

Program Year
2016
Annual Report



State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind



From the Chairman of the MO Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

Dear Fellow Missourians:

As Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC), it is my honor to submit, with my colleagues, the 2016 Annual Report. The SRC is responsible for reviewing, analyzing and advising Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB), an agency in the Missouri Family Support Division (FSD), on its policies and provision of vocational rehabilitation services to Missourians who are blind or visually impaired. This Council is dedicated to working with RSB to assist visually impaired Missourians in becoming self-supporting and fully participating members of society.

RSB has had a busy and productive year. Challenges related to turnover of key personnel has been a critical focus. Recruitment strategies and training of personnel have been at the forefront of RSB leaders. During 2016, many vacant positions have been filled and numerous competent young professionals have joined the organization.

RSB continues to implement process changes required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA's influence on Youth in Transition, Pre-Employment Transition Services, and Competitive Integrated Employment, has led RSB to update standing contracts and to implement new contracts for services to ensure young people with vision loss are getting what they need.

RSB has worked to improve outreach to employers. Missouri employers need to be aware of the capability of visually impaired Missourians and how they can contribute to their businesses. RSB has worked hard to get this point out to the community and to show clearly how RSB can assist employers through this process.

RSB has continued to work to lead change and meet the growing challenges facing our fellow citizens. RSB has met key measurable goals and maintained a high level of client satisfaction. The SRC hopes this report provides an informative overview of the activities of RSB; and we would be pleased to answer any questions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Clay C. Berry

State Rehabilitation Council Chairman

Director of Education & Rehabilitation at Alphapointe

Program Year 2016



In Program Year **2016**, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind closed **174** clients cases in **Competitive Employment**.

Clients **Earned** annual salaries totaling **\$4,453,510.88** and Paid **\$774,474** in Federal and State **Taxes**.



In **2.6 years**, these blind/visually impaired Missourians will **pay back** in taxes what it cost to assist them into **successful employment**.



Return on Investment

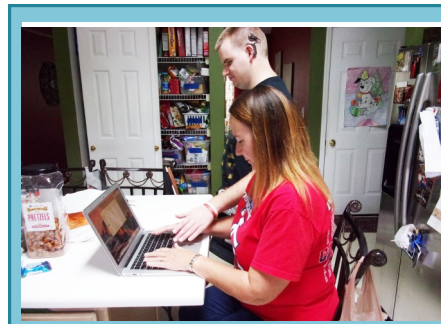
MISSOURI REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

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PO Box 2320
Jefferson City MO 65102-2320
Phone: (573) 751-4249
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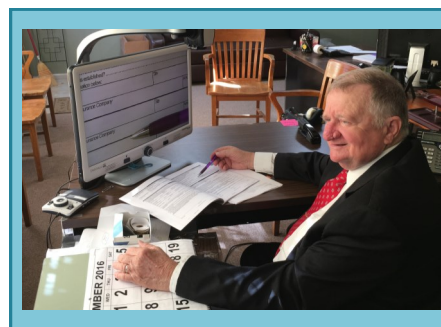
Purpose of the State Rehab Council

The Missouri State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind was established in February 1993 by Executive Order 93-01 to:

Act as a forum through which citizens with blindness, parents, providers, and other interested Missourians can voice their opinions and constructive criticisms, make recommendations and give public recognition for services being performed on their behalf by RSB;



Serve jointly with RSB in its activities to improve the services, programs, and facilities for individuals with blindness and visual impairments;



Recieve from RSB information concerning the intents and objectives of RSB so that the Council, in turn, can pass this information on to individuals with blindness.



Council Members

The membership of the Council is comprised of no more than 21 individuals appointed by the Governor, with the following representation mandated by the Rehabilitation Act.

At least one representative from each of the following:

- Statewide Independent Living Council
- Parent Training and Information Center
- Client Assistance Program
- RSB Vocational Counselor
- Community Rehabilitation Program service provider
- State education agency responsible for the public education of students with disabilities
- State Workforce Investment Board
- Disabilities group representing individuals who are blind
- Representative of individuals who have blindness, have multiple disabilities, and have difficulty representing themselves due to disability
- Business, labor and industry
- Advocacy groups for individuals with blindness or other authorized representatives of individuals with blindness who are unable to represent themselves
- Current or former recipients of VR services
- And the Deputy Director of FSD/RSB as an ex-officio member.



Committees

Evaluation Committee: Chair: Betty Farley. Anything that evaluates the performance and/or operation of RSB, such as surveys and annual reports.

Governmental Affairs Committee: Chair: Sheila Wright. Works on things happening at the state and federal level and that are governmental in nature.

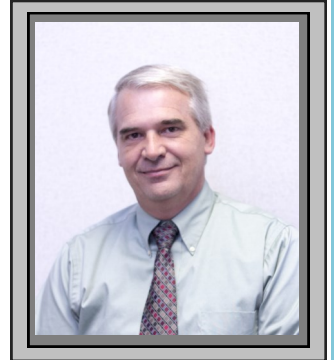
Planning Committee: Chair: Dr. Paul Ajuwon. The state plan and any other planning operation of the Council, including the business network issues.

