

TITLE IV-VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) PROGRAM

-General quarterly update for Q1 2023:

The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Bureau of Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired as combined, has had a busy Q1 2023. While Q4 2022 saw the completion of the 18 months long Legislative Council Bureau (LCB) audit of the program, January brought the news that Nevada Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and 11 other states were identified for monitoring by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). RSA will be on site in Carson City to perform the primarily fiscal monitoring on June 13-15th. Nevada has not been monitored by RSA since 2018.

Legislature: Like all other state agencies, Nevada VR has been very busy in Q1 2023 with the 82nd Nevada Legislative Session. Nevada VR is closely watching AB 79 which is about the 700 Hour Program run by Nevada VR. If passed, it will require agencies to make one hire off the 700 Hr. List before moving on to hire someone without a disability.

After the January soft-launch of its new www.VRNEVADA.org website, we are happy to say that in Q1, the website is now available in 5 languages (English, Spanish, Tagalog, Korean & Chinese) with a link to real-time ASL interpretation assistance. The site is fully ADA-compatible and adds many new features to improve the user experience and cater to the needs of people with disabilities while adding transparency and accountability.

February: After the branding success of the new VRNevada website and other branding efforts in 2022, the Bureau of Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired (BSBVI) and the Blind Enterprises of Nevada (BEN)Program both adopted new logos. These logos are reminiscent of the VRNevada logo, yet have a stylized eye, which reminds the viewer that both the BSBVI and BEN programs are dedicated to serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired. A page specifically for the blind and visually impaired was also added to VRNevada.org to bring emphasis to those specific services for those who need them.

February also saw the development of the first Pre-ETS camp for Deaf/Hard of Hearing students in Nevada. It is called Camp SignShine and will be held on the campus of UNLV June 26-30th. It will serve Deaf/Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind students ages 14-22 who are clients of VRNevada from across the state. The camp will focus on careers and college through fun and engaging activities while restoring Nevadan Deaf Heritage in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities.

March: March 22, 2023 was celebrated with a proclamation from Governor Joe Lombardo and celebrations across the state at VRNevada for National Rehabilitation Counselor Appreciation Day. This day commemorates the date in 1983 when the president of the National Council on Rehabilitation Education testified before the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Select Education, bringing the need for qualified rehabilitation counselors to the attention of the US Congress and led to the professional standards we reflect as a profession at VRNevada.

In March, VRNevada and the Nevada Department of Education Office of Inclusive Education finalized a data sharing agreement to facilitate data sharing for data driven decision making within the two agencies. This is a first of its kind and will facilitate improved communication for both agencies.

April: The Q1 intake report found that March 2023 was the busiest month yet for intakes with VRNevada completing 281 new intakes and Pre-ETS doing 150 new intakes statewide.

