



Idaho State Rehabilitation Council
Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Combined 2021 Annual Report



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Information and data within this report is reflective of State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2021 (July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021)

Idaho Scenic photographs by Mike MacGuffie

Council Chair:	Janice Carson
Council Vice Chair:	Darin Lindig
Disability Advocacy Group Representatives:.....	Janice Carson Tim Blonsky David “Max” Maxwell Nathan Ogden
Former Applicant or Recipient Representative:	Danielle “DR” Reff Stephanie Taylor-Silva
Community Rehabilitation Program Representative:.....	Pam Harris
Client Assistance Program Representative:	Christine Meeuwsen
Business/Industry & Labor Representatives:.....	Darin Lindig Ron Oberleitner Paul Tierny Vacant
Idaho’s Native American Tribe Representatives:.....	Ramona Medicine Horse
Parent Training & Information Center Representative:.....	Sarah Tueller
State Independent Living Council Representative:	Jami Davis
State Department of Education Representative:	Randi Cole
Workforce Development Council Representative:.....	James Pegram
Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Representatives:	
Ex-Officio:.....	Jane Donnellan, Administrator
Ex-Officio:.....	David White, Assistant Regional Manager/ VR Counselor
Council Secretary:.....	Emily Carlisle

Message from State Rehabilitation Council Chair

Over this past year we watched as the COVID-19 crisis waned and then strengthened again. As a result, the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meetings, like a plethora of other advisory councils, continued to meet via an online format for most of the year. Although we missed seeing our colleagues in 3-D, we continued our work toward what turned out to be a very fruitful year of accomplishments!

Committee Work

The SRC members participate on one or more of our three committees: Executive, Program Effectiveness, and Planning and Public Policy.



- The Executive Committee identified the need and began work to improve the recruitment process and nomination form this year.
- The Program Effectiveness Committee worked with IDVR staff to increase the response rate from our VR clients.
- The Planning and Public Policy Committee input on VR policies and supported public comment sessions.

Shoulder-to-Shoulder

As part of, and often in addition to, our committee duties, the SRC members worked collaboratively with the IDVR staff on a variety of projects.

- The SRC reviewed the entire State Plan and provided comment on the VR Services Portion in addition to writing our designated section labeled “Input of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).”
- SRC members reviewed the draft of the Field Services Policy Manual prior to it being finalized and posted on the IDVR website.
- The SRC members, particularly those who represent members representing business, industry, and labor, participated in a strategic planning process for the Business Engagement Program.

- Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) monitored IDVR this past year. RSA met with two members of the SRC - the Chair and the Coordinator of the Client Assistance Program (CAP). The Chair also participated in the exit meeting with RSA and IDVR.

SRC Education

SRC members grew our VR knowledge on such topics as performance programs and competitive integrated employment by several means: our quarterly meetings, national VR/SRC focused conferences, and national SRC monthly meetings.

Warm welcomes and heartfelt goodbyes

We were thrilled to welcome Christine Meeuwsen from DisAbility Rights Idaho (DRI) and Randi Cole from the State Department of Education (SDE) as our new members this year. Christine is the Coordinator of the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and Randi is the Secondary Transition Coordinator. Yet were equally sad to see Angie Eandi, the previous CAP Coordinator from DRI, and Mike Hauser, our departing SRC Chair, leave our advisory council. Angie has been a strong voice for families and individuals with disabilities across the state. We will miss her perspective. Mike has served Idahoans for many years in the field of vocational rehabilitation both as a counselor and a valued leader on the SRC. His depth and breadth of insight will be sorely missed by all. Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to both of you.

On behalf of the Idaho’s State Rehabilitation Council, it is my honor and a privilege to provide you with our 2021 report.

Thank you,
Janice Carson
SRC Chair

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.

Greetings!

It is an honor to present the 2021 combined State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and Vocational Rehabilitation program (VR) annual report. Through our strong collaboration and partnership, IDVR and the SRC can ensure a robust and comprehensive VR program that will improve and enhance employment outcomes for Idahoans with disabilities.

This past year continued to present challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the obstacles placed before us, both VR staff and the SRC stayed true to our mission “to prepare individuals with disabilities for employment and career opportunities while meeting the needs of the employer.”

