

Report of the Nebraska

State Rehabilitation Council

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*A consumer controlled council committed to
ensuring quality rehabilitation services*

Contact information:

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) values the input and involvement of all citizens in Nebraska regarding rehabilitation services. All SRC meetings are open to the public and are a great opportunity for the public to voice concerns and opinions.

Meetings:

Meeting dates, times, and locations are posted on the Nebraska VR website at vr.nebraska.gov

Write:

State Rehabilitation Council Chairperson
Nebraska Department of Education
500 S. 84th St., 2nd Floor
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509

Call:

Angela Fujan
402.679.6298
877.637.3422

Fax:

402.471.0788

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State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education

December 8, 2022

As another challenging year draws to a close, I would like to begin my annual report by thanking the staff at Nebraska VR across the state. Nebraska VR staff continued to persevere through changes in the economy as well as the pandemic to ensure that services were provided. The hard work of the team continues to make a difference in the lives of individuals every day.

I am pleased to present a report that summarizes the accomplishments of the Nebraska SRC during Fiscal Year 2022. At each quarterly meeting, the SRC membership and visitors were presented with reports from the Transition Services, Employer Services, and Client Services Committees, as well as, reports from the Nebraska Assistive Technology Project (ATP), Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), Project SEARCH, Nebraska Youth Leadership Council (NYLC), and the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH). These reports provided a good understanding of current events and enabled us to advocate for and provide input to Nebraska VR.

Additionally, Nebraska VR Director Lindy Foley reported on the status of VR services and programs to include the Order of Selection and the amending of the VR Services section in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan to open all priority groups. The SRC was asked for and provided feedback on numerous issues to include:

- Order of Selection
- Senator Outreach (virtual event focusing on CPAP 2.0)
- Disability Employment and Inclusion Awards (held In Lincoln with all recipients in-person)

As the COVID-19 pandemic began to wind down, this year saw a number of changes in the business environment again. Individuals began to return to the office and businesses sought to hire large numbers of individuals to support their operations. Many of the businesses in our communities were unable to fully staff to their needs. This has provided Nebraska VR expanded opportunities to highlight the value of our programs and help to find employment for clients.

Finally, I would like to say "Thank You" to each member of the SRC. This group of individuals from all backgrounds and experiences once again came together during the year with the shared goal of helping others. The individual members volunteered time and resources without prospect of anything in return.

Sincerely,

Michael Bursaw

Michael Bursaw
Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council



Crystal is a Manager of HR Operations at Ameritas. She represents business, industry, and labor.

Crystal Booker—Lincoln



HR Director for West Pharmaceutical Services, Michael serves on the SRC as a business, industry, and labor representative.

Michael Bursaw—Ravenna



Jeremy is an Advocacy Specialist for the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing who serves on the Transition Services Committee.

Jeremy Daffern—Omaha



Gloria is the State of Nebraska ADA Coordinator who serves on the Client Services committee.

Gloria Eddins—Lincoln



Chris serves as a current or former applicant for or recipient of vocational rehabilitation services.

Christine Gaspari—Kearney



Jason serves as a current or former applicant for or recipient of vocational rehabilitation services.

Jason Gieschen—Ogallala



As a Community Benefits & Benefits Coordinator for Easterseals Nebraska, Gayle serves as a community rehabilitation program service provider.

Gayle Hahn—Hastings

SRC Committee Reports

Transition Services Committee

Members: Theresa Hayes (chair), Jeremy Daffern, Jason Gieschen, and Michael Tufte with Lupe Stevens as Nebraska VR Advisor.



Transition Services Committee Chairperson – Theresa Hayes

Theresa is an Education Specialist with the Nebraska Department of Education Office of Special Education.

