

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 325, Bismarck ND 58505**

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Vocational rehabilitation professionals recognized for helping North Dakotans with disabilities achieve their employment goals

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation presented performance and recognition awards to 14 individual employees and several division teams at its training conference Oct. 10 in Bismarck.

Last federal fiscal year, department vocational rehabilitation professionals helped 525 North Dakotans with disabilities obtain jobs in their communities working alongside individuals without disabilities and earning comparable wages.

The division presented **Jennifer Moldenhauer** of its **Jamestown** office with the *Director's Award for Excellence*. Peers nominated Moldenhauer for the award for demonstrating dedication, productivity and dependability while managing office operations, training new counselors and providing excellent customer service to both individuals with disabilities and employers.

Jennifer Reinke and **Megan Stone** of the **Fargo** office received the *Award for Counselor Achievement*, which recognizes the top 10 percent of counselors who helped the most people become employed.

Minot region employee **Allyson Berner**, **Jamestown** region employee **Wes Heinley**, and **Fargo** region employee **Rebecca Martin** received the *Award for Counselor Achievement—Honorable Mention* for having the second highest number of clients to achieve employment.

The division presented **Kendra Faa** and her colleagues in the **Minot** office with the *Exemplary Service Award* for providing outstanding case service to clients through creative thinking, direct work with multiple agencies and consistent client follow-up.

The *VR Team Participation Award* was presented to the **Minot** office for their involvement in community activities on behalf of the division.

The division named **Bismarck** office employee **Pete Rubke** *Rookie of the Year*. This award honors an employee who has less than two years of service, exceeds performance goals and displays a high level of community service and involvement.

The *Pillar Award*, which recognizes support staff who contribute to the successful employment of individuals with disabilities, was presented to **Brenda Vennes** of the **Minot** office.

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The division also presented career achievement awards based on the number of clients achieving employment over the course of a vocational rehabilitation counselor's career. **Jacque Harder** of the **Fargo** office and **Candace Hanson** of the **Bismarck** office received the *Career Achievement – 400 Club Award*. **Kendra Faa** of the **Minot** office, **Jennifer Moldenhauer** of the **Jamestown** office and **Tom Schiwal** of the **Bismarck** office received the *Career Achievement – 200 Club Award*. **Allyson Berner** of the **Minot** office, **Erik Anthony** of the **Grand Forks** office and **Angie Parr** of the **Bismarck** office received the *Career Achievement – 100 Club Award*.

Division vocational rehabilitation professionals provide assessments and counseling to help people identify strengths and goals. They also connect individuals to training, education, assistive technology and supportive services, and provide job placement assistance.

To receive vocational rehabilitation services, individuals must have a disability that is an obstacle to employment, and they must want to work and be available to work. Many of the individuals the division serves have a physical or cognitive disability.

Division employees also assist employers by connecting them to qualified prospective employees who can meet their workforce needs. They can help businesses retain employees affected by disabilities and find solutions to other disability-related issues.

Information about vocational rehabilitation services is available online at www.nd.gov/dhs/dvr/index.html or by contacting the division at 1000 E. Divide Ave., Bismarck, N.D., 58501, 701-328-8950, toll-free 800-755-2745, ND Relay TTY 800-366-6888 or dhsvr@nd.gov.

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