

INDIANA'S COMMISSION ON
REHABILITATION SERVICES

YEAR IN
REVIEW
2017

FFY 2017 Annual Report



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

Message from the Director _____	1
The Commission on Rehabilitation Services and VR Services _____	3
Where Are They Now? _____	4
Spotlight on Client Success! _____	6
• Justin Mann – Dreams Really Do Come True! _____	7
• Brandon Anderson – Never Give Up _____	9
VR Clients Receive Awards at IN-APSE Conference _____	12
• Pamela Shireman _____	13
• Yulia Reynolds _____	14
Accomplishments _____	15
2018 Commission Members _____	22
Commission Responsibilities _____	23
Contact the Commission _____	25

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Message from the Director

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge and thank every member of the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) staff as well as the Commission on Rehabilitation Services and those we do business with each day, for their excellent work and achievements during 2017. The collective efforts of everyone enabled the BRS program to accomplish many critical program goals.

BRS and key stakeholders recognized the need to improve the quality of employment outcomes for individuals exiting the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) system. With this identified need, BRS implemented numerous strategies to work toward improving the quality and quantity of competitive, integrated employment outcomes. These strategies included an evaluation of the VR employment services model which was implemented in 2015, to continuously monitor the quality and quantity of employment outcomes; an ongoing partnership with the Indiana University, Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC) to revise the training curriculum for employment specialists; partnering with IIDC to provide individualized technical assistance to Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) to address areas of improvement in the delivery of employment services; and partnering with HANDS in Autism to develop a series of three-day hands-on workshops to assist CRP staff to develop critical foundational skills. BRS also entered into contracts with 47 CRPs for Establishment projects to improve capacity for the provision of quality employment services including supported employment, with the objective of enhancing CRP staffing resources and training. ***These efforts contributed to an increase in the number of VR participants obtaining employment, as well as an increase in the average hourly wages of those who were successfully employed!*** Great work to all!

BRS initiated a plan to modernize its technology systems to improve efficiencies for both the program and vendors, which will have a positive impact on customer service. BRS secured contracts to begin development and implementation of a new case management system as well as the VR Claims Payment System Vendor Portal to streamline claim payment processing.

BRS continued efforts to implement and expand several new requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), such as the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities, and career counseling and information and referral services to individuals employed at sub-minimum wage. Much effort was also focused on meeting expansive new federal reporting requirements including in depth case reviews of more than 19,000 cases and increased collection of data from VR participants. A very

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

dedicated team of BRS staff worked day and night to complete this task and their efforts are much appreciated.

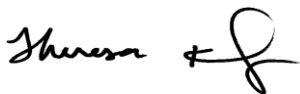
Implementation of an order of selection in 2017 also brought about program change. After thoughtful deliberation and much planning, the order of selection was implemented August 1, 2017. While this was a difficult decision, it was a necessary decision to ensure that available resources followed the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities first.

With the implementation of order of selection came new opportunities and new challenges. Collaborative efforts with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) became even more robust in 2017. DWD and BRS co-hosted a roundtable summit in July in preparation for implementation of the order of selection, to bring together key representatives from state and federal organizations who may be in a position to expand services to individuals with disabilities. Following the summit, statewide training on available resources and information was provided to WorkOne staff to help them effectively assist with the anticipated increase in Hoosiers with disabilities accessing WorkOne centers following implementation of the order of selection.

While there will always be new challenges, opportunities, and program changes in the VR system, I hope we all agree that awareness and belief in the potential of each VR participant remains unchanged. Every day VR participants come into the program with unique abilities and attributes that drive their success. It is the important and unique partnership between skilled and compassionate VR staff and VR participants that breathe life into the BRS program and truly define our success.

Our 2016 annual report, entitled *Celebrating Our Success!* showcased four VR success stories. In our 2017 annual report entitled *Year in Review*, we re-visit with those individuals to see where they are now. This year's annual report will also feature new success stories that remind us of the impact that VR assistance has on the lives of real people, who just happen to have a disability, on their quest to achieve their employment dreams. Their stories are examples of why the VR program is one of the most empowering government programs in our country. I am proud to be a part of it and to work with all of you!

Best wishes in 2018!



Theresa Koleszar, Director
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

THE COMMISSION ON REHABILITATION SERVICES AND VR SERVICES

The Commission on Rehabilitation Services and VR Services

MISSION STATEMENT

To assist persons with disabilities in achieving employment and independence.

VALUES STATEMENT

VALUE 1 - We value persons with disabilities and their equal opportunity to maximize employment, independence, and, to fully participate in their rehabilitation program.

VALUE 2 - We value quality services for persons with disabilities to achieve employment and independence.

VALUE 3 - We value staff as Vocational Rehabilitation Services' greatest resource.

