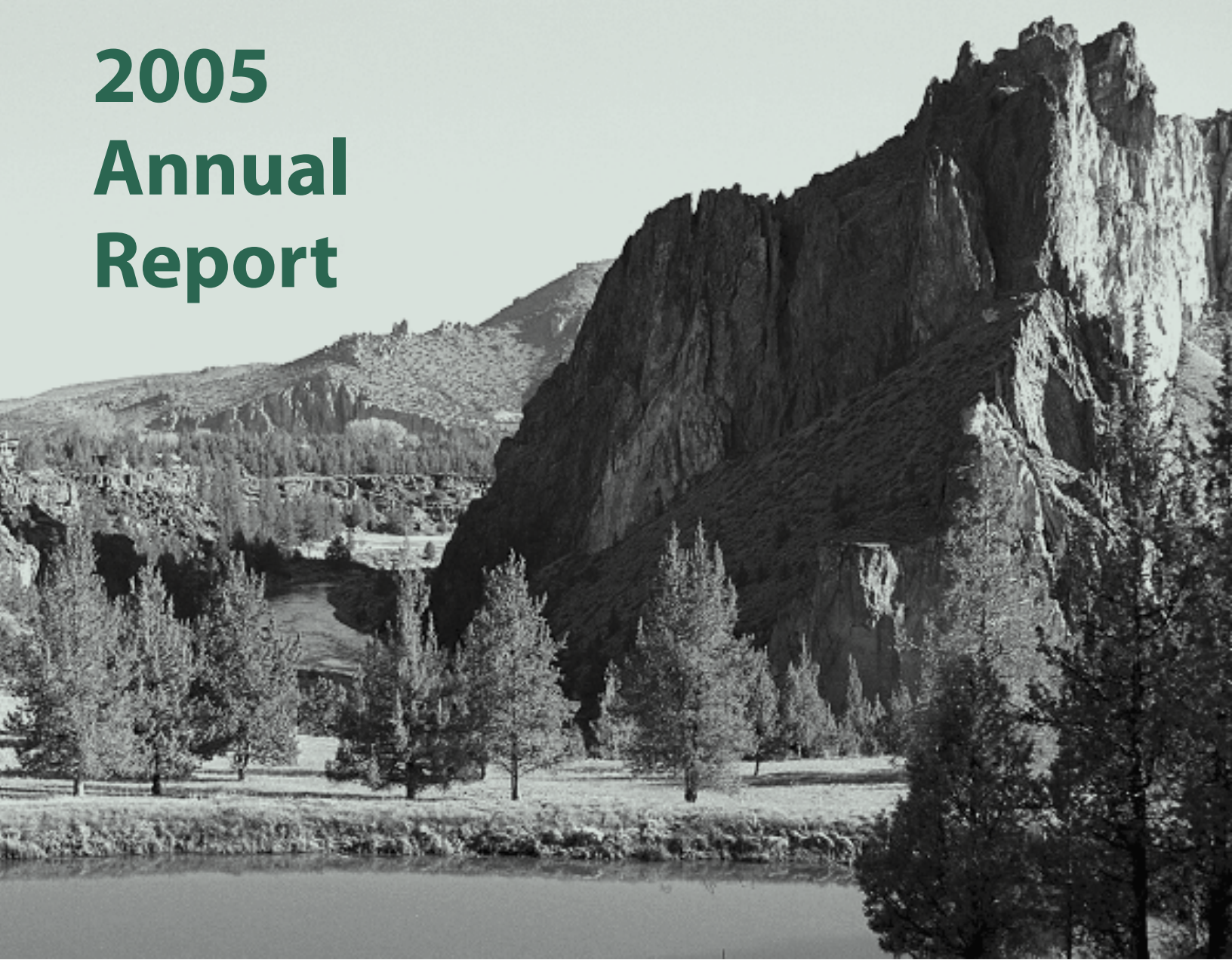


Oregon
State
Rehabilitation
Council

**2005
Annual
Report**



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December 2005

Honorable Governor Ted Kulongoski and Dr. Ed Anthony, Acting Commissioner,
Rehabilitation Services Administration:

On behalf of the Oregon State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), it is my pleasure to present to you our 2005 Annual Report. Included in this report are several features that highlight the responsibilities and work of the SRC as well as its policy partner, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVRS).

One of the major changes to affect the SRC is the restructuring of its sub committees to streamline and more effectively carry out the work of the Council. In addition, the Council carried out comprehensive Field Visits intended to provide the Council with “first hand” information of policy, practice and effectiveness of OVRS services to Oregonians with disabilities.

The Council maintains a positive relationship with OVRS and the Department of Human Services (DHS) – the Designated State Agency. Indeed the positive and collegial working partnership is viewed on a national level as a model for effective partnership and working relations.

Despite this positive relationship, there continue to be ongoing concerns of the Council on both the state and national fronts. On the state level, the placement of OVRS within the Department of Human Services remains a concern as it has been since the reorganization several years ago. Some of the ongoing unease includes the lack of ability to provide client confidentiality due to office arrangements, overly cumbersome processes to obtain basic support services and supplies and many times accurate and timely fiscal information. The DHS overall agency budget shortfalls and the ongoing possible impact on OVRS also continues to trouble the SRC.

On the national level, the restructuring of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) is disconcerting due to the closure of the regional offices where we were able to acquire valuable technical assistance and enjoyed mutually beneficial collaborations. While not opposed to change, the seeming lack of a solid structure to replace such is worrisome. The Council will endeavor to keep its focus on positive employment outcomes for Oregonians with disabilities and will work diligently and in partnership with DHS/OVRS to ensure this outcome.

