

NEVADA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2008



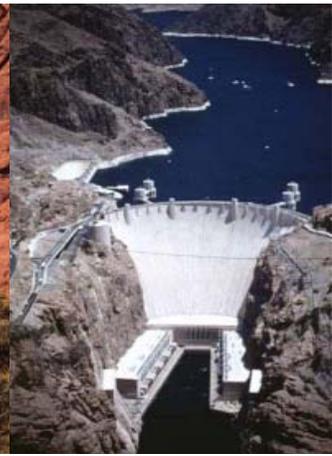
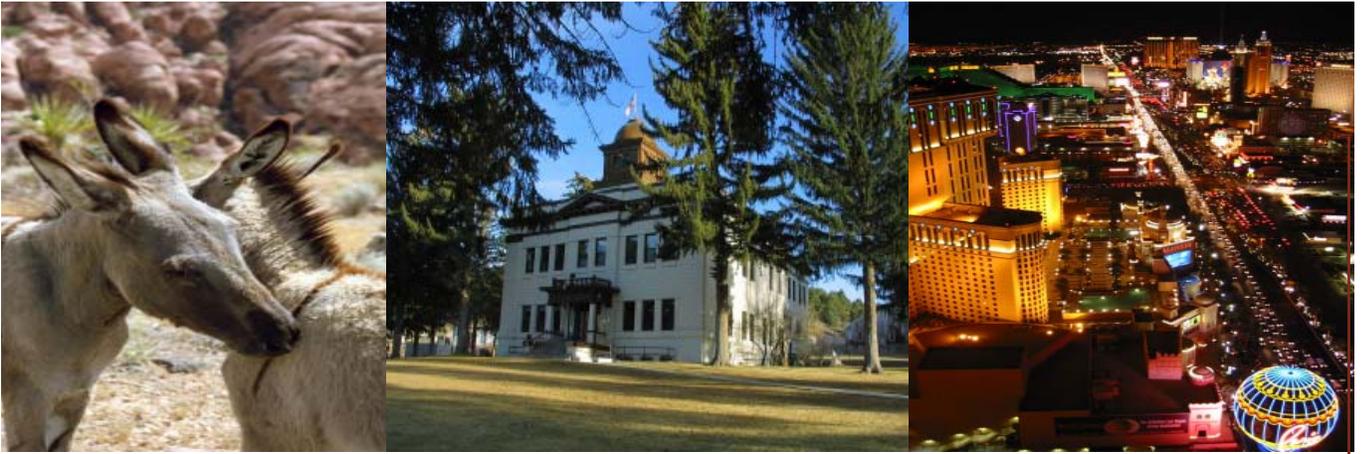


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Mission Statement

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

Deborah A. Braun
Rehabilitation Administrator

Gary Cottino
Council Chair/Business

Bonnie Dixon
Advocate

Mary Evilsizer
Vice Chair
Independent Living Program

Jimmy Begay
Native American VR Program

Jill Godin
Community Rehabilitation Program

Ed Guthrie
Business

Brenton King
Advocate

Denyse Lizer
Business

Robin Hall-Walker
CAP Director

Brian Patchett
Community Rehabilitation Program

Jean Peyton
Business

Christine Syverson
Business

Jennifer Kane
Dept. of Education / IDEA

Veronica Wilson
Community Rehabilitation Program

Kathy Treants
Parent Training Information Center

Inez Navarro
VR Counselor



Message From Council Chairman Gary Cottino

It has been my pleasure to once again serve as the Chairman to the Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC).

As the year has unfolded, the NSRC has grappled with the distressing issues of the loss of state revenues and staffing vacancies. These issues are particularly disheartening when the need for services to individuals with disabilities is growing at a rapid pace.

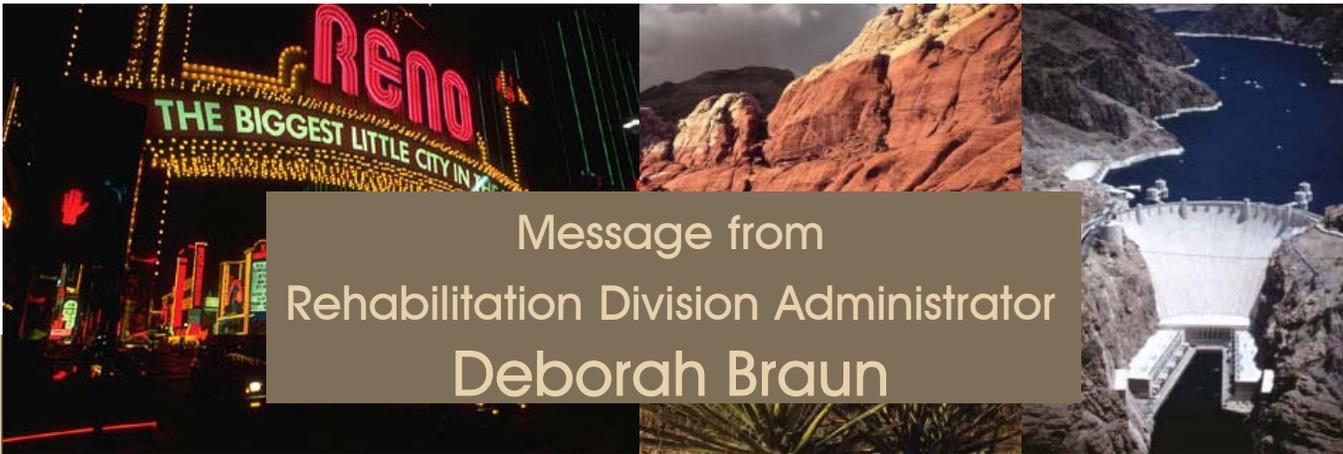
This year the NSRC has gained many new and energetic council members, and we look forward to their participation as we jointly seek to meet Nevada's vocational rehabilitation (VR) program challenges. Notwithstanding our challenges, the Council and Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation will continue its partnership, working together as a team to provide needed services to the disabled community of the State. The Council also expresses sincere appreciation to those Council members who have during the year completed their service on the Council.

