

**State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind**

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**2014**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**October 2013 - September 2014**

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**Department of Services for the Blind**  
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents ..... 2

SRC 2014 Annual Report Introduction ..... 3

Chairperson’s Letter ..... 5

Director’s Letter ..... 7

Council Membership and Biographies ..... 9

Council Activities and Public Meetings in 2014 ..... 17

DSB Core Services ..... 21

DSB Outreach Activities ..... 32

SRC Customer Satisfaction Survey ..... 33

Successful Employment Outcomes for 2014 ..... 34

## SRC 2014 ANNUAL REPORT INTRODUCTION

### MANDATE

The Washington State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for the Blind is mandated by the federal Workforce Investment Opportunity Act and is authorized in Washington RCW 74.18.070-74.18.100. The SRC for the Blind serves as a separate Council to the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) which administers the part of the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation under which services are provided to individuals who are blind.

### MISSION

The major purpose of the Council is to develop, analyze, and make recommendations to state strategic plan goals, the state vocational rehabilitation plan, state policies, and Department activities to insure that persons who are blind in the state of Washington receive the most effective and efficient vocational rehabilitation services possible.

In fulfilling its duties, the council:

- Provides direct guidance to the Director of the DSB on behalf of the public and consumers;
- Where appropriate, advises or reports to the Governor or makes recommendations to the State Legislature to promote efficient and effective services; and

Enhances the services, opportunities, and rights of Washingtonians who are blind by working closely with other state councils, state agencies and state organizations whose programs may impact such services.

In addition, where appropriate, this Council provides guidance and makes recommendations about other programs and services provided by the Department including the Independent Living Program services provided to children and adults, the Older Blind Independent Living Program, and the Business Enterprise Program.

## HIGHLIGHTS

The SRC for the Blind met 4 times in 2014, discussing, among other topics, budget cuts, website accessibility, and Department performance

The SRC for the Blind has 4 vacancies. See Council Membership on page 9.

The SRC for the Blind sent letters to the Governor's Office expressing concerns about State website accessibility. Accessibility improvements were made on specific websites noted in the letter including the Results Washington site. See page 17 for additional Council activities.

415 children and young adults, from birth to age 20, received a variety of services, including family counseling, adaptive skills of blindness, and job counseling. See pages 21 and 26.

192 of Vocational Rehabilitation customers went to work in competitive jobs with an average hourly wage of \$18.34. See page 25.

Over 1,500 individuals in the Independent Living Older Blind Program were able to stay in their own homes due to increased independence. See page 30.

78 students and staff participated in the Orientation and Training Center's challenge activities, including rock climbing and tandem bicycling. See page 27.

## CHAIRPERSON'S LETTER

**Honorable Jay Inslee, Governor, Washington State**

**Janet LaBreck, Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration**

As chair of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), I am pleased to present to you, and to our friends and public stakeholders, our Annual Report for 2014.

The SRC for the Blind met 4 times in 2014. Members provided feedback to the Director in the areas of planning, policy, performance, cost savings-meeting the challenges of continuing budget impacts, and information accessibility. Each meeting included time for public comment. Individuals and stakeholders from across the state gave input to the SRC in person or by conference call.

3 meetings were held at the DSB office in Seattle, Washington. Our March meeting was hosted by the Washington School for the Blind in Vancouver, and included a fabulous and informative tour of the School.

Other presentations throughout the year included: Sightconnection; National Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program; the Orientation and Training Center proposed curriculum changes; the Older Blind Independent Living Program; the newly authorized Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act; results from the SRC Customer Satisfaction Survey; State biennium budget development and enhancements; DSB Communications Plan; and Results Washington—Governor's Task Force on Employment of People with Disabilities.

During 2014, the SRC for the Blind also heard updates from our members who represent various entities as required by the Rehabilitation Act. Reports were given by the Statewide Independent Living Council, the Client Assistance Program, the Section 121 Native American Vocational Rehabilitation Programs, the Parent Training and Information Center, and a Community Rehabilitation Service Provider. We did not have a presentation from the State Workforce Investment Board because they did not appoint a representative to the Council until October.

In 2014, 4 members left the SRC for the Blind and 4 new members were appointed. We continue to experience difficulty recruiting applicants who represent business and labor and currently have 2 vacancies in this category. We welcome and appreciate any assistance that the Governor's Office could give us in recruiting qualified applicants. As a result of our continued advocacy in the Governor's Office, we now have a representative of the State Workforce Board.

Since the DSB is part of the State Workforce Investment System, resolving this critical appointment was very important to the SRC.

In 2014, the SRC for the Blind continued to advocate for increased accessibility of State government information systems. We expressed our concerns to the Governor's Office and to members of the Governor's Task Force on Employment of People with Disabilities.

The SRC for the Blind is proud of the relationship we have with the Director and staff of DSB, and the partnerships we have with key stakeholder groups. We are passionate about representing individuals who are blind and we look forward to receiving continued support from the Governor's Office.

Sincerely,  
**Sue Ammeter, Chair**



DIRECTOR'S LETTER

**Honorable Jay Inslee, Governor, WA State**

**Janet LaBreck, Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration**

Representing a broad spectrum of Washington citizens, the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for the Blind guides our agency mission:

*Inclusion, Independence, and Economic Vitality for People with Visual Disabilities*

The role of the SRC is particularly important in our current economic environment. Council members actively seek and convey the input of their respective constituents, and are strong partners in helping the agency to clarify values and assess options regarding our budget, policies and strategies. As a result, Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) continues to demonstrate the positive impact of our services on children and families, youth transitioning from school to work, adults who want to be competitively employed, employers who need qualified workers, and elderly citizens who want to remain independent in their homes. The strong focus of the SRC for the Blind along with the successful outcomes achieved by our professional staff contributes to Washington's economic and cultural vitality by emphasizing the skills and abilities of all its citizens including those with disabilities.

In spite of the continued economic downturn, the good news is that every day in Washington people with vision loss are going to work in competitive jobs, starting up their own businesses and employing others, or keeping their current jobs by acquiring new skills and assistive technology. Services for the Blind is celebrating because this year 192 of our customers completed their rehabilitation programs and went to work in competitive jobs with an average hourly wage of \$18.34. This means that these individuals have taken charge of their lives, can support their families, pay taxes, and contribute to the vitality of their communities.

Jobs are about all of us. In order for our state and our communities to thrive, all of us must thrive. People come to us at Services for the Blind because they have vision loss, but that is often only a part of what is happening in their lives. You may already know this because someone with vision loss is in your family, or is a neighbor or friend.

This year the youngest individual getting his first job through Services for the Blind was a 19-year-old going to work as a baker. A 78-year-old office worker was able to keep her 30-hour a week position in the aging and long term care services industry. 10 transition age youth went to work. We assisted 9 individuals to start up their own small businesses. 9 blind military veterans became employed or kept their jobs.

Additionally, the Independent Living Older Blind Program successfully served 1,500 individuals, age 55 and over, who wished to maintain or increase their independence at home and in the community after vision loss.

We create these successes by being innovative in how we manage our resources, providing our state employees an environment of recognition and development, maintaining a strong relationship with our stakeholders, and keeping the public informed. As a state agency, we continue to emphasize accountability, performance outcome measures, and careful analysis of data as the drivers for strategic planning, as well as the key tools for our Council members to be well-informed as advisors and advocates.

