

South Dakota

Board of Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired

2019

Annual Report



Service to the Blind
& Visually Impaired

∞ A T S B I V I



BOARD OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Hillsview Plaza, 3800 East Highway 34
c/o 500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-5070
Phone: (605) 773-4644 | TTY: (605) 773-6412
FAX: (605) 773-5483
Website: dhs.sd.gov

Dear Governor Noem:

It is my honor to present to you the 2019 South Dakota Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) Annual Report. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you that we look forward to working with you and your leadership as we continue to lead our nation as an employment first state. Thank you for your support of Board activities including the Governor's awards to recognize employers and the abilities of citizens with disabilities in the workplace.



This report has been prepared in accordance with regulations of the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration. The report is prepared yearly to capture the impact services have on South Dakota citizens who are blind or visually impaired and analyzes the programs and services delivered by SBVI. The report also provides snapshots of the activities conducted by the Board over the last year. The comprehensive statewide needs assessment, public forums and consumer satisfaction surveys are some examples of activities that help SBVI jointly develop goals and strategies to address the needs identified.

I would like to acknowledge the professionalism and dedication of my colleagues whose commitment makes South Dakota an even better place to live for citizens who are blind and visually impaired.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine Greseth
Chair, Board of SBVI

CC: SBVI Board Members
Christyne Cavataio, Rehabilitation Services Administration State Liaison
Shawnie Rechtenbaugh, Secretary, Department of Human Services

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Board of SBVI Members	2
Board of SBVI Committees and Meetings	3
Board Activities	4
Vocational Rehabilitation Program	8
Independent Living Program	20
Rehabilitation Center for the Blind	25
Business Enterprise Program	31
SBVI Office Locations and Contact Information	34

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

December 19, 2019

South Dakota is second in the nation for employment of citizens with disabilities and fifth for the employment rate of citizens with significant vision loss. These achievements are not a coincidence, but a testament to the work ethic of South Dakotans and the commitment of the State of South Dakota to provide the tools necessary to assist people with disabilities to maintain or obtain employment.

Prepared in conjunction with the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, this report highlights the accomplishments of those who participated in services and the goals achieved by SBVI in 2019. The impact of services is not reflected only by data; feedback from those who participated in services provides insight into the true results of the work we do. Success stories and comments made on satisfaction surveys can be found throughout this report. These perspectives reflect the true impact of services provided by the dedicated staff of the Division of SBVI.

Members of the Board of SBVI bring experience, both personal and professional, to guide the division on priorities. Their guidance on goals and strategies to ensure optimal service provision is invaluable. Fifty percent of members are blind or visually impaired, this perspective is critical as we move forward to improve our system to ensure quality employment outcomes for those we work with.

In the past year we have seen heightened awareness and increased activities with partner agencies in the public and private sector. SBVI has actively sought opportunities for partnerships to ensure a seamless system for job seekers who are blind or visually impaired. Older citizens benefit from individualized training in their homes to learn alternative techniques to perform tasks with vision loss. Our ultimate goal is continuous improvement that leads to higher quality outcomes for those who participate in the vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the trained professionals in SBVI who deliver services across the state. Their commitment to finding solutions, regardless of the barriers faced by those they serve, is commendable. Their expertise and dedication are imperative to the positive results throughout this report.

Gaye Mattke, Director, Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired

“I just thought you might want to know that sometimes the small things you do make a lasting difference in someone’s life.”

Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired

The mission of the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired is to promote independence, employment, and full inclusion for all citizens who are blind or visually impaired.

The Board of SBVI is a 15-member advisory council appointed by the Governor. The Board reviews, analyzes and advises the Division of SBVI on responsibilities related to effectiveness of programs and policy and procedures. The Board meets four times per year and at least 50% of members must be blind or visually impaired. All board meetings are open to the public.

Name	Hometown	Representation
Tami Francis	Sioux Falls	Business and Industry
Jill Kundtz – Member at Large	Rapid City	Business and Industry
Nichole Nelson	Aberdeen	Community Rehab. Program
Zay Norman	Hays	Business and Industry
Cole Uecker	Pierre	Client Assistance Program
Gaye Mattke	Pierre	SBVI Director– Ex Officio
Connie Sullivan	Pierre	State Education Agency
Cheri Knispel	Rapid City	Disability Advocacy Group
*Patrick Czerny	Piedmont	Community Rehab. Program
Elaine Fritz	Baltic	Parent of Child with Disabilities
Burdette Clifford	Mission	American Indian VR Services
Tana Buresch	Sioux Falls	Parent Connection
Alan Vandenburg	Sioux Falls	VR Counselor – Ex Officio
Koni Sims – Vice Chair	Sioux Falls	Disability Advocacy Group
Catherine Greseth - Chair	Rapid City	Business and Industry/SILC
Marcia Hultman	Pierre	Workforce Dev. Council

*Denotes members whose terms expired during 2019

Board composition is defined in the Rehabilitation Act, as amended. Nominations for Board vacancies are solicited from organizations representing people with disabilities, including the South Dakota Association of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota. In addition, the Division seeks representation by current or former clients of the vocational rehabilitation program. At least 50% of members must be blind or visually impaired. The Board serves as an advisory council to the Division of SBVI; the Board reviews, analyzes, and advises the Division of SBVI regarding the performance of the responsibilities relating to eligibility, the extent, scope and effectiveness of services provided, and functions performed by SBVI that affect or that potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes. The Board also assists with development of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Unified State Plan and evaluates the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program including consumer satisfaction. Board members recommend the format for public forums and serve as facilitators of the forums which are held to obtain input for the state plan.

Board Committees

Executive Committee – The Executive Committee consists of the Board Chair, Vice Chair, and Member at Large. The Executive Committee plans agendas for Board meetings and handles decisions between regularly scheduled meetings and other activities assigned by the Board.

Strategic Planning and Policy Development Committee – This committee provides input on strategic planning and policy development and evaluates state plan updates, consumer satisfaction surveys, and SBVI policy revisions. Recommendations from the committee are brought to the full Board.

Public Relations Committee – The Public Relations Committee recommends activities to promote the programs and services offered by SBVI and assists SBVI in designing and conducting outreach activities.

Assistive Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC) – ATAC is comprised of individuals who are knowledgeable about the latest innovations in assistive technology. Members advise SBVI in matters concerning assistive technology.

Board Meetings

The Board meets at least four times per year. Meetings during the report period were held on the following dates and locations:

December 7, 2018, Pierre, SD

March 22, 2019, Fort Pierre, SD

June 21, 2019, Pierre, SD

September 26 & 27, 2019, Fort Pierre, SD

Meetings are open to the public and held at accessible locations. Meetings are announced via the SBVI website, the State of South Dakota news website, the Board Portal, and through a variety of publications throughout the state. Meeting dates are determined by the Board; agendas and minutes are posted on the Open Government Board Portal at: <http://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov>.



Board Members and Staff

“I would highly recommend your service to anyone who needs it. Without a doubt I would come back to SBVI. The magnifying glasses and the large print helped greatly. I have been at my present employment for almost 6 months. I could not be happier.”

Board Activities

Governor's Awards for Employment of People with Disabilities

Governor Noem recognized individuals and employers for their contributions to the rehabilitation and employment of South Dakotans with disabilities on November 4, 2019 in the Capitol Rotunda. Following are the recipients of the 2019 awards:

- Brad Konechne, Brookings - Outstanding Individual with a Disability
- Carolee Bucholz, Sioux Falls - Outstanding Employee with a Disability
- Cammack Ranch Supply, Union Center - Outstanding Private Employer (Small Employer)
- Five Star Call Centers, Sioux Falls- Outstanding Private Employer (Large Employer)
- University of SD/Sanford School of Medicine - Vermillion Outstanding Employer
- Carolyn Schuldies, Sturgis – Outstanding Transition Services
- Nancy Schlichenmayer, Pierre – Distinguished Service Award



The Governor's Awards ceremony is co-sponsored by the South Dakota Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Statewide Independent Living Council and DHS.



South Dakota Disability Employment Awareness Month

Governor Kristi Noem proclaimed October 2019, Disability Employment Awareness Month in South Dakota. Disability Employment Awareness Month aims to raise awareness about disability employment issues and to celebrate the contributions of workers with disabilities. The 2019 theme was "The Right Talent, Right Now".

The Board joined a host of South Dakota agencies and organizations to sponsor activities in thirteen communities in October to promote awareness and to help foster a disability-friendly culture in the workplace.

Public Forums

The Board of SBVI sponsored a public forum in conjunction with the National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota 2019 convention on April 26th. Twenty-four people participated and topics included the unified state plan, comprehensive statewide needs assessment, pre-employment transition services and comments on services provided by SBVI.

The Unified State Plan core partners will hold a public forum in January 2020 and the Board of SBVI recommended that SBVI hold a public forum on February 3, 2020. The forums will be held by video conference with the option to phone in to ensure participants have statewide access.

White Cane March

The Board of SBVI sponsored the 8th annual White Cane March by assisting with costs for billboards to educate the public about white cane laws. The event took place in Sioux Falls on October 5th, 2019 with approximately 100 participants whose mission was to remind drivers to yield to pedestrians with a white cane or guide dog. The event is sponsored by a number of organizations who promote access for people with vision loss.



Public Relations

Outreach activities are a focus of the Board of SBVI to ensure citizens with vision loss have access to services. Activities are conducted to educate the public about accessibility for people with vision loss.

The Board of SBVI sponsored a booth at Disability Awareness Day during the 2019 South Dakota Legislative Session in the capitol rotunda in Pierre. Board Vice Chair, Koni Sims represented the Board and took the opportunity to bring awareness of the needs of citizens with vision loss to legislators.



