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MESSAGE FROM
THE SRC CHAIR

Honorable Doug Burgum
Governor of North Dakota
600 E Boulevard Ave
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Governor Burgum:
The ND State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is pleased to present the 2021 Annual State Report for the Vocational Rehabilitation Division. The report highlights the activities of the SRC and the ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in the delivery of quality vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities throughout North Dakota. The report fulfills the requirements of 34 CFR Part 361.17(h)(5).

We look forward to working with the North Dakota Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in the coming year to advocate for and assist North Dakotans with disabilities to obtain competitive integrated employment.

Respectfully,

Renee Speidel-Wetzsteon
Renee Speidel-Wetzsteon
Chair, ND SRC
OUR PURPOSE

WE ASSIST INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO IMPROVE THEIR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND WE ASSIST BUSINESSES IN SOLVING DISABILITY-RELATED ISSUES.

OUR VISION

NORTH DAKOTA DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION IS THE LEADER IN DISABILITY-RELATED SOLUTIONS.
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.

CHANGE IS INEVITABLE AND PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY.

SERVING OUR CONSUMERS IS THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF EVERYTHING WE DO.

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.

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.
**Professional Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling & Guidance**
Evaluations of strengths and how an individual’s disability may affect their ability to work, a comprehensive assessment of their rehabilitation needs, planning and implementing strategies to overcome barriers and helping the individual adjust to and live with a disability.

**Employment**
Identification of an employment goal that is consistent with the individual strengths, resources, abilities, capabilities, priorities, concerns, interests and informed choice.

**Accommodations**
Adaptive aids, assistive technology, accessibility and work site evaluations to assist in achieving individual employment goals.

**Training**
Tailored to meet individual rehabilitation needs and attain individual employment goals. 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, and, follow-up services.
SCOPE OF SERVICES

THROUGH A “DUAL CLIENT” APPROACH, THE DIVISION ALSO ASSISTS BUSINESS OWNERS AND EMPLOYERS THROUGH A VARIETY OF BUSINESS AND DISABILITY-RELATED SERVICES, INCLUDING:

- Staff Retention
- Accessibility and ADA Consultation
- Recruitment Source
- Financial Incentives
- Disability Consultation
- On-the-Job Training/Job Coach Services
- On-Site Consultation and Recommendations

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.
PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

Services provided to students with disabilities ages 14-21 includes self-advocacy training, workplace readiness training, work experience, counseling in post-secondary opportunities, and job exploration.

Accomplishments include:

Established contracts with 18 school districts for a total of 71 schools throughout the state to provide pre-employment transition services to transition age youth with disabilities.

Served 1,885 students with disabilities through contracts and VR counselor services.
The purpose of the North Dakota State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is to advise the 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 must have at least 17 members representing:

- 4 Business, Industry & Labor Sectors
- 1 Statewide Independent Living Council
- 1 Parent Training & Information Center
- 1 Client Assistance Program
- 1 Disability Advocacy Group Advocate
- 1 Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider
- 1 State Workforce Investment Board
- 1 Current or Former VR Applicant or Recipient
- 1 American Indian VR Program
- 1 Department of Public Instruction
- 1 Developmental Disabilities Division Director
- 1 ND Association of Community Providers (NDACP) Executive Director
- 1 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- 1 Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Director
SRC Committees

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

SRC Recommendations

- Reviewed and approved DVR Policies. One policy was sent back with recommendations to amend.
- Selected the 2021 Statewide DVR Employer of the Year
- Reviewed the DVR Client Satisfaction Surveys
- Analyzed the Employee Gallop Poll to survey results
- Developing recommendations for a process to manage revenue received from parking fees per North Dakota Century Code 39-01-15.11
You Make A Difference Award

In order for DVR to achieve its vision and purpose, DVR wishes to recognize two businesses with whom we work.

Sanford Health
Roosevelt Park Zoo
Two North Dakota businesses receive statewide awards for supporting the employment of people with disabilities

BISMARCK, N.D. — The North Dakota Department of Human Services’ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has recognized two businesses for supporting an inclusive workforce by hiring, training and inspiring people with disabilities to excel in the workforce.

The agency and State Rehabilitation Council selected **Sanford Health of Bismarck** as the 2021 North Dakota State VR Employer of the Year award recipient. The **Roosevelt Park Zoo of Minot** was recognized with the You Make a Difference Award.

Sanford Health was selected from among eight nominees and was recognized for efforts to support and inspire individuals with disabilities to achieve employment goals and to reach their full potential in their community.

Bismarck VR office team members who nominated Sanford Health for this honor said the hospital’s willingness to make workplace accommodations allowed for multiple individuals with disabilities to become and remain employed in non entry-level positions.

“At Sanford Health, we pride ourselves on maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and safe work environment for all our employees,” said DJ Campbell, executive director of human resources for the Bismarck region of Sanford Health. “Our commitment to diversity and inclusion pushes our organization to continually build on the talents and experiences of our employees, as well as the patients and communities we serve.”

Other nominees receiving honorable mention include Bowman Lodge, **Bowman**; JCPenney, **Fargo**; Hugo’s Family Marketplace, **Grand Forks**; Triumph, Inc., **Jamestown**; Langdon Daycare, **Langdon**; Maysa Arena, **Minot** and the Daily Addiction Coffee House, **Williston**.

The statewide You Make a Difference Award honors one business annually for consistently recognizing individuals’ unique abilities, providing work experience opportunities for students with disabilities, and actively supporting, developing and inspiring students to achieve goals in a competitive and integrated employment setting.

