



Idaho State Rehabilitation Council
Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Combined 2024 Annual Report



Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's History:

The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1920 was the start of the public rehabilitation program in the United States. The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1920 provided funds for people with physical disabilities for vocational guidance, training, occupational adjustment, prosthesis, and placement services. A series of amendments through the years expanded services to persons with other types of disabilities.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 emphasized priority services for persons with severe disabilities and incorporated civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. At the present time, the authority of the rehabilitation program is still under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner- Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

What is Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a state-federal program whose goal is to assist people with disabilities prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment.

IDVR's Vision:

An Idaho where all individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in the workforce and employers value their contributions

IDVR's Mission:

To prepare individuals with disabilities for employment and career opportunities while meeting the needs of the employer

Information and data within this report are reflective of State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2024 and Program Year 2023 (July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024). This document is partially funded by the Department of Education/ Rehabilitation Services Administration, Grant Award Number H126A240016. The Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation receives 78.7% of its funding through a grant from the United States Department of Education.

Landscape photographs provided by Mike MacGuffie, IDVR Center Manager of Customer Center South Central.

IDVR Agency Core Values are A.R.T.

Accountability: Taking ownership and responsibility for our actions

IDVR values **Accountability** by taking ownership and responsibility for our actions. Accountability includes using a solution-focused approach to positive outcomes through individual awareness, integrity, and transparency.

Respect: Recognizing abilities, valuing professional judgement

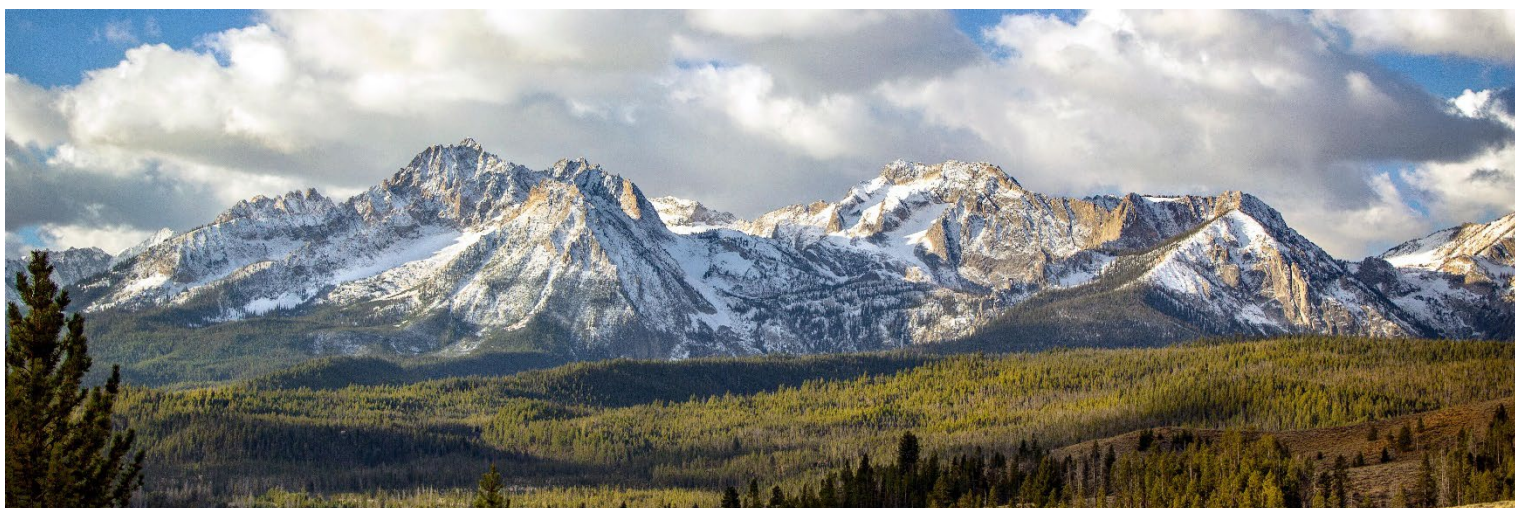
IDVR promotes mutual **Respect** in the workplace. We recognize team members for their abilities and contributions, and value their professional judgement.

Teamwork: Working together to achieve a collective goal

IDVR values **Teamwork** that utilizes professional and mindful communication while working together to achieve a collective goal. We value the diverse experiences, skills, and perspectives that each team member brings to the Agency.

As IDVR lives in these values, we aspire to the outcomes of higher levels of customer service and satisfaction, increased team member satisfaction, engagement, trust, and retention, increased work-life balance, and improved communication agency wide.

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Message from State Rehabilitation Council Chair



It is one of the greatest honors of my life to serve as SRC Chair during such a pivotal time for Idaho's Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR)

program. The council, composed of individuals appointed by the State Board of Education as designated by the Governor, represents diverse perspectives. The council includes former recipients of VR services, parents of persons with disabilities, a representative of the State Independent Living Council (SILC), a representative of indigenous communities, small business owners, and employees from some of Idaho's largest employers. At each quarterly meeting, we engage deeply, ask challenging questions, and provide the feedback necessary for VR to navigate these challenging times.

As a representative of individuals with disabilities, I am particularly passionate about ensuring that IDVR and our state do everything possible to remove barriers and equip Idahoans with the tools they need to succeed. As a deaf individual, this mission is personal to me. In addition, my experience as a workforce development professional

and business owner allows me to bring valuable insights to this conversation.

Let's look at some numbers. Nationwide, 1.4 million Baby Boomers will retire each year until 2030. By then, nearly all Baby Boomers will have left the workforce. The next generational cohort, consisting of 61 million people, must replace the 72 million Baby Boomers—a task made more challenging by current labor participation rates, leading to a labor shortage not just in Idaho, but across the U.S. and globally. Light cast, a world-renowned labor market research firm based in Moscow, Idaho, has coined this phenomenon the "Demographic Drought". Their website offers extensive studies and white papers on this workforce trend.

Idaho's economy and population have experienced unprecedented growth over the past decade. Boise alone grew from 399,000 residents in 2015 to 519,000 in 2022. Currently, the unemployment rate in Idaho is around 3.4%, lower than the national average of 4.1%. However, for those with disabilities, the unemployment rate is approximately 6.4% in Idaho, compared to 7.2% nationally.

Digging deeper, the 2022 U.S. Census reports that about 269,000 Idahoans identify as people with disabilities. This means approximately 17,200 individuals with disabilities are

Message from State Rehabilitation Council Chair

unemployed. Meanwhile, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in April 2024 that Idaho had around 53,000 job openings across both private and public employers. With a population of roughly 1.8 million and a labor participation rate of 62.8%, 47,000 people are non-participating. Now more than ever, it is crucial to help Idaho's growing employers tap into this talented and underutilized pool of workers. By employing individuals with disabilities, they not only gain employment but also become active contributors to Idaho's economy. Idaho's Vocational Rehabilitation Program, which is 80% federally funded, is staffed by dedicated professionals committed to serving individuals with disabilities. They assist with education credentialing, workplace accommodations, and creating cultures of disclosure and acceptance initiatives that statistically increase productivity and benefit countless employers nationwide. IDVR also supports Idaho's disabled youth through programming focused on work readiness, developing career pathways in trades, registered apprenticeships, and post-secondary education.

Let's work together to build a thriving workforce, where individuals with disabilities are gainfully employed and contributing to Idaho's economy during this time of worker shortages. Beyond

addressing the labor shortage, it's simply the right thing to do. By supporting IDVR's mission, we can ensure that individuals with disabilities have the tools they need to achieve their own success and happiness. This is not just about filling jobs; it's about empowering people to live fulfilling lives and enriching our communities in the process.

Thank You,
Timothy J Blonsky, SRC Chair

I have had a very good experience with the program and wouldn't be where I am now if not for this program and my Counselor was so encouraging with me and she was able to guide me through all my options and find the right one for me.

VR Customer Response to Customer Satisfaction Survey

Who is the State Rehabilitation Council?

State Rehabilitation Councils were created by amendments made to the Rehabilitation Act in 1993 when disability rights advocates succeeded at the federal level in persuading Congress to create a system supporting people with disabilities receiving vocational rehabilitation to take an active role in shaping the services they receive.

The Idaho State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a body of citizens appointed by the Idaho State Board of Education. The Council reviews, analyzes, and advises the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR) regarding the performance, effectiveness, and objectives of the program.

The SRC is composed of a diverse group of volunteers including current or former customers, professionals, employers, advises, and service providers who promote public awareness, advocacy, and support for the Vocational Rehabilitation program. The majority of the SRC members are themselves individuals with disabilities. SRC members are chosen for their interest in, and specialized knowledge of the disability community. The term of office for SRC members is three years, with the option of serving a second three-year term.