Program & Policy: Chair: Gene Fleeman, Handles new policy and or program items from RSB rather than waiting until the next Council meeting.

From the Acting Director of Rehabilitation Services for the Blind

This annual report, presented to you from the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind for program year 2016, provides information on the Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind employment program for individuals with visual disabilities.

As part of the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), beginning July 1, 2017, our federal partners, Rehabilitation Services Administration, transitioned services from a federal fiscal year to a federal program year. This change includes new reporting requirements and collecting baseline data during the next two years for new performance measures. WIOA has eliminated uncompensated outcomes such as homemakers and expanded the definition of competitive integrated employment, reducing the closures considered successful under the Vocational Rehabilitation program. Even with these changes, RSB completed another prosperous year in program year 2016, assisting 182 blind or visually impaired individuals to obtain or retain competitive integrated employment.



There are many different alternative techniques and skills used by blind and visually impaired individuals to overcome the barriers to independent living and economic self-sufficiency, and these are significantly different from the accommodations required by persons with other disabilities.

The process of instructing the blind and confronting the issues and visual demands of everyday life requires separate and categorical agencies serving the blind to assist individuals in maximizing their potential. This includes highly trained, committed personnel who deliver specialized services and the commitment of the separate State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, whose members demonstrate a thorough understanding of blindness and the resultant issues in our society.

In the coming years, Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind will continue implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act as part of the Missouri workforce development system in collaboration with our core partners. RSB has implemented some major changes in the operation of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, resulting in a new policy and procedure manual. RSB is very confident that as we move forward, we will continue to provide those services which blind and visually impaired Missourians have always expected and relied upon to assist them in reaching their goals.

In closing, I, along with the Council, offer our sincere appreciation for your interest and support in serving blind Missourians.

Sincerely, Keith Roderick
Acting Deputy Director
Rehabilitation Services for the Blind

Highlights of PY2016

4,081 individuals with blindness/visual impairments served in 2016.

1,337 individuals were served in the Older Blind Independent Living Program, and **647** closed successfully rehabilitated.

421 individuals received case management services in the Prevention of Blindness Program, screening **2,657** individuals for intraocular pressure and other eye conditions.

1,520 individuals served in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, closing **182** in successful employment.

517 children received services in the Children's Services Program.

286 individuals were served in the Independent Living Program, and **77** closed successfully rehabilitated.

34 Business Enterprise Program facilities, including 1 military installation, **25** managers, employing **942** people, with gross sales at **\$40,196,512**.

Functions

The SRC's functions include, but are not limited to, acting in partnership with RSB to:

Review, analyze, and advise RSB regarding RSB's performance of responsibilities under Title I of the ACT, relating especially to eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services; the extent, scope and effectiveness of VR services that RSB provides; and functions performed by State agencies that potentially affect the ability of blind individuals to achieve rehabilitation goals and objectives.

Assist RSB with the development and review of the State goals and priorities; assist in the preparation of the State plan.

Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with, VR services and other functions performed by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible for performing functions for blind individuals.

Prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor of the State of Missouri, to the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration of the U. S. Department of Education, and to the Director of FSD.

Coordinate with other councils within the State.

Provide for coordination and the establishment of working relationships between FSD, RSB and the Statewide Independent Living Council and Centers for Independent Living in Missouri.

Select a pool of individuals to serve as impartial hearing officers for VR applicants and recipients who wish to appeal a decision of RSB.



Dacia Cole's Success Story

Dacia Cole was born premature and as a result spent her first months in an incubator. She lost her vision due to a condition called Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP). ROP affects the retina and causes blindness due to retinal concerns such as blood flow, oxygen supply, and detached retinas. Because of ROP Mrs. Cole is totally blind. As a toddler Dacia was provided advocacy services through RSB's Children's program. RSB provided additional assistance at her Individualized Educational Program (IEP) meetings. Mrs. Cole attended local public high schools and continued to receive RSB services.

RSB's Transition services helped to prepare Mrs. Cole for life after high school by providing experiences in self-advocacy, daily living skills training, and adaptive and assistive technology. RSB provided transition services such as summer programs at Colorado Center for the Blind and World Services for the Blind. In addition, Mrs. Cole uses assistive technology provided by RSB, including a laptop, scanner, adaptive software, a KNFB reader.

RSB supported Mrs. Cole's college tuition at Columbia College where she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Education in 2008. Following graduation she found it difficult to find a job. But Mrs. Cole stayed positive and busy. She served on the Blind Task Force where she learned leadership skills, cooperation, planning, and negotiation skills. Due to personal concerns, she took care of family members until 2013. In 2014 she married and was ready to return to work.

