

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark grey blazer, is seated in a wheelchair at a light-colored wooden desk. She is smiling and looking towards the left, where a silver laptop is open. Her hands are on the keyboard. The background is a bright, out-of-focus office space with large windows. A thick, wavy red line arches over the top of the image and another arches under the bottom of the image.

# NEVADA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

## ANNUAL REPORT 2007



# DETR

Nevada Department of Employment,  
Training and Rehabilitation

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# 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.

# Nevada State Rehabilitation Council Members

Barbara Cegavske  
Legislator

Michael T. Coleman Ed.D.  
Rehabilitation Administrator

Gary Cottino  
Council Chair/Business

Bonnie Dixon  
Advocate

Mary Evilsizer  
Vice Chair  
Independent Living Program

Vacant/Pending  
Native American VR Program

Jill Godin  
Community Rehabilitation Program

Ed Guthrie  
Business

Brenton King  
Advocate

Kathryn LeBlanc  
VR Counselor

Denyse Lizer  
Business

Robin Hall-Walker  
CAP Director

Brian Patchett  
Community Rehabilitation Program

Jean Peyton  
Business

Christine Syverson  
Business

Vacant/Pending  
Dept. of Education / IDEA

Veronica Wilson  
Community Rehabilitation Program

Kathy Treants  
Parent Training Information Center

## Message From Council Chairman Gary Cottino



I am pleased to present the Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) 2007 Annual Report to you and other interested parties. The Nevada Rehabilitation Division and the NSRC continue working together, with a mutual vision creating opportunities for employment and independence for Nevadans with disabilities. The vision reveals a strong consumer driven focus in the NSRC's Mission Statement and demonstrated through an ongoing commitment to jointly participate in the Division's development and implementation of consumer-oriented programs and policies.

In accordance with its federal mandate, the NSRC carries out strategic planning, and evaluative functions of programs and policies throughout the year and regularly shares recommendations with the Division. Further, the NSRC's participation in the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and Consumer Satisfaction Surveys are directed toward further outreach to unserved or underserved populations in the state. Goals are focused to increase employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities.

Nevada's Rehabilitation Division is committed to work in partnership with the NSRC, our Participants, to provide services and advocacy that result in employment, increased quality of life and independence for individuals with disabilities.

## Message from Rehabilitation Division Administrator Michael T. Coleman, Ed.D



As 2007 comes to an end, I am thankful for the strong partnership that the Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) and the Rehabilitation Division have forged. Training, meetings, and constructive dialogue continue to provide a better understanding of our unique roles and responsibilities. The NSRC played an active role in the development of our current State Plan. They also assisted us in assessing the data and determining action steps related to our comprehensive needs assessment. NSRC members have made unique contributions related to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the services that we provide to people with disabilities.

I am delighted that the Rehabilitation Division had significant improvement in State Performance Indicators and passed all Federal Standards and Indicators for the third year in a row.

Our goal is to assist people with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes. I am delighted to see our performance exceed our goal. For federal fiscal year ended 9/30/07: consumers were employed with an average wage of \$11 per hour.

2007 was truly a very good year. The NSRC was a key partner in that success.

# Nevada State Plan Goals



## **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% (2008 over 2007).

## **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.

## **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.

## **Goal #4**

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

## **Goal #5**

Provide increased employment and higher education opportunities to students with disabilities from the prior FFY by: Increasing competitive employment by 3% from the prior FFY (2008 over 2007); and, increasing higher education services by 3% (2008 over 2007).

## **Goal #6 Supported Employment**

Support individuals with the most severe disabilities to become taxpayers or otherwise live more independently of public support.

# NSRC Roles and Responsibilities



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 2007, 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.

# NSRC Roles and Responsibilities

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.



# NSRC Orientation

The Rehabilitation Division hosted a Training in Las Vegas for New members of the Nevada State Rehabilitation Council, new division staff, and Attorney General representatives that assist the NSRC.

The NSRC and Designated State Unit received training from San Diego State University Interwork Institute on the following subjects:

- ◆ Council Member Roles and Responsibilities.....NSRC Chairman
- ◆ Overview of Bylaws and Robert's Rules of Order.....NSRC Chairman
- ◆ Nevada Open Meeting Law.....Attorney General's Office
- ◆ Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as Amended and the History of Vocational Rehabilitation Programs.

The NSRC and SDSU enjoyed discussion regarding voting procedures, establishing a quorum, meeting agenda posting requirements, appropriately responding to requested accommodations and the law regarding public comments during the quarterly NSRC meetings.



