

VR Success Story: Breaking Barriers on the Road to Success



IDVR's **Mission** is to prepare individuals with disabilities for employment and career opportunities while meeting the needs of the employers.



Nathan's SUCCESS STORY

Location: Burley, Idaho
Occupation: Truck Driver
Business: Ag Express Incorporated



"I'm grateful to VR for the funding and additional support they provided to me in going to training to obtain my CDL class A license. The support to get my dream job and to be able to get behind the wheel as a successful truck driver has changed my life." - Nathan, VR Customer

- Nathan applied for VR services in December 2023, as a previous VR customer seeking support with his goal of obtaining his CDL to gain more stability in his career and to move from part-time to full-time employment.
- Prior to his eligibility determination with VR, Nathan took several independent steps to support his goal of becoming a CDL driver, including going through the DOT physical process that required extra steps of obtaining an exemption from a federal governing body due to his diagnosis of bilateral deafness. At that time, he had completed all the required paperwork and was awaiting their response to be able to proceed in obtaining his DOT medical card needed to become a CDL driver.
- After many months of waiting for approval for his medical exemption due to his hearing, Nathan received his exemption in April 2024 and then began working with his VR counselor to start the process in enrolling in the CDL program and obtaining his CDL permit.

"Nathan's story is a great example of overcoming barriers to employment. He was prepared, understanding, and patient for the length it would take to achieve his goal. He persevered and will continue to advocate for himself in all future endeavors. - Isabella Nunez, VR Counselor

- Nathan's VRC also referred him to the Idaho Launch program which approved him for support with his CDL program to allow for cost sharing between IDVR and the Idaho Launch training program allowing him to start the program in May 2024. He graduated in June 2024, and then obtained his CDL with endorsements in July 2024.
- Nathan then began his job search for a CDL position, but encountered challenges when employers made assumptions about his ability to work safely as a CDL truck driver due to his deafness. In response, Nathan provided educational materials to several employers, addressing misconceptions about his hearing and clarifying that his diagnosis would not hinder his ability to perform the job. Despite this, some employers either stated they would not hire him because of his hearing or stated they were unable to accommodate his communication needs.
- Despite these challenges with his job search, Nathan obtained a full-time CDL driving position with benefits that would meet his needs in the beginning of August 2024 with Ag Express.

A few words that I feel are appropriate when thinking about Nathan is 'Nothing is Impossible.'"
– Shane Gardner, Director of Operations, Ag Express Incorporated

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