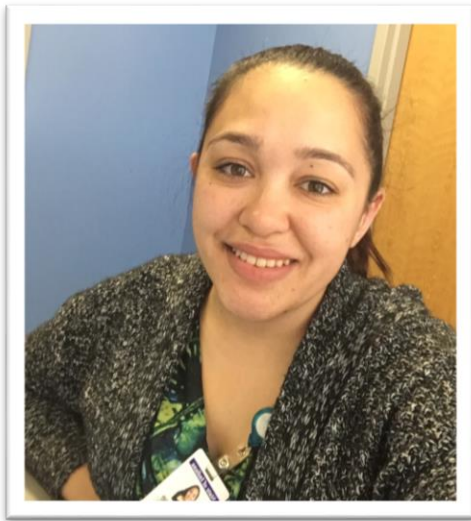
A SHARED VISION WITH VR SERVICES

Focusing on Long-Term Employment Success for Hoosiers with Disabilities
In Partnership with VR Services.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Where Are They Now?

Last year we featured four incredible individuals who shared their stories and their employment success at the 2016 VR Symposium during a panel discussion.



Meganne Wheeler

Happy Anniversary! Meganne has completed her first year of working as a VR Counselor and is well into working on her second year. She is a VR Counselor Intake Specialist for her office. Meganne told us *“I find myself referring back to my time as a client of VR, and I am constantly looking for ways to improve, from doing intakes, to working with continuing caseloads, and to addressing the questions and concerns of clients, their families, and the many vendors we work with.”*



Jimmy Kennedy

Wow, 2017 was a big year for Jimmy! Getting his driver’s license, graduating from UIndy with *summa cum laude* honors and losing 20 lbs. Jimmy is now working for Cumulus Media in Indianapolis as part of their programming department. Cumulus Media is the largest pure-play radio company in the US and one of the nation’s top providers of local marketing solutions. When we checked with Jimmy this past fall he stated *“I am looking forward to putting in the time and effort to advance myself and keeping a positive attitude!”*

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Brian Christian

Another year in the books! Brian is still a licensed vendor through Business Enterprise Program and continues his work at the Pendleton Correctional Industrial Facility. He was also nominated by his peers to serve on the Indiana Committee of Licensed Managers, a representation of managers in the Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program. The Committee

members actively participate with the state licensing agency in major administrative decisions and policy development decisions affecting the overall administration of the State's blind vending program. We checked in on Brian he told us, "Work and my two daughters in high school keep me busy!"



Judge G. George Pancol

Change can be a good thing! In 2017, the courts of Indiana went paperless. Instead of staff reading filings to Judge Pancol they can be sent to him as they are filed. A new system was developed allowing him to become more efficient. He is still working with his employment specialist when there are new changes. He states "*I am learning something new every month and I don't know what I would do with my time if I didn't enjoy my work so much!*"

SPOTLIGHT ON CLIENT SUCCESS!

Spotlight on Client Success!

This year we focus the spotlight on two outstanding individuals, Justin Mann and Brandon Anderson, who were able to achieve their employment goals with the assistance of VR and other local partners. We also commend all of the VR staff, including Tina Sills and Shelby Jennett, as well as staff from all of the partners who provided critical services and guidance to these two amazing gentlemen during their rehabilitation process.

Thank you Justin Mann and Brandon Anderson for allowing us to share your stories!



JUSTIN MANN – DREAMS REALLY DO COME TRUE!

Justin Mann – Dreams Really Do Come True!



Former VR consumer, Justin Mann, currently lives in sunny Orlando, Florida. If that's not enough, Justin is also employed at Walt Disney World! Justin's VR Counselor, Tina Sills, from the Kokomo VR office, stated that when she first met Justin, she asked him what his dream job would be if he could do anything in the world without limitations. He immediately told her he wanted to work at Walt Disney World.

Justin applied for an internship at Walt Disney World and was accepted. He began his college program at Frontierland Merchandise in the Magic Kingdom in August 2015. Justin received glowing references from his co-workers and supervisors. In May 2016, Justin was hired by the Disney Company as a part time room service cashier at Disney's Yacht & Beach Club. He became a full time employee in August 2016.

Justin continues to excel in his dream career path. He was promoted to a Relief Private Dining Coordinator in December 2016. He explained that his job is equivalent

to an assistant manager at the location. His responsibilities include assisting restaurant guests with food selections, taking their food orders, and ensuring their satisfaction with the Disney experience. Justin may be called upon to do some food preparation and also handles cash deposits.

When Justin was asked what he likes most about his job, he said "I love the interaction with guests who stay with us." In looking to the future, Justin said he would like to continue to work at Walt Disney World and hopes to become a front desk manager at one of the Walt Disney World resorts.

