



Idaho Division of
Vocational Rehabilitation



Coeur d'Alene Career Exploration Fair

IDVR Bringing Together CDA School District, Local Businesses, and Community Members to Assist Students with Disabilities to Explore Careers

Philosophy of IDVR Pre-ETS Program: *To increase independence and future success in the workplace by empowering students with disabilities to make informed choices about their transition options. IDVR supports and guides students through the transition process by providing opportunities for skill development, career exploration, and discovery of each individual's specific interests, needs, and abilities.*

Bringing the Career Exploration Fair to life was a collaborative and focused effort between IDVR and the Coeur d'Alene School District. Building an impactful student experience required intentional communication and strong coordination between IDVR and the School District. IDVR was able to obtain the involvement of 23 local business and community organizations, and other businesses who provided donations for the event.

The students were organized into rotating groups allowing the 48 students to attend classroom-style sessions with speakers and then also have time to engage in one-on-one conversations with professionals from various industries. This structure required detailed scheduling and ongoing communication with both schools within the district that participated and business partners to ensure the event ran smoothly for both the students and businesses.

This event gave the students a rare opportunity to engage directly with professionals and see firsthand the variety of careers available to them. What made it so impactful was how it challenged their assumptions — many walked in thinking they knew what they were or weren't interested in but left with entirely new ideas and possibilities. It also allowed the businesses to meet their future workforce. It's exactly the kind of real-world exposure we strive to provide to the students that IDVR serves under our Pre-Employment Transition Services Program.

"The Career Exploration Fair was a resounding success, providing students with disabilities valuable exposure to a wide range of local career opportunities and postsecondary pathways. The event was highly attended and received overwhelmingly positive feedback from both students and teachers, who shared how meaningful and engaging the experience was. It helped open students' minds to possibilities for their future and gave them insight into the steps they may need to take after high school.

— Samantha Minert, CDA School District

"When I first came up with the idea of Career Quest, I imagined a space where students could explore real career paths through hands-on learning — by hearing directly from the people doing the work. But seeing it all come to life truly exceeded my expectations. The energy in the room, the enthusiasm from students, and the commitment from our business partners — it all came together in a way that was even more impactful than I had hoped."

— Brandy Longley, VR Counselor

"The Career Quest event offered a higher level of engagement than we've experienced at other career fairs. We were especially impressed by the students' professionalism, preparedness, and curiosity—they came ready with thoughtful questions and showed genuine interest in our industry. We appreciated the opportunity to connect with such promising talent. What made this event even more valuable was the environment, allowing us to engage with students of all abilities and backgrounds. We look forward to future opportunities to participate"

— Alan Longley, Bunker Hill Mine

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