

Oregon State Rehabilitation Council 2020 Vocational Rehabilitation Annual Report





2020

Annual Report

Oregon State Rehabilitation Council

500 Summer Street N.E., E87
Salem, OR 97301-1120

503-945-6256
1-877-277-0513
Fax: 503-945-8991

All scenic photography by Ed Rutledge
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Inside cover photo: Short Beach, Tillamook County

December 2020

Honorable Governor Kate
Brown and Mark Shultz,
Rehabilitation Services
Administration Commissioner,

Thank you for your leadership during what has been an extraordinary year of challenges. It is tradition for the State Rehabilitation Council chair to write a letter to the sitting governor and report the past year's accomplishments and highlights. I'm confident the contents of the entire report will enlighten you to the details of the great works of Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) throughout 2020, which is its 100-year anniversary. Therefore, I will divert from tradition and share my personal story as a means of highlighting the value of VR services.

For the past 35 years as an occupational therapist, I have been evaluating and treating patients with disabilities of all types. My career began as a patient. When I was 13 years old, my best friend and I were burned in a freak fire accident in Wichita, Kansas, where I grew up. My friend passed away a few days later related to severe burns. I was flown to the life-saving Shriners Burn Center in Galveston, Texas, which became my home away from home for the next five years as I recovered from burns over 65% of my body. Here, my desire grew to devote my life to helping others who, like me, faced adversity beyond their control and needed a helping hand to live out their purpose, their "why," regardless of the emotional, physical and psychological barriers they encountered as they learned to live with a disability.

SRC chair's message

Over the years, Vocational Rehabilitation has been instrumental in my ability to become successful and fulfill my desire to help others. Because I was critically injured during my junior high years and required multiple hospital stays and 37 surgeries over the next eight years, my education suffered. Higher education for me appeared out of the question. Therefore, I began a search for any type of work. I was repeatedly turned down due to my physical appearance and limitations. One business owner of a national ice cream chain spent the 10-minute job interview problem solving how I could cover my scars on my hands, face and neck to "be more presentable" to customers. There, in front of her, my hope sunk. I was wounded. Some were kinder than others in telling me I wasn't what they were looking for or needed. I took my discouragement, flipped the world off and started a lawn mowing business. As it turns out, the physical labor and the Kansas heat was what I needed to heal and grow stronger. Yet my dream to help others as I envisioned seemed more and more out of reach. I felt lost in every yard I mowed. As I was approaching high school graduation, the occupational therapist at Shriners Burn Center suggested I think about becoming an occupational therapist (OT) as a career choice. He also educated me about VR services as a means to this end.

Upon return to Wichita, I met with a VR counselor. Finally! A person who understands! She was kind,

compassionate, empathetic and excelled at instilling hope. Exactly what I needed. We made a plan. I could attend college with integrated supports that she helped design. VR would pay my tuition and books. I believe in 1980 tuition and books at the University of Kansas was about \$800 per semester. She helped problem-solve and supplied resources and encouragement to help me make up my academic deficits. Most importantly, she believed in my dream and took notice of my passion and desire to succeed in a helping profession. She supported my autonomy and challenged me to not give up as college would be extremely difficult for me. She helped me enter college with eyes wide open. She was not mistaken. The college journey for me was academically challenging. With her support, I was successful. I began my OT career in Oregon in 1985 working in mental health at Dammasch State Hospital, which led to specializing in helping individuals with the life-long rehabilitation process of surviving severe brain injuries. Over the years, when my burn scars and mental scars have interfered with my ability to perform job functions, VR has willingly stepped in to assist so I can continue. I am forever grateful to VR ... In reflecting on my career, which never would have happened without Vocational Rehabilitation's assistance, my mind and heart land on this statement: I am blessed. A very good VR counselor intervened when I asked for help. I'm confident I've made a difference. I'm humbled by those who have faced adversity much

greater than my own. I'm saddened by the lack of understanding and resources and the unwillingness of some to see the potential a person with a disability possesses. This is why the SRC exists. SRC members share a vision to advocate, educate and support those who desire and need a helping hand to discover, pursue and succeed in their "why." Our continued partnership with Oregon's Vocational Rehabilitation program is not only crucial to the success of our vision and mission, but to maintaining equity and diversity in the workforce. I'm honored to serve on the SRC, and I thank you for appointing me to this role. Thank-you, Governor Brown, for your support of Vocational Rehabilitation and for helping those of us who need help be successful in career and purpose.

"He who has a why to live for
can bear almost any how."

— Friedrich Nietzsche



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Paysinger".

Steve Paysinger, SRC Chair

VR director's message

Greetings everyone,

Thank you for taking time to read the 2020 VR and SRC annual report. It is hard to put into words the challenges we have overcome this past year. At the outset of the year, we were optimistically planning a celebration of several important milestones. 2020 is the VR program's 100-year anniversary. The Americans with Disabilities Act was turning 30 years old and our very own Youth Transition Program was also celebrating a 30-year birthday.

Unfortunately, 2020 would unfold in unforeseen ways that changed our plans. The COVID-19 pandemic devastated our economy, disrupted our communities and changed the daily lives of nearly every Oregonian. The harrowing deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and others led to an important and renewed focus on racial justice across our country. Oregon experienced the most active fire season on record with more than 1 million acres of land burned, hundreds of homes and businesses destroyed and nearly 40,000 Oregonians displaced by this natural disaster. These external factors had huge implications for VR staff, our Tribal partners, vendors, employers, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners and, ultimately, for our clients.

The emotional toll has paired with feelings of empathy for our coworkers and the Oregonians reaching out to us for help in these extraordinary times. I am humbled by the VR staff's dedication and how much compassion, care and poise they bring to their jobs to help their clients reach their employment goals. Similarly, I am so encouraged to see VR successfully serve job seekers, many of whom are entering competitive integrated employment in these unique times. Our staff and clients are engaging in new and innovative opportunities and taking advantage of work opportunities and other emerging opportunities in new labor markets moving to virtual employment. We are also seeing innovative Pre-Employment Transitions Services in our evolving Youth Transition Program, where they are providing virtual job fairs, online job site tours and virtual job shadows. This is a testament to VR's adaptability and responsiveness to evolving client and community needs.

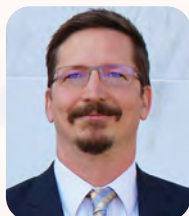
VR has a long history of adapting to emerging challenges and responding to the evolving needs of people with disabilities. Our staff are experts in identifying barriers and creating person-centered plans that help our clients pursue employment and independence. Over the past 100 years, VR has evolved in its scope and service delivery model when societal and cultural norms have recognized the moral and human benefit of empowering individuals with disabilities. With the challenges of 2020, we yet again have had to consider a new path forward for service delivery. Mark Schultz, the commissioner of the Rehabilitative Service Administration, recently noted that more than 75 percent of the 78 VR programs are using a hybrid model, where

services are provided both remotely and in person. My belief is that VR will overcome all these current challenges and be more responsive to consumer needs.

The VR program is in a unique position to be able to work with job seekers with disabilities in a new paradigm. While many of the employers around the world are shifting the way they conduct their business, we are seeing emerging opportunities for people with disabilities. Many are entering a workspace of virtual platforms. The benefit of this could be a universal design approach that creates more accessibility for VR clients to participate in the labor force in ways that were not considered before the pandemic. We are embracing and proactively addressing equity to create an anti-racist program that provides culturally responsive services to Oregon's diverse population. We are actively learning from the challenges of 2020 to continuously improve our program.

2021 will undoubtedly be another exciting year for VR with new challenges and new successes. It will be the first year of the next 100 years of serving people with disabilities. We are excited to embark on this journey together!

Sincerely,



Keith Ozols
Director, Vocational Rehabilitation

Ed Rutledge Photographs

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Success stories

Focusing on ability

In these profiles, you will meet people who focus on their abilities – not their disabilities.

These remarkable people are determining their future as they work through challenges with help from the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

Be prepared to be amazed.

Working together, Donny and his team find success

The adage “It takes a village” may sound trite. In the case of Donny Long and his Medford Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Cheryl Timeus, it’s definitely true.

Donny has many disabilities. His mom, Diane, said he had unsuccessfully filed for Social Security disability benefits for years. “We finally heard about Vocational Rehab and made an appointment. It was totally worth the wait,” Diane said. “Cheryl is totally awesome and has gone above and beyond to help my son.”

Donny applied for VR services in early 2019. He was 28 years old and had only held two jobs. Each job lasted a day-and-a-half. Cheryl was a new Vocational Rehabilitation counselor (VRC). In fact, Donny was her second client.

VR services are available to any Oregonian with a disability having difficulty getting or keeping a job because of disability-related barriers. Cheryl started by getting an accurate picture of Donny’s conditions. Then, together, they identified how those conditions were affecting Donny’s ability to get and keep a job.



“Coming into Voc Rehab, I was just worried that this was going to be another failure for me,” Donny said. “I haven’t ever been able to hold down a job in the last 10 years, and I really never felt I was valuable.”

Donny completed many VR assessments including motivational interviewing (MI) card sorting activities that helped stimulate meaningful person-centered conversations between Donny and Cheryl. Motivational interviewing is an approach that attempts to move an individual away from indecision or uncertainty and toward finding motivation to make positive decisions and accomplish established goals.

Cheryl connected Donny to other resources. He created an Imatchskills.org profile. Danny attended WorkSource Rogue Valley’s employment readiness workshop for foundational skills. The workshop included classes such as communication in the workplace, customer service and emotional intelligence, assessing career strengths, resume and cover letter writing, interviewing skills, workplace culture, and action planning. He also scored a silver on the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). The NCRC measures and certifies the essential work skills needed for success in jobs across industries and occupations. By the end of the workshop, Donny had completed his employment portfolio and practiced mock interviewing with Cheryl.

Donny’s job goal was to work in retail, but he also had no teeth, which could be a problem when working with the public. Donny obtained dentures

through the Oregon Health Plan.

“After about six months, Donny became more confident in his abilities and hungry for employment,” Cheryl said.

Cheryl connected Donny with Job Developer Eric Acosta when Donny was ready to look for work at the end of 2019. “Donny’s involvement in the process was not what I expected,” Eric said. “He followed up on everything that was asked and went above and beyond. The transition from where we started to where he is today grew quickly.”

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Cheryl and Donny revised his plan to include on-the-job training (OJT).

Eric connected Donny with a retail position at Blackbird Shopping Center, stocking shelves and assisting customers. Donny began working 12 to 16 hours each week. He completed his OJT successfully July 31, 2020, and was hired as a full-time permanent employee the next day.

“Donny has been an excellent addition to the Blackbird team. He shows up every day to work with a smile on his face and ready to complete whatever task is at hand,” Blackbird Manager Tyler Quitt said. “On a personal level, I’ve had the opportunity to see a dramatic change in his attitude and outlook. I’m so grateful to have been part of his journey. I foresee him as being a long-time employee here at Blackbird.”

“My counselor was awesome, and I learned so much. She and other people like my job developer, Eric Acosta, really lifted me up,” Donny said. “My

boss, Tyler Quitt, really helps lift me up too. It’s been an awesome experience. I never would have thought I would be where I am today.”



Paulina Peak, Newberry National Volcanic Monument

John works remotely from home during COVID-19 pandemic

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Oregon, John Bertrand's support team moved quickly so his work wouldn't be interrupted.

John has worked for [Providence](#) for more than 25 years. He is currently a learning development clerk on the e-learning team. John works on special projects, sets up trainings and helps with grading classes.

John, 50, lives at home with his mother, Carol. Although most of his team works remotely, John went into the office every day – until COVID-19.

"I used to have a caregiver at work to help me with personal needs," John said. "The caregiver would help me with lunch and going to the bathroom."



John's keyboard is on his screen and controlled with a cursor on his forehead.



John Bertrand with his work set-up at home

John has worked at Providence for 26 years and knows his job well. Mer Stevens, with provider [Community Access Services](#), said most of the services were centered on making sure John had the technology to do his job from home.

“John really has an expert grasp on his tasks and the nuances of his position,” she said. “We were able to provide the supports to allow John to use his tools. Coaches supported by moving and finding documents for him to work with and with activities of daily living (ADLs). His home office was beautifully designed to meet his needs – he can control the lighting, the door and the temperature from where he sits, and he really seems to enjoy showing off his tools!”

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Amel Karaselimovic has supported John for more than five years. He said when John has needed an upgrade in his supports and technology, VR has stepped in to help.

“VR assisted with training on the speech generating device,” Amel said. “He has a specialized power chair that is connected to everything in his room. We reopen his file each time he needs a major upgrade in supports, but luckily it is streamlined because John has worked so long.”

