



collaborative partnerships achieving

MEASURABLE RESULTS



DIVISION of
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

State of North Dakota

2013 Annual Report

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CAPABLE

MESSAGE TO GOVERNOR DALRYMPLE & THE CITIZENS OF NORTH DAKOTA



Scott Burlingame
North Dakota State
Rehabilitation
Council Chair



Russ Cusack
North Dakota
Division of Vocational
Rehabilitation Director



On behalf of the members of the North Dakota State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), we are pleased to present the FFY 2013 Annual Report to the Governor.

The SRC is proud of its efforts to improve services and quality of life for individuals with disabilities in North Dakota. DVR exists to assist individuals with disabilities to be successfully employed and to assist businesses and employers with disability-related issues in the workplace. The results of these efforts are significant and are identified in this report.

Included in the report are success stories that reflect the diversity of our clients and their needs. These success stories illustrate how the partnership between DVR staff and our clients makes vocational rehabilitation a successful outcome-based program.

North Dakota remains number one in the nation for the employment rate of working age individuals with disabilities. Based on statistics from the latest American Community Survey, North Dakota's employment rate is 52%. In contrast, the national average is 33.2%. DVR works so "every North Dakotan with a disability has the opportunity to contribute to the quality of life and the economic prosperity of the state."

Towards this vision, DVR works with state and federal partners, employers, the State Rehabilitation Council, the Statewide Independent Living Council, and community-based providers to achieve excellent service. North Dakotans' strong commitment to individuals with disabilities, combined with the booming economy, enhances the quality of everyone's life.

Sincerely,

Scott Burlingame, ND SRC Chair
Russ Cusack, ND DVR Director

DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Purpose

We assist individuals with disabilities to be successfully employed.

Guiding Principles

- Serving our consumers is the primary focus of everything we do.
- Collaborative partnerships with employers are essential to our success.
- All people have value, regardless of age, race, creed, color, gender, or disability.
- Good communication is essential to delivering quality rehabilitation services.
- Quality outcomes are a result of the commitment of consumers and qualified staff working together towards mutually agreed upon goals.
- Change is inevitable and provides opportunities for innovation and creativity.
- Effective partnerships are critical in achieving results for consumers.
- Informed choice is central to sound decision-making and allows decisions to be based on all relevant information, options and consequences.
- When all things are equal, legal, and based on good rehabilitation counseling, decisions will be made in favor of the consumer.

VISION

North Dakota
Division of
Vocational
Rehabilitation
is the leader
in disability-
related
solutions.



CLIENT COMMENT

“All of my VR Counselors were very nice and helpful, and were always willing to go the extra mile to make sure I was able to fulfill my job goal.”

EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS & BUSINESSES

Scope of Services

Vocational Rehabilitation services include:

- **Professional Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling & Guidance** – evaluations of strengths and how your disability may affect your ability to work, a comprehensive assessment of your rehabilitation needs, planning and implementing strategies to overcome barriers and helping you adjust to and live with a disability.
- **Employment** – identification of an employment goal that is consistent with your strengths, resources, abilities, capabilities, priorities, concerns, interests and informed choice.
- **Accommodations** – adaptive aids, assistive technology, accessibility and work site evaluations to assist you in achieving your employment goal.
- **Training** – tailored to meet your individual rehabilitation needs and attain your employment goal. This may include on-the-job training, internships, job mentoring, job coaching and/or academic training.
- **Job Placement** – develop resume writing skills and interview strategies, job referral, placement, follow-up services.

Through a “dual client” approach, the division also assists business owners and employers through a variety of business and disability-related services, including:

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Financial Incentives
- Accessibility Analysis
- Education and Awareness Training

These services are available to a legally operated and registered North Dakota business, non-profit organization, or government agency. There are no costs associated with services except for those accommodations or modifications chosen as a result of DVR recommendations.



NORTH DAKOTA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the North Dakota State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is to advise the North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) on issues concerning policy and program, delivery of services, and methods for reaching potential consumers.

The Council

- Informs and advises DVR on the effects its programs may be having on North Dakota communities and consumers
- Facilitates public input into the Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan
- Advocates for consumer rights and services
- Communicates to public and community leaders the purpose and need for vocational rehabilitation

The council members are selected to serve on the SRC by the Governor of North Dakota. They are selected to serve based on their interest, knowledge, and understanding of the needs of individuals with disabilities. Members are advocates for equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in their communities and throughout North Dakota.

The Council must have at least 15 members representing:

- 4 Business, industry and labor
- 1 Statewide Independent Living Council
- 1 Parent Training & Information Center
- 1 Client Assistance Program
- 2 Disability advocacy group advocates
- 1 State Workforce Investment Board
- 1 Current or former VR applicant or recipient
- 1 American Indian VR program
- 1 Department of Public Instruction
- 1 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- 1 Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Director

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Counselors are encouraged to continue to focus on transition with younger students, providing guidance and counseling, and going out to the schools to develop relationships with teachers to encourage good referrals.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

VR should continue to focus on integrated, competitive employment and should not support sub-minimum wage or sheltered workshops.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Continue to develop relationships with community partners and schools to ensure clients are receiving the services they need.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Counselors should refer all clients who receive SSI/SSDI to benefits planners.

NORTH DAKOTA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

COMMITTEES & MEMBERSHIP



(Left to Right) Back Row: Scott Burlingame, Rodney Gillund; Middle Row: Jillian Schaible, Don Brunette, Russ Cusack; Front Row: Deb Carlson, Vickay Gross

Committees

- Planning/Evaluation Committee
- Resource Committee
- Membership/Public Relations Committee

CLIENT COMMENT

“VR helped me stay motivated in working toward my goals.”



COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Scott Burlingame, Chair

Independence, Inc. CIL
Minot, ND 58701

Don Brunette, Vice Chair

Friendship, Inc.
Fargo, ND 58103

Pat Anderson

Job Service North Dakota
Bismarck, ND 58502-5507

Deb Carlson

Division Vocational
Rehabilitation
Jamestown, ND 58402

Russ Cusack, Director

Division of Vocational
Rehabilitation
Bismarck, ND 58501

Harley Engelman

KAT Communications
Bismarck, ND 58501

Donene Feist

Family Voices
Edgeley, ND 58433

Rodney Gillund

Statewide Independent
Living Council
Crosby, ND 58730

Vickay Gross

Client Assistance Program
Bismarck, ND 58501

Marshall Longie, Director

Spirit Lake Vocational
Rehabilitation
Fort Totten, ND 58335

Jillian A Schaible

Bismarck, ND 58503

Kelly D Smeltzer

Cando, ND 58324

COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

On April 2, 2013, Governor Dalrymple signed Senate Bill 2271, which amended and reenacted section 50-06.1-16 of the North Dakota Century Code, related to the Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. The amendments expanded the membership of the Committee and advances competitive and integrated employment as the first employment option for people with disabilities.

The goal of the committee is to remove barriers in reaching and identifying how to further the goal of public and private employers considering competitive and integrated employment as the first option when supporting individuals with disabilities who are of working age to obtain employment.



SUCCESS story

In 2011, John applied for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services to maintain his independent employment. He was involved in a vehicle accident in the early 1990s, resulting in his losing partial use of his right hand and arm. Prior to his injury, John was the owner/operator of a restaurant. His injuries prevented him from continuing with his business. John uses an electric wheelchair for mobility that is controlled by his right hand.

Vocational Rehabilitation was able to assist John with the complete modification of a van he purchased, including the installation of lift and hand controls. VR also assisted John in the purchase and modification of work clothes, batteries for his wheelchair, support for him continuing with his physical therapy treatment, counseling and guidance, and consultation for modifications necessary for a new employment opportunity.

His desire to maintain his independence has contributed to his success in his employment. He continues to enjoy his career and has proven to be an invaluable and loyal employee.

ROYCE SCHULTZE

The Dakota Center for Independent Living (DCIL) sums up their services to clients in one phrase: your life is your choice.

“We work to give persons with disabilities the same rights, choices and equality as anyone else,” says Royce Schultze, executive director of DCIL, who dedicates his time and energy to ensuring others can live independently.

DCIL is a non-profit organization providing services to people with disabilities including information and referral, peer support, advocacy, and independent living skills training.

“Anyone can come to us for help as long as they have two things: a disability and a goal.” Goals can be as simple as learning how to use public transportation or as extensive as transitioning out of a care center to live at home.

As they share a client base, DCIL gives referrals and receives referrals from Vocational Rehabilitation. It’s all part of the independent living philosophy that Schultze adheres to, working to give everyone the chance to be as independent as they want to be.

“We work to give persons with disabilities the same rights, choices and equality as anyone else.”

Royce Schultze,
Executive Director of DCIL

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DVR ORDER OF SELECTION

FFY 2012 – the Past

Last year it was reported that DVR implemented an Order of Selection (OOS) on March 16, 2012, due to a combination of level federal funding and escalating program costs, particularly in education and training expenses. This affected the division's ability to provide services to all eligible individuals. At the time DVR entered OOS, a thorough review of all policies was underway which resulted in revisions to various key policies.

The OOS process designated the order in which eligible individuals would receive services. A wait list was implemented to manage the available financial resources.

FFY 2013 – the Present

Beginning December 17, 2012, DVR released the first names off the wait list and began serving individuals with the most significant disabilities.

The division continues to review expenditures, funding and projected costs monthly to determine the rate at which individuals would be brought off the wait list.

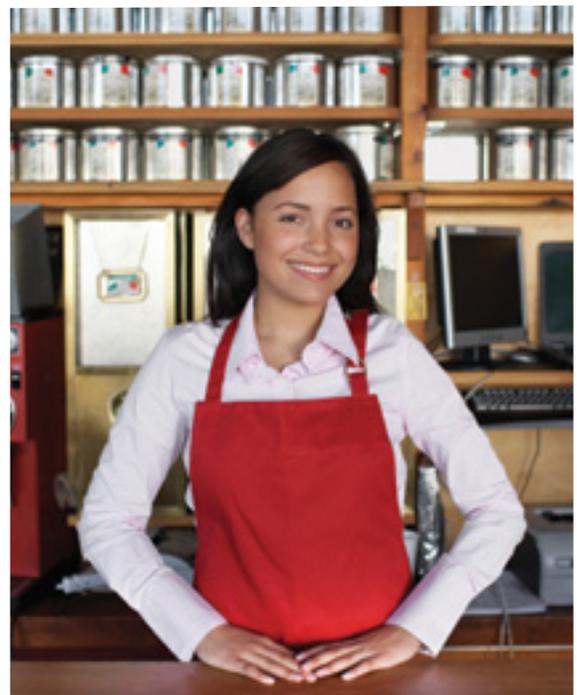
FFY 2014 – the Future

Effective October 1, 2013, individuals with the most significant disabilities are no longer placed on a wait list.

DVR's goal is to eliminate the wait list by March 2014.

CLIENT COMMENT

"I highly recommend these services whenever possible – I greatly appreciate the assistance I was given to further my education. Thank you."



RUTH LACHER

Vocational Rehabilitation and Job Service North Dakota have a longstanding partnership working together to help individuals with disabilities access the resources they need to successfully join the state's workforce.

"We want to make sure individuals with disabilities seeking employment get the resources they need," says Ruth Lacher, workforce programs manager at Job Service North Dakota (JSND). "It benefits both the business and the individual."

If an individual seeking employment has a disability that would affect employment, JSND refers them to Vocational Rehabilitation. In addition to allowing Vocational Rehabilitation

to utilize a vacant JSND office space in New Town, ND, the two agencies also work together on the Skill Build project, a training program helping veterans and Native Americans build the skills needed to work in the oil and construction industries.

"Employers were saying they were not finding skilled individuals primarily in the oil and building sectors," explains Lacher. "Targeting Native Americans and veterans, we pay for their training (through a federal demonstration grant) in certain occupations in oil and building trades." JSND then assists Skill Build program participants in job placement. Working together, the agencies exceeded the goal of enrolling 280 individuals in the program.

"We want to make sure individuals with disabilities seeking employment get the resources they need."