The SRC must be composed of at least 15 members including:

- 4 representatives of businesses, industry & labor
- 1 representative of Statewide Independent Living Council
- 1 representative of parent training & information center
- 1 representative of client assistance program
- 1 representative of community rehabilitation program service provider
- 1 representative of disability groups
- 1 current or former VR customer
- 1 American Indian VR Services program
- 1 representative of the State Department of Education
- 1 representative of the Workforce Development Council
- 1 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (ex-officio)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator (ex-officio)

The SRC communicates directly with customers, rehabilitation professionals, businesses, service providers, and other individuals interested in improving the services and programs provided by the VR program. SRC members provide critical support and guidance to IDVR (and to individuals with disabilities served by the Division) and communicate regularly with legislators, on both the state and national levels on their behalf.

Purpose of the Idaho State Rehabilitation Council

Activities

State and Strategic Plans:

The SRC participates in disseminating the Division's draft of the State and Strategic Plans and solicits public comments on those plans. The SRC prepares written recommendations for the Plan and coordinates with IDVR during the planning process.

Meetings:

The SRC meets four times a year. Dates and locations are available on the [IDVR SRC Meeting Schedule webpage](#). Council members participate in local and state activities dealing with disability related issues.

Surveys:

The SRC conducts needs assessments and surveys. Some of these efforts are accomplished independently and while collaborating with IDVR.

Employer needs, client satisfaction and team member perceptions of IDVR are a few of the inquiries that have been conducted.

SRC members and IDVR staff agree that this strong partnership produces positive and lasting impacts for Idahoans with disabilities.

In order to accomplish the many activities and responsibilities, the SRC is

comprised of two standing committees: Executive and Planning, Policy and Program Effectiveness Committee. All SRC members participate in committee activities based upon their strengths and area of interest.

Membership

If you enjoy learning, building relationships and advising for change in our systems, the SRC provides a rewarding opportunity for volunteer public services.

Service on the SRC provides a unique opportunity to engage in the dialogue on the Vocational Rehabilitation services at the State level.

One Person Can Make a Difference!

To learn more about the Idaho State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation visit the



[SRC Membership webpage](#), scan the QR code, or contact us at (208) 334-3390.

SRC 2025 Meeting Schedule

January 28th, 2025

April 22nd, 2025

July 22nd, 2025

October 21st, 2025

Executive Committee

This committee will exercise the overall governance of the Council subject to Council Bylaws. The Executive Committee will represent and guide the Council's efforts to advise for the VR program on behalf of the state agency, to state legislators, congressional delegation, and to the public at large. Advocacy efforts will focus on a partnership with the agency toward a common goal - maximizing employment and independent living for people with disabilities.

The Executive Committee will be composed of the Chair, Vice-Chair, the immediate past Chair, if available, and the co-chairs of the Planning, Policy and Program Effectiveness Committee. At least one member with a disability will be a member of the Executive Committee.

Planning, Policy and Program Effectiveness Committee

Activities of the Planning, Policy, and Program Effectiveness Committee strive to ensure that the VR program produces high quality outcomes for VR customers. Committee members will review, analyze, and advise IDVR on eligibility, including order of selection; the extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided, policy development; and functions performed by

state agencies that affect or potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes. This Committee will have two co-chairs, one chairing the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) and VR Portion of the State Plan and the other chairing the Policy Development and Survey Committees. Each subcommittee shall consist of at least two (2) additional members.

SRC Mission

Working on behalf of Idahoans with disabilities, the Idaho State Rehabilitation Council endeavors to provide consumers, service providers and others the opportunity to participate in constructive dialogue and public input to continually improve the quality of Vocational Rehabilitation services to residents of Idaho.

2024-2025 SRC Members

Council Chair	Tim Blonsky
Council Vice Chair	Diana Colgrove
Disability Advocacy Group Representatives	Tim Blonsky David "Max" Maxwell
Former Applicant or Recipient Representatives	Mark Reinhardt Stephanie Taylor-Thompson
Community Rehabilitation Program Representative.....	Danielle Larsen
Client Assistance Program Representative	Nancy Grant
Business/Industry & Labor Representatives.....	Angie Tuft Diana Colgrove Jeff DeForest Lucas Rose
American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services	Feather Holt
Parent Training & Information Center Representative	Linda Thomas
State Independent Living Council Representative	Jami Davis
State Department of Education Representative	Randi Cole
Workforce Development Council Representative	Clay Long
Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Representatives	
Ex-Officio	Judy B. Taylor, Interim Administrator
Ex-Officio	Kent Ireton, Pre-ETS VR Counselor
Council Secretary	Wendy Page, Management Assistant



I was honored to be appointed Interim Director of the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation this June. I joined the team during a

challenging time, but through the months we pulled together, worked creativity, relied on valuable partners, and found solutions.

IDVR provides a valuable resource to Idaho by promoting competitive employment to our citizens with physical, mental, or emotional challenges. This benefits individuals, families, communities and Idaho businesses.

Please keep in mind while reading our report that while this is data heavy, every number represents a customer who hopefully is engaged in a satisfying, meaningful, and dignified job, that allows them to be financially stable.

Please reach out with any questions about the material presented in this report.

Sincerely,

Judy Bicknell Taylor

About VR

Vocational Rehabilitation is the largest and oldest program funded under the Rehabilitation Act. It is the state-federal eligibility vocational rehabilitation system which provides comprehensive vocational services to individuals with disabilities.

Rehabilitation counselors provide vocational guidance counseling and other services as identified in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for each participant. The scope of rehabilitation services that may be provided is extensive and includes services that lead to employment which will also result in increasing an individual's independence and self-worth. Although each state adheres to the federal laws and regulations, each state has flexibility in determining its policy, procedures and business practices.



*Idaho Division of
Vocational Rehabilitation*

Who does the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Serve?



Interested in the VR portion of the Idaho's Combined State Plan for Program Years 2024-2025?

Visit the [Publications and Agency Plans](#) webpage or scan the QR code above for more information.

IDVR assists Idahoans with disabilities to obtain, maintain or advance in employment. IDVR provides various services to assist individuals with disabilities find work.

Vocational Rehabilitation is appropriate if...

- Individuals want to work.
- Individuals have a disability that makes it hard to get a job, continue working or advance in a job.
- Individuals want to become employed to the best of their ability.
- Individuals need support and assistance to become employed.
- Individuals can be an active participant in the development of their career goals.

Individuals may be eligible if:

- They have a physical or mental disability which creates difficulties with obtaining or maintaining a job.
- They get Social Security for a disability (SSI or SSDI) and want to work.

Services

When developing a plan for getting work, individuals may require several different types of support. The types of support vary based on the employment goal and will be unique to meet specific needs.

Supports may include counseling and guidance, job search, placement and other job supports, academic training, and disability related supports, to mention a few.

Are you a high school student? Visit the [student page](#) on the website or scan the QR code for more information.



Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) oversees the ongoing customer satisfaction survey of IDVR participants who leave/exit the program for various reasons.

In order to gauge the customers' overall experience with program services, the customer satisfaction survey asks 12 questions in three domains. The SRC and Division use customer feedback to improve the VR experience and service delivery.

The survey was completed by 224 out of 3,056 customers with a 7% response rate. Percentages listed below represent the proportion of respondents who answered "agree" or "strongly agree" to each of the survey questions. Responses were collected from customers with cases closed from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

Overall Customer Satisfaction (N=224)

Percent of "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" Responses

General Customer Satisfaction

Treated me with respect	93%
Responded to my questions in timely manner	84%
Satisfied with my experience	81%
Would recommend VR to friends with disabilities	82%
Understood that employment was the goal	96%

Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)

Had the opportunity to choose service providers	93%
Services provided in a timely manner	89%
Worked with VR counselor to develop plan	94%

Services Provided by Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs)

Recommend providers	84%
Services were helpful	82%
Satisfied with the communication & interactions	82%
Had a choice when picking a provider	82%