John uses a hands-free cursor on his forehead to control his computer through his head movements. Through the cursor and a keyboard on his screen, he can send emails, do video conferencing and any other work required on the computer.

John’s supervisor, Gail Gubser, said the e-learning team at Providence is more essential than ever. The team is responsible for all classes, orientations and trainings for more than 150,000 Providence employees.

“Learning used to be carried out separately, with all the hospitals doing their own thing,” she said. “Now our team manages all of it centrally. One of John’s duties is going into the system and cleaning out old classes that need to be retired.”

John worked in an office before COVID-19 and enjoyed the social aspect of work. He said he misses seeing coworkers and friends every day.

“I like my home but it’s getting old,” John said, referring to working from home, something many people can relate to right now. “I miss my coworkers and the office.”

John works 28 hours per week. When he first started at Providence, it was before the Employment First movement. His mother, Carol, said John was a strong self-advocate.

“Back then, people with John’s level of disability weren’t expected to work,” she said. “He wrote letters to every single company he wanted to work for, stating what he was able to do and asking for a chance. A gentleman at Providence named Don Brown contacted John and gave him an interview. It made all the difference.”

Gail said John is a popular member of the team. Many employees at Providence ask to work with him on their projects.

“We have virtual get-togethers, happy hours on camera,” she said. “John participates in all of those.”

John said he likes that Providence has given him new challenges over the years and has supported him to keep taking on new work. His advice to people with disabilities: Keep pushing to get the job you want.

“Keep a positive attitude,” he said. “Don’t give up, no matter what anyone says.”

John’s employment team includes Services Coordinator David Tom, with Clackamas County Developmental Disabilities Services, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Amel Karaselimovic, and additional supports from provider Community Access Services.



Story by Angela Yeager, communications officer for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

Focused job development helps William land dream job

As more companies work to hire people with disabilities as part of developing an inclusive work culture, clients in the Vocational Rehabilitation program benefit.

In 2019, VR Counselor Mariah Boyd, in North Salem, received a call from such a company. Microsoft's Autism Hiring Program had offered William Gilreath a position but needed some accommodation assistance.

Unfortunately, the opportunity fell through before VR could finalize the needed services. But now that he was Mariah's client, William and Mariah worked to find him a position in his chosen field.

VR counselors often work with contracted job developers to help identify and secure a job for the client. "There were some challenges finding the right job developer for William. We were fortunate to connect William with Carla Paradine at Exceed," Mariah said. "We also needed to do some evaluations to secure William's diagnosis of autism, which would help ensure the right focus for our work together."

After they overcame those hurdles, William started applying for jobs. "He was extra motivated to get the job he really wanted, aiming high and letting nothing stand in his way!" Mariah said. By the time he accepted the job as a senior software engineer, working remotely with VMware, a company in Palo Alto, California, he had submitted more than 290 applications.

William credits his successful employment to his job developer, Mariah, as well as to the Neurodiversity in the Workplace (NITW) program that connects qualified autistic candidates to jobs that fit their skills and VMware's neurodiverse hiring policies.

"William had been through so many interviews that he wrote an essay on the experience," Mariah

said. "It outlines how employers can improve their interviewing processes to make it more inclusive for people like William, who need certain environmental and communication accommodations to be able to perform at their best."

William says, "During one interview, I almost had a meltdown doing the code for a 'brute force' string search, and my NITW job coach, Joe, jumped in and suggested I take a 15-second breather to gather my thoughts. So NITW during the coding interview was a great help as well."

As talented as William is in coding and using technology, he says his next goal is to "get a smartphone to join the 21st century!"

William's essay on interviewing is available at <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/EMPLOYMENT/VR/SRC/Documents/Perspective%20of%20Autism%20William%20Gilreath.pdf>.



Heather Lynch uses and trains others in Motivational Enhancement Group Intervention

In 2013, Anya Sheftel created Motivational Enhancement Group Intervention, or MEGI.

Anya was curious about how combining the evidence-based counseling method “motivational interviewing” with current transition practices could support meaningful conversations about work for transition-age youth with disabilities. She worked with six schools in Lane County and 132 students with disabilities. In 2014, she and University of Oregon colleagues published results that showed a positive change in students’ self-determination, vocational skills, self-efficacy and vocational outcome expectations.

Years later, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor Heather Lynch is at the forefront of using MEGI to help Oregonians ages 14 to 21 explore work. Since 2015, Heather trained and consulted with Anya Sheftel, Ph.D. Heather is currently the main trainer and supervisor of special education staff, transition specialists and VR counselors who use MEGI with their students.

“The focus is career exploration and development, but not through the usual lens,” Heather said. “I am less interested in the ‘what’ about work and more interested in the ‘why.’”

Through 12 sessions, conversations allow a young person to think about work and career differently. It’s not just about a paycheck — but how a job fits into a person’s life, what it means to them and how past experiences can inform their goals.

“It’s all strengths-based,” Heather said. “Students need to know how to advocate for themselves, as well as navigate systems. This process helps them create a story for themselves.”

The group approach is essential to the success, Heather said.

“Peer relationships at that age are very impactful,” she said. “They have an opportunity to build connections and become inspired by what they are hearing from their peers.”

MEGI is one of many Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) that Oregon VR offers.

In addition to her work as a VR counselor, Heather spends her time traveling Oregon to conduct trainings to transition teachers, special education teachers, other VR counselors and others who want to learn how to use MEGI. She trains approximately 30 people per year.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Heather has shifted to virtual and added new facilitators. She uses Zoom breakout rooms for smaller group activities. Heather and other facilitators also hold one-hour monthly Zoom sessions called MEGI Innovation sessions for facilitators to meet and share ideas.

Josie Shindler, a youth transition specialist at Bandon High School, said MEGI has helped her students.

“I was able to find a correlation between student success and my MEGI group,” she said. “They were prepared for the process of seeking employment and have stayed employed.”

Josie feels MEGI helped her communicate better. “I noticed that my communication with students became more thoughtful and productive.”

Heather continues to track student outcomes pre- and post-MEGI. 2017 and 2018 student participant measures showed a positive change in students’ self-determination, self-efficacy and vocational outcome expectations.

“This is my passion,” she said. “This is about helping students hope and dream and give them confidence to take those first steps and find their voice.”

For more information on MEGI, go to the Youth Transition webpage at <https://ytp.uoregon.edu/content/motivational-interviewing>.

Story by Angela Yeager, communications officer for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).

Empowering Oregon's Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Lindsey's story

If you ask Kathy, Becky and Lindsey what makes their partnership work, they would each point to the others. Creativity and respect are evident in their work together.

Kathy Eckert-Mason is a counselor specialist with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) in Salem. Becky Emmert coordinates the Living Independently for Empowerment (LIFE) Program, supporting VR consumers.

Kathy and Becky have strong backgrounds in the needs of people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and are passionate about youth in transition from high school to college and work. Together, they find ways to ensure youth do not fall between the cracks.

"I tend to think big picture, saying, 'Here's a need we need to work on,'" Kathy said. "Becky is the detail person. She's really good on the ground with the students and staff and coordinating the minute details like work sites, arranging interpreters and getting activities on school schedules."

Kathy and Becky work with high school seniors and transition students, assisting them in exploring career options.

Many of the youth attend the Oregon School for the Deaf in Salem. Some come through the Willamette Education Service District (ESD), which provides in-school support to students experiencing disabilities in the mid-Willamette Valley. Kathy and Becky partner closely with ESD staff, explaining VR services and helping staff know how and when to refer students to VR.

Lindsey Stevens was a junior at Cascade High School in Turner when she first heard about VR. "A Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing specialist from ESD recommended I see Kathy because I had no idea what to do after high school," Lindsey said.

Kathy brought on Becky to help Lindsey with career exploration.

"We started doing research on equine therapy because I love horses and wanted to connect working with horses and people," Lindsey said.

After several informational interviews, Lindsey decided that equine therapy really wasn't a good fit for her.

Becky took Lindsey to Western Oregon University in Monmouth for a tour. There she learned about accommodations and American Sign Language classes.

"She was in awe of all the options," Becky said.

Lindsey had done well in high school despite not having accommodations available to her. But she says she struggled greatly internally, had to work harder than her peers, and missed a lot of information.

One of the informational interviews Becky arranged was with a VR counselor who has hearing loss and cerebral palsy, similar to Lindsey.

"Seeing it was possible for her to be a VR counselor was a turning point for Lindsey," Becky said.

Working together has been rewarding for Kathy, Becky and Lindsey.

Becky and Kathy said that Lindsey's experiences will make her an amazing counselor.

Lindsey's response? "It's because of the people who helped me."

With VR's help and new job, Leslie helps others

Leslie started working with VR in July 2018. Before she worked with VR, she struggled with her finances and relied on SSI Disability for her income. She has a congenital condition and uses a power chair 100% of the time. She has a joint condition that makes it painful for her shoulders to support her arms. As a result, VR knew she would need assistive technology once she obtained a job in the area.

Leslie chose to pursue a human services position. VR connected her with a job developer and submitted applications for upcoming jobs. In June 2019, the Work Incentive Network hired her as a work incentive coordinator. She had to pass a series of exams to qualify for the job, learning the impact of work not only to SSA benefits but also to other local benefits such as SNAP, TANF and OHP. She passed all of her exams and has been working through Grants Pass's Handicap Awareness and Support League (HASL) Center for Independent Living.

Adaptive Technology Providers in Grants Pass evaluated Leslie's needs and recommended adaptive technology that allows her to use her computer with an eye-tracking system. Leslie also received an adaptable rolling floor stand for her to easily access her laptop computer and equipment.

Leslie also needed a replacement wheelchair cushion that VR was able to purchase for her.

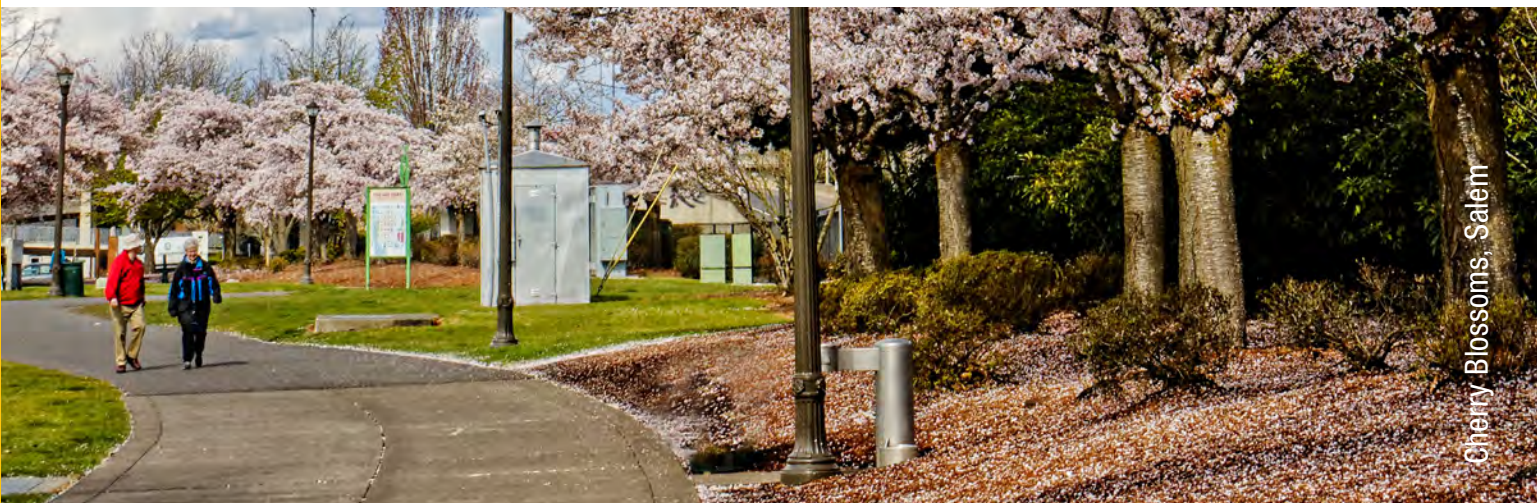
Leslie says her biggest barrier to finding employment was "finding a potential employer that would give me a chance and see me instead of my chair."

The thing Leslie likes most about her job is the feeling she gets when "someone's life has been changed when I can provide them with the information they need to succeed." Leslie recognizes her strengths in being an analytical thinker as a benefit for this kind of work.

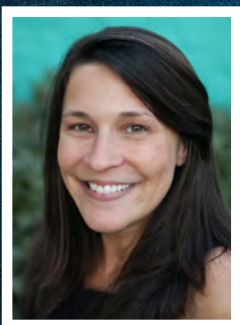
"My goal right now is to adjust to working remotely and try to help as many people as I can," Leslie says. "COVID has caused my position to become completely remote. I have recently set up my home office. There is an adjustment period, but I am working through it."