Ruth Lacher,
Workforce Programs Manager at
Job Service North Dakota

H I R A B L E



2013 NORTH DAKOTA STATE DVR

EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The awards honor North Dakota business owners and employers for their continued work with the North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and for their work within their communities to support, develop, and inspire individuals with disabilities to achieve their full potential. The division and the ND State Rehabilitation Council selected Opportunity Foundation, Inc. and Central Market from eight regional employer award recipients.

The other regional employer award-winners include Dan's Supermarket, Dickinson; Leever's Foods, Devils Lake; Red River Commodities, Inc., Fargo; Rydell Chevrolet Buick GMC Cadillac, Grand Forks; Service Master, Valley City; and Gooseneck Implement, Minot.

"It is a pleasure to honor these companies. Their progressive attitudes and business practices have allowed individuals with disabilities who are living and working in their communities to put their abilities to work," said Russ Cusack, director of the North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.



Opportunity Foundation, Inc. Shares 2013 ND State DVR Employer of the Year

(L-R) Andrea Meyer, regional administrator, ND Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR); Sonya Owen, executive director, Opportunity Foundation, Inc.; Sheryl Beard, Opportunity Foundation, Inc.; Russ Cusack, DVR director; and Maggie Anderson, department's executive director displaying the awards Opportunity Foundation, Inc. received for supporting people with disabilities in the workplace.



Central Market Shares 2013 ND State DVR Employer of the Year

(L-R) Tom Schiwal, regional administrator, ND Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR); Greg Severson, Central Market, Bismarck; Terry Elsberry, Central Market, Mandan; Russ Cusack, DVR director; and Maggie Anderson, department's executive director displaying the awards Central Market received for employing people with disabilities.





2013 Vocational Rehabilitation Annual Conference

Seven-time Paralympic Medalist and motivational speaker, Muffy Davis, delivered the closing keynote presentation on overcoming challenges and achieving personal success no matter the circumstances.

CLIENT COMMENT

“I was very satisfied with the experience I had at VR and want to thank you for all your help.”



SUCCESS story

Charles held a job, worked hard, and provided a safe and loving home for himself and his family. This was until he became addicted to methamphetamines for two years. His drug abuse ravaged his life, cost him his job, and eventually caused permanent brain damage. Charles could no longer work in his trained field and struggled with his memory in completing everyday tasks.

With VR's assistance, Charles received counseling, guidance and vocational training. Charles and his VR counselor identified the need to modify his training program to specifically provide him more time to complete required tests. He was successful in achieving his goal to receive his commercial drivers license. Charles is currently employed driving truck to transport oil in western North Dakota. With money saved from his work, Charles has now started his own trucking business. He credits the counseling and guidance service received from his vocational rehabilitation counselor with his success. He is looking forward to helping other people with disabilities gain a start in the trucking industry.



2013 DIRECTOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

ERIK ANTHONY

“Erik is truly a deserving individual who has devoted his career to serving individuals with disabilities to enable them to reach their highest potential.”

“Through Erik’s work with community groups, professional organizations and especially with clients, he displays an open, caring, and empathetic attitude which fosters trust and respect.”

The quotes above are from the 2013 Director’s Award for Excellence Nomination Letter.



(Left to Right) Erik Anthony, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Russ Cusack, DVR Director.



PAUL OLSON

As both organizations offer services for the visually impaired, ND Vision Services/School for the Blind superintendent Paul Olson sees a natural affiliation between his organization and the North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

“We’re very pleased to be included in Vocational Rehabilitation’s strategic planning,” explains Olson. *“This resulted in a framework to do training together and work towards common goals.”*

Their common goals include ensuring visually impaired individuals get the assistance and adaptive equipment

that may be needed to allow them to enter the workforce.

“If someone needs rehabilitation because of recent loss of vision and wants to get back into workforce, then they absolutely need to have a relationship with Vocational Rehabilitation,” states Olson, who ensures any new adult clients at ND Vision Services/School for the Blind are also aware of Vocational Rehabilitation services. *“We always give them literature and talk to them about their local Vocational Rehabilitation teacher. To have two sources of assistance, that’s a benefit to the person.”*

“If someone needs rehabilitation because of recent loss of vision and wants to get back into workforce, then they absolutely need to have a relationship with Vocational Rehabilitation.”

Paul Olson,
ND Vision Services/School for
the Blind Superintendent

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RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF COUNSELING & GUIDANCE SERVICES

The foundation of all vocational rehabilitation services is the professional counseling and guidance provided by ND DVR counselors. As Master's level practitioners, they seek to continually expand and enhance their counseling skills.

The 2013 annual training conference focused on skills specific to motivational interviewing.

This built on the cognitive motivational techniques (CMT) and strategies initiated by the division during the previous year. The cognitive motivational approach captures key elements of motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioral therapy and stages of change, with a focus on work and the inherent changes that go along with work.

DEB'S story

CLIENT COMMENT

“I am very thankful for everything VR has done for me in the past 5 years. I do not believe I would be where I am if not for VR. A special thanks to my VR Counselor!”



Whether working for the first time, choosing a new field because of a disability, or re-entering the workforce after an extended absence, one common denominator is change can be difficult. Using their training in motivational interviewing and stages of change, counselors are better able to counsel and support through those many changes that work and disability present.

Deb desired to seek a different career but was fearful and apprehensive in making such a change. She had worked part time in the same type of job for most of her life, but always felt that she could do more. She attended college and earned a degree that qualified her for a full time career.

DVR provided counseling and guidance to assist Deb in working through her apprehension. At first, whenever Deb talked about her future career, she expressed feeling two ways about making the change: “I want to, but I’m too afraid to try something new.” Deb’s VR counselor assisted her to explore her strengths and identify her own reasons why taking the risk to make the change might be worth it. She developed a plan to overcome each obstacle that had been getting in her way. As a result of counseling efforts, Deb began to sound optimistic, confident, and ready to take steps to reach her career goal.

Deb’s confidence empowered her to work with her VR counselor to plan a successful job search strategy. She identified specific guidelines for a career opportunity that matched her skills and interests. Deb put in many hours of practicing her interview skills. With her renewed confidence, she was hired!

