

Annual Report 2012



Arizona Governor's State Rehabilitation Council



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Mission

and Responsibilities of the Council

The Governor's State Rehabilitation Council mission encompasses the Council's vision, operating principles, and goals.

Mission

Serving all citizens of Arizona, the mission of the Arizona Governors State Rehabilitation Council is to advise, evaluate and partner with the public vocational rehabilitation program in support of improving access to employment and promoting a diverse workforce statewide.

Vision

The Arizona Governor's State Rehabilitation Council envisions a statewide workforce that values disability and diversity, and is committed to full participation of its citizens.

Operating Principles

- Serve as an ally to the public vocational rehabilitation program in structuring and conducting business in ways that reflect the social, political, historical and economic experiences of disability.
- Collaborate with state and other non-government agencies to promote meaningful and sustainable employment for everyone.
- Foster a broad definition of diversity that honors and appreciates disability alongside race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and religion as an integral part of human experience.
- Promote disability discourse, awareness and involvement; honor disability culture and pride.

Goals

- Advise the Vocational Rehabilitation Program in the development, implementation, evaluation and review of innovative rehabilitation services and programs.

- Support the development of public policy that improves opportunity for full participation for all citizens in the economic life of Arizona.
- Engage business and industry statewide in the creation of inclusive environments guided by the principles of universal design.
- Increase access and employment opportunities for people with disabilities through collaboration with outside agencies, councils and community partners.
- Strengthen the Vocational Rehabilitation Program through collaboration on the development of human resource infrastructure.

The Governor’s State Rehabilitation Council functions, as defined in the Title I, Part A, Section 105 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act, are as follows:

Review, analyze and advise the Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) regarding the performance of its responsibilities, particularly those related to eligibility (including order of selection); the extent and scope and effectiveness of services provided; and the functions performed by State agencies that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services.

Partner with RSA to develop, review and agree to State goals and priorities in accordance with the VR State Plan. The Council and RSA evaluate the effectiveness of the VR program and submit reports of progress to the RSA Commissioner.

Advise RSA on activities authorized to be carried out under the Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan. Assist in the preparation of the VR State Plan, and Amendments to the plan, applications, reports, Needs Assessments, and evaluations.

Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of Vocational Rehabilitation services and consumer satisfaction regarding functions performed, VR services provided, and employment outcomes achieved.

Prepare and submit an Annual Report to the Governor and the Federal U.S. Department of Education Commissioner of RSA on the status of Vocational Rehabilitation programs operated with the State of Arizona.

Coordinate activities with other disability related Councils with the State of Arizona.

Establish working relationships between RSA, the Statewide Independent Living Council, and Arizona Centers for Independent Living.

Perform other functions consistent with VR services deemed appropriate by the Council.



A Note from the SRC Chair

*Michael Duncan reflects
on Council activities
during his tenure*

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve

as Chairman of the Arizona Governor's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) again. I have had the opportunity to serve on the SRC for the past six years and to chair the Council for three of those years.



During my tenure on the Council, I have been fortunate to work with some dynamic council members and the professional staff from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Our collaborative efforts have helped to establish and enhance vocational programs throughout the state of Arizona.

During the past year, SRC members have been significantly involved in a number of disability community activities statewide. In October, 2011, the 5th Annual Aurora Foundation disABLED Divaz Fashion Show was held in Tucson involving the SRC. October has been "Disability Employment Awareness Month" and members of the SRC were active participants in the "Dream Job Fair" in Tucson. The State Rehabilitation Council also facilitated a vendor's booth at the Twelfth Annual Arizona Department of Education Transition Conference. Additionally, members of the SRC participated in two employer panels for students, parents, and special education personnel from throughout the state. The SRC was highly promoted during the conference with over 800 in attendance.

The Governor's State Rehabilitation Council assisted the RSA with the current client satisfaction survey and the State Plan. Members of the Council also collaborated with other state disability Councils in the quarterly RSA Administrator's Disability Council Chair meetings.

Once again, it has been a pleasure to serve on the SRC during the past six years. It has been very heartwarming to develop meaningful relationships with people who share similar goals while serving the disability population in our state. Arizona is fortunate to have a number of business leaders, agencies, educators and state personnel with the same mission to assist the disabled in the vocational and employment arenas. I would encourage each of the existing Council members to reach out to their colleagues and associates to join the SRC and promote the visions of the Council and the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael F. Duncan".

Michael F. Duncan, Chair
Arizona Governor's State Rehabilitation Council



Input & Recommendations

SRC input and recommendations to the Arizona RSA VR State Plan

1. SRC recommends that AzRSA continue to focus their efforts to increase awareness and outreach of Vocational Rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities (including a broad spectrum of disability populations), while highlighting the importance of placement on the Order of Selection waiting list.
2. SRC recognizes and encourages the maintenance of the AzRSA collaborative efforts regarding youth transitioning from school to work as it relates to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, Department of Education, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Department of Behavioral Health, and American Indian Programs using protocol and school to work contracts. SRC recommends the AzRSA expand collaborative efforts by having VR representatives fully participating in joint opportunities at the state and local level through the Arizona and National Community of Practice forums (AzCoPT), the Secondary Transition Mentoring Project (STMP), and the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center Institute which is designed to promote stakeholder work to identify emerging practices that could be utilized in Arizona.
3. SRC recommends that AZRSA communicate the status and implementation of the revised Arizona RSA Strategic Plan goals, objectives and action steps to SRC and RSA staff at all levels.

