

Missouri State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

Program Year 2018

Annual Report

An abstract graphic consisting of several overlapping circles in various shades of blue. The circles are of different sizes and are arranged in a way that they overlap each other, creating a sense of depth and movement. The colors range from a light, almost white blue to a deep, dark blue.

Providing individuals who have visual disabilities with valuable services that effectively address common barriers to employment.

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YOU CAN QUOTE ME

I cannot thank you enough for the services you have provided me. It was God-given. As promised I will go on working as long as I can. I will be forever grateful. God bless RSB.

—RSB Client



Brian Mulvany, RSB Mobility Specialist, works with peers using sleep shades to perform cooking tasks.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN, MSRCB



Chairman,
Missouri State
Rehabilitation
Council for
The Blind

Clay C.
Berry

Dear Fellow Missourians:

As Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC), it is my honor to submit the 2019 Annual Report on the status of services, in accordance with Section 105(5) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Congress in 1998. The SRC, created by Missouri Executive Order 93-01, is responsible for reviewing, analyzing and advising Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB), an agency in the Missouri Division of Family Support (FSD), on its policies and provision of rehabilitation services to Missourians who are blind or visually impaired.

The services that RSB provides are critical to this growing segment of our population. The CDC reports that during the next three decades, the population of adults with vision impairment and age-related eye diseases is estimated to double because of the rapidly aging U.S. population. In addition, the epidemic of diabetes, as well as other chronic diseases, will contribute to an increasing population of people who experience vision loss.

The SRC is dedicated to working with RSB to assist blind and visually impaired Missourians become self-supporting and fully participating members of society. Missourians with vision loss have a voice through the SRC, our quarterly reviews of agency policies, procedures and operations, along with public forums and our customer satisfaction survey, have given clients a critical source of input into the rehabilitation process.

The SRC is committed to its purpose and is rising to meet the growing challenges facing people with vision loss. We feel this report provides an informative overview of RSB and the activities of the SRC. We would be pleased to answer any questions about this report, the operations of RSB, and the work of the State Rehabilitation Council.

Respectfully Submitted,

Clay C. Berry

Alphapointe, Director of Education & Rehabilitation
Chairman, State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

YEAR IN REVIEW

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

RSB continued to update the SRC on the Workforce Innovations Opportunities Act (WIOA), 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 provided input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, reviewed the Annual Report, reviewed and analyzed the consumer satisfaction surveys, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions.

The SRC approved RSB to set maintenance limits, removing financial requirements and specifying reimbursement for expenses. The SRC also encouraged, requested and supported RSB to send accessible electronic surveys to improve return rate of Client Satisfaction Surveys.

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

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

RSB informed the council on the new case management system that became 'Live' in July 2019. Staff have been working in this case management system successfully and RSB made sure the Council was updated on that success.

YOU CAN QUOTE ME

Lindy and RSB have been both a blessing and saving grace. I would not have been able to continue employment in a peaceful environment with my current employer without the resources provided by RSB and the sage wisdom and advice from Lindy. I would like to thank the Rehabilitation Services for all they helped me do.

—RSB Client

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR, RSB



Director,
Rehabilitation
Services for
the Blind

Keith
Roderick

This annual report, presented by the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind for program year 2018, provides information on the Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division, and Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) vocational rehabilitation employment program for individuals with visual disabilities.

The Department of Social Services' mission is to lead the nation in building the capacity of individuals, families and communities to secure and sustain healthy, safe, and productive lives. RSB completed another successful year in meeting this mission by providing 1,556 individuals vocational rehabilitation services to assist 188 individuals to obtain or retain competitive integrated employment. Approximately \$12.3 million federal and state dollars allow RSB to provide effective, high-quality services to blind and visually impaired Missourians. Successful services in program year 2018 resulted in a \$46.8 million economic impact on Missouri.

RSB continues to be a national leader in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. For the fourth time, the federal Department of Labor and Rehabilitation Services Administration selected RSB and the Missouri workforce team to serve on a national cohort to assist in developing national guidance, processes and best practices in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act implementation. The Rehabilitation Services Administration recognized RSB as the top performing

agency for the blind in the nation for program year 2018 "Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit" at 68.5 percent, compared to a 38.8 percent median rate for agencies for the blind and 49.2 percent median rate for all vocational rehabilitation agencies.

The Rehabilitation Services Administration reports the program year 18 "Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit" measure resulted in \$5,117 for Blind VR Agencies compared to \$3,714 for all VR Agencies. The state and national results support the benefits of a separate agency serving blind and visually impaired individuals. Specialized services move families to economic stability and self-sufficiency.

In closing, I offer my sincere appreciation for your interest and support in serving Missourians with visual disabilities.