Board Chair, Catherine Greseth and Patrick Czerny, DakotaLink were featured on KEVN TV speaking about assistive technology for people with vision loss in a segment entitled "Turning Disability into Possibility with Technology". In addition, Catherine was the keynote speaker at a Black Hills Leadership Development event where she spoke about losing her eyesight to 75 CEOs and leaders in the Black Hills. She also worked with over 100 Synchrony employees for a "lights out lunch", where participants were blindfolded to simulate what it is like to be blind. Afterwards Catherine spoke on different eye diseases and handed out glasses that simulated different types of vision loss.

"The services helped me keep my job and I am eternally grateful."

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan

The WIOA Unified State Plan was a topic of discussion at all meetings in 2019. Board members provided input on the comprehensive statewide needs assessment and the goals and strategies to be included in the SBVI section of the plan. In addition, information was shared from other core partners regarding service delivery and coordination. The draft plan was shared with Board members for their input and approval prior to submission to the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Public input was sought on the draft plan via public forums, the opportunity to review the draft plan and provide input was also available through the SBVI website. The Board voted unanimously to include the following goals and strategies in the 2020 state plan submission.

Goal 1: Improve earnings, benefits, and career advancement for consumers served by SBVI.

Strategy 1.1: Increase utilization of South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind to improve skills of consumers served, including alternative techniques and vocational services.

Strategy 1.2: Maintain and emphasize the quality of job development services to SBVI consumers by providing specialty training on blindness and visual impairments to providers.

Strategy 1.3: Expand the use of Integrated Resource Teams to address the broad array of needs for those with significant disabilities.

Goal 2: Work with workforce programs and other partners so that referral sources, employers, and citizens who are blind or visually impaired are aware of the unique services provided by SBVI.

Strategy 2.1: Design and disseminate outreach materials and participate in activities that target employers to educate them on the capabilities of people who are blind or visually impaired.

Strategy 2.2: Annually conduct activities that promote services for citizens with vision loss including those from minority backgrounds.

Strategy 2.3: Annually review and update outreach materials and procedures that staff utilize to promote services to referral sources, employers and other entities.

Goal 3: Ensure that Vocational Rehabilitation consumers receive services that allow for informed choice and help them to improve their ability to communicate, interact, and perform to their potential in their community.

Strategy 3.1: Develop assistive technology training resources to improve accessibility for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, including those with the most significant disabilities.

Strategy 3.2: Collaborate with workforce programs and other partners to ensure essential life supports are in place so SBVI consumers have the skills necessary to obtain employment.

Strategy 3.3: Ensure access to specialized skills training by trained/certified providers.

Strategy 3.4: Improve access to peer supports and behavioral health supports to address life conditions of those with visual impairments and blindness.

Goal 4: Strengthen the agency’s ability to provide quality services to minority populations in South Dakota.

Strategy 4.1: Coordinate with the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and workforce programs to plan educational activities on norms, beliefs and values of minority populations.

Strategy 4.2: Collaborate with Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs to ensure that all eligible individuals are served in an effective and efficient manner on reservations and tribal lands.

Strategy 4.3: Inform minority populations of vocational rehabilitation services and the role of SBVI to meet the needs of those who are blind or visually impaired in these populations.

Goal 5: Provide quality transition services to eligible students that facilitate their movement from school to post-secondary education and/or optimal employment outcomes.

Strategy 5.1: Continue transition activities and services, such as Project Skills, Project Search, Youth Leadership Forum, Catch the Wave, and SBVI Transition Week, which provide students with valuable experiences and skills development needed to move from school to employment.

Strategy 5.2: Develop strategies with the SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Transition Specialist to provide statewide education to teachers, students and family members about services available to students through SBVI.

Progress on goals and strategies will be reported at quarterly Board meetings. The SBVI portion of the WIOA Unified State Plan will also include an evaluation and reports of progress on the goals and strategies.

“Even with all of the services, vision loss is hard to deal with. Mike Webb has done an amazing job to help my husband- we thank him so much for everything that he has done for Henry. We wouldn’t hesitate a bit contacting SBVI again. Many, many thanks!”

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

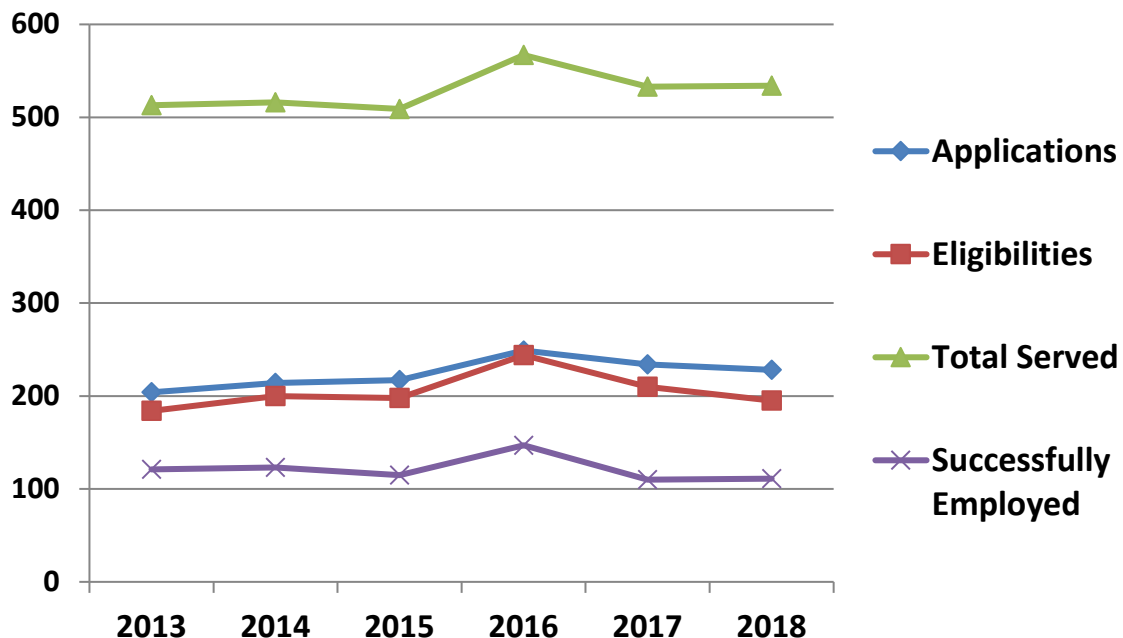
The Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program provides individualized rehabilitation services that result in optimal employment outcomes for citizens who are blind or visually impaired. Vocational rehabilitation counselors provide specialized services throughout the State of South Dakota. Most VR data is based on Program Year 2018 (July 2018-June 2019).

Vocational Rehabilitation Performance

- 534 participated in services through the SBVI VR Program during Program Year 2018 (PY18), compared to 533 people in PY 2017.
 - 111 people were successfully rehabilitated through the vocational rehabilitation program in PY18, compared to 110 in PY2017, and 147 in 2016.
 - Median earnings of program participants during the fourth quarter after exit from the program was \$4,852.39.
-

SBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Caseload Summary

The chart below illustrates the number of people who have applied for and received services from the SBVI Vocational Rehabilitation program over the past seven years. SBVI counselors completed 228 applications, 195 eligibilities, served a total of 534 individuals, and successfully employed 111 clients, similar to last year. SBVI counselors took an average of 19 days to determine eligibility after an application was obtained.



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Performance Measures

Effective July 1, 2017, SBVI started tracking the performance measures listed below to meet new requirements stipulated by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). SBVI does not yet have a minimum required measure for these indicators, as the first two years will be used for collection of data to propose an expected level of performance. SBVI will negotiate annually with RSA to set target levels starting in December 2019. Information provided below includes measures for the second year of data collected.

Instead of submitting this data once annually as had been the norm, data on all open and closed cases between July 1 and June 30 (program year) are submitted on a quarterly basis to RSA. With the federal change to program year, SBVI data in this portion of the report is also changing to Program Year unless indicated otherwise.

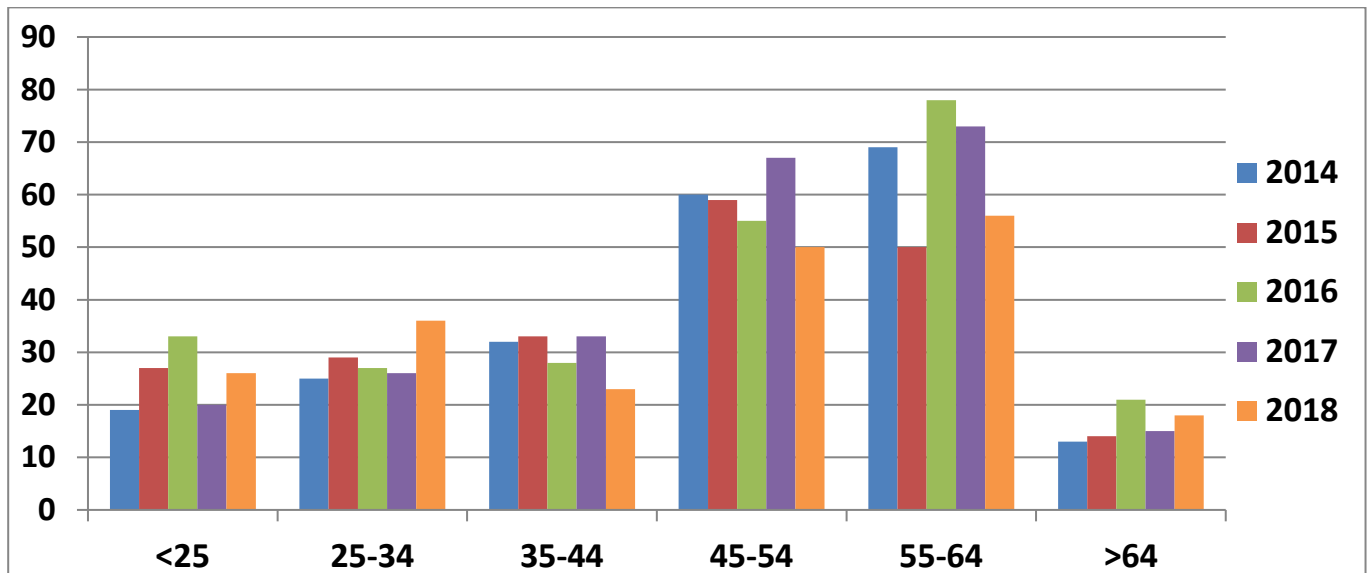
Primary Performance Measures for Core Programs