VR has successfully closed Leslie from services. She now works full-time for the Work Incentive Network.

Submitted by Katie Willis, M.A.
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Rogue Branch



Cherry Blossoms, Salem



SRC new member profile: Bridget Dazey

Since joining Clackamas Workforce Partnership (CWP) in December 2008 and assuming the role of executive director in 2014, Bridget's focus has been on individuals with barriers to employment, WorkSource services, sector strategies, equity, and community engagement.

Bridget's career pathway began in Iowa, with experience in the criminal justice system, substance abuse prevention and intervention. She also worked with children on the autism spectrum and behavior disorders. Bridget has led the CWP team through two strategic planning processes, helping to guide principles of equity and advancement, sector strategy for the needs of the county workforce and a shared goal of workforce prosperity across Clackamas County. Described by her peers as tenacious, strong-willed and highly motivated, Bridget leads a respected, well versed team of workforce experts in Clackamas County.

Bridget received a master of social work from St. Ambrose University, as well as a bachelor of social work from Loras College.



Committee work groups

Although the COVID-19 experience has put a dent in some of the original goals we set at the beginning of the year, the SRC subcommittee work groups have remained active and focused. Below are some of the projects and activities they have been working on in 2020.

- **Evaluation and Recommendations:** Heidi Dirkse-Graw volunteered to chair this committee in the first half of the year. In March, after the Governor issued the stay-at-home orders, Heidi led a discussion of how to collect data to assess the effect of COVID-19 on VR consumers and community providers. Committee members and the Executive Team helped create two surveys.

They first measured how layoffs, job retention and ability or desire to return to work was affecting VR consumers during the crisis. VR counselors helped collect this data. We learned:

- » Before the lockdown: 2,386 consumers were searching for work and 776 consumers were employed.
- » By June 1, 1,128 consumers were looking for work, 428 were employed working regular hours, 139 were working reduced hours, 158 who were employed had been laid off and 221 had been temporarily laid off or furloughed. At that time, 1,436 consumers were choosing not to look for work due to the COVID-19 crisis.
- » More than 550 consumers haven't been reachable since the Governor enacted stay-at-home orders and VR services moved to mostly virtual.

The second survey's purpose was to gain a better understanding of how the community rehabilitation provider network was being affected by work closures, delays in retention and placements, and their financial ability to continue providing services to VR consumers. We learned that the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) was simultaneously working on a larger provider survey and provided these data points

for us to evaluate. Of the 107 vendors replying to the survey that contract with VR:

- » 83% had made modifications to serve consumers
- » 74% receive more than three-quarters of their funding through ODHS contracts
- » Approximately 16% would be able to continue services if there were interruptions to funding, and
- » 27% have a plan in case funding was interrupted.

Assessing these results allowed the SRC to discuss with VR leadership how the program could support this vital network to ensure longevity of services as people reenter employment phases after restrictions are lifted. By July 7, VR worked out a temporary vendor fee increase to support the important and necessary partnerships with community rehabilitation providers serving VR consumers.

- **Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) + Consumer Satisfaction Survey:** This consumer-focused committee collaborates with VR to administer the Consumer Satisfaction Survey and assist with the CSNA. Emily Purry is the chair of this committee. They were developing the Consumer Satisfaction Survey and creating a contract when COVID-19 started. The committee decided to postpone the original plan to issue the survey in October 2020 because of changes in service delivery, the need to train staff on virtual services and the significant confusion predicted with the change in service delivery. The survey is now scheduled for spring 2021. In the meantime, we have interviewed a contractor, explored different mechanisms to conduct the survey and requested prior authorization of use of funds through RSA to cover this project.

The CSNA began in mid-2019 and the needs assessment contractor was chosen at the end of

2019. Planning to implement the data collection began in January 2020. Dates for stakeholder focus groups were ready to begin when the Governor issued the stay-at-home orders. As 2020 wore on, the committee renegotiated tasks to complete the CSNA. In fall 2020, the CSNA contract was finalized and work to complete it resumed. The plan is for the CSNA to be complete in spring 2021.

- **SRC/VR Policy, Budget and Legislative**

Committee: This committee was extra busy. They met twice a month to work on updating policies and put new practices in place around providing virtual service, record keeping, maintaining electronic and hard copy files, how to gather needed documentation for intakes, and how to pay providers during the COVID-19 response. The list of policy accomplishments is on page 20–23.

At the August quarterly meeting, the committee kicked off its goal of starting legislative advocacy efforts in the last half of 2020. By the end of the year, the SRC provided several letters of advocacy to state legislators and federal congresspersons to support the VR program and consumers.

- **Outreach Committee:** This committee has three work groups: Business Networking Outreach, Youth Council, and Membership.

- » **Business Networking Outreach:** The original plan for this year was to create a space for regional networking with WorkSource and local businesses during the quarterly meetings by inviting local community partners and VR staff together and offering facilitated networking discussions. The SRC was not able to travel after the February meeting. As a result, the Business Networking Outreach Work Group created a similar space for stakeholders, staff and partners to have a panel discussion at the Annual VR In-service Meeting held in August, virtually. They will continue to work toward holding regional networking meetings at the SRC quarterly meetings when people can travel and safely meet.

- » **Youth Council:** The Outreach Committee observed that the SRC did not include anyone from the youth-aged population receiving Pre-ETS and transition services. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and the Oregon Governor's Office encouraged the SRC to seek youth aged SRC members. There is no membership age limit. The committee explored the idea of a "Junior SRC" and created the Youth Council Work Group. Consulting with other organizations that focus on this age group taught us how to structure this effort for success. As of September 2020, the committee recruited youth participants for the creation of the Youth Council.

As of September 2020, the committee was recruiting youth participants for the creation of the Youth Council. Their perspective and experience should lead to providing consumer voice to the SRC around Youth Transition VR programs. This work group hopes to build regional youth councils and have members from each apply for appointed SRC membership to bring the voice of the youth in their respective regions to VR programming.

- » The **Membership Work Group** updated the application for SRC membership recruiting materials and application. It also networked with the Oregon Department of Human Services Office of Equity and Multicultural Services around increasing diversity on the council. All current council members and interested recruits were invited to a September training on the Rehabilitation Act and roles and responsibilities of the SRC.

- **Executive Committee:** The SRC chair, vice chair, committee chairs and co-chairs make up this committee. It shares high-level information with and from committees. As the governing body of the SRC, the committee meets monthly with the VR director, provides input and recommendations to VR and reviews final drafts of SRC projects before submission to make sure the council is represented. The SRC chair appoints committee chairs and co-chairs.

VR-SRC Policy Legislation and Budget Committee report

Policy updates and information about public hearings can be found at <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/EMPLOYMENT/VR/Pages/Policies-Rules.aspx>.

For the 2020 federal fiscal year, the joint VR-SRC Policy, Legislation and Budget Committee reviewed the following policies, procedures and other transmittals and processes:

October 2019

- Draft Application and Eligibility: Social Security number must be provided (update VR-IM 15-09 11/16/2015)
- Draft updated VR-IM 19-04 SPOTS Purchase for Client Services (administrative; courtesy share)
- VR-IM 19-10 Universal release and ODDS referral (9/20/2019) (administrative; courtesy share)
- VR-IM 19-12 Purchase of Costco, Amazon Prime and other club type memberships prohibited (requested 10/22/2019) (administrative; courtesy share)
- VR-IM 19-13 Re-release of 20-hour recommendation for supported employment planning and implementation for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.
- Records Retention Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) final draft
- Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment began

- Updated Mediation and Hearing forms update; translations to additional languages discussed
- Public meetings complete for Division 20 and 150; public comment period ended 10/15/2019

November 2019

- Updated VR-IM 19-14 Car rental procedure change (eff: 11/21/2019)
- Draft VR-PT 19-03 Hearing Aid Test Requirements
- Discussion VR-PT 19-04 Updated Competitive Integrated Employment
- Discussion VR-PT 19-05 Students exit school with Individual Plan for Employment
- Draft Division 10 Fiscal (initial discussion)

December 2019

- Introduction to new Policy & Training manager, Howard Fulk
- VR-PT 19-03 Hearing aid purchase process changes
- Joint transmittal from ODDS and VR on Competitive Integrated Employment (transmittal date is January 2020)
- Discuss transmittals under consideration:

- » Further defining “qualified personnel” for the purposes of determining disability and barriers to employment, particularly for students with disabilities for determining eligibility and developing the Individualized Plan for Employment

- » Investigation of qualifying disabilities for vocational rehabilitation services

- Review Service Questionnaire update. Request question to inquire if the applicant is a “federally recognized member” of the Native American, Alaskan tribes or Native Hawaiian
- General discussion of Pre-ETS Services
- Confirm Policy Committee meetings for the upcoming year

January 2020

- Discussion about the use of Zoom for future meetings
- VR-AR 20-03 PRE files in ORCA (administrative; professional courtesy share)
- VR-AR 20-01 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Competitive Integrated Employment Toolkit; discuss questions fielded about this action request

- Review message for service providers about qualified rehabilitation facilities
- As requested, added a question to Oregon VR Service Questionnaire about the applicant being a federally recognized member of a Tribe
- Process set to make permanent OAR 582 Divisions for Vocational Rehabilitation previously out for public review; OAR 582 Division 190 Services and Training to Employers was the first submitted
- Client Information Form was the suggested title for a form to replace the Service Questionnaire (draft 1/17/2020). Follows ORCA flow of information to be gathered; conforms with REAL ID requirements for the state. Uses plain language

- Supported employment and IPS (adding information for the field about this service collaboration)

February 2020

- Committee renamed VR & SRC Policy Committee to show that VR has incorporated SRC into decision making; demonstrates VR efforts to collaborate with the SRC
- Notified that Policy Q&A meetings with all VR staff were reinitiated 2/19/2020
- OAR 582 OAR 582 Division 190 Services and Training for Employers made permanent as of 02/03/2020
- OAR 582 Division 1 Definitions submitted to make permanent on 2/14/2020. Final 2/28/2020
- Discussed VR-AR 20-04 ID and Employment verification (Draft

2/21/2020; updates). Provides answers to additional questions from the field and clarifies previous questions. (Updates VR-AR 19-05, 9/6/2019 issue date)

- Updated documents: Instructions for hearing aid purchase and flowchart of the process (draft)

March 2020

- Reviewed draft of updated VR-AR 19-08 Hearing Aids are rehabilitation technology. OAR has changed regarding testing for persons needing testing to gain hearing aids. Need to submit these purchases for prior approval changed as of October 2019 with new RSA information; further reviewed at second meeting in March
- Discussion about the process of making Oregon Administrative Rules permanent; described



Tulip Fields, Marion County

public meetings for rules and what they entail

- Discussed question related to ORCA codes; these codes are different and separate from the definitions that are in OAR 582 Division 1 Definitions for Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation
- Discussion of Oregon Legislative meetings for 2020
- Discussion of how the agendas for the meetings are developed
- Dialogue about the need for identification during the applicant intake meeting and why it is important in the VR process; RSA does not require an applicant to provide a Social Security number (SSN) to access services
- Extensions to eligibility were discussed

April 2020

- SRC Chair offered information on the purpose of the meetings
- Discussed changing method to hold meetings from Skype and telephone to Zoom and telephone; a revised listing of meetings was shared
- VR-AR 20-04 Virtual meetings
- VR-AR 20-05 AFPs (and four attachments)
- Discussion of further development of self-employment policy
- Share RSA FAQ WIOA VR COVID-19 document released 3/26/2020 from the Department of Education

- Follow-up question regarding the need for prior approval for any items purchased during the period of eligibility; VR did not submit a question on this issue during the comment period that ended 4/8/2020
- Budget updates
- VR-AR 20-06 Eligibility and IPE extensions
- VR-AR 20-07 Virtual intakes
- VR-AR 20-08 Interim paying AFP guidance (courtesy share, administrative)
- Outline of VR-PT 20-02 Signature options and use (electronic signatures); verbal acceptance options; issues around setting up a contract for electronic signature software
- Discussion of internet availability in rural areas for persons and students with disabilities and general needs of persons with disabilities in rural areas particularly with respect to COVID-19 impacts
- Discussion of general collaboration between Oregon VR General and the Tribal VR programs

May 2020

- SRC Chair offered information on the purpose of the meetings
- Budget: Hire of Research Analyst 4
- VR-IM 20-02 Draft update on request for SSN

- VR-AR 20-09 Required orientation, intake and application forms—final
- VR-AR 20-08 Paying AFPs electronically (administrative, courtesy share)
- VR-AR 20-07 virtual intakes—final
- Electronic signatures: RSA reportedly stated that guidance will be forthcoming on this; nothing has been shared