8 of our Council members are blind or have other disabilities. They continue to thoughtfully share their expertise, resources, and life experiences with our customers. Both as a group and individually, they function as role models for an engaged Washington committed to the well-being of all its citizens and are persistent on behalf of the economic and cultural vitality of our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce the work of these dedicated volunteers.

Sincerely,  
**Lou Oma Durand, Director**



## COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND BIOGRAPHIES

Council members are appointed by the Governor for no more than two 3-year consecutive terms. The SRC for the Blind actively seeks demographic and ethnic diversity among its members in addition to meeting the challenge of its statutory membership requirements.

The Council currently has the 4 following *vacancies*:

- 2 labor and business representatives
- 1 current or former recipient of VR services
- And 1 Washington State Independent Living Council representative

### CURRENT MEMBERS

BOB HUVEN, M.ED., CRC

CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

*Seattle, WA*

Bob has a Bachelors' in Habilitation/Rehabilitation and American Sign Language as a Second Language from Antioch University. He also has a Master's in Vocational Education from the University of Washington and is certified both as a sign language interpreter and rehabilitation counselor.

He brings to the SRC his experience as a person with a disability and 30 years' experience working with blind, deaf, and other people who experience life with a disability.

DEBBY PHILLIPS

CURRENT OR FORMER RECIPIENT OF VR SERVICES

*Spokane, WA*

Debby Phillips grew up in Oregon, attending the Oregon School for the Blind. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Social Services from George Fox University and a Master's in Theological Studies from Mount Angel Seminary.

Following several social service jobs, Debbie worked for the IRS for 10 years. During that time, she worked as a volunteer receptionist at a church office, among other volunteer activities. When she moved to Spokane with her husband Craig, Debby realized she had little confidence in herself. She asked the DSB to send her to the NDB Training Center in Colorado. When Debby returned, she was hired by the Inland Northwest Lighthouse as their Braille Instructor. She is now on the hunt for a new job and prays that a job will be in her near future.

Debby serves as Secretary for the National Federation of the Blind of Washington. She also serves as the Secretary for Patron Advisory Council for WTBB. Debby and Craig live in Spokane

with her Seeing Eye dog, Neena, my retired dog, Lamar, and our cat, Flounder, whom they rescued. She enjoys singing in the choir at Saint Charles Boromeo Catholic Church.

DOUG TRIMBLE

STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

*Vancouver, WA*

Doug Trimble has spent most of his life in the Vancouver/Portland area. He has been working at the Washington State School for the Blind since 1999. He currently teaches Orientation & Mobility to middle and high school students. Doug also works as an Older Blind Program provider, which he finds extremely rewarding.

Doug is married with 2 daughters who are in middle school. In his leisure time, he enjoys traveling, hiking, and watching football (go Seahawks!), basketball, and baseball. Doug also likes to tinker with technology, but his kids clearly know more than he does, of course!

Doug joined the SRC in October of 2014 and is looking forward to serving on the Council.

GLORIA WALLING

BUSINESS, INDUSTRY AND LABOR

*Olympia, WA*

Gloria grew up in New Mexico. In 2007, she enrolled in the DSB Business Enterprise Program (BEP). Through the BEP, she received training and became a licensed operator in 2008, managing cafeterias and other locations.

Gloria is involved in her community and currently serves as President of the local chapter of the Washington Counsel of the Blind and has been a member of the Legislative committee. She is also Vice-Chair for the BEP Vender's committee.

ERICA HANSEN

STATE WORKSOURCE

*Olympia, WA*

Erica Hansen is the Executive Assistant and Board Secretary for the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. She was appointed to the SRC for the Blind in October 2014. From programs that target teens in danger of dropping out of high school to industry skill panels that help bridge the gap between high-demand jobs and the training workers need to succeed, the Workforce Board advocates for a better educated, better prepared Washington workforce.

EVA LAURRARI

QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR

*Seattle, WA*

Eva grew up in the Philippines and moved to Seattle, WA, with her parents, in 1992. Eva is multi-lingual (Tagalog, Bicol, and English) and has a 12-year old husky named Juno.

Eva joined the University of Washington, Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation as a Training and Information Specialist in March of 2014. She answers the NW ADA Hotline and provides face-to-face and webinar training related to ADA guidelines and disability issues, employment services, language and etiquettes, assistive technology and more.

Eva received her undergraduate degree from the University of Washington and her Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Western Washington University (WWU), and is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. She spent nearly 14 years in the field of vocational rehabilitation counseling and employment services as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at DSB. She currently serves as an Advisory Committee member at WWU's Rehabilitation Counseling graduate program. Eva has also been an appointee to the Governor's Committee on Disability and Employment Issues (GCDE) since 2009, and is the Co-Chair of the Youth Leadership Forum, a subcommittee of the GCDE.

LOU OMA DURAND

DSB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (EX-OFFICIO MEMBER)

*Seattle, WA*

Lou Oma Durand was appointed Executive Director of the Washington State Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) in July 2005. Previously she held the position of Deputy Director, as well as other executive and administrative positions since beginning her career at DSB in the late 1970's when it was the State Commission for the Blind.

Lou Oma left state government from 1984-86 to work in the private sector for the Boeing Corporation, where she was responsible for corporation-wide programs, including the Injured Worker Return to Work, the Medically Impaired Employee, and the Handicapped New Hire programs. Lou Oma received a Special Achievement Award for the "Return to Work" program, saving Boeing millions of dollars and enabling Boeing workers to remain employed.

Lou Oma worked for 3 years as a vocational rehabilitation counselor and 2 years as a rehabilitation teacher for Washington State Department of Services for the Blind. She spent 3 years as a high school English and humanities teacher at the Washington State School for the Blind and Vancouver School District. In addition to over 25 years of service in state government, Lou Oma has served on numerous education, arts and other non-profit boards, advisory councils, literary arts organizations, and legislative task forces.

Lou Oma is proud to lead a state agency that ranks in the nation's top 3 among agencies providing services to people with visual and other disabilities, using a variety of job placement quality indicators. Lou Oma believes it is a privilege to help people take charge of their lives and become contributing members of their community.

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NATE MARSHALL

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM

*Port Townsend, WA*

Nate graduated from the University of North Dakota with a Bachelor's of Arts Degree from the Department of Philosophy and Religion. He moved to Washington State in 2002. He served in AmeriCorps as tutor in Oakville and Olympia and then became a VISTA staff member for Solid Ground at a high school in Seattle. While there he began working as an educational program assistant for the Seattle Jewish Film Festival. Nate then attended the University of Washington-Tacoma's Non-Profit Management Program.

In June of 2014, Nate became the Employment Consultant for the Port Hadlock Office of Concerned Citizens, a regional social service agency, where he provides job placement and job coaching skills for disabled youth and adults in Jefferson County. Prior to current position, Nate worked at Tacoma Goodwill Industries in a number of different positions, including as a Placement Specialist with the YouthBuild program and as the Projects with Industry Career Consultant, which included working as a job placement vendor for the DSB.

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SHEILA TURNER

BLIND, WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

*Pasco, WA*

Sheila Turner, a lifelong Washington resident, has been legally blind since birth due to bilateral congenital cataracts. She is the second of 3 generations of blindness, inheriting the condition from her mother and passing it to 2 of her kids. Her mother was Sheila's role model for self-advocacy, who, along with her dad, taught Sheila to believe in herself and her abilities. They have always supported and encouraged her and still do. Sheila is now trying to pass this value on to her children and to be an example for everyone in her life.