I express a special "thank you" to Dr. Michael "Mick" Coleman for his years of service to individuals with disabilities in Nevada. I have appreciated my association with Dr. Coleman and his insight into the disability services programs and knowledge of the interrelationships between the various services providers, state and federal entities, and VR participants. His broad perspective and willingness to "guide and educate the Council" have made the NSRC more effective. We all wish Dr. Coleman the best in his new pursuits.



In turn, we welcome the new Administrator, Deborah Braun, to the NSRC. Having already served as the Deputy Administrator of Program Services, we will also depend upon her knowledge and abilities,

As we have in the past, the NSRC will continue its commitment to serving as a strong partner with the State of Nevada to meet the far-reaching needs of the VR program.



Message from Rehabilitation Division Administrator Deborah Braun



This year has been eventful for the Rehabilitation Division. Dr. Michael “Mick” Coleman decided to accept an offer to spearhead the Workforce Transformation Project for Nevada and has been dedicating his considerable organizational skills to meet this tremendous need. We will miss his sage advice and optimistic outlook. In July, I was promoted from the Deputy Administrator position to Administrator. I am honored to lead Nevada’s vocational rehabilitation (VR) program.

This year the Rehabilitation Division was visited by a review team from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). RSA spent a week in our fine state talking with management, Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) members, stakeholders and VR staff. During their visit and for several months afterwards, we discussed the challenges Nevada faces and developed goals and strategies for improving our services. The dominant challenge for us will be to provide quality services at a time when state revenues have decreased resulting in budget reductions.

Fortunately, our VR program is graced with VR counselors and support staff with a strong commitment to serving individuals with disabilities. The NSRC is a strong partner in our efforts to meet the need to assist an ever growing population of individuals with disabilities to attain their employment goals. I am grateful for their professionalism and support as we move forward into the next year.

Yours truly,

Deborah A. Braun



Nevada State Plan Goals

A major issue discussed during NSRC meetings in FFY 2008 included State Plan revisions. The NSRC State Plan Committee significantly revised the goals with corresponding strategies and measurable indicators to align them with the recommendations and information revealed through the comprehensive, statewide Needs Assessment and sentiments expressed in NSRC meetings. The goals are:

Goal #1:

Emphasize the employment potential of students with disabilities, and improve transition from school to work and school to post-secondary education.

Goal #2:

Extend outreach efforts toward diverse populations, specifically, eligible individuals with autism, developmental, cognitive and mental health disabilities.

Goal #3:

Extend outreach efforts toward diverse populations, specifically minority populations, represented in Nevada's workforce.

Goal #4:

Assist individuals to transition into work by the provision of quality employment outcomes, increased retention of competitive employment, self-sufficiency through accessible and equitable services and opportunities to all consumers who need supported employment services.



NSRC Roles and Responsibilities

The Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) meets at least four times a year with additional committee 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 (DETR), 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 2008, the council consisted of 16 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 consumer satisfaction; and,
- “ Submit an annual report to the Governor and the Commissioner on the status of Vocational Rehabilitation in Nevada.

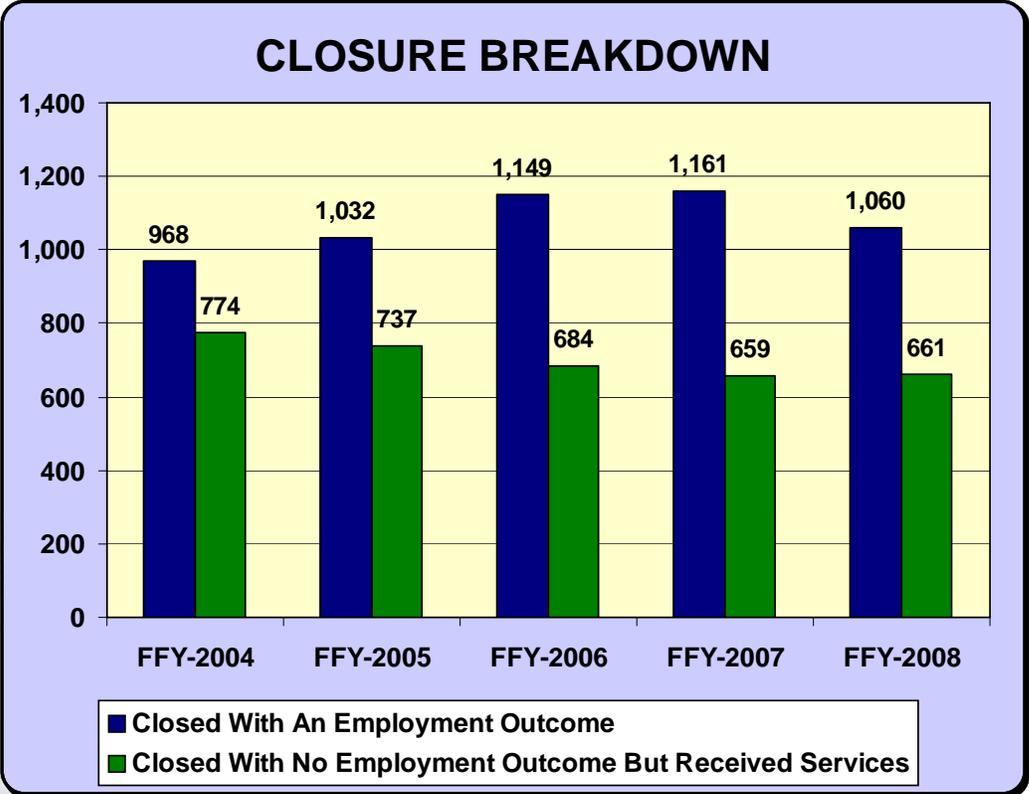




Vocational Rehabilitation

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.