# Rehabilitation In-Service Training

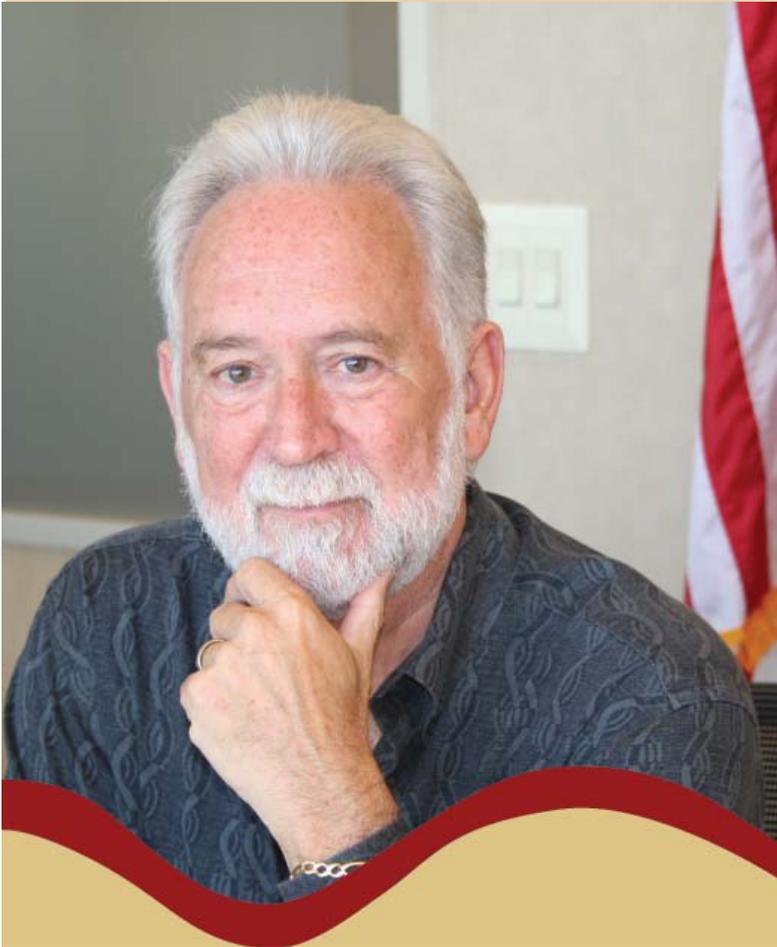


**I**n mid-September, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) employees and Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) members gathered in Las Vegas for a two-day training session. Each year, the Rehabilitation Division offers continuing education opportunities for its professional and paraprofessional staff members.

NSRC members are also encouraged to attend. The agenda included presentations on: the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act; Employer Relations and developing partnerships to accommodate individuals with disabilities; stress management and wellness; techniques to build teamwork, motivation and customer service; the fair hearing process and, Nevada Rehabilitation Division performance and budget issues and internal policies.

The training was funded primarily through the Rehabilitation Services Administration In-Service Training grant. The training was well received and many went away from the training with new information that will help them better perform their jobs.

## Vocational Rehabilitation Staff Spotlight Howard Castle



*“Excellence is never an accident: it is the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, skillful execution and the vision to see obstacles as opportunities.”*

*-Author unknown*

Beneath that signature silver mane is a well-known face that represents the character of the Rehabilitation Division with a zealous passion. Howard Castle is a cheerful and optimistic department veteran who has dedicated his life to serving those who simply need a caring hand.

Howard’s distinguished corporate façade quickly melts under the warmth of the southern hospitality of a Kentucky native who enjoys a good story and a hearty laugh. His life’s philosophy, “do your best and the rest will follow,” keeps him balanced in a job that brings him in contact with people whose circumstances haven’t been so kind.

“Everyone is capable if they are just given the opportunity,” Howard believes. “I got into this career because I enjoy giving people with disabilities the opportunity to maximize their abilities.”

At 61, Howard’s been helping people his entire career. After college, he enlisted in the United States Air force. One of his favorite memories entails starting a basketball team at an orphanage while stationed in Thailand.

“Giving back to the community is a core family value that I learned at an early age,” he says. “I was raised to believe that you help others when you can.”

The Vietnam era veteran later began his career with the state in 1974 with the Mental Health Division. He holds a Bachelor’s Degree in psychology from Eastern Kentucky University and a Master’s Degree in counseling from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. His years of experience has led him to his current



post as chief of program services for the Rehabilitation Division of the Department of Employment, Training & Rehabilitation.

Howard has held several other positions including director for Partial Hospitalization, Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, coordinator for special programs, and district manager.

What keeps him going?

“I try to keep a positive attitude in everything I do,” says Howard. “You can only do what you can do. I believe you can overcome any obstacle with hard work.”

Howard has witnessed a major evolution in the field of Rehabilitation over the past 34 years. He said he believes many positive changes have occurred, but there is much left to do.