RSB provided job development and job placement services. In October 2015 she was hired as a medical support assistant at the Harry S. Truman Veteran's Hospital in Columbia. Mrs. Cole's Senior Vocational Counselor, Genny Asher, collaborated successfully with Nanopac and Alternative Community Training to ensure that all of the necessary accommodations were in place. This included note takers, such as the Braille Sense, JAWS screen reader software and OpenBook scanner software.

After only one year on the job Mrs. Cole received a promotion to Advanced Medical Support Assistant and was assigned to the Advanced Medical care team. Dacia admits that the road has been tough, but her positive spirit and never give up attitude has contributed to her success.



RSB opened 174 new VR cases in Program Year 2016,
and served a total of 1,520 clients.

The average annual
earnings for a successfully
Rehabilitated Client is
\$24,469.84

The following information is based
on that amount:

MO State Taxes Paid per
Rehabilitated Client, **\$1,243**

Federal Taxes Paid per
Rehabilitated Client, **\$3,208**

Total Taxes Paid per
Rehabilitated Client, **\$4,451**

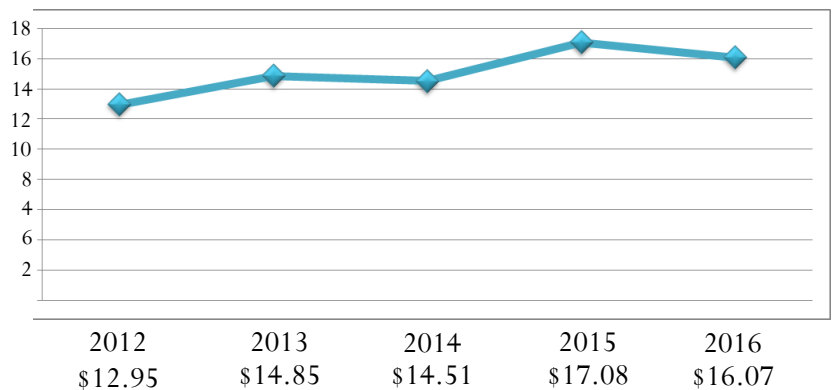
Total Combined Yearly Taxes
Paid by all Rehabilitated
Clients **\$774,474**

\$15.36

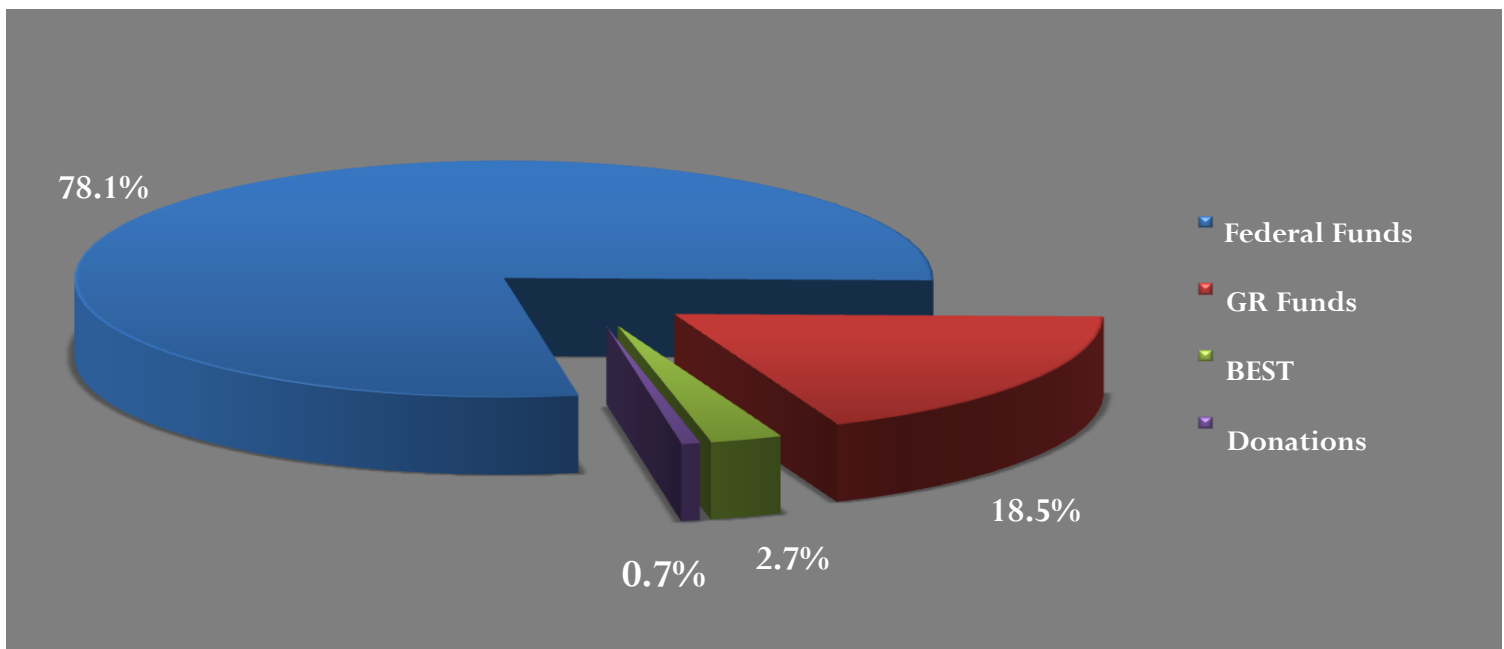
PY 2016

Average Hourly Wage

Average Hourly Wage at Closure



State Fiscal Year 2017 Missouri Funding Sources



Success Story: Sue Archer

Sue Archer is a practicing Registered Nurse in Poplar Bluff at Westwood Hills Health and Rehabilitation Center. Mrs. Archer came to Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) in 2016, having been a previous client. She began to have more concerns and loss of vision as a result of Age Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD) and cataracts.