The Rehabilitation Services Administration recognized RSB as the top performing agency for the blind in the nation for program year 2018 "Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit" at 68.5 percent, compared to a 38.8 percent median rate for agencies for the blind and 49.2 percent median rate for all vocational rehabilitation agencies.

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

HIGHLIGHTS OF PROGRAM YEAR 2018

Individuals Served

Individuals with blindness/visual impairments served in Program Year 2018.....4,074

Older Blind Independent Living Program

Individuals were served in the Older Blind Independent Living Program.....1,242

Individuals were closed successfully rehabilitated.....573

Prevention of Blindness Program

Individuals received case management services in the Prevention of Blindness Program.....500

Individuals screened for intraocular pressure and other eye conditions.....4,238

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Individuals served in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.....1,556

Closing in successful employment.....188

Children's Services Program

Children received services in the Children's Services Program.....516

Independent Living Program

Individuals were served in the Independent Living Program.....260

Closed successfully rehabilitated.....76

Business Enterprise Program

Business Enterprise Program facilities.....33

 Military installations.....1

 Managers.....23

 People employed.....939

 Gross sales.....\$41,689,061

PURPOSE OF THE STATE REHABILITATION 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 constrictive 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;
- Receive 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.

Missouri State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

615 Howerton Court - P. O. Box 2320

Jefferson City MO 65102-2320

Phone: (573) 751-4249 — Fax: (573) 751-4984

YOU CAN QUOTE ME

Was not aware of RSB until referred to them. Without their help I would not still be employed. They relieved all the anxiety I had about my visual impairments, just knowing there is help from the RSB staff who are wonderful people.

—RSB Client

COUNCIL MEMBERS & COMMITTEES

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

Evaluates the performance and/or operation of RSB, such as surveys and annual reports.

Planning Committee

The state plan and any other planning operation of the Council, including the business network issues.

Governmental Affairs Committee

Works on things happening at the state and federal level and that are governmental in nature.

Program & Policy Committee

Handles new policy and or program items from RSB rather than waiting until the next Council meeting.

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 the Family Support Division (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.

YOU CAN QUOTE ME

This is a remarkable place that was really there for me when nobody else was. The staff genuinely care for my well-being especially my Counselor. Thank you for everything you have done for me.

—RSB Client

STANDARDS & 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.



YOU CAN QUOTE ME

All involved were polite, hardworking and seemed interested in helping me achieve my goal.

—RSB Client



"The technology and services provided by RSB have given me the opportunity to continue with career growth, promotions, and being acknowledged as a top producer within my company."

Monica Bethards first learned about Rehabilitation Services for the Blind while on a routine visit to her eye care professional, Dr. Laura Montgomery in Bolivar, Missouri. Monica was born with macular dystrophy, and saw Dr. Montgomery on a regular basis to maintain her eye health.

When she was first diagnosed, it was assumed that as her vision decreased, she would not be able to continue at her job. "RSB made an investment in me, and this investment has helped me remain gainfully employed. The results yielded from that investment have led to me also becoming more independent, contributing to our society, and being recognized as a top performer in my company. I am most grateful for all these services have meant for me and my family."

Monica contacted the Springfield office of RSB to see if they could help her maintain her job as a program manager at Duck Creek Technologies in Bolivar, a company that develops and implements software for insurance carriers worldwide. Her vision had grown steadily worse over the years, and she needed help with assistive technology that would allow her to more readily access printed material and her computer screen. Additionally, she needed assistance with orientation and mobility skills, as she is required to travel around the country. Mobility Specialist Ben Vercellone was assigned to work with

Monica on her travel skills. "My job requires that I travel, and the use of a cane and travel instruction has been a game changer for me to travel independently. The technology provided by RSB has helped me adapt to differing environments when I find myself in new surroundings."

Monica's case was assigned to Brady Clevenger, Program Development Specialist in the Southwest District office. Brady helped Monica obtain a CCTV video magnifier, magnification software, and a handheld magnifier to help her read hard copy printed material. With the handheld device, she was able to take it with her and access print wherever she might be, in a variety of work settings.

"Brady has been an excellent counselor to work with. I believe it is because he truly understands the daily struggle his clients go through. He has provided great insight, and powerful resources regarding the various types of skills I needed to continue in my daily life, and truly customized a plan for me that has helped me succeed," Monica said.

Monica was recognized within her company as a Special Impact Award winner. "The technology and services provided by RSB have given me the opportunity to continue with career growth, promotions, and being acknowledged as a top producer within my company. The use of the assistive software, large screen monitor, CCTV, Ipad, a cane, and hand held magnifiers are used on a daily basis for various parts of my job. These tools have truly given me the ability to operate independently and continue performing my job duties."