“I’ve found the greatest challenges to be getting through the red tape to deliver services,” he said. “Staffing our programs has been another challenge. Counselors are required to have Master’s Degrees and be able to sit for national certification.”

Howard says he’s not discouraged by these challenges, because vocational rehabilitation is heading in the right direction.

“We are much more focused on maximizing the full potential of people with disabilities,” he says. “We have other significant things to improve, but I’m happy for where we are.”

Howard is proud of the fact that Vocational Rehabilitation has met its performance indicators for the past three years.

“We’ve especially had a great year, with counselors exceeding their goals,” he says. “I work with a great staff, from the top, down. They are very knowledgeable and accepting of new ideas. They are motivated and come to work for the same reasons I do. They came to this field, not for a job, but to make a difference.”

Howard plans to continue working for several more years, and then move into a less demanding second career upon retirement. For now, he’s enjoying life as it is — golfing, dancing, and traveling with his wife.

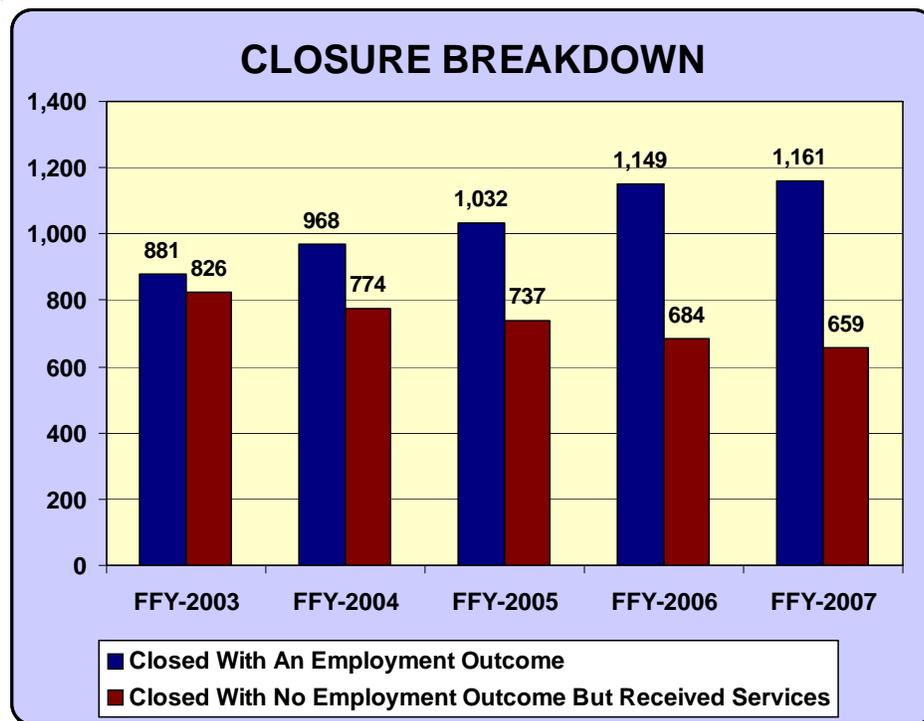
“I’m looking forward to retirement, but I do love my job,” he says. “I love that when I go home at the end of the day, I’ve made an impact on someone’s life.”

