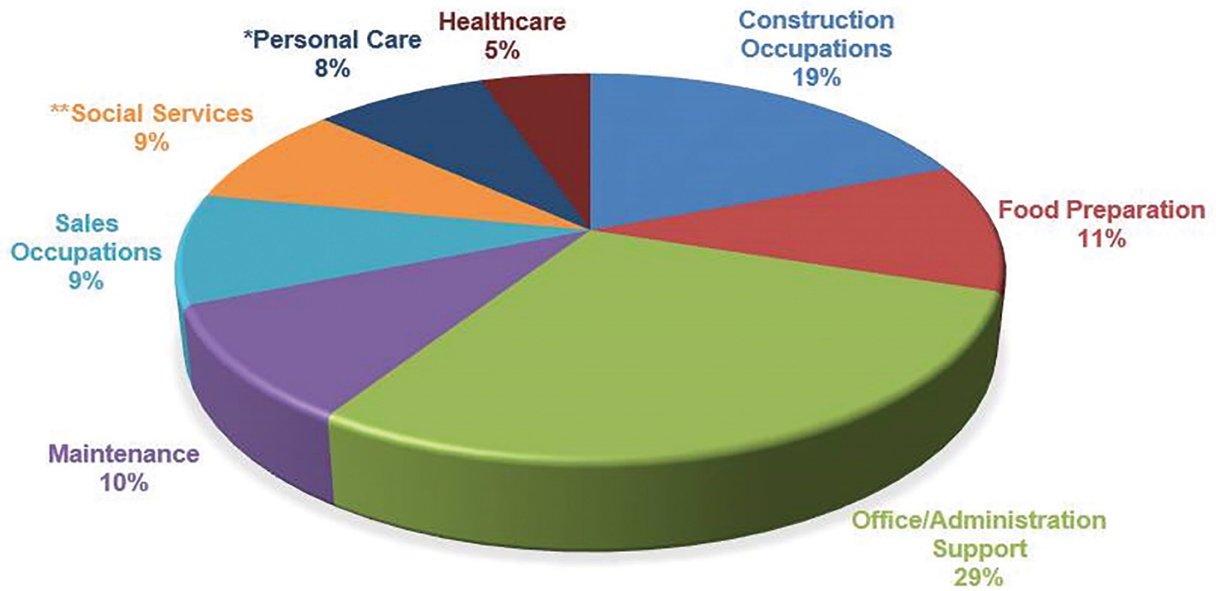
**Disability Breakdown of Served Clients**

**FFY20**



**Disability Breakdown of Employed Clients**

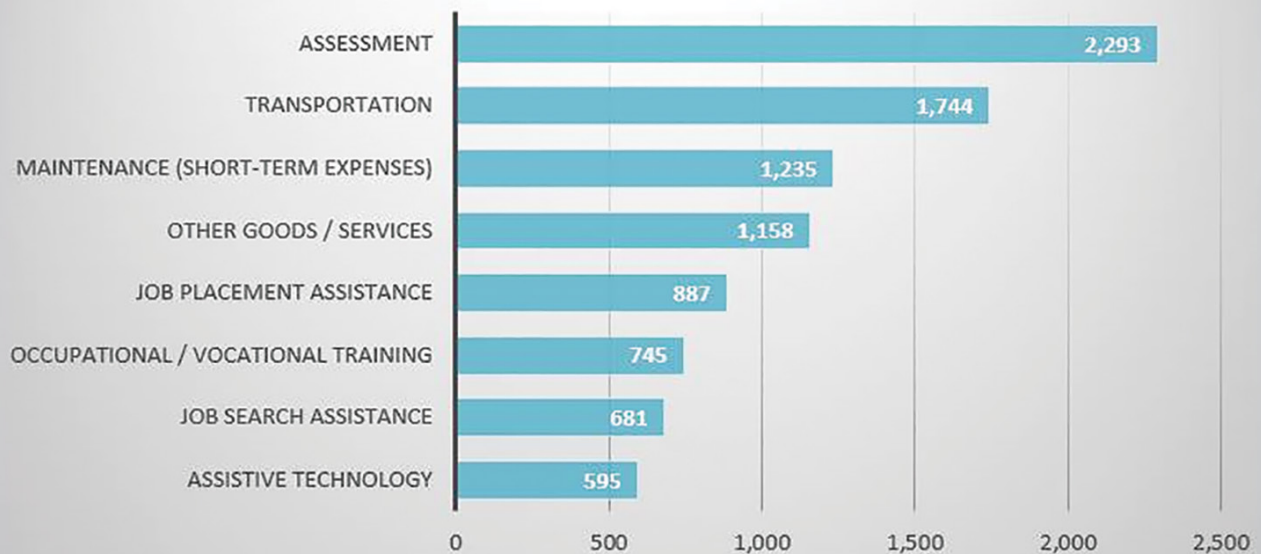
## Top 8 Job Titles Of Successfully Employed Clients FFY20