"Many people often ask, 'How do you continue to do the things you do that you really should not be able to do?' And I am able to give great credit to the technology and training I have been blessed with from RSB."

MALLORIE

**EXPRESSED HER
DESIRE TO WORK
AND
BE INDEPENDENT**

Mallorie grew up like many other children in Columbia, Missouri. Going to school, playing with friends, enjoying the outdoors; that is, until 9th grade. During her 9th grade school year, she found out that she was a type one diabetic. Through the difficulties of being diabetic, Mallorie graduated from Hickman High school and enrolled at University of Missouri, Columbia. There, she attained a masters in accounting, graduating in 2009 and went to work.

Unfortunately, Mallorie's health took a turn for the worse; and by 2015, Mallorie was suffering from severe diabetic complications. These problems started with kidney and pancreas issues which led to extreme swelling, water retention, kidney failure, and finally dialysis for eight months. Because Mallorie needed both kidneys and a pancreas, she was placed at the top of the transplant list.

While waiting on the transplant list and trying to control blood glucose lev-

els, Mallorie lost vision in one eye from diabetic retinopathy. Mallorie had to quit working in March 2016.

Mallorie successfully received a kidney and pancreas transplant, but due to the long surgery, the sight worsened significantly in her good eye. During this time, Mallorie was

recovering from surgery and living with her parents because of her decrease in vision.

Mallorie signed an application for RSB services on 10/24/2018. During the initial interview, Mallorie expressed her desire to work and be independent, but stated that she needed to lower her expectations. After much discussion, Mallorie learned that there was no need to lower her expectations for her career and life goals. A case was opened and rehab teaching and vocational rehabilitation counseling services were delivered. Equipment was evaluated and training was done so adaptive equipment could be used once work was found. Mallorie was referred to a community rehab program vendor; and within just a few weeks had landed a job at MFA OIL in the accounting department.

Mallorie's strength, positive attitude and resilience are why she is a success story. She has taken every opportunity to pull herself back up and set herself on a productive path again. She now lives independently and works full time. Mallorie now knows that she will be able to work consistently in her field of study and will have available assistance when she needs it.

**NO NEED TO LOWER
HER EXPECTATIONS
FOR HER
CAREER AND LIFE GOALS.**

Samuel Harris is a 74-year-old farmer who became a client of Rehabilitation Services for the Blind on June 18, 2018. He lost a lot of his vision due to glaucoma and cataracts causing many new challenges in his everyday life. Samuel came to RSB in need of assistance with his farming. Samuel and his counselor, Vickie, decided the AgrAbility program was the best fit for Samuel's needs. Samuel and his wife, Dorothy, live on their 102 acre farm and Samuel has been farming for 46 years. They have 26 cows, 13 calves, 18 chickens, 10 geese and a couple of turkeys. Outside of taking care of their livestock, Samuel also does the rotating of crops, mowing, raking and bailing of the hay and computer work.

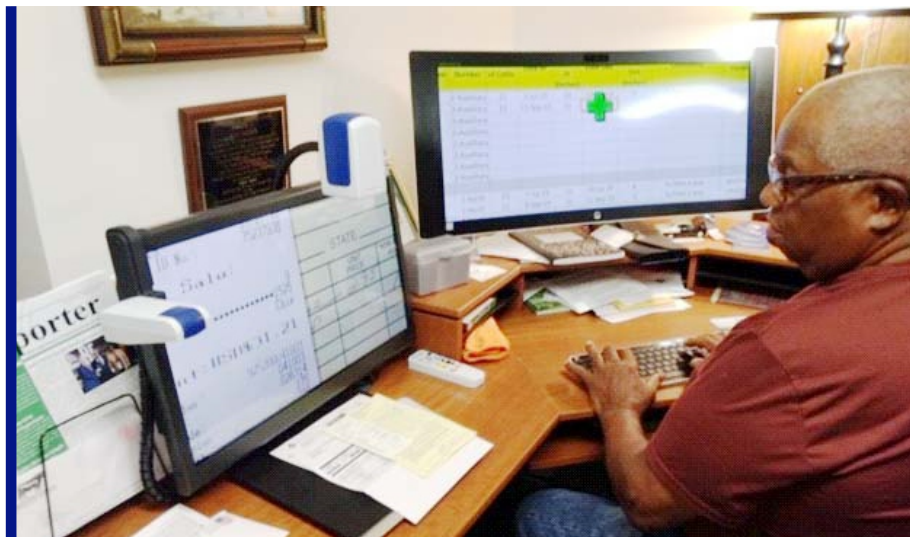
After having the AgrAbility representative visit the farm, Samuel received two gate systems. These gate systems make it easier to open and close the pasture gates to feed the cows as well as move them from field to field. Samuel also received computer training on different programs, Independent Living training, equipment and magnifiers. All of the training and equipment provided allowed Samuel to do his work better and more efficiently with his vision changes. Samuel's computer work consists of keeping inventory of his stock, crop reports, and grazing reports.