# Vocational Rehabilitation



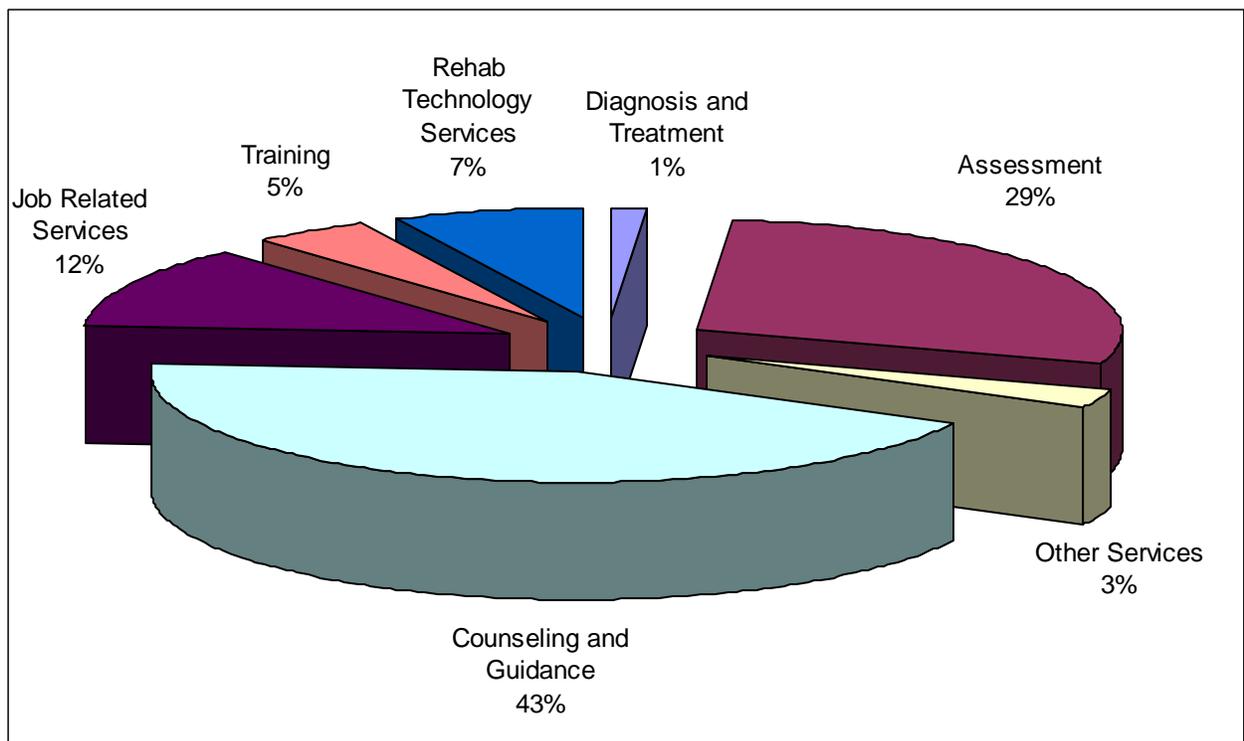
The Department of Employment, Training & Rehabilitation's Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and Bureau of Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired are designed to help people with disabilities become employed and to help those already employed perform more successfully through training, counseling and other support methods.

- ◆ 1,153 Vocational Rehabilitation participants obtained employment in SFY-2007.
- ◆ \$11.06 is the average hourly wage of the participants that are working.
- ◆ 43 percent of the participants employed have medical insurance.
- ◆ 908 Transition Students (school-aged youth) were served.



# How We Serve

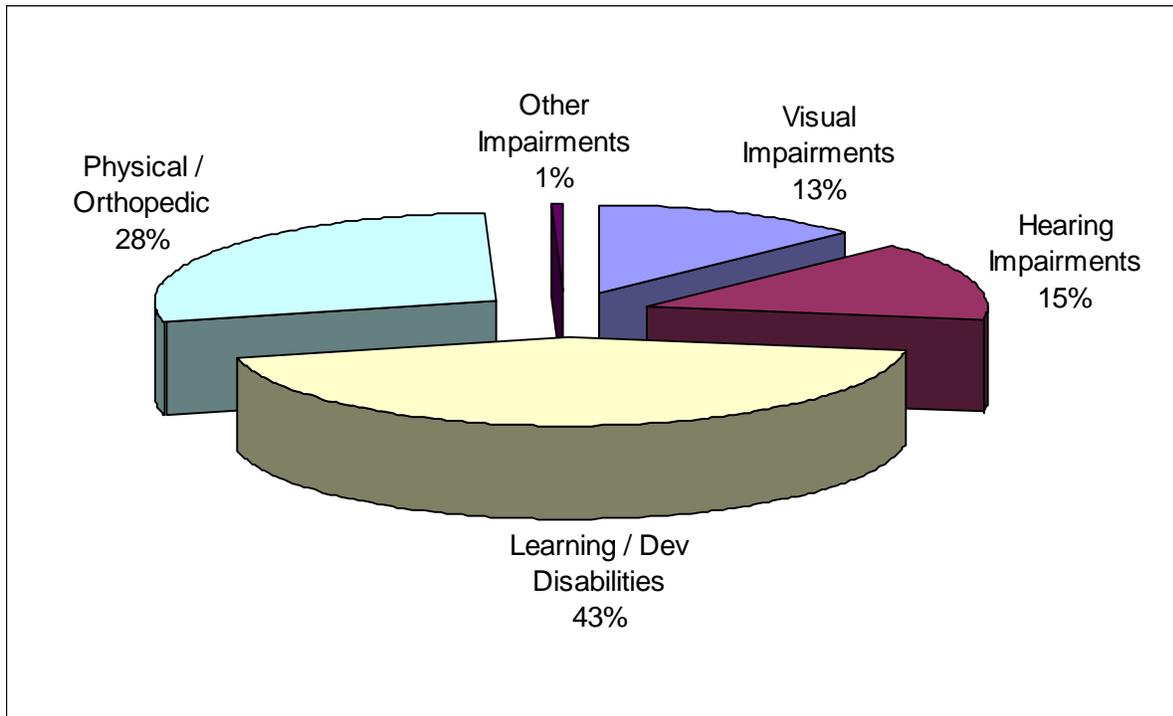
## FFY-2007: Services Provided by State Agency Using VR Funds