June 2020

- SRC chair offered information on the purpose of the meetings
- Budget report: Research analyst announced. Budget narrative is complete and budget build has started. The budget reduction exercise (related to COVID-19 impacts) completed; there has been no federal response to a question about waiver to carry forward unused funds from this fiscal year to the next
- VR-IM 20-02 Updates VR-IM 19-11 SSN Expectation: Applicant SSN Validation. Rescinds VR-IM 19-11 with additional information
- VR-PT 20-03 Official paper file and ORCA electronic documentation

July 2020

- SRC chair offered information on the purpose of the meetings
- Budget update
- VR-AR 20-10 COVID-19: Interim Operational Guidance: Signatures on documents and record retention

- Updated: VR-PT 20-03 Official paper case service record and ORCA documentation of case notes and email communication clarification
- VR-PT 20-04 Warranty Payment
- OAR 582 Division 115 Subminimum Wage is permanent
- COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) from VR and ODDS Employment Policy
- First draft of VR-AR 20-12 Non-mainstream medical service
- Draft summary of the SRC Committee activities for the 2020 calendar
- Discussion about job developer vendors and update to their contracts
- Dialogue about revising vehicle modification policy and procedures
- Conversation about dispute resolution requests made to Disability Rights Oregon by VR participants through the Client Assistance Program (CAP)
- Assuring legislative discussion included in the meeting
- Changes to the electronic meeting software to conduct the meeting

Note:

Since the start of 2020, the following Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) for Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation have been made permanent:

- VR-AR 20-12 Use of Alternative Medical Treatments. Non-traditional Medical Services for Restorative Services
- Revision of VR-AR 20-08 COVID-19 Interim Operational Guidance: Interim Guidance on Paying AFPs in Response to Executive Order 20-12
- Fulfilling the expanded responsibilities of VR & SRC Policy, Legislative & Budget Committee
- The VR & SRC Policy, Legislative & Budget Committee role and how SRC members can support it
- OAR 582, Division 190 Employers Training and Services (permanent as of 2/3/2020)
- OAR 582, Division 1 Definitions (permanent as of 2/28/2020)
- OAR 582, Division 20 Dispute Resolution (permanent as of 3/6/2020)
- OAR 582, Division 72 Supported Employment (permanent as of 3/31/2020)
- OAR 582, Division 100 Order of Selection (permanent as of 6/8/2020)
- OAR 582, Division 115 Subminimum Wage (permanent as of 7/17/2020)

August 2020

September 2020



Beach Grass, Tierra Del Mar

2020 State Rehabilitation Council activities

- Welcomed three new members at the February quarterly meeting: Cecilia Fiorillo from Oregon State Hospital (OSH) and former VR counselor Mike Franklin from the Department of Education and Matt Serres from CAP.
- Helped to finalize the Combined State Plan.
- Made appointments to talk with Oregon legislators about the VR program and successes.
- Wrote letters of support to the RSA about Oregon VR program's needs during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Created surveys to gather information about how COVID-19 stay-at-home orders are affecting VR consumers.
- Collaborated with VR and ODHS around surveys for providers and their impact around the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders.
- Provided input and recommendations on how VR could support vendors and community rehabilitation providers (CRPs) to stay open and serving VR consumers through the COVID-19 crisis that affected so many people's employment status and goals.
- Started efforts to create a Youth Council to help bring the youth consumer voice to the SRC for those receiving VR services.
- Adapted to virtual quarterly meetings, making them available to a wider audience.
- Collaborated with the Oregon Disabilities Commission to host the 30th-year celebration of ADA rights.
- Business Networking Outreach Work Group collaborated with the VR In-service Planning Committee to facilitate a breakout session to educate and encourage employers about the benefits of using VR services and hiring people with disabilities.
- Opened the invitation to Tribal VR directors to attend and participate on the Policy, Budget and Legislative Committee.
- Members of the SRC presented on topics of their expertise at the VR In-service Training.
- Welcomed two new members to the council at the August quarterly meeting: Bridget Dazey from the Clackamas Workforce Board and Brenda Dennis from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Supported Employment Program.
- Interviewed a consumer survey contractor to perform the Consumer Satisfaction Survey and made requests to RSA for funding approval.
- Brainstormed about how to gather consumer voice in the absence of a communication system and not having in-person meetings.
- Held annual training for new and experienced members as well as prospective members.
- Brainstormed and collaborated with new VR staff on how to maintain the VR/SRC partnership's roles and responsibilities to work together on ongoing projects.

February meeting topics

The SRC started using the new quarterly meeting format with workgroups meeting in the morning and re-convening in the afternoon to hear reports from VR admin staff. New members Cecilia Fiorillo, Matthew Serres and Mike Franklin received votes to be accepted as council members. Topics discussed include plans for the 100-year anniversary of VR and 30-year anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. New hires on the VR management teams were introduced. The regional and branch managers provided local office updates. Bylaw updates that reflect the meetings' and committees' new structure were reported out. It was decided to move the August quarterly meeting to the second week of August because of conflicting schedules with the VR

in-service conference. Burger King on Geary Street in Albany, Marley's Monsters eco-shop, Courtyard Marriott Corvallis, Inavale Farm, and Supported Employment Services received Employment Partner Awards.

May meeting topics

This was the first virtual quarterly meeting held on Zoom and hosted by Western Oregon University. We started with a reminder of what it means to be the consumer voice and partner with VR from the State Rehabilitation Council-Vocational Rehabilitation Partnership Under WIOA guidebook. Keith Ozols gave the VR director's report that included hearing from admin staff about how operations have changed since the Governor's stay-at-home orders in response to the COVID-19 state of emergency. VR services are now offered in a tele-service, virtual style using phone, email, video calls, webinars and the mail service to share documents and have appointments. State agencies worked together to allow for staff to work at home. This included providing technology tools and workstations needed for teleworking that also supports the added needs of childcare and education during this time. RSA did not provide guidance on continuing service to persons with disabilities in a pandemic. Oregon VR cooperated with other state VR programs to ask the Department of Education to request waivers on mandated performance levels and spending requirements. A Zoom contract is in the works that will allow all the privacy and accessibility features that ODHS and VR need. VR is holding monthly all staff broadcasts to keep everyone informed and

communication flowing. The Policy Team is working hard to update policies and guidance on working in virtual settings with different tools.

August Meeting topics

The SRC and VR continued discussion about the impact of the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders and VR consumers and program needs. SRC members voted in Bridget Dazey and Brenda Dennis as council members. VR staff presented data on how VR services are being delivered and how VR contractor partners are able to meet consumers' needs during this time. SRC members worked in groups to make plans for 2021. Annual elections resulted in Steve Paysinger as the chair and Susie Calhoun as the vice-chair. The Outreach Committee and the Evaluation and Recommendation Committee need chairs. Lynn Wiles, Heidi Dirkse-Graw and Elisha Kirsch resigned from their positions. The Governor has asked that all state programs do an exercise with a 3.5% state budget cut. Director Keith Ozols and Operations Team members are working on how to address these budget needs.

November meeting topics

The VR Administration Team updated about virtual intake e-signature capabilities and the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) program being used for VR clients to find work. The VR Administration Team also discussed budget cuts and how they may affect the VR program. VR is confident they

can manage the budget cuts without impact to service delivery or staff. The VR training team is working hard on creating and delivering training to address new policies and procedures for virtual service delivery. SRC member workgroups broke into four break-out rooms: one for legislative planning, one for budget planning, one for the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, and one for the Youth Council. SRC members voted in Ed Cortez from Trendsitions, an Employment First affiliate in Pendleton, OR, and Neal Narayan, a disability advocate from Portland, as new SRC members. The SRC acknowledged Gary Chiaravalli for his six years of service on the council as he terms off. He is planning to continue as an ad-hoc committee member. The SRC also acknowledged Ted Wenk for more than 12 years of service to the SRC in the Consumer Advocate Program role.



121 Tribal VR

I would like to report that being a member of the SRC has been informative and challenging. It has provided growth of knowledge with our partners and stakeholders through new relationship building practices.

As the 121 representative, I have been involved with the Policy, Budget and Legislative Committee (PBLC), taken part in the State Plan, Outreach Committee and been a member of the Executive Committee. The past year has been a whirlwind of change. We began with looking at ways to strengthen our committees and prioritize their goals and what we will be working on in the next few years. This started with the SRC members' two-day strategic planning training last fall where we agreed on a more efficient restructure of our committees and meetings. This would provide time for all the committee members to participate in the committee work for a half-day in the morning and, in the afternoon, attend the SRC meeting. We put this format into place with two meetings, face to face, to begin working through the new process when COVID-19 made us regroup and figure out how to meet as committees and hold the SRC public meetings virtually.

The challenges have brought us closer as we rallied and met twice virtually. We worked efficiently and creatively determined to keep moving forward in hopes of meeting face to face again in the fall and winter. Each member of the SRC provides insights into the bigger picture. Gathering to work together better serves both our communities and the state to deliver information and services. Through everyone's dedication and insights on YTP, PWS, education, business partners, equity, integration and employment — to name a few — the comprehensive disabilities services for Tribal and non-Tribal citizens we serve across Oregon is humbling.



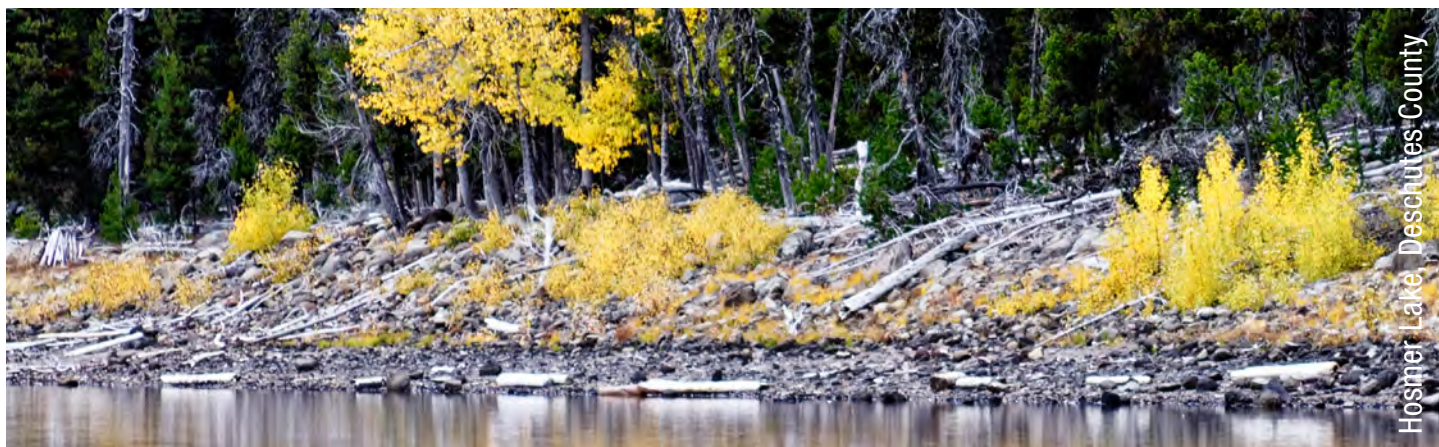
SRC new member profile: Brenda Dennis

Brenda Dennis currently works for the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) in the Adult Mental Health Section as the statewide coordinator for Supported Employment, Assertive Community Treatment, and Mobile Crisis.

Previously, Brenda worked in the Legal Affairs Department at OSH where she represented the hospital on matters related to patients' inability to provide informed consent for significant procedures. Before joining OSH, Brenda coordinated Oregon's statewide certification program for forensic mental health evaluators at OHA. Brenda also administered the federal Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) grant, providing services statewide to individuals who have serious mental illness and are currently experiencing homelessness.

Brenda worked for 15 years at the Oregon Department of Corrections in a variety of capacities including Inmate Services manager, correctional counselor, classification manager and mental health specialist. Brenda has also worked as an intensive psychiatric case manager at the Portland Veteran's Affairs Medical Center and as a case manager in community mental health.

Brenda regularly writes and blogs on topics of leadership and organizational change. She is a graduate of Willamette University and studied geriatric mental health at the University of Washington; she is also the current chair of the Oregon Board of Licensed Social Workers.



My Tribal VR (TVR) colleagues are invited to every SRC meeting and included on the agenda to share their program updates with the state's local office updates. This has provided many opportunities for everyone to start conversations, network, collaborate and be better partners to work and bring in opportunities that benefit our Tribe, TVR staff and, most importantly, our participants.

Grand Ronde Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (GRVR) hosted our 2019 November SRC meeting. This included a welcome and prayer to start our meeting off in a good way. The TVR staff welcomed everyone with gift, provided a salmon lunch and guided tour of their museum. It was a great experience for everyone! Thank you GRVR. The more we share about our history and people we serve, the better counselors, directors, community partners we become. Building relationships through mutual trust, respect and understanding of each other as we work together is key. This past year has really opened up inclusion and understanding of our 121 partnerships at SRC meetings.

