

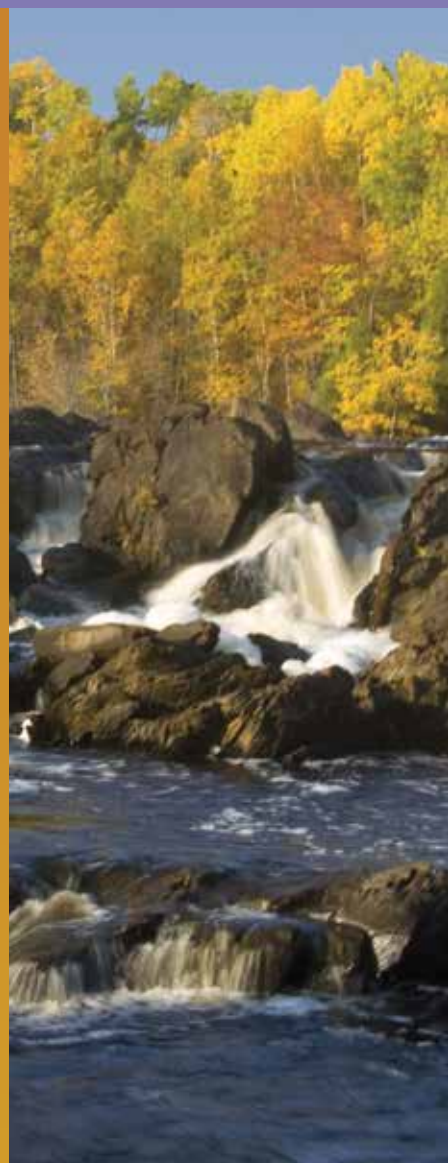


MINNESOTA



# State Rehabilitation Council — General

2013 ANNUAL REPORT ■ OCTOBER 1, 2012 — SEPTEMBER 30, 2013



# Welcome to the 2013 Annual Report

Every year, the State Rehabilitation Council reports to the citizens of Minnesota on the performance of the Vocational Rehabilitation program. As illustrated by the Minnesota map on page 11, Vocational Rehabilitation program touched the lives of 19,535 Minnesotans with disabilities in

2013. Of that number, 2,738 people completed their employment plans and obtained employment.

Each number represents a personal story of dreams and striving. This report gives you not only performance data but also several client stories that illustrate how VRS can have a huge positive impact

on the lives of Minnesotans. The work that Vocational Rehabilitation Services does to assist with making dreams come true for those served by the program is nothing short of incredible, and these stories are the reason I am so honored and humbled to have had the opportunity to serve as chair of the State Rehabilitation Council in 2013.

Claire Reeve  
— SRC Chair

## VR Innovation — Placement Partnership

The idea of local placement partnerships originated in 2012, when Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff in the Minneapolis North and South offices started a conversation with their community partners. The goal was to find new ways to provide expert, professional employment services to help businesses find skilled and qualified job candidates. The result of that conversation was the Minneapolis Placement Partnership (MPP).

MPP includes both of the VRS offices in Minneapolis, as well as 14 community rehabilitation program partners. Collectively, the partners have access to more than 500 pre-screened candidates, with talent in every field. They share job leads with candidates and assist businesses during the recruitment and hiring process. The model has proven to be effective, and several more local placement partnerships have been created in communities across the state.



Pictured are Eric Dresselhaus and Alan Hurd representing Savers Thrift Stores.

On October 10 MPP sponsored its second annual career fair to bring together job seekers with disabilities and employers who employ individuals with disabilities. There were 31 employers and 271 job seekers at the career fair; 85 percent of the candidates were VRS customers and the others were either participants of the MPP collaboration or the wider

VR community. The results: 60 job interviews, 22 hires, and four on-the-job training opportunities.

A highlight of the career fair was when Kim Peck, director of VRS, named Savers Thrift Stores and Mall of America as employers of the year, recognizing them for their strong commitment to hiring and supporting people with disabilities.