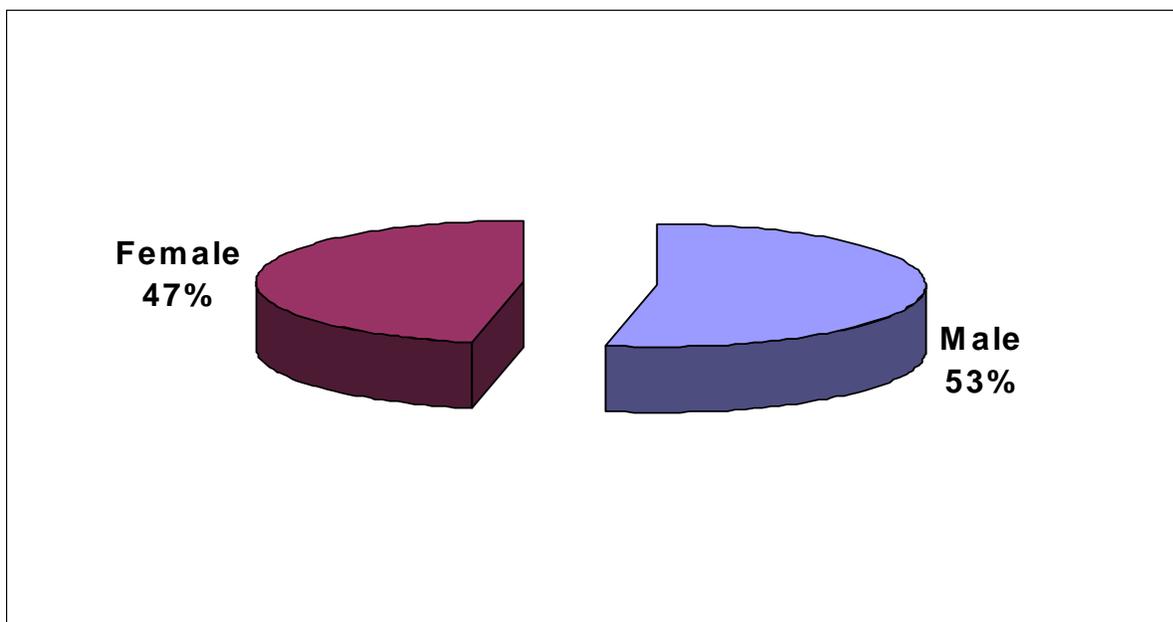
**\* All Rehabilitation Division participants receive Counseling and Guidance from their Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. The sum in reference to Counseling and Guidance on the above chart refers to services from vendors outside of the Rehabilitation Division.**