Respectfully,

Lu Ann Anderson

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Oregon State Rehabilitation Council

Council Purpose

The purpose of the Oregon State Rehabilitation Council is to provide the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVRs) with an external, consumer-oriented perspective. The council advises OVRs on the needs of Oregonians with disabilities concerning programs, policy, services and other issues.

The council also provides rehabilitation services consumers with a formal mechanism to influence the direction of rehabilitation programs in Oregon at the systemic and policy level.

Council Authority and Initiative

The State Rehabilitation Council is authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. This federal legislation identifies the required functions of the council, which include:

- **Work in partnership** with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVRs) regarding essential planning and service delivery intended to result in meeting the employment potential of Oregonians with disabilities.
- **Review and analyze** program effectiveness, create and analyze consumer satisfaction materials, render concerns and recommendations to OVRs derived from performance standards and measurements of rehabilitation services.
- **Advise** the governor and state agencies on the performance of vocational rehabilitation in Oregon regarding eligibility, program effectiveness and effect on individuals with disabilities. This includes preparation and distribution of this annual report.
- **Coordinate** the work of the State Rehabilitation Council with the activities of other disability-related councils in the state. This includes establishing and maintaining a positive working relationship with the State Independent Living Council (SILC).

Council Sessions

The full council meets four times a year. These sessions occur throughout the state and are structured in order to:

- **Listen** to and hear from consumers and others;
- **Learn** about programs, activities and needs specific to each region of the state;

- **Build/Support** collaborations with public and private partners involved in rehabilitation and employment in Oregon; and
- **Conduct** the business of the council in a public setting.

During 2005, with appointments by the governor, the council had 24 members representing persons with disabilities, advocates, service providers, former VR consumers, employers, State Independent Living Council, Workforce Investment Board, 121 Native American Program, Department of Education, Client Assistance Program, Parent and Training Information Center and Vocational Rehabilitation. The 2005 council had 54% persons with disabilities, 35% former VR Consumers and 8% minority representation. The council is committed to meeting the mandated membership requirements in the Rehabilitation Act.

State Rehabilitation Council Members

Green indicates primary representation

NAME	TERM	REPRESENTATION / COMMUNITY
LuAnn Anderson	01/03 - 11/07	Advocate /Education/ McMinnville
Carol Bennett	08/05 - 11/07	Advocate / Redmond
Corina Brunoe	12/04 - 08/05	121 Program / Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
Jackie Burr	12/04 - 11/07	Education / Statewide
Jan Campbell	04/01 – 11/06	Advocate / Portland
Roxie Choroser	12/04 - 12/07	Advocate / Consumer / Portland
Ruthanne Cox-Carothers	11/02 - 11/05	Business / Social Service/ Portland
Bob Craft	12/04 - 11/07	Workforce Investment Board / Statewide
Cheryl Davis	08/05 - 11/07	Rehab Education /Advocate / Monmouth
John Dziennik	05/04 - 04/05	Advocate / Business / Portland
Barbara Fields	10/00 - 11/06	Client Assistance Program / Statewide
Donald Ford	05/04 - 11/07	Mental Health Service Provider / Business / Banks
Guy Goode	12/04 - 11/07	Voc Rehab Counselor / Statewide
Bennett Johnson	03/00 - 11/08	Community Rehab Provider / Business / Boring
Jesse Kappel	08/05 - 11/07	Advocate / Gladstone
Gary Lanctot	08/05 - 11/06	Business / Salem
Cynthia Owens	05/04 - 11/06	Advocate / Family Member w/ Dis. / Portland
Martha Simpson	02/01 - 11/06	Advocate / Portland
Roz Slovic	10/02 - 11/05	Advocate / Family Member w/Dis. /Rehab Ed./Eugene
Kirsten Thompson	05/04 - 11/06	Parent and Training Info Center / Statewide
Tina Treasure	07/04 - 11/07	Independent Living Council / Statewide
D. Scott Whetham	12/01 - 11/04	Community Rehab Program / Eugene
Rebecca Woods	12/04 - 11/07	Advocate / Rehab Education/ Salem
Jesus “Tony” Zarate	08/03 - 11/06	Advocate / Monmouth

SRC Committee Structure

At the November 2005 SRC quarterly meeting, the council conducted a facilitated work session and changed the committee structure. The former SRC committees were Business, Evaluation, Executive, Legislative, Membership and Policy. The new committees and responsibilities are:

Executive Committee

Chair: LuAnn Anderson; *Vice-Chair:* Tina Treasure

Members: Don Ford, Jesse Kappel, Scott Whetham, Rebecca Woods

Responsible for:

1. Conducts council business, including policy matters, and acts on matters referred to it by the council.
2. Arranges meetings with OVRS, the governor's office, congressional delegates, legislators, and responds to state and federal legislation as needed.
3. Develops position papers and drafts correspondence as needed.
4. Represents the council at SRC conferences, forums and events.
5. Works closely with the Quality Assurance Committee on consumer satisfaction surveys, field visits, state plan development, 107 reviews and policy regarding order of selection.
6. Works closely with the Membership Committee on recruitment and member development and training, keeps informed of other committee activities.
7. Makes decisions on behalf of the SRC and reports those decisions to the full council. The Executive Committee is not authorized to set or change policy for the council, but is responsible for referring proposed changes to the council.
8. Performs other duties necessary to conduct business between regular quarterly meetings.

Membership Committee

Chair: Martha Simpson

Members: Roxie Choroser, Scott Whetham, Tony Zarate

Responsible for:

1. Recruitment of new members, including assessment of population sectors' representation and skills needed to fill gaps.
2. Council member development, training and mentoring.

Public Advocacy Committee

Chair: Cynthia Owens

Members: Carol Bennett, Jackie Burr, Jan Campbell, Bob Craft, Rebecca Woods

Responsible for:

1. Review and input of public policies (state, federal, possibly local) as they impact employment of people with disabilities.
2. Actively associate with the Oregon Workforce Investment Board.
3. Advocate for improved work incentives and reduced disincentives.
4. Draft SRC position papers related to public policy for SRC consideration.
5. Educate employers/businesses about the skills and value of employing people with disabilities and learning about employer/business needs and expectations of workers.

Quality Assurance Committee

Chair: Gary Lanctot

Members: Cheryl Davis, Barbara Fields, Guy Goode, Bennett Johnson, Kirsten Thompson

Responsible for:

1. SRC field visits to OVRS offices.
2. Consumer Satisfaction Survey.
3. Public input at the SRC meetings.
4. CAP reviews.
5. OVRS state plan development and compliance reviews, including the resource plan.
6. Work with OVRS regarding policy and implementation of Order of Selection
7. SRC responsibilities for 107 review.
8. OVRS staff surveys.
9. OVRS internal policies review and comment.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVRs)

Overview

Over the last federal fiscal year, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVRs) has experienced changes and challenges, pursued new opportunities and continued to work to provide services for Oregonians to assist them in obtaining quality employment outcomes. OVRs, like the rest of state government, experiences fiscal challenges that have confronted the state over the last two biennia. It continues to experience higher than usual levels of staff turnover, including two key positions on the program's executive team.

Employment outcomes have rebounded after a decline that mirrored the states' unemployment rate. OVRs passed all of the federal standards and indicators for FY 2004 and anticipates doing so again in FY 2005. OVRs also passed a performance audit conducted by the secretary of state. In an effort to improve services to consumers, OVRs contracted with EMP, a Toronto based firm, to conduct an assessment to determine areas where improvements could be made to enhance both quantity and quality of consumer employment opportunities.

OVRs has implemented two initiatives aimed at improving services to consumers over the next several years. In addition to the afore mentioned activities with EMP, the agency is working in partnership with the Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS). This effort is focused on improving services and outcomes for individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

The year also marked the beginning of Nextalk, a computer based alternative to TTYs, as well as a statewide pilot of the technology during 2006. This advancement is expected to improve our communication with clients who are deaf or severely hard of hearing.

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) decision to close all regional offices across the nation ended a long relationship with our regional federal partners effective July 1, 2005. Years of experience and expertise formerly available through RSA regional offices are already greatly missed. Many questions remain concerning how this partnership will be maintained through the RSA central administration during the months and years to come.

Following is a more detailed account of how OVRs has continued to deliver excellent services over the past year. A description of partnerships and new innovations is provided.

Locations and Staffing

OVRs services were provided at 56 locations throughout Oregon. These included 33 field offices, multiple single-employee outstations in one-stop career centers, educational centers, and other

human services agencies. Over 28,000 Oregonians received our services during the 2003-05 biennium. Of these, approximately 9,700 placed into Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs) and 6,400 into permanent jobs.

Statewide Program

Location	Branch Office	Outstation	Satellite Office	HSA's	OS 1-2	Counselors	Admin.
Albany (10)	xx	2		3		4	1
Astoria (4)			xx	1		1	
Baker City (6)	xx			1		1	1
Bend (50)	xx	5		1	1	3	1
Central Portland (1)	xx			1	2	9	1
Clackamas (5)	xx	4		3		8	1
Coos Bay (13)			xx		1	2	
Corvallis (10)			xx	1		3	
East Portland (3)	xx					8	1
Gold Beach (13)		xx		1		1	
Grants Pass (12)			xx			3	
Hermiston (6)			xx			2	
Klamath Falls (12)			xx	1		2	
La Grande (6)			xx			1	
Marion/Polk (09)	xx			4	1	11	1
McMinnville			xx	4		8	1
Medford (12)	xx	9				10	1
Newport (10)			xx		1	2	
North Portland (02)	xx					7	1
Ontario (06)			xx		2	2	
Pendleton (6)			xx		1	2	
Redmond (50)			xx			1	
East Springfield (11A)	xx			2		5	1
Roseburg (13)	xx			1	1	3	1
St. Helens (04)			xx			2	
Tigard (04)	xx		8	1	3	10	1
Tillamook (15)			xx			1	
The Dalles (50)			xx	1		2	
West Eugene (11B)	xx			2		8	1

Key Policy Initiatives

Throughout 2005, OVRS and the State Rehabilitation Council worked collaboratively on a number of key policy initiatives. In coordination with the SRC, OVRS developed a process and policy for invoking an Order of Selection.

OVRS and the SRC have reviewed and improved the application process, which will be implemented beginning January 2006. The process will allow for better understanding of the various steps in our vocational rehabilitation program. Enhanced consistency across state offices is expected, as a result. An information sheet and flow chart outlining the VR process will be provided to each applicant, along with a common personal information form.

Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG)

In early 2005, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services assumed responsibility for administering the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG): the Oregon Competitive Employment Project. Oregon has a history as a pioneer and innovator in providing services and supports to its citizens with disabilities, including the area of employment.

Over the past several months, the Oregon Competitive Employment Project has worked to develop a strategic plan called “*A Blueprint for Change.*” This document describes how (over the course of three years) the project and its partners and supporters will build a more comprehensive, inclusive, and integrated system of employment for Oregonians with disabilities.

The mission of the Oregon Competitive Employment Project is to enhance the quality of life in Oregon by achieving such an employment system through completion of corresponding goals:

- Empower people with all types of disabilities to obtain meaningful employment.
- Educate and engage employers to develop and market the “business case” for employing people with disabilities.
- Enhance the availabilities and effectiveness of employment supports for persons with disabilities.

Youth Transition Program

The Youth Transition Program (YTP) continues to provide successful transition services for youth with disabilities. YTP operates as a partnership between OVRS and local school

districts, in concert with a technical assistance team from the University of Oregon. The purpose of the program is to prepare high school youth with disabilities for employment or career related post secondary education/ training. During the 2003-2005 biennium, YTP operated in 36 local sites, serving 113 high schools and 1481 youth.

About 92% of YTP students served this biennium received either a standard high school diploma or other recognized completion document. Such documents include: an adult basic education diploma, modified diploma, or a GED (General Education Diploma). Youth completing high school are more likely to achieve successful post secondary outcomes, such as employment.

One effective method to document the success of this program is through a review of post secondary status of the students served. For those completing the program between July 2003 and December 2004, 78% of YTP youth were employed and 80% of YTP were “engaged” 12 months after exiting. “Engaged” is defined as either working 30 hours per week, being enrolled in at least nine credit hours of training, or some combination of work and training.

In July 2004, OVRs began the process of revising the YTP Request For Proposal (RFP) for the 2005-2007 biennium. These revisions reflected new performance benchmarks. All school districts in Oregon were notified of the RFP. Forty-eight proposals were received and of these, 43 grants were awarded covering 130 participating high schools that contracted to serve approximately 1500 youth.

Beginning early 2005, local orientation training was provided to participating schools and OVRs staff, to present information about grant expectations. A broad cut across these participants included: school and OVRs staff, transition specialists, special education directors, business managers, and building principals. This training helped ensure that all significant stakeholders were aware of contract expectations. Follow-up contacts with school districts are made on a regular basis by University of Oregon technical assistance staff.

Additional YTP training is scheduled in January 2006, to ensure that programs are on target to meet their performance benchmarks. Furthermore, plans are underway to create an YTP brochure, describing the YTP program and services provided.

The YTP continues to be a very focused and successful collaboration between OVRs, the Oregon Department of Education, and the University of Oregon.

Supported Employment Activities

Supported Employment (SE) efforts assist people with severe disabilities, whose limitations pose significant barriers to employment, and who have the need for ongoing support to stay employed. OVRs supports multiple SE projects serving Oregonians with severe and persistent mental illness. Oregonians with developmental disabilities who are eligible for services under the Staley Settlement are also recipients of OVRs supported employment programs.

Highlights of both programs for 2005:

- ***Dartmouth Project:*** Grant support for this project has concluded, but OVRs is actively engaged with DHS' Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS). These services continue to nurture new Supported Employment projects in county mental health programs around the state.
- ***Options for Southern Oregon Program (OSOP):*** This effort provides placement and support services in competitive jobs to 43 OVRs clients with severe psychiatric disabilities living in Josephine County. OVRs extended this contract through Sept. 30, 2005, due to OSOP's high success rate in assisting consumers to attain employment.
- ***Life Works NW (LWNW):*** OVRs extended this contract through June 30, 2006. Life Works NW demonstrated a promising success rate in assisting consumers to attain employment. As of Sept. 30, 2005, this program was providing placement and support for 56 Washington County residents, diagnosed with severe and persistent mental illness and who are seeking competitive jobs. At that time, 13 participants were employed and another two individuals maintained employment for 90 days or more.
- ***VR/DD Partnership Project:*** Through training, planning and local collaboration, OVRs, the self-directed support brokerages, and a network of personal agents, continue to focus on better serving the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. Joint training sessions have been completed across the state, with OVRs and brokerage staff in joint attendance. OVRs has contracted with a vendor to provide short-term progress evaluation and technical assistance to field staff. In the summer of 2005, OVRs and SPD presented training at both the OVRs Annual In-Service training and the Developmental Disabilities In-Service meetings.

Joint Collaboration with Centers for Independent Living

OVRs and the State Independent Living Council (SILC) continued its unique and very beneficial partnership this year. Easier access and an efficient referral system for OVRs clients to employment-related independent living services has been developed. Using a creative leverage of both state and federal funds, clients now have even greater access to IL services

from the network of 10 Centers for Independent Living (CIL) throughout Oregon. Enhanced collaboration between local vocational rehabilitation counselors and CILs continues to result in a more holistic approach to the provisions of employment and independent living services to Oregonians with disabilities. This exceptional relationship has drawn the attention of many other states, which are now starting to pattern their work after this innovative partnership, consequently increasing these valuable linkages in their areas.

OVRs, SILC and the network of 10 CILs are continually refining and advancing the strategies used as partners meet both the employment and independent living needs of persons with disabilities. As a result of this connection, mutual clients are better prepared to access services successfully and benefit from vocational rehabilitation.

Annual Rehabilitation Training

This year, OVRs, Commission for the Blind, Oregon Business Leadership Network (OBLN) and Western Washington (Region X RCEP) partnered to host a two-day successful statewide conference. Drawing more than 230 vocational rehabilitation professionals from around the state, the theme “Achieving Successful Employment Outcomes” provided a timely and well-received employment focus, with an array of four guest speakers and over 25 breakout sessions on employment related training topics, strategies and resources.

Collaboration with Rehabilitation Counselor Education Programs

While OVRs has long been an active partner with local graduate rehabilitation counselor education programs, 2005 has shown a marked increase in that collaboration. This is especially apparent in the relationships that have been forged with Western Oregon University (WOU). OVRs field offices have hosted students for both practicum and internship experiences.

OVRs staff have been involved in the development and provision of a case management course at WOU that has received national attention. This course will be the subject of presentations at both the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration State Coordinators for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing National Conference in 2006. Efforts to engage in similar relationships with other rehabilitation counselor education programs in the region and across the nation will continue to be a priority in the coming year.

New Counselor Training Academy

OVRs provided three 12-day training sessions for new counselors. Curriculum included vocational rehabilitation methods, caseload-management skills, employment strategies, and finding other service resources. Sessions were expanded to include human services assistants, office specialists and OVRs partners.

