Get involved. Become a VR Ambassador.

You've seen - and perhaps experienced first hand - the benefits of Vocational Rehabilitation. Now is your opportunity to get involved and help someone with disabilities become successful.

**Share**
Your success with VR is a powerful tool in helping people see their possibilities, such as:
- engaging in business-to-business education
- speaking at a meeting or event
- writing a letter in support of VR

**Teach**
You have knowledge and experience that can be invaluable to someone starting out or starting over professionally, including:
- serving as a guest job preparedness instructor
- providing useful tips or advice to a group
- hosting a tour of your jobsite

**Mentor**
A word of encouragement from someone who's "been there and done that" can make a big difference. Discuss:
- how your experience changed your perspective
- how you made your career choices
- information and resources that helped you

---

"America wants people back in the workforce. You guys are vital!"
— Cindy Hooks, Service Representative
Social Security Administration

"VR is our first call because of the quality of people we get and the service by the whole team there at VR."
— Butch Crawford, Co-owner
ICE Recycling

"The biggest thing I got from VR was the confidence and the courage to know that I can do anything that I set my mind to."
— Courtney Harper, Woodworker
former VR consumer

---

VR Ambassadors
scvrd.net
The Vocational Rehabilitation program receives 78.7 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For Federal fiscal year 2020, the total amount of grant funds currently awarded is $12,334,742. The remaining 21.3 percent of the costs ($3,338,374) are funded by state appropriations.

"We’ve hired ten percent of our workers through the VR SWAT program," Jeff Mang, plant manager of HBD Thermoid, tells a group of business and community leaders during the 1st Annual Camden Area Business Cookout at the Camden Work Training Center.

The group includes more than 40 representatives from Lee and Kershaw counties who are learning firsthand how VR helps businesses find talented employees through services such as work-based training.

“We make the very best transmission belts for lawn mowers in the world,” Mang continues, “and these employees are our top tier performers. They are knowledgeable and excited to come to work.”

A VR consumer may participate in work-based training for up to 12 weeks, explains Robert Truesdale, VR Business Development Specialist. During this time, the consumer learns the job with assistance from VR staff. It is also an opportunity for the business to evaluate a potential employee’s abilities, and a chance for the consumer to determine if the position is a good match.

“VR has done a tremendous job getting [their consumers] ready to join or rejoin the workforce,” says an enthusiastic Mang.

Skip Cranfill, Operations and Materials Manager, agrees, “Anyone can have knowledge and skills, but it’s attitude and habits that a lot of people are lacking. Our employees who have come from VR have the soft skills and motivation—they are excited to be here. They come in early, they are flexible, willing and capable.”

Work-based training also helps employers offset the cost of training for higher skilled jobs. In the case of HBD Thermoid, those savings “go right on the bottom line and actually allowed us to increase the pay rate for our folks,” says Marie Vanhoy, Human Resource Specialist.

She explains that the consumers they have hired from VR work throughout HBD Thermoid’s Elgin plant. “They all start in our warehouse doing packing and shipping. Then we find out what their hidden skills are and they migrate from there to other areas.”

One is a lead that steps in to provide guidance or support anywhere in the plant. “His learning curve is disturbingly steep,” she says, smiling. “He’s been cross-trained in every part of our facility. He will work his way into a supervisor position.”

Truesdale sums up the benefits for VR consumers and businesses. “What makes VR unique is that we assess our consumers and match them with jobs that fit.”

Mang appreciates this attention to detail, and the thoroughness of the VR staff.

“This is one of the best programs I’ve ever seen from a government agency,” says Mang. “VR is really changing people’s lives and helping businesses thrive in the community.”

Cultivating success