# Participants Served

**FFY-2007: Disabilities of those who went to work**

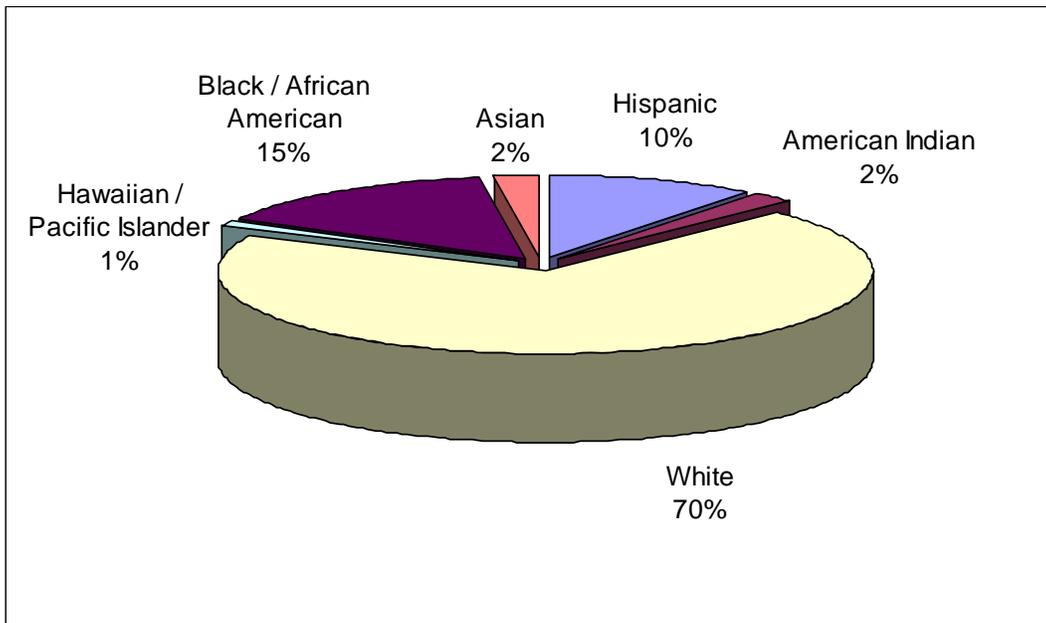


**FFY-2007: Gender**

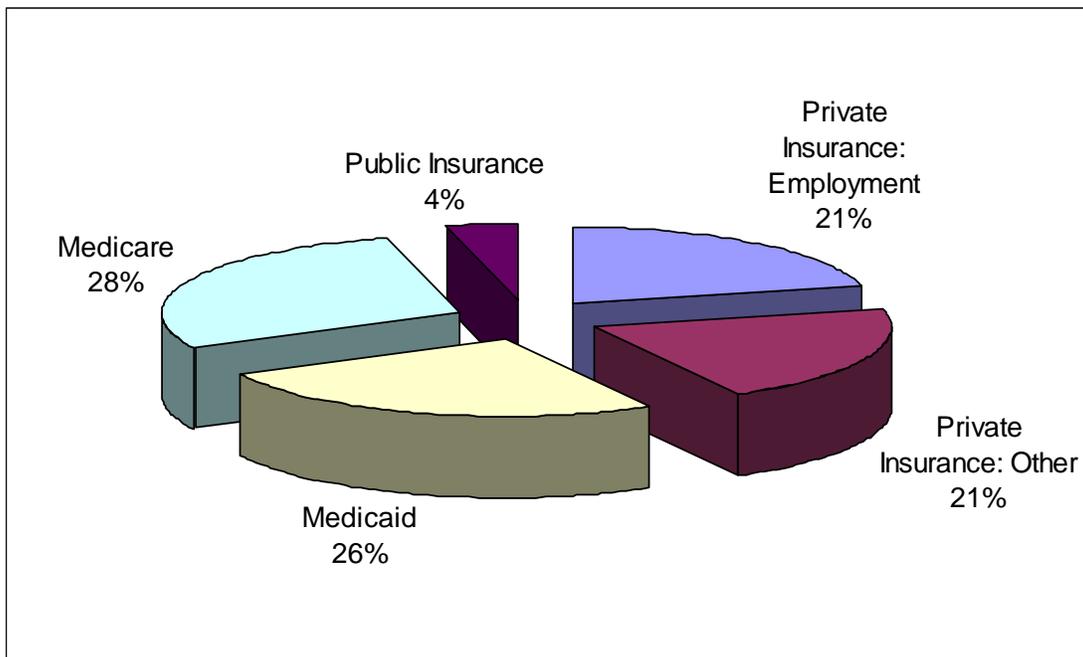


# Participants Served

## FFY-2007: Ethnicity Breakdown



## FFY-2007: Medical Insurance Breakdown



# Nevada State Rehabilitation Council

## Focuses on Needs

During Federal Fiscal Year 2007, the Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) and Rehabilitation Division Administrator Michael “Mick” T. Coleman took proactive steps to perform a “comprehensive needs assessment” for the State Plan.

Nevada contracted with the Interwork Institute of San Diego State University to perform the assessment. Included in the review was:

Analysis of Consumer Service Data: This was a review of Nevada Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) consumer demographic data to determine: the characteristics of the Division’s consumers; the types of services provided to consumers; and, rehabilitation outcomes consumers derived from participating in the program.

Analysis of Census Data and Available Data Sources: This was a comparative review of: general population indicators to determine population trends; the VR applicant trends between 2000-2005; and, how well the Division’s caseload compared to known state, regional and national populations.

Focus Group and Interviews: Focus groups were held in northern and southern Nevada including separate group meetings with individuals with disabilities, disability-related community agency staff and Rehabilitation Division staff. Individual interviews were also held with community agency and division staff in northern, southern and rural Nevada.

The focus of the meetings/interviews were based on six subject areas:

- ◆ Mobility: the ability to move from place to place.
- ◆ Communication: the ability to use, give and/or receive information.
- ◆ Self-Care: the ability to plan and/or perform activities of daily living.
- ◆ Interpersonal Skill: the ability to establish and maintain appropriate interactions with others.
- ◆ Work Skills: the ability to learn or perform work functions.
- ◆ Work Tolerance: the ability to sustain the required level of work function.

The results of the “comprehensive needs assessment” were presented to the NSRC in October where the information was discussed as a prelude to the development of goals, objectives and strategies for the FFY 2009 State Plan.