The TVR directors and managers have been invited to participate in the state VR/SRC Policy, Budget and Legislative Committee in order to share the needs and experiences for a more cohesive process in policy writing, funding planning and legislative advocacy.

The five TVR programs were welcome to attend the State In-service in August. We provided information about our funding, our competitive grant process every five years and RSA guidelines that follow the same federal regulations that guide both state and Tribal programs. Many were surprised that we have the same set of rules, goals and outcomes as they have. It was well-attended with attendees asking many questions about the cultural services TVR provides, which the state VR does not offer.

As we move into 2021, we hope to diversify the SRC membership and add other Tribal members as well as Tribal youth to our table. Continuing to build strong partnerships between state and Tribal agencies is a priority for the SRC. We are proud to be making strides toward it.

Respectfully,

Susie Calhoun
CTUIR Vocational Rehabilitation Program Manager

Youth Transition Services

Youth Transition Program

Established in 1990, the Oregon Youth Transition Program (YTP) is a collaborative partnership between Vocational Rehabilitation, Oregon Department of Education and the University of Oregon. Vocational Rehabilitation funds the program every two years through competitive grants to local school districts. YTP prepares students with disabilities for employment or career-related post-secondary education or training through a comprehensive array of pre-employment transition activities and supports. Oregon's YTP serves students in 69 school districts across the state.

State benchmarks are one way to show program success. In 2019, YTP served 1,284 students with disabilities in urban and rural high schools throughout Oregon. Of these students:

- 821 developed individualized plans for employment
- 72 percent of those exiting school were employed and/or enrolled in a post-secondary school
- 54 percent of those who exited the program had jobs upon exit. They were working an average of 28 hours per week at an average wage of \$11.57 per hour.

The YTP provides year-round services to students typically during the last two years of high school and continuing into the early transition years after leaving high school. YTP staff work with young adults and families, as appropriate, to customize services that support the young adult's employment and career-related goals.

YTP has two primary objectives:

- To improve post-school transition outcomes for students with disabilities. This prepares students for competitive integrated employment or career-related post-secondary education or training. School transition specialists and VR counselors provide YTP services to help students obtain and maintain successful post-school



Deschutes River Flow

outcomes. Services include pre-employment transition services, career exploration, counseling on postsecondary education, essential skills training, work experience, self-advocacy training, job placement and follow-up.

- To increase Oregon schools' capacity to provide transition services and supports, including helping schools refine and expand these services and supports. This is in line with the spirit of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to encourage efforts to provide collaborative transition services for students with disabilities.

A summer program for YTP students

Summer Work Internship for Transition (SWIFT) is a seven-week residential living work experience program for students with disabilities ages 16–20. SWIFT's fourth year occurred virtually during summer 2020.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, SWIFT transferred to a virtual setting through the hard work of Lisa Catherwood and Toni DePeel. SWIFT participants met at a virtual townhall meeting before the program began to discuss their ideas about how long, how often and what they wanted to learn during virtual SWIFT.

SWIFTees received a box of supplies for all activities throughout the

summer. Each participant met with several individuals in different career fields that matched the SWIFTee's interests. They learned how these guests arrived in their careers and asked questions. SWIFTees also participated in classes where they discussed living outside of the home, living with a roommate, food sustainability, disclosing their disabilities, and many other topics. Students also engaged in age-appropriate social activities such as a painting class, game night, trivia, cooking classes and so much more. The activities' goal was to help improve participants' soft skills.

At the end of the seven weeks, SWIFTees expressed they were happy they attended and learned so much, even though we all would have rather been participating in person.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

VR provides Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to school districts without YTP programs. VR is obligated to set aside 15% of its budget to provide these services to students with disabilities, ages 14 to 21, in Oregon. Pre-ETS are for students that are eligible, or potentially eligible, for VR services. These services are provided by request and include these categories:

- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences
- Workplace readiness training

- Instruction in self-advocacy, and
- Counseling on transition services and/or post-secondary education.

The Oregon VR Youth Team has expanded. It now includes four Pre-ETS coordinators, one Pre-ETS Program coordinator and one Pre-ETS data coordinator.

Other VR transition service programs and services

Oregon's VR, Office of Developmental Disabilities Services and Department of Education collaboratively issued a Request for Applications (RFA) to build capacity for summer work experiences for students with disabilities. The three agencies leveraged funds and recruited community-based organizations to run these work-based learning experiences across the state. In summer 2019, 26 community providers served more than 400 students with disabilities. More than 46 percent of those participating were students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. All work experiences in 2019 were paid and located in competitive, integrated settings. In addition, each program covers at least three total Pre-ETSS. Many programs cover all five Pre-ETSS. In summer 2020, all in-person services transitioned to virtual. Seven of the community providers served 147 students with disabilities in virtual Pre-ETS. Of

those students, 38 percent were students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Out of the five required Pre-ETSSs, at least four were provided to all students virtually in 2020.

Camp LEAD (Leadership Empowerment Advocacy Development), held July through September 2019, included 57 students with disabilities. They participated in week-long leadership academies at Silver Falls State Park and La Pine State Park. Each of the academies focused on the five Pre-ETSSs with an emphasis on the work-based learning experiences. Due to safety guidance for summer 2020, Camp LEAD did not include overnight experiences. In fall 2020,

Heart of Oregon, which provides Camp LEAD, began a virtual pilot project. Both new students and past Camp LEAD graduates interested in the leadership academies were invited to attend.

Motivational Enhancement Group Intervention (MEGI) is an evidence-based practice and classroom-based service to help students with disabilities explore employment dreams, goals, challenges and abilities. It is delivered in a collaborative, goal-oriented style of communication called “motivational interviewing.” Students are encouraged to lead discussions, express opinions and explore their own thoughts and feelings around employment.

MEGI’s goals include engaging students in conversations about work, increasing self-advocacy skills and exploring preferences, strengths and interests. MEGI increased the number of facilitators to include Pre-ETS coordinators, YTP transition specialists, teachers, Transition Network facilitators (TNF), a TNF/Pre-ETS support specialist and VR counselors.



SRC new member profile: Cecilia Fiorillo

Cecilia Fiorillo has worked for the state for more than 10 years and has worked a total of 15 years in the field of mental health. She holds a master’s degree in education with a rehabilitation counseling specialization. As a person with a severe mental health challenge, as well as a major neurocognitive disability, she is always humbled by the courage and strength many people with disabilities bring to the table.

At Luke-Dorf Inc., a community mental health provider, she worked in supported employment, followed by working for the state in Vocational Rehabilitation as a certified rehabilitation counselor. She assisted people from all disabilities find meaningful employment.

Cecilia is now the in/outreach coordinator at the Oregon State Hospital. She works with paid resident colleagues on a program called “Through the Residents’ Eyes.” These residents work as a close team, busting stigma by sharing their lived experience at the hospital. With remarkable candor, they facilitate a shift in the hospital’s medical model culture by presenting a new lens. Their work teaches recovery and hope to new employees, future medical doctors, college and high school students, as well as other community stakeholders. The goal is always healing and empowerment of the recovery movement and the loosening of the ties of the medical model.

Cecilia enjoys her life with her husband, who is also a mental health survivor. She loves to play with her two beloved cats, Turbo and Luna. She also enjoys nature and having good conversations over good coffee.

Services to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Oregonians

In 2020, Oregon VR continued its work with the National Deaf Center-based transition programming, increasing the scope and types of services available to students at the Oregon School for the Deaf who are transitioning from secondary school to adult life. Additionally, Oregonians who are Deaf, have intellectual and developmental disabilities and live in Marion and Polk counties were able to access new services for employment preparation, job search and job retention through the Partnerships for Community Living (PCL) Deaf Services Program. This program is slated to serve as a model for other organizations across the state in the months and years to come.

The COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Brown's Executive Order to "Stay Home, Save Lives" and the resulting restrictions on meetings and physical distancing have greatly affected all aspects of VR's work. Since mid-March, all services to VR clients have been provided remotely, with a few rare exceptions. Businesses have closed, cut staff and/or dramatically changed their business models. VR has continued to focus on ensuring all Oregonians with hearing loss have effective communication access and culturally appropriate VR services statewide. In the COVID-19 period, VR has worked closely with ODHS and OHA's Office of Information Services to secure access to Zoom, as Skype for Business is inaccessible for those who require Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART) captioning or ASL interpreters for communication

access. VR's training materials were so well respected that they have been made available to all staff in ODHS and OHA (nearly 10,000 employees) and the accessibility and language access materials have been compiled into a reference document that is now available for all ODHS and OHA staff and volunteers on the agencies' Forms Server. Significant work has been done in testing Microsoft Teams, which replaces Skype for Business in ODHS and OHA, to ensure Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing and non-English speakers have full access to virtual meeting resources.

Oregon VR's State Coordinator for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (SCD), Sheila Hoover, continues to serve on the Oregon Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Program Advisory Committee (her term ends August 2021), representing VR and VR consumers' needs and priorities for services through this ODHS program.

VR has continued to work closely with the ODHS Office of Equity and Multicultural Services (OEMS) to ensure effective communication access for Deaf American Sign Language (ASL) users within VR and across the department. Thirteen VR staff members statewide currently receive the bilingual pay differential for American Sign Language; this is double the number of staff who receive the same differential for spoken language proficiency. The VR field staff who have specialized training and skills in serving Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing clients continued their

quarterly meeting schedule and serve as subject matter experts in their local offices on issues and services for VR clients with hearing loss.

This year, VR staff in the field served approximately 1,100 Oregonians who reported some level of hearing loss as their primary disability. The COVID-19 pandemic greatly affected staff, communities and employers.

The most frequently provided services across all levels of hearing loss, from highest to lowest prevalence, included:

- Job placement services
- Medical/psychological services (including audiology)
- Personal assistance services including American Sign Language (ASL) and Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART)
- Rehabilitation technology (including hearing aids and cochlear implants)
- Transportation
- Training
- Employment services
- Vocational exploration
- Clothing

Rehabilitation rates for consumers who relied on visual modes of communication (64%) and for those who relied on auditory modes (71%) were both above the general statewide average for all disabilities (34%). For all types of hearing loss, the combined rehabilitation rate was 70 percent.



Pratum



Ready for Harvest, Wheatland

Oregon Department of Education (ODE)

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) fosters equity and excellence for every learner through collaboration with educators, partners and communities. One of ODE's top priorities is making sure high school graduates are career-ready. With the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), ODE's role is "to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living."

IDEA also requires the school to invite to the individual's team representatives of any other agency likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. When we work together with the shared responsibility of agency partners on transition planning, we can determine what the student wants for their future, and what needs or challenges are seen as barriers to reaching student goals. This partnership reflects the value of long-term, person-centered coordination and shared responsibility, so we are confident in reaching the student's postsecondary goals.

In 2020, Oregon continued work with the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) to provide Oregon with intensive technical help to improve outcomes for youth with disabilities. ODE has also partnered with the Oregon Department of Human Services to pilot the updated Universal Release

of Information form. Having one release of information form will allow a more streamlined process to collect and share information when social services agencies are working with local education agencies.

The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) team consists of members from the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services, VR and ODE. The team took part virtually in the Capacity Building Institute in Charlotte, NC, in May 2020 to update the technical assistance plan for the state.

For more information on Secondary Transition for Students with Disabilities, please visit <http://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/SpecialEducation/SecondaryTransition/Pages/Secondary-Transition-for-Students-with-Disabilities.aspx>.

Transition Network Facilitators (TNF)

Oregon VR and the Oregon Department of Education continue to collaborate on the Transition Technical Assistance Network. In 2019, they expanded to four TNF/Pre-ETS support specialists. These positions are embedded in three regional education service districts (ESDs). They support the TNFs and pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) coordinators in high-density

areas and large rural counties. This team is working to improve Oregon's systems of designing and delivering employment services for students with disabilities. The TNFs and Pre-ETS support specialists will collaborate with VR and Oregon's local education agencies to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and provide pre-employment transition services. School closures in March 2020 created many challenges for families, students and educators. However, one silver lining is it also allowed TNFs to collaborate with teachers to develop meaningful activities and strategies for students to pursue competitive, integrated employment in this new setting of virtual learning and hybrid model school experiences.



Adult initiatives

VR counselor's world in COVID-19 times

This year is national VR's 100th anniversary. In January, none of us could have imagined what our world would look like only 60 days later. On March 16, many of us immediately shifted to working from home, completely virtual, for an undetermined time frame. Our state went into lockdown, as governed by Governor Brown's Executive Order 20-12.