Deb was still a little nervous to begin this new adventure, but she said, “If I’m ever going to do this, now is the time!” Most importantly, she discovered her strengths and learned how to overcome her fears in order to reach her goal.



DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

PROGRAM REPORTS

Independent Living

The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is a Governor appointed body charged with advancing the principles and philosophy of independent living for all North Dakota citizens with disabilities.

DVR and the SILC are responsible to jointly complete a triennial assessment of the need for service to increase the independence and inclusion of individuals with disabilities into their community of choice. From this assessment, DVR and the SILC write and approve a State Plan for Independent Living. The State Plan includes a resource allocation strategy to distribute federal and state funding within the State.

Four non-profit organizations operate Centers for Independent Living in Minot, Bismarck, Fargo and Grand Forks. Each Center also has staff located in outreach offices to serve individuals with disabilities living in rural communities. Centers are nonresidential and provide services to include:

- Information and Referral
- Individual Advocacy
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Peer Mentoring
- Systems Advocacy



SUCCESS story

Bob farmed his entire life, a career that started when he was in grade school helping on the family farm. However, in his 20s, Bob's career came to a standstill when a stroke left him partially paralyzed and unable to drive, access his machinery or live independently. He watched his operation go on with the help of his family and neighbors. He spent his days wondering if he would ever be able to return to the field.

VR stepped in and partnered with others to get Bob back in the driver's seat. With the assistance of rehab professionals, a creative fabricator and Farm Rescue, Bob was able to access his machinery with fabricated lifts, electronic roll tarps, and encouragement from all who knew his passion. He's back in the driver's seat turning up soil, sowing seed and enjoying the close of another harvest season, all made possible by a very determined young man and a group of partners and professionals who came together for a common cause.

FFY 2013 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

Percentage of
Independent Living
goals achieved: 92%

Number of people
served: 17,986



DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

PROGRAM REPORTS

Randolph-Sheppard Program

The Randolph-Sheppard program ensures individuals who are blind a priority in the operation of vending facilities, which includes cafeterias, snack bars, and automatic vending machines, on federal property.

DVR is the state licensing agency (SLA) and has the responsibility to recruit, train, license, and place individuals who are blind as operators of vending facilities. DVR licenses two operators in North Dakota and they operate snack bars out of federal buildings in Bismarck and Fargo. The operators benefit from revenue generated via highway vending contracts.

CLIENT COMMENT

“My VR Counselor is amazing! She was very helpful, supportive and encouraging. This program has been a source of strength for me; focusing on my abilities and strengths, not my disabilities. Thank You.”



JUDY LAKODUK

Judy's Place is a cozy café in the lower level of the Federal Building in downtown Bismarck. Owned and operated by Judy Lakoduk, walk in on any given weekday morning, and Judy will be there, serving up coffee, making breakfast sandwiches, and preparing her daily lunch special, all while chatting with her regular customers.

"I worked as head cook at the State Capitol for 16 years," explains Judy, "but I like this because I have control over the food. I like the responsibilities of planning ahead."

Judy does her work so efficiently that it's not apparent to most bystanders that she has vision impairment. That may be due in part to the services she has

received from the North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, which has been a valuable resource to Judy as she became an entrepreneur with vision impairment. She feels reassured knowing that help is just a phone call away.

"I would recommend (DVR) to anybody with a disability," says Judy. "With vision impairment, we have to depend on other people. I can't drive, for example. But doing something like running a business, it gives a person self confidence."

Although she loves her job, Judy would like to retire in a few years. "I hope to travel," she says. Judy claims she is not picky on her travel destination – she wants to see it all.

"I would recommend (DVR) to anybody with a disability."

Judy Lakoduk,
Owner and Operator of Judy's Place

VALUABLE





DVR VISION SERVICES/OLDER BLIND

PROGRAM REPORTS

Vision Services

The purpose of DVR Vision Services/Older Blind is to provide training, accommodation and support in daily living activities to individuals with visual impairments so they can maintain independence in their home environment.

DVR vision rehabilitation specialists provide services throughout the state. Services may include:

- Orientation and mobility training
- Communications skills training
- Activities of daily living training
- Low vision screening
- Assistive technology services
- Counseling
- Community integration
- Transportation
- Readers and guides
- Management of secondary disabilities
- Support groups
- Referral

SUCCESS story

Jane, a new client to the Older Blind Independent Living program, has a diagnosis of macular degeneration and additional disabilities that include hearing loss and tremors. She lives independently in her own home and leaves home only a few times a year. The Vision Rehabilitation Specialist provided Jane a device for hands-free magnification to complete her reading tasks. Having hands-free magnification was important due to Jane's tremors.

Communication is also a high priority for Jane. She likes to call family and friends and send cards during the holidays. These activities help Jane to continue to feel connected to her family and friends. The Vision Rehabilitation Specialist ensured Jane's personal phone and address books were transcribed into large print. Through the services offered by the Vision Rehabilitation Specialist, she received a low vision lamp, transcribed books for communicating, and the encouragement to self-advocate for further needs.



FFY 2013 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE OLDER BLIND PROGRAM

976 individuals
aged 55 and older
received one or
more services

8 individuals over
the age of 100
received one or
more services



NORTH DAKOTA COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE/YOUTH TRANSITION

The North Dakota Community of Practice (COP) provides an opportunity for Vocational Rehabilitation to collaborate and share resources to develop successful post-secondary outcomes for youth.

The mission of the ND Community of Practice is to build, support, and sustain community partnerships. The COP promotes and improves the scope, opportunity, and quality of services for youth with disabilities to adequately prepare for life and career, beyond high school.

North Dakota's Community of Practice focuses on working across groups and localities to share information, address issues, learn together, identify shared goals, define shared work, and improve transition practice. The North Dakota structure is

modeled on the national community of practice, of which North Dakota is a member.

Information from the ND Community of Practice is widely shared with students, parents, and professionals in the field of education and employment in each region and county of the North Dakota.

DVR Summer Work Experience

In 2014, community rehab providers, high schools, Job Service, DVR, and others will collaborate to offer work experiences to students who are within two years of high school graduation.