4. SRC recommends that AZRSA provide SRC with preliminary results of the 'performance report card/ scorecard for providers' within calendar year 2012.
5. SRC recommends that AZRSA make efforts to identify and alleviate Vocational Rehabilitation Program service provision barriers in the rural areas of Arizona in order that services are distributed equally statewide.
6. SRC recommends that AZRSA meet Federal Standards and Indicators and inform SRC of strategies being implemented to meet the rehabilitation rate.
7. SRC recommends that AZRSA continue to maintain partnerships with current Project 121 American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs in Arizona and identify strategies to partner with those tribes that do not have existing Project 121 Programs.
8. SRC recommends that AZRSA provide SRC with the status and implementation of the Federal Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) Center regional plan as it relates to training and technical assistance.
9. SRC recommends that the 2011 SRC Client Public Input Survey questions be considered for inclusion in the AZRSA Client Satisfaction Survey and Vocational Rehabilitation clients be surveyed throughout the rehabilitation process.



Committees of the Council

The council committees have specific functions to help the SRC achieve its goals.

The goal of the **Employment and Community Partnerships Committee** is to create and foster business and community partnerships, and to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities through collaboration with the Rehabilitation Services Administration/ Vocational Rehabilitation Program (RSA/VR) clients, outside agencies, councils and community partners. It is the Committee's vision to enhance SRC relationships with these partners in order to expand employment opportunities, encourage involvement in policy development, and promote advocacy for service provision and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.

The **Executive Committee** provides leadership to the SRC in furthering its mission, vision, and goals. The Committee also seeks new members from the community who will represent, and be representative of, individuals with disabilities, specific disability groups, business and labor, rehabilitation program providers, disability advocates, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the State Workforce Investment Board, and American Indian Rehabilitation Programs. The Council accepts nominations at any time throughout the year when vacancies occur, and submits candidates to the Governor, who makes the final appointment of members to SRC.

The goal of the **Program Review Committee** is to advise, evaluate, and collaborate with the RSA/ VR Program to improve the quality and efficiency of VR services, including transition services and Order of Selection, by building the capacity of RSA employees via the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development, increasing employee satisfaction, and reviewing VR State Plan implementation.



Strategic Plan

2012-2014

Goal 1: Improve access and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through collaboration with agencies, councils, business and community partners.

Objectives:

- ◆ Develop and participate in activities directed at employers and business (including but not limited to; Untapped Arizona, Employer Presentations, Ticket to Work, RSA Employer Coordinator).
- ◆ Review and promote self-employment.
- ◆ Maintain a current knowledge level about federal and state policies/legislation issues, including employment, that affect individuals with disabilities.

Goal 2: Advise, evaluate, and collaborate with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR) services.

Objectives:

- ◆ Monitor the Order of Selection (OOS).
- ◆ Monitor the Federal Standards and Indicators (S & I).
- ◆ Monitor Transition services statewide.
- ◆ Advise on the development of, and monitor implementation of, the VR State Plan.
- ◆ Monitor employee satisfaction.
- ◆ Monitor Fair Hearing decisions.
- ◆ Assist with the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA).
- ◆ Participate in, and monitor results of, federal RSA monitoring visits.

Goal 3: Improve Council outreach and public input regarding Vocational Rehabilitation services in the State of Arizona.

Objectives:

- ◆ Partner with RSA on VR client satisfaction survey.
- ◆ Facilitate public input regarding the vocational rehabilitation program.
- ◆ Prepare and submit an SRC Annual Report.
- ◆ Partner with the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC).



Membership

2012

Council Support

*Carolyn Maciel
Council Liaison*

*Nancy Kimball
Administrative Secretary*

Katharine M. Levandowsky RSA Administrator

VR State Agency, Ex-Officio
Term: No Limit
City: Phoenix

Robert Blaylock

Business, Industry and Labor Rep.
Term: 2007-2012
City: Mesa

Russ Bull

Disability Advocacy Rep.
Term: 2011-2014
City: Flagstaff

Michael Duncan, Chair

Disability Advocacy Rep.
Term: 2006-2012
City: Phoenix

George Garcia

Specific Disability Rep.
Term: 2009-2012
City: Laveen

Jenny Goeckel

Specific Disability Rep.
Term: 2009-2014
City: Tucson

John Gutierrez

Client Assistance Program Rep.
Term: 2006-2012
City: Phoenix

Mark Jacoby

Community Rehabilitation
Program Service Provider Rep.
Term: 2009-2015
City: Phoenix