For WIOA core programs, states must report the results of primary performance measures set forth at section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA:

1. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program; **62.32%**
2. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program; **41.92%**
3. The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program; **\$4,138.85**
4. The percentage of program participants who obtained a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program. For those participants who obtained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, the participant must also have obtained or retained employment or be in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within 1 year after exit from the program; **13.13%**
5. The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; **20.18%**
6. The indicator(s) of effectiveness in serving employers. ***Data not yet available**

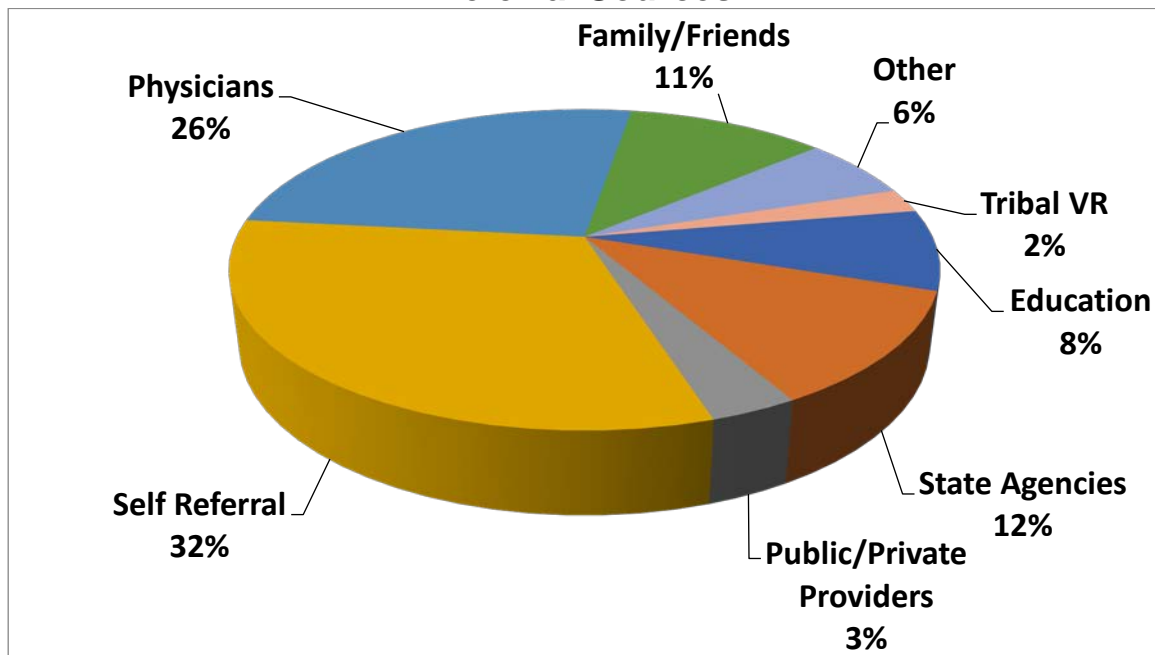
“I didn't realize how severe my vision loss was- I desperately needed the services I love my job now. I have been employed for almost 16 months now and am very happy for the first time in quite a few years.”

Age of Applicants



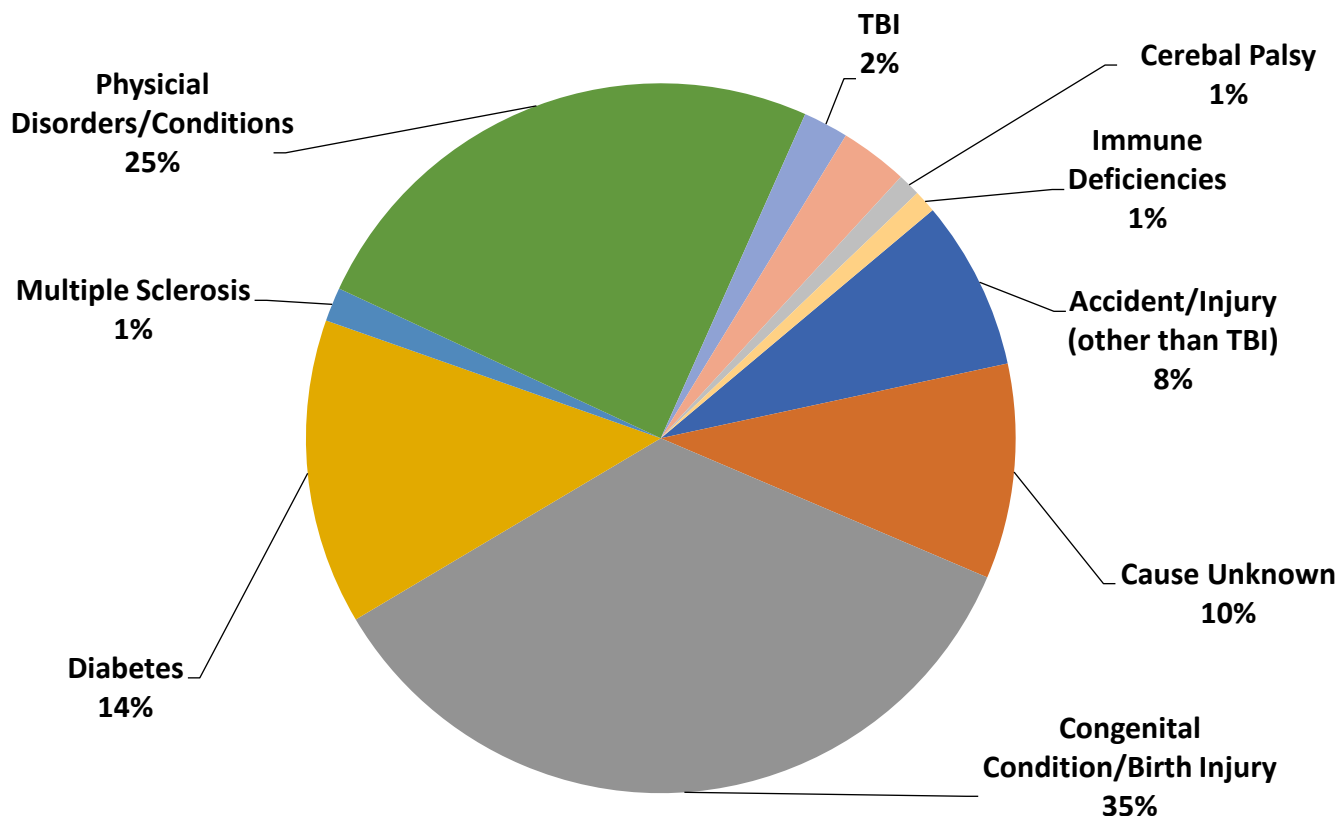
This graph illustrates the age groups of applicants for the VR program. Although SBVI takes applications from individuals starting at age fourteen, historically the majority of applicants are between the ages of 45-64 due to the progressive nature of vision loss. SBVI did see an increase in applicants age 34 and below during the report period.

Referral Sources



Physicians and self-referrals continue to be the highest percentage of referral sources. With a focus on transition services to students, SBVI staff will continue to increase outreach efforts to school personnel and parents to inform them of the availability of transition services for students with vision loss.

Causes of Impairments



The cause of visual impairment for most VR clients found eligible in PY18 was due to a congenital condition/birth injury, a physical disorder/condition or diabetes. This data has been consistent for many years.

Barriers to Employment	2017	2018
Low Income	36%	43%
TANF exhausted or never received	27%	16%
Long Term Unemployment	16%	22%
Ex-Offender	6%	12%
Single Parent	4%	8%
English Language Learner	3%	2%
Basic skills deficiency/low levels of literacy	3%	2%
Homeless	3%	7%
Cultural Barriers	3%	4%

SBVI is seeing low income, TANF being exhausted or never received, and long-term unemployment as the top barriers to individuals obtaining employment.

Impacts to Employment

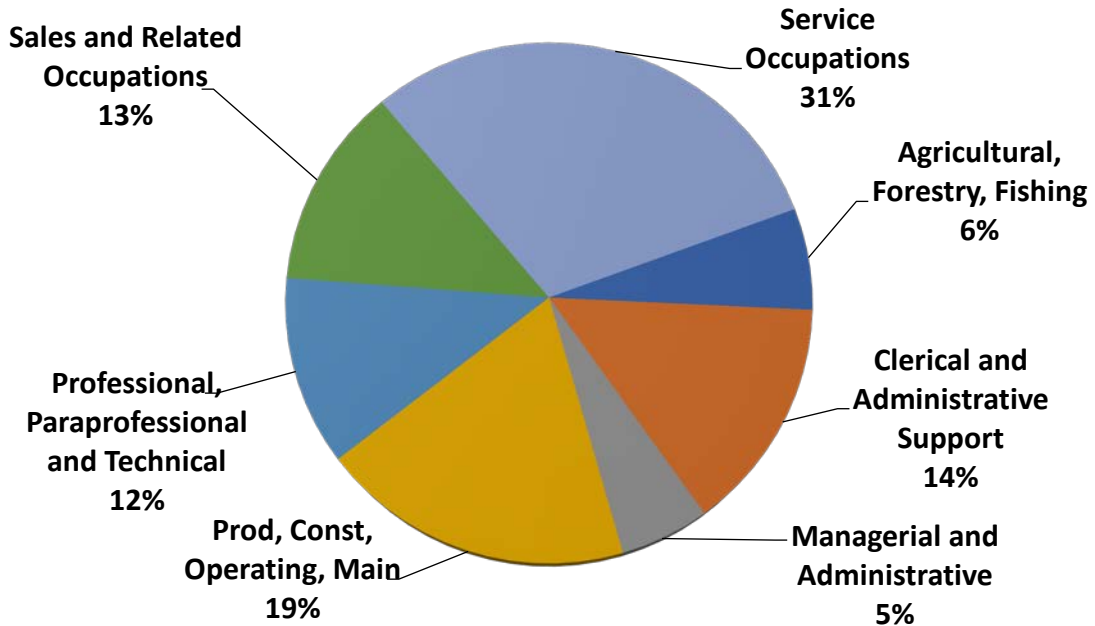
SBVI assisted 111 clients to successfully obtain employment in PY18. Clients had a visual impairment as their primary disability, but sixty four percent of them were also diagnosed with a secondary disability, which also impacts their ability to work.

