

# Idaho State Rehabilitation Council 2018 Annual Report

October 1, 2017— September 30, 2018

## **MISSION** of the Idaho State Rehabilitation Council

To review, analyze, and advise the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation regarding services and functions that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve individual rehabilitation goals.

---

**T**he State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is composed of volunteers from around the state, who show leadership and a commitment to empower Idahoans with disabilities to achieve their goals for employment, independent living, and community integration.

Appointed by the State Board of Education, the Council serves both as

an advisor and partner to Idaho's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR) program. Its members participate in IDVR's strategic planning by guiding and assisting in making thoughtful, participant-focused decisions through needs assessments, customer satisfaction surveys, and ongoing program evaluation.

### **STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**Molly Pollastrini, Chair**  
Disability Advocacy Groups

**Mel Leviton**  
State Independent Living Council

**Jane Donnellan**  
Vocational Rehabilitation  
Administrator

**Sarah Tueller**  
Parent Training  
& Information Center

**Ramona Medicine Horse**  
American Indian  
Vocational Rehabilitation

**Dwight Johnson**  
Workforce Development Council

**Dina Flores-Brewer, Vice Chair**  
Client Assistance Program

**Kendrick Lester**  
State Department of Education

**Suzette Whiting**  
Vocational Rehabilitation  
Counselor

**Kenna Buckner**  
Community Rehabilitation Program

**Ron Oberleitner, Darin Lindig,  
Lucas Rose and Rob Atkins**  
Business/Labor/Industry

**Mike Hauser & Janice Carson**  
Disability Advocacy Groups

**Joe Anderson**  
Former Applicant or Recipient

## **MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR**

As an advocate for individuals with disabilities and the Chair of the Idaho State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) I want to thank members of the Council, the wonderful staff at the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR), and the Executive Director of the Idaho State Board of Education (SBOE) for the continued support of Idahoans with disabilities. The SRC has a legal responsibility outlined in federal legislation and is appointed by the SBOE.



I am proud to work with such kind and dedicated professionals. The work we do in support of people with disabilities and businesses is invaluable. The SRC partnership with IDVR can ensure all eligible Idahoans with disabilities have the opportunity to work and contribute to the state's economy and tax base. Idaho businesses profit through access to a trained and eager workforce. And as job seekers obtain employment, they become more independent and rely less on public assistance and other support programs. All of which helps stabilize the economic well-being of the state.

As I look back on the accomplishments of this past year I am proud to report an increased level of cooperation and collaboration with IDVR, greater outreach to people in all parts of Idaho, and a national presence in promoting best practices in rehabilitation.

I have been truly honored to serve Idahoans with disabilities and look forward to expanding opportunities to all people with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Molly Pollastrini

## **MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR**

One of my primary roles as the Administrator of IDVR is to be a leader in assuring our mission and vision are achieved. Early this year our mission and vision were updated to reflect the dual customer focus of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and to align with our National Vision 2020 initiative. I am excited about our new mission: “To prepare individuals with disabilities for employment and career opportunities while meeting the needs of the employers”. And our vision: “An Idaho where all individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in the workforce and employers value their contributions”. The National Vision 2020 initiative also reflects the strong commitment of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program to both individuals with disabilities and businesses. Vocational Rehabilitation is the leader in working with individuals with disabilities; preparing them through career readiness for competitive integrated employment. We impact the workforce by helping prepare individuals with disabilities for careers which assists businesses meet their talent needs. We engage in collaborative strategies with our community partners to best meet the needs of both the individual with a disability and the businesses in our communities.



Our program changes lives. I am proud of the committed staff of VR and their dedication to deliver high quality individualized services to individuals with disabilities and connect them to businesses who will benefit from their skills and talents.

We are continuing to transition and build capacity as required under WIOA. I see individual staff and teams working every day to improve our processes, to find unique approaches, and to adapt to requirements set out before us. We have seen the emergence of leadership teams in the areas of business engagement, transition for student with disabilities, case documentation, and quality counseling. We continue to strengthen the collaboration with our community partners to develop a dynamic workforce in Idaho that meets the needs of both the individual job seeker and employer.

I am honored to be granted the opportunity to be the Administrator of VR and am proud of the team of professionals who are dedicated to providing employment opportunities for individual with disabilities as well as employers. It is a great pleasure to present this annual report. I want to thank the SRC, the State Board of Education, our valued partners, all of the IDVR staff, and most importantly all the individuals who participated in our program.

Sincerely,

Jane Donnellan, MA, CRC



## State Rehabilitation Council Accomplishments FFY 2018

The State Rehabilitation Council and the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's shoulder-to-shoulder and face-to-face partnership continued this year with a unified vision of enhancing services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Council members were actively involved in pre-employment transition services development through high school education summer programs and the Tools for Life Secondary Transition Conference.