\*Personal Care includes: Child Care, Manicurist, Hair Dresser, Personal Care Aide

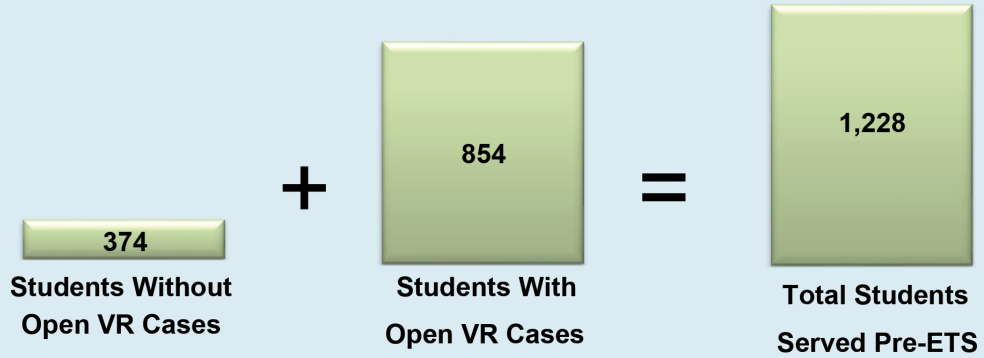
\*\*Social Services includes: Security Guard, Special Education Teacher, Substance Abuse Counselors, Clergy

## Top 8 Services Provided FFY20





## Students With Disabilities Who Received Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) FFY20

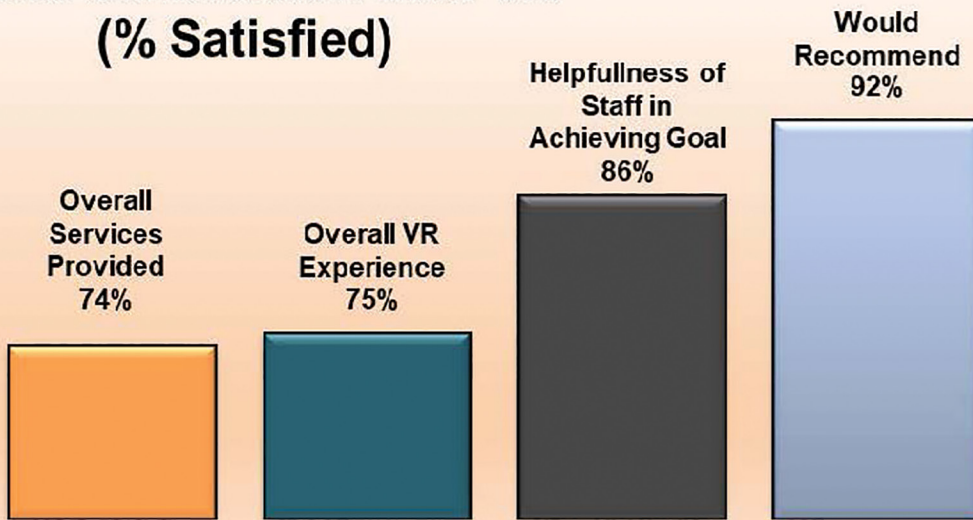


**1,228 Students Served Pre-Employment Transition Services**  
**More Than 3,300 Individual Services Provided**  
**\$1,205,426 Spent on Services Provided**