NSRC Chair Gary Cottino was encouraged by the extent of participation. He said “ This year’s needs assessment delved deeper and touched more individuals with disabilities than in the past. We learned a lot and can now focus our efforts on areas most in need.” Administrator Mick Coleman was impressed with the commitment of participants and their willingness to share their thoughts. He stated “The joining of people with different perspectives to discuss Nevada’s challenges and to look for solutions made it worth while.”

# Customer Satisfaction



Each year, the Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) contracts with the Nevada State University System to perform consumer satisfaction surveys. In FFY 2007, NSRC selected two surveys: an overall consumer satisfaction survey; and, a transition student survey.

The University of Nevada, Reno observations of overall consumer responses were:

- ◆ Generally positive and happy with their counselors and other Rehabilitation staff members;
- ◆ Less happy with the choices they had in the kind of services and programs available;
- ◆ Frustrated with the ability of the VR program to help them locate or keep a job;
- ◆ On the other hand, an overwhelming majority would recommend the VR program to others;
- ◆ The 53% of the respondents were employed-consumers that were generally more satisfied than those not employed;
- ◆ Clients living in Rural Nevada were most satisfied while those living in Southern Nevada were the least satisfied;
- ◆ No substantial differences based on gender or age.

The observations of the of Transition Student consumer responses were:

- ◆ Transition students were generally satisfied;
- ◆ Most unemployed consumers cited attending school or unable to find an employer that could accommodate a disability as the reason they could not find a job;
- ◆ Men were more likely to be employed;
- ◆ Rural students with current employment were more likely to have an adjusted diploma;
- ◆ Overall satisfaction with the high school program was high;
- ◆ Overall satisfaction with job placement and job coaching services was high; and,
- ◆ Consumers from Southern Nevada were more likely to be satisfied.

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE



**Osman Bangura** became deaf at a young age from an illness contracted in West Africa, his home of origin. In 2006, he arrived in the United States as a refugee after fleeing for his life. He had never had a job and was not familiar with American Sign Language. It was necessary to use two sign language interpreters to communicate with him in his native sign language. His rehabilitation counselor coordinated services on his behalf resulting in his obtaining a job at Target. He began working for them in August of 2006 as a warehouse stocker. VR funded an interpreter who accompanied him to the job to help him through his training period. After the training, he was able to manage well on his own. In November of 2006 he received cochlear implant surgery. Target provided him with alternative leave with pay while he recovered because they were impressed

with his positive job performance and work ethic. Osman returned to his job after the surgery and is now able to vocalize some of the words learned in speech therapy.

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**Martin Maryott**, a graduate of North Carolina University with an Engineering degree, moved to Las Vegas in 2001 after securing a job as a senior estimator. Shortly after moving, he was terminated due to issues related to depression. Martin was facing one of the lowest periods of his life because he was mourning the loss of both his wife and job. He was unable to pay rent and was challenged having a disability since birth involving his left arm and hand. While receiving services from Southern Nevada Mental Health, he was referred for vocational rehabilitation services. He was provided counseling that assisted in building his self-esteem, he was provided with construction estimating and natural speaking (dictating) software packages and job development services. He was initially placed in a small company as a stepping-stone to his present job. Although it took years for Martin to “get back on his feet,” he is now a successful Senior Estimator. When asked if we could share his story, he responded, “Yes, I’m completely convinced that your system works. I am so grateful you did not give up on me. I was at the lowest point in my life.”

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE



**Cory Melaerts** has a learning disability and experiences mood swings. She had a sketchy work history and struggled to find the right career match but Cory never gave up on obtaining steady employment. Her rehabilitation counselor worked in partnership with Goodwill of Southern Nevada to help find the right job for Cory. She was placed with Terrible Herbst's ETT Change Company where she is responsible for traveling to various work sites, paying customer cash outs, maintaining various safes and ensuring that customers are satisfied. Due to her own determination, the support of her rehabilitation counselor, and a job coach which was funded by VR she has successfully maintained employment since September 2006. Her employer reports that they are pleased with her work. Cory states, "I have come a long way to be where I am today." Because she never gave up, Cory

received Goodwill's 2007 Perseverance Award.



**Tim Downen** successfully managed two jobs as a retail supervisor and phone company customer service representative until he was involved in a severe motor vehicle accident, which left him paralyzed and required that he use a wheelchair. Due to the time needed for extensive medical treatment he left his employment. However, after his treatment he was eager to return to work, to be around people, to improve his life and to live more independently. Due to Tim's strong past work history he was able to demonstrate excellent customer service skills during a work assessment arranged by his rehabilitation counselor. VR assisted in finding him a part-time job at the Mirage as a room reservation specialist. VR also coordinated services to modify his vehicle and complete driver training so he could get to and from his job. Tim's positive outlook is a motivating force for everyone he meets. He is excited to start this new chapter in his life and feels that "it is another stage of good things to come."

