



Nevada State Rehabilitation Council



ANNUAL REPORT



Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation
Nevada Rehabilitation Division
Office of Disability Employment Policy
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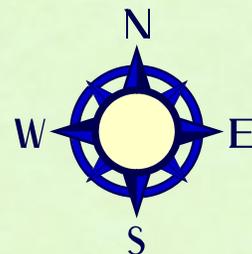
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COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) is to help ensure that vocational rehabilitation programs (Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and Bureau of Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired) are consumer oriented, consumer driven and that the programs' services and resources result in employment outcomes for Nevadans with disabilities.

Council meetings are held at least quarterly, teleconferencing between Carson City and Las Vegas, so that members unable to travel may attend.



NEVADA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBERS

Barbara Cegavske
Legislator

Dr. Mick Coleman
Rehabilitation Administrator

Gary Cottino, Council Chair
Business

Bonnie Dixon
Advocate

Mary Evilsizer, Vice Chair
Independent Living Program

Joel Feldman, Native
American VR Program

Jill Godin, Community
Rehabilitation Program

Ed Guthrie
Business

Brenton King
Advocate

Kathryn LeBlanc
VR Counselor

Denyse Lizer
Business

Margaret Moroun
CAP Director

Brian Patchett, Community
Rehabilitation Program

Jean Peyton
Business

Christine Syverson
Business

Dr. Tom Venardos
Dept. of Education / IDEA

Veronica Wilson, Community
Rehabilitation Program





This has been a year of change, growth and maturity for the Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC). Change, which came through great effort! The NSRC held a three-day strategic planning process where the Council joined with Mick Coleman, Administrator of the Rehabilitation Division, and key Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) and Bureau of Services to the Blind & Visually Impaired (BSBVI) staff to strengthen our comprehension of Council responsibilities under the Rehabilitation Act and to clearly define priorities for 2006. The strategic planning process provided the Council with a greater understanding of its partnership role with BVR and BSBVI.

Together we developed policies and strategies to support BVR and BSBVI's mission of serving individuals with disabilities. The strategic planning experience nurtured a greater understanding of each other! I would say that two words clearly reflect our adventure "change" and "cohesiveness." We were able to focus on the needs of individuals with disabilities in Nevada and key issues for the State Plan. The substantive discussions also identified target areas for program enhancements such as maintaining staffing levels at 95% and redesigning the "needs assessment" process.

Working together to build strategies for the future brought the Council and BVR/BSBVI closer together as a unit as we made a commitment to jointly set goals and strategies. Even though members of the Council and BVR/BSBVI may have different perspectives and, often, strong opinions, we agreed to examine issues through an "open and robust- yet respectful" exchange of ideas. Through the process, we were able to establish trust and mutually develop goals.

On a sad note, the Council mourns the loss of Chairperson Karla McComb who will be missed and remembered as a "champion and advocate" for individuals with disabilities in the State of Nevada.

As a group we look forward to the future, welcome new Council members on board, and remain committed to building upon the collaborative and productive relationship inaugurated in 2006.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary A. Cottens". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a white rectangular box with a purple border.



LETTER FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR 6

Kenny C. Guinn
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

Terry Johnson
Director

Michael T. Coleman, Ed.D.
Administrator



December 2006

As I reflect on this past year, I am pleased with how the Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) and the Rehabilitation Division have been able to work together. Training, meetings, and constructive dialogue have provided a better understanding of our unique roles and responsibilities.

I am pleased with how we were able to follow through with the goals and objectives of last year's strategic planning process. The active role that the NSRC played in developing our State Plan is a key example of our work together.

I appreciate the talent, energy, and time that each NSRC member has contributed to assist us in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the services we provide to people with disabilities. The Rehabilitation Division had significant improvement in State Performance Indicators and Federal Standards and Indicators.

In June, Karla McComb, who chaired the NSRC from November 2003 to June 2006 went to her eternal reward. Karla was a talented leader who led the NSRC with grace and wisdom. She is truly missed, but her legacy lives on in our mutual work. I am also thankful to Gary Cottino for his service as Vice-Chair from November 2003 to June 2006 and his willingness to accept the responsibilities of the Chair of the NSRC.