It is common for SBVI Counselors to work with clients who have multiple disabilities that affect more than their vision, and SBVI increasingly works with clients with multiple disabilities as reflected in the following table.

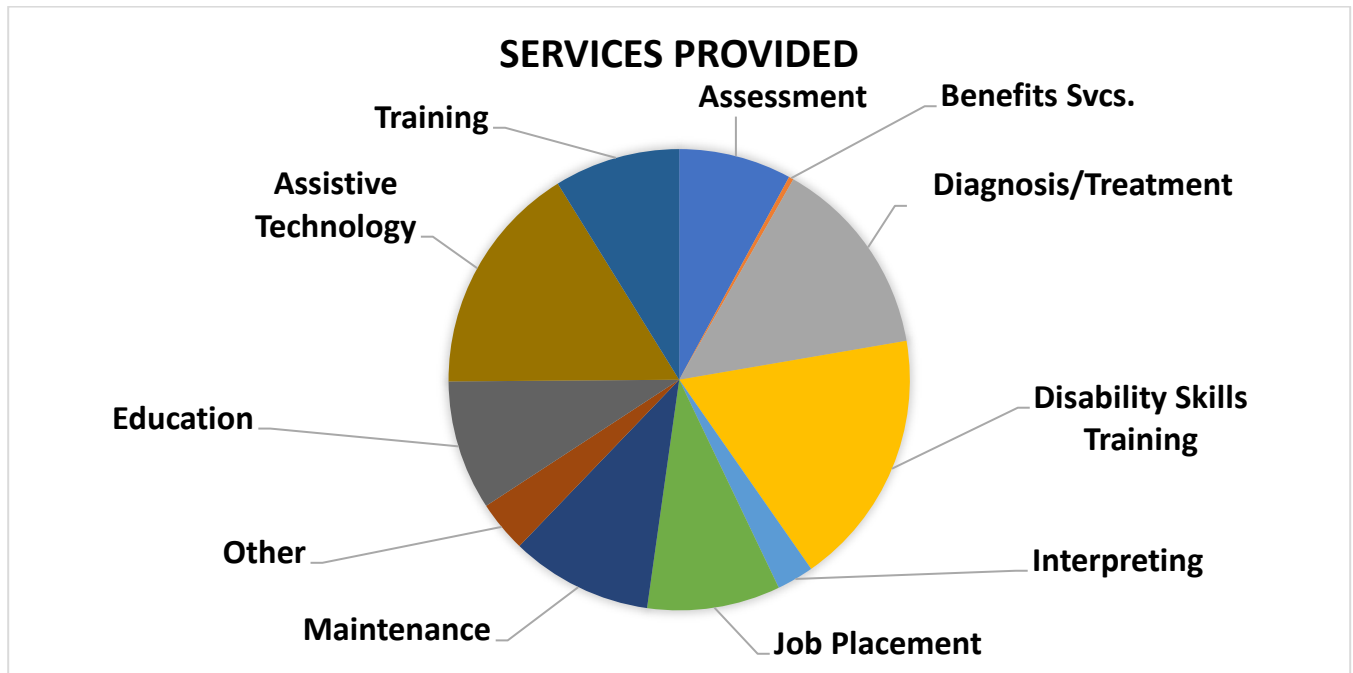
Secondary Impairment	Closed Cases
Diabetes Mellitus	21
Depressive and Mood Disorders	6
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	6
Cause Unknown	5
Congenital Conditions/Birth Injury	5
Physical Disorders/Conditions	5
Anxiety Disorders	4
Arthritis and Rheumatism	4
Accident/Injury (other than TBI or SCI)	3
Intellectual Disability IQ <=70	2
Multiple Sclerosis	2
Respiratory Disorders other than Cystic	2
Cardiac and other Conditions	1
Cerebral Palsy	1
End-Stage Renal Disease and other	1
Immune Deficiencies excluding HIV/AIDS	1
Personality Disorders	1
Stroke	1

“I cannot express more how awesome the service that I received was. Thanks to all the people involved in my rehab.”

Occupations of Individuals Successfully Employed

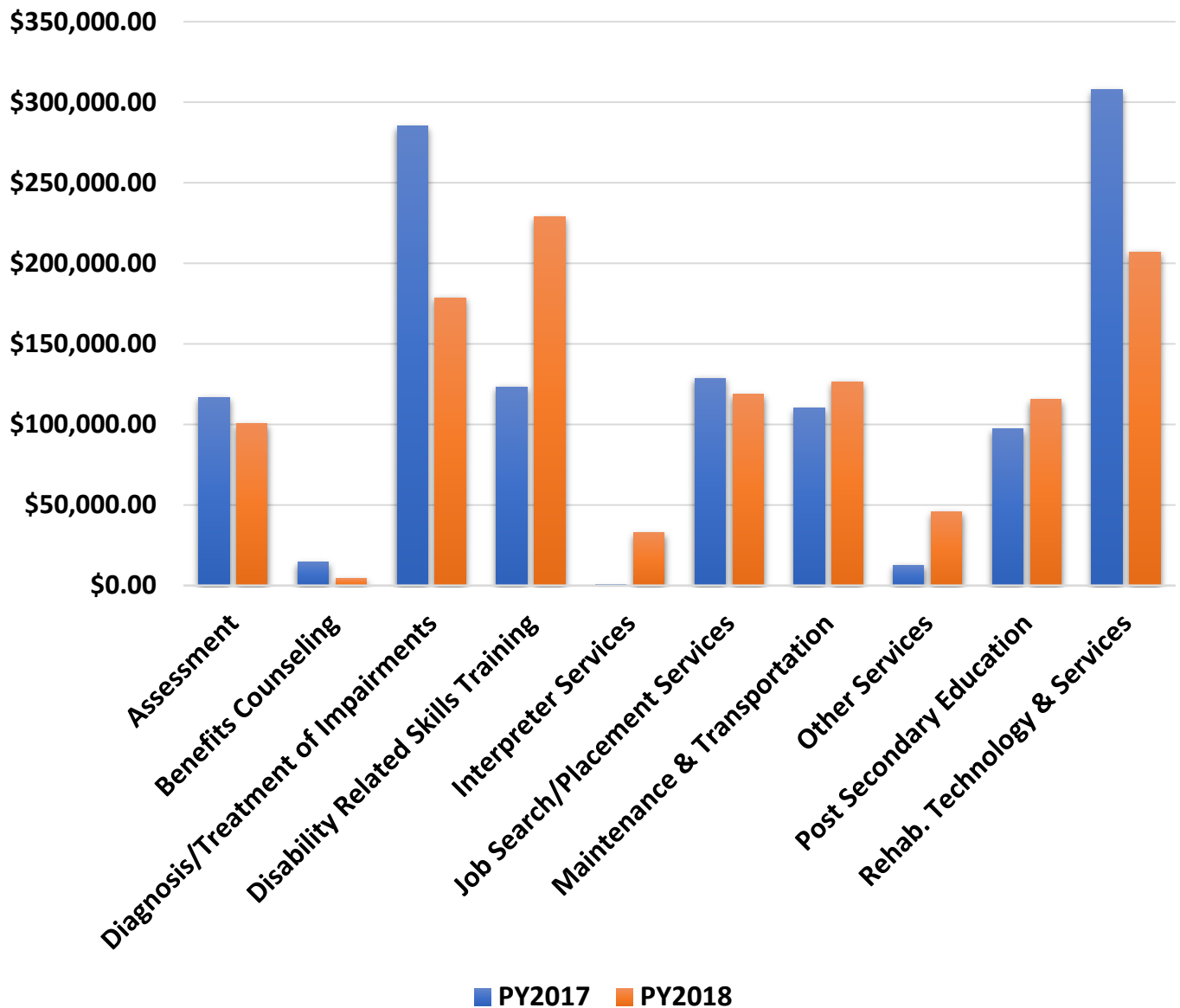


In PY18, the Vocational Rehabilitation program helped 111 people to achieve their employment goals. This pie chart reflects the occupations of people successfully employed, with almost one third of the jobs in service occupations.