Promoting Continuing Education

In addition to partnering to ensure the continuation of the Annual In-Service Training Conference, OVRS has maintained good working relationships with rehabilitation counselor education training programs. These include: Western Oregon University, Portland State University, Western Washington University and the Southern University Baton Rouge, Distant Education Program.

These programs offer innovative education models to engage today's learner, such as: distance learning, week-long intensive programs, and traditional classes. OVRS and Washington Vocational Rehabilitation are partnering with Western Oregon University, to assist in preparing graduate program participants through internships.

Oregon Business Leadership Network

The Oregon Business Leadership Network (OBLN) is quickly becoming an effective collaboration between employers and OVRS staff. Grant resources have served as a catalyst to launch the OBLN as a non-profit organization. Among the many activities OVRS has provided in conjunction with OBLN in 2005 are:

- Developing a new OBLN chapter in the Salem area through coordinated outreach and employer recruitment.
- Developing a white paper document on employer supports for the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) leadership group.
- Establishing relations with the Salem Chamber of Commerce, while planning a joint presentation to recognize a member business, Roth's Family Market. OVRS initiated the business connection with Roth's.
- The U.S. Business Leadership Network recognized OBLN at its national conference in November, for the benchmark achievements attained in a relatively short period of time.

Employer Liaison

At the state and local level, OVRS is focusing on the development of positive business partnerships. Both staff and community stakeholders have participated in recent regional and national conferences, with a focus on developing better business partnerships. Several events or activities were completed in the past year focusing on enhancing business partnerships:

- Participation in Disability Mentoring Day, Oct. 19, with employers and YTP projects.

- Selaina Miller, OVRs' employer program coordinator, was invited to address the Bend Business Relations Network on VR's role with economic development efforts, including ADA consulting.
- Partnered with Oregon Employment Department to maximize the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), for employers who hire people with disabilities.
- Representation from OVRs and OBLN at the Oregon Employer Council State Conference and at the USDOL Workforce Innovation conference in Philadelphia.
- Increased networking opportunities through the Society of Human Resource Management.
- Established a collaborative working relationship with the Commission for the Blind's corporate business-relation staff.

NexTalk

OVRs conducted a pilot project using NexTalk software to replace aging and broken TTY machines. This pilot involved nearly 20 OVRs staff statewide and a second stage is already in final planning. OVRs has submitted a business case document to the Information Technology Governance Council, justifying installation of NexTalk software on all OVRs workstations.

If approved, training and activation schedules will be developed. The intent is that all OVRs staff and consumer lab workstations will have the software installed sometime in 2006. This project allows OVRs to become fully compliant with the communication needs of an underserved population. If the second stage of the pilot is successful, it is likely that NexTalk will become available for use in other DHS clusters and programs statewide.

Workers' Compensation

OVRs has successfully negotiated an 18-month interagency agreement with the Department of Consumer and Business Services' Workers' Compensation Division, targeting 200 Multnomah County preferred worker cardholders for vocational rehabilitation services. This project begins Jan. 1, 2006 and expected outcomes include 100 placements over the term of the agreement. OVRs staff in the North Portland and East Portland field offices have been identified to assist in this project.

Disability Program Navigator Initiative

The Disability Program Navigator (DPN) is a federally funded program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). The Department of Community Colleges, Workforce Development (CCWD), and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services jointly manage the program.

These positions are intended to increase employment and self-sufficiency for persons with disabilities. By linking consumers to employers, promoting and implementing systems change, and facilitating access to supports and services, the DPN will provide a smoother (hopefully more successful) transition to employment.

To date, over 2,700 Oregonians with disabilities have been served through the program. Oregon was originally awarded a two-year grant that expires June 30, 2006. However, earlier this year Oregon received additional funding from DOL that has been tagged as a “down payment” for program costs incurred June 30, 2006 through June 30, 2007.

Oregon currently has more than 10 Navigators throughout the state and the program is administered by a state lead, located in Salem.

Workforce Coordination

The OVRs workforce programs manager collaborated with other state level team members from the Oregon Employment Office, community colleges and workforce development. Along with the Department of Human Services’ TANF program, their focus is to develop and approve resource sharing agreements in each of Oregon’s 15 workforce regions.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration has issued a Technical Assistance Guide (TAG). A state-level team of trainers used this tool to deliver operational guidance training for all mandatory partner programs implementing cost allocation and resource sharing.

Over the 2003-05 biennium, OVRs participated in over 30 resource sharing agreements, significantly enhancing access to Oregon’s one-stop systems for Oregonians with disabilities.

Oregon Statewide Disability Summary

10/1/2004 through 9/30/2005

Disability Group	Disability Code	Primary Disability		Secondary Disability	
		#	%	#	%
No impairment	00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Blindness	01	71	0.40	74	0.34
Other visual impairments	02	101	0.56	288	1.32
Deafness, communication visual	03	290	1.62	9	0.04
Deafness, communication auditory	04	210	1.17	93	0.43
Hearing loss, community visual	05	60	0.34	11	0.05
Hearing loss, community auditory	06	383	2.14	258	1.18
Other hearing impairments	07	26	0.15	34	0.16
Deaf-blindness	08	7	0.04	8	0.04
Communicative impairments	09	193	1.08	316	1.45
Mobility	10	894	4.99	725	3.32
Manipulation	11	450	2.51	688	3.15
Mobility and manipulation	12	919	5.13	526	2.41
Other orthopedic impairments	13	1,582	8.84	1,474	6.75
Respiratory impairments	14	141	0.79	429	1.96
General physical debilitation	15	887	4.95	1,256	5.75
Other physical impairments	16	2,200	12.29	3,831	17.53
Cognitive impairments	17	4,113	22.97	3,160	14.46
Psychosocial impairments	18	2,591	14.47	4,800	21.97
Other mental impairments	19	2,667	14.90	3,858	17.65
Invalid cases	---	120	0.66	0	0.00
TOTAL CASELOAD SERVED		17,905	100.0	21,838	100.0
TOTAL NUMBER OF SECONDARY DISABILITIES **		21,851			