Before moving to Florida, Justin lived in Wabash, Indiana. He got acquainted with VR while in middle school and describes it as the opportunity "to set me up in a path for my future."



JUSTIN MANN – DREAMS REALLY DO COME TRUE!

Justin has a visual impairment, but has never let it place limits on his goals. When asked what assistance provided by VR has been the most beneficial to him, Justin replied, “bioptic driving training.” In addition to bioptic driving training, VR provided assistive technology and assistance with the cost of attendance for training which resulted in Justin obtaining an Associate’s Degree in Human Services.

Justin stated that the assistance provided by VR was “wonderful.” He said Tina is an amazing VR Counselor and made a tremendous impact on his future.

When Tina was asked about the experience in working with Justin, she stated “I was always impressed with Justin’s optimism and his resilience.” Tina added that she is very happy that Justin loves his job, and she has no doubt that he will continue to excel.

Most recently, Justin went on the Disney Wonder cruise, which included one day at sea and additional time spent at Nassau Bahamas and Disney's Private Island Castaway Cay.

Justin stated that the Disney cruise was “absolutely amazing.” additionally stating “Although it was great, I am happy to be back at Walt Disney World!”



“All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.”

Walt Disney

BRANDON ANDERSON – NEVER GIVE UP

Brandon Anderson – Never Give Up



It has now been over one year since Brandon Anderson's motorcycle accident, which resulted in an above the knee amputation due to an unexpected infection. Having a life-long dream of being a firefighter, Brandon's successful career as a Lieutenant with Fishers Fire Station 93 was abruptly interrupted on August 12, 2016, but never dismissed.

Shelby Jennett, VR Counselor in the Columbus VR office, recalls her first meeting with Brandon and his wife, Neshia, which occurred on December 22, 2016. She said she knew she had to work quickly to ensure that Brandon could return to full duty as a Lieutenant firefighter. "I was encouraged by the support that Brandon's fire station team offered him by giving up their sick and vacation days for him while he recovered from his accident. Brandon came into this intake with hope and motivation to get back on the fire truck. His motivation moved me to advocate for him throughout the VR process."

BRANDON ANDERSON – NEVER GIVE UP

Shelby explained, “After discussing Brandon’s prosthetic limb options with Patrick from Kenney Orthopedics, I knew that VR had to purchase an additional limb that could be stationed in Brandon’s fire boot at all times so that he would be able to quickly take off his leg (covered by insurance) and pin it to his stationary limb in his boot (purchased by VR) in order to meet timeliness requirements of a firefighter. Within less than 3 months we were able to purchase Brandon’s additional limb in order for him to begin his physical therapy and practice his response time to emergency calls.”

Brandon spent a month in the hospital and underwent 10 surgeries. He returned to light duty January 17, 2017 and was released on May 30, 2017 to begin retraining to resume his firefighting career. Training included a physical agility test with eight different exercises; walking stairs with full gear; carrying hose up and down stairs; raising ladders; carrying tools; completing search patterns; dragging a dummy; completing a sledgehammer swing; a ceiling breach and more. The tests are completed by firefighters every year. Brandon also underwent retraining for EMT calls and live training such as auto extrication and forcible entry.

VR provided the Ottobock X3 prosthetic, which is rugged and technologically advanced enough to meet the demands of a firefighter’s job. It is a one-of-a-kind product that has a microprocessor which reads pressure and how Brandon is moving. It allows him to climb stairs, step over objects, and go up and down different terrains. Brandon has an extra prosthetic leg fitted in his bunker pants at the fire station. When the station receives a call, he switches out prosthetics.

Brandon acknowledges the importance of the additional state-of-the-art prosthetic device for his fire boot that was provided by VR to enable him to meet the required firefighter response time-lines. When asked about his VR experience, Brandon is very quick to comment on his VR Counselor and the services provided by VR. He said “Shelby has been awesome and I thank her for all she has done to help me in a time of need. VR was very easy to work with throughout the process.”

