

## **Emerging Practices from Vocational Rehabilitation-Nevada**

### **CRAVE:**

The Southern Nevada Transition VR program has successfully collaborated with a number of community partners to sponsor a summer camp program called CRAVE. The program's short-term goal is to help participants break down barriers that prevent them from going to college or pursuing employment. The agency's long-term goal is to have a higher percentage of transition students choosing careers rather than entry-level jobs. In FY 2014, CRAVE camp celebrated its sixth year with 18 participants and the inclusion of additional community partners.

The program has two tracks, one focusing on post-secondary education, and the second emphasizing employment. Within the college track, the students learn how to navigate the college system, advocate for themselves, and learn how to procure financial aid, accommodations and supportive services to ensure access to campus courses, services, and activities. They tour local colleges during the week and have an opportunity to meet Disability Resource Center staff. Students participating in the employment track learn job market information, effective application completion, interview skills, and work-related social skills. They also meet with human resource managers and business owners. Upon completion of this week-long/college residential camp, the students participate in a six-week paid internship on campus or within the community

### **CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT:**

Nevada Rehabilitation Division (NRD), the Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities (NCED) at the University of Nevada Reno, and the Nevada Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services/Sierra Regional Center, developed an agreement to facilitate the referral to NRD of individuals with intellectual disabilities/developmental disabilities who have been identified by their Regional Center case workers as having the greatest likelihood of benefiting from customized employment or job carving. NRD pays a higher fee-for-service rate, acknowledging the increased effort and expertise needed to achieve a successful closure. The team, representing the university, NRD, and the Regional Center, work together to identify appropriate referrals, assessment sites, job developers, and IPE goals. All individuals referred by the Regional Center are pre-identified as funded for extended services to ensure appropriate SE closures. The principles on this project have worked to teach this model to other job developers to help achieve increased supported employment closures and to meet the NRD goal of serving more individuals with cognitive/intellectual disabilities.

### **VOICE:**

Nevada Rehabilitation Division (NRD) partnered with the Washoe County School District (WCSD) in its first Third Party Cooperative Arrangement to co-locate a dedicated transition VR Counselor and technician in an office together with school district transition personnel. Full-time VR and WCSD

personnel work together to facilitate the achievement of competitive employment outcomes for eligible transition youth. The office space is funded by WCSD. NRD and WCSD signed an agreement that states that NRD will provide its own office equipment, clerical supplies, computer, phones and staff. This collaboration provides a cohesive and comprehensive opportunity for VR staff to work side-by-side with school district transition personnel for improved mutual outcomes.

#### CAREER DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY:

Starting in January 2013, the Nevada Rehabilitation Division (NRD) entered into a vendor relationship with a community rehab program; High Sierra Industries (HSI) and the Nevada Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services/Sierra Regional Center (SRC). The regional center agreed to divert Jobs in Day Training (JDT) Waiver funding along with NRD funding for identified individuals in CRP's to utilize funds to pay for pre-vocational, soft-skills training to make them better candidates for competitive/non-sheltered employment outcomes through BVR. The Regional Center also provides ongoing (past 90 days) support via use of their JDT funds. Working with professional behaviorists, clients do a 6 week hands on work experience in a local hospital to gain real work experience and skills that lead to employment. This collaborative has been very successful, with over an 85% successful placement rate and represents a notable shift in the conventional wisdom for what was considered an acceptable employment outcome for individuals with intellectual/cognitive disabilities.

#### PATHWAYS TO WORK; BVR/OVI/ DRC/ Station Casinos

Nevada's Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation's (DETR) Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), Opportunity Village, Desert Regional Center and Station Casinos have partnered to provide vocational training to a group of individuals with intellectual disabilities to help them develop job skills that will allow them to obtain competitive employment.

The Pathway to Work program began during the first week of June, 2014 with five clients who will work in various positions at Boulder Station for four hours a day, five days a week for 12 weeks. The program participants are paid \$8.25 per hour for the time that they are working on the job.

The goal of this program is to assist individuals to move from the Opportunity Village Resource Center to community-based jobs at or above minimum wage, either full time or part-time.

Pathway to Work combines classroom-based learning with real-work experience to help participants understand what is required of employees working in community-based jobs. Once the individuals have secured competitive employment the Regional Center provide ongoing follow along support once BVR closes their case.