Sheila graduated from Washington State University in 2000 with a BA in Social Science. She is currently attending graduate school at the University of Northern Colorado. There, she is working towards a Master's in Teaching of the Visually Impaired and becoming a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

Sheila is a single mother, sharing custody with her kids' dad, and working full time as the Independent Living Older Blind teacher for the Edith Bishel Center for the Blind and Visually

Impaired in Kennewick. She works with people aged 55 and older in south eastern Washington and has enjoyed the position for 13 years.

STEVE FIKSDAL, VICE CHAIR

BUSINESS, LABOR AND INDUSTRY

*Auburn, WA*

Low vision brought a 25-year career in real estate brokerage management to a quiet conclusion. He is now the owner of ConnectEd Institute, which provides character strength assessment and education to individuals and teams. Steve says DSB played a significant role in the establishment of his new company and career by providing him the skills to succeed in a sighted world and the resources to form his own company, thus allowing him to embark on a new and exciting career.

In addition to his role on the State Rehabilitation Council, Steve is Secretary of the Washington Council of the Blind, a consumer organization promoting advocacy and independence for Washington's blind and visually impaired citizens.

SUE AMMETER, COUNCIL CHAIR

DISABILITY ADVOCACY GROUP

*Port Hadlock, WA*

Sue has been a disability/civil rights advocate for over 40 years. Sue worked for the City of Seattle, Washington State, and King County in the areas of civil rights, disability accommodations, and employee training. She served on the Board of Directors of the American Council of the Blind, as President of the Washington Council of the Blind for several terms, as Chair of the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, and as Chair of the Patron Advisory Council for the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library. She is now Chair of the SRC for the Blind since June 2011, and serves on the Assistive Technology Program Advisory Council.

Following her retirement in 2005 Sue and her husband John moved to their retirement "dream home" in Port Hadlock.

TRACY KAHLO

PARENT INFORMATION AND TRAINING CENTER

*Tacoma, WA*

After moving to Washington in 1992, Tracy oversaw an Individual Employment Program serving persons with developmental disabilities residing in Pierce, King, and Thurston counties for a local employment vendor. This position achieved a personal goal of doing what she loved to do and getting paid to do it. It was during those 8 years that she had the pleasure of collaborating

with Linda Wilder from the DSB to find and secure employment for 2 individuals who are blind. Both gentlemen became employed at a statewide organization thanks to the joint partnership with the DSB, DVR, and DDD. In 2000, Tracy had her most rewarding educational experience while earning a Master's in Not-for-Profit Leadership at Seattle University. She then enjoyed 7 years as Vice President for a national not-for-profit in Seattle. In 2008, she was hired as the Executive Director of PAVE fulfilling her dreams to return to her home community of Pierce County and serve families in Washington State with loved ones who have a disability.

YVONNE THOMAS-MILLER

SECTION 121 NATIVE AMERICAN

*Bellingham, WA*

Yvonne has been employed part time by the Lummi Vocational Rehabilitation Program on the Lummi Reservation for over 4 years as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Outreach. She is certified by the PET-AIR (Post Employment Training-American Indian Rehabilitation program) and is working to obtain her Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. Yvonne is a graduate of Evergreen State University in Olympia, Washington and the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Yvonne's past vocation was as a fine artist, specializing in drawing, painting, silkscreen, and sculpture. She was employed by the tribe as a Graphic Artist and worked on the local tribal newspaper.

After losing most of her vision, Yvonne attended DSB's Orientation Training Center. As an active member of the United Blind of Whatcom County and the Washington Council of the Blind, she welcomed the opportunity to work for the Lummi Vocational Rehabilitation program as a good match for her volunteer experience and education.

DEPARTING MEMBERS

ALCO CANFIELD

QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR

*Walla Walla, WA*

Alco was born in Seattle, WA and lived there until 1976. After graduating from the University of Washington School of Social Work, she worked for the DSB for 14 years as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) and Rehabilitation Teacher. Following her time at the DSB, she worked for the Division of Developmental Disabilities for 12 years, and retired in 2004. Alco joined the SRC in 2012. Alco is active in her community, serving in her church, and participating in the activities of the United Blind of Walla Walla chapter.

DALE KOSIER

STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

*Puyallup, WA*

Dale worked from 1981 to 2010 for the DSHS Division of Developmental Disabilities as the Coordinator for Sensory Impairment at the Rainier school in Buckley. In 1982, he co-founded Washington State Deaf-Blind Citizens and served on the task force which created the Deaf-Blind Service Center in Seattle. Then, in 1985, Dale was appointed by Governor Booth Gardner to serve on a task force that reviewed parks to ensure that they met federal standards to accommodate people with disabilities.

Dale has 3 daughters, 5 grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren.

GAYLEN FLOY

CURRENT OR FORMER RECIPIENT OF VR SERVICES

*Federal Way, WA*

Gaylen has worked as a graphic designer and illustrator for agencies and newspaper for 27 years. She received skills training at the OTC that allowed her to finish her bachelor's degree. Now Gaylen teaches Zoomtext and the Office Suite at the Orientation and Training Center part-time. She is also a part-time Marketing and Communications Intern at the Seattle Lighthouse for the Blind.

LINDA MCCLAIN

CURRENT OR FORMER RECIPIENT OF VR SERVICES

*Spokane, WA*

Linda is a native of Southern California. When she moved to Spokane 20 years ago, she knew her destiny was to become a social worker and dedicate her life to the independent living movement. She has a Master's degree in Social Work and has been involved in disability issues for over 20 years. For 12 years, she was the Executive Director of Coalition of Responsible Disabled (CORD), the Center for Independent Living (IL) in Spokane that advocates for civil rights and educates consumers with disabilities about IL. She is also a former member of the Statewide Independent Living Council. She has been involved in several councils and committees dedicated to disability issues. She truly believes that all persons with disabilities have something to offer and are contributing members to society.

LORI PULLIAM

STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

*Vancouver, WA*

Lori has worked at the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) since 1982. Lori has had a wide range of experiences while at the school, beginning as a teacher of the deaf-blind and

moving on to work with WSSB students who attend classes in the Vancouver Public Schools. She has worked with the WSSB career and work experience program, as the transition specialist. Currently, Lori is the Director for the Learning Independence for Today and Tomorrow (LIFTT) Program, a postsecondary independent living program. In the summer of 2010, Lori additionally became the Director of the Residential Program at WSSB. As well as the various roles she has held at the WSSB, Lori has also been very involved in the Youth Employment Solutions (YES) program, a summer career and work experience program, from its inception.

Lori resides in Vancouver with her husband Roy and has 3 grown children.

STAFF

DEBBIE COOK

DSB APPOINTED LIASON

*Seattle, WA*

Debbie works for the University of Washington Center on Technology and Disability Studies where she manages the Older Blind Independent living Program as a sub-recipient grant of the DSB and serves on DSB's Executive Team as a consultant. Prior to her employment at the UW, Debbie worked 16 years at DSB as a VR Counselor, rehabilitation teacher and program manager and 6 years as an Independent Living service provider.

## COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND PUBLIC MEETINGS IN 2014

### COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

#### COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

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The Council continues to have a strong, collaborative relationship with the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB). 4 new members have been appointed to the Council as a result of the Council and Department's collaboration in recruiting. Current vacancies include 2 labor/business representatives, 1 recipient of VR services, and the SILC representative.

The Council Chair and SRC staff presented at the Department's New Employee Orientation, educating new DSB employees and new SRC members about the purpose and role of the Council. In addition, there is open communication amongst Council members and DSB staff (executive, management, direct service) to discuss areas of interest and/or areas of concern.