The summer work experience is competitive and integrated employment and is not intended as a permanent job placement.



CLIENT COMMENT

“Thank you for all of your help! It is a wonderful program and I recommend it to those in need.”



The most important aspect of work experience is not necessarily the nature of the work but rather the opportunity to learn work norms and develop good work habits.

All students enrolled in the summer employment program must be:

- Eligible for VR service and off the wait list prior to participation in work experience that is financially supported by VR. Financial support includes counselor time and funding for a job coach to monitor the work experience.
- Enrolled in their last two years of high school (juniors and seniors).

SUCCESS story

Laura applied for DVR services in the fall of 2010. She had been struggling to maintain entry level jobs due to limitations related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and a learning disability. Laura’s early formative years were spent living in foster care and therapeutic group homes. She graduated from high school, but had not developed skills to support herself and her children independently by age 27.

DVR worked with Laura to further her understanding of her disabilities and the impact of these disabilities to her concentration, mood, and interpersonal skills. Laura was impacted emotionally and had some short and long-term memory loss. She began individual therapy and was prescribed medication for her PTSD.

Laura and her VR counselor identified a short-term training program that fit her interest and offered a promising career. DVR provided transportation and clothing to support Laura’s effort to apply and interview for jobs. With counseling and guidance from her VR counselor and her new found confidence, she successfully competed for a mid-management position in the transportation industry. Laura’s employment as a shift supervisor provides her an excellent salary and full benefit package with the opportunity for advancement. Laura has been very satisfied with her career choice.



SUCCESS story

Ashley was struggling in high school due to missed days from sickness and medical treatments associated with her disability. Her doctor convinced her to apply for Social Security Disability Benefits as a means to support herself and her child as a single parent. However, she wanted to one day make enough money where she would no longer rely on Social Security Disability payments.



Ashley, with the assistance of her VR counselor, identified a course of study to develop marketable job skills. What would have taken three years for most students took her six years as she needed to attend school part-time. Her car engine quit working when she started going to school and her VR counselor coordinated with Job Service North Dakota to assist her with the cost of repairs to her car. Her car was vital as she needed to get to medical procedures at a facility 100 miles away.

Ashley started her job search soon after graduation from vocational training. Her VR counselor worked with her on a resume to present to employers. She was hired three months after graduating from school in a medical office setting. With her new job, she reached her goal to discontinue receiving Social Security Disability Benefits. She said that she is a prime example of how VR services really work to help people.

Social Security Reimbursement Program

The Social Security Administration (SSA) administers a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Reimbursement Program. Under this program, VR agencies are reimbursed by SSA for the cost of services provided to individuals who are current recipients of Social Security disability benefits. The services must have resulted in the individuals achieving work at or above a specified earnings level for a given period of time.

During FFY 2013, DVR received \$251,200 to further assist individuals with disabilities.

CLIENT COMMENT

“I was very satisfied with the experience I had at VR and want to thank you for all your help.”



**WORKING WITH PARTNERS —
AMERICAN INDIAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES**

DONNA THOMAS

Donna Thomas has 20 years experience as director of American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services at Turtle Mountain in Rolette County, North Dakota, but as she lost much of her vision, she also has experienced the state's vocational rehabilitation services from the perspective of a client.

"I went through the state's vocational rehabilitation program with my visual impairment," explains Thomas, who has benefited from the use of magnification and other visual adaptations at her job. "That's why I choose to do this, devoting my life to helping people with disabilities."

Thomas's program is one of four vocational rehabilitation service centers in Native American areas of North Dakota,

and one of 85 in the United States. Thomas and the North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation work closely together in a program called Common Ground, which brings the American Indian and state vocational rehabilitation programs together to improve opportunity for disabled individuals.

The vocational rehabilitation program at Turtle Mountain works much the same as the state's program, with one important difference: the availability of traditional Native healing services. "(Our clients) benefit from the best of both worlds," says Thomas. "With expertise from state of North Dakota, and our understanding of local and cultural needs in Indian nations, we find people do better in rehabilitation programs when close to home."

"With expertise from state of North Dakota, and our understanding of local and cultural needs in Indian nations, we find people do better in rehabilitation programs when close to home."

Donna Thomas,
Director of American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services at Turtle Mountain

REPUTABLE



DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
FFY 2013 AT A GLANCE

Program Expenditures

\$9.3 Million

VR Employment Services for Individuals with a Disability

People completing training and becoming employed	431
Average weekly earnings before rehabilitation	\$68.71
Average weekly earnings after rehabilitation.....	\$497.53
People receiving counseling and guidance and.....	4,516
additional rehabilitation services	
Percent of individuals with a significant disability.....	93%

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

ROI identifies the cost benefit based on the clients' income - for every dollar spent by DVR, clients earn \$9.98.

ROI also identifies the cost benefit based on client payback - for every dollar spent by DVR, the clients pay back \$2 in taxes.



DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

FFY 2013 AT A GLANCE

Employment Placements

Professional/Business Management	30%
Office & Administrative Support	13%
Healthcare Support, Personal Care	13%
Service	11%
Installation, Maintenance, Repair	9%
Transportation & Material Moving	7%
Production	6%
Sales	5%
Construction	3%
Agriculture	1%
Homemaker	1%