The Division was successful with many initiatives this past year including three major accomplishments I wish to specifically highlight:

Benefits planning services for those individuals with who are social security beneficiaries were implemented across numerous regions of the state. This accomplishment achieves a long-term goal for both the SRC and the Division. This vital service allows individuals to have a greater understanding of how work will impact their benefits so decisions about engaging in employment are better informed.

IDVR Vision

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

IDVR Mission

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



Mural in State Capitol Mall Tunnel. Artwork by Linda McMillin

Additionally, the agency created three Area Transition Counselor (ATC) positions to better support and serve students with disabilities. These three positions are strategically located across the state. ATCs serve students with disabilities and educate parents on the availability and benefits of pre-employment transition services.

IDVR’s Business Relations Coordinator was instrumental in advancing strategies to enhance business engagement across the state over the past year. This included the development of minimum requirements and performance expectations for field staff, the development of regional business plans, and the creation of a virtual platform for employers to highlight their businesses.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 this past year, the VR program has had great success. I am very proud of the accomplishments the program has achieved this past year. The staff have been dedicated, flexible, agile, and creative in meeting the many needs of Idahoans with disabilities. I look forward to our program’s ongoing success!

Please enjoy this publication.
Jane Donnellan, MA, CRC
IDVR Administrator

Purpose of the Idaho State Rehabilitation Council

The Idaho State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a body of citizens appointed by the executive director of the Idaho State Board of Education under the authority of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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

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

- 4 representatives of businesses, industry & labor
- 1 representative of the 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 Idaho State Rehabilitation Council provides direct communication from customers, rehabilitation professionals, business, service providers and other individuals interested in improving the services and programs provided by the VR program. This group reviews, analyzes, and advises the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (IDVR) regarding the performance, effectiveness, and objectives of the program. The SRC members provide critical support and guidance to IDVR and to individuals with disabilities served by the Division by communicating with legislators, on both the state and national levels, and also by directly communicating with Division leadership.

Council members participate in various functions and activities of the Division, including participating in quarterly meetings, strategic planning activities, provide input and recommendations for the VR Portion of the Combined State Plan, provide critical feedback on Division policies, and assist with analyzing customer satisfaction results and other relevant program performance data.

Council members and IDVR staff agree that maintaining a strong partnership will have important and positive lasting impacts for Idahoans with disabilities.

In order to accomplish the many activities and responsibilities of the Council, the SRC is comprised of three standing committees: Executive, Planning & Public Policy, and Program Effectiveness. All SRC members

participate in committee activities based upon their strengths and area of interest. The three committees are:

Executive Committee

This committee exercises the overall governance of the Council and adheres to Council Bylaws, policies, and any vote at Council meetings. The Executive Committee members guide the Council's efforts to advocate for the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program including advocacy with state legislators and congressional delegation and to the public at large.

Advocacy efforts focus on a partnership with the agency toward a common goal - maximizing employment and independent living for people with disabilities.

The Executive Committee is composed of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, the immediate past Chair, and the standing Committee's Chairs. The Executive Committee is responsible for the fiscal, administrative, and coordinating functions of the Council including budget oversight, membership, policy recommendations, State Plan and Annual Report compliance, and coordination of all committee activities.

Planning & Public Policy Committee

The purpose of this committee is to educate, inform and influence the state and federal legislative agenda as it relates to the VR program and disability employment policies. Responsibilities include meeting with state and federal legislators to advocate for the VR program, review and provide input on state

"My counselor is an awesome and attentive counselor. When I first started working with her and VR I was earning \$10 per hour, today I am earning \$20 per hour. I can't explain with words how grateful I am."

public policy as it affects employment of people with disabilities, and be involved with VR in developing agency policy. Two subcommittees, finance and policy development, assist this committee with its responsibilities.