Tim was honored with the 2007 Carl Haag Spirit Award from Goodwill Industries as a true example of how hard work and determination can lead to success.

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE



**Lauren Moeller** experiences a physical disability due to multiple sclerosis. When she graduated from high school VR assisted her in attending college, however she found that higher education was not for her and chose a career as an esthetician. VR assisted in coordinating services and paying for tuition at a local cosmetology school where she successfully completed the course and received her license. Soon after, Lauren began working at the Cutting Room Salon. She needed to build a clientele so she worked two days a week and supplemented her income with another part time job. After eight months, Lauren has built up her clientele base to allow her to work four days a week and has quit her other job. She says she loves her new career and is grateful for all the help VR provided.



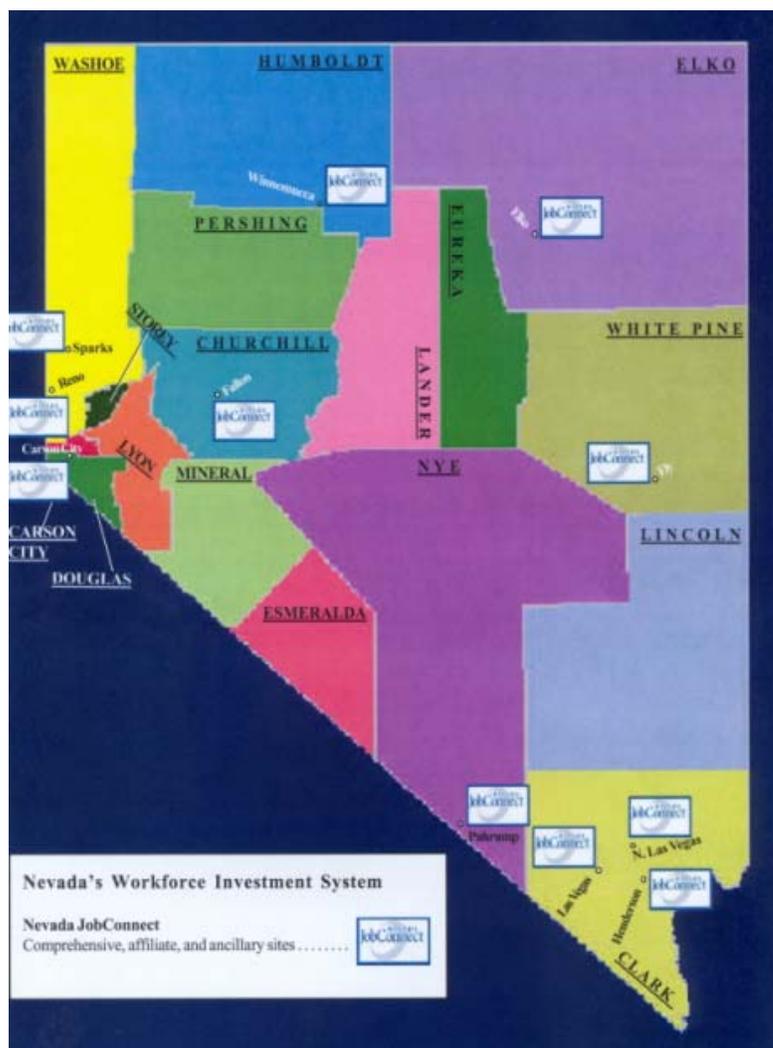
**Susan Wiley**, a Reno senior citizen, had not been able to work for several years and could no longer work in the same field. She visited a NV JobConnect and was referred to the Rehabilitation Division. After taking an aptitude test she found that she wanted a job that would allow her to make a difference in people's lives. Her rehabilitation counselor arranged for interviews with non-profit agencies and gave her guidance on interview techniques. Ultimately, she found employment. While on the job, the counselor arranged for Susan to take an eight-hour Spanish class so she could better serve her clients. She loves her job and says "I would not be where I am today without the efforts and support of my Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor..."



**Thomas Archuleta**, a Transition Student of Churchill County, who has a hearing disability, entered the program as a Senior in High School. He was given assistance to attend Western Nevada Community College where he graduated with a degree in machine tool technology in 2007. His counselor arranged for tuition and supplies, tutors, interpreters and job placement. He is now working in Carson City at Bay Swiss Manufacturing. Tom states "without their [counselor and technician] help, I would be struggling with my goals to become a successful person."

# Service Area

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.nvdetr.org](http://www.nvdetr.org)                      [www.nevadajobconnect.com](http://www.nevadajobconnect.com)



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