Samuel has been on the Missouri Agriculture Board as a member for six years, currently serving as their treasurer. Samuel and his wife have a clear passion for their work. This year they received a Missouri Agriculture Legacy Award. This award is given to individuals that strive to innovate their farm or ranch, give back to their communities, and commit to land stewardship or stand as a great example for future generations. The recipients were nominated by fellow farmers, ranchers and agriculture leaders who were inspired by their contributions in Missouri agriculture.

Samuel has stated that he is very moved by the help and assistance that RSB and AgrAbility provided him. He stated that these services have better equipped him to continue to do his farming in a better and safer manner, expressing that the services have been wonderful and played crucial parts in allowing him to continue to do the job he knows and loves.

Samuel's case was closed successfully on May 14, 2019 by his SVRC Vickie L. Yovich.

Samuel ... received computer training on different programs, Independent Living training, equipment and magnifiers. All of the training and equipment provided allowed Samuel to do his work better and more efficiently with his vision changes.



Nathan Merzlicker, a student at Francis Howell High School, wanted to earn his own money during the summer to buy the things that he wanted. He needed an opportunity to practice his social skills before he went to work.

Nathan participated in a program sponsored by Rehabilitation Services for the Blind for transition age students called Blind and Socially Savvy. In this program, with six other high school and college students, Nathan learned about etiquette and protocol in a business setting. This included how to give a proper handshake and introduce oneself, table etiquette in formal and casual settings, how to mingle with others in a networking setting, how to conduct an informational career interview, social media and cellphone etiquette, and how to carry oneself confidently during college and job interviews.

This is what Jennifer Merzlicker, Nathan's mother, had to say about Blind and Socially Savvy:

"Imagine my surprise when I came to the final lunch of the Blind and Socially Savvy program and heard that my introverted and extremely shy son would be the one making the opening introductions to the program! It was such a joy to see the growth he had made that week in his confidence and overall professional skills.

"I think the experience and knowledge that he gained in this program will definitely help him

feel more comfortable and prepared for college and the professional world in the coming years."

Nathan added: "My favorite part of the Blind and Socially Savvy program was learning to dine in a professional environment. I feel more comfortable doing that now."

"My favorite part of the Blind and Socially Savvy program was learning to dine in a professional environment.

I feel more comfortable doing that now."

—Nathan Merzlicker

"Nathan's participation in the Summer Work Program is possibly the greatest contributor that I have seen to help with his growth and development of skills needed for adulthood."

***—Jennifer Merzlicker
Nathan's mom***

Following his completion of Blind and Socially Savvy, Nathan participated in a paid summer work experience program, with the assistance of Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, through Preferred Employment. Nathan worked at a local grocery store as a courtesy clerk for 20 hours a week for six weeks. His duties included bagging groceries, getting carts from the parking lot, assisting customers with finding items in the store, and returning items to store shelves.

Nathan Merzlicker



In addition to these duties, Nathan received soft skills instruction. A job coach was available to assist the students in learning and performing their job duties.

In regards to the summer work program, Jennifer Merzlicker commented: "Nathan's participation in the Summer Work Program is possibly the greatest contributor that I have seen to help with his growth and development of skills needed for adulthood. He never would have been able to succeed in a traditional summer job, but with the coaching in this program, I saw him blossom. He began taking initiative and his maturity made leaps and bounds this summer. We have seen those gains continue into the school year as well. He still has a way to go and a lot to learn to gain independence into adulthood, but I have been so very thankful for the opportunity he had in this program and the progress that he has made."

Nathan had this to say about the work experience program: "I enjoyed that we got to practice skills in the Summer Work Program that can help us in life. The people there were nice and willing to help with any issues we may have had. I would definitely want to do it again if I could."

Blind and Socially Savvy is a program sponsored by Rehabilitation Services for the Blind designed to help transition-age blind students to carry themselves confidently in various social circumstances.

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind in Program Year 2018...

Federal and State dollars allowed RSB to provide effective, high quality services to blind and visually impaired Missourians..... **\$13 million**

Economic impact on Missouri:

Successful services and employment outcomes between the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, as well as the Business Enterprise Program..... **\$45.3 million**

This Annual Report outlines these successful services provided by RSB, as well as shares personal success stories by RSB clients.