Theresa Hayes—Lincoln

Highlights from the Transition Services Committee discussions include:

- Project SEARCH had 13 sites that operated in 2021-2022. Two sites earned an award for having more than 70% of their interns gain competitive, integrated employment at the end of the program.
- A school satisfaction survey of educators and school administrators was completed by 389 respondents. The survey results revealed that 73% of the respondents were satisfied with the communication received from the Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Coordinators and found the most useful service provided to students was job exploration.
- Nebraska VR supported 5 Job Expos in different regions across Nebraska.
- Nineteen Summer Transition Programs were supported by Nebraska VR during the summer of 2022.
- Nebraska Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) held 6 regional meetings to practice interview skills. NYLC also hosted a Summer Leadership Conference in Kearney in June.
- NYLC also had the opportunity to share information about self-advocacy at 15 different events across Nebraska.

Client Services Committee

Members: Jerry Bryan (chair), Gloria Eddins, Gayle Hahn, Matthew Kaslon, Lisa Kent-Scheer, Cody McEvoy, and Diane Owen-Downs with Angela Fujan as Nebraska VR Advisor.



Client Services Committee Chairperson – Jerry Bryan

A required council member, Jerry is the Director of the Client Assistance Program.

Jerry Bryan—Lincoln

Over the past year, the Client Services Committee:

- Worked on the Client Satisfaction Survey for closed VR cases.
- Reviewed the suggestions of the SRC to survey those clients who have had their cases closed unsuccessful as well as successful.

- Considered updating questions to address VR customer service, timeliness, and client’s awareness of rights and Client Assistance Program (CAP).
- Considered celebrating successful cases by focusing on the client’s success rather than the staff in hopes of generating more successful cases submitted for review.
- Shared the year-to-date Client Satisfaction Survey with the Counselor Committee for discussions and recommendations for the SRC to consider.
- Provided follow-up on individuals whose work hours were cut and added a question to the survey asking if the person completing the survey would like more information about the SRC.

Employer Services Committee

Members:

Lonnie Berger (chair), Crystal Booker, Michael Bursaw, Chris Gaspari, Susan Madsen, and Mary Matusiak as Nebraska VR Advisor.



**Employer Services Committee Chairperson
– Lonnie Berger**

Lonnie joined the SRC representing business, industry, and labor. He is the franchisee of Wendy’s in York, NE.

Lonnie Berger–York

The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly impacted our ability to meet in-person and has continued to change how we are able to communicate and work with one another in the Employer Services Committee. I am thankful for technology that allows each of us to participate in the work of the committee regardless of whether we are meeting in person or via Zoom technology.

The October 12, 2021 meeting was held in-person at the Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker where we also held the SRC’s 2021 Disability Employment and Inclusion Award Ceremony. The award recipients for this ceremony were nominated by Nebraska VR staff. The nominations were then reviewed by the SRC Employer Services Committee and the winners selected.

The February 8, 2022 meeting was an in-person meeting and included time for participation in the “Opportunities to Find, Develop, and Retain Employees in a Challenging Labor Market” webinar.

The May 10, 2022 and August 9, 2022 meetings were held via Zoom. Meeting time was spent planning for the SRC Disability Employment and Inclusion Awards. A special meeting was held to review nominees and select award recipients. Additional committee meetings were held to choose the location for the October meeting and awards ceremony. Nebraska VR and ATP staff assisted the committee in critical planning and follow up to ensure the event would be a success.

I would personally like to thank Crystal Booker, Susan Madsen, and Michael Bursaw for their participation and contributions throughout the year. Our work could not be successful without the dedicated Nebraska VR staff members who work throughout the year offering wise counsel and professional expertise.



Matthew Kaslon–Grand Island

Mathew represents the Statewide Independent Living Council. It is a required seat of the SRC.



Lisa Kent-Scheer–Omaha

Lisa serves as a current or former applicant for or recipient of vocational rehabilitation services.



Susan Madsen–Lincoln

Susan is the General Manager at The Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel. She represents business, industry, and labor.



Cody McEvoy–Lincoln

Cody is the representative of the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.



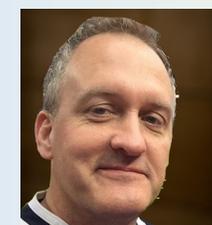
Tobias Orr–Lincoln

In his role as Director of Assitive Technology Partnership, Tobias is a provider of community rehabilitation program services.



