

Cover Page

South Dakota State Seal 2017 Annual Report
 South Dakota
 Board of Service to the Blind & Visually Impaired
 SBVI Logo

Letter to the Governor

Dear Governor Daugaard:

It is my honor to present to you the 2017 South Dakota Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) Annual Report. I would like to thank you for your support of Board activities including the National Disability Employment Awareness Month and the Governor's awards that recognize employers and the abilities of citizens with disabilities in the workplace. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend you for sharing your personal experiences and your belief in the ability of citizens with disabilities, to add value to the workforce. Through your leadership South Dakota is truly an "Employment First" state that has become a model for our Nation.

This report has been prepared in accordance with regulations stipulated by the federal 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. This year, the report analyzes the programs and services delivered by SBVI. The report also provides snapshots of the activities conducted by the Board of SBVI 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.

In presenting the annual report, 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

CC: Gloria Pearson, Secretary, Department of Human Services
 Rimal Desai, Rehabilitation Services Administration State Liaison

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Executive Summary

December 28, 2017

To the Honorable Dennis Daugaard, Governor, State of South Dakota:

It is my distinct honor to submit this Annual Report on the performance of the Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI), a division of the Department of Human Services. 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 2017.

We are fortunate to live in a state that promotes hiring individuals with disabilities and are grateful for your support, as Governor, spreading the word on an inclusive workforce. Thanks to your support, SBVI experienced a significant increase in the number of citizens with vision loss who obtained employment in the fields they chose in the last year.

Goals and strategies are developed with input from the Board and address priorities in the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act. 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. This has resulted in not only more successful outcomes, but higher quality services and supports for those who participate in the services we deliver.

In addition to the vocational rehabilitation program, we are fortunate to have a variety of programs and services that benefit citizens with vision loss. This report highlights some of the successes of those programs and statements by those who benefitted from the unique services.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the trained professionals in SBVI for their commitment to citizens with vision loss. We strive to provide training in the specialty skills of blindness and a variety of targeted areas to staff of the Division. The results are a trained and prepared workforce who delivers top notch services on a statewide basis. Their expertise and dedication are imperative to the positive results throughout this report.

To understand the impact of services, it is important to look at program performance in terms of data, but it is also valuable to see comments that people were willing to share. Some of the quotes received from the satisfaction surveys are throughout this report.

On behalf of the Division and Board of SBVI, I would like to close with a quote from one of our satisfied customers.

Consumer quote “Your staff were very helpful and great to work with. You have made my live much easier. Thank you all!”

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.

Table with Name, Hometown and Representation of the Board members

Tami Francis, Sioux Falls, Business and Industry

Jill Kundtz, Rapid City, Business and Industry

Eric Rippentrop, Dell Rapids, Disability Advocacy Group

Dr. Lynda O’Connor–Ohayon, Sioux Falls, 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

Roberta Ecoffey, Pine Ridge, American Indian VR Services

Bruce Micheel, Cavour, Business and Industry

Julie Briggs, Sioux Falls, Business and Industry

Tana Buresch, Sioux Falls, Parent Connection

Alan Vandenburg, Sioux Falls, VR Counselor – Ex Officio

Koni Sims, Sioux Falls, Disability Advocacy Group

Catherine Greseth – Chair, Rapid City, Business and Industry

Kay Miller – Member at Large, Mitchell, Business and Industry

Marcia Hultman, Pierre, Workforce Development Council

Members whose terms expired during 2017 are Dr. Lynda O’Connor-Ohayon, Bruce Micheel and Julie Briggs.

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. A majority of members are current or former recipients of SBVI

services. Board members bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to assist the Division of SBVI with program evaluation and development.

Picture of Bruce Micheel and Dr. Lynda O'Connor-Ohayon.

Board Committees and Meetings

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 also 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 9, 2016, Pierre, SD	March 24, 2017, Pierre, SD
June 16, 2017, Pierre, SD	September 22, 2017, Pierre, SD

Meetings are open to the public and held at accessible locations. Meetings are announced via the SBVI website, in the VISIONS newsletter, on the State of South Dakota news website, 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>

Picture of Board members and staff.

Board Activities

Governor's Awards for Employment of People with Disabilities

The Board of SBVI sponsors the annual Governor's Awards for recognizing employment of people with disabilities.

Lt. Gov. Matt Michels presented the 2017 Governor's Awards to South Dakota businesses and workers who have made significant contributions to the employment of people with disabilities on October 3, 2017.

Governor's Awards were presented to the following recipients:

- Koni Sims of Sioux Falls - Outstanding Citizen with a Disability
- Tami Francis of Sioux Falls - Outstanding Employee with a Disability

- Pizza Ranch of Spearfish - Outstanding Private Small Employer
- Country Fair Food Store of Mitchell - Outstanding Private Large Employer
- Meri Erickson of Groton - Outstanding Transition Services Award
- Yankton Area Mental Wellness, Inc. of Yankton - Distinguished Service Award

The Board of SBVI submitted nominations for several individuals and two of the nominations were selected for recognition, both of whom are SBVI Board Members.

Picture of Koni Sims and Lieutenant Governor Matt Michels

Koni Sims of Sioux Falls is legally blind due to a rare eye disease called Aniridia. After acquiring her degree, Sims began work with Sanford University of South Dakota Medical Center where she developed the current hospital massage program. Outside of work, Sims is the current president of the Siouxland Chapter of the South Dakota Association of the Blind. For these achievements, Sims was awarded the Outstanding Citizen with a Disability Award.

Tami Francis of Sioux Falls sought help from the Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired after losing her vision. Francis returned to school and obtained a Bachelor's Degree and went on to purchase a coat manufacturing business, Dakota Jackets Etcetera. Francis donates coats from her business to those in need and is an active member of the Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce. Francis was awarded the Outstanding Employee with a Disability Award for her efforts.

Picture of Tami Francis and Lieutenant Governor Matt Michels.

Picture of several SBVI Board members at a table during the luncheon.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Gov. Dennis Daugaard proclaimed October 2017, Disability Employment Awareness Month in South Dakota. Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) aims to raise awareness about disability employment issues and to celebrate the contributions of workers with disabilities. The 2017 theme was "Inclusion Drives Innovation". The Board joined a host of South Dakota agencies and organizations in sponsoring activities in thirteen communities in October to promote awareness of these issues and to help foster a disability-friendly culture in the workplace.

Logo used in 2017 National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Public Forums

The Board of SBVI sponsored two public forums in 2017. The first was held in conjunction with the National Federation of the Blind State Convention in May. Over thirty people participated and topics included updates on activities related to the Workforce Opportunity and Innovation Act, success stories of those who have participated in SBVI services and assistive technology.

Picture of individuals at the public forum at the NFB Convention.

A listening session was held in Kyle, South Dakota on June 2nd in conjunction with the Oglala Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program, Disability Rights South Dakota and the Division of Rehabilitation Services. KILI, the local radio station, conducted live interviews during the event to help educate citizens about programs and services. SBVI staff visited with participants to discuss their concerns and share information on SBVI programs.

The Board of SBVI made recommendations for public forums in 2018 including: an audio-video conference, forums in conjunction with National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota and South Dakota Association of the Blind conventions and joint forums with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core partners to obtain input on the WIOA Unified State Plan.

Consumer quote: "My counselor was wonderful, she helped me and I was involved every step of the way. She went above and beyond to help me. Everything was great."

White Cane March

The Board of SBVI sponsored the 6th annual White Cane March by assisting with costs for billboards to educate the public about the white cane law. The event took place in Sioux Falls on October 14th along 41st Street, reminding drivers of the laws that require all vehicles to yield to pedestrians walking with the help of a white cane or a guide dog. Members of the Sioux Falls Police Department held an educational meeting after the march. Shawn Cable and Kamie Roesler from KSFY also spoke at the event and KSFY televised a news story about the march.

Flyer about White Cane Day March in Sioux Falls.

Picture of people walking in the March.

Public Relations

The Board of SBVI public relations committee recommended that SBVI air the Lakota radio ad to promote services on Tribal lands. SBVI made arrangements to air the ad on KINI and KLND radio stations. The ad will also be aired on KILI in Pine Ridge at a later date. The ads ran 3 times per day during drive time for 2 months.

Outreach activities are a focus of the Board of SBVI to ensure citizens with vision loss have access to services. In addition, activities are conducted to educate the public about accessibility for people with vision loss. Members of the Board and SBVI staff conducted a variety of activities to promote awareness in 2017.

Picture of Rehab Teacher Mike Webb doing a presentation.

Picture of Rehab Teacher Nancy Kelsey doing a presentation.

Consumer quote: “Everyone worked together to help resolve my issues. They were on their toes, asking a lot of questions to give me the opportunity to tell what I was feeling and what services I needed.”

Vocational Rehabilitation

The Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR) provides individualized rehabilitation services that result in optimal employment outcomes for citizens who are blind or visually impaired. Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors provide specialized services throughout the State of South Dakota.

Fiscal Year 2017 Performance

- 564 people were served through the SBVI VR Program during Federal Fiscal Year 2017 (FFY 17), compared to 509 people in 2016 (FFY 16).
- 147 people were successfully rehabilitated through the vocational rehabilitation program in FFY 17, a substantial increase from 115 successfully rehabilitated VR clients in FFY 16.
- The average hourly wage was \$13.18 for people who obtained and/or maintained employment through the vocational rehabilitation program.

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 caseloads have recently increased, partially due to increased outreach efforts to schools and other public and private sectors in an effort to provide awareness of SBVI services.

Graph with caseload data for multiple years

2011:	Applications 222	Eligibilities 187	Total Served 606
2012:	Applications 197	Eligibilities 152	Total Served 560
2013:	Applications 206	Eligibilities 162	Total Served 532
2014:	Applications 231	Eligibilities 210	Total Served 513
2015:	Applications 187	Eligibilities 174	Total Served 516
2016:	Applications 217	Eligibilities 198	Total Served 509
2017:	Applications 246	Eligibilities 244	Total Served 564

The VR program has experienced a downward trend for the number of people participating in services beginning in 2012. In 2017, VR applications, eligibilities and total served increased compared to 2016 and total served is the highest it's been since 2011.

Consumer quote: “The service and staff were great!”

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Performance Measures
Effective July 1, 2017, SBVI started tracking the performance indicators listed below in order to meet new performance measures required 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. Following the proposal, SBVI will negotiate with RSA to set target levels. The process of negotiating targets will be done annually, so each year may have different expected levels of performance.

Instead of submitting this data once annually as has been the norm, beginning July 1, 2017, data on all open and closed cases from the most current quarter are submitted to RSA. SBVI has 45 days from the end of each quarter to submit accurate data to RSA. With this new requirement going into effect July 1, RSA has changed from Federal Fiscal Year reporting (October-September) to Program Year reporting (July – June). This timeline falls in line with the state budget year.

Primary Performance Indicators for Core Programs

For WIOA core programs, States must report the results of primary performance indicators 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;
2. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;
3. The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
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;
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; and
6. The indicator(s) of effectiveness in serving employers.

The 2018 Board of SBVI Annual Report will address these performance measures, once the data is obtained for a full program year.

Consumer quote: “Mike- We cannot begin to thank you enough for everything you did. You have no idea how much the equipment that was given to my husband has done to keep him reading the Green Sheet, checking cows with powerful binoculars - and everything else. Again, many thanks - your help was so appreciated!”

Age of Applicants

Graph showing age of applicants for several federal fiscal years

<20: FFY13 8; FFY14 12; FFY15 15; FFY16 20; FFY17 19
 20-29: FFY13 24; FFY14 14; FFY15 18; FFY16 25; FFY17 23
 30-39: FFY13 19; FFY14 26; FFY15 28; FFY16 30; FFY17 28
 40-49: FFY13 43; FFY14 38; FFY15 46; FFY16 31; FFY17 42
 50-59: FFY13 71; FFY14 70; FFY15 64; FFY16 65; FFY17 85
 60-69: FFY13 33; FFY14 39; FFY15 37; FFY16 40; FFY17 41
 70-79: FFY13 8; FFY14 2; FFY15 7; FFY16 4; FFY17 10
 80+ FFY13 0; FFY14 2; FFY15 0; FFY16 2; FFY17 1

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 who apply for services are between the ages of 50 to 59 due to the progressive nature of vision loss. There was a substantial increase of applicants in the 50-59 age range in 2017.

Referral Sources

Pie graph showing percentage by referral source: Physicians 28%; Family/Friends 4%; Other 10%; Education 5%; State Agencies 14%; Public/Private Providers 6%; Self Referral 33%.

Physicians and self-referrals continue to be the highest percentage of referral sources to Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired. 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

Graph of Causes of Impairments: Physical Disorders/Conditions 30%; Traumatic Brain Injury 1%; Accident/Injury (other than TBI) 8%; Asthma/Allergies 1%; Cancer 1%; Cause Unknown 13%; Congenital Condition or Birth Injury 34%; Diabetes Mellitus 11%; Multiple Sclerosis 1%.

The most frequent cause of visual loss for VR clients closed successfully was congenital condition/birth injury or physical disorder/condition. There was a decrease in the number of clients with physical disorders and an increase in congenital/birth injuries compared to last year.

Table on Secondary Impairments and Number of Cases

Diabetes Mellitus 28

Depressive and other Mood Disorders 10

Physical Disorders/Conditions (not listed elsewhere) 7

Accident/Injury (other than TBI or SCI) 7

Cause Unknown 5

Arthritis and Rheumatism 5

Congenital Condition or Birth Injury 4

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) 4

Specific Learning Disabilities 3
 Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder 3
 Autism 3
 Multiple Sclerosis 2
 Digestive 2
 Stroke 2

All clients have a visual impairment as their primary disability, but 62.6 percent of them were also diagnosed with a secondary disability, which also impacts their ability to work. SBVI Counselors often work with clients with multiple disabilities.

Making a Difference

Joanne Hoftwolt has had vision issues all her life. She remembers having to wear what she calls “pop bottle glasses” as a child and then continued to lose vision as she aged, including having torn retinas in both eyes. She refused to let that stand in her way. She graduated from Dakota Wesleyan with a bachelor’s degree. She has had a long and varied career, including working as a group home manager, a dietary supervisor and a social worker. She is still working as an in-home caregiver despite going on Social Security five years ago. Joanne says she will never retire because of the relationships she has developed with those she works with.

Picture of Joanne

Joanne has relied on a number of assistive technology devices to keep her working. She has a computer equipped with Zoomtext as well as a CCTV. She also has some portable magnifiers and a RUBY HD XL to read printed materials when away from her desk. She says a large part of her success is due to the assistive technology and training and skills of blindness training that she acquired at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind.

She expressed that she really appreciates the fact that her employer, Home Instead, has worked with her to provide accommodations such as information in large print and adjusting her schedule to fit with her transportation limitations.

In addition to her employment success, Joanne and her husband, Stan, served as caregivers to a number of foster and respite children. In fact, they adopted four of them. Talk about making a difference; not only has Joanne managed to succeed on her own but she has played a part in helping many others succeed. Now this is a Success Story!!

Consumer Quote: “I’m glad to know there are organizations out there like yours that can help people and get them started on a new way of life after their other way of life has come and gone. With the division of the blind, they helped me able to see again, be able to work and function in the community again.”

Occupations of Individuals Successfully Employed

Pie chart of occupations and percentages employed: Sales and Related Occupations 16%; Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing 7%; Clerical and Administrative Support 21%;

Managerial and Administrative 5%; Production, Construction, Operating, Main 31%; Professional, Paraprofessional and Technical 19%; RSA Special Occupations and Miscellaneous 1%.

In FFY 2017, the Vocational Rehabilitation program helped 147 people to achieve their employment goals. This chart reflects the occupations of people successfully employed, with half of the jobs in the Professional/Technical and Production/Construction/Maintenance careers. The occupations in the Professional, Paraprofessional & Technical category increased by nine percent, and occupations in the Production/Construction & Maintenance category increased by fourteen percent, compared to FY 2016.

Consumer quote: "My life is totally changed after the surgery. I am so grateful. Thank you so much for every support, all administration. I have no words to explain what you have done for my life. Thank you, may the Lord bless you."

Services for Students with Vision Loss

Bar graph showing select services for students in 2014 through 2017

2014: Project Skills 7; Project SEARCH 0; Transition Week 5; YLF 6: Employment Skills 4.

2015: Project Skills 9; Project SEARCH 1; Transition Week 7; YLF 6: Employment Skills 2.

2016: Project Skills 9; Project SEARCH 1; Transition Week 5; YLF 5: Employment Skills 0.

2017: Project Skills 9; Project SEARCH 1; Transition Week 11; YLF 5: Employment Skills 4.

SBVI provides transition services for students with vision loss. Counselors assist with development of transition plans and meet with students and parents, creating awareness of options after high school. The activities shown in this graph illustrate how SBVI provides job exploration counseling, work based learning experiences, counseling on post-secondary options, workplace readiness training and self-advocacy training. The largest increase in transition services was eleven Transition Week participants at the SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind in 2017 compared to four in 2016.

Vocational Rehabilitation Purchased Services Analysis

Pie chart with percentages spent on various services: Assistive Technology 22%; Transportation 3%; Assessment 9%; Physical Restoration 22%; Disability Related Training 7%; Post Secondary 10%; Job Placement 8%; Other training 1%; Job Search Assist <1%; Maintenance 6%; Employment Skills 10%; Other 2%.

SBVI spent over \$1,261,000 on client services in 2017. Physical restoration and assistive technology continue to constitute almost half of the case service expenditures

for vocational rehabilitation cases. These services have a significant impact on improving the likelihood of successful employment outcomes.

South Dakotan's with Vision Loss – National Rankings

According to the Disability Statistics website, an online resource for US Disability Statistics by Cornell University, an estimated 76.8 percent of non-institutionalized persons aged 21 to 64 years with a visual disability in the United States have an educational attainment of at least a high school education.

South Dakota had an estimated 96.4 percent of persons aged 21 to 64 years with a visual disability with an educational attainment of high school education or beyond, the highest percentage nationwide.

Graphic of map of United States with states delineated with their percentage of persons aged 21 to 64 who have attained a high school education or beyond.

South Dakota can also boast top billing in the percentage of non-institutionalized persons aged 21-64 years with a visual disability who were employed full-time/full-year based on the most recent data. The United States sees an estimated 28 percent employed full-time/full-year, while South Dakota has 48.8 percent of non-institutionalized person's age 21-64 years with a visual disability who were employed full-time/full-year. Below are the top 5 states:

Table with information about the top five states, including rank, estimated percentage, base population, and sample size.

South Dakota: Ranking 1; Estimated Percentage 48.8%; Base Population 7,800; Sample Size 77

North Dakota: Ranking 2; Estimated Percentage 43.1%, Base Population 5,100; Sample Size 47

Wyoming: Ranking 3; Estimated Percentage 42.5%; Base Population 6,600; Sample Size 57

Montana: Ranking 4; Estimated Percentage 41.5%; Base Population 8,400; Sample Size 74

Minnesota: Ranking 5; Estimated Percentage 40.8%; Base Population 41,100; Sample Size 399

2015 is the most recent data for these measures.

Consumer quote "Working with Alan has been very nice. He's very caring and I appreciate all the help your organization has given me."

Services to Minorities

Picture of adult and two students

According to the 2010 census, South Dakota's minority (non-white) population was 14.1 percent. The largest minority group in South Dakota involves American Indians from nine South Dakota Tribes making up 8.8 percent (2010 U.S. Census) of the state's total population. In FY 2017, 19 percent of SBVI closures were comprised of individuals of American Indian descent, an increase of 4 percent from last year, and 28

percent of all closures reported coming from a minority background, which exceeds census data for minorities in the population of the state. SBVI has increased services to minority clients by 12.4 percent in the past four years.

Bar graph showing percentages of Native American and All Minorities in South Dakota from 2013 through 2017.

2013: Native American 15.0; All Minorities 28.0

2014: Native American 8.5; All Minorities 15.6

2015: Native American 12.0; All Minorities 19.0

2016: Native American 15.0; All Minorities 21.0

2017: Native American 19.0; All Minorities 28.0

The Board and Division of SBVI work to address culturally relevant services for minority populations through a number of initiatives. The Director of the Oglala Sioux Tribe Vocational Rehabilitation Program is a member of the Board of SBVI. The newly developed WIOA Unified Plan specifically 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.

A radio ad promoting SBVI services in Lakota for Native Americans on the state's Tribal lands is distributed to support outreach. Bi-annual State and Tribal VR meetings are conducted for information sharing and to identify and address specific needs and concerns. Staff also participated in National Disabilities Awareness Month Disability Summit with the Cheyenne River Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

The 2017 Fall Conference ended with a meeting between DRS and SBVI state office staff, VR Counselors and Tribal VR representatives. Several visits were made to Tribal VR programs in the state, including a meeting with the Oglala Sioux Tribal VR Program in Kyle, SD on the Pine Ridge Reservation in November to clarify roles for joint cases and discuss future training and awareness activities.

The Department of Human Services is planning cultural sensitivity training to all DHS employees on a statewide basis in spring 2018, with a focus on the Native American culture within South Dakota.

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). An additional seven questions were developed with the help of the Board of SBVI. This is the 9th year that SBVI has conducted this annual survey.

In FFY 2017, the survey was mailed out to 204 people who received services and were closed from the SBVI vocational rehabilitation program during the past fiscal year. This is a 50 percent increase in the number of surveys mailed out, compared to 136 surveys mailed out last year. Of 204 questionnaires mailed out, 93 were returned, which is a 46 percent response rate. This information was 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 to SBVI.

The overall client satisfaction mean continues to be very high, at 29.78 out of a possible score of 32, with a standard deviation of 4.46. Demographics of the survey indicated the respondents were predominantly Caucasian, but it does reflect a movement in the direction of greater ethnic diversity in the response group. Men represented 57 percent of the respondents, and 43 percent of women, mostly over 56 years of age.

Following are examples of responses from the survey which indicate that the majority of people are satisfied with the services they receive from SBVI VR. Trend data shows current and past client satisfaction over time.

1. How would you rate the quality of service you received?

Ninety-six percent of respondents answered “excellent” or “good”.

Bar graph showing response percentage for 2014 through 2017.

2014: 96; 2015: 94; 2016: 95; 2017 96.

2. Have the services you received helped you to deal more effectively with your problems?

Ninety-five percent answered “yes, they helped a great deal” or “yes, they helped somewhat”.

Bar graph showing response percentage for 2014 through 2017.

2014: 91; 2015: 94; 2016: 95; 2017 95.

3. If you were to seek help again, would you come back to our program?

Ninety-six percent answered “yes, definitely” or “yes, I think so”.

Bar graph showing response percentage for 2014 through 2017.

2014: 97; 2015: 97; 2016: 95; 2017 96.

Consumer quote: "I was already employed but looking at maybe having to leave due to being unable to read my computer screen. Now, thanks to April and this program, leaving is no longer in the cards. Thank you, April Schulte!"

Building Confidence

Picture of Ryan Flisrand at work

Ryan Flisrand lives in Watertown and worked in a factory managing a shipping and receiving center when his health took a turn for the worse. He lost his kidney and a great deal of his eyesight due to diabetic retinopathy. Ryan was able to get a replacement kidney and is no longer on dialysis but he is legally blind, unable to drive a car, or read standard print without magnification. Some of the things he truly enjoys have become a greater challenge than they were before.

Ryan approached SBVI, stating he wanted to return to the workforce, but was unsure of what he could do. We worked with Ryan to get a job at Runnings working behind the counter selling firearms, stocking shelves, unloading equipment and providing customer service. He used magnification and an iPhone with an app that takes pictures and reads to him. When we first approached Runnings they were skeptical, but Ryan won them over in his interview. His job performance was simply outstanding. His counselor met with his supervisor after he had been employed for several months and his supervisor's words were "I'm so glad, I absolutely just love him." Ryan worked at Runnings for nearly a year and then he contacted SBVI again, this time with a different request. Ryan said now that he'd been in the workforce for a year, working and increasing his stamina and confidence, he felt that he should seek out more substantial employment.

He began working at Watertown Box in July 2017. Recently his counselor attended a banquet in Watertown, honoring National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Ryan was in attendance with his Human Resources (HR) representative from Watertown Box and they presented on a panel. The HR representative commented, "When Ryan came in, we didn't even have an opening, but after he met with me and the manager, it was decided we would find a place for him."

Ryan currently is a floater and moves from station to station getting trained on every machine. He received accommodations for his job, including apps for his iPhone, a CCTV, and an iPad. SBVI assisted Ryan with filling out applications, interview training and transportation to attend job interviews. As a result of the services, Ryan was able to start out working in a position where he developed confidence and then he obtained a position with better pay, better hours and increased promotional opportunities and benefits. Ryan has a way of presenting himself with an honest, calm demeanor. His attributes were the reason the management of Watertown Box decided to give him a chance.

Consumer quote: “Never let Mike Webb leave the program. He is a great person and now a great friend, very satisfied with his help! Don't know any suggestions on how to improve the program. Great program and services.”

Independent Living

The Independent Living Blind (ILB) Program is a resource for quality of life solutions after a person receives a diagnosis that results in significant vision changes. The ILB program focuses on specific services and activities which maximize the persons remaining vision. Staff members in the ILB program teach skills and methods when paired with assistive technology; allow the person to accomplish their daily tasks. Examples of this specialty training and assistive technology are explained in the following story:

Old Tasks in New Ways

Picture of Marian

At 82 years old, Marian Cramer has the reputation for being a very busy lady, regularly writing articles for two newspapers, baking for family and friends and playing the organ in her church. These activities and her social life had to be placed on hold when her vision diminished quite seriously at the beginning of this year due to macular degeneration.

After providing Marian low vision training, she is able to use a 3 X stand magnifier to read a variety of printed material. She is now using yellow Haven Sun Glasses to help with light glare. Marian has also received a CCTV through the Lease/Loan Program which will assist her in reading her recipes, looking up phone numbers, researching information for her articles and enjoying pictures of her family. In order for Marian to continue her activity of writing for the local papers and send emails, we placed black-on-yellow overlay numbers and letters on her computer keys.

Encouraged by the success in these activities; Marian has resumed playing the organ at her church by memorizing the music without any low vision aids. Low vision measuring cups & spoons helped her with her cooking hobby and she was making an apple crisp dessert when I last went to her home. Following bladder surgery in April, Marian had to learn to manage a colostomy. While initially a struggle, she developed specific skills taught by the rehabilitation teacher and now manages her own care in this area.

Marian has a great attitude about dealing with her vision loss. She is not afraid to try to accomplish old tasks in new ways. She does attribute some of this to a very loving and caring family who are always willing to help when it is needed.

Consumer quote: “I can do many things I wouldn't have done without this service.”

Independent Living Services Provided in 2017

The cornerstone of the Independent Living Blind program is services that are individualized and selected following a discussion that analyzes a variety of activities that have become difficult for the applicant to complete due to vision loss.

The services listed below were provided by the Rehabilitation Teachers who have the skills and specialty training to introduce aids and devices that allow the individual to resume their activities of daily living. The services listed were provided during the past fiscal year and based on the person's needs, interests and goals.

Table of Service with Description and number of people receiving that service.

Communication Skills - Training in the use of the telephone, handwriting guides, telling time, reading or writing Braille, etc. 376 people

Daily Living Skills – Training in the use of adaptive aids and assistive technology for daily living. 352 people

Low Vision Device Training – Services related to the use of optical aids and devices. 383 people

Low Vision Aids – May include items such as canes, insulin gauges, CCTVs, magnifiers, adaptive cooking items, etc. 389 people

Counseling – Peer, individual or group counseling to assist with adjustment to visual impairment and blindness. 344 people

Low Vision Exams – Evaluations to identify strategies and devices for enhancing visual performance. 217 people

Advocacy Training – Participation in advocacy training activities such as consumer organization meetings and peer support groups. 24 people

Referral to Other Agencies – Referral to other service providers, programs and agencies. 294 people

Orientation and Mobility – Travel training and learning to access public or private transportation to travel safely and independently. 100 people

- In FY 2017, the ILB program provided services to 444 older individuals with vision loss which compares to 472 in FY 2016. Staff successfully closed 291 individual cases compared to 296 in FY 2016.
- In addition to providing services to older citizens who have severe vision loss, the ILB program provided services to 28 individuals under the age of 55 who required independent living skills training due to their vision loss.

Consumer quote: “The service and staff were great!”

Primary Types of Eye Diseases for People Served

Graph showing types of eye diseases and the number serviced: Macular Degeneration 306; Cataracts 9; Glaucoma 41; Diabetic Retinopathy 22; other 66.

Macular Degeneration was the major cause of vision loss in 306 of the 444 individuals who received services in 2017 as reflected in this chart. According to Prevent Blindness American, South Dakota has an estimated 7,300 individuals with macular degeneration which results in severe vision loss.

Degree of Vision Loss

Pie chart showing degree of vision loss: Legally Blind (excluding Totally Blind) 42; Totally Blind 15; Severe Visual Impairment 387

Of the 444 people served in 2017; only 3% of them experienced total blindness which results in having some light perception or no light perception. Individuals who have some remaining vision that can be utilized to complete activities of daily living are often experiencing severe visual impairment which makes up 87% of the people served. The chart above explains the degree of vision loss experienced by the 444 people served in 2017.

Consumer quote: "Wonderful program! Wonderful, experienced trained staff!"

Age Range of ILB Individuals Served in FY 2017

Bar graph showing age of individuals receiving ILB services in FY2017.

Age 55–59 18; Age 60-64 20; Age 65-69 28; Age 70-74 36; Age 75-79 55; Age 80-84 91; Age 85-89 94; Age 90-94 74; Age 95-99 24; Age over 100 4.

Satisfaction with Independent Living Services

Citizens who receive services from the ILB program have the opportunity to provide feedback through a satisfaction survey which is sent out quarterly. Survey responses assist SBVI to assess whether services are effective in assisting citizens to maintain or regain their independence. Two hundred sixty two surveys were sent out to those who achieved their independent living goals. One hundred sixty two people responded to the survey, which is a 61% response rate.

Our goal is 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 162 survey responses, 53 or 32% 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.

Consumer quote: "Amanda was helpful, cheerful, encouraging, knowledgeable, and all done with a smile on her face."

An Artist's Way

Picture of Wayne standing by one of his paintings.

Wayne Allen lost his vision due to remote central retinal vein occlusion in both eyes. Wayne is 83 years old and lives with his wife in one of the garden homes at Bethany Meadows in Brandon. He applied for Independent Living Services in November of 2016, and we began working together shortly after that. Because Wayne is a veteran, I referred him to the Veterans' Impairment Service Team (VIST) low vision program for help. Unfortunately, due to eligibility guidelines; Wayne did not qualify for services through the VA.

Wayne was persistent in trying to get help with his vision loss as reading had become very difficult. He was also unable to see his television and had difficulty controlling light glare. But for Wayne, the worse loss was his struggle with continuing to do his art work. He paints pictures, and they are beautiful.

We worked with several different low vision aids including lamps, electronic magnifiers and colored paper for contrast. Wayne found he could read newspapers and magazines with a 3 X stand magnifier however, this did not help resume painting. He found that a monocular is helpful with bringing in the TV pictures more clearly. For glare control and for making things brighter, Wayne found the yellow solar shields to be the best answer. Wayne and his wife joined the Peer Support Group that meets monthly at Bethany Meadows. There, he has been able to learn and share ideas about living with low vision while he continued to seek solutions to continue his hobby of painting. In the spring of this year, Wayne had a cataract removed. Following this successful procedure, he discovered that his vision had cleared significantly, which was improved further with the use of a bright lamp. Wayne is very happy to resume painting which is his favorite pastime. He has even decided to sign up for a painting class at the Center for Active Generations.

Consumer quote: "Thank you very much. I am very happy with SBVI."

Electronic Video Magnification (CCTV) Lease/Loan Program

Picture of a CCTV

SBVI created the CCTV Lease/Loan program in 2004 with memorial funds donated specifically for the purpose of providing devices for older citizens which were not available through other programs. The CCTV program began with 24 units as a start-up to determine if we were addressing 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. Over the next 13 years, SBVI 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 4 text to speech reading units that not only magnify but provide auditory output of the printed information. The 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 219 units that have been placed with older citizens with vision loss. Currently there are 122 units loaned and 90 leased which requires a minimal monthly fee. Over the past 12 years, a total of 871 older citizens with vision loss have received CCTVs and training through this program.

Public Outreach and Information and Referral

In 2017, Rehabilitation Teachers were involved with over 120 outreach activities with an estimated 1800 attendees to share information about how to access services from

SBVI. These events included the South Dakota State Fair, community health fair events, employee in-service trainings and other public forums. Staff also responds to individual calls to ensure people obtain the information they need to access services. This picture shows SBVI Board member Koni Sims and Rehabilitation Teacher Chelle Hart, who collaborated to provide information about working with patients who have vision loss to over 120 nurses and professionals with Sanford Health in Sioux Falls. The presentation was also telecast to multiple Sanford affiliates located across the Midwest.

Picture of Koni Sims and Chelle Hart.

Consumer quote: "Heather is an outstanding service provider. I miss her."

Rehabilitation Center for the Blind

The mission of the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC) is to provide assessment and training to individuals with disabilities in order to enhance their independence at home, work, and in their community. Open year round, we work together to define goals that will best help maximize each individual's independence.

A total of 323 people were served throughout all programs at the Center during 2017. Compared to 2016, there was a decrease of 31 people who participated in programs at the Center. The reduced numbers occurred in the areas of Assistive Technology outreach services, Adaptive Skills of Blindness, as well as Employment Skills Training. In contrast, there was an increase in the number of people working with the employment specialist and the number of patients who attended the low vision clinics during 2017.

Table of data on number of individuals receiving various services at SDRC for multiple fiscal years.

Transition Students: FY2017 11; FY2016 5; FY2015 7; FY2014 5.

Low Vision Patients: FY2017 94; FY2016 85; FY2015 105; FY2014 82.

Employment Specialist: FY2017 27; FY2016 22; FY2015 19; FY2014 23.

Skills of Blindness: FY2017 37; FY2016 44; FY2015 45; FY2014 62.

Employment Skills Training: FY2017 93; FY2016 102; FY2015 84; FY2014 85.

O&M Outreach: FY2017 10; FY2016 10; FY2015 1; FY2014 0.

Assistive Technology Technical Assistance & Training: FY2017 51; FY2016 86; FY2015 68; FY2014 8.

Total: FY2017 323; FY2016 354; FY2015 329; FY2014 265.

Adaptive Skills of Blindness

During 2017 thirty-seven people attended the Adaptive Skills of Blindness classes at the Rehabilitation Center. Flexible schedules offer an opportunity for working adults to attend classes that fit into their busy lifestyles. For those who live outside of Sioux Falls, convenient housing is available with offsite apartments near downtown Sioux Falls. Transportation is provided via taxi or city bus.

Picture of instructor and students in Home Management class.

Skills of blindness include Home Management, Communications, Assistive Technology, and Orientation and Mobility. Additional offerings include therapeutic recreation, counseling, and peer support. Seventeen of the participants were women and 20 were men; the average age was 41. Eighteen students had severe visual impairments, 6 were legally blind and 7 were totally blind. Secondary conditions of participants included diabetes, hearing loss, brain injury, and learning disabilities. Three sighted staff also attended training to learn the adaptive skills of blindness to prepare them to teach citizens with vision loss in their homes or communities. The Rehabilitation Center for the Blind provides comprehensive blindness skills training to SBVI staff to prepare them to provide services on a statewide basis.

Three University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine students attended the Center for three days of cultural diversity training. Participation in training at the Center helps medical students gain a sense of understanding about the capabilities of people with vision loss and the independence they gain through the skills of blindness training program.

Students who attend the Rehabilitation Center learn how to plan and enjoy their leisure time through participating in events in the community. A variety of activities were planned including local summer festivals, sporting events, and concerts. They learned to navigate the mall independently, participated in a cooking class with a local caterer and went out to eat as a group. The students planned "Dining in the Dark"; they invited their families to experience dinner using a blindfold and an evening of entertainment. A Sioux Falls Boy Scout troop invited the group to a summer cookout where they cooked over a campfire and learned outdoor skills. These activities teach students leisure skills so they have more confidence to participate in a variety of activities when they return home.

Picture of students and Boy Scouts and instructor.

Using assistive technology can be challenging due to the variety of devices and programs available to accommodate vision loss. To help alleviate the frustration, the SDRC Assistive Technology Instructor uses Facetime, Skype, e-mail and the telephone to answer technology questions for people who need technical assistance to access technology. In FY 2017, 51 people utilized the assistive technology outreach services, with 118 total contacts to the instructor. In addition, fifteen people attended "walk-in" clinics to work with the assistive technology instructor. The First Friday classes covered different topics relating to a specific blindness skill or technique. In 2017, 23 people participated with topics including: an open house showcasing all the areas of skills of blindness, a cooking class, winter travel techniques, leisure skills, new Braille rules, and the latest assistive technology.

Orientation and mobility (O&M) is an area of critical need for people experiencing vision loss. People who are not able to attend adaptive skills training in Sioux Falls have the option for training from a certified instructor who travels to individual's homes to provide training. During 2017 eleven people received training in their home communities to learn to travel independently.

The SDRC low vision clinic provides specialized examinations by an optometrist who is trained specifically for prescribing low vision aids and devices. Low Vision devices enhance an individual's ability to access information with their remaining vision. During FY 2017, there were 21 clinics serving 94 patients.

Picture of low vision aids.

Consumer quote: "Awesome service and skills taught by awesome providers; was cooking, washing dishes and crossing streets with confidence in no time."

Transition Services

Transition services for youth occur each summer at the Center. Students who live near the Center in Sioux Falls attend classes to gain additional independent living skills. They live at home and attend classes during the day. In 2017, eight students participated in summer classes at the Center.

Picture of Transition Week students holding some of the blankets they made.

Each June, SDRC hosts Transition Week for students across the state, eleven students attended in 2017. They learned about work opportunities, self-advocacy and independent living skills, participated in fun recreational experiences, and worked together on a service project. They made blankets and donated them to the Sanford Children's Hospital and toured local businesses to learn about a variety of jobs and the skills needed for those jobs. The week ended with a resource breakfast for students and their families to help them better understand how to navigate programs that can assist them during their transition years.

Picture of some of the Transition Week students.

SD Vocational Resources

Employment Skills Training (EST) served 93 people in 2017, compared to 102 in 2016. The field counselors refer individuals who need employment services such as help with work accommodations, interview skills, and computer skills. Individuals referred tend to have greater physical and cognitive needs and require more intensive instruction and creativity to determine which type of jobs are appropriate for participants to pursue to become employed.

Picture of individuals working in the computer lab.

SD Vocational Resources invited the rehabilitation counselors from the Native American Vocational Rehabilitation Programs to tour the Employment Skills Training

area to build an awareness of service options for people they serve. As a result, 3 youth attended the program to learn about the type of jobs that were the best match for their unique skills.

The employment specialist provided job placement services to 27 people in 2017. All were a result of referrals from rehabilitation counselors from the Sioux Falls Divisions of Rehabilitation Services and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Satisfaction with Services

A questionnaire about services is provided to each participant who attends the Skills of Blindness program and Employment Skills Training. We had a 58% return rate from people who attended the skills of blindness program. The overall rating was 3.7 on a 4.0 scale, which falls between the ratings of (3) Agreed and (4) Strongly Agreed to questions about the quality of services. Narrative responses from the participants included:

In response to what did you like best about the program? “Supportive staff,” “accepting my condition...really helped me see there was more I could do,” and “[the Center] helped me so I could do the same things I did before.” “The knowledge of instructors” and “their kindness and helpfulness” were also highlighted as positives.

The Employment Skills Training (EST) area uses the same format of questions and narrative responses to obtain information about services. The return rate was 63% for people who attended EST. All answers received a 3.5 or above – equivalent to Agree – and the highest score was a 3.8. The lowest score was related to “I received adequate supervision and instruction during training.” This is a common problem in the EST area, where there is one instructor regardless of the number of students attending training. The highest rated question was “I would recommend this program to a friend.” Comments provided by participants regarding what they learned are largely positive, and frequently note the support of staff. There were very few comments about what they would like to change, but comments included not having enough time to apply for jobs and that the class wasn’t long enough. Specific suggestions for change included more one-to-one interaction, having guest speakers in the World of Work class, and having more counseling or another staff person like the current instructor.

Picture of individuals in Employment Skills Training area at SDRC.

Picture of individuals receiving O&M training on city sidewalk.

Consumer quote: “I appreciate the great service.”

Student Success – Justin Schoenrock

Picture of Justin standing by his tractor

Justin Schoenrock grew up on a farm and from an early age he knew farming was what he wanted to do for his career. He bought his own farm and began doing what he knew was his path. Raising two children and farming was everything he needed to be content.

In August of 2016, Justin started experiencing short blackouts and floaters that would come and go. It was discovered he had a cancerous brain tumor. He had surgery to remove the tumor; but after surgery, he lost nearly all of his vision with the exception of a little light perception and occasional shadows or colors.

His family and friends realized he needed help and stepped in. Moving back home to his parents' farm was devastating, but Justin could no longer care for his children or work independently on the farm. He struggled with feeling he had lost his purpose in life. Living with only light perception for vision and the effect of the brain surgery, Justin had difficulty with orientation and struggled with directions and conceptualizing his environment. He had problems getting from his bed to the bathroom and back, he couldn't go outside alone, and living alone was not an option. He realized that he couldn't care for his children without help.

In January of 2017, he met SBVI rehabilitation counselor Alan Vandenburg and learned about the programs and services available to help him. He toured the Rehabilitation Center and began attending 3 days a week for about 6 months. Justin reported that before he started he was very apprehensive and skeptical about any possibility to improve his situation. He did not want to use a cane – ever! In spite of his misgivings about the Center he settled into the program and spent 6 months in the skills of blindness classes. Justin learned to use a computer with JAWS speech software and Excel to track and report all types of information for managing the business finances for the farming operation.

Justin accepted using a white cane, which opened up more doors to increase his independence. He struggled with orientation within his environment and knew that a guide dog would improve his independence. He was introduced to the Victor Trek which provides verbal navigation similar to a GPS device. This helped him with orientation and allowed him to travel independently to get his mail at the post office, walk 2 miles to the farm and around his town independently. The ability to walk a two mile route was the first step for him to prove to the guide dog school that he had obtained the skills necessary to be eligible to have a guide dog.

Justin learned many valuable skills at the Center and expressed that he wished to thank everyone for all they have done for him. Justin stated, "I'm happy, and it took my counselor and everyone at the Center working together to make the difference. It wasn't one thing or one person, but it took everyone to get me to where I am today."

Business Enterprise Program

Under the Randolph-Sheppard Act, State licensing agencies recruit, train, license, and place individuals who are blind as operators of 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 vending facilities through permits or contracts.

In South Dakota, SBVI is the state licensing agency. Through the Business Enterprise Program, blind individuals are provided the opportunity for self-employment in food service, operating cafeterias, coffee shops, and vending routes.

SBVI and the Business Enterprise Program has permits with the Department of Interior for food services at the Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS) Center near Sioux Falls; the General Services Administration in Federal Buildings in Sioux Falls, Aberdeen and Huron; the US Postal Service facilities in Sioux Falls, Huron, and Pierre; and the US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons, in Yankton. In addition, SBVI has an interagency agreement with the South Dakota Bureau of Administration for vending machines in multiple State buildings in Pierre.

Picture of aerial view of Earth Resources, Observation and Science (EROS) Center near Sioux Falls.

Currently there are four vendor operators in the BEP program who operate cafeterias and vending machines at the locations mentioned above. At the EROS cafeteria, most of the equipment is furnished by the federal agency, and BEP owns the equipment at the other sites. BEP currently owns 51 vending machines and the vendor operators utilize an additional 16 vending machines furnished by third party vendors. SBVI contracts with Coca-Cola and Pepsi for vending machines at the postal facilities, federal buildings, and at EROS in the Sioux Falls area.

Picture of bank of vending machines at one of the BEP vending sites.

BEP Combined Vendor Expenses for FFY2017

The largest monthly operating expenses incurred by the vendors include:

All other expenses	\$ 9,404
Payroll + payroll tax	\$83,868
Stand cost of goods	\$88,243
Vending cost of goods	\$96,392

Bar graph of BEP vendor expenses for FFY2017 data above.

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

Table of Earnings and Expenses for FFY2015, FFY2016, and FFY2017.

- 1) Gross Sales (total income): 2015 \$446,428; 2016 \$449,385; 2017 \$368,890
- 2) Merchandise Purchases: 2015 \$241,596; 2016 \$246,962; 2017 \$200,472
- 3) Gross Profit: 2015 \$204,832; 2016 \$202,422; 2017 \$168,418
- 4) Total Operating Expenses: 2015 \$101,523; 2016 \$137,624; 2017 \$101,416
- 5) Net Proceeds: 2015 \$115,561; 2016 \$75,060; 2017 \$79,138
- 6) Levied Set Aside Funds: 2015 \$15,102; 2016 \$12,130; 2017 \$11,361
- 7) Net Profit to Vendors: 2015 \$100,460; 2016 \$62,929; 2017 \$67,778

Gross sales, merchandise purchases and gross profit were all less in 2017 than the previous two years. Closure of the coffee shop portion of one vendor's business and

closure of another facility for five months, had a negative impact on profits in the program.

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 90 and 29. The SD Departments of Transportation and Tourism have developed a Revitalization Plan for these rest areas. Two rest areas, one each for I-90 and I-29 were closed November 1, 2016, as part of the plan. Several rest areas are scheduled for upgrades and remodels over the next few years.

Picture of one of the rest areas in South Dakota

There are currently 19 interstate rest areas in South Dakota.

Current contracts with third party vendors for designated rest areas began June 1, 2016. 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 45 to 62 percent. Income from rest area commissions for June 1, 2016 through May 31, 2017 was \$73,930 for I-90 rest areas and \$15,151 for I-29 rest areas, totaling \$89,081. The majority of BEP expenses are paid utilizing rest area funds. Bar graph of commission on sales at Chamberlain for years 2014 through 2017
2014: \$7,602.68; 2015: \$7,412; 2016: \$8,159.08; 2017: \$11,433.81

Picture of Dignity statue.

Revenue from sales at the Chamberlain Rest Area/Information Center has increased since the Dignity statue was installed in September, 2016. This chart is indicative of the increase in the number of visitors to the rest area to view this majestic statue.

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