## Christopher — A Job With a Future

Christopher Smith traveled to Siberia last March to compete in the World Deaf Cross Country Skiing Championship. Deaf from birth, Christopher is now in his mid-30s, a world-competitive athlete, and a machinist at JEM Technical, a manufacturing company in Orono. And there's an interesting connection between the job and the skiing. Less than a year after hiring Christopher, the company permitted him to take a leave of absence to compete in the cold Siberian winter.

Real and perceived barriers to employment nearly caused Christopher to give up, says Susan Kiefer, a VR counselor specializing in deaf and hard-of-hearing services in St. Paul. It's not that Christopher wasn't qualified. He had completed machine skills training at St. Paul College, but it took him six long and sometimes discouraging years to do it. Although he had acquired a lot of classroom knowledge, he had no real-life experience to apply and develop his technical skills. He also encountered resistance by employers to hiring a deaf employee. His motivation and self-esteem decreased, and instead of seeking employment as a machinist he settled for a part-time job assembling bicycles and collecting Social Security disability benefits.

For nearly four years Christopher worked with a highly collaborative team to receive counseling to

overcome his acquired apathy about the job search process and rebuild his self-confidence. In addition to his counselor, he worked with Career Ventures, Inc, and attended job seeking classes. His family provided support and encouragement. He began sessions with VRS communication specialists, Mary-Beth Elchert and Diane Currie Richardson, who coached him on effective communication with potential employers and job interviewing techniques.

Ron Adams, a VRS placement coordinator, joined the team, along with Maureen McAvoy, a rehabilitation specialist. Maureen had established a relationship with JEM Technical and she connected Ron with the business leaders. Together they developed a 540-hour internship opportunity at JEM for Christopher — an internship that by November 2012 was turned into a permanent, full-time position paying \$18 an hour plus full benefits.

Today Christopher works as a CNC machinist, manufacturing heavy duty machinery parts. He says he loves the job and wants to advance in his career at JEM — and he's proud that he no longer relies on Social Security benefits. The job pays well, and he's got a future there.

For the company the feeling is mutual. Kari Scanlon, a human resources professional at JEM, says that any initial nervousness



the company might have had about hiring a deaf employee has disappeared. Christopher and his fellow employees communicate largely by writing notes — and Christopher has taught some of the others some basic sign language. Scanlon says there have been very few difficulties on the shop floor and the company looks forward to employing Christopher for a good long time.

And in another year's time, Christopher says he'll be skiing again in the deaf Olympics, seeking that elusive gold medal.

## Kevin and Angela — Thanks for the Help



**K**evin and Angela Ridgley, both in their 50s, had always held jobs. Most recently they worked together in a local store near their home, about an hour's drive from Duluth. When the store closed, on New Year's Eve 2011, it was the first time that either of them had been unemployed, and it would be the last time either of them would work for more than a year. It was a scary time for them.

Both of the Ridgleys have medical problems. Angie has multiple sclerosis, which causes fatigue and headaches, and Kevin has Marfan's

Syndrome, a heart disease that requires a pacemaker, defibrillator and three stints. He's experienced five heart attacks — as well as arthritis and many "mini-strokes."

In November 2012 the couple connected with Jeri Werner from Vocational Rehabilitation Services in Duluth and Chelsea Davidson at Goodwill Industries Duluth. Together they determined that the Ridgleys would benefit from a short-term assessment to determine how many hours and at what time of day would work best for them — and ultimately they went to work at Goodwill Industries.

When the assessment period ended, Angela continued with Goodwill working in their store while Kevin was offered a position at Bernick's, a beverage and vending company in Duluth. Angela was eventually offered a position at Goodwill as an office clerk in their supported employment program. The job offers the flexible hours and scheduling that Angela needs to succeed.

Bernick's proved to be a perfect match for Kevin, as well. The company is able to accommodate his endurance levels and allow him to have the time off from work for doctor appointments and medical procedures. With the addition of a Supported Employment supplement to his employment plan, Kevin remains successfully employed.

Since Angela is dependent on Kevin for her transportation to and from work, Goodwill has accommodated their work schedules to coincide with each other. They also understand that when Kevin is unable to attend work, this will also affect Angela's ability to attend work.