In so many ways 2006 has been a very good year. The NSRC was a key partner in that success.

Thank you,



The Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) meets at least four times a year with an equal number of subcommittee meetings. Most of the meetings are held by videoconference between Carson City and Las Vegas to encourage statewide public input on the delivery of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. The Council works in partnership with the Administrator of the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation, Rehabilitation Division to establish policies, priorities and goals for the program.

The Governor appoints the Council members from a cross section of community-based organizations, business representatives, advocates and former VR clients as required under the Rehabilitation Act. During Federal Fiscal Year 2006, the council consisted of 18 members or stakeholders. The NSRC must always be composed of representatives of the Independent Living Council; a Parent Training and Information Center; the Client Assistance Program; the Department of Education; the Administrator of the designated State vocational rehabilitation unit; the Governor's Workforce Investment Board; the Director of the American Indian VR program; current or former applicants for, or recipients of, VR services; a representative of a community-based rehabilitation program; a VR counselor; a variety of advocates; and, four representatives of business, industry and labor.

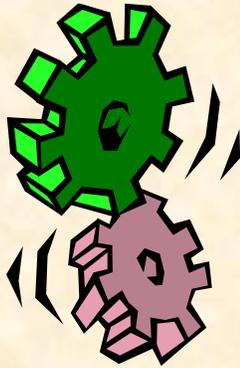


Although service provision to all eligible participants is of importance to the Council, the primary focus for the past two years has been on the enhancement of services to underserved populations particularly students in transition from school to employment.

The responsibilities of the NSRC are defined in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. Essentially, it works in partnership with the Division to:

- ❖ Review, analyze and advise on the performance of the VR program;
- ❖ Assist in developing state goals and priorities;
- ❖ Evaluate the effectiveness of the VR program;
- ❖ Assist in the preparation of the State Plan;
- ❖ Review customer satisfaction; and,
- ❖ Submit an annual report to the Governor and the Commissioner on the status of Vocational Rehabilitation in Nevada.



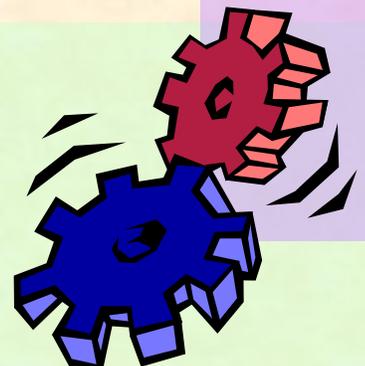


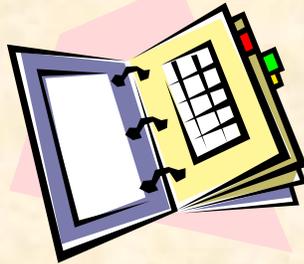
The Bureaus of Vocational Rehabilitation and Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired are agencies of the Rehabilitation Division, the Designated State Unit, which is primarily concerned with vocational and other rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. The Rehabilitation Division functions under the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation.

Bureau personnel must meet the minimum qualifications established by each Bureau through the Nevada Department of Personnel and as required under the Rehabilitation Act. Each Bureau employs Rehabilitation Counselors and support staff to assist program participants in understanding the rehabilitation process, applying for and receiving services. The Division employs staff whose purpose is to conduct program planning and evaluation, provide for staff development and determine the extent of rehabilitation facility utilization and the need for facility development.

Civil Rights:

Eligibility requirements are applied without regard to Race, Color, National Origin, Religion, Sex, Age, Disability or Veteran Status.

