Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

Recruitment and Retention Solutions for Nevada Employers
As an employer, what is most important in keeping your organization fine-tuned and running at optimum performance? At the top of the list of answers are well-trained, conscientious, and dedicated employees.

Nevada’s Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) understands to reach the business and organizational success you desire, you need reliable and qualified job applicants who can put their diverse abilities to work for you. You want employees who can help you maintain that critical edge and competitive advantage.

That’s where BVR can help. BVR offers a full service business assistance program for business owners and employers that can help you gain a critical advantage in today’s highly competitive marketplace. BVR provides professional consultation services to: assist business owners and employers in developing short and long term strategies regarding their varying disability-related issues; and assist individuals with disabilities in maximizing their employment opportunities by helping them develop the skills that today’s businesses are seeking in the workforce of the future.

BVR represents a real opportunity for business owners and employers to build on their business or organizational success through services in the areas of:

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Accessibility
- Education/Training
- Financial Incentives

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To reach the business and organizational success you are seeking, you need to tap into highly reliable and qualified job applicants who can put their diverse abilities to work for you.

National studies show that when compared to employees without disabilities, employees with disabilities have equal or higher job performance ratings, equal or higher retention rates, and equal or lower absentee rates.

A Walgreens study of its workforce found individuals with disabilities are often more reliable employees. Statistically speaking, individuals with disabilities have higher employment retention ratings, and are equal or better in performance, attendance, and safety.

BVR services are designed to aid you in finding the right match to fill your needs:

- pre-screened and qualified applicants
- employee matches based on your needs
- soft skill development
- customized employee training strategies
- reliable technical assistance and referrals
- quality assurance through follow-up
Finding the right employee is always a challenge, but retaining trained employees is equally important to business and organizational success. Every business or organization in the state has at least one individual who is an integral part of their success. Two key questions that challenge owners and employers are:

- What happens if that individual incurs a disability?
- Who can assist me in keeping this individual on the job?

It is often estimated that it costs a business on average $25,000 to train and integrate a new employee into the company’s workforce. It is simply more cost-effective to retain an existing employee who incurs a disability by making a reasonable accommodation. Most accommodations are low cost, yet yield considerable direct and indirect benefits. In fact, data collected by the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) over the years reveal that more than half of accommodations cost employers nothing. Of those that do cost, the typical one-time expenditure is $500, an outlay that most employers report pays for itself in the form of reduced insurance and training costs and increased productivity.

- $500 for the typical cost of an accommodation
- 50 percent of employers report that there’s no cost for accommodation

Making accommodations is nothing more than helping people do their jobs to their full potential. Think of it as productivity enhancement. Your retention efforts benefit from BVR services through:

- maintenance of current workforce and productivity levels
- assistance in building assistive technology strategies and referrals
- professional work site assessments and options
- customized continuing education and training strategies
- job restructuring recommendations and assistance
- reliable technical assistance and referrals
- quality assistance through follow-up
Of equal importance in today’s highly competitive marketplace is ensuring that all potential customers can effectively access your goods or services. Whether through physical access or electronic access, your goal is to connect customers to your product or services. To effectively accomplish this, you need to understand the changing market dynamics and your options.

- According to the US Business Leadership Network, the disposable income for individuals with disabilities annually is $220 Billion in the United States.
- A person now has a 51 percent chance of incurring a disability in their lifetime.
- One in five Nevada citizens has a disability.
- One in three Nevada families has a family member with a disability.

BVR services on accessibility benefit you through:

- the development of strategies for disability-related solutions
- reasonable accommodation outcomes
- greater access through ADA site assessments and recommendation
- positive impact on bottom line through greater market share
- development of strategies for positive disability-related solutions
EDUCATION & TRAINING

If you were to ask a Nevada human resource professional what is the key challenge of today’s workforce in Nevada, the answer would most likely be diversity. Your business knowledge ought to go far beyond finances and operational processes, by understanding the complexities of and dealing with a diverse workforce. Whether it’s culture, gender, religion, or race, these complex issues ought to be a primary focus of management. Understanding disabilities is an important part of understanding diversity. People with disabilities today, particularly the 18-34 age groups, are a completely different set of people.

• They have more access to education and training.
• They don’t see disabilities as a barrier the way other generations have.
• They have not been denied the kinds of access other generations have.
• They expect a level playing field.