In a letter to Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the Ridgleys wrote: "Now we enjoy going to work every day knowing that our hours aren't going to be cut due to a stroke or an MS flare-up. Thanks for the help...and for believing in us. Keep this program going. It works!"

### Organizational Vitality

The success of the Vocational Rehabilitation program rests on having well trained and engaged staff. This year's staff development activities continued to focus on motivational interviewing, a counseling approach that emphasizes strengthening the client's motivation

and commitment to change. Additionally, Vocational Rehabilitation Services managers and supervisors participated in a federally funded training program designed to expand their capacity to provide clinical supervision in motivational interviewing.

## Who VR Serves

- 19,535 people with disabilities received services from the Vocational Rehabilitation program in FFY 2013.
- 67 percent of those served by Vocational Rehabilitation had three or more serious functional limitations. An additional 23 percent of the VR caseload had two serious functional limitations.
- There were 7,721 new applicants this year.
- 33 percent of all VR participants report a serious mental illness.
- 41.5 percent of those accepted for service in 2013 were transition-aged youth, age 16 through 24.
- At application, 32 percent of VR participants were receiving Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Insurance or a combination of both.

## VR Outcomes

- This year 2,738 Vocational Rehabilitation participants obtained employment, up 248 from 2012.
- Of all who obtained employment, 19.5 percent received employment supports.
- The average hourly wage for participants earning above minimum wage without long-term job supports is \$11.41.
- 99.5 percent of those who obtained employment earned above minimum wage. The 12 VR participants earning less than minimum wage have VR services that will assist them in working towards competitive wages.

## Return on Investment

- For every \$1.00 VR spends on services, case management, and administration, \$8.89 goes back into Minnesota's economy through wages earned by VRS participants. The return on investment would be even larger if the resulting reduction in public benefits and increased income tax revenue was factored in.
- Upon acceptance, VR participants earned an average of \$29.00 per week. Upon successful closure, VR participants earned an average of \$329 per week. Individuals employed after receiving VR services earned a combined total of \$902,000 dollars per week.

# Vocational Rehabilitation at a Glance

## Placements by Type of Employment 2013

	2011	2012	2013	Percent of 2013 Placements	Wage	Hours Worked Per Week
Employment Without Supports	1,988	2,023	2,183	79.5%	\$11.31	29
Employment With Supports	462	446	539	19.5%	\$9.42	25
Self-employment	27	21	16	1.0%	\$22.86	22
Total	2,477	2,490	2,738	100.0%		

## Consumers Served by Cultural/Ethnic Group 2013

Percent of Total MN Population <sup>1</sup>	Cultural/Ethnic Group	Percent of Caseload	Percent Obtaining Employment
1.0%	American Indian	2.5%	1.8%
4.2%	Asian	2.2%	1.8%
5.3%	Black or African American	13.1%	10.5%
4.9%	Hispanic/Latino <sup>2</sup>	3.5%	3.4%
0.0%	Pacific Islander	0.4%	0.3%

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

<sup>2</sup>Duplicate Count.

## The VR Caseload: What are the Major Categories of Disability?

Primary Disability Group	2011		2012		2013		
	Participants	% of Caseload	Participants	% of Caseload	Participants	% of Caseload	% of Total Placements
Serious Mental Illness	6,055	33.0%	6,330	33.0%	6,464	33.0%	32.5%
Learning Disability	3,801	20.0%	3,922	20.0%	3,880	20.0%	21.5%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	1,308	7.0%	1,480	8.0%	1,659	8.5%	6.5%
Developmental Cognitive Disabilities	1,426	8.0%	1,404	7.0%	1,348	7.0%	8.0%
Orthopedic/Neurological Impairments	1,122	6.0%	1,119	6.0%	1,094	6.0%	6.0%
Deaf/Hearing Loss	755	4.0%	814	4.0%	836	4.0%	5.5%
Traumatic Brain Injury/Stroke	770	4.0%	740	4.0%	771	4.0%	3.5%
Cerebral Palsy	299	2.0%	296	2.0%	315	1.5%	1.5%
Chemical Dependency	366	2.0%	335	2.0%	315	1.5%	1.5%
Arthritis & Rheumatism	274	1.5%	284	1.5%	293	1.5%	1.5%
Epilepsy	154	1.0%	164	1.0%	181	1.0%	1.0%
Spinal Cord Injury	155	1.0%	151	1.0%	156	1.0%	0.5%