Mrs. Archer participated in assessments to help determine the most appropriate services to help her retain her position as a Registered Nurse and to remediate any of her visual concerns in the workplace. Following assessments, a new Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE) was developed. RSB supported Mrs. Archer by providing needed adaptive aids and training in the activities of daily living. Assistive technology provided to Mrs. Archer included an Onyx portable HD CCTV with a 32" HD display, Onyx Mini XY Table, and a Ruby7 HD handheld video magnifier. These devices allow Mrs. Archer to access print information much more efficiently.

Rehabilitation items were delivered and setup in her work area, followed by training to ensure her understanding and proficiency. Mrs. Archer was very appreciative of the new technology. She stated that this afforded her the independence to continue working in a career field that she has been in for years. Ms. Archer loves her chosen vocation; but moreover, she loves to serve and help others in need. Today, though moving toward part-time employment, and looking forward to retirement in the near future, Ms. Archer continues working as a nurse and helping many in need.



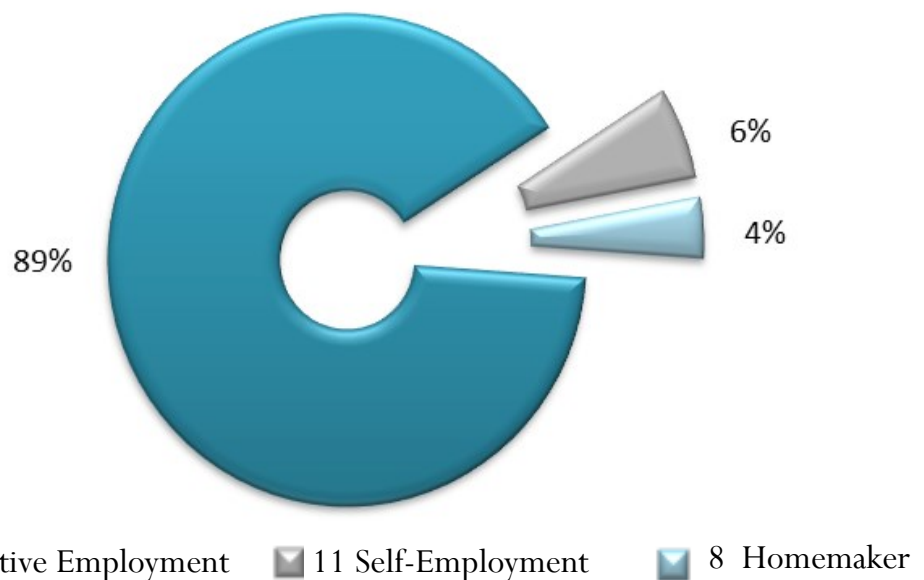
Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Individuals who have a severe visual disability encounter some common barriers to employment. Common barriers recognized are: access to print information, transportation, negative attitudes regarding the skills and abilities of the blind, and marketable 21st Century job skills. Rehabilitation Services for the Blind provides valuable services that effectively address these barriers and others.

In program year 2016, RSB successfully rehabilitated 182 Missourians in pursuit of their employment goal. The following data profiles show those successful closures:

Rehabilitation Rate

89.2%



In PY2016, through the services of RSB, 182 individuals have been able to gain or retain employment. Their occupations are as follows:

Management 25	Protective Service 2
Business and Financial 4	Food Preparation and Food Serving 6
Computer and Mathematical 6	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance 14
Architecture and Engineering 3	Personal Care and Service 15
Life, Physical, and Social Science 0	Sales and Related 13
Community and Social Service 18	Office and Administrative Support 16
Legal 4	Farmers, other Agricultural Managers 1
Education, Training, and Library 12	Construction and Extraction 1
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media 17	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair 2
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical 4	Production 6
Healthcare Support 11	Transportation and Material Moving 3

PY 2016 Blind Agency

SUMMARY OF RSB PERFORMANCE

Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, requires the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to establish evaluation standards and performance indicators for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program that include outcomes and related measures of program performance. RSB passed 5 of the 6 federal performance indicators in standard 1, and the required minority service rate ratio in federal performance indicator 2.1.

1520 Served in VR Program

182 Achieved Employment

**Fewer Clients Achieved
employment than last year S & I 1.1**

The following Standards and Indicators data is based on a 2 year loop of data.