The Roosevelt Park Zoo in Minot was recognized for providing students with disabilities with temporary work experiences in a variety of areas including concessions, gift shop, janitorial, and dietary support for animals. The zoo also provides students with natural supports and positive encouragement and allows on-site job coaching to help students build confidence and skills for successful employment.

-MORE-
Two North Dakota businesses receive statewide awards for supporting the employment of people with disabilities

"While we appreciate the recognition from the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the greater reward for the Roosevelt Park Zoo and staff has been getting to know these exceptional individuals and watching them develop into valued members of our team," said Zoo Director Jeffery Bullock.

These awards were presented to Sanford Health and Roosevelt Park Zoo during an awards ceremony at VR’s annual training conference in late October in West Fargo.

"It's a pleasure to honor these North Dakota businesses for their continued work with our program to help people of all abilities reach their full potential in the workforce," said Damian Schlinger, VR division director. "North Dakota is the leader in the employment of people with disabilities because of the tremendous support from our business community."

The department's VR team helps people with disabilities find and retain meaningful work or advance their careers. The division also works with employers to help connect them with qualified applicants, retain trained workers whose abilities may have changed and find solutions to disability-related issues.

Rehabilitation counseling and consultation is available at no cost to qualifying individuals and businesses, nonprofits and government agencies.

To receive VR services, North Dakotans must have a disability that is an obstacle to employment, and they must want to work and be available to work.

Information about VR services is available online at [www.nd.gov/dhs/cvr/index.html](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/cvr/index.html) or by contacting the division at 1000 E. Divide Ave., Bismarck, N.D., 58501, 701-328-8950, toll-free 800-755-2745, 711 (TTY) or dhsvr@nd.gov.

###

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DVR uses ROI to show how clients benefit economically from VR services as well as how their increased income positively impacts the economy.

**FOR EVERY $1 SPENT BY DVR, CLIENTS EARN $6.44**

**FOR EVERY $1 SPENT BY DVR, THE CLIENTS PAY BACK $1.29 IN TAXES**
PRIMARY IMPAIRMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVING EMPLOYMENT

- Psychosocial impairments: 24%
- Cognitive impairments: 31%
- Physical impairments: 13%
- Other mental impairments: 8%
- Hearing impairments: 19%
- Communicative impairments: 3%
59% of NDVR’s Case Service Expenditures was for training individuals with disabilities.

Training Services include:
- Postsecondary Tuition
- On the Job Training
- Work Experience
- Job Development
- Supported Employment
- Customized Employment
ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH VISION IMPAIRMENTS

NORTH DAKOTA HAS RESOURCES TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS WITH VISION IMPAIRMENTS. NORTH DAKOTA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) CAN ASSIST INDIVIDUALS SEEKING EMPLOYMENT OR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE WANTING TO MAINTAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

We provide high quality services to assist eligible individuals who are blind or visually impaired to obtain or maintain competitive employment. A team of specially trained vision rehabilitation specialists will work to accomplish employment needs in the home, community, workplace, or school.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES INCLUDE (BUT NOT LIMITED TO):

- Vocational Guidance & Counseling
- Vocational Exploration
- On-the-job Training
- Job Placement
- Resume Writing
- Interviewing Skills
- Assistive Technology
- Information and Referral

OLDER INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BLIND (OIB)

The OIB program is designed to assist individuals (over the age of 55 who have a vision deficit, are not employed, and not in a nursing facility) improve their independence in their homes and communities by enhancing their quality of life.

OIB SERVICES INCLUDE (BUT NOT LIMITED TO):

- Advocacy Training & Support
- Assistive Technology Devices
  - Magnifiers
  - Lighting
  - Glare control
- Assistive Technology Training
- Communication Skills
- Independent Living Skills
- Information and Referral
In FFY 2021, 555 North Dakotans benefited from our program to remain independent in their homes. 73% of the cases seen last year had a diagnosis of Age Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD). A team of specially trained vision rehabilitation specialists work with both our VR employment program and our Older Individuals Who are Blind program to increase independence in the home and community. 189 cases were opened in FFY 2021. 82% of consumers are over the age of 75. 97% of consumers received assistive technology devices (e.g. magnifier, lighting, talking watch, etc.) through our grant that allowed them more independence. 73% of the cases seen last year had a diagnosis of Age Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD).
Amid the ups and downs, his certified rehabilitation counselor did not give up. She believed in him and knew he had the potential to find meaningful employment.

As a team, they spent time driving around the community, learning about businesses and picking up applications for jobs that interested him. Together, they filled out the applications, role-played how to interact with potential employers and discussed how to submit an application and request a callback.

This skill-building and one-on-one support were invaluable to Phoenix. As a result, he developed emotional and vocational skills that helped him get his first job at Walmart.

Phoenix and his certified rehabilitation counselor remained connected. They developed a plan for him to continue on his path to becoming more independent and emotionally healthy by touring apartments, completing a housing application and signing up for other support services from community partners.

In September 2021, he moved into his very own apartment and continues to make progress in developing friendships both at work and in the community. Phoenix has made great strides in a short period with the help of VR’s pre-employment transition services and one dedicated certified rehabilitation counselor.
Acknowledgements

DVR IS A PARTNER IN

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE NORTH DAKOTA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND THE NORTH DAKOTA DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

VISIT WWW.ND.GOV/DHS/DVR

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