#### DSB'S RESPONSE:

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The agency continues to be impressed by the talent, representation, and experience that have come to the SRC as a result of targeted recruitment efforts. The SRC has shown eagerness to learn about how the agency operates, extending invitations, and allotting extensive council meeting time for each program in DSB to present an overview of our current work initiatives. Having new SRC members integrated in DSB's New Employee Orientation with new staff continues to be a great opportunity for all. The new staff is given the chance to learn, on a personal basis, who and what the SRC is. And, the new SRC members gain a deeper understanding for the agency's current organizational systems and processes. Overall, communication and collaboration remain strong.

#### LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

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The Council took steps to educate the community about the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA), which was passed by Congress in 2014. Changes include qualifications for counselors, minimum wage requirements, and new transition requirements. WIOA moves the IL programs, except for the Older Blind Program, to a new Independent Living Administration aligned with Aging and Disability Services within the Federal Department of Human Services.

#### DSB RESPONSE

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The agency is very appreciative of legislative advocacy by the SRC and our other community stakeholders. The SRC's continued monitoring of issues that may affect the agency and the

relationship building and education efforts they put forward have provided the agency with stronger local legislative support.

#### SRC SURVEY

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The Council, in collaboration with the DSB and the University of Washington Center on Technology and Disabilities Studies, made major revisions to the customer satisfaction survey in 2014 to better align with the Results Washington data collection requirements. The survey is open now for responses and a summary of preliminary results is included on page 33.

#### DSB RESPONSE

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The agency appreciates this survey as baseline data in which to maintain high ratings and improve low ratings towards creating a consistently high quality customer experience. DSB is pleased that the Council further refined the data collection process to make it even more meaningful to the Department and to the community.

#### STATE PLAN REVIEW AND INPUT

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In June, the Council provided input to the Department's 2015 VR State Plan including a written summary of the SRC's activities and participation in the Plan development. The Council's input is important in setting priorities. Resources and strategies must be aligned with performance measures and targets in the Strategic Plan and with Results Washington targets and measures. The Council is responsible for some inputs such as the Customer Satisfaction Survey and the results of public forums. The Council will also be expanding its role to conduct a needs assessment in collaboration with DSB.

#### DSB RESPONSE

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The on-going input of the SRC is invaluable in reviewing, assessing, and reinvigorating State Plan goals and strategies for the agency.

#### STATE BIENNIUM BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

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The SRC assisted the agency to prioritize how the agency would comply with the Governor's requirement for a 15% budget reduction plan, buy back of those reductions, and essential budget enhancements. It was agreed that the agency would propose the cuts across the board and would buy back VR, Child and Family Services and Older Blind in that order. Enhancements were also agreed upon in order to restore previous cuts to the Child and Family Services provided under IL and to maintain current service delivery levels in the Older Blind Program.

## DSB RESPONSE

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The SRC is an outstanding and articulate advocate for the DSB budget in the community and with the Legislature when necessary. This year they assisted the Washington Council of the Blind to develop and adopt a resolution in support of our budget initiatives and they have a plan to engage the community during the legislative session.

## ADVOCACY

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In February, the SRC sent a letter to the Governor's Office expressing concerns that the Workforce Board had failed to appoint a representative to the SRC for the Blind and that key state agencies had failed to make their information and websites accessible to employees and to the public. The Council did not receive a direct response, but noted that accessibility improvements were made on some specific websites noted in the letter including the Results Washington site.

In June, the SRC sent a letter to staff of the Governor's Task Force on Employment of People with Disabilities. The SRC requested that

- the DSB Director be appointed as one of the staff supporting the disability employment initiative;
- the Workforce Board be directed to designate a representative to the SRC for the Blind in compliance with federal statute;
- the Governor direct the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) establish and implement policy, procedures, technical assistance, and accountability measures to ensure accessibility of information and information technology used in any capacity by the State of Washington; and
- the Governor's Office establish a position with specific expertise in disability policy.

No response was received, but we are pleased that a representative from the Workforce Board office was appointed in October. SRC staff has also been working with the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, Employment Security Department and the OCIO to begin development of state policy and procedures related to information technology accessibility.

## DSB RESPONSE:

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The advocacy efforts of the SRC have been instrumental in moving forward very important accessibility initiatives in State government. It is exciting to see the SRC take its role so seriously and gratifying to see progress being made.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) met 4 times during 2014. 3 meetings were held in Seattle and 1 was held in Vancouver. All meetings were open to the public, including a phone conferencing system with call-in information advertised ahead of time allowing interested consumers to take part regardless of where they live throughout our state. The agenda included a public comment period, allowing the opportunity for input on any subject related to the business of the Council including the vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs, and issues impacting the employment or independence of blind Washington citizens.

Agenda items included the following:

- State Budget: reduction proposals, buy back justifications and enhancements
- Authorization of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which includes provisions of the rehab act
- IL Part B grant funding and relocation to Health and Human Services Administration
- ILOB program and funding
- Customer Services performance in relation to GMAP and RSA standards and indicators
- Results Washington and its application to DSB
- Governor's Executive Orders on employment of people with disabilities and veterans
- Accessibility of state information and information technology systems
- VR employment outcomes
- VR employment initiatives and state plan update
- OTC program and services
- Agency outreach and communications plan
- 2014 SRC Customer Satisfaction Survey
- SRC Annual Report
- Sightconnection staffing changes and strategic plan
- National Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program

## DSB CORE SERVICES

### DSB OVERVIEW

DSB has offices statewide: Spokane, Yakima, Vancouver, Lacey, Tacoma, and Seattle. Assessments and services are frequently provided in the customer's home, community, and workplace. Working in regional teams, most of DSB's programs are delivered by multidisciplinary teams including:

- Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors who provide case management and work with customers to determine employment goals and what services are needed to reach those goals.
- Rehabilitation Technicians who assist with paperwork and also conduct some of the career assessments and other prevocational activities with customers.
- Rehabilitation Teachers and Orientation and Mobility Specialists who conduct adaptive skill and low vision evaluations, and they arrange or provide the necessary skills training.
- Assistive Technology Specialists who provide support for any technology needs in training or on the job and they also perform job site assessments to determine what accommodations will be required.
- Low Vision Specialists who identify appropriate magnification strength and lighting needs, when appropriate, in order for individuals to maximize their remaining vision.

DSB provides services to and has programs for individuals of all ages, crossing the entire life span.

### CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

The DSB serves children and youth who are blind or have low vision from birth through high school graduation, providing:

- Assistance in understanding the nature and potential impact of the child's visual disability.
- Training in parenting techniques and understanding the child's developmental needs.
- Daily living skills training for the child and their family to help the child become more independent at home and participate in household chores.

For FFY 2014, 29 children (and their families) from birth to age 5 received services, including Counseling and Basic Orientation & Mobility. For children ages 6 through 13, 70 children received services including Education Consultation and Adaptive Life Skills Training.

2014 YOUTH ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTS:

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RECREATION ACTIVITY (AGE 5-7)

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This summer, 4 children took part in a recreation activity at a local gymnastics club focused on orientation and special awareness. They enjoyed tumbling in the foam pool, walking on the balance beam, and crawling on the parallel bars. Parents made connections with each other during a snack break, swapping stories about their child with a vision impairment. Hopefully, an activity like this will become an annual event for this age group.