Suzanne Malson

Statewide Independent Living
Council Rep.
Term: 2008-2014
City: Bullhead City

Bill McQueary

State Education/Special Ed. Rep.
Term: 2011-2014
City: Glendale

Allan Potter

Specific Disability Rep.
Term: 2011-2014
City: Queen Creek

Brian Satran

Business, Industry and Labor Rep.
Term: 2011- 2013
City: Laveen

Paula Seanez

I2I Project Director's Rep.
Term: 2002-2013
City: Window Rock

Charles Tiller

Business, Industry and Labor Rep.
Term: 2009-2015
City: Tucson

Leslie Williams

Parent Training and Information
Center Representative
Term: 2009-2012
City: Phoenix

Chris Zabramny

Specific Disability Groups Rep.
Term: 2009-2012
City: Tucson



Council Activities

2012

*Highlights of the Council's
activities this past year:*

DREAM Job Fair

disABLED Divaz Fashion Show

*Secondary Transition Mentoring
Project Presentations*

*Client Satisfaction Survey
Collaboration with RSA*

*Quarterly Disability Council
Chair Meetings*

DREAM Job Fair

It started as a way to bring attention to the crushing 70 percent unemployment rate for people with disabilities. It ended up as something so much more than that. October has been designated Disability Employment Awareness Month since the 1940s, usually with little notice. Although society is becoming more accepting of people with disabilities in the workplace, opportunities are still limited. There have been some efforts by individual organizations to gain more public attention to employment opportunities for people with disabilities, but no effective large scale movement.

Enter the DREAM Team. Nine local agencies came together in the summer of 2010 and started thinking BIG! Disability and Rehabilitation Employment Awareness Month (DREAM) was born. Chuck Tiller, SRC member from the Beacon Group, Goodwill of Arizona, Rehabilitation Services Administration, SRC member Chris Zabramny of the Community Partnership of Southern Arizona, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), Linkages, DKA, the Easter Seals/Blake Foundation, and the Direct Center for Independence all agreed to join forces to make the biggest impact. Ron Barber, District Director for Representative Gabrielle Giffords, agreed to serve as the DREAM Team's spokesperson.

One of the goals of the Dream Team was to get 100 people with disabilities hired by the end of the month. To attract the most media attention, a press conference and job fair was held on October 6, 2011, at the Beacon Group in Tucson. The team hoped to attract twenty local businesses to participate in the job fair and make actual jobs available for the hundred or so job-seeking persons with disabilities expected to attend.

The DREAM kickoff day came; all the local media came to hear Barber speak about the DREAM Team's plans. Twenty-two



SRC Member Jenny Goeckel in the 5th Annual disABLED Divaz Fashion Show.

businesses participated, ready to interview and hire people for a wide variety of jobs. To the amazement of the job fair organizers, in two hours an estimated 500 people showed up for the job fair, resulting in a line all the way out the front door!

The DREAM team was overwhelmed with the response and participation of the employers, and with the strong motivation people had to find work. Statistics obtained in December, 2012 showed that the combined efforts of the group and the employers resulted in 113 people with disabilities finding a job they had been dreaming about. The Council applauds the nine organizations that came together and showed how big an impact could be made. The goal of gaining attention and raising people's awareness of the need for more job opportunities was accomplished. Plans are underway for next year's DREAM in October, 2012—starting with finding a bigger location!

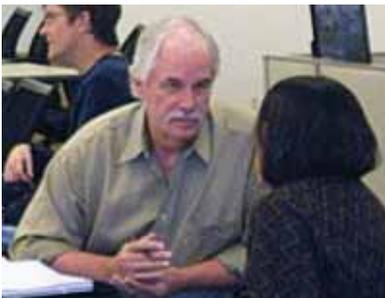
disABLED Divaz Fashion Show

The 5th Annual Aurora Foundation disABLED Divaz Fashion Show took place on Saturday, October 15, 2011, with a theme of "Divaz through the Decades." The event was held at the JW Marriott Starr Pass Resort in Tucson. The evening featured dinner, live entertainment from Crystal Stark & Triple Threat, and, of course, the Divaz Fashion show! Leading up to the event, 21 women and girls ranging in age from teens to fifties participated in workshops to learn how to carry themselves with confidence and perfect their runway walks. The workshops are based on The Aurora Foundation's proprietary curriculum, "Leaders for a Lifetime." SRC member Jenny Goeckel has participated in the fashion show since its inception, and worked tirelessly to gain SRC support in advertising the event.

For the second year in a row, the event included a designer competition. Skilled amateurs and professional clothing designers



created unique fashions customized for every “diva” to model on the runway. At the end of the night, each Divaz model was given the outfit they modeled in the show. Awards in specific design categories were given to the designers, as decided by a panel of fashion-expert judges. Information about this annual event can be found at www.disableddivaz.org



Secondary Transition Mentoring Project Presentations

The Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services (ADE/ESS) and the University of Kansas have developed the Secondary Transition Mentoring Project (STMP), to help eligible public education agencies (PEAs) improve secondary transition education and services, and foster the development of local interagency community transition teams to improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. Each year, teams of educators from 15 eligible PEAs come together to learn innovative strategies to reach established outcomes over a four-year program. Additionally, PEAs gain an understanding of how other Arizona schools have overcome transition issues, by building professional networks with colleagues from around the state.