## Supported Employment (SE) Outcomes

|                               | FFY17 | FFY18 | FFY19 | FFY20 |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>SE Clients Served</b>      | 607   | 534   | 795   | 781   |
| <b>SE Successful Closures</b> | FFY17 | FFY18 | FFY19 | FFY20 |
|                               | 125   | 132   | 106   | 82    |

## Client Satisfaction With VR (% Satisfied)



## Client Satisfaction With VR Counselors (% Satisfied)





**Our Mission:**  
Actively engaging with Nevada businesses to understand their employment needs and creating innovative programs that develop the strengths, priorities, and talents of individuals with disabilities, ensuring that Nevada works for everyone.

Nevada VR provides vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals with disabilities to prepare for and obtain meaningful competitive, integrated employment, consistent with their skills, abilities and informed choice.

Nevada VR administers the Supported Employment Program to expand employment options for individuals with the most significant disabilities through intensive training, supervision and other vocational rehabilitation services.

Nevada VR works closely with Nevada's businesses to fulfill businesses' needs for trained and skilled employees in any area of commerce. Additionally, we work collaboratively with other public and private entities to utilize experience, resources and expertise to best serve individuals with disabilities and businesses.

VR Facts for FFY20:

- ❖ 5,265 Participants Served
- ❖ 453 Individuals Achieved Employment
- ❖ \$13.69 Average Hourly Wage
- ❖ 1,228 Students Served Pre-Employment Transition Services

Nevada VR assists students with disabilities to successfully transition from secondary school to work or higher education. VR also provides follow-up services to employers and participants to ensure the satisfaction of both parties.

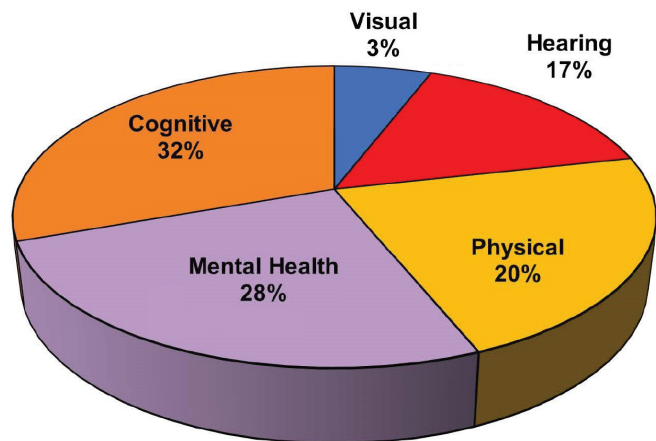
Top Five Job Titles Achieved by Participants:

- Office/Administrative Support
- Construction Occupations
- Food Preparation
- Maintenance
- Sales and Related Occupations

Nevada VR specializes in services tailored to meet the individual needs of persons with disabilities, including:

- Counseling and Guidance
- Assessments
- Assistive Technology
- Transportation
- Occupational and Vocational Training
- Job Development and Placement

**Primary Disability Breakdown of Employed Participants**




Please Contact Us At:  
751 Basque Way  
Carson City, NV 89706  
(775) 687-6860  
[sghendren@detr.nv.gov](mailto:sghendren@detr.nv.gov)  
[mwmerrill@detr.nv.gov](mailto:mwmerrill@detr.nv.gov)

Or Visit Us Online At:  
[www.detr.nv.gov](http://www.detr.nv.gov)  
[www.vrnevada.org](http://www.vrnevada.org)



Search 'VR-Nevada' on Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and Twitter