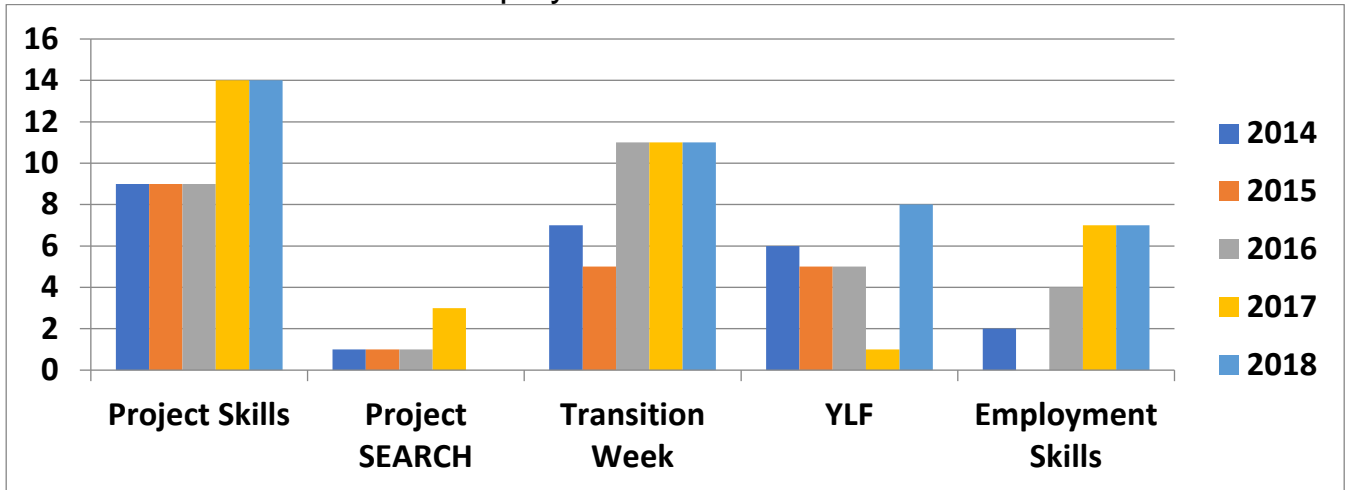
SBVI assists clients to overcome their vision-related impediments to employment by providing a variety of services. Assistive technology, diagnosis and treatment of impairments and disability skills training were the most common services provided/purchased during the report period.

Vocational Rehabilitation Purchased Services Analysis



In PY18, SBVI spent \$1,271,033 providing services for VR participants, a decrease of \$74,207 from the previous year. SBVI saw a 32% decrease in assistive technology services and devices, and an 85% increase of disability related skills training this past year. Disability related skills training teaches skills of blindness training, including how to use assistive technology, orientation and mobility training, communication, employment skills training, home management classes, and peer support, resulting in greater independence and increased skills to return to work. Assistive technology services and devices are an integral service for accessing information in a wide variety of occupations, as well as for post-secondary education. SBVI also experienced a substantial increase in interpreter services this past year.

Transition Activities for Students with Vision Loss Pre-Employment Transition Services



The activities shown in the graph above illustrate services provided to students to assist them to address barriers to employment. SBVI noted a substantial increase in participation at the Youth Leadership Forum, which occurs annually in June.

Most Common Planned Services for Youth	Percent of Plans
Counseling and Guidance	90%
Transportation	33%
Room and Board	30%
Project Skills	19%
Assistive Technology Devices	18%
Assistive Technology Services	17%
Tuition and Fees, 4 yr. College	13%
Books & Supplies	12%
SBVI Transition Week	11%
Job Coaching & Follow Along Services	10%

Rehabilitation counselors focus on counseling and guidance, working closely with students to determine an employment goal based on their interests, skills and abilities, and plan services that will help them to obtain their goal of employment. Of the 119 plans developed for youth, counseling and guidance is the most common service at 90%, followed by transportation to attend pre-employment transition activities at 33%. Pictured is the transition specialist and an SBVI VR counselor presenting information about transition services at the Special Education conference in Rapid City. SBVI has an agreement with the SD School for the Blind & Visually Impaired for a Transition Specialist who provides statewide transition services to schools and students with vision loss.



Services to Minorities

According to the 2010 census, South Dakota's minority (non-white) population is 14.1 percent. The largest minority group in South Dakota involves American Indians from nine South Dakota Tribes making up 8.8 percent of the state's total population. In PY18, 17 percent of individuals served by SBVI were of American Indian descent, and 28 percent of all individuals served reported coming from a minority background. SBVI has increased services to minority individuals by 65 percent and has seen a decrease of services to non-minorities (White) by 7.5 percent.



The Board and Division of SBVI work to address culturally relevant services for minority populations through numerous initiatives. The Director of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Vocational Rehabilitation Program is a member of the Board of SBVI. The WIOA Unified Plan identifies areas of concern that arose from analysis of the needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities and/or have been unserved or underserved:

- Employer Public Outreach/Education - Public education targeted to language and cultural sensitivity as needed to better serve the unserved or underserved.
- Services for Native Americans - Collaboration, local education events, information/referral, economic development, more appropriate provider services, and cultural awareness.
- Transition Services-Address disengagement rates for high school exiters which remain disproportionately high for high school dropouts, exiters labeled ED, American Indians, and Hispanic persons.
- Self-Advocacy Skills - Expressions of need to assist minority persons with the most significant disabilities to effectively represent their own needs in social and work settings.
- Cultural Understanding -The need for South Dakota citizens to better understand the implications and requirements of the cultures of the minorities who share the state.



SBVI participated in State and Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program biannual meetings to share information and to address concerns. These meetings help to enhance relationships, clarify roles for joint cases and provide opportunities to discuss training and awareness activities. KILI, a non-profit radio station that broadcasts to the Lakota people on the Pine Ridge, Cheyenne River and Rosebud Reservations, interviewed an SBVI counselor on air; as a result, several referrals were made to the SBVI program. The Oglala Sioux Tribal program regularly invites

staff to be interviewed on their radio show to help educate citizens about programs and services.



The Oyate' Circle Project, a resource, education, outreach and training effort through Center for Disabilities, provided four Disability Awareness Trainings (DAT) throughout the state of South Dakota, strategically placed to include rural Native communities. SBVI Counselors attended the trainings and provided information to the audience about working jointly with Tribal/State VR programs to access services on Tribal lands. This picture shows Oyate' Circle Project staff with Siera Johnson, SBVI VR Counselor.

VR Program Client Satisfaction Survey Analysis

SBVI partners with the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired to conduct an annual client satisfaction survey, which consists of eight core questions that contribute to a composite satisfaction scale, Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ-8), Larsen, Attkisson, Hargreaves, and Nguyen (1979). An additional seven questions were developed with the help of the Board of SBVI, and consumers rated their satisfaction level from 1 (Poor) to 4 (Excellent). This is the 10th year that SBVI has conducted this annual survey.

Between October 1, 2018 and September 30, 2019, the survey was mailed out to 185 individuals who received services and were closed from the SBVI vocational rehabilitation program during the past federal fiscal year. Of the 185 questionnaires mailed out, 79 questionnaires were returned, which is a 43 percent response rate, an improvement from last year's response rate of 36 percent. This information gets compiled and sent to Dr. Alan Davis, Professor in the Department of Counseling and Human Development at South Dakota State University, who analyzes the data and provides the results in a comprehensive report to SBVI. This data gets shared with the Board of SBVI on an annual basis. Along with the survey ratings, previous clients have an opportunity to provide comments and feedback. Many of those comments are found throughout the Board's annual report.

***“I was able to keep my employment. Very, very satisfied and grateful for the program and the people that did a fantastic job of helping me.
Thank you again.”***

Question	Average Rating
1. How would you rate the quality of service you received?	3.79
2. Did you get the kind of service you wanted?	3.71
3. To what extent has our program met your needs?	3.51
4. If a friend were in need of similar help, would you recommend our program to him/her?	3.78
5. How satisfied are you with the amount of help you received?	3.68
6. Have the services you received helped you to deal more effectively with your problems?	3.65
7. In an overall, general sense, how satisfied are you with the service you received?	3.65
8. If you were to seek help again, would you come back to our program?	3.76
9. Were you a full partner in the process to determine your employment goal and services to be provided?	3.67
10. Do you feel that the services provided by your counselor were necessary to obtain or keep your employment?	3.58
11. Were information and services provided to you in a timely manner?	3.74
12. Were information and services provided to you in a courteous manner?	3.87
13. Did the services help you adjust to your visual impairment?	3.54
14. How beneficial were services in assisting you in achieving more independence?	3.58
15. How satisfied are you with the employment that you obtained as a result of Vocational Rehabilitation Services?	3.62

Ratings are based on a four-point scale from 1 for poor or strongly disagree to 4 for excellent or strongly agree. Respondents were predominantly Caucasian, with minority participation slightly decreased from the previous year of twenty-three percent in FFY 2018 to seventeen percent in FFY 2019. Men represented forty-six percent of survey respondents, and the average age of respondents was fifty-one years. The variables correlating strongest with satisfaction were “help adjusting to blindness, more independence, and satisfaction with employment”.

Determination + Collaboration = Success

Shauna graduated from Kimball high school and then attended Headlines Academy to be trained in massage therapy. At the age of 12, Shauna lost her mother, father, and brother and was raised by her cousin. She not only had to overcome the tragic loss of her family at such a young age, but also was challenged with a visual impairment.

Shauna has nystagmus, a condition in which the eyes make rapid, uncontrolled movements, decreasing her ability to focus. This condition causes a reduction in vision and depth perception making reading very difficult. She also has optic nerve atrophy which can be a progressive condition.

Shauna moved to Aberdeen and went to work for the Wyndham Reservation Line and was very good at her job. SBVI assisted her with adaptive equipment that she needed to use the computer at her job. When Wyndham closed, Shauna began looking for other employment opportunities. She decided to attend the Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) to pursue a degree in accounting. SBVI assisted with adaptive equipment, transportation and vocational guidance and training. Shauna was also eligible for retraining services from the South Dakota Department of Labor, who funded her computer, tuition and fees, and books and supplies. Shauna graduated from Mitchell Technical Institute in May 2019 with an associate degree in accounting.

Due to her efforts to work past barriers from her vision loss, her success at MTI and her tremendous work ethic, Shauna was hired two months before she graduated. Shauna is now working full time with benefits for a local hospital in Mitchell, South Dakota as an accountant, assisting with processing bills and other accounting activities. Shauna's employer has been supportive and purchased computer equipment to provide accommodate for her vision.

Despite having to overcome barriers to education, and tragic loss in her life, Shauna has displayed perseverance, working hard to meet her goals. Shauna benefited from resources from SBVI and the Department of Labor to reach her chosen employment goal. The resources provided to Shauna are examples of agencies combining resources to assist a hardworking and determined individual to overcome challenges leading to a job she enjoys.