Diane Owen-Downs–Norfolk

Diane works at the Norfolk Nebraska VR office. She serves on the SRC as a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor.



Michael Tufte–Omaha

Michael works for the Parent Training and Information Center (PTI). PTI Nebraska is a required member of the council.

Director's Message



Lindy Foley-Director
Nebraska VR

Nebraska VR had another productive and innovative year! It's always an exciting time to reflect on the accomplishments of the agency, our commitment to delivering quality services, doing our part to be a leader in the state's workforce system, and our collaboration with the Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council.

There are many examples of Nebraska VR's efforts in 2022 to increase our infrastructure and ultimately expand our services to individuals with disabilities. The following are a few of the year's highlights:

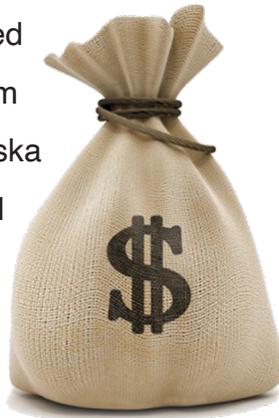
- **Recruitment and Retention** - In Fiscal Year 2022, Nebraska VR filled nearly 50 positions statewide. Progress was made to fill vacancies which were the result of a hiring freeze beginning in 2017. Nebraska VR was not exempt to the nationally recognized "Great Resignation" so other positions were filled due to staff moving to other external opportunities. Recruitment and retention has been a focus for Nebraska VR for many years. It is understood we are most effective to serve people when our staff have the appropriate training, experience, and skills to do the work. We want Nebraska VR to be a place staff are proud of and the energy felt by experienced and newly on-boarded talent helps us see we're headed in the right direction. I am very grateful for the exceptional staff at Nebraska VR and I'm excited to see how their work will move our agency into even greater opportunities in the coming year!
- **Outreach** - In 2022, the agency eliminated the wait list for all three Priority Groups. As a result, any individual eligible for VR can be served immediately. This is exciting news! Offices have been studying demographics in their catchment areas, working with referral sources to spread the message about our capacity, and even identifying any necessary supports in order to reach historically unserved/underserved populations. The agency has progress still to make in the number of individuals served prior to our wait list and the pandemic but there are extensive strategies in place to get us there.
- **Innovation and Performance** - Even during uncertain times like the Order of Selection and the Pandemic, the agency was committed to exploring ways our agency can lead the way as a VR program. In 2022, Nebraska VR completed its first year of the Career Pathways Advancement Project (CPAP 2.0). As one of eight agencies/states selected, we are very proud to be a part of rethinking what VR can look like in Nebraska and nationally. For the second year, we have been recognized as a top performing state in reporting employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities (employment data after 6 months and one year).

There's a great sense of pride reflecting on our 2022 accomplishments and we know there are awesome opportunities ahead. With the ongoing support of the SRC, it's certain 2023 will be another productive year!

Lindy Foley
Director, Nebraska VR

Nebraska VR Funding

Every \$1.00 appropriated to Nebraska VR from the State of Nebraska earns \$3.69 in Federal Funding for services to Nebraskans with disabilities.



Return on Investment for the Nebraska VR Program

Average Cost of Nebraska VR Services per Person:	\$36,094.22
Average Annual Earnings after Nebraska VR Services:	\$22,776.48
Estimated Annual Taxes on Earnings:	
Federal Income Tax	\$1,028.00
State Income Tax	\$510.00
State/Local Sales Tax	\$0
Social Security Tax	\$1,742.00
Average Total Taxes per Year	\$3,280.00
Average Return to Taxpayers over 30 Remaining Years of Employment	\$98,400.00

On average, a successfully employed person **Returns \$2.73** to the taxpayers for every **\$1 Spent** through Nebraska VR services.