At the February, 2012 meeting, the SRC was honored to have the opportunity to speak to the student cohorts about the work of the SRC and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program’s transition services. The presentation was so well received the SRC has been invited for future interaction with the group.



Client Satisfaction Survey Collaboration with RSA

The SRC met with RSA staff this year to provide recommendations for the standardized client satisfaction survey. RSA indicated survey results are used to provide guidance to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), assist in developing the State Plan's services and supports, and for refining and improving VR processes and services. The Council recommended adding questions to the survey, and surveying clients throughout the vocational rehabilitation process. RSA was receptive to the SRC recommendations, revising the survey and agreeing to poll clients at four stages: eligibility determination, Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) development, IPE completion or after one year of services, and case closure. RSA plans to implement the updated survey in October, 2012, and will share quarterly results with the SRC.



Quarterly Disability Council Chair Meetings

The RSA Administrator instituted quarterly Disability Council Chair meetings this fiscal year. The purpose of the meetings is to foster communication and collaboration among disability councils, as well as with RSA. Councils attending the meetings include the Governor's State Rehabilitation Council, the Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment, the Governor's Council on Spinal and Head Injuries, and the Governor's State Independent Living Council. Each council brings a unique perspective to the meetings, which encourages networking opportunities, information sharing, and project collaboration.

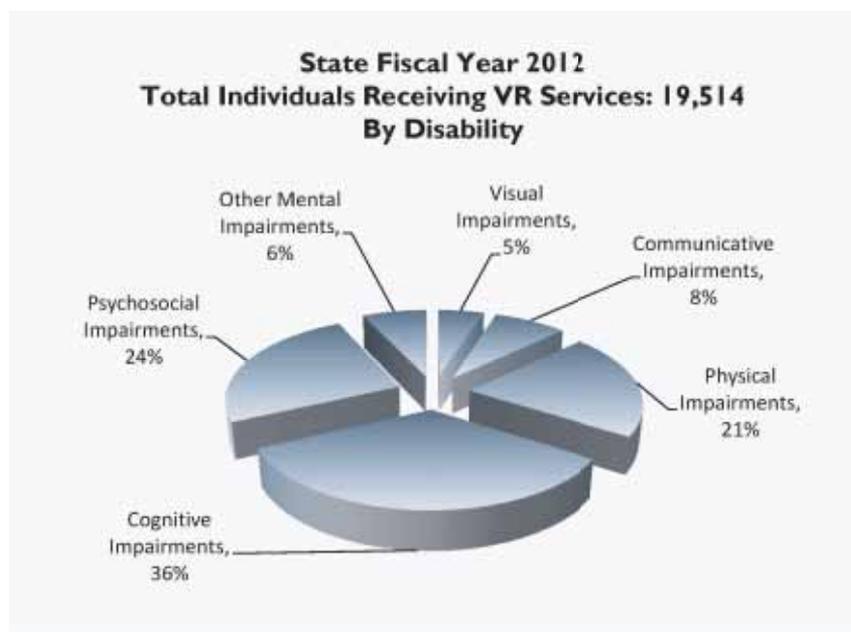
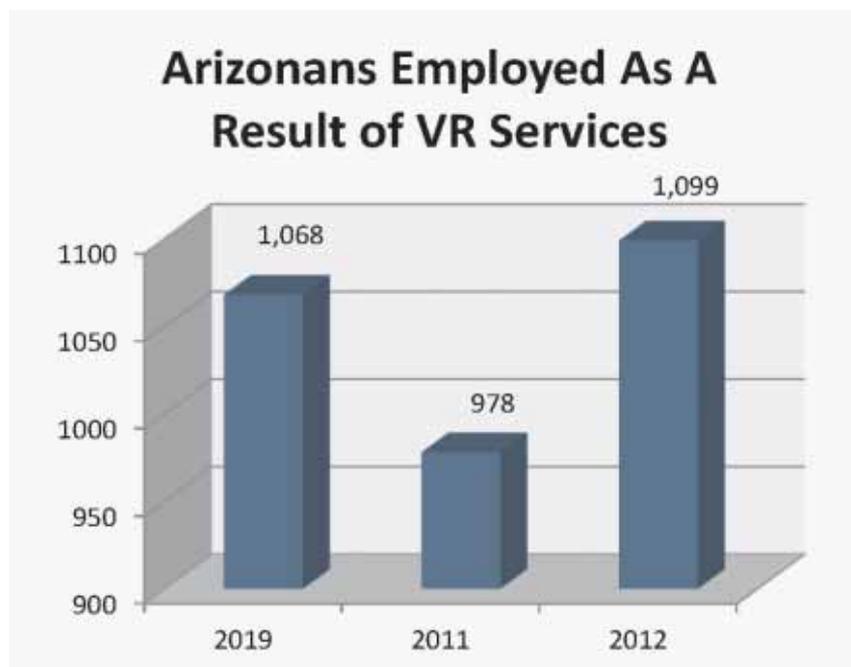


Vocational Rehabilitation

Program Basics

The mission of the Arizona Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR) is to work with individuals with disabilities to achieve increased independence and/or gainful employment through the provision of comprehensive rehabilitative and employment support services in a partnership with all stakeholders.