Program Effectiveness Committee

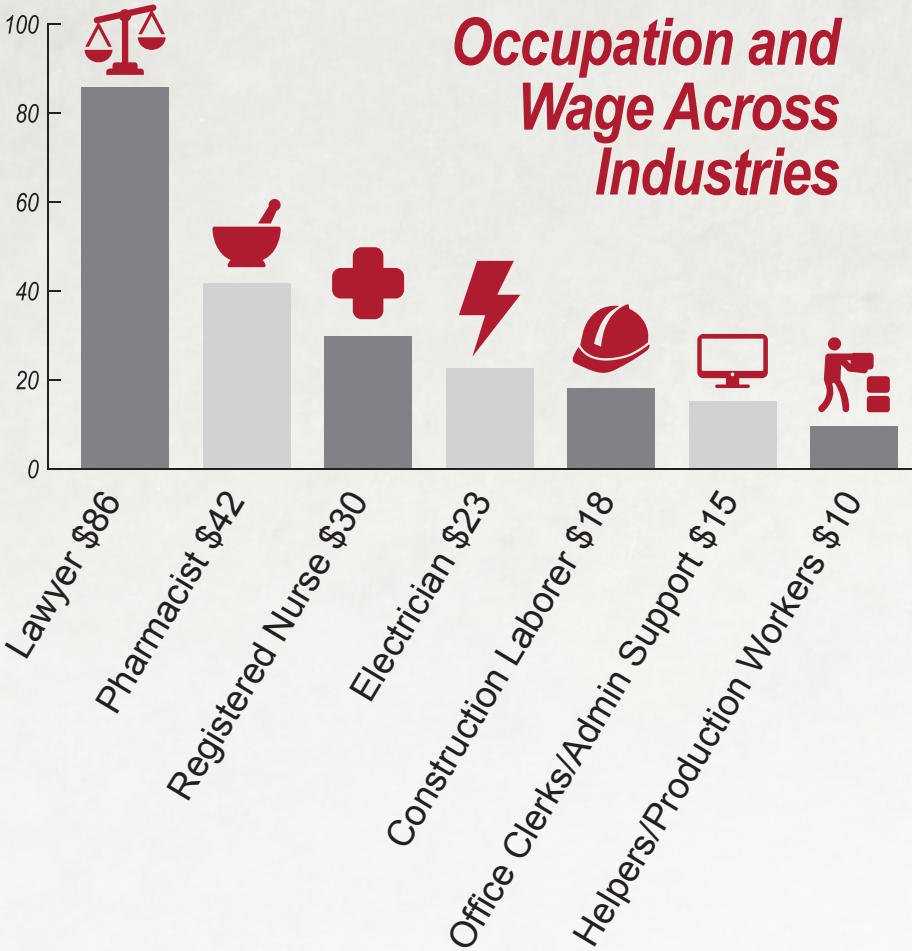
This committee strives to ensure that the VR program produces high quality results for VR customers. Committee members review, analyze, and advise IDVR on eligibility, including order of selection; the extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and functions performed by state agencies that affect or potentially impact the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes. The members guide the development and results of the customer satisfaction survey.

This committee has two co-chairs who chair three subcommittees: Survey, Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the VR Portion of the Combined State Plan.

SRC Accomplishments

- SRC continued to provide input on IDVR activities throughout the year and during SRC quarterly meetings
- Members reviewed Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)
- SRC Chair, Janice Carson reviewed and provided comment on the VR services portion of the State Plan
- SRC members collaborated on review of the Field Services Policy Manual prior to finalization
- SRC member involvement in 30th ADA Anniversary events
- SRC contributed and informed the 2020 Annual Report
- SRC members participated in Business Engagement strategic planning by providing feedback and comments on short-term and long-term objectives to increase business awareness about IDVR

“My VR counselor was awesome! He partnered with me on my journey to become financially self-sufficient, and always put my best interest above all else.”