## Competitive Employment\* Placements 2013

Occupation	Number of Consumers	Average Hourly Wage	Average Hours per Week	Average Weekly Wage
Clerical/Sales	735	\$9.76	28	\$280
Healthcare: support and service	316	\$10.41	27	\$285
Industrial Trades	390	\$11.42	35	\$418
Misc. Occupations	215	\$11.10	31	\$350
Professional/Technical/Managerial	361	\$17.85	32	\$570
Service	709	\$8.90	25	\$226
Total	2,726			

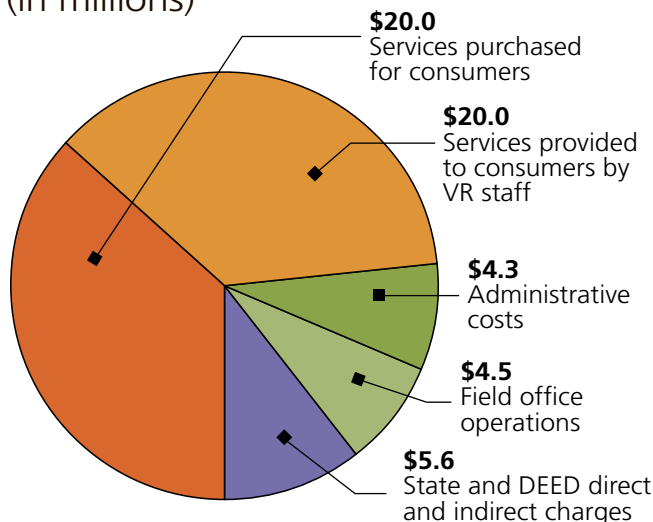
\*Competitive employment is defined as work typically found in the community with wages and benefits commensurate to other employees.

Twelve participants found employment below minimum wage, but are working towards competitive employment.

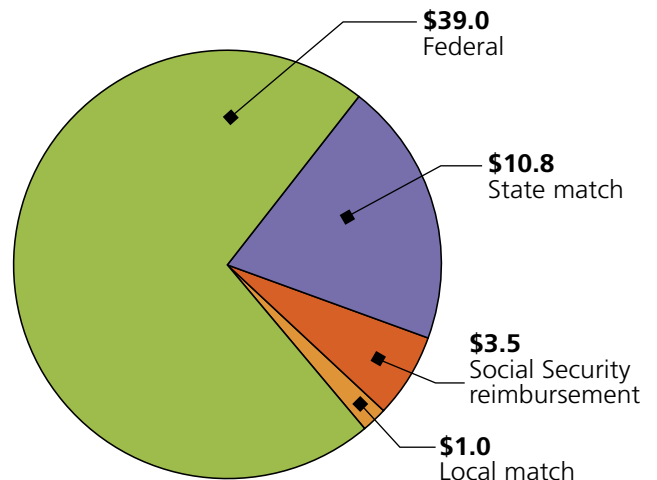
## Top Six 2013 Vocational Rehabilitation Referral Sources

Referral Source	Percentage
Educational Institutions	35.0%
Self Referral	25.0%
Workforce Centers	8.0%
Community Rehabilitation Program	8.0%
State or Local Government	5.0%
Health Care	5.0%

## VR Expenditures (in millions)



## VR Funding Sources (in millions)





# Matthew Collins — VR/IL Collaboration

**M**atthew Collins is enrolled in a two-year program at Anoka-Ramsey Community College. When he finishes he'll transfer to the University of Minnesota to complete a four-year degree and eventually pursue an information technology career with a nonprofit organization.

A severe panic disorder — agoraphobia — had kept Matthew from leaving his apartment for several years, and education wasn't his top priority when he ventured out to see a counselor at the Anoka County Vocational Rehabilitation Services office in Blaine. He wanted a technology job. He had plenty of practical, technical experience — mostly from working freelance and online from his apartment — but he had no real credentials. Those require education and training. Plus, he had a load of debt from a previous college loan, recurring health problems, housing and transportation issues, and a lot of practical questions about how to proceed.