The VR Program provides a variety of specialized services to individuals who have physical, mental or emotional impairments that create barriers to employment and/or independent living. Eligibility for the VR Program is determined by the following: an individual wants to become or remain economically independent through work; an individual's disability is serious enough to make it hard to get or keep a job; available services can help the individual get or keep a job; the VR Program is the only or best place to provide the individual with the help he or she may need.





VR Highlights

2012

A review of Vocational Rehabilitation Program activities throughout the year:

Twelfth Annual Transition Conference

Arizona Disability Benefits 101

Self-Employment

Employment Coordinators

Ticket to Work

Transition School to Work Coordinators

Arizona Industries for the Blind

Blind Enterprise Program

12th Annual Transition Conference

The Annual Transition Conference was sponsored by the Arizona Department of Education, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and other agencies for its twelfth year in 2012. The theme of the conference, held October 15-17 at the Talking Stick Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona, was “Facing the Future: Who’s in Your Network?” The theme reflected the critical need to develop social, employment, and family networks and integrate technology in order to facilitate the transition process.

The conference is a collaborative, cross-stakeholder professional development event, focused on providing information that is meaningful and pertinent to the transition planning process. Participants include youth and young adults with disabilities, family members, state agency staff, educators, and service providers, who all share a commitment to the successful transition of students to adult life. This year’s conference provided a dynamic array of national speakers and state-level experts, who presented sessions focused on improving strategies for youth success, community involvement, and interagency collaboration. Participants had the opportunity to attend sessions in the areas of employment, education, training, and adult living. A dedicated session with content tailored specifically for a youth and young adult audience was also offered. For the seventh consecutive year, the creativity of youth and young adults was highlighted through displays of their artwork.

Arizona Disability Benefits 101

A new website, Arizona Disability Benefits 101 (AZ DB101), was launched in May, 2012, funded through a partnership with the AzRSA and the Arizona Medicaid Infrastructure Grant administered by the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). AZ DB101 online tools help individuals with disabilities to make informed decisions about going to work or accepting a job offer, by helping them plan for employment



and learn how work and benefits (cash, medical, etc.) go together. The online tools and information help individuals plan for and manage their financial well-being and self-sufficiency through work.

The Disability Benefits 101 website launched in May, 2012, through a funding partnership of AzRSA and the Arizona Medicaid Infrastructure Grant administered by AHCCCS.

Benefit programs and work earnings interactions are individualized. The system allows users to “walk through” individual work scenarios and visualize how their benefits are impacted by work. Additionally, AZ DBI01 identifies specific follow-up resources to assist the user in the next steps to a formal work plan—for instance, making a referral and scheduling an appointment for benefits and work incentive counseling services. Arizona Disability Benefits 101 can be accessed at www.az.dbi01.org

Self-Employment

Self-employment is work done for a profit in an individual’s own business, profession, or trade. The individual takes personal responsibility for all business decisions and activities, including services rendered, hours of operation, employee services, pricing, and purchasing equipment and tools. Self-Employment is one of an array of employment settings available to the VR client developing a plan to accomplish his/her vocational goal. The VR client has at least 51 percent ownership and directly operates the business, managing all or most aspects of the operation.

The decision to commit VR funds in support of Self-Employment is based on a variety of factors, including, but not limited to, viability of the VR client’s Self-Employment Business Plan (SEBP), potential for obtaining supporting resources (financial and non-financial), startup costs and financial projections, and sound business decision making.

In SFY 2012, the RSA Self Employment Review Committee (SERC) approved and funded 14 SEBPs with Vocational Rehabilitation 110 Grant dollars. Amounts varied and did not exceed \$18,000. The types of businesses funded include artist, professional audio recording production, Internet radio broadcasting business, yard and tree services, hair salon, candle shop, internet bartering services, illustrator/writer, pool care services, design and graphic arts, vision rehabilitation therapist, ornamental ironwork, and photography.

Self-Employment is one of an array of employment settings available to the VR client. The VR client has at least 51% ownership, directly managing all or most aspects of the operation.

Employment Coordinators

This year, RSA established several employer coordinator positions statewide. The main role of the employer coordinator is to bridge the gap between the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselor and prospective employers, with the goal of increasing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Tim Stump, Employment Coordinator for Region I, has developed and implemented Job Clubs to augment this activity. The clubs, held primarily in VR offices in Maricopa County, bring together VR clients, their counselors, and employers to facilitate job searches. Mr. Stump enlisted employers' participation in mock interviews with VR clients, to help clients prepare for an actual interview situation. This provided immediate benefits for VR clients, helping them improve and enhance their interviewing skills, and also for the VR counselors who were able to sit in on feedback sessions with the employers to gain a better understanding of what employers are looking for in an employee.