658
Customers successfully employed

5,056
Customers served

Customers by Age Range

Age Group	# of Participants
14 to 21	1808
22 to 24	316
25 to 44	1676
45 to 54	667
55 to 59	285
60+	307



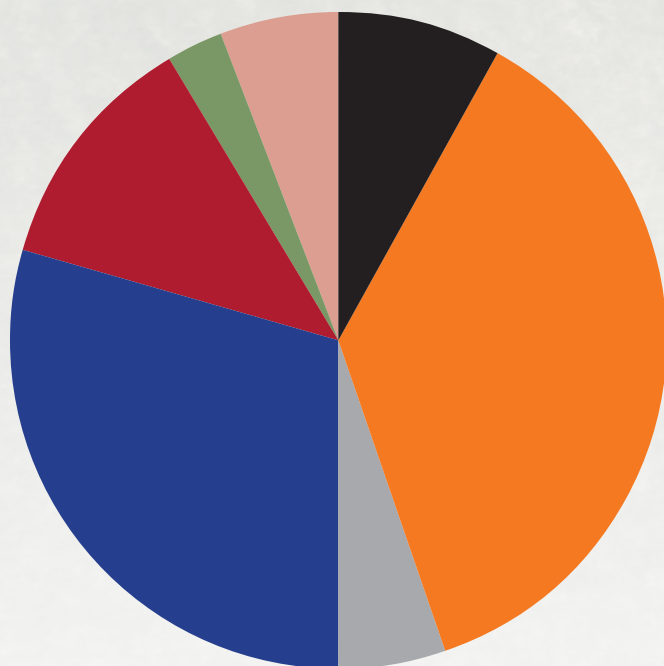
Customers by Disability Type

Auditory and Communicative Disabilities	481
Learning and Intellectual Disabilities	1144
Psychological and Psychosocial Disabilities	2541
Physical Disabilities	886
Visual Impairments	21

\$14¹⁶
Average Wage of Successfully Employed Customers

\$1,797,647

Funds Expended on Training



- Junior or Community College Training
\$148,492
- Four-Year Training
\$658,579
- Graduate Training
\$96,485
- Occupational/Vocational Training
\$526,232
- Training: Truck Driving
\$214,891
- Training: On-the-Job
\$53,138
- Miscellaneous Training
\$101,480

Grant Expenditures

\$6,792,695

Spent on Direct Services to VR Customers in SFY 2021

“The VR counselor and VR assistant were very helpful and professional. They both have the best interest of the client in their respective duties. They went the extra mile to accommodate scheduling.”

Return on Investment (ROI)

For every State General Fund dollar spent by IDVR, it is estimated that successfully employed customers will return \$4.84 in taxes to the State over the course of their working life (based on data from SFY21)

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

The SRC oversees the on-going customer satisfaction survey of IDVR participants who left/exited the program for various reasons. The Division and the SRC values the customer's perspective to help improve program administration and services.

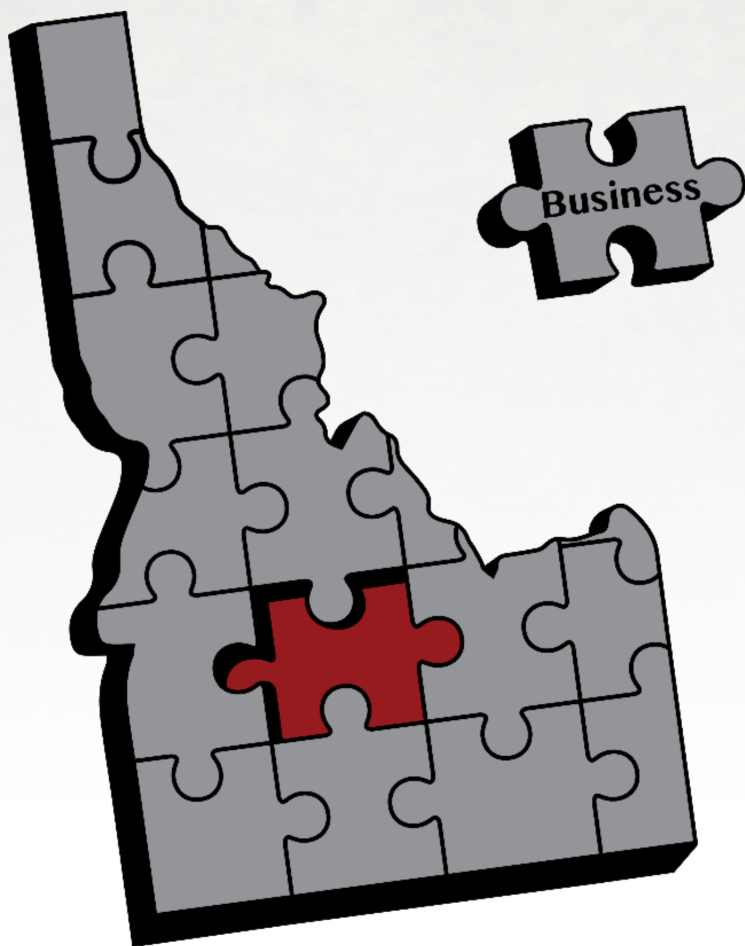
The customer satisfaction survey asks up to 12 questions in three domains; treating the customer with respect, plan services, and involvement with community rehabilitation programs, in order to gauge the customers overall experience with program services. The SRC and Division have high expectations and will use customer feedback to improve the VR experience and service delivery.