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# BUREAU OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION OFFICE LOCATIONS

A Proud Partner of American Job Center of Nevada

## NORTHERN NEVADA

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 1933 North Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89701 (Carson)       | (775) 684-0400 |
| 4001 South Virginia Street, Suite H-1, Reno, NV 89509 (Washoe) | (775) 284-9600 |
| 1325 Corporate Boulevard, Reno, NV 89502 (Washoe)              | (775) 823-8100 |
| 2281 Pyramid Way, Sparks, NV 89431 (Washoe)                    | (775) 284-9520 |

## RURAL NEVADA

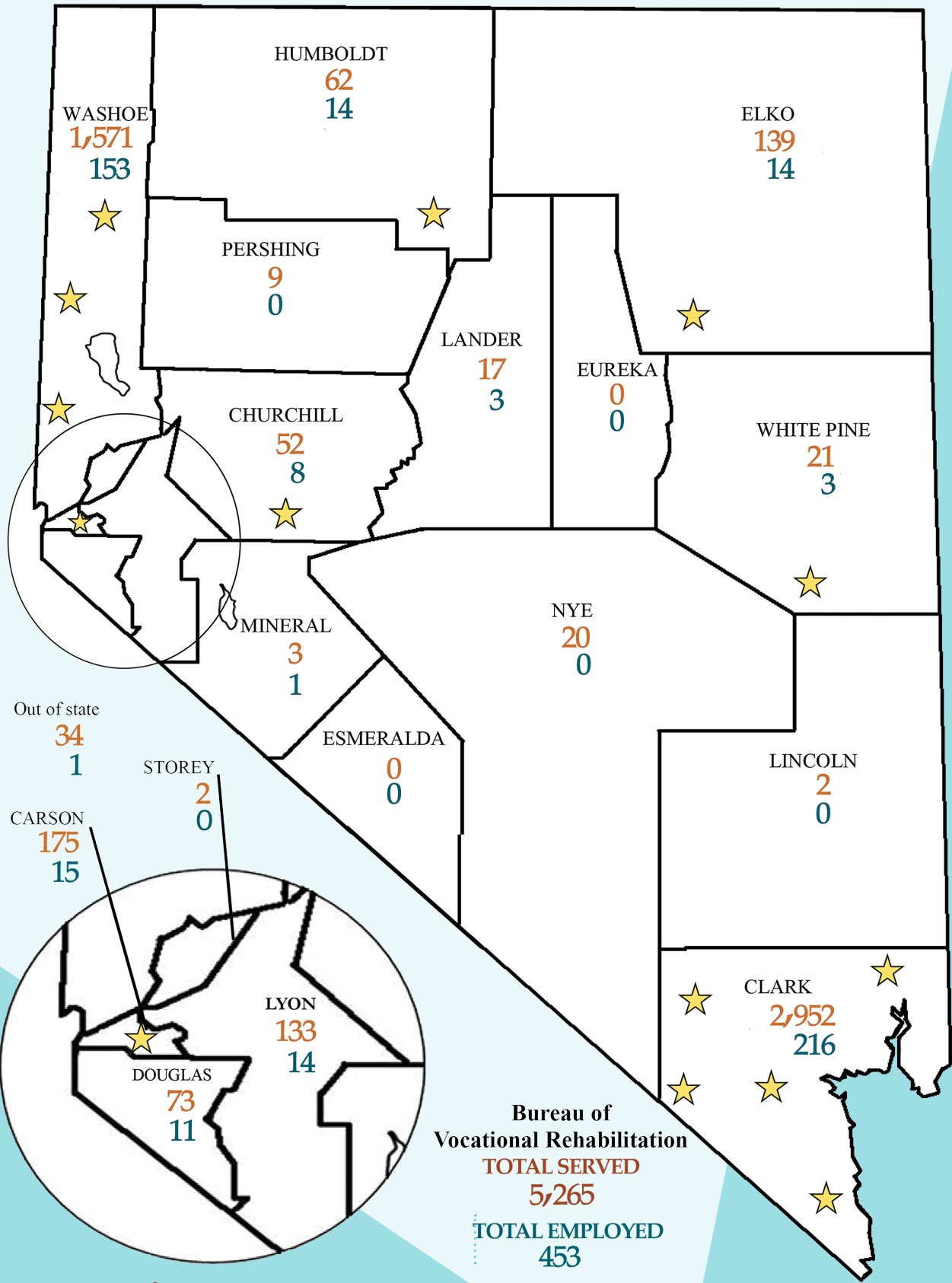
|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| 172 6th Street, Elko, NV 89801 (Elko)                             | (775) 753-1931 |
| 475 West Haskell Street, Suite 2, Winnemucca, NV 89445 (Humboldt) | (775) 623-6544 |
| 1500 Avenue F, Suite 1, Ely, NV 89301 (White Pine)                | (775) 289-1675 |
| 121 Industrial Way, Fallon, NV 89406 (Churchill)                  | (775) 423-6568 |