Types of Disability of Individuals Employed

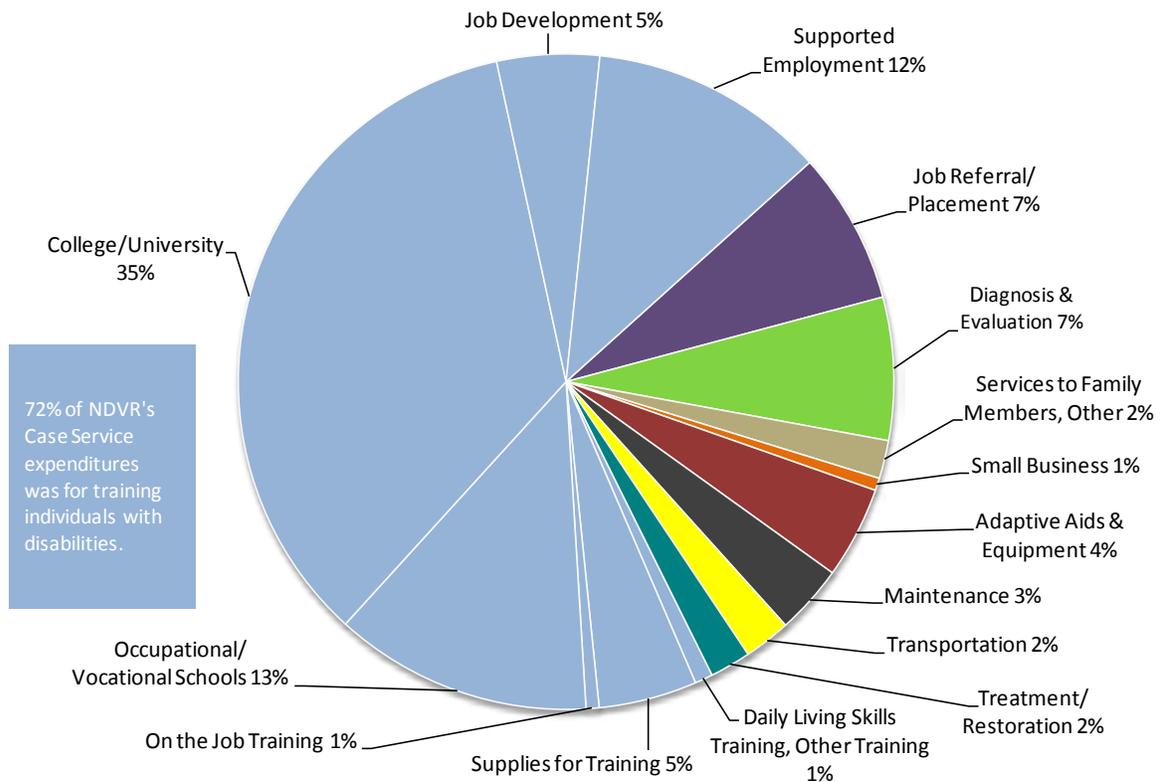
Mental Illness	35%
Learning Disabilities	20%
Orthopedic	14%
Cognitive Impairment	7%
Other (Nervous System, Respiratory,	6%
Cardiac, Amputation)	
Hearing Impairments	5%
Substance Abuse	5%
Autism	3%
Visual Impairments	2%
Traumatic Brain Injury	2%

Types of Service Expenditures

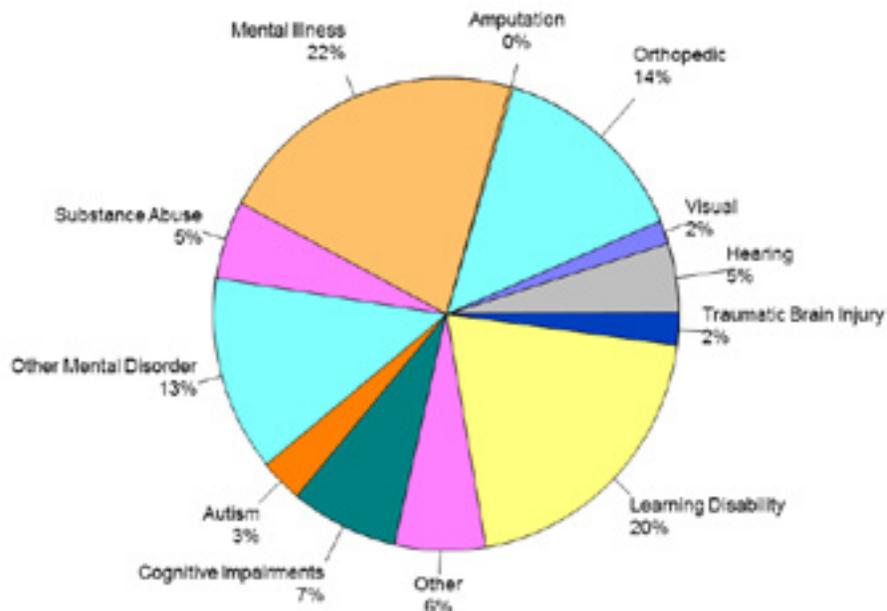
Training & Supplies	72%
Diagnosis & Evaluation	7%
Job Referral/Placement	7%
Adaptive Aids & Equipment	4%
Maintenance	3%
Treatment & Restoration	2%
Transportation	2%
Other	2%
Small Business	1%

NORTH DAKOTA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FFY 2013 FACTS & DATA

Case Service Expenditures ND Vocational Rehabilitation FFY 2013



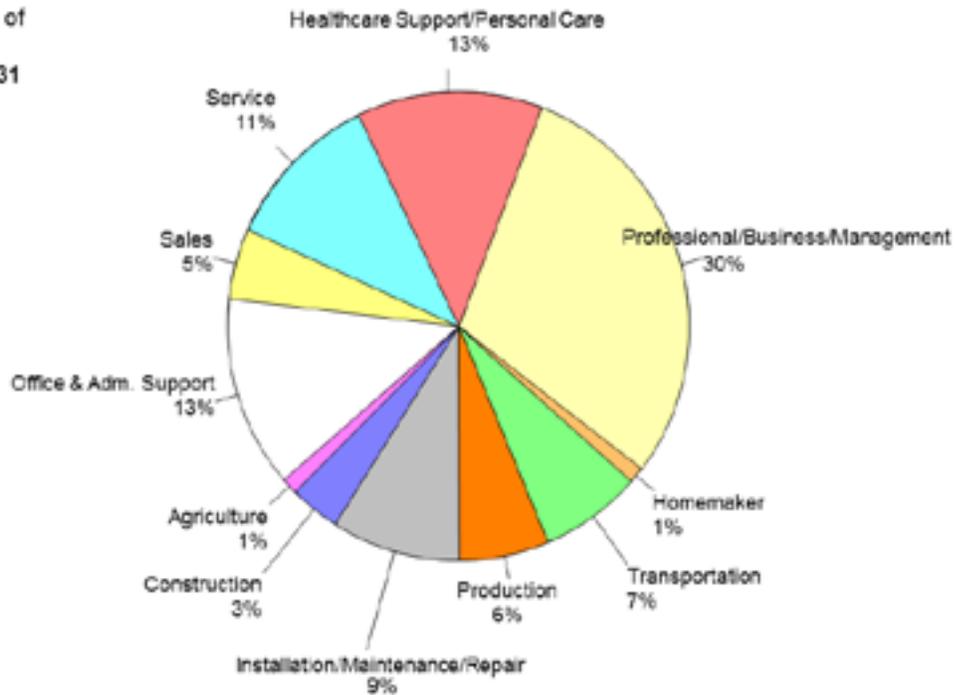
Primary Disabilities of Individuals Achieving Employment ND Vocational Rehabilitation FFY 2013