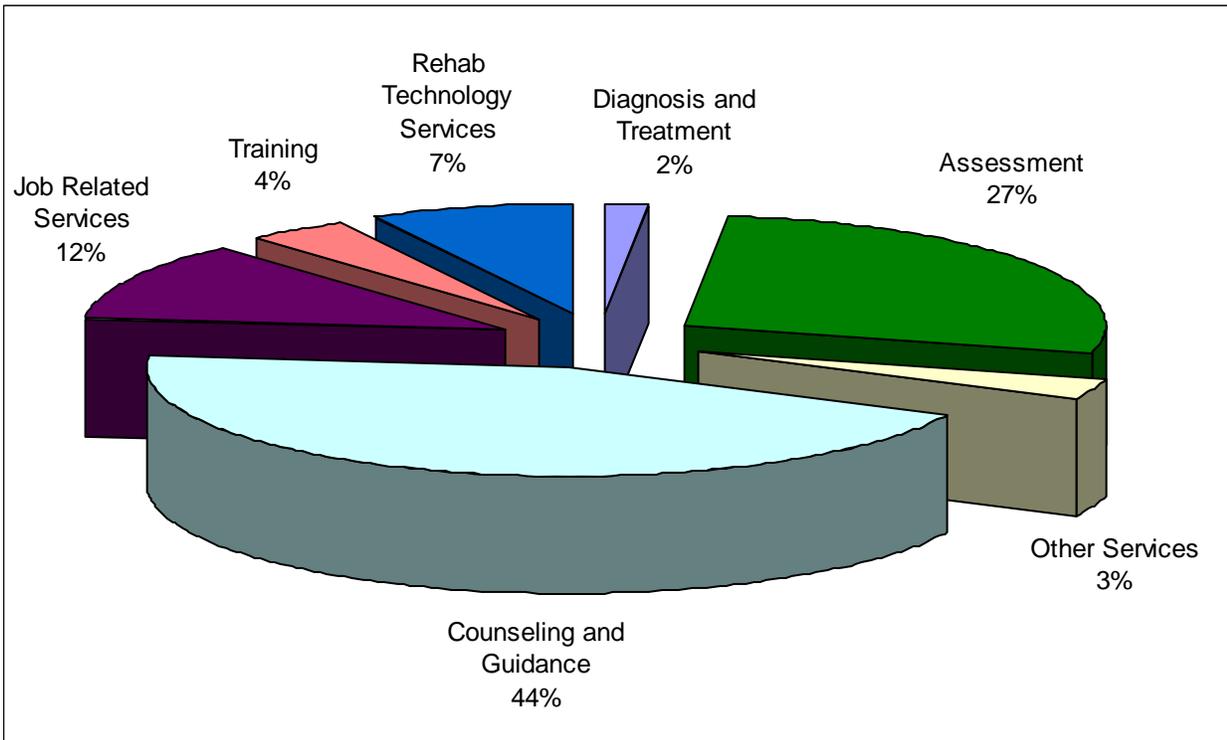
- ◆ 1,153 Vocational Rehabilitation consumers obtained employment in SFY-2008.
- ◆ \$11.06 is the average hourly wage of the consumers that are working.
- ◆ 43 percent of the consumers employed have medical insurance.
- ◆ 908 Transition Students (school-aged youth) were served.





How We Serve

FFY-2008: Services Provided by State Agency Using VR Funds

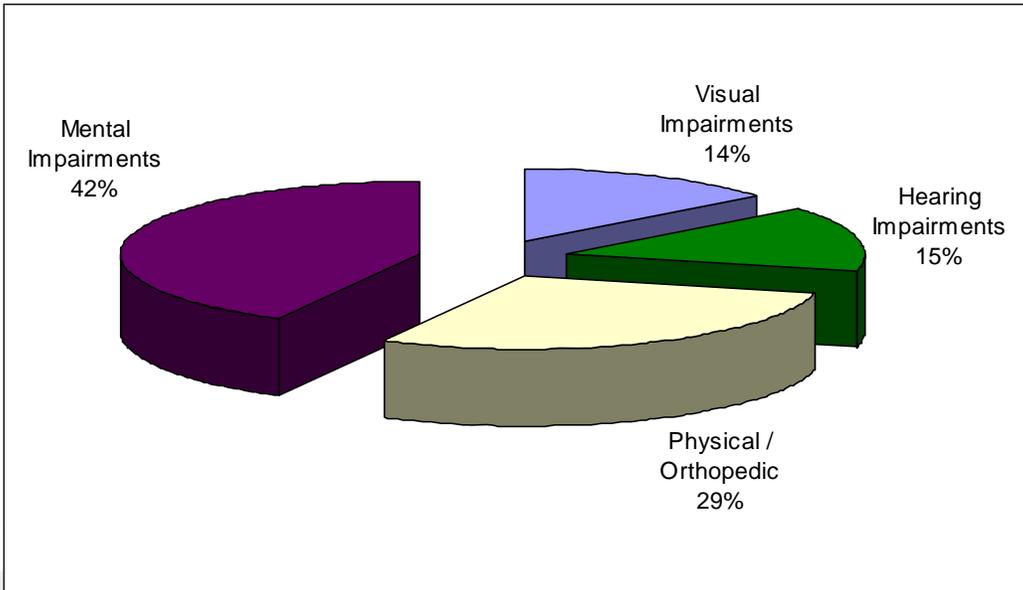


*** All Rehabilitation Division participants receive Counseling and Guidance from their Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. The sum in reference to Counseling and Guidance on the above chart refers to services from vendors outside of the Rehabilitation Division.**