Mr. Stump actively distributed job leads from local employers to VR counselors statewide, and incorporated this information into an RSA database. He was a participant in the FOCUS and the DREAM job fairs held in October. Mr. Stump conducted monthly Job Developer meetings, working with local employers and service providers to host this informational activity. All of

the efforts were made with a twofold focus; that the needs of the VR clients are met, as well as the needs of the employer.

Ticket to Work

Ticket to Work (TTW) is a federally-funded Social Security program administered by Maximus. The TTW program is essentially a voucher system, whereby beneficiaries receiving Social Security Insurance (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) can receive employment services to allow them to go back to work. There are two categories of agencies that provide services under the TTW program: Employment Networks (EN) or state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies. The program is voluntary; persons to choose when to participate. Social Security and Maximus expect recipients to shop around for the agency best able to serve their particular employment needs. New focuses in 2012 for the Ticket to Work program as it pertains to AzRSA:

- The development of the Secure Provider Portal;
- The Automated Ticket Assignability – Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system;
- Nullification of issuing physical tickets;
- The development of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement between AzRSA and ENs, built on the premise of the Partnership Plus service delivery model; and
- Institution of the Vocational Rehabilitation Earnings Alert Report (VEAR).

In the summer of 2012, the Social Security Administration (SSA) developed an EN Secure Provider Portal. The portal was developed to help state VR agencies and ENs manage business transactions and operations with the Ticket to Work program. The online tool provides functionalities of document management, uploading and downloading reports, viewing reports, and verifying Ticket status. The portal has been activated, and SSA continues to make improvements. Over the course of time the agency plans to make this the primary tool for business operations between provider agencies and Maximus.

The Ticket Assignability – Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system allows VRs and ENs to check, via telephone, the status of an unlimited number of tickets at any time. Previously, SSA would send an actual ticket symbolizing the participant’s eligibility for the Ticket to Work program. This is no longer the case. An individual receiving either SSI and/or SSDI is, in most cases, deemed as eligible for the Ticket to Work program. If needed, verification of eligibility can be obtained by contacting Maximus.

AzRSA is communicating with ENs statewide about the recently finalized Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement. The MOU is built upon the premise of the Partnership Plus service delivery model. Essentially, the MOU agreement consists of the referral process and the responsibilities of the participating organizations, and is an effort to streamline the process for beneficiaries to receive services from both VR and ENs in a sequential manner. Three ENs have agreed to terms with AzRSA; additional meetings to discuss the MOU with other ENs across the state have been scheduled.

The Social Security Administration has begun issuing the Vocational Rehabilitation Earnings Alert Report (VEAR), a quarterly indicator of earnings by VR clients drawn from a national database, which will help expedite the processing of cost reimbursement claims submitted by the state VR program.

Essentially, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is an effort to streamline the process for beneficiaries to receive services from both VR and ENs in a sequential manner.

Transition School to Work Coordinators

The Rehabilitation Services Administration has created coordinator positions to address the growing needs of transitioning students. The five-person Transition Team includes the statewide transition coordinator, two transition specialists, and two Third Party Cooperative Agreement (TPCA) liaisons. The team focuses on providing technical assistance and guidance (TAG) to both VR staff and Public Education Agencies (PEAs). The TAG is specific in how AzRSA/VR can best be of service to the PEAs, regarding practices, programmatic issues, and contractual concerns.

The team is leading an effort to start routine quarterly meetings for VR Counselors working with the high school population. The purpose of the meetings is to disseminate accurate and

During SFY 2012, AIB paid approximately \$2.9 million in wages and benefits to over 80 employees who are blind, visually impaired, deaf-blind, and multiple disabled Arizonans.

up-to-date information that affects the staff serving these young adults. The processing of new contracts requires the collaborative effort from all team members before contracts can move forward. This approach had resulted in 21 TPCAs under development to bring new schools on board.

The Transition Team also participates on planning committees for the yearly Transition Conference and the AZ Community of Practice on Transition (AZCoPT). Participants on the AZCoPT committee include individuals from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), the Department of Behavioral Health Services (BHS), and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). The major initiative of this committee is to develop local committees that have a similar purpose and to improve collaborative efforts among different agencies by identifying common initiatives to tackle. The National Community of Practice on Transition (NCoPT) assists AZCoPT with their efforts in developing these teams.

Arizona Industries for the Blind

Arizona Industries for the Blind (AIB) was established in 1952 to provide employment and training opportunities for individuals who are blind. AIB functions as a self-sustaining enterprise fund operating under the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act. Employees of AIB have an uncompromising dedication to their work and to the quality of products and services provided to the federal government and U.S. armed forces. This results in jobs with competitive wages, benefits, and upward mobility. All employees receive competitive wages with full benefits, including major medical, dental, life insurance and retirement. During SFY 2012, AIB paid approximately \$2.9 million in wages and benefits to more than 80 employees who are blind, visually impaired, deaf-blind, and multiple disabled.