Matthew was a prime candidate for receiving services through an innovative partnership between Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Minnesota's Centers for Independent Living. The vision of the VR/IL Collaboration is "to build local service capacity in mutual partnership to advance the employment and independent



living of Minnesotans who require both vocational rehabilitation and independent living to achieve their goals for working and living in the community."

Through the collaboration, Matthew Collins received VR services from his counselor, Kaity Jacobs, and from an independent living specialist, Hallie Ramsey, from the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living in St. Paul. Together they put together a successful plan that included career counseling and practical independent living skills training — a collaboration that helped Matthew achieve self-sufficiency and stability, and ultimately to embark on his journey toward an education, a career, and independence.

You can see a short video about Matthew Collins and his experience with the VR/IL Collaboration here: <http://youtu.be/pref3dF1dFw>

**T**he Vocational Rehabilitation/Independent Living collaboration brings staff from Minnesota's eight Centers for Independent Living into VRS offices to provide independent living skills training to VR clients. Six years after it began as a time-limited demonstration project with an uncertain future, the unique collaboration is now firmly in place. From the beginning, in 2007, it was understood that the first three years of the collaboration would be a time-limited demonstration project and that the future of the collaboration would depend on the success of local projects and their impact on employment. Today the VR/IL collaboration is recognized as an effective and essential part of the provision of services for individuals who require both vocational rehabilitation and independent living services to meet their goals for working and living in the community. In 2013, 1,510 VR clients received an average of six hours of independent living counseling and the employment rate for this group was 8 percent higher than the rate of consumers who did not receive the service.



The State Rehabilitation Council convenes two public forums each year, fulfilling two of the council's key responsibilities. The forums provide an opportunity to gather grassroots commentary and input regarding Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation program, and they encourage participation in public conversation about matters of interest and importance in the arena of disability employment. This year, as in most years, the forums were sponsored jointly with several other statewide or regional disability organizations.

JUNE 19

## Joint Forum on Minnesota's Olmstead Plan

The first opportunity for public input on the draft of Minnesota's new Olmstead Plan came at a special joint forum on June 19 in St. Paul. The forum was convened by four statewide disability councils — State Rehabilitation Council-General, State Rehabilitation Council-Blind, Statewide Independent Living Council, and Minnesota State Council on Disability — to collect comment through public testimony and small group discussion. More than 150 people attended the conference in person and an additional 83 followed the discussion via live streaming on the internet.

Minnesota's Olmstead Plan was written by the Olmstead Subcabinet, established in January by Governor Mark Dayton's executive order. The subcabinet, which consisted of leadership from eight state agencies, was charged with developing and implementing a comprehensive

plan supporting freedom of choice and opportunity for people with disabilities. To view the Minnesota Olmstead Plan, go to <http://tinyurl.com/lh8rva6>.

SEPTEMBER 25

## Rochester Joint Forum

A joint forum on September 25 in Rochester focused on the booming economic landscape and emerging employment trends in southeastern Minnesota, particularly the Rochester area. The forum also explored the employment challenges and opportunities facing students and young adults with disabilities. Thank you to Rochester Mayor Ardelle F. Brede, Labor Market Specialist Brent Pearson, Guy Finne of Mayo Clinic, the Vocational Rehabilitation transition specialists and the youth panel that helped create this enlightening day. The forum was co-sponsored with the Rochester Vocational Rehabilitation Office, the Southeast Minnesota Center for Independent Living, and the Statewide Independent Living Council.



# SRC and VRS Joint Activities set Roadmap for 2014 to 2016

It is the State Rehabilitation Council's responsibility to advise and assist Vocational Rehabilitation Services with statewide comprehensive needs assessments. This year five SRC members participated on the VRS committee that identified the following needs for the Vocational Rehabilitation Services program:

- Transition Services
- Employment Preparation
- Employer Relationships
- Long Term Supports
- Communication

The SRC and VRS used the needs assessment as the framework for developing strategic goals and priorities to guide the Vocational Rehabilitation program for the next three years. Two SRC members participated and provided input on this important committee, which adopted four strategic goals as part of the 2014 State Plan. The four goals are:

**Goal 1:** MORE JOBS, BETTER JOBS, resulting in expanded job opportunities and improved employment outcomes for Minnesotans with disabilities.