We Invest in the Potential of the Most Amazing People



Gloria Carson



Albert "Jim" Piel



David K. Pinkley

Individuals in the Business Enterprise Program receiving Awards for outstanding achievement in professional development as well as exemplary performance in management.

PY 2018 BLIND AGENCY Summary of RSB Performance

Section 116 of WIOA establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of States and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served. RSA has used their transition authority under WIOA sec. 503(a) to designate primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators in the first plan submission. The actual performance data reported by States for indicators designated as “baseline” in the first two years of the Unified or Combined Plan will serve as baseline data in future years.

During this transition period, RSB is utilizing the following measurements for state level performance reporting:

Individuals who achieved integrated employment, who had significant Disabilities..... **68.5%**



Percentage of Individuals Achieving Self-Sufficiency (Relying Primarily on Their Own Income) After Successfully Completing the Program..... **89.4%**



Vocational Rehabilitation Rate of Successful Rehabilitation..... **72.3%**



VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION: Earnings and Funding Resources

PY 2018 New VR cases opened **367** Clients served **1,556**

Average Annual Earnings

Per Rehabilitated Client.....**\$27,336**

The following information is based on the above amount:

MO State Taxes Paid

Per Rehabilitated Client.....**\$584**

Federal Taxes Paid

Per Rehabilitated Client.....**\$1,650**

Total Taxes Paid

Per Rehabilitated Client.....**\$2,234**

Total Combined Yearly Taxes Paid

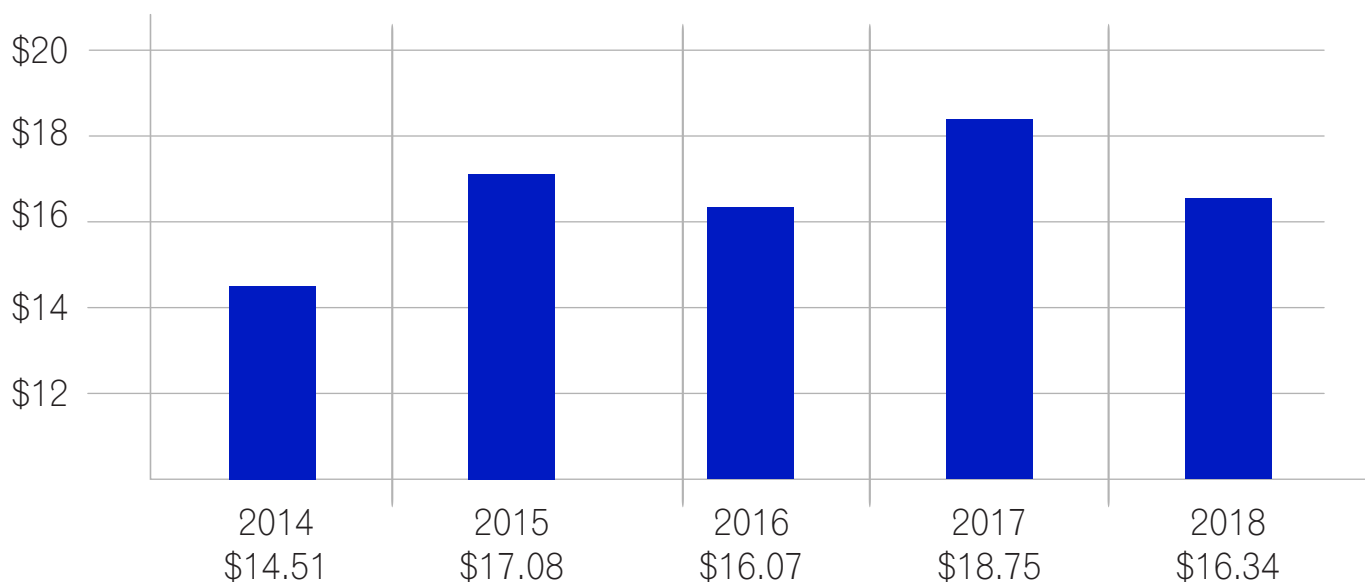
by all Rehabilitated Clients.....**\$419,992**

PY 2018

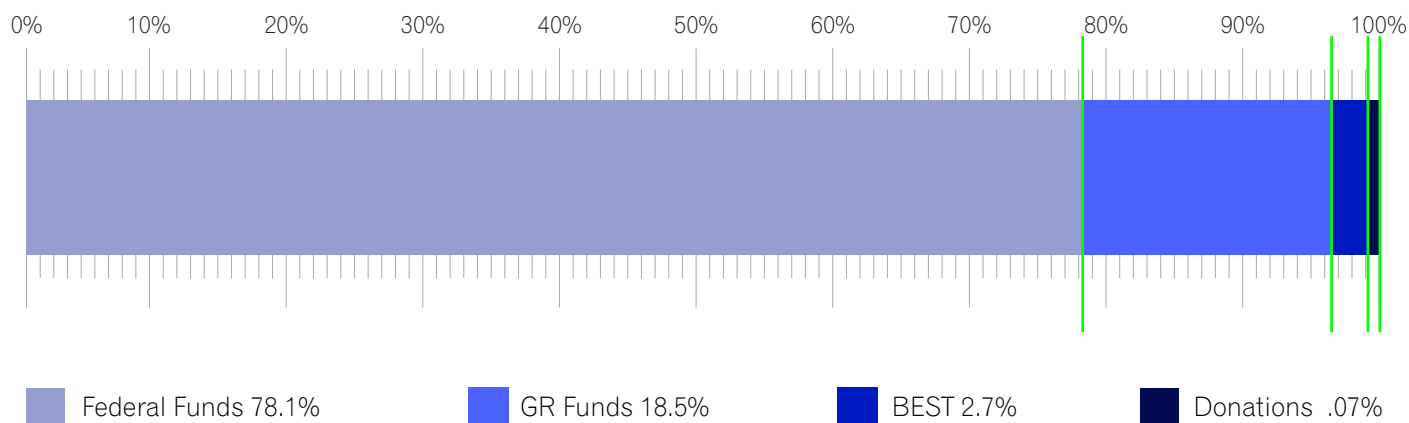
Average Hourly Wage

\$16.34

Average Hourly Wage at Closure



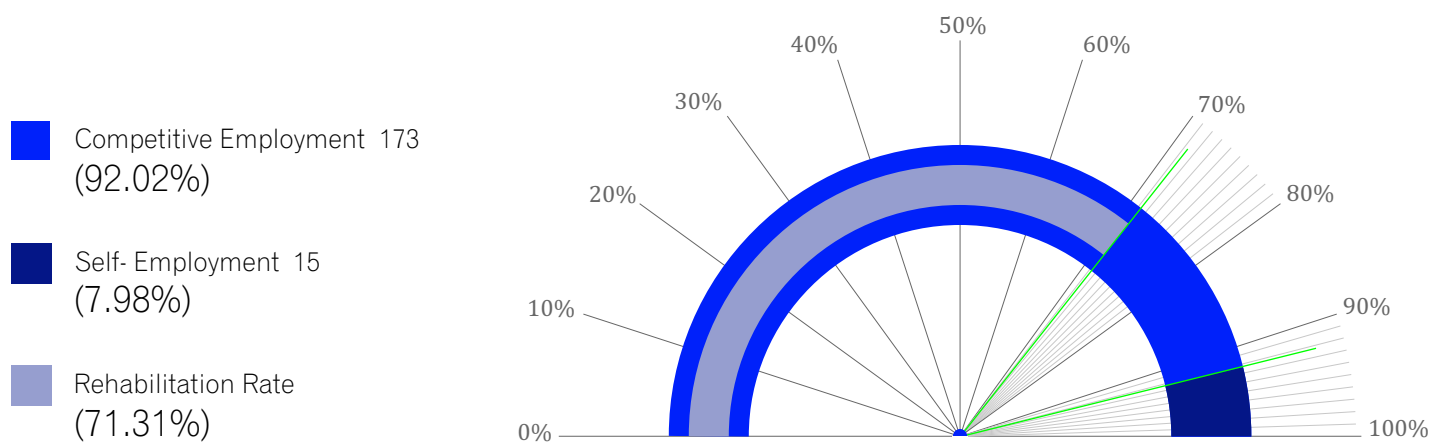
State Fiscal Year 2018 Missouri Funding Sources



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, as well as marketable 21st century job skills. Rehabilitation Services for the Blind provides valuable services that effectively address these barriers and others.

In program year 2018, RSB successfully rehabilitated 188 Missourians in pursuit of their employment goal. The following data profiles show those successful closures:



In PY 2018, through the services of RSB, 188 individuals have been able to gain or retain employment. Their occupations are as follows:

Architecture and Engineering	2	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	18
Arts, Design, Entertainment,		Healthcare Support.....	6
Sports, and Media.....	21	Installation, Maintenance,	
Building and Grounds Cleaning	11	and Repair	2
Business and Financial Operations.....	13	Legal Occupations.....	6
Community and Social Service	14	Life, Physical & Social Science	1
Computer and Mathematical	6	Management	33
Construction and Extraction		Office and Administrative	15
Occupations	4	Personal Care and Service	8
Educational Instruction, and Library	7	Production.....	4
Farming, Fishing and Forestry.....	3	Sales and Related.....	6
Food Preparation and Food Serving	9	Transportation and Material Moving	4

CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Client Satisfaction Surveys are administered to individuals after closing their Vocational Rehabilitation case with RSB.

Clients closed in competitive integrated employment.....	188
Clients who returned their survey.....	56
Rate of return.....	30%
Clients closed in a status other than competitive employment.....	130
Clients who returned their survey.....	3
Rate of return.....	2%

Client Satisfaction Survey Questions

Two different surveys are given:

a 14-question survey is sent to individuals whose cases are

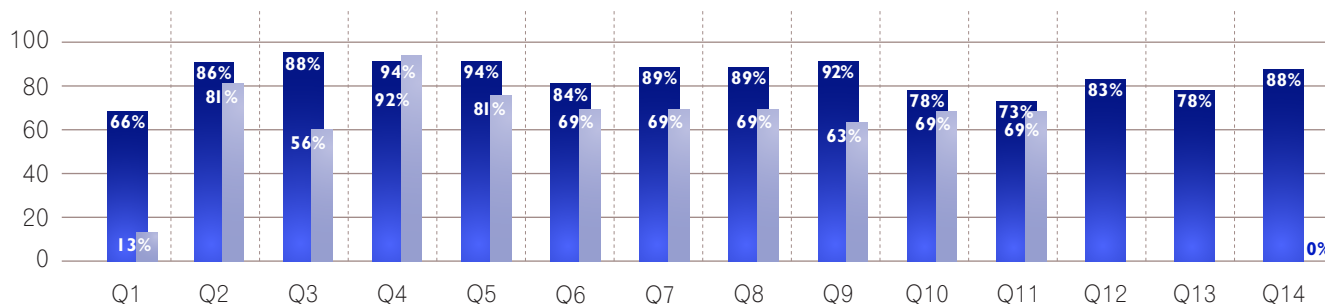
closed in competitive employment;

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.



Source: Rehabilitation Services for the Blind - Independent Living Program - FY 2020 Program Participant Survey

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 as well.

August: St. Louis, Mo – Amanda Dovin and her Seeing Eye dog, Sonya, shared with the public different mobility options available to those who are visually impaired. Amanda also shared her story of success going through college and ultimately accepting a job with RSB as a Rehabilitation Teacher in the St. Louis North office.

November: Kansas City, Mo – Cathy Wolford shared with the public stories of individuals who are deaf and blind. Cathy shared her desire to see more employment opportunities for those who are deaf/blind and shared that there are many assistive technology devices that can help those individuals become successful in education and career goals they may have. A second speaker, Lauren McDaniel, shared his personal story about his recent loss of vision due to being shot. Lauren shared his story of triumph as he worked with RSB and Colorado Center for the Blind to adjust to life with the complete loss of his vision. Lauren expressed the newfound optimism for his future with a “nothing can stop me now” attitude that was very inspiring to everyone in the room.

February: Joplin, Mo – Matthew Holloway, Employment Service Manager at Preferred Employment Services and Adrian Marcos, an RSB client, came to speak to the public in Joplin. Matthew shared about Preferred Employment Services, and their work with RSB clients. Adrian Marcos shared about his experience with Preferred Employment Services as well as RSB. He shared with the public about his summer work experience and how that has helped prepare him for more jobs in the future.



State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, pictured at one of the 4 Public Forums held throughout the State of Missouri.

May: Jefferson City, Mo – Amy Nickless from Wolfner Library came to share about Wolfner and the services they provide. Wolfner Library is Missouri's Library for individuals with visual, physical and reading disabilities. Wolfner provides braille, audio, large print, print braille books, audio described DVDs, print braille games, activity kits, programming, magazines and newsletters.

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 individuals 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 and Opportunity Act, in order to ensure coordination of all entities involved increasing access of blind Missourians to today's job market.



Mid Missouri District Office, Student Group Activities:

Run and coordinated by Children's specialist, Samantha Scott, this group works with RSB youth in the Mid Missouri area to teach important independence and social skills that they do not get the opportunity to learn in school. These activities give students the fundamental skills to become and remain successful in school and future careers.

YOU CAN QUOTE ME

When it comes to everyone from RSB they all were very helpful and listened to my needs.

Between Katie Cawdron and Kayla McFarland, I could not have been more pleased with the assistance I received.

Appreciate all the services that were provided to me. Helped me be a well-rounded person. Jane Zerr is awesome and very caring. I would recommend her to anyone in need of services.

Katherine Cronin,
District Supervisor
St. Louis South office.