In addition, the SRC weighed in regarding the use of the Comprehensive State Needs Assessment (CSNA) to develop the State Plan and Strategic Plan goals. Further, we provided thoughtful suggestions for the revision of the vision/mission statement and fine-tuning the Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Finally, in preparation for the mid-cycle update of the IDVR Services Portion of the Combined State Plan, the Council developed a list of the input provided by the SRC to the agency over the past two years. VR staff categorized the input by type: changes to policy/rule, qualified hearing officers, Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, etc.

Indeed, our year in review indicates much has been accomplished and we look forward, with great anticipation, to our upcoming collaborative opportunities.

Janice Carson  
Chair for VR Portion of Combined State Plan and Finance Committee



## VR SUCCESS STORY— NICK HEUSSER

~~~

### JOURNEY TO JOBS

Nick has a job that he loves and an employer that appreciates his work skills and positive attitude. But the journey to Nick's job had some physical challenges. Nick did not let that stop him from pursuing his dream of getting and keeping a job. Nick lives in Preston, Idaho where jobs are a little harder to come by. A smaller community has less employers, so less job opportunities. Nick comes from a family of people that work hard for a living and he wanted that for himself as well. Nick wanted to contribute to society and gain his independence.



He started working with a vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor in high school. His counselor and him developed a plan in which he went on to pursue and obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree. But a job still alluded him.



## VR SUCCESS STORY— NICK HEUSSER JOURNEY TO JOBS

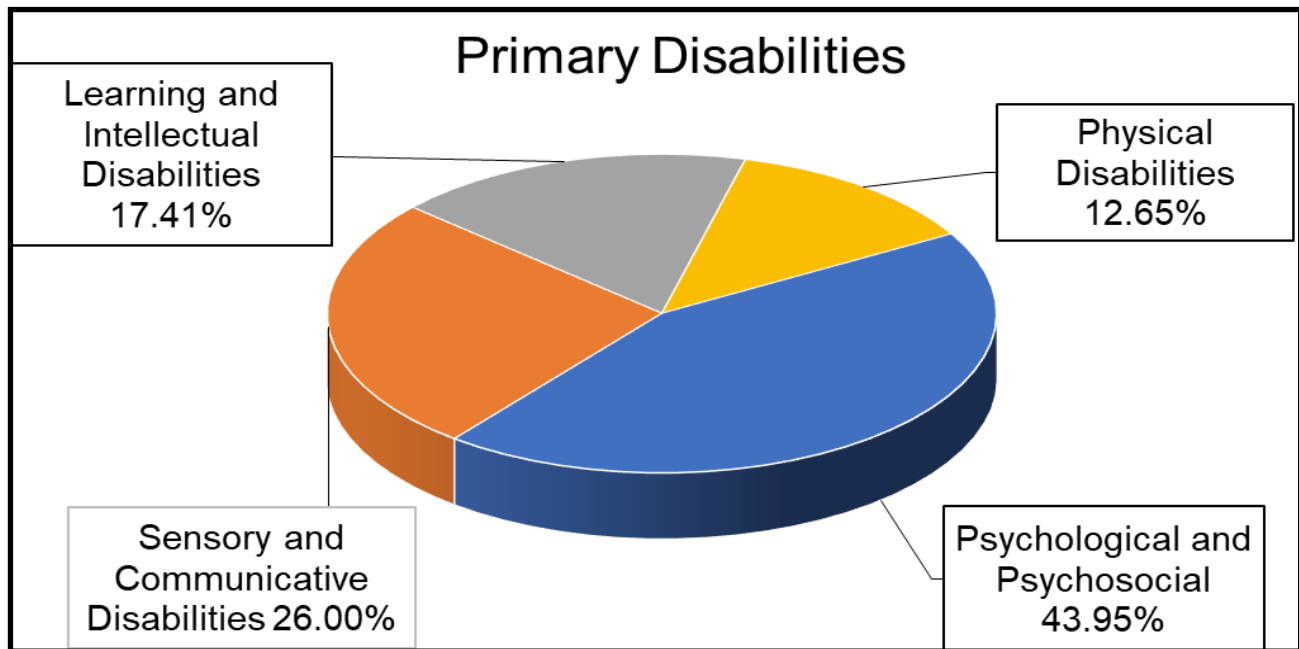
After working with his VR counselor and doing some research he got a medical coder certification and was hired by Franklin County Medical Center. Adrienne Alvey is his supervisor and she says besides medical coding, Nick scans documents, gets releases of information, and “anything I ask him to do.” His job requires understanding human anatomy, accuracy, attention to detail and the ability to learn and remember all the medical codes necessary that contribute to precise and correct reporting and billing. Nick has taken on this challenge and is eager to do more. When Alvey is asked what is Nick’s best quality as an employee she says, “his work ethic and appreciation for the job. Both of which are hard things to come by.”