77.5% Achieved employment after receiving services S & I 1.2



88.2% Employed in competitive employment S & I 1.3



98.8% Of the individuals who achieved integrated employment had significant disabilities S & I 1.4

Standards and Indicators

GENERAL INFORMATION

There are a total of 80 state vocational rehabilitation agencies or commissions that provide rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities in the United States and associated territories. Currently, 24 states have a separate vocational rehabilitation agency or commission that provides services exclusively for consumers who are blind or visually impaired. The alternative skills of blindness are markedly different from the skills required by other disabled persons. The methodology of instructing the blind and confronting the issues of blindness in our society require the development of specialized service programs, with service delivery by specialized personnel.

.76

Ratio of average hourly
earning in competitive
employment to average
of all employed in
Missouri

S & I 1.5

.89

Ratio of the percent of
individuals exiting the
program with a minority
background to those
without

S & I 2.1

33.49

Individuals who
achieved integrated
employment, who had
significant disabilities

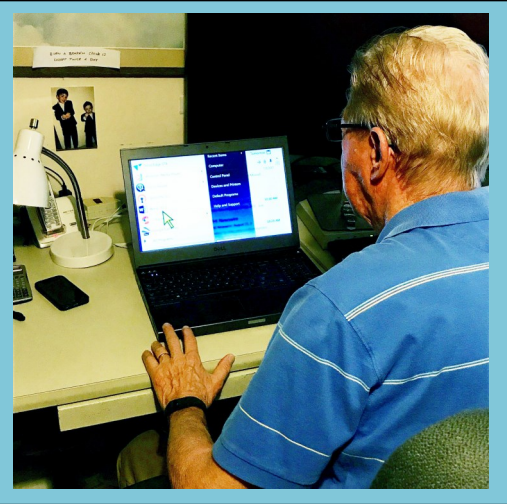
S & I 1.6

82 Minorities Served

Success Story of Michael Peterson

Michael Peterson began to lose vision as a result of Macular Degeneration and Glaucoma. Both conditions are progressive and both cause “gaps” or blind spots in the client’s field of vision; Macular Degeneration in particular causes central vision loss. In October 2016 he contacted Rehabilitation Services for the Blind after hearing about (RSB) from a family friend.

Mr. Peterson is a veteran of the United States Air Force (USAF) who in 1979 obtained a Master’s Degree in Engineering from the University of South Carolina. Initially he worked at the aerospace engineering company McDonnell Douglas. In 1980 he was asked by a good friend to join his new business venture. Mr. Peterson took that chance, and began working as Vice President of John Harder & Co. By 1985, Mr. Peterson was the company’s President, a role he has worked in for 32 years.



Mr. Peterson informed his Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Daniel Schoenig, of his difficulty reading print materials and accessing the computer screen. RSB provided equipment such as a Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) that enables Mr. Peterson to enlarge documents on a large screen. For more portable use, he was provided with a handheld video magnifier. To help him read the computer, Mr. Peterson was provided with rehabilitation engineering training in the use of Zoomtext to provide computer screen magnification.

At 70, Mr. Peterson has no plans to slow down. He states that he enjoys providing solutions to each customer’s unique challenges. John Harder & Co. provides custom lift truck attachments for companies in need of a specialized approach to heavy lifting, sensitive material handling, and improvement of safety. The company currently employs less than twenty individuals, but it has continued to grow in prestige and has provided services to large corporations such as Disney, Kodak, Zenith, and the Army Corps of Engineers, to name a few.

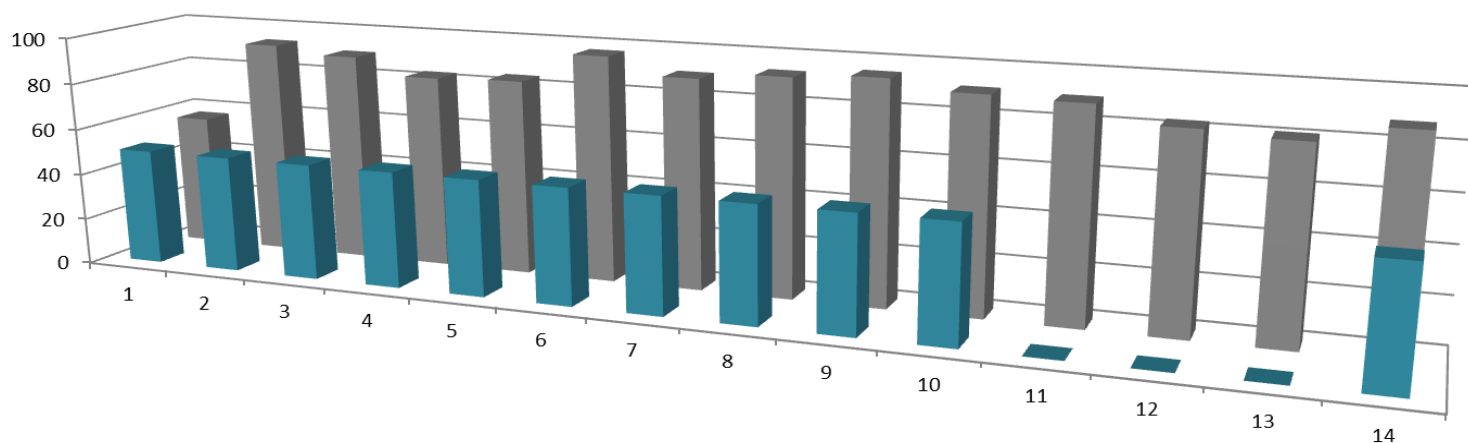
Mr. Peterson has displayed a positive attitude as he adjusts to this visual condition. His eagerness to learn new skills has contributed greatly to his success. In addition to work, he enjoys accessing audio books from Wolfner Library. He has expressed an interest in learning braille to continue reading. Michael and his wife enjoy spending time with their children and grandchildren as often as possible.