At the time of writing, Oct. 10, 2020, I have been working virtually from home 100% since March 16. VRCs are still moving forward into the unknown and unpredictable, embracing the constant change day by day, week to week and — now

— month to month. No one knows how long we will be here. It's truly unprecedented.

With the support of our Administrative Team, Oregon VR was essentially up and running virtually within two weeks of lockdown. This meant equipping the entire VR staff to be able to work from home using laptops and cell phones. We stopped seeing clients in person. On June 1, more than 225 VRCs were issued their own Zoom.gov accounts. These made client intakes and meetings possible but also ensured privacy.

As a youth transition counselor, I've had to adapt to help keep students (whose worlds turned upside down)

motivated and active. I work with parents to find ways to focus on independent living skills while they are stuck at home. Our students are now continuing to move forward by doing budgets, cooking, shopping, comparing prices, counting money, doing listening skills exercises and, of course, preparing for interviews and investigating careers in local labor markets.

Our clients' needs have changed. Many have chosen not to work until they feel it is safe. Some are waiting on a vaccine before they return to work. Others are afraid, and some are as happy as they've ever been. A few have disappeared and do not want to engage. Some don't have access to the technology to interact, and



Fall Color, Salem

others are ready and want to work. As always, we strive to meet each client where they are at.

Finding ways to support our clients in this diverse climate of needs has kept VRCs on our toes. Every one of us works diligently to find strategies to adapt and support our clients, as well as our community partners and vendors — many of whom are also struggling. We call our clients, we send letters and emails, we meet remotely. VR services look different now, but our intentions will never change: to support our clients move forward in their life paths to employment, empowerment and independence.

One of the biggest challenges for VR is continuing to do all intake appointments while also managing our growing caseloads (many of us with 95 or more clients) and ever-increasing workloads. Our work as counselors in this virtual environment takes at least twice the time to do things as we work from our homes.

For example, a typical intake that used to take an hour or one-and-a-half hours now take more than three hours with all the preparation and two or more hour-long intake meetings. It's challenging to complete paperwork with clients in a virtual setting. We prefill all possible parts of forms and send and collect them by mail rather than in person.

We need to remember; we are all in uncharted waters. We are not

alone in this. This is true for every organization and individual right now. All state VRs are challenged to figure out processes. No one could have been prepared for where we are today. We recognize we are doing well overall because we are servicing our clients. Our clients are getting jobs. In one week in June, I had three youth get new jobs!

In the end, I believe VR will come out stronger. We have adapted to our clients' needs more than we ever have before, faster than we've ever had to before. Many of the practices we've adopted will benefit our clients and business partners for years to come.

It is fortuitous that this growth and reformation of our VR program will be associated with VR's 100th anniversary year.

Lynne Carter, MS, CRC
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

State Independent Living Council

Oregon's State Independent Living Council (SILC) and other Independent Living Program entities have nurtured a working relationship with Vocational Rehabilitation program partners over the years.

This includes a State Independent Living Council member serving on the State Rehabilitation Council. The SILC shares the SRC's consumer focus. This relationship provides a conduit

for information to flow between the two councils. Working together allows both programs to address areas for improvement and growth.

Leadership from Vocational Rehabilitation, Oregon's Center for Independent Living Association, the SILC and Oregon Commission for the Blind's independent living (IL) program met regularly to share updates and improve coordination. As a result, we implemented a cross-training project to provide staff with information and resources to enhance cross-referrals and coordination of services.

Good coordination between Centers for Independent Living, VRCs and other vendors provided consumers a foundation for better job retention and improved quality of life. This came from holistically providing employment-related and the non-employment-related services that are the foundation for successful employment.

VR functioned as the designated state entity receiving the Title VII Independent Living Program funds and ensuring they were distributed and accounted for as the State Plan for Independent Living directs. These funds supported services provided by Oregon's Centers for Independent Living and Independent Living services through Oregon Commission for the Blind.

Independent living services offered mentoring for individuals

with disabilities around core areas: information and referral; independent living skills training; peer counseling; systems and individual advocacy; and transition-related services to those wanting to move out of institutions, those at risk of entering an institution, and youth with disabilities leaving high school.

In addition, Title I Rehabilitation Act funding supported the State Independent Living Council's operational resources.

Social Security programs

Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has operated under the traditional Cost Reimbursement (CR) program offered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) since 1981. The program reimburses state VR agencies for money they spend rehabilitating SSA beneficiaries receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI or Title II) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI or Title XVI). State VR agencies only receive reimbursement if the individual reaches wage levels needed to stop SSA disability cash payments for a specified period.

Oregon VR also participates in the SSA Ticket to Work (TTW) program. This program allows SSA disability recipients to choose an employment service provider to help them maintain or return to work. State

VR agencies are one of the choices. TTW offers VR agencies a different type of rewards payment system. We currently only operate under this payment system for clients receiving mental health services from Oregon VR-approved agencies. Agencies receive a percentage of the TTW payments if they meet all contract requirements.

Employment First

Employment First's goal is to make sure Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities have the supports and services needed to get a community job. Employment First is a collaborative effort between Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS), the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), along with stakeholders and local teams. The website is iworkwesucceed.org.

In 2020, Oregon's Employment First initiative focused on helping providers maintain services during COVID-19. ODDS offered contingency funding to employment providers and increased training opportunities to support provider capacity. Employment First also continued to implement the Lane v. Brown Settlement Agreement with ODDS and VR.

Employment First changed policy to allow for remote services during

COVID-19, including remote job coaching and remote Employment Path courses.

Some Employment First efforts in 2020 included the following:

- VR continues to support people with intellectual and developmental (I/DD) disabilities to get jobs in the community. In 2012, 274 people with I/DD completed VR services with jobs in the community. In 2020, 753 people with I/DD completed VR services with jobs in the community.
- Employment First continued to implement the Lane v. Brown Settlement Agreement. As of September 2020, the state met its targets for reductions in the use of sheltered workshops and the increase of employment services to those in the settlement class, which includes people in sheltered workshops and transition-age youth.
- In early 2021, Employment First will launch a new workforce website for providers, as well as ODDS and VR, to post available jobs in the I/DD workforce for positions such as job coaches, job developers and direct support professionals.

Oregon Supported Employment Center for Excellence

OSECE activities

Prior to the pandemic, OSECE's focus included in-person technical

support to the 40-plus Individual Placement and Support (IPS) supported employment programs across Oregon, as well as in-person annual fidelity reviews. Seven supported education programs also receive training and fidelity reviews. Supplemental activities included data analysis, supported education material development, peer inclusion, occasional support to other states and participation with the IPS international learning community.

Once the pandemic arrived, OSECE switched focus to provide immediate support to programs with meetings each week, suggested activities and extensive Zoom-based trainings that include interactive components. OSECE recently developed a remote quality assurance process in lieu of fidelity reviews for the rest of 2020. The switch to quality assurance assessment (QAA) provides program and agency feedback and develops a plan for technical assistance and support that will, through a safe virtual environment, support programs in their recovery from COVID-19's impact. The QAA will also temporarily replace the state requirement for fidelity and allow programs to continue to encounter Medicaid for services provided.

Outcome summary

The last two quarters of 2019 showed steady growth and consistent outcomes of more than 40 percent employment

for IPS participants. First quarter (January through March) 2020 data is incomplete because OHA prioritized service delivery over data collection during the beginning of the pandemic. The data shows a minor drop in participants, although outcomes remain at 40%. Supported education data began to be collected as a unique data set. It showed a high percentage of attendance, course completion and participant grade point average above the state average. The second quarter (April through June) 2020 is incomplete at the time of this report; it will likely show a further drop in participants and outcomes, which are currently at 39%. Anecdotal reports showed that several clients have chosen not to pursue employment during the pandemic, due to the increased health risks of being in a workplace. Since 2008, IPS programs across Oregon have served 14,758 people, helped obtain 10,512 jobs and seen 3,623 people depart IPS programs in employed status. Supported education went from 186 students at the end of 2019 to 144 in 2020, with an increase in enrollment from 44% to 51%.

Program resilience

Since COVID-19, a great deal of variation appears to have occurred across the state with IPS program service delivery and local regulation. Many programs quickly adopted telehealth practices, although some struggled to maintain contact with participants over time. Several IPS

programs furloughed employees but brought them back prior to this report. A couple of programs appear to have pulled IPS staff into other agency duties. Some programs are doing well with outcomes and getting jobs, although jobs appear to be more oriented than normal to the service or cleaning industry. Some programs can see clients face to face, job develop and provide transportation while others cannot yet. One new IPS program, in Lincoln County, started up during the pandemic. Programs consistently report they have good ongoing collaboration with VR, can access counselors and provide shared services.

Next steps

Begin quality assurance assessments, launch Common Ground (Dr. Patricia Deegan's recovery-oriented online courses and library) training, prepare for the 2020 virtual conference, partner with VR on contract and training, further peer inclusion and supported education, analyze data for performance during COVID-19, perform longitudinal data study, and other activities requested by the Oregon Health Authority.



Mt. Washington from Black Butte Ranch



SRC new member profile: Matthew Serres

As the Client Assistance Program advocate at Disability Rights Oregon, Matt's work focuses on helping Oregonians with disabilities overcome barriers to employment.

He advocates for the rights of participants seeking services from Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services, independent living centers, Oregon Commission for the Blind vocational services, and Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs. He also assists Social Security beneficiaries with services, benefits or accommodations directly leading to work, including legal issues that are barriers to employment.

To bring about broader change, Matt seeks to elevate the needs of individuals with disabilities in Vocational Rehabilitation and other state policies. Prior to joining Disability Rights Oregon, he served as a law clerk to Justice Rebecca Duncan and Justice Megan Flynn on the Oregon Court of Appeals and to Judge Douglas Van Dyk in the Clackamas County Circuit Court. He has also worked as a court-appointed criminal defense attorney.

Matt was born and raised in Oregon.

Client Assistance Program (CAP)

Disability Rights Oregon's Client Assistance Program offers advice and tools that individuals seeking vocational rehabilitation can use to protect and assert their rights to services. CAP serves participants of:

- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Independent Living (IL) centers
- The Oregon Commission for the Blind (OCB), and
- Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) programs.

We help individuals get services and resolve disputes with vocational rehabilitation programs. Those disputes may relate to the denial of services or to some other decision their VR branch has made.

We help protect VR participants' rights to have:

- Their eligibility determined within 60 days
- VR processes and decisions explained to them
- Developed assessment and individualized plan for employment within 90 days, and
- A written copy of an individualized plan for employment and all decisions.

We may also assist VR participants who seek to appeal a decision or action they don't agree with by requesting mediation or a hearing within 60 days.

During the past year, the Client Assistance Program has sought to build a more collaborative relationship with Oregon VR to

positively shape new policies. We have been a productive partner in helping VR develop appropriate policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also sought to improve the process for individuals to access educational services through VR. CAP aims to help develop new person-centered policies that adequately reflect individuals' right to self-determination in deciding their vocational future and obtaining competitive, integrated employment.

CAP staff provided three separate trainings to service providers including Individual Placement and Support (IPS) providers, peer counselors and case workers. These trainings educated them about employment-related issues and discussed services to VR and ILR clients. During those trainings, CAP explored reasonable accommodations under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as considerations in protecting workers with disabilities during the pandemic.

CAP forged a new relationship with the Oregon Supported Employment Center for Excellence (OSECE) to work together to improve services for individuals seeking supported employment and education services. CAP also attended the VR In-service and learned about the history of Native Tribes in Oregon from TVR, as well as ethical considerations in the field of vocational rehabilitation from VR staff.

CAP staff pivoted quickly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and continued to provide dispute

resolution services and individual advocacy without interruption. The CAP program welcomed Matt Serres as its new CAP advocate and representative on the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). Matt transitioned into the role at Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) after having worked on issues involving informed consent at the Oregon State Hospital and discrimination in housing and employment. He is thankful to all his fellow SRC members in giving him a warm introduction to the council and particularly enjoys his participation on the Policy, Legislative and Budget Committee.

Matt is carrying forward the work of Ted Wenk, former DRO managing attorney, who made enormous contributions to the quality of the VR program and dedicated countless hours to the SRC in his 20-year tenure with VR. Widely respected throughout the field, Ted was devoted to CAP's mission. His efforts to expand job opportunities and promote independent living touched the lives of thousands of Oregonians with disabilities. CAP congratulates Ted on his new position as a field operations manager with the Bureau of Labor and Industries and wishes him well on this new chapter of a career devoted to serving the public interest.