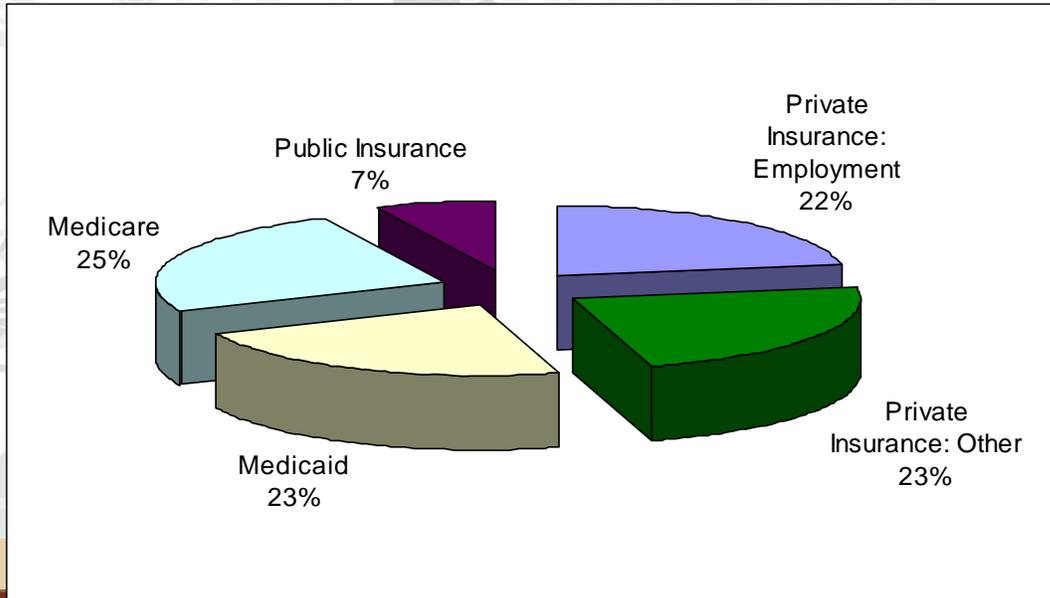


Participants Served

FFY-2008: Disabilities of those who went to work

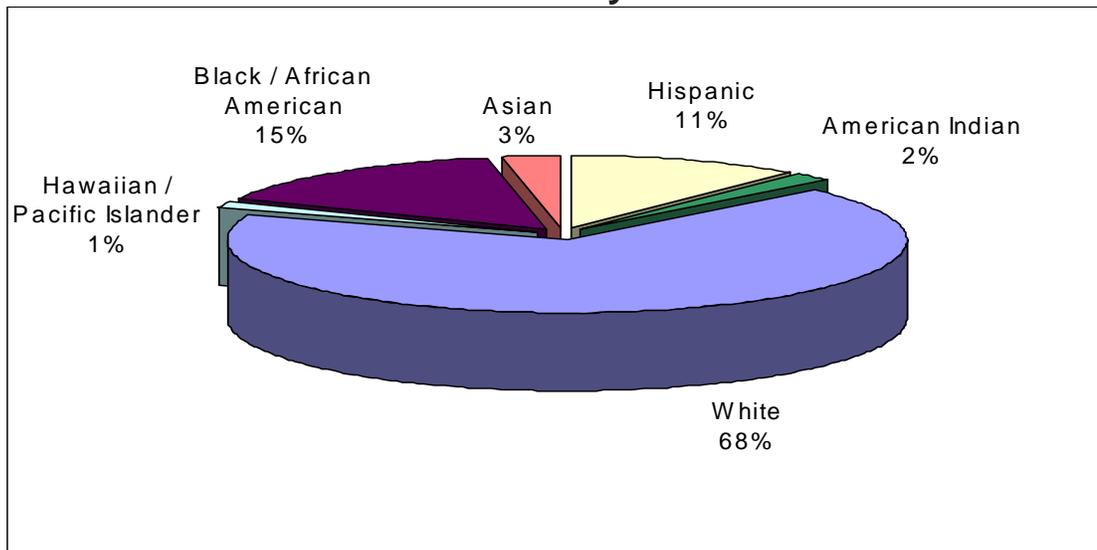


FFY-2008: Medical Insurance Breakdown

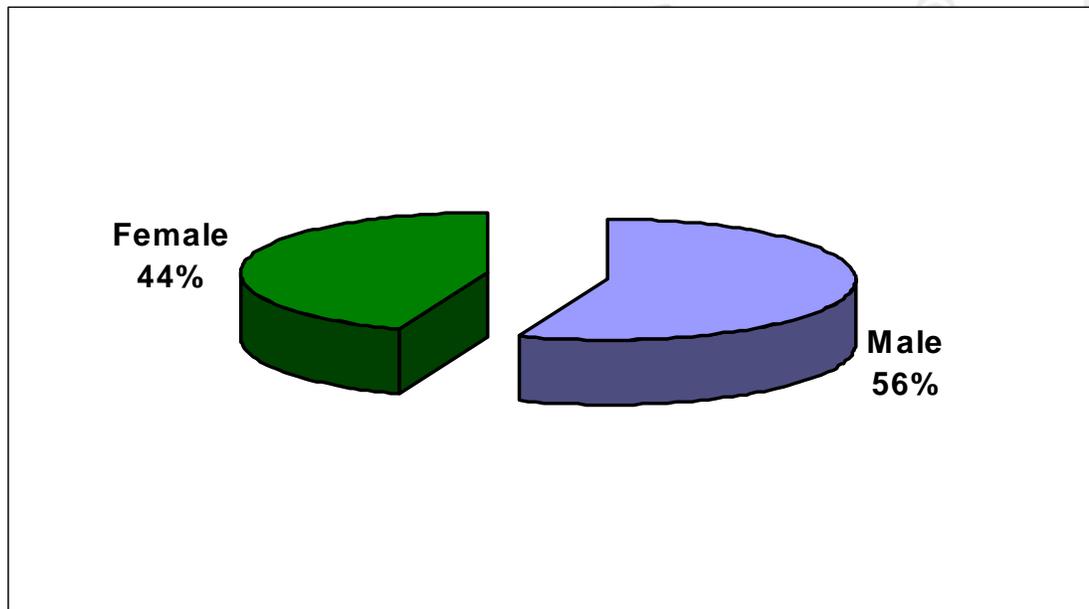




FFY-2008: Ethnicity Breakdown



FFY-2008: Gender





Consumer Satisfaction

The Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) in conjunction with the Rehabilitation Administrator contracts with an outside entity to perform consumer satisfaction surveys. In FFY 2008, the surveys were performed by the University of Nevada, Center for Research, Design and Analysis. Two surveys were performed including a survey of all participants regardless of age and the Transition Student survey. The Transition Student survey glean information about the school district services as well as the vocational rehabilitation program. Both surveys are designed to gather information to help improve service delivery.