INDEPENDENT LIVING BLIND PROGRAM

Losing vision doesn't have to mean losing your independence. Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired rehabilitation teachers are creative problem solvers who offer training techniques to accomplish daily living activities for someone with vision loss. Rehabilitation teachers are also knowledgeable about low vision aids and devices and when combined with techniques, can solve the difficulties most people are experiencing leading to independence and self-sufficiency.

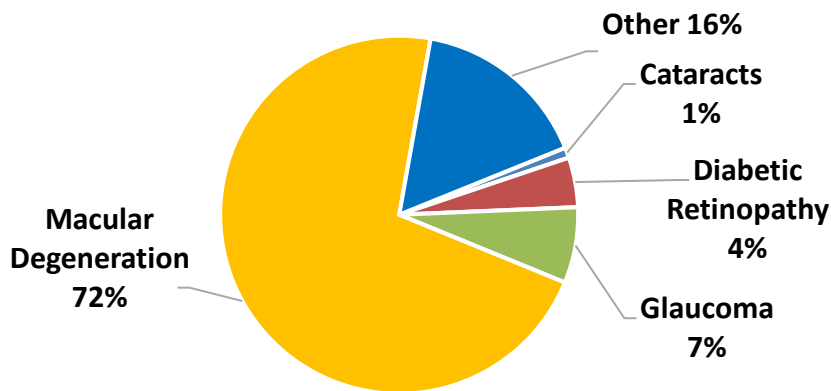
During the past fiscal year, the services listed below were provided to the 423 people who were served in the Independent Living Blind Program (ILB).



Services Provided	Number of People
Communication Skills -training in the use of the telephone, handwriting guides, telling time, reading or writing Braille, etc.	348
Daily Living Skills -training in the use of adaptive aids and assistive technology for daily living.	325
Low Vision Device Training -services related to the use of optical aids and devices.	399
Low Vision Aids -may include items such as magnifiers, video magnifiers (CCTVs) canes, insulin gauges, talking equipment, adaptive cooking items, etc.	404
Counseling -Peer, individual, or group counseling to assist with adjustment to visual impairment and blindness	311
Low Vision Exams -Evaluations to identify strategies and devices for enhancing visual performance.	182
Advocacy Training -Participation in advocacy training activities such as consumer organization meetings and peer support groups.	38
Referral to Other Agencies -Referral to other programs and agencies.	277
Orientation and Mobility -Travel training and learning to access public or private transportation to travel safely and independently.	60

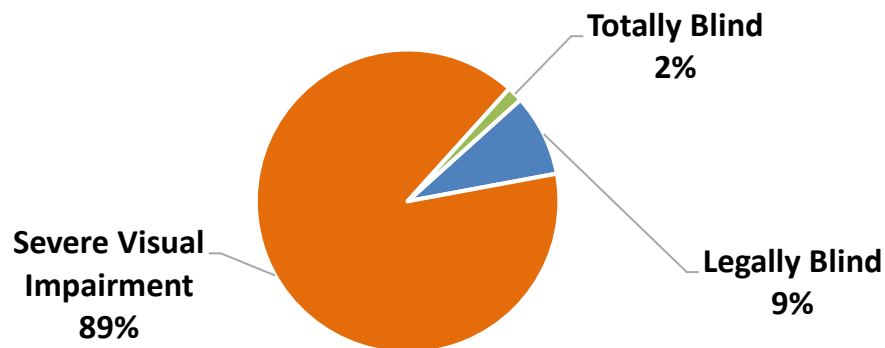
In 2019 the ILB program provided one or more of the services listed above to 423 older individuals with vision loss compared to 442 in 2018. Rehabilitation teachers drove more than 55,000 miles delivering services in individuals' homes across the state. Staff successfully closed 266 cases compared to 272 in 2018.

Primary Types of Eye Diseases for People Served



Macular Degeneration was the primary cause of vision loss in 303 (72%) of the 423 individuals who received services in 2019 as reflected in the chart above. Age Related Macular Degeneration is a disease that blurs the sharp, central vision needed for straight-ahead activities such as seeing faces, driving, reading, and sewing. It also impacts an individual's ability to see fine detail.

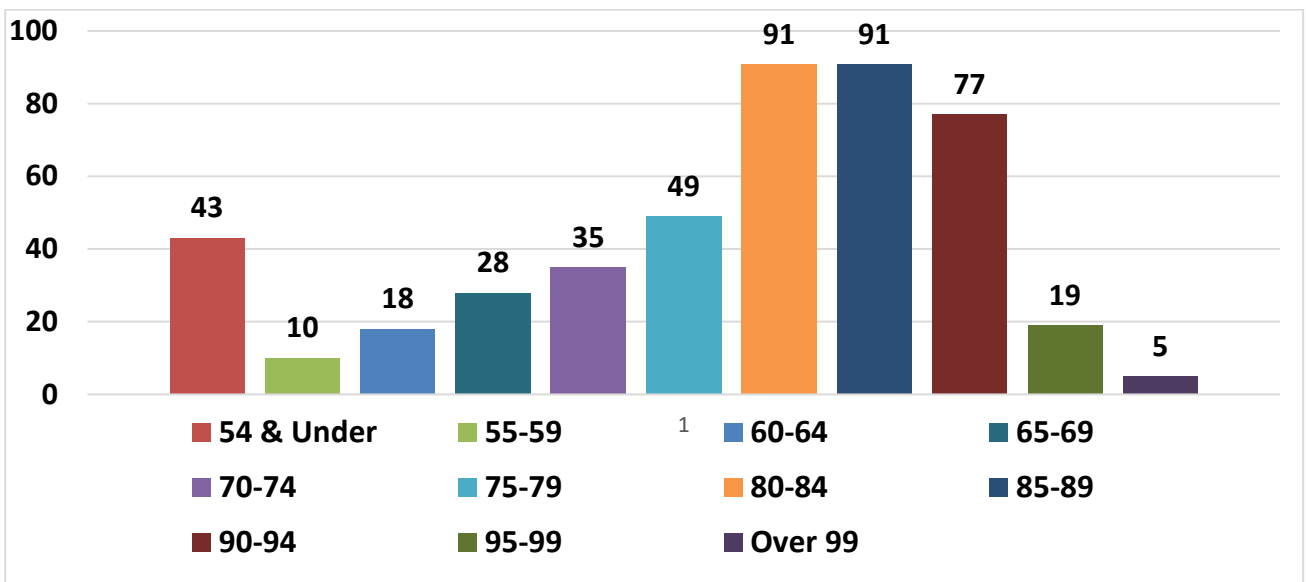
Degree of Vision Loss



People who experience uncorrectable vision loss often fear total blindness with minimal light perception or no light perception. Of the 423 people served in independent living program in 2019; only 2% of them experienced total blindness. Individuals who have some remaining vision that can be used to complete activities of daily living are often experiencing severe visual impairment which makes up 89% of the people served. The chart above explains the degree of vision loss experienced by the 423 people served in 2019.

“Thankful for marking measuring cups. Love magnifying glass, dots on microwave & washing machine.”

Age Range of ILB Individuals Served in FY 2019



The target population for the ILB program is individuals over the age of 55 however, rehabilitation teachers also served 43 individuals under age 55 who were experiencing vision loss. As reflected in this chart, 283 or 61% percent were over the age of 80 with five people over the age of 100.

Satisfaction with Independent Living Services

Citizens who receive services from the ILB program can provide feedback through a satisfaction survey which is sent to them a few weeks after their services end. Survey responses assist SBVI to assess whether services are effective in assisting citizens to maintain or regain their independence. Two hundred forty-four surveys were sent out to those who achieved their independent living goals. One hundred thirteen people responded to the survey which is a 46% response rate. Frequently the survey responses include statements expressing gratitude for services which are included throughout this report.

It is the goal of Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired that services from the Independent Living program increase the opportunity for individuals to remain in their homes. To measure this, we ask program participants whether they would have considered moving into a facility with a higher level of care if they had not received services from the ILB program. Of the one hundred thirteen survey responses, twenty-six or 23% of the individuals stated they did not have to move to a facility that provides a higher level of care because of the services and training they received.

“Amanda was very helpful & knowledgeable. She made sure time was convenient for me. Very Kind.”

Public Outreach and Information & Referral



In 2019, Rehabilitation teachers were involved with over 84 events with an estimated 1400 attendees to share information about how to access services from SBVI. These events included community health fairs, employee in-service events, information sharing at local libraries or with targeted audiences such as eye care providers or hospital social workers along with presenting at public forums. In addition to a wide range of events, staff members respond to approximately 430 individual calls and home visits in a timely manner to ensure people obtain the information they need to access Independent Living and other services. In this picture, SBVI rehabilitation teacher Tricia Eggers provided information about low vision aids and devices at the Aberdeen Healthy Aging Fair.

Electronic Video Magnification (CCTV) Lease/Loan Program

SBVI created the CCTV Lease/Loan program in 2004 with memorial funds donated specifically for providing devices for older citizens that couldn't be purchased using the limited Chapter II OIB grant funds. The CCTV program began with 24 units as a



start-up to determine if we could address a need for older program participants who could not acquire the devices using insurance or Medicaid. The need for the table top magnification systems was immediately apparent and the demand for units demonstrated that the program could be expanded. Since then, SBVI has purchased over 200 units and monitored the trends in technology which resulted in purchasing styles that were lightweight with high definition (HD) monitors for

providing a magnified image that is of substantially higher resolution for individuals whose lifestyles were more mobile. In 2016, SBVI expanded the selection to include four text to speech reading units that not only magnify but provide auditory output of the printed information. Any of these CCTV units may be leased for \$30 per month or loaned at no cost for those who meet economic need criteria. The CCTV Lease/Loan program currently has 221 units that have been placed with older citizens with vision loss. Currently there are 115 units loaned and 92 leased for a minimal monthly fee. Fifty-three people obtained CCTVs from the Lease/Loan program in the past year which results in a total of 1,035 older citizens with low vision receiving CCTVs and training through this program since 2004.