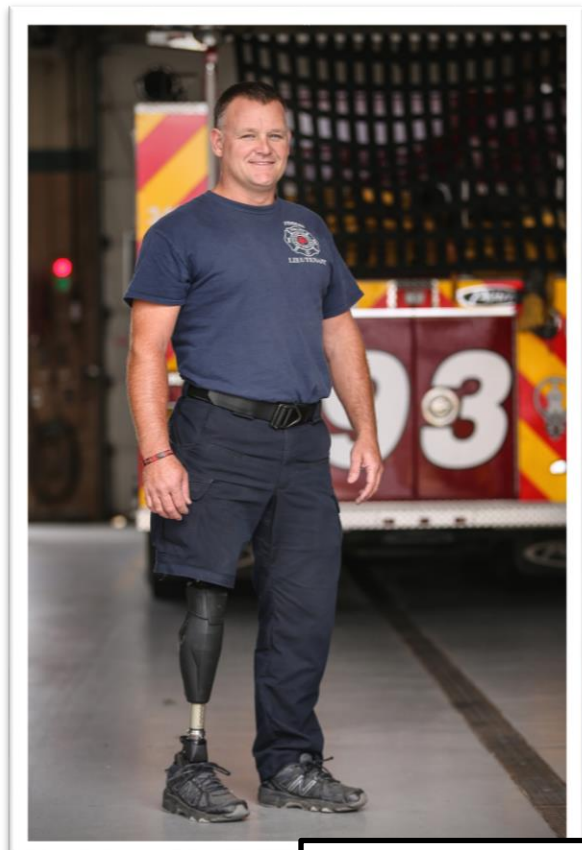


Photo by: Jenna Watson/IndyStar

BRANDON ANDERSON – NEVER GIVE UP

Brandon explained that through their research, it was discovered that he is the first career fire-fighter to go back to work as a person with an above the knee amputation. On June 26, 2017, Brandon experienced his first day back with his crew. He recalls that he was nervous about his first day back at the firehouse, but it was also a huge relief and sense of accomplishment to be back to work in less than a year after the amputation.

"If I can share where I've been and what I've come through...I can help..."

Brandon Anderson

Today, Brandon is not one to ever look back, but he does share his story as a source of information and support for other firefighters who have experienced an amputation. He maintains contact with firefighters across the county. His experience is both inspirational and affirmative to others to "never give up." Brandon stated "If I can share where I've been and what I've come through ... I can help them." Brandon stated that there truly is a "brotherhood" among firefighters.

He remembers the concern and encouragement given to him and his family throughout his recovery process. "I am so proud and honored to be a part of this brotherhood of firefighters."

Camping, hiking, boating, hunting, working on the family farm, and hanging out with family and friends are among Brandon's interests and activities when not at Fire Station 93. He and his wife have two wonderful sons, ages 13 and 16, who keep them busy with their school and extracurricular activities. "My wife and sons have been a great support system throughout this journey. My hope is that my boys have a whole new understanding of what it means to never give up, no matter how difficult the situation."

VR PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE AWARDS AT IN-APSE CONFERENCE

VR Participants Receive Awards at IN-APSE Conference

In November 2017, IN-APSE hosted their 27th annual conference. This year's conference theme was "Picture the Possibilities" and included a panel discussion, breakout sessions and keynote speakers. A feature of the second day of the conference is the IN-APSE awards presentation. This year, four awards were presented – the Employer Award, Professional Award, Personal Achievement Award, and the Consumer Advocacy Award. The Personal Achievement Award recognizes an individual who has gained meaningful work through supported employment, who has contributed substantially to his or her employer's enterprise, and who has achieved a more empowered lifestyle as a result. This year's Personal Achievement Award resulted in a tie and two awards were presented to two outstanding VR participants.



PAMELA SHIREMAN



Left to right: Marleen Martin-Employment Specialist for Easterseals Crossroads, Pamela Shireman, Theresa Koleszar – Director, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and Tina Skeel – President, IN-APSE.

Pamela Shireman

Pam has overcome major setbacks in her life to achieve successful employment and independence, including an abusive relationship, deaths in the family, homelessness, and loss of previous jobs. Pam was raised by her father after her mother left when she was two years old. She graduated from a high school in LaGrange, Texas. Five years ago, Pam's father passed away after a battle with cancer. Pam moved to Indiana and had a difficult time making it, especially the last few years. When she was suddenly laid off from her employer she lost everything she had. She was homeless and sleeping in her car with her three cats. During the winter months, she would seek shelter in abandoned houses. Pam realized it was time to get help and sought out assistance from VR. This is when she met Karen Jeter, her VR Counselor. Pam said she has always had a difficult time with comprehension and reads at a third grade level. Pam began working with Marlene Martin, an Employment Specialist with Easterseals Crossroads. Marlene worked with Pam on job development for a long time and has been witness to Pam's struggle as she moved out of homelessness and out of an abusive relationship. Pam is now employed at Fort Benjamin Harrison in the janitorial services division and living independently!

YULIA REYNOLDS



Left to right: Theresa Koleszar – Director, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Macaleigh Reynolds, Yulia Reynolds and Tina Skeel – IN-APSE President.

Yulia Reynolds

Yulia was born and raised in an orphanage in the Ukraine where she was subjected to unthinkable living conditions with little to no medical attention or education. She would only speak to her twin sister, and they had their own language to communicate back and forth.