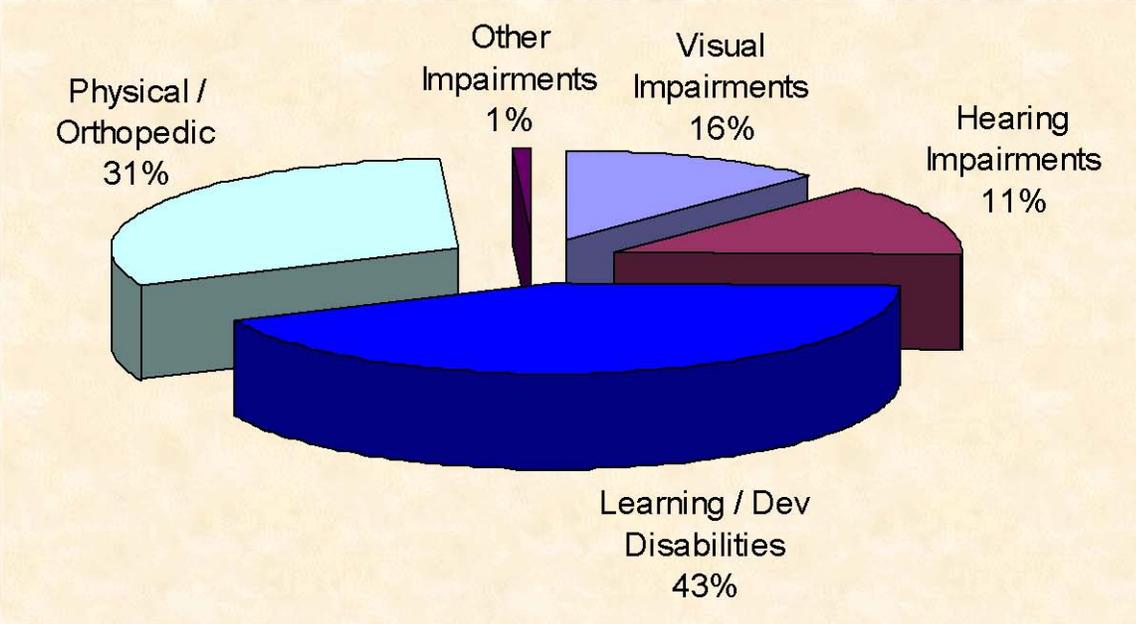




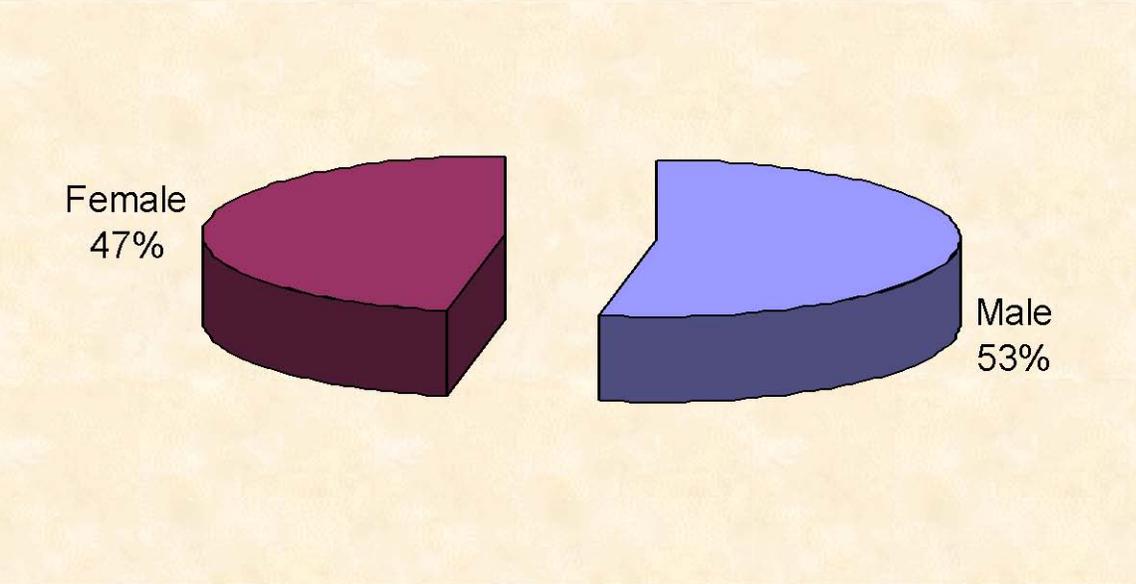
Vocational Rehabilitation Outcomes

- 1,161 Vocational Rehabilitation participants obtained employment in SFY-2006.
- \$11.25 is the average hourly wage of the participants that are working.
- 43% of the participants employed have medical insurance.