Paulina Creek, Newberry Volcanic National Monument



Reflection on the Willamette River

VR client outcomes, measures and demographic graphs

State fiscal year (SFY) performance

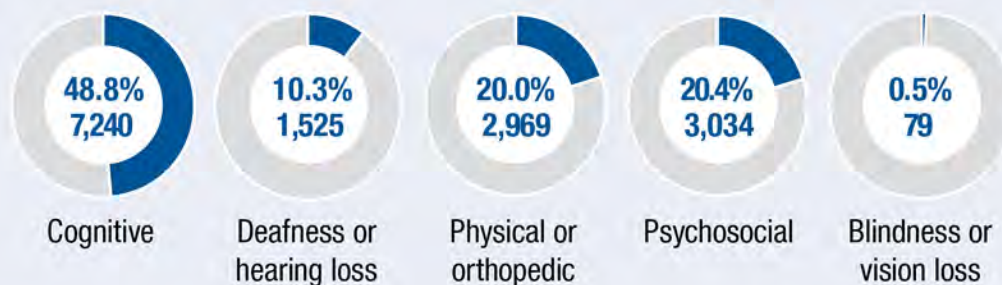
Total clients served



Number entering plan

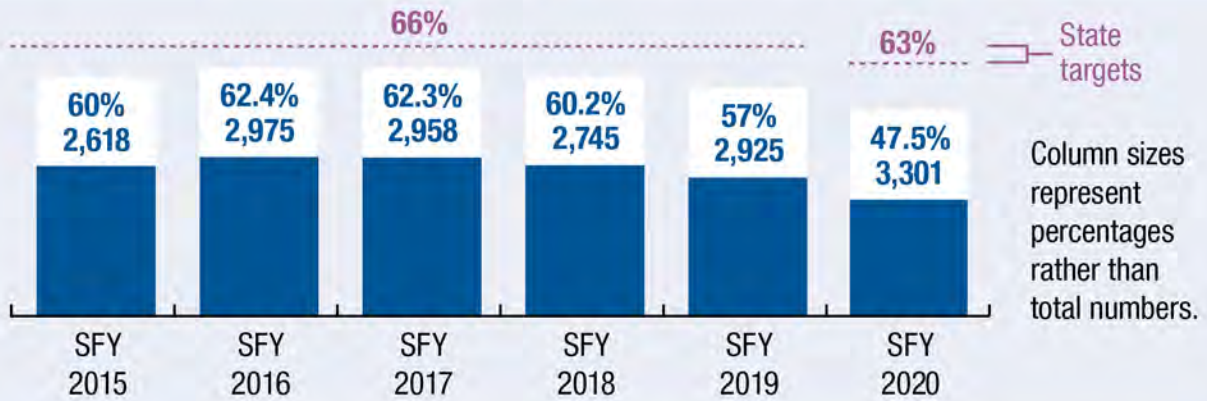


Number and percent of clients served by primary disabling condition

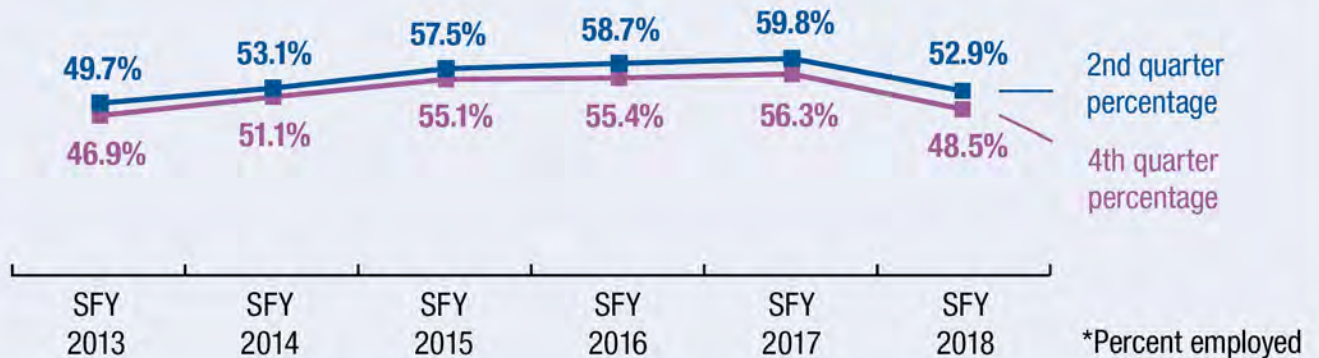


State fiscal year (SFY) performance

Number and percent of clients employed at exit



Rates of retention in employment*, second and fourth quarters after exit



Median monthly income during second quarter after exit



State fiscal year (SFY) performance

Average hourly wage at exit



Average weekly hours at exit

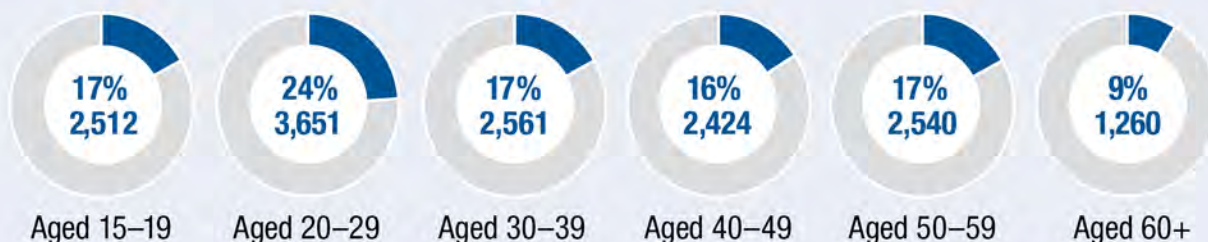


Average weekly earnings at exit

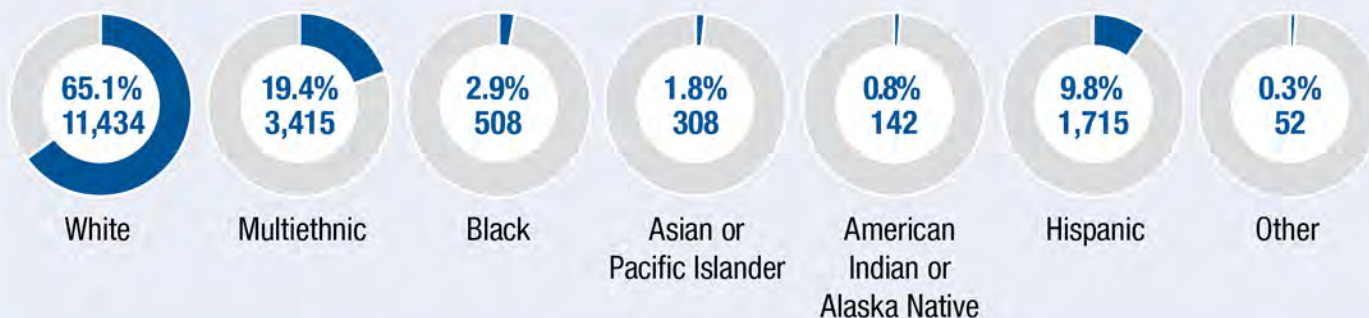


State fiscal year (SFY) 2020 performance

Number and percent of clients served by age group



Number and percent of clients served by ethnicity and race



SRC new member profile: Mike Franklin

Mike is the special education legal specialist for the Oregon Department of Education. He previously worked as a student services director, high school administrator, high school teacher and an attorney. He also served in the United States Army.

Mike grew up in Tennessee and received a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Tennessee. He then moved to Eugene and graduated from law school at the University of Oregon.

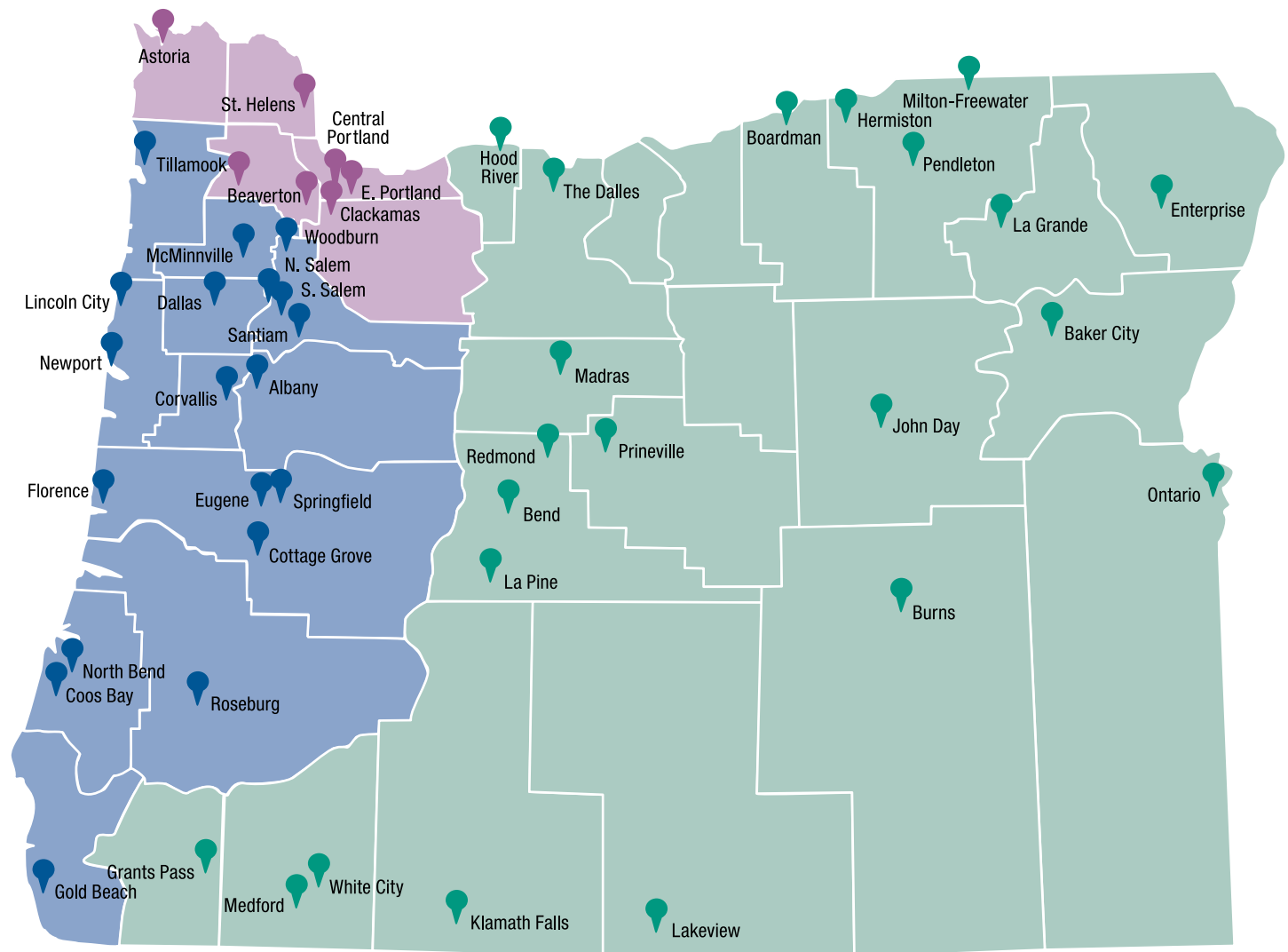
After spending 21 years in Colorado, he was finally able to return to Oregon. He and his wife live in West Salem with their rat terrier and brown tabby. He has two adult children and six grandchildren. Mike enjoys listening to music, watching sports and riding his motorcycle.