Client Satisfaction Survey

Client Satisfaction Surveys are administered to individuals after closing their Vocational Rehabilitation case with RSB. These surveys are administered on a monthly basis.

Of the 182 clients closed in competitive employment 58 of the clients returned their survey: a return rate of 32%. Surveys were sent to 14 clients closed in a status other than competitive employment. Of those 14, only 2 returned their survey: a return rate of 14%. This information is based on those surveys.



Client Satisfaction Survey Questions

Two different surveys are given: a 14-question survey is sent to individuals whose cases are closed in competitive employment, and a similar 11-question survey is sent to individuals whose cases were closed in any status other than competitive employment.

1. I was employed when I applied for services from RSB.
2. The choice of services available from RSB was sufficient to meet my needs.
3. I had the final say in the selection of service providers.
4. I received services from RSB in a reasonable amount of time.
5. RSB staff returned my phone calls within 1-2 business days.
6. RSB staff was knowledgeable about my needs as a person who is visually impaired/blind.
7. RSB staff helped me build my confidence in my abilities.
8. My rehabilitation plan was individualized to meet my goals.
9. I had the final say in the selection of my vocational goal.
10. Upon completion of my vocational rehabilitation plan, I was prepared to seek/maintain employment.
11. The services RSB provided were sufficient to help me secure/continue employment.
12. As a result of the services provided by RSB, my present work situation is better than it was before I began the program.
13. The support I received from RSB following my employment was adequate to ensure continued success.
14. I am pleased with the overall outcome of my experience in the vocational rehabilitation program provided by RSB.

Public Forums

The SRC continued to hold public forums throughout the state, allowing individuals to voice opinions and concerns about the services of RSB. To assist those with difficulty traveling, the Council provides phone conferencing.

August: St Louis MO, Southwest Center for Independent Living, Choices and Empowerment for people (SCIL). Core services are information & referral, independent living skills training, advocacy, peer support, and transitions (Youth). They also offer personal care services, consumer directed services (hire themselves) in-home services (SCIL hires and trains attendants), youth program teaches independent living skills, life skills, and pre-employment skills.

November: St Joseph MO, Delinda and Paul described the services available through MERIL which includes transition, job preparation, services for blind, and deaf-blind. They teach Independent living skills, which include transportation, laundry, budgeting, and anything they are struggling with regarding that skill. They provide assistance where needed to help remain in home, such as in home health, diabetes, blood test, general health test, Angels home health care, and licensed registered nurses working with doctors' orders to check on patients. MERIL provides information, referral services, and general information; as well as advocacy, individually or through a whole system, TAP and interpreting services called Bridge Interpreting.

February: St Louis MO, Angie York – “See the future” Lighthouse has 16 outreach programs, the majority for children and all free. They served 850 individuals in 2016

Clint Cruz – “Operations of Lighthouse of Blind” – Lighthouse is a non-profit 501C, since 1933. Their mission is for employment and quality. They have 96 employees, 48 are visually impaired.

May: Columbia MO, MO Protection and Advocacy Services, Betty Farley, the Director of Advocacy Administration, spoke on the services provided through CAP and how to get their services.



Hannah Thornhill Success Story

Hannah Thornhill began RSB's Vocational Rehabilitation program in 2012 after high school graduation. She is legally blind due to bilateral optic atrophy. Because of her condition she had difficulty reading standard print, using computer technology. Her vision loss also affected daily living skills such as cooking and money management. But she also possessed a strong desire to contribute through meaningful employment.