- 861 Transition Students (school-aged youth) were served.
- Nevada was one of eighteen states to achieve all its federal performance indicators in 2005, placing us in the top third of the country.

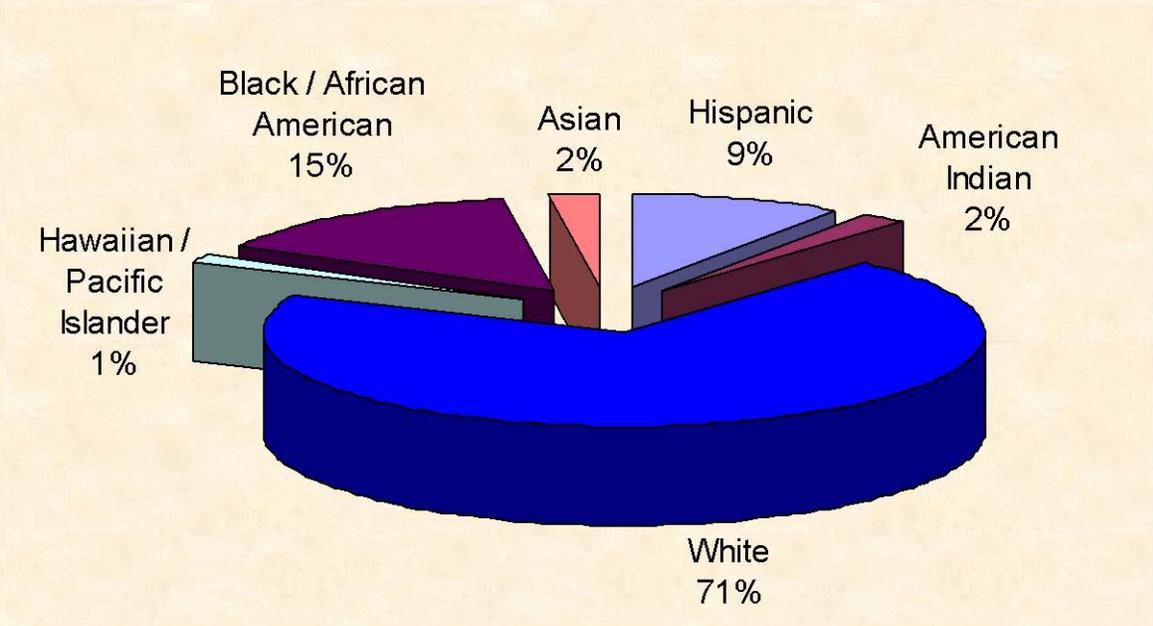
FFY-2006: Disabilities of Those Who Went to Work