VR offices and regional managers, 2020

Regional managers

 Region 1: Kadie Ross Includes ODHS districts 1, 2, 15, 16	 Region 2: Nathan Tierney Includes ODHS districts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	 Region 3: Bambi Bevill Includes ODHS districts 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
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VR office locations



Field offices and managers

ALBANY (Linn County)	CENTRAL PORTLAND (Multnomah County)	GOLD BEACH (Curry County)
Lauren Smith 1400 Queen Avenue SE, Suite 107 Albany, OR 97322 541-967-2022 (Voice) 541-967-2154 (Fax)	(Mr.) Chris Olson 1704 NE 26th Avenue Portland, OR 97212 971-673-2555 (Voice) 503-775-5696 (Fax)	Amy Kincaid 94145 W 5th Place Gold Beach, OR 97444-0808 541-247-0290 (Voice) 541-247-3434 (Fax)
ASTORIA (Clatsop County)	CLACKAMAS (Clackamas County)	GRANTS PASS (Josephine County)
Mindy Gochis 450 Marine Drive, Suite 100 Astoria, OR 97103 503-325-7335 (Voice) 503-325-5795 (Fax)	Doug Franklin 4382 SE International Way, Suite B Milwaukie, OR 97222-4635 971-673-6130 (Voice) 971-673-6131 (Fax)	Kari Kingsolver 725 NE 7th Street, Suite C Grants Pass, OR 97526-1632 541-474-3130 (Voice) 541-474-3135 (Fax)
BAKER CITY (Baker County)	COOS BAY (Coos County)	HERMISTON (Umatilla County)
Dee Dee Satran 3165 10th Street, Suite 500 Baker City, OR 97814-3913 541-523-8444 (Voice) 541-523-9858 (Fax)	Amy Kincaid 1431 Airport Lane North Bend, OR 97459 MAIL: PO Box 1113 Coos Bay, OR 97420 541-808-6154 (Voice) 541-808-6163 (Fax)	Andrea Rogers 940 SE Columbia Drive Hermiston, OR 97838 541-564-5673 (Voice) 541-567-3244 (Fax)
BEAVERTON (Washington County)	CORVALLIS (Benton County)	HILLSBORO (Washington County)
Sarah Sadrudin 8880 SW Nimbus Avenue, Suite D Beaverton, OR 97008 503-277-2500 (Voice) 503-277-2536 (Fax)	Lauren Smith 4170 SW Research Way, Suite 140 Corvallis, OR 97333 541-757-4131 (Voice) 541-757-4241 (Fax)	Mindy Gochis 5300 NE Elam Young Parkway Hillsboro, OR 97124 MAIL: 8880 SW Nimbus Ave. Suite D Beaverton, OR 97008 971-673-5582 (Voice) 971-673-3747 (Fax)
BEND (Deschutes County)	EAST PORTLAND (Multnomah County)	KLAMATH FALLS (Klamath County)
Cortney Gibson 1645 NE Forbes Road, Suite 100 Bend, OR 97701 541-388-6336 (Voice) 541-388-6310 (Fax)	Nateesh Noakes 305 NE 102nd Avenue, Suite 200 Portland, OR 97220-4173 971-673-5858 (Voice) 503-257-1811 (Fax)	Kari Kingsolver 801 Oak Avenue Klamath Falls, OR 97601-6136 541-883-5614 (Voice) 541-883-5621 (Fax)
BURNS (Harney County)	EUGENE (Lane County)	LA GRANDE (Union County)
Dee Dee Satran 809 W Jackson Burns, OR 97720 541-573-2985 (Voice) 541-573-1937 (Fax)	Sabrina Cunliffe 2885 Chad Drive Eugene, OR 97408 541-684-2450 (Voice) 541-345-1406 (Fax)	Dee Dee Satran 1607 Gekeler Lane La Grande, OR 97850-3341 541-963-2151 (Voice) 541-963-7698 (Fax)

McMINNVILLE (Yamhill County)	ONTARIO (Malheur County)	SPRINGFIELD (Lane County)
Martha Dodsworth 384 NE Norton Lane McMinnville, OR 97128 503-472-2116 (Voice) 503-434-5867 (Fax)	Dee Dee Satran 186 East Lane, Suite 1 Ontario, OR 97914-3051 541-889-9148 (Voice) 541-889-9209 (Fax)	Susanne Furnari 101 30th Street Springfield, OR 97478-5845 541-736-7812 (Voice) 541-726-2535 (Fax)
MEDFORD (Jackson County)	PENDLETON (Umatilla County)	ST HELENS (Columbia County)
Kari Kingsolver 28 W 6th Street, Suite A Medford, OR 97501-2774 541-776-6035 (Voice) 541-776-6213 (Fax)	Andrea Rogers 1555 SW Southgate Place Pendleton, OR 97801-9600 541-966-6233 (Voice) 541-276-1942 (Fax)	Mindy Gochis 500 N Hwy 30, Suite 230 St Helens, OR 97051-1200 503-366-8383 (Voice) 503-366-0215 (Fax)
NEWPORT (Lincoln County)	ROSEBURG (Douglas County)	THE DALLES (Wasco County)
Lauren Smith 119 NE 4th Street, Suite 1 Newport, OR 97365 541-265-7843 (Voice) 541-265-3652 (Fax)	Amy Kincaid 2020 NW Newcastle Street Roseburg, OR 97471 541-440-3371 (Voice) 541-440-3493 (Fax)	Andrea Rogers 3591 Klindt Drive The Dalles, OR 97058 541-298-5573 (Voice) 541-298-1136 (Fax)
NORTH SALEM (Marion County)	SOUTH SALEM (Marion and Polk counties))	TILLAMOOK (Tillamook County)
Martha Dodsworth 3402 Cherry Avenue NE, Suite 200 Salem, OR 97303 503-378-3587 (Voice) 503-378-3750 (Fax)	Rhonda Meidinger 1701 Liberty Street SE Salem, OR 97302 503-378-2483 (Voice) 503-373-7549 (Fax)	Rhonda Meidinger 4670 E 3rd Street Tillamook, OR 97141-2902 503-842-7873 (Voice) 503-815-1593 (Fax)

VR EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM		
Keith Ozols, Director Salem: 503-945-6201 Fax: 503-947-5025	Heather Lindsey, Deputy Director Salem: 503-947-5497 Fax: 503-947-5025	Tryna Luton, Field Chief Salem: 503-983-8958 Fax: 503-947-5025
Howard Fulk, Policy and Training Program Manager Cell: 971-332-0646 Fax: 503-947-5025	Sheri Boyd, Workforce and Youth Program Manager Salem: 503-945-5679 Fax: 503-947-5025	Bryan Campbell, Business Operations Program Manager Salem: 503-945-6217 Fax: 503-947-5025
Kadie Ross, Region 1 Manager Office: 971-673-5858 Cell: 971-201-9385	Nathan Teirney, Region 2 Manager Office: 503-945-6695 Cell: 971-209-5797	Bambi Bevill, Region 3 Manager Bend: 541-956-2912 Cell: 971-719-1396
	Emily Armstrong, Strategic Development and Innovation Officer Salem: 503-602-8259 Fax: 503-947-5025	

Establishment and overview of state rehabilitation councils



Near Black Butte Ranch

The 1992 amendments to the federal Rehabilitation Act required formation of state rehabilitation advisory councils (SRACs) and identified their functions. Oregon's Governor Barbara Roberts appointed the Oregon SRAC on Sept. 1, 1993.

SRACs were originally established to advise designated state agencies on providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. The passage of the 1998 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act shifted the focus from a State Rehabilitation Advisory Council to its current role of policy partner. This significantly changed the role of the State Rehabilitation Council, giving the council independence, autonomy and a stronger advocacy role. SRCs now work in partnership with the public vocational rehabilitation program on the effectiveness of its policies, programs and services in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities.

This federal legislation identifies the council's required functions, which include:

- Work in partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation regarding essential planning and service delivery intended to result in meeting the employment potential of Oregonians with disabilities.
- Review and analyze program effectiveness, create and analyze consumer satisfaction materials, render concerns and recommendations to VR derived from performance standards and measurements of rehabilitation services.
- Advise the Governor and state agencies on the performance of vocational rehabilitation in Oregon regarding eligibility, program effectiveness and effect on individuals with disabilities. This includes preparation and distribution of an annual report.
- Coordinate the work of the State Rehabilitation Council with the activities of other disability-related councils in the state. This includes establishing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the State Independent Living Council (SILC).

For more information about the Oregon State Rehabilitation Council, go to <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/EMPLOYMENT/VR/SRC/Pages/index.aspx>.

State Rehabilitation Council members



Susie Calhoun

Vice-chair
121 Tribal VR



Lynne Carter

VR Counselor



Gary Chiaravalli

Community Rehabilitation
Program



Bridget Dazey

Workforce and Talent
Development Board



Brenda Dennis

Supported Employment



Toni DePeel

VR Pre-Employment
Transition Coordinator



Heidi Dirkse-Graw

Advocate
(resigned August 2020)



Mary Jo Erickson

Youth Transition Program



Cecilia Fiorello

Former VR Consumer
and Advocate



Mike Franklin

Oregon Department of
Education



Anais Keenon

Business Representative
and Advocate



Elisha Kirsch

Business Representative
(resigned August 2020)



Jorge Martinez

Business Representative



Steve Paysinger, Chair

Business, Former Consumer



Kim Poage

Advocate and Rehabilitation
Counseling Educator



Emily Purry

Advocate and Business
Representative



Christy Reese

Parent Training Information



Charles Richards

State Independent Living
Council



Matthew Serres

Oregon Client Assistance Program



Lynn Wiles

Business Representative
(resigned August 2020)



Tel Woolsey

Advocate and Business
Representative

Acknowledgements

The State Rehabilitation Council would like to thank the following:

- Steve Paysinger for his dedicated leadership as chair during the most unprecedented year of social, environmental and health challenges we have seen yet. And a huge thanks for his willingness to remain chair for another year, despite his extremely demanding position at Salem Health.
- Ted Wenk for his stalwart advocacy to expand opportunities for competitive, integrated employment for persons with disabilities and his many dedicated years of service to the SRC. As manager of the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and its SRC member, Ted maintained the integrity of the CAP program while elevating VR policies to be more participant-driven and person-centered. Ted was engaged in many VR and SRC committees and workgroups and served as SRC vice-chair for many years. A big thank you goes to Ted for his irreplaceable service to VR participants.
- Gary Chiaravalli for excellent contributions to the SRC in his six years of service. Gary has been the leader in business outreach, doing the majority of the Employer Partner Award organizing and networking. His vision and purpose have strengthened how we nourish relationships with community partners, including his vision of including Tribal VR partners in Employer Partner Awards. We will miss Gary and welcome him to return as a cherished guest, visitor and advocate in the future.
- Todd Nell for participating for three years in his role as the Workforce Board representative. We will miss Todd's "get it done" attitude and humor. The SRC appreciates his service and wishes him well.
- Heidi Dirkse-Graw, Elisha Kirsch and Lynn Wiles have all experienced changes in their lives that required their early departure from their terms with the SRC. We will miss the work they did to stay engaged and help in their expert areas including community rehabilitation and Access Technologies. We wish them good luck on their new journeys!
- All VR Admin representatives and staff who are a part of SRC committees and work groups. With their participation, we can do more and stretch farther in our mission. We also want to acknowledge Morgan Rincon of Oregon Commission for the Blind, who participates in our Outreach Committee. A special thank you goes to Sheri Boyd and Lisa Catherwood, who were very instrumental in the Outreach Committee's workgroups. They both took on new positions this year and have stepped down from those roles with the workgroups.
- The entire VR Admin staff for being so flexible and adaptable during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their responsiveness has helped keep the program running. Their willingness to learn, teach, share, collaborate and be transparent about the efforts and changes being made really helps us believe in the mission we share of supporting Oregonians with disabilities finding meaningful employment in the most unprecedented times.
- Sheila Hoover, who has been our go-to person for virtual meetings on Zoom.
- VR consumers and staff who shared their successes.
- Community partners who are willing to show up and engage with the consumers, VR, the SRC and each other to support the common goal of supporting employment for Oregonians with disabilities.
- All employers who support VR services, and especially the award winners who have gone above and beyond to be collaborative and provide opportunities for people to be successful and independent.
- All the vendors who help us get our jobs done, including but not limited to LNS Captioning, Cascade Sound, Archer Captioning Services, Pearl Buck Center and Garten. It is a pleasure working with them.
- Ed Rutledge for donating his professional photography services.
- Dan Harrington, Macy Guppy, Sherryll Johnson Hoar, Angela Yeager and the many VR administrative staff who contributed to this year's annual report.



SRC members, May 2020

The “new normal” of Zoom meetings has allowed us to continue to do the work of the SRC and stay safe and adhere to social distancing requirements.

Clay Myers State Natural Area

2021 quarterly meetings

February 2021 — Virtual via Zoom

May 2021 — Ashland Springs Hotel, Ashland, OR

August 2021 — Pendleton, OR

November 2021 — Embassy Suites, Tigard, OR

Public Law 101-166, Section 511, Steven’s Amendment

SEC.511. When issuing statements, press releases, requests for proposals, bid solicitations and other documents describing projects or programs funded in whole or in part with Federal money, all grantees receiving Federal funds, including but not limited to State and local governments, shall clearly state (1) the percentage of the total costs of the program or project which will be financed with Federal money, (2) the dollar amount of Federal funds for the project or program, and (3) percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the project or program that will be financed by nongovernmental sources.



To request additional copies of this report or for more information, please contact:

**Oregon State
Rehabilitation Council**

500 Summer St. N.E., E87

Salem, OR 97301-1120

503-945-6256

1-877-277-0513

Fax: 503-945-8991

www.orsrc.org

Those who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing or speech-impaired may contact the VR and SRC staff by relay.

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact the Oregon State Rehabilitation Council at 1-877-277-0513. We accept all relay calls or you can dial 711.

VR is funded by a combination of federal funds received under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (78.7%), and non-federal funds (21.3%) included in VR's legislatively approved budget.