General Participant Survey Results

- 79% would recommend the Vocational Rehabilitation program to others.
- 78% felt the counselors understood their needs, 74% said counselors were easy to contact and 84% felt the counselors treated them with respect.
- 72% of all participants were somewhat or very satisfied with the overall quality of the program's service.
- 70% were satisfied with the timeliness of services.
- 58% satisfied with the ability of the program to help participants get or keep a job.
- 55% were satisfied with the choice between providers while 67% felt they were able to choose the services they received.



Consumer Satisfaction

Transition Student Survey Results

- 89.3% of the students were satisfied with the training and most of the responding students participated in on-the-job training.
- 62% of the students that completed high school received an Adjusted diploma.
- 28% of those surveyed received a standard diploma.
- 78.8% of the students were satisfied with the program.
- 73.1% of the students were satisfied with the services and over half of the students received job placement and job coaching services.
- 34.5% of the student survey group received paid vacations from employment.
- 48.2% of the students receive health insurance from employment.
- 31.3% of the survey group receive paid sick leave from employment.
- 29.8% of the students obtained a retirement plan from their employer.
- 24.7% of the student survey group receive meals as a benefit of employment.
- 7.7% of those students surveyed work where daycare facilities are present.
- 91.3% of the students who received mobility, grooming and hospitality training were satisfied with the program.





MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Christina Pollock



Christina Pollock became blind as a result of congenital Retinitis Pigmentosa. She applied for services with the Bureau of Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired (BSBVI), seeking assistance with employment, mobility and life skills training.

Initially, Christina lived with her family although their home was located outside the zone of service for the public transportation system in Las Vegas. Determined to participate in activities, she worked with a BSBVI Mobility Trainer and learned to take the city bus. She was able to attend all of her training sessions, although this involved walking a mile to the bus

stop. Christina was working at the Blind Center of Nevada when a better opportunity presented itself. BSBVI and the Blind Center worked collaboratively with this participant and she was recruited and hired to work at Sierra Ready Mix as a Receptionist.

Christina worked closely with BSBVI's Assistive Technologist to determine necessary work site accommodations. Sierra Ready Mix purchased a new phone system and head set allowing Christina to simultaneously utilize Assistive Software (JAWS) in one ear while listening to a caller with the other. Training and technical support was provided to Christina to learn computer software programs and internet navigation which are part of the essential functions of her job.

Christina has moved into her own apartment which is closer to her job. She acquired home management skills and lives a complete and independent life. Christina exhibited the attitude of an individual who is willing to work hard to overcome barriers in order to become self-sufficient and independent.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Ignacio Aviles

Ignacio Aviles was diagnosed with a Bi-Polar Mood Disorder in 1998. It was very difficult for family and friends to accept the diagnosis since he was highly intelligent and had obtained a college degree. At that time, he was employed as an academic advisor at UNLV. He struggled with barriers to employment and infrequent employment for nearly a decade.

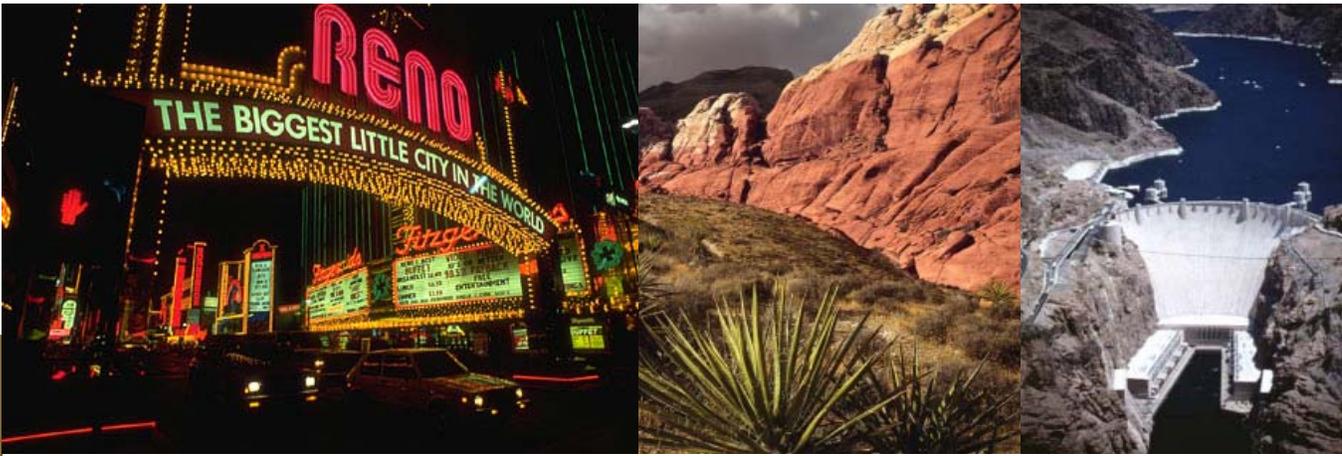
Mr. Aviles was introduced to BVR in 2002, after a referral from the Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Center (SNAMHC). Over the years, the barriers to employment affected his ability to maintain employment. In early 2006, after being on "Social Security Disability" for about two years, Ignacio felt it was imperative for him to earn an income sufficient to provide for his two daughters, when he assumed a full-time role as a single father.

With assistance and direction from the Psychosocial Rehabilitation program (PSR) under SNAMHC, Ignacio became a shift manager of the Recovery Café inside the Rawson-Neal Psychiatric Hospital. PSR and BVR teamed up to provide assistance including job counseling and guidance.