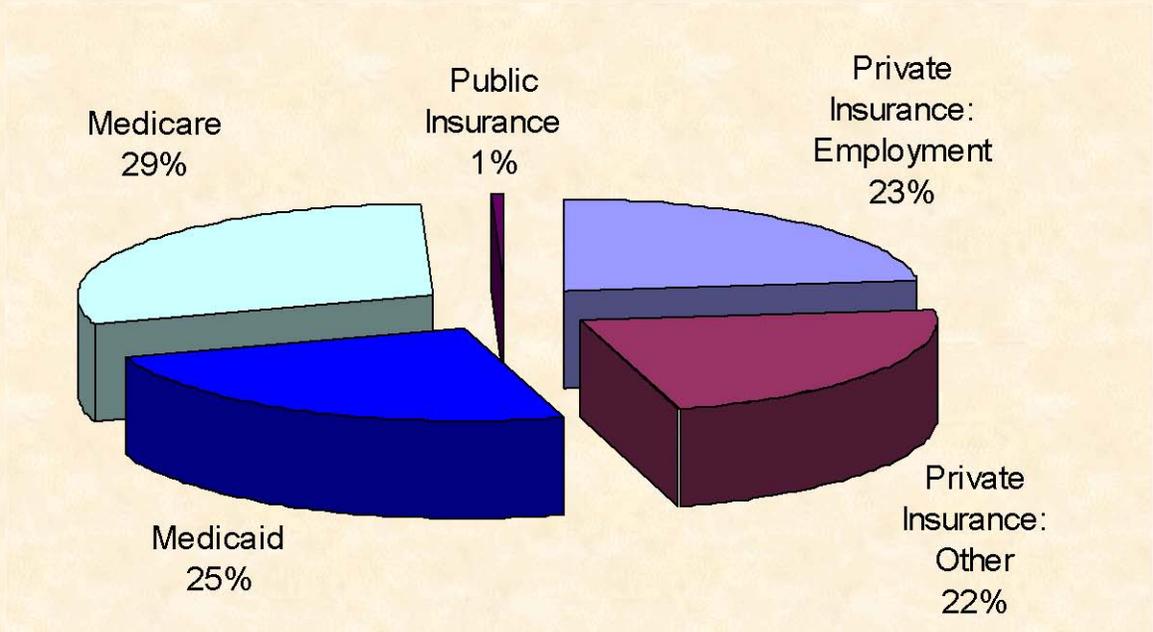
FFY-2006: Gender Breakdown



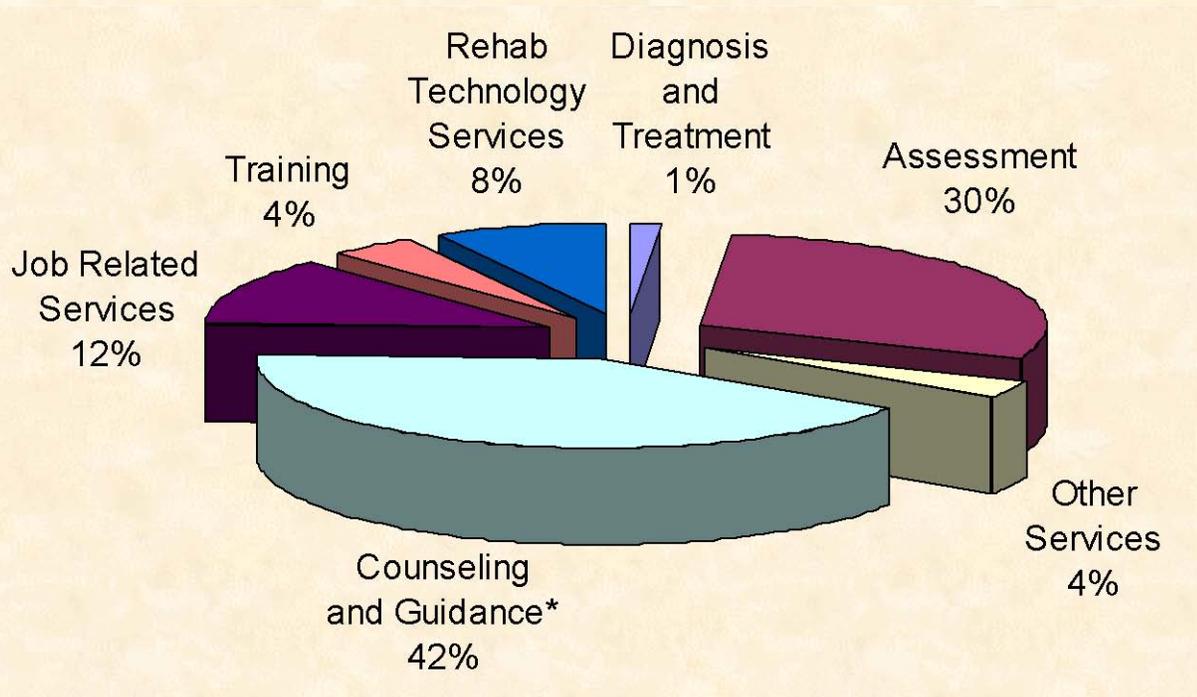
FFY-2006: Ethnicity Breakdown



FFY-2006: Medical Insurance Breakdown



FFY-2006: Services Provided by State Agency Using VR Funds



*** All Rehabilitation Division participants receive Counseling and Guidance from their Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. The sum in reference to Counseling and Guidance on the above chart refers to services from vendors outside of the Rehabilitation Division.**

In partnership with Nevada State Rehabilitation Council, the Rehabilitation Division conducted an annual review of their goals. The following goals were effective on July 1, 2006:

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Goal 1: Improve the quality of employment outcomes by increasing the average hourly earnings of people placed in competitive employment from the prior FFY by 2%.

Goal 2: Improve the quality of employment outcomes as evidenced by the availability of healthcare benefits from all sources provided to people successfully closed into competitive employment.

REPRESENTATION OF MINORITY POPULATIONS

Goal 3: Ensure that the percentage of minority clients served by the Designated State Unit is the same as the representation of minorities in the Nevada Workforce.

ACCESSIBLE AND EQUITABLE SERVICES

Goal 4: Provide accessible and equitable services and opportunities to all customers in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

TRANSITION STUDENT EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Goal 5: Provide increased employment and higher education opportunities to students with disabilities from the prior FFY. Increase competitive employment by 3% from the prior FFY.

GOALS AND PLANS FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT FUNDS

Goal 1: Support and encourage economic development by helping more individuals with the most severe disabilities become taxpayers and customers of business and industry or to otherwise live more independently of public support.



700 Hour Program

The State of Nevada adopted a law requiring that an individual with a disability be considered for state employment based on the individual's ability to perform the duties of the position, regardless of his/her disability.

The law known as the 700 Hour Law considered practices of state agencies, including testing/examination, interviewing and hiring, and how such practices might inadvertently and negatively impact an individual with a disability.