SCILS (AGE 9-13)

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SCILS (Summer Camp for Independent Living Skills) is a camp that focuses on an expanded core curriculum: self-care, social skills, recreation, technology, and orientation and mobility. A 5-day day camp is held in Seattle and an overnight weekend session is held in Spokane. This year, the campers at both sessions had the opportunity to visit science museums and participate in special events. The 9 Seattle campers wrote and recorded a song at Jack Straw Productions to enter into the National Federation of the Blind song competition. And the 3 Spokane campers participated in a beep kick ball game and tandem bicycle riding with the Northwest Blind Athletes Association. All campers learned how to sweep, dust, and make lunches.

JAYDEN YAMADA: SCILS CAMP PARTICIPANT

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*Bellevue, WA*

I really enjoyed my time at SCILS camp. It was a very interesting and useful learning experience. I found that I am capable of more than I thought I was.

I learned how to do multiple things from doing dishes to making change and taking the bus independently. It was a positive and exciting way to learn everyday tasks. I found it difficult to make a sandwich and read street names because of my sight. But, I learned! That was what this was for, right? I definitely had the chance find my strengths and adapt my weaknesses.

I also meet many people who have the same experiences I do. About half of the kids there were kids with albinism. Spending time with people



Jayden Yamada out to dinner with family.

whom I could relate to made me feel like I am not alone. Talking about our experiences together helped me brainstorm ways to overcome the challenges I face every day. We didn't just spend time talking about blindness. We also spent a lot of time just hanging out as kids. One of the kids played Minecraft like me, so we spent a lot of time talking about playing.

It was a fun time at SCILS camp, and I hope to come again. The instructors were nice, there was a good group of kids, and it taught me things I did not know how to do. It was definitely one of the best things I did all summer.

#### YES 1 (AGE 14-15)

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YES 1 (Youth Employment Solutions) is a 2-week program offering students the opportunity to explore interests and careers. 22 students practiced the skills needed to find and procure a job including filling out applications, participating in mock interviews, and building a resume. They were given the opportunity to visit work sites and participate in community service projects.

#### YES 2 (AGE 15-18)

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20 high school students who are blind or have low vision had paid summer work experiences in a variety of job settings, including customer service and food service. In addition, as residents of the YES house in Seattle's University District, many students lived away from home for the first time: shopping, cooking and cleaning for themselves, earning and managing money in checking accounts. This year, students had a special visit from Washington State Senate Representative Cyrus Habib, who gave a lively hour long talk and answered questions from the students.

#### COURTNEY COLE: YES 2 PARTICIPANT

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*Silverdale, WA*

No! This word was my inner voice's favorite word to say. I was using it constantly:

"No, you can't cook. Don't even try."

"No, don't even bother with your make-up. You'll just mess it up."

"Make friends? There's no way you can do that! You're too different."

Eventually, I began to think this way about everything I did. Knowing my vision would only get worse, I gave up on everything. My mom, sighted not only physically but instinctively, noticed this. Despite my teenager-level lack of enthusiasm, she worked tirelessly to fill out paperwork for the YES program.



**Courtney Cole hanging out at the beach on a summer's day.**

In July, my parents and I, along with the other 15 to 18 year olds, arrived at the Tri-Delta Sorority house near the University of Washington's campus. With my parents' help, I settled into my room and they left. I had so many mixed feelings when my parents walked out that door. Part of me was terrified. I knew I could run, catch up with them, and ask them to take me home. But I also knew that I desperately needed this experience.

I surprised even myself with what I did in the following weeks. Being the science geek I am, I was chosen to work at the UW Botany Greenhouse, and I loved it. I was making a paycheck for the first time ever and I was managing my money well. I learned to travel the city independently and shop for my own groceries. I branched out, spending time with the other students and the staff, too. We all became so close; we were like an enormous family. Being there helped me realize that I'm not alone. There are other teens dealing with a disability like mine

But the biggest thing I gained this summer wasn't the money or the acceptance I felt. The biggest thing I gained was hope. I know now that I am capable. And when my eyesight does fade away, I'll have this picture burning in my mind of a future that is bright and prosperous and bursting at the seams with joy.

I now know how to say YES to my dreams!

#### BRIDGE

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The Bridge program enrolled 3 high-school graduates in summer courses at Eastern Washington University, where they learned how to advocate for accommodations in higher education programs and experienced life in the dorm. The students were provided with O&M, mastering routes to the cafeteria, dorms, classes, and recreational facilities.

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

### THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) PROGRAM

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Vocational Rehabilitation is for people interested in getting a job or keeping a job. It is a very comprehensive program that considers the needs of each individual. It has the bulk of DSB's resources. The program provides quality services to customers rather than just placing people in jobs. There is freedom to explore and to work with the customer. DSB consistently gets higher wages than most other Washington State VR programs and consistently has the highest ratio of individuals who earn enough to reduce or eliminate Social Security financial benefits.

To meet eligibility requirements, an individual must have functional limitations associated with a vision impairment that could be overcome by VR services. Examples of services include:

- training in adaptive skills of blindness such as home and personal management, Braille, independent travel and orientation, use of low vision devices and other specialized technology, etc.;
- provision of computer technology or other job equipment;
- higher education or other job training;
- career exploration and matching, internships and other work experiences; and
- placement and follow-up services.

Numbers have been down compared to other states but this is beginning to change with new staff, a surge of new applicants, and increased outreach to underserved Hispanic and Asian populations. In FFY 2014, 192 customers achieved successful employment outcomes with an average hourly wage of \$18.45. This is a significant increase in outcomes from 119 in 2013.

Other 2014 results:

- 1405 individuals received VR services.
- 451 individuals applied for VR services.
- 98 individuals (or 52%) received job retention assistance.
- 44 individuals no longer rely on Public Assistance as their primary source of income.
- 9 individuals with successful employment outcomes are Honorably Discharged Veterans.
- 20 individuals with successful employment outcomes own their own businesses.

A complete list of jobs and employers can be found in the Successful Employment Outcomes for 2014 Table beginning on page 34. Just a few employers for FFY14 include:

- Amazon (Customer Service Representative)
- Department of Corrections (Psychology Associate)
- Everett Public Schools (Special Education Teacher)

- Internal Revenue Service (Collections Representative)
- Shell Gas & Oil (Cashier)
- St. Francis Animal Clinic (Animal Technician)
- Umpqua Bank (Bank Teller)

#### LORI ALLISON, VR CUSTOMER

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*Tacoma, WA*

When Lori Allison came to the DSB in 2003, after losing vision due to complications of diabetes, she had never met a blind person and had no idea what to expect. She was completely caught off guard when she learned the person who would be taking her application for services was in fact a blind person. She has come a long way since 2003. In fact, this past year, Lori was hired by TACID (Tacoma Area Coalition for Individuals with Disabilities) as the office manager. It has been a long journey. Lori is proud of her accomplishments and appreciates the support she has received from DSB and other programs.

Lori started her journey by attending the Orientation Training Center where she learned techniques and skills that would help her adapt to vision loss. From there, Lori attended Pierce Community College and received an AA degree. Unfortunately there was no work in her chosen field because many of the jobs were being sent overseas to save money.

Lori didn't give up at all. She took out financial loans from the Washington Access Fund to buy adapted computer technology and the DSB helped her with training to use it. Then DSB assisted Lori in a paid internship at TACID last year. Lori had hoped the internship would turn into a permanent position at TACID, but the position was cut due to a lack of funding. Lori really liked working at TACID, so, with a positive and determined attitude, she continued to volunteer after her internship was completed. Lori was in the "right place" at the right time to learn about the office manager opening; she started her new position on January 9, 2014. She loves this job because she's able to interact with many individuals who are just starting that journey toward adjustment to disability.