**Goal 2:** ORGANIZATIONAL VITALITY, resulting in a vibrant organization providing the best possible services to Minnesotans with disabilities.

**Goal 3:** EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS, resulting in the establishment and strengthening of system-wide collaborative partnerships, including the State Rehabilitation Council.

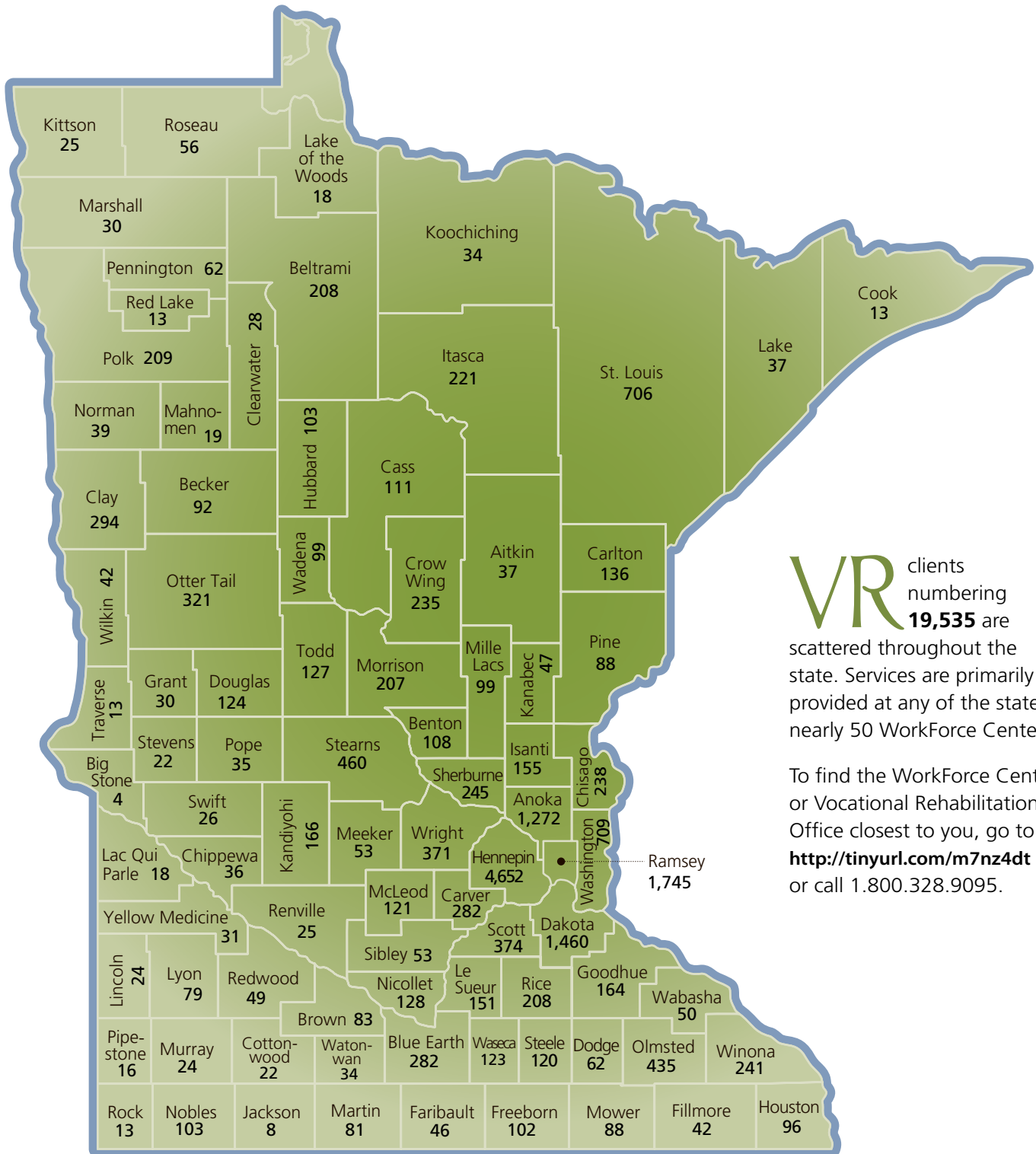
**Goal 4:** EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT, resulting in long-term, enduring, mutually satisfying relationships and increased employment for VRS customers.

Each goal has measurable objectives that the State Rehabilitation Council will use to measure progress over the next three years

The State Rehabilitation Council meets 10 times a year to discuss issues and shape policies that guide the state VR program. Council members are appointed by the governor and represent a broad cross-section of Minnesotans who have a personal or professional stake in employment services for people with disabilities. As described in federal law under the Rehabilitation Act, the council's tasks are as follows:

- Through advice given to the VR program, help shape policy.
- In partnership with VR, participate in strategic planning and evaluations of VR program effectiveness.
- Spearhead customer satisfaction and effectiveness studies.
- Assist with needs assessments and the development of the state plan.
- Study disability/employment issues and broaden citizen input by hosting public forums (see page 9).
- Prepare an annual report on VR program performance and present it to Minnesota's citizens.

# Vocational Rehabilitation Participants by County



**VR** clients numbering **19,535** are scattered throughout the state. Services are primarily provided at any of the state's nearly 50 WorkForce Centers.

To find the WorkForce Center or Vocational Rehabilitation Office closest to you, go to <http://tinyurl.com/m7nz4dt> or call 1.800.328.9095.

Out of State..... 77



# The Council Seeks Public Input

**T**he State Rehabilitation Council is always seeking applicants to represent various constituencies on the council.

In addition to advocating for the Vocational Rehabilitation program, we offer you the opportunity to learn about the many things necessary to run a program: budgets, customer satisfaction surveys, need assessments, strategic planning, program assessment and, most important, leadership development.

Consider attending a meeting. Our meetings are open to the public and we set aside time at every meeting for public comment. For more information about our meetings or the work of the council, go to <http://tinyurl.com/k5y735b> or contact Gail Lundeen at [Gail.Lundeen@state.mn.us](mailto:Gail.Lundeen@state.mn.us) (651.259.7364).

Council applications are available at the Secretary of State's website. [www.sos.state.mn.us/](http://www.sos.state.mn.us/)

**I**n the next five years, 20 percent of Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation counselors are slated to retire. If you are looking for a career that helps people with disabilities become part of the economic mainstream, consider Vocational Rehabilitation counseling. For more information go to <http://tinyurl.com/kpk3e6c> or contact [James.Allison@state.mn.us](mailto:James.Allison@state.mn.us)

## State Rehabilitation Council Member Roster

### **CHRISTINE BAUMAN**

Mankato  
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

### **SCOTT BERSCHIED**

St. Michael  
Business, Industry or Labor

### **EMMA CORRIE**

Saint Paul  
Business, Industry or Labor

### **AL HAUGE**

Roseville  
Department of Education

### **MICKY KYLER**

Crookston  
Statewide Independent Living Council

### **GLORIA LAFRINIERE**

White Earth Nation American Indian  
Vocational Rehabilitation Director

### **CLAYTON LIEND**

Keewatin — Community  
Rehabilitation Program

### **HECTOR MATASCASTILLO**

Saint Paul  
Advocate

### **ANDREA MOORE**

Bloomington  
Parent Training and  
Information Center

### **KIMBERLEY PECK**

DEED — Saint Paul Vocational  
Rehabilitation Services — Director

### **SHERRI RADEMACHER**

Melrose  
Former VR Participant

### **CLAIRE REEVE**

Rogers  
Business, Industry and Labor

### **ANNE ROBERTSON**

Client Assistance Project  
Minneapolis

### **CHUCK RYAN**

Saint Michael  
Business, Industry and Labor

### **JOHN SCHATZLEIN**

Bloomington  
Former VR Participant

### **BOB WAGNER**

Saint Paul  
Former VR Participant

### **NICHOLAS WILKIE**

Saint Paul  
Advocate