**** Many individuals served by OVRS have multiple disabilities**

Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2005 Consumer Profiles

Gender	Quantity	Percentage
Male	9,243	51.2%
Female	8,807	48.8%
TOTAL	18,050	100%

Age	Quantity	Percentage
Under 20	1,069	5.9%
20-29	3,762	20.8%
30-39	3,479	19.3%
40-49	5,020	27.8%
50-59	3,898	21.6%
60 Plus	822	4.6%
TOTAL	18,050	100%

Education	Quantity	Percentage
No formal Schooling	53	0.3%
Elementary	749	4.1%
Secondary Ed., no high school diploma	2,119	11.7%
Special Ed.	847	4.7%
High school graduate	7,670	42.5%
Post-secondary ed., no degree	3,518	19.5%
AA degree or VoTec certificate	1,680	9.3%
Bachelor's degree	1,044	5.8%
Master's degree	370	2.0%
TOTAL	18,050	100%

Primary Disability	Quantity	Percentage
Cognitive	4,185	23.2%
Communicative	196	1.1%
Deaf/hearing loss and blindness	1,120	6.2%
Orthopedic	3,917	21.7%
Other physical	3,146	17.4%
Mental	2,710	15.0%
Psychiatric	2,631	14.6%
Respiratory	145	0.8%
TOTAL	18,050	100%

Ethnicity Only	Percentage
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3.3%
Asian of Pacific Islander	1.2%
Black	4.3%
Chinese	0.2%
Filipino	0.1%
Japanese	0.1%
Korean	0.2%
White	90.6%

Race and Ethnicity	Percentage
Non-Hispanic and White	86.5%
Hispanic and Non-White	13.5%

OVRS Success Stories

The Work Readiness Alternative Workshop (WRAW) program took me under their wing and walked me very patiently thorough the steps necessary to get back into the work place. Vocational



“...dealing with the WRAW personnel, I had no doubt that they truly cared about me as a person, not another number. The understanding and patience these folks are capable of is immeasurable. ”

Rehabilitation assisted with gas for auto, clothing and finally much needed hearing appliances—these were crucial to succeeding in my eventual return to work. The most important thing I took away from this experience was dealing with the WRAW personnel. I had no doubt that they truly cared about me as a person, not another number. The understanding and patience these folks are capable of

is immeasurable. It was the WRAW staff and their belief in me and my wanting to match their expectation with results, that made this work so well for me. —*Dennis J. Shrode*

Due to drug abuse, *Jenny Way* was left with an injured brain and a profound short-term memory deficit. She wrote to VR: “Thank you for all of your kindness and support, especially the WRAW program (Work Readiness and Alternative Workshop) which I am thankful for. I do appreciate your patience and support.” Jenny now lives in her own apartment, manages her own money, does her own cooking, laundry and works on her art 12 hours a week in Studio Sfumato, which markets art for persons with disabilities. She is also active in her church and makes speeches to youth groups about what drug abuse can do.

“Thank you for all of your kindness and support, especially the WRAW program which I am thankful for. I do appreciate your patience and support. ”

“ I wish to thank you for your assistance in my educational and personal journey. I could not have done this alone. ”

I wish to thank you for your assistance in my educational and personal journey. I could not have done this alone. I am a perfect example of social work at its best—a willing vessel given the opportunity, support, means, and inspiration needed to succeed. I believe education is the key to choice, community is the key to support, and God is the key to empowerment. May you be blessed in knowing that your time, energy, efforts and care have rippled out through my life, and as I step into life after graduate

school I hope to share with others the gifts that were given to me.” —*Tawana L. Grabarz*

“SUCCESS STORIES” cont. page 22...

“SUCCESS STORIES” continued...

My name is Debra Burchett, and I am writing this letter to say thank you for creating a rehabilitation program like the VR program in Medford. Four years ago my husband Terry became very ill. The doctor told him he wouldn't drive trucks anymore. To top it off, Terry was often unable to sit up more than an hour at a time, and was tube fed. Terry has never been one to sit and do nothing, we just had no idea what he could do. VR found a computer class he was able to attend which met his limits. He learned to repair computers and went on to learn other programs. Terry now helps other people with disabilities or people who need to learn the computer for a new job. He is currently learning to build web sites for businesses. It is amazing to me the new skills and confidence he has now and even though he was disabled, VR was able to help him develop a new work life and skills. Thank you for being there! —*Debra Burchett*

“VR was able to help him develop a new work life and skills. Thank you for being there!”

Reading “You are now the owner and operator of Portraits by MAC,” in a OVRs congratulatory letter was simply amazing. It had been over 10 years since disability forced me to leave the workplace as a professional registered nurse, administrator and educator. My disabilities—Multiple Chemical Sensitivity/Environmental Illness and Porphyria—have made life interesting. Symptoms can impact every body system, but the most troublesome are neurocognitive fluctuations, pain, and extreme fatigue.



“Even during periods when illness takes precedence, I still have hope and purpose. Very simply, without VR's assistance, I would not have these.”