I really enjoy my counselor Mr. Phillip Tucker. He is always very professional with assisting me as well as Mrs. Sharon Silverstein. I really appreciate all of their help with the services.

This is an excellent program! I truly believe that without RSB I would not have made it through college. I am so thankful for everything RSB has done. Thank you so much you are all amazing.

Donald Goosens and the staff did everything possible to help me. They were very nice and helpful. I couldn't ask for any better.

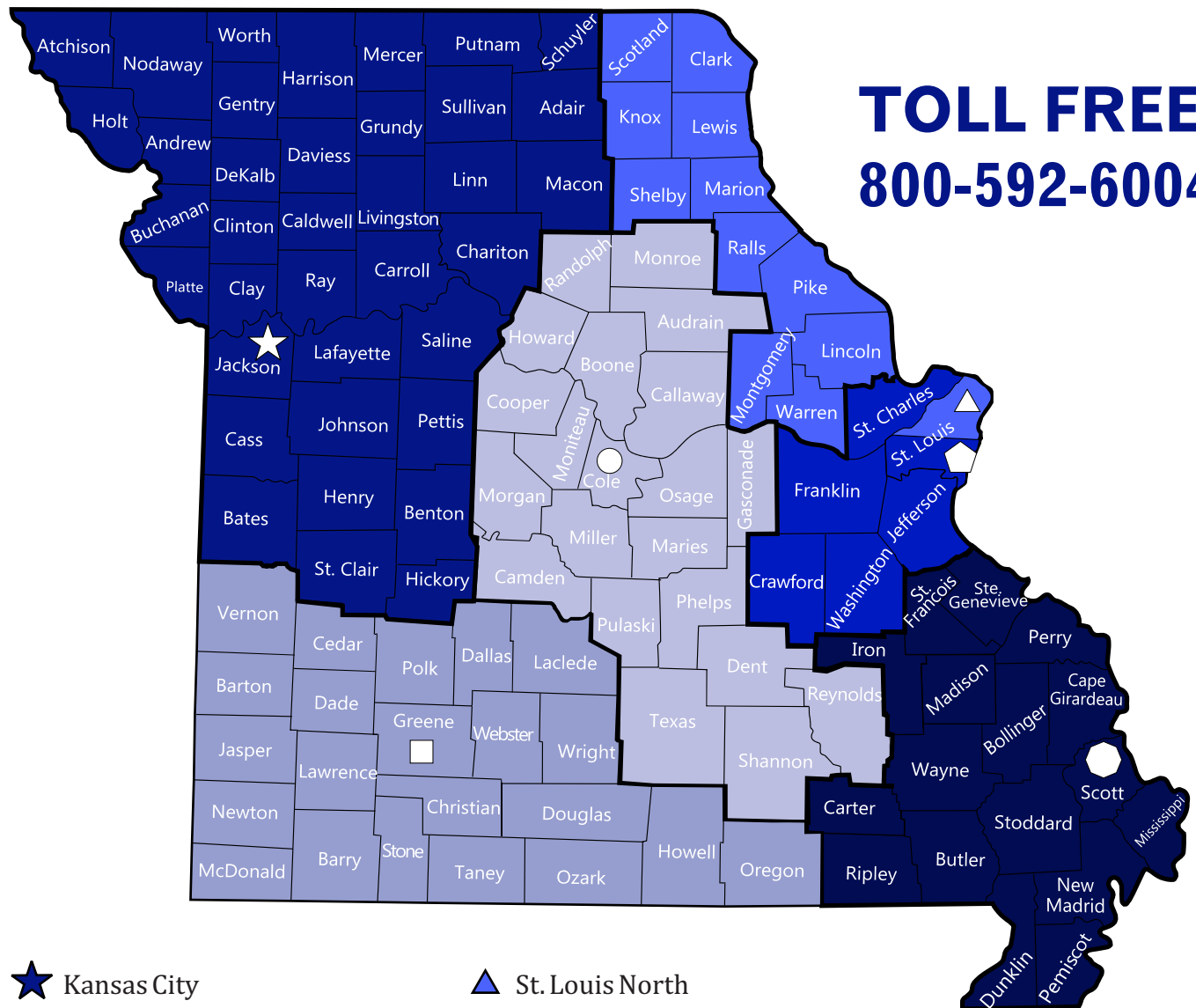
Ali, My case worker is so kind and helpful.



Southwest District Office Supervisor, Randy Custer presenting Years of Service Certificates to staff. Sr. Vocational Rehab Counselor Lindy Pierce (left), 10 years of service; Rehab Teacher Nicole Hanlin (right) with 20 years of service.

REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

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Missouri State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

Program Year 2018 Annual Report

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