Nick says his life has improved for the better since working at Franklin County Medical Center. He doesn’t have to rely on family or friends and that gives him a sense of self-worth and pride. “I earn my keep,” says Nick. That is why Nick is a VR Success Story!

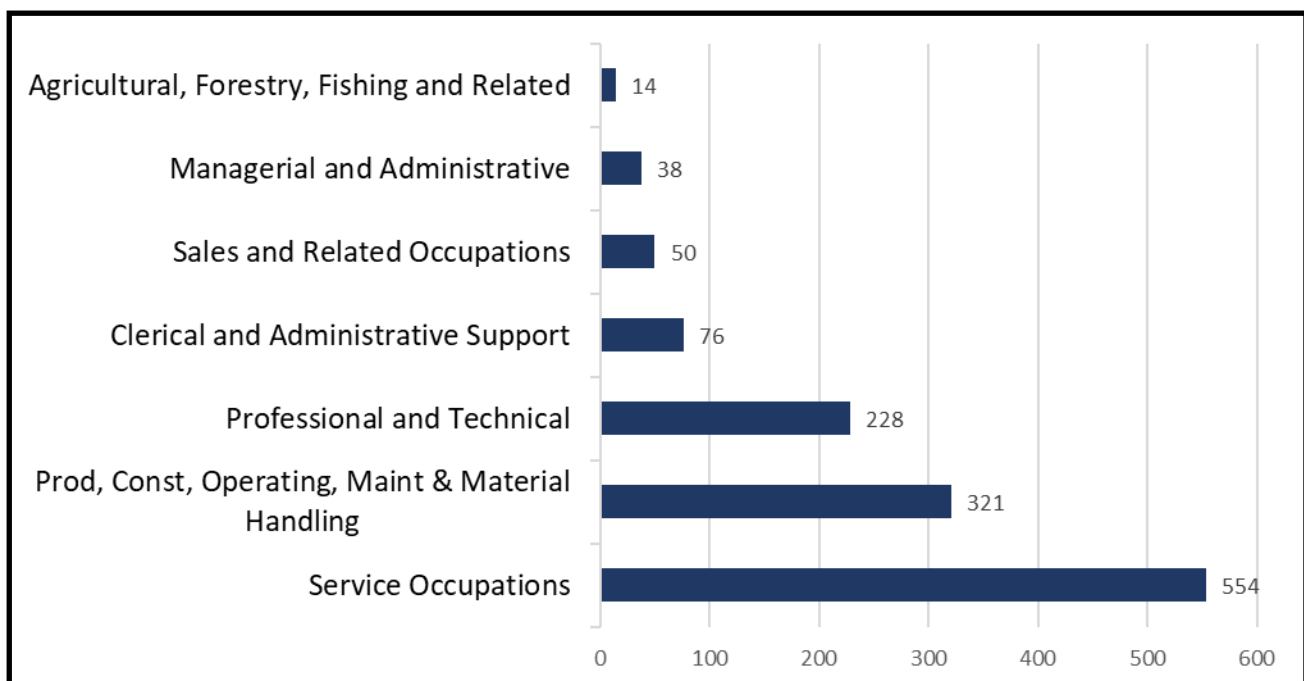


The primary goal of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is employment. VR provides individualized vocational counseling and guidance as well as other services to assist Idahoans with disabilities to make informed choices concerning their careers in order to become successfully employed.

### Disabilities of the 1,281 Individuals Who Went to Work



### Occupations of the 1,281 Individuals Who Went to Work





## By The Numbers—FFY 2018

### Average Customer Weekly Earnings

Average weekly earnings of customers before and after rehabilitation.



Before  
\$84.89



After  
\$386.58

This represents an increase of 355%.

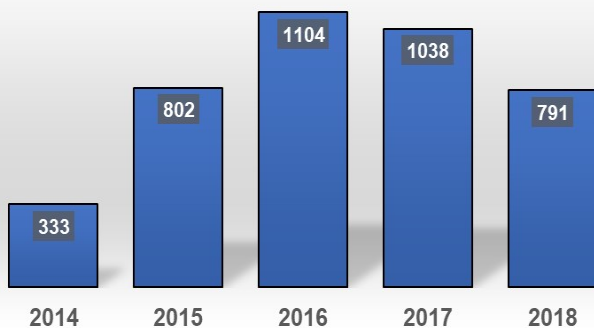


### Return on Investment

In FFY 2018, VR had 1,281 customers who achieved successful vocational outcomes. Their average weekly earnings equate to an estimated \$7,406,501 in state sales taxes paid over their remaining work life.

# Ticket To Work and Cost Reimbursement

**Tickets Assigned to IDVR**



**Ticket to Work** is a work incentive that allows some individuals on Social Security the ability to access employment services from a list of pre-approved providers and gives them protection from Social Security Administration (SSA) medical reviews while they are actively working on and making progress toward their goals.



More information can be found from MAXIMUS here:

★ **1,360** Tickets In-Use with IDVR

★ **66,905** Eligible Tickets In Idaho

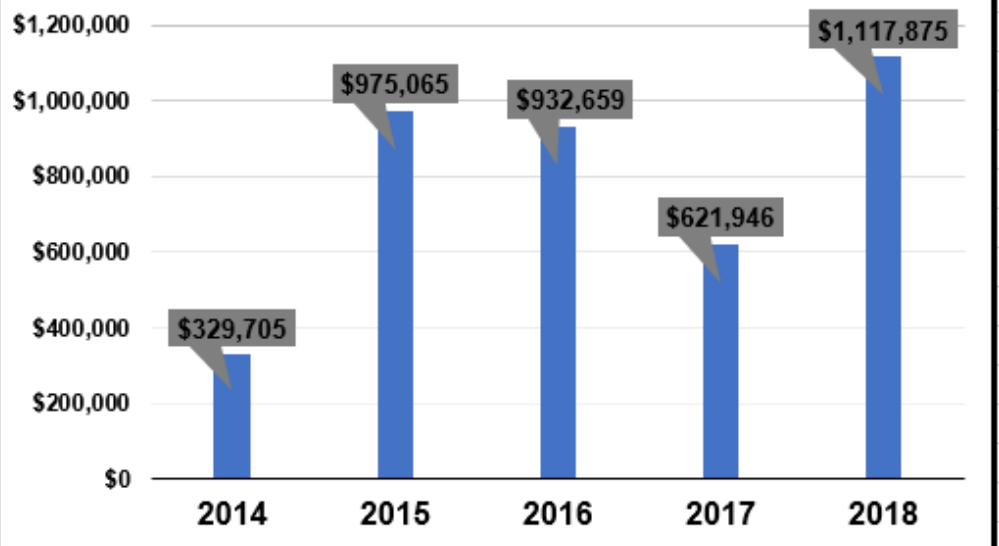
<https://choosework.ssa.gov/>

**\$1,117,875**

## Cost Reimbursement (CR)

is a program where SSA rewards VR agencies for putting individuals back to work and reducing or eliminating their use of SSA income. IDVR recovered over \$1.1 Million in CR in 2018.

**COST REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENTS**



## Business Engagement 2018 Year in Review

IDVR made great strides forward in business engagement (BE).

We now have a business engagement team comprised of staff representatives from all eight regions in our state as well as two representatives from our regional managers. The goal is to develop and implement a business engagement and outreach plan from the inside out.

Loni Hanka, Business Liaison, leads this newly formed team.



We have established our mission:

To intentionally create and maintain long-term partnerships with businesses for mutually beneficial outcomes for all parties.

Six-month goals include:

- ♦ Specific definition of BE activities and talking points/script
- ♦ Clarify/specify expectations for staff including tracking and coordination
- ♦ Develop training for managers and field staff

### Coming Together

Employing and Retaining Individuals with Disabilities

The year ahead promises to be full of business engagement progress and developing long-term employer relationships and collaboration with our partners.

## Services To Students and Youth With Disabilities

VR has continued to provide valuable Pre-Employment Transition Services to students with a disability around the state. The following opportunities have been highlighted:

### PAID SUMMER WORK EXPERIENCE

329 students participated in a week of job skills training, followed by five weeks of paid work with businesses in 15 different local areas around the state; additional on the job work training was provided to students, if needed. In addition, 26 students who are deaf or hard of hearing from around the state participated in job skills training followed by four weeks of paid work experience; all interpreting services were included.

Several students were hired by the employer either during or after the program ended. Students were excited about earning a pay check, but more importantly students gained significant confidence in their abilities during the experience.



### VANDAL SUMMER ACADEMY (VSA)

Students who participated in VSA learned basic college skills through participation in course presentations, career development activities, independent living skills, as well as developing next steps for students on their path to postsecondary education.



## SELKIRK OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP and EDUCATION PROGRAM (SOLE)

For the past two years SOLE has partnered with the Lake Pend Oreille School District and Vocational Rehabilitation to encourage students to take leadership roles and provide a safe space to push through personal challenges. This STEM focused program teaches students leadership skills while also highlighting employment opportunities specifically in forestry and conservation.



## WORK OF ART

The Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation worked with Idaho Parents Unlimited to provide students with the opportunity to participate in paid short-term internships working with business partners to create corporate works of art under the guidance of a teaching artist. In one opportunity, students worked with HP to develop artwork with the statement of 'Reinvent' using old computer parts from HP.



[illegible]