Avoiding stressors, including chemical precipitants, keeps me essentially homebound. There were times when personal doubts abounded. My initial work goal of total independence had to shift as my health wavered, but my counselor was incredibly patient and supportive. Her belief in my talent was such a motivator. My goal of gaining increasing independence remains. What also remains is my absolute gratitude for the help given to me. Even during periods when illness takes precedence, I still have hope and purpose. Very simply, without VR's assistance, I would not have these. —*Melissa Anne Cranor*

My name is Kevin Gaynor and I am writing to offer thanks for the services I received from MOVRs. Reaching my goals took time, but I recently graduated with honors from the Oregon Institute of Technology with a Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Science—Nuclear Medicine Technology. I passed the national boards exam with the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board, so I am now a licensed Nuclear Medicine Technologist. I've just been hired at a job paying me \$37 per hour. I can't emphasize how important I feel it is to keep VR doing what it does so well. From my first day at VR, I was impressed with the compassion that the

continued...

staff had toward clients. I'm grateful that my counselor was empowered to look beyond a "short-term fix" to help me get a degree in the field we both felt was right for me with my physical limitations."—*Kevin Gaynor*

“ I can't emphasize how important I feel it is to keep VR doing what it does so well. ”

Through stress that took away my health due to uterine cancer in 1997, diabetes in 1998, and one month in the hospital and one month in a nursing home due to being paralyzed from the waist down from a serious case of gout, I ended up meeting a VR counselor. He is my hero as he introduced me to the Work Readiness Alternative Workshop (WRAW). I am now a full-time state



“ Thank you for being there for me when I needed you. ”

employee. I wouldn't be where I am today without the help of all the wonderful staff at WRAW and VR. Thank you for being there for me when I needed you. —*Elinore Dietzel-Tally*

Brain damage from an accident robbed *Robert Brown* of his career as a commercial painter. It also stunted his memory, speaking ability, intellect and changed his personality. “My world was turned upside down,” he said. “I couldn't even finish my own sentences. I couldn't follow simple directions on the back of a soup can.” With determination, Robert at 38 set out to rebuild his life, overcoming daunting disabilities to graduate with honors from Chemeketa Community College. He credits his family and VR counselor for his comeback. He said his VR counselor “was the only professional who supported me in my decision to go to school. He knew I was persistent about wanting to change my circumstances.” Robert is pursuing a career as an accountant and his counselor predicts he will thrive in his new career.

“ He credits his family and VR counselor for his comeback. ”

Thanks to the combined forces of two Oregon agencies, Portland area resident and quadriplegic *Ed Kerns* is back to the business



“ Through creative funding and the partnership of Mobility Unlimited and OVRs, Ed was able to obtain an accessible van and continue his work. ”

of tree planting along the Springwater Corridor in the Lents neighborhood—a project he started over 10 years ago. As an environmental consultant, he works with volunteer kids from challenged neighborhoods. In order to keep working Ed was faced with having to replace his old rusting van with a dependable, accessible van. He contacted Mobility Unlimited, a Medford non-profit organization assisting

physically disabled working adults with mobility equipment. Through creative funding and the partnership of Mobility Unlimited and OVRs, Ed was able to obtain an accessible van.

2005 State Rehabilitation Council Impact

SRC Field Visit Report

Please note: All reference to “field visits” pertain to both field and central office staff.

Background

The Executive Committee (EC) of the Oregon State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), after lengthy discussion, determined that in order to better know and understand the issues and concerns of field and central office staff, the council should conduct a comprehensive series of “field visits” to each Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVRs).

At its quarterly meeting in November, the full SRC affirmed this proposal and agreed that the persons conducting the field visits would be SRC EC members and Rhoda Hunter, support staff to the SRC.

There is precedent for this activity as the SRC conducted “field visits” a few years ago and determined that this was a valid and informative way to obtain information from the OVRs staff. The timing of the field visits was randomly chosen and is not intended to be performed during any particular time of the year. In fact, the timing was dependent upon the availability of EC members.

Authority

As stated in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 the SRC is mandated to:

“Review, analyze, and advise the designated state unit regarding the performance of the responsibilities of the unit under this title, particularly responsibilities relating to (A) Order of Selection, (B) the extent, scope and effectiveness of services provided and (C) functions performed by State agencies that affect or that potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under this title...”

Methodology

The EC determined that to allow for the most “open” dialogue, EC members would meet with each level of OVRs staff separately. All field office staff met without managers, managers met without central office administration and central office staff met without supervisors/administrators. For those staff who were not comfortable sharing in front of colleagues, or for those staff who wished to provide additional feedback, address labels to a secure, off site post

office box were made available. Further, staff was assured that this summary report would contain “general” feedback that reflected the issues, concerns, etc., that would to the maximum extent possible maintain confidentiality of the person and/or office.

A series of questions/statements (see attached copy) was sent to every OVRs staff person as discussion points. Discussions were held as a roundtable. It was made known to all OVRs staff that this report, once given and discussed with OVRs administration, would be sent to all OVRs employees.

Areas of Concern

After extensive review of the data it was determined that there were several areas of concern in the OVRs program. These could be condensed into the following broad categories:

Technology: There was considerable concern expressed about the current ORCA system, the cumbersome and time-consuming nature of its navigation requirements, the lack of “field testing” for enhancements to the system, its unreliability as well as its lack of portability (remote access). There is also concern about the lack of knowledgeable technical assistance on the software from DHS and OVRs. The lack of training and reason for using forms such as the Financial Needs Test was also an issue.

Personnel/Staff Development: Staff was very complimentary regarding the annual In-Service and hope that it continues. There was considerable concern about staff turnover at every level. Field staff also expressed concern about not knowing “who is in central office and what do they do.” Many felt that having OVRs in a human services agency does not send the important message of employment and they are being seen more and more as “case managers” versus professional vocational counselors. The lack of confidential meeting space in which to meet with clients is a big problem. Unfortunately, there are considerable morale problems among staff who do not feel valued for the work they do for clients.