Annual Program Costs

	Cost of Program
Administration	\$ 4,502,396

Client Services		Cost of Program
Provided by VR Staff		\$ 17,695,551
Purchased from Community Rehab Programs		\$ 1,662,995
Purchased from Other Vendors		\$ 2,958,116
Total		\$ 26,819,059

Purchased for Clients		Cost of Program
Assessment		\$272,411
Pre-Employment Transition Services		\$769,228
Supported Employment		\$1,935,500
Customized Supported Employment		\$287,500
Occupational/Vocational Training		\$34,068
Other Services		\$46,858
Transportation		\$46,079
Maintenance – Increased Living Costs		\$25,151
Benefits Counseling		\$130,730
Rehab Technology		\$628,492
Jr/Community College		\$74,767
Interpreter		\$8,704
Short Term Supports		\$35,314
Diagnosis and Treatment		\$2,176
4 Year College		\$228,688
On the Job Training		\$7,548
Graduate College		\$66,048
Customized Training		\$412
Technical Assistance Self Employment		\$300
Job Placement Assistance		\$3,120
Disability Related Skills Training		\$510
Miscellaneous Training		\$17,433
Personal Assistance Services		\$75
Total		\$ 4,621,111

Individuals Served by Nebraska VR

2022 Nebraska VR Employment Program

Clients Served by County

County.....Total	County.....Total
Adams.....70	Jefferson.....4
Antelope.....3	Johnson.....1
Arthur.....0	Kearney.....9
Banner.....1	Keith.....2
Blaine.....1	Keya Paha.....1
Boone.....7	Kimball.....3
Box Butte.....21	Knox.....12
Boyd.....4	Lancaster.....546
Brown.....3	Lincoln.....90
Buffalo.....99	Logan.....0
Burt.....8	Loup.....1
Butler.....24	Madison.....121
Cass.....25	McPherson.....0
Cedar.....10	Merrick.....10
Chase.....3	Morrill.....7
Cherry.....1	Nance.....6
Cheyenne.....21	Nemaha.....7
Clay.....10	Nuckolls.....3
Colfax.....2	Otoe.....23
Cuming.....15	Pawnee.....1
Custer.....7	Perkins.....2
Dakota.....12	Phelps.....10
Dawes.....13	Pierce.....13
Dawson.....60	Platte.....98
Deuel.....2	Polk.....9
Dixon.....3	Red Willow.....28
Dodge.....72	Richardson.....5
Douglas.....613	Rock.....1
Dundy.....3	Saline.....20
Fillmore.....3	Sarpy.....137
Franklin.....3	Saunders.....16
Frontier.....1	Scotts Bluff.....78
Furnas.....4	Seward.....13
Gage.....37	Sheridan.....6
Garden.....1	Sherman.....3
Garfield.....2	Sioux.....0
Gosper.....8	Stanton.....9
Grant.....2	Thayer.....4
Greeley.....3	Thomas.....0
Hall.....164	Thurston.....6
Hamilton.....13	Valley.....2
Harlan.....2	Washington.....18
Hayes.....1	Wayne.....17
Hitchcock.....2	Webster.....3
Holt.....17	Wheeler.....0
Hooker.....2	York.....17
Howard.....3	Total Served.....2763

Applied for Services	1600
Received Services	2763
Successfully Employed	615

Successfully Employed Nebraska VR Clients



41% of clients are employed full-time.

Average hourly wage for 2022 is **\$15.04**

2022 Occupation & Earnings for Competitively Employed Clients

Occupations	Percent	Average Hourly Earnings
Service	33.17%	\$11.31
Professional	19.84%	\$19.36
Sales	12.85%	\$12.65
Transportation & Material Moving	10.41%	\$13.49
Office Support	9.76%	\$15.43
Production	5.37%	\$19.43
Management, Business, & Finance	3.90%	\$24.53
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	1.95%	\$21.22
Installation, Maintenance, & Repairs	1.46%	\$17.17
Construction & Extraction	1.30%	\$19.30

Career Pathways Advancement Project (CPAP)

CPAP, a five-year grant awarded to Nebraska VR in 2015 from the United States Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) came to an end in June 2021. The grant allowed adults and youth with disabilities to acquire skills and credentials necessary to advance in high-demand industries. The strategy advanced incumbent workers, opened job opportunities for job seekers, and benefited business partners by cultivating workforce development through educational advancement and training.