NORTH DAKOTA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FFY 2013 FACTS & DATA

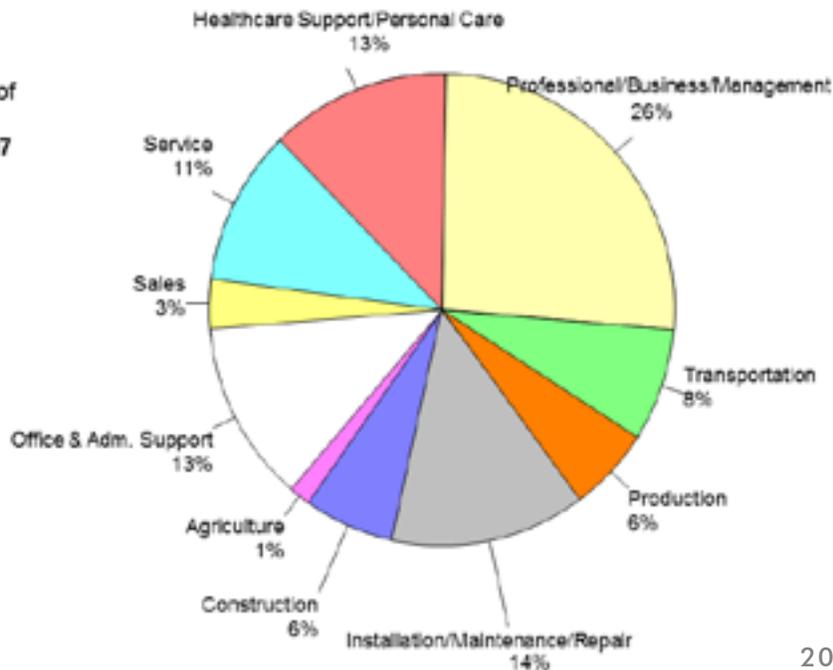
Occupational Categories of Individuals Achieving Employment ND Vocational Rehabilitation FFY 2013

Total Number of
Individuals
Employed: 431



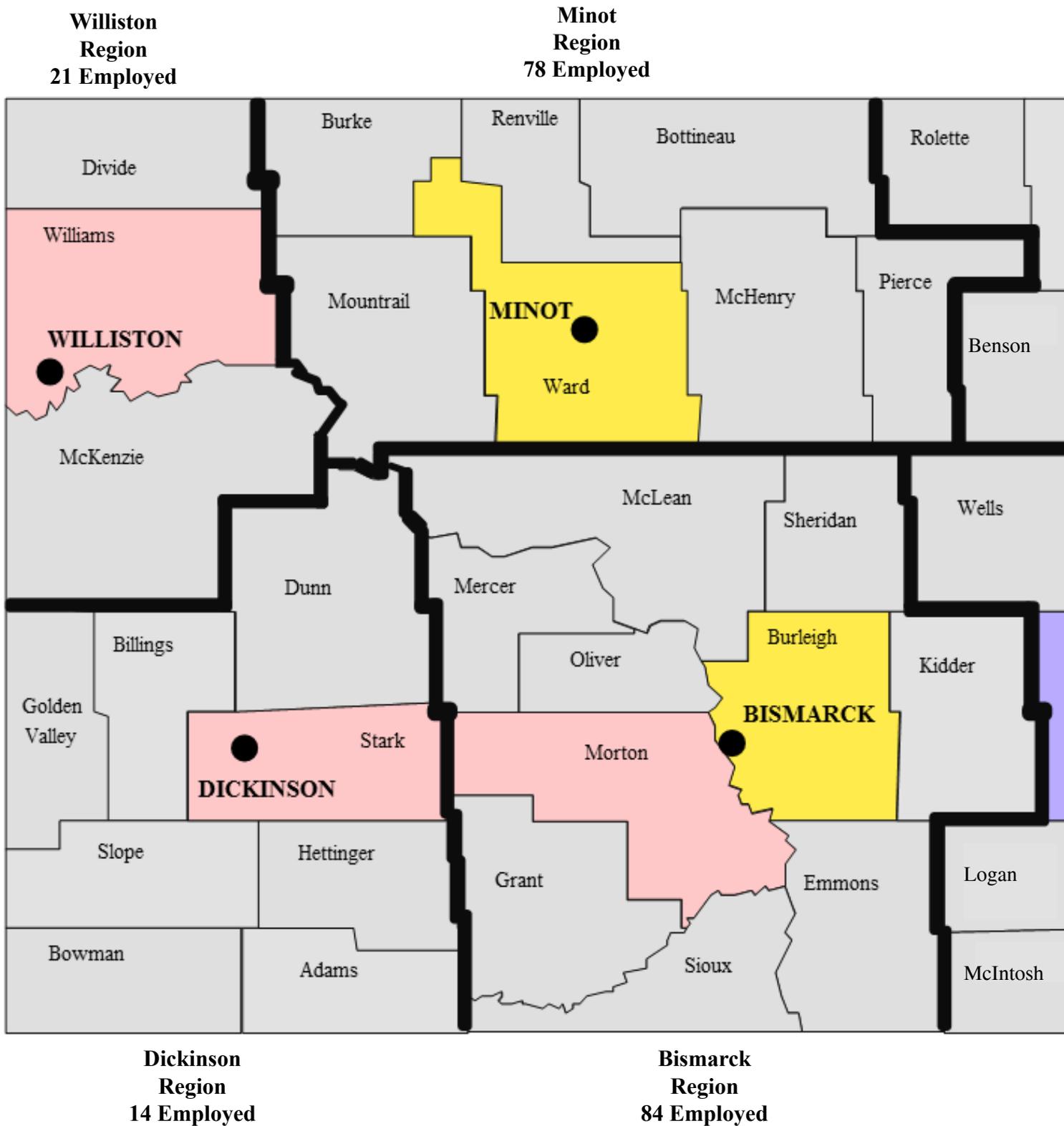
Occupational Categories of Individuals Achieving Employment ND Vocational Rehabilitation FFY 2013 (Age 21 and Under at Application)