The 700 Hour Program is jointly administered by the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR) and the Department of Personnel. The program allows eligible individuals with disabilities to bypass the competitive ranking process to be considered for permanent employment. The recruiting entity must review the applicant's work on a regular basis. Once 700 hours of successful working experience is achieved, the employee may be given permanent employment.



Transition Connect

The Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation, Rehabilitation Division partnered with Easter Seals Southern Nevada and the Clark County School District (CCSD) to enhance vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to students with disabilities. The pilot project, entitled "Transition Connect", facilitates communication between educators and the VR Counselors. Under the guidance of VR and CCSD, the Transition Service Coordinator works directly with students in high schools to access services, create employment plans and provide ongoing support to achieve a successful employment experience. The Coordinators serve students in special education programs and students with disabilities that do not require special education. The project began in January 2006 and is building momentum.



The Recovery Café

Relax, Refresh and Renew
“Creating a Stress-Free Environment”

In early February of 2006, a group of fourteen clients from Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (SNAMHS) were selected to participate in training conducted by SNAMHS' Psychosocial Rehabilitation Program (PSR). The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) in Las Vegas is a key partner in this collaborative endeavor.

The primary goal of this project is to utilize a portion of the new Rawson-Neal Psychiatric Hospital, *The Recovery Café*, to help individuals return to work and “refresh” their skills in maintaining employment. The trainees are prepared to work as managers and employees in their own cafeteria. To this end, PSR began the first component of training and educated a group of fourteen, for six months to prepare them to work in the *Cafe*. The West Charleston BVR Team provided necessary support services including work cards, dental services and medical exams. On August 18, 2006, eight individuals completed the training and were recognized for their participation in a heartfelt graduation ceremony.