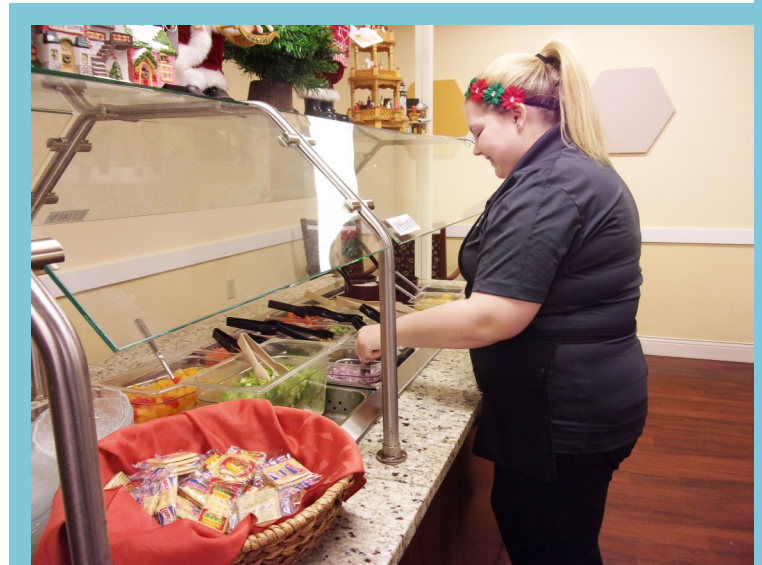
Mrs. Thornhill worked with her Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) and expressed interest in going to work. Her VRC provided vocational evaluation services to help her determine strengths, abilities and interests. Her attributes were to be matched to potential employment outcomes for Mrs. Thornhill.



She was provided instruction from Rehabilitation Teacher, Brian Mulvany, who provided instruction in meal preparation, money management, organization and self-care. That training along with adaptive technology such as an Optelec CCTV, allowed for greater access and scope of employment opportunities. Hannah's new SVRC, Katherine Cronin, helped her continue her employment search. Hannah worked with RSB's community

partners to find a job that was the right fit. She again expressed a desire to work where she could contribute and feel valued as an employee. By coordinating with RSB and community partner MERS Goodwill, Mrs. Thornhill found a job match working at the Breeze Park, an assisted living community.

Mrs. Thornhill works in the dining room where she provides assistance at meal times and making the residents feel at home. RSB coordinated job coaching services to ensure that all of Mrs. Thornhill's needs were met and that the employer was satisfied with her work. Mrs. Thornhill's warm demeanor serves her well in that work environment. After a year on the job she states that she enjoys her work at Breeze Park.



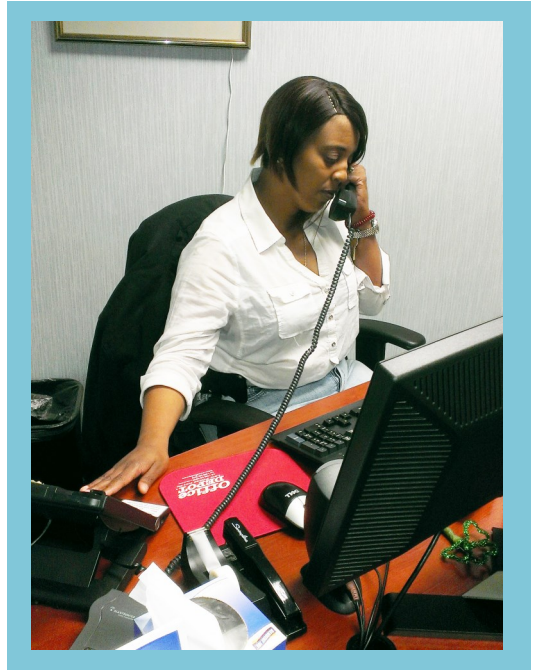
YEAR IN REVIEW

The SRC analyzed the results of client satisfaction surveys, which were received from RSB clients at the time of case closure. The comments and concerns of the clients were discussed by the SRC.

RSB continued to update the SRC on the Workforce Innovations Opportunities Act. (WOIA). Including WIOA's influence on Youth in Transition, Pre-Employment Transition Services, Competitive Integrated Employment, and how RSB collaborated with and have created partnerships with other state agencies.

The SRC committees reviewed the Annual Report, reviewed goals and strategies for the new combined State Plan and has given advice on the updated VR policy manual.

SRC has encouraged RSB to do more for outreach to employers. The council has pushed for RSB to make a presence in social media. RSB is now active on the DSS Facebook page.



Public Forums were held quarterly in various locations across the state.

RSB kept the SRC updated on the vacancies within RSB. These issues of the difficulty of recruitment were discussed, as well as how accessible the application process is for the blind and visually impaired.

The Government Affairs committee as been very active in updating the council and contacting legislature regarding issues that affect the blind and visually impaired. Some of those included the Braille Bill, SSP bill, SB43, HB118, and SB28, which effect budgets, accessibility, education and programs for blind and visually impaired.

Vision for the Future

As RSB strives to create opportunities for the personal and vocational success of blind and visually impaired Missourians, the SRC believes that with the proper training, alternative skills and assistive technology, those individuals who are blind can be vocationally, socially and economically competitive.