## SOUTHERN NEVADA

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 3405 South Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, NV 89169 (Clark)               | (702) 486-0100 |
| 3016 West Charleston, Suite 200, Las Vegas, NV 89102 (Clark)           | (702) 486-5230 |
| 4500 E. Sunset Road, Suite 40, Henderson, NV 89014 (Clark)             | (702) 486-0300 |
| 2827 Las Vegas Boulevard North, North Las Vegas, NV 89030 (Clark)      | (702) 486-0200 |
| 6330 West Charleston Boulevard, Suite 190, Las Vegas, NV 89146 (Clark) | (702) 822-4214 |

Nevada Relay 711





 **OFFICE LOCATIONS**



# Nevada

## Vocational Rehabilitation

*A Proud Partner of American Job Center of Nevada*

**At Work for Disability Inclusion**

**You can also find us on: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter or YouTube**



**[www.VRNevada.org](http://www.VRNevada.org)**  
**<https://detr.nv.gov>**

### **Administration Office**

**751 Basque Way, Carson City, Nevada 89706**  
**(775) 687-6860**

**Vocational Rehabilitation is an Equal Employment Opportunity program/service.**

**Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request during consultations with counselors and service providers.**

*THE SERVICES AND/OR GOODS DESCRIBED HEREIN ARE FUNDED, IN PART, WITH FEDERAL FUNDS AWARDED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION UNDER THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR), SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, AND/OR THE INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES FOR OLDER INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BLIND (OIB) PROGRAMS. FOR PURPOSES OF THE VR PROGRAM IN NEVADA, THE FEDERAL VR GRANT PAID 78.7 PERCENT OF THE RELATED COSTS. IN FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR (FFY) 2018, NEVADA VR RECEIVED \$18,531,753 IN FEDERAL VR FUNDS. FUNDS APPROPRIATED BY THE STATE OF NEVADA AND/OR ACQUIRED FROM OTHER NON-FEDERAL SOURCES PAID 21.3 PERCENT OF THE RELATED COSTS (\$5,015,583). FOR PURPOSES OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, FEDERAL FUNDS PAID 95 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL COSTS. IN FFY 2018, NEVADA'S VR PROGRAM RECEIVED \$181,159 IN FEDERAL SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FUNDS. STATE APPROPRIATED FUNDS PAID 5 PERCENT (\$3,505) OF THE TOTAL COSTS UNDER THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM. FOR PURPOSES OF THE OIB PROGRAM, FEDERAL FUNDS PAID 90 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL COSTS INCURRED UNDER THE PROGRAM. IN FFY 2018, REHABILITATION DIVISION RECEIVED \$232,946 IN FEDERAL GRANT FUNDS FOR THIS PROGRAM. FUNDS APPROPRIATED BY THE STATE PAID 10 PERCENT (\$25,882) OF THE TOTAL COSTS INCURRED UNDER THE OIB PROGRAM.*