During SFY 2012, AIB achieved total sales of \$19.0 million, equaling sales of the prior year. AIB continues to pursue growth opportunities for employment and training in Document Management Services, Contact Center Operations, Production Services, and Warehousing and Distribution.

The AIB Rehabilitation Services Unit (RSU) provided support services to AzRSA and the community, and to 60 blind and visually impaired individuals. These individuals received one or more of the following services: job placement, job retention, job search skills, labor market surveys, work site assessments, on-the-job training, work adjustment training and assessment, assistive technology training, custom produced turnkey computer, and access technology systems. Along with this service provided to individuals, the RSU assisted employers and RSA providers with training and consultation statewide.

Blind Enterprise Program

The Arizona Business Enterprise Program (BEP) trains and places qualified legally blind individuals as operators of merchandising businesses. Current business sites include food service operations such as full service cafeterias, snack bars, gift shops, and vending operations.

During SFY 2012, the BEP made some facility consolidation and service level adjustments to allow affected operations to remain profitable. Two new contracts to increase efficiency of services and support were established.

BEP opened the Pinal County Vending route in February, 2012, and opened an additional facility at the USPS West Valley Distribution Center later that year. In SFY 2013, the BEP will continue its focus on establishing additional opportunities through a Luke Air Force Base food service facility and other possible vending locations, and continue to advance the statewide Post Office agreement.

In May, 2012, three individuals began a six-month training program to become BEP Licensees. The focus of the BEP training program is to teach skills that will enhance the trainee's upward mobility among licensed operators, and to seek new individuals interested in the entrepreneurial aspects of business. Solicitation to recruit new qualified trainees will continue throughout the year, with plans for two training programs in SFY 2013.



Client Successes

Celebrating VR client achievements!

John A. One day at a time to reach success! This is something John has always believed. As a child, he was diagnosed with gastro-esophageal reflux disease, and as a young adult he continued to have erosion and reflux. This impacted his school attendance, and would later impact his ability to reach employment success. To be autonomous through work, John sought out Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) in 2008 and applied for services at a Tucson VR office. John's original goal was employment as an Occupational Therapist. VR partnered with John, providing extensive tuition and school supports so that he could attend school. It arranged comparable benefits of VR Counseling and Guidance, Pell Grants for tuition needs, and the utilization of AHCCCS and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance. In June, 2010, John's case transferred, and his VR counselor encouraged him to consider certification as an OT Assistant. John graduated from Pima Medical with a cumulative 4.0 GPA in the summer of 2010. He became a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant at the end of that year, and applied at a local hospital.

John began full-time employment in January, 2011, earning a competitive salary with benefits, achieving his financial independence. John conveyed to his VR counselor, "I realize at the end of each day I have made a difference, when I hear the thanks and praise of my patients. I can definitely say this is where I need to be right now. I am learning so much and I am building a strong foundation for my future. Thank you so very much again and thanks to all the support Vocational Rehabilitation has provided me. I could not have done it without you."

Rudy T. is a 42 year old married male who was referred to the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program in January, 2010 by Yavapai College. He had been attending classes part-time for

the past four years to become an X-ray technician, but could not pass the math requirements of the training program. He suspected he had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and specific learning disabilities (SLD). He requested the assistance of the VR program to determine why he couldn't achieve his educational goal. A psychological evaluation determined that Rudy has an anxiety disorder, ADHD not otherwise specified (NOS), and academic problems. Recommendations included further evaluation and initial treatment, to which Rudy complied.



Rudy at the control board of his business, Ghost Town Studio, in Jerome, Arizona. With the help of VR services, Rudy discovered his vocational calling through a Self-Employment Business Plan.

Rudy pursued several vocational options which did not work out. As he and his VR counselor continued to investigate vocational careers, it became clear that a self-employment plan might be warranted. Rudy met with a Self-Employment Business Plan (SEBP) consultant under contract with RSA. His employment goal was revised to Sound Engineering Technician. VR services included self-employment technical assistance, self-employment classes taken at the local community college, and Pro-Tools certification. Rudy made tremendous progress on the self-employment business plan development. In September, 2011 Rudy presented his final plan with all of the financials to the RSA Self-Employment Review Committee, and his plan was funded. He continued to follow through with all directives, and launched his business with some follow-up services in the self-employment technical assistance area.

Rudy is operating a recording studio called Ghost Town Studio in Jerome, Arizona. The business is exceeding his financial projections. He is thrilled and grateful for the opportunity to succeed, and for the services and supports provided by the VR program. His workload is increasing monthly and he earns the same wages as those without disabilities. It is important to note that this VR client was motivated to succeed, with the insight to understand and manage his disability, which enabled him to benefit from VR services. He was willing to work hard through the challenges of business plan development and follow the direction of the technical assistance advisor. The Self-Employment Review Committee is very proud and encouraged by Rudy's success.



Client Satisfaction

Survey Results

In SFY 2012, client satisfaction with services received and last job obtained remained virtually steady over SFY 2010.