The SRC will continue to work cooperatively with RSB to improve the services offered to meet what we consider to be the unique rehabilitation needs of clients with visual disabilities. The following top five strategic priorities were developed by the SRC to ensure ongoing success for visually impaired Missourians:

1. Promote the full inclusion, participation, and integration of Missouri blind and severely visually impaired in the economic, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of society.
2. Through the SRC's advisory capacity assure that appropriate education and rehabilitation services increase the employment rate of blind and visually impaired in Missouri.
3. Promote and assure the continuation of specialized vocational rehabilitation services to consumers who are blind and severely visually impaired through specially trained professional staff with unique skills and knowledge of blindness.
4. In partnership with RSB, develop, agree to, and review the annual state goals and priorities, including strategies to address the unprecedented turnover the agency has experienced in recent years to ensure Missourians who are blind receive high quality service from qualified personnel.
5. In partnership with RSB, the SRC will work to implement new procedures congruent with the expectations of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, in order to ensure coordination all entities involved increasing access of blind Missourians to today's job market.



RSB District Map

Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind

800-592-6004

Kansas City
615 E 13th St. Rm 409
Kansas City MO 64106
816-889-2677

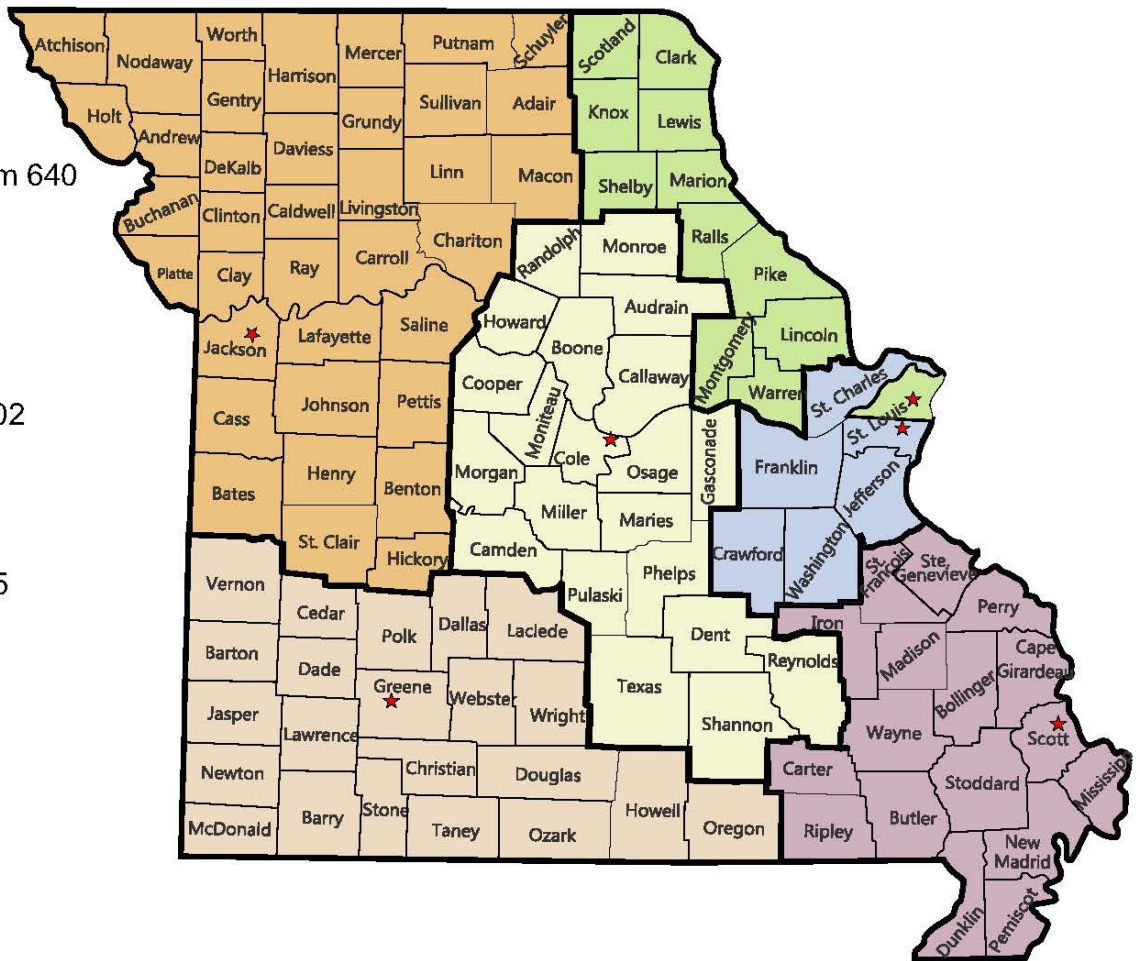
Southwest
149 Park Central Sq. Rm 640
Springfield MO 65806
417-895-6386

Mid-MO
3418 Knipp Dr. Ste A-2
Jefferson City MO 65102
573-751-2714

St Louis North
9900 Page Ave. Ste 105
St. Louis MO 63132
314-264-7601

St Louis South
3867 Magnolia Ave.
St Louis MO 63110
314-933-7311

Southeast Office
106 Arthur St Ste E Sikeston
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