After a year, Ignacio was offered a position as Assistant Training Coordinator for Family TIES of Nevada, which is a non-profit organization serving the needs of people with disabilities. The job provided assistance and training in time management, prioritizing tasks, balancing home life and work life, and handling stress. Ignacio has been successfully employed for almost a year and has gained tremendous self-confidence.

Ignacio is a dynamic, and highly-determined individual who perceives adversity as an opportunity for growth. His inspiration rests with his daughters.



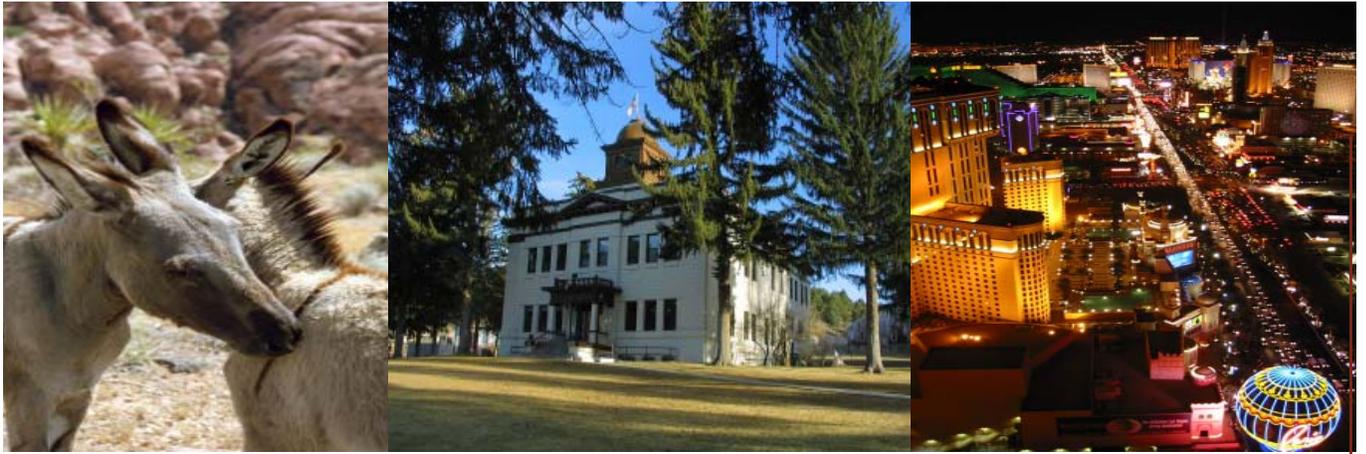


Jace Meyers

Jace Meyers was diagnosed as an infant with Soto's Syndrome. Two of the symptoms of Soto's Syndrome are intellectual and speech disabilities. Jace was referred to the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation as a Senior in high school. Jace participated in a work assessment at a Goodwill Thrift store which introduced him into the world of work. When Jace completed the work assessment, he was able to perform most of the job functions, however, Jace did not like interacting with customers due to his speech disability which created a potential barrier to employment.

BVR hired a Job Developer to assist Jace in locating a selective job placement. Jace was successful in locating employment. He was hired at Costco in the maintenance department. BVR provided a Job Coach to assist Jace in learning the job functions. The majority of his time was spent in the back of the store where he did not have to interact with customers. With the Job Coach's help Jace learned his assigned duties and was soon working independently. Jace was very happy with this position but unfortunately he was hired during the Christmas rush and was laid off after the holiday season.

With his newly acquired work experience, BVR continued to assist Jace with locating a new employment opportunity. Jace was offered a position with Albertson's as a Courtesy Clerk. This position calls for customer service and interaction, so Jace required counseling and guidance from his BVR counselor and the Job Developer in an effort to support and encourage him to try to overcome any barriers. Again, a Job Coach was hired to assist Jace with learning the job functions and to assist him with customer relations. After a couple of weeks with the Job Coach and rehearsing what he was supposed to say to customers at home, Jace was able to interact with customers with diminished fear and without stuttering. Jace has been working successfully at Albertsons for four months.



Linda Wilcox

Linda Wilcox applied for Vocational Rehabilitation services in June, 2007, due to depression, anxiety and a connective tissue disability. These disabilities prevented her from experiencing stable employment for many years due to the challenge of finding

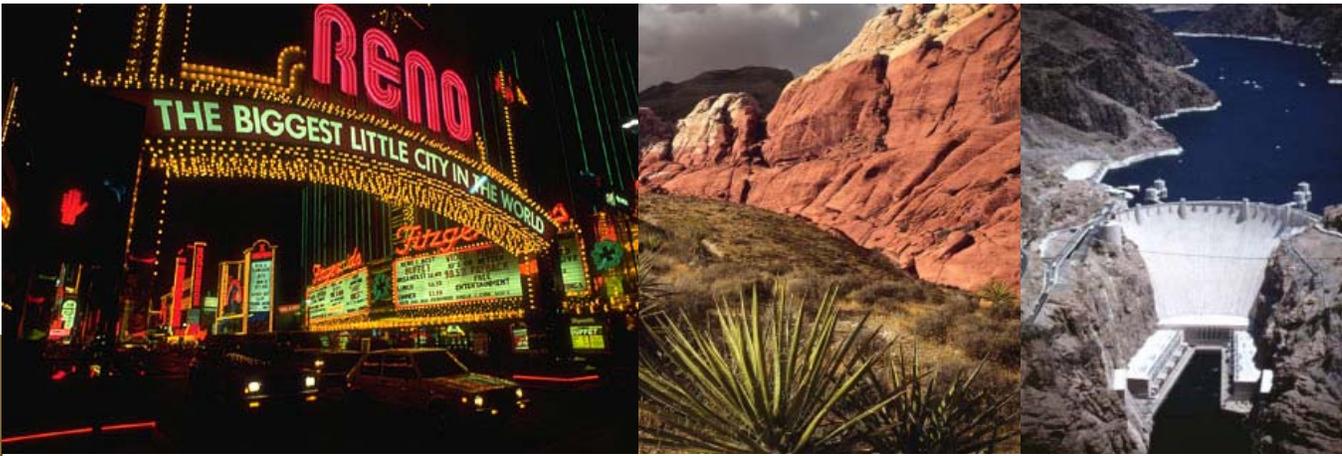


an appropriate employment setting with minimal stress and to accommodate unpredictable medical/hospitalization needs. Integral to success was finding an understanding employer willing to allow time off for doctor visits due to the connective tissue disability.