Percentages listed below represent the proportion of respondents who answered agree/strongly agree to each of the survey questions. Responses were collected from customers with cases closed from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

<i>Treating the Customer with Respect</i>	<i>Plan Services</i>	<i>Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP)</i>
Overall, I am satisfied with my experience with IDVR.	I had the opportunity to make decisions regarding which service Provider(s) would be used to deliver planned services.	I am satisfied with the communication and interaction I had with the CRPs that assisted me with looking for work.
I understand from the start that employment was the goal of VR.	I had the opportunity to work together with my VR counselor to develop my plan.	I had a choice when picking a CRP.
VR staff treated me with respect	The services outlined in my plan for employment were provided in a timely manner.	The services provided by the CRPs that assisted me in looking for work were helpful.
VR responded to my needs (questions/ requests) in a timely manner.	I would recommend VR to friends with disabilities who are looking to find work, keep work, or advance in their careers.	I would recommend the CRP that assisted me to others in my community who need similar services.

Business Engagement

IDVR assists Idaho businesses in hiring and retaining qualified employees. IDVR's Business Engagement (BE) Team members are available in each region to address the needs of local Idaho businesses including providing technical assistance/training with accommodations on the job, connecting businesses with a relatively untapped and diverse labor pool, and to help employers work with their employees with disabilities to keep or modify their job, or even training to help move to a new position.



Business Spotlight

IDVR has implemented Business Spotlight Sessions which allow businesses a platform to share information about their business and the needs of their business in a group setting. Those invited to attend the Business Spotlights include IDVR, ICBVI, DOL, Department of Veterans Affairs, Oregon Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Oregon Commission for the Blind, Washington Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Utah Division of Vocational Rehabilitation staff. Businesses that have participated since launching these spotlights in April 2021 include: Amazon, St. Alphonsus, Southwark Metal, Nissha Medical Technologies, MOD Pizza, Western Building Maintenance, and NxEdge/AceCo.

Business Services

IDVR staff have provided more direct services to business over the last year. This is reflected in an increase in the variety and quality of services provided to businesses. Division staff are providing more support to businesses in Workforce Recruitment Assistance, Training Services, and Accessing Untapped Labor Pools than in prior years. These quality services provided to business have increased from 18% (179) of services provided to business in 2018, to 21% (148) in 2020 and to 33% (261) thus far in 2021.

“The VR counselor helped me in reaching the career advancement that I was seeking to obtain.”

Business Engagement Strategic Plan

IDVR completed strategic planning sessions in the fall of 2020 in order to look forward at the next steps needed to further develop and increase agency performance in the area of Business Engagement. The following groups were represented in this process: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Regional Managers, Vocational Rehabilitation Assistants, Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually impaired staff, State Rehabilitation Council members, Workforce Development representative, and Central Office personnel. The strategic planning sessions took place over four different sessions in which the agency’s business engagement activities were discussed, evaluated, and identified needs were prioritized.

Following the strategic planning sessions, the information gathered was compiled and summarized into a working plan with the following goals.



<https://vr.idaho.gov/business/>

GOAL 1

Develop business engagement minimum requirements and performance expectations for each IDVR job category identified.

GOAL 2

Increase staff understanding of how to deliver effective business services through ensuring they understand the purpose, intent, and requirements of providing business engagement activities.

GOAL 3

Develop a communication plan for business engagement.