The CPAP 2.0 grant was awarded from RSA in October 2021 and will continue through June 2026. Over the course of Year 1, the CPAP 2.0 team has conducted outreach to 178 businesses, setting the team on a path to exceed the original target of reaching 400 businesses over the course of the five-year project. The Business Pathways Specialists have also formulated Individualized Business Plans (IBPs) which outline the services and supports CPAP 2.0 will provide to business partners with the goal of advancing incumbent workers with disabilities.

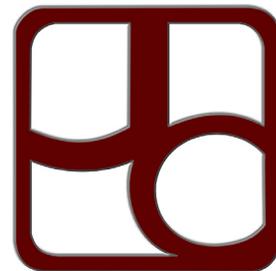
The 10 IBPs signed in Fiscal Year 2022 are with Eakes Office Supply, Royal Engineered Composites, Sunheat, Middleton Electric, Masonite, Highline Warren, West Pharmaceutical Services, BD Medical, J & C Company, and Dave Janke Plumbing.



Unstoppable growth. Unlimited opportunity. Unrelenting passion.



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Nebraska VR Successful People

The Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) honored five Nebraska VR partners for their role in creating inclusive workplaces and advocacy for disability employment during October 2021 Disability Employment and Inclusion Award Ceremony.

Disability Employment and Inclusion Entrepreneur Award – Paul Filsinger – First Impressions Photography – Shelton, Nebraska

Paul Filsinger used Nebraska VR’s self-employment program to receive a business feasibility study, a business plan, start-up costs, and guidance to open his own business, First Impressions Photography in Shelton, NE. He photographed weddings, family portraits, proms, and wildlife. Four of his photographs were featured in Nebraskaland Magazine. Before his untimely death in October of 2020 after a 7-week battle with COVID-19, he was also very involved in the community. Filsinger helped the Historical Society organize and digitize old photographs, created a Facebook page for Shelton’s Lincoln Highway Festival Car Show, designed promotional posters for events, and photographed first responders during Kearney’s Cruise Night.



Paul Filsinger, First Impressions Photography



Steve and Rachelle Kotschwar, Pristine Clean Commercial Cleaning

New Business Partner Recognition Award—Pristine Clean Commercial Cleaning – McCook, Nebraska

Pristine Clean Commercial Cleaning owners/operators, Steve and Rachelle Kotschwar, grew their business from cleaning a couple of churches for extra spending money to employing forty people to clean more than fifty facilities. They started their McCook, NE based business in 2015 and have expanded their business to serve surrounding communities. In September of 2020, they began partnering with Nebraska VR to meet their staffing needs and provide work-based learning experiences for students.

Small Business Recognition—Cornhusker Auto Center – Norfolk, Nebraska

Cornhusker Auto Center in Norfolk, NE sells new and used cars, has a service and detail department, and employs almost 100 people. The dealership has partnered with Nebraska VR since 2019 and provided local high school students with work-based learning experiences. Management has gone above and beyond to provide modifications like checklists, so students know their job responsibilities and the tasks to be completed. In addition, Cornhusker Auto Center has hired a student after his completion of a work-based learning experience.



Nate Hahne, Cornhusker Auto Center Detail Manager



Susan Madsen, The Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker General Manager

Large Business Recognition—The Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel – Lincoln, Nebraska

The Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hotel has been a downtown staple since the 1920s and caters to travelers with upscale accommodations, food, and event space. The hotel encompasses the meaning of true partnership and has been a Project SEARCH host site for up to ten interns for each of the last five years. While hosting the nine-month internship program that trains students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the interns are immersed in the working culture of the hotel. The hotel has hired five of the student interns upon graduation over the years.