Now, a great challenge begins as *The Recovery Café* prepares to open its doors for business in early October. The second component of the training begins with the operations of the *Cafe*. PSR will continue training the graduates, but this time on-site. The mission of *The Recovery Café* is as follows: *“We are a client-run business dedicated to training individuals living with mental illness. We explore and create an opportunity to bring out our personal best in order to maintain employment.”* As this work crew prepares for what appears to be an opportunity to recover from life's trials, they are determined to move ahead with a renewed spirit.

Jesse came to our program in the spring of 2000 with a strong desire to work as a lineman for the power company. With our help, he attended the Northwest Lineman School in Idaho.

While at the school, Jesse learned to handle the technical aspects of the job. Included in his training, were dangerous activities like poll climbing. After returning to his home in Fallon, Nevada, he was eventually able to acquire a job with the local telephone company. And he works there to this day.



Jesse has generously offered to speak to high school students about his experiences with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). During his talks he explains the support provided while in the VR program and the commitment a participant must make to succeed.

Jesse is now 24 years old, making over \$50,000 a year. He tells students the biggest challenge he has is deciding whether to vacation in Hawaii or the Caribbean.



Charlene, a single Mom and Social Security recipient, initially entered the VR program in North Carolina where she was given assistance in obtaining her Associate of Arts Degree. In 2005, she and her son moved to Las Vegas to enjoy the warmer climate and abundant opportunities. In June of that year, she entered the Nevada VR program with the goal of obtaining her Bachelors Degree from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV).

One can imagine the difficulties she faced after losing her husband and other key family members, moving to a new city and juggling a full time school schedule while raising a child.



During her first semester, her car was stolen, compounding the obstacles to her success. Although her car was eventually returned to her, extensive repairs were needed. VR stepped in and paid for the repairs.

Charlene is now a college senior doing her practicum as a court advocate for Safe Nest and will soon be working with the homeless at the Salvation Army. She was elected President of the UNLV, Association of Social Workers.

We look forward to seeing Charlene in cap and gown with degree in hand in December 2007.

Susan, a diabetic and recent kidney transplant recipient, entered the VR program in 2005. Due to complications of her illness, she had not been able to work for three years and was concerned about her future. We assessed her transferable skills and abilities and found she had a high interest in medical fields, clerical and reading ability. VR helped her with training, transportation, supplies and guidance. She has now completed her coursework with perfect grades and attendance.

She is currently doing her externship and already has several job opportunities. Susan has been able to do this because she is a positive person that meets challenges head on and always with a sense of humor.



Lindsey, a Reno High School student, was born deaf and was interested in enrolling in college after graduation. Due to her hearing impediment, Lindsey decided to pursue a career in advertising. While in the VR program, she received a new medical procedure, the cochlear implant, that miraculously restored her hearing. Because she had never heard words pronounced correctly, Lindsey was not able to verbalize at a level appropriate for her age and education level. We provided her with speech and auditory therapy to help develop her verbal and communication skills.



With these new capabilities, Lindsey changed her major and successfully completed an internship in Washington D.C. at a United States Congressman's office. She enjoyed the experience so much that she decided to focus her career on the public sector. VR guided her through the application process for the 700 Hour Employment Program through the Nevada Department of Personnel, a program that allows state agencies to bypass the personnel system to directly hire individuals with disabilities on a trial basis. Lindsey was interviewed and offered a position at the University of Nevada, Reno campus as an Administrative Assistant for the University Police Department. In addition to performing administrative duties, she monitors the surveillance cameras on the campus.