GOAL 4

Establish IDVR as a resource to business.

GOAL 5

Develop strategy for completing business engagement activities with outside agencies and partners.

GOAL 6

Increase agency business engagement performance.

Jason's Story

Workforce Partnership leads to Employment with Advancement Opportunities



Occupation:
**Shop Foreman
and Exterior
Design**

Employer:
**Snap Tight
Products LLC**

Location:
Pocatello, Idaho

Hourly Wage:
\$20.00

Weekly Hours:
40+

Jason applied for IDVR services after being referred by Probation and Parole as he was struggling to maintain consistent long-term employment. He had experience working in construction but knew he needed to find a position that would allow him to have long-term potential and meet his economic needs.

Jason obtained employment with Snap Tight Products, LLC which aligned with his prior experience working in the construction industry. IDVR partnered with his employer to support on-the-job training to increase Jason's skillset through employer provided training.

Additionally, IDVR partnered with the Idaho Department of Labor to support Jason with additional training to expand Jason's position responsibilities. Jason's employer also supported him by investing in software necessary for Jason to complete work with his expanded skillsets.

Prior to working with VR, Jason was struggling with maintaining his sobriety, was living in a halfway house, and only making \$10.00 per hour. Now, he is happily married, sober, and a proud homeowner and extremely happy in all aspects of his life.

"Jason is a stellar example of hard work, honesty, and the standard of excellence in all aspects of his work and how he lives his life."

- Snap Tight Products, LLC



Jeremy's Story

High School Student's Journey to Doctor of Physical Therapy

High School:
Twin Falls High School

Post-Secondary Education:
College of Southern Idaho and Idaho State University

Employer:
Specialized Physical Therapy

Location:
Pocatello, Idaho

Hourly Wage:
\$31.00

Jeremy started working with IDVR while he was in high school after being referred by his audiologist as his profound hearing loss impacted communication and learning in the school setting. Jeremy was able to obtain a unilateral cochlear implant which greatly increased his communication skills.

With the support of IDVR, Jeremy completed interest assessments and job shadows to help him in making the decision he wanted to pursue a career as a physical therapist. He started his post-secondary education at College of Southern Idaho to complete pre-requisite courses and then transferred to Idaho State University to complete his bachelor's degree and the physical therapy program with VR support throughout his education.

Jeremy completed his final clinical hours at Specialized Physical Therapy in Pocatello, Idaho and upon completion, Jeremy was offered employment with the clinic. Jeremy continues to work at Specialized Physical Therapy and is an asset to the team.

Jeremy wants to instill a sense of encouragement within each one of his patients as he has had a lot of support and he sees it now as his turn to give back to the community and support his patients on their journeys.

Find more VR Success Stories at
<https://vr.idaho.gov/business/>



Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Paid Summer Work Experiences

Even with many students deciding to opt out of summer work due to Covid-19, 343 students were provided a summer work experience. The students participated in a week of job skills training, followed by five-weeks of paid work with businesses in 12 different local areas around the state; with additional on-the-job work readiness provided to students, if needed.

Several students were hired by the employer either during or after the program ended. Employers continue to express the importance of this program and assist students to learn on the job.



Nampa School District Career Technical Education (CTE) Program

IDVR was able to work with the Nampa School District to create a new program this last summer. The program was created with the CTE director Cindy Arnzen from the Nampa School District with assistance from her CTE teaching staff. It was determined that the program would provide students with the opportunity to explore small engine repair, culinary, and welding as possible job options. Students excelled in exploring jobs in a hands-on manner. The students were so engaged in the work and the district staff was amazing.



Employer Reimbursed Paid Work Experiences

IDVR is working with local employers to offer students with disabilities the opportunity to take part in a short-term paid work experience. Employer-reimbursed paid work experience are opportunities for students to be hired directly by the employer and for the employer to be reimbursed by IDVR for costs incurred to provide the individual work-based learning experience. Exposure to internships, work-based learning opportunities, and job shadowing all contribute to the employability of students with disabilities. Partnering with employers helps students to identify career interests, build confidence, learn about workplace culture, and make what they are learning in school more meaningful through real-world applications.