Large Business Recognition—Lincoln Williamsburg Hy-Vee – Lincoln, Nebraska

As a longtime Nebraska VR partner, Williamsburg Hy-Vee often provides work experiences for students and adults. The store welcomes job candidates with disabilities with open arms providing support, guidance, and mentorship to ensure successful employment. Throughout the pandemic, Lincoln Williamsburg Hy-Vee continued to provide opportunities for students and clients. Through on-the-job training, 9 out of the 10 clients successfully found employment.



Eddie Bucknor, Hy-Vee Customer Care Education Manager

Office Locations

Columbus serves counties:

Butler, Colfax, Nance, Platte and Polk
3100 23rd Street, Ste. 5, Columbus, NE 68601
(402) 562-8065, (877) 505-0866
VR.InfoColumbus@nebraska.gov

Fremont serves counties:

Dodge and Washington
827 North D St , Fremont, NE 68025
(402) 727-2900, (888) 585-5439
VR.InfoFremont@nebraska.gov

Grand Island serves counties:

Fillmore, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Howard, Merrick,
Nuckolls, Thayer and York
203 E Stolley Park Rd, Ste. B
Grand Island, NE 68801
(308) 385-6200, (800) 862-3382
VR.InfoGrandIsland@nebraska.gov

Hastings serves counties:

Adams, Clay and Webster
2727 W. 2nd Street, Ste 326
Hastings, NE 68901-4683
402-462-0160, 800-852-3382
VR.InfoHastings@nebraska.gov

Kearney serves counties:

Blaine, Buffalo, Custer, Franklin, Furnas, Garfield,
Harlan, Kearney, Loup, Phelps, Sherman and Valley
315 W 60th Street, Ste 400, Kearney, NE 68845
(308) 865-5343, (800) 262-3382
VR.InfoKearney@nebraska.gov

Lincoln serves counties:

Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Lancaster, Nemaha, Otoe,
Pawnee, Richardson, Saline, Saunders and Seward
3901 N 27th Street, Ste 6, Lincoln, NE 68521
(402) 471-3231
(800) 472-3382
VR.InfoLincoln@nebraska.gov

Norfolk serves counties:

Antelope, Boone, Boyd, Brown, Burt, Cedar, Cuming,
Dixon, Holt, Keya Paha, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Rock,

Stanton, Wayne and Wheeler

1212 W. Benjamin Avenue, Norfolk, NE 68701
(402) 370-3200, (800) 442-3382
VR.InfoNorfolk@nebraska.gov

North Platte serves counties:

Arthur, Chase, Cherry, Dawson, Dundy, Frontier, Gosper,
Grant, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith, Lincoln, Logan,
McPherson, Perkins, Red Willow and Thomas
200 South Silber, Bldg. #2, North Platte, NE 69101
(308) 535-8100, (800) 272-3382
VR.InfoNorthPlatte@nebraska.gov

Omaha-Downtown serves counties:

Cass, Douglas and Sarpy
1313 Farnam on the Mall, Omaha, NE 68102
(402) 595-2100, (402) 595-2107
(800) 554-3382
VR.InfoOmahaDowntown@nebraska.gov

Omaha-West serves counties:

Douglas
12011 Q Street, Omaha, NE 68137
(402) 595-1212, (877) 240-4445
VR.InfoOmahaWest@nebraska.gov

Scottsbluff serves counties:

Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden,
Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan and Sioux
505A Broadway, Ste 500, Scottsbluff, NE 69361
(308) 632-1321, (800) 292-3382
VR.InfoScottsbluff@nebraska.gov

South Sioux City serves counties:

Dakota and Thurston
510 W. 13th Street, Suite C
South Sioux City, NE 68776
(402) 494-2265, (877) 659-7899
VR.InfoSouthSiouxCity@nebraska.gov

State Office (located in Lincoln):

500 S. 84th St., 2nd Floor, PO Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509
(402) 471-3644, (877) 637-3422
VR.InfoStateOffice@nebraska.gov



State Rehabilitation Council

Department of Education
State of Nebraska
P.O. Box 94987
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4987