Ms. Wilcox completed a Bachelor of Science Degree in Health, Physical Education and Recreation. In addition, she completed Post Graduate study in the same discipline.

Thereafter, it was important for her to be able to apply her transferable skills in an employment setting.

The CEO of Special Needs Assistance Program (SNAP), observed Linda's potential while working with her as a Job Developer. He hired Linda in March 2008 as an Administrative Assistant. Her duties include filing, processing applications, professional planning activities, completing required documentation and job coaching. Ms. Wilcox appreciates that SNAP is a very accommodating employer and she is very pleased to be working for this organization.



Mark Valenzuela



Mark Valenzuela has been employed as a Job Coach for Westview Services since November 29, 2007.

Mark applied for to the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) for services in December 2006. His disabilities included an absence of mobility including the inability to raise his arms, head injuries involving multiple concussions from blunt trauma, back problems, severe pain, and psychological issues including depression, anxiety, insomnia, memory/concentration and hallucinations.

His previous employment as a floor installer was no longer a viable option because of the physical requirements. Mark's Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor initially had concerns about whether Mark would be able to benefit from Vocational Rehabilitation services.

Vocational, neuropsychological and community based assessment evaluations were performed at Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health (SNAMH) for a clerical occupation. Mark excelled in performance in a Community Based Assessment at SNAMH, Mark was also able to learn computer office software skills quickly.

Mark was presented with an opportunity to be a Job Coach by his Job Developer and he has been working in this position for over six months. The Job Developer who did the placement states that the employer has high regard for Mark and he appreciates the excellent job that he is doing.

Mark informs BVR how much he loves his job which entails Job Coaching of individuals with intellectual disabilities. He added he never dreamed a job like this existed and was sorry he didn't know about Job Coaching before. He also mentioned he would eventually like to train Job Coaches. Mark remains calm, well spoken, and happy, exhibiting an attitude that shows evidence of defeating previous barriers to employment.



Carson Tomicic

Carson Tomicic was introduced to the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) by his Special Education teacher at McQueen High School in Reno, Nevada when he was a Junior. Carson has a learning disability and it was questionable if he would be able to graduate without Vocational Rehabilitation services. His BVR Counselor was invited to attend his Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting and explained the program to the Academic Team.



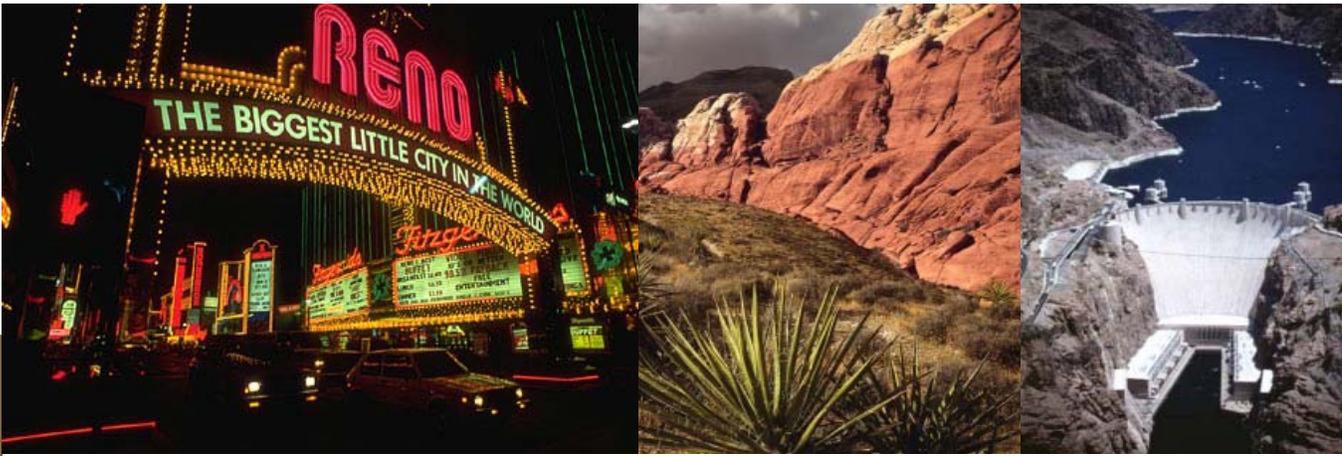
Carson and his mother expressed an interest in BVR. Shortly thereafter, Carson was found eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services.

Carson had a dream of becoming a firefighter. However, his academic performance was a barrier to Carson obtaining this dream. The BVR Counselor suggested a laptop computer might assist Carson in being able to access and review information presented in class, which facilitated improved grades.

An Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE) was developed with a vocational goal of firefighter identified. Carson began attending Truckee Meadows Community College, becoming an honor student with a 4.0 grade point average. He graduated in May of 2008.

Carson became a Certified Firefighter and was hired by the Lake Tahoe Fire Department. Carson fought his first fire in June 2008, although, he subsequently developed asthma, and his respiratory system could not handle pollen, smoke, dust, and the higher altitude.

Although Carson was not able to maintain employment due to his health condition, he was able to successfully complete High School, TMCC Firefighter Training and has been a positive role model to other students in high school. Carson will be returning to college in the near future. His new goal is to become a Game Warden.



Tim Siegel



Tim is a 34-year-old male with a learning disability including reading, mathematics, writing skills and also a right shoulder injury.