Knowledge, awareness, and understanding are the keys to creating a positive work environment for all employees. There are far too many misperceptions and myths surrounding this issue. Whether an employee with a disability or a customer with a disability, it is important that your entire staff understands how to deal effectively with this issue.

BVR services can assist your employees, through education/training, in developing a broader understanding of the diversity in today’s workplace and marketplace. The benefits of disability awareness, education and training are:

• enhanced ADA knowledge of roles and responsibilities
• greater understanding of workforce diversity
• access to professional knowledge and expertise
• enhanced team-building and customer service
• increased staff morale
On the following pages is a summary of incentives related to accessibility and the employment of people with disabilities. If you need further assistance on tax credits or deductions please contact an accountant or tax attorney. Further information about these credits and deductions and the necessary forms are available through the IRS at www.irs.gov. You can also find further information regarding the employability of people with disabilities at www.vrnevada.org.
Businesses accommodating people with disabilities may qualify for some of the following tax credits and deductions. More detailed information may be found in the IRS publications referenced.

Disabled Access Credit
The Disabled Access Credit provides a non-refundable credit for small businesses that incur expenditures for the purpose of providing access to persons with disabilities. An eligible small business is one that earned $1 million or less or had no more than 30 full time employees in the previous year; they may take the credit each and every year they incur access expenditures. Refer to Form 8826, Disabled Access Credit for information about eligible expenditures.

Barrier Removal Tax Deduction
The Architectural Barrier Removal Tax Deduction encourages businesses of any size to remove architectural and transportation barriers to the mobility of persons with disabilities and the elderly. Businesses may claim a deduction of up to $15,000 a year for qualified expenses for items that normally must be capitalized. Businesses claim the deduction by listing it as a separate expense on their income tax return. Also, businesses may use the Disabled Tax Credit and the architectural/transportation tax deduction together in the same tax year, if the expenses meet the requirements of both sections. To use both, the deduction is equal to the difference between the total expenditures and the amount of the credit claimed.

Work Opportunity Credit
The Work Opportunity Credit provides eligible employers with a tax credit up to 40 percent of the first $6,000 of first-year wages of a new employee if the employee is part of a “targeted group.” An employee with a disability is one of the targeted groups for the Work Opportunity Credit, provided the appropriate government agencies have certified the employee as disabled. The credit is available to the employer once the employee has worked for at least 120 hours or 90 days. Employers claim the credit on Form 5884, Work Opportunity Credit.
Expanded Tax Credit for Hiring Unemployed Veterans

The Work Opportunity Credit has been expanded to provide employers with new incentives to hire certain unemployed veterans.

On November 21, 2011, the President signed into law the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011. This law provides an expanded Work Opportunity Tax Credit to businesses that hire eligible unemployed veterans and for the first time also makes part of the credit available to tax-exempt organizations. Businesses claim the credit as part of the general business credit, and tax-exempt organizations claim it against their payroll tax liability. The credit is available for eligible unemployed veterans who began work on or after November 22, 2011, and before January 1, 2013.

For more information on claiming this credit, go to www.irs.gov/Credits-&-Deductions for the expanded Work Opportunity Tax Credit available for hiring qualified veterans. Get the latest information about Form 5884, Work Opportunity Credit, and its instructions, and Form 8850, Pre-Screening Notice and Certification Request for the Work Opportunity Credit.
Additional information about these business topics concerning accommodations for individuals with disabilities are in:

- Publication 954, Tax Incentives for Distressed Communities
- Form 8826, Disabled Access Credit
- Form 5884, Work Opportunity Credit
- Form 3800, General Business Credit
- Instructions to Form 3800
- Form 8850, Pre-Screening Notice and Certification Request for the Work Opportunity Credit
- Instructions for Form 8850

There is also a wide array of tax benefits available to persons with disabilities, ranging from standard deductions and exemptions to business and itemized deductions to credits. Information about these issues is in Publication 3966, Living and Working with Disabilities.
**Nevada’s Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) Program**
Nevada’s Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Program has a long history of assisting people with disabilities with preparing for and entering the competitive workforce. BVR may provide skills assessments, job training, job placement, retention services, job coaching, medical restoration services, occupational licenses and tools, and assistive technology. BVR is a state program funded in part, with a federal grant. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, authorizes annual funding for state BVR agencies so they can achieve the goals of the program. There is no cost to the employer.