Yulia and her twin sister were adopted when they were nine years old and brought to the United States. She weighed 39 pounds and was barely three feet tall. Yulia relied on her sister for everything. Her twin sister was her protector, her voice and her

leader. It took many years of progress but she no longer relies upon her twin to be her voice. She no longer feels the need to follow in her twin's footsteps, she now follows her own path.

Yulia has overcome much, learning a new language, learning to eat a normal diet, various social skills and going to school for the first time. She has had to learn to trust and rely on others, letting go of some of the survival skills learned when she was younger.

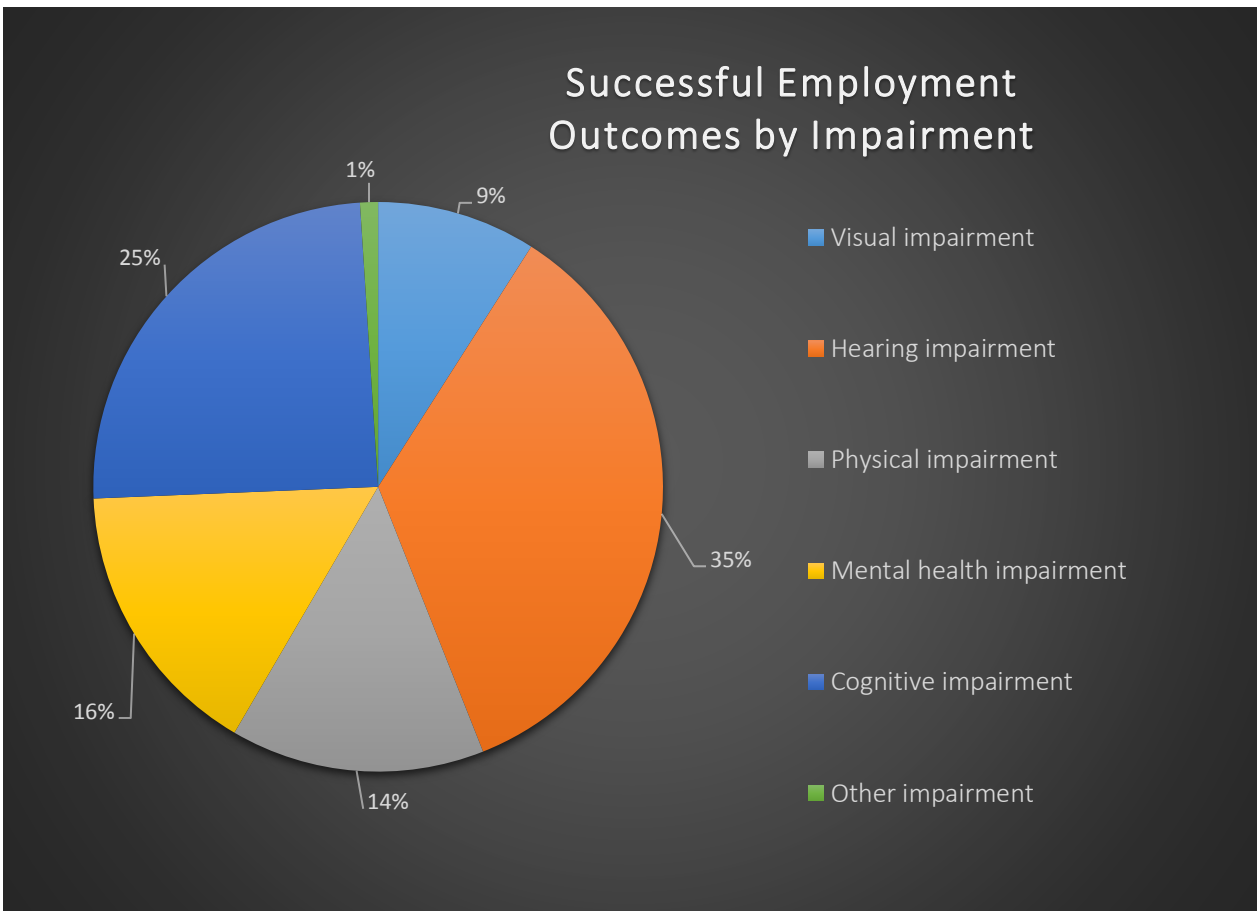
She is a bright, charming and kind hearted young lady who continues to work hard on learning new things, challenging herself, and making her mother and sister proud. She tries very hard to advocate for herself and others in and out of her work environment.

Yulia was placed in an internship through Sycamore Services at IU Health West Hospital. She impressed hospital staff and was extended an offer of employment. Yulia works in the dietary department doing dishes and helping the kitchen staff. Tess Kunkle with Sycamore Services tells us "Yulia is an excellent employee, never calls in or asks off except for family trips. Yulia is always willing to help her co-workers even when she has had a long day herself. She loves to make people smile and make their day better in some way. Yulia is an inspiration and a role model for anyone who is lucky enough to know her."

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishments

- In 2017, VR assisted 3,730 individuals with disabilities in achieving their employment goals, in jobs that paid on average, \$13.97 per hour. This represents an increase in the number of participants who obtained employment compared to 2016, and a 6% increase in average hourly wages earned by individuals placed in the prior year!



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

BRS continued to implement and expand new federal requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) including expansion of pre-employment transition services; career counseling and information and referral services to individuals employed or seeking employment in subminimum wage settings; and enhanced partnerships with WIOA core partners, including the Department of Workforce Development.

- Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Pre-ETS are available to students with disabilities age 14-22 who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services. Pre-ETS activities include job exploration counseling; work based learning experiences; counseling on enrollment in post-secondary training opportunities; workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and instruction in self-advocacy including peer mentoring.

VR has made great progress on expanding Pre-ETS statewide in 2017 through several strategies, including:

- Contracted providers carrying out Pre-ETS have expanded services to additional schools and counties and are currently providing Pre-ETS to students with disabilities in 71 counties. Additional expansion is planned for 2018 and it is anticipated that Pre-ETS activities will be widely available in all of Indiana's 92 counties by early 2018.
- VR Youth Services staff, along with assistance from the VR Director of Business and Community Engagement, completed two VR Mentoring Days this past fall. These days consisted of tours of local businesses, along with discussion of workplace readiness skills. Speakers from Self-Advocates of Indiana as well as the local WorkOne centers also attended and spoke to the students about the importance of self-advocacy, and how to explore job options and other post-secondary opportunities at the local WorkOne. The first of these mentoring days was at Subaru of Indiana in Lafayette and the second at Primex Plastics in Richmond. They were well received by both students and educators and more mentoring days are planned for 2018.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

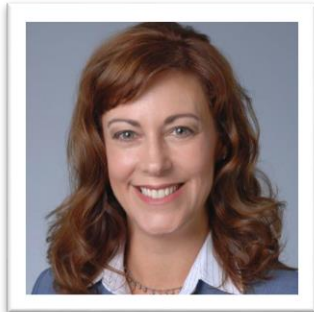


- For more information and to obtain contact information for the Pre-ETS provider in your area, please visit <http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2636.htm>
- Career Counseling and Information and Referral Services

VR partnered with the Arc of Indiana and Self-Advocates of Indiana to provide career counseling and information and referral services (CCIR) to individuals employed in sub-minimum wage settings. Self-advocates provided CCIR to approximately 4,000 individuals across the state. These activities are intended to educate individuals with disabilities employed in sub-minimum wage settings about resources available to them to pursue competitive, integrated employment. These activities will continue in 2018.
- Enhanced Collaboration with WIOA Core Partners

BRS and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) engaged in further collaborative efforts this past year, including negotiation of infrastructure funding agreements; development of an updated memorandum of understanding; and jointly conducting a Roundtable Summit and providing training on working with job seekers with disabilities. The BRS Director also continues to be active member of the State Workforce Innovation Council (SWIC) and several BRS staff are represented on SWIC task forces.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



On June 19, 2017, Dr. Jennifer Walthall, Secretary of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration welcomed representatives from federal and state programs to a Roundtable Summit co-hosted by BRS and DWD. Representatives from the 12 Indiana Workforce Development regions, higher education, veterans' organizations, public assistance programs, and others participated in this proactive convening of stakeholders that provided attendees with background on the VR program and informed them of the implementation of order of selection in August 2017. The discussion focused on how these changes could potentially impact these stakeholder organizations with an increase in referrals to their respective programs. Activities completed following the Roundtable Summit included provision of training, sharing of resources, and development of resource guides.



Order of Selection

Indiana made the difficult determination to implement an order of selection on August 1, 2017 due to a lack of sufficient resources to adequately serve all eligible individuals in the VR program. A State VR agency is required to implement an order of selection when it lacks sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals. The order of selection process is utilized to prioritize consumer services in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, which requires that individuals with the most significant disabilities be served first.

In preparation for the implementation of the order of selection, BRS developed and posted information and resources online to provide consumers and stakeholders with information about the order of selection process. A frequently asked questions document was developed and several meetings and webinars were conducted. BRS developed a listing of federal, state and local resources that may provide services or supports to individuals with disabilities who

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

are not prioritized to receive VR services. BRS also recorded a podcast with the Arc of Indiana to provide information about the impact order of selection has on current and future VR applicants. Resources can be viewed at <http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/5285.htm>.