In state fiscal year (SFY) 2012, the number of consumers who reported “Overall satisfaction with services provided by VR staff directly, especially your VR counselor” remained steady from SFY 2011, with 72% reporting Very Satisfied/Satisfied and 9% reporting Neutral. Satisfaction with the last job obtained as a result of receiving VR service decreased slightly from 61% reporting Very Satisfied/Satisfied and 21% Neutral, to 60% and 19% respectively. The number of respondents currently working dipped from 58% in SFY 2011 to 56% in SFY 2012 while satisfaction with their job dropped from 74% Very Satisfied/Satisfied and 13% Neutral to 69% and 14% respectively. The average hourly salary of successfully closed cases remained stable at \$11.20 an hour.

Average hourly salary of successfully closed cases (26s)

SFY2010	\$11.71
SFY2011	\$11.20
SFY2012	\$11.20

	SFY 2010		SFY 2011		SFY 2012	
	Satisfied / Very Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied / Very Satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied / Very Satisfied	Neutral
Overall satisfaction with services provided by VR staff directly, especially your VR Counselor	76%	8%	72%	9%	72%	9%
Satisfaction with the last job obtained as a result of receiving VR services	51%	32%	61%	21%	60%	19%
Currently working (Y/N)	51% Y	—	58% Y	—	56% Y	—
If yes, satisfaction with this job?	75%	6%	74%	13%	69%	14%

NOTE: The survey results should be viewed within an overall continued economic context for SFY 2012. State budget and economic impacts still have Order of Selection categories Priority Two and Priority Three closed, but Priority One clients were fully released in July, 2011. Given these impacts, some decline in client satisfaction might reasonably be expected.



Statewide Directory

RSA Offices

RSA Administration

1789 W. Jefferson St., 2NW
 Phoenix, AZ 85007
 (602) 542-3332
 1-800-563-1221
 TTY 1-855-475-8194 (statewide)
 Katharine M. Levandowsky,
Administrator

Region I Administration

3221 N. 16th St., Ste. 200
 Phoenix, AZ 85016
 (602) 266-6752

Region I Offices

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 Phoenix, AZ 85016
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 Mesa, AZ 85210
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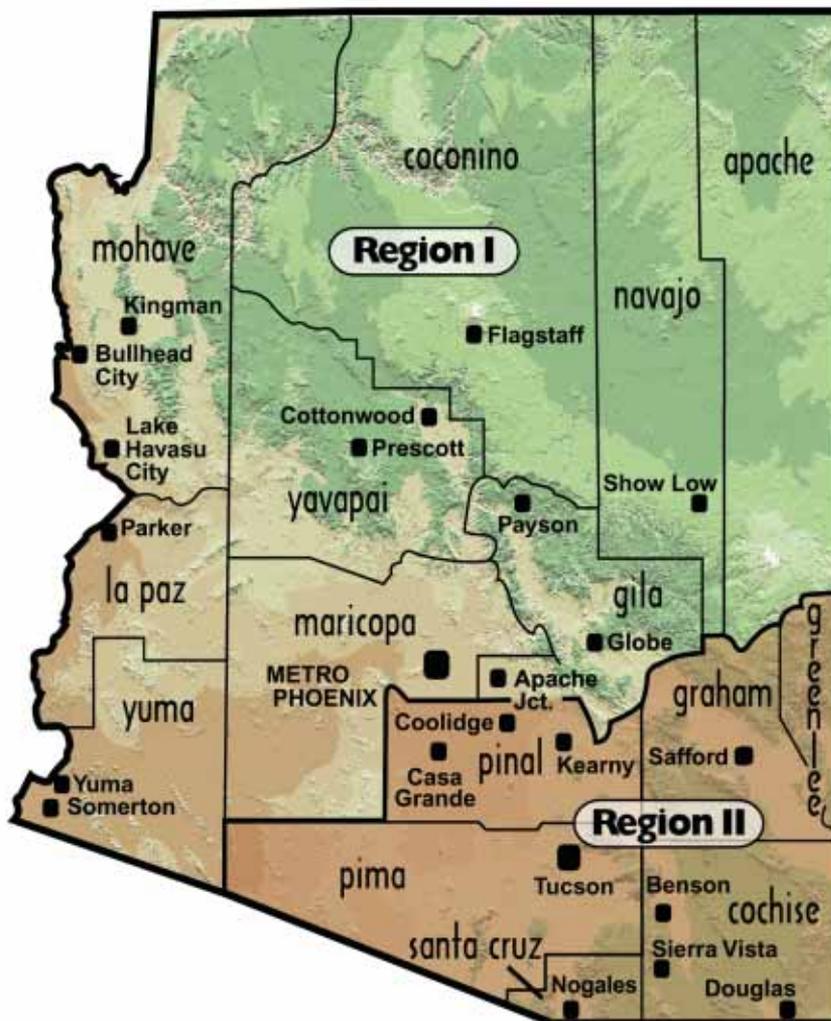
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Region II Administration

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Site Code 930A

1789 W. Jefferson Street, 2nd Flr NW

Phoenix, AZ 85007



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MIV-234 (12-12 draft)