“I’m able to read the newspaper which helps me keep up with current events and visit with people about those. Tricia has done a good job.”

The Right Magnification Can Make A Difference

Dorothy was referred to SBVI from Long Term Services & Supports because of her vision problems. When her rehabilitation teacher met with her, she explained how important it is to her to be able to read her church bulletin, the newspaper, and to keep in touch with family/friends using her computer. She struggled with keeping track of appointments and the days of the week which was solved by providing her a large print calendar, Dorothy was happy to have it and said she would use it daily to keep track her appointments. Dorothy had previously purchased a magnifier, but it wasn't strong enough. Her rehabilitation teacher provided her with a magnifier with the correct magnification strength to use for a variety of reading tasks. After receiving instruction on the correct use of it, she found that it assists her with almost all of her reading but, most importantly, reading the church bulletin and the newspaper. Bump dots were placed on her oven dials and training was provided so that she could cook and bake independently. Along with making some modifications to the computer settings, we discovered yellow filters assisted with managing the glare from the computer screen so she could continue to use her computer. Dorothy was excited to have all these items that will help her stay in touch with her family and remain independent in her apartment.

Advanced Technology Leads to More Independence

James lives alone in his home and has received Independent Living Services from SBVI several times in the past. He has had numerous types of magnification devices including a CCTV from the Lease/Loan program however, his vision has decreased so much, magnifying printed material was no longer helpful to him. He was very discouraged when he told us he could no longer benefit from the CCTV and needed to return it. This prompted us to explore another type of video magnifier that would benefit him more. SBVI has a DaVinci model video magnifier in the CCTV Lease/Loan program which has a built-in feature to read the printed material to the user. After talking it over with him; he decided he wanted to give this model a try hoping it would help him.

When the DaVinci was delivered to James, he received specialized training on how to use it. James was confident in his ability to manage it since he was very familiar with using a CCTV. After a couple of weeks, he called the Rehabilitation Teacher to report he forgot some of his training and needed a refresher course in order to use the talking portion of his video magnifier. Following several training sessions and weeks of practice, he is now comfortable using the speech features of the CCTV on his own. Without the service of SBVI, James wouldn't be able to fully use his talking video magnifier to access a variety of printed material in his home.

“Thanks for your help. The video magnifier is a big help.”

SOUTH DAKOTA REHABILITATION CENTER FOR THE BLIND



The Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC) in Sioux Falls, provides adaptive skills of blindness training to residents of South Dakota who are blind or visually impaired. Attending the Center for training improves client's independence and employment opportunities. SD Vocational Resources is a specialized employment program within the Center that assists people with a variety of disabilities to obtain job skills. The two programs provide the tools, training, and technology to help individuals overcome barriers they face because of a disability. Apartments are available for students from other parts of the state to participate in training.

Adaptive Skills of Blindness



The Rehabilitation Center provides daily classes to teach adaptive skills of blindness; classes include home management, communications, computers with assistive technology, orientation and mobility, peer support, and leisure activities. During 2019, 54 people attended adaptive skills of blindness classes; six of the trainees were SBVI staff members. Four were medical students who attended SDRC for a 3-day cultural immersion experience, which is part of the medical school curriculum. The Center is the only facility in the state that provides adaptive skills of blindness training for adults. Therefore,

its necessary for SDRC staff to be the experts in the field of blindness to provide training to all new SBVI staff in addition to students with vision loss. Forty-four people attended SDRC because vision loss was impacting their activities of daily living or employment. Twenty-eight percent were blind, and 72 percent were legally blind, or had a visual impairment. Often people tin training have secondary disabilities, increasing the challenges of training.

Diabetes was the most common condition, followed by mental health issues, brain injuries, and cognitive disabilities. The average age of students was 38, which is consistent with last year's average of 41.

USD Medical Students in Rehabilitation Center for the cultural immersion experience.

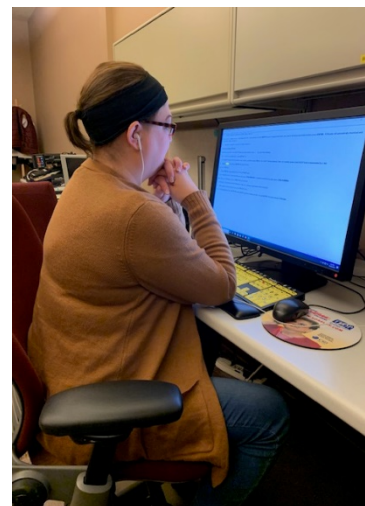


“Very pleased with the services I received.”

Assistive Technology (AT) First Friday Clinics

Do you have questions about assistive technology? The first Friday of each month, the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind invites South Dakota residents with vision loss to the Center between 8:00-11:00 a.m. to get help for their questions about assistive technology. In 2019 forty-five people stopped for help or attended an afternoon class. Most requests for help were related to using accessibility features with iPhones or iPads. In addition, the assistive technology instructor spent approximately 45 hours answering questions via email, Facetime, Skype, or telephone solving technology-related issues. First Friday afternoon events are from 1:00 to 3:00. This class addresses blindness related topics.

Announcements with the topic for the class are sent to SBVI clients and posted on the DHS webpage. Typical topics were computer operation, troubleshooting software, new assistive technology, orientation and mobility winter travel tips, cooking without sight, new UEB Braille rules, non-sighted leisure activities, as well as other topics suggested by people who participate and ask for a specific topic of interest.



Low Vision Clinics



Dr. Paul Greenfield provided low vision evaluations at the SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind for over 15 years until his retirement this year to spend more time at his practice - The Eye Doctors, P.C. We want to thank him for the hundreds of people he provided low vision services to during his time at SDRC. Due to the vacancy for several months, the number of low vision clinics and number of people served was much lower in 2019 than in 2018. There were 15 clinics and 59 people served through low vision evaluations in 2019, a decrease of 26 people from 2018. Dr. Nicholas Wenande, an optometrist from Mitchell,

began providing low vision evaluation for SBVI clients in December of 2019.

“I appreciate the services you provided for me.”

Orientation and Mobility Training

Sometimes people can't attend the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind in Sioux Falls for a variety of reasons, often because of medical concerns, family obligations, or job responsibilities. However, they still face the challenges of getting around within their environment independently. SDRC was able to help with one-on-one orientation and mobility instruction in client's homes and around their communities. Although long term O&M training wasn't available, we were able to offer limited services to teach basic skills and improve levels of independence. We always encourage clients to attend the SDRC for full access to O&M and adaptive skills training. During 2019, services were provided to 13 people for a total of 58.25 instructional hours, averaging 4 hours per person. Most services provided in 2019 were basic training to get around their homes or limited areas outside of their homes.



Transition Week 2019



Transition-age students from across South Dakota, who have a vision loss had the opportunity to attend a week-long event at SDRC to explore employment topics. They learned about a variety of careers, the importance of self-advocacy, navigating the interview process, workplace etiquette and techniques to increase their skills for

independent living. Peer support and making developing friendships is also important, therefore evening recreational activities were held each night. The week concluded with motivational speaker Keith Bundy who spoke about personal experiences, as well as how to navigate a plan for career options. Eleven students attended Transition Week in 2019.

South Dakota Vocational Resources



People attending Employment Skills Training (EST) get assistance through assessment and training. They learn about accommodations for solutions at work, explore career options, and practice interviewing skills.

EST assessments help develop important skills and determine limitations someone might have for employment. Once a referral is received from a rehabilitation counselor, clients start the program and attend between 6 to 12 weeks. Clients attend 4 days per week for 4 to 8 hours a day. During training, they try a variety of skills that will provide

information about their abilities and career interests. The assessments provide information that helps the counselor and client find appropriate career choices. Examples of the type of information being assessed include how well they can follow multi-step directions, use of gross and fine motor skills, level of physical stamina, attendance, ability to get along with others, as well as a variety of job skills.

World of Work class is for people attending EST with a focus on interviewing skills and workplace etiquette. Knowledgeable staff help clients find job opportunities and provide tips for professional interviewing skills.

Employment Skills Training served 68 individuals in 2019, compared to 90 in 2018. This significant decrease of 22 people is due to low unemployment rates which result in fewer people seeking training and job placement assistance.

Job placement services were provided to 32 individuals in 2019, which was an increase of 6 people compared to 2018. The employment specialist continues to build connections with employers throughout the community. During the past year, the employment specialist contacted over 105 businesses within the Sioux Falls area to discuss the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

Summary of Services

SDRC Services	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Transition Students	5	11	11	11
Low Vision Patients	85	94	85	59
Employment Specialist	22	27	26	32
Skills of Blindness	44	37	45	54
Employment Skills Training	102	93	90	68
O&M On-site	10	10	27	13
AT Walk-in Clinic & First Friday Classes	86	51	105	45
Total	354	323	389	282

The total number of people participating in all services at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind was significantly lower in 2019. The adaptive skills of blindness classes had an increase of 9 people, for a total of 54. Job placement services also experienced an increase with 6 more clients than in 2019. However, there were four areas with decreases in the number of people served. Employment Skills Training saw a decrease of 38 people. As indicated previously, there were fewer referrals from Rehabilitation Services and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired counselors for vocational services. Walk-in assistive technology training and First Friday classes also saw a decrease in attendance. With the retirement of the program specialist, the number of people receiving O&M training in the community was also lower.

Satisfaction Survey Responses

A survey about satisfaction with services is provided to each participant who completes the Skills of Blindness program and Employment Skills Training. In the Skills of Blindness area, there was an 33% return rate for the surveys from the individuals attending adaptive skills of blindness training. The overall rating was 3.5 on a 4.0 scale, which falls between the ratings of (3) Agreed and (4) Strongly Agreed to the questions about the quality of services. Examples of the responses received for the question, "What did you like best about the program?" were:

"Employees and all the people. Excellent staff, secretaries all the way up were very accomodating."