Central Office: Staff expressed concern about turnover, not knowing who fills what position and what their responsibilities are and in general, there is no connectivity between a person leaving and a new staff member taking their place. There is no clear chain of command, direction or guidance. Some staff feel their field offices reflect poorly on OVRs by being in a neglected part of town, in dirty, old buildings that do not give clients or counselors the needed feeling of safety. Many mentioned not having signage on the buildings so people would know OVRs is located in the building. Sentiments were expressed that OVRs has lost its identity. Concern was also expressed about the “first impression” clients, advocates, etc., get when contacting central office.

Clients: Staff expressed considerable concern about clients presenting needs that are often outside the scope of VR services. Concern was also expressed about the demographics that show a huge increase in clients with severe mental health and addiction issues as well as high referrals of people having been incarcerated. There is also concern about other DHS agencies referring clients as a matter of course without regard for the true mission of VR and its responsibility to clients. High caseloads and no increase in funding or FTE for years is also a big concern.

Summary

On Feb. 27, 2006, the SRC Executive Committee met with OVRs administrators to review the completed Field Visit Report. The SRC EC requested that a written reply and action plan be developed to address the areas of concern. The Oregon State Rehabilitation Council hopes this data will be seriously considered and any plan to address concerns be mutually developed between OVRs administration and field staff. The SRC expressed its commitment to assist and support in this process.

Fall 2005 - State Rehabilitation Council Visits to OVRs Field Offices

1. What changes in the following would make:

- a. Your job more efficient?
- b. Services to clients more effective?
 - i. Policies
 - ii. Processes
 - iii. Practices
 - iv. Working environment

2. Describe the information system between:

- a. You and central office?
- b. You and your peers in the field?
 - i. What areas would you say work well?
 - ii. What areas would you say need improvement and how?

3. What have been the biggest changes in your work in the last two years?

- a. Changes might include make-up of your client population;
- b. Changes in the way you are required to deliver services;
- c. Working relationships either within the agency or with community partners.

Changes that worked? Changes that didn't work?

SRC Activities

- SRC has representation with the Oregon Cross Disability Coalition, Oregon Workforce Investment Board, and the High Level Leadership Council for the CMS MIG 2 Grant.
- SRC works closely with the State Independent Living Council, Oregon Commission for the Blind, Client Assistance Program, Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities, and other advocacy groups.
- SRC worked with OVRs on a variety of issues, such as Order of Selection criteria for possible implementation by July 1, 2005. Reviewed and discussed decisions of impartial hearing officers and the reviewing official, were involved in discussions regarding the financial needs test and participated on an OVRs workgroup to develop new application materials.
- Field visits were conducted with OVRs staff, and the SRC met with the OVRs executive team to discuss results of the field visit report and asked for an action plan addressing concerns.
- SRC continues to be concerned about the placement of OVRs (an employment program) within the Department of Human Services (a social service program).
- SRC is concerned about confidentiality for OVRs consumers and counselors who feel in violation of their professional code of ethics by delivering services in non-confidential settings.
- Members of the SRC met with Oregon legislators to educate them about the role of the SRC and the public vocational rehabilitation program.
- SRC responds to requests for information regarding OVRs services and to consumer complaints, referring them to the appropriate OVRs manager or the Client Assistance Program.
- SRC assisted in the recruitment and appointment of new council members.
- SRC sent three representatives to the Region IX and X SRC Training Forum in Seattle, WA, March 21-22, 2005. Oregon co-facilitated four breakout sessions.
- Seven SRC representatives attended OVRs' In-Service Conference, Aug. 2-3, 2005 in Salem.
- SRC held a November 2005 facilitated work session to reorganize their committee structure in order to make committees more effective.
- Two SRC representatives attended the 2005 Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation Conference in San Diego, CA. Oregon SRC participated as co-presenters.

State Rehabilitation Council Resource Plan

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services has continued its commitment of resources to support the effective functioning of the State Rehabilitation Council. Resources include:

1. Adequate funding to support full member participation and consumer involvement across the state.
2. Continued dedicated staff support for full council and committee activities. Costs include salaries and benefits for council coordinator and clerical support. (These costs, totaling \$85,427, are reflected in another portion of the VR budget.)
3. Annual budget for 2005 is \$70,000

RESOURCE PLAN

2004-2005 BUDGET

Category

Expenditures

Quarterly Meetings.....\$35,190

Includes meals, meeting accommodations, facilitators, member travel, member per diem, attendant care, reasonable accommodations

Member Training and Involvement.....\$17,500

Includes teleconference calls, committee meeting costs, travel, regional and national meetings

Major Council Activities.....\$12,225

Includes annual report, member recruitment, client and employee surveys

Supplies and Services.....\$5,085

Includes materials and supplies, staff travel, postage and printing

Acknowledgments

The council would like to make the following acknowledgements:

To the following SRC members who faithfully served on the council: *Corina Brunoe, Ruthanne Cox-Carothers, John Dziennik and Roz Slovic*. Thank you for your leadership and many contributions to the SRC.

Lynnae Rutledge for her unwavering support of the Oregon State Rehabilitation Council. The Oregon SRC congratulates Lynnae and wishes her the very best in her new role as Director of the Washington State Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

Kathy West-Evans for the many years the Oregon SRC benefited from her valuable technical assistance and support of the SRC and the public vocational rehabilitation program. The Oregon SRC congratulates Kathy and looks forward to continued partnership with her in her new role as CSAVR (Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation) Director of Business Relations.

State Rehabilitation Council—2006 Quarterly Meetings

Feb. 3, 2006—Salem

May 5, 2006—Pendleton

Aug. 4, 2006—Medford

Nov. 3, 2006—Hood River

For more information, please contact the State Rehabilitation Council or your local vocational rehabilitation office.

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