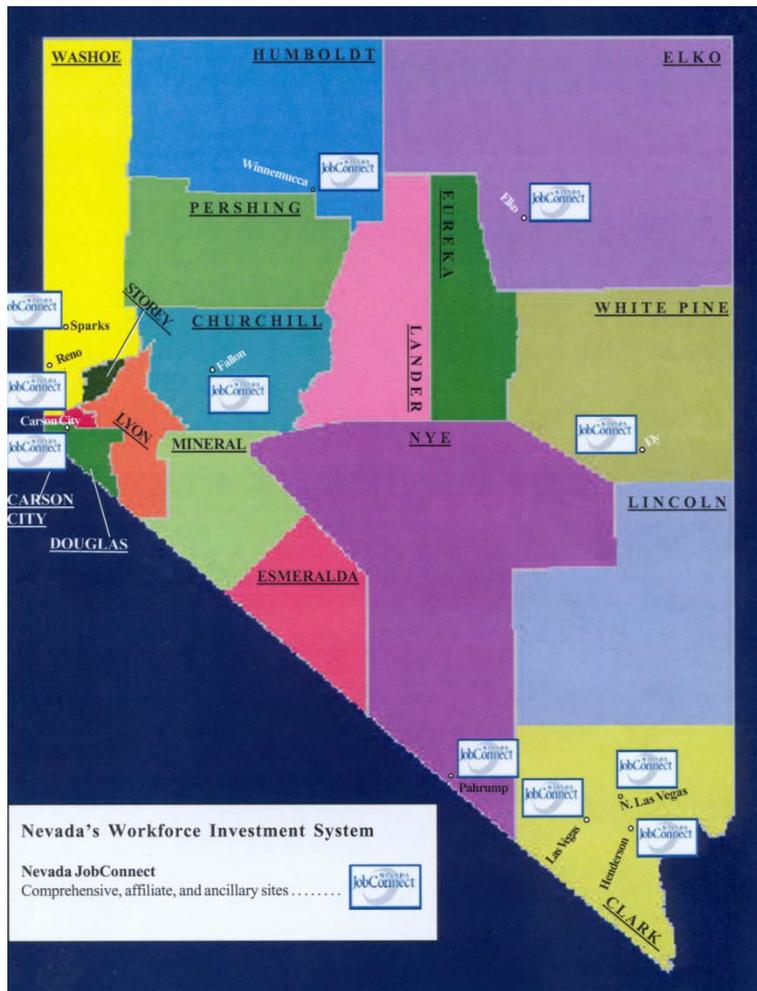
Karla McComb served with distinction as the Chair of the Nevada State Rehabilitation Council from November 2003 to June 2006 when she passed away. She was an inspiration to all that knew her. Karla's passion was to improve the lives of people with disabilities and devoted much of her time and efforts advocating for them. As a leader, she was second to none. She had a firm but gentle way of building consensus between Council members, elected officials and governmental administrators in making policies and programmatic changes to help Nevadans with disabilities.



Her key focus was on educating youth where she served as the Director of Curriculum and Professional Development for the Clark County School District, supervised social studies, health, physical education, Native American and multi-cultural education, and Safe/Drug-Free Schools. As a lifelong educator, she influenced the lives of generations of Nevadans.

Karla's litany of public involvement includes: Chair of the Nevada State Rehabilitation Council; member of the Nevada Commission on Economic Development, Substance Abuse Prevention Enforcement and Treatment; Vice Chair of the Governor's Council on Education Relating to the Holocaust; President of Endeavor (formerly the Nevada Association for the Handicapped); President of the Southern Nevada Center for Independent Living; member of Easter Seals Southern Nevada Board of Directors; Director of Easter Seals Southern Nevada Government Affairs and Grants; member of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board; member of Bringing Everyone's Strength's Together (BEST); Member of Coalition for a Safe and Drug-Free Nevada; and, Volunteer Center of Southern Nevada.

Karla was a dedicated advocate, respected citizen and most of all a good friend. All who knew her will truly miss her.



The Rehabilitation Division's vision is that of a barrier-free future where every individual in Nevada has equal vocational and independent living opportunities.

The Nevada Rehabilitation Division is an active partner in the Nevada JobConnect system. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Technicians are housed in ten of the Nevada JobConnect offices and provide itinerant services to Pahrump. VR staff work in collaboration with the other partners to leverage resources and provide broad based services.

For Additional Information:
www.detr.state.nv.us/rehab
www.nevadajobconnect.com