"I loved everything, especially going outside with Jen. Mary Carrell and JoMarie are very knowledgeable."

"The teachers and staff. They are polite, professional, and encourage you. They care about you and encourage you. They treat you like family. The one-on-one training. It was an amazing experience and something I will never forget. Thank you for treating me like a part of your family. Thank you for making me feel welcome, and I can come back any time. You taught me things I thought I couldn't do."

The Employment Skills Training area uses a similar format of questions and narrative responses to obtain information about services. The return rate for EST surveys was 48%. The overall rating was a 3.7 on a 4.0 scale, which falls between the ratings of (3) Agreed and (4) Strongly Agreed. The EST survey brought in many positive comments. A few of the comments were:

"I liked learning working in a store and work setting items that we learned. It was easier learning here."

"Doing things, I need to learn in a way I can remember"

"Learning Microsoft programs and the teachers are great to learn from"

When asked how EST can be improved, there weren't many responses; but one suggestion was to have a broader list of activities for people with brain injury.

Farmer to Vendor



Jeff lost his vision several years ago due to diabetic retinopathy. He needed to learn how to be independent as the owner/operator of their family farming operation. Jeff decided to attend the SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind skills of blindness and employment training programs. While in training, Jeff learned how to use a computer with assistive technology, and alternative communication devices. He received instruction on how to travel with a white cane and home management skills, as well as the ability to problem-solve. After completing training, Jeff returned to the farm for several years but recently decided it was time to change careers. He decided to try the food service and vending

business available through the Business Enterprise Program (BEP). The BEP offers opportunities to people who are legally blind to manage cafeterias and vending routes located in federal buildings. Jeff returned to the Rehabilitation Center for a 2-week evaluation to determine if additional skills would be helpful. He learned he was a candidate for the BEP program; but he needed additional training in orientation and mobility, MS Office Excel, and training on the BEP modules and ServSafe certification. Once Jeff completed training, he shadowed two South Dakota locations before taking on the responsibilities at EROS (Earth Resource Observation and Science) Data Center outside of Sioux Falls, SD.

Student with a Plan

Rachel is a young woman growing up in Sioux Falls. She was born blind but doesn't let that slow her down. She attended public school, loves music, is active in her church, Spanish club, Bible study, guitar club and enjoys spending time with her family.



Rachel was introduced to the SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind in 2015, during high school and attended Transition Week. This specialized week-long event helps high school students with vision loss to learn about work etiquette, job exploration, accessible technology, and offers the opportunity to socialize with peers. Rachel attended the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind part-time while in high school for about one year to gain the skills to live independently. A goal-oriented person, Rachel set goals for herself and worked to achieve them. The accomplishment she is most proud of is being able to shop independently at the mall. Rachel also learned how to cook, clean, label, budget, do her laundry, use the newest Braille technology, and became a problem-solver.

When asked about the highlights of her experience at the Center, she said, "Home Management and learning new and better ways of cooking". Rachel said now she has the skills to use the stove and oven. Learning to navigate at the mall and shop alone also ranked very high on her list of favorites.

Rachel also attended Employment Skills Training to learn vocational skills. After completing the programs at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, Rachel participated in Project Skills; this program allows Rachel to work part-time at the Department of Social Services while attending school. Project Skills helped her gain experience to advance her work skills.

Rachel's goals for the future are to find a job and get her own apartment; she is well on her way!

Business Enterprise Program

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides individuals who are blind the opportunity for self-employment in food service including operating cafeterias, coffee shops, and vending routes. The Randolph-Sheppard Act authorizes State licensing agencies to recruit, train, license, and place individuals who are blind as operators of cafeterias and vending facilities located on federal and other properties. The act authorizes a blind individual, licensed by the state licensing agency, to conduct specified activities in facilities through permits or contracts. In South Dakota, SBVI is the state licensing agency.

SBVI has permits for food and vending services at the following locations:

- Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS) Center, Garretson;
- General Services Administration in Federal Buildings in Sioux Falls, Aberdeen, and Huron;
- The US Postal Service for facilities in Sioux Falls, Huron, and Pierre;
- SBVI also has an interagency agreement with the South Dakota Bureau of Administration for vending machines in multiple State buildings in Pierre.

Two vendors were licensed with the Business Enterprise Program in January 2019. Celeste Centenaro manages the café at the Federal Building in Aberdeen along with vending on federal properties. She also managed EROS Data Center as a satellite location until October 2019. Dan Munce manages a vending route with machines in various locations in Huron.

The SDBEP trained one new vendor in 2019. Jeff Nelson (pictured to the right) began training in February 2019 and successfully completed training in August. Jeff was placed on the ready-for-assignment list and he applied for the EROS Data Center manager position as his primary facility. Jeff officially became the cafeteria manager on October 7, 2019.



The annual vendor's meeting was held in November 2019 through teleconference. Celeste is the Chair and Dan Vice Chair of the Vendor Committee.

Interstate Rest Area Vending



Through an agreement with the SD Department of Transportation, the BEP is responsible for vending at the South Dakota rest areas along Interstates 29 and 90.

Current contracts with third-party vendors for designated rest areas began in June of 2019, contracts were awarded to the vendors who bid to contribute the highest percentage of commission from sales to the BEP. Current commissions paid to the BEP range from 53 to 68 percent.

Income from rest area commissions for June 1, 2018 to May 31, 2019 was \$61,915 for I-90 rest areas and \$5,439 for I-29 rest areas, totaling \$67,354. The totals from the rest areas are down from the previous year. Rest area renovations have disrupted income performance. The new commission rates and the reopening of rest areas will stabilize rest area income.

The majority of BEP expenses are paid utilizing revenue from rest area vending. The rest area commissions are utilized to purchase and repair equipment. Funds are also spent on vendor needs, such as retirement, insurance and bookkeeping services.



Vendor Financials

Following is a breakdown of sales and net profits earned by BEP vendor operators.

Earnings and Expenses					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Gross Sales (Total Income)	\$446,428	\$449,385	\$368,890	\$432,909	\$350,259
Merchandise Purchases	\$241,596	\$246,962	\$200,472	\$240,724	\$182,530
Gross Profit	\$204,832	\$202,422	\$168,418	\$192,185	\$168,108
Total Operating Expenses	\$101,523	\$137,624	\$101,416	\$115,735	\$137,289
Net Proceeds	\$115,561	\$ 75,060	\$ 79,138	\$ 65,921	\$30,819
Levied Set Aside Funds	\$ 15,102	\$ 12,130	\$ 11,361	\$ 11,034	\$7,785
Net Profit to Vendors	\$100,460	\$ 62,929	\$ 67,778	\$ 54,887	\$31,187

Gross profits declined for BEP vendors during 2019. The number of vendors decreased at the end of 2018 and vendors experienced losses during the government shutdown at the end of December 2018 and most of January 2019. Total operating expenses increased during 2019. The costs were a result of higher labor costs. The program has been working on improving revenue by making repairs in a timely manner to reduce lost revenue and updating existing machines.

A Letter of Thanks - Vocational Rehabilitation Leads to Business Success

Dear Adam:

I would like to thank you Adam, Julaine Arient-Rollman, Ronda Williams, and the entire staff at Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired for helping me start my handmade greeting card business. The support, counsel, encouragement, software and equipment has enabled me to get a head start.

With your generous contribution, I've created and sold hundreds of handmade greeting cards locally, online at Amazon, Etsy and through social media. Feedback on the greeting cards is all great, the western line has really been a hit here in South Dakota.

A recent fair, in Kadoka, has sold out. I was elated at the end of the event to see all handmade cards were sold. The buyers all stated: "These are the cards I would like to get from someone."

I have identified an opportunity with greeting cards for the blind and visually impaired. I have a lineup of cards for all occasions, holidays, and more, and have been selling this line online at Amazon. Custom greeting cards are quite popular, a shopper will select a card along with a message for their greeting in braille. These specialty cards are being sold throughout the nation.

Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired, thank you once again for helping me realize my dreams and potential, allowing me to bring smiles to faces with sight or touch. Please look at my work at greetingsinbraille.com and winsacreations.com.

Please feel free to contact me at nadiaarment@gmail.com or home 605-462-6149

Sincerely,

Nadia Arment



SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED OFFICES

<p><u>SBVI State Office</u> Gaye Mattke, Division Director 3800 E. Hwy. 34 c/o 500 East Capitol Ave. Pierre, SD 57501-5070 Phone/TTY: (605) 773-4644 Fax: (605) 773-5483 Toll Free: 1-800-265-9684</p>	<p><u>SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind</u> Dawn Backer, Manager 2900 West 11th Street, Suite 101 Sioux Falls, SD 57104 Phone/TTY: (605) 367-5260 Fax: (605) 367-5263 Toll Free: 1-800-658-5441</p>
<p><u>Aberdeen Office</u> 1707 4th Avenue SE, Suite A Aberdeen, SD 57401 Phone/TTY: (605) 626-2395 Fax: (605) 626-3089 Toll Free: 1-800-439-3417</p>	<p><u>Rapid City Office</u> 2330 N. Maple, Suite 2 Rapid City, SD 57701 Phone/TTY: (605) 394-2261 FAX: (605) 394-1659 Toll Free: 1-800-439-8861</p>
<p><u>Sioux Falls Office</u> 811 East 10th Street, Dept. 22 Sioux Falls, SD 57103-1650 Phone/TTY: (605) 367-5330 Fax: (605) 367-5327 Toll Free: 1-800-265-9679</p>	<p><u>Pierre Office</u> 912 E. Sioux Ave. c/o 500 East Capitol Ave. Pierre, SD 57501-5070 Phone/TTY: (605) 773-3318 Fax: (605) 773-5161 Toll Free: 1-877-873-8500</p>

For more information go to the SBVI web site at: <http://dhs.sd.gov/servicetotheblind>

Please contact the SBVI state office in Pierre to request alternative formats.