In addition to working at TACID, Lori is President of the Peirce County Association of the Blind. She is a tireless supporter of older individuals who are experiencing vision loss and plans to keep spreading the word about the capabilities of people who are blind.

#### SCHOOL TO WORK TRANSITION

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A national emphasis in the VR program is services to ensure smooth transition for youth (ages 14-24) who are moving from high school to post-secondary activities. School-to-Work

Transition helps students, as young as age 14, and their families think about and plan for life after high school. The DSB provides:

- Career counseling: including consulting on part-time employment and internships
- Assessments to help students determine their interests for their future careers.
- Information regarding services for adults, including job counseling and training in the adaptive skills of blindness
- Collaboration with students, parents, and high school staff on IEP development and post-school activities
- 3 summer programs are available for students in transition as well. These programs are discussed in the Child and Family Services section, on page 23.

DSB's VR caseload is about 23% transitioning youth. Overall, DSB served 316 youth, age 14 through 20. Services included Psychological Counseling, Community Based Assessment, and Job Placement. More than half of the transition cases are age 15 through 18.

#### ORIENTATION AND TRAINING CENTER (OTC)

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The Orientation and Training Center is a primarily residential program open to VR customers, where they can receive intensive daily instruction in adaptive skills of blindness and other employment-related experiences. DSB Field staff provide many of these same services but they can usually only see a customer once a week. Those with significant service needs benefit from the intensive daily program at the OTC. It is an expensive, high risk program but VR could not provide the level of skills customers need without the OTC.



**Embert Pezzali, OTC Student, and an Outdoors For All guide on a tandem bike at Seward Park.**

In 2014, the OTC provided training to 53 students. Of those, 42 were full-time residential students and 11 were full-time commuting students. While attending the OTC, these students participate in a variety of classes, including Home Management, Braille, Keyboarding and Computers, Orientation and Mobility, and Home Maintenance. The adaptive skills they learn enable them to be independent and successful in the home, in school, on the job, and in their communities.

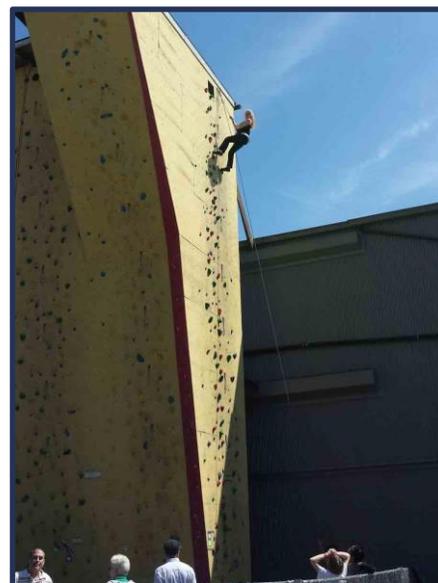
OTC students also participate in other activities and learning experiences. Challenge Activities help students build confidence with vision loss. In 2014, students participated in

- tandem bicycling at Seward Park with Outdoors For All volunteers;
- rock climbing at Stone Gardens Gym;
- snow shoeing or cross-country skiing with Outdoors For All; and
- the Low Ropes Course at Camp Long in West Seattle.

Additional learning opportunities for students include a career class, yoga class, and English as a Second Language.

The OTC also offers training opportunities for customers who are not fulltime OTC students.

- Intensive Workshops were conducted in April and September 2014 to provide adaptive skills training to 23 VR customers. The subject areas include home management; Braille; keyboarding and computers; social media; and mobility. During the September Intensive Workshops, an ESL/literacy class was provided to 4 individuals
- Distance Braille classes were provided to 8 VR customers. One customer was so excited to learn how to write on the slate and stylus that, upon learning uncontracted Braille, she immediately sat down with the slate, wrote out her grocery list, and took it to the store with her!



**Julie Harlow, OTC student, at the top of the 40 foot rock wall at the Stone Gardens Gym in Seattle.**

#### MUNA AZEEZ, OTC GRADUATE

*Burien WA*

I grew up in the Middle East and came to the U.S. in 2009. Vision problems run in my family: my siblings also have low-vision and Retinitis Pigmentosa left me visually impaired when I was 13. I was scared – being blind in a new place where I did not speak the language. In our culture, a girl stays with her family, especially if single. So, I stayed home all the time listening to music or using the computer. I cleaned and did laundry. But, my mother did not want me around fire because she was afraid I would get hurt, so I could not help her with the cooking for our big family. I had to ask family members to take me places, like grocery stores. I was totally dependent on the people around me.

When my sister learned about the DSB, too, she broke tradition and made an appointment herself. I saw how DSB was helping my sister and I decided to call them, using Google translator. It was very difficult, but I was determined to do it. When my DSB counselor, Linda Wilder, showed me career options for blind people, I was amazed. I had no idea it was possible for a blind person to even consider a career. I saw all the activities the OTC students were doing like mobility, cooking, and wood shop. I could not believe it was true. If

they could do all these things, then maybe I could do it, too.



Muna Azeez on OTC graduation day.

I attended the OTC for 9 months. I learned computers, Braille, mobility, cooking, and English. I learned a lot from the people around me and gained many new friends. Now that I have graduated, my life is completely different. I cook anything I want, I take busses alone, and I am continuing my education. My goal is to get more language skills, get my GED, and then go to university. I want to work with computer networks.

I never knew any of this was possible. It was like a dream I could not reach because I always needed someone to help me. Now I am independent. I can speak English, travel anywhere, and cook! My dreams have come true!

#### INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM (IL)

IL primarily serves people under age 55 who are not going to work at time of services. Individuals could be medically fragile adults who need skills of blindness or they could be children participating in DSB's youth programs. Some adults, 55 or older, are served through this program if they have employment goals but need to learn extensive adaptive skills first.

#### FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

In FFY 2014, IL served 113 adults, age 18 through 70, which is nearly a 25% increase over FFY 2013. More women than men were served in IL by nearly 3 to 1 customers. More than 30% of IL customers identify as being a part of an underserved minority group. Almost half of IL customers have vision loss in addition to other disabilities.

An IL client recently reported the following about her services in the IL program: My teacher helped her in so many ways. She got me! She knew what I was going through and said all the right things. I was afraid to try to use a knife for fear of cutting myself, so my teacher showed me safety techniques to use, not only around the kitchen but in my entire house. She even taught me escape routes in case of an emergency. I love making stir-fry, which requires a great deal of cutting and chopping, I know I can make them safely now with my black and white cutting board. I use it every day! For all my dark colored veggies I use the white side and for all light colored veggies I use the black side. My teacher spent so much focused time with me, making sure I understood what she was teaching me. I just learned so much from my teacher and the IL program. Thank you!

#### INDEPENDENT LIVING OLDER BLIND (ILOB)

The Independent Living Older Blind (ILOB) program empowers older adults to live independently in their homes and communities. ILOB clients are age 55 or older and have lost, or are losing vision, who need tools and to learn alternative skills to remain independent. Utilizing a network of 9 contractors statewide, ILOB providers offer a wide range of services, including training, brief counseling, info and referrals, and supplying aids or devices.

#### FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

At the conclusion of the federal fiscal year, providers have served 1,572 clients, exceeding last year's total service delivery by more than 100. 87% of our closures indicate that they have greater independence and another 10% indicate that they have maintained their level of independence.