Total Number of
Individuals
Employed: 207



NORTH DAKOTA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

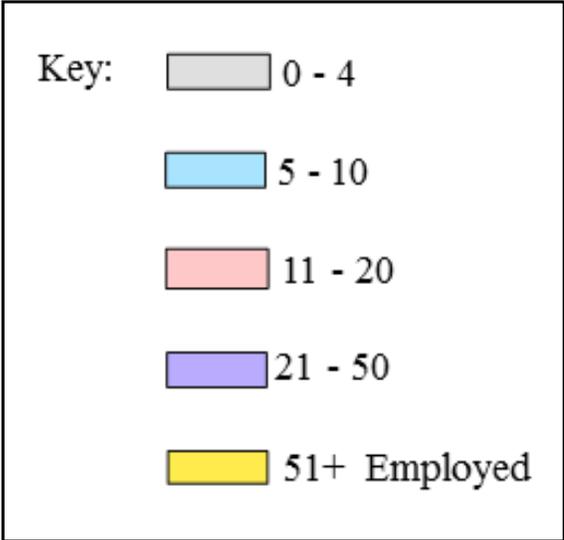
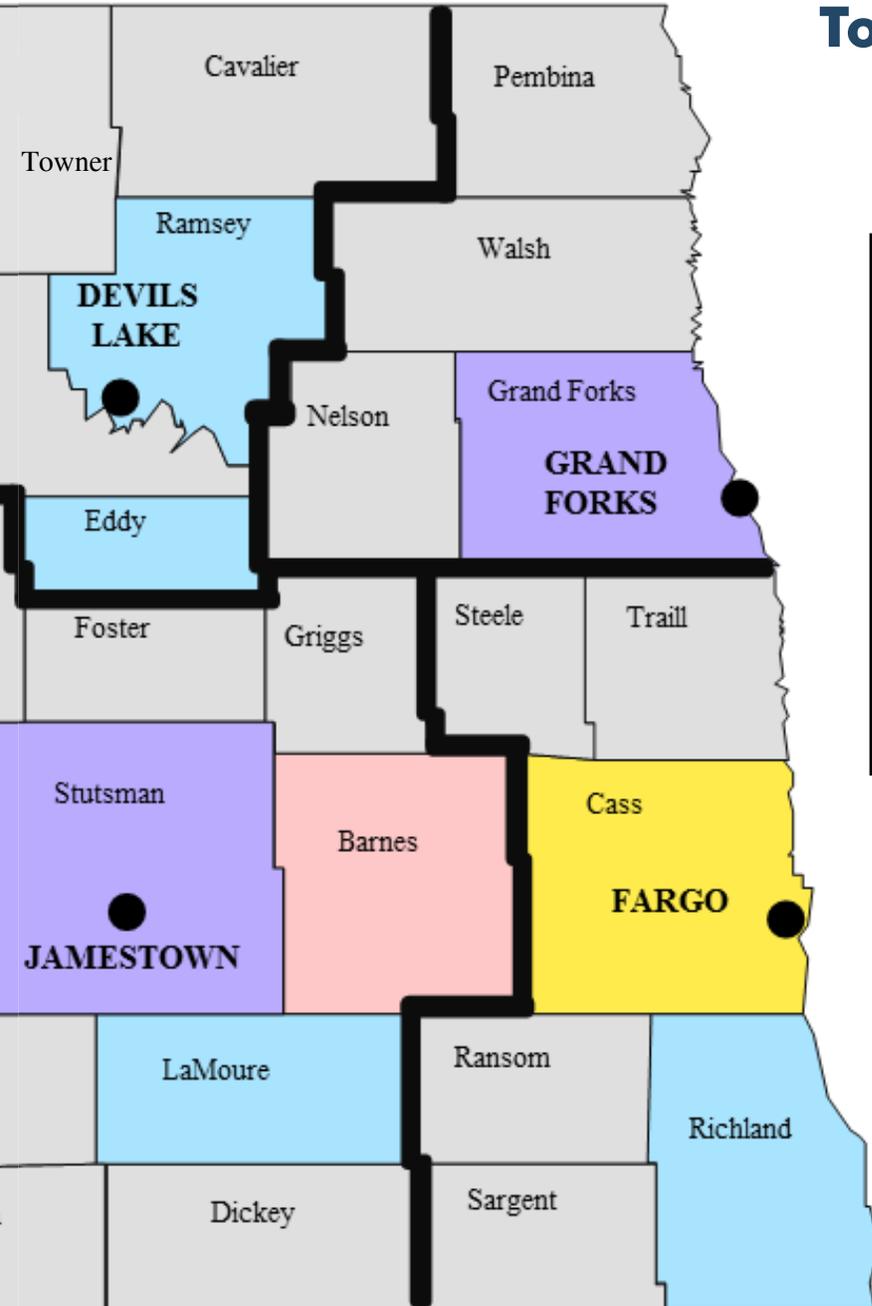
REGIONAL OFFICES & COUNTIES



**Devils Lake
Region
25 Employed**

**Grand Forks
Region
50 Employed**

**Total Clients Employed:
431 FFY 2013**



**Jamestown
Region
80 Employed**

**Fargo
Region
79 Employed**

To learn more about the North Dakota State Rehabilitation Council and the North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, visit www.nd.gov/dhs/dvr

DVR is a partner in



Maggie Anderson, Executive Director
North Dakota Department of Human Services

Russell Cusack, Director
North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

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