Employers find that developing this kind of working relationships results in considerable benefits. Among those benefits are developing a future workforce in specialized areas, expanding business outreach to under-represented communities, and engaging in mentoring opportunities.



Area Transition Counselors

IDVR is happy to announce that we now have three area transition counselors whose focus is to increase the number of students receiving pre-employment transition services and to increase the number and types of services that are available to students. One counselor covers northern Idaho, one cover southeast and south-central Idaho, and one covers southwest Idaho. They will work to increase services to rural students and build more collaborative relationships with the local education agencies.

*Find more information about Pre-ETS at
<https://vr.idaho.gov/students/>*



To learn more about the Idaho State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation visit <https://vr.idaho.gov> or contact us at (208) 334-3390, Idaho State Rehabilitation Council, P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720
<https://vr.idaho.gov/about/src/>

SRC Meeting Schedule

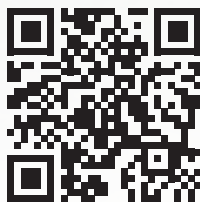
Jan 25, 2022

Apr 26, 2022

Jul 26, 2022

Oct 25, 2022

The Idaho State Rehabilitation Council invites you to apply for membership. If you are interested in issues related to disability and employment, the SRC encourages you to apply for a seat on this council.



<https://vr.idaho.gov/about/src>

“Without the involvement of VR, I might have left the workforce prematurely. I am genuinely grateful for the support that I received from VR, and for the skill of my counselor. Prior to my dealings with VR, I would not have thought of VR as a program that could meaningfully and powerfully change lives.”

Region 1 – Coeur d’Alene

Region 2 – Lewiston

Region 3 – Treasure Valley, Central

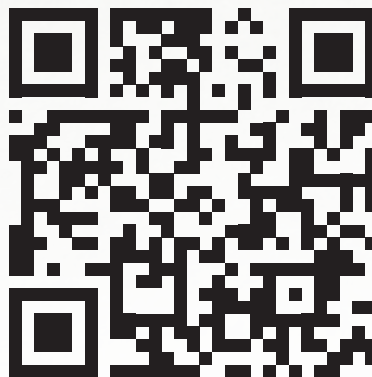
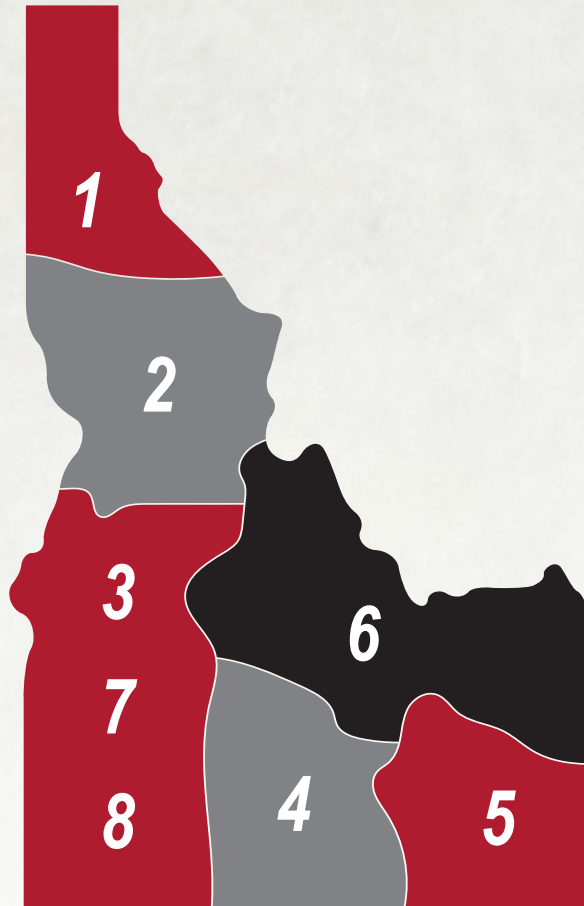
Region 4 – Twin Falls

Region 5 – Pocatello

Region 6 – Idaho Falls

Region 7 – Treasure Valley, West

Region 8 – Treasure Valley, East



<https://vr.idaho.gov/contacts>

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