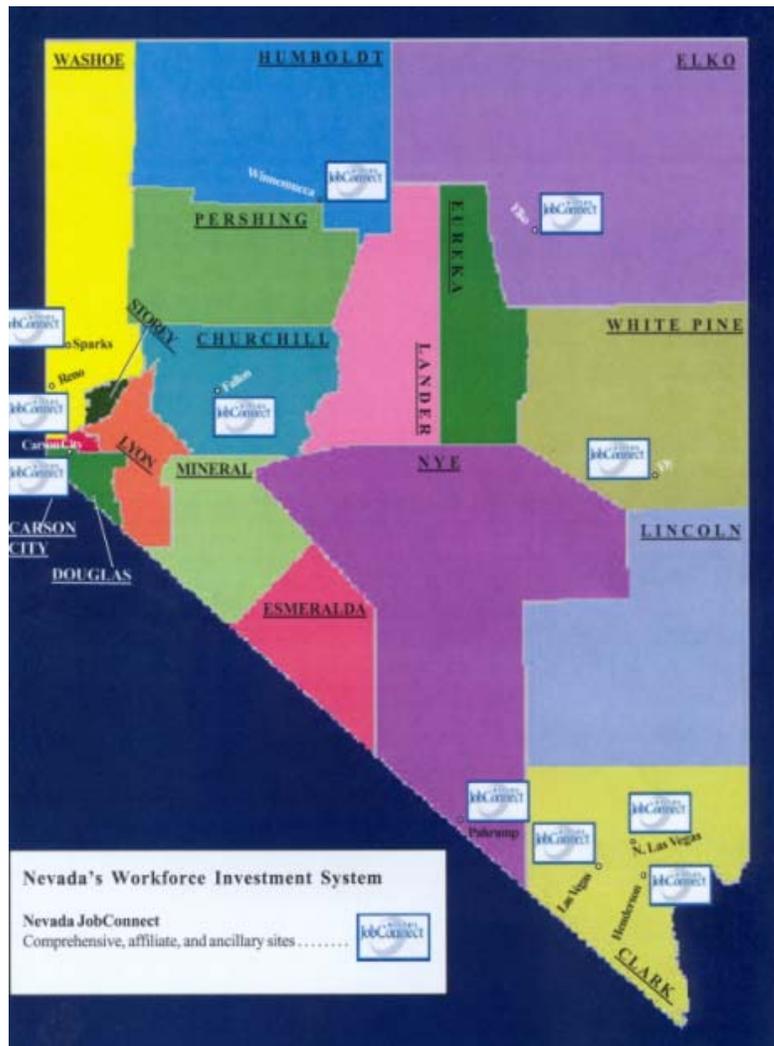
At the time of application Tim was interested in seeking employment that was not physically demanding considering his work restrictions. Tim's restrictions include no repetitive lifting over 15 lbs., pushing and/or pulling over 15 lbs. of force and he is not able to reach above his shoulders.

Tim was referred to Career Builders of Southern Nevada for Job Development and Placement and to develop a resume. Tim's Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) Counselor provided counseling, guidance and support during this time. As a result of working with Career Builders of Southern Nevada and BVR, Tim was successful at finding employment at Texas Station as a Valet Attendant.

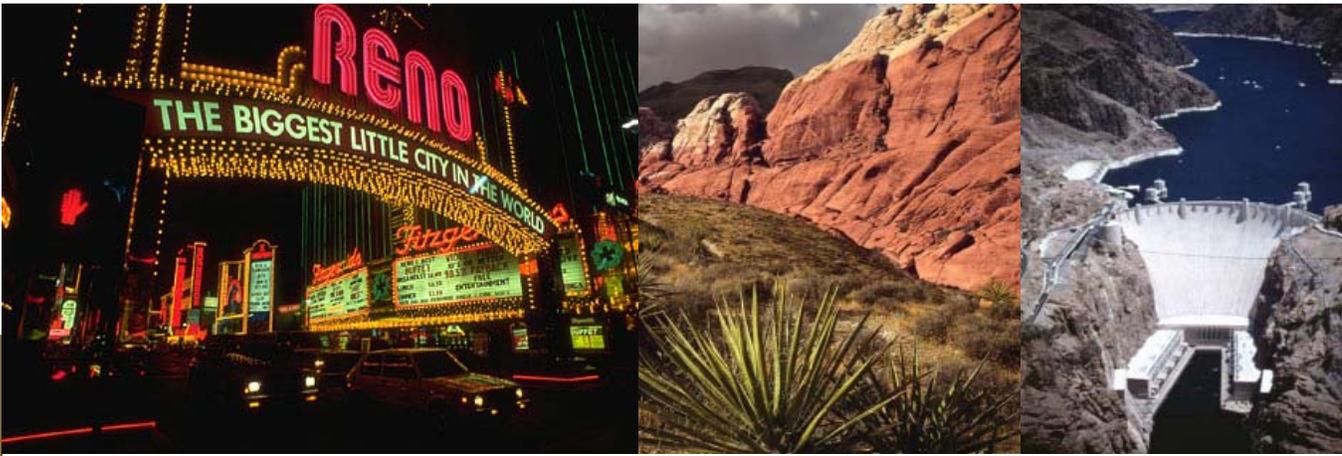
Tim started working part-time and after a month he was working full-time. Working as a Valet Attendant does not involve strenuous activity or complex instructions, therefore, given Tim's physical and learning disabilities, the position presented a positive work opportunity. Tim's motivation and hard work was rewarded with successful employment. Tim enjoys his job as a Valet Attendant and he is thankful for BVR's services.



Service Area



For Additional Information:
www.nvdetr.org www.nevadajobconnect.com



**Department of Employment, Training and
Rehabilitation
Rehabilitation Division
Nevada State Rehabilitation Council
Office of Disability Employment Policy
1370 South Curry Street
Carson City, NV 89703-5147
(775) 684-3200
www.nvdetr.org**

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