**Funds Expended Toward Customer Services/Support
\$7,729,023.61**

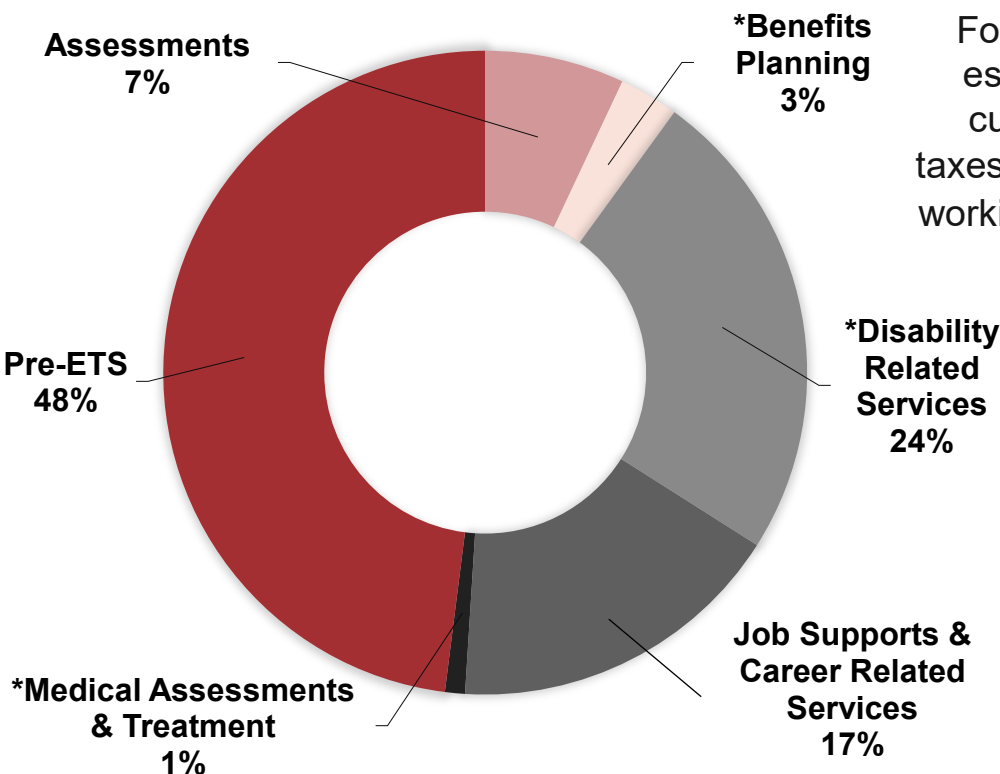
Expenditures on Job Training \$2,783,334.98

Training Type	Total Paid	Unique Participants
Apprenticeship	\$16,999.32	18
Four-Year	\$1,212,759.27	271
Graduate	\$327,162.38	37
Junior/Community College	\$233,098.01	107
Miscellaneous	\$106,055.37	85
Occupational/Vocational	\$745,097.64	308
On-the-Job	\$25,500.00	8
Truck Driving	\$116,662.99	72

Customer Expenditures

Return on Investment (ROI)

For General Funds spent by IDVR it is estimated that successfully employed customers will return \$16,497,758 in taxes to the State over the course of their working life (based on data from SFY24).



Expenditures in the following categories:

- Business Services
- Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)
- * Vocational Rehabilitation Traditional Service

Top 5 Referral Sources in Program Year 2023

State Department of Correction/Juvenile Justice	634
Family and Friends	618
Other Sources	521
Medical Health Providers	300
Mental Health Providers	278



Idaho Outcomes are Exceeding National Averages:

- Employment Rate** in the Second Quarter after exit – Program Year 2023: **5th** of 52 nationally
- Median Earnings** in the Second Quarter after Exit – Program Year 2023: **25th** of 52 nationally
- Employment Rate** in the Fourth Quarter after Exit – Program Year 2023: **6th** of 52 nationally
- Credential Attainment Rate** – Program Year 2023: **4th** of 52 nationally

Primary Performance Indicators PY23 (IDVR and ICBVI)

Employment 2 nd Quarter	64.5% (-0.4 PY22)
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter	\$5,380.00 (+\$430 PY22)
Employment 4 th Quarter	61.1% (-1.6 PY22)
Credential Attainment	59.7% (+2.4 PY22)

JP's Success Story



Occupation:

Janitor

Employer:

Rock Creek Fire Department

Location:

Kimberly, Idaho

From the day of the intake JP stated that he really wanted to be able to work around fire trucks and other emergency vehicles. It has been amazing to watch JP gain confidence and grow as a part of the team at the Rock Creek Fire Department. I am so happy for JP and his continued success at his job.

Brian Patingre, VR Counselor

“Being around the fire fighters and watching them respond to an alarm and leave the station to fight a fire is my favorite part of my job. I do my part to make sure the station is safe and clean. I enjoy being part of the team.”

JP, VR Customer

JP applied for VR services in June of 2023 as a self-referral to gain assistance to find a part-time employment position to be more active in his community after leaving his previous long-term position when it was identified he needed more support on the job to be successful than was available.

JP and his VR Counselor completed an interest inventory that identified janitorial type of work as a good fit based on his interests, and this type of work also aligned with his previous work experience that he expressed that he found fulfillment in.

Throughout the process of identifying what type of work JP would want to pursue, he expressed an interest in the world of firefighting and working in that type of environment as his dream job.

When JP obtained his new employment position, he received direct support from a job coach at work to learn his new work tasks, understand the expectations of his employer, and to assist him in meeting those expectations.

“We treat JP like one of the crew here. He is part of our team and family. We make sure to include him in all news and activities related to the fire house.”

Taylor Hunsaker, Rock Creek Fire Department Lieutenant





Occupation:
Food Prep

Employer:
Flying Pie Pizzeria

Location:
Nampa, Idaho

Marli is very goal driven, if a goal is set for her, she will meet the goal. She's not afraid to ask for help, which shows that she wants to grow. She has expressed an interest in management, so we have set goals that we are working toward to help her get there. Marli is probably the most reliable employee I have.

Rose, Supervisor at Flying Pie

"I really like my job, and I enjoy all the people that I work with. My confidence has grown since I started my job, and I am more comfortable doing things on my own now. At the beginning, I was nervous about cashiering, but I am comfortable now because I was trained how to do it."

Marli, VR Customer

Marli applied for VR services in 2021 after struggling to maintain previous jobs as she had difficulty meeting employer expectations which led to several short-term jobs and significant gaps in her work history. Through counseling and guidance Marli and her VRC, Kara Whitehouse, completed career exploration and they determined foodservice would be a good fit for Marlie based on her interests, abilities.

Marli's VR Counselor referred her to the Create Common Good Employment Training Program to gain the soft and hard skills needed to enter the food service industry. Marli obtained her ServSafe Food Handler Certificate and understanding of proper food handling skills that would allow her gain transferrable skills for a future employment position.

Marli graduated from the Create Common Good Program in 2023 and then began working for them in a temporary position while she did job search for a permanent employment position.

"Marli's greatest strength is her positive attitude. Her friendly demeanor made her classmates feel welcome and made the program more enjoyable for everyone. She picked up tasks quickly and demonstrated excellent workplace behavior. We are so happy for Marli and her continued success!"

Angie Tuft, Create Common Good



Charlie's Veteran Success Story



Employment:

***Behavioral
Interventionalist***

Current Status:

***Self-Employed Business
Owner & Operator***

Location:

Lewiston, Idaho

Charlie's determination, positive attitude, and responsiveness fostered a great working relationship throughout his time working with Vocational Rehabilitation. His hard work during college and his initiative to secure employment on his own prior to graduation truly reflects his commitment to success! I am so proud to see that since we last worked with Charlie, that he is now also self-employed and continuing to make a difference!

Angela Moran, VR Counselor

“I love doing what I do. I work directly with the children and their families in the community and within their homes. Each client is unique, and I use whatever modality that seems to work best with each one.”

Charlie, VR Customer

Charlie, a military veteran and social security disability recipient came to VR in 2018 to obtain support for his long-term career goals after being referred by Lewis-Clark State College for assistance to reach his identified goal of working in the human services field. He had been struggling to maintain employment due to physical demands of the positions he had held, and due to this, had had several short-term jobs that were not a good fit.

After Charlie began working with VR, he worked with a counselor to identify his vocational goal within the human services field and began to receive support to continue his education which would allow him to meet the educational requirements of the positions of interest.

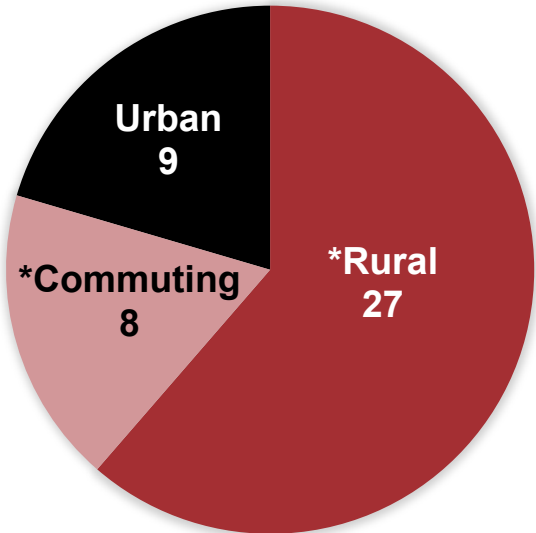
Through VR support, Charlie was able to complete his bachelor's degree and obtained employment working as a behavioral interventionist where he worked for 18 months.

In 2024, Charlie then took the skills from his education and experience as a Behavioral Interventionist and started his business Charlie's Behavioral Services, where he now owns and operates the business focused on providing behavioral intervention services to individuals ages 5-21 and their families to achieve their individualized behavioral goals.



Top 10 Rural Idaho Counties Served

Counties Served	Number of Participants
Bingham	412
Bonner	262
Cassia	179
Minidoka	155
Payette	104
Blaine	89
Clearwater	70
Idaho	70
Shoshone	50
Oneida	43



*There are 35 Idaho counties that are Rural. Of those 35 there are 8 that are listed as commuting counties.

Idaho’s Top 5 Commuting Counties

Counties Served	Number of Participants
Jefferson	107
Elmore	99
Jerome	66
Gem	64
Fremont	46

9 Urban Idaho Counties Served

Counties Served	Number of Participants
Ada County	2,526
Canyon	1,090
Kootenai	865
Bonneville	757
Twin Falls	624
Bannock	480
Nez Perce	351
Madison	256
Latah	175

Thank you for helping me get into a position that I can physically do. You helped give me my independence and feelings of self-worth back.

VR Customer Response to Customer Satisfaction Survey

Customer Demographics

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program is a federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Education to provide education, training, and career opportunities to individuals with disabilities to maximize their employment, independence, and integration into the community and competitive labor market.

To be eligible for the VR program, individuals must have a physical or mental disability that results in a barrier to employment and who require and can benefit from VR services to achieve employment and maximize career goals.



Customer Gender

Male	2,762
Female	2,148
Not Specified	69

139 customers disclosed that they were a veteran.

1,556 applicants had Social Security Benefits during application

Customer Background

Low Income	3,127
Long-term Unemployment	1,768
Justice Involved	1,011
Cultural Barriers	334
Single Parent	461
Homeless	159
English Learner	206
Skills Deficient	842



Low Income: Homeless, a youth living in a high poverty area, youth in foster care or the family they live with either receive now or received SSI, state or local income-based public assistance, or food stamps (SNAP), an individual with a disability whose own income is below the poverty guidelines.

Long Term Unemployment: The individual is now unemployed and has been for the previous 27 (or more) consecutive weeks, excluding secondary education students.

Justice Involved: An individual who is convicted of committing a crime or offense.

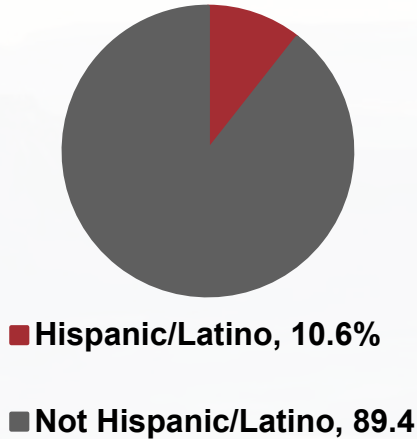
Homeless: Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, uses a public/private place not designed for regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.

English Language Learner: Limited ability to speak, read, write, or understand English.

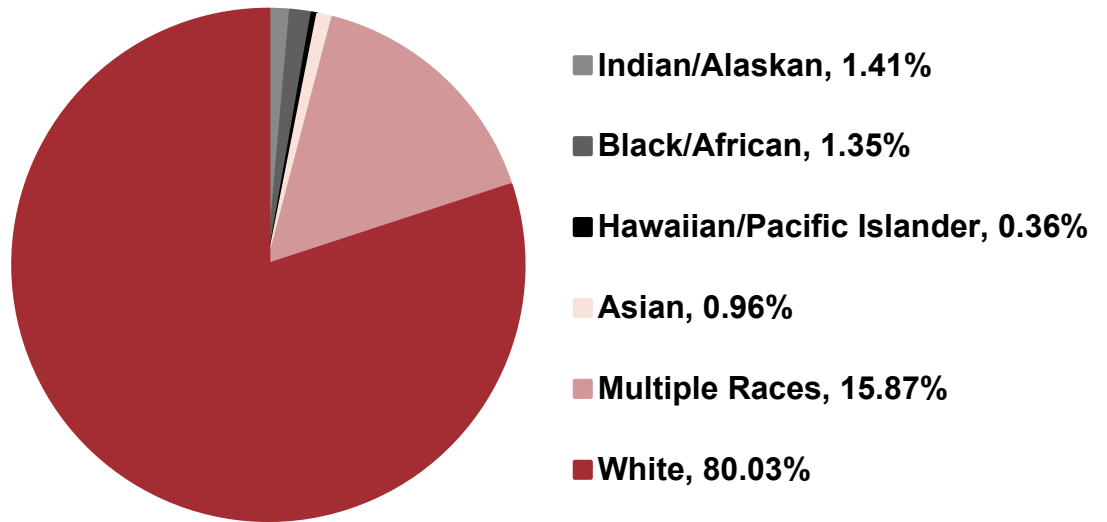
Basic Skills Deficient: Individual is under the age of 25 with less than 8th grade reading, writing, or math skills on standardized school tests.

Cultural Barriers: The individual sees themselves as possessing attitudes, beliefs, customs or practices derived from their cultural experience which may influence a way or thinking, acting, or working.

Number of Participants by Race



Number of Participants by Ethnicity



Customers by Disability Type



Auditory and Communicative Disabilities	610
Learning and Intellectual Disabilities	834
Physical Disabilities	860
Psychological & Psychosocial Disabilities	2,680
Visual Impairments	25
Total	5,009

*Customers may have selected one or more of the labeled Disability Types.



682

Customers Successfully Employed

4,975

Customers Served*

Customers by Age Range

Age Group	# of Participants
14 to 24	1586
25 to 44	1932
45 to 59	1018
60 to 85	437
Over 85	2

*Individuals received Individualized Plan for Employment IPE services; typical participation (duration) is multiple years.

Enhancing Opportunities for Idaho Students with Disabilities: The Impact of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Introduction

Students with disabilities, ages 14-21, often face significant challenges in finding employment or enrolling in post-secondary education after high school. In fact, they obtain post-school employment and enroll in post-secondary education at rates significantly lower than their peers without disabilities (Harkin Institute, 2024). Research indicates that the longer it takes for youth with disabilities to find a job or engage in further education after high school, the worse their long-term outcomes. Early disengagement from the workforce can lead to reduced hours worked, fewer job benefits, and lower income potential throughout life.

Addressing the Challenge with Pre-ETS

To address these issues, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 introduced significant changes to the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. It required all state VR agencies, including the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR), to dedicate at least 15% of their federal funding to providing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). These services aim to help students with disabilities start early and sustain their engagement with Idaho's labor market and post-secondary opportunities.

Impact of Pre-ETS in Idaho

Since the implementation of WIOA, IDVR has worked diligently to establish and expand Pre-ETS programs across the state. As a result, the number of students served has significantly increased:

- **Fiscal Year 2021:** 1,210 students served
- **Fiscal Year 2022:** 1,968 students served
- **Fiscal Year 2023:** 2,784 students served

This growth demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting students with disabilities as they prepare for life after high school.



Core Pre-ETS Activities

Pre-ETS includes five core services designed to prepare students with disabilities for successful transition from high school to adulthood:

- 1. Job Exploration Counseling:** helps students discover their interest and abilities to assist with career planning. This raises motivation and helps students explore opportunities and participate in activities that will help make informed decisions about the future.
- 2. Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLE):** opportunities give students the opportunity to gain work experience though paid or unpaid work in a community-based setting. This might also include informational interviews, job shadows, workplace tours, apprenticeships, and/or internships.
- 3. Counseling on Postsecondary Education:** enrollment opportunities help students decide what options are available after graduation. It helps students understand what post-secondary education is needed for specific careers and helps determine which institutions offer the programs students need to further their education. This might also include understanding accommodations,

technology, financial aid, and other college resources.

4. Workplace Readiness

Training: develops the skills and behaviors needed for any job. These skills help students learn how to interact with employers and co-workers. This may include instruction in soft skills, communication, and/or independent living skills.

- 5. Instruction in Self-Advocacy:** helps students learn how to make informed decisions on their future and explain to other what they need to be successful on a job or in school. This includes learning about their disability, setting goals, and requesting and using accommodations.

Number of Students Served

Counseling on Enrollment Opportunities	1,614
Instruction in Self-Advocacy	1,615
Job Exploration Counseling	2,285
Total Cases Receiving Pre-ETS	4,186
Work Based Learning Experience	1,799
Work Readiness Training	2,529

These services are provided in either group or individual settings to students in or out of the school day during the year. Counselors work with students, families, and teachers to determine which services are needed for the student.

Pre-Employment Transition Services provides students with the supports to transition into the world or work. I believe our services could be the steppingstones for many individuals with disabilities to begin to build the confidence to uncover the skills they have or can build on. These services provide advocacy to students to start believing in themselves and guide them to making steps in the direction to meet their future goals.

Annie Crockett, Pre-ETS VR Specialist

Prevention: Why Early Engagement Matters

Research shows that youth with disabilities who receive early support through programs like Pre-ETS have better outcomes in employment and education. These services help them develop essential skills, gain work experience, and build confidence, which increases their chances of finding a good job and achieving success in post-secondary education. Studies have also shown that students who participate in coordinated Pre-ETS activities are more likely to have positive post-school outcomes. For example, youth with disabilities who receive these services are more likely to secure competitive, integrated employment with better wages and longer job retention. In some cases, participation in these services has doubled the rate of

successful postsecondary outcomes for students.

Filling the Gap

Pre-ETS services are crucial for addressing the gap in employment and postsecondary opportunities for students with disabilities. By connecting students with work experiences and educational guidance early on, IDVR helps them prepare for successful futures.

Pre-ETS also strengthens connections between schools, families, and the community. By working closely with schools and other organizations, IDVR can provide more targeted support, reduce duplication of efforts, and ensure that students receive the services they need.

Promoting Collaboration for Better Outcomes

Collaboration between IDVR, schools, families, and community organizations are essential for the success of Pre-ETS. These partnerships help coordinate services, reduce redundancy, and ensure that resources are used effectively. This collaborative approach also promotes better outcomes, such as increased engagement in work and education, higher earnings, and improved job satisfaction.

Building on Promising Practices

IDVR is continuously working to improve Pre-ETS by expanding effective strategies, such as:

- **Engaging Employers:** Creating more job opportunities for youth with disabilities by partnering with local businesses.
- **Expanding Postsecondary Options:** Providing more opportunities for students to pursue higher education and vocational training.
- **Family Involvement:** Encouraging families to be active participants in the transition process, which helps students stay motivated and supported.

IDVR Partnerships

Across the state, IDVR has 35 team members that are specialized and focused on serving the schools and students with disabilities. 19 of these positions are counseling staff who are directly involved with service provision to students in the schools. These 19 positions are assigned to cover each school district across the state.

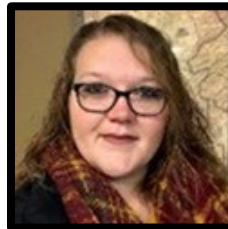
If you have a question about who is serving your school, please reach out to the IDVR Transition Manager or one of the Pre-ETS Supervisors:



Caleb Tibbetts, Pre-ETS Supervisor, Meridian



Robert Price, Pre-ETS Supervisor, Pocatello



Tia Amundson, Pre-ETS Supervisor, Twin Falls



Lauren Noble, Transition Manager, Operation Support Center

This summer, we partnered with Twin Falls, Jerome, and Kimberly School Districts to run work experience programs for their students who experience disability. Each of these programs was a first-time effort and required a lot of up-front work, planning, and coordination. The results were amazing! Students, teachers, paraeducators and parents all expressed their pleasure with how much the program helped the students with developing work skills, social skills, self-confidence and hope for their future.

Kent Ireton, Senior VR Pre-ETS Counselor

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Reality Town provided our students with a powerful glimpse into adult life. It taught them the value of budgeting, prioritizing needs over wants, and making thoughtful financial decisions. This hands-on experience challenged them to think about their future and prepared them for the real-world responsibilities and situations they will face.

Coeur d'Alene High School Special Education Consulting Teacher - Jonathan Beecher

Services provided during the school day are provided based on student and district need. We have had great success in partnering with the schools around the state to develop programs and provide needed pre-employment transition services.

Our programs are true steppingstone for students with disabilities, guiding them on their journey to independence. Each skill they learn transforms their aspiration into realities, revealing their potential in ways that are inspiring to witness. Not only do these programs enhance their employability, but also foster a sense of independence and purpose, equipping them to navigate their futures with optimism and resilience.

Gulru Sen, Senior Pre-ETS VR Counselor

We continue to facilitate many successful Reality Towns in partnership with the school districts. Reality Town is a hands-on curriculum where students are responsible for making financial decisions and standard monthly expenditures for their "Reality Town Family". Students learn to prioritize spending to meet their financial obligations. Students learn many financial and life concepts including:

- Financial Concepts including Budgeting & Accounting for their spending
- Payroll Withholding's including Federal & State Taxes, FICA & Medicare
- Principles of Debt & Savings and the Impact of Interest
- Importance of putting "Needs" before "Wants"
- Goal Setting, Education Planning & Career Planning
- Benefits of Education on Future Earnings & Lifestyle
- Respect for their current Educational Opportunities
- Appreciation for the Financial Responsibilities of their Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

In addition, students across the state have participated in a variety of staff provided services such as resume workshops, job shadows, career exploration, and self-advocacy. As the IDVR Pre-Employment Transition Services program has continued to

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

grow, so have the number of students and schools served.

From July 1st, 2023, through June 30th, 2024, counselors provided services to 2,821 students across the state. This spans 298 schools that have students involved with IDVR Pre-Employment Transition Services.

Reality Town was a fun interactive way student learned about important life skills for adulthood. Students learned about the power of financial planning and making choices between wants and needs. Students were engaged and had great questions as they navigated through their assigned adult life. They all had impactful self-reflection at the end on what they learned and what surprised them about making financial choices and the outcome of those choices. This is something that is important for all students to learn to help prepare them for the move from high school to adulthood.

Brandy Longley, Pre-ETS VR Specialist

Over the past year, we have had great success with programs facilitated by our partners as well.

The growth we see in Work of Art students is a significant increase in confidence and skill that they will be able to step into the employment realm. By engaging in activities such as interviews, timesheets, and applications students build necessary knowledge preparation for the job market. Students gain experience in problem solving using design thinking, and in social skills by working in collaboration as a design team. Many students who are at first quiet and anxious are able to open up and speak confidently to the group in just a few short weeks. They proudly present their work at the reception and parents always comment on their growth.

Heather Kirk – Idaho Parents Unlimited

Students participated across the state in Career Technical Education programs both during the school year and in the summer to gain valuable information in career exploration. Students received hands on experience to learn skills required for a variety of trades to include cosmetology, animal science, construction, welding, as well as others.



Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Students in the Idaho Falls and Pocatello area of the state had the opportunity to participate in a conference called Tools for Life over a period of two days. They participate in presentations to learn about a variety of tools and resources to gain valuable self-advocacy skills.

Idaho Parents Unlimited facilitated a supported work experience called Work of Art for students to receive valuable knowledge and skills in learning to work together and follow instruction. This is a program where students create an original piece of art under the guidance of a professional teaching artist. Students will determine the type of visual art produced with the teaching artist. Students work together utilizing the client's materials or client portfolio samples to create the piece of art.

Areas for Improvement

While there has been significant progress, there are still areas for improvement. Better coordination between agencies, schools, and families can lead to more efficient use of resources and improved services for students. By reducing duplication of efforts and ensuring that all partners are working towards the same goals, IDVR can enhance the overall quality of Pre-ETS, while reducing overall costs of services.



Looking Ahead

IDVR is committed to continually enhancing Pre-ETS to provide better support for Idaho's students with disabilities. By focusing on effective collaboration, data-driven decision-making, and innovative practices, IDVR aims to ensure that every student can succeed in the workforce and beyond.

Conclusion

Pre-Employment Transition Services are a vital resource for students with disabilities, helping them build the skills and confidence they need to succeed in work and education. Through early engagement, strong partnerships, and a commitment to continuous improvement, IDVR is making a positive impact on the lives of Idaho's youth. By working together, we can help ensure that all students can achieve their full potential.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Students across the state were able to participate in weeklong programs through some of the higher education partners. These programs help students understand how to be a successful college student or gain insight into different careers through on campus participation in lectures, informational presentations on financial aid, communication and time management practices, as well as learn about accommodations on a college campus. Three of the Community Rehabilitation Providers facilitated paid work-based learning experiences for students around the state. The students who participated in this program received work readiness training prior to the work experience beginning and were provided additional work readiness as needed during the experience. This service allows those students who may require more support on a job to be successful as for many of them, this may be their first exposure to having a job.

I couldn't be happier with the services provided to me by my Counselor and Voc Rehab. It was a very positive experience. Thank you!

VR Customer Response to Customer Satisfaction Survey

Pre-ETS Expenditures in PY 2023

Counseling on Enrollment Opportunities	\$32,437.83
Instruction in Self-Advocacy	\$137,347.65
Job Exploration Counseling	\$181,510.03
Maintenance	\$526.29
Transportation	\$1,183.55
Work Based Learning Experience	\$1,658,978.38
Workplace Readiness Training	\$2,067,068.92
Total	\$4,079,052.65

It has been exciting to see the growth of the Pre-Employment Transition Services program. The team has a direct impact on student's understanding and transition from secondary education. This is a wonderful result of increased collaboration and coordination with the school districts across the state. We have seen more school and student involvement over the past year than we have ever seen before. I am looking forward to continuing to strengthen our partnerships and collaboration to provide needed services to the students of Idaho.

Lauren Noble, IDVR's Transition Manager

Building Your Talent Pipeline with IDVR

IDVR is able to support businesses across the state to build their talent pipeline by connecting with the next generation of employees. Students with disabilities gain invaluable work skills and experiences through the support of local employers by learning hands on about the world of work, whether through an informational interview, job shadow, or a short-term work experience which in turn supports the business to grow talent their way.



Pictured: IDVR Customer Shuey and Manager

Working with VR has been an invaluable program to our company as well as to the students. These students sometimes work out to be the best employees, they are reliable, pleasant to work with, and are eager to work.

Roberta Larson, Manager, Pizza Pie Cafe

"I enjoy working at Pizza Pie Café. I'm going to be able to work here part-time while attending CSI full-time."

Shuey, VR Customer

Thank you, to our Business community, for creating a culture of inclusion and support that assists students with disabilities to gain invaluable experiences!

Though direct agreements between IDVR and 80 businesses across the state, 147 students have been able to participate in independent work-based learning experiences with only the natural support of the employers.

Jerek gets along well with everyone and is just a positive influence on the work environment overall.

Jake, General Manager at FatCats



Jerek was super excited to have the manager ask him to apply for a position after his work experience was completed. He now has worked there an entire year and loves his job."

Karla, Parent

"Through hands-on training and real-world rural work experiences, our students have transformed their lives, gaining not only essential skills but also the confidence to excel. Their positive success and gainful employment highlight the profound impact of having dedicated mentorships with local businesses, turning their dreams into reality and preparing them to thrive in a competitive workforce."

Kellsie Meade, VR Assistant



Pictured: Amanda, VR Customer and Roberta, Manager

IDVR Customer, Amanda, completed a work-based learning experience as a student with Pizza Pie Café and is now employed there and is learning additional skills through an on-the-job training agreement with IDVR and states: “This is my first job, and I am enjoying it!”

It has been an absolute pleasure to work with Pizza Pie Café to provide work experiences for local students. Roberta is very supportive and has provided students with disabilities with the opportunity to learn and grow. So, whether they moved on to bigger and better things afterward or maybe were offered a position, it was always step forward.

Kent, VR Counselor

“Partnering with local employers to develop and provide work-based learning experience opportunities for the students I work with has been shown to be one of the strongest predictors of students’ employment success following their completion of high school. I have seen that students who actively participate in these work experiences develop skills and behaviors that are essential to success in every workplace”.

Lyle Bloxham, VR Counselor

IDVR Customer, Anthony, who is currently completing an on-the-job training program with Young Automotive to become an Automotive Technician states that: “Working with VR and Young Automotive was a better fit for my training because hands on learning is better for me and I’m learning a lot more by completing my apprenticeship program.”



Pictured: Dan Alvey, Service Manager & Anthony, VR Customer

Work experiences for students in rural areas are particularly important to support students with disabilities to gain real life work experience, learn the value of a paycheck, and to grow their skills for future employment that they otherwise may not be able to gain.

Employers like Fat Cats in Rexburg, Pizza Pie Café in Twin Falls, and Young Automotive in Burley are all examples of businesses in rural Idaho that have hired students who completed a work experience at their site.

IDVR Partnership with School District for Summer Work

IDVR has expanded the summer work experiences to students in rural areas of the state by collaborating directly with local school districts. The local school districts then work collaboratively with businesses in their communities to secure work experience sites for students and then support to ensure the students are successful with their work experience is provided by the teacher's and paraprofessionals that the students know from the classroom which has led to positive outcomes for the students, school districts, and the business communities.

It was wonderful seeing real life work readiness training in action, where school staff were modeling and assisting the kids with inquiring about job openings, managing their hours, following up on job applications, receiving feedback, and making connections in the community with employers.
Mackenzey Starkey, Counselor

This service, especially in rural areas such as Idaho City, is extremely valuable to students as they are able to learn about opportunities within their local communities through their work experience, and the teachers are able to learn more about the local workforce and incorporate their new knowledge into their curriculum with their students.



I really enjoy working in food prep because it is enjoyable work without a lot of pressure.
Jill Joslin, Idaho City Student & IDVR Customer

“We worked with three businesses this year and the goal for next year is to go to a different business each week. There is a great need for employees in our community, and partnering with IDVR for the summer work program has provided the business community the help that they needed.”
Chelsey Campbell, SPED Teacher at Idaho City School District

In Idaho City I witnessed ‘Teamwork makes the Dream work!’ with IDVR working with the teachers and students, teachers collaborating with the community for job opportunities, and then the students being able to take advantage of those opportunities, gaining work experience, and even leading to employment.
Jill Simpson, Counselor Intern

Thank you, to our School Districts across the state for collaborating in your communities to make work experiences for your students a reality!

IDVR Partnership with Business for Student Experiences

“In 2017 I learned about the Summer Work program provided by Vocational Rehabilitation. Although all of our employees are licensed cosmetologists or barbers, we were able to carve out a position that was beneficial both to the students going through the program as well as our business. Every year we have had a student spend 5-6 weeks working alongside our staff. The VR team working with the students do their best to match the students to the type of work environment where they will be working, and the results have varied considerably.”

One year we had a student who wanted to be a makeup artist after graduation, so we encouraged her to spend any down time on the job talking to our licensed cosmetologists who all went through the program. I think she got a lot more out of her summer work experience working with Sport Clips. It also offered our stylists the opportunity to share their passion and experience with the future generation.

We have had a few students who did exceptionally well who we were able to hire to help through the end of summer. One student even came back to help during Thanksgiving and Christmas break.

“We have come up with a list of responsibilities and ranked them in order of priority and timeliness. The students usually train in our stores for only an hour before they start working. Every day we add a new task until they reach their potential and have enough work to fill their entire shift.

Our staff enjoys a break from some of the duties that the students are able to take on and allows them time to serve more clients. We have received very positive feedback from our clients who observe the students working alongside the barbers in our stores.”



“I would like to say every student was a success story, but that would not be life. We have had students who got through the program and a few that switched to another job or quit entirely. Just like every employee is not a great fit for every job, the summer work program offers students the opportunity to learn new skills and try out a line of work without any strings. If it works out for the student and employer, great. There is always an option to hire the person or offer an extended position. If it doesn't fit the ideal job for the student, then hopefully they picked up some great skills to help them in their future job endeavors.”

Diana Colgrove, Franchise Business Owner, Sports Clips, Hayden, Coeur d'Alene, and Post Falls

Thank you, to Sport Clips for collaborating in your communities to make work experiences for students with disabilities a reality!

Business Spotlight: Albertsons Companies



Through Albertsons Company Inc. partnership with IDVR, the retailer has hired 82 IDVR customers to work at various Albertsons locations over the last 5 years, which has made Albertsons the top employer in Idaho for persons with disabilities working with the IDVR program during this timeframe.

However, more lives have been touched by Albertsons commitment to their local communities as Albertsons locations across the state have also opened their doors to students with disabilities to complete work experiences, often giving these students with disabilities their first job.

“My work experiences have helped me develop a good work ethic, better understand what it means to have a job, to gain friendships, and learn how to listen to a supervisor. Now I have a job at Albertsons that I love while I finish high school.”
Bryant, VR Customer

IDVR is honored to spotlight Albertsons Companies as their featured business partner this year. Albertsons has been an outstanding partner to IDVR over the years and provides ongoing opportunities for IDVR customers to complete community-based work evaluations, complete short-term work experiences, and by providing part-time and full-time employment opportunities for VR customers.

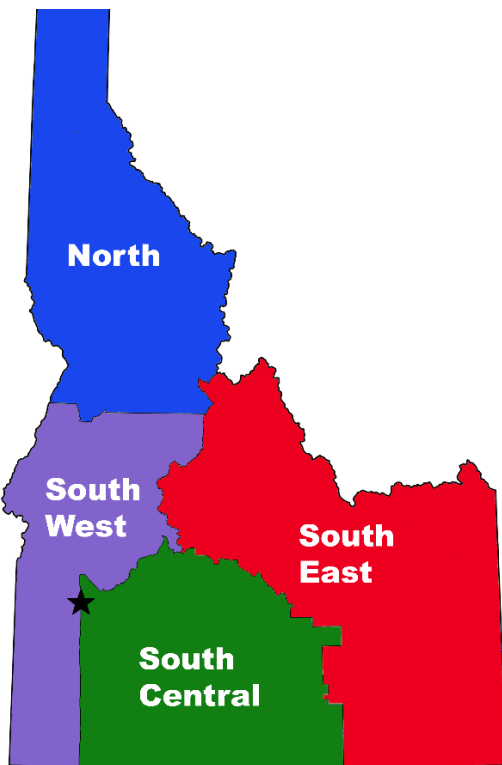
Bryant was able to build strong relationships during his work experience that made him someone we wanted to add to our team.
Patty, Supervisor at Albertsons



IDVR's Expansion of the Business Services Team

IDVR's Business Services team expanded in August 2023 to include Business Services Specialists positions located across the state to support businesses in reaching their business goals by providing individualized and customized supports and services to businesses in their local communities.

To learn more about how IDVR's Business Services Specialists can support your business needs, please reach out to the business services specialist in your local area.



Note from MiKayla Monaghan, IDVR's Business Relations Manager: It has been a pleasure over the last year to implement a new team and the role of Business Services Specialists for the agency. Witnessing the impact that the business specialists are able to make in their local communities and to see the growth of this program has been a pleasure. As a result of the expansion of the team, there has been an increase collaboration with our workforce partners, increase training and education available to businesses, and more impact across the state for businesses partnering with IDVR over the last year. I look forward to continuing to build out our business services program and supporting more businesses in the years to come.

Meet the IDVR Business Services Specialists



"I enjoy engaging with local businesses to understand their unique needs and helping them thrive by connecting them with resources. It's incredibly rewarding to see the positive impact on both employers and job seekers."

Dru Zolman, Customer Center North



"It is rewarding to be able to hear businesses' unique stories first-hand and to be able to play a pivotal role in meeting each of the businesses unique needs while also serving our jobseekers."

Tate Sanders, MBA, Customer Centers South West and South Central



"I enjoy getting to know our local businesses and working with our workforce partners to help connect businesses with resources that help them grow and meet their changing needs."

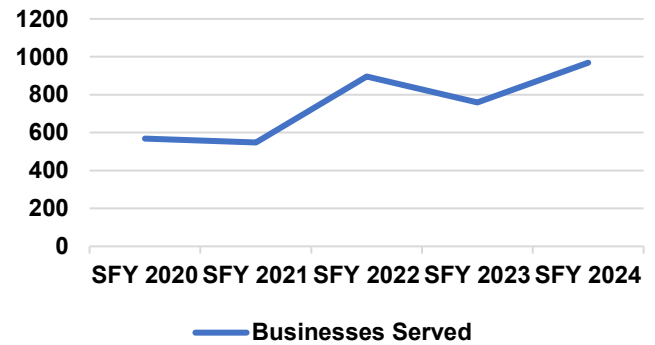
Kirby Rider, Customer Centers South Central and South East

Business Services Data

IDVR provides no-cost support and services to the business community to address the needs of businesses to include training, education, and the hiring and maintaining of qualified employees with disabilities.

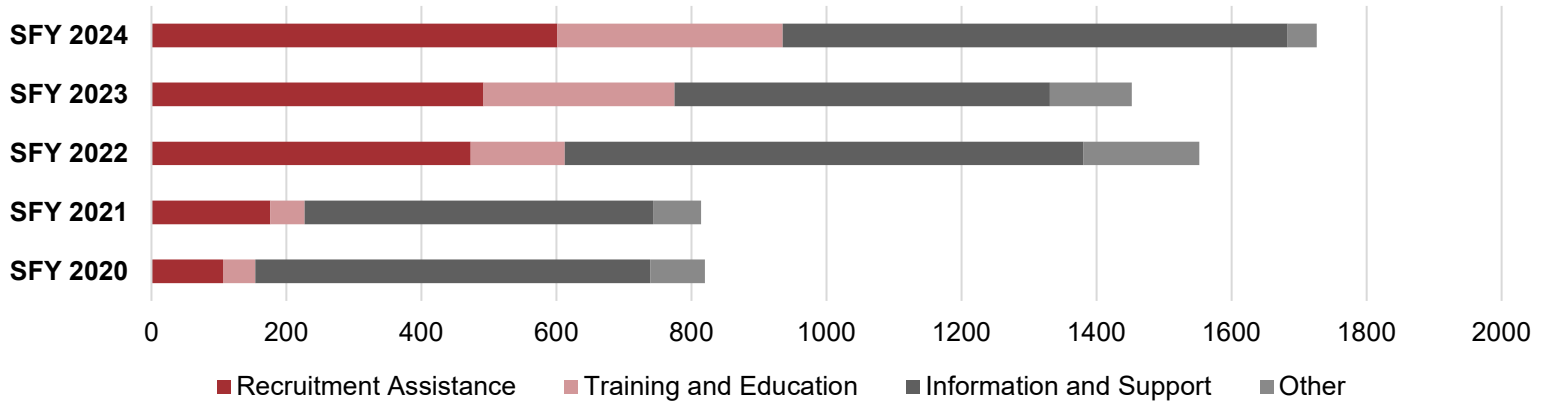
Business Can Receive Support to Build Their Talent Pipeline by partnering with VR to connect with the next generation of employees by providing students opportunities to learn about the world of work.

Businesses Served



969 Businesses Engaged with IDVR

Services Provided to Business by Type



Recruitment Assistance & Candidate Pre-Screening is provided to businesses as a service to assist them to tap into the talented VR job seeker pool who are seeking employment opportunities.

Training and Education is provided as a service to businesses to provide learning opportunities for their employees on disability etiquette and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to support employers in their goals to create inclusive workplaces.

Employee Training Support is a service that VR can partner with your business to support to assist in skill development of your employees for your

positions through an on-the-job training agreement.

Information and Support Services are available to businesses to request assistance, to answer their questions, provide resources, and support them to maintain individuals with disabilities as part of their workforce.

To [request services](#) for your business, please select the link or scan the QR code and complete the request for services form.



Internal Collaboration Leads to Successes

A focus of the Business Services Specialist role is to provide current labor market information, hiring trends, and other helpful information about the workforce to the Counseling team to ensure they have current information to support their customers in reaching their employment goals.

It is a great feeling when I share information about employers in our community and then hear that our counselors have used this information to help prepare a customer for employment. I recently had a customer tell me, because of my help, they got a job that I helped connect them to!

Kirby Rider, Business Services Specialist



Pictured: Kirby Rider, Business Services Specialist and Amy Kaiser, VR Counselor

“In such a small community, my customers have struggled finding new opportunities Kirby, our Business Specialist, has worked hard to build relationships with businesses to open doors for my customers that they may not have otherwise had. Having a Business Service Specialist has really bridged a gap between VR and our customers and the, what used to be, elusive employers!”

Katelyn Collier, VR Counselor

Vocational Rehabilitation’s Business Specialist, Kirby, connected our organization with Eric. We feel lucky to have Eric as a staff member. The monthly check-ins from Voc Rehab are also great; if we have any questions, we can connect with them during these check-ins.
Serene Hooper, Operation Manager of the Boys and Girls Club of Payette



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF WESTERN TREASURE VALLEY

“If I wasn’t working with Voc Rehab, I wouldn’t have known about my job. They helped connect me to my employer and to prepare for the interview, they also check-in with me and my employer regularly, and they are helping me prepare for my future.”

Eric, VR Customer

Kirby connected with those that were running the Boys and Girl’s club apprenticeship program after I identified that I had a customer who might be a good fit for their program in the local area. I reached out to the customer and Kirby helped the customer update his resume and we were able to work collaboratively to assist Eric in applying for the position. After interviewing, Eric got the job and both the employer, and the customer are extremely happy in the situation! By working together, we were able to get the customer a position in the field that he wanted, and he is fulfilled in his employment.

Emily Flynn, VR Counselor

Internal Collaboration Leads to Successes

Kirby has been instrumental in building relationships in our community with area employers and his help has been extremely beneficial in my role as a VR counselor! Kirby passes information about hiring needs along to me, which allows me to refer appropriate customers and he has connected some of my customers with HR business contacts, which allowed their job applications to be reviewed and interviews scheduled.

Becca Freeburne, VR Counselor



Pictured: Tate Sanders, Business Services Specialist and Kara Whitehouse, VR

Collaboration with our counselors is an integral piece of the puzzle in producing quality outcomes for the students, jobseekers, and employers that we serve.

Tate Sanders, Business Services Specialist

“Collaboration is important because I know the student side, and Tate the business specialist has the knowledge of the businesses, and working together has allowed for greater success for both the students and the businesses. That collaboration with Tate has led to tours, informational interviews, work-based learning experiences for the students I support.”

Jurene Willett, VR Counselor

Tate, the Business Services Specialist, in my area offers valuable insight in his knowledge of market trends and employer needs, which I have used as a VR Counselor to identify job opportunities and has helped with vocational goal identification and for creating individualized plan for employment with my customers. It is great to have a partner within the agency that builds employer connections and furthers the mission of IDVR in the community for the benefit of both our customers and the business community.

Kara Whitehouse, VR Counselor

As a result of internal collaboration between our teams, many customers have benefitted from knowledge shared internally between the business services and counseling teams that has led to opportunities for job shadows, work-based learning experiences, and permanent employment for VR customers since the implementation of the business services specialist position.



Training topics IDVR Business Specialists can provide education to your employees include:

- Disability Awareness & Etiquette
- ADA Basics
- ADA & Employment
- Reasonable Accommodations
- Service Animals
- Serving Customers with Disabilities
- Public Services & the ADA
- Public Accommodations
- Accessible Technology

The Reasonable Accommodations: What makes it 'Reasonable'? training provided by MiKayla at our annual work conference provided me with the ability to learn about what a reasonable accommodation is and what they aren't. It was the best and most informative training session of our conference that I attended this year!

Participant of an IDVR training on Reasonable Accommodations

IDVR has invested in ensuring that our new Business Services Specialists are able to provide customized and relevant training to business partners across the state by having the business services specialists become Windmills and ADA Training Leadership Network Certified trainers. This was done to assure that businesses can access training in their local communities that meet the needs of the businesses to create and maintain inclusive and supportive workplaces for persons with disabilities.

Vocational Rehabilitation has helped me feel confident enough to facilitate training for our business community on topics relevant to their business operations. These trainings help raise awareness of People with Disabilities and break down barriers and stigmas this community often faces. I love it when an attendee shares that they learned something new or that the training we provide has changed their viewpoints.

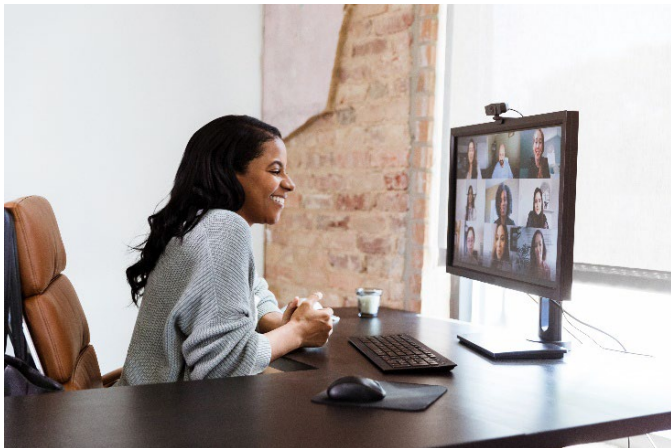
Kirby Rider, Business Services Specialist

If you would like to request training for your business, please visit the included link or scan the QR code to complete the [training request form](#).

One of the Business Specialist team members will reach out to you to discuss your training request.



DREAM: Business Training Series



The Business Training Series offered the following sessions:

- March 2024: Disability Language & Etiquette
- April 2024: Reasonable Accommodations 101
- June 2024: Debunking Disability
- August 2024: Service Animal & Mental Health Etiquette
- October 2024: Disability Employment Fact or Fiction

“ICBVI is proud to partner with IDVR to host the DREAM training series. Through these collaborative efforts, ICBVI and IDVR are reaching businesses within our community to provide education and opportunities. Through community partnerships, we build stronger communities, an inclusive workforce, and better opportunities for persons with disabilities to live independent and meaningful lives.”

Earl Hoover, ICBVI

I learned so much new information and really appreciated the interactive format of the training.

DREAM Session Attendee

IDVR with their partners at the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired introduced a new service for businesses this year, with the 2024 D.R.E.A.M. Business Training Series. This training series offers a free virtual training opportunity to businesses and community members to increase their understanding of disability etiquette and other disability related topics.

Understanding different abilities leads to a better solution for all! The Dream series helped me gain more insight into providing the right accommodations for the candidates and employees.

Manju, Recruiter, City of Boise

When I received the announcement for this series, I sent it out to my team. The interest was phenomenal! I had numerous people tell me they were attending or were having their employees attend. In total, 28 members of our team attended.

Afterwards, I was able to lead a brief discussion for the team regarding the content taught during the session and how the information could be applied to our work. It was very beneficial experience for all!

DREAM Session Attendee

If you are interested in attending a virtual training offered by IDVR, please check out the website to register for an upcoming training.

Collaborative Delivery of Business Services

IDVR provides opportunities for businesses to share about their mission, culture, positions, and processes by hosting both regional and statewide Virtual Business Spotlight sessions as well as coordinating business tours where IDVR invites workforce partners from the Department of Labor, Equus, Community Colleges, and more to participate in supporting businesses while exchanging information about their needs and to learn about the services each partner can bring to the table to support the business in reaching its goals.

Idaho's workforce partnerships are made stronger through the efforts of IDVR to spotlight employers and coordinate business tours. By understanding business needs, we all can provide more meaningful support to Idaho employers.

Megan Beyer, Idaho Department of Labor Manager, Twin Falls

"I have seen people's lives changed through the On-the-job Training Program offered by Vocational Rehabilitation. It is a truly inspired program that gives people the tools to develop their talents and passions; applied towards a career path that provides meaningful work opportunities."

Jeremy Moore, CEO, One Love Agency

IDVR works with other workforce programs to serve businesses collaboratively by providing opportunities for businesses to share about their needs not only with IDVR, but with other workforce programs at the same time.

Streamlining communication and working cohesively as one, we can provide businesses with multiple avenues to build robust talent pipelines. Our collaborative problem-solving and knowledge-sharing with combined tours and business spotlights enable us to offer employers comprehensive resources immediately. This unified approach ensures that we meet the unique needs of Idaho's businesses effectively and efficiently.

Dru Zolman, Business Services Specialist



"Exploring businesses through tours provides invaluable insights into their operations and understand first-hand about their positions and expectations and to better understand their business. This empowers our agency and our workforce partners to connect their business with quality job seeker referrals, and to provide other services to meet their needs."

Kirby Rider, Business Services Specialist

Success Stories featured in this years Combined Annual Report:

Pre-ETS/Business Success Story

- Idaho City School District Summer Work Experience – Idaho City, Idaho

Business Success Story

- Albertsons – Rexburg, Idaho
- Burley Young GMC – Burley, Idaho
- Sports Clips – Post Falls, Idaho

Traditional VR Cases

- JP – Rock Creek Fire Department – Kimberly, Idaho
- Marli – Flying Pie – Nampa, Idaho

Traditional/Veteran VR Case

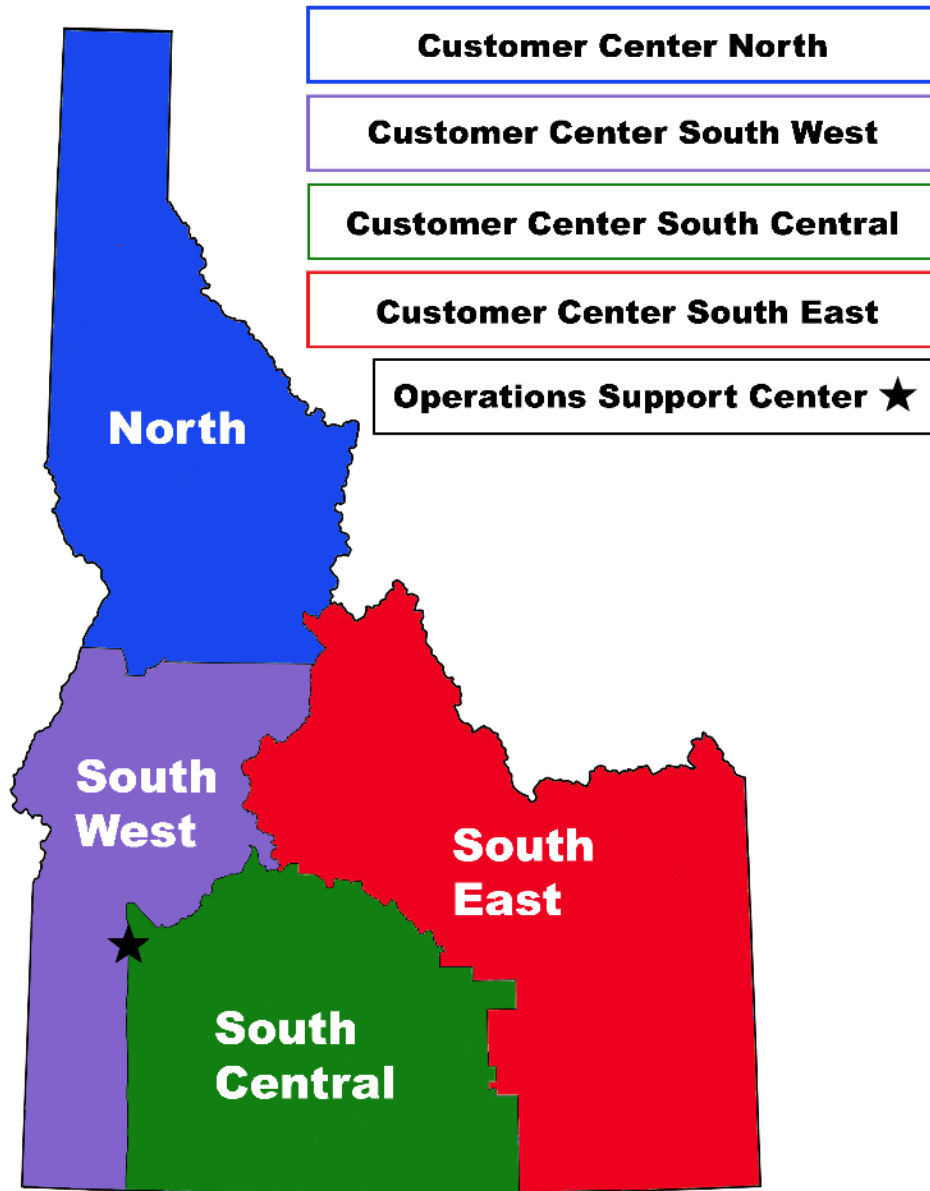
- Charlie – Self-Employed Business Owner & Operator – Lewiston, Idaho

Pre-ETS VR Cases

- Amanda & Shui – Pizza Pied Café – Twin Falls, Idaho
- Bryant & Jerek – Albertsons & Fatcats – Rexburg, Idaho



To view additional Success Stories, visit the [VR Success Story webpage](#). Select the link or scan the QR code.



Visit the [contacts page](#) on the website or scan the QR code for more information.

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