**Silver State Works (SSW)**
For an employer to be eligible to participate, the employer must have an established, verified, paid-to-date Unemployment Insurance (UI) account, as well as a valid business license if required by the city or county in which the employer conducts business. Eligible employers also include city, state and federal entities, as long as the positions are permanent. To ensure employers have the broadest range of choices, the selection of one of three options is available. Business Service Representatives in the Nevada JobConnect offices will be responsible for developing training sites and completion of all the forms for the employer and the participant. There is no cost to the employer.

**SSW Employer-Based Training**
This component allows laid-off workers who qualify for UI benefits to simultaneously receive on-site workplace training and regular UI benefits. This component is also available to other targeted populations. It provides a special training allowance of $200 every two weeks for a maximum of $600. Job seekers would be required to train 24 hours per week up to six weeks while continuing regular work search.

**SSW Employer Incentive Job Program**
Under this component, employers enter into a contract that establishes the agreed upon wage, number of hours to master the tasks, and the maximum amount of reimbursement based on the wage paid. Employers will be reimbursed up to a maximum of 50 percent of the participant’s initial agreed upon gross wage for the contract period and a maximum of 40 hours per week. Contract length will be based on the time estimated to complete the needed training. Employers will submit a timesheet/invoice/progress report on a monthly basis to receive reimbursement.
SSW Incentive-Based Employment
This component supports employers who hire and retain eligible individuals in full-time employment (30 hours or more per week) by providing a wage and training subsidy based on the total amount of time the qualified individual remains actively employed. Upon completion and satisfaction of certain requirements, the employer may receive a wage retention supplement – on average up to $2,000 – payable in four equal increments of $500 after each 30 days of successful employment, up to 120 days. The employer agreement outlines the role and responsibility of the employer to the employee and is signed by both the employer and the agency representative. For more information about which option is best for your business, contact the Nevada JobConnect Business Service Office.

Career Enhancement Program (CEP)
CEP is an employer-funded training and re-employment program that provides job seekers with training designed to improve earning potential and increase job skills required in today's workplace. This program also works directly with UI claimants to provide intensive re-employment assistance. CEP may assist job seekers by paying for job related expenses such as certifications, work permits, uniforms, and small tools in order to facilitate entry or re-entry into the labor force.

Federal Bonding Program
The Federal Bonding Program is designed to help a job applicant get and keep a job. The program issues Fidelity Bonds, and is sponsored by the U. S. Department of Labor. It is a business insurance policy that protects the employer in case of any loss of money or property due to employee dishonesty. It is like a “guarantee” to the employer that the person hired will be an honest worker. The bond is given to the employer, free-of-charge, and serves as an incentive to the employer to hire the job applicant who has a “risk” factor in their personal background. The employer is then able to get the worker’s skills without any risk of worker dishonesty on the job.

BVR On-the-job training
An on-the-job training program can be set up by the counselors of BVR with an employer for an individual client of BVR. This program pays an agreed upon amount of the participant’s salary for an agreed upon period of time during their training, as well as reimburses worker’s compensation premiums during the on-the-job training period. This training cost incentive helps employers while our participants gain valuable job training and the promise of continued employment upon completion of the training. As a participant in the BVR program, the individual qualifies for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program.
Job Coaches
BVR Counselors can arrange job coaching services for the client and employer. Job coaches are individuals who specialize in assisting individuals with disabilities in learning and accurately carrying out job duties. Job coaches provide one-on-one training tailored to the needs of the employee. They may first do a job analysis to identify the job duties, followed by developing a specific plan as to how they can best train the employee to work more and more on his/her own until completely self-sufficient and able to perform job duties accurately and effectively without assistance. BVR pays the job coaching provider for clients it refers.

Assistive Technology
Assistive technology may be funded partially or in full by the counselors of BVR or with an employer for an individual client of BVR. Assistive technology is any piece of equipment or device that enables a person with a disability to have greater independence, productivity and confidence in their home, at work, at school or in the community. BVR assistive technology is funded by the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, (as amended), to increase statewide access of assistive technology to people of all ages and abilities.

Disability Awareness Training
Our trained professionals who are experts in the fields of disability services offer disability awareness training to companies at no cost to the company. These half-day or full day training experiences educate people about appropriate attitudes and interactions needed in a diverse workforce. The training also takes participants further into understanding the needs of people with disabilities through hands on learning experiences and role-play activities. The program covers visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disabilities, hidden disabilities, and cognitive disabilities. Through awareness, knowledge and skill building, our experts will develop greater professional cultural competence in your staff.

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