More than two-thirds of ILOB clients are women; the large majority of our clients have macular degeneration; and the average age of ILOB customers is 86 years old. Most live in their home or apartment rather than in a nursing or assisted living setting. (In FFY 2014, we served 2 homeless people.) Many need recurring services because their limitations will change over time. Services usually span about 3 or 4 appointments of about 2-3 hours each, costing the program an average of about \$530 per case.

Despite an emphasis on outreach to the Asian and Hispanic minorities, these populations are being significantly underserved. 11% and 7% of Washington State's general population identifies as being Hispanic and Asian, respectively. But, ILOB's service delivery is only 2.2% and 1.5%.

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PIERRE CAMPANO

*Spokane, WA*

Pierre Campano, an active and independent 78 year old, recently moved into an apartment where he lives alone. Mr. Campano has Usher syndrome and an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter accompanied him at his appointments. During his O&M assessment, Mr. Campano said he occasionally suffered depression and fatigue but felt strongly that it would not hinder O&M lessons. Mr. Campano already had some long cane skills before coming to the OB Program, but he identified a few specific skills and routes he wanted to work on.

Over the next 5 months, Mr. Campano had several O&M lessons, always with the assistance of an ASL interpreter. Mr. Campano and the O&M Specialist began by reviewing how to navigate stairs which he quickly mastered. After the stairs, they moved on to practicing using the crosswalk signal near his apartment. Mr. Campano learned to cross with the surge of traffic so that he had enough time to cross the street. Lastly, the O&M Specialist made sure that Mr. Campano felt comfortable walking around his new apartment complex, including going to the mailbox, the rec room, and the small patio where he likes to sit and listen to the birds during the day.

At the conclusion of his ILOB services, Mr. Campano felt better about his new living environment and his ability to get around. He thanked the OB case worker for her time and agreed that he would call if he felt further services would be beneficial.

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MINNIE ALBERTS

*Vancouver, WA*

Minnie Alberts is 94 years young and lives in a retirement community. Other than vision loss due to macular degeneration, Ms. Alberts is healthy and active despite her advanced age. Her retirement community offered a presentation from an OB provider; the information shared made Ms. Alberts realize that she might be able to get some help around her home.

Ms. Alberts told her OB case worker she wanted to feel safe in the kitchen and desperately wanted to be able to read again. Over 2 months, Ms. Alberts was met 4 times. With the help of her case worker, Ms. Alberts figured out alternative ways to measure ingredients and pour liquids. Her appliances were marked with tactile dots to make setting them easier. She received 20/20 pens and a large print planner; a talking clock; and a big button phone.

Ms. Alberts also received a magnifier to read recipes, bills, and letters from her great grandchildren. But, that just wasn't enough for Ms. Alberts, who enjoyed reading Christian novels, so the OB case worker told Ms. Alberts about the Talking Book and Braille Library. After Ms. Alberts' services ended, her book player arrived and the OB case worker came out to teach her how to use the machine.

## DSB OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

### OUTREACH TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

The emphasis continued on outreach to underserved communities, specifically Asian and Hispanic/Latino communities in Washington State. DSB staff engaged in multiple half-hour radio call-in shows in Spanish, through the Commission on Hispanic Affairs, to alert Spanish-speaking residents of our services. DSB staff further developed connections and relationships with agencies that serve Asian and Latino communities. The numbers of customers served within both groups has been steadily increasing for a couple of years. In 2014, the numbers experienced slight increases of less than 1%.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES & EFFORTS

Both VR staff & ILOB contractors attend multiple outreach events every year, including career fairs, public conventions, and professional conferences.

VR staff regularly network with a wide variety of companies, government departments, and social service agencies, including Holland America, Xerox, Starbucks, and the Department of the Navy, to increase job opportunities for VR customers.

DSB received a grant to do a strategic planning project with technical assistance from University Massachusetts – Boston. The strategic planning project begins in earnest in January 2015. The DSB will receive input from stakeholders, employees, management, and recipients of VR who were closed in 2014.

The Department website is undergoing updates to both content and structure, with a continued emphasis on accessibility.

**SRC CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY**

The University of Washington Center on Technology and Disability Studies conducts an anonymous satisfaction survey, on behalf of the SRC for the Blind, for VR customers who were closed in the federal fiscal year. This year, the survey was started in November and was completed during February 2015. Surveys were completed online or by phone

The SRC for the Blind established a committee to review the survey during 2014. Some of the questions were not clear and the survey did not align with the Results Washington satisfaction initiatives. After several discussions, the survey was revised. The questions address the same concerns of previous versions, but there are fewer questions, now easily understood and better aligned to the Results Washington initiatives.

62% of the customers surveyed responded. Of those responding, 67% of the customers experienced successful employment outcomes at the time of closure.

**RESULTS**

Customer Satisfaction Element	2014 Satisfaction Percentage
Overall*	75%
Training offered	73%
Accuracy of staff*	79%
Timeliness of staff*	76
Respectfulness of staff*	80%

\* Responses to multiple questions were combined to best meet satisfaction element.

The majority of respondents had no suggestions to offer for improvements to services. The items that were reported as suggestions for change include:

- Increase in staff needed
- Increase agency outreach/advertising
- Improved staff communications/customer service skills
- Improved staff responsiveness
- Wanting stronger employment networks and connections
- Inconvenient office hours/ locations
- Increase in knowledge of current assistive technology

A significant number comments simply expressed gratitude for the services they received.

SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR 2014

192 people who are blind or have low vision successfully found jobs in a variety of occupations at the organizations listed below.

Job Title	Employer Name
Owner *	A/R Solutions
Assistive Technology Instructor *	AccessAbility, Inc.
Customer Service Representative	Affiliated Computer Systems
Call Center Customer Service Representative	Amazon
Eligibility Interviewer for Social Services	Arizona Department of Economic Securities
Executive Administrative Assistant	Automatic Entries, Inc.
Owner *	Baby N Me
Greeter	Best Buy
Worker Compensation Administrator	Boeing
Deli Worker	Brite Starr Deli
Owner *	Brite Starr Deli
Knitter/Weaver *	Butterfly Knitting
Doctor of Acupuncture	California Department of Industrial Relations
Bilingual Parent Educator	Catholic Charities
Lead Cook	Central Valley School District
Teacher	Central Valley School District
Graduate Teaching Assistants	Chapman University
Patient Access Specialist	CHI Franciscan Health St. Anthony's Hospital
Substitute Teacher	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Seminary
Pool Assistant	City of Seattle Parks and Recreation
Dishwasher	Clark College
New Product Development Specialist	Close to My Heart
Admissions and Registration Assistant	Community Colleges of Spokane
Community Property Manager	ConAm
Community Property Manager	ConAm
Owner *	Creative Arts Retreats
Executive Director	Deaf-Blind Service Center
Social and Community Service Manager	Deaf-Blind Service Center
Psychology Associate	Department of Corrections
Administrative Office Worker	Department of Fish and Wildlife