Following the Roundtable Summit described above, BRS collaborated with DWD to conduct training sessions for WorkOne staff in each region to provide additional information about order of selection and the impact this may have on the local WorkOne centers. It was anticipated that the local WorkOne centers might experience an increase in individuals with disabilities seeking services as a result of BRS's implementation of the order of selection. Therefore, the training content included helpful information about serving job seekers with disabilities, such as disability etiquette and reasonable accommodations.

Employment Services

In 2017, BRS continued its formal evaluation of the VR employment service model which was implemented in July 2015. Three comprehensive evaluation reports are available online <http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/4976.htm>

In an effort to increase the staffing capacity, knowledge and skills of VR employment service providers, BRS entered into Establishment Projects with 47 VR employment service providers in April of 2017. The purpose of these projects is to enhance training and staffing capacity to improve the quality and quantity of competitive, integrated employment outcomes for VR consumers.

System Modernization

In 2017, BRS entered into a contract agreement for the development of a new VR Claims Payment System which will serve as a vendor portal for tracking and submission of claims. The portal is expected to go-live in 2018. Additionally, VR began working toward development of a modernized VR case management system, called 'AWARE.' This system is currently used by more than 30 state VR agencies across the country. AWARE is expected to go-live in 2019, replacing the current case management system which has been in place for the last 17 years.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Business and Community Engagement

Over the course of 2017, the Business and Community Engagement team introduced a new logo, updated informational materials and nearly doubled the social media following on Twitter and Facebook!



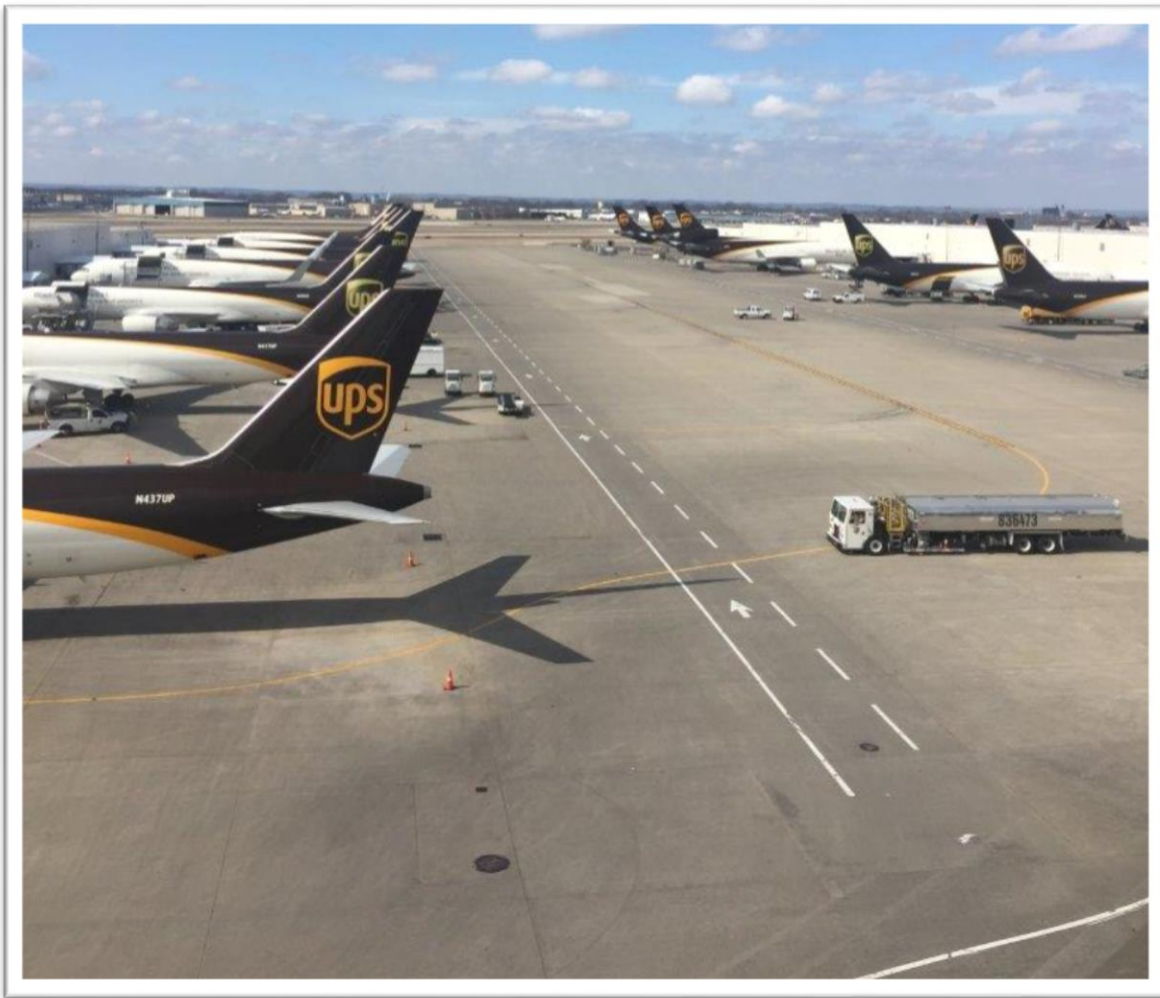
The Business and Community Engagement team continued their work of raising awareness and changing perceptions of employment for individuals with disabilities by attending and presenting at several conferences: IN-APSE Panel Presentation, Chicago BLN Disability Inclusion Summit, Indy Business Leadership Network kick-off, the 2017 Marion County Re-Entry Conference and the ARC Self-Advocates Statewide Conference.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Employer Partner Highlights

Toyota located in Princeton, Indiana, continues to develop and expand upon their diversity hiring initiative. The Business and Community Engagement team coordinated meetings between Toyota management and UPS Louisville WorldPort management. The group toured each respective facility and shared best practices. Particular attention was paid to the Louisville WorldPort Training Center that was developed for the purposes of training individuals with disabilities.

Continued collaboration with DWD occurred throughout 2017, including planning for new required federal data collection regarding business engagement efforts.



2018 COMMISSION MEMBERS

2018 Commission Members

Congratulations to all appointed commission members for 2018! Appointed commission members include both new and returning VR Commission members from last year. BRS looks forward to working with the VR Commission in 2018!

Dawn Adams, Indiana Disability Rights

Scott Beauchamp, Indianapolis Yellow Cab, Inc.

Tony Cross, The American Legion Department of Indiana

Kelsey Crowley, Self-Advocates of Indiana

Christine Dahlberg, Governor's Council for People with Disabilities

Nancy Davisson, Department of Workforce Development

Eric Heeter, Division of Mental Health and Addiction

Steve Henderson, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Tim Kirk, Knox County Arc

Theresa Koleszar, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

James Michaels, Bosma Enterprises

Richard Propes, Bureau of Development Disability Services

Karen Rusk, IN*SOURCE

David Spradley, National Alliance on Mental Illness

Daniel Stewart, Achieva Resources Corp. Inc.

Traci Taylor, Independent Living Center of Eastern Indiana

Ben Trockman, Old National Bank

Frederick Vaiana, Indiana Statewide Independent Living Council

Stephen Yockey, Department of Education

COMMISSION RESPONSIBILITIES

Commission Responsibilities

The Commission's responsibilities are outlined in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. Responsibilities include reviewing, analyzing, and advising the VR Services program regarding their performance related to eligibility, order of selection, the extent, scope and effectiveness of VR Services, and functions performed by VR Services that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve an employment outcome.

In partnership with the VR Services program, the Commission must:

- Develop, agree to, and review the state's goals and priorities;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the VR Services program and submit an annual report to the Rehabilitation Services Administration;
- Advise BRS in the development of the State Plan and the statewide needs assessment;
- To the extent feasible, review and analyze the effectiveness of and consumer satisfaction with VR Services functions, services provided by VR and others, and employment outcomes achieved by VR participants;
- Prepare and submit an annual report on the status of the VR Program, and make the report available to the public;
- To avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served, coordinate activities with the activities of other councils within the State;
- Provide for the coordination and the establishment of working relationships between BRS and the State Independent Living Council and the Centers for Independent Living; and
- Perform other functions that are determined appropriate and comparable to the State Rehabilitation Council's other functions, consistent with the purpose of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and its implementing regulations.

COMMISSION RESPONSIBILITIES

New Commission Responsibilities

On May 10, 2017, Indiana Governor Eric J. Holcomb signed Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) 390 into law. The passage of Indiana Senate Bill (SB) 390 “Employment First” legislation made Indiana one of 34 other states promoting employment as the first goal for people with disabilities. The Employment First bill makes competitive integrated employment the priority in Indiana’s disability service programs. As a result of Senate Bill 390, the VR Commission will have added responsibilities, as well as an expanded membership. Added responsibilities include identifying barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities, reviewing and recommending modifications to federal, state, and local policies concerning the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, and providing an annual report on the status of employment of individuals with disabilities.

CONTACT THE COMMISSION

Contact the Commission

You may contact the Commission by telephone, mail, e-mail, or by visiting the website.

<http://www.in.gov/fssa/ddrs/3355.htm>

E-mail: VRCommission@fssa.IN.gov

Mail to:

Indiana Commission on Rehabilitation Services
c/o Vocational Rehabilitation Services
402 W. Washington Street, MS-20
PO Box 7083
Indianapolis, Indiana 46207-7083

Telephone:

(317) 232-1350

Toll free 1-800-545-7763