Job Title	Employer Name
Technician	Department of Fish and Wildlife
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	Department of Social and Health Services
Archiving Communication Systems Administrator	Dignity Health St. Rose Dominican
Office Assistant	Division of Child Support
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Vendor	Dog on the Run
Office Assistant	East Valley School District
Occupational Therapy Aide	Eastern State Hospital
Puller/Picker	E-Cig Express
Custodian	Edmonds Community College
Assistive Technology Specialist/Braillist	Educational Service District 105
Teacher for the Visually Impaired	Educational Service District 105
Janitor	Ellensburg United Methodist Church
Business Analyst	Employment Security Department
Special Education Teacher	Everett Public Schools
Stock Person/Cleaner	Everybody's Music
Certified Nursing Assistant	Family Resource Home Care
Stock Clerk	Fort Lewis Express Supply
Sales Associate	General Nutrition Centers, Inc.
Boxing Trainer	Gladiator MMA
Production Worker	Goodwill Industries
Production Worker	Goodwill Industries
Certified Nursing Assistant	Gracelen Terrace Care Center
Registration Clerk	Grays Harbor Community Hospital
Stocker/Freight Handler	Grocery Outlet, Inc.
Billing and Service Representative	Group Health Cooperative
Physician Assistant	Group Health Family Practice
Community/Property Manager	Guardian Management Services
Software Quality Assurance Program Manager	H10 Capital
Utility Cleaner/Janitor	Holiday Inn
Massage Therapist	Holistic Treatment Center and Spa
Sales Clerk	Home Depot
Massage Therapist	Houk Chiropractic Clinics
Office and Administrative Support Worker	Infinite Possibilities
Vice President of Flight Operations	ISTAR Tactical

Job Title	Employer Name
Team Leader	Jack in The Box
Materials Project Manager	Jesse Engineering Co.
Medical Massage Therapist	Kay Chiropractic
Real Estate Broker	Keller Williams Realty
Teacher for the Visually Impaired	Kennewick School District
Transit Maintenance Analyst	King County
Customer Service Representative	Kohl's
Diesel and Heavy Equipment Instructor	Lake Washington Institute of Technology
Landscaper	Lambert, Inc.
Photographer	Life Touch, Inc.
Administrative Specialist	Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
Assembler	Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
Contract Close-Out Specialist	Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
Contract Worker	Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
Development Assistant	Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
Machine Feeder and Off-bearer	Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
Machine Operator	Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
Machine Operator	Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
Machine Operator	Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
Stock Clerk	Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
Video Transcriber	Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.
Maintenance and Repair Worker	Logis-Tech, Inc.
Owner *	Lona's Tikki Hut Blankets
Pressman	Longview Daily News
Team Member	Lowe's
Team Member	Lowe's
Housekeeper	Lucky Eagle Casino and Hotel
Preschool Teacher	Lummi Nation Early Learning Program
Rehabilitation Counselor	Lummi Nation Employment and Training Center
Office Manager	Major Pest Solutions
Client Service Specialist	Marchex, Inc.
Accounting/HR Manager	Marcoo, Inc.
Claims Investigator *	Maxwell and Associates
Strap Chopper Operator	McDougall and Sons
Reflexologist *	Meridian Reflexology

Job Title	Employer Name
Cashier	Mill Plain Shipping Company
English Teacher Assistant	Ministère de l'Education Nationale: Academie de Versailles
Baker	New Sage Bakery
Courtesy Clerk	New Seasons Market
Product Tester	Nintendo of America
Customer Service Representative	Nordstrom, Inc.
Patient Care Coordinator	Northgate Hearing Services
Licensed Massage Practitioner	Northwest Advanced Medical Massage
Braille Technology and Computer Teacher	Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Native American Director	Okanagan School District
ES Systems Technician	Orange County, NC Emergency Services Department
Insurance Consultant *	P.M. Consultants, LLC
Assess Computer Instructor	Pacific ATI
Pizza Box Assembler	Papa John's International, Inc.
Braille Translator/JAWS Instructor	Pasco School District
Registered Dietitian	PeaceHealth
Nurse Educator	PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center
Mental Health Counselor *	Phoenix Therapeutics
Customer Service Associate	Premera Blue Cross
Construction and Sustainability Coordinator	Providence Health and Services
Food Preparer and Server	Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center
Administrative Assistant	Providence St. Mary Medical Center
Farm/Ranch Worker and Horse Groomer	Reber Ranch
Inventory Analyst	REI, Inc.
Care Giver	Riverton-Bonaventure Senior Living
Bakery Assistant	Safeway, Inc.
Cashier/Food Service	Safeway, Inc.
Courtesy Clerk	Safeway, Inc.
Network Analyst	Seattle Public Schools
Adaptive Technology Trainer *	Self-employed
Apartment Manager *	Self-employed
Clerical Support *	Self-employed
Massage Therapist *	Self-employed
Online Tutor: English as a Second Language *	Self-employed

Job Title	Employer Name
Photographer *	Self-employed
Writer *	Self-employed
Cashier	Shell
Faculty, Criminal Justice Instructor	Shoreline Community College
Telemarketer	SightConnection
Telephone Solicitor	SightConnection
Accessibility Tester	Skills, Inc.
Usability and Compliance Tester	Skills, Inc.
Vocational Specialist	Skookum Contract Services
Office Clerk	SL Start
Owner and CEO *	Sound Asylum, Inc.
Teacher Assistant	Sound Child Care Solutions
SHIBA Program Assistant	Southeast Washington Aging and Long Term Care
Animal Technician	St. Francis Animal Clinic
Assistant Manager	Starbucks
Crowd Management/Customer Service	Starplex Corporation
Call Center Agent	Strategic Contact Solutions Group, Inc.
Counter Attendant	Subway
Car Washer	Sunset Car Wash
Visitation Facilitator	Support Care and Networking (SCAN)
Switchboard Operator	Swedish Medical Center
Office Manager	Tacoma Area Coalition of Individuals with Disabilities
Meat Cutter Manager	Templeman's Meat Market
Channel Manager	TestudoData
Owner *	The Break Room
Lead Software Engineer	Ticket Master Hollywood
School Psychologist	Toppenish School District
Bank Teller	Umpqua Bank
IT Specialist	Unified Research Science
Resident Physician	University of Michigan
Graduate School Recruiter	University of Washington Medical Center
Research Study Assistant	University of Washington Social Development Research Group
Claims Examiner	US Department of Labor
Water Ways Program Manager	US Environmental Protection Agency

Job Title	Employer Name
Collections Representative	US Internal Revenue Service
Independent Contractor Driver	US Postal Service
Tele-service Representative	US Social Security Administration
Social Worker	Veterans Administration Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinics
Sales Floor Stocker	Walgreens
Customer Service	Walmart Stores, Inc.
Floor Maintenance	Walmart Stores, Inc.
Sales Associate	Walmart Stores, Inc.
Sales Associate/Stocking	Walmart Stores, Inc.
Braille Proofreader	Washington State School for the Blind
Instructional Support Technician	Washington State School for the Blind
Outreach Teacher of the Visually Impaired	Washington State School for the Blind
Residential Life Counselor	Washington State School for the Blind
Access Advisor, Disability Services	Washington State University
Reader Advisor	Washington Talking Book and Braille Library
Physical Ed Teacher	West Valley School District
Social Worker	Western State Hospital
Computer Specialist	Winfield Jewelers
Work Source Specialist	WorkSource
Warehouse Worker	Wycoff Farms
Homemaker **	
Homemaker **	z
Homemaker **	
Homemaker **	z Scott Ronald

\* self-employment.

\*\* an individual's increased independence has allowed a caregiver to return to competitive employment.

# 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

**JAY INSLEE**

Governor

**BRAD OWEN**

Lieutenant Governor

**JAY MANNING**

Chief of Staff

**LOU OMA DURAND**

